

## MATTOLE—LOST COAST PLANNING UNIT ACTION PLAN



*Mattole River. Photo: Mattole Restoration Council.*

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**Helpful Links**

Mattole Restoration Council: [mattole.org](http://mattole.org)  
Humboldt County Fire Safe Council: [humboldt.gov/org/firesafecouncil](http://humboldt.gov/org/firesafecouncil)  
Humboldt County WebGIS: [webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP)  
Humboldt County Fire Safe Council Representative, Cybelle Immitt: [cimmit@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:cimmit@co.humboldt.ca.us)

## 4.12 MATTOLE–LOST COAST PLANNING UNIT ACTION PLAN

### 4.12.1 MATTOLE–LOST COAST PLANNING UNIT DESCRIPTION



**Map 4.12.1 Map of Mattole- Lost Coast Planning Unit**

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 are the dominant ownership pattern in this unit; these include residential parcels, medium to large tracts of ranchland, and land owned by two industrial timber companies 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 public 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*

**Watershed:** All of the land that drains water runoff into a specific body of water. Watersheds may be referred to as drainage areas or drainage basins. Ridges of higher elevation usually form the boundaries between watersheds by directing the water to one side of the ridge or the other. The water then flows to the low point of the watershed.

*Map 4.12.1, Mattole–Lost Coast CWPP Unit Map.*

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

<sup>2</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016) Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan [PDF]. Retrieved from [http://www.mattole.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LM\\_CWPP\\_2016-FINAL.pdf](http://www.mattole.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LM_CWPP_2016-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 20).

4.12.2 MATTOLE–LOST COAST ASSETS AND VALUES AT RISK

Assets and values at risk are those things that are important to quality of life that can be threatened with destruction or loss from wildfire. These include a variety of things such as homes, businesses, critical infrastructure, cultural sites, wildlife habitat, natural resources, air and water quality, recreational facilities and areas, historical structures, and any other important attribute that individual communities rely on for their well-being.

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*.

Map 4.12.2, found at the end of this Unit Action Plan, illustrates assets and values at risk to wildfire identified by community members at public workshops. More detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features can be found on the Humboldt County Web GIS<sup>4</sup> Portal: [webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP).

FIGURE 4.12.1 MATTOLE–LOST COAST: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS AT RISK	
○ Mount Pierce Communication Site	○ Old South Maid Ranch House – Historical
○ Mattole Grange	○ Mattole Salmon Group offices
○ A.W. Way Park	○ Seven Day Adventist Church
○ Wilder Ridge fire house	○ St. Patrick’s Church
○ Honeydew Fire Stations	○ Church of Scientology
○ CAL FIRE Mattole Station	○ Mattole Campground
○ Petrolia Fire Department	○ Mill Creek Forest
○ Mattole Valley Community Center	○ Mattole Camp
○ Mattole Union School Campus (Triple Junction High School and Honeydew Elementary School)	○ Gilham Butte Forest
○ Honeydew Store and Post Office	○ Mattole Valley Resource Center
○ Petrolia Store and Post Office	○ Open Door satellite clinic
○ Etter Enterprise Zone	

Significant recreation areas in the Unit include the Mattole Campground and the A.W. Way County Park. Shell mounds of historical and cultural significance are in the westernmost part of the Unit as well. The Mattole River has important ecological significance as the Unit’s primary freshwater body; it is part of a federally and state-designated Area of Special Biological Significance and drains into a 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>5</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, Panther Gap, Lighthouse Road, and the Lower North Fork, contain many of the last remaining old-growth forests in the Mattole Watershed.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

<sup>5</sup> Mattole River and Range Partnership. (2009). 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>6</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 50).

### 4.12.3 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>7</sup> However, 3% of the Unit, including some locations near Petrolia and along portions of Mattole Road are zoned “Moderate Fire Hazard Severity,” while approximately 7% of the Unit, including sections of and adjacent to the King Range National Conservation Area and land surrounding the Lighthouse and Prosper Ridge neighborhoods, are zoned “Very High Fire Hazard Severity.”

