
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Executive Summary	2
I.A.	Plan Goals, Introduction, and Background	3
I.A.1	Overall Plan Purpose	3
I.A.2.	Conservation Principles for Community Wildfire Protection in California’s Sierra Nevada	4
I.A.3.	Fire Safe Objectives.....	4
I.A.4.	Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit Profile	5
I.A.5.	Communities at Risk	6
I.B.	Fire Planning Process Overview.....	6
I.B.1.	Fire Planning Area Boundaries.....	6
I.B.2.	Planning Process Summary	6
I.B.3.	Stakeholders	7
I.C.	Fire Safety and Defensible Space.....	7
I.D.	Wildfire Environment	8
I.E.	Fire Protection Organizations	9
I.F.	Pine Grove Planning Unit Assets at Risk	9
I.F.1.	Pine Grove Planning Unit Assets at Risk.....	9
I.G	Pine Grove Planning Unit Fire Safe Action Plan.....	10
I.G.1.	Proposed Projects and Actions	10
I.G.2	Action Plan Summary	14
I.H	Facilitating Unit Fire Safety in the Long Term	14
I.H.1.	Monitoring and Maintenance.....	14
I.H.2.	Updating This Plan	15

I.H.2.	Needed Resources.....	15
I.I	Acknowledgments	16
I.I.1	Core Planning Team	16
I.I.2	Steering Committee Members	16

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Amador Fire Safe Council contracted with EIP Associates¹ to prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Amador County. EIP Associates hired a local Registered Professional Forester (RPF), Ron Monk, to gather data and write the plan. The plan divided the county into nine planning units. Each planning unit represents a distinctly different wildfire environment. The Amador County Fire Hazard Reduction Plan (CWPP) was approved by CAL FIRE and all local fire agencies. It was adopted by the Amador County Board of Supervisors in 2005.

Following the completion of EIP’s plan, the council prepared an addendum titled “Steps to Implementation” which is a five-year action plan to implement the Amador County CWPP. These two documents are collectively referred to as the Amador County Generic Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

In 2006, all fuel reduction projects (wildfire mitigations) proposed in the CWPP were incorporated into the Amador County Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP). The purpose of the MHMP is to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects in Amador County. This plan was prepared to meet the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requirements in order to maintain Amador County’s eligibility for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Pre-disaster Mitigation (PDM) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs (HMGP).

Amador Fire Safe Council recognized the need to reevaluate the recommendations in the Amador County CWPP within five years from its adoption. Instead of reevaluating all nine planning units simultaneously, the council decided to revisit each of the units separately starting with the most at risk areas. The Pine Grove Planning Unit is the second most at risk planning unit in the county.

Amador Fire Safe Council obtained funding from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to update the Pine Grove Planning Unit section of the 2005 CWPP. This update is written as a Community Conservation and Wildfire Protection Plan (CCWPP). The difference between a CWPP and CCWPP is that the latter recognizes the impact of post European settlement on forest health and composition; and how these have influenced wildfire in the Sierra.

This document summarizes the process and information developed for the Pine Grove Planning Unit update. Detailed information for this plan can be found in the relevant appendices, which are referenced for additional information.

This plan identifies wildfire risks and hazards in the Planning Unit and the mitigations needed to reduce them. It also provides residents with a systematic guide on how to fire-safe their homes, businesses, and community and how to best prepare for the threat of wildfire. The appendices and reference sections can be copied or removed for reference.

This document and all its associated appendixes, maps, and supporting documentation are written for multiple audiences. Audiences that include homeowners, policy makers, public and private land managers, and fire agencies. Readers will note that at times the writing style will be formal and somewhat technical. Other parts are written in an informal style that is more informative than technical. These different styles are intentional and represent the broad audience this plan is intended to inform and influence.

