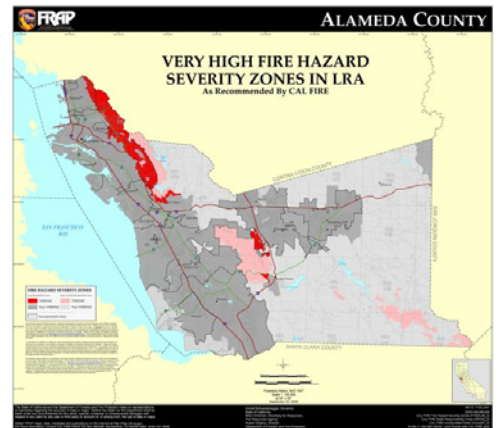


## Strategic Plan Aims to Reduce Wildfire Threat

Did you know that Alameda County contains over 100 watersheds and almost 22,000 acres of land subject to high or extreme wildfire conditions? The Alameda County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), 18 months in the making, provides for the first time a comprehensive plan to address the wildfire threat countywide.

Fire records for Alameda County document an active, damaging, and costly fire history. The area's unique ecology--particularly the topography, climate, and vegetation--provides the setting for a catastrophic fire to strike. While large-scale fires do not occur every year, when they do, they are often exacerbated by extreme wind conditions that make them very difficult to contain.

To create the plan, the Diablo Fire Safe Council, Oakland Wildfire Prevention Assessment District (WPAD), and other project partners worked with residents, representatives of federal, regional, state, and local agencies, and with community organizations. Richard Kauffman and Barbara Goldenberg participated on behalf of Friends of Sausal Creek. The plan's goals are to increase cooperation and collaborative planning among the various entities responsible for fire safety and to develop strategic, cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive fuel management projects.



"When you talk about fuel management, native plants are an essential part of the conversation, because they tend to be less fire prone than invasives," says Richard Kauffman, volunteer coordinator at Beaconsfield Canyon. "The CWPP can help bring attention to the important role that vegetation plays in wildfire prevention."

Creating the CWPP involved compiling myriad existing documents, analyzing fire behavior potential (based on fuels, topography, and historical weather conditions), and collaborating with homeowners, representatives of special interest groups, and agency officials. The planners were careful to create a document that complements local agreements and existing plans for wildfire protection so implementation efforts can be more efficient and more easily coordinated.

Key elements of the plan are:

- development and implementation of fuel management plans that are strategic, cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally sensitive
- educational programs that explain fire risk, promote voluntary citizen involvement, and emphasize long-term strategies for creating and maintaining fire resistant communities
- selecting areas and projects where resources can be put to use efficiently and with maximum benefit.



To that end, stakeholder participation and regular review are central to maintaining the ideas and priorities of the CWPP. The plan is designed to reflect changes in practices, technology, and information as they become available.

The CWPP's recommendations for prioritizing mitigation activities are organized into four broad categories:

- information, education, and collaborative planning
- enhanced suppression capability and emergency preparedness
- fuel reduction treatments around homes and on public lands
- improving survivability of structures.

Several action plan summaries identify implementation steps, lead organizations and partners, timeframes, and funding needs. Many of the recommended actions will require commitments over many years to address the complex hazards. Some activities have current funding, but additional funding will be needed to address all of the issues in the plan on an ongoing basis.

FOSC board member Barbara Goldenberg, formerly chair of the Citizens' Advisory Council to the WPAD, says, "Countless hours have been spent by FOSC staff, volunteers, and board members researching fire mitigation methods in sensitive habitats and educating the WPAD. Many of these lessons can now be easily disseminated through the CWPP and will be available not only to cities but to individual homeowners to reduce the fire risk in their own yards and neighborhoods."

The Alameda County Community Wildfire Protection Plan will be available for public review from April 2 through May 4. FOSC members are encouraged to download the draft at [www.diablofiresafe.org/ala\\_co\\_CWPP.html](http://www.diablofiresafe.org/ala_co_CWPP.html).

The Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC) is asking for input on additional projects. Look for the small grey boxes in Sections 3, 4, and 5 in the draft plan for examples of how priority projects are being described. They have also asked our readers to submit corrections or additions to the text and for community assistance to keep the plan current.



For more information visit the DFSC website at [www.diablofiresafe.org](http://www.diablofiresafe.org) or contact Cheryl Miller, executive coordinator for the council at [DFSCMiller@comcast.net](mailto:DFSCMiller@comcast.net).