

Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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II.4. Community Preparedness

As has been stated previously, it is not a matter of if wildfires will occur in Humboldt County, but when. However, a wildfire does not have to be a disaster. It is possible to prepare for wildfire to minimize its impact on the community and individuals. Community members can greatly improve their odds of surviving a wildfire if they actively engage in preparedness activities. Early preparation is not just recommended for residents living in the warmer and drier inland areas of the county but also for those living on the coast. Wildfire history shows that forest fires can burn right to the ocean and, contrary to common perception, redwood forests do burn.

Through the community outreach associated with developing this Plan, it has become clear that many residents are unaware of their vulnerability to damage from wildfire. Even when awareness is increased, many property owners do not have the resources or the expertise to address their fire safety issues. However, if this wildfire threat is not addressed, Humboldt County will become increasingly vulnerable to loss of homes and life. With no action, the complexity of fighting fires where homes are intermixed in the wildlands will continue to challenge the efforts and safety of firefighters. The result is not only a threat to valuable community resources but also increases wildfire management costs during a time of shrinking budgets.

Although there are places where preparedness activities need to be initiated, action is being taken in specific areas of the county by groups of citizens and individuals. Community preparedness is being advocated by local fire safe councils, Firewise® groups, local fire departments, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the United States Forest Service (USFS), and other local community organizations. The Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC) works to support these groups and bring them together to collaboratively develop strategies to help communities prepare for wildfire and take actions that will mitigate potential negative impacts.

II.4.1. Fire Safe Councils

Local Fire Safe Councils

Fire safe councils (FSCs) are voluntary organizations that typically consist of local concerned citizens, representatives from state and federal fire agencies, and local fire districts and fire protection organizations who share a common, vested interest in wildfire prevention and loss mitigation. FSCs form to enhance the effectiveness of fire protection and prevention by securing grant funds and volunteer support for fire hazard reduction projects and performing community fire-safety education. Communities that organize themselves into FSCs and participate in a community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) and/or Firewise Communities/USA® process give themselves a competitive advantage for securing grant funds, particularly federal funding through the California FSC. FSCs also provide the ideal forum for communities to discuss, analyze, and solve fire-related issues before they become a crisis. They also provide opportunities for local jobs, community partnerships, and wide-spread community involvement. To learn more about forming and sustaining a FSC go to the California FSC website at: www.firesafecouncil.org

There are six local FSCs in Humboldt County, in addition to the County FSC. Residents of several additional Humboldt County communities are working to establish new FSCs in their areas. These FSCs are developing local CWPPs and Firewise® community assessments and action plans. They have also been successful in securing funding for and implementing *hazardous fuels reduction* projects within their local communities. These groups have also organized many community events raising awareness in their community about preparing for wildfire. FSCs secure funding and volunteer support for programs that educate residents and provide resources for steps that can be taken to help firefighters locate residents' homes and gain access to *fire*

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protection water. The following table lists currently active local FSCs and their contact information and Figure II.4-1 provides an illustration of where most of the local FSCs operate.¹ This map also includes the areas potentially served by newly forming FSCs on the Hoopa Valley Reservation and the Yurok Reservation. *More detailed information about all local FSCS can be found within Part IV. Planning Unit Action Plans.*

