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## 5.4 COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

Each year, there is a window of high fire risk for every Humboldt County community when conditions are just right for a single fire ignition to have potentially devastating consequences. Firefighters worry about the perfect storm of high fire danger during the wildfire season when local and state firefighting resources are committed to other incidents. A wildfire ignition during one of these periods could potentially spread quickly, threatening citizens’ lives, as well as homes, schools, and businesses. **This chapter focuses on community preparedness efforts to mitigate wildfire losses and help Humboldt residents adapt to living in a wildfire environment.**

Many Humboldt County residents live in what is commonly referred to as the *Wildland-Urban Interface*, or WUI, where homes are intermixed with a wildland, or natural environment. For people living in these areas—especially, but not exclusively, in the hotter, dryer, inland areas—preparing for the inevitable wildfire is a very serious issue. Fire-prevention activities such as creating defensible space and restoring fire-adapted landscapes must be incorporated into home maintenance routines and family emergency plans.

**Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI):** The zone where structures and other human developments meet, or intermingle with, undeveloped wildlands.

**Fuel Load:** The amount of available and potentially combustible material, usually expressed as tons/acre.

Although a number of communities have taken initiative to increase their fire preparedness, many more Communities at Risk still have multiple unmet hazard-mitigation needs. While public understanding of fire prevention, fire safety, and evacuation planning is increasing in Humboldt County, education is still needed, especially among the smaller, more remote Communities at Risk.

Relatively cool summer temperatures and coastal influences create a false sense of security for many local residents. Population centers in Humboldt County, particularly along the coast, have not experienced a damaging wildfire recently. However, unmanaged *fuel loads* are a growing hazard.<sup>1</sup> Local wildfire history shows that forest fires can burn right down to the ocean. Contrary to common perception, redwood forests do burn, as with the 2003 Canoe Fire (*see picture below*). The community outreach process for this Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) confirmed that many residents are still unaware of their wildfire vulnerability; even fewer are prepared for the eventuality of wildfire. While wildfire has been and will continue to be an integral part of the local landscape, it does not have to mean disaster for local communities. Actively engaging in wildfire preparedness will greatly reduce the potential for the loss of life, property, and other community and natural assets.



Redwood forest fire, Canoe Fire 2003.

Well-prepared communities contribute to the feasibility of the safe reintroduction of fire across the landscape, a practice that is needed to reduce fuel loads and is generally supported in Humboldt County. The more prepared a community is, the more comfortable residents will be with methods of restoring historic fire patterns to the landscape, including cultural and/or prescribed burns, and careful and strategic wildfire management. (*For more information on reintroducing beneficial fire, see Chapters 5.2, and 3.5.*)

There are several local organizations that have been working to prepare their communities for wildfire for over a decade. They are presented in this chapter, with more information for each group in their respective *Planning Unit Action Plan* in *Part 4* of this CWPP. The Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC) supports these local groups by bringing them together to share experiences and develop

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2.2 for more information on wildfire risks.

collaborative strategies to help their communities become more resilient to wildfire.

The organizations and agencies discussed in this chapter are working to prepare Humboldt County communities and are providing a strong framework for executing projects, attracting funding, and educating the community. However, there is still, and will continue to be, more to be done to increase the effectiveness of these groups. In some cases, the local groups below are made up of just a few passionate volunteers. Additional members could boost organizational capacity to increase the number and scale of projects, apply for funding, and increase their reach within the community. Likewise, increased membership can enhance the stability and longevity of an organization. These benefits may also be achieved by nesting the local organization under a larger and/or more established host organization.

A key part of enhancing community preparedness is community-buy in and cooperation. Much of the hazards that threaten communities exist on private land. Private landowners have a responsibility to mitigate these hazards around their own homes and are encouraged to reach out for assistance and information from any one of the groups discussed below. Many of these groups are interested in helping landowners help themselves. Alternatively, landowners may choose to collaborate with one another to reduce fire hazards in their neighborhoods. Such a group could choose to pursue recognition as a Firewise community, as discussed in *section 5.4.2*.

#### 5.4.1 FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

Fire Safe Councils (FSCs) are voluntary organizations that form to support fire preparedness in their communities or neighborhoods. FSCs also provide the ideal forum for communities to discuss, analyze, and solve fire-related issues before they become a crisis. They provide opportunities for local jobs, community partnerships, and wide-spread community involvement. To learn more about forming and sustaining a FSC visit the California FSC website at <http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org/fire-safe-councils>.

