Alameda County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update
Summary Working Session #2 – September 25, 2014

1. **Introduction.** Ms. Miller welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.
   - Gilbert Bendix, Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC) Board
   - Chris Burgardt, Oakland Wildfire Protection Assessment District
   - Dinah Benson, Oakland Wildfire Protection Assessment District, Oakland Fire Safe Council
   - Ken Benson, Oakland Fire Safe Council
   - Terence Carey, Alameda County Fire
   - Robert Chew, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit
   - Vince Crudele, Oakland Fire Department
   - Amy Dawson, SF PUC
   - Rick Duffy, SF PUC
   - Barbara Dröher Kline, Sunol FireSafe Coalition, DFSC Board
   - Barbara Goldenberg, DFSC Board
   - Lynn Kozma, Sunol CERT
   - Dee McDonough, DFSC Board President
   - Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator DFSC
   - Lawrence Nunes, Briones, DFSC Board
   - Ed Orre, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit
   - Gordon Piper, Oakland
   - Sue Piper, Oakland Fire Safe Council
   - David Rocha, Fire Chief Alameda County Fire Department
   - Dee Rosario, Friends of Sausal Creek
   - Mark Silva, East Bay Municipal Utility District
   - Bonnie Terra, Alameda County Fire Department
   - Ciara Wood, Kensington Fuel Reduction Project, DFSC Board

2. **Recap of Meeting #1**
Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator, Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC) provided a recap of meeting #1 and a written summary was distributed. In 2012, DFSC and stakeholders in Alameda County developed a CWPP addressing high fire hazard areas to reduce the risk of loss of life and property due to wildfire. The current CWPP can be downloaded at [www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/AICo_CWPP_060512.pdf](http://www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/AICo_CWPP_060512.pdf). Since the development of the Alameda County plan, DFSC has been able to secure funding for community projects (see our latest newsletter and current activities). DFSC has funding to facilitate three working sessions in 2014 discussing updates with community members and agency partners.

3. **Status of 2012 work plan and action items**
The group reviewed the 8 priority action items in the 2012 CWPP and confirmed they still are relevant.

   1. Improve communication with messaging systems. The group wanted to expand this to other communication and outreach such as CERT programs, awareness campaigns etc., in addition to using a messaging system.
   2. Regionally specific educational materials for homeowner system.
   3. Evacuation Planning.
   5. Volunteer projects on public lands.
   7. Education and training on structure retrofit.
   8. Access and egress improvements by reducing road restrictions.
4. New Common Challenges and Shared Solutions
A round table discussion provided updates to the existing priority action items as well as new information for the CWPP Update:

- Local Value of CWPP: Barbara Dröher Kline confirmed the value of the plan for her community of Sunol. The CWPP has helped community members understand the issues and what resources are available. They have begun to develop a community database for the Sunol FireSafe Coalition. One of the community goals is collaboration with Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park to develop detailed plan for fuel management and community wildfire safety. Sunol is located in a box canyon, surrounded on three sides by regional parkland. The community is also interested in focusing on large tree removal and “bad houses” within the community. Power line clearance is another challenge. They have been communicating with the Alameda County Board of Supervisors and plan to develop a Sunol appendix to the CWPP Update.

- Forest Health:
  - Several in the group expressed concern about diseased/dying large trees and removal of dead and downed materials throughout the county. The drought has increased the effects of disease and pests. A carrot and stick approach of a subsidy and some type of enforcement was seen as desirable.
  - The need for coalition building and leadership regarding fire prone trees and reforestation was also expressed. Projects such as CAL TRANS 4th bore have called for mitigation planting that is not compatible with fire safety due to the quantity of replacement plantings required.
  - California Re-leaf and other restoration groups may be potential partners for an urban forestry management plan. CAL FIRE is having an Urban Forestry grants meeting in Oakland on October 2nd to discuss the upcoming grant opportunities, see [http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php](http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_urbanforestry_grants.php). Jim Scheid is the CAL FIRE Urban Forestry Advisor for the Bay Area.
  - Written comment from Robin Freeman expressed interest in urban lumber as forest product from cutting 8” and larger diameter trees. Link this with fuel reduction plans to help get neighborhood buy-in and generate small economy.

