



HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

Appointed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Supported by
Public Works, Natural Resources Planning
COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
1106 Second Street, Eureka, CA 95501



Meeting Summary
Humboldt County Fire Safe Council Meeting – May 15, 2025

A [Humboldt County Fire Safe Council \(HCFSC\)](#) meeting was held on May 15, 2025 at the UC Cooperative Extension Office in Eureka. The HCFSC was appointed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (BOS) to guide maintenance and implementation of the [Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan \(CWPP\)](#).

Fire Safe Council Members Attending:

Members listed as follows: name, member seat, additional affiliation

- **Jill Demers**, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
- Ali Freedlund**, Supervisorial District 1 Appointee, Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council/Mattole Restoration Council
- Anna Rogers**, Supervisorial District 2 Appointee, Sanctuary Forest
- Chris Ramey**, CAL FIRE, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit, HCFSC Vice Chair
- Kathy Weber**, Local FSC/Firewise Community, Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council
- Rod Mendes**, Tribal Representative, Yurok Tribe/Yurok Fire Department
- Ross Mathewson**, California State Parks
- Ryan Derby**, Office of Emergency Services
Mike Miles, Timber Industry, Humboldt Redwoods Company
- Jeff Stackhouse**, Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association

Fire Safe Council Alternates Attending:

- **Katrina Henderson**, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
- Eric Darragh**, Supervisorial District 5 Appointee, Mid Klamath Watershed Council
- Harry Vaughn**, Local FSC/Firewise Community, Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council
- Olivia Lopes**, Local FSC/Firewise Community, Willow Creek Fire Safe Council
- Ross Dollarhide**, CAL FIRE, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit
- Reid Cody**, Timber Industry, Green Diamond

Non-Voting Agency Liaisons Attending:

N/A

****Members of the County Coordination Team**

Public and Agency Representatives Attending:

- **Julia Cavalli**, Humboldt County Public Works / Lead County Coordinator
- **Tanner Speas**, Humboldt County Public Works
- Kacy Tuel**, North Coast Air Quality Management District
- Winslow Condon**, North Coast Air Quality Management District
- Garret Gregory**, CAL FIRE, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit
- Katelyn Suderman**, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Patric Esh**, Office of Emergency Services
- Jim Cotton**, Willow Creek Fire Safe Council

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Meeting Summary

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1. Call to Order: Welcome, Zoom Orientation, Roll Call/Introductions, and Agenda Review

HCFSC Vice Chairperson, Chris welcomed all and convened the meeting at 2:00 pm. Quorum (11) was confirmed, and introductions were made in-person. Zoom participants introduced themselves. The Zoom recording is available on the [Public Works – Natural Resources channel](#) and will be available until it is replaced by the next meeting's recording.

2. Approval of the meeting Agenda and Minutes from the previous HCFSC meeting

- **Action: Review and Approve Minutes from the November 2024 HCFSC Meeting**
 - **Motion:** Ryan Derby motioned to approve the November HCFSC meeting minutes. Rod Mendes seconded the motion.
 - **Discussion:** Vice Chair noted that the February meeting was cancelled. **Vote:** All in favor.

3. Public Comments/Announcements/Correspondence

- Chris announced that Deborah Harris is retiring from the Air Quality Management District; she has been an asset to the HCFSC and the burn community for many years and we hope will continue to be involved.
- Julia: Master's Thesis available: "An evaluation of fuel model accuracy and multi-scale mitigation strategies in the wildland-urban interface of southern Humboldt County." Please get in touch if interested in a copy. Will also be available through the Cal Poly Digital Commons in the next few weeks.
- Application period for Wildfire Prevention grants opening soon including \$70-80M in CCI funds (project max \$950k) emphasizing maintenance projects - more details to come.
- Spanish version of the Preparing Your Home for Wildfire brochure (and more English) now available for dissemination (contact Katrina for pick up).
- Trinity County FSC representative announced that the Greater Willow Creek Wildfire Resilience Project is beginning in Salyer – please get in touch if interested in collaborating; Six Rivers Post-Fire Recovery assessments beginning soon; TCFSC meeting 4th Thursday 1-3pm in Weaverville and via Zoom.