##### Humboldt County Fire Safe Council

The Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (HCFSC) was established by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in 2002 and has been active ever since. The primary purpose of the HCFSC is to guide the maintenance and implementation of this plan, the Humboldt County CWPP. When appropriate, it also informs and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. In 2018, the HCFSC consisted of 16 appointed members representing a diversity of expertise and perspectives. The table below outlines current membership.



##### **Humboldt County Fire Safe Council Mission**

*Serve as a forum for the implementation of Humboldt County's CWPP, share fire-safety information, assess fire risk, promote community fire-safe planning and coordination, link fire-prevention programs, and support the fire service and local FSCs.*

**HCFSC meetings provide the agencies and organizations working on fire prevention and protection an opportunity to regularly share information.** At each quarterly meeting, members and partners can provide a summary of their recent work. This information-sharing process is a critical contribution of the HCFSC towards increased collaboration and communication in the county.

*Section C.1 in Appendix C, **Accomplishments** highlights some of the key accomplishments of the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council since 2013.*

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The **HCFSC** meets quarterly to discuss progress on projects and share ideas. Special presentations are often made by a wildfire mitigation, management, or community preparedness experts. All are welcome to these public meetings. *Meetings dates and locations, and more information about the HCFSC is available at [humboldtqov.org/firesafecouncil](http://humboldtqov.org/firesafecouncil).*

**FIGURE 5.4.1 HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL 2018 MEMBERSHIP**

**Four at-large appointees, currently representing:**

- Southern Humboldt Fire Chiefs’ Association
- Southern Humboldt FSC
- Van Duzen Watershed FSC
- Willow Creek FSC

**Five appointees, one by each member of the Board of Supervisors, currently:**

- District 1: Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council and the Honeydew Fire Company
- District 2: Briceland Fire Protection District and the Southern Humboldt Technical Rescue Team
- District 3: Humboldt Bay Fire
- District 4: Local Insurance Industry
- District 5: Orleans/Somes Bar FSC

**Four appointees representing specific agencies or organizations:**

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
- Hoopa Valley Tribe
- Humboldt County Fire Chiefs’ Association
- Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services

**Three non-voting appointees representing specific agencies:**

- Bureau of Land Management
- Humboldt County Public Works Director, or designee, acting as a liaison for communication between the HCFSC and the Board of Supervisors
- Six Rivers National Forest

The HCFSC oversaw the creation and implementation of the 2006 Master Fire Protection Plan and the 2013 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). *(See section 1.1.4 for more information on these plans.)* Since then, its work has focused on plan implementation.

The HCFSC formed several subcommittees around the 2013 CWPP Action Plan to ensure implementation of its recommendations. The 2013 Implementation Committees are shown in the following table. In 2017, these committees were disbanded and new Work Groups were created around the current CWPP *Countywide Action Plan*. The 2017-2018 Work Groups are also shown on the following table. *For more detailed information on the current HCFSC Work Groups, see section 1.2.1 CWPP Work Groups in Chapter 1, and Appendix B.2.*

**FIGURE 5.4.2 HCFSC COMMITTEES AND WORK GROUPS**

HCFSC COMMITTEES 2013-2017	HCFSC WORK GROUPS 2018
Helping Firefighters Help You	Wildfire Ignition Prevention
Ensuring Adequate Water Supplies for Fighting Fire	Wildfire Preparedness
Managing Hazardous Fuels	Disaster Preparedness
Maintaining Air Quality	Fire Protection
Firewise® Communities	Restoration of Beneficial Fire
Planning for Safe Evacuation	Integrated Planning

**Local Fire Safe Councils**

There are six local FSCs in Humboldt County, in addition to the HCFSC. These FSCs all contribute in their own way to moving their communities closer to living safely within a wildfire environment. There is some variety in how these FSCs are organized, as well as their approach to and philosophy about community wildfire preparedness. These unique approaches are detailed in the *Planning Unit Action Plans* in Part 4 of this CWPP.



The following table lists currently active local FSCs and their contact information. *Map 5.4.1* later in this chapter shows where most local FSCs operate.<sup>2</sup> This map also includes the areas potentially served by developing tribal FSCs or equivalent organizations for the Hoopa Valley Reservation and Upper Yurok Reservation.

