

## **Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

### **IV.12. Mattole-Lost Coast Planning Unit Action Plan**

#### **IV.12.1. Mattole-Lost Coast Planning Unit Description**

The Mattole-Lost Coast *Planning Unit* encompasses 200,563 acres situated in the southwestern coastal region of Humboldt County, located west of the Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Although no major highways exist in the Unit, Mattole Road comprises the primary transportation corridor, leading from Cape Mendocino in the northern section of the Unit to the town of Petrolia, and continuing in a south-easterly direction toward Honeydew. The Unit is part of the Mattole *watershed*, which is characterized as “an extremely geologically active and unstable watershed.”<sup>1</sup> The terrain is mostly mountainous with steep valleys formed by *tributaries* of the Mattole River. The Mattole River comes into the Unit south of Honeydew, flows alongside Mattole Road, and joins the Pacific Ocean just south of Petrolia.

The towns of Petrolia and Honeydew comprise the central communities of this Planning Unit, with populations of about 400 and 1,000, respectively. Other smaller neighborhoods are scattered throughout the Unit as well, mainly near Mattole Road, including: Wilder Ridge, Panther Gap, Windy Nip/Doreen Drive, Green Fir/New Jerusalem, Conklin Creek, Lower North Fork, Lighthouse Road, and Prosper Ridge.<sup>2</sup>

Private lands comprise the dominant ownership pattern in this Unit; these include residential parcels, medium- to –large tracts of rangeland, and a few timber harvest operations in the northern portion of the Unit. The majority of the residential properties are clustered in, around, and in between the towns of Petrolia and Honeydew. Several developed properties are also distributed in the southern region, along Wilder Ridge Road. This Unit contains a large portion of land belonging to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)--The King Range National Conservation Area--which dominates the southwestern quadrant of the Unit. The Conservation area is an environmentally significant area managed by the Arcata Field Office, which is responsible for the administration of natural resources, lands, and mineral programs.<sup>3</sup> A map of this planning unit can be viewed in Figure IV.12-1. Mattole-Lost Coast Unit: CWPP Unit Map.

#### **IV.12.2. Mattole-Lost Coast Community Process Summary**

A community workshop was held on March 25, 2012 in Petrolia for the purpose of gathering local information and garnering public input regarding various factors contributing to the extent of wildfire risk and/or preparedness among the communities in this Unit, and to provide information about the countywide community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) update process. It was attended by approximately 30 community members, and functioned as a brunch fundraiser for the Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. The meeting also celebrated Petrolia having earned national recognition as a Firewise® community.

A group exercise, which involved maps of the Planning Unit area, invited those present to help identify and pinpoint on the map where particular *fire hazards* exist, the location of *protection resources*, such as fire water drafting sites, as well as values and *assets at risk* within the community that could be threatened by wildfire. These workshop processes also provided an opportunity for participating community members to ask questions and provide information based on their local knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup>Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2011). Petrolia Community Assessment. (p. 4.)

<sup>2</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*. [Draft]. (p.14.) Petrolia, CA.

<sup>3</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 18.)

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Participants were also asked to review pre-existing information illustrated on the maps which had been added by community members during similar workshops that took place during the initial planning process in 2006. This workshop and mapping exercise also facilitated discussion among community members about potential actions that could be taken to reduce fire risk in their communities. Through discussion and collaborative processes, participants identified major hazard areas and compiled lists of project proposals for enhancing their communities' fire preparedness.

The community-identified fire hazards, protection resources, and values and assets at risk discussed throughout the following sections of this Planning Unit Action Plan reflect information generated by these community workshop mapping exercises, as well as information resulting from direct outreach to local fire departments and residents.

The project proposals resulting from community member discussions are contained in section IV.12.8. Community-Identified Projects in this Planning Unit Action Plan.

### **IV.12.3. Mattole-Lost Coast Wildfire Environment**

Approximately 90% of the Mattole-Lost Coast Planning Unit is zoned "High *Fire Hazard Severity*," as determined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).<sup>4</sup> However, 3% of the Unit, including some locations near Petrolia and along portions of Mattole Rd. are zoned "Moderate Fire Hazard Severity," while approximately 7% of the Unit, including sections of the King Range National Conservation Area and land surrounding the Lighthouse and Prosper Ridge neighborhoods, are zoned "Very High Fire Hazard Severity."

