

Dec 10, 2025

Amador CWPP: Working Group 4 Meeting

Summary

Todd Bertwell welcomed participants to the fourth working group meeting for the Amador Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), where Ian Moore outlined the objective of developing priority projects and action items. Preliminary community survey results, with 55 points of input, highlighted concerns about fuel accumulation, ingress/egress, and community fuel breaks, while Mr. Moore presented quantitative wildfire risk assessment data and the relative importance survey results, which prioritized assets, water, and wetlands health in the central zone. The participants, including Christopher Dow, Richard Sykes, and James Thornock USFS, discussed collecting and incorporating fuel treatment data contributions by January 10th, with Jeff (CalFire) offering to provide VMP boundaries; additionally, Kayla Dale (Amador Fire Protection District) and Jeff (CalFire) detailed successful defensible space programs, and Dan Macon, Jeff (CalFire), and Amanda Watson discussed integrating prescribed grazing into fire planning, with Ian Moore suggesting flexibility in listing multiple treatments. The main talking points included the collection of treatment data, the high compliance rate of defensible space inspections, and the integration of grazing as a fire treatment option, with Jeff (CalFire) emphasizing the need to address capacity and coordination for ongoing plan and project coordination.

Details

Notes Length: Standard

- **Meeting Opening and Introductions** Todd Bertwell initiated the fourth working group meeting for the Amador Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), welcoming both in-person attendees and those joining online.. Introductions were held with 16 attendees total: Matt Waverly (PG&E), Susan Peters (Amador Water Agency), and Kayla Dale (Amador Fire Protection District) and Todd

Bertwell (AFSC/ARCD) in person, and several others online, such as Amanda Watson (Amador Resource Conservation District/Amador Fire Safe Council), Christopher Dow (SPI), Chuck Beckman (East Bay MUD), Dan Epperson (Amador County Supervisor, District 2), Dan Macon (UC Cooperative Extension), James Thornock (El Dorado National Forest), Chief Jeff Hoag (CALFIRE AEU), Chief Robert Greathouse (City of Jackson Fire Protection District), Richard Sykes (UMRWA), William Watson (City of Sutter Creek) and Beth Brennemen (BLM Mother Lode Field Office) ([00:00:00](#)). Mr. Dow mentioned that he might have to leave early due to prescribed burns ongoing in Calaveras County ([00:03:26](#)).

- **Agenda and Meeting Objectives** Ian Moore outlined the meeting agenda, which included reviewing the last meeting's progress, discussing materials developed since then, and dedicating the bulk of the time to developing priority projects and identifying action items, which they noted are two key elements of the CWPP ([00:06:38](#)). They stated that the materials would be presented to guide the development of decisions, followed by an open discussion and tasks for participants to complete after the meeting ([00:08:00](#)).
- **Community Survey Results and Input** Mr. Moore provided an update on the community survey, which was disseminated following the community town hall meetings and has so far received 55 points of input, identifying areas of concern across the county ([00:08:00](#)). They noted the survey would remain open at least until the end of the year, if not into January, and that preliminary results indicate the main concerns are accumulation of fuels, ingress/egress issues, and opportunities for community fuel breaks ([00:09:33](#)).
- **Treatment Data Collection and Timeline** The group discussed the collection of treatment data sets, which are viewable on the fire safe council website, showing collected treatments categorized as active, planned, or completed ([00:11:13](#)). Christopher Dow informed the group that SPI is working on providing their data and updating the interagency platform, which they found to be missing a significant amount of data, an issue Mr. Moore acknowledged, attributing it potentially to recent management changes ([00:12:49](#)). Todd Bertwell stated the goal is to incorporate all fuel treatment data contributions by January 10th to ensure high-quality contributions ([00:15:07](#)).
- **Data Contributions and Concerns** Richard Sykes confirmed that both the Forest Service and UMRA will provide additional information on approximately 7,000 to 8,000 acres of completed work in the past three years ([00:16:24](#)). James Thornock USFS added that coordination is needed due to the work being done on National Forest Service land with a partner, requiring careful handling of

information sharing. Jeff (CalFire) inquired about the incorporation of Cal Mapper data and offered to provide the boundaries for CalFire's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) areas, which Mr. Moore agreed to add, noting that both completed and planned/active projects are helpful ([00:17:26](#)).

