

Planning for and Reducing Wildfire Risks Methodology

“A Community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) is a collaborative effort involving government entities and affected non-governmental interests, especially local community residents. A CWPP identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction and recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures.”

The Redesign theme “Assist communities in planning for and reducing wildfire risks” calls for assessments to “incorporate existing CWPPs and identify communities in especially vulnerable areas that need a CWPP.”

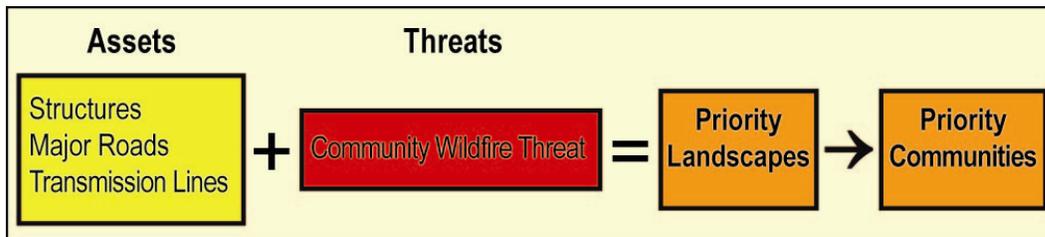
This analysis has two main components:

- 1) Identify and support existing California Wildfire Protection Plans
- 2) Encourage vulnerable communities that have not created a CWPP and explore opportunities to build local planning capital

Preliminary data development involves determining which communities are currently covered by a CWPP or its equivalent. Information is gathered from available sources on community wildfire planning resources, such as a local or county Fire Safe Councils, and each community is evaluated according to the Priority Landscapes developed in Assessment Chapter T2.1.

Analytical framework

The diagram below shows the analytical framework used to identify priority communities in the chapter *Wildfire Threat to Ecosystem Health and Community Safety*. This chapter builds upon this analysis to estimate how many of these priority communities have taken steps to address wildfire threat through various planning processes.



INDICATORS

The Priority Landscapes produced in the T2.1 analysis are overlaid on the Communities Layer, and “Priority Communities” are selected based on the amount of acres and population in High or Medium Priority Landscape. The analysis is limited to communities which are included in the Communities Layer as area polygons.

Planning Resources

The planning resources of a community have a direct bearing on its ability to create a CWPP or its equivalent. This includes local leadership and problem solving experience, knowledge of natural resource values and funding to obtain technical assistance.

Planning resources can include:

- Local Fire Safe Council
- County or Regional Fire Safe Council
- Firewise Community status
- CALFIRE Unit
- County Fire Plan
- Resource Protection District
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Other collaborative fire planning organization

Data Used in the Analysis

The datasets used to analyze wildfire threat to communities (shown in the analytical diagram) are available at http://frap.fire.ca.gov/assessment2010/2.1_fire_threat.html.

Additional datasets used for this analysis are available at http://frap.fire.ca.gov/assessment2010/3.3_wildfire_planning.html. These are provided to document the analysis, and to provide the potential to replicate results. Updated versions of these datasets may be available from the various data providers.

ANALYSIS: Planning For and Reducing Wildfire Risks		
Data theme	Dataset name	Purpose
OTHER DATA		
Priority Communities and Planning Status	community_wildfire_protection09_1.gdb	Used to depict priority communities with and without community wildfire protection plans and county fire plans and priority communities that are Firewise Communities or belong to local or county Fire Safe Councils.
Communities at Risk	comatrisk09_1.gdb	Point locations of communities at risk from California Fire Alliance
Communities	community09_3.gdb	Input dataset that provides community boundaries
Bioregions	INACCBioreg04_1.gdb	Reporting unit for summarizing results

Data and Analysis Limitations

Data Quality

<i>Data Element¹</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Currency²</i>	<i>Completeness</i>	<i>Detail</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Relevance</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
Fire hazard severity zones	2009	CAL FIRE-FRAP	Community Threat (wildfire)	F	F	E	G	E	Data preliminary for some counties
Structures	2000	US Census (blocks)	Community asset (houses)	F	E	E	E	F	Coarse spatial grain. Does not reflect recent development.
Commercial development	2007	NLCD	Community asset (commercial)	G	E	E	E	E	
Transmission lines	2007	CEC - Strategic Value Analysis	Community asset	G	G	G	E	E	
Major highways	2009	US Census (Tiger Files)	Community asset	G	G	G	E	E	
CWPP	2009	CFA	Community wildfire planning	G	P	G	P	E	Based on cursory web survey
Planning resources	2009	FSC	Community wildfire planning	F	G	G	P	E	Based on cursory web survey
Communities	2009	FRAP 2009 (incorporated cities)	Reporting unit	E	E	E	G	E	
Communities	2000	US Census (unincorporated communities)	Reporting unit	F	F	P	F	F	Examples of huge boundaries around small communities, and omitted some small population centers

1. Other data required as inputs to create the above layers or as reporting metrics: vegetation, fire perimeters, land ownership
2. P = Poor F = Fair G = Good E = Excellent

Appropriate Use and Limitations

Priority Communities were created to estimate numbers of communities and relative populations and acreages of priority landscapes by bioregion, not to identify specific areas for protection. Local data and expertise are necessary in order to identify communities for priority outreach efforts.

Data Gaps and Data Improvements

- The Fire Hazard Severity Zones, on which stand level fire threat to communities is based, uses an updated method and involves local community input. Several counties are still in the process of reviewing data and fire threat ranks could change dramatically in some counties.
- The communities included in the analysis do not include over 600 tiny communities which received “community at risk” status following a wildfire threat analysis in 2001. The present analysis, however, says nothing about these communities, except that they can be assumed to have at least a high level of wildfire risk.
- Planning Resources and Experience: there are more sources of planning resources available to every community than are considered in this analysis. Identifying all such resources and making that information easily accessible for all communities should be a strategic priority.
- The precise number or location of communities covered (or planned to be covered) by a Community Wildfire Protection Plan could not be ascertained within the time constraints of this analysis. The primary central source of information on CWPPs is the California Fire Alliance website (although many CWPPs are easily found on the web). Reporting is voluntary and incomplete. The number ascertained from this site could be half of the true number. In addition, many communities are in the process of creating a CWPP.
- Other performance measures related to CWPPs were not addressed due to limitations of time and data availability. These include percent of at risk communities that report increased local suppression capacity.
- Number and percent of WUI treated that are identified in CWPPs or other applicable collaboratively developed plans
- Number of green tons and/or volume of woody biomass from fuel reduction and restoration made available for utilization through permits, contracts, agreements, or equivalent.
- Number and percent of non-WUI acres treated that are identified through collaboration consistent with the 10 Year Implementation Plan.