

Communities at Risk

Congress, through the FY2001 Appropriation Bill called for a list of "...all urban wildland interface communities, as defined by the Secretaries, within the vicinity of Federal lands that are at high risk from wildfire, as defined by the Secretaries." In the fall of 2000, representatives from CDF, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service developed criteria to select communities at risk.

The communities in the following list and the designated areas on the "Communities at Risk Map" were selected by this validation process and submitted for inclusion in the National listing of Communities at Risk in March of 2001.

Shasta – Trinity Communities at Risk

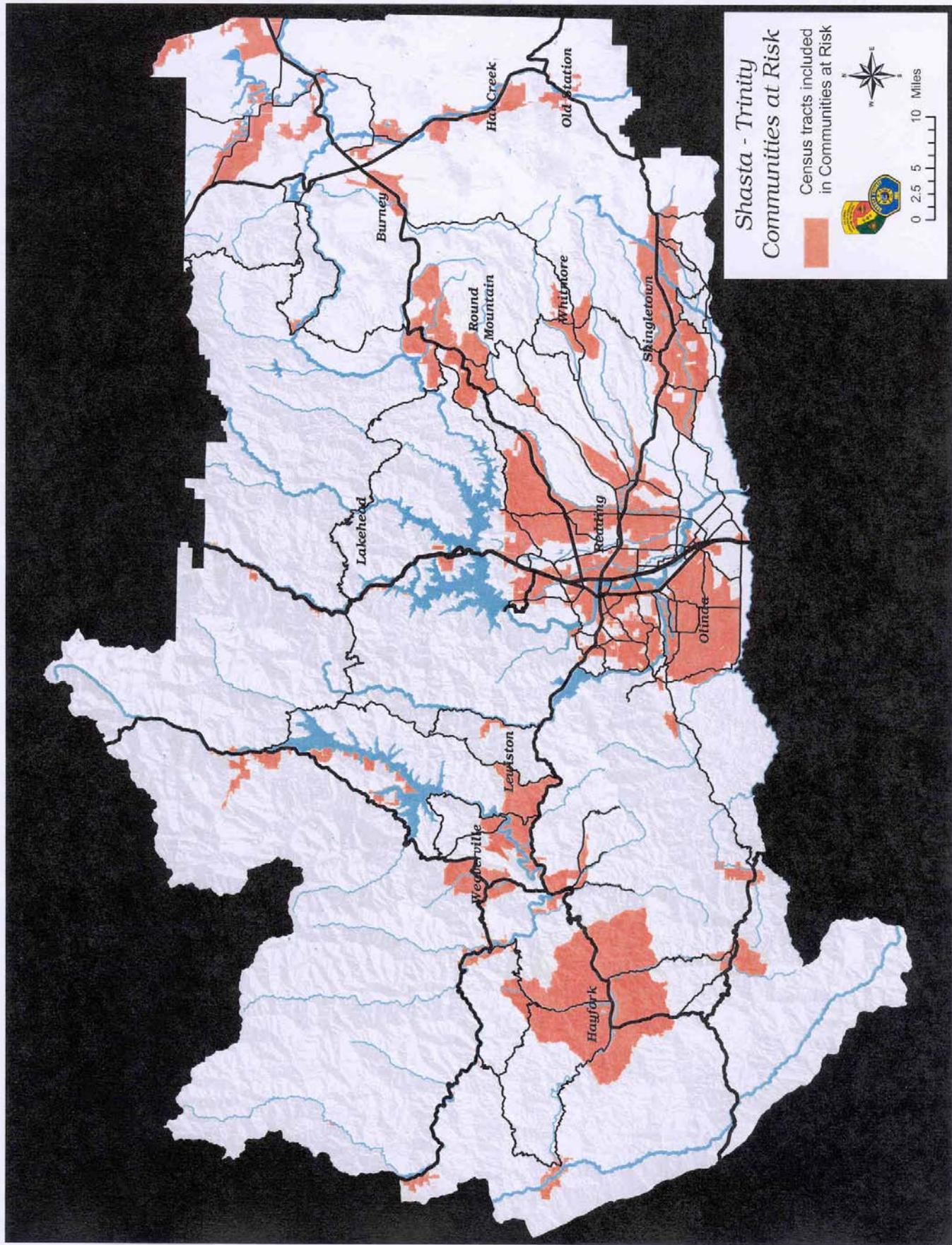
Anderson	Fall River Mills	O'Brien
Bella Vista	Forest Glen	Oak Run
Big Bar	French Gulch	Old Station
Big Bend	Gibson	Ono
Burney	Glenburn	Palo Cedro
Burnt Ranch	Hat Creek	Pitville
Cassel	Hayfork	Platina
Castella	Hyampom	Redding
Centerville	Igo	Redding Rancheria
Central Valley	Junction City	Round Mountain
Cloverdale	Keswick	Shasta
Coffee	Lakehead	Shingletown
Cottonwood	Lamoine	Sims
Covington Mill	Lewiston	Trinity Center
Dana	Manton	Weaverville
Day	McArthur	Whitmore
Del Loma	Millville	Wildwood
Denny	Montgomery Creek	
Douglas City	Mountain Gate	