*For a closer look at fire hazard severity in this planning unit, see Map 4.12.2, **Mattole–Lost Coast Protection Resources, Values/Assets, & Risks/Hazards.***

#### How is *Fire Hazard Severity* determined by CAL FIRE?

- The classification of a zone as moderate, high, or very high fire hazard is based on a combination of how a fire will behave and the probability of flames and embers threatening buildings.
- Zone boundaries and hazard levels are determined based on vegetation. For wildland areas, the current FHSZ model uses burn probability and expected fire behavior based on weather, fuel, and terrain conditions. For urban areas, zone boundaries and hazard levels are based on vegetation density, adjacent wildland FHSZ scores, and distance from wildland areas.
- Each area of the map gets a score for flame length, embers, and the likelihood of the area burning. Scores are then averaged over the zone areas.
- While FHS zones do not predict when or where a wildfire will occur, they do identify areas where wildfire hazards could be more severe and therefore are of greater concern.

#### Fire History

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, keep ridgelines open for travel, ensure vitality of tribal plant communities, 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:

**Fire suppression:** All the work and activities connected with control and fire-extinguishing operations, beginning with discovery and continuing until the fire is completely extinguished.

“ 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>8</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 describes the degree of departure from the historical natural fire

<sup>7</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>8</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 24).

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.

FIGURE 4.12.2 MATTOLE–LOST COAST FIRES OVER 10 ACRES 1997-2017 <sup>9</sup>				
Fire Name	Cause	Year	Acres	
			In Unit	Total
Honeydew	Lightning	2003	10,098	11,794
Spanish	Equipment Use	2011	524	524
Flat	Campfire	2001	308	317
Buckeye	Equipment Use	2010	202	202
Ranch	Escaped Prescribed Burn	2009	125	125
Spanish	Campfire	2012	122	122
Chambers	Arson	2007	55	55
Driftwood	Unknown/ Unidentified	2007	52	53
Cooskie	Campfire	2013	36	36
Rainbow	Unknown/ Unidentified	2003	16	11,794

### Structural Ignitability

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, ladder fuels in nearby trees, or 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 siding are also a concern for homes in this area.

**Structural ignitability:** The ease with which a home or other structure ignites.  
**Wildland-urban interface (WUI):** The zone where structures and other human developments meet, or intermingle with, undeveloped wildlands.

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>10</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. Homes within this

<sup>9</sup> FRAP. (2018). State Fire Perimeters 1908-2017.

<sup>10</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 47).

planning unit could be vulnerable to ignition from embers from nearby wildfires. The 2017 Napa and Sonoma fires showed that homes can be destroyed by flying embers, often miles away. If there are places on or around the home for embers to take hold, this greatly increases a home's vulnerability to loss. Many of the homes lost in the 2017 fires burned from the inside out, as embers were forced inside by strong winds, or sucked in through ventilation systems. Based on field observations, there are many homes where steps need to be taken to ensure structure survival when wildfire is nearby.

*Map 4.12.2, found at the end of this Planning Unit Action Plan, illustrates risks and hazards identified by community members at public workshops.* More detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features can be found on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal: [webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP).

### **Water Sources**

A lack of available water for fire protection is a very serious issue in this planning unit, particularly in the more remote neighborhoods. Because there are no municipal water services or hydrants, 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 committed to fire, maintained, and functioning properly is a high priority for community members in these neighborhoods.

Fire protection water may be drafted from the Mattole River and main tributaries. 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.

*Map 4.12.2, found at the end of this Unit Action Plan, illustrates these drafting sites as well as other community-identified wildfire protection resources.* More detailed descriptions can be found on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal: [webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP).

#### **4.12.4 MATTOLE–LOST COAST FIRE PROTECTION CAPABILITIES**

Community fire protection within the Unit is provided by the Petrolia Volunteer Fire Department (PVFD), which provides all risk protection services for the Petrolia Fire Protection District, and the Honeydew Volunteer Fire Company (HVFC).

*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 60 minutes or more, depending on the location of the incident.

**Mutual aid agreement:** A reciprocal aid agreement between two or more agencies that defines what resources each will provide to the other in response to certain predetermined types of emergencies. Mutual aid response is provided upon request.

The CAL FIRE Mattole Station can be reached by calling **(707) 629-3344**.

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Fire protection agencies in this unit are benefited by convenient access to helpful and pertinent information, which is compiled in the Lower Mattole Fire Atlas for the area.

