

TRINIDAD PLANNING UNIT ACTION PLAN



Trinidad State Beach. Photo: California State Parks.

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Helpful Links	
LOOK FOR THE WESTHAVEN AND TRINIDAD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS ON FACEBOOK	https://facebook.com
TRINIDAD FIRE DEPARTMENT:	http://trinidad.ca.gov/volunteer-fire-department-0
TRINIDAD RANCHERIA:	https://trinidad-rancheria.org
CAL FIRE HUMBOLDT-DEL NORTE UNIT:	http://www.fire.ca.gov/HUU
HUMBOLDT COUNTY WEB GIS:	https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP
HUMBOLDT COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (HCFSC):	https://humboldt.gov.org/FireSafeCouncil
HCFSC REPRESENTATIVE, CYBELLE IMMITT:	cimmit@co.humboldt.ca.us

4.5 TRINIDAD PLANNING UNIT ACTION PLAN

4.5.1 TRINIDAD PLANNING UNIT DESCRIPTION



*A larger map of this planning unit can be viewed in Man 4.5.1. **Trinidad Planning Unit.***

The Trinidad Planning Unit encompasses over 67,000 acres situated on the northern coast of Humboldt County. Highway 101 is the main transportation route, which runs north-to-south, parallel to the ocean. The Trinidad watershed is the smallest watershed in the county, with 83,684 acres spread along the Pacific coastline; Maple Creek and Little River are its primary waterways, both of which reach less than 20 miles inland.

The City of Trinidad, which was incorporated in 1870, comprises the community population center of this planning unit. Although the local population is small—containing less than 400 people—“the City of Trinidad acts as the commerce hub for around 1,500 inhabitants in the surrounding unincorporated communities, including Westhaven, Patrick’s Point, and Big Lagoon”.¹

The Community of Westhaven is another population center within this unit. Westhaven is an unincorporated area that roughly encompasses the coastal area just north of Little River (near Moonstone Beach) and south of the City of Trinidad. The majority of the population resides within or adjacent to the boundary of the Westhaven Community Services District (WCSD). The WCSD is approximately 384 acres in size and serves a population of approximately 500.²

The area around Trinidad Head once supported the Yurok village of Tsurai, which was occupied until 1916 and is said to be the southernmost of many dozens of Yurok villages.³ Today, Trinidad is bordered by the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria, a federally recognized tribe with ancestral ties to the Yurok, Wiyot, Tolowa, Chetco, Karuk and Hupa peoples located within the ancestral territory of the Yurok. The Trinidad Rancheria is composed of 88 acres of trust lands in the towns of Trinidad, Westhaven, and McKinleyville and has 244 enrolled members.⁴



Also located within this planning unit is the Big Lagoon Rancheria, a federally recognized tribe composed of the Yurok and Tolowa peoples. Their 20 acre reservation is located near the community of Big Lagoon with a population of approximately 17. The Tribe has 24 enrolled members.⁵

¹ County of Humboldt, Natural Resources Planning. (2014). Part 2 – Annexes for Municipalities [PDF]. Humboldt Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan; Volume 2 – Planning Partner Annexes. (p. 10-1). Retrieved from <http://www.humboldtqov.org/506/Local-Hazard-Mitigation>

² County of Humboldt, Natural Resources Planning. (2014). Part 3 – Annexes for Community Service Districts. Humboldt Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan; Volume 2 – Planning Partner Annexes. (p. 17-1).

³ Heizer, R.F. & Milles, J.E. (1952). *The Four Ages of Tsurai: A Documentary History of the Indian Village on Trinidad Bay.* (“Preface”, para. 1). Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

⁴ Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria, prepared by Wise Oak Consulting. (2018). Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. [Draft PDF]. Retrieved from https://trinidad-rancheria.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Trinidad_Rancheria_HMP_Draft_October_19_2018compressed.pdf

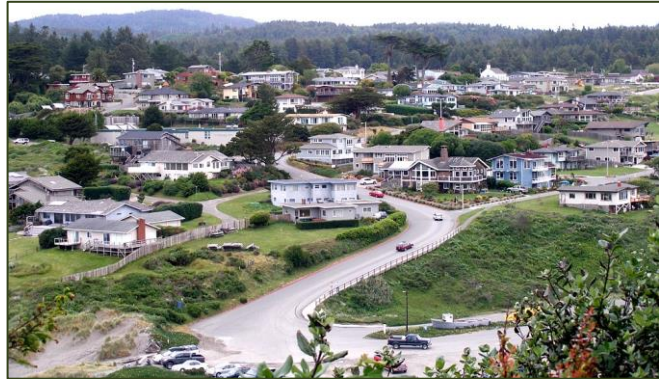
⁵ Big Lagoon Rancheria. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Lagoon_Rancheria

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The population and associated residential and commercial development within this unit is primarily located on the coast along Highway 101, intermixed with California State Parks lands and flanked to the east by large tracts of timberlands. Parcels in this planning unit span a variety of types, from “million dollar” homes with stellar ocean views, to rental units and RV parks near the freeway. The majority of homes are stick-built, and many have been upgraded within the last decade. Well over half of the land in the Unit is commercial timberland, most of which is managed by the Green Diamond Resource Company. State Parks areas such as Patrick’s Point, Trinidad Beach, and Big Lagoon are scattered along the coastline.

