

Inter-Canyon Fire Protection District Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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INTER-CANYON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

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LIST OF ACROYNMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFOP	Annual Fire Operating Plan
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Services
ASTER	Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CAPCD	Colorado Air Pollution Control Division
CSFS	Colorado State Forest Service
CWPP	Community Wildfire Protection Plans
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
ERC	Energy Release Component
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
EV	Existing Vegetation
FBFM	Fire Behavior Fuel Model
FDO	Field Duty Officer
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FPD	Fire Protection District
FRCC	Fire Regime Condition Class
gpm	gallons per minute
HART	High Angle Rescue Team
HFRA	Healthy Forests Restoration Act
HOA	Homeowners Association
IC	Incident Commander
ICT	Incident Command Team
IMT	Incident Management Team
JFDRS	Jefferson County Fire Danger Rating System
JEFFCO	Jefferson County
mph	miles per hour
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Act
NFDRS	National Fire Danger Rating System
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NIFC	National Interagency Fire Center
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
OEM	Office of Emergency Management
PNV	Potential Natural Vegetation
USFS	US Forest Service
WALSH	Walsh Environmental Scientists and Engineers, LLC
WFU	Wildland Fire Use
WFAS	Wildland Fire Assessment System
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is essentially a strategic plan that identifies wildland fire issues facing the community and outlines prioritized mitigation actions designed to reduced those risks. Once the CWPP is adopted, it is the community's responsibility to move forward and implement the action items. This may require further planning at the project level, acquisition of funds, or simply motivating community members.

This CWPP is not a legal document. There is no legal requirement to implement the recommendations herein. Actions on public lands will be subject to federal, state, and county policies and procedures such as adherence to the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). Action on private land may require compliance with county land use codes, building codes, and local covenants.

The HFRA of 2003 provides the impetus for wildfire risk assessment and planning at the county and community level. HFRA refers to this level of planning as Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP allows a community to evaluate its current situation with regards to wildfire risk and devise ways to reduce risk for protection of human welfare and other important economic or ecological values. The CWPP addresses such issues as community wildfire risk factors, structure flammability, hazardous fuels, non-fuels mitigation recommendation, community preparedness, and emergency procedures. A Core Team needs to be locally organized to provide oversight to the process and ultimately to project implementation.

This CWPP provides wildfire hazard and risk assessment for selected neighborhoods and subdivisions within the Inter-Canyon Fire Protection District (FPD), located in Jefferson County, Colorado. Continual development in the region, combined with the buildup of hazardous fuels, limited access, and mountainous topography, creates a significant wildfire threat to human life and welfare, as well as to property, local economy, recreation, ecology, historic and cultural sites, and critical infrastructure.

Wildfires are common in Jefferson County. In the absence of comprehensive fire data for the immediate area, adjacent US Forest Service (USFS) district histories were evaluated. Records indicate an average of 45 wildfire ignitions per annum occur on the Pike National Forest South Platte Ranger District and the Arapaho National Forest Clear Creek Ranger District. Significant local wildfires include the 1978 Murphy Gulch fire that scorched 3,300 acres of the district and the 1989 Mount Falcon fire burned over 50 acres on the eastern edge of Indian Hills. More significantly in the immediate region, hundreds of thousands of acres burned, including the Buffalo Creek fire (1996), Hi Meadow fire (2000), the Snaking fire (2002), the Schoonover fire (2002) and the Hayman fire (2002). While the majority of local forest fires were lightning-caused (65 percent), four out of the five largest fires during the last three decades were human caused.

Natural resource management policies and changing ecological conditions have converged to create hazardous fuel situations throughout the assessment area. Decades of

aggressive fire suppression practices have resulted in very dense and weakened timber stands. Years of drought have further stressed the forests, setting the stage for the devastating insect and disease infestations we are experiencing today. Shrublands have grown dense and expanded into traditional grasslands, at the same time accumulating hazardous amounts of woody ground fuel. The diversity of native grasses has succumbed to more aggressive non-native species and noxious weeds. In many areas these fire-dependent ecosystems have grown unchecked by fire for over a century. The net result is any wildfire has the capacity to become catastrophic.

All vegetation is potential fuel for a wildland fire. Within the Inter-Canyon FPD, vegetation can be grouped into three major categories: **Timber** (ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, spruce, Douglas-fir), **shrub** (oakbrush, sage, juniper, mountain mahogany) and **grasses**. Fire managers study fire behavior associated with each of these vegetation/fuel types as well as their spatial relationship to neighborhoods, critical infrastructure and areas of concern.