The Unit is characterized as a Mediterranean climate, with cool, wet winters with high runoff, and dry, warm summers with greatly reduced river flows. Most of the lower river area is choked with *sediment*, which reduces its capacity to support fish and other aquatic organisms. About 84% of the Mattole watershed is forested;<sup>5</sup> forest types predominately include Douglas-fir, as well as hardwood forests, mixed hardwood and *conifer forests*, and a relatively small number of redwoods. The majority of the remaining, non-forested area is comprised of annual grasslands. Various brush and coastal shrub species are also mixed into grasslands and forests; these can contribute to *fire risk* by creating *fuel ladders* into the forest *canopy*. Conversely, grasslands with low levels of thatch can sometimes act as helpful *firebreaks* during forest fires.

Traditionally, fire has been an integral part of the *ecosystems* in this region. Forest management by indigenous tribes included low-intensity, intentional burns to help enhance forest ecosystems and prevent the accumulation of high *fuel loads*. Some of the early settlers in the late 1800s also used intentional burning to maintain grasslands for pasture animals. However, a heavy *fire suppression* campaign beginning in the 1940s has disturbed the fire-adapted ecosystems within this Unit and altered *stand composition*. Intense timber harvests, which were followed by the land being sold and subdivided during the 20<sup>th</sup> century further exacerbated damages to forest ecosystem health: "the unprecedented combination of widespread logging and heavy fire suppression resulted in the dense second growth forests of Douglas fir and tanoak that are found throughout Mattole today."<sup>6</sup> These heavy fuel loads allow small fires that would otherwise burn through the *understory* to reach into the tree tops, increasing the likelihood of wildfires destroying whole trees and swaths of forest. The extent that the *landscape* has been altered as a result of fire suppression is reflected in the *condition class* of the Unit area. Condition class

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<sup>4</sup> CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection). (2007). *Fire Resources Assessment Program (FRAP)*. [Map showing Fire Hazard Severity Zone ratings within various geographic areas, mapped by county]. Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map. Retrieved from <http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/>

<sup>5</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 27.)

<sup>6</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 23.)

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describes the degree of departure from the historical *natural fire regime*. Where the condition class indicates that fire has been absent for an unnaturally long time, the hazard and potential damages are high to both the environment and human developments in the area. Approximately 50% of the Mattole-Lost Coast Planning Unit is condition class 3, meaning the fire regime is significantly altered from the historical range; and approximately 18% of the area is condition class 2, or moderately altered from the historical range.

Fortunately, there have been few major fire events in recent years. A few exceptions include:

- Honeydew Fire, September 2003: 11,793 acres.
- Spanish Fire, 2011: 524 acres.

Major fires between the years of 1980-1999 included:

- Rainbow Fire, August 1990: 2,757 acres.
- Mattole Fire, August 1990: 4,875 acres.
- Kings Fire, August 1990: 3,069 acres.

Humans are the primary *ignition sources* for fires in this Planning Unit, with “equipment use” being the dominant cause of fire starts. Other human-caused *ignitions* include *debris burning*, smoking, campfires, playing with fire, and arson. Human-related causes such as vehicles and downed power lines are also potential ignition sources. The majority of human-caused ignitions occur in populated areas and near major transportation corridors. Lightning is the leading natural cause of fire starts in this region. Other factors that are likely to have a future impact on fire risk within this Unit include: large fuel increases resulting from the spread of *Sudden Oak Death*, which has already been detected in areas of the Mattole watershed; climate change, which is likely to extend the dry season when fire risk is greatest; as well as probable earthquakes, since the Mendocino Triple Junction (where three tectonic plates meet) is just offshore from the Mattole Watershed.<sup>7</sup>