4.5.2 TRINIDAD 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 quality, recreational facilities and areas, historical structures, and any other important attribute that individual communities rely on for their well-being.



City of Trinidad. Photo: Cool Caesar.

Special status species: Animal or plant species that are officially listed, proposed for listing, or are a candidate for possible listing under the State and/or Federal Endangered Species Act. Also includes species that are biologically rare, very restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, or have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle that warrants monitoring.

The majority of assets at risk in this planning unit are residential homes, water related infrastructure, and key natural resource areas. These natural resources specifically include private and municipal water supply drainages, commercial timberland, and public beaches. Several *special-status wildlife species* found in this planning unit include southern torrent salamander, tailed frogs, red tree vole, as well as Chinook and coho salmon, and steelhead trout.⁶

Map 4.5.2, 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 GIS⁷ Portal: https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP.



Southern torrent salamander.
Photo: Gary Nafis.



Patrick's Point State Park. Photo: Nathan Gonzalez.

⁶ Dyett & Bhatia. (2002). Trinidad Watershed. Humboldt 2025 General Plan Update: Natural Resources and Hazards; Vol. 2: Detailed Watershed Characteristics and Regulatory Framework Analysis. (p.116). Retrieved from <https://humboldt.gov.org/571/Background-Reports>

⁷ Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

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Some of the key community-identified assets at risk within this unit are listed in the table below. This list is not intended to be comprehensive and illustrates participating community members' concerns.

FIGURE 4.5.1 TRINIDAD: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS AT RISK	
Big Lagoon Rancheria	Big Lagoon School
Patrick's Point State Park	Patrick's Point Drive, Hotels, etc.
Trinidad Head Cell Phone Towers	Westgate Community Development
Little Red Inn – historical site	Trinidad Downtown
Cher-Ae Heights Casino	Tribal youth center
Tribal operations building and emergency center	Greater Trinidad
Westhaven Fire Hall	Westhaven Community
Westhaven Community Church	Big Lagoon Community and Big Lagoon Rancheria
Trinidad Water Treatment Plant	Upper Fox Farm Community
Westhaven Water Treatment Plant	Patrick's Point Watershed (Drinking Water)
Trinidad Water Tanks (300,000 gallons)	Luffenholtz Watershed (Municipal Watershed)
Moonstone Grill / Beach Area	Two Creeks (Municipal Watershed)
<i>Additional Assets</i>	
Commercial timberland	State and County beaches

4.5.3 TRINIDAD WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT

Approximately 32% of the Trinidad Planning Unit is zoned “Moderate Fire Hazard Severity,” as determined by CAL FIRE,⁸ including all of the populated areas along the coastline. Nearly the entire remaining Unit area containing timberlands is zoned “High Fire Hazard Severity” (68%).

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.

For a closer look at fire hazard severity, see Map 4.5.2, Trinidad Community-Identified Protection Resources, Values/Assets, & Risks/Hazards.

⁸ 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://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_zones_maps

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Humans, vehicles, and lightning strikes are the most probable ignition sources here. Human-caused fire starts are more likely to occur in populated areas and recreation spots; buildup of roadside fuels increases the likelihood of fire starts from vehicles. Downed power lines are also potential ignition sources. Much of the land in this unit is seismically active, with the Trinidad and Big Lagoon faults located close to shore; this creates the potential for electrical fire starts that may follow an earthquake.

Fire History

Traditional forest management methods used by Native Americans in this region typically incorporated low-intensity, intentional burns that helped facilitate the production of cultural and ecological resources. However, a national policy beginning in the 1930s that emphasized *fire suppression* in forest management systems has allowed the accumulation of dense, flammable vegetation in forest understories, which acts as fuel and increases the risk of high-intensity wildfires. Logging operations in the area that incorporated clear-cuts have also contributed to alterations in stand compositions. Forest ecosystems adapted to low-intensity fires that would burn off brush and newer starts in the understory are now threatened by overcrowded forests and accumulated fuels in some areas of the Unit.

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.

There have been very few major fire events in this planning unit within **recent decades**. The A-Line Fire in 1936 was one of the last major wildfire events in this area, burning a substantial 1,628 acres in total. The Luffenholtz Fire in 1908 is another noteworthy event that burned the town of Luffenholtz to the ground. According to a September 25, 1908 article in the *Sacramento Union*, over 100 residents were left homeless, there were two deaths, thousands of acres of timberland were destroyed, and the Little River Mill burned. The Little River Redwood Lumber Company, the Oregon and Eureka Railroad Company, and Kellstroms’s Mill reported significant financial losses. The southern edge of the community of Westhaven and neighborhoods along Crannell and Dows Prairie roads now sit within the historic footprint of that devastating fire. Despite the coastal influences and moist climate, catastrophic wildfire has and could still play a role in the local environment. Particular vigilance should be observed during the months between June and October.

