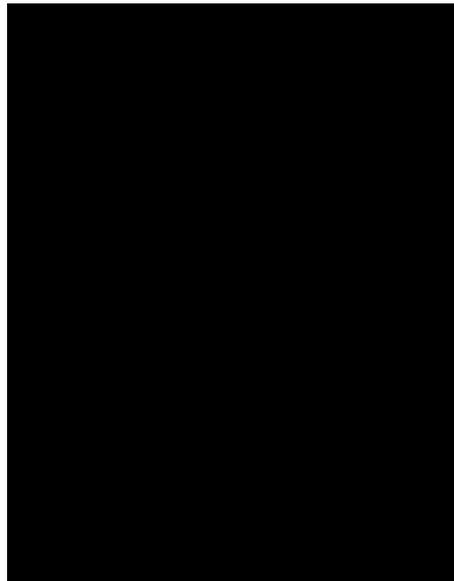


# Paradise Fire Safe Council



# Membership Guide

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November 2008

# **Introduction of Town of Paradise California**

## **Paradise Fire Safe Council**

Paradise is nestled in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range slopping upward from around 1200 to approximately 2300 feet, perfectly situated above the valley fog and beneath the heavy snows of the Sierra. Ascending through Paradise the views change from scrub oak to digger pines and to the towering Ponderosa pines. The changing landscape harbors small canyons covered with mixed brush to timber stands with understory of brush and small trees. Bordering each side of the town are two picturesque canyons, the west branch of the Feather River on the east and Little Butte Creek and the middle fork of Butte Creek on the west.

This town of approximately 26,000 has much of its homes nestled amongst those trees, on the canyon edge or on winding and sometimes narrow roads which adds to the character of the town and the charm of living in Paradise. However, those same factors amplify the wildfire danger as the surrounding area has a history of wildfire. Every year thousands of acres and hundreds of homes are lost during the fire season, much of it in terrain similar to this town. At one time or another, a wildfire has occurred on almost every side of Paradise.

Fortunately the Town of Paradise Fire Department and the Paradise Fire Safe Council partnered with the Butte County Fire Safe Council to establish methods to improve the safety of the town from wildfire. Ongoing in this partnership is the creation and maintenance of shaded fuel breaks (funded by grants) that will surround the town. Education of residents regarding their role and the associated hazards of wildland fire is a major focus of the Paradise Fire Safe Council. In addition, the Paradise Fire Safe Council, as a designated council of the Town of Paradise, establishes goals and develops action objectives for inclusion in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

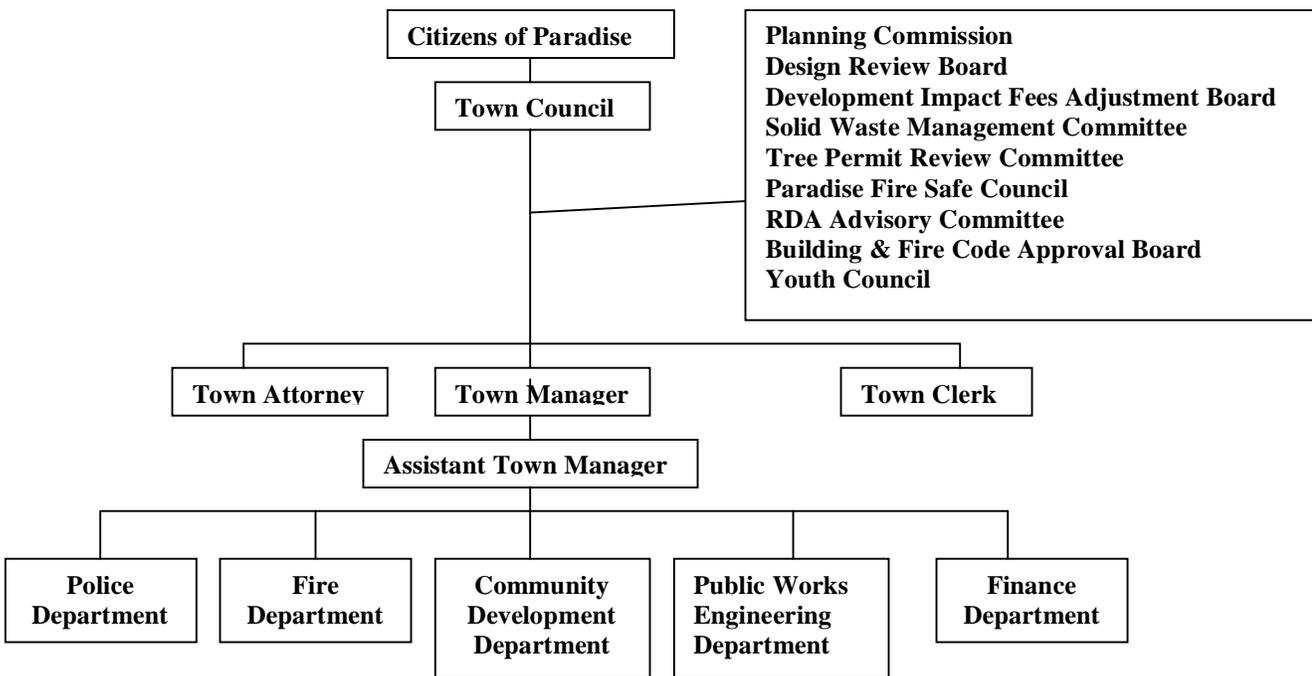
This handbook was generated to provide background information on wildfire safety for those volunteering to serve on the Paradise Fire Safe Council.

# Paradise Fire Safe Council

The Paradise Fire Safe Council is comprised of volunteer community members under the umbrellas of the Butte County Fire Safe Council and the California Fire Safe Council. As such we are also members of the California Fire Alliance which includes over 50 public and private organizations working together to mobilize Californians to protect their homes communities and environments from wildfire.

The Paradise Fire Safe Council is a designated council of the Town of Paradise designed to provide community input on wildfire prevention and safety. The council was founded around 1999 with membership evolving from the Town of Paradise Burn Committee. The Paradise Fire Safe Council is concerned with mitigation of wildland fire urban interface risk by fuel reduction projects and community education regarding wildfire dangers.