The following areas are where there is potential for a new Fire Safe Council to form:

- Avenue of the Giants (Planning Unit 14),
- Eel (Planning Unit 10), and
- Humboldt Bay Area (Planning Unit 8), specifically the WUI areas around McKinleyville, Fieldbrook, Arcata, Blue Lake, and Eureka.

FIGURE 5.4.3 LOCAL FIRE SAFE COUNCILS IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY			
FIRE SAFE COUNCIL NAME	FORMATION DATE	COUNTY CWPP PLANNING UNIT	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>Orleans/Somes Bar FSC</b> A program of the Mid-Klamath Watershed Council	2001	Mid Klamath (Unit 3)	<b>530-627-3202</b> <a href="mailto:mail@mkwc.org">mail@mkwc.org</a> <a href="http://www.mkwc.org/index.php/programs/fire-fuels">www.mkwc.org/index.php/programs/fire-fuels</a>
<b>Southern Humboldt FSC</b>	2002	Southern Humboldt (Unit 13)	<b>707-923-9109</b> <a href="mailto:bille@asis.com">bille@asis.com</a>
<b>Lower Mattole FSC</b> A program of the Mattole Restoration Council	2002	Mattole-Lost Coast (Unit 12)	<b>707-629-3514</b> <a href="mailto:firesafe@mattole.org">firesafe@mattole.org</a> <a href="http://www.mattole.org/programs/land-management/fire">www.mattole.org/programs/land-management/fire</a>
<b>Van Duzen Watershed FSC</b> A program of the Bridgeville Community Center	2004	Mad-Van Duzen (Unit 11)	<b>707-496-4530 or 707-777-1775</b> <a href="mailto:jlc4660@gmail.com">jlc4660@gmail.com</a>
<b>Crooked Prairie FSC</b>	2005	Southern Humboldt (Unit 13)	<b>707-986-7705</b> <a href="mailto:kw@asis.com">kw@asis.com</a>
<b>Willow Creek FSC</b>	2007	Willow Creek Area (Unit 7)	<b>707-499-0767</b> <a href="mailto:admin@willowcreekfsc.org">admin@willowcreekfsc.org</a> <a href="http://www.willowcreekfsc.org">www.willowcreekfsc.org</a>

Information about each local FSC and its recent accomplishments can be found in Appendix C and in each relevant *Planning Unit Action Plan* in Part 4 of this CWPP.

<sup>2</sup> *Map 5.4.1* does not show the operational area of the Humboldt County FSC, which operates throughout the entire county.

### Tribal Fire Safe Councils

The following tribes have been building functional FSCs:

- **Hoopa Valley Reservation.** The Hoopa FSC was formed in 2013 to assist with the development and implementation of a local CWPP. Members of the Hoopa Fire Department and Office of Emergency Services are working to rebuild the FSC as a venue for implementing the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation CWPP and educating community members about wildfire preparedness.
- **Upper Yurok Reservation.** In 2013, the Yurok tribe recognized the need for a FSC during the update of their Hazard Mitigation Plan. A steering committee/FSC was formed to provide Hazard Mitigation Plan oversight as well as guidance for the development of the associated local CWPP. Although not directly overseen by Tribal governance, the Cultural Fire Management Council currently fills many of the roles of an FSC for communities in the Upper Yurok Reservation area.

More information about the **Hoopa FSC** or its community wildfire preparedness efforts can be found by calling the Hoopa Fire Department at **530-625-4220**, or by emailing Fire Chief Rod Mendes at [hoopaoes@gmail.com](mailto:hoopaoes@gmail.com).

More information about community wildfire preparedness in the **Upper Yurok Reservation** can be found by contacting the **Yurok Tribe** at **530-625-4130**. Information on local cultural burning is available at [culturalfire.org](http://culturalfire.org).