- Economic Forces and Effect on Wildfire Safety: Dinah Benson spoke about concern over the economic forces, enforcement process and staffing levels. The inspector positions in Oakland are part time due to lack of funding. Only the immediate tree hazards are being addressed due to lack of funding.

- Educational Materials:
  - Dead and dying trees: Additional educational materials specific to dead and dying trees were requested. Lynn Kozma commented that Sunol area native sycamore trees are experiencing impacts from the drought. Partnering with arborists and foresters was also recommended.
  - School age appropriate materials: A second recommendation was for developing materials for school age children and partnering with schools.

- What to plant: Retail sale of French broom. Dinah Benson spoke about dialogue with Alameda County’s Agricultural Director who would need to declare it a noxious weed for it to be banned in our county. A model for local ordinance and citizen campaign were alternative measures offered.

- Oil tank cars as potential ignition sources: Dinah Benson expressed concern about oil tank cars on rail lines heading to the ports in Oakland and Contra Costa County as new potential ignition source. Fire service and Fire Prevention Officers WUI Committee are aware of the issue and working with the railroad companies to manage fuels along the rail lines.

- Use of Volunteers: Leadership is needed for volunteer programs. There are local success stories of working with high school students, prohibition department work crews and other
volunteers for control of broom and other invasive plants. San Mateo County uses the Sheriff’s Department work crews. Other resources include: Volunteer Center of East Bay, Volunteers for Outdoor California, corporate programs such as at Cliff Bar and Chevron, Civicorps Schools. Two key challenges are how to scale projects to accept large and small groups of volunteers, and how to communicate the opportunities for volunteers. Written comment from Robin Freeman also expressed interest in broadening the existing efforts and linking resources together.

- **Effective Public Awareness Campaigns:** At the last work session “Spare the Air” was offered as a public awareness campaign model. Sue Piper followed up with the Bay Area Air Quality Control Management District and was told they spent between $850K - $1 Million on a major communication plan with media, apps, social media, city posts, door-to-door volunteers and a meteorologist to talk about the details of Spare the Air. It is now widely recognized as to what to do on spare the air days. Potential campaigns such as those related to red flag weather need to have specific things for the public to do: e.g. don’t mow; ignition prevention such as those listed on the one less spark one less wildfire campaign.

- **Insurance Industry as Partners for Wildfire Safety:** Bay Cities Joint Power Insurance Authority (BCJPIA) is a potential partner. They offer insurance for public entities: 14 cities, 3 towns, a redevelopment agency and police authority. Amy Dawson will follow up to see if there is common ground and interest.

- **Evacuation Planning:** DC Chew updated the group on recent fires in northern California that reinforce the importance of fuel reduction work along evacuation corridors to buy time for safe evacuations. Other opportunities discussed include:
  - Phone companies doing reverse 911 emergency notifications during hurricanes on the East coast.
  - Liability issues related to evacuation continue and situation awareness is needed. It requires coordination with law enforcement and the Sheriff’s department. Fire Chiefs will need to ask heads of law enforcement for coordinated pre-planning, drills, etc. Plans will need to be flexible -- Woodside in Santa Clara County and San Luis Obispo County may serve as a models. Coordinating with adjoining jurisdictions is critical. Alameda County is currently updating its emergency evacuation plan.
  - Citizen involvement was also highlighted: the power of working with local authorities to understand local road networks and conditions.
  - Model legislation regarding keeping road right of ways clear for evacuation and penalties/tickets for parking at choke points.

- **Fuel reduction inspection/ enforcement:** Written comments from Jared Klein highlighted the difficulty of enforcing defensible space on Home Owner Association and other public lands that are located within 100 feet of homes. Current State codes focus on property with structures and do not enforce clearance if no structure is located on the property. The concern is where hazardous fuel conditions exist within 100 feet of a structure on an adjacent parcel where that owner has no legal recourse.

5. **Next Steps – Admin Draft Plan Update**  
   Thursday November 20, 2014  
   Time and place to be confirmed. Target location: Castro Valley Library Community Room  
   For More Information Contact: Cheryl Miller  DFSCMiller@comcast.net  510-536-0143