FIGURE 4.5.2 TRINIDAD: WILDFIRES OVER 10 ACRES IN THE LAST 100 YEARS 1908-2017⁹

Fire Name	Cause	Year	Acres	
			In Unit	Total
A-Line	Unknown/ Unidentified	1936	17,531	17,531
G.P. #6	Unknown/ Unidentified	1970	76	567
Luffenholz	Unknown/ Unidentified	1908	3,420	7,434
No Name	Unknown/ Unidentified	1945	15,792	15,792

Note: An interactive map of fire history through 1908 is available through the County WebGIS.

⁹ FRAP. (2018). State Fire Perimeters 1908-2017.

Structural Ignitability

Communities in this unit exist within the *wildland-urban interface* (WUI), which increases the risk of wildland fires becoming structural fires, and vice versa. Embers carried on the wind from nearby wildfires—even miles away—could ignite homes within this planning unit. This was made all too clear during recent, catastrophic wildfire events in Northern California that claimed thousands of homes. Many of the homes lost burned from the inside out, as embers were forced inside by strong winds, or sucked in through ventilation systems. For this reason, home hardening should be a top priority for homeowners concerned about their fire resiliency.

Roofs and eaves, windows, vents, and siding are all components that can be upgraded to reduce a home's vulnerability to loss. Resources for homeowners ready to take this leap in fire preparedness include *Appendix L, Living with Wildfire* and *Home Survival in Wildfire-Prone Areas*¹⁰, published by the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources. **Based on field observations, there are many homes in this planning unit where steps need to be taken to ensure structure survival when wildfire is nearby.**

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

Home Ignition Zone: The home and area out to approximately 100 feet, where local conditions affect the potential ignitability of a home during a wildfire.

Structural ignitability: The ease with which a home or other structure ignites.

Wildfire risk is exacerbated by the presence of dense vegetation growing in the *Home Ignition Zone* and flammable items in direct contact with the structure. Dead plant matter and vegetation with low moisture levels within 100-150 feet of homesteads pose some of the greatest threats to *structural ignitability*. Of particular concern are houses with needles and leaves accumulating on rooftops or in rain gutters. Houses with wooden rooftops and siding add to this risk, as do the presence of wooden decks, particularly those with dead plant matter accumulated beneath them. Many homes in the Unit are surrounded by steep slopes that can limit their defensible areas, put structures in the line of up-hill spreading wildfires, and limit emergency access of firefighting resources.

Managing fuels for at least 100 feet of defensible space is highly recommended by this CWPP and is mandated by California Public Resources Code 4291¹¹. By reducing the intensity and rate of spread of a fire, defensible space provides suppression personnel the option to deploy their resources to defend the home; it also reduces the likelihood that a house fire will spread outwards. Likewise, managing fuels along access roads provides safer escape routes for both residents and suppression personnel.

Although the high levels of humidity and precipitation within the coastal climate help prevent thorough drying-out of vegetation, it is important that communities in this area do not become complacent about the risk of wildfire. Hazardous fuel loads in the form of brush and timber litter produced by logging activity can increase the potential for ignition and rapid spread of wildfires.

Map 4.5.2, found at the end of this Unit Action Plan, illustrates risks and hazards identified by community members at public workshops with an underlay map of fire hazard severity zones. More detailed descriptions of community-identified fire planning features can be found on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal: https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP.

Water Sources

The City of Trinidad's Water Department provides potable water to residents within the city limits and has 30 hydrants available to provide fire protection water. The WCSD supplies drinking water to customers and maintains fire hydrants in all areas where water service is available within its

¹⁰ Quarles, S.L., Valachovic, Y., Nakamura, G.M., Nader G.A., & De Lasaux, M.J. (2010). *Home Survival in Wildfire-Prone Areas: Building Materials and Design Considerations*. University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources. ANR Publication 8393. Retrieved from <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8393.pdf>

¹¹ California Public Resources Code 4291 is provided as *Appendix K* of this CWPP.

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boundaries.¹² Residents outside of this service area obtain water through other means, such as drawing from nearby creeks and holding tanks. The availability of sufficient firefighting water has been identified as a challenge for providing fire protection services to communities within this planning unit. A lack of water tanks outside of water service areas contributes to this complication. Community-identified locations from which fire protection water could be drawn are listed in the table below. This list is not intended to be comprehensive and illustrates participating community members’ knowledge.

FIGURE 4.5.3 TRINIDAD: FIRE PROTECTION WATER DRAFT SITES	
○ Big Lagoon	○ Azalea Glen Pond
○ Two Ponds (1 million gallon total; dip or draw)	○ Big Lagoon Mill Pond
○ Trinidad Water Tanks (300,000 gallons)	

Note: Locations identified at community workshops will need to be vetted further with local firefighting personnel.