High potential for *structural ignitability* is a concern for many communities in this Unit. The degree to which residents maintain *defensible space* around their homes varies greatly from house to house among the neighborhoods, which can limit the ability of firefighters to ensure the safety of structures. Many houses have dense vegetation growing in the *home ignition zone* or ladder fuels surrounding trees close to roofs. Another common issue is the buildup of highly flammable debris such as leaves, needles, and moss, on rooftops or in gutters. Flammable roofing and sliding is also a concern for homes in this area. “Observations have been made in the planning area of homes with wood piles, fences, gates, and wood lattice in contact with structures. Dead leaves under decks or along foundations of structures were also observed in some cases. These items are generally more susceptible to combustion from *embers* or *radiant heat* and, if lighted, could lead a fire to the rest of the home.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, communities in this Unit exist in the *wildland-urban interface* (WUI), which increases the likelihood that *structural fires* will spread into the wildlands, and vice versa. Figure IV.12-2 found at the end of this Planning Unit Action Plan illustrates risks and hazards identified by community members at public workshops and can be used as a key to access detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal, “Fire Planning” section: <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/>.

Mattole Rd. is the central *ingress and egress* route, along with Wilder Ridge Rd., with numerous smaller roads connecting residences and neighborhoods to it. Some neighborhoods in this Unit are very remote and contain homes that are only accessible via narrow, steep, dirt roads, some of which have no alternative exit route. Poor or complete lack of *signage* at roads and intersections pose potential problems for emergency ingress and egress; this is especially true for

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<sup>7</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (pp. 41-44.)

<sup>8</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 47.)

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more remote residences that are further from the towns. The narrowness of smaller roads leading to these remote residences could create serious complications for emergency vehicle response trying to gain access during simultaneous home evacuations. Routes may also be grown over with vegetation, and many properties have inadequate *turn around spaces*. The potential for landslides in this area could also inhibit access.

A lack of available water for fire protection is a very serious issue in this Planning Unit. There are no municipal water services or hydrants in this Unit, and residents must obtain water through other means, such as drawing from nearby creeks and holding tanks. Water availability is a limiting factor for the safety of many neighborhoods in this Unit, particularly the more remote communities. Although a few community water tanks have been placed in these neighborhoods, their contents can fall short of what is anticipated for fire suppression needs and firefighters are often challenged by a shortage of *fire protection water*. Ensuring that existing water tanks are maintained and functioning properly must be made a high priority for community members in these neighborhoods.

The only community-identified water source for this Planning Unit is a *drafting site* on the Bear River near Capetown. Fire protection water may be drafted from the Mattole River. However, this has become problematic in late summer months because of the impact that withdrawing water from the river can have on *endangered* salmon and steelhead populations.

The map in Figure IV.12-2 found at the end of this Unit Action Plan illustrates drafting sites as well as other community-identified wildfire *protection resources*. The map can be used as a key to access detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal, “Fire Planning” section: <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/>.

### **IV.12.4. Mattole-Lost Coast Values and Assets at Risk**

*Assets at risk* can be defined as those things that are important to quality of life that can be threatened with destruction or loss from wildfire. These may include community assets such as homes and businesses, as well as environmental values such as wildlife habitat, natural resources, and air quality, along with any other important attribute that individual communities rely on for their well being. Loss or damage to community assets as a result of wildfire can have short- or long-term impacts of varying severity, depending on the asset. Short-term loss caused by a wildfire can include the destruction of residences, commercial assets, timber, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and *watersheds*. Long-term effects may include displaced persons, smaller timber harvests, reduced access to affected recreational areas, and destruction of cultural, ecological, and economic resources, and community infrastructure.

The majority of *assets at risk* in this Planning Unit are residential homes and communities, along with a variety of commercial and service industries, community centers, medical clinics, schools, fire stations, churches, as well as infrastructure components, such as power lines and *access roads*. The map in Figure IV.12-2 found at the end of this Unit Action Plan illustrates values and assets at risk to wildfire identified by community members at public workshops. The map can be used as a key to access detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features on the Humboldt Web GIS<sup>9</sup> Portal, Fire Planning section: <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/>. Some of the community-identified assets at risk within this Unit include:

- Mattole Salmon Group offices
- Mill Creek Forest
- Mt. Pierce – Communications Site
- Mattole Resort
- Yellow Rose
- Old South Maid Ranch House – historical site

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<sup>9</sup> Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