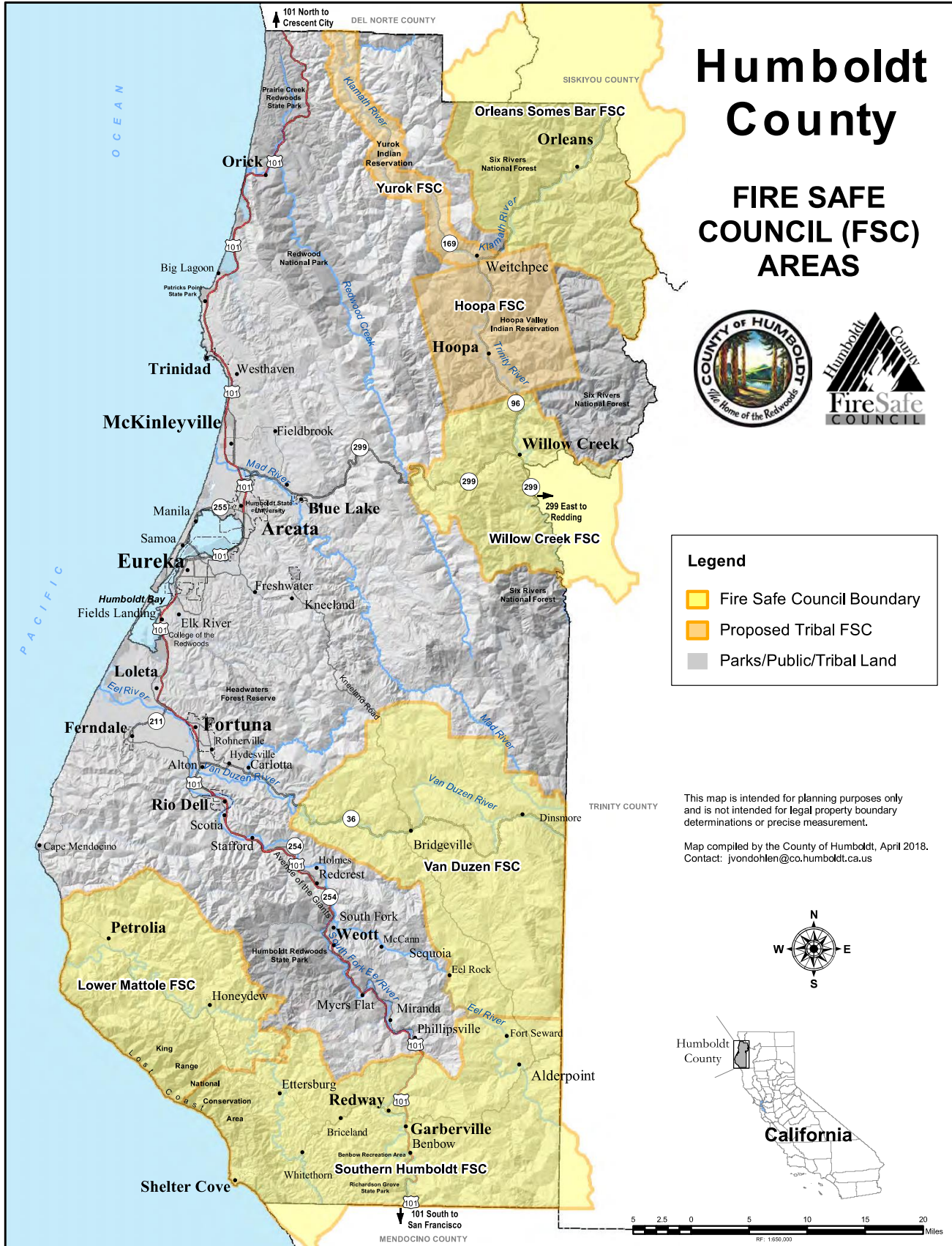
*Information about each tribal FSC can be found in each relevant **Planning Unit Action Plan** in Part 4 of this CWPP.*



*Hoopa Valley prescribed fire.*

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Map 5.4.1. Fire Safe Council Areas



## 5.4.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS ORGANIZATIONS

### Firewise® Communities

The HCFSC and County staff have worked closely with local communities to gain recognition as Firewise® Communities/USA sites. The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise® Communities program teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action to prevent losses. The program provides many tools and resources to local communities and neighborhoods.



These four new communities gained Firewise® recognition since the 2013 CWPP publication:

- Hydesville,
- Kneeland,
- Redwood Valley/Chezem, and
- Shelter Cove.

This brings the list of existing nationally recognized Firewise® Communities in Humboldt County to ten, with the inclusion of these previously recognized communities:

- Bridgeville, pending renewal
- Honeydew,
- Orleans,
- Petrolia,
- Upper Jacoby Creek, and
- Willow Creek.