Map 4.5.2, 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 of community-identified fire planning features can be found on the Humboldt County Web GIS Portal: https://webgis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP.

4.5.4 TRINIDAD FIRE PROTECTION CAPABILITIES

The Trinidad Volunteer Fire Department (TVFD), the Westhaven Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD), and CAL FIRE provide community fire protection within the Unit. The Trinidad Rancheria does not have its own fire department and services are provided through multiple local and Federal agreements depending on the Tribal land area.¹³

The TVFD provides fire protection, medical, and rescue services to the City of Trinidad as well as the surrounding area as needed through mutual aid agreements. The WVFD was founded in 1950 as a non-district volunteer company with financial support provided primarily by donations and fundraisers. Their primary fundraiser is the annual Wild Blackberry Festival, featuring blackberry pies and jams handmade by the Westhaven Ladies Club.

This planning unit is also home to the Trinidad CAL FIRE Station, which provides year-round fire protection services to communities within County Service Area #4 (CSA #4) through an *Amador agreement* with the County of Humboldt. CAL FIRE has *mutual aid agreements* with volunteer fire departments in the surrounding areas. These entities may call upon each other for additional support when responding to structural or wildland fires. Even with statewide obligations during fire season, at least one fire engine is guaranteed to remain in the Trinidad station at all times.

The VFDs in this unit are in need of more volunteer members to perform a range of duties including administration, fundraising, and maintenance. Both Trinidad and Westhaven VFDs are currently working to secure funds to improve their fire stations.



¹² Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission. (2008). Municipal Service Review for the City of Trinidad. Retrieved from <http://humboldtlafo.org/msr-soi-reports>

¹³ Trinidad Rancheria. (2018). Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

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Volunteer fire department: A fire department associated with a local agency (either a city or a special district authorized to provide fire protection) that is comprised almost entirely of volunteer, unpaid, firefighters, whose primary objective is community fire protection.

Amador agreement: A contract that continues CAL FIRE staffing and station coverage through the winter off season.

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.

FIGURE 4.5.4 TRINIDAD: FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCES ^{14,15}				
PERSONNEL	SERVES		FIRE APPARATUS	RESPONSE
	RESIDENTS	AREA (SQ. MI)		
TRINIDAD VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (TVFD) – PHONE (707) 677-0224 • EMAIL: tvfdchief@gmail.com				
10 Volunteer	367	District: 0.65 Out of District: 1.63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fire protection ○ Medical and rescue services ○ Aid to CAL FIRE and WVFD 	
FIRE APPARATUS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type-1 engine ○ Type-4 4x4 vehicle 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type-7 rescue vehicle 	
WESTHAVEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (WVFD) (NON-DISTRICT, NON-TAX BASED) – PHONE (707) 677-0388				
8 Volunteer 15 Auxiliary	857	Response: 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fire protection ○ Medical and rescue services ○ Aid to CAL FIRE and TVFD 	
FIRE APPARATUS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fire engine ○ Water tender 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rescue truck ○ (2) Rescue vehicles 	
TRINIDAD BATTALION COMMUNITY SERVICE AREA (CSA) #4 – PHONE (707) 677-3638				
10 Regular 19 Seasonal	2,500	District: 23.5 Out of District: 9.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fire Protection ○ Medical and rescue services ○ Aid to WVFD and TVFD 	
FIRE APPARATUS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (2) Type-3 engines 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medical and rescue gear 	

¹⁴ Humboldt County Fire Safe Council. (2018). Humboldt County Fire Chiefs' Association Annual Report, 2017. (pp. 45-47). Retrieved from <https://humboldtqov.org/Archive.aspx?AMID=75>

¹⁵ Humboldt Local Agency Formation Commission. (Adopted Jan. 2016). North County Regional Fire Services: Municipal Service Review. Retrieved from <http://humboldtlafo.org/msr-soi-reports>

4.5.5 TRINIDAD EVACUATION

When wildfires have the potential to become disasters by threatening life and safety, procedures are initiated to support the safe evacuation of people, domestic animals, and livestock from potentially hazardous areas. During such events, 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 and location of the affected population.** The determination for the location of these sites is normally made by the Humboldt County Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander in cooperation with an Incident Management Team. The Humboldt County Sheriff and Emergency Officials will use the Humboldt Alert mass communication system (<https://humboldtqov.org/alerts>) and door-to-door methods to inform residents about the threat and where residents should go to take shelter.

Evacuation routes in the Trinidad Planning Unit will depend on the location of the community at risk and law enforcement recommendations based on fire behavior, wind patterns, traffic, and ingress of emergency vehicles. It is likely though, that evacuation will travel either north or south along Highway 101. Several smaller roads connect residences and neighborhoods to Highway 101, and adequate ingress and egress along these roads is vital to residents that need to access the main highway evacuation route. Many of these smaller roads are narrow and windy, and some have sections that are un-paved and one-lane only. These types of conditions on smaller roads that lead to remote residences could create complications for emergency response vehicles trying to gain access during simultaneous home evacuations. Many routes are also overgrown with vegetation and many properties have inadequate turnaround spaces. Other ingress and egress impediments may include steep road sections, fallen trees and power lines, wooden bridges susceptible to burning, 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. The potential for landslides along steep slopes in this area could also inhibit access, particularly if wildfires were initiated by a severe earthquake.