The Inter-Canyon FPD provides emergency services to the residents of approximately 55 square miles of mountainous topography with five fully equipped stations strategically positioned near the district's population centers. The Jefferson County Annual Operating Plan provides for mutual aid agreements between all fire districts within the county for large-scale emergency response needs. In addition, detailed mutual aid agreements arrangements are in-place with Elk Creek, Evergreen, West Metro, and Indian Hills FPDs. Along Colorado's Front Range privately owned lands are interspersed with public lands, including lands owned by Jefferson County Open Space and Denver Mountain Parks. A coordinated effort between all fire authorities, land management agencies, and private landowners within the district is needed to effectively manage the reduction of hazardous fuel and reduce the risk of wildland fire.

Extensive field surveys, interviews and meetings with federal, state, county and city land management agencies, meetings and coordination with officials from Inter-Canyon FPD as well as surrounding fire protection districts, public meetings, and questionnaire feedback were utilized to obtain information and data pertinent to the analysis of wildfire hazards and risks in the assessment area. All information was gathered, analyzed, and prepared in the CWPP format by Walsh Environmental Scientists and Engineers, LLC (WALSH). A project website is maintained by the Jefferson County Division of Emergency Management and project updates and information to promote public awareness and outreach were provided (<http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/emerg/index.htm>).

Public meetings were convened on October 25 and December 6, 2006 at Inter-Canyon FPD Station No. 1 on South Turkey Creek Road. The meetings were announced on the Jefferson County Emergency Management website, in newspaper articles, by Homeowners Association (HOA) notification, the posting of flyers in public locations, and the mailing of the meeting announcement to every resident in the Inter-Canyon FPD response area. The purpose of the first meeting was to explain the CWPP process, goals and objectives, neighborhood survey results, and provide an opportunity for the public to participate in the process, review the findings, and comment on proposed mitigation

recommendations such as defensible space, hazardous fuels management and non-fuel projects. Meeting feedback was incorporated into the CWPP draft. The purpose of the second meeting was to present the CWPP draft to the public. Questionnaires were distributed at the first meeting on October 25, and were also mailed to every resident prior to the December 6 meeting. The questionnaires were designed to elicit information on public opinion relative to the level of wildfire risk in the Inter-Canyon FPD, evaluate values at risk, and assess mitigation practices needed to reduce the risk (Appendix C). Firewise pamphlets and brochures that explained proper home construction and landscaping practices to reduce the risk of wildfire loss were also handed out at the meetings. To encourage public review and comment, a draft report of the CWPP was posted on the Jefferson County Emergency Management website prior to the second meeting on December 6, 2006.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Form 1144, Standard for Protection of Life and Property from Wildfire 2002 Edition, was utilized to assess the level of risk and hazard to individual neighborhoods. Field surveys of 14 subdivisions identified by the Inter-Canyon FPD as areas of concern were conducted during October 2006 to assess specific wildfire hazard and risk factors. Surveys assess predominant characteristics within individual neighborhood communities as they relate to structural ignitability, fuels, topography, expected fire behavior, emergency response, and ultimately human safety and welfare. Scores are assigned to each element and totaled to determine the overall level of risk. Low, moderate, high, and extreme hazard categories are determined based on the total score. A summary of the community hazard ratings and contributing factors are provided in Table ES 1. Community survey summaries are located in Appendix C.

Table ES 1. Community Hazard Rating and Contributing Factors

Community	Hazard Rating	Contributing Factors
Deer Creek Mesa	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Adequate emergency access, multiple ingress/egress routes, good road condition, low grade. • (+) No timber fuels present, predominance of irrigated grass, low topography. • (+) Predominance of non-flammable construction material, pressurized hydrant grid, buried utilities.
West Ranch	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Good primary emergency access along a valley meadow, adequate secondary road turnarounds. Pressurize hydrant grid present. • (+) $\geq 30'$ d-space present in over 65% and non-flammable construction in over 30% of observed homes. • (-) Steep south entrance access through thick mature oakbrush and ponderosa pine. Dense fir and mixed conifer on north facing slopes. • (-) Both entrances follow topographic chimneys.
Homestead-West/ Sourdough	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Good access through 2 primary routes. Good road condition, low to moderate grade. • (+) Pressurized hydrant grid, close proximity to main fire station and HWY 285, over 80% of home