“ The Lower Mattole 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>11</sup> ”

FIGURE 4.12.3 MATTOLE–LOST COAST FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCES <sup>12</sup>			
PERSONNEL	SERVES		RESPONSE
	RESIDENTS	AREA (SQ. MI)	
<b>PETROLIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (PVFD) – PHONE: (707) 629-3558</b> <b>EMAIL: <a href="mailto:petroliafire@frontier.net">petroliafire@frontier.net</a></b>			
22 Volunteer 4 Auxiliary	500	150	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Structure defense and wildland fire</li> <li>○ Emergency medical and rescue services</li> <li>○ Services provided from fire station in Downtown Petrolia</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE APPARATUS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water tender, 2,100-gallon</li> <li>○ Type-1 engine, 750-gallon</li> <li>○ (2) Type-3 engines, 500 gallons each</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BLS medical rescue van</li> <li>○ All-terrain vehicle (ATV) with a winch and a “Side-x-Side” set up for medical rescue</li> <li>○ Quick attack pick-up truck</li> </ul>	
<b>HONEYDEW VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY (HVFC) – PHONE: 707-986-7688 (DISPATCH)</b> <b>EMAIL: <a href="mailto:honeydew@asis.com">honeydew@asis.com</a> WEB: <a href="http://www.honeydewfire.com">www.honeydewfire.com</a></b>			
14 Volunteer 4 Auxiliary	600	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Structure defense and wildland fire</li> <li>○ Emergency medical and rescue services</li> <li>○ Services provided from three strategically located fire stations</li> </ul>
<b>FIRE APPARATUS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (3) Type-6 wildland “quick-attack” engines</li> <li>○ Utility truck</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Water tender</li> <li>○ 6-wd water tender, 500 gallon</li> </ul>	

**4.12.5 MATTOLE–LOST COAST EVACUATION**

Evacuation from the Mattole–Lost Coast Planning Unit will depend on law enforcement recommendations based on *fire behavior*, wind pattern, traffic, and ingress of emergency vehicles. The Mattole Road is the central west to east ingress and egress route, along with the north to south running Wilder Ridge Road. There are numerous smaller roads connecting residences to neighborhoods on Mattole Road. 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.

**Fire behavior:** The manner in which a fire reacts to the influences of fuel, weather, and topography. Common terms used to describe behavior include: smoldering, creeping, running, spotting, torching, and crowning.

<sup>11</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 61).

<sup>12</sup> Humboldt Fire Safe Council. (2018). Humboldt County Fire Chiefs’ Association Annual Report, 2017. Retrieved from <https://humboldt.gov/Archive.aspx?AMID=75>

FIGURE 4.12.4 MATTOLE—LOST COAST: POTENTIAL EVACUATION ROUTES

- West or East along **Mattole Road** towards Ferndale or Humboldt Redwoods State Park respectively
- South on **Wilder Ridge Road** towards Ettersburg

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 alternate 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 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 or evacuation of residents.

“Many roads are not maintained properly to allow access to firefighting apparatus, nor are they labeled with addresses or water storage.”<sup>13</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>14</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.

**Humboldt Alert: Humboldt County’s Mass-Notification System**

- ❖ The best way for emergency personnel to alert you of an emergency in your geographic area. You may choose to be contacted by email, text message, landline, or cellphone – or all four.
- ❖ It is geographically targeted. You will only receive alerts relevant to your geographic area, which is based on the address(es) you provide. The system can hold multiple addresses under one account (ex. home, office, child’s school).
- ❖ The service is completely free of charge.
- ❖ To sign-up visit: [humboldtgov.org/alerts](http://humboldtgov.org/alerts) or contact the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services **(707) 268-2500**.

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

<sup>13</sup> Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. (2011). Petrolia Community Firewise® Assessment. Retrieved from <https://humboldtgov.org/739/Petrolia>

<sup>14</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (pp. 49-60).

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 Appendix H, Living with Wildfire for more information on preparing for safe evacuation, and evacuation planning for pets and livestock. See also Chapter 5.4.6, Evacuation Preparedness in Part 5, Risk-Assessment Detail for information about evacuation procedures and challenges in Humboldt County.*

#### 4.12.6 MATTOLE–LOST COAST COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Fire awareness within communities in this unit is abetted by the Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan (LMCWPP), 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). The LMCWPP was last updated in 2016.

