Frequently Asked Questions

Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Wildfire Risk Assessment

1. What are Community Wildfire Protection Plans and why do they need to be updated?

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) are collaborative and strategic planning documents that are designed to help communities reduce wildfire risk. CWPPs serve as a framework and a roadmap for prioritization of future wildfire risk reduction activities. Wildfire risk changes over time. CWPPs need to be updated to adapt to changing risks and call out new areas for wildfire mitigation. Current CWPPs are also important for certain grant funding opportunities.

2. Who are CWPPs for?

CWPPs are for communities at risk of wildfire and are designed by the community for the community. These planning documents also help align agency, non-profit, and community wildfire mitigation priorities.
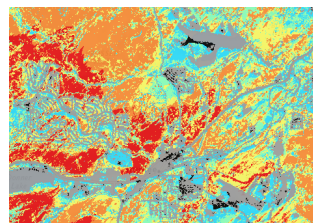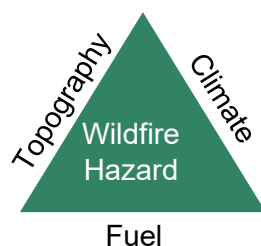
3. How do CWPPs help implement wildfire mitigation projects?

CWPPs identify areas that are a priority for implementing wildfire risk reduction activities based on the alignment of the wildfire hazard and community values. CWPPs also help communicate to communities, agencies, and funders why certain locations or projects are strategic.
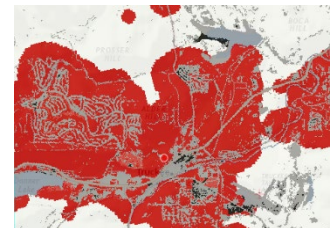
4. What is the difference between Wildfire Hazard and Wildfire Risk?

Wildfire Hazard is the combination of topography, climate, and fuel. These are the three components that drive wildfire behavior. Wildfire hazard helps us understand our fire environment by trying to understand how a fire may burn on our landscape.

Wildfire Risk looks at the combination of wildfire hazard, likelihood, and vulnerability. Wildfire risk tries to understand how likely it is for a wildfire to occur, how intense the wildfire would be, and how likely the wildfire is to impact High-Value Resources and Assets at risk.

Wildfire Hazard

Wildfire Risk

5. Why was the County divided into Forecast Zones?

The Forecast Zones were created to capture the differences in fire environment, fire hazard, and community boundaries across Nevada County. The Forecast Zones are areas in the County that have similar fire environments and community identity.

6. How is Nevada County assessing wildfire hazard and wildfire risk?

Nevada County is using the Interagency Fuel Treatment Decision Support System, a web-based application supported by the federal government, that is designed to model potential fire behavior and prioritize areas for fuel treatment.

7. How does the CWPP Wildfire Hazard Assessment compare to the CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones?

The Wildfire Hazard Assessment (WHA) is not intended to replace or change the CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs). The Wildfire Hazard assessment used in the CWPP differs from the FHSZ because it is a comparative analysis. The Wildfire Hazard Assessment (WHA) compares the wildfire hazard on the landscape against itself to indicate wildfire hazard priority and not areas of high or low wildfire hazard.

This makes it strategic to use in a landscape such as Nevada County where the majority of the land is considered to be a high or very high fire hazard and it is necessary to determine the wildfire hazard priority to inform treatments. The WHA is not a regulatory determination and cannot be used for insurance purposes. The WHA is a tool for wildfire planning and mitigation on a landscape scale.

8. Can you compare the results from one Forecast Zone to another?

No. The Forecast Zones (FZ) each have different fire environments, topography, fuel types, and community identity and the results are specific to the conditions within each FZ.

9. Why are some areas not considered a priority for wildfire risk reduction?

The Project Priority Areas were determined by comparing the results from the Wildfire Hazard Assessment for each Forecast Zone to the High-Value Resources and Assets at risk to determine how vulnerable a location was to being impacted by wildfire and see where the most overlap occurred. The Project Priority Areas indicated locations where risk reduction activities would address the wildfire hazard and also strategic to protect community values. They do not indicate low or high risk.

10. How do you use the results from the Wildfire Risk Assessment?

The results can be used to identify locations for implementing multi-beneficial wildfire risk reduction activities.

11. Why is the CWPP identifying Project Priority Areas and not a list of projects?

The Project Priority Areas allow for a greater diversity in the type of wildfire risk reduction activities that could be implemented under the CWPP and also allow for a greater number of stakeholders to use the CWPP to support wildfire risk reduction activities.

12. What if my project is not in a Project Priority Area?

Having a project outside a Project Priority Area does not prevent you from designing or implementing a project in that location. Projects that are not in a Project Priority Area may still be important wildfire risk reduction projects. There are a number of funders who do not require a project to be identified in a CWPP to be eligible for funding.