County fire-safety standards require roads to be of a certain width to allow access during emergencies. However, concern has been expressed that there is the potential for increased fire danger resulting from the widening of county roads to meet fire-safety standards. Although widening the road improves access, this process can also open up the overstory canopy to sunlight, which can enable the encroachment of fire-prone vegetation, such as huckleberry and scotch broom. Maintaining roadside vegetation clearance is important for keeping ignition risk low and protecting the communities that depend on these roads.

If a catastrophic event occurs, 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 what to do if they get trapped.¹⁶ 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.

*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.*

¹⁶ 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>.

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: <https://humboldtgov.org/alerts> or contact the Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (707) 268-2500

4.5.6 TRINIDAD COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS

No local *fire safe councils* (FSC) exist in this planning unit and none of the communities have achieved national *Firewise Communities/USA*® recognition. However, during the community outreach process, the communities of Trinidad and Westhaven both expressed an interest in forming a local FSC. Given their proximity and their shared interest in this goal, there is good potential for collaboration amongst these two communities in this endeavor. Alternatively, they may choose to pursue recognition as a Firewise® Community. The Trinidad Rancheria Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update also identifies the formation of a Firewise® Community as a potential wildfire mitigation action. The Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program teaches people living within the WUI how to adapt to living with wildfire by preparing for a fire before it occurs. This program empowers communities with tools and resources for reducing their wildfire risk and encourages neighbors to work together to take action to minimize losses from wildfire. The process of becoming Firewise® includes a site specific wildfire risk assessment, an action planning process, and an annual educational community event.

Currently, efforts to educate community members about fire safety and to improve emergency preparedness within this unit are guided by the local fire protection service providers, the Trinidad Rancheria, CAL FIRE, Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services (OES), and the Humboldt County FSC.

As resources are available, CAL FIRE conducts defensible space inspections within this planning unit as part of their Fire Safety Education Program. These inspections are intended to determine and encourage compliance with Public Resource Code 4291, which requires residents of California to provide and maintain 100 feet of defensible space around all property structures. These inspections can be a valuable source of information about what a property owner can do to improve their defensible space and increase the odds that their home will survive a wildfire. Inspections usually take place in the spring but special arrangements can be made by contacting CAL FIRE directly.

Fire safe council (FSC): Public and private organizations that comprise a council intended to minimize the potential for wildfire damage to communities and homeowners, while also protecting the health of natural resources. Goals are achieved by distributing fire prevention materials, organizing fire safety programs, implementing fuel-reduction projects, and more. Visit www.firesafecouncil.org.

Firewise®/Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program: (1) A national, multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire. (2) Firewise® offers a series of practical steps that individuals and communities can take to minimize wildfire risks to people, property, and natural resources. It emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home evacuation and design, landscaping and maintenance.

CAL-FIRE HUU can be reached by calling (707) 725-4413 or visiting <http://www.fire.ca.gov/HUU>.

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Green Diamond Resource Company, which owns a significant acreage in this planning unit, has undertaken efforts to help reduce risk of wildfire occurrences on company lands. Firefighting equipment is maintained at logging operations and inside all vehicles; harvesting operations are suspended at specified levels of low relative humidity; and logging crews are required to make daily fire inspections after work is done during the fire season. The company also maintains fire trucks and heavy equipment for wildland fire emergencies. Green Diamond Forestry staff, logging and maintenance crews, and contractors are available to respond to fire emergencies on the company’s timberlands and to assist CAL FIRE at their request. The company also treats logging slash in a variety of ways to help reduce fire hazards. Their methods include piling and burning, broadcast burning, and at times mastication and on-site chipping. As market conditions have allowed, Green Diamond has also conducted post-harvesting biomass recovery for power generation, resulting in fuel hazard reduction.

Broadcast burning: A controlled burn, where the fire is intentionally ignited and allowed to proceed over a designated area within well-defined boundaries for the reduction of fuel hazard, as a resource management treatment, or both.

Biomass utilization/recovery: The harvest, sale, offer, trade, or utilization of woody biomass to produce bioenergy and the full range of bio-based products including lumber, composites, paper and pulp, furniture, housing components, round wood, ethanol and other liquids, chemicals, and energy feedstocks.

The table below summarizes the accomplishments of the Trinidad Planning Unit over the past five years.