## Town of Paradise Organizational Chart



## Goals and Objectives

The Paradise Fire Safe Council has the permanent goals of providing safety to the Paradise community from the ravages of wildfire.

- To educate and create awareness of fire risks in the community**
- To reduce wildfire fuel**
- To prepare for other disasters**

Each year the Paradise Fire Safe Council sets up objectives on the best methods to achieve those goals for that year. Although the specific objectives change from year to year, the following can serve as sample objectives.

## 2008 Paradise Fire Safe Council Objectives

1. **Recruit Membership**
  - a. Complete Membership Handbook
  - b. Reach out with advertisement, involvement with projects and partnerships
2. **Support Continuation of Fuel Reduction Projects**
  - a. Identify Order of Next Fuel Reduction Projects
  - b. Support the Development of Grants to Fund Projects
  - c. Support the Completion of Honey Run and West Paradise Fuel Reduction Projects
3. **Coordinate Ongoing Fuel Reduction Projects with Fuel Reduction Project Manager**
4. **Expand and Strengthen Public Demonstrations**
  - a. Participate in Street Fairs
  - b. Design Promotional Program, Tools and Materials
  - c. Do neighborhood presentations
  - d. Coordinate publicity with Butte County Fire Safe Council
  - e. Recruit youth
  - f. Explore having a mascot
  - g. Develop "Frequently Asked Questions" for Website, Homeowner Letters, Brochures
  - h. Explore "Shelter in Place" educational/informational options
5. **Advance Home Fire Safe Award**
  - a. Train Council Members to review Property for Home Fire Safe Award
  - b. Make use of Home Fire Safe Check List

## **Projects and Responsibilities**

Provide community input to Town Council	Designate Fire Safe Home Awards
Educate Public on Wildfire Prevention/Safety	Advise on outdoor burn regulations
Cooperate in Town of Paradise fuel reduction projects	Educate on fire safe landscaping
Assist Fire Chief on Future Projects for CWPP	Provide input on disaster planning
Coordinate fire safe activities with Butte County Fire Safe Council	
Promote such community factors as Defensible Space, Town Disaster Plan, Family Disaster Plan and related programs such as SNAP and Animal Disaster Rescue.	

## **Membership and Meeting Information**

### **Membership**

**Membership:** Membership consists of a group of concerned citizens approved and appointed by the Paradise Fire Chief, who serves on the committee and is liaison to the Paradise Fire Department. To be a voting council member, one must be a resident of Paradise and be available to attend meetings on a regular basis. Participants should have an interest in disaster preparedness, wildfire prevention and safety plus be willing to contribute time and energy to advance this cause through public presentations, projects and activities. Interested parties must attend at least two meetings before activation of membership. If a member misses more than three consecutive meetings without advance notice to the chair or secretary, the member will be dropped from active membership. Each year the council will elect a chair and a secretary from the volunteer members. Associate membership is available to those individuals who have a strong interest in this cause, but live outside of Paradise or are unable to make a commitment on a consistent basis. Associate members may attend, provide input, and receive Paradise Fire Safe Council information, but cannot vote.

### **Meetings**

Meetings are the first Wednesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall and last approximately one and one half hours.

# Council Membership Guidelines

(Adopted from “Town of Paradise Handbook for Commission and Committee Members, 2008)

## General Guidelines

Appointment to a Town commission/committee is an honor. It provides an opportunity for genuine public service. Each commission/council member should be aware of the responsibilities that go along with officially serving the Town. The specific duties of each commission/committee/council vary with the purpose for which it was formed. There are, however, many responsibilities common to all members.

1. Understand the role and responsibility of the commission/committee/council on which you serve. Be informed of its functions, work programs and relationship with other groups.
2. Represent the overall public good, not the exclusive point of view of a sole person, group or interest.
3. Keep all line of communication open. Each member serves a communication link between the community, the Town Council and the staff.
4. Do your homework and be prepared. Members should become familiar with items under consideration prior to meetings in order to be fully prepared to discuss, evaluate, and act on matters scheduled for consideration. Feel free to seek staff’s advice and assistance in advance of a meeting.
5. Establish a good working relationship with fellow commission members, the Town Council and your staff liaison.
6. Understand the scope and authority of your commission/committee/council and strive to work within that scope.
7. Be a participant, an active representative and be enthusiastic.

## Relationships

Relations with Town Council: The primary responsibility of commissions/committee/councils is to advise and make recommendation to the Town Council. It is the Town Council role to absorb the advice and recommendation offered by numerous sources and to make decision to the best of its ability. Because the Town Council is in such a position to see the broader context and is aware of other concerns, it may not always follow the recommendations

Relationship with Town Staff of Paradise Fire Department: The Paradise Fire Chief or his designee provides the Town Staff liaison to the Paradise Fire Safe Council. As such the Chief is also the person who is designated to appoint all members to the council. At Paradise Fire Safe Council meetings, the Chief provides the relevant information that enhances the council’s ability to understand what is being accomplished. He informs, promotes and reports on needed projects for the council.

Relationship with Butte County Fire Safe Council: The Paradise Fire Safe Council operates as a local council under the umbrella of the Butte County Fire Safe Council. The Butte Fire Safe Council is a valuable resource for background information, fire wise materials and funding of fire safe projects. They manage all fiduciary dealings as they have the infrastructure to process those accounts.

Relationship with Fellow Council Members: Cooperation among fellow council members play an important role in the successful efforts of the council. In order to build consensus around common goals and objectives, members should first show a willingness to objectively define the issues at hand and to reconcile opposing viewpoints.

### Council Member Relationship Guidelines

1. Respect other's viewpoint, even though different than your own;
2. Allow other members time to present their viewpoints
3. Voice your viewpoint with facts, fairness and brevity
4. Accept responsibility
- 5 Welcome new members and help them become acquainted.

## **Legal Issues**

The council must abide by the local, state and federal laws protecting the democratic process. These laws are designed to protect fair access of the citizens to their government official and due process.

The Brown Act: Whenever a quorum (majority) of the council is discussing town business, it is a meeting as defined by the Brown Act. Only items posted on an agenda 72 hours prior to a meeting can be acted upon.