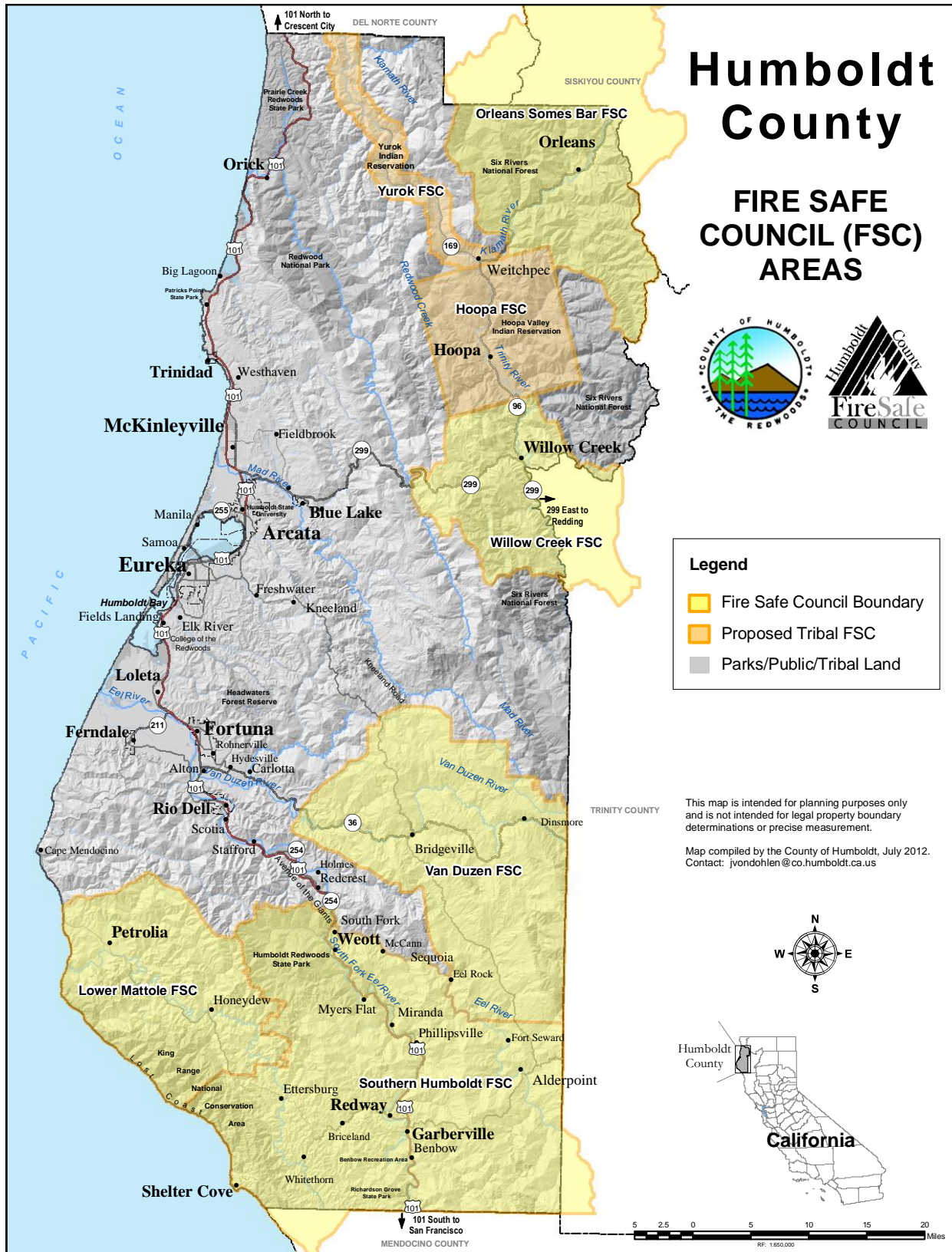
Figure II.4-1. Humboldt County Fire Safe Councils

| Fire Safe Council Name | Formation Date | County CWPP Planning Unit | Contact information |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Orleans/Somes Bar FSC | 2001 | East Klamath (Unit3) | (530) 627-3202 mail@mkwc.org www.mkwc.org/programs/firefuels/index.html |
| Southern Humboldt FSC | 2002 | Southern Humboldt (Unit 13) | (707) 923-9109 bille@asis.com www.newforestry.org/shfsc/ |
| Lower Mattole FSC | 2002 | Mattole-Lost Coast (Unit 12) | (707) 629-3514 firesafe@mattole.org |
| Van Duzen Watershed FSC | 2004 | Mad-Van Duzen (Unit 11) | (707) 496-4530 jeanlouiscarmona@yahoo.com |
| Crooked Prairie FSC | 2005 | Southern Humboldt (Unit 13) | (707) 986 7705 kw@asis.com |
| Willow Creek FSC | 2007 | Trinity (Unit 7) | (707) 499-0767 admin@willowcreekfsc.org www.willowcreekfsc.org |

¹ The map does not show the jurisdictional area of the Humboldt County FSC, which operates throughout the entire county.

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Figure II.4-2: Fire Safe Council Area Map



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Potential Fire Safe Council Startups

During the community outreach process associated with developing this Plan, several communities expressed an interest in forming a FSC. These communities include:

- Hoopa Valley Reservation
- Yurok Reservation
- Westhaven/Trinidad
- Orick
- Redwood Valley
- Kneeland
- Upper Jacoby Creek

For more information on the public process, see Part I of this CWPP.

Humboldt County FSC

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors (BOS) formed the HCFSC in 2002. The BOS recognized that community-based fire planning efforts assist residents in making their homes, neighborhoods, and communities fire safe.

The mission of the HCFSC is to:

Serve as a forum for the implementation of Humboldt County’s CWPP, share fire-safety information, assess fire risk, promote community fire-safe planning and coordination, link fire-prevention programs, and support the fire service and local FSCs.