I.A. PLAN GOALS, INTRODUCTION, AND BACKGROUND

I.A.1 OVERALL PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is several-fold:

- To identify priority projects to reduce risks and hazards to the Pine Grove Planning Unit from wildfire while protecting conservation values. Goals are to be achieved principally through prioritization and implementation of fuel hazard reduction, community education, and fire-suppression projects and activities.
- To provide community priorities for conservation-based fuel reduction on public lands
- To provide conservation-based fire safety educational information to residents of the Pine Grove Planning Unit
- To provide a positive balance among fire prevention, conservation, and wildlife protection
- To provide a guidance document for future actions of the Amador Fire Safe Council, County of Amador, CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Pacific Gas & Electric Company and local emergency service providers.
- To coordinate fire protection strategies across property and administrative boundaries to achieve landscape scale wildfire defenses.
- To integrate private land management goals with community needs and expectations for fire safety.
- To create ecologically sustainable biomass utilization and removal projects within Pine Grove Planning Unit.
- To provide tools to emergency response agencies that improves response capabilities.
- To reduce damage from wildfire by recreating a pre-European settlement *fire adaptive ecosystem*².
- To reduce the potential of large scale damage from the historic large fire scenario in the foothill and mountain regions of Amador County

- Finally, this document is being written as a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, in order to meet the requirements for future National Fire Plan and other government funding sources, and to provide community direction for federal lands management within the planning area.

I.A.2. CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION IN CALIFORNIA'S SIERRA NEVADA

This document is based on the following Conservation Principles.

REMEMBER THE VEGETATION (NATIVE TREES AND OTHER PLANTS)

1. Discover and monitor forest and vegetation's dynamic changes.
2. Act conservatively.
3. Protect native species
4. Keep, favor, and retain the largest, most fire-resilient, and healthiest trees adapted to the location.

REMEMBER THE WILDLIFE

1. Provide local wildlife a place to live.
2. Provide access to food and water.
3. Protect future generations of wildlife.
4. Value the standing dead trees.
5. Conserve rare and endangered species.

REMEMBER THE SOIL

1. Maintain the life in the soil.
2. Ensure the soil cover is fire safe.
3. Minimize erosion.
4. Protect soil after a fire.

REMEMBER THE PEOPLE

1. Plan actions with neighbors
2. Find experienced workers and treat them well.
3. Work with the local fire department.

I.A.3. FIRE SAFE OBJECTIVES

The objectives for fire safety will drive the development of the assessment and eventual solutions. These objectives reflect the particular characteristics of Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit. The overall objectives for

this plan are to decrease the intensity of fire behavior and minimize ignitions, while increasing *permeability*³ and *resiliency*⁴ of landscapes—e.g. a fire-resistant landscape—to decrease damage from wildfires.

These objectives reflect the particular wildfire characteristics facing Amador County.

1. Prevent damage to the environment and structures caused by the historic large wildfire scenario⁵ in Amador County.
2. Prevent damage to the environment and infrastructure caused by wildfires occurring during “average bad⁶” fire weather.
3. Provide safe evacuation of citizens during wildfires
4. Assist fire and other emergency agencies to respond to emergencies
5. Obtain compliance with the defensible space requirements⁷
6. Educate the citizens of Amador County about the importance of re-establishing a pre-European forest landscape and its importance on fire safety and forest health.

I.A.4. GREATER PINE GROVE PLANNING UNIT PROFILE

The Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit is located in the midsection of Amador County. The plan area contains 4,562 parcels of land totaling 32,725.62 acres. The estimated population is approximately 8,418. There are no incorporated towns within the planning unit. The community of Pine Grove contains most of the commercial development. However, small enclaves of commercial development exist outside of Pine Grove proper. Most of the area is zoned R1, R1A, R2, R2A, R3, and RE.⁸ (*See Plate 1-General Plan Zoning*).

Amador County is currently updating its General Plan. All versions of zoning for the new plan increase the residential zoning within the Pine Grove Planning Unit. Increased residential development with a corresponding increase in commercial development is expected. The large number of residential parcels intermixed with highly flammable forest fuels places the residents of the planning unit at risk of large damaging wildfires.

The Bureau of Land Management owns approximately eight percent of the land within the planning unit. The parcels owned by the Bureau of Land Management are scattered throughout. Most of the land within the planning unit is privately owned by individuals and used for residential purposes. Some of the land is devoted to timber production and other agricultural uses. The entire area is unincorporated.