The LMFSC was founded in 2002 and aims to:

- 6 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>15</sup>

LMFSC 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: [mrc@mattole.org](mailto:mrc@mattole.org).

Since its inception, the LMFSC has partnered with the MRC on fuels reduction and fire safety projects. The MRC supports the efforts of the LMFSC and manages the Fuels Reduction and Fire Planning program. The MRC works with landowners and public resources to create shaded fuel breaks along key public and private access roads, connects landowners with resources for conducting their own fire safe measures, and provides services for fuels reduction including a chipper with crew<sup>16</sup>. The MRC has also contracted with the County of Humboldt to implement 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.

Petrolia and Honeydew both received national Firewise Communities/USA<sup>®</sup> recognition in 2011. The Petrolia Firewise<sup>®</sup> Area includes the town of Petrolia, as well as sections of Mattole Road to the north and southeast of Petrolia, a portion of Conklin Creek Road, and the Lighthouse Road neighborhood. Successful Firewise<sup>®</sup> modifications around Petrolia include: improving signage and defensible space for residents; fuels reduction along roads, schools, community center, and in neighborhoods; and increasing water storage tanks in the area.<sup>17</sup>

The Honeydew Firewise<sup>®</sup> Area includes the town, areas to the north and east of the town, along Bull Creek Road and Applewood Road, a large portion of Mattole Road to the west, and the Wilder Ridge Road neighborhood to the south. Some Firewise<sup>®</sup> modifications accomplished within the community

<sup>15</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 17).

<sup>16</sup> Mattole Restoration Council. (n.d.). Fuels Reduction and Fire Planning [Web]. Retrieved from <http://www.mattole.org/programs/land-management/fire>

<sup>17</sup> Firewise Communities/USA<sup>®</sup> Recognition Program. (2011). Petrolia Community Assessment.

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include: improving defensible space around homes, posting clearly marked addresses and water storage signs, and fuels reduction along roads and in neighborhoods.<sup>18</sup>

Two emergency communication resources exist in this Planning unit as well: a Neighborhood Emergency Service Teams (NEST) list and the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES) deputy coordinators. The NEST list was generated after an earthquake in 1992 to provide a structure for emergency communication in and around Petrolia. It has expanded since then, however, there are still neighborhoods in the communities of Honeydew and Ettersburg which are neither organized nor represented. There are two OES deputy coordinators: one in Petrolia and one near Honeydew.

“ Through the NEST and the local volunteer fire departments, the OES representatives are the line of communication between emergency community needs and OES.<sup>19</sup> ”

**FIGURE 4.12.5 MATTOLE–LOST COAST: FIRE PREVENTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Completed the 2016 <i>Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan</i>, an update to the <i>Lower Mattole Fire Plan</i> of 2002.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintained Firewise® recognition for Petrolia and Honeydew through Action Plan implementation and hosting an annual Firewise® Day.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue to hold at least two annual public meetings of the Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council since 2002.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Shaded Fuel Break Projects MRC completed with USDA funding in the watershed:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Chemise Mountain/Usal Road Fuels Reduction for Neighborhood Safety- 36 acres completed in two phases by 2011</li> <li>● Telegraph Ridge-Fuels Reduction for Neighborhood Safety I and II- 85 acres completed (2008)</li> <li>● Wilder Ridge Fuels Reduction for Neighborhood Safety I and II - 65 acres, 8 miles (2003 and 2005)</li> <li>● Prosper Ridge Fuel Reduction Project - 2 miles (Phase 1- completed in 2005)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prairie/Ridgeline Clearing for Fire Safety:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mill Creek Ridge and Road Fuel Break, funded by USDA and CA FSC Clearinghouse- Completed treatment of 55 acres</li> <li>● Prosper Ridge/North King Prairie on BLM land, federally funded-Active-Treated 110 acres</li> <li>● Prosper Ridge Fuels Reduction Project Phase II, funded by USDA and CA FSC Clearinghouse- Treated 80 acres Completed 2013</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Defensible Space Projects:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lincoln Neighborhood Safety Project and Defensible Space for Neighbors in Need, Two Title 3 funded grants-USDA, funded through Humboldt County with support from Petrolia and Honeydew Fire Companies- Treated four parcels, three completed 2014 and one in 2016</li> <li>● Mattole Chipper Days-funded SRA project 2016-Treated 15 residences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Between 2011 and 2016 over 238 acres were treated under the FLASH program involving approximately 80 separate parcels. The program has received additional funding for 2016-17 and the goal is to treat approximately 35 additional acres.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ MRC assisted CCC shaded fuel break work along 2.5 miles Mattole road, 2 miles on middle Bull Creek Road, and 4 miles along Wilder Ridge Road.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since the development of the Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council in 2002 and with the help of sponsored projects by the Mattole Restoration Council, hundreds of homes have now been treated in the home ignition zone to provide defensible space. The Unit’s communities are more educated than ever before on the need to reduce fuel loads.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support has been provided to the local fire service through Measure Z, a half-cent sales tax passed by Humboldt County voters in 2014. These funds have been used to purchase radios, self-contained breathing apparatus or SCBAs, personal protective equipment, a fire engine, fire hose, and to pay fees for dispatch.</li> </ul>