Economic Conflicts of Interest: The Political Reform Act of 1974 applies the economic conflict of interest law to member of Town commissions/committees/council as well as elected officials. As stated in the Government Code, in pertinent part, "No public official at any level of state or local government shall make, participate in making or in any way attempt to use his official position to influence a government decision in which he knows or has reason to know he has a financial interest."

## **Economic Conflicts of Interest**

The Political Reform Act of 1974, codified in California Government Code Section 81000-87500, applies to members of Town commission/committees/councils as well as elected officials. As stated, in pertinent part: "No official at any level of state or local government shall make, participate in making or in any way attempt to use his official position to influence a government decision in which he/she knows or has reason to know he has a financial interest." The interest of immediate family must also be considered.

Economic interest is defined broadly and includes:

- ✓ Sources of income \$500 within 12 months prior to action
- ✓ Real property interest worth \$2000 or more
- ✓ Investments such as stocks or bonds
- ✓ Any business entity in which the individual has a direct interest or position
- ✓ Interest in trusts
- ✓ Loans
- ✓ Gifts with an aggregate value of \$390 or more within 12 months prior to action
- ✓ Any other economic interest that might benefit the individual or immediate family

Whenever a member of a Town commission/ committee/council believes there may be an economic conflict of interest, he or she should seek an opinion from the Fair Political Practices Commission. Obviously this means that members need to be looking ahead at upcoming issues and obtaining an opinion before the item requires action. Any time, it is always safest to err on the conservative side and to publicly identify the conflict and then abstain from votes on issues that you believe might pose an economic conflict of interest.

# About Fire Safe Councils

## California Fire Safe Council

The California Fire Safe Council was formed in 1993 under the direction of CAL-FIRE as a collaborative interagency effort for fire safety. It is a coalition of public and private sector organizations that share a common, vested interest in reducing losses from wildfire. There are approximately 90 Councils in communities throughout California and in other states. The California Fire Safe Council mission is as follows:

*To preserve California's natural and manmade resources by mobilizing all Californians to make their homes, neighborhoods and communities fire safe.*

Great success has been achieved in uniting diverse membership around community fire safety. The California Fire Safe Council develops and distributes fire prevention education materials to industry leaders and their constituents, evaluates legislation pertaining to fire safety, and empowers grassroots organizations to spearhead fire safety programs. The county and community level Fire Safe Councils which the California Fire Safe Council supports work with multiple agencies, community representatives and volunteers to get a fire safe message out to the public.

## California Fire Plan

The California Fire Plan was a cooperative effort between the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and provides the state's road map for reducing the risk of wildfire. In the 1996 California Fire Plan the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection asked the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to work with communities in their strategic fire planning effort. The California Fire Plan recommended that local forums would be beneficial to obtain expertise and other input from citizens, community groups, local agencies and other stakeholders. The California Fire Plan also recommended that fire prevention education programs communicate levels of risk to people living in wild lands and that the message cover vegetation management, ignition resistant building construction and individual actions which could reduce wildfire risks. By October 2003, the Fire Safe Council idea had spread to over 50 communities in southern California alone.

## Funding Resources

The Paradise Fire Safe Council has no budget or funding from the Town of Paradise. In 2007, the Paradise Fire Chief requested funds within the Fire Department Budget to finance identification materials for both individual members and projects of the Paradise Fire Safe Council.

Paradise Fuel Reduction Projects funds come from grants financed from various state and federal sources. In California, agencies have pooled their National Fire Plan funding into a one-stop shop to help simplify the process of finding and applying for grants which improve California's community wildfire preparedness. This one-stop shop is hosted by the California Fire Safe Council in cooperation with its fellow members of the California Fire Alliance. Following are some funding sources.

Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) The Rural Fire Assistance grant program is designed to support the fire protection capabilities of rural and volunteer fire departments that typically fight fires near or on Department of the Interior (DOI) lands offering awards of up to \$20,000.

State Fire Assistance (SFA) The State Fire Assistance program assists state forestry agencies in wildfire response coordination and delivery, compliance with the national safety and training standards that ensure local crew deployment to federal fires and other emergency situations.

Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA): The Volunteer Fire Assistance Program is administered by state forestry agencies through 50-50 cost –sharing grants to local fire departments in rural communities mostly those areas with a population of 10,000 or less.

The National Fire Plan’s Contracting Opportunities

California Forest Stewardship Program: Information on cost-share and assistance programs for a variety of forestry projects is available in a Directory produced by the UC Cooperative Extension Forestry.

HR2389: House of Representative Bill 2389 Country Schools Funding Revitalization Act Title III Secure rural school and self determination Act money is funneled though Butte County. Because federal lands reduce a county's property tax base, the Federal Government returns a percentage of revenues generated from those lands, chiefly in the form of timber sales, to the states to fund county schools and road maintenance.

California Proposition 40: Proposition 40 provides funds for local/community assistance grants, funded through Cal-Fire.

OES: Butte County Office of Emergency Services

# Mitigation of Wildfire Risk

## Introduction

People that have chosen to live in the California foothill are annually at risk from wildfire. The damage and destruction caused by these fires can be devastating. The issue is not IF but WHEN will the wildfire occur. Residents living in these areas must realize their responsibility for reducing fire risk on their own property. The reality is if the hazard is to private property then the responsibility lies with the property owner, not the federal, state or local government nor developer or builders.

In the Oakland Fire, 13 structures a minute were igniting. At that point; no amount of fire equipment or personnel could stop that maelstrom. Wildfires are inevitable in fire adaptive ecosystems. During large interface fires hundreds of structures an hour may be ignited so that no fire suppression system can stop losses from these large conflagrations. The focus must be on mitigation/preventive actions before the event that reduce losses. Emphasis must be on reduction of the potential fire intensity that the vegetation will influence and reduction of the structure's ignitability. This will stop the transition from the wildland fire to an urban fire disaster. Science has shown that most homes ignite from the fire brands or embers of the fire than from the flames themselves.

