



RIO ARRIBA COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP) UPDATE 2016-2017

July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017

ABOUT CWPPS

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). Federal and state funding for hazardous fuel reduction projects is dependent on whether a county or community has a signed and approved CWPP. CWPP's have three main components: (1) Collaboration with all stakeholders throughout the CWPP process, (2) Identification and prioritization of hazardous fuel reduction areas and (3) addressing the treatment of structural ignitability within the CWPP area. CWPP's are reviewed by the New Mexico Fire Planning Task Force by the 1st of December each year and if approved placed on this website.

WHY UPDATE THE PLAN?

The consulting firm SEC established the Rio Arriba County CWPP in 2007 based on the Wildland Urban Interface plan they had written for Rio Arriba County in 2003. The plan uses landscape-scale data and recommendations are general in nature. However, a key improvement between the 2003 WUI plan and the 2007 CWPP is the addition of 19 specific project areas. While the description of these project areas and suggested treatment is very general, they are prioritized so managers can focus on the highest priorities. However, the lack of geographic or treatment specificity means the prioritization effort in the plan fails to provide clear direction for community members.

Additionally, the Rio Arriba County CWPP does not appear to be a driver for activity on-the-ground, and has not been integrated into key county planning processes including the 2013 Rio Arriba County Hazard Mitigation Plan. For example, there has been significant fuels treatment work in the county, but little or no activity appears to be driven by the CWPP. Other agency projects, such as the USDA Forest Service project along the Highway 84 corridor, have reduced wildfire risk for communities in the county. However, these projects were not driven by nor sourced from the CWPP.

Updating the Rio Arriba County CWPP will allow partners to pursue funding opportunities and forest management projects that provide protection to Communities at Risk of wildfire. This, in turn, can help lower risk ratings as well as improve the overall watershed health of Communities at Risk. Through ongoing hazardous fuel management, community

involvement and accountability, an updated CWPP will enable opportunities and success in efforts to manage the overall health of our forest and water quality for Rio Arriba County communities and downstream users.

WHAT WILL THE PLAN DO?

- ✓ Engage a diversity of stakeholders including private landowners and tribes
- ✓ Update WUI areas with more specificity
- ✓ Identify priority treatment areas across jurisdictions
- ✓ Establish new Firewise communities
- ✓ Integrate specific recommendations from the Upper Chama CWPP (2008)
- ✓ Address forest health and resiliency through treatments that reduce catastrophic wildfire and resulting debris flows that effect water users.
- ✓ Crosswalk the new plan into ongoing planning efforts such as:
 - 2013 Rio Arriba County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
 - Rio Arriba Comp Plan
 - RAC Land Use Plan
 - Santa Fe, Carson NF plans

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Open House Style Meetings with Rio Arriba County, 6-8pm

- September 8th: Alcalde, NM
- September 13th: Abiquiu, NM
- September 15th: Hernandez, NM
- September 20th: Dixon, NM
- September 22nd: Lindrith, NM
- September 29th: Chimayo, NM

In Depth CWPP Meetings with Question and Answer Sessions:

- October/November 2016 - to be scheduled

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT:

Existing CWPPs in New Mexico

<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/FireMgt/cwpps.html>

The effectiveness of mitigation activities in the WUI

<http://www.forestguild.org/WUI>

Fire ecology and resiliency efforts in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico through the Rio Grande Water Fund and Chama Peak Land Alliance

<http://chamapeak.org/programs/san-juan-chama/fire-ecology-resiliency/>

PROJECT TIMELINE AND DELIVERABLES

Sequential Tasks	Time Frame
Review existing plan for needed updates – engage partners in update needs	July 2016 – August 2016
Pull together county wide Core Team for the CWPP	July 2016 – August 2016
Compile existing plan GIS data and other relevant data for plan update	July 2016 – December 2016
Reach out to a broad array of partners to discuss plan updates; Host 3-6 meetings around the county to gather community input	August 2016 – December 2016
Utilize community input to update the CWPP	December 2016 – April 2017
Host 3-6 meetings to review final plan update	April 2017 - May 30, 2017
Present final plan and associated documentation to NM State Forestry for final approval by the New Mexico Fire Planning Task Force (for September 2017).	June 30, 2017