Community	Hazard Rating	Contributing Factors
		with at least 30ft of d-space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+/-) Light to moderate south slope ponderosa pine and open meadow. Heavy north slope lodgepole pine and Douglas fir. • (-) Regional fire frequency and fire weather.
North Turkey Creek	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Adequate ingress/egress and road condition, moderate topography. • (+) D-space and predominance of meadow grasses and light to moderate ponderosa pine. • (-) Regional fire frequency and fire weather.
Andrea Lane	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Good road condition and structural access. • (+) Predominance of d-space, fire resistive building materials, light to moderate fuel in surrounding forest. • (-) Restricted (single) ingress/egress, conifer regeneration, abundant ladder and surface fuels, homes positioned on ridge, dry southern aspect, heavy fuels on north slope, ignition potential from surrounding highways.
Homestead-East	High (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Good emergency access on all sides, low to moderate topography. • (+) $\geq 30'$ d-space in-place with 70% of structures, pressurized hydrant grid present • (+/-) Predominant southeast aspect with fairly open ponderosa pine, moderate fuel load and grassy interior meadows present. Heavy Douglas fir and dead-down woody material on some north facing slopes. • (-) Predominance of flammable construction materials. • (-) Regional fire frequency and fire weather.
Tiny Town	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Adequate ingress/egress. • (+/-) Low to moderate topography. • (+) Low risk characteristics of surrounding area - meadows and highways. • (-) No local emergency water source. • (-) Steep and restricted secondary roads. • (-) Regional fire frequency and fire weather.
DoubleHeader	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Southeast aspect with light to moderate fuels predominant, some interior grassy meadows present. • (-) Inadequate d-space predominant, 10% combustible shake roof • (-) Restricted (single) ingress/egress for over 100 homes, significant topography.
Murphy Gulch	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Over 75% of observed homes with $\geq 30'$ d-

Community	Hazard Rating	Contributing Factors
		space, over 50% on lots with < 10% grade. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (-) Single ingress/egress, primary rd follows topographic chimney, unimproved surface, long secondary roads with inadequate turnarounds. • (-) Significant topographic features, dissected topography. • (-) Moderate to heavy oakbrush and light to moderate ponderosa pine dominate south facing slopes. Heavy Douglas fir on north facing slopes.
Hilldale	High (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) 2 primary ingress/egress routes, adequate rd condition, low to moderate road grade. • (+/-) 60% observed homes with $\geq 30'$ d-space, predominance of flammable construction materials. • (-) Significant topography, steep lots, chimneys, switchback road grades problematic, sinuous across-slope rd network. • (-) Moderate to heavy N. aspect fuels with lodgepole pine stand central to the community, and aspen in older clearings and mitigated areas. • (-) No strategically accessible emergency water source.
Jennings Rd	High (+)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+/-) Single ingress/egress follows valley meadow low fuel load, low road grade. • (+) Majority of homes benefit from proximity to natural d-space provided by meadow. • (+/-) Continuity of heavy north facing slope fuels broken by valley meadow and south slope light ponderosa pine stands. • (-) Single lane unimproved rd, no turnarounds, restrictive switchback on secondary road. • (-) No strategically accessible emergency water source.
McKinney Ranch	Extreme (-)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (-) Condition of primary access road, single ingress/egress, lack of turnarounds. • (-) South facing slopes moderate ponderosa pine with oak understory, dense oakbrush stands, some open grassy meadows. North facing slopes dense Douglas fir and mixed conifer. • Many homes are located in dense north slope fuels. • (-) Combustibility of construction material, predominant lack of d-space. • (-) No strategically accessible emergency water source.
Sampson Rd	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (-) Single lane ingress/egress through moderate to heavy fuels in steep topographic chimney. Inadequate signage, vegetation encroachment. • (-) Mature brush fuel models present on level and

Community	Hazard Rating	Contributing Factors
		south facing slopes, north facing slopes dense Douglas fir and mixed conifer, some dead and down woody material. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Good supply and distribution of in-place water for structure fires (> 190,000 gals). • (-) No strategically accessible emergency water source. • (+/-) 50% of observed home with $\geq 30'$ d-space and lots with < 10% slope. • (-) Predominance of flammable building construction material, utility placement. • Regional fire frequency and fire weather.
Maxwell Hill	Extreme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (+) Over 70% of observed home with $\geq 30'$ d-space, 30% with non-flammable roofing. Most structures built on south facing lots. • (+/-) South facing slopes dominated by moderate to dense oakbrush with scattered light ponderosa pine, heavy Douglas fir and mixed conifer on north facing slopes. • (-) Single ingress/egress in topographic chimney with surrounding heavy timber fuels, some unimproved road surface, hazardous shoulder drop off. • (-) Significant dissected topography. • (-) No strategically accessible emergency water source.

