

Lake County - Aligning to Action

Healing the Land, Healing the People



Prepared by the Community Mitigation Assistance Team

May 27, 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Large wildfires over the past six years, which scorched thousands of acres and resulted in the loss of several thousand homes, served as wake-up call to the residents and land managers in Lake County. In 2019, talk about bringing in a Community Mitigation Assistance Team (CMAT) began. Those same fires, as well as the pandemic in 2020, delayed the Team's start but both the community and the CMAT recognized the need and finally made it happen, albeit virtually.

The County has many things going for it – numerous Firewise USA® Communities working to increase mitigation with their neighborhoods; strong relationships between CAL Fire and the local fire departments; adoption of both the Wildland Urban Interface Code and Buildings Codes; and the Scotts Valley Tribe of the Pomo Indians recently started a training program for tribal members to increase the mitigation workforce in the County. In 2018, the County adopted a Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance, though implementation has been slowed by the pandemic.

Though efforts were underway, mitigation leaders, residents, organizations, and governmental agencies recognized that they often didn't know who was doing what and that their efforts had minimal cohesive focus. Amazing work and partnerships were flourishing with some groups and in some areas of the County but not at the level everyone felt was needed.

Lake County and the Mendocino National Forest requested a CMAT to enhance Lake County's collaborative efforts and evaluate their wildfire mitigation strategy, including relevant plans, programs, and activities. They also requested CMAT develop priorities, clarify roles and responsibilities of involved parties, and provide them with an actionable plan to implement.

This report summarizes the CMAT's findings and provides recommendations that incorporate wildfire mitigation best practices to support the further development of collaborative efforts and increase mitigation actions across Lake County, California.

This CMAT assignment was conducted virtually due to travel and in-person gathering restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Team Members undertook an extensive review of existing mitigation resources and documents, followed by hosting an intensive SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) exercise with active members of the mitigation community, and followed up with numerous individual and small group dialogues which enhanced the CMAT's understanding of the situation. An additional interactive workshop focused on learning about successful mitigation efforts from CMAT members.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report captures findings and provides actionable recommendations to increase public participation in mitigation activities and enhance the overall effectiveness of Lake County's strategies and tactics. The Mitigation Guiding Principles are overarching best practices gleaned from numerous successful practitioners and should be used to guide all partner's mitigation and engagement efforts. The Team's findings and recommendations fall into two categories, **Collaboration** and **Mitigation**.

CMAT has created an online Community Toolbox ([link](#)) that contains research and reference documents related to the specific recommendations provided in this report.

"This CMAT work is exhilarating. So many of the people involved here are engaged and DO listen. It's a joy to be a part of this."
Betsy Cawn



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Cover photo courtesy of CAL FIRE

Cover page subtitle quoted from Terre Logsdon, Environmental Director for Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians



Healing the Land, Healing the People

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Consider these guiding principles when developing your Lake County wildfire mitigation strategy and the projects that comprise it; they will make your efforts more effective.

Work together – A group of people who share the same goals can get more done together than separately. They plan together, piggyback on strengths, share resources, staff, and the work. A partnership is more likely to get supporting funding. Collaboratively planning, implementing, sharing successes and lessons learned is an essential first step in building a common vision and gaining broad community support.

Be strategic – Be strategic by creating larger landscape fuel treatments and helping clusters of homes reduce risk but realize this takes time. Incremental actions, (one home / one acre), is progress!

No boundaries – Wildfires do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. Link fuel reduction and defensible space projects to benefit cross-boundary areas. Engage with other neighborhoods and other jurisdictions to accomplish work on adjoining properties.

Promote home hardening and defensible space – Having homeowners prepare their yard and structure for

wildfire is the most important thing they can do to avoid loss and is always where work should begin.

Help underserved populations – Provide mitigation assistance for low-income, elderly, and disabled residents who may be unable to accomplish this work on their own.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Face-to-face engagement – Sharing with residents is best done face-to-face through a home assessment and conversations about actions they must take. Often this discussion has to take place many times before someone takes action.

Stretch project funds - Homeowner contributions should be part of the funding equation, but expectations for investment vary by community and homeowner. When and where appropriate, require an investment of labor, time, or financial resources. This investment empowers the homeowner to take responsibility for what's theirs and makes them more likely to maintain their project over time.

Think creatively to meet unfunded needs - Always engage local and regional partners that have something to lose or gain; these individuals and businesses may have financial resources to contribute. Even when a grant received does not have a match requirement, consider asking for some percent (5-10%) of the subaward amount from the homeowner group or resident that could be used to help increase the overall value of the project or program. Funds could be used to: Assist with coordination or administrative costs, provide support for the underserved or chipping programs, or conducting fuel reduction assessments.

Invest most of your time and resources on risk reduction actions – Meetings, recognition programs, news releases, or going to events do not accomplish mitigation. Respect everyone's time. Do not hold additional meetings if wildfire mitigation discussions can be consolidated into existing forums. Make meetings short and strategic. Ensure tasks and initiatives are clear at the end of each meeting and are moving the partnership forward.

Celebrate success! – Sustained participation in any partnership will require frequent communication and recognition of everyone's contributions. Recognition does not have to be formal and can be as simple as a handwritten thank you. Recognition in the presence of peers and partners goes a long way toward retaining volunteers. Share accomplishments through media, presentations, yard signage, or site visits to build momentum for mitigation work. Stories, especially those from the perspective of the property owner, often have the biggest impact.

INTRODUCTION

Located in the west-central portion of northern California, Lake County lies midway between the Pacific Ocean and the Sacramento Valley. Clear Lake, the oldest and largest lake in California, sits in at the center of the County, surrounded by burned and unburned ridges. The diverse topography of Lake County ranges from level valleys and rolling hills to rugged mountains. Public lands comprise just over half of the County's acreage. The area experiences warm, dry summers and cool winters with moderate precipitation.



Lake County is home to seven Tribal Nations, and as of 2018, had a population of 64,382. Recreation and tourism make up a significant sector of the County's economy along with vineyards, pear, and walnut orchards. Mining and timber harvesting are a minor component of the economy.

Wildfires have impacted the majority of Lake County, resulting in numerous homes lost and almost every resident being evacuated at least once. Since 2015, three of California's largest wildfires have occurred in and adjacent to Lake County, including the Valley Fire (2015), Ranch Fire (2018), and August Complex (2020), renewing the community's interest in wildfire mitigation.

Planning efforts have been extensive. A revision of the 2009 Community Wildfire Protection Plan is currently underway and is expected to be approved in late June. Both the County of Lake and the City of Lakeport have current Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans and the Tribal Nations developed a Multi-Tribal Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, the first in the nation, that has been approved by FEMA. The County has also formally adopted the Wildland Urban Interface Code as well as the 2008 Building Code. In 2018, they adopted a Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance.

In 2017, the County formalized the Risk Reduction Authority, which under a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), is responsible for a wide variety of programs and projects for all hazards.

COLLABORATION

Lake County, California has a multitude of resources focused on all phases of wildfire. Individual neighbors, groups, organizations, agencies, and governments are arranged in formal (*with authority*) and informal (*without perceived authority*) working groups. Some organizations have a clear chain of command and hierarchy in place for decision making and action, while others have little oversight and decision-making accountability. The County is geographically large and demographically diverse. Because of this, programs do not always cover the entire land area or populations.

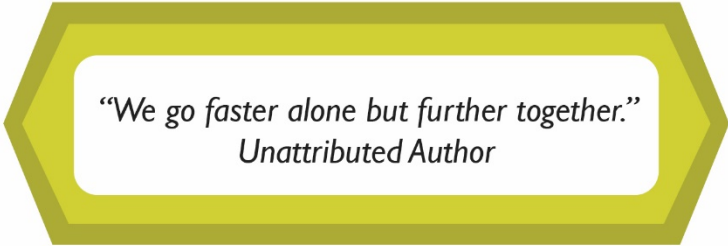
To frame this section of the findings and recommendations, CMAT focuses on the activities of:

1. County-wide organizations: *Risk Reduction Authority, Fire Safe Councils*
2. Individual organizations (*Partners*) which provide mitigation services within Lake County.

County-wide organizations, such as the *Risk Reduction Authority (RRA)* and *Lake County Fire Safe Council (LCFSC)* act as convening bodies for the individual organizations and have a vital role to play in fostering collaborative mitigation.