4. HCFSC Membership

Welcomed new members and summarized changes to alternates. [Updated roster](#) available on the HCFSC website:

- Chris Emmons, Chief of the Arcata Fire Protection District bumped up from an alternate to the primary Supervisorial District 3 representative.
- Wayne Peabody, Arcata Fire Protection District Assistant Chief, is the new alternate for Supervisorial District 3.
- Eric Darragh, Fire Program Director for the Mid Klamath Watershed Council, was appointed as a second alternate for the 5th Supervisorial District.
- Mika Cook, a member of the Van Duzen Watershed Fire Safe Council, was appointed as a new alternate for a Local FSC/Firewise Community seat.
- Jeff Stackhouse, Board Member and UCCE Livestock and Natural Resource Advisor, bumped up from an alternate to the primary representative of the Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association (HCPBA).
- Henri Holbrook, HCPBA Burn Coordinator, is the new alternate for the HCPBA seat.

5. Consent Agenda

- **Action: Vote to approve Consent Agenda Items**
 - There are two proposed updates to the CWPP Project Database updates included in the meeting materials: Stansberry Ranch Roadside Clearance and Public Works completed treatments.
 - **Motion:** Rod Mendes motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Kathy Weber seconded the motion.
 - **Discussion:** None. **Vote:** All in favor.
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6. Fire Season Outlook (Ross)

- Seasonal staff brought on early (in part given the January LA fires) - at peak staffing now with additional air support becoming available in June; despite recent hires, there continue to be inmate crew shortages.
- More funding coming next year will further bolster staffing/equipment.
- Climate: dry April (one of the driest on record), southern CA is experiencing drought conditions; no drought in the north but snowpack is diminishing quickly.
- Fuel conditions are trending average.
- Anticipating early and increased lightning activity with above average fire activity predicted starting in June.
- Office of Emergency Services Pre-Season Fire Briefing June 5th (contact Ryan Derby for details).

7. County Coordinator Team Update

- CWPP Update project kick off (Julia)
 - CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant Agreement executed, implementation partner agreements in progress, Request for Proposals for planning consultant in development, CWPP Update ad hoc committee meeting soon to discuss next steps.
 - Key implementation partners named in the grant include Willow Creek FSC, Southern Humboldt FSC, Mattole Restoration Council, and Humboldt County Resource Conservation District
- CA FSC County Coordinator Funding (Julia)
 - Awarded \$151,500 (announced today!).
 - County and RCD staff will continue to function as an integrated team.
 - Work Plan is consistent with previous funding rounds as the broad scope of these tasks adequately encompasses the activities members of the CCT regularly engage in. Work Plan tasks include: HCFSC Organizational Support, Local Mitigation Group Support, Interorganizational Collaboration, CWPP Implementation & Tracking, and Outreach & Education.
- New resources for CWPP implementers (Tanner, Jill)
 - Liability white paper advising project implementers of insurance and risk considerations: developed by legal counsel and overseen by the RCD; will be available soon on the Fire Safety Resources webpage.
 - Governor's proclamation re CEQA & Coastal Act
 - MRC was first in the state to be approved for CEQA suspension.
 - Ali Freedlund (MRC) gave a review of the process: uploading narratives and shapefiles.
 - Additional background: Technical Assistance from the North Coast Resource Partnership supported project development/prep for environmental compliance. Being "shovel-ready" allowed them to be first in the state.
 - The CEQA suspension also provides an opportunity to streamline projects under current VTPs. Also helpful for Coastal Zone - eliminates need for permit.
 - Applications accepted for suspensions through 2025; projects must begin implementation no later than 2026. Good info available on [CA Wildfire Task Force website](#).
 - Prescribed Fire Manual – [currently available on the PBA website](#). Now is a good time for feedback as the final touches to the next version are being made, including updates on liability and insurance.
 - Prescribed fire liability continues to be a challenge. The liability white paper discussed earlier is primarily relevant to project managers overseeing contractors (less relevant for burners).
 - Manny (Insurance Rep) reports that prescribed fire insurance continues to be very expensive (one instance of \$10-20,000 premium). Many policies now exclude wildfire.

