

Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

IV.7. Trinity Planning Unit Action Plan

IV.7.1. Trinity Planning Unit Description

The Trinity *Planning Unit* encompasses 168,362 acres situated in eastern Humboldt County within the south-central Klamath Mountains, bordering Trinity County. The boundaries of this Planning Unit were partly determined by the area described in the Willow Creek Greater Area *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP), which includes communities located in Trinity County. Thus, the southeastern quadrant of this Planning Unit actually falls within the boundaries of Trinity County; however, the recommended action items described in this Unit Action Plan will focus on those items pertinent to Humboldt County, specifically. The two main transportation routes are Highway 299, which leads southeast towards Weaverville or west towards Arcata, and Highway 96, which follows the Trinity River north into Hoopa. These primary roads intersect in the central town of Willow Creek, about 35 miles from the Pacific coast. Part of the Trinity River *watershed*, the Unit is made up of mostly steep and mountainous terrain with deep valleys formed by the Trinity River and its *tributaries* dissecting the area. "The New River, the South Fork of the Trinity, and Willow Creek all confluence with the main stem of the Trinity along with numerous streams, creeks, and unnamed water courses."¹ Elevations in this unit range from 440 to 9,025 feet above sea level.

Willow Creek comprises both the geographic center as well as the central community of this Unit. Several neighborhoods exist in the area surrounding Willow Creek; among them are the neighborhoods of: Bigfoot, Clover Flat, Hodgson, Kimtu, Knights, McIntosh, Riteway Lane, Rowley, Terrace, and The Farms.² The majority of communities in this Planning Unit exist along Highway 299, including: Salyer, Hawkins Bar, Burnt Ranch and Cedar Flat, as well as the neighborhoods of Oden Flat, Gray Flat, and Suzy Q. All of these are identified *communities at risk* of wildfire,³ where homes are located within the *wildland-urban interface* (WUI). Although the majority of the population has access to phone and electrical services, there is limited cellular phone reception and many residents live "off-the-grid."⁴

The majority of this Planning Unit falls within Six Rivers National Forest boundaries and is managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The distribution of private and public lands within this Unit is somewhat like a checkerboard, with private in-holdings interspersed throughout Forest Service land. A large portion of private land in this Unit is owned by timber industries. Other private ownerships include residential parcels as well as ranchlands. The area also supports a few small produce and specialty farms, as well as some local vineyards. Dominant land uses include recreation, timber, fisheries, wildlife *habitat*, and grazing. A map of this planning unit can be viewed in Figure IV.7-1. Trinity Unit: CWPP Unit Map.

IV.7.2. Trinity Community Process Summary

A community workshop was held on May 24, 2012 at the Trinity Valley Elementary School in Willow Creek 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

¹Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP). (p.6.) Retrieved from <http://willowcreekfsc.org/cwpp.html>.

² County of Humboldt, Natural Resources Planning. (2006, August). Appendix G: Community Identified Values, Protection Resources, Risks and Hazards, and Projects. (p.G-7.) *Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan*. Retrieved from http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire_safe_council/fsc_mfpp_cwpp.aspx

³ California Fire Alliance. (2012). *Communities at Risk List* Retrieved from www.cafirealliance.org/communities_at_risk/communities_at_risk_list.

⁴ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 6.)

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communities in this Unit, and to provide information about the countywide community wildfire protection plan (CWPP) update process. Attendees included members of the local volunteer fire department (VFD), several members of the Willow Creek Fire Safe Council, USFS, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) representatives, as well as the Grange Master of the district. 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.

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 community. Through discussion and collaborative processes, participants identified major hazard areas and compiled lists of project proposals for enhancing their community's 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.7.8. Community-Identified Projects in this Planning Unit Action Plan.

IV.7.3. Trinity Wildfire Environment:

Nearly the entire Trinity Planning Unit (97%) is zoned "Very High *Fire Hazard Severity*," as determined by CAL FIRE,⁵ although fire risk tends to be slightly lower in the flatter and less vegetated areas. The mountainous terrain and steep river canyons that are characteristic of this region, combined with long, hot summers that generate *fuels* with low *moisture levels* can amplify the rate that fires spread and their level of intensity. The Trinity County Board of Supervisors has expressed concern about these issues and notes that, "exorbitant amounts of money are spent each year fighting fires."⁶

Local *vegetation types* include mixed evergreen, *conifer forests*, Klamath mixed conifer forests, and White Oak forests. Riparian areas are dominated by grasslands and hardwoods such as oak, alder, and willow.⁷