This plan recommends that the following communities consider becoming recognized Firewise® Communities within the next five years:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| ● Alderpoint                                  | ● Garberville/Redway area |
| ● Avenue of the Giants individual communities | ● Hoopa                   |
| ● Blue Lake and greater area                  | ● Orick                   |
| ● Blue Lake Rancheria                         | ● Westhaven/Trinidad      |
| ● Briceland                                   | ● Whitethorn              |
| ● Ettersburg                                  | ● Table Bluff Reservation |

The HCFSC continues to reach out to new communities to offer support for entering the recognition process. Recognition includes the formation of a committee or board, the development of an action plan based on a community wildfire risk assessment, a minimum per capita investment in wildfire-risk reduction activities, and the production of at least one annual educational event.

*Information about the recent accomplishments of each Firewise® Community, can be found in Appendix C, and in each relevant **Planning Unit Action Plan** in Part 4 of this CWPP.*

### Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association

The Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association (HCPBA) is a collective of landowners, non-governmental organizations, volunteer fire departments, and other community members working together to implement prescribed burning. HCPBA projects include burning for habitat restoration, invasive plant control, fuel reduction, and more. The group was officially formed in March 2018, with a Board of Directors and by-laws. It is currently working towards non-profit status and developing a project prioritization process.

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The HCPBA is the first official prescribed burn association (PBA) in California, joining more than sixty PBAs nationwide. The HCPBA will be able to leverage the energy and resources of individual landowners and community members, and attract outside funding and support where needed, to scale up the use of fire throughout the county and surrounding areas.

For more information on the **Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association**, contact Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative Extension, Area Fire Advisor, **707-445-7351**, [lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu](mailto:lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu).

### Humboldt Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coalition

The Humboldt CERT Coalition (HCC) was formed in April 2014 as an ad-hoc group of CERT Team and Program Leaders to offer peer support, guidelines, collaboration for training opportunities, and refreshers. A Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. Neighborhoods and communities within the county that have the potential for becoming isolated during a large wildfire event are good candidates for reaching out to HCC and forming a CERT. Local CERT members gain awareness of the potential impacts of natural disasters, which can be shared with their fellow community members to help them prepare for disasters.



HCC team members actively promote preparedness in local communities through tabling at local events and participating in like-minded groups and organizations. It facilitates community training by applying for grants to support the 23-hour course, equipment, instructors, logistics, and supplies. There are currently 12 local instructors who have graduated from the nationally approved CERT *Train-the-Trainer* course. One advantage of local instructors is their ability to train agencies that work volunteer teams, in addition to their ability to train more local CERT members.

Many rural areas of Humboldt County that have the greatest need for, and interest in, establishing CERTs lack the agency sponsorship required to form a team. The County CERT currently being developed by the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services in partnership with HCC, will provide CERT training, support, and sponsorship for remote communities. It will function as an incubator for new CERTs and an umbrella for CERT-trained community volunteers without a locally sponsored team.

**FIGURE 5.4.4 LOCAL COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS (CERTS)**

➤ Arcata Police Department	➤ Humboldt Bay Fire
➤ Blue Lake Rancheria	➤ Humboldt State University
➤ City of Blue Lake	➤ Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District/Fire Department
➤ Fortuna Fire Protection District	➤ McKinleyville (interested)
➤ Hoopa	➤ Trinidad (interested)

Learn more about completing the **CERT** training and joining the **Humboldt CERT Coalition** by contacting their chairperson, Linda Nellist at [linda.nellist@humboldt.edu](mailto:linda.nellist@humboldt.edu) or by looking for the “Humboldt CERT Coalition” on Facebook. To learn more about CERTS in general, visit <https://www.ready.gov/community-emergency-response-team>.

### 5.4.3 LOCAL AGENCY FIRE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Fire prevention and education programs can reduce the chance of fire occurring and the cost of damage from fires while supporting fires suppression efforts. Several local agencies provide fire prevention and education programs and are summarized here. Additional programs throughout the county similar to those presented below would benefit Humboldt residents.

#### Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association Fire Prevention Officers Section

Most local fire protection agencies include a division focused on fire prevention and preparedness. The Fire Prevention Officers Section of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association brings together the fire prevention officers of their fire departments throughout the county.

More information about the **Fire Prevention Officers Section** of the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association can be found by emailing Chief Lon Winburn at [lwinburn@fortunafire.com](mailto:lwinburn@fortunafire.com).