## Defensible Space

The focus must be the recognition of the potential of ignition. This includes reducing fire intensity from the landscape vegetation and surrounding wildland fuels that directly influence fire exposure to the home and reduction of the ignitability of the home itself.

Defensible space is providing the landscape base around a home that will give firefighters and the home a change of surviving a wildfire. It means that the property owner creates a green zone of at least 30 feet around the house and structures and then reduces the amount of flammable vegetation for at least 100 feet from the home, more if on a slope. This does not mean a ring of bare dirt around the home. The fire risk should be assessed considering such things as terrain, landscaping plants, plant spacing and nearness of flammable native vegetation. The objective is to reduce the amount of flammable vegetation near the home.

The elimination of a "fire ladder" is important as fire needs fuel to burn. Taking away the continuous sequence of vegetation can hinder or stop the flames that could work their way to the home. Keep branches trimmed at least 10 feet from the chimney. For trees taller than 18 feet, prune lower branches within six feet of the ground. Try to have fire resistant drought tolerant plants that do not accumulate dead leaves or twigs. While all plants will eventually burn, healthy well water plants burn less quickly.

Homeowners must also recognize and not forget those non-vegetative flammable items around the home that might ignite from drifting embers such as brooms, stacks of kindling, fire wood, and clutter on the deck or old rags. Check to see if a dry wooden fence would lead fire up to the house, are there flammable furniture and/or cushions, vents without screens, construction waste or outside wall ornaments.

**By identifying fuel hazards, assessing and reducing ignition risks, the loss of homes from wildfire can be significantly reduced.**

## TEN TIPS on Defensible Space

### **1. Define your defensible space.**

Create a 30 foot green zone of fire-resistant space around your home to prevent fires from starting near or spreading to your home and reduce flammable vegetation and ladder fuels to 100 feet or beyond.

### **2. Reduce flammable vegetation and brush around your home.**

Juniper, bitterbrush and manzanita are highly flammable. Replace them with fire-resistant shrubs like Vine Maple and Lilac.

### **3. Reduce the density of nearby trees.**

Remove or thin overcrowded or small diameter trees. Prune low hanging branches from the ground to eliminate "ladder fuels."

### **4. Keep grass and weeds cut low.**

Trim grass and weeds to less than 4" to prevent rapid spread of fire and high flames.

### **5. Clear wood piles and building materials away from your home and outbuildings.**

Keep burnable materials at least 30 feet from your home and outbuildings. Clear all brush at least 10 feet away from wood and debris piles.

### **6. Keep your yard and roof clean.**

Clear pine needles, leaves and debris from your yard, roof and gutters to eliminate ignition sources. Remove overhanging and dead limbs.

### **7. Keep address signs visible for easy access.**

Post easy-to-read address signs and trim vegetation away from driveways so firefighters can find and access your home quickly.

### **8. Choose fire-resistant roofing materials.**

Use fire-resistant materials like composition shingles, metal or tile roofing. Install spark arrestors on chimneys to prevent sparks from igniting your roof or surrounding vegetation.

### **9. Use alternatives to burning debris.**

Instead of burning, recycle or compost your yard waste.

### **10. Be prepared to respond to wildfire.**

Keep a 72-hour kit handy. Know the evacuation routes from your neighborhood and practice with your family, using a checklist of what to take and how to prepare your home before leaving.

# Wild Fire Risk Historical Background

Wildland/urban interface (WUI) fire is an expanding issue in the United States; more than 44,000 communities have been designated at risk. Jurisdictions are being faced with increased demands for firefighting resources and the related escalating costs as a result of the impacts from population migration from urban to rural environments. At the same time, land-use and development needs continue to increase pressure, requiring improved collaborative planning at all levels, from the homeowner to the federal government.

The Fire Safe Council movement in California was a response to the 1,600 acre Tunnel Fire in Alameda County in the Oakland-Berkeley Hills on October 20, 1991. The fire destroyed 3,354 single family dwellings and 456 apartments. It left 25 people dead and 150 injured. It caused damages in excess of one billion dollars (Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 1991). At that time the event was the worst conflagration in the United States in 70 years and Alameda County was declared a federal disaster area by FEMA. Many factors contributed to the severity of the fire including topography, wind conditions, urban planning and natural and urban vegetation.

In the aftermath of this fire, FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Report stated that educating residents in fire affected areas to implement "fire safe" actions could greatly reduce the devastating impacts of future fires. One mitigation strategy suggested following the Tunnel fire was to "provide community 'fire safety program' information for residents in urban-wildland high fire hazard areas" FEMA asked for collaboration with multiple stakeholders to carry out this mitigation strategy including federal, state and local agency public education/information officers and/or fire prevention specialists.

This collaboration should include the compilation of existing information and development of model materials for areas at risk to wildfire and to help communities interfacing with federal lands the opportunity to get technical assistance and funding to reduce the threat of wildfires. The Plan directed federal agencies to work directly with communities for protection from wildfires, and to develop partnerships for the management of the landscape through time (California Fire Alliance 2007). National Fire Plan funds supported hundreds of fuels reduction and fire education projects across the nation in states such as California, Montana, Oregon, Alaska and the Carolinas

## National Fire Plan

In 1985 over 1,400 homes were lost to wildfires burning primarily in two states, California and Florida. After these significant structural losses from wildfires, wildland/urban interface received national attention from federal and state lands and forestry agencies, researcher, planners, insurance and other key fire and safety organization. The 2000 fire season demonstrated to the public, politicians, agency administrators and fire manager that the protection of natural and man-made resources requires a bigger and broader effort by all agencies and fire programs.

The resulting effort, the 'National Fire Plan' offered a comprehensive strategy with funding that began in Federal Fiscal Year 2001. The Plan had five key points of firefighting, rehabilitation and restoration, hazardous fuel reduction, community assistance and accountability. Regional/state Program like FireSafe Councils were organized and funded to educate and implement programs to reduce community loss and damage form wildfire.

