

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2019

### Table of Contents — Appendix G: Background for Wildfire Protection

G.1	Local Fire-Protection Organizations.....	G-1
	County Service Area (CSA) – (1).....	G-1
	Community Services Districts – (4).....	G-1
	City Fire Departments – (1).....	G-1
	Fire Protection Districts – (19).....	G-2
	Resort Improvement District – (1).....	G-2
	Tribal Fire Departments – (3).....	G-2
	Volunteer Fire Companies – (11).....	G-2
G.2	Cooperative Agreements.....	G-2

### Figures

Figure G.1	USFS Statewide and Regional-Level Cooperative Fire Agreements.....	G-2
Figure G.2	SRNF Forest-Wide Fire Assistance Agreements and Local Operating Plans.....	G-3
Figure G.3	SRNF Agreements With Humboldt County Local Volunteer Fire Departments for Fire Suppression Assistance and Assistance-By-Hire for Wildfire Incidents.....	G-3

## APPENDIX G — BACKGROUND FOR WILDFIRE PROTECTION

### G.1 LOCAL FIRE-PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS

Local fire services are provided in Humboldt County through a variety of different organizations including fire related districts, joint powers authorities, and associations. The following is a description of fire organizations in Humboldt County. Each sub-heading is followed by the number of fire organizations of that type, in parentheses.

#### County Service Area (CSA) – (1)

*County Service Areas* (CSAs), authorized under §25210.1 of the Government Code, are generally single purpose, dependent special districts governed by the County Board of Supervisors. In Humboldt County, there is one fire related CSA, called CSA No. 4. CSA No. 4 is essentially a funding mechanism developed to provide structural fire protection in the coastal area located south of Orick and north of Crannell, not including the City of Trinidad. Through an *Amador Agreement*,<sup>1</sup> the County contracts with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to provide structural fire protection within CSA No. 4. The Westhaven Volunteer Fire Company also provides service within CSA No. 4, but is not a recipient of CSA No. 4 funding.

#### Community Services Districts – (4)

*Community Service Districts* (CSDs) are sometimes called junior cities and are authorized under §61000 et seq. of the Government Code. CSDs can provide a broad range of municipal services (primarily to unincorporated areas), including fire protection. CSDs are normally governed by a five-member elected Board of Directors and can receive revenue from taxes and fees. In cases where a CSD is responsible for fire protection in Humboldt County, services are provided by a volunteer fire department with facilities and funding provided by the CSD. Two CSDs in Humboldt County, Carlotta and Ruth Lake, provide fire protection and no other services. Most of the Ruth Lake CSD is located in Trinity County, along with the District's fire station and firefighters. Consequently, details about the Ruth Lake CSD are not addressed in this plan and the District is not counted here. In 2017, the Weott CSD was not able to renew a lease agreement for the property where the volunteer fire department station was located. The fire station had to be shut down and response operations have ceased. The CSD is considering the process of removing fire protection from its charter and for that reason the district is not counted here as an active fire service provider.

#### City Fire Departments – (1)

The cities of Eureka and Trinidad have city fire departments. The City of Eureka is the only city in Humboldt County that provides fire protection services with full-time staff members. The City of Eureka's fire department is staffed with career firefighters and the department also maintains a contingent of volunteer firefighters. The City fire department is operationally combined with Humboldt #1 Fire Protection District under a single fire chief. Humboldt Bay Fire represents the consolidation of the Eureka Fire Department (protecting the City of Eureka) and the Humboldt No. 1 Fire Protection District (protecting the greater Eureka area, outside the City limits). Consolidation talks were ongoing for 50+ years until finally the Humboldt Bay Fire Joint Powers Agreement was signed in November of 2012, officially combining the two entities. For that reason Humboldt Bay Fire is counted once below under fire protection districts.

The City of Trinidad receives service from an all-volunteer city fire department. All other cities in the county receive fire protection services from a fire department associated with a fire protection district.

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<sup>1</sup> The Amador agreement continues CAL FIRE staffing and station coverage through the winter "off season" and is defined in: California Public Resources Code, sections 4143 & 4144. (2005).