The HCFSC membership consists of 16 individuals representing federal, state, and local fire service agencies and organizations, along with local FSCs, the Hoopa Valley Tribe, the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES), CAL FIRE, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Six Rivers National Forest, and the insurance industry. Since overseeing the development of a countywide fire plan in 2006 (the Master Fire Protection Plan, or “MFPP,” now referred to as the CWPP), the HCFSC has made much progress implementing several elements of the MFPP (*see Chapter I.4. 2006 Plan Implementation Progress Review, in Part I*).

Accomplishments include:

- drafting a hazardous fuels plan update;
- creating a Web GIS² tool showing the current level of fire service and community identified needs for hazardous fuels reduction;
- funding for and implementation of a cost-share program for treating flammable vegetation (Fire-adapted Landscapes and Safe Homes—FLASH--Program);
- assisting local FSCs with their CWPPs and Firewise® activities;
- assisting with fire protection district expansion and formation;
- and much more...

To ensure implementation of the recommendations of the County CWPP, various subcommittees of the HCFSC have been formed, focusing on the following programs:

- Fuel Modification/Biomass Utilization
- Revenue Source for Fire Protection
- Level of Service (LOS) Standards

² Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

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- Improve Emergency Dispatch Services
- Safety Element of the County General Plan Update

The committees meet regularly and are making significant progress.

The HCFSC provides guidance for a County-funded program that offers staff assistance and small grants to local FSCs to support the development of CWPPs and to help with the process of becoming a nationally recognized Firewise® community. The HCFSC also provided valuable input and guidance in the development and update of this CWPP and informed the processes of updating the Humboldt County General Plan (GPU). GPU input included recommendations for the fire protection and prevention policies and implementation measures of the GPU Safety Element and the Community Infrastructure and Services Element.

The HCFSC meets quarterly to discuss progress on projects and share ideas. There is often a special presentation provided by a content expert related to one of the major themes of wildfire mitigation and management or community preparedness. These meetings are open to the public and all are welcome. More information about these meetings and the HCFSC is available at: www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire_safe_council/.

California FSC

In 1993, the statewide FSC, consisting of private and public membership, was formed to educate and encourage Californians to plan and prepare for wildfires by reducing the risk of fire to property, communities, and natural/structural resources. In 2002, this group created a nonprofit organization and board of directors, called the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC). The CFSC Mission is: Mobilizing Californians to protect their homes, communities and environments from wildfire, and their vision is: Together, people and communities have eliminated the impact of catastrophic wildfires on all they hold dear.

Since its formation, the CFSC has united its diverse membership to speak with one voice about fire safety. The CFSC has distributed fire prevention education materials to industry leaders and their constituents, evaluated legislation pertaining to fire safety and empowered grassroots organizations to spearhead fire safety programs. The CFSC provides assistance to local FSCs through: the CFSC website (www.firesafecouncil.org), the distribution of educational materials, and technical assistance--primarily through their regional representatives. More than 130 local FSCs have formed in California so far. More continue to form throughout the state, working to plan, coordinate, and implement fire prevention activities.

The CFSC works closely with the California Fire Alliance to facilitate the distribution of National Fire Plan grants used for wildfire risk reduction and education through their Grants Clearinghouse (www.grants.firesafecouncil.org). The HCFSC as well as most of the local FSCs in Humboldt County have taken advantage of this grant program; bringing much needed funding into the county to support wildfire mitigation and planning projects.

Northern California Prescribed Fire Council

The Northern California Prescribed Fire Council (the Council) was formed in 2009. Since then, they have built a strong foundation with an established Steering Committee and by-laws. The Council provides a forum for discussions on prescribed fire practices, regulations, and policies, and aims to facilitate the use of prescribed burning as a fire management tool in Northern California. Semi-annual events hosted by the Council bring together a range of individuals working together to promote this goal and to increase public understanding of the benefits of prescribed burning and the role of fire in ecosystems.

The mission of the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council is to:

“Serve as a venue for practitioners, state and federal agencies, academic institutions, tribes, coalitions, and interested individuals to work collaboratively

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to promote, protect, and expand the responsible use of prescribed fire in Northern California's fire adapted landscape.”³

The Council's Steering Committee consists of individuals representing state and federal land management agencies, environmental groups, regulatory agencies, educational institutions, tribes and indigenous coalitions, private practitioners, and local watershed and fire safe councils. These include: CAL FIRE, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the BLM, the National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy, the Wilderness Society, North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District, Humboldt State University, University of California Cooperative Extension, the Karuk Tribe, the Indigenous Peoples' Southwest Research Station, Firestorm Wildland Fire Suppression Inc., the Mid Klamath Watershed Council, and the Orleans/Somes Bar FSC. These organizations and individuals participate in the Council through working groups, attendance at open meetings, and various field tours.