Traditionally, fire was an integral part of the *ecosystems* in this region. Forest management by indigenous tribes often included low-intensity, intentional burns that helped enhance forest ecosystems and prevent the accumulation of high *fuel loads*. Some of the early agricultural settlers in the late 1800s used intentional burning to clear and maintain grasslands for pasture animals. A heavy *fire suppression* campaign beginning in the 1940s has allowed the accumulation of dense, flammable vegetation in forest *understories*, which acts as *fuel* and increases the risk of high-intensity wildfires. Forest ecosystems, accustomed to low-intensity fires that would burn off *brush* and newer starts in the understory, become threatened by overcrowded forests and accumulated fuel. This change from the natural *fire regime* has also altered *vegetation*

⁵CAL FIRE. (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/>

⁶ Trinity County Board of Supervisors. (2008, February 5). Resolution No. 2008-006 Declaring a state of emergency related to the extreme wildfire risk in Trinity County. In: Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*.

⁷ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 8.)
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composition and the ecological structure of forests in these areas, such that the majority of ecosystems in this area are "out-of-whack" and susceptible to losing key ecosystem components.⁸ Intense timber harvests during the 20th century have further exacerbated damages to forest ecosystem health. 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 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 56% of the Trinity Planning Unit is condition class 3, meaning the fire regime is significantly altered from the historical range; and approximately 32% of the area is condition class 2, or moderately altered from the historical range.

The Fire History Map within the Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP shows some of the more widespread fires. Although several of these fires burned in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (NF) area, outside of Humboldt County, the proximity of these fires was near enough for the communities within this Planning Unit to experience their impacts, particularly in the form of degraded air quality. Fires in and adjacent to this Planning Unit include⁹:

- The Megram Fire, in 1999: 57,727 acres
- The Onion Fire in 1999: 15,949 acres (Shasta-Trinity NF)
- The Friday Fire in 2003: 389 acres
- The Half Fire in 2008: 9,095 acres
- The Ziegler Fire, in 2008: 2,349 acres (Shasta-Trinity NF--part of the Iron Complex)
- The Ironside Fire in 2008: 12,720 acres (Shasta-Trinity NF--part of the Iron Complex)
- The Cedar Fire in 2008: 25,398 acres (Shasta-Trinity National Forest--part of the Iron Complex)

Humans have been the primary cause of fires in the last 50 years. Most fires have occurred along main road systems, down in the river valley, and near residences and recreation areas. Lightning strikes are another cause of fire, but they are spread more evenly throughout the Unit, often occurring at higher elevations and in remote locations. Numerous wildfires may be generated from multiple strikes within the same lightning storm, which can put a strain on firefighting resources. Vehicles are also a potential *ignition source*, with higher risks resulting from roadside fuels built up along town streets, back roads, and highways. Recreation operations draw in an increased population during the summer months, which can create a higher ignition risk as well. Additional ignition risks include: unattended campfires, *structure fires* spreading into the *wildlands*, arson, and power lines.¹⁰

The risk of *structural ignitability* is exacerbated in many cases by wooden roofs and sidings, which are common to houses in this area. This risk is greatly increased by the accumulation of leaves, needles and small dead branches on rooftops and in gutters. It has been observed that many homes in the planning area have dense vegetation growing in the *Home Ignition Zone*. Additionally, homes with woodpiles, fences, gates and wood lattice in contact with the structure are susceptible to combustion and, if lighted, could ignite the home as well. Figure IV.7-2 found at the end of this 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/>.

⁸ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 9.)

⁹ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 14.)

¹⁰ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 2.)

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Topographical features of the Unit such as narrowed winding roads, and hilly terrain create potential problems for orderly evacuation and delivery of emergency services. The terrain also poses problems for water delivery in fire protection. Many private roads originating off of Highways 299 and 96 serve back woods residences but do not provide a secondary emergency *evacuation route*. This problem of *one-way-in-one-way-out roads* is prevalent throughout the Unit and poses a serious potential risk to firefighter access, particularly if home evacuations are occurring simultaneously. One prominent example is the bridge on Country Club Road, which serves as the only way for residents of the Bigfoot Subdivision, Seely McIntosh, Patterson Road, and Oak Lane neighborhoods to get across the river to Highways 299 and 96. These neighborhoods are otherwise surrounded by the steep, dense forests of Six Rivers National Forest.¹¹