There are several individual organizations with independent and autonomous governing oversight bodies that invest in the community, provide resources, and add to the overall mitigation ecosystem. Their inclusion in this section is intended to highlight the value they bring and the opportunities that may be enhanced. If an organization was not included, this was not intended to reduce their value, rather it is because they did not fit within the context of the analysis or we did not directly interact with them.

CMAT compiled a Lake County Partners List to be used as a template ([link](#)).



“We go faster alone but further together.”
Unattributed Author

The Collaborative - Developing a Common Direction

A well-defined structure of an organization allows participants to easily understand the flow of information, how decisions are reached, expectations, and where to go for assistance. In the fire response world, the hierarchy is known as the Incident Command System. This structure focuses on accountability, action planning, unity of command, personal responsibility, span of control, and resource tracking. In this section we highlight the current structure and strongly suggest some changes.

COLLABORATION

I. **Finding** - Work occurs in organizational silos and while some good work is getting done, often it is not being completed together. Three organizations appear to carry a great deal of responsibility and there is no clear definition of which organization is responsible for which activity.

a. The Risk Reduction Authority (RRA), under the Joint Powers Authority (JPA), is responsible for a wide variety of programs and projects for all hazards. These include:

- i. Development of low- or no-cost resources to reduce the risks of fire from hazardous vegetation, earthquakes, and environmental causes.
- ii. Development of community infrastructure improvements.
- iii. Development of property inspection programs with scoring and assessment tools to prioritize the level of individual and community risk.
- iv. Development and management of funding sources necessary to the Authority's risk reduction programs.
- v. Development of educational and training tools to assist Authority members, the public and non-member governmental agencies in discovering, assessing, reducing the risks associated with fire and other disasters, and mitigating potential impacts.
- vi. Development of community programs to improve the resilience of our local forested areas.
- vii. Enforcement of County, State, and Federal laws.



"The RRA was formed to support the entire Lake County community through the effective use of the authority of local governments, implement programs offering low- or no-cost risk reduction resources to the public, the development of funding to implement and maintain such programs, and to provide information and educational resources to the public so that they are better able to assess and manage these risks."

- b. The Lake County Fire Safe Council is currently a stand-alone organization, staffed by one individual.
- c. The vision of the Lake County Fire Safe Council is to foster a fire adapted county developed through ongoing public education, training, community collaboration, and is responsible for a wide variety of programs and projects. These include:
 - i. Implementing the Lake County CWPP and supervising the re-write of the document. (The CWPP process by its very nature is collaborative. Collaboration is not the current process.)
 - ii. Empowering Lake County residents and businesses with the information, knowledge, and support to protect their families and properties from wildfire.
- d. The South Lake Fire Safe Council (SLFSC) has taken responsibility for coordinating wildfire mitigation efforts within the boundaries of the South Lake Fire District since the early 2000s. They are incorporated as a

COLLABORATION

501(c)(3) with a volunteer Board of Directors and no staff.

2. **Finding** - Due to the extensive responsibility placed on the Risk Reduction Authority (RRA) it is evident that they need to delegate responsibility to other partners.



Opportunity: Use the organizational structure chart (page 7) to facilitate working together.

Recommendations:

- a. Agree upon and formally designate one entity to pull the entire group together.
- b. The Risk Reduction Authority (RRA) will serve as the bridge to provide high level direction and support to the overall goals and objectives of wildfire risk reduction activities throughout the entire county (amongst other RRA duties.)
- c. Fire Safe Councils will act as the convening body for partners in wildfire mitigation work and must develop working groups to focus on specific tasks. The working groups should include, at a minimum:
 - i. Implementation
 - ii. Communications - Outreach, Education and Training
 - iii. Science and Monitoring
- d. The role of the Fire Safe Council will be multi-pronged and include the following:
 - i. Community liaisons to local organizations and citizens
 - ii. Education, outreach

- iii. Implementation of a consistent communication strategy
- iv. Source for resources, programs, and available resources
- v. Grant clearinghouse (sharing, informing, and assisting with grant applications)
- vi. See Appendix A (page 29) for details

- e. To achieve these recommendations, consideration must be given to the structure, funding, and staffing of the Fire Safe Council. See Appendix B (page 32) for more details.

3. **Finding** - There is no clear vision on how to work together to increase mitigation efforts.



Opportunity: Develop and agree upon a collective vision for the future together.

Recommendations:

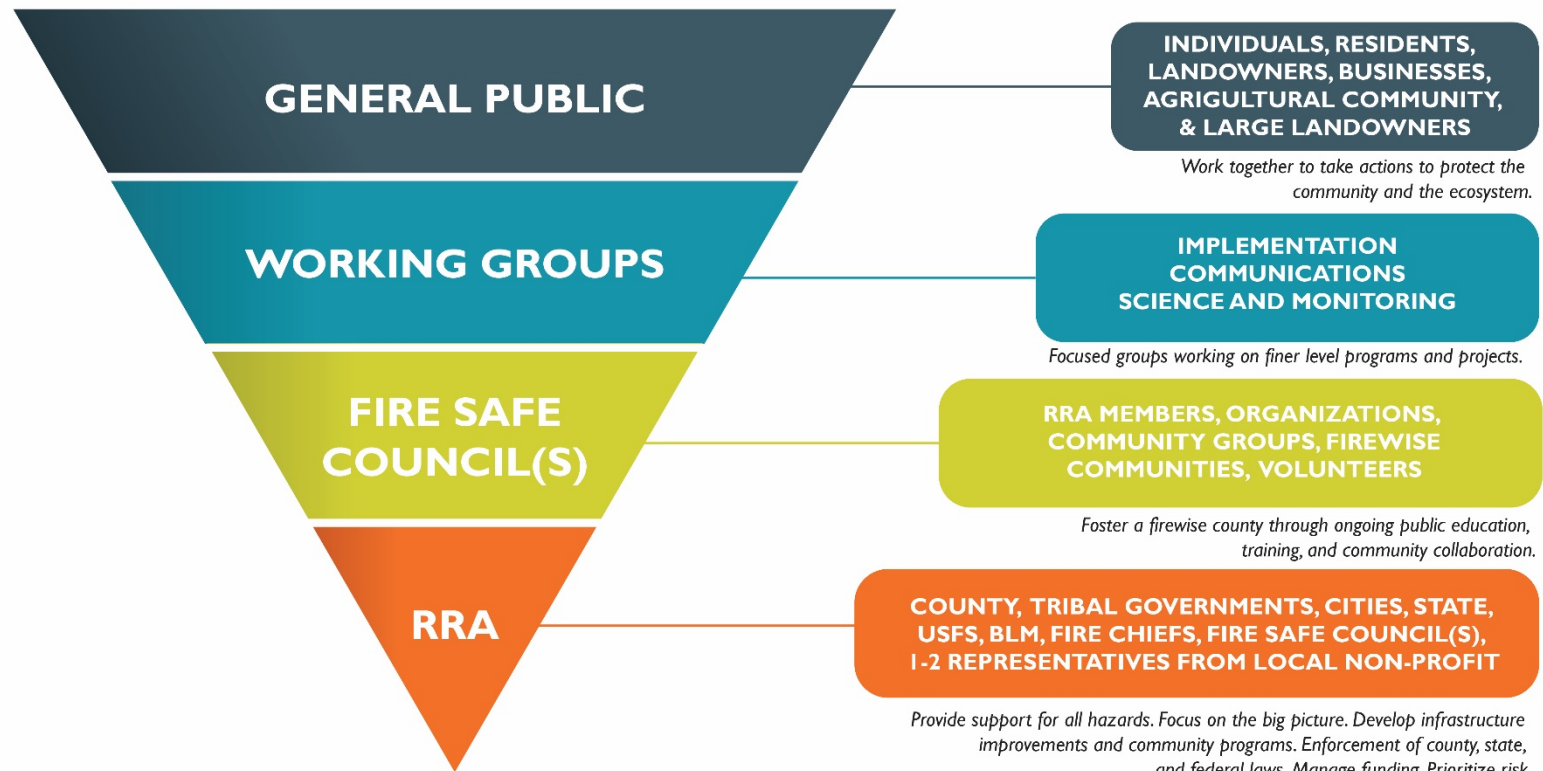
- a. Create mission, vision, goals, and objectives for the Collaborative. This is not intended to replace any existing organization's mission, rather to bring all organizations together.
- b. A mission statement is a format summary that explains what you do, how you do it and why you do it. Include the target audience, services, and contributions and what makes you different (distinction). The Mission statement should be no more than two sentences.
- c. A Vision statement is a short description of an organization's aspirations and the wider impact to aims to create. This statement is very concrete, describes a future state and provides clear focus.

