

General Plan 2030: Applying Lessons Learned
Policy Recommendations from the Second Annual Wildfire Safety Summit
December 3, 2008
10 am – 1 pm @ Cozy Diner

Quick Facts:

1. Butte County contains 23 listed and another 29 eligible communities at risk within a Wildland Urban Interface.

http://www.cafirealliance.org/communities_at_risk/communities_at_risk

2. Catastrophic wildfires throughout Butte County's history such as; 1996 Raulson Fire, 1999 Lightning Fires-Butte Complex, 2000 Concow Fire, 2001 Poe Fire, 2001 HWY 70 Fire, 2003 Centerville Fire, 2004 Oregon fire, 2008 Lightning Fires-Butte Complex, 2008 Ophir fire, 2008 Humboldt fire have, in total burned significant acres and destroyed hundreds of residences. These fires have devastated watershed landscapes, creating erosion and negative effects on water quality throughout the County as well as in communities downstream which receive water from the California Water Project. (*See PDF fire history map*).

Policy Recommendations

Shaded Fuel Breaks (Traffic/Public Health and Safety)

1. Construct and maintain Shaded Fuel Breaks along road ways in all communities at risk to wildfire for evacuation ingress/egress and wildfire protection. Current Shaded Fuel Breaks include: Cohasset Rd., Coutolenc Rd., 17 mile Upper Ridge, Town of Paradise, Feather Falls, Butte Creek Canyon, Jordan Hill Rd. Future projects should include the Pentz Rd. corridor. (*see Buttefiresafe.org for more information*).
2. Communications such as the reverse 911 system used for evacuation information during a fire need to be protected through roadside fuels reduction projects and their maintenance. Small roadside brush fires could jeopardize 911 system operations.

Water Resources (17):

1. Protect Watersheds from the devastation of wildfire through preventative fuels reduction projects around homes and at the community level through shaded fuels reduction projects.
2. Develop additional small water storage through permanent water ponds and water tanks for fire protection for both existing and new homes in communities at risk especially in Paradise.
3. Develop Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of water resources for out-of-area fire fighters.
4. Export only surplus water.
5. Educate residents on water use issues.

6. Require small scale water systems for fire protection in all developments located in high, very high or extreme wildland urban interface areas.

Policy - Transportation (24)

1. Require that roadways for all new development and housing in the wildland urban interface provide for egress by residents and access for fire service through roadside Shaded Fuel Breaks and road design.
2. New development in high, very high or extreme wildland urban interface areas shall identify access and egress routes and make improvements or contribute to a fund to develop, upgrade or maintain these routes.
3. Establish additional emergency evacuation routes in Magalia and Paradise including east/west linkages from Skyway to Coutolenc as well as routes on Garland/Doe Mill Road, Centerville Road, Jordan Hill Road.
4. Hwy. 171 (Skyway from Inskip to Butte Meadows) poses both pros and cons as an evacuation route. Some funding should be used on other evacuation routes in the area.
5. New evacuation routes may have a negative growth producing potential - a scenic highway or other measures will need to be used to prevent growth along evacuation routes.
6. Reexamine/develop county road and bridge standards to insure proper ingress/egress and access for fire vehicles.
7. Transportation (24): reinstate sections (a) and (f).

Community Assembly Locations (Traffic/Public Health and Safety)

Need fire safe community assembly locations especially in Magalia. Locations to include shopping center and other parking lots, schools, baseball fields, parks etc.

Education

- Continued wildfire safety education programs which guide residents on living with and preparing for wildfire with an emphasis on land stewardship.
- Continue Programs which assist residents in living with wildfire such as the No-cost Chipper Program, 6th Grade Wildfire in the Foothills Education Curriculum, home inspections and Residents Assistance Programs.
- Developers should be required and home buyers should be encouraged to complete a “wildland fire stewardship” training course which will be developed in partnership with the Butte County Fire Safe Council. The course will prepare them for living in a wildfire area and cover topics such as; defensible space, home fire safe inspections, tree/shrub pruning, maintaining “little things” (such as leave, pine needles and other potential fine fuels under decks, stairs etc. which cause the loss of homes) and evacuation process and preparation.

Timber Resources (12):

1. Development of biomass facilities & uses is critically important to reducing forest fuels.

2. Explore the cost effective opportunities of biomass and make biomass opportunities more economical.
3. Reinstate outreach materials to both proponents and opponents of timber harvest projects. Look for potential of effective areas for large area fuels reduction/ forest treatment.
4. Review wild and scenic designation impacts on wildfire fighting.
5. County should address input from landowners after catastrophic wildfire (for Timber Preserve Zones).

Park & Recreation (32) Develop and maintain parks in conjunction with evacuation assembly points/safety zones or staging areas.

Building Construction

Reducing home-based wildfire hazards is an incredibly critical part of the wildfire safety equation. Most homes burn during wildfires due to ember intrusion through vents, etc., so it is key that homes are built or retrofitted to address these issues. New homes need to meet current building standards with fire-resistant construction and materials. Programs and resources should be made available to retrofit older homes. Community members need to be educated about fire safe homes with:

-a science-based, interactive assessment for homeowners on the web:

http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/homeassessment/home_assess_intro.html

also available in Spanish:

http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/homeassessment/spanish/home_assess_intro_sp.html

-resources for how to complete that type of assessment on a community or even neighborhood wide scale:

<http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/toolkit/communityassessment.html>