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

<sup>19</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP. (p. 63).

#### 4.12.7 MATTOLE–LOST COAST LOCAL WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLANS

A tremendous amount of work related to fire-planning has been completed in this planning unit including the publication of the 2016 Lower Mattole CWPP, which is narrower in scope than this county-level CWPP. In addition, the Lower Mattole communities of Petrolia and Honeydew have each completed a Firewise® Action Plan, as part of the Firewise® certification process. The lists below summarize the specific actions and projects recommended by the complimentary plans.

##### Lower Mattole 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 following categories:

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

A complete copy of the Lower Mattole CWPP, including the details of each of the above categories, can be found on the MRC<sup>20</sup> and Humboldt County FSC<sup>21</sup> websites.

##### Petrolia and Honeydew Firewise® Action Plans

The Petrolia Firewise® Action Plan and Honeydew Firewise® Action Plan were first completed in 2011, as a result of the community Firewise® assessments conducted in their respective communities. The two Plans each contain 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. The actions laid out in both plans are identical, given the common fire risks these neighboring communities face and the common resources they have at their disposal. These actions are consistent with implementation of the Lower Mattole CWPP. To view the full plans, visit the MRC or Humboldt County FSC website.

#### 4.12.8 MATTOLE–LOST COAST COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL PROJECTS

As part of the collaborative planning process to create this CWPP, 14 community wildfire preparedness workshops were held throughout the County. *See Chapter 1.2, Collaborative Planning Process and Appendix B, Planning Process Details for more information.* The workshop for this planning unit was held on November 28, 2017 at the Mattole Grange with the following goals:

##### **Provide information:**

- Fire protection capabilities and needs.
- Prevention of unplanned human-caused wildfires.
- Wildfire and emergency preparedness.
- The role of wildfire in our local environment.
- The Humboldt County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

##### **Seek Information:**

- Obtain local knowledge and concerns regarding assets and hazards.
- Provide an opportunity for direct input into priorities for community fire safety.

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<sup>20</sup> Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council. (2016). Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan [PDF]. Retrieved from [http://www.mattole.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LM\\_CWPP\\_2016-FINAL.pdf](http://www.mattole.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/LM_CWPP_2016-FINAL.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Humboldt County Fire Safe Council. (2016). Lower Mattole FSC. Lower Mattole Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Retrieved from <https://humboldtqov.org/640/Lower-Mattole-FSC>

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Through the initial 2004-2005 fire-planning process and the 2012 and 2017 CWPP update processes dozens of projects were identified for this planning unit through a community workshop mapping exercise. These projects are illustrated on the community-identified projects map found at the end of this Unit Action Plan (*Map 4.12.3*). For more information on the mapping exercise, see *Appendix B.5, Mapping Exercise Instructions*. The community-identified fire hazards, protection resources, and assets and values at risk discussed throughout this Planning Unit Action Plan (*Map 4.12.2*) also reflect information generated by these community workshop mapping exercises, as well as information resulting from direct outreach to local fire departments and residents.