The Northern California Prescribed Fire Council manages a website which contains numerous informational and outreach resources and links.⁴ These include recent publications on prescribed burning practices, news articles pertaining to prescribed fire, a “CAL FIRE Vegetation Management Program Fact Sheet” and a “Air Resources Board Rx⁵ Fire Fact Sheet,” as well as links to other websites dedicated to providing information related to fire science.

II.4.2. Firewise®

The Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program provides a unique opportunity to America's fire-prone communities. Its goal is to encourage and acknowledge action that minimizes home loss to wildfire. It teaches community members to prepare for a fire before it occurs. For more detailed information about Firewise®, you can visit their website on-line at: www.firewise.org. To receive Firewise Communities/USA® recognition, a community must:

- Conduct a community assessment and draft an action plan to address observed fire safety issues;
- Sponsor a local Firewise® board to maintain local Firewise® programs and track accomplishments;
- Observe an annual Firewise® day dedicated to a local Firewise® project;
- Invest a minimum of \$2.00 annually per capita into local Firewise® activities; and
- Submit an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA®, documenting continued compliance with the program.

The HCFSC and County staff have worked closely with local communities to gain recognition as Firewise Communities/USA® sites. Secure Rural Schools Act, Title III grants have been awarded by the County to local FSCs to conduct community risk assessments, write Firewise® plans and hold community Firewise® days in coordination with local fire departments. The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise Communities/USA® Program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action to prevent losses. The program provides many tools and resources to communities.

As of 2011, the Humboldt County communities of Bridgeville, Honeydew, Orleans, Petrolia, and Willow Creek had achieved national Firewise Communities/USA® recognition. Several more communities are interested in participating in the program and some have taken meaningful

³Northern California Prescribed Fire Council. (2012). *About Us: Our Mission*. Retrieved from http://www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org/About_Us.html

⁴ Northern California Prescribed Fire Council. (2012). *Resources*. Retrieved from <http://www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org/Resources.html>.

⁵ Rx = Prescribed fire

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steps toward becoming Firewise®. One very good example of this is in the Upper Jacoby Creek Neighborhood, near the City of Arcata. After helplessly watching a neighbor's house burn to the ground, a group of residents dubbed themselves the Upper Jacoby Creek Firewise® Board and committed to becoming a Firewise® community. This group worked diligently to better understand local risks and hazards. The importance of preparing their community for wildfire was realized when they learned that their homes are not located within the boundaries of any local fire protection district and that it could take up to 45 minutes for emergency responders to arrive on the scene. In October 2011, this group of dedicated residents held a Firewise® event at the bottom of their road with the intention of getting fire safety information out to their neighbors. At the end of the 2012, the Upper Jacoby Creek Firewise® Board completed a Firewise® Community Assessment and Action Plan, submitted their application, and successfully achieved recognition as a Firewise® community.

Firewise® assessments and action plans serve as excellent tools for communities to collaboratively learn about and identify actions to address wildfire hazards in their community. Firewise® also provides an opportunity for communities, not only to raise awareness about wildfire risks, but to showcase what they are already doing to mitigate those risks. Community Firewise® events have been used to share the results of successful projects such as; a new or updated local fire plan, educational brochures or videos, or mechanical treatments and prescribed burns to manage hazardous vegetation and improve forest health. Some of the communities that have achieved Firewise® status were also awarded Title III grant funds from the County to implement components of their action plan. So far, Willow Creek and Bridgeville have used funding to design *Blue Dot Programs* (where a round, blue reflector is placed on water sources) that help identify and/or develop water sources that are appropriate for fighting fires. The Bridgeville project also includes posting of address and road signs to improve the ability of firefighters to find residences in an emergency.

II.4.2. Fire Service Preparedness Programs

Being prepared for wildfire involves learning about how to take advance steps that will mitigate damage if a fire does occur, how to prevent fire, and what to do when a fire occurs. The fire service achieves these goals through what they call “prevention and education” programs. Fire prevention and education programs can significantly lessen the chance of fire occurring and the cost of damage from and suppressing fire when it does occur. There are a number of agencies involved in the development and delivery of fire prevention and education materials. The following is a description of fire prevention and education activities by fire-related agencies in Humboldt County.

