

THE PLANNING PROCESS



Collaborating with stake holders, FireSafe Council meeting and planning a prescribe burn.

Background

Working with the State Board of Forestry, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection developed the California Fire Plan in answer to Legislative direction codified in the California Public Resources Code (PRC).

Purpose

The WPP is structured to articulate the County wildfire situation to the Director of CDF, the various stakeholders, and the administrative and elected officials charged with developing fiscal policy. The WPP is also intended to convey management direction from the County Fire Chief, educate the stakeholders on the wildfire environment and explain the processes used to identify strategic targets for pre-fire solutions. Finally, the intent of the WPP is to organize the myriad of wildfire prevention and suppression projects and programs into a single unified plan.

Goals and Objectives

California Fire Plan Goal

Reduce total costs and losses from wildfire in California by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions and increasing initial attack success.

California Fire Plan Objectives

- To create wildfire protection zones that reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- To assess all wildlands, not just the state responsibility areas. Analysis will include all wildland service providers - federal, state, local government, and private. The analysis will identify high risk, high value areas and develop information on and determine who is responsible, who is responding, and who is paying for wildland fire emergencies.
- To identify and analyze key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes in public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total costs and losses by increasing fire protection system effectiveness.
- To have strong fiscal policy focus and monitor the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
- To translate the analysis into public policies.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Goal

The Consolidated Planning Process

The WMP also has direct relationships with other plans, programs and agreements, such as the County Comprehensive Plans, Fire Department Strategic Plan, U.S. Forest Service - Land Management Plan, U.S. Forest Service Operating Agreement, Bureau of Land Management Operating Agreement, Santa Barbara City Fire Department Wildland Fire Plan, Montecito Fire District Wildland Fire Plan, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation - Cachuma Lake Management Plan, UCSB Sedgewick Reserve Fire/Vegetation Management Plan, California Department of Fish And Game – Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve Management Plan and the Fire Protection Agreement - Operating Plan between the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

Administrative Oversight and Approval

For the CFP element, the Santa Barbara County is one of six “contract counties” (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Kern, and Marin), which has

executed a contract with the State of California to provide wildland fire protection on state responsibility area (SRA). As such the Santa Barbara County Fire Department functionally operates as a Unit of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) and is responsible for all California Fire Plan activities within the County. One of the primary California Fire Plan activities is completion of what CDF refers to as the “Unit Fire Management Plan” and which this document, the Santa Barbara County Communities Wildfire Protection Plan, is intended to fulfill.

In addition to the administrative responsibility that the Santa Barbara County Fire Department has in relation to the California Fire Plan, as the representative State agency responsible for forest management, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department must agree to the final contents of any CWPP in the County.

For the CWPP element, the local government and local fire departments agree on the final content.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Concurrence

A stakeholder can be defined as any person, agency or organization with a particular interest – a stake – in fire safety and protection of assets from wildfires. The stakeholders already identified include federal, state, local, private agencies, or interest groups, with assets at risk from wildfire.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department is attempting to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the development of the SBC CWPP. The process of identifying stakeholders and their interests is an ongoing process and will be evaluated continuously through the evolution of future unit wildfire management plans. The Santa Barbara County Fire Department will participate with as many stakeholders as is possible and continually update planning efforts involving stakeholder input.

Santa Barbara County FireSafe Council

The Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council was formed in January of 1997

after a presentation from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Representatives from all local fire agencies and a collective group of some forty-five plus members of the community were present. The FSC is organized as a non-profit organization and has 501c (3) tax-exempt status with the Franchise Tax Board and the Internal Revenue Service, tax identification number 77-0459954. The FSC has a Board of Directors (Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, and seven directors) and has adopted by-laws with the mission statement for the FSC being: “To unify public and private organizations to educate, motivate and coordinate Santa Barbara County communities to minimize the losses associated with wildfire”.

The Fire Safe Council (FSC) is instrumental in bringing a conglomeration of stakeholders to “the table.” The council sheds light on many concerns within communities and expose information relating to the effectiveness of fire safe efforts in the County. Through the council’s diversity, agencies have been able to develop pre-fire projects that otherwise may never have developed.

Plan Implementation

As the plan evolves and matures the concept is that all of the stakeholders will use the plan to implement programs, projects and activities to achieve the goals documented in the plan.

Plan Monitoring, Evaluation and Updating

All of the stakeholders will collectively and collaboratively monitor and evaluate the plan on a regular basis. The plan will updated in the same fashion on an annual basis.