COLLABORATION

LAKE COUNTY MITIGATION COLLABORATIVE

PARTNERS AND VISION

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS



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- d. Goals are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve in your community.
- e. Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals.

Attributes of a Successful Collaborative:

Agree upon mission, vision, goals and objectives
Trust amongst participants
Partnership care
Membership – determine structure of organization
Coordinator – a full time position
Consistent meetings
Create annual action plans
Internal communication mechanisms
Partnership roles

See Appendix A for additional details on these attributes

- 4. **Finding** - Accountability for project implementation and completion at the County-wide scale is lacking, and no comprehensive project tracking mechanism exists.



Opportunity: Make accountability a priority.

Recommendations:

- a. Articulate deadlines and milestones and stick to them.

- b. At RRA meetings require partners to report out on project progress, identify needs and areas requiring additional collaboration.
- c. Using the existing plans, Lake County - Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and the Natural Hazards Plan, develop a tracking system capturing project updates, progress, and completion.
- d. Throughout all levels of the collaborative, develop strategies and evaluate direction on a regular basis.

Partners within the Collaborative

“Substantive and durable conservation success arises when community members from many backgrounds come together from day one to shape a common sense of place and develop a future vision grounded in respect for diversity of perspective.” (M. Whitfield, speech for Network for Landscape Conservation, 2018). Partners play a critical role in the success of a collaborative. Partners provide institutional memory, are the worker bees are integral to a functioning group. Who you invite to the table will define your collaborative.

- 1. **Finding** - The roles and responsibilities of each partner are not clearly defined and articulated.



Opportunity – Identify the necessary roles for collaborating efficiently and the partner(s) who can fulfill those roles.

Recommendation: A long-lasting collaborative group requires certain skills to sustain the organization and interest. The following table depicts the necessary role and partners who should or are fulfilling this role.

COLLABORATION

Use this table and update frequently as new partners emerge and roles are refined. Reference - *A Guide to Organizations in Lake County: Wildfire Mitigation and Emergency Preparedness* for other potential partners.

Role essential for efficient collaboration	Entity or person to fill role
<i>Authority role</i> – Entities that make the decisions on the lands where they hold authority. Authority to enter into agreements to do mitigation work.	<p><u>RRA</u> – Responsible for all hazards and disasters</p> <p><u>Tribal Governments</u> - Mitigation work on Tribal lands</p> <p><u>Forest Service</u> – work on National Forest Lands and use the “Wyden Amendment” to work on lands under other jurisdictions.</p> <p><u>BLM</u> – Mitigation work on BLM managed Lands</p> <p><u>CAL Fire</u> – Mitigation work on BLM lands and State Responsibility Area (SRA), cite people in SRA for noncompliance with wildfire mitigation laws.</p> <p><u>Lake County Board of Supervisors</u> – Responsible for non-federal lands within Lake County and lands outside City Limits</p> <p><u>Mayors of both Cities</u> – Responsible for lands and laws within City Limits</p> <p><u>Individual property owners</u>– Work on individual property subject to local regulations</p>
<i>Responsible for implementation of CWPP and documenting completed projects, as well as responsible for future updates</i>	<p>A collaboration between <u>ALL</u> partners and community members</p> <p>Lake County Fire Safe Council</p> <p>South Lake County Fire Safe Council</p>
<i>Grant writing – provide successful grant writing skills</i>	<p>Clear Lake Environmental Research Center (CLERC)</p> <p>Forest Service</p> <p>Firewise USA® Communities</p> <p>Lake County and South Lake Fire Safe Councils</p> <p>Tribal Governments</p> <p>Seigler Springs Community Redevelopment Association</p>
<i>Grant Administration or fiscal sponsors</i>	<p>CLERC</p> <p>501(c)(3)s</p> <p>Fire Safe Councils</p> <p>Tribal Governments</p> <p>Fire Chiefs</p> <p>RRA</p> <p>California Office of Emergency Management (OEM)</p>
<i>Facilitation of Fire Safe Council(s) meetings</i>	Individuals comfortable with facilitation

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<i>Staff to provide continuity and conduct day-to-day operations for each Fire Safe Council</i>	Volunteers for South Lake Fire Safe Council L. Hutchinson for Lake County Fire Safe Council
<i>Leadership for Fire Safe Councils</i>	Board of Directors (BOD) South Lake Fire Safe Council has a BOD Lake County Fire Safe Council must appoint a BOD
<i>Seeking additional funding sources such as contributions</i>	501(c)(3)s Firewise USA® Communities CLERC
<i>Enforcement of existing City, County, and State Laws and Regulations</i>	CAL Fire County Fire Marshal Cities HOAs Sheriff
<i>Implementation of projects in large landscapes, both private and Agency lands</i>	Forest Service BLM Landowners CAL Fire Tribal governments Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA) Contractors
<i>Implementation of smaller projects on private lands</i>	CAL Fire HOAs Homeowner Landowner Firewise USA® Communities Cobb Area Council Fire Departments
<i>Community Engagement</i>	Lake County Fire Safe Council South Lake Fire Safe Council Tribal Governments All individuals and groups involved in wildfire mitigation

COLLABORATION

2. **Finding** - Entities, groups and individuals are missing from the Collaborative.



Opportunity: Identify and engage missing entities.

Recommendation: Compile a list of entities missing from the Collaborative that should be included. Develop a strategy for inclusion for each of these entities.

To the right is an example. Reference Toolbox ([link](#)) to complete the rest of the table.

3. **Finding** - Numerous post fire emergency response organizations and social services organizations are active in the area following past wildfires.



Opportunity - Understand emergency response organization's roles and if they can support pre-fire mitigation activities as well as their existing functions.

Recommendations:

- a. Determine the names and roles of these organizations and their capacity for additional mitigation work. Compile information of how these organizations could contribute to wildfire mitigation.
- b. Use "**A GUIDE TO ORGANIZATIONS IN LAKE COUNTY in Wildfire Mitigation and Emergency Preparedness**" (prepared by Cindy Leonard, Terre Logsdon, and Magdalena Valderama) as your starting point.

Group or Entity to include	Why they should be included	Strategy for inclusion
All Tribal Governments	Through TERA, they have developed a training program to increase mitigation capacity within the County and have a vested interest in healing the land by encouraging people to be involved in its care.	Invitation to all RRA and Fire Safe Council meetings.
Hispanic and other diverse community leaders and groups	Communication channel to important and underserved audiences. Potential pool of volunteers and source of other resources.	Utilize Hispanic community leaders and peers to develop relationships, listen to concerns, and invite their participation.

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- c. Below is an example. Reference Toolbox ([link](#)) to complete the rest of the table.

Emergency response, post fire, social service	Pre-fire Role	Capacity for wildfire mitigation (Yes/No)
Team Rubicon	Mitigation activities	Yes
Lake County Office of Education Disaster Assistance	Conduct mitigation workshops	

Effective Leadership/Authority

Just as important as an organization's structure are the critical concepts of leadership and authority. It is important that partners understand leadership has little to do with seniority or one's position in an organization. Leadership is not management, but good management is needed to lead. Within Lake County there are many amazing leaders. Empowering, inspiring, collaboratively developing and setting the course are the critical elements focused on in this section.

1. **Finding** - The community does not feel empowered to make decisions because they do not understand the approval process for mitigation actions. There is frustration on all levels that projects can take years to get approval especially when the project has to have completed environmental and archaeological reviews. These reviews can be delayed because of capacity limitations.



Opportunity: Create an understanding of what types of mitigation work need approval. Increase capacity for faster approval.

Recommendations:

- Develop a list of mitigation projects which need prior approval.
- Increase the number of resources that can get archeological reviews completed.
- Create a streamlined mechanism for the community to use for understanding the approval process to move forward with projects.
 - Provide information for compliance for each type of approval and an easy-to-follow flow chart depicting applicable process. Have a clear step-by-step approach to understand if and when environmental assessment is required.
- Invest in organizations that can conduct environmental review, (CLERC, Tribal governments).
- Empower everyone to take action.** Provide a clear, consistent message to the community about the responsibility individuals have to protect their homes. It is up to the community on how they will implement these projects to reduce risk.