Several large drainages are within or adjacent to the planning unit. Most significant of these are the Mokelumne River, Consumnes River, and Sutter Creek. The influence of these drainages on potential wildfire damage is related to their east/west orientation, fuel load, and the historic large fire weather events. *See Chapter 3, Topography for more information.*

Much of the planning unit contains an abundance of forest fuels capable of supporting intense fire behavior, including crowning. Intermingled with the forest are many homes and businesses. Many of these structures were constructed before the adoption of modern fire safe building and development standards and would not be permitted today.

I.A.5. COMMUNITIES AT RISK

On January 4, 2001, for the purposes of the National Fire Plan, the Department of Interior (DOI) published in the *Federal Register* a “Notice of Urban-Wildland Interface (WUI) Communities within the Vicinity of Federal Lands That Are at High Risk from Wildfire.” In Amador County, Pine Grove was among the first communities to be designated as a Community at Risk.

After the 2000 fire season, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), working with the California Fire Alliance, developed a list and associated map of communities at risk from wildfire using 1990 Census and USGS Geographic Names Information System data to identify populated places, and CAL FIRE’s Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) fuel hazard data.⁹ This data describes relative risk to areas of significant population density from wildfire by combining residential housing unit density with the proximate fire threat to give a relative measure of the potential loss of structures and threats to public safety from wildfire. CAL FIRE’s designation of the Pine Grove WUI encompasses all of the Pine Grove Planning Unit and thus, no further proposals for areas within the planning unit to be designated as Communities at Risk are required.

FIGURE 1. COMMUNITIES AT RISK IN PINE GROVE PLANNING UNIT

Community at Risk	Threat Level ¹⁰	Federal Adjacency ¹¹	Source of Designation
Pine Grove	3-Very High		California Fire Alliance and Cal Fire (FRAP)

I.B. FIRE PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

I.B.1. FIRE PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES

This CCWPP update covers the entirety of Pine Grove Planning Unit. This area is described as starting from the intersection of Highway 88 and Molfino Road on the western extent of Planning Unit and moving east to Highway 26 encompassing all lands between. The northern boundary is Shake Ridge Road and the southern boundary is the Mokelumne River. (See Plate 2 – Pine Grove Base Map)

I.B.2. PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

The planning unit is comprised of numerous small and large subdivisions, several mercantile areas, and ranches. The planning group discussed the best way to reach this diverse community to explain the planning process and obtain input regarding community concerns. To this end, the Core Working Group prepared a PowerPoint presentation explaining the wildfire threat and the Conservation and Community Wildfire Plan development process. This PowerPoint presentation was used at all group meetings and was posted on the council’s website.

The Pine Grove Planning unit is a large area. How to reach residents of this area became an issue of discussion. It was decided to hold several town meetings. While these meetings were advertized through several media sources, they were not well attended. However, the steering committee that oversaw the

development of this plan and the core-working group, which did the basic research, included numerous residents of the area.

One of the major outreach efforts involved the risk assessments. This process systematically assessed the risk from wildfire for individual subdivisions. This risk assessment provided a beginning point for discussing the wildfire threat to a particular community

To allow all stakeholders to comment on the plan each section of the plan was posted on the Amador Fire Safe Council's website. This posting started in mid-March 2012. A final draft with all displays was posted in October 2012. Hard copies of the final draft were provided to CAL FIRE, the Amador County Board of Supervisors, the boards of Lockwood and Amador Fire Protection Districts, Folsom Bureau of Land Management, and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

I.B.3. STAKEHOLDERS

The following stakeholders participated in this process:

- Lockwood Fire Protection District
- Amador Fire Protection District
- Bureau of Land Management
- Business owners
- Residents of the planning Unit
- Pacific Gas and Electric Company

I.C. FIRE SAFETY AND DEFENSIBLE SPACE

When residents in the wildland-urban interface understand what steps they can take to make their homes and properties more fire safe, they are generally interested in doing it. Appendix B begins with a broad description of what is necessary for a fire to begin and how communities can defend themselves when faced with a wildfire. Wildfire behavior depends on *fuel*,¹² *weather*, and *topography*. Clearly, fuel is the one factor that communities have some capacity to control. This plan focuses on how fuel can be mitigated to enhance community safety while protecting conservation values. It outlines necessary steps to ensure local fire protection efforts are successful (e.g. residence addressing, adequate roads, proper turnarounds, secondary access, water supply, etc.).