FIGURE 4.5.5 TRINIDAD: FIRE PREVENTION ACCOMPLISHMENTS	
○	Westhaven VFD celebrated the following accomplishments in the last five years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secured \$100,000 in grant funding over the last 10 years. ● Acquired a water tender. ● Improved their Insurance Services Office (ISO) classification from a 10 to a 5. ● Received Measure Z funding for new fire engine and critical safety equipment (12 SCBAs and several sets of turnouts).
○	In 2017, the Trinidad VFD modified their firehouse to accommodate larger Type-1 fire engines.
○	In 2018, the Trinidad Rancheria completed a draft of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update with a target final draft date in December.
○	The annual Westhaven Wild Blackberry Festival fundraiser, sponsored by the Westhaven Ladies Club, has continued to benefit the Westhaven Volunteer Fire Department. July 2018 marked its 58 th year.



Blackberry pie served at the Westhaven VFD annual fundraiser.
Photos: Elaine Weinreb.



Westhaven VFD fire truck.

4.5.7 TRINIDAD LOCAL WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLANS

As of the date of this CWPP, there were no completed local planning documents such as a CWPP or Firewise® Assessment for this planning unit. Communities within this unit may choose to pursue Firewise® recognition, and through that process would adopt a Firewise® Action Plan that identifies and prioritizes actions that reduce the risk posed by wildfire in the Trinidad Unit. Alternatively, a local Fire Safe Council could facilitate the writing and implementation of a community-level wildfire protection plan. As a first step, a point person or group of individuals must come forward to lead these efforts from within the community. This Planning Unit Action Plan as well as the Trinidad Rancheria hazard mitigation plan can provide a starting point for fire-planning efforts within this planning unit. To help guide and inspire wildfire preparedness in this planning unit, this CWPP provides a list of priority action recommendations reflective of the community concerns and ideas collected through the process described below. *See section 4.5.9, Trinidad Action Plan for a list of priority action recommendations.*

A relevant plan that addresses wildfire hazards for a portion of this unit is the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. The plan is being updated to “protect lives, property, and the environment; as well as support tribal sovereignty”.¹⁷ The Trinidad Rancheria community identified the following five goals to reduce or avoid long-term vulnerabilities to the identified hazards¹⁸:

- Goal #1: Promote sustainable living
- Goal #2: Protection of lives and property
- Goal #3: Increase Public Awareness of Local Hazards
- Goal #4: Partnerships and Implementation
- Goal #5: Strengthen Emergency Services Capability

Reference the Trinidad Rancheria website to view details and monitor Plan update progress and implementation. The hazard mitigation plan is a valuable resource that should be reviewed to increase understanding of local wildfire hazards and potential mitigation actions within the Rancheria as well as the surrounding area.

4.5.8 TRINIDAD COMMUNITY IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL PROJECTS

As part of the larger 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 14, 2017 at the Westhaven Fire Hall 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.

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

¹⁷ Trinidad Rancheria. (2018). Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

¹⁸ Trinidad Rancheria. (2018). Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

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this Unit Action Plan (*Map 4.5.3*). New or confirmed existing project ideas proposed during the 2017 update process are summarized in *Figure 4.5.6* and *4.5.7* in this section. *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 4.5.2*) 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: https://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.

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 and evaluate for feasibility.

FIGURE 4.5.6 TRINIDAD: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PROPOSED PROJECTS, NON-GEOGRAPHIC
○ Upgrade all water mains to 4" and add hydrants.
○ Build fire department garage addition for Westhaven VFD.
○ Develop program to put in water tanks with fire department hookup/standpipe.
○ Rural (north) Trinidad would like CAL FIRE to audit defensible space.
○ Create a local fire safe council.
○ Implement a community-wide mobile Chipping Program.
○ Implement a Big Red Truck Program, where fire department representatives visit residents and help them identify priority areas, such as those with high fuel loads and one-way-in, one-way-out roads.
○ Increase Hazard Awareness with public outreach and education; demonstrate good examples with local models of fire safe landscaping.
○ Conduct a “boilerplate” Firewise® Assessment as a public outreach tool to gauge local interest in becoming a Firewise® Community.
○ Install a fire hydrant at Moonstone Beach.
○ Recruit more volunteers for the local fire departments.
○ Seek out more volunteer firefighting training opportunities.

The local residents who attended the November 14, 2017 workshop identified the following projects as their top priority projects to be evaluated for feasibility and implemented over the next five years.

FIGURE 4.5.7 TRINIDAD: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PRIORITY PROJECTS		
PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROJECT TYPE	PROJECT ID
Inter-tie between Westhaven & Trinidad water systems	Water	TRI065
Upgrade all water mains to 4" & add hydrants (particularly Westhaven CSD)	Water	Non-geographic
Fire department garage addition	Upgrade	Non-geographic
Rural Trinidad neighborhood fuels reduction	Defensible Space	TRI074

4.5.9 TRINIDAD ACTION PLAN

Ideally, everything recommended in this action plan will be implemented. However, feasibility analysis and 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. This action plan can be used to guide the action of community members, organizations, and agencies working and living within each of the 14 planning units within Humboldt County. It is the intention of the HCFSC that one or more local groups be sustained within each planning unit to lead local action. It is understood that some units have more capacity than others. The HCFSC, with individual members from higher-capacity areas and partner agencies, can provide guidance for building capacity where needed.