The data collected through these planning processes can also be viewed in the GIS layers within the fire-planning GIS Portal. The GIS Portal allows users to search for and view specific community-identified fire-planning features by location or to zoom into a desired area from an aerial view. The GIS Portal also provides descriptions of each planning feature. To access the Portal, go to: [webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP). For a copy of fire-planning feature descriptions in table format, please contact the Office of Natural Resources Planning by phone **(707) 267-9542**, or email [cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us).

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.

The following non-geographic community-identified project ideas have been identified through the planning process described above and will not be found on the maps or in the GIS Portal but are important to note.

FIGURE 4.12.6 MATTOLE–LOST COAST: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PROPOSED PROJECTS, NON GEOGRAPHIC
○ Increase participation by California State Parks and BLM in the Lower Mattole FSC.
○ Multi-lingual outreach regarding vegetation management/defensible space
○ Develop strategy to educate seasonal workers.

The local residents who attended the November 28, 2017 workshop identified the following projects as their top priority projects to be evaluated for feasibility and implemented over the next five years.

FIGURE 4.12.7 MATTOLE–LOST COAST: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PRIORITY PROJECTS		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT ID
Chambers Road eucalyptus grove forest cleanup and roadside clearing	Roadside Clearance	PET065
Chambers Road bridge repair for emergency access	Infrastructure	PET272
System of ridgetop fuel breaks/prescribed burns	Non-geographic	-
Water tank at Honeydew School	Water	PET284

#### 4.12.9 MATTOLE–LOST COAST ACTION PLAN

Ideally, everything recommended in this action plan will be implemented. However, implementation will be subject to the availability of funds and other resources, and the willingness and ability of community members and plan partners to take action. Any recommended vegetation treatments in this CWPP must be undertaken with the consent and involvement of the property owner and the observance of all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

The following Action Plan is intended as a resource to guide and inspire action, as well as to cite in grant applications to leverage implementation funds.

##### Priority Action Recommendations:

The following recommendations are based on a review and evaluation of community-identified fire planning features, local fire planning documents where they exist, and findings from this Humboldt County CWPP risk assessment. Given the results of this analysis, a growing understanding of local capacity, and potential supporting resources, it was determined that the following list of priority actions would best serve as a starting place towards the fire safety of the communities in this planning unit.

- **M**aintain and support the LMFSC to facilitate community wildfire preparedness and mitigation. Reach out to establish increased participation from Humboldt Redwoods State Parks and BLM and unrepresented neighborhoods. Enhance outreach and education programs by developing multi-lingual materials and reaching out to seasonal workers. Inspire more community involvement in and support of the LMFSC with outreach about what they do and how to get involved.
- **M**aintain the supportive relationship between the MRC and the LMFSC and work together to implement the LM CWPP and local Firewise® action plans.
- **S**upport and expand the fire and fuels resources offered by the MRC through the Fuel Reduction and Fire Planning Program.
  - Continue to work with landowners to plan and implement shaded fuel breaks along roadways and around infrastructure, plan large-scale fuel breaks and community safety projects in the Mattole Watershed.
  - Continue to offer the chipper program through MRC.
  - Continue to provide defensible space incentives and/or grant-funded work.
  - Work with the Humboldt County FSC to secure more funding to continue and expand the FLASH program or a similar program.
- **D**evelop a disaster communication strategy by expanding the NEST phone tree area and diversify communication methods. Coordinate this work the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES), CAL FIRE, and other applicable entities.
- **W**ork with landowners, partners (local firefighters), and agencies to develop a strategy and funding plan to implement and maintain a system of ridgetop fuel breaks and prescribed burns.
- **T**ake part in fire ecology and conservation/restoration efforts designed to restore fire to Mattole ecosystems without damaging natural and community resources.
- **C**ollaborate with the Humboldt County Roads Division to strategically identify priority road maintenance and brushing in areas where conditions are impacting or have the potential to

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impact emergency response and safe evacuation. Review the Humboldt County Rural Transportation and Access Partnership program for applicability to local issues.<sup>22</sup>

- **C**ollaborate with local fire departments, CAL FIRE, emergency dispatch centers, Humboldt County Planning and Building, and the Humboldt County Roads Division to develop a strategy to address confusion about official and common names for roads.
- **E**stablish the HVFC as an official fire protection district supported by consistent and dependable revenue sources.
- **S**upport the HVFC's effort to purchase a much needed fire truck.
- **A**ssist in the development of recruitment and retention strategies for the Petrolia and Honeydew volunteer fire departments.
- **S**ecure resources to update and maintain the Lower Mattole Fire Atlas.
- **C**hambers Road bridge repair to ensure access for firefighting engines and water tankers. The current bridge is temporary and unrated for heavy loads.
- **W**ork with the HCFSC to share successful local strategies to help inspire similar action throughout the county.