8. Feature Presentations (presentation slides linked)

- Wildfire Preparedness: Members of the Public Works, Natural Resources Planning team presented the accomplishments of several recently completed grant projects.
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- [StoryMap](#) of the projects is available online – including an interactive map and photos.
 - Project Overview & Impact: Six wildfire prevention projects led by Public Works, supported by nearly \$3 million in public investment and \$654,000 in matching funds, enhanced wildfire resilience across Humboldt County. Efforts focused on home protection, defensible space, roadside clearance, and resident engagement.
 - Results Exceeded Goals: All projects met or surpassed their objectives: roadside fuel breaks exceeded goals by 44%, defensible space assistance reached 72% more homes, and chipper days processed 78% more piles than planned.
 - Community & Economic Benefits: Projects employed and trained local crews, building workforce capacity, and supporting economic resilience in rural areas.
 - Next Steps & Lessons Learned: Flexibility, partnerships, and community involvement were key. Tools and strategies continue to be used by partners as part of ongoing CWPP implementation.
 - Integrated Planning: CAL FIRE Unit staff on the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit Plan Update
 - The Unit Plan is currently an 85-page document outlining the Unit's response capacity and fuels management priorities.
 - Notable trends highlighted in the revised plan include:
 - A strong correlation between ignition locations and roadways.
 - A significant increase in fuel reduction projects and acreage from 2023 to 2024.
 - How to get involved:
 - Training to become a Qualified Entity to perform Defensible Space Assessments (training and common, ESRI based platform available) - aiming for local training in fall (Garrett requests number interested)
 - Shovel-Ready project development – CAL FIRE staff may be available to assist with planning
 - Vision for the updated plan
 - A more interactive and accessible format, developed in ArcGIS StoryMaps.
 - Emphasis on:
 - a. Collaboration with local mitigation groups, especially in the WUI.
 - b. Complementarity with the CWPP while minimizing redundancy.
 - c. Real-time progress tracking, measurable outcomes, and incorporation of fire modeling outputs.
 - d. Alignment with Unit and State Fire Plan priorities.
 - Provided demonstration of Wildfire Analyst fire and risk modeling software capabilities that could be incorporated into the Unit Plan
 - Questions
 - Can weather inputs be made variable in wildfire analyst? Yes. Or constant.
 - Are the CAL FIRE Assessments used for regulatory purposes? Not currently in the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit, though CAL FIRE retains that authority.
 - Can homeowners share positive assessment results with insurers for a discount? Will vary by insurer. In Ross' experience, insurers are not interested in assessments performed by CAL FIRE.
 - Chris added that there are pilot projects in two CAL FIRE units experimenting with Vibrant Planet (a landscape prioritization software) and are incorporating modeling results into their Unit Plans. Potential for statewide deployment. Unit Plans from these two pilots to be published in July.
 - Integrated Planning: County Office of Emergency Services on the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Update
 - LHMP Overview: Federally regulated plan identifying natural hazards and mitigation projects. Provides a framework for outreach and public engagement.
 - Collaboration: Developed with Community Service Districts and multiple local planning entities.
 - Timeline: 5-year cycle; last plan expired in March. Pushing for CalOES/FEMA approval ASAP.
 - Structure: Vol. 1: Area-wide elements, Vol. 2: Jurisdictional Annexes (unique hazards by area)
 - Aiming for a more accessible, implementation-ready plan that makes use of a dashboard or other tracking tool (similar and complementary to CWPP Hubsite tracking tools)
 - [Public Comments on the draft accepted through May 30.](#)
 - Question: Does the current plan incorporate CWPP by reference?
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- Yes, incorporated by reference along with several other mitigation related plans (e.g., General Plan, Safety Element, etc.).
- Cybelle (CCT) serves on LHMP Steering Committee and has provided input on alignment with CWPP.
- Integration is especially key during implementation (e.g., aligning priorities and funding sources to increase competitiveness).

9. Confirm next meeting date and location and adjourn

- Next meeting is proposed for August 14, 2025, 2-4pm at UCCE Office, 5630 S Broadway St, Eureka, with a virtual option available for public and non-voting participation.

Meeting adjourned at 3:52 pm.

Additional Information:

Member Reports: *Submitted voluntarily by HCFSC members this quarter to share progress on CWPP-related projects and activities.*
