

Maricopa County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
Annual Review
2011



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Background

Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management embarked on a journey to develop a comprehensive, all inclusive, Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in 2009. The plan was developed over a period of one year with assistance and collaboration with 40 different government agencies and fire chiefs. The following communities and agencies were involved in the preparation of the Maricopa County CWPP: Arizona State Forestry Division, Municipal fire departments and local fire districts. Government officials, emergency managers, and fire chiefs from the following communities:

Aguila, Apache Junction, Avondale, Buckeye, Buckeye Valley, Cave Creek, Circle City/Morristown, Carefree, Chandler, El Mirage, Fountain Hills, Gila Bend, Glendale, Gilbert, Guadalupe, Goodyear, Harquahala, Litchfield Park, Mesa, New River, Peoria, Phoenix, Paradise Valley, Queen creek, Rio Verde, Scottsdale, Sun City, Sun City West, Sunflower, Sun Lakes, Surprise, Tempe, Tolleson, Tonopah, Wickenburg, Wittman and Youngtown.

The following state, federal and local agencies also participated:

Arizona State Forestry Department, Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management, Bureau of Land Management, Tonto National Forest, Fort McDowell Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, Tohono O'odham Indian Nation San Lucy District, and the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

The Maricopa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was developed in response to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) for the at-risk communities and unincorporated areas in Maricopa County, Arizona, located in and around public lands administered by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Phoenix District Office and the Tonto National Forest (TNF).

A primary objective of a CWPP is to help local governments, fire departments and districts, and residents identify at-risk public and private lands to better protect those lands and structures from a severe wildfire threat.

Additional functions of a CWPP are to improve fire prevention and suppression activities, as well as, identifying funding needs and opportunities to reduce the risk of wildland fire and enhance public and firefighter safety. Identifying at-risk areas and

improving fire protection capabilities helps the communities to prioritize high risk area projects and expedites overall project planning.

Maricopa County's CWPP was created to meet these objectives at a local level while integrating with overall federal- and state-level fire planning objectives. Annual review of the CWPP allows for the review of plan objectives to ensure continued integration, as well as adjustment priorities to meet the dynamic needs of the community in terms of wildfire protection and mitigation.

2011 Annual Review

During development of the CWPP, MCDEM formed two core teams to facilitate agency and public collaboration and to ensure that all residents of Maricopa County were represented in this planning process; the Eastern Core Team includes all identified at-risk communities in Maricopa County located east of Interstate 17 (I-17) and east of Interstate 10 (I-10), and the Western Core Team includes all identified at-risk communities west of I-17 and I-10.

Core Team were assembled (December 12 at SRPMIC location and December 13 at a Peoria location) to perform the annual review of the CWPP plan (minutes attached). This review included;

Review Plan Performance Measures (pg 112) - Each group reviewed Table 5.1, page 112 of the CWPP document, *Performance Measures to Assess Maricopa County CWPP Progress*. These are annotated in the Annual review form on page 8.

Projects Completed in 2011 - In 2011, more than 800 acres of land had fuel reduction or modification within Maricopa County. Six specific projects, representing \$30,000 in grant funding and \$10,000 of "in-kind" contributions, were identified as complete by October 31, including three separate area projects in the Rio Verde community, one in Buckeye, and two in Fountain Hills.

- **Rio Verde** - Three projects were completed near the Rio Verde community. The first two involved fuel modification and reduction underneath transmission lines (see Figures 1 – 6). The third project (utility and fire suppression access) was a partnership created between Salt River Project, Rio Verde Fire, Bureau of Land Management and Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). This third project, valued at approximately \$30,000, was completely funded by "in-kind" contributions from the partnership involved. While no grant monies were

required, the partnership is worth noting as it stemmed from CWPP collaboration. (See Figures 7 and 8).

- **Fountain Hills** - The projects in Fountain Hills were two areas of fuel reduction and modification in Balboa Wash. (see Figures 9-12)
- **Buckeye** - The project in Buckeye was unique in that it included a residential housing development that went bankrupt and into receivership leaving no readily identifiable agency to take responsibility for the severe fire hazard created by weeds and overgrown vegetation. The community members, local government and fire agencies all partnered together to clean the area and make it safe for the remaining residents (see Figures 14-18).

Plan Implementation – Core Teams discussed and provided consensus on the following methods of continuing and improving upon implementation of the CWPP in 2012:

- **Promotion of FireWise Program** – The FireWise program is an excellent tool to garner community involvement and support, while educating on the dangers of wildfires. FireWise community programs assist the fire department and local government, in educating the community and building defensible space around a home. To date there are three communities in Maricopa County that have the FireWise designation (one in Anthem, one in Scottsdale and one in Rio Verde) and several in the process of becoming FireWise communities. Consensus among the Core Committee members was to further promote the FireWise program in 2012 by increasing the number of FireWise communities.
- **FireWise Training** - To effectively increase the number of FireWise communities within Maricopa County, a corresponding effort to provide training is necessary as there is a currently is a shortage in certified Advisors and Assessors. Additionally, the Core Teams agreed it was more appropriate to have this training revolve around the types of vegetation types found in the lower deserts.
- **FireWise Garden** – Develop one or more FireWise Gardens to serve as a visual tool for potential FireWise Communities. The purpose of the garden is to give homeowners a place to come to view the types (and configuration of) vegetation associated within lower fire risk. Participating organizations were asked to review if they have any areas where BLM could place a garden of plant types to use for desert landscaping. The BLM would pay for the plants and installation and the organizations would provide upkeep. This concept, already in place in Black

Canyon City, would allow property owners to visit a location where they could identify fire safe planting for their home.