#### Humboldt Bay Fire

The fire prevention and safety education activities of Humboldt Bay Fire are closely tied to the themes of the National Fire Protection Association. Humboldt Bay Fire's Fire Prevention Division provides public education in schools, at fairs and other events, and during fire prevention week. It also provides specialized fire-safety classes on fire extinguisher use, first aid, and hazardous materials (for both awareness and operator level). The Community Risk Reduction Division provides information on weed abatement. It can assist with complaints about overgrown vegetation that, if ignited, could endanger nearby properties.



**Humboldt Bay Fire** can be contacted by calling **707-441-4000** or by sending an email to: [info@HBFire.org](mailto:info@HBFire.org). More information can also be found by visiting their website at [hbfire.org](http://hbfire.org).

#### Arcata Fire Protection District

The Arcata Fire Protection District has an active fire prevention and safety education program. District representatives visit local schools to share fire-prevention information. They also host an annual "Open House" where community members can learn more about its services and collect educational materials. The Arcata Fire Protection District also conducts fire-safety inspections at businesses, multi-family residences, schools, daycare centers, and senior residential-care units.



The **Arcata Fire Protection District** can be contacted by calling **707-825-2000** or sending an email to [info@arcatafire.org](mailto:info@arcatafire.org). More information can be found by visiting their website at [arcatafire.org](http://arcatafire.org).

#### Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department

The Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) provides fire prevention and safety services through their Fire Prevention and Public Education Divisions and sponsors a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The VFD implements community-outreach programs to inform the public about fire prevention, provide safety presentations on a range of topics, and distribute informational materials at local community events. In addition, the VFD conducts fire-safety inspections at businesses, residences, schools, daycare centers, and senior residential-care units.



The **Fortuna Volunteer Fire Department** can be contacted by calling **707-725-5021** or sending an email to Fire Chief Lon Winburn at [lwinburn@fortunafire.com](mailto:lwinburn@fortunafire.com). More information can also be found by visiting their website at [fortunafire.com](http://fortunafire.com).

#### 5.4.4 STATE AGENCY FIRE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

##### CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit

The prevention goals of the CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit (HUU) are to reduce wildfire ignitions through education, information, planning, and enforcement. Hence, the CAL FIRE Prevention Bureau, among other duties: enforces state forest and fire laws, oversees defensible space inspections, conducts public education and outreach, and coordinates media outreach.



Defensible space inspections (also known as DSIs, or LE-100 inspections, after the form used to record the information) can be a source of important information for residents who aren't sure how to prepare for wildfire. Inspections can be requested by contacting CAL FIRE. *(See CAL FIRE's local contact information below.)*

HUU's Pre-Fire Planning Battalion supports local community-wildfire preparedness in a variety of ways. Pre-Fire Planning staff provide a variety of planning functions including, but not limited to:

- Environmental review,
- HCFSC member participation,
- Local FSC support,
- *Unit Strategic Fire Plan*<sup>3</sup> maintenance,
- Hazardous fuel-treatment project development,
- Expert analysis for specific County Planning projects,
- State-funded, local fire-prevention project's grant management,
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map development, and
- Prescribed burning support and collaboration to reduce wildfire hazards and promote forest health.

For more information about **CAL FIRE's Fire Prevention Unit** and **Pre-Fire Planning** programs, contact Pre-Fire Planning Battalion Chief Chris Ramey at [chris.ramey@fire.ca.gov](mailto:chris.ramey@fire.ca.gov), visit the Unit webpage at [www.fire.ca.gov/HUU](http://www.fire.ca.gov/HUU), or call **707-725-4413**.

##### North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District

The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) is the regional environmental regulatory agency with jurisdiction over air quality in Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity Counties. NCUAQMD is on the front lines with public health agencies responding to catastrophic wildfire smoke events by providing air quality status and recommendations to the general public.



During wildfire season NCUAQMD provides Public Service Announcements, Advisories, and Alerts to protect public health. If needed NCUAQMD can access air-monitoring instrumentation from the State Air Resources Board cache to supplement existing stationary and temporary instrumentation. They also maintain a Facebook page and a website, <http://www.ncuaqmd.org>, to educate the public about open burning, burn regulations, and how to obtain a burn permit. The website is a communication point for wildfire information.

NCUAQMD is responsible for the regulation of stationary sources of air pollution, including overseeing activities such as prescribed burning, agricultural burning, and residential open burning.