### **California Fire Alliance**

The California Fire Alliance, made up of key wildland fire management agencies, was chosen to implement the National Fire Plan in California. The Alliance endeavored to maintain 1) a comprehensive list of communities at risk and to assist them in community-based planning leadership; 2) fire loss mitigation plans; 3) education and projects that reduce the wildfire threat; and 4) information and education outreach plans to increase awareness of wildland fire protection program opportunities

To help administer the transfer of funds to the local areas, the California Fire Alliance created the grants “clearing house” concept by which National Fire Plan Funds would be made available through one entity rather than a number of agencies. The Fire Alliance partnered with the California Fire Safe Council which became a non-profit-501c3 and began assisting with the grant selection and management of National Fire Plan funding from the federal government.

# Community Wildfire Protection Plan

(Adapted from “Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, March 2004)

The enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003 provided the impetus for communities to engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization. This landmark legislation includes the first meaningful statutory incentives for the US Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to give consideration to the priorities of local communities as they develop and implement forest management and hazardous fuel reduction projects.

In order for a community to take full advantage of this opportunity, it must first prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Local wildfire protection plans can take a variety of forms, based on the needs of the people and area involved. The CWPP may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, or structure protection—or all of the above.

The language in the HFRA provides maximum flexibility for communities to determine the substance and detail of their plans and the procedures they use to develop them. The process of developing a CWPP can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). Completing this document should help at-risk communities establish recommendations and priorities that protect their citizens, homes, and essential infrastructure and resources from the destruction of catastrophic wildfire. It also can lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options and implications for the surrounding watershed.

## Communities and the Wildland–Urban Interface

The wildland–urban interface (WUI) is commonly described as the zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. This WUI zone poses tremendous risks to life, property, and infrastructure in associated communities and is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations firefighters face. Both the National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment place a priority on working collaboratively within communities to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire.

The HFRA builds on existing efforts to restore healthy forest conditions near communities and essential community infrastructure by authorizing expedited environmental assessment, administrative appeals, and legal review for hazardous fuels projects on federal land. The Act emphasizes the need for federal agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and it places priority on treatment areas identified by communities themselves in a CWPP.

## Role of Community Wildfire Protection Plans

The HFRA provides communities with a tremendous opportunity to influence where and how federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on federal lands and how additional federal funds may be distributed for projects on nonfederal lands. A CWPP is the most effective way to take advantage of this opportunity. Local wildfire protection plans can take a variety of forms, based on the needs of those involved in their development. They can be as simple or complex as a community desires.

The *minimum requirements* for a CWPP as described in the HFRA are:

**(1) Collaboration:** A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.

**(2) Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.

**(3) Treatment of Structural Ignitability:** A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan. The HFRA requires that three entities must mutually agree to the final contents of a CWPP:

1) The applicable local government i.e. counties or cities; 2) The local fire department(s) and 3) The state entity responsible for forest management.

In addition, these entities are directed to consult with and involve local representatives of the USFS and BLM and other interested parties or persons in the development of the plan. The process is intended to be open and collaborative, as described in the Ten-Year Strategy, involving local and state officials, federal land managers, and the broad range of interested stakeholders.

### **Benefits to Communities**

In the context of the HFRA, a CWPP offers a variety of benefits to communities at risk from wildland fire. Among those benefits is the opportunity to establish a localized definition and boundary for the wildland-urban interface. In the absence of a CWPP, the HFRA limits the WUI to within 1/2 mile of a community's boundary or within 1 1/2 miles when mitigating circumstances exist, such as sustained steep slopes or geographic features aiding in creating a fire break. Fuels treatments can occur along evacuation routes regardless of their distance from the community. At least 50 percent of all funds appropriated for projects under the HFRA must be used within the WUI as defined by either a CWPP or by the limited definition provided in the HFRA when no CWPP exists.

In addition to giving communities the flexibility to define their own WUI, the HFRA also gives priority to projects and treatment areas identified in a CWPP by directing federal agencies to give specific consideration to fuel reduction projects that implement those plans. If a federal agency proposes a fuel treatment project in an area addressed by a community plan but identifies a different treatment method, the agency must also evaluate the community's recommendation as part of the project's environmental assessment process.

### **Checklist Summary of the Development of the CWPP**

**✓ Step One: Convene Decision Makers**

- Form a core team made up of representatives from the appropriate local governments, local fire authority, and state agency responsible for forest management.

**✓ Step Two: Involve Federal Agencies**

- Identify and engage local representatives of the USFS and BLM. Contact and involve other land management agencies as appropriate.

**✓ Step Three: Engage Interested Parties**

- Contact/encourage active involvement in plan development from a range of organizations and stakeholders.

**✓ Step Four: Establish a Community Base Map**

- Work with partners to make a map of the community that defines the community's WUI and displays inhabited areas at risk, forested areas that contain critical human infrastructure, and forest areas at risk for large-scale fire disturbance.

**✓ Step Five: Develop a Community Risk Assessment**

- Work with partners to develop a community risk assessment that considers fuel hazards; risk of wildfire occurrence; homes, businesses, and essential infrastructure at risk; other community values at risk; and local preparedness capability.
- Rate the level of risk for each factor and incorporate into the base map as appropriate.

**✓ Step Six: Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations**

- Use the base map and community risk assessment to facilitate a collaborative community discussion that leads to the identification of local priorities for fuel treatment, reducing structural ignitability, and other issues of interest, such as improving fire response capability. Clearly indicate whether priority projects are directly related to protection of communities and essential infrastructure or to reducing wildfire risks to other community values.

# Terms and Acronyms

**4291:** California Public Resources Code 4291. Property owners in mountainous areas, forest-covered lands or any land that is covered with flammable material must create at minimum a 100-foot defensible space (or to the property line) around their homes and other structures. The state legislature enacted PRC 4291 in January 2005 to improve fire safety and to help prevent catastrophic fires. Under the law, property owners or those who control a property must establish a 30-foot clean zone (or to property line) and a 70-foot reduced fuel zone (or to property line). This does not mean the property must be clear-cut to bare soil. It involves thinning and breaking up the continuity of ladder fuels and large areas filled with contiguous shrubs that can readily transmit fire.

**ALARA:** As low as reasonably achievable (term from Homeland Security)

**BIA:** Bureau of Indian Affairs

**BLM:** Bureau of Land Management

**CEQA:** California Environmental Quality Act

**Chemise:** One of the most flammable plants of all vegetation types. Some grows in Northern California, especially on the east slopes of the Coast Range. It is the dominant brush in Southern California and is a driving force for the fires they experience in the brush belt.