One of the most important concepts introduced in the plan is that of defensible space. In short, this means creating a space around residences/structures to enhance the chances of structural and human survivability. Thus, one of the priority goals of the plan is to document the various elements that make up defensible space and to do so in clear, action-oriented terms. The Plan lists various additional ways that a community can enhance its chances of surviving a fire, including the use of fire ignition-resistant building materials and construction methods, water availability, escape plans, landscaping, and fuel hazard reduction. Recent evidence indicates that a structure has a greater than 80% chance of surviving a wildfire if it has adequate brush clearance and is made of ignition-resistant materials.¹³

This Plan outlines various actions that community members should take when a wildfire threatens. These include actions such as evacuation; keeping friends and family members informed of their plans and whereabouts; gas/propane shut-off; water preparation and use; closing of all interior and exterior doors; and emergency communication.

Beyond the home, fuel reduction in the wildland-urban interface is critical for fire-permeable and fire-resilient landscapes. Fuel reduction methodologies can be consistent with conservation goals to restore *fire-adapted ecosystems*. In fact, they ultimately must be if they are to be effective. Fuel reduction methods are described in Appendix C, with practices identified that are consistent with the Conservation Principles.

I.D. WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT

It is generally believed today that fires in the Sierra Nevada landscape are less frequent and more severe compared to the wildfire patterns present before Europeans settled in the area. The absence of fire combined with historic logging practices has led to a build-up of *surface fuels*¹⁴ and *ladder fuels*.¹⁵ In many cases, small trees and shrubs have become a fire hazard to both the natural environment as well as to the human communities who live there.

The Pine Grove Planning Unit is no exception to the increasingly common problem of large significant structure and resource loss from wildfire. Fuel loads have been accumulating to abnormal levels throughout the Sierra due to decades of fire suppression and timber harvesting. Annually, state and federal agencies respond to more than 600 fires in Amador and Eldorado Counties¹⁶, not including fires responded to by local fire departments. One of the largest recent fires was the Power Fire (2004), which burned a total of 16,800 acres in eastern Amador County. Condition Class level III is present in this planning unit. *For an explanation of Condition Class, see Chapter 3 Fire Behavior.*

FIGURE 1 - RESOURCE DAMAGE FROM POWER FIRE



The historic large damaging wildfires in Amador County occur during a relatively rare weather event known as foehn wind¹⁷. Foehn winds occur when a High-pressure system exits east of the Sierras and Low-pressure system exist west of the Sierras. Foehn winds flow over and down the Sierras in a westerly direction. These winds can reach speeds in excess of sixty miles per hour. Because these winds are caused by subsiding air masses, foehn winds heat and dry as they flow down slope.

The affect of foehn winds is greatest east of Highway 49. The most recent examples of foehn wind driven wildfires are the Power Fire (2004) and the Rancheria

Creek Fire (1961). Both fires exhibit the same burn pattern of all large wildfires, in mid to upper Amador County, since 1900.

Chapter 4 – Fire Ecology and Management of Sierra Nevada Vegetation describes the present condition of the planning area; the vegetation that occurs there; and considers how wildfire might change the area. The features and conditions of the planning area are used to develop management prescriptions that:

- a) are consistent with the natural disturbance expected for each type

- b) promote the Conservation Principles identified in *Appendix A*, and
- c) improve the fire resiliency of the vegetation type

Three fuel types are the primary drivers of wildfire in the planning unit. These are Ponderosa Pine/Mixed Conifer (fuel model 10), Montane Meadow (fuel model 1), Open Pine with oak or shrub understory (fuel model 2), and Foothill and Montane Chaparral (fuel models 5 and 6). The dominate fuel type in the most populated areas is fuel model 2, Open Pine with oak or shrub understory.

The historic (pre-European settlement) occurrence of wildfire suggest low intensity wildfires were common and replaced less than 75% of the dominate overstory. Today, because of over 100 years of fire exclusion from the landscape, wildfires exhibit dramatic increase in fire behavior, intensity, severity, and size. Forest stand replacement wildfires are to be expected. In the Planning Unit, stand replacement wildfires are most likely to occur in the pine mixed/conifer fuels (fuel model 10). Where wildland urban interfaces exist, significant loss of structures and loss of life is likely. Most areas zoned for residential developments are in fuel model 2 and fuel model10.