<sup>3</sup> CAL FIRE: Humboldt – Del Norte Unit (HUU). (2017). Strategic Fire Plan Humboldt – Del Norte Unit 2017. Retrieved from [http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire\\_er/fpp\\_planning\\_plans\\_details?plan\\_id=270](http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire_er/fpp_planning_plans_details?plan_id=270)

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Open burning is the use of outdoor fires for disposing of vegetation. *More information on burn permits is available in Appendix I, Regulations and Compliance.*

Each year on average, the District issues about 7,300 burn permits, 700-900 burn authorizations, reviews 150-170 smoke management plans, and receives about 200 open burning complaints. Three dollars (\$3) of each Standard burn permit fee is passed through to the local fire district.

For more information about the **North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD)**, contact Debra Harris, Burn Program Coordinator, by calling **707-443-3093 x122**, or visit their webpage at [www.ncuaqmd.org](http://www.ncuaqmd.org).

### University of California Cooperative Extension

The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Humboldt-Del Norte Counties chapter devotes time, research, and resources to improving fire safety and achieving a greater understanding of the role of fire in human and natural communities. Through its Forestry, Fire, and Forest Health program, UCCE offers science-based information and technical expertise to local landowners, natural resource professionals, and community groups, all in the interest of increasing forest health and resiliency. The program's Area Fire Advisor is a particularly important resource for local groups interested in wildfire preparedness and resiliency. The Fire Advisor works closely with and connects the efforts of the California Fire Science Consortium,<sup>4</sup> the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council,<sup>5</sup> the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network,<sup>6</sup> and the formation of the Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association (*see above*). UCCE is leading efforts to create much-needed information for Humboldt County residents on how to use prescribed fire to reduce fuels on their properties.



More resources and information can be obtained by visiting the Forestry, Fire, and Forest Health program of the **UCCE Humboldt-Del Norte Counties** website: <http://cehumboldt.ucanr.edu/Programs/Forestry>, or calling **707-445-7351**. Lenya Quinn-Davidson, the Area Fire Advisor can be reached at [lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu](mailto:lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu).

### 5.4.5 FEDERAL AGENCY FIRE EDUCATION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

#### Six Rivers National Forest Wildland Fire Prevention Program

The US Forest Service, Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) Wildland Fire Prevention Program focuses primarily on:

- Wildfire detection,
- Wildfire origin and cause investigations,
- State commercial burning permit issuance,
- Public education, and
- Community fire-safety awareness.



SRNF has responded to increasing wildfire severity and duration attributed to excessive fuel buildup, climate change, and increased lightning activity with a fuels program that prioritizes strategically reducing hazardous fuels near communities. Community protection projects and strategic fuel breaks are managed through mechanical treatments and the use of prescribed fire. This strategy is

<sup>4</sup> California Fire Science Consortium: [www.cafiresci.org](http://www.cafiresci.org)

<sup>5</sup> Northern California Prescribed Fire Council: [www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org](http://www.norcalrxfirecouncil.org)

<sup>6</sup> Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network: [www.fireadaptednetwork.org](http://www.fireadaptednetwork.org)

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implemented through close collaboration with FSCs and Resource Advisory Committees. SRNF is also an active collaborator in the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership<sup>7</sup> and has maintained advisory membership on the HCFSC since its inception.

More information on the **SRNF Wildland Fire Prevention Program** can be found by visiting their website at [www.fs.usda.gov/main/srnf/home](http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/srnf/home), calling **707-441-3604**, or by sending an email to Fire Prevention Officer Robert Rivelle at [rivelle@fs.fed.us](mailto:rivelle@fs.fed.us).

### Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Arcata Field Office's wildland fire-prevention efforts are concentrated on community fire-safe awareness. They also educate the public on the benefits of fire prevention and the necessity for a proactive hazardous fuel-management and reduction program.



More information on the **BLM's** wildland fire prevention efforts in Humboldt County can be obtained by contacting District Fire Management Officer, Walter Herzog at [wherzog@blm.gov](mailto:wherzog@blm.gov), calling **530-224-2151**, or the Arcata Field Office at **707-825-2300** or visiting their website at <https://www.blm.gov/office/arcata-field-office>.

### 5.4.6 EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS

Despite fire's natural and beneficial role in the local environment and ongoing efforts to prepare communities to live safely with fire, there will inevitably be wildfire events that require evacuation. The rugged terrain and remote nature of many Humboldt County communities can complicate access to and from residences. Additionally, issues with rural communication infrastructure may prevent timely notification of residents in an emergency. Fire officials and community members have identified many narrow, one-way-in-and-out roads as one of the biggest hazards facing Humboldt County in the event of a large wildfire. Furthermore, historic developments were not created with current fire-safety standards. These older developments, combined with the general disparate nature of Humboldt's rural communities, increase the number of people with challenging evacuation circumstances.