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Significant recreation areas in the Unit include the Mattole Campground and the A.W. Way County Park. Shell mounds comprise areas of environmental and cultural significance to some communities in this Unit as well. The Mattole River has important ecological significance as the Unit's primary freshwater body, which drains directly into a State-designated Area of Special Biological Significance, Critical Coastal Area, and Marine Protected Area. *Sensitive and listed species* in this region include: Steelhead Trout, Chinook Salmon, Coho Salmon, martens, fishers, and northern spotted owls, to name a few.<sup>10</sup>

Hardwood and coniferous forests are assets within this Unit as well; they are valuable for subsistence, commercial livelihood, and ecological resources. Some areas, especially near Wilder Ridge, contain many of the last remaining old-growth forests in the Mattole Watershed.<sup>11</sup>

### **IV.12.5. Mattole-Lost Coast Community Preparedness**

Fire awareness within communities in this Unit is abetted by the *Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (LM CWPP), which was collaboratively developed with involvement from local, state, and federal land and fire management agencies, as well as officials from CAL FIRE, State Parks, the Mattole Restoration Council (MRC), and from the Lower Mattole *Fire Safe Council* (LMFSC). This Plan is an updated version of the Lower Mattole Fire Plan, which was developed in 2001. The updated CWPP was completed in 2012 and is intended to provide resources and tools to help communities develop strategies for *fire safe* land management practices and *fuels reduction*, improve emergency communication and response systems, and outline possible future projects and funding sources. The plan identifies and prioritizes areas for *hazardous fuel reduction treatments*, and recommends treatment methods, as well as measures for reducing the potential for structural ignitions.

The LMFSC was founded in 2002 and aims to “reduce risks and minimize damage to life, property, and the environment from wildfire, by coordinating efforts to fund and implement fire-safe education and projects in the Lower Mattole.”<sup>12</sup> Some of their goals and objectives include: reducing fuel loads in and around neighborhoods; increasing availability of water sources; assisting local fire protection agencies; educating landowners on fire-safe practices; improving community and emergency response communication networks; and promoting healthy forest and rangeland ecosystems. The LMFSC can be reached by calling (707) 629-3514, or by email at: [firesafe@mattole.org](mailto:firesafe@mattole.org).

Since its inception, the LMFSC has also partnered with the MRC on fuels reduction and fire safety projects. These entities have utilized the *Fire-adapted Landscapes and Safe Homes (FLASH) program* in an ongoing effort to assist community members with wildfire mitigation efforts. FLASH is a rebate program that reimburses property owners for *hazardous vegetation management* completed around their homes, along access routes, and in particularly hazardous areas. Between 2010 and 2011, over 138 acres were treated under the FLASH program and 92 site visits including a home *risk assessment* were conducted by FSC/MRC staff. The program has received additional funding for 2012-2013 and the goal is to treat approximately 75 additional acres by mid 2013.

Petrolia and Honeydew both received national *Firewise Communities/USA®* recognition in 2011. The Petrolia Firewise® Area includes the town of Petrolia, as well as sections of Mattole

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<sup>10</sup> Mattole River and Range Partnership. (2009, August). *Mattole Integrated Coastal Watershed Management Plan; Foresight 2020*. Retrieved from [http://www.mattolesalmon.org/joomla/images/stories/Documents/Reports/MSG/SOS/MICWMP\\_090901.pdf](http://www.mattolesalmon.org/joomla/images/stories/Documents/Reports/MSG/SOS/MICWMP_090901.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 50.)

<sup>12</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 16.)

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Rd. to the north and southeast of Petrolia, a portion of Conklin Creek Rd., and the Lighthouse Rd. neighborhood. Successful Firewise® modifications around Petrolia include: improving signage—some residents had been unaware of their own address numbers but have since figured them out from the County and constructed road signs as well; fuels reduction along roads and in neighborhoods; and increasing water storage tanks in the area.<sup>13</sup>

The Honeydew Firewise® Area includes the town, areas to the north and east of the town, along Bull Creek Rd. and Applewood Rd., a large portion of Mattole Rd. to the west, and the Wilder Ridge Rd. neighborhood to the south. Some Firewise® modifications accomplished within the community include: improving defensible space around homes, posting clearly marked addresses and water storage signs, and fuels reduction along roads and in neighborhoods.<sup>14</sup>