I.E. FIRE PROTECTION ORGANIZATIONS

In Pine Grove Planning Unit there are two local fire departments:

- Amador Fire Protection District
- Lockwood Fire Protection District

There are also state and fire agencies:

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Amador Eldorado Unit, (CAL FIRE)
- US Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode District

For more information about fire protection agencies, see Chapter 6, Fire Protection.

I.F. PINE GROVE PLANNING UNIT ASSETS AT RISK

I.F.1. PINE GROVE PLANNING UNIT ASSETS AT RISK

Assets at risk are all the values, human made and natural, that exists in the Pine Grove Planning Unit. These values include such diverse things as view shed and power plants. Knowing what values are at risk allows land managers, public officials, and the public to devise and prioritize mitigations that will reduce or eliminate the risks.

The risk assessment process rated each road within the planning unit. Factors rated included slope, fuel type, fuel concentration, road length, roadside fuels, turnouts, signing, road width, road quality, cul-de-sacs, structure density, and surface fuels. Risk ratings are provided for each road.

Four level of risk were developed to describe each areas relative risk from wildfire. These ratings are:

- **Low risk:** strict compliance with defensible space will protect most homes from wildfires occurring during the normal summer weather pattern and foehn wind events. (Note: urban structure density

can be reached if placement of structures on parcels regardless of parcel size creates an urban density because of the proximity of structures to each other.)

- **Moderate risk:** Strict compliance with defensible space will protect most homes from wildfires occurring during the normal summer weather patterns. There is a greater risk of home loss during foehn wind conditions. Where structure density is urban, structures may be lost from radiant heat generated from nearby burning structures. (Note: urban structure density can be reached if placement of structures on parcels regardless of parcel size creates an urban density because of the proximity of structures to each other.)
- **High risk:** There is significant risk of structure loss during normal weather patterns and foehn wind events. Risk increases significantly as structure density increases. Where structures density is urban, the structure fuel load invalidates the fire model. These areas need additional protection beyond homeowner defensible space. (Note: urban structure density can be reached if placement of structures on parcels regardless of parcel size creates an urban density because of the proximity of structures to each other.)
- **Very High:** Combinations of structure density, slope, fuels, fuel load, and/or life safety issues create this rating. Where structures density is urban, the structure fuel load invalidates the fire model. Multiple structure loss can occur regardless of weather patterns. Life safety issues relating to evacuation also can create this rating. These areas need additional protection beyond homeowner defensible space. (Note: urban structure density can be reached if placement of structures on parcels regardless of parcel size creates an urban density because of the proximity of structures to each other.)

I.G PINE GROVE PLANNING UNIT FIRE SAFE ACTION PLAN

This plan identifies several actions to reduce hazards and risks from wildfire and decrease structural ignitability. The following sections and tables summarize these actions. They were identified through a collaborative public process.

I.G.1. PROPOSED PROJECTS AND ACTIONS

The proposed projects and actions designed to mitigate the wildfire threat fall into three categories.

1. Community and Homeowner Projects – projects and actions homeowners and community organizations can take without government financial assistance.
2. Existing Projects – fuel reduction projects created by government and other organizations that need continued maintenance to remain viable.
3. New Projects – proposed fuel reduction projects designed to increase protection from large wildfire and Foehn wind driven wildfires.

COMMUNITY AND HOMEOWNER ACTIONS

1- COMMUNITY AND HOMEOWNER PROJECTS			
Community, Structure, or Area at Risk	Type of Treatment	Method of Treatment/implementation	Overall Priority
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit	Strict compliance with defensible space regulations	Individual property owners	Very High
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit	Roadside fuel reduction	Reduce fuel along selected public and private roads a minimum of 20 feet from each road edge. Clearance of greater than 20 feet (up to 40 feet) on downslope side when slopes exceed 10%.	Very high
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit	Street address signs	Replace wooden and other street address signs with a county standard street sign	Very High
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit roads where Scotch Broom is present	Roadside Scotch Broom Eradication	Herbicides and/or hand removal. Amador Fire Safe Council has tools for this purpose available for loan at no cost.	Very High
Toyon Road Area	Alternate egress for Toyon road to Highway 88	Open existing alternate access	Very High
Toyon Road Area	Alternate egress for Penrose Way to Climax Road	Create an escape route along existing right-away	Very High
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit	Identify with a standard sign all locations private water tanks and swimming pools.	Install reflective roadside sign near water sources. Residents should contact their local fire department for information about the appropriate sign.	High
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit (private roads)	Street signs	Replace wooden and other street signs not meeting current county standards with a county standard road sign	High