II.4.3. Local Fire Education And Prevention Programs

Fire Prevention Officers Section

The Fire Prevention Officers Section of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association brings together the fire prevention officers of fire departments throughout the county. This group contains approximately 12 regular members and meets on a monthly basis. The Fire Prevention Officers Section acts as a working group for local fire prevention officers. Recently, the Fire Prevention Officers Section has been working to clarify state and federal fire prevention construction and occupancy standards in order to assist contractors, business operators, local government, and local fire agencies to improve fire safety. To that end, they are developing standards for smoke detectors, key boxes, fire department connections, fire sprinkler inspector test and alarm monitoring, fire extinguishers, cooking hoods, premises identification, roads, burn permits, and gated communities. The Fire Prevention Officer's Section also manages the smoke simulator trailer used at the Humboldt County Fair and in schools.

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More information about the Fire Prevention Officers Section of the Humboldt County Fire Chief's Association can be found by visiting their webpage on the City of Eureka's website located at: <http://www.ci.eureka.ca.gov/depts/fire/prevention/standards.asp>, or by emailing Fire Chief, Lon Winburn at lwinburn@fortunafire.com.

Humboldt Bay Fire Department

Humboldt Bay Fire represents the consolidation of the Eureka Fire Department (protecting the City of Eureka) and the Humboldt No. 1 Fire Protection District (protecting the greater Eureka area). Consolidation talks were on going for 50+ years until finally in 2012 the Humboldt Bay Fire Joint Powers Agreement was signed in November of 2012 officially combining the two entities.

Community fire protection can be divided into two strategic elements: reactive and proactive. The reactive element involves committing resources to an incident after it has started; this is the role of the Suppression Division of Humboldt Bay Fire. The proactive element addresses the prevention of incidents, and the minimization of incident impacts, through safety education and code enforcement; this is the role of Humboldt Bay Fire's Fire Prevention Division. The Fire Prevention Division administers specialized services involving fire code enforcement, fire education, fire investigation, and State-mandated building code enforcement and inspections. The Fire Prevention Bureau supports the Suppression Division by providing additional personnel for incident management, project administration, support services, training, and vacancy back-fill.

The fire prevention and safety education activities of Humboldt Bay Fire are closely tied to the themes of the National Fire Protection Association. The Fire Prevention Division provides public education in schools, at fairs and other events, and during fire prevention week. It also provides specialized fire safety classes on fire extinguisher use, first aid, and hazardous materials (awareness and operator level).

Humboldt Bay Fire conducts extensive school visits during Fire Prevention Week (which occurs annually during the week containing October 9th – the date of the 1871 Chicago Fire). The Department provides fire safety lectures and demonstrations for all grades. Humboldt Bay Fire distributes smoke detectors to students in return for a signed "contract" that contains requirements for installation, maintenance, and regular battery replacement.

Humboldt Bay Fire can be contacted by calling Battalion Chief William Reynolds at (707) 441-4000 or (707) 445-4900, or by sending an email to: wreynolds@HBFire.org. More information can also be found by visiting their website at: <http://humboldtbayfire.org/>

Arcata Fire Protection District

The Arcata Fire Protection District has an active fire prevention/safety education program. The Arcata Volunteer Fire Department visits pre-school to high school classes within the District year-round, and provides "show and tell" with the engines and equipment, gives "Stop, Drop, and Roll" drills, tests students' knowledge of fire safety using flash cards, and plays "Fire and Life Safety Bingo" with older students. The Arcata Fire Protection District primarily develops and distributes its own education materials.

The Fire and Life safety trailer, owned by the Humboldt County Fire Prevention Association, is normally housed at the Mad River station of the Arcata Fire Protection District. The District uses the trailer on a regular basis to deliver fire safety education to children in schools and the community.

The Arcata FPD can be contacted by calling (707) 825-2000; more information can be found by visiting their website at: www.arcatafire.org/.

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Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department

The Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) provides fire prevention and safety services through their Fire Prevention Division and Public Education Division. Their efforts include implementing and maintaining community outreach programs that educate and inform the public about fire prevention; in addition to giving safety presentations on a range of topics, the Fortuna VFD also distributes informational materials at local community events. The Fortuna VFD is also committed to enhancing public safety by conducting fire safety inspections at businesses, residences, schools, as well as children’s day cares and senior residential care units.

The Fortuna VFD may be contacted by calling (707) 725-5021 or sending an email to Fire Chief, Lon Winburn at lwinburn@fortuanfire.com; more information can also be found by visiting their website at: <http://fortunafire.com/>.

Fire Prevention and Building Plan Review

According to the Humboldt County Building Inspection Division (BID), fire departments are only involved in commercial permit/plan review and review of permits for commercial uses and special occupancies. Some departments, such as Arcata, Humboldt Bay, Fortuna, and others, have the capabilities to perform in-house plan review. If a local department does not have capacity to do a plan review, the BID or the State Fire Marshall will perform the required review. In some cases, such as when a complicated fire sprinkler system is required, consulting engineers perform the review.