The importance of being prepared and evacuating early during extreme wildfire events cannot be overemphasized. Surviving an extreme event is supported by the following:

- Understanding of the situation at the time of evacuation (situational awareness),
- Confidence in the actions of emergency personnel,
- Clear communications with emergency personnel,
- Adequate pre-planned preparations, and
- A relatively safe location to which one can evacuate.

Despite the best planning, there may be times when residents and visitors may not be able to reach designated evacuation sites. In such cases, people may need to make decisions on their own about seeking shelter where they can survive the passage of the wildfire. Residents should seek shelter as a last resort, when evacuation is not an option. It can be very difficult to determine the right thing to do as the fire approaches, which is why it is so critical to **have a plan** and to **evacuate early**, if possible. Before a wildfire threatens, community members should research options and talk to fire and emergency service representatives about evacuation procedures, expected fire behavior in their neighborhood, and

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<sup>7</sup> Western Klamath Restoration Partnership: [www.wkrp.network](http://www.wkrp.network)

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what to do if they get trapped.<sup>8</sup> If residents are forced to take shelter, the horrific sound, smoke, and heat of a passing wildfire may be physically and emotionally difficult to endure. It may bring some solace and may help combat the natural urge to flee knowing that all possible measures have been taken to increase the odds of survival.

One of the most important first steps for Humboldt residents' evacuation preparedness is signing up for the Humboldt ALERT emergency notification system through the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES).

### 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 (e.g. home, office, child's school).
- ❖ The service is completely free of charge.
- ❖ To sign-up visit: <https://humboldtgov.org/alerts> or contact the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services at 707-268-2500.

**REMEMBER, WE CAN'T ALERT YOU IF WE CAN'T REACH YOU.**



Humboldt County OES is drafting a *Countywide Evacuation Plan*. It has been working closely with the HCFSC to reach out to community members to identify:

- Evacuation barriers such as one-way-in-and-out access roads,
- Potential evacuation shelter sites, and
- Residents who are willing to volunteer as Community Liaisons.

In addition to ongoing evacuation planning, County OES is completing community profiles for high-risk, populated rural areas. These profiles are being coordinated with local volunteer fire departments, community volunteers, and planning partners. Community profiles assess available resources and gaps in communities to pre-identify needs to more efficiently order and assign resources during and following disasters.

*Specific information related to potential evacuation routes is identified in each of the **Planning Unit Action Plans** in Part 4 of this CWPP. See Appendix H, **Living with Wildfire** for more information on preparing for safe evacuation and evacuation planning for pets and livestock.*

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<sup>8</sup> CAL FIRE and Idaho Firewise offer advice on what to do if you become trapped:

<http://www.readyforwildfire.org/What-To-Do-If-Trapped> and <http://idahofirewise.org/evacuation/if-you-get-trapped>.

### Deciphering the Jargon

Evacuation sites and routes are designated at the time of an incident by law enforcement in conjunction with firefighters. These areas generally cannot be designated ahead of time, as they depend greatly on the local weather and other current conditions. Terms like “Safety Zone” and “Temporary Refuge Area” are used operationally by firefighters and not intended to describe locations for public refuge. These areas are identified during wildfire management operations by experienced firefighters and change frequently with conditions and fire line construction progress.

**Evacuation center/site:** A safety zone located within a community—usually on a large, flat, open area—where community members can go in cases of emergency evacuation; oftentimes, temporary shelters are established, and food, water, and medical supplies are distributed at these locations.

**Safety zone:** An area cleared of flammable materials used by firefighters for escape in the event the line is outflanked or in case a spot fire causes fuels outside the line to render the line unsafe. In firing operations, crews progress so as to maintain a safety zone close at hand, allowing the fuels inside the control line to be consumed before going ahead. Safety zones may also be constructed as integral parts of fuel breaks; they are enlarged areas which can be used with relative safety by firefighters and their equipment in the event of a blowup in the vicinity.

**Temporary refuge area:** A preplanned area where firefighters can immediately take refuge for temporary shelter and short-term relief without using a fire shelter in the event that emergency egress to an established Safety Zone is compromised. Examples: lee side of structure, inside of structure, large lawn or parking area, cab of apparatus.