

Employ Robust CWPP Project Implementation and Tracking Methods



Systematically managing and overseeing the implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) projects can help ensure that they become actionable items rather than a “binder sitting on a shelf.” Including a project implementation and tracking mechanism in the CWPP process means defining measurable objectives, key performance indicators, and timelines for mitigation projects; identifying funding mechanisms and resources; and consistently tracking and communicating progress to all relevant stakeholders. When done effectively, these mechanisms strengthen accountability, ensure the CWPP remains relevant over time, and encourage community involvement and support for wildfire mitigation initiatives.

Key Strategies for Project Implementation and Tracking

Effective strategies for implementing and tracking CWPP projects include:

- **Create and/or identify consistent and ongoing funding for CWPP implementation.**
Implementing a CWPP typically requires significant resources, such as personnel and equipment for fuel reduction projects, infrastructure improvements, and community outreach activities. Ensuring adequate funding resources from the outset will help establish the CWPP as a live document with sustained momentum. Examples of funding sources include local government funds, a public tax, and grants.
- **Build capacity.** CWPP implementation will require skills and knowledge (e.g., mitigation techniques, wildfire risk awareness, evacuation protocols) that the community may or may not already have. Conducting an assessment of strengths and deficiencies will help clarify how to build capacity, such as incorporating training programs, technical assistance initiatives, and public education, to facilitate CWPP implementation.



- **Define clear performance indicators and collect data.** Measuring CWPP implementation performance is crucial for building accountability, allocating resources, improving performance, and tracking progress. Metrics will vary based on the project, but may include: number of acres treated, percent of structures with defensible space, project expenses and cost-effectiveness, emergency response times, and community participation in activities. Additionally, metrics can be created around the CWPP process itself (e.g., inclusivity, group satisfaction, communication) to help make improvements for the next CWPP update.
- **Leverage technology to aid CWPP implementation.** Digital tools can help organizations track and monitor CWPP implementation. For example, cloud-based platforms enable real-time collaboration among stakeholders, cultivating seamless communication and information sharing. Analytic and reporting features also help obtain insights that lead to informed decision-making and course corrections, if needed.
- **Report information to and collect feedback from the community.** Establishing communication channels to provide CWPP implementation updates and solicit feedback on the process helps keep the community engaged and supportive of the plan. Examples include surveys, public meetings, and online updates. An informed community can provide valuable information and insights, as well as buy-in and participation when CWPP funding or

support is needed. Additionally, community members who are informed about CWPP activities may feel empowered to take proactive measures to protect their homes and property and be better prepared for a wildfire emergency.

- **Hold regular reviews and updates.** Regular reviews of CWPP implementation can help identify weaknesses and gaps and provide opportunities for plan updates that reflect changes in the landscape (e.g., fires, vegetation, floods, forest health), wildfire risk, community demographics, building developments, and available resources. Regular reviews help keep the CWPP alive and prevent it from becoming a static document, as well as help facilitate future CWPP updates. Transparent tracking and reviews also provide opportunities to celebrate accomplishments of CWPP partners (and maybe engender some healthy competition among them, too). Reviews and updates can be conducted in person or through websites and project hubs.

Project Implementation and Tracking in Action

CWPP development requires a tremendous amount of effort and resources, and the hope is that the CWPP will serve as a valuable tool for enhancing wildfire resilience and cultivating sustainable wildfire management practices. Proactive approaches to tracking and implementing CWPP projects also keep the CWPP relevant as a living document through regular plan consultation, review, and updates. Many communities across California are



employing robust CWPP project implementation and tracking methods to ensure their CWPPs yield successful results.

Regular CWPP project meetings and updates are often used to maintain momentum and enthusiasm around projects. As one example, Lassen County's CWPP working group has met regularly since 2015 to review and rank wildfire mitigation projects across the county. The group meets quarterly via video call to share new and ongoing project information, and each project is documented in a single spreadsheet. Every November, the group meets in person to hear about project details directly from the project sponsors and then collectively rank all projects. The result is an [annual CWPP work plan](#) that ensures the CWPP is current and effective. The Lassen County Fire Safe Council also holds monthly meetings that are open to the public to keep community members informed about the CWPP work plan and project activities.



Alpha Services performing tree planting for the Lassen Fire Safe Council in the Sheep Fire footprint. Photo credit: Lassen Fire Safe Council.

Similarly, Mariposa County has a committee that meets regularly to review and update their [CWPP implementation and action plan](#) ("Table 9" in Part 4 of their CWPP). John Patton, Wildfire Mitigation Coordinator for Mariposa County, says the Committee strives to rapidly publish this CWPP action table whenever it's updated so that the public gets current, real-time information about CWPP projects. Patton notes, "I think it's for the best that the public has an opportunity to be engaged so that folks better understand what's going on out there, and how [the CWPP] is going to help the community and the landscape."

Some organizations are leveraging technology to help them collect and analyze data and make project decisions. The Truckee Fire Protection District (TFPD) uses a cloud-based program to collect and review data and prioritize treatments. Eric Horntvedt, Wildfire Prevention Manager for TFPD, says the program enables data-driven, scientific decisions that "...really quickly allow all these entities to run their own simulations, identify their own projects, and ... quickly see spatially where there's complete alignment and consensus on the landscape for multi-objective treatments." Humboldt County also uses a cloud-based relational database to track CWPP activities, such as including details on projects, accomplishments, funding sources, and project and financial management. CWPP action plans and their associated priority actions are entered into the database, so that the County Humboldt County Fire Safe Council can track activities and progress on an ongoing basis. The software includes an interface for the public to submit project information so that data is updated in real-time.