II.4.4. State Fire Education and Prevention Programs

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

CAL FIRE, through the Unit Fire Prevention Officer, maintains an active fire safety education program. The CAL FIRE website⁶ contains a wide variety of fire safety information, including:

- a homeowner’s safety awareness checklist and other homeowner responsibility information;
- camping and burn permit information;
- tips regarding the safe use of holiday fireworks;
- teacher’s tools and Smokey Bear information for kids;
- Roadside Fire Prevention Signs;
- Smokey Bear Fire Danger Rating Signs; and
- information regarding the CAL FIRE Volunteers in Prevention Program.

The CAL FIRE, Fire Prevention Officer and other staff visit elementary schools in the springtime, prior to the beginning of fire season, and disseminate fire safety education. CAL FIRE uses a “team teaching” approach to delivering elementary school fire safety education, working with teachers, local fire agencies, and Volunteers in Prevention program participants. Subjects include match safety, Smokey Bear, and exercises focusing on “two ways out” of the house for kids, “Stop, Drop and Roll,” “911,” and “Fire Drill.”

The Volunteers in Prevention program (VIP) involves private citizens who donate their time to provide public education at community events, distribute fire prevention materials, inspect homes for proper clearances, and support emergency fire information and communications operations. CAL FIRE has 2,600 VIPs statewide and many local VIP participants. VIP also includes a specialized group of volunteers (HAM radio operators and CB radio groups) who provide

⁶ CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.fire.ca.gov/>

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additional communication networks for CAL FIRE during emergencies, including wildfires, earthquakes, and floods.

CAL FIRE also supports Fire Prevention Week and Wildfire Awareness Week, participates in local disaster fairs, and works with local fire agencies at a booth at the Humboldt County Fair. The booth includes a simulator for children to practice “two ways out” of the house in a mock-up of a bedroom with simulated smoke. CAL FIRE also funds and carries out various types of wildland fuels treatments, for the purpose of reducing fire hazard or severity, through a number of programs. Programmatic environmental documents provide the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) disclosure and analysis for fuels projects carried out under the Vegetation Management Program⁷ (VMP) and California Forest Improvement Program⁸.

The State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Prevention Benefit Fee⁹ was enacted in 2011 as new annual Fire Prevention Fee to support fire prevention services within the SRA. The fee is applied to all habitable structures within the SRA. Property owners are charged \$150 fee per habitable structure; defined as a building that can be occupied for residential use. A reduction of \$35 per habitable structure will be granted for properties located within the boundaries of a special district that provides local fire protection services.

Although this fee was enacted to generate revenue for much needed wildfire prevention activities, it has been controversial in Humboldt County and the state at large. Local fire departments are concerned that residents who must pay the fee will be less inclined to support their local fire protection services. The Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association¹⁰ filed a class action lawsuit that claims that the fee is illegal. The future of the fee is unclear, but in the meantime, property owners are required to pay the fee.

The CAL FIRE VMP is a cost share program that allows public and private landowners to participate in wildland fuel reduction projects. The primary tool used is prescribed fire, although in more recent years CAL FIRE has used the program for mechanical treatments of vegetation as well. The VMP program also acts as a public education tool in that it demonstrates reduction in wildland fuels and in some cases improvement of wildlife habitat.

For more information about CAL FIRE’s Fire Prevention Unit, please contact Pre Fire Planning, Battalion Chief, Mark Rodgers by sending an email to mark.rodgers@fire.ca.gov or visit the CAL FIRE website at: www.fire.ca.gov/.

University of California Cooperative Extension Supported Programs

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Humboldt-Del Norte Counties chapter devotes energy, research, and resources to addressing local issues. Improving fire safety and achieving a greater understanding of the role of fire in human and natural communities are among their many goals. The UCCE has developed a range of useful publications, online tools, and other resources providing fire-related information and materials on topics including: hardening homes against wildfire and fire-safe landscaping strategies; the science of fire and prescribed burning techniques; and the influence of sudden oak death on fire ecology, fire

⁷ CAL FIRE. (2005, April). *CDF Vegetation Management Program (VMP)*. Retrieved from http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/VMP2.pdf

⁸ CAL FIRE. (2012). California Forest Improvement Plan. *Resource Management*. Retrieved from http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestryassistance_cfip.php

⁹ State of California: California Fire Prevention Fee. (2012). *About the Fire Prevention Fee*. Retrieved from <http://www.firepreventionfee.org/index.php>

¹⁰Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association (HJTA). (2012, October 3). HJTA Files Class Action Lawsuit Against Fire Tax. *Press Releases*. Retrieved from <http://www.hjta.org/press-releases/pr-hjta-files-class-action-lawsuit-against-fire-tax>

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behavior, and fire suppression operations. Additionally, the UCCE has staff available for answering fire-related questions and advising homeowners on how to improve their fire safety and preparedness.