Wildfire mitigation is an individual responsibility.
Individuals can join together for broader and more effective results at the neighborhood and community level.

COLLABORATION

2. **Finding** - Individual organizations, tribal governments, and communities are actively getting mitigation work done, however, they don't share their successes and lessons learned with the larger group.



Opportunity: Utilize each other's talents to be more efficient. Share information and resources to guide each other to success. Don't reinvent the wheel.

Recommendations:

- a. Invite community representatives to share their experiences with each other.
 - i. Present on your successes, processes, lessons learned and challenges.
 - ii. Share useful documents and tools.
- b. Visit each other's communities and projects for demonstrations.
- c. Celebrate successes together and publicly.
- d. Reach out to neighboring collaborative groups to learn and adopt their successful strategies. Example: Marin County Fire Safe Council
- <https://www.firesafemarin.org/programs>

3. **Finding** - There are plans and codes developed to regulate mitigation actions, but it is unsure who will implement and enforce them. Authority is delegated without accountability.



Opportunity: Reassess roles and responsibilities to keep each other accountable and to provide effective enforcement.

Recommendations:

- a. Share the list of state and county laws that govern wildfire mitigation and who is responsible for enforcing them.
- b. Determine if those responsibilities can be delegated to additional authorities or entities.
- c. Assign responsibility for CWPP monitoring, oversight, implementation tracking, and collaborative revisions and updates.



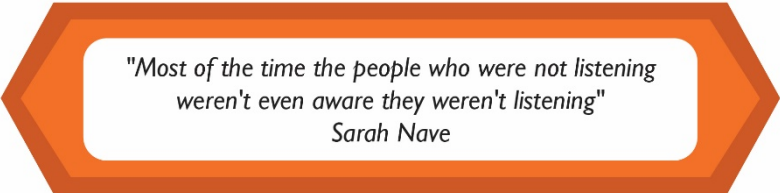
Stoney Timmons (Robinson Rancheria) and Philip Patereau (Robinson Rancheria) prepare for a prescribed fire in Scotts Valley.

COLLABORATION

Communications

“Communication” is an essential part of life. It is fundamental to our relationship with the world we live in and ourselves. It is a process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and information such that the purpose or intention is fulfilled in the best possible manner. In simple words, it is nothing but the presentation of views by the sender in a way best understood by the receiver. As we have learned in life, conveying a message effectively is an art as well as a skill developed after continuous practice and experience.

“A FRESH START” - As we come out of the “Year of the Pandemic” there is an opportunity to pause, reflect on how to improve our lives, and reconnect with oneself and the community. Developing improved communication skills, methods, and building a communication strategy can assist in accomplishing this.



"Most of the time the people who were not listening weren't even aware they weren't listening"
Sarah Nave

1. **Finding** - A clear communication strategy does not exist. Messaging and communication methods are inconsistent and are creating disruptions for building and maintaining relationships through effective communication.



Opportunity: Define how the Collaborative communicates with the community.

Recommendations:

- a. The LCFSC will lead the countywide communication strategy.
 - b. Develop a LCFSC communication strategy including mitigation messaging and branding.
 - c. Have the LCFSC develop and send out a newsletter on a regular schedule that shares upcoming grant and training opportunities (esp. for residents), project updates, success stories, and articles of interest.
2. **Finding** - Communication barriers exist, and mitigation information and resources do not reach all audiences.



Opportunity: Engage the whole community.

Recommendations:

- a. Determine which communities are not being reached and develop message delivery methods to reach them.
- b. Use existing messaging emergency communication capabilities to share mitigation information.
- c. Provide accessible information in the appropriate languages including, but not limited to Spanish, American Sign Language (ASL), other languages and dialects as needed.
- d. Use different mediums of communication (in different languages) such as radio, newspaper, letters, virtual meetings, social media, posters, workshops, and town halls.

COLLABORATION

- e. Create innovative methods for communicating and engaging with absentee property owners. Direct engagement tactics are shown to be most successful - pick up the phone and give them a call whenever possible.
 - i. Insert mitigation requirements and resources into their annual tax bill.
 - ii. Invite them to participate in virtual community meetings.
 - iii. Use sample letters developed by Cobb View to connect with absentee owners.
- f. Post notices of upcoming meetings for all residents by using different methods and media channels. Not all sectors of the community use the same methods of communication. Find out what methods are being used in the community and use *ALL* of them.
- g. Provide interpreters at public meetings.
- h. Share mitigation information through the California Environmental Education Initiative to reach younger audiences by developing mitigation lesson plans.
- i. Support the County's initiative to upgrade the communication infrastructure to broadband. This can enable mitigation information to flow easily to more community residents.

3. **Finding** - In some cases, such as fixed location outreach booths, information is one-way communication and not an engaged interaction with interested individuals.



Opportunity: Build relationships with community members. Engage with your audience.

Recommendations:

- a. Understand the limitations of booths at events and fairs. If you use booths to get information out, take the following steps to increase your effectiveness.
 - i. Provide information on available programs and assistance with contact phone numbers and emails clearly identified.
 - 1. Take contact information for follow-up engagements.
 - 2. Schedule risk reduction site visits and assessments.
 - ii. Ensure the booth or information centers are staffed with trained mitigation personnel that engage in direct face-to-face conversation.
 - iii. First impressions matter - Establish credibility by wearing agency- or organization-branded attire.
- b. Use interactive visuals
 - i. Risk maps with parcels visible – Ask residents to point out where they live.
 - ii. Before and after photos of mitigation project.



Volunteers clear brush for fuel reduction

COLLABORATION

4. **Finding** - There is a lack of programmatic continuity due to employee and volunteer turnover at communities, agencies, and organizations.



Opportunity: Minimize the implementation and communication disruptions caused by turnover.

Recommendations:

- a. Develop a system to pass information on to new employees and partners.
 - i. Develop a “two-deep” personnel approach to provide a legacy of information within the collaborative and its partners.
- b. Create a “living” document containing historical and current information on shared files and tools, collaborative relationships, communication strategies, and other pertinent information.
- c. Take time to introduce new participants to the culture, history of the area and the collaborative at meetings.

“Ideas are only as good as your ability to communicate them.”
Adena Friedman

MITIGATION

Residents, organizations, and governmental agencies in Lake County are working on wildfire mitigation efforts and have done so for over a decade. Projects and activities support individual organization and agency priorities yet encounter significant challenges which slow progress despite the desperate need for more action. Understanding and evaluating the dynamic pieces of a mitigation strategy are imperative to address and improve wildfire risk reduction efforts.

To frame this section of the findings and recommendations, CMAT focuses on the issues and/or activities of:

1. Capacity: *Project Implementation, Prescribed Fire and Biomass*
2. Private Landowner Mitigation: *Mitigation Incentive Programs, Risk Reduction Assessment Site Visit Program, Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance and Funding*

Project Implementation Capacity

- I. **Findings** - Lack of mitigation workforce capacity. Capacity is reduced as personnel are recruited by other entities outside the county, reducing the number of qualified personnel to implement local mitigation projects.



Opportunity: Recruit, develop, and hire a workforce from within the community.

Recommendations:

- a. Forecast workforce needs based on knowledge, skills, and abilities required on current and future mitigation projects.




Diana McCloud (Robinson Rancheria) fells a tree as part of a tribal hazardous fuels reduction project.

- b. Develop and implement recruitment incentive programs as appropriate. Incentive examples include:
 - i. One-time signing bonus
 - ii. Relocation assistance
 - iii. Providing temporary housing
 - iv. Tuition assistance
- c. Actively recruit new hires using available methods such as KPZ radio, Facebook, billboards, flyers, job fairs, and local events.
- d. Provide and communicate career path opportunities within your organization.

MITIGATION

2. **Findings** - There are limited local mitigation contractors. One local contractor seems to be serving the whole county and is scheduling 18 months out. No consolidated list of available mitigation companies exists.

 **Opportunity:** Increase the number of qualified, certified, insured, and bonded - individuals, contractors, and organizations.


