

Maysville – North Fork Community Wildfire Protection Plan November, 2008

I. Introduction

The Maysville-North Fork Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was initially developed through a series of public meetings held from May through October, 2004, hosted by the South Arkansas Landowners' Association and the Chaffee County Fire Protection District (CCFPD.) The meetings used as a template the publication, *"Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: a Handbook for Wildland/Urban Interface Communities."* Minor revisions were made at a public meeting held November 3, 2008.

The Maysville-North Fork CWPP builds upon a foundation of 3 primary documents: the 1995 Maysville-North Fork "pre-attack wildfire plan", the 2001 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Fire Management Plan for the Royal Gorge Field Office, and the 2001 United States Forest Service (USFS) Westside Ecosystem Management Project environmental assessment and decision notice.

A fourth document, the recently adopted Upper Arkansas Valley Wildfire Plan, will provide a means to remove some sections previously included in existing community plans, but which should more appropriately be provided by county-level planning.

II. Community Base Map

The 1995 Maysville-North Fork plan defined its location by the legal description: "Portions of Sections 17, 20, 21, 27, 28, 33, 34 T50N R7E and a portion of Section 3 T49N R7E." In essence this defines the townsite of Maysville and the North Fork of the South Arkansas River drainage.

For the purposes of this 2004 Maysville-North Fork plan, the community base map for private property includes the above and has been extended west to Fooses Creek (the old townsite of Arbourville) and the Lost Creek drainage (portions of section 29, 30, 31 and 32 of T50N R7E) and to the east by including the western half of the southern strip of section 35 T50N R7E and the northwest quarter of section 2 of T49N R7E (the area south of U.S. Highway 50 and west of the Green Creek drainage.)

The Maysville-North Fork CWPP anticipates 3 additional CWPP to be adopted in the coming years: Garfield-Monarch (all private property east of the Continental Divide within T50N R6E and T49N R6E,) Weldon Creek-Hayden Ranch (portions of sections 25, 26, 27, 35, 36 of T50N R7E) and Cochetopa-Green Creek (portions of sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 18, 19, 30 of T49N R8E and portions of sections 1, 2, 22, 23 of T49N R7E.)

The Wildland-Urban Interface for the Maysville-North Fork CWPP is defined as the area bordered to the south by the ridgeline south of US Highway 50, to the east by the eastern ridge of Weldon Gulch, and to the north and west by the Colorado Trail.

III. Summary Recommendations

This document is intended to set forth a recommended plan only and imposes no obligations on the signatories. Specifically, executing this document in no way obligates Chaffee County to take any action requiring the commitment of funds in order to accomplish the Summary Recommendations.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the CWPP to the contrary, no term or condition of the CWPP shall be construed or interpreted as a waiver, express or implied, of any of the immunities, right, benefits, protection, or other provisions of the Colorado Governmental Immunity Act § 24-20-101, et seq., C.R.S. (including future amendments) or as an acceptance by Chaffee County or any responsibility or liability with respect to the CWPP.

a. Encourage Public Land Fuel Treatments and Planning

#1. Endorse USFS Westside Ecosystem Management Project – Continuation (and acceleration, where possible) of fuel treatment on USFS parcels in Lost Creek, North Fork and Weldon Creek drainages. Recommend that Westside polygons 168, 169, and 170 be treated with prescribed fire in 2009.

#2. Endorse 2001 BLM Fire Management Plan and designation of lands adjacent to Maysville – North Fork as *“Fire (wild and prescribed) is desirable but its use is complicated by social, political or ecological constraints that must be considered.”* Recommend that BLM finish abandoned treatment project in section 27 T50N R7E as part of a fuel treatment plan to be developed for the entire Poncha West polygon.

#3. Encourage USFS to update Pike-San Isabel National Forest fire management plan with input from local residents. Future updates are likely to include authorization for wildland fire use (“appropriate management response to naturally-ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific resource management objectives in predefined designated areas”) as part of the revision process to the forest’s 1984 Land and Resource Management Plan.

#4. Encourage Chaffee County to conduct a hazard tree assessment for public safety and wildfire risk on platted streets and alleys in Maysville town site.

b. Reduce Structural Ignitability

#1. Improve defensible space and fuel breaks to coincide with proposed prescribed fire activity on USFS Westside project through use of Companion funds.

#2. During 2009, conduct comprehensive wildfire risk assessment with a hazard rating for each lot and house/structure in community, with assistance of Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and CCFPD. Assessment should inform property owners of particular hazards and suggest possible actions to reduce risk.

#3. Prior to completion of items #1 and #2, encourage property owners to implement Firewise recommendations. Sound advice is found in Jack Cohen’s comment from the “How Homes Ignite” video/article: *“At a very minimum, you want to make sure there is no fire within 10 feet of your house and then no big flames within 100 feet.”*

c. Improve Fire Response Capability

#1. Build CCFPD fire station #5 in Maysville, to house a minimum of structure pumper, wildland engine, and tender. Recruitment of volunteer firefighters in response area is critical to this project.

#2. Develop community water supply plan in conjunction with CCFPD, CSFS, USFS, and BLM for placement of dry hydrants and cisterns.

#3. Improve access for firefighting vehicles. With consent of willing property owners, obtain gated-easement for emergency access along the east side of North Fork from Highway 50 through Miller Way, Hanging Tree Drive, and Ponderosa Lodge to USFS land at intersection of County Road 240 and USFS Road 219. Improve condition of access roads to both Western Area Power Administration high voltage power lines that cross North Fork valley to gain access to east and west ridges.

IV. Authorization

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 defines a CWPP as a plan for an at-risk community that:

“(A) is developed within the context of the collaborative agreements and the guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by the applicable local government, local fire department, and State agency responsible for forest management, in consultation with interested parties and the Federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the at-risk community;

“(B) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-Federal land that will protect 1 or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and

“(C) recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community.”

The Maysville-North CWPP has been developed by and agreed to by the following entities:

Frank F. Holman, Chairman
Chaffee County Board of Commissioners

date

James Wingert, Fire Chief/Deputy County Fire Warden
Chaffee County Fire Protection District

date

Damon Lange, District Forester
Colorado State Forest Service

date

Pat Jones, President
South Arkansas Landowners' Association

date