Two emergency communication resources exist in this Planning Unit as well: a Neighborhood Emergency Service Teams (NEST) list, and California Office Emergency Management Agency representatives. The NEST list was generated after an earthquake in 1992 to provide a structure for emergency communication in and around Petrolia. There is, however, a need to expand NEST to include the communities of Honeydew and Ettersburg, which is located just south of the Planning Unit boundaries. There are also two California Office Emergency Management Agency representatives: one in Petrolia, and one near Honeydew. “Through the NEST and the local VFD’s, the [California Office Emergency Management Agency] representatives are the line of communication between emergency community needs and the [California Office Emergency Management Agency].”<sup>15</sup>

### **IV.12.6. Mattole-Lost Coast Wildfire Protection Capabilities**

Community fire protection within the Unit is provided by the Petrolia *Volunteer Fire Department* (PVFD), which services the Petrolia *Fire Protection District*, and the Honeydew *Volunteer Fire Company* (HVFC). These entities provide protection from structural and wildland fires, as well as medical and rescue services.

The PVFD has 25 volunteer firefighters who provide service to approximately 500 residents and respond within a 150 square mile area. The PVFD’s *apparatuses* include: a 2,100-gallon water tender; a type-1 engine with a 750-gallon capacity, two type-3 engines that carry 500 gallons; an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) with a winch; an ambulance-type medical rescue van; and a four-wheel drive quick attack pick-up truck with a 50-gallon tank. The PVFD can be reached by calling (707) 629-3558, by email at: [petroliafire@frontier.net](mailto:petroliafire@frontier.net), or by visiting their website at: [www.petroliavfd.com](http://www.petroliavfd.com).

The HVFC was established in 1987 and is served by 14 volunteer firefighters. The HVFC does not currently have the tax-based support of a fire protection district, so their income is based on voluntary contributions from community members. The HVFC has no formal district boundaries; however, they serve approximately 350 residents in a *response area* of nearly 100 square miles, much of which is rugged and isolated, which can present challenges for emergency response. The HVFC’s *apparatuses* include: three type-4 wildland “quick attack” engines and one 500-gallon water tender.<sup>16</sup> The HVFC is in need of new emergency response vehicles and better storage areas for them. The HVFC can be reached by calling (707) 373-4631.

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<sup>13</sup> Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2011). *Petrolia Community Assessment*.

<sup>14</sup> Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2011). *Honeydew Community Assessment*.

<sup>15</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP* [Draft]. (p. 63.)

<sup>16</sup> County of Humboldt, Natural Resources Planning. (2012). *Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association Annual Report, 2010*. Humboldt County Fire Safe Council. Retrieved from [http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire\\_safe\\_council/fireserviceannualreport.aspx](http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire_safe_council/fireserviceannualreport.aspx)

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*Mutual aid agreements* are in place with neighboring jurisdictions, such that all local departments often respond to calls inside and outside of their response areas. However, due to the rural nature of the area, additional help can take a long time to reach its destination. CAL FIRE also responds to wildland fires in the Unit, but the Mattole station is only in operation during declared *fire season*, which usually begins in June and lasts through October. The CAL FIRE Weott station can also send equipment and personnel to the Unit area when extended service is needed. Response times from the Weott station often require 45 minutes or more, depending on the location of the incident.

Fire protection agencies in this Unit are benefited by convenient access to helpful and pertinent information, which is compiled in the Fire Atlas for the area. “The Fire Atlas identifies firefighting resources like fire stations and trucks, and water tanks and ponds. The Fire Atlas also shows the known locations of structures. The Atlas is not distributed publicly. Copies are made available to the PVFD, HVFC, CAL FIRE, and the MRC.”<sup>17</sup>

### **IV.12.7. Mattole-Lost Coast Evacuation**

Evacuation from the Mattole-Lost Coast Planning Unit will travel either northwest or southeast along Mattole Rd., or south on Wilder Ridge Rd., depending on law enforcement recommendations based on *fire behavior*, wind pattern, traffic, and ingress of emergency vehicles. There are numerous smaller roads connecting residences to neighborhoods on Mattole Rd. Adequate ingress and egress along these roads is vital to a large portion of the community that may need to access the main *evacuation route* and for firefighters who will be using the roads to access wildfires burning in up-slope areas.