**Communities at Risk:** Communities that are at high risk of damage from wildfire (where homes and wildlands intermix) are published in the Federal Register which lists those that are neighboring federal lands. California extensive urban interface extends beyond those just adjacent to Federal lands. There are 1,264 communities currently on the “Communities At Risk List”. The California State Forester (CDF Director) has assigned the role of managing the list to the California Fire Alliance (Alliance).

**Crown Fire:** This is the most intense wildfire that advances from top to top of trees or shrubs more or less independent of a surface fire.

**CWPP:** Community Wildfire Protection Plan-A master wildfire management plan for all communities of the county listing proposed future projects.

**Defensible Space:** The area that will help to protect the home and provide a safety zone for the firefighters battling the flames. Clearing all flammable vegetation a minimum of 100 feet (or to your property line) around your home and other structures will provide the greatest chance of survival and is California law.

**DOI:** Department of Interior is the administrative head of all federal lands.

**FMAG:** A Fire Management Assistance Grant that can be obtained through FEMA for a wildland fire that threatens life, requires evacuation, and/or destroys homes or infrastructure. Application is made for an FMAG as soon as the threat is perceived and it can be granted within a few hours. This grant does not require a disaster declaration. The grant covers the cost of fighting the fire including the cost of the EOC, law enforcement and all of the responding agency costs.

**Fire Hazard:** A measure of the likelihood of an area burning and how it burns (example: intensity, speed, embers produced).

**Fuel Breaks:** Wide strips of land on which vegetation has been reduced or removed. These areas can slow, and even stop, the spread of a wildfire as they provide fewer fuels to carry the flames. They also provide firefighters with safe zones to take a stand against a wildfire or retreat from flames if the need arises. Maintenance is a critical issue for fuel breaks.

**FWS:** US Fish and Wildlife Service)

**HIZ:** Home Ignition Zone

**HR2389:** House of Representative Bill 2389 Country Schools Funding Revitalization Act

**ICC:** Incident Command Center

**ISO:** Insurance Services Office

**I Zone:** Interface one is where wildlands and residential areas meet and mix.

**LE100:** Property Inspection Sheet for Cal-Fire (formerly PRC4291)

**LRA:** Local Responsibility Area

**NEPA:** National Environmental Protection Agency

**NPS:** National Park Service

**National Wildland /Urban Interface Fire Program:** A national interagency program designed to educate fire professional and the general public about wildland/urban interface and how to protect lives and properties from its effects.

**Prop 40** On March 5, 2002, voters passed Proposition 40 by 56.8 percent, the 2.6 billion dollar "California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002" (2002 Resources Bond). The passage of Proposition 40 provided funds for local assistance grants, as provided for in Sections 5096.600 through 5096.683 of the Public Resources Code

**RFA Rural Fire Assistance:** The Rural Fire Assistance grant program is designed to support the fire protection capabilities of rural and volunteer fire departments that typically fight fires near or on Department of the Interior (DOI) lands.

**SFA State Fire Assistance**

**SNAP:** Special Needs Assistance Program is the organizational structure that was developed to assist individuals with special needs during an emergency situation in Paradise.

**SOP:** Standard Operating Procedure

**SPAT:** Strategically Placed Area Treatment

**SRA:** State Responsibility Area

**WUI Wildland/Urban Interface:** (Often pronounced Woo ee) Any location where a fire can spread from vegetation (wildland fuels) to buildings (urban fuels) resulting in multiple house fires that overwhelm fire protection. Can also be stated as an area in which a wildfire directly influences with flames and firebrands the potential ignition of the structures within that area. It is also commonly described as the zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

## Appendix

**The following pages provide copies of some of the lists/charts/brochures developed by or with the input of the Paradise Fire Safe Council.**

# Wildfire Defensible Space and Readiness Checklist (Draft)



Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Inspected by: \_\_\_\_\_

	Y	N	Recommendation
<b>A - Property Access</b>			
1-Address posted with 3" numbers, 3/8" stroke, on contrasting background			*Available from local Fire Company, or home improvement center
2-Driveway free of obstructions, at least 12' wide			
3-Driveway under 15% grade. If over 15%, proper surface on driveway			
4-Fire engine can turn around in property or street			
<b>B - Landscaping and Vegetation (Fuel, Weather, Topography)</b>			
1-Dry grass, needles, leaves and brush are 10' away from structure(s) 14CCR 1299(b)			*Mulch or gravel, keep this area clean
2-Flammable vegetation is at least 30' from structure(s) PRC 4291(a); 14CCR 1299(a)(1)			*Use Fire Resistive Vegetation in the Lean Clean and Green Zone 30'
3-Wood is stacked at least 30' from structure(s) 14CCR 1299(D)			
4-Trees around structure(s) have been cleared of ladder fuels PRC 4291(a)			*Limb trees to 12' off the ground or to 1/3 of their total height
5-Fuels have been removed at least 100' from structure(s) PRC4291(b); 14CCR1299(a)(2)			
6-Tree limbs are at least 10' from chimney/stovepipe PRC 4291(c)			
7-Dry grass and brush is cleared 10' around and under LPG tank(s) PRC 4291			
<b>C - Structure(s) (Guidelines for New Construction)</b>			
1-Roof is constructed of fire resistive material			*Metal, tile, or composition shingles
2-Siding is constructed of fire resistive material			*Vinyl, metal or cement fiber siding
3-Windows are dual or triple pane.			
4-Large windows have energy efficient glass to reflect heat			
5-Eaves are enclosed			
6-Attic vents and chimneys are screened or otherwise protected			
7-Gutters are covered and/or clear of flammable material PRC 4291(e)			
8-Wood decks are enclosed below or clear of flammable material			
<b>D - Miscellaneous Items (Personal and Family Readiness)</b>			
1-Hydrant or other water supply is nearby, marked and available			
2-An emergency generator is available			
3-Radio scanner in home, access to local radio/website			
4-Personal and family evacuation plan			

## Comments/Suggested Improvements

Item Ref.	