### Action Catalogue:

This Action Catalogue lists additional suggested actions can be used as a menu to select wildfire mitigation actions in addition to or to compliment the priority actions above. Action items are organized under each of the six countywide Action Plan goal categories outlined in Part 3 of this CWPP. Local groups are encouraged to implement these actions within their communities wherever possible and to actively seek opportunities to engage with and benefit from the associated work being done countywide by the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC). To contact the HCFSC, call **(707) 267-9542**, or email [cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:cimmitt@co.humboldt.ca.us). In addition, the Lower Mattole CWPP and local Firewise Action Plans provide detailed recommendations similar to the general guidance listed on the following pages. To guide local action, review those plans first.

### **Wildfire Ignition Prevention**

- **I**mplement One Less Spark education: [readyforwildfire.org/one-less-spark-campaign](http://readyforwildfire.org/one-less-spark-campaign).
- **U**se *Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California* as a primary outreach tool and distribute widely: [humboldt.gov/livingwithwildfire](http://humboldt.gov/livingwithwildfire).
- **I**dentify primary ignition sources in the local community and focus prevention efforts on reducing them.
- **I**ncrease community awareness and access to information about proper methods for safe pile-burning, prescribed fire, and other fuel reduction strategies that could result in an unintended wildfire.
- **I**nform residents about the importance of vigilance and caution during Red Flag conditions when a small ignition has a higher probability of growing into a large fire.

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<sup>22</sup> Contact County Roads for more information: <https://humboldt.gov/1405/Road-Equipment-Maintenance>

## Wildfire Preparedness

- **D**evelop a wide range of opportunities for community education on preparing for wildfire. This effort should involve the production and or distribution of a variety of informational materials. Use existing materials as much as possible and develop materials tailored to the local community as needed and able. Distribute materials through mailers, via community hubs such as the post office, at all community events, on community bulletin boards, through the use of social media, local media outlets, and any means used by the local community to share important information.
- **P**rovide residents with information about ways to reduce structural ignitability and maintain adequate defensible space around their homes.
- **C**ollaborate to maintain defensible space for elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who are unable to do or fund the work themselves.
- **F**ocus roadside fuel reduction efforts on priority ingress and egress routes for safe evacuation. Priority roads to evaluate include:
  - Chambers Road eucalyptus grove forest cleanup and roadside clearing
  - Green Fir Road
  - Cooksie Ridge Road
  - Old Hindley Road
  - Mattole/Bull Creek Road
  - Panther Gap
  - Wilder Ridge Road
  - Lighthouse Road
  - Conklin Creek Road
- **W**ork with PG&E and local landowners to reduce fuels along powerline easements.
- **R**aise awareness of Sudden Oak Death and the fire hazard that afflicted trees pose. Identify hot-spots for Sudden Oak Death infected trees. Conduct fuels reduction projects in those areas to prevent spread and mitigate fire hazard. Seek guidance from organizations such as University of California Cooperative Extension.
- **W**ork with commercial timberland owners such as Green Diamond Resource Company to create strategic fuelbreaks on their land.
- **C**ollaborate with agency and local partners to plan and fund landscape level fuels reduction and management. Match the site with the best method of treatment including prescribed fire, forest thinning, landscape pruning, mowing, or targeted grazing. Evaluate the following priority areas:
  - Shenanigan Ridge
  - Prosper Ridge
  - Appletree Ridge
  - Boots Canyon Ridgeline

