

Community Wildfire Protection Plans are public planning processes that describe wildfire risk reduction priorities across boundaries. CWPPs are written for a specific geographic area such as a neighborhood or county. They have an action plan that identifies the most important projects for residents and professionals to accomplish to reduce wildfire risk.

CWPP COMPONENTS

Required

Healthy Forests Restoration Act requirements:

- Signed by local government, fire district(s), and state forester.
- Identify the highest priority locations for fuels treatments.
- Discuss ways to reduce structural ignitability.
- List communities-at-risk and their community hazard risk ratings.
- Include WUI (Wildland-Urban Interface) Delineation
- 1-2 year Action Plan with prioritized projects and timeline.
- Public Outreach and Education

Recommended

- Fire Hazard Analysis
- Evacuation Assessment
- Consideration of Socially Vulnerable Populations
- Commitment for Revision
- Community Input
- Post-fire planning

Optional

- Hazard Mitigation Plan Integration
- Local Capacity Assessment
- Fire Response Planning (Potential Operational Delineations)

ANTICIPATED COSTS

Lower Cost (\$20-70k)

- Small project area-HOA, town, or small/ medium fire district
- Minimal analysis
- Small-scale community engagement
- Written internally
- Fewer optional pieces
- 5-year update

Average Cost (\$70-150k)

- Large fire district or small county
- May have custom modelling
- Community engagement has multiple touchpoints
- Written internally or a contractor
- Some optional pieces

Higher Cost (\$150-250k)

- Large project area, or with densely populated areas
- Custom or complex modeling: evacuation & fire behavior modeling
- Significant community engagement
- Using a contractor (get multiple quotes if using a contractor)
- Multiple optional pieces
- GIS Mapping Specialists and Consultants will charge between \$60-125/hour on average.

SIZE

- Typically, CWPPs cover areas as small as a neighborhood and as large as county.
- Most CWPPs in New Mexico are completed at the county level.

CWPP TIMELINE

- **Medium size, average complexity:** 10-12 months
- **Large size:** 12-18 months, if it's concurrent with other planning processes, if there is extended community engagement, or if partners have little time to dedicate to meetings and project work.
- **Regular 5-year update:** 6-9 months

WHO NEEDS A CWPP?

Communities at risk to wildfire looking to assess relative risk, build and maintain partnerships, encourage community participation, and develop and action plan.

Communities may have vulnerabilities such as:

- numerous isolated neighborhoods
- limited emergency services
- limited evacuation routes
- communication "dead-zones"
- seasonal visitors
- part-time homeowners

Is CWDG right for my community?

The CWDG program (Community Wildfire Defense Grants) is intended to assist at-risk communities and Tribes plan for and reduce the risk of wildfire.

Priority given to:

- Area identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential
- Benefit a low-income community
- Area impacted by severe disaster(s) that make wildfire more likely

What does CWDG fund?

The program provides funding for:

- Developing and revising Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP).
- Implementing projects described in a CWPP that is less than 10 years old.

A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for CWDG is typically announced in late summer (www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/grants) with proposals due in early winter (November).

APPLYING FOR GRANTS

Organizations must have an active registration with the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) for all federal grant opportunities. Registration through SAM.gov may take several weeks.

Read the NOFO which describes the details of a grant and eligible entities. Review the eligibility criteria and fundable activities to determine if the grant is a good fit. The [CWDG Eligibility Tool](#) is a data dashboard to identify CWDG eligibility criteria.

WHERE TO FIND DATA

Note: These sources are intended as a starting point and may contain differing data from one to the next!

NIFC Interagency Fire Perimeter History:

<https://nifc.hub.arcgis.com/maps/nifc:interagency-fire-perimeter-history-all-years-1/about>

State or regional assessments:

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/forest-action-plan/>

Ignitions By County:

<https://wildfirerisk.org/>

NM Wildfire Risk Portal:

<https://nmwrap.org/>

US Forest Service Wildfire Risk to Communities risk-mapping tool:

<https://wildfirerisk.org/reduce-risk/>

USGS Data Portal and Topographic Maps:

<https://www.usgs.gov/programs/national-geospatial-program>

LANDFIRE databases, ecological models, and geo-spatial layers:

<https://www.landfire.gov/index.php>

USING A CONTRACTOR

What They Can Provide

- Project management
- Document writing
- Meeting facilitation
- Outreach planning
- Modeling and mapping
- Leading outreach

Pros

- Technical expertise
- Additional capacity
- Experience with process
- Facilitation experience
- Defined scope keeps the project on track

Cons

- May lack local context
- Can be more expensive
- Not place-based

TRAINING RESOURCES

Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System webinars:

https://iftdss.firenet.gov/landing_page/webinars.html

NM Forestry Division CWPP Resources and Guidelines:

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>

2020 New Mexico Forest Action Plan, Maps, and GIS:

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/forest-action-plan/>

Mapping the Wildland Urban Interface:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/treesearch/64457>

Potential Operational Delineations introduction:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/rmrs/projects/pods#resources>

PODs workshop recordings:

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/8231822>

CWPP Examples & In-Depth Guides

FEMA CWPP Guide:

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/creating_a_cwpp.pdf

CWPP Portal and Data Library:

<https://fireadapted.org/cwpp-database/>

EMNRD 2021 CWPP Guidelines:

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/State-Forestry-CWPP-Requirements-2021.pdf>

Request a Navigator to assist with your CWPP grant:
<https://www.thewatershedcenter.com/featured-projects-cnp>

NM Forestry Division CWPP Resources and Guidelines:
<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>

COMMUNITY AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Create Core Team

5-15 people

Will meet frequently during planning process and no less than annually upon implementation.