The Willow Creek *Community Service District*, which was formed in 1967, provides water to about 2,000 customers with 935 service connections. The District's critical facilities include a water treatment plant, pump stations, and six water tanks, three of them redwood and three metal, with a storage capacity of 1.2 million gallons.¹² Water for fire protection may also be drawn from the following locations:¹³

- Big Rock - USFS river access
- Bigfoot golf course (drafting)
- Kimtu Beach - drafting area
- Burnt Ranch Mill water intake
- Hennessey Creek
- Skycrest Lake (on private property)

The map in Figure IV.7-2 found at the end of this Unit Action Plan illustrates these *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.7.4. Trinity 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 and dental clinics, schools, churches, fire stations, as well as infrastructure components such as a water treatment facility. Several small organic farms and local wineries within this Unit are also considered assets at risk.

The map in Figure IV.7-2 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

¹¹ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 13.)

¹² County of Humboldt, Natural Resources Planning. (2008). *Humboldt Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan; Volume 2 – Planning Partner Annexes*. (p.14-2.) Retrieved from <http://www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/hazardmitigation/?inc=finaldraft>

¹³ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). Appendix 1: Matrix of Community Identified Features and Maps. *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*.

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used as a key to access detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features on the Humboldt County Web GIS¹⁴ Portal, “Fire Planning” section: <http://gis.co.humboldt.ca.us/>. Some of the community-identified assets at risk within this Unit include:

- Burnt Ranch Veterans Hall- Indian Hall
- Knights neighborhood/Trailer Park
- Burnt Ranch Campsite – Burnt Ranch Falls USFS
- Commercial District - US Post Office
- Willow Creek repeater
- Cell Tower

Natural resource assets such as waterways, forests, fisheries and wildlife are highly valued by residents in these communities. These assets contribute positively to local quality of life and to the tourist-related economy as well. Many culturally sensitive sites of special importance to Native Americans exist throughout the Unit as well.¹⁵

IV.7.5. Trinity Community Preparedness

Three distinct *fire safe councils* (FSCs)--the Willow Creek Fire Safe Council (WCFSC), Humboldt County FSC, and Trinity County FSC-- support communities in this Unit by providing fire preparedness education and programs to residents. These FSCs also compete for grants to help fund *fire hazard* mitigation efforts within the area, such as *fuel reduction* projects.

The mission of the WCFSC is: “to reduce wildfire risk and increase survivability by implementing fuels reduction projects and encouraging residents of the Willow Creek area to make their homes, neighborhoods, and communities *fire safe*.”¹⁶ The WCFSC is very active and has secured grant funding to put on an annual Fire Safe Day and Youth Ecology Fair. Also with grant money, the WCFSC has held *Chipper Days* in order to help landowners get rid of brush, and they have implemented the “*Blue Dot Program*,” which makes water sources available for fire protection more apparent to firefighters. In addition to constructing their own website through which community members can access fire safety information, the WCFSC has produced a “Living With Fire” publication. The WCFSC works in coordination with the Willow Creek Volunteer Fire Department (WCVFD) to provide community education, and with CAL FIRE to conduct a Fire Prevention program.

The WCFSC also had a prominent role in developing the Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP, which was completed in 2011. It encompasses the communities of Willow Creek, Salyer, Hawkins Bar, Burnt Ranch, and Cedar Flat. Some of the main objectives of the plan are: to improve the protection of lives and properties from wildfire; merge the goals of landowners with community needs regarding *wildfire risk* reduction; coordinate fire protection strategies across property boundaries; and provide a tool to help coordinate grant funding for such efforts. The plan is also aimed at increasing public awareness of good fire safety practices for living in the WUI and providing residents with resources to help them reduce fire risk on their own properties.¹⁷

The WCFSC can be contacted by calling (707) 499-0767, by email at: admin@willowcreekfsc.org, or by visiting their website at: www.willowcreekfsc.org.

The community of Willow Creek has also all received national recognition as a *Firewise*® community. Some successful *Firewise*® modifications include: *hazardous vegetation management* around homes, roads, parks, and businesses; eliminating *ladder fuels* in the home

¹⁴ Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

¹⁵ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (pp. 18-19).

¹⁶ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (n.d.) Our Mission. *Willow Creek Fire Safe Council Homepage*. Retrieved November 28, 2012 from www.willowcreekfsc.org.

¹⁷ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 1.)

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ignition zone; creating well positioned, reflective address and road signs; implementing fire safe landscaping (such as stone and gravel pathways that can act as *fuelbreaks*) around homes in the community; and obtaining funding assistance for property owners making these modifications via the *Fire-adapted Landscapes and Safe Homes (FLASH) program*.¹⁸

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 35 acres were treated under the FLASH program and over 100 site visits including a home risk assessment were conducted by FSC staff. The program has received additional funding for 2012-2013 and the goal is to treat approximately 20 acres.