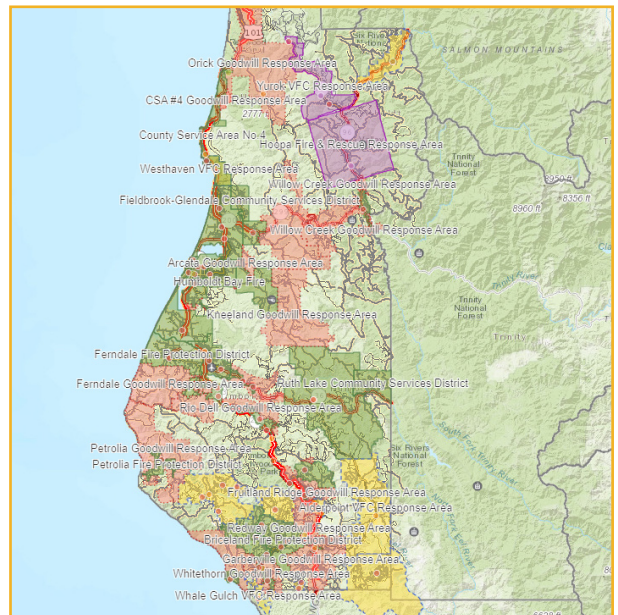


Truckee Fire Protection District uses GIS technology to convey fire risk information to community participants. Photo credit: Truckee Fire Protection District

Technology is also used to inform the public about CWPP projects. Napa County has an online [CWPP Hub](#) where residents can read the county CWPP and view a series of thematic maps that have various layers (e.g., topography, watersheds, CWPP boundary, public ownership). The Hub also contains the Napa County Firewise Foundation (NCFF) Fuel Reduction Project Dashboard which is a project database that shows all CWPP projects by type, location, funding source, and status. The dashboard includes NCFF-sponsored projects as well as those originating from other agencies and organizations performing fire mitigation work. The result is a comprehensive look at all fire mitigation activities occurring across the county. [Sonoma County's CWPP Hub Site](#) also houses the county CWPP and maps, and it provides a Project Planning Tool to help plan fire mitigation projects. The end user simply uses the tool to outline their project on a map to view relevant statistics that can be used in project planning, such as the wildfire hazard index, population, and number of structures. The Sonoma County CWPP Hub Site also has a Project Entry Portal where end users can

enter project details for possible inclusion in the county's CWPP Project List.

CWPP project funding is always a concern when implementing a CWPP, and funding sources should be sought early in the CWPP development process. Many counties, such as San Diego, Napa, and Humboldt, are leveraging the [California Fire Safe Council County Coordinator Grant Program](#) to fund countywide CWPP coordination. The Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County uses the grant to provide one full-time employee to oversee CWPPs countywide through the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County. Similarly, the Napa Community Firewise Foundation funds their Program Director for Community Action through the grant. Humboldt County took a team approach and partially funded two positions to leverage different skills sets and knowledge and share the associated workload.



The Humboldt County GIS portal lets community members access valuable information about their area, such as critical wildfire risk and current projects. Photo Credit: Humboldt County Fire Safe Council



Other communities have successfully passed a public tax to help fund their CWPP activities. For example, CWPP projects in the Truckee Fire Protection District are primarily funded through grants, matching funds, and [Measure T](#), a parcel tax passed by voters in 2021. The tax creates an annual Community Wildfire

Prevention Fund, of approximately \$3.8 million, dedicated to fuel reduction and wildfire prevention projects. As of 2024, Sonoma County also passed a fire safety sales tax, [Measure H](#), that is predicted to generate \$60 million annually to address emergency services staffing and fund fire mitigation work.

Additional Tips for Success

- Pursue “ready” communities. For quick wins, consider taking an active opportunity approach to project prioritization and implementation. This means prioritizing at-risk communities who are actively indicating that they are ready for fire mitigation work. For example, a community might signal they are ready by organizing fire mitigation days, becoming a recognized Firewise USA® site, or seeking funding mechanisms.
- Inform the public. Community members who are paying for fire mitigation through a public tax will want to know how their dollars are being spent, so it’s especially important to keep the taxpayers informed and engaged in CWPP project activities. This is particularly important for communities with a tax that will sunset in the future, thus requiring another vote.
- Avoid relying solely on the internet for sharing CWPP information. Online information via project hubs and portals can potentially omit some parts of the population, since not everyone has equal access to the internet and digital devices, and there are disparities in digital literacy and skills. Instead, consider supplementing online information channels with non-digital approaches, such as in-person meetings and mailings.

Key Resources

Joint Fire Science Program’s Quick-Guides

The Joint Fire Science Program is an applied research collaboration between the United States Forest Services and several universities that aims to improve the ways communities are collaborating to address wildfire risk. Quick Guide #18, [Monitoring the Collaborative Process](#), provides ideas on how to track and evaluate the experience participants have when collaborating on a CWPP. Quick Guide #15, [Implementation and Sustainability](#), includes succinct tips for successful CWPP implementation.

Resource Innovations Institute for a Sustainable Environment’s *Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Guide*



The [Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Guide](#) offers strategies and guidance for evaluating CWPP effectiveness and updating plans. Includes recommendations for gathering data and writing an evaluation report.

The Forest Guild's *Measuring Community Capacity for Protection from Wildfire*

[Measuring Community Capacity for Protection from Wildfire](#) documents Taos County, NM, as a case study for incorporating community capacity (the ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire) into fuel treatment prioritization decisions.

Interested in more CWPP best practices and guidance? Explore the entire CWPP Toolkit [here](#).

About the California CWPP Toolkit

The California CWPP Toolkit was co-developed by CAL FIRE's Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division, Community Wildfire Planning Center, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, and California Fire Safe Council.

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