Include at least one community resident, and someone with expertise in each of the following areas:

- fire behavior
- community outreach
- local regulations

Gather Community Input

- Landing page
- kick-off meeting
- news releases
- social media
- surveys
- focus groups
- storymaps

Partner Input and Feedback

Partners must include:

- Fire departments
- Local governments
- NM Forestry Division district foresters

Also include federal agencies, land managers, tribes, pueblos, utility companies, nonprofit groups, and law enforcement.

Find NM Forestry Division District contacts here:

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/contact-us/find-a-district-office/>

Develop Goals and Objectives

Relate them to the following issues:

- Partnership and Collaboration
- Risk Assessment
- Fuels Reduction
- Structural Vulnerability Reduction
- Emergency Management
- Education and Outreach

Example Goals:

- To enhance safety and preparedness.
- To create fire adapted communities.
- To restore and maintain landscapes.

Example Objectives:

- WUI fuels reduction.
- Potential evacuation routes identified.
- Reduce human caused ignitions.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Fire Hazard Mapping

Mapping Needs:

Expertise, software, and data.

- *Describe the Community.* Boundaries of community in relation to vegetation, social vulnerability index.
- *Locally developed Wildland Urban Interface map.*
- *Describe the Risk.* Community Risk Ratings, Suppression Challenges, Evacuation Hazards, Home Ignition Zone Hazards
- *Display the Solutions.* Identify and Highlight Priority Project Areas, taking into consideration what treatments are needed, land ownership, and what is feasible to do in 5-10 years.

Existing Fuel Treatments

New Mexico has a database of fuel treatments at

www.vegetationtreatments.org.

Create maps with the free tool available in the database. CWPP developers should ensure that prior treatments are accurately reflected in the database.

Identify Values at Risk/Critical Infrastructure

Clearly indicate whether priority projects are related to protection of communities and essential infrastructure or to reducing wildfire risks to other community values.

Response Capacity

Include action items like testing your Reverse 911 calling system and maintaining and improving rural addressing.

Evacuation Assessment, Roadway Hazards

Emergency evacuation routes, shelters, and smoke refuge for wildfire and post-fire flood situations.

On-the-Ground Assessment

Identification of residential areas at the highest risk to help prioritize action.

Steps:

1. *Divide community into neighborhoods, or plan units* (subdivision-level for smaller CWPPs, Fire Department-level for county-wide CWPPs).
2. *Develop assessment criteria and methodology.*

Examples:

Fire Risk - topographic features

Fire Suppression Capacity - water sources, road accessibility, etc.

Evacuation Capacity - road width, primary egress routes

Home Ignition Zone Hazards - home hardening, defensible space

3. *Conduct the assessments.* Include photos and narratives.

4. *Analyze your data.* Rate risk as high, medium or low.

Details of the CWPP Process, continued

PRIORITIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Core Team and Partner Meetings

Response and Recovery Planning

Identify and establish a wildfire response and recovery team.

Develop a plan to provide communities with refuge from smoke during a wildfire.

Resources:
www.afterwildfirenm.org
<https://www.fireadaptedwashington.org/toolkit/coordinating-recovery/>

Make the Priority Action Plan

Plan for 5 years
Include recommendations for:
 fire district capacity, evacuation, priority fuel treatments, education and outreach, and post-fire pre-planning

Be Specific and action-oriented!
 Each category will have tasks with a responsible party and timeline associated.

The information should be presented in a spreadsheet or table.

Consider making an implementation plan and a monitoring plan to see if goals are being met. Having a clear schedule for monitoring accomplishments will ensure a dynamic plan that responds to the needs of the community.

Find monitoring framework resources here:
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Documents/Fire/CWPPEvalGuide.pdf>

WRITING THE FINAL DOCUMENT

Write the CWPP Document

Written in plain language and is understandable to a broad audience, is concise, and usable.

Convene Implementation Committee

Consider Funding Avenues for Priority Actions

NM Forestry Division CWPP Resources and Guidelines

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>

CWPP Development Process Visual Guide



FACNM CWPP Resources Page



EMNRD CWPP Homepage

Learn More!

Additional resources hosted by the Fire Adapted New Mexico Learning Network:
<https://www.facnm.org/>