## Disaster Preparedness

- **W**ork with the County Office of Emergency Services (OES) and local fire service to engage community members in evacuation preparedness and the identification of local evacuation routes and sites. The locally produced Lower Mattole Fire Atlas will be an important resource for this. In addition, identify local community liaisons to work directly with emergency management officials.
- **I**mprove community communication networks and explore way to increase redundancy. This might include developing a community phone tree list; compiling a list of contacts to call in case of emergency or when help is needed from (or in) other areas. As another form of emergency communication, consider training or identifying a few community members to use HAM Radios and secure funds to purchase radios and store them strategically throughout the community. (See Priority Action Recommendation above for Unit specific approach).
- **W**ork with a local fire or law enforcement agency to form a Community Emergency Response Team or CERT. Coordinate with the Humboldt CERT Coalition.
- **F**ocus evacuation planning efforts in populated areas located along single access roads. Priority roads for outreach efforts include:
  - Prosper Ridge Road, particularly residences above the Matthews Ranch Road connection.
  - Chambers Road
  - Conklin Creek Road
  - Evergreen Way
  - Green Fir Road
  - Spur roads to neighborhoods off Bull Creek Road (also referred to as “Mattole Road” in the County road system).
  - Doreen Drive
- **P**romote the creation of family disaster and evacuation plans.
- **I**nform residents about Humboldt Alert and encourage them to sign up to receive emergency notifications at [humboldt.gov/alerts](http://humboldt.gov/alerts).
- **W**ork with residents to ensure adequate road and home address signage for more efficient emergency response. Signs should be large, reflective, and have lettering at least three-inches in height. Less noticeable but more sentimental address signs may remain but it is important to post reflective signs as well.
- **A**ddress road conditions that inhibit effective evacuation and access by emergency responders. Begin by systematically identifying and mitigating such access impediments (See Priority Action Recommendation above for Unit specific approach). The following priority access issues were identified at community workshops and or through analysis and are recommended for initial evaluation and action:
  - Prosper Ridge Road, particularly residences above the Matthews Ranch Road connection.
  - Chambers Road
  - Conklin Creek Road

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- Evergreen Way
  - Green Fir Road
  - Spur roads to neighborhoods off of Bull Creek Road (also referred to as “Mattole Road” in the County road system).
  - Doreen Drive
- **I**nform residents about the importance of keeping local gates open or accessible during Red Flag conditions. Community members should consider providing a key or access code to the local fire department.
  - **I**nform residents of the need to have accessible, mapped and identifiable water sources for fire suppression, and to share that information with local fire departments/companies. This type of activity can be supported by a “Blue Dot” program, which identifies the location of firefighting water sources by marking them with blue reflective dots.
  - **I**ncrease the availability of water for fire protection by investing in more community water tanks and ensuring existing water tanks are outfitted with fittings compatible with firefighting equipment. Priority water needs to evaluate include:
    - Water tank at the Honeydew School
    - Water tank at Lighthouse Road

### Fire Protection

- **S**upport the local fire departments by becoming a volunteer. Volunteer firefighters and volunteers who are emergency medical service (EMS) trained are essential to a functional local fire service. In addition, volunteers are needed for non-firefighting and EMS duties such as logistical support, traffic control, administration, fundraising, public education, and fire prevention.
- **A**ssist in the development of recruitment and retention strategies for volunteer fire departments.
- **H**elp local fire departments raise funds by making donations directly and/or organizing fundraising events or campaigns.

### Restoration of Beneficial Fire

- **P**rovide resources to private landowners interested in implementing prescribed burns on their property, including the contact information for CAL FIRE, UC Cooperative Extension, the Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association, and the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council.
- **S**hare information about educational events that provide information about prescribed burning.
- **E**ncourage landowners with larger acreages to work with the Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association to conduct prescribed burns on their lands.
- **H**elp federal land managers garner local support for using prescribed fire or managed wildfire on the public lands they manage.

### Integrated Planning

- **E**nsure that the LMFSC continues to be represented on the Humboldt County FSC.
- **L**MFSC work with the PVFD and HVFC, the MRC, and other community groups to implement the priority projects identified in the Lower Mattole CWPP, Local Firewise Action Plans, and at community meetings.
- **C**oordinate the implementation and maintenance of the Lower Mattole CWPP, this CWPP, and Firewise Assessments and Action Plans.
- **L**MFSC assist Petrolia and Honeydew to renew participation in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program annually. This will include active implementation and maintenance of the Firewise® action plan and organizing an annual Firewise® Day.
- **S**hare GIS data sets between local representatives and County staff to maintain the fire planning features included in the County Web GIS Portal ([webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6\\_CWPP](http://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP)).