

CHAPTER 2- PLANNING PROCESS

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2. PINE GROVE CCWPP PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 PINE GROVE CCWPP PLANNING UNIT BOUNDARIES

This Fire Plan covers the entirety of the Pine Grove Planning Unit as identified in the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2005). *(See Executive Summary, Plate 2 - Pine Grove Base Map)*

2.2. PROCESS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENTⁱ

The Amador Fire Safe Council began the process of the updating the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Fire Plan in 2008. The Generic CWPP divides the county into nine planning units. Each

FIGURE 1- WORKING GROUP PLANNING SESSION



planning unit represents a distinct wildfire environment and fire protection problem.

Rather than rewrite the entire plan, the fire safe council decided to review and rewrite each planning unit separately starting with the most at risk planning unit. Thus, this process is a partial update of the 2005 generic plan.

In January 2012, a rewrite of the most at risk area, Pioneer/Volcano Planning Unit was completed. Pine Grove is the second most at risk area in the county.

While the 2005 plan took a broad countywide view and recommended landscape scale projects designed to reduce damage from large wildfires, this update is focused more locally.

Greater emphasis is given to neighborhood and community risks that can be mitigated by an individual property owner, community group, local government agency, non-profit, state agency, corporation, or federal agency. Issues like evacuation, water supplies, defensible space, local fuel reduction, ingress and egress, and signage are at the forefront. This is not to say that large landscape scale projects were ignored. The 2005 plan recommendations are included in this plan along with additional large fuel reduction projects identified during the planning process.

The Community Wildfire Planning process is by its very nature a community effort. Great importance is placed on the desires of the community concerning what the plan contains. To facilitate input from the community, the planning writers held several public meetings. Unfortunately, these meetings were poorly attended. However, the core working group and steering committee includes many individuals from within the planning unit.

To begin the discussion regardless of the audience, the planning team developed a PowerPoint program outlining the planning process, fire problem, and current efforts to mitigate the wildfire threat.

In November(2012), each draft section of the plan was posted on the Amador Fire Safe Council's web page and community organizations and individuals were invited to comment and submit additional recommendations.

2.2.1 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Initial Meeting

An initial community meeting was held in Pine Grove in November 2011 at Volcano Telephone Company's Tech Center. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce interested community and agency members to the Pine Grove Plan project. At this meeting, the working group responsible for preparing the draft plan was introduced.

This group included:

- Cathy Koos Breazeal, Amador Fire Safe Council (also representing the Lockwood Fire Protection District)
- Keith Brizzi, Amador Fire Protection District
- Ray Blankenheim, Battalion Chief
- Brian Mulhollen, Bureau of Land Management
- Charlie Blankenheim, Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE
- Jim Simmons, consultant
- John Hofmann, Amador County BOS Consultant

Funding for this plan update was provided by a grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Community/Neighborhood Meetings



One of the goals in developing the Pine Grove Fire Plan is to educate residents regarding fire safety and defensible space. Therefore, the planning process was designed to maximize public input. A series of community meetings was held in Pine Grove. The community meetings were held in the following locations in 2011 and 2012. All meetings were held at the convenience of the community group.

Community meetings were held:

- Volcano Tech Center, 11/7/ 2011
- Volcano Tech Center, 12/14/2011
- Pine Grove Community Center, 1/25/2012
- KC Ranchettes homeowners association, 8/2011
- Stakeholders Meeting, 11/7/2011
- Pine Grove Community Council, 1/4/2012
- Pine Grove Civic Improvement Club, 1/4/2012
- Progressive Women's Committee, 1/5/2012
- Amador County Fire Chiefs Association, 1/5/2012
- Interagency Co-op Work Group , 1/10/2012
- Stakeholders Meeting, 1/25/2012
- Progressive Women's Committee, 2/2/2012
- Amador County Fire Chiefs Association, 3/1/2012
- Progressive Women's Committee, 4/5/2012
- Stakeholders Meeting, 4/26/2012
- Amador County Fire Chiefs Association, 5/3/2012
- Upcountry Rotary, Pine Grove, 5/30/2012