- **Relative Importance Survey and Risk Assessment** Ian Moore reported on the relative importance survey results, which helped establish priorities for objectives in the Vibrant Planet platform used to calculate priority treatment zones. For the central zone, assets, water, and wetlands health were highly ranked ([00:18:29](#)). Mr. Moore also presented the output of the quantitative wildfire risk assessment on the map, illustrating that deeper red areas denote greater risk from fire behavior to resources and assets ([00:22:16](#)). They clarified that some light blue areas indicate a slight positive change or benefit to forest health from expected fire behavior, such as in areas with lower expected flame lengths, suggesting that treatment would not be prioritized there as fire is not a significant threat to resources or structures ([00:25:44](#)) ([00:29:03](#)).
- **Focus Areas for Priority Projects and Action Items** The conversation shifted to defining priority projects and action items, which Mr. Moore clarified would involve identifying fuel reduction projects (like ingress/egress, fuel breaks) and community resilience efforts (coordination, education, home hardening). Todd Bertwell suggested starting by identifying the mitigation actions that the stakeholder group currently implements, such as ingress/egress, community fuel breaks, and defensible space ([00:30:18](#)) ([00:33:23](#)).
- **Defensible Space Programs and Compliance** Kayla Dale (Amador Fire Protection District) explained that their role in defensible space involves property inspections upon community member requests, often for Firewise communities, and providing letters to homeowners who have completed the necessary vegetation management work, with over 80 such inspections in 2024 ([00:36:34](#)). Jeff (CalFire) shared that their unit, which includes Amador County, performs several thousand defensible space inspections annually, approaching 9,000 across the unit ([00:38:15](#)). Jeff also noted that their inspections typically achieve a high compliance rate, around 90–95% after the third follow-up, emphasizing the importance of the education and enforcement component ([00:39:24](#)). Given the high risk in WUI communities, Mr. Moore suggested finding ways to expand the reach of these successful programs ([00:40:49](#)).
- **Grazing as a Treatment Option** Dan Macon introduced the topic of accounting for prescribed grazing, noting its inclusion in the interagency tracking system and its ability to reduce fine fuels ([00:44:26](#)). Ian Moore presented a pre-run output

from Vibrant Planet that showed where the use of prescribed herbivory would be prioritized based on fuel and vegetation types ([00:46:02](#)). Mr. Macon questioned the parameters used to determine land suitability for grazing and the value of tracking conventional grazing that also removes fuel, as it is a widespread land use in the foothill portions of the county ([00:48:09](#)). Mr. Moore explained that while they included a land use layer that incorporates grazing leases in the fire risk assessment, they are likely unable to differentiate the exact fuel differences between various grazing activities for the scope of the CWPP ([00:49:26](#)).

- **Integrating Grazing into Fire Planning** Jeff (CalFire) added that areas suitable for grazing generally have lower intensity fuels and lower fire intensity, and thus rank lower in the overall risk model compared to high-hazard areas near infrastructure ([00:50:36](#)). Mr. Macon stressed the effectiveness of using grazing in conjunction with other tools like prescribed fire, even in the WUI and adjacent to transportation corridors, and offered to help identify such opportunities ([00:51:52](#)). Ian Moore suggested listing multiple potential treatments, including herbivory, within the project definitions to allow flexibility for future implementation and grant seeking. Todd Bertwell affirmed the value of incorporating existing grazing and looks forward to connecting with Mr. Macon to augment the limited information they currently have on this topic ([00:54:10](#)).
- **Grazing Project Opportunities and Future Research** Amanda Watson reinforced the challenge of capturing the ecosystem services of working lands, suggesting that accounting for these uncaptured benefits may exceed the scope of the CWPP, but could be called out as an area for future research or coordination. She also mentioned struggling with CalFire's AEU fire plan's limited prioritization of grazing projects and proposed a discussion outside the CWPP process to align efforts on using grazing as a landscape-scale tool for fire risk reduction ([00:55:38](#)).
- **Conclusion and Next Steps** With limited time remaining, Ian Moore invited any final comments, reiterating their availability for input on treatment data, the survey, and other suggestions. Jeff (CalFire) emphasized the need to address capacity and coordination within the county, in addition to the landscape-level projects ([00:56:58](#)).
- **Need for Future Coordination** Jeff emphasized the necessity of identifying a coordinator and people to bring groups together for ongoing plan and project coordination, especially since the SIG will eventually conclude. Ian Moore agreed that collaborating across boundaries is essential and related this need for coordination capacity to feedback from town hall meetings where fire

departments felt their work didn't continue once jurisdiction borders were crossed ([00:58:37](#)).

- **Upcoming Meetings and Events** Amanda Watson invited the entire group to the Fires Safe Council board meeting on the 17th of next Wednesday at 2 o'clock at Hoist House, noting that pizza and a celebration of partners' work will be provided. Todd Bertwell thanked Amanda Watson and confirmed the next working group meeting date as January 14th at 1 o'clock, which will be held online or in person at the Amador County Administration Building ([01:00:07](#)).

Suggested next steps

Christopher Dow will work on getting the SPI data set to Spatial Informatics Group and update the inter agency platform.

Richard Sykes will work on getting more information on the seven or 8,000 acres of completed treatments in the past three years to Spatial Informatics Group.

Jeff will get the boundaries for the BMP CalFire projects to Ian Moore.

Ian Moore will send out an email about the vibrant planet setup and what has been done with it so far, along with some of the other materials.

Todd Bertwell and Dan Macon will connect beyond the meeting to discuss incorporating existing grazing into the plan.

Amanda Watson will provide more details about the Fires Safe Council board meeting if requested.

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