EXISTING LARGE-SCALE FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS

2 - EXISTING FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS						
Community, Structure, or Area at Risk	Project Name	Method of Treatment	Funding Needs	Acres	Priority	Expected Completion Date
Shake Ridge Road Area	Stone Jug	Mastication, tractor, and/or hand crews	\$73,172	55	5	In progress using CAL FIRE CAG funding. Project sponsor is the Amador Resource Conservation District, scheduled to be completed 2012-2013
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and	AFSC FMZ 1	Mastication with herbicide maintenance	\$9,848 every 5 to 7 years	55	On going	Completed in maintenance mode – AFSC project

south)						
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	AFSC FMZ 2	Mastication with herbicide maintenance	\$11,252 every 5 to 7 years	66	On going	Completed in maintenance mode = AFSC project
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	AFSC FMZ 3	Mastication with herbicide maintenance	\$5503 every 5 to 7 years	20	On going	Completed in maintenance mode = AFSC project
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Mt Zion Fuelbreak	Mastication with herbicide maintenance	\$9,511 every 5 to 7 years	52	On going	Completed in maintenance mode – AFSC project
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Newsom FMZ	Hand crew with herbicide maintenance	\$5,141 every 5 to 7 years	17	On going	Completed in maintenance mode - AFSC project
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	PG&E RW between Aqueduct Road and Tabeaud Road	Multiple	\$5,936	24	On going	Completed in maintenance mode – PG&E project currently in need of rehab to reduce surface fuels
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Pine Acres FMZ	Hand crew with herbicide maintenance	\$12,987 every 5 to 7 years	80	On going	Completed (2011) - in maintenance mode. CAL FIRE and AFSC project
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit private roads	Roadside fuel reduction	Roadside chipping (estimated 30 miles @ \$1000/mile)	\$146,000 additional	146 ac est.	On going	In progress needs refunding

The following table lists additional large-scale fuel reduction projects proposed to improve protection from wildfire.

PROPOSED LARGE-SCALE FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS

3 - PROPOSED FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS						
Community, Structure, or Area at Risk	Project Name	Method of Treatment	Funding Needs	Acres	Priority	Expected Completion Date
Jackson Pines Area	BLM FMZ	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$96,012	83	(4a)	Proposed –pending funding, To be completed as part of the Mt Zion extension
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Pine Acres Hwy 88 link (extension of Pine Acres Project)	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$30,358	17	1	Proposed –pending funding
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Pine Acres Wildwood link (extension of Pine Acres Project)	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$53,410	40	1	Proposed –pending funding
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit, Pine Acres (north and south)	Pine Acres PG&E link (extension of Pine Acres Project)	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$45,392	32	1	Proposed –pending funding
Toyon Road Area	Toyon FB	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$55,945	43	2	Proposed –pending funding
Greater Pine Grove Planning Unit	Mitchell Mine FB	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$252,635	242	3	Proposed –pending funding
Jackson Pines Area	Mt. Zion extension	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$63,797	51	4	Proposed –pending funding
Volcano Road Area	BLM FMZ	Mastication and/or hand crews	Unknown	Unknown	(3a)	Proposed –pending funding, to be completed as part of the Mitchell Mine FB. This is a retreatment of an existing BLM fuels project.
Shake Ridge Road Area	Stone Jug	Mastication, tractor, and/or hand crews	\$73,172	55	5	In progress using CAL FIRE CAG funding. Project sponsor is the Amador Resource Conservation District, scheduled to be completed 2012-2013

Sutter Creek Road and Sutter Highlands Areas	Rancho	Mastication and/or hand crews	\$106,742	94	6	Proposed –pending funding
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I.G.2 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

This plan purposes a combination of community/individual actions combined with large-scale fuel reduction actions designed to protect structures and the environment from damaging wildfires. Defensible space is the keynote of this plan. No other activity can accomplish more protection for individual property owners and communities at risk. Studies show that homes with adequate defensible space have an 80% survivability potential during wildfires.