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2019

### Fire Protection Districts – (19)

*Fire Protection Districts* (FPDs) are authorized under §13800 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code to provide fire protection and emergency medical services. FPDs are generally governed by a three- or five-member, elected Board of Directors. The Board of Supervisors (BOS) governs three of the FPDs in Humboldt County and, in these cases, it is the BOS that appoints a local board of fire commissioners. The majority of the FPDs in Humboldt County are staffed entirely by all-volunteer fire departments.

### Resort Improvement District – (1)

Resort Improvement Districts (RIDs) are authorized under §13000 of the Public Resources Code to provide a broad range of services (similar to CSDs) to unincorporated areas that are occupied seasonally for recreation/resort purposes. In Humboldt County, RID No. 1 provides municipal services to the community of Shelter Cove; the RID provides fire protection services through the Shelter Cove Volunteer Fire Department.

### Tribal Fire Departments – (3)

The Hoopa Fire Department is the largest tribal department within Humboldt County and is a chartered stand-alone organization within tribal government, solely operated and managed by the Hoopa Valley Tribe. The Hoopa Fire Department is a national resource and responds across the nation to provide assistance to local, state, and federal agencies when requested. Hoopa Volunteer Fire and Rescue is a volunteer fire company that also provides services to the Hoopa Valley Reservation. The Karuk Tribe supports a fire and fuels program under their Department of Natural Resources with offices in Humboldt County (Orleans) and Siskiyou County (Happy Camp and Yreka). The Wildland Fire Crew is dispatched by the Klamath National Forest for any federal emergency and reimbursed through the BIA. The Karuk program is primarily based outside of Humboldt and is not considered a primary local county resource in this plan. The Yurok Tribe has limited staff and resources to provide contract wildland firefighting services through the BIA. The Yurok Volunteer Fire Department is a local fire company which, when active, provides fire and rescue services to the Upper Yurok Reservation. The Yurok Volunteer Fire Department is not counted in this version of the CWPP because its activity status is unknown.

### Volunteer Fire Companies – (11)

Volunteer firefighters are the fire protection backbone of rural Humboldt County. Although almost all fire departments in Humboldt County are staffed by volunteers, most departments are associated with a local government organization such as a city or special district. Most *Volunteer Fire Companies* (VFCs) are organized pursuant to Health and Safety Code §14825 et seq., or by other means, and these organizations often establish themselves as non-profit 501(c)3 corporations.

## G.2 COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

**FIGURE G.1 USFS STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL-LEVEL COOPERATIVE FIRE AGREEMENTS**

- Five Party Agreement with CAL FIRE, USFS, BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service (Provides for interagency response to wildfires within the state of California)
- California Fire Assistance Agreement with California OES, CAL FIRE, USFS, BLM and NPS (Cooperative Agreement for acquisition of local government resources by the Resource/ Wildland Fire agencies for assistance on wildfires within California).
- Northwest Area and Oregon Cooperative Fire Agreement
- California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan
- National Park Service Cooperative Agreement
- California Conservation Corps
- Memorandum of Agreement for the Development of a Collaborative Fuels Treatment Program (USDA, DOI, National Association of State Foresters, and the National Association of Counties)

## HUMBOLDT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2019

### FIGURE G.2 SRNF FOREST-WIDE FIRE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENTS AND LOCAL OPERATING PLANS

- Hoopa Valley Tribe (Fire Department)
- CAL FIRE-Humboldt Del-Norte Unit
- Redwood National Park
- Bureau of Land Management (Kings Range)
- California Conservation Corps (Fortuna)
- Incident Service Agreement with The Native Service Crew
- Local Operating Plan with Six Rivers NF, Siskiyou NF, and Redwood NP
- Humboldt County (use of Rhonerville airport for landing aircraft involving wildfire suppression activities)
- Memorandum of Understanding Between the Karuk Tribe of California and USDA FS Six Rivers and Klamath National Forests
- Memorandum of Understanding Between the Yurok Tribe and USDA FS Six Rivers National Forest

### FIGURE G.3 SRNF AGREEMENTS WITH HUMBOLDT COUNTY LOCAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS FOR FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSISTANCE AND ASSISTANCE-BY-HIRE FOR WILDFIRE INCIDENTS

- Orleans Volunteer Fire Department
- Willow Creek Volunteer Fire Department
- Hoopa Volunteer Fire Department