Recommendations:

- a. Create a consolidated list of available mitigation contractors who will work in the county. Include contact information, the kind of work they do (example: hand-thinning, mastication, forestry plans, wildfire risk assessments, weed abatement, burning, etc.), and if they have any certifications or insurance. Include a disclaimer that the list keeper is not responsible for verifying workmanship, certifications, or insurance status.
- b. Invest in entrepreneurial enterprises to create mitigation contracting businesses and explore opportunities for community economic development.
- c. Support Scotts Valley Tribal Government with adding a training component to their TERA program on “How to Start Your Own Business” to address contractor capacity issues.
- d. Investigate a Heavy Equipment Co-op to coordinate resource utilization and availability.

 **Opportunity:** Develop and support training programs to increase available workforce.

Recommendations:

- a. Provide workforce development training to increase mitigation knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- b. Implement on-the-job training programs to increase worker qualifications. Example: CLERC is recruiting two foresters and will assist with certification registration if they do not have the qualifications upon hiring.
- c. Support the TERA program to train a new implementation workforce.
- d. Work with the Fire Safe Councils to provide mitigation implementation training to volunteer groups, Firewise USA® communities, and individuals.
- e. Offer an annual workshop for mitigation contractors to build skills, aid in the recruitment of new contractors, and provide an orientation to local programs and resources.

 **Opportunity:** Increase the use of available mitigation implementation resources.

Recommendations:

- a. Develop and increase opportunities to use TERA, Team Rubicon, and other mitigation crews.
- b. Investigate the availability of the California Conservation Corps as a mitigation resource.
- c. Use community members, community organizations, and regional volunteer groups.

MITIGATION

Prescribed Fire Capacity

“Prescribed fire is an important tool to restore the landscape and reduce biomass from hazardous fuels treatment on all lands. Prescribed fire is being used in the County and seems to be accepted by local residents.”

Lake County CMAT SWOT Outcome

- I. **Findings** - There is a lack of qualified personnel to implement prescribed fire as qualified personnel are frequently engaged in suppression efforts during the same time period.



Opportunity: Develop trainings and a local workforce that will be available during prime burning periods.

Recommendations:

- a. Support the current development of a multi-agency and landowner Prescribed Burn Association to increase the number of qualified personnel to implement prescribed fire.
 - b. Continue to support fire departments in burning community slash windrows.
 - c. Pursue a Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREN) in partnership with TERA. Invite landowners to participate in TREN opportunities.
 - d. Host California Certified Pile Burning training.
 - e. Develop a system to track, schedule, monitor, report, and share prescribed fire activities.
2. **Findings** - There is a desire to use more prescribed fire on private land, but issues with liability hinder implementation.



Opportunity: Statewide legislation underway may reduce liability concerns.

Recommendation:

- a. Create a liability waiver form for landowners to accept liabilities and indemnify the burn boss and all prescription burning operations and personnel.

Biomass Capacity

“We have completed the hazardous fuel reduction, but now what do we do with all this cut material?”

- I. **Findings** - There are limited means to dispose of and utilize brush, logs and other mitigated fuels. The local infrastructure to support biomass conversion for cut fuels is saturated or not currently available. There are limited outside wood product markets. Market barriers such as combining volumes of materials and the cost of material transport are cost prohibitive for some agencies and residents.



Opportunity: Support, develop and evaluate biomass projects.

Recommendations:

- a. Develop a local Biomass Working Group to investigate and address biomass opportunities. Include the Economic Development Council, PG&E, and other multifaceted partners.
- b. Research potential new markets for sale or utilization of small diameter and low-quality wood products. Lake County Economic Development Council offers resources and loans for small businesses.

MITIGATION

- c. Increase support of the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians in their biochar efforts.
 - d. Connect with an organization or agency in a nearby county that manages an Air Curtain Burner to determine the practicality of purchasing, managing, and operating.
 - e. Explore the opportunities for large scale chipping operations to produce high quality wood chips for agricultural permaculture use.
2. **Findings** - Private landowners have limited means to dispose of brush, logs, and other residual fuels. The local infrastructure to support biomass conversion for cut fuels is not available.



Opportunity: Identify biomass disposal needs and expand resources for private landowners.

Recommendations:

- a. Expand the Lake County Recycles program countywide.
- b. Lake County Recycles runs a Green Waste program for their customers. Residents using curbside waste collection can request a special container and leave green waste at no extra cost.
- c. Develop curbside chipping and slash disposal locations throughout the county.
- d. Develop biochar demonstrations to support personal and agricultural biochar making and utilization.



Removing invasive and highly flammable Scotch Broom from Lake County

MITIGATION

Mitigation Incentive Programs

A perception within the county is that if information is shared with individual landowners, then they should be motivated to take responsibility with wildfire mitigation. Developing the “right” mitigation incentive program to address perceived barriers results in more engagement and direct action by individual landowners.

- I. **Findings** - There are mitigation programs established in parts of the community, but no county-wide programs that incentivize all residents and landowners to reduce their risk.



Opportunity: Strategically expand existing mitigation programs and develop new mitigation programs to be available to ALL residents.

Recommendations:

- a. Investigate existing mitigation incentive programs and services in the county and expand effective programs. Examples of incentive programs that could be adapted and scaled up include:
 - i. The Cobb Area Council manages CalFire homeowner grants for brush clearing – providing up to \$1,250 per acre of financial support to residents.
- b. Individual groups must be encouraged to develop their own risk reduction services in addition to county-wide programs. Multiplicity of services is far better than an absence.
- c. Develop new programs to serve unmet needs of residents.
 - i. Risk Reduction Assessment Site Visits
 - ii. Vegetation abatement compliance assistance

- iii. Home hardening financial assistance
- iv. Property maintenance for renters
- v. Options for biomass removal

Tips for New and Expanded Program Development

- Target outreach to the highest risk areas.
- When partners are not in agreement on program priorities:
 - launch new programs on a limited trial basis,
 - scale up more than one existing program slowly with an adaptive management intent.
 - use surveys to gauge community interest and needs
- Individual organizations, agencies, and neighborhoods will have different capacities and interests. All groups should develop their own risk reduction services regardless of county-wide programs.
- Evaluate how the program will reach and support a wide range of county residents and landowners.

MITIGATION

2. **Findings** - There is no coordinated effort to create programs and manage projects to address underserved populations.



Opportunity: Develop programs to support the underserved population.

Recommendations:

- a. Develop a needs-based vegetation management assistance program.
 - i. Leverage the Area Agency on Aging, County In-Home Support Services, and Tribal Health to engage and help elderly and disabled residents in meeting mitigation requirements.
 - ii. Enlist volunteers to conduct mitigation projects for elderly residents who are aging in place.
 1. Use release of liability waivers such as South Lake Fire Safe Council's "Neighbor helping Neighbor" right of entry agreement. Use three-way agreements between landowner, organizer, and volunteer or contractor.
 2. Potential volunteers include: Team Rubicon, Region I of the California Conservation Corps, Community Emergency Response Teams, Habitat for Humanity Lake County, Lake County COAD members, and neighbors.
 - iii. Utilize needs-based projects as training sites with: TERA, PG&E, Cal Fire, Fire Departments, and others.
- iv. Seek grants and hire contractors to complete mitigation projects where residents are unable to do the work themselves or afford a contractor.
- b. Provide free or low-cost slash removal options. For efficiency, set a route schedule and limited collection windows, such as spring and fall clean-up, or during key mitigation windows, rather than functioning on a year-round request basis. Accept donations or charge a small fee. Coordinate program development with community groups that already run chipping programs:
 - i. Expand the Lake County Recycles Green Waste program.
 - ii. Expand South Lake Fire Safe Council curbside slash pick-up program to other areas of the County.
 - iii. Provide low- and no-cost programs based on income based or MediCal qualification criteria.
 - iv. Develop sliding scales for incentive and regulatory mitigation programs.
 - v. Bundle grant-funded projects across a broad landscape and population to spread out funding match responsibility (if applicable) and leverage more in-kind investments. Support programs such as chipping services that can be matched with the labor or contract work for the cutting and hauling to the roadside. This results in a match greatly exceeding the chipping cost.

MITIGATION



Opportunity: Encourage landowners who have lost homes in wildfires to use wildfire hardening techniques when rebuilding their homes.