IV.7.6. Trinity Fire Protection Level of Service

The Trinity Planning Unit has excellent coordination and collaboration between various fire protection groups. Federal, state, and local agencies have a cooperative agreement for exchanged protection responsibility in specific areas; for example, CAL FIRE provides both 911 *dispatching* services to the Willow Creek VFD, as well as suppression resources to the Six Rivers National Forest when requested. "Because fires do not respect jurisdictional boundaries and in the spirit of shared protection responsibility, local, state, and federal resources work together to ensure a well coordinated wildfire management strategy."¹⁹ However, CAL FIRE's capabilities and resources are limited outside of fire season due to units being unstaffed as a result of state budget cuts.

Local *volunteer fire departments* (VFDs) are primarily responsible for responding to *structural fires* and medical emergencies; however, volunteers are also trained for wildfire management and may be called upon to assist in case of fire emergencies. The following VFD provides fire protection as well as medical and rescue services to the neighborhoods within this Planning Unit:
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- The Willow Creek VFD, founded in 1957, has 22 volunteers who provide service to approximately 2,000 residents within an area of four square miles. Their *apparatuses* include: two type-2 engines, a type-6 wildland engine, one rescue truck, and a 3,000 gallon *water tender*. The Willow Creek VFD can be reached by calling (530) 629-2229.

The following departments are in Trinity County but will respond to emergencies in Willow Creek and also receive assistance from the WCVFD as needed:

- The Hawkins Bar VFD has 12 volunteers who provide service to 600 residents within approximately 156 square miles. Their apparatuses include: four fire engines, including one quick attack engine, a medical van, and a water tender. The Hawkins Bar VFD can be reached by calling (530) 629-3920.
- The Salyer VFD has approximately 14 volunteers who provide service within approximately 50 square miles. Their apparatuses include: two type-2 engines, one quick attack medical vehicle, and one water tender. The Salyer VFD can be reached by calling (530) 629-2778.

Sufficient funding is a critical issue faced by many VFDs in this area. Costs associated with insurance, Workers Compensation, and ensuring adequate safety equipment and training are high; and fund-raising by all-volunteer departments is difficult and time-consuming. Providing emergency response to calls during business hours can be a challenge for many VFD, as volunteers often have jobs or children to attend to during the day. Still, VFDs are holding fast to

¹⁸ Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2010). *Willow Creek Community Firewise® Assessment*.

¹⁹ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (p. 20.)

²⁰ Willow Creek Fire Safe Council. (2011). *Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP*. (pp. 23-25.)

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ensure delivery of local emergency services, although the level of service capabilities vary between communities.

IV.7.7. Trinity Evacuation

Evacuation from the Trinity Planning Unit will travel either south-east or west along Highway 299 or north on Highway 96, depending on law enforcement recommendations based on *fire behavior*, wind pattern, traffic, and ingress of emergency vehicles. There are numerous smaller roads connecting residences and neighborhoods to Highway 96. Adequate ingress and egress along these roads is vital to a large portion of the community that may need access to the main highway evacuation route and for firefighters who will be using the roads to access wildfires burning in these areas.

Several U.S. Forest Service Routes could potentially provide alternative evacuation routes; however, residents would most likely require permission and assistance to utilize these routes.

Potential alternative evacuation routes include:

- Campbell Ridge Rd., Brannan Mountain Rd., Beebe Ranch Rd., Coon Creek Rd., and USFS Rte 4, surrounding Willow Creek;
- USFS Rte 5N01, USFS Rte 5N10, USFS Rte 1, and PVT - Redwood Valley, located near the southwestern portion of the Unit;
- USFS Rte 4, USFS Rte 06N10, and USFS Rte, located in the northeastern unit area.

Evacuation impediments may include: landslides, fallen trees, downed power lines, 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, 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.7.8. Trinity 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.7-3). This map includes projects carried over from the 2006 fire-planning process and those identified and refined during the 2011 Willow Creek local CWPP development and the 2012 County CWPP

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update process. In addition, Figure IV.7-2 illustrates Community-Identified Values and Assets, Hazards and Risks, and Wildfire Protection Resources. The maps in Figure IV.7-2 and Figure IV.7-3 can each 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/>.