“Many roads are not maintained properly to allow access to firefighting apparatus, nor are they labeled with address or water storage.”<sup>18</sup> Some neighborhoods are only accessible via steep, narrow dirt roads with few *turnouts*. These road conditions can severely hinder fire engine *response time*, such that some homes in these neighborhoods can take between 30 minutes to an hour to reach from the pavement. *One-way-in and one-way-out roads* are a concern for many residences as well. Neighborhoods most at risk from poor road access include: Panther Gap, Windy Nip, Wilder Ridge, and Prosper Ridge.<sup>19</sup>

Evacuation impediments may include: landslides, fallen trees, downed power lines, ignition of roadside fuels, overgrown vegetation, poorly marked streets and intersections, and one-way-in, one-way-out roads that could inhibit evacuation and emergency response vehicles, or leave residents stranded should the roads become blocked.

During wildfire events that have the potential to threaten personal safety, community evacuation sites may be established where residents can go to survive a wildfire. Evacuation sites will be established in different locations depending on the anticipated path of the wildfire. The determination for the location of these sites is normally made by Humboldt County Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander in cooperation with an *Incident Management Team*. The Humboldt County Sheriffs and Emergency Officials will use mass communication and door-to-door methods to inform residents about the threat and where residents should go to take shelter.

If a catastrophic event occurs, residents may not be able to reach designated evacuation sites. In such cases, residents may need to make decisions on their own about seeking shelter where they can survive the passage of the wildfire until they can reach an evacuation site. It can be very difficult to determine the right thing to do as the fire approaches. Before a wildfire threatens,

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<sup>17</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP [Draft]*. (p. 60.)

<sup>18</sup> Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2011). *Petrolia Community Firewise® Assessment*.

<sup>19</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2012). *2012 Lower Mattole CWPP [Draft]*. (pp. 50-59.)

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community members should talk to their local fire department about evacuation procedures in their neighborhood.

*See section V.2.3 in Part V. Fire-Safe Communities for more information on preparing for safe evacuation and evacuation planning for pets and livestock. Also see section II.3.5 Evacuation Routes and Vulnerability in Part II. Risk Assessment for information about evacuation procedures and challenges in Humboldt County.*

### **IV.12.8. Community Identified Potential Projects**

The following section includes a summary of potential projects identified through the community processes discussed above. Some of the potential projects are illustrated on the community-identified projects map found at the end of this Unit Action Plan (Figure IV.12-3). This map includes projects carried over from the 2006 fire-planning process and those identified and refined during the 2011 LMFSC local CWPP and the 2012 County CWPP update process. In addition, Figure IV.12-2 illustrates community-identified Values and Assets, Hazards and Risks, and Wildfire Protection Resources. The maps in Figure IV.12-2 and Figure IV.12-3 can each be used as a key to access detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features on the Humboldt Web GIS Portal, “Fire Planning” section: <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/>.

Because of the tremendous amount of work that has been accomplished within this unit and the existence of a local CWPP, a project matrix was not included in this Unit Action Plan. All of the geographic community identified project information is cataloged in the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal described above as well as in the Lower Mattole CWPP. This County CWPP incorporates that information by reference here. This information will continue to be made available as a resource for capturing grant funds and continued project implementation tracking.

Project ideas are also listed that are not visible on the maps, because they are not geographically based. These proposed actions also add to and expand upon the 2006 plan, based on the 2012 process (including the County CWPP update, the local CWPP, and Firewise® action plans). Because of the complexity of the planning process in this unit, the community identified potential projects are broken out into the following categories:

- CWPP Action Items,
- Firewise® Action Items

#### **CWPP Action Items:**

The Lower Mattole CWPP lists and outlines various types of projects that have been proposed to improve fire safety in the area in a five to ten year action plan. These projects fall under the categories of:

- Empowering Residents
- Reducing Structural Ignitability
- Reducing Fuels
- Enhancing Fire Protection
- Community Emergency Preparedness and Planning
- Fire Ecology and Conservation/Restoration Efforts

The following summarizes the projects proposed in the Lower Mattole CWPP. A complete copy of the Lower Mattole CWPP, which includes the matrix of coded projects mentioned above, can be found on the MRC<sup>20</sup> and Humboldt County FSC<sup>21</sup> websites.