Some of their online resources pertaining to fire include the following:

- “Home Survival in Wildfire-Prone Areas: Building Materials and Design Considerations”¹¹ - A publication outlining the importance of defensible space in protecting homes from destruction from wildfire and providing information to guide homeowners in making “fire wise” decisions regarding their home design and choice of building materials. This publication offers detailed explanations and illustrative photographs on which design strategies are more vulnerable or resilient to wildfire and why. This publication helps enhance the reader’s general fire awareness and preparedness.
- “Homeowners Wildfire Mitigation Guide”¹² - This section includes an exploration of various factors contributing to the likelihood of home ignition and destruction. This section also offers advice on how to increase your home’s survivability in wildfire events. It outlines basic improvements that can be made to the tops and sides of houses, as well as vents and surrounding landscapes to increase a home’s resilience to wildfire. There are also a number of appendices that include useful materials such as a list of inexpensive “quick fix” suggestions, a pre-evacuation checklist, and a checklist for surveying your home’s surroundings and potential vulnerability.
- “Sudden Oak Death-Caused Changes to Surface Fuel Loading and Potential Fire Behavior in Douglas-fir-tanoak Forests:”¹³ - A publication on the ways the presence of sudden oak death can impact the spread and intensity of wildland fires and what that means for firefighters’ suppression strategies.

The Fire section within the UCCE website also provides a link to the California Fire Science Consortium (CFSC) website¹⁴ which serves as a forum for exchanging fire knowledge and aims to make fire science information available to the greater public. In addition to providing the most up-to-date research and information on fire ecology, the CFSC website hosts a discussion forum, a number of fire-related webinars and blogs, as well as a monthly newsletter. The CFSC website also includes a page through which people may submit questions and receive answers from fire experts in California.

More resources and information can be obtained by visiting the Fire section of the UCCE Humboldt-Del Norte Counties website at: <http://cehumboldt.ucdavis.edu/Fire/>; the Humboldt County UCCE office can also be reached by calling (707) 445-7351.

¹¹Quarles, S.L., Valachovic, Y., Nakamura, J.M., Nader, G.A., & De Lasaux, M.J. (2010, May). Home survival in wildfire-prone areas: Building materials and design considerations. *UCANR (University of California: Agriculture and Natural Resources) Publication 8393*. Retrieved from <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8393.pdf> © 2010 Regents of the University of California. Used by permission.

¹² UCANR (University of California: Agriculture and Natural Resources). (2012). *Homeowner’s Wildfire Mitigation Guide*. Retrieved from <http://ucanr.org/sites/Wildfire/> © 2012 Regents of the University of California. Used by permission.

¹³ Valachovic, Y., Lee, C.A., Scanlon, H., Varner, J.M., Glebocki, R., Graham, B.D., & Rizzo, D.M. (2011). Sudden oak death-caused changes to surface fuel loading and potential fire behavior in Douglas-fir-tanoak forests. *Forest Ecology and Management, 261, 1973-1986*. Retrieved from www.cafiresci.org/storage/papers/psw.2011.valachovic.SODcausedchanges.FEM.pdf

¹⁴California Fire Science Consortium. (n.d.) Retrieved November 26, 2012 from <http://www.cafiresci.org/>

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Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)

Opportunities for Humboldt County residents to increase their emergency preparedness are available through the Regional Training Institute, an information center that collaborates with Humboldt State University's Office of Distance and Extended Education to offer regional disaster preparedness training in Humboldt, Del Norte, Mendocino, Trinity, and Siskiyou counties. The Institute's primary focus is *Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)* training courses, which offer groups of local citizens training in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. These skills and training make it so that CERT members can effectively assist others in their community and neighborhoods following a disaster event. These community teams become especially valuable when professional emergency responders are not immediately available to help, which is not unlikely in the more remote communities of Humboldt County. These courses utilize informational material provided to Citizen Corps by FEMA's Emergency Management Institute and augment that material with information specific to the northwestern California region.¹⁵ Although CERT training comprises the cornerstone of the Regional Training Institute, they also offer other regionally specific preparedness classes, such as a "Living on Shaky Ground" course that helps inform and prepare citizens for disastrous earthquake incidences.

More resources and information can be found by visiting the Regional Training Institute website at: www.humboldt.edu/rti; emailing rti@humboldt.edu, or calling 707-826-3731.