Recommendations:

- a. Build new homes with fire-resistant materials and use approved home hardening techniques.
- b. Look to examples from other counties and adopt a streamlined permit process for re-builds.
- c. Waive fees for uninsured and underinsured rebuilds.
- d. Develop a home hardening program that fills the funding gap for rebuilding a wildfire damaged home with current building standards.

"It can feel really good to stand up for someone else and to have someone stand up for you"

Laurel Bard, CLERC

[Clear Lake Environmental Research Center]

Risk Reduction Assessment Site Visit Program

Property-level wildfire risk assessments are commonly recognized as a paramount service to inspire and enable mitigation action by providing individualized recommendations and support resources to residents.

1. **Findings** - There is no coordinated property level risk reduction assessment system.



Opportunities: Develop and launch a Lake County Wildfire Risk Reduction Assessment system.

Recommendations:

- a. Establish a temporary working group to develop this system. Incorporate into grant request for coordination or to hire a consultant to assist.
 - i. Identify who is already conducting parcel-level assessments (CalFire, FPDs, CLERC, BLM, SSCRA) and who is willing to conduct assessments (contractors, USFS, TERA, HOAs, FSCs).
 - ii. Evaluate existing tools and methods.
 - iii. Develop an outreach plan.
 - iv. Create simple resident sign-up opportunities promoted by many partners.
2. **Findings** - There are no incentive programs in place to support home hardening. The financial burden of trying to bring the 1970s housing stock up to the state standards has been insurmountable for many homeowners.

MITIGATION

A Risk Reduction Assessment System must consider:

- Who is capable of providing assessments? Training and qualifications needs will vary depending if they are conducting voluntary, grant associated, or regulatory assessments.
- Easy registration for residents
- Easy assignment and scheduling for assessors
- How can you increase efficiency and cluster assessments by promoting the opportunity in targeted communities (Use HOAs, Property Managers, neighborhood events, and Municipal Advisory Councils)
- Link to the appropriate codes and jurisdictions based on map or parcel identification in order to customize requirements and associated recommendations.
- How the system will function in the field and how residents/ landowners will access their report?
- How to track assessments, findings, and resulting risk reduction actions?
- If and when certificates of completion will be issued.
- Plan for training at least annually on how to use the assessment program and what programs and services are available to help residents accomplish risk reduction recommendations.



Opportunity: Seek creative opportunities to accomplish more structure hardening.

Recommendations:

- a. Partner with Habitat for Humanity's Brush with Kindness program to provide basic home hardening retrofits: screening, non-combustible apron, flashing and fascia.
- b. Evaluate remodeling requirements to align with the intent of adopted codes and develop a process that enables owners of outdated housing stock to gradually improve structure hardening.
- c. Pursue home hardening support resources to assist homeowners with structure hardening expenses.
- d. Provide a wildfire resistant retrofit training opportunity for local builders. Include information on local permitting and financial assistance programs.

Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance

The County Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance is well written, encourages voluntary compliance and aligns with state CEQA exclusions. Code enforcement is most effective where longstanding codes have been enforced by CalFire. The county program is new, and it will take time and focus to build an effective regulatory program.

- I. **Findings** - The systems and capacity for the *County Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance* implementation, educating, tracking, enforcing, and abating, have not been well established.

MITIGATION



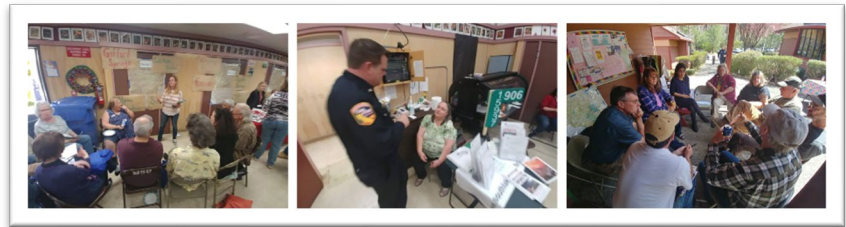
Opportunity: Increase awareness, compliance, and consistent enforcement of the Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance.

Recommendations:

- a. Host a stakeholder's workshop with all "county fire officials" to gather input on how to improve the implementation systems related to the Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance.
- b. Develop a code enforcement taskforce working group to:
 - i. Establish appropriate expectations with partners about carrying out code enforcement.
 - ii. Develop a countywide program for education, inspections, assessments, and tracking of all components.
 - iii. Some HOAs provide friendly notices about the requirements and available incentives to support compliance which could serve as a model.
 - iv. Develop a map overlaying code requirements and jurisdictions to aid in enforcement and enable code enforcement throughout the county.
 - v. Evaluate contracting with CalFire to integrate a countywide assessment into existing State Responsibility Area (SRA) code enforcement system.
- c. Conduct an annual refresher training for ordinance enforcement personnel. Invite residents who are actively educating and enforcing the code in their own neighborhoods.

- d. Track complaint and citation occurrence and feedback from residents to evaluate challenges of code compliance faced by all or subsets of residents and landowners.
- e. Integrate the code inspection process with the educational and voluntary risk reduction assessment program when that is established and functioning.
- f. The code enforcement taskforce reports code compliance needs back to the Risk Reduction Authority at least annually to consider adapting regulations, fee structure, and allowable expenses based on program feedback.

**Note: The Vegetation Abatement Ordinance may compound disparities amongst residents who do not have the wherewithal to complete the required vegetation abatement. Feedback from tracking and assessments should inform the development of mitigation support services and programs to assist with hazardous vegetation removal.*



2. **Findings** - Funding from citations is available and earmarked specifically for vegetation abatement of non-compliant properties. There does not seem to be a common process for implementing vegetation abatement on non-compliant properties.

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Opportunity: Implement vegetation abatement projects.

Recommendations:

- a. Prior to citations, connect those in need of vegetation abatement support with any available volunteer resources or incentive programs that could support their voluntary compliance.
- b. At least annually the code enforcement taskforce develops a scope of work for abatement of noncompliant parcels, directly or through a contracted partner.
- c. Determine who can best provide the mitigation service and start with a term-limited contract to allow for evaluation of effectiveness. Options include:
 - i. Designating a public entity
 - ii. Non-competitively select an existing local contractor such as the Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance or Timberline.
 - iii. Publish a Request for Proposal (RFP) to accomplish the scope of work.
- d. Evaluate the effectiveness of abatement measures, process, and cost at least annually and adjust accordingly.
- e. Consider the use of a sliding fee structure for non-compliance with the vegetation abatement ordinance.
- f. Expand the allowable use of a percentage of fees collected to provide for program education and coordination.

Communities and Firewise USA® Sites

Promoting and supporting the Firewise USA® recognition program is a key function of both Fire Safe Councils. Engaging residents in effective mitigation and preparedness activities is a struggle among professionals and neighborhood leaders. Seigler Springs Community Redevelopment Association is actively managing a grant to recruit new Firewise USA® site leaders. Residents are only beginning to recognize their full potential to lead wildfire mitigation activities.

- I. **Findings** - Community mitigation professionals and residents are looking to one another to do more. Partner support for neighborhood efforts is strong, but partners don't always know how to best support resident requests and use their limited capacity efficiently.



Opportunity: Amplify limited capacity of subject matter experts and improve scale and effectiveness of risk reduction activities in high-risk communities.

Recommendations:

- a. Determine the basic support structure for community volunteer efforts. See potential Fire Safe Council structure and responsibilities in Appendix B (page 32).
- b. Establish a working group to design a custom Neighborhood Ambassador volunteer approach. Leverage existing efforts (LCFSC, SLFSC, Cobb Area Council, SSCRA, Firewise USA® sites) and include key partners. A customized "Fire Adapted Communities Neighborhood Ambassador Approach" workbook is included in the Toolbox.
- c. Develop an orientation program for new Firewise USA® site leaders. A 2021 example "Master Gardener"

MITIGATION

style orientation from Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group (CO) is included in the Toolbox.

- d. Invite and train volunteers to:
 - i. Support local implementation of the county-wide risk reduction assessment system.
 - ii. Develop property level mitigation plans.
 - iii. Participate and lead fuel reduction activities.
 - iv. Participate and lead planning efforts using tools such as SWOT, FAC Self-Assessment tool, and Asset Based Community Development to identify community needs and opportunities.