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, Tribal, state, and federal laws and regulations. Please work closely with the applicable regulatory and permitting authority as projects are developed, particularly if public funds are being used and/or the project will take place on public lands or in public right-of-ways. For more information about how to ensure regulatory compliance, refer to *Appendix I, Regulations and Compliance*.

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.

- Identify community or neighborhood level organizations, Tribes and/or groups of individuals with the interest and capacity to facilitate participation in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program, FSC, or other similar wildfire preparedness program.
 - This focus area could be added to existing disaster preparedness groups.
 - Conduct community risk assessments with support from the HCFSC, local fire departments, and CAL FIRE and draft Firewise® action plans. Use information from this unit action plan as a starting point for the development of community assessments and action plans.
 - Actively implement and maintain the Firewise® action plans on an annual schedule.
 - Host Firewise® Days to share findings and inspire action; Firewise® activities could be added to existing annual community events.
 - If necessary, seek funding to support these efforts.
- Once implementation groups are formed, evaluate, further develop, seek funding for, and implement—as appropriate and feasible—the community-identified priority actions listed above as well as all community-identified potential projects stored in the Web GIS Portal. Perform this same process for the actions identified in the *Trinidad Rancheria Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update*, this *Priority Recommendations List*, and the *Action Catalogue* below. Pursue activities that align with available resources, community values, and the highest wildfire risks to local assets and values.

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- **P**riority areas within this planning unit for fuels reduction and potential Firewise® programs are included in the list below. Activities might include, creating defensible space, roadside clearance, chipper programs, and/or landscape treatments, as well as education and assistance for addressing structural ignitability through home hardening and evacuation preparedness. The Big Red Truck Program was suggested for this area, where local firefighters visit residences and offer advice for improving fire safety on a property.
 - Rural Trinidad Neighborhoods off of Stagecoach Road (TRI065)
 - Trinidad Rancheria (TRI098)
 - Westhaven (TRI095)
 - Moonstone Cross Road
 - Driver Road
 - Ox Lane
 - Skyhorse Ranch/Brindle Lane
 - Neighborhood at the end of Fox farm Road (TRI096)
 - Crannell / Dows Prairie Road neighborhoods (TRI097)
 - McDonald Creek Rd and Kane Ridge Road neighborhoods (ORI055)
- **E**vacuation preparedness and the identification of local evacuation routes and sites is a priority for this unit. This plan recommends that residents stay vigilant and evacuate as early as possible to avoid loss of life.
 - Work with the County Office of Emergency Services (OES), local fire service, and law enforcement to engage community members in evacuation preparedness (generally, the Sheriff's Office is responsible for conducting evacuations while the fire service focuses on wildfire management). Work together to review best practices as well as emerging new approaches.
 - Identify local community liaisons to work directly with emergency management officials.
 - Identify and map local evacuation routes and sites.
 - Residents, law enforcement, local fire departments, and FSCs should work together to identify alternative paths that may be taken or actions to initiate if primary routes become inaccessible during a wildfire.
 - Create an alternative evacuation route for neighborhoods at the end of Fox Farm Road (potential alternative is from Fox Farm to Stumptown Road (TRI068)).
 - Create an alternative evacuation route for residents in Big Lagoon.
 - Identify and actively maintain areas to shelter as a last resort if safe evacuation is blocked by wildfire, especially in areas with one-way-in, one-way-out roads.
- **F**ocus roadside fuel reduction efforts on priority ingress and egress routes for safe evacuation and emergency response, especially those roads used by the highest number of residents, single access roads, and roads leading to remote-hard to access residences. Priority roads for initial evaluation and outreach efforts include:
 - Old Railroad Grade North
 - Luffenholtz Lane
 - Fox Farm Road
 - Stagecoach Road

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- **I**mplement the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and consider opportunities to collaborate with neighboring communities.
- **P**ursue funding and support for the Westhaven and Trinidad fire hall additions/expansions.
- **C**onduct public education and outreach efforts regarding wildfire hazards and risks. Send out informational material in mailers throughout the communities. Focus initial efforts on increasing awareness about the risk of wildfire occurrence to inspire action. Education will help residents understand that there is a seasonal window of opportunity when the conditions are just right for severe wildfire and it only takes one ignition during that time to threaten local communities.
- **C**oordinate with CAL FIRE, the WVFD, the TVFD, and local community members and/or groups to develop a strategy to ensure that unmaintained vegetation on parcels that pose a wildfire threat to neighboring homes is abated.
 - Start by reaching out to the property owner(s) with the goal of helping them understand the fire danger and the importance of working across property lines to reduce wildfire hazards. If there are many properties of concern, consider organizing a neighborhood meeting to discuss the issue; invite CAL FIRE, local fire department representatives, and/or fire safe council/Firewise® community representatives.
 - Request assistance from the local fire agency (for vacant properties, if there is a local ordinance) or CAL FIRE (for properties with a structure) and ask for an inspection.
 - As a last resort, send a certified letter that describes the hazard, including photos, and states that if a fire that originates on their property spreads to yours, resulting in damage, legal action will be taken.
 - Contact the HCFSC for more details and examples of how to address this situation.
- **S**eek funding and partners to address water system needs:
 - Establish an inter-tie between Westhaven and Trinidad water systems (TRIO65).
 - Make essential water main upgrades to support fire flow, particularly for the Westhaven CSD.
 - Evaluate the need for additional fire hydrants.
 - Evaluate possible funding sources, including Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard mitigation grants and/or Proposition 1 Water Bond funding through the Integrated Regional Water Management program administered by the North Coast Resource Partnership¹⁹.
- **I**nforn residents of the need to have accessible, mapped, and identifiable water sources for fire suppression, and the importance of sharing 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. Community identified priority was placed on the following:
 - Trinidad greater area neighborhoods.