II.4.5. Federal Fire Education and Prevention Programs

U.S. Forest Service – Six Rivers National Forest Wildfire Prevention Program

The Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) wildland fire prevention program focuses primarily on wildfire detection, wildfire origin and cause investigations, State commercial burning permit issuance, public education, and community fire-safe awareness. SRNF fire prevention activities also include enforcement and permit compliance operations and oversight for forest industrial operation and permittee activities that occur on both private and SRNF National Forest lands.

In addition to the SRNF Wildfire Prevention Plan, each local Ranger District maintains and annually updates a local prevention plan. The objective of the prevention plan is to provide specific local direction to fire management personnel on prevention activities in the Districts. Each Ranger District is involved in implementing the SRNF Wildfire Prevention Plan. The Plan's principal goal is to sustain healthy and productive ecosystems and to protect human life and property.

Plan components related to fire prevention/safety education include:

- Structural Hazard Inspection and Debris Management
- School Presentations, Team Teaching, and Children with Matches
- Public Information Programs (at Visitor Centers, Rodeos, Fairs, Parades, etc.)

Public education-related prevention tasks include the use of fire danger ratings, involvement in FSCs, and involvement in various public events. Ranger District level staff has provided educational outreach throughout the SRNF and Humboldt County, including the Humboldt County Fair (including the fire and smoke safety trailer with the Humboldt County Fire Prevention Association, CAL FIRE, and local fire organizations), Fire Prevention Week, team teaching in schools, and other local events. District staff utilizes education materials, including the Smokey Bear costume and associated symbols, to convey fire safety themes to children.

¹⁵ Humboldt State University: Regional Training Institute – Community Disaster Preparedness. (n.d.) *Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) Training*. Retrieved November 27, 2012 from <http://www.humboldt.edu/rti/cert>

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SRNF fire prevention education objectives include: instituting programs to make local communities aware of the need for local residential hazard reduction; public education to reduce the number of abandoned campfires; and education and public contact to strive for a zero occurrence of fires set by children playing with matches.

More information on SRNF can be found by visiting their website at: www.fs.usda.gov/main/srnf/home, calling (707) 441-3604, or by sending an email to Fire Prevention Officer, Robert Rivelle at rrivelle@fs.fed.us.

BLM Wildfire Prevention Program

The BLM Arcata Field Office's wildland fire prevention efforts are concentrated on community fire-safe awareness and educating the public on the benefits of fire prevention and the necessity of a proactive hazardous fuels management/reduction program. Particular program emphasis is placed on community education programs for those wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas and communities at risk within or adjacent to BLM public lands. Additionally, in 2011, the California BLM put out a publication titled, "Wildfire Protection,"¹⁶ which outlines some of the challenges to fire protection within the state, as well as the BLM's contributions and project efforts to improve fire safety in California.

More information on the BLM's wildland fire prevention efforts in Humboldt County can be obtained by contacting Fire Management Officer, Tim Jones at tmjones@blm.gov, or by calling the BLM Arcata Field Office at (707) 825-2300 or visiting their website at: www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/arcata.html.

II.4.6. Areas Without Any Community Preparedness Leadership

There are still areas in Humboldt County where there is a pressing need for organized efforts to prepare community members for wildfire and other natural hazards. These areas include the following:

- **Maple Creek** – The Maple Creek Fire Company recently shut its doors and ceased operating. This leaves community members without committed, near-by, year-round emergency service. Blue Lake Fire and Kneeland Fire will respond to the area but may not always be available and have long travel times to arrive on scene. The Maple Creek area is also not served by a local FSC or Firewise® group.
- **Redwood Valley and Titlow Hill** – These areas do not have a local fire department. Blue Lake and Willow Creek Fire will and do respond to these areas but it can take up to 45 minutes to arrive on scene and it is outside of these fire department's jurisdictional area so resources may not always be available. During fire season CAL FIRE is responsible for fire protection in this area from their Trinidad fire station, which is close to an hour away. The Willow Creek FSC offers some of their preparedness programs to this area but it is far for them to travel. There is a clear need for the development of a local effort.
- There are many developed areas within the county that are outside of the boundaries of a service districts. The fire departments associated with the districts will respond to these areas but have no obligation to do so and receive no compensation for their efforts. Many of these places are far from fire stations and expect long response times from fire service. Residents of these areas need to prioritize personal responsibility for their safety and make sure to carry out effective wildfire mitigation activities. Where they do not already

¹⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) California. (2011). *Wildfire Protection*. Retrieved from <http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/caso/publications.Par.31582.File.dat/SinglePages.pdf>.

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exist, there is a need for local wildfire preparedness groups and organizations in these areas.