2. **Finding** - Volunteer led risk reduction and planning activities are often under-recognized and under-supported. Locally developed community plans provide a fine scale detailed prioritization which are often overlooked in larger efforts.



Opportunity: Incorporate volunteer efforts and input into the fabric of county-wide risk reduction.

Recommendations:

- a. Continue to invite the public and engage volunteer leaders as active members of the Risk Reduction Authority and Fire Safe Councils.
- b. Incorporate local community risk assessment and action plans into countywide planning documents.

Funding and Grant Management

An enormous hurdle to complete wildfire mitigation activities for an individual, organization, or agency is funding. This section highlights diverse options and strongly encourages changes.

I. Findings -

- a. There is a perceived shortage of 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations and capacity within existing organizations in the county to seek and manage grants funds. CLERC, a 501(c)(3), has partially filled that niche by securing grant funding for a variety of public and private partners; however, they lack the funding and capacity to offer immediate reimbursement, which residents would like.
- b. South Lake FSC is also a designated 501(c)(3) organization, however it does not have paid staff.
- c. Many HOAs are 501(c)(4) not-for-profit organizations and are unable to secure funding on their own. Many would like to become 501(c)(3) organizations. A newly created 501(c)(3) organization may not be able to overcome the gap of immediate reimbursement that the homeowner groups are desiring.
- d. State agencies prefer to fund larger grants to established organizations to disburse rather than to fund a request from individual homeowner groups.
- e. Limited opportunities exist for homeowners outside of Firewise USA® Communities to receive financial assistance for mitigation.



Opportunity: Seek a diversity of funding options that have clear parameters and accomplish a variety of mitigation activities.

MITIGATION

Recommendations:

- a. Work with existing non-profit organizations to develop a solution that meets the needs of residents.
- b. Pass-through funding organizations need to set clear parameters, like reimbursement guidelines and timeframes, when setting up programs and clearly communicate those details.
- c. If capable, existing homeowner and property associations should cover mitigation project costs up front until the entire project (in their community) is completed, approved, and grant reimbursement is received by the fiscal sponsor.
- d. Examine pros and cons of having or using one umbrella organization for grant assistance versus potentially working with numerous groups. For example, CLERC seeking funding for larger landscape projects and the Fire Safe Council(s) seeking funding for HOA and resident projects and programs.
- e. Diversify funding sources by asking large local businesses such as casinos, vineyards, orchard owners, and utility companies to support wildfire mitigation efforts with an annual contribution.

2. **Findings** - Fire Safe Councils need funding for supplies and outreach materials, printing and mailing non-compliance letters, volunteer recognition events, video conferencing accounts, and branded materials.



Opportunity: Support Fire Safe Council's materials and supplies budget needs.

Recommendations:

- a. Allocate portion of County's timber receipts (old Title III) for Firewise USA® Community support.
- b. Have Fire Safe Councils secure funding and create a mini grant fund for Firewise USA® site support.

3. **Findings** - No grant funding currently available for home hardening programs.



Opportunity: Seek new funding source to launch a home hardening program.

Recommendation:

- a. Pursue opportunity for funding through Fire Resilience Task Force (2021 state budget projected to offer \$25 million for home hardening and home retrofits) (State Bill 85 and Assembly Bill 79).

4. **Findings** – Fire Safe Councils are primarily serving as information clearinghouses but could potentially serve as fiscal agents.



Opportunity: Partner with other non-profits to meet need; change the focus of one or both Fire Safe Councils

Recommendations:

- a. Partner with existing community groups (like CLERC, TERA, etc.) to apply for and administer mitigation grants for residents.
- b. One FSC should secure funding for mitigation work on private lands across the County and to meet other non-mitigation needs of Firewise USA® Communities.

APPENDIX A - PARTNERSHIP

DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP

“Substantive and durable conservation success arises when community members from many backgrounds come together from day one to shape a common sense of place and develop a future vision grounded in respect for diversity of perspective. Success starts by building a foundation of mutual trust, trust that each participant’s values will be heard and respected. Such trust is the foundation for creating an open-source arena for dialogue and information exchange – a place where we work together in true collaboration to find common ground, a safe place where participants can change their perspectives, a platform that purposefully fosters a continual re-earning of mutual trust.” (M. Whitfield, speech for Network for Landscape Conservation, 2018).

Whitfield (2018) strongly believes several key elements are central to this approach, including:

- The full array of stakeholders should be invited to the discussion from day one (or as soon as we identify them). From there we will have to invest in our collective capacity to allow all sectors to continue to participate.
- We start by building trust that diverse values and perspectives will be respected, and we will work together to discover common ground.
- We need to work across boundaries in an “All Lands and All Hands” approach.
- We need to develop and share science at appropriate scales that allow practitioners to define what conditions will be if we choose one vision over another, to help us understand the advantages or disadvantages of various conservation strategies.
- We rely upon our investment in one another and our shared stewardship of nature and the land to make the right choices for the landscape.
- Our goals will necessarily be holistic: social, cultural and ecological.
- We must stay the course; true collaboration is a long iterative process. We must nurture the collaborative.
- Results matter—small successes keep people at the table. We should celebrate success together.
- We have a much better chance of succeeding if we worry less about Who authored the success and more about Who gets to share in the outcomes.

Partnerships enable us to productively interact and communicate with each other and to remove barriers. Collaboration within partnerships can result in several benefits, including:

1. **Synergy.** The sum of the whole is bigger than the sum of each part. Working together collaboratively can result in greater accomplishments as compared to each organization working on its own.
2. **Sharing resources.** Whether collaborating with one organization or several, there will always be things and resources that can be shared. One organization may be an expert in one field and can help another organization learn about it.
3. **Overcoming obstacles.** When an organization encounters problems that hinder it from achieving its goals, another organization may be able to help. Partnerships, coalitions, and networks are more powerful than organizations that operate on their own.

APPENDIX A - PARTNERSHIP

4. **Increased community awareness.** By getting involved with others, your organization's message is better relayed to the community.
5. **Access to constituents and funding.** Partnering with other organizations can give you the benefit of more grant opportunities as well as make a bridge for more exposure.

ATTRIBUTES OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

- **Agreed upon mission, vision** to provide a base for the development of organizational goals and objectives. Mission or vision will evolve into your elevator speech about wildfire mitigation and your role.
- **Develop goals and objectives** that are connected to your mission. Periodically review these goals and objectives to track progress and ensure completion. Goals provide an overarching framework that can guide decision making. Objectives are specific, measurable action steps that can help you to successfully attain your goals.
- **Trust amongst participants is key.** The benefits of collaboration don't come for free. Amidst its benefits are the challenges that need to be overcome. Organization management and project managers as well need to find ways to create a successful collaboration. By combining knowledge, skills and experiences, organizations and team members can accomplish more than if they worked alone. It is important that collaborative teams trust each other and communicate effectively so that they can overcome the challenges.
- **Focus on "Partnership Care"** – make this a credo that you all live by.
 - a) Understand and promote each other's work and programs.
 - b) Work together, not apart. If concerns are raised regarding program operations, efficacy or outcomes, address them immediately. Acknowledge that partners are all trying to reduce risk and have a common vision.
 - c) Be inclusive. Make sure all voices are heard. Be willing to rotate the location of your meetings around the county or provide virtual access to meetings.
- **Establish membership.** Use and maintain the partner contact list.
 - a) Create a list of partners' roles and how they will participate.
 - b) Determine who is the responsible agency.
 - c) Identify who can add value to the Collaborative and invite them to participate.
 - d) Consider formal agreements for commitment and active partnership.
 - e) Be sure to establish a two-deep approach. Each organization should have two people involved so that if one leaves, the other will be familiar with vision and operations.
- **Structure of Collaborative.** Determine if you will have core members, auxiliary members, working groups to implement goals and objectives:
 - Core members would guide the entire Collaborative and ensure completion of tasks. This could also be a steering committee.
 - Auxiliary members would play a role when their expertise is needed.

APPENDIX A - PARTNERSHIP

Working groups or ad hoc committees could be established when looking at specific items like CWPP updates, project implementation, or membership development.