¹⁹ Find out more about the North Coast Resource Partnership and funding cycles at:

<https://northcoastresourcepartnership.org>

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- Westhaven greater area neighborhoods.
- Increase the availability of water for fire protection by investing in more community water tanks and ensuring existing tanks are outfitted with fittings compatible with firefighting equipment.

Action Catalogue:

This Action Catalogue lists additional wildfire mitigation actions that can be selected in addition to, or to compliment, the priority actions above. Action items are organized under each of the six countywide goal categories outlined in *Part 3, Countywide Action Plan*. 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.

Wildfire Ignition Prevention

- Implement One Less Spark education: www.readyforwildfire.org/One-Less-Spark-Campaign.
- Use *Living with Wildfire in Northwestern California* as a primary outreach tool and distribute widely: www.humboldt.gov/livingwithwildfire.
- Identify primary ignition sources in the local community and focus prevention efforts on reducing them.
- Increase 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.
- Inform 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.

Wildfire Preparedness

- Develop 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. Examples of new materials include locally based before-after fuel treatment and or home hardening pamphlet with high quality photographs.
 - Distribute materials through mailers (including already occurring mailers such as local utility bills); via community hubs such as the post office; at all community events; on community bulletin boards; through the use of social media and networks, local media outlets, and any means used by the local community to share important information.
 - Include compelling stories about recent coastal wildfires.
 - Encourage local volunteer/service organizations or schools to help perform community service activities including delivering literature to homeowners or clearing around and painting fire hydrants.

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- **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. See details in the *Priority Action Recommendations* above.
- **W**ork with PG&E and local landowners to reduce fuels along power line easements.
- **S**upport or create community chipping programs.
- **C**ompile a directory of brushing crews and other resources for landowners seeking to reduce fuels on their property.
- **W**ork with commercial timberland owners such as Green Diamond Resource Company to identify priority areas for strategic vegetation treatments to increase forest resiliency to wildfire.
 - Design projects to buffer residences from wildfires that originate from the timberlands and to protect timber resources and ecological values from fires that start in adjacent developed areas and along roads.
 - Seek opportunities to collaborate on roadside vegetation management projects where public roads or private roads, leading to residences, transect timberlands.
- **C**ollaborate with agency and local partners to plan and fund landscape level fuels reduction and management where appropriate and in observance of applicable environmental laws and regulations. Match the site with the best method of treatment to meet forest resiliency and community protection goals, including prescribed fire, forest thinning, landscape pruning, mowing, or targeted grazing.

Disaster Preparedness

- **E**vacuation preparedness and the identification of local evacuation routes and sites is a priority for this unit. See details in the *Priority Action Recommendations* above.
- **I**mprove community communication networks and explore ways to increase redundancy. This might include developing a community phone tree list and/or 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.
- **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.
- **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 <https://humboldtqov.org/alerts>.

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- **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.
- **I**nform residents about the importance of keeping 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. See details in the *Priority Action Recommendations* above.
- **I**ncrease the availability of water for fire protection. See details in the *Priority Action Recommendations* above.

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.²⁰
- **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 and state land managers garner local support for using prescribed fire or managed wildfire on the public lands they manage.

²⁰ To learn more about UC Cooperative Extension, the Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association, and the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council, contact Lenya Quinn-Davidson at lquinndavidson@ucanr.edu or call her at (707) 445-7351. To learn about CAL FIRE prescribed fire programs and support, contact Chris Ramey at chris.ramey@fire.ca.gov or call him at (707) 726-1206.

Integrated Planning

- **I**ntegrate the evaluation, development, and implementation of all relevant planning documents. See details in *Priority Action Recommendations* above.
- **I**nitiate and maintain participation in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program with neighborhood groups in developed areas adjacent to the wildland, particularly where there are many residences located along dead-end roads. See details in *Priority Action Recommendations* above.
- **S**hare GIS data sets between local representatives and County staff to maintain the fire planning features included in the County Web GIS Portal (https://webqis.co.humboldt.ca.us/HCEGIS2.6_CWPP).