- **Development of a CWPP Working Group** - The two core committees are large and coordination of meetings with good attendance is difficult. The CWPP (pg 102) recommended the formation of a Working Group to assist in plan management and administration during the year. Both two core committees agreed to the development of Working Group, possibility to include representatives from existing FireWise communities.
- **Develop Additional Water Sources** - Rio Verde and Scottsdale have identified areas for helicopters to “dip” for water when needed. Water continues to be an item of discussion and area for improvement. Ft. McDowell Fire Department will continue to work with Goldfield community to improve water supplies.
- **Potential CWPP projects for 2012** – The consensus of both Core committees was to continue with fuel reduction/modification. Although the groups had no specific locations at the meetings they will be reviewing them during the upcoming months.
- **Video Production** – The Core Committees both showed interest in the development of a video explaining fuel reduction and defensible space for the homeowner. Ideally, this video could be developed to include vegetation types consistent with local flora and be distributed to municipal channels for broadcast.

CWPP Annual Report Form

Name of Jurisdiction: Maricopa County

Date Document Was Prepared: December 14, 2011

Prepared by: Robert Meyer

Performance Measures:

Goal:

1. Improve Fire Prevention and Fire Suppression.

➤ Reduction of wildland fire occurrences and acres burned (unplanned) in the WUI

- Green waste disposal sites available in high risk communities? **Yes**
- Type 3 fire engine acquired by Queen Creek Fire? **No**
- Type 6 brush truck acquired for Carefree/Cave Creek WUI? **No**
- Type 6 brush truck acquired by Sun Lakes for sub WUI? **No**
- Effectiveness monitoring of fire prevention and suppression will include the following:
 - Acres burned and degree of severity of wildland fire. **50 acres burned with no severe fires in Maricopa County.**
 - Percentage of wildland controlled on initial attack? **All**
 - Number of homes/structures lost? **None**
- New water sources developed in key areas? **Two communities identified potential water sources on their golf courses for helicopter use.**
- Wildland PPE acquired as needed? **None purchased by CWPP**

2. Reduce hazardous vegetative fuels.

➤ Effective treatment of high risk areas by acre:

- Number of treated acres of NON Federal WUI lands in condition 2 or 3 as identified as high priorities by the CWPP and should be moved to condition 1 or another acceptable level of fuel load and continuity. **0 acres**
- Acres of treated to acceptable fuel levels within priority treatment management areas. **800 acres**

3. Restore Watershed Health

➤ Acres of fuel reduction or watershed enhancement treatments that meet restoration treatment guidelines for riparian habitats.

- Coordinated with and support of MCDEM, ASFD, ASLD, TNF, and BLM in implementing and determining social, economic, and environmental effects on riparian restoration treatments (Treatments 7 and 9) **0 acres**

- Acres of Saltcedar-invaded riparian areas identified and undergoing restoration treatments? **Unknown on Gila River Indian Community**
4. Promote Community Involvement.
- Initiation of public outreach programs:
 - Countywide CWPP Working Group Initiated? **Yes**
 - Public outreach programs and promotions implemented to enhance voluntary efforts to reduce hazardous fuels and fuel loading? ***FireWise community formed in Rio Verde***
 - Number of areas and private landowners supporting and implementing fuel reduction projects? **Two FireWise communities and 2 more in the process.**
 - MCDEM and local fire organizations developed and implemented evacuation plans for high risk areas? **Ready, Set, Go is being implemented**
 - Roadside fire warning signs in English and Spanish installed? **None**
 - Green waste disposal and processing site secured and operational? **Yes**
 - Fire awareness articles printed in the newspapers? **None**
 - Fire-safety awareness programs, posters and information available in public places? **Yes**
5. Encourage economic development
- Wood products industry growth and diversification to use all sizes of material removed by fuel reduction treatments.
 - Number of value added wood products developed by the community? **None**
 - Number of new markets (local firewood sales) for products created? **None**

Illustrations of 2011 CWPP Projects

Rio Verde Projects (Three)



Rio Verde Area Before The Fuel Modification (Figure #1)



After Fuel Modification (Figure #2)



Before Fuel Modification (Figure #3)



After Fuel Modification (Figure #4)



Before fuel modification (Figure #5)



After Fuel Modification (Figure #6)



Before access enhancements (Figure #7)



After access enhancements (Figure #8)

Fountain Hills Project Legend Wash



Before Cleanup (Figure #9)



After Cleanup (Figure #10)

Fountain Hills Project Balboa Wash



Before Cleanup (Figure #11)



After Cleanup (Figure #12)

Buckeye Project



Community Meeting to discuss Sage Wood (Figure #13)



Weeds before Cleaning (Figure #14)



After Cleanup (Figure #15)



Before Cleanup (Figure #16)



After Cleanup (Figure #17)