For more information on the fire-safe action plan, please see Chapter 8.

I.H FACILITATING UNIT FIRE SAFETY IN THE LONG TERM

I.H.1. MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

The Amador Fire Safe Council hosts an annual meeting of all public and private entities that manage fuels to improve forest health and reduce damage from wildfire. This meeting is intended to coordinate efforts of all agencies and private industrial land managers. While this meeting has a countywide focus, projects relating to this plan are also discussed.

With regard to landscape scale projects designed to reduce damage from wildfires that are not within the planning unit but have a direct affect on wildfires threatening values within the planning unit, these projects are ongoing as part of an overarching fuel modification scheme (referred to in this document as the Cooperative Fire Defense System).

The CAL FIRE is in the process of designing a Geographical Information System (GIS) database that will catalog all existing and proposed fuel reduction projects. This database will include projects regardless of location or responsible agency.

The design and function of this database is currently being developed. The minimum criteria for this database are:

1. The ability to retrieve maps of projects on demand by type, agency, year, treatment, etc
2. Identified safety islands along with size and potential capacity
3. Color coded maps that estimate fuels projects current effectiveness against wildfire
4. Polygons representing identified fire defense systems
5. Projects within fire defense systems. Fire defense systems are differentiated from projects in that projects are used to create a system (i.e. Antelope Fuelbreak is a fire defense system while projects are the building blocks of a system.) This can be used to determine the completeness of a fire defense system and to identify key parcels needed to complete the system.

6. Recent wildfire polygons (wildfires are fuel reduction projects albeit not of the planned or desired kind).

I.H.2. UPDATING THIS PLAN

No plan is ever permanent. This plan was written in 2012 based on current conditions and best available information. The field of fire safety is rapidly changing. It is likely that new developments will occur in the coming years. Therefore, it will be important to review this plan at least every five years and update it as needed. Copies of this plan will be available for public review at Amador County libraries, Amador County Office of Emergency Services website www.co.amador.ca.us and on the Amador County Fire Safe Council's website www.amadorfiresafe.org.

Progress on the plan's implementation and other projects affecting the planning unit will be reviewed at least annually at the Upcountry Community Council or similar meeting hosted by the Amador Fire Safe Council. Since not all projects are public agency projects, community associations and citizens can provide input on progress towards meeting fire safety goals in local neighborhoods at this meeting.

The Amador Fire Safe Council will continue its outreach efforts to community and neighborhood groups. Concerns and community desires expressed at these meeting will be considered for inclusion in the next update.

I.H.2. NEEDED RESOURCES

The agencies (CAL FIRE, USFS, PG&E, and BLM) along with the Amador Fire Safe Council and Sierra Pacific Industries are the primary developers of large fuel reduction projects. The agencies have ongoing programs to create and maintain these projects.

The Amador Fire Safe Council is a non-profit corporation that is funded through grants and the 15% administrative fees charged to specific grant projects. Originally funded by Federal Title III grants to the County of Amador, this funding source is no longer available for general operating expenses. Currently the council is solely dependent on administrative fees and specific projects such as this plan. The annual operating expenses of the council are \$50,000.

If the council is unable to obtain enough grants on an annual basis to generate its operating expenses, it will go out of business. To remain in business, the council needs to generate between \$300,000 and \$500,000 in new grant awards annually. Ideally, these projects need to be spread over eighteen months to allow for two burning seasons and to level out operational income over multiple fiscal years.

I.I ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An extensive collaborative project such as this requires contribution, dedication, and commitment from a number of people. We would like to give a special thank you to the following people, without whom this project would have never succeeded.

The following people contributed to the successful creation of this Conservation Community Wildfire Protection Plan. We thank them for their participation.

