

Throughout the planning process, the plan must consider and incorporate the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provide for public stakeholder involvement.

This cooperation will allow us to incorporate the use of prescribed fire (the planned wildland fire ignition), fuelbreaks, vegetation manipulation (thinning, crushing, etc.) into management goals and planning efforts that will restore ecosystems and provide protection from the loss of human life or property. The current conditions on thousands of acres of wildlands, within Orange County, increase the probability of large, intense fires. These severe fires will in turn increase the risk to humans, to property, and to the land that we wish to enhance ecologically.

The magnitude of this plan and subsequent action items cannot be accomplished by any one single agency. It is paramount that the Orange County Fire Authority works in concert with stakeholders to encourage, gain consensus and to accomplish action items that will benefit the publics and provide for firefighter safety.

WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION ASSESSMENT

The assessment framework will consist of a systematic set of tools that describe the existing levels of wildland fire protection services. Additionally, the framework will assist in identifying high-risk and high-value areas that are potential locations of costly and disastrous wildland fires, assist in ranking the areas in terms of priority needs and prescribe what can be done to reduce the future costs and losses. The Wildland Fire Protection assessment system has four (4) components. These are Weather, Assets at Risk, Fuels and Level of Service.

WEATHER

Fire behavior is dramatically influenced by weather conditions. Large and costly fires are frequently, though not always, associated with severe weather conditions, typified by high temperatures, low humidity and strong surface winds. The different local climates within Orange County experience a different frequency of weather events that lead to severe fire behavior (severe fire weather).

CDF FRAP data provides a weather assessment that uses a Fire Weather Index (FWI) developed by USDA Forest Service researchers at the Riverside Fire Lab. This index combines air temperature, relative humidity and wind speed into a single value. This index can be calculated from hourly weather readings such as those collected in the California Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) data collection system. FWI does not include fuel moistures or fuel models. The FWI includes topography only to the extent that the RAWS station weather readings are influenced by local topography.

The following map shows the locations of the RAWS units and the areas of coverage for each station that has is used for this planning effort.