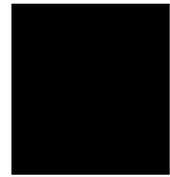
For questions or clarifications contact your local fire department:  
 6264



Paradise Fire Department	(530) 872-
Butte County Fire Department/CAL FIRE	(530) 538-
Oroville Fire Department	(530) 538-
Chico Fire Department	(530) 897-
4900	

# WILDFIRE DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND READINESS CHECKLIST

## Homeowner's Self-Assessment



A.	<i>Property Access</i>	Y	N
1.	Mailbox and/or house are clearly marked with street address using 3" high reflective numbers and letters.		
2.	Driveway is at least 12 ft. wide with 15 ft. vertical clearance for emergency vehicles, and is free of obstructions.		
3.	If there is a gate, it is 2 ft. wider than the drive, opens inward, and has a key/code box if normally kept locked.		
4.	Fire engine can turn around on property or in the street.		
B.	<i>Landscaping and Vegetation</i>		
1.	All dry grass, needles and leaves are kept cleared at least a distance of 10 ft. from any structure.		
2.	From all structures the majority of native brush is cut and removed for a distance of one hundred (100) ft, or the property line as the terrain allows.		
3.	Some native brush may remain, provided the nearest branches of individual or small grouping of plants are at least 10 ft. apart.		
4.	The canopy of trees within the 100 ft. of defensible space, are raised 10 ft. from the ground or 1/3 of the tree.		
5.	Remove any portion of a tree that is dead and extends over a structure.		
C.	<i>Structure(s)</i>		
1.	Roof is constructed of fire resistive material, and is kept free of accumulations of leaves and pine needles.		
2.	Siding is constructed of fire resistive material.		
3.	Structures constructed of wood siding are well painted with quality latex paint.		
4.	Windows are dual pane with energy efficient glass to reflect heat.		
5.	Eaves are enclosed with a fire resistive material.		
6.	Attic vents and chimneys are screened (maximum 1/8 "screen) or otherwise protected.		
7.	Gutters are covered and/or clear of pine needles, leaves and any other debris.		
8.	Decks are enclosed or protected with fire resistant material and kept clear of flammable materials.		
9.	Remove that portion of any tree that extends within 10 ft. of any stovepipe or chimney.		
10.	Compost and wood piles are kept a minimum of 30 ft. from any structure		
D.	<i>Liquid Propane Tanks</i>		
1.	Immediately around and under the tank provide total clearance to the soil for a distance of not less than 5 ft.		
2.	The remaining distance shall be maintained, grass is cut to three inches in height for a distance of 10 ft.		
3.	All other flammable vegetative growth or combustible debris should be removed for at least 10 ft, so it is not over-hanging or covering the tank.		
E.	<i>Miscellaneous Items (Personal and Family Readiness)</i>		
1.	Hydrant or other water supply is nearby, marked and available.		
2.	An emergency generator is available.		
3.	Know how to shut off gas at meter or propane tank.		
3.	Own an Emergency Scanner and/or access the Town of Paradise Highway Advisory System, 1500 AM radio.		
4.	Outbuildings are equipped with accessible rakes, shovels, ladders, water buckets and hose.		
5.	Know the community evacuation plan; prepare and practice an individual/family plan.		

This checklist is provided to you as a tool to evaluate your Wildfire defensible space readiness. For questions and clarifications contact the local Fire Departments or Fire Safe Councils.

Paradise Fire Safe Council (530) 872-6264  
 On the Web: [buttefiresafe.org/paradisefsc.php](http://buttefiresafe.org/paradisefsc.php)  
 CAL FIRE Butte County (530) 538-7888

[paradisefirecouncil@yahoo.com](mailto:paradisefirecouncil@yahoo.com)  
 Paradise Fire Department (530) 872-6264  
 Butte County Fire Safe Council (530) 877-0984

July 5, 2008

# Paradise Shaded Fuel Break Projects

## Property Owner Frequently Asked Questions



**1. Can I be there when the work is done?**

*Yes.*

**2. Can I save my special plant(s) on my property?**

*Yes, the contractor and you can review your property together and mark any plants that you want to save.*

**3. Do I have to do anything while they work?**

*No.*

**4. What if someone else (like a neighbor) does not do his property?**

*The owners of vacant properties are required to comply with hazard abatement regulations. The Fire Department can now enforce the clearance of property to 100 feet of structures or the property line. If the property owner does not comply they can be issued a citation. If you are aware that a property is a wildfire hazard, you may call the Paradise Fire Department for an inspection of the property. However, a property owner cannot be compelled to participate in the Paradise Fuel Reduction Projects, participation is entirely voluntary.*

**5. How do they get rid of all the cut material?**

*When possible, the cut material will be gathered and piled near a roadway for chipping. The chipper will chop the material and project the chips back onto the forest floor. If the ground is not too steep or rocky, a masticator will “chew” up the brush and debris and leave it on the soil. Otherwise, piles of cut material will be stacked for burning when fire conditions are acceptable.*

**6. Are they going to contact me?**

*The contractor will contact each homeowner 24 or 48 hours in advance in person or by telephone. If the homeowner is not home the contractor will leave a message on how he can be contacted. You and the contractor can resolve any questions you might have. The contractor should talk with you at least twice to let you know who he is and when the project is expected to begin and be at your property.*

**7. Will they cut everything?**

*No. The contractor is following work as designated in the project contract. This contract specifies such things as horizontal/vertical clearance and what types of flora to clear or not clear. Native species such as Dogwood and California Nutmeg are not cleared. You also have input into the clearing of your property.*

**8. How long will it take?**

*Typically the time required for a fuel reduction project is 45 to 120 days depending on the size of the project. The time is from when the contractor starts on the first property until the project is completed. In some cases, the burning of piles might take place after the project is completed due to fire risk.*

**9. Will the cutting cause erosion on my property?**

*No. There is minimal disruption of soil. All stumps are left in place; nothing is scraped or dug out.*

**10. Will they come back next year?**

*No. The only instance would be if the contractor would have to return to burn the piles at a later date. The contractor will not return to maintain or cut new growth.*