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 Web GIS Portal described above as well as in the Greater Willow Creek 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 the Firewise® action plan). 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 Greater Willow Creek Area 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:

- Reduce Structural Ignitability
- Support and Improve Fire Protection Capabilities
- Treatment of Hazardous Fuels
- Education
- Planning

The following summarizes the projects proposed in the Greater Willow Creek Area CWPP. A complete copy of the Greater Willow Creek Area CWPP, which includes the table of coded projects mentioned above, can be found on the Willow Creek FSC²¹ and Humboldt County FSC²² websites.

- Proposed projects to **Reduce Structural Ignitability** include: lessening the vulnerability of homes to damage from wildfire by retrofitting flammable roofs, siding, gutters, etc. with ignition-resistant materials; and creating and maintaining defensible space in the Home Ignition Zone by thinning fuels and implementing fire-wise landscaping.
- Proposed projects intended to **Support and Improve Fire Protection Capabilities** include actions that aim to make firefighters’ jobs easier. These projects include: supplying sufficient water for fire protection by adding more water tanks, equipping water tanks with the proper fittings, and marking water sources so that they are easily identifiable; establishing emergency secondary access routes in remote, single-access neighborhoods; improving signage; and ensuring that firefighters have the necessary equipment and resources for providing adequate fire protection services.

²¹ www.willowcreekfsc.org/

²² www.co.humboldt.ca.us/natural-resources/fire_safe_council/

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- Proposed projects for the **Treatment of Hazardous Fuels** include: removing dense vegetation along primary and residential access roads that could hinder emergency response or evacuation; reducing fuel loads located near critical facilities and valued community areas; collaborating with local, state, and federal partners to take steps toward returning the landscape to a closer semblance of its natural fire regime; and continuing to explore appropriate uses of prescribed burning.
- Proposed **Education** projects include: providing fire prevention informational materials and support to community members on topics such as, how to create a fire-safe Home Ignition Zone, and how to prepare for emergency evacuation; encouraging communities to obtain and maintain Firewise® recognition; and conducting outreach in local schools with age-appropriate fire-safety materials and presentations for preschool through high school curriculums.
- Proposed **Planning** projects include maintaining the efforts of the existing fire safe council and encouraging the development of a new one in neighboring communities; and facilitating collaboration between planning partners and local community members to select and implement priority actions from within their local CWPP.

Firewise® Action Items

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 Willow Creek Greater Area CWPP. The following summarize the projects proposed in the Firewise® Action Plan:

- Publish an **educational brochure for community residents** entitled, “Living With Fire in the Lower Trinity” that includes material on home ignition prevention, evacuation readiness, and fire-safety in the WUI.
- Complete **fuels reduction projects** on approximately 38 acres in four Willow Creek neighborhoods; these projects have already been planned out and funding has been obtained for them.
- Complete wildfire hazard reduction with **FLASH** funding for ten property owners.
- Hold three **Neighborhood Cleanup Days** to help property owners get rid of flammable debris and byproducts; this will be done with assistance from PG&E and CAL FIRE.
- Hold three **Sheriff Work Alternative Program (SWAP) Work Days** to reduce buildup of roadside fuels throughout the community.
- Host the **annual Firewise® event**, the “Willow Creek Fire Safe Day & Youth Ecology Fair.”

IV.7.9. Trinity 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 consent and involvement of the property owner and all applicable local, state and federal regulations must be observed.

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- Maintain and support the WCFSC to facilitate community wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- Ensure that the WCFSC continues to be represented on the Humboldt County FSC.
- Maintain and support the WCVFD to provide community emergency services.
- WCFSC work with the WCVFD, the Willow Creek Community Services district and other community groups to implement priority projects from the Greater Willow Creek Area CWPP (See the project matrix in the Greater Willow Creek Area CWPP as well as projects illustrated on the Web GIS Portal).
- This Plan recommends an initial focus on the following priority areas for fuels reduction as identified at the 2012 Community Workshop:
 - Bigfoot subdivision West
 - Patterson Road
 - Patterson Road North
 - Upper Brannan
 - Friday RidgeSecondary priorities include:
 - Conducting fuel clearance along Otter Lane.
 - Improving defensible space in Trinity Acres neighborhood.
 - Landscape clearing and modifications to improve bottleneck situation on Highway 299, West of Willow Creek.
 - Conducting roadside clearance on fuels along Old Three Creeks.
- Apply 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 Willow Creek CWPP 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 geographic information on project implementation progress with County staff so that the project information of the County Web GIS Portal can be updated.
- WCFSC and WCVFD 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.