The highest priority hazardous fuels reduction project starts at the home, the most important line of defense in the event of a wildfire. The creation of defensible space around homes, the utilization of fire resistant construction materials, combined with some common sense practices around the home and property will significantly reduce the risk of life and property loss in the event of a wildfire. When these Firewise practices become the predominant model in a neighborhood the entire community benefits.

Recommended action items also focus on improving the safety of neighborhood access and evacuation routes. Reducing hazardous fuel loads along these critical routes is an important factor in creating a safer community environment for both residents and emergency responders. Other fuel reduction projects may extend into the surrounding forest to establish strategic fuelbreaks around subdivisions, breaking the continuity of continuous forest canopy and providing a level of protection to communities from possible sources of ignition. Larger scale mitigation projects involve landscape level planning and implementation. The long-range goal is to restore forest health and chaparral health to its natural fire-adapted state and reducing the likelihood of wildfire ignitions becoming catastrophic.

Community action item recommendations may also include suggested road improvements, further development of emergency water resources, and home addressing

improvements. These are non-fuel related items but provide tangible improvements to the overall safety of residents and emergency responders. Additionally, on-going homeowner and community outreach efforts are necessary to maintain momentum, solicit involvement and drive implementation.

Familiarization and coordination with the Jefferson County Annual Operating Plan is also recommended. This provides important information concerning county and regional fire operations, policies and procedure definitions. Information may be available through the Inter-Canyon FPD or on-line through the Jefferson County Office of Emergency Management web site.

The following Table ES 2 summarizes the survey ratings and identifies specific prioritized mitigation projects for each neighborhood community. Survey summary results and detailed treatment maps are found in Appendix C.

Table ES 2. Prioritized Community Action Plan Recommendations

Hazard Reduction Recommendations		High Priority					
		Prioritized Implementation					
		Low Priority					
1144 Rating	Community	D-Space	Shaded Fuel Breaks	Secondary Evacuation Development	Water Supply	Area Fuels Treatment	Additional Miscellaneous
EXTREME	Sampson Road	Phased d-space program implementation	Lower Sampson Road to 1st saddle; Mill Hollow Road; Sampson road north of Sunburst Road; Secondary evac routes; utility corridors	To Maxwell Hill via Sunburst Road & Trapper Mtn Road. East to LHM from Sunburst Road	Install gravity-fed source at Sampson Road & Deer Creek Canyon Road	Fuels breaks in FBFM 10 areas on Deer Creek Open Space & North Sampson Road	Install standard reflective street and address signage
	McKinney Ranch	Phased d-space program implementation	South side lower McKinney Road; South side North Canyon; Hondah Drive in FBFM 10; Secondary evac Routes; utility corridors	To Hilldale via Hondah/Goins; to Jennings via North Canyon Dr; to Deer Creek Canyon via McKinney Road drainage	Install gravity-fed source at McKinney & Deer Creek Canyon Rd	Between McKinney and Jennings along Homewood Park to Cypress Road in Hilldale	Install standard reflective address signage
	Maxwell Hill	Phased d-space program implementation	FBFM 10 area on Flat Top Road; secondary evac routes along Trapper Mountain; utility corridors	To Sampson Road via Trapper Mountain Road & Sunburst Road	Install gravity-fed source at Maxwell Hill Rd. & Deer Creek Canyon Rd	N/A	Switchback improvement @ entrance to Majestic Eagle, standard address signage
HIGH	Jennings Road	Phased d-space program implementation	Yegge Road; Secondary evac route along lower Jennings Road	To McKinney Ranch North Canyon via Lower Jennings Road; Hilldale Pines via Yegge Road and Hilldale Drive	Install gravity-fed source at Jennings Rd. & S. Turkey Creek Rd	Between McKinney and Jennings along Homewood Park to Cypress Road in Hilldale	Jennings Road widening/grading/pul lovers; switchback improvement on Yegge Rd; standard address signage
	Hilldale Pines	Phased d-space program implementation	City View Drive in central slope lodgepole stand; South Crystal Way; secondary evac along Goins; Utility and pipeline corridors	To Yegge Road via Hilldale Drive; McKinney Ranch via Goins	Install gravity-fed sources @ south access on Crystal south of Granite and @ Turkey Creek Road and Hilldale Drive	Fuelbreak in chimney from Coronado Cr to Crystal Way	Improve Buford Lane turnaround; standard reflective address signs.
	Murphy Gulch	Phased d-space program implementation	South side lower Murphy Gulch Road; secondary evac route., utility corridors	To South West Ranch Road via Oakview Road	Install gravity-fed source at Murphy Gulch Road & Deer Creek Canyon Road	N/A	Turnaround improvement on Moonlight Drive and Mountain Air Ranch; switchback improvement on Deer Mountain Drive; standard reflective address signs, jackpile mitigation in Deer Mountain Road gulch
	Doubleheader	Phased d-space program implementation	Lower Doublehead Ranch Road; Cook Lane to North Drive to Rossman Gulch Road to North Turkey Creek Road; utility corridors	To Rossman gulch and North Turkey Creek Drive via North Drive; Hillview Dr. & HWY 285 via Doubleheader Ranch "HWY"	Install gravity-fed source at Doubleheader Ranch Rd. & HWY 285	East facing slope between Inter-Canyon Station 3/Homesteader Drive and Draco Drive/Arrowhead Drive to Rossman Gulch Road	Improve Brandenburger turnaround; standard reflective address signage
	Tiny Town	Phased d-space program implementation	Summer Road	N/A	Install gravity-fed source @ LZ #4 off South Turkey	N/A	standard reflective address signage

