

APPENDIX 2-PIONEER/VOLCANO FIRE SAFE PLANNING PROCESS

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2. PIONEER/VOLCANO PLANNING UNIT FIRE SAFE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1. PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

This Fire Plan covers the entirety of the Pioneer/Volcano Planning Unit as identified in the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2005).

For a map of the planning area, see Plate 2 Pioneer/Volcano Base map in Appendix 1.

2.2. PROCESS AND PLAN DEVELOPMENTⁱ

The Amador Fire Safe Council began the process of updating the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Fire Plan in 2008. The Generic CWPP divides the county into nine planning units. Each 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 – the Pioneer/Volcano unit. Thus, this process is a partial update of the 2005 generic plan. 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, and 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.

Because the planning unit is relatively large, the decision was made to contact groups that represent neighborhoods. These groups included road associations, recreation association, and community associations. Not all areas have recognized community groups representing a community. To broaden the process to include residents of areas without existing community groups and/or organizations, the planning team met multiple times with the Upcountry Community Council (UCC).

UCC is acknowledged by Amador County and serves as a forum for residents, business and organizations to identify and address common issues and concerns. The UCC facilitates interaction with local, state and federal government agencies and other entities in resolving community issues.

To begin the discussion regardless of the audience, the planning team developed a Power-Point program outlining the planning process, fire problem, and what is currently being done to mitigate the wildfire threat. When possible, a community risk assessment was completed

prior to the PowerPoint presentation and the PowerPoint presentation modified, based on the risk analysis, to fit the community. At the end of the presentation, comment cards were distributed to the audience and they were asked to send their comments and concerns to the Amador Fire Safe Council's Executive Officer, Cathy Koos Breazeal.

In late October (2010), 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. To broaden this outreach, the information regarding the draft report was published in the November 2010 edition of the Upcountry News, a local area monthly. Again, residents were invited to comment.

2.2.1 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

INITIAL MEETING

An initial community meeting was held in Pine Grove in November 2008 at the CAL FIRE Pine Grove fire station. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce interested community and agency members to the Pioneer/Volcano Plan project. At this meeting, a working group responsible for preparing the draft plan was created.

This group included:

- Cathy Koos Breazeal, Amador Fire Safe Council (also representing the Lockwood Fire Protection District)
- Ray Blankenheim, Battalion Chief, Amador Fire Protection District
- Chris Waters, Forester- Fire Behavior Specialist, CAL FIRE
- Charlie Blankenheim, Battalion Chief, CAL FIRE
- Jim Simmons, consultant and GIS specialist

In addition to core planning group, USFS's fuels officers Joan McNamara and Robyn Woods; Bureau of Land Management fuels management specialist, Brian Mulholland; and Sierra Pacific Industries' forester, Craig Ostergaard were asked to review the draft plan.

Funding for this plan update was initially provided by a grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. This funding was temporarily suspended due the state's budget problems. Unfortunately, the loss of funding and the upcoming fire season eliminated three members of the development team from the day-to-day plan drafting. As a result, these three members became reviewer rather than active developers of the draft plan.

In the spring of 2009, the County of Amador provided limited bridging funds from Title III to allow the project to move forward. The council also received additional funding from a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant administered through the County of Amador,

Office of emergency Services. This additional funding allowed the development team to add additional elements to the plan. These additional elements are:

- A Reverse 911®ⁱⁱ database that defines evacuation areas by neighborhood. These areas were developed based on probable fire behavior.
- A reverse 911 field guide for fire and other emergency services agencies
- A field guide for law enforcement that describes all intersections that may need to be controlled during an order evacuation and to prevent looting. This guide is based on the neighborhood areas developed for the Reverse 911® system.
- A helicopter-landing zone guide for fire, law enforcement, and medical flight crews.
- An evacuation guide for residents.

The original planning process included a road atlas for residents and public agencies. However, the county GIS department was working on a similar project. It was decided that the Atlas project would remain a county GIS project. The atlas has been completed and is available as a downloadable PDF file on the Amador County Office of Emergency Services website.