**11. What effect does the fuel reduction have on wildlife?**

*The contractor will leave specific flora for wildlife habitat. Fuel Reduction is not the stripping or removal of all wildlife habitat of the area, just a corridor approximately 100 feet wide where underbrush has been cleared and trees have been limbed up. Often this cleared area provides for a better environment for wildlife living and your viewing.*

**12. What is my participation in the Paradise Fuel Reduction Program?**

*Grant monies were secured to complete the fuel reduction around the perimeter of Paradise to mitigate wildfire risk. As a property owner you are responsible for fuel reduction for the first 100 feet (or to your property line). The Paradise Fuel Reduction Project will clear and complete fuel reduction on your property beyond that 100 feet. However, the year to year fuel reduction maintenance of the entire fuel break area on your property is your responsibility as the property owner.*

[paradisefirecouncil@yahoo.com](mailto:paradisefirecouncil@yahoo.com)

July 5, 2008

## Family Emergency Evacuation Plan

Immediate Threat Evacuation 5 Minutes To Evacuate	Immediate Threat Evacuation 15 to 30 Minutes to Evacuate	Precautionary Evacuation 2 or More Hours to Evacuate	Pre Fire Season Annual Preparation November to May
Purse/Credit Cards Checkbook/ Cash/All Car, Boat & RV Keys/ Safe Deposit Keys	All Photos Albums  Family Photos/Videos	Clean up little things i.e. leaves by structure flammable material on deck	List items to be removed during evacuation 1. Immediate Threat 2. Precautionary
Pets, Pet Crates. Pet Leashes, Pet Food	Items from Safe Passports/Insurance	Irreplaceable Art & Craft Work i.e. quilts, heirlooms,	Make copies of important papers for storage in Safe Deposit Box/Fire Safe Box
Medication and Prescriptions	Computer files on CD's	Computers	Create Financial Binder
Eye & Reading Glasses/ Hearing Aids	Digital Camera with extra batteries and charge unit	Recipes/Recipe Book Grandma & Mom's Recipes	Take pictures of each room for insurance purposes.
Cell Phone Blackberry Palm Pilot (PDA) Battery and Cell Phone Chargers	<b>Important Papers</b>  Financial Binders Birth Certificate Social Security Card Insurance Paper Car Registration	Hook up Boat Trailer  Move extra cars Boats/RV's to Safe Areas Holiday, Safeway, Kmart or Church Lots	Store CD's and other electronic media at a location away from home
Multiple day of clothing including sturdy walking shoes or boots	Take flammable off porches i.e. mats, plastic furniture, shade items, flags	High Priority Hobby Items Sewing Machine, quilting material, tools	Develop a Virtual Meeting Place where all family members can make contact.
Planning Calendar Phone/Christmas Lists, Address Book Bills/Payment Coupons	High Value Items such as Jewelry, Priceless vase, Collections	High Priority Memorabilia	Create 100 feet or more of Defensible Space
Laptop		Tools	Check building construction for places where embers heat or flames will threaten your home

## Further Emergency Evacuation Questions to Review

### Power Outages

- Power is out! Do you know how to open your electric garage door to get your car out and re-lock the garage door?
- Do you have a phone that does not require electricity? During emergencies cell phone usage can be limited and loss of power will restrict calls from most new house phones (wireless).

### Paperwork

- Is planning calendar up to date: phone lists of friends/relatives/ doctors/ vets/ insurance?
- Have you recently updated your home and auto insurance so that you have complete replacement insurance?
- Make a copy of a recent PG&E bill that has your home address/name information on the bill. Newcomers to Paradise may not have up to date Drivers License(s) and in order to get back to your home when the emergency is over may require you to prove you are a resident.
- Do you have a current documented list of your family's medications with prescription numbers/dosage/frequency and Doctor Name? Have you shared this with family members in case they need to fill a prescription on your behalf?
- Keep some cash in your home safe or other safe area of the house. ATM machines may be out of order or out of cash.

### Vehicles

- Do you have a first aid kit in all of your automobiles and RV's with fresh supplies?
- Do you have a full tank of gas in all cars?
- Do you have maps of your area in your cars?
- Have you designated an area to meet with other family/friends if you are separated?

### Go-Bag

- Do you have a good portable radio with spare fresh batteries?.
- Keep an emergency bag packed with items to keep going for at least three days? May include sleeping bag, blankets, clothing, comfortable shoes, socks, packaged food, juices, power bars, water, sanitation supplies, toiletries, feminine supplies & hygiene items, plastic sheet & plastic poncho, flashlight, fresh batteries kept separate from the flashlight, work gloves, plastic garbage bags, hammer, extra pet leashes and mask filter. (It is suggested you keep this bag in your car and there will be one less item to pack when there is an emergency).

### Before Fire Season

- It is a good idea to have a safe deposit box at your local bank or a bank in a nearby town. Keep backup CD's /copies of important papers/ and or family photos.
- Take a digital photo of all rooms and belongings in your home. Open cupboards, hutches and drawers and take photos of contents.
- Do regular backups of computers and put CD's in a bank safe deposit box.
- Keep burnable items away from house (leaves, wood, trash, outside shade or curtain hangings and flags).

### During the Emergency

- Stay tuned to Local Radio Stations at: 1500 AM Town Radio Paradise, California and KPAY 1290 AM – Chico, California and [www.townofparadise.com](http://www.townofparadise.com) (you can sign up to receive emergency notifications)
- Butte County Public Safety Scanner [www.thenet411.net](http://www.thenet411.net) (will provide you with emergency communications)
  - CDF Website: [www.fire.cal.gov](http://www.fire.cal.gov).
  - Butte County Website [www.buttecounty.net](http://www.buttecounty.net)
  - Town of Paradise 530-872-6281

This document was created on June 26, 2008 following the Paradise, California firestorm and during the Butte County June lightening fires. A special thank you to the people who contributed to the original *Emergency Plan Document*: Phil Simpson, Diana Riggins, Toni Johnson, Carolyn Mosher, Nancy Barnes, Diana Henson and Elise Aiello-Simpson. Revisions made by the Butte Fire Safe Council. Families can add items to make this more specific to their needs.