- **Hire a Coordinator** as a full-time position dedicated to the daily operations of the collaborative. The coordinator is neutral, supportive and flexible to ensure continued functioning of the Collaborative. A few tasks of the coordinator could include:
 - a) Ensure Collaborative members understand, embrace, and work towards Collaborative's goals and objectives.
 - b) Organize and facilitate meetings and agendas.
 - c) Checking in with members on assignments and keep them accountable.
 - d) Maintaining contact list and website.
- **Consistent Meeting schedule.** Host meetings at regular times (e.g., the third Thursday of each month) and at a location that will allow the greatest participation possible. Members should discuss plans and progress as well as provide a learning opportunity for future training and education opportunities (i.e., cost-share program, fire ecology, changes in agency authorities).
- **Develop an annual action plan** that accomplishes goals and objectives. Identify specific objectives and who will get them done. Set deadlines and hold people accountable. Make the final plan easily accessible.
- **Internal communication mechanisms.**
 - a) Set up a common platform for sharing information. Utilize a free or low-cost document-sharing platform (ex: Google Drive, Dropbox) to hold documents and contact lists.
 - b) Depict mitigation projects and jurisdictions of all members on a map.
 - c) Map layers to include are completed projects, planned projects, parcels, wildfire risk areas, existing CWPP coverage areas.
 - d) Identify areas of overlap for opportunities to collaborate.
 - e) Agree upon common language and speak with a collective voice.

Review progress often and address challenges as a team. Success and failures must be addressed in a timely fashion. Ask for help when needed and share resources to overcome barriers.

General parameters of a partnership are included in this website: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/creating-and-maintaining-partnerships>

You have the ingredients in place for starting a partnership. This website offers ways of inviting people to participate and addresses some of the common roadblocks to diverse opinions and ways to overcome that diversity. Steps to starting a partnership can be found on this website. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/promotion-strategies/start-a-coalition/main>

APPENDIX B – FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

OPPORTUNITIES AND OPTIONS FOR FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

To achieve some of the goals of the RRA and to offer additional support to the many Firewise USA® sites and active communities in the County, there may need to be a re-structuring of one or both Fire Safe Councils, if those Councils are amenable. This is an opportune time to consider some changes with the Board Chair of the South Lake Council resigning in July and the Risk Reduction Authority exploring restructuring staff roles for the Lake County Fire Safe Council.

Step 1: Convene the RRA, Council Coordinators, RCD, the South Lake Fire Safe Council Board, the Lake County Fire Safe Council Advisory Board, and interested Firewise USA® community leaders to forge a structure that will meet community needs. Keep the group small and engage a neutral facilitator to help you through the process.

Before you begin discussion, recognize that desired changes could result in the need for organizational restructuring, additional funding, staffing, or training. It will take time to implement changes; however, a highly functional Fire Safe Council will result from a common vision with set objectives.

Think first and foremost about what is best for Lake County residents.

- Make a list of desired Council roles.
- Determine what each Council is currently doing. What programs are each running beyond education and outreach? Which of these programs might be desirable to expand or re-vamp to meet the needs of residents? The CMAT report contains some recommended roles.
- What roles can be filled by current Coordinator and Board(s)?
- Then do a gaps analysis. What gaps need to be filled and what skills are needed to fill them?
- Revise Coordinator position description as needed.

Step 2: As your discussion progresses, be open to possibilities and continue to think about what structure will serve the County best. Some food for thought:

- The Lake County FSC could be the overarching FSC with “Chapter” Councils that increase support throughout the county and represent various geographic areas.
- Do partners have the capacity to provide all the risk reduction assessments or would it be helpful to have “staff” that could do assessments as well?
- Lake County FSC could probably use South Lake’s 501(c)(3) status and “Do Business As” or modify the articles of incorporation and bylaws so they wouldn’t need to jump through the hoops of registering as a 501(c)(3).

APPENDIX B – FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

- Would it make sense to have one Board of Directors providing overall guidance or does it make sense to have two separate Boards?
- Discuss the pros and cons of having grant writing and grant management as part of your vision. The South Lake FSC is currently a 501(c)(3) with a Board of Directors; Lake County is not a 501(c)(3) and has an advisory board with loosely defined roles.
- What capacity would be needed to renew a countywide chipping program? SLFSC has an active program, LCFSC had a former program, and this is a relatively easy opportunity to provide a countywide service.
- Could job duties be divided between the two Councils? One has communication and outreach; the other might have programs and grant management?

As the CMAT developed recommendations, there were numerous items that we noted were missing. These items have helped other Fire Councils and collaborative groups operate successfully and increase their momentum. They are helpful resources for residents and partners. Developing and maintaining the following could be a responsibility of the Lake County Fire Safe Council, a working group, or a combination of the two.

- Maintain the collaborative's Partner List and associated contact information.
- Create a consolidated list of available mitigation contractors who will work in the county, including contact information, the kind of work they do (hand-thinning, mastication, forestry plans, wildfire risk assessments, weeds abatement, burning, etc.), available equipment (chipper, masticator) and if they have any certifications or insurance. Include a disclaimer that the list keeper is not responsible for verifying workmanship, certifications, or insurance standing.
- Create an online request form to request risk reduction assessments on the firesafelake.org site. Have the Fire Safe Council monitor and coordinate the site visits to increase efficient use of partner's' time.
- Set up an online mechanism for tracking volunteer investments and accomplishments. Share information widely on a regular basis.
- Recognize the mitigation efforts of residents, communities, and partners and celebrate these successes.
- Create an annual report to share accomplishments of the residents and the support provided through the Council.

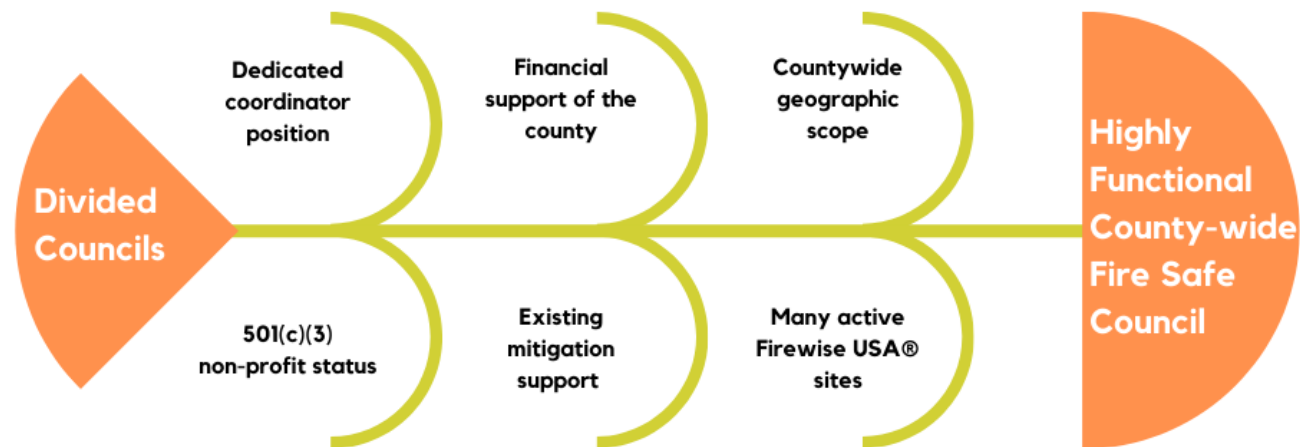
If interested in any of these items, CMAT can connect you with examples from other organizations so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

APPENDIX B – FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

Strengths of a County-wide Fire Safe Council

Both wildfire councils have a deep history, excellent educational programs, shared partners, and passion for a common mission. What would happen if ... ?

Lake County Fire Safe Council



South Lake Fire Safe Council

THANK YOU

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THE CMAT TEAM

The Community Mitigation Assistance Team (CMAT) is sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service to assist communities impacted by wildfire. CMATs are comprised of public and private wildland-urban interface (WUI) mitigation professionals from across the country. The Team provides technical and strategic mitigation support to build and strengthen sustainable mitigation programs. The team mentors organizations, helps to identify and provide tools, advises on the highest priorities for risk reduction, and shares best management practices for mitigation.



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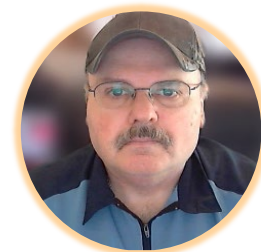
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LAKE COUNTY TOOLBOX



<https://tinyurl.com/zkz9p3z8>



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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