I.I.1 CORE PLANNING TEAM

- Cathy Koos Breazeal, Amador Fire Safe Council, Executive Director
- Charlie Blankenheim, California Department of Forestry, Battalion Chief
- Jim Simmons, Amador Fire Safe Council, Consultant/forester
- Keith Brizzi, Amador Fire Protection District, Captain
- Craig Ostergaard, Sierra Pacific Industries, Forester
- Brian Mulholland, Fuels Management Specialist, Mother Lode Office, Bureau of Land Management

I.I.2 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The steering committee was comprised of all members of the Amador Fire Safe Council Board of Directors and several at-large members of the community. This board is comprised of a diverse group of citizens representing many organizations.

- John Hofmann, Consultant to Amador County Board of Supervisors
- Lola Blevins, Vice-chairperson of Amador Fire Safe Council and rancher
- Jim McCart, Chairperson of the Amador Fire Safe Council and Chief of Amador Fire Protection District
- Dick Hess, retired forester and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Elaine Knox, homeowner and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Ingrid Barnes, California State Automobile Association Manager and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Kristina Agustin, Realtor and member of the Amador Fire Safe Council
- John Romena, Licensed Professional Forester for Buena Vista Biomass and member of the Amador Fire Safe Council
- Kristina Augustin, Realtor and member of Amador Fire Safe Council

- Paul Maben, Licensed Professional Forester for Pacific Gas and Electric; and member of the Amador Fire Safe Council
- Steve Bonner, homeowner and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Tony Migliaccio, Pharmacist and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Amy Rocha, USDA/NRCS District Conservationist and member of Amador Fire Safe Council
- Thomas Tinsley, CAL FIRE
- Debbie Dunn, Pine Grove resident and member at large

This document is based on the Sierra Nevada Community Conservation and Wildfire Protection Plan Guidebook, written by Tracy Katelman, Marko Bey, Susan Britting, and Carol Rice. Some text in this document is taken directly from the Guidebook. For more information on the Guidebook, see forevergreenforestry.com/SierraCo¹⁸nservationCWPP.html

¹ EIP was recognized for its reputation as a leading provider of environmental, urban planning, water resources planning, and natural resources services throughout California. Now, as PBS&J,

² Fire-Adapted Ecosystem: A local mix of mature natural vegetation (ideally native species but often found in combination with exotic species) that maintains its ability to survive and regenerate, and perhaps even to thrive, with regular disturbance from wildfire. Some species may actually require fire to trigger seed maturation, such as the giant sequoia. Opportunistic species benefit from fire and the openings it can create in a woodland; this is part of their adaptation.

³ Permeability: In this case, a condition in which fire can spread through a community with minimal negative impact.

⁴ Resiliency: The inherent ability of organisms and/or ecosystems to deal with disturbances such as fire in a way that permits or enhances healthy survival.

⁵ Foehn wind driven wildfires

⁶ Fires occurring during normal summer weather. Does not include foehn wind driven fires.

⁷ Public resources Code 4291

⁸ R1 Single family residential district; R1A Single family residential and agricultural district; R2 Low density multiple family residential district; R2A Single family (2 acre minimum) residential district; R3 High density multiple family residential district; RE residential estates district

⁹ California Fire Alliance. "Communities At Risk History."

cafirealliance.org/communities_at_risk/communities_at_risk_history.

¹⁰ The Threat Level Code designates a community's fire threat level, with 1 indicating the least threat, 3 indicating the highest threat.

¹¹ Lands adjacent to federal lands are indicated as such with a mark in this column.

¹² Fuel: All burnable materials including but not limited to living or dead vegetation, structures, and chemicals that feed a fire.

¹³ Ethan Foote, "Wildland-Urban Interface Ignition-Resistant Building Construction Recommendations from the 2004 Community Wildfire Protection Plan Workshops, the California Fire Alliance and the California Fire Safe Council," August 2004.

¹⁴ Surface Fuels: Materials on the ground like needles or low-growing shrubs that provide the fuel for fires to spread on the ground. Surface fuels are generally considered all fuels within six feet of the ground.

¹⁵ Ladder Fuels: Materials such as shrubs or small trees connecting the ground to the tree canopy or uppermost vegetation layer. In forests, this allows fire to climb upward into trees.

¹⁶ The Eldorado National Forest and the Cal Fire Amador Eldorado Unit include these two counties.

¹⁷ Chapter 3 contains a detailed description of foehn winds and their unique impact on large wildfires in Amador County