COMMUNITY/NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

One of the goals in developing the Pioneer/Volcano 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 various locations throughout planning unit. The community meetings were held in the following locations in 2010. All meetings were held at the convenience of the community group.

The planning team met with:

- Amador Pines Units 2 & 5 Homeowners Association
- Amador Pines Unit 1 Road Association
- Carson Pass Pines Road Association
- Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association
- Sierra Highlands Recreation Association
- Upcountry Community Council

Additionally on two occasions, members of the development committee took residents on ride-a-longs during the risk assessment process and pointed out issues of risk to these residents.

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:

- Attending sixteen stakeholder meetings.
- The Amador Fire safe Council provided self-addressed postcards 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. Final review draft was posted for one month beginning on December 1/2010.
- Draft review was announced at multiple public meetings throughout the review period
- Review period was extended one month to all reviewers additional time to comment.

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. On November 1, 2010, the public 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 on November 30, 2010. The following people made comments on the public draft.

Figure 1. Comments to Public Draft of the Pioneer/Volcano Fire Plan

Comments submitted from (Name and Affiliation):	Date Rec'd:	Comments
Craig Ostergaard, Sierra Pacific Industries	November, 8 2010	<p>I did not mention this before but the southern portions of Beaver and Panther Creek fuelbreaks are in the Power Fire. This area will have the plantations managed across the landscape to reduce the threat of uncontrolled wild-fires.</p> <p>Our vegetation control has been herbicide application on the Beaver Ridge fuelbreak. The Panther Creek Fuel-break area had an initial herbicide application and we are currently controlling the grass and brush in this area with increased cattle grazing.</p> <p>We will start the Pre-commercial thinning next year so we can thin the trees before they are so big as to put a lot of fuels on the ground</p>

Rich Farrington Upcountry Community Council		<p>Why does Carson Drive have an overall risk of Medium with a risk survey score of 101 and Williams Tract has a rating of High with a lower risk survey score of 89? In the 4 categories starting with Fuel Hazard they both have Med, Hi, Med, and then Carson has a Hi rating and Williams a Med. rating in Fire Fighting Capability.</p> <p>However, the 1991 study by Bartholomew Engineers found that the water system in the Carson Drive and neighboring areas "is not currently able to meet current fire flow criteria (1,000 GPM residential, 2,500 GPM commercial in most areas."</p> <p>The improvements recommended in this study have not been made. I think your plan should mention this conclusion and reduce the Carson rating to Medium or Low in Fire Fighting Capability and the neighboring areas (I received a copy of this study from Amador Water Agency).</p>
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2.3. STAKEHOLDERS

Figure 2. Stakeholder Representatives and Date Invited to Participate

Agency/Stakeholder Group	Representative	Date Invited to Participate
Amador County Office of Emergency Services	Lynne Olsen	2010
Amador Fire Protection District	Ray Blankenheim, Battalion Chief	2009
Amador Fire Safe Council	Cathy Koos Breazeal	2009
Amador Pines Unit 1 Road Association	Chairperson	2010
Amador Pines Units 2 & 5 Homeowners Association	Chairperson	2010
Bureau of Land Management	Brian Mulholland	2010
CAL FIRE (representing unit chief)	Charlie Blankenheim, Battalion Chief	2009
Carson Pass Pines Road Association	Chairperson	2010
Lockwood Fire Protection District	Cathy Koos Breazeal	2009
Sherwood Forest Homeowners Association	Chairperson	2010
Sierra Highlands Recreation Association	Chairperson	2010
Sierra Pacific Industries	Craig Ostergaard	2009
United States Forest Service	Joan McNamara	2010
United States Forest Service	Robyn Woods	2010
Upcountry Community Council	Chairperson	2010

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 was the board of directors of the Amador Fire Safe Council. 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 Pioneer/Volcano 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, the United States Forest Service, 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.

AMADOR FIRE SAFE COUNCIL FIRE 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)
- Maureen Murray, Treasurer (Retired Visa financial officer)
- 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)

See Section 9.3 for information regarding updating this plan.

ⁱ The 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).

ⁱⁱ A computer system that allows the county Office of Emergency Services to automatically dial phones in pre-identified geographical areas to warn of a wildfire or other emergency.