2.2.2. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

An outreach effort was made to encourage public participation in these meetings. Cathy Koos Breazeal coordinated this outreach effort. It included:

- The Amador Fire safe Council provided forms for residents and community associations to write comments and suggestions regarding the plan.
- All draft documents were posted on Amador Fire safe council's website
- Draft review was announced at multiple public meetings throughout the review period

Public Comment Process

In addition to the meetings that generated local data, the public was provided another opportunity to contribute to this document. An internal draft was prepared for the Steering Committee and other

interested agency members. In October 2012, the public review draft of the Fire Plan was published. The draft of the plan was posted on the Amador Fire safe Council’s website. An article in the local monthly newspaper notified stakeholders of the posting. This article invited all residents of the study area to comment and make suggestions regarding the plan. The final plan was released in early 2013. The following people made comments regarding the plan.

FIGURE 2. COMMENTS TO PUBLIC DRAFT OF THE PINE GROVE FIRE PLAN

| Comments submitted from (Name and Affiliation): | Date Rec'd: | Comments |
|--|-------------|--|
| Patrick Ousby, citizen | | Need information on waiver to roadside clearing along BLM lands, money for roadside clearing along private sections of Mitchell Mine. Support is growing for clearance. Need more money for clearing. Also, interested in meeting to talk about fuelbreak. |
| Dennis Manner, citizen | | Try to have the CCWPP published in the Ledger upon completion along with as much other pertinent info, i.e., fire hose thread capatibility. |

2.3. STAKEHOLDERS

FIGURE 3. STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATIVES AND DATE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE

| Agency/Stakeholder Group | Representative | Date Invited to Participate |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Amador Fire Protection District | Ray Blankenheim, Battalion Chief | 2011 |
| Amador Fire Safe Council | Cathy Koos Breazeal | 2011 |
| Bureau of Land Management | Brian Mulholland | 2011 |
| CAL FIRE (representing unit chief) | Tom Tinsley, Forester | 2011 |
| Lockwood Fire Protection District | Cathy Koos Breazeal | 2009 |
| Sierra Pacific Industries | Craig Ostergaard | 2011 |

2.3.1 STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee was established to oversee development of the Fire Plan and to ensure its compliance as a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The steering committee included all members of the Amador Fire Safe Council and other community members. The purpose of the committee is:

- to provide oversight to the planning process,
- to meet the requirements of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) of the National Fire Plan

- to ensure that the Plan meets the needs of all sectors of the Pine Grove Planning Unit in terms of fire safety and prevention

Steering Committee members represent a broad cross section of interest in Amador County. The steering committee had access to technical advisers from local government, Bureau of Land management, and CAL FIRE. Oversight of the planning process by this committee ensures that the plan meets the applicable parts of the collaboration requirements of a CWPP.

Steering Committee Members:

- Lola Blevins, President (Farrier and horse rancher)
- Jim McCart, Vice President (Chief, Amador Fire Protection District)
- Amy Rocha, Secretary (Range conservationist for NRCS)
- Elena Knox, Member (artist)
- John Romena, Member (Manager, Buena Vista Biomass)
- Kristina Agustin, Member (Realtor)
- Tony Migiacchio, Member (Pharmacist)
- Steve Bonner, Member (Retired)
- Ingrid Barnes, Member (CSAA Manager)
- Amy Rocha, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Dick Hess, retired forester
- Debbie Dunn, member at large
- John Hofmann, consultant and Amador County representative
- Paul Maben, PG&E forester
- Tom Tinsely, CAL FIRE forester

¹The community fire planning process outlined in this chapter was developed by Tracy Katelman, ForEverGreen Forestry (www.forevergreenforestry.com) and the Mattole Restoration Council (www.mattole.org).