Hazard Reduction Recommendations		High Priority						Prioritized Implementation		Low Priority	
MODERATE	Homestead-West	Phased d-space program implementation	North Surrey Drive; Iowa Gulch; utility corridors in FBFM 10	N/A	Creek Road Install gravity-fed source at Valley Road and South Turkey Creek Road	N/A	standard reflective address signage				
	Andrea Lane	Phased d-space program implementation	Improve fuelbreak along HWY 285	N/A	Maintenance at dry hydrant	North and west of home lots over looking North Turkey Creek Road.	standard reflective address signage				
MODERATE	North Turkey Creek	Phased d-space program implementation	Starlight Drive North of lodge	N/A	Maintenance at dry hydrant	Northeast slope from Ridgeview Drive and Northway Drive to North Turkey Creek Road	standard reflective address signage				
	Sourdough/Homestead-West	Phased d-space program implementation	South Homesteader Drive; South Settlers Drive	N/A	N/A	East facing slope between Inter-Canyon Station 3/Homesteader Drive and Draco Drive/Arrowhead Drive to Rossman Gulch Road	standard reflective address signage				
	West Ranch	Phased d-space program implementation	S. entrance along West Ranch Trail; West Ranch Road	N/A	N/A	N/A	standard reflective address signage				
LOW	Deer Creek Mesa	Phased d-space program implementation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	standard reflective address signage, seasonal mowing				

The Inter-Canyon FPD CWPP is a strategic planning document that is developed and approved by the core team. An important component of the development process includes building a stakeholder group that will move the plan forward, implement prioritized recommendations and maintain the CWPP as the characteristics of the WUI change over time. Organizing and maintaining this team is often the most challenging component of the CWPP process. It is, however, essential in the process of converting the CWPP from a strategic plan into action. This team will oversee the implementation and maintenance of the CWPP by working with fire authorities, community organizations, private landowners, and public agencies to coordinate and implement hazardous fuels treatment projects management and other mitigation projects. Building partnerships among neighborhood-based organizations, fire protection authorities, local governments, public land management agencies, and private landowners is necessary in identifying and prioritizing measures to reduce wildfire risk. Maintaining this cooperation is a long-term effort that requires the commitment of all partners involved. The CWPP encourages citizens to take an active role in identifying needs, developing strategies, and implementing solutions to address wildfire risk by assisting with the development of local community wildfire plans and participating in countywide fire prevention activities.