Boundaries for the Communities at Risk were created using 1990 census tracts. The 1990 Census did not include names for communities without a Post Office thus many named communities within the unit are contained within the boundary of an adjacent community (example: Jones Valley had to be included with Bella Vista)

A process has been developed in 2004 to add communities to the list that were not included in the previous selection.

Shasta – Trinity Unit communities not listed on the California Fire Alliance list are:

- Cloverdale
- Inwood
- Jones Valley
- Lakeshore
- Olinda
- Pine Grove
- Post Mountain
- Shasta Lake City (listed as Central Valley)
- Viola



Fire Condition Summary

The vegetation in the Unit has been modified since the introduction of non-native settlers. Early survey reports and settler communications indicate that both the oak woodland and timberlands were more open. Ladder fuels were limited probably because of low intensity natural and Native American caused fires. Historical information indicates that major fuel modification occurred within the Unit because of mining, logging, and farming.

By the 1870's large damaging fires occurred, not just within the Unit but also throughout the United States. The most documented of these fires are those that occurred in the Great Lakes region. The Peshtigo fire claimed 1300 lives and burned over 1,100,000 acres and an unnamed fire in Michigan burned an estimated 1,200,000 acres and killed over 200 people. The Great Lakes region's fuels had been heavily modified and hundreds of fires starting in slash destroyed millions of acres and killed over 2000 people¹⁸¹⁹.

An excerpt from "The Marinette and Peshtigo Eagle" printed Saturday October 14, 1871 gives one key to wildfire survival.

"The whole country is scene of devastation and ruin that no language can paint or tongue describe. There is only one family of any note in the entire bush that has escaped. This is the fine farm of Mr. Abram Place in the upper bush. He having an immense clearing and protected also by the roads was enabled to save his house, barn and nearly all of his stock and supplies. His house has been an asylum for the suffering ones of that region, and he has rendered them all the assistance in his power."

One of the results of the 1870 fires was a national effort to control unwanted vegetation fires. The 1905 USFS Handbook states "Every ranger or guard must go to and fight every fire he sees or hears of at once, unless he clearly can not reach it, or is already fighting another fire..."²⁰ By the early 1900's efforts were made within the Unit to control all unwanted fires.

As vegetation reclaimed the modified or denuded lands all fires were extinguished which helped promote today's fuel loading. In addition, fuel types such as brush and timber require sufficient dead fuel or sufficiently low live fuel moisture in order to burn. Many areas with this type of fuel have not burnt because the proper burning conditions were not met.

Now many of the open woodlands of the valley floor and foothills of the Shasta – Trinity Unit are congested with decadent brush fields. A tightly closed canopy has replaced the timberland's openness and contains sufficient ladder fuels to create a tinderbox. Most of the land within the Unit, where large fires have occurred in the last 100 years, has also been reclaimed by impenetrable brush and forest. Lands burned as recently as thirty years ago have returned to the flammable conditions that existed the day of the fire.

The exceptions to this are those lands where the landowner, private or governmental, has made a concerted effort to thin the regenerating vegetation via manual or mechanical fuel removal of by the use of prescribed burning. **This thinning and maintenance can be the impetus to break the cycle of large and devastating fires within the Unit.**

¹⁸ "The Great fires of 1871 in the Northwest" I.A. Lapham <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/WIReader/WER0133.html>

¹⁹ History & Ecology of Fire in Michigan" http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10367_11851-24038--,00.html

²⁰ 1905 USFS Handbook pg.68 (www.lib.duke.edu/forest/usfscoll/publications/1905_Use_Book)

Vegetation within the boundary of the 1972 Swasey Fire.



These Swasey Drive fuels are again a fuel model 4 below a young pine and oak canopy. A fire burning in these fuels will likely destroy all of the vegetation including the grey pines and oaks.



1992 Fountain Fire Reforestation.

This is a single age plantation with some hardwood in the drainage. This particular section has received some thinning. The entire plantation will require subsequent maintenance to protect it from fire. As maintenance continues this will return to a healthy forest. Areas of this fire not maintained have already aged into a hazardous condition.