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<sup>20</sup> [www.mattole.org/](http://www.mattole.org/)

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire\\_safe\\_council/](http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire_safe_council/)

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- **Empower residents** with information and resources to act on their own to increase their wildfire readiness and decrease fire hazards around their homes and in their communities. Provide workshops for community members and devise methods of involving local youth in fire hazard mitigation. Create opportunities for fire education.
- Take action to **reduce risk to structural ignitability**. Educate and make information available to residents and landowners about measures they can take to remove fuels on, near, or against structures and improve their defensible spaces.
- **Reduce flammable vegetation** in areas where there is high ignition risk, such as around structures, along roads, and on ridge tops. Continue utilizing the FLASH program to create new fuelbreaks, and to evaluate and maintain existing ones. Take steps to implement strategic management of fuels in such a way that helps restore fire ecology within the area.
- **Enhance fire protection** capability by maintaining and increasing firefighting water sources in the area. Similarly, increase the visibility of water sources and addresses and improve access for firefighting apparatus on local roads.
- Conduct **community emergency preparedness and planning** and enhance the Emergency Communication Systems. Expand the NEST phone tree area and diversify communication methods. Equip local emergency communication systems to handle a variety of emergencies. Educate community members about being prepared for evacuation.
- Take part in **fire ecology and conservation/restoration efforts** designed to restore fire to Mattole ecosystems without damaging natural and community resources.

### **Firewise® Action Plan**

The Firewise® Action Plan, which resulted from the community Firewise® assessment, contains a list of short-term actions with measurable objectives that can be done within the home ignition zone, within high risk community areas, and the community at large. These actions are consistent with implementation of the Lower Mattole CWPP. The following provides a summary of the projects proposed in the Firewise® Action Plan:

- Have information available to residents about home fire safety in local stores and at local events.
- Continue fuels reduction projects through the FLASH program.
- Conjoin the annual Firewise® event with the HVFC's annual fundraiser and staff an information booth at the event.
- Post road or driveway signs so they are clearly visible. Assist residents in figuring out their addresses, if necessary.
- Pursue funding to help install water tanks on properties and help residents acquire proper fittings for fire protection equipment.
- Keep the Fire Atlas up to date.

### **IV.12.9. Mattole-Lost Coast Action Plan**

The following items are the initial priorities for community action for the Trinity Planning Unit as recommended by this Humboldt County CWPP (not listed in order of priority). In an ideal world, everything recommended here would be implemented. However, it must be understood that implementation will be subject to the availability of funds and other resources and the willingness/ability of community members and Plan Partners to take action. This Action Plan can be cited in grant applications to leverage needed implementation funds and used to guide and inspire action. No vegetation *treatments* recommended in this plan will be carried out without the

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consent and involvement of the property owner and all applicable local, state and federal regulations must be observed.

- Maintain and support the LMFSC to facilitate community wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- Ensure that the LMFSC continues to be represented on the Humboldt County FSC.
- Maintain and support the PVFD and HVFC to provide community emergency services.
- LMFSC work with the PVFD and HVFC, the MRC, and other community groups to implement the priority projects from the Lower Mattole CWPP that are summarized above (also see the project matrix in the Lower Mattole CWPP as well as projects illustrated on the Web GIS Portal).
- LMFSC assist Petrolia and Honeydew to renew participation in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program annually. This will include an annual update of the Firewise® action plan, which can be used as a short-term LMCWPP implementation tool. Actively implementing and maintaining the Firewise® action plan on an annual basis will take small bites out of the local CWPP which has a five to ten year planning horizon.
- Share GIS data sets between local representatives and County staff to maintain the projects included in the County Web GIS Portal.
- LMFSC, PVFD, and HVFC work with the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services to engage community members in evacuation preparedness. Efforts should be made to ensure that local gates are open or accessible during Red Flag conditions.