

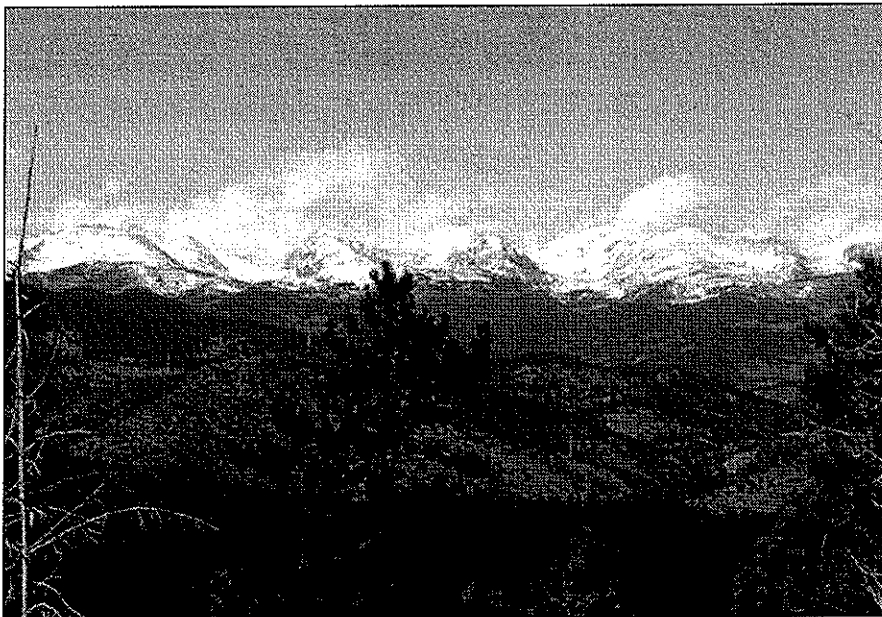
Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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Draft

Prepared for:

**Clear Creek County, Colorado
Office of Emergency Management**



Submitted by:

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CWPP Certification

The Clear Creek County, Colorado Community Wildfire Protection Plan was developed in accordance to the guidelines set forth by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2003) and the Colorado State Forest Service's Minimum Standards for Community Wildfire Protection Plans (2004). This plan;

- was collaboratively developed – interested parties and federal land management agencies managing land in the region of Clear Creek County have been consulted;
- identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment to reduce the wildfire threat to values at risk in the county; and
- recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

The following entities mutually agree with the contents of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

Print, sign, date

USDA Forest Service, Arapaho/Roosevelt National Forest

Golden District, Colorado State Forest Service

Clear Creek County Office of Emergency Management

Fire District

Executive Summary

“By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail.” ~ Ben Franklin

Wildfire is a naturally occurring and important component of the Montane and Subalpine ecosystems that dominate much of Clear Creek County (CCC), Colorado. However, since the early 20th century land and forest management practices for this same region were designed around a simple protocol, “Prevent Wildfires.” While originally intended to protect human settlement and forest resources, the practice of fire exclusion proved to be short-sighted and has led to the accumulation of hazardous fuels and weakened, overgrown timber, in these same “fire-dependent” regions. In recent years unprecedented urban and suburban expansion all along Colorado’s Front Range, including CCC, has positioned extensive development directly in the face of this growing threat of catastrophic wildfire.

This conflagration is not unique to Clear Creek County, the Front Range, or even the Rocky Mountain Region. Wildfires, losses associated with wildfires, as well as suppression costs have been growing more catastrophic nationally every year. To better address this growing crisis the federal government, since 2000, has been building a legislative framework and financial incentives to promote and assist the reduction of hazardous fuels on public and private lands around communities at risk and support the improvement of local emergency preparedness.

In order for communities to take advantage of this assistance, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) must be prepared. These plans assist at-risk communities, neighborhoods, and subdivisions, and address such issues as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection. Completed CWPPs can be used by communities to gain access to grant funding for wildfire prevention and protection projects. They can also be used to help guide forest and land management activities on adjoining public lands.

This CWPP is essentially a strategic plan for CCC that delineates Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI) communities and neighborhoods within the county, identifies wildfire threats facing these areas, and prioritizes mitigation actions that are designed to reduce those threats. The plan also takes into account headwater resources the county maintains and recognizes downstream municipal water users located outside the primary assessment. The CCC CWPP was collaboratively developed according to the guidelines of *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities* (Communities Committee, Society of American Foresters, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Foresters). This CCC CWPP meets the requirements of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) by:

- Having been developed collaboratively by multiple agencies at the state and local level in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties;
- Prioritizing and identifying fuel reduction treatments and recommending the types and methods of treatments to protect at-risk communities and pertinent infrastructure;
- Suggesting multi-party mitigation, monitoring, and outreach;
- Recommending measures and action items that residents and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures; and
- Facilitating public information meetings to educate and involve the community to participate in and contribute to the development of the CWPP.

Field surveys were conducted to assess predominant community characteristics pertaining to wildfire hazards, community design, as well as structural ignitability. Survey results established relative hazard ratings for each identified Wildland-Urban Interface. Detailed neighborhood surveys also served as the basis for specific mitigation and emergency response recommendations. Comprehensive fire behavior modeling was completed to aid in the determination of which areas within the county are at highest risk of catastrophic wildfire, supporting CWPP mitigation recommendations and providing a valuable tactical fire management tool for future wildfire incidents.

The CCC CWPP provides:

- Collaborative development of WUI boundaries within the county;
- Documentation of collaborative CWPP development activities including strategic planning meetings, public outreach, and a comprehensive summary of the results of the county questionnaire;
- A general profile analysis of CCC;
- A wildland fire primer;
- An analysis of the county's critical infrastructure;
- A regional wildfire risk assessment including historical fire occurrence;
- A comprehensive community wildfire hazard survey and hazard ranking of all identified WUIs;
- A county-wide wildfire risk analysis based on potential wildfire behavior. This analysis will utilize regional fire behavior analysis utilizing LANDFIRE data and FLAMMAP/FARSITE computer modeling;

- An integrated wildfire hazard and risk assessment of all identified WUIs within the county;
- Prioritized mitigation recommendations including fuel reduction, defensible space, and structural ignitability on a county-wide basis;
- Analysis of county emergency response capacity; and
- CWPP implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan.