

# **Meeting Summary Humboldt County Fire Safe Council December 15, 2003**

The eighth meeting of the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council (FSC) was held on December 15, 2003, from 1:00 P.M. to 4:10 P.M., at the U.S. Forest Service Six Rivers National Forest conference room, 1330 Bayshore Way, Eureka, California. The FSC was appointed by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors to guide preparation of the County Master Fire Protection Plan (Fire Plan).

## **Fire Safe Council Members Attending:**

Kevin O'Neil, California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) Division Chief  
Kirk Gothier, Humboldt County Community Development Services, Assistant Director  
Will Harling, Orleans/Somers Bar Fire Safe Council and Orleans Fire & Rescue  
Frank Hizer, Fortuna Fire Protection District, Fire Chief  
Debra Lake, Fruitland Volunteer Fire Department, Board Chair  
Lucy Salazar, USFS, Six Rivers National Forest, Vegetation Management & Air Coordinator  
Ian Sigman, Honeydew Volunteer Fire Company and Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council  
Dave White, Arcata Fire Department and Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association Representative

## **Fire Safe Council Members Absent:**

Gary Risling, Hoopa Fire Department, Wildlands Fire Manager  
Glenn Ziemer, Humboldt Fire District #1, Assistant Fire Chief

## **Public and Agency Representatives Attending:**

Jim Moranda, CDF CDF Assistant Chief  
Hugh Scanlon, CDF Battalion Chief  
Kim Price, CDF Fire Captain and Pre-fire Planner  
Cybelle Immitt, Humboldt County Community Development Services  
Stephen Underwood, State Parks  
Amy Zeigler, USFS, SRNF Fire Planner

## **County Fire Safe Council Coordinator / Master Fire Protection Plan Consultant**

George Williamson, Planwest Partners, Principal Planner (Fire Safe Council Coordinator)  
Bob Burnham, RNB Spatial Data Inc., Chief Operations Officer  
John Miller, Planwest Partners, Planner

## **Call to Order and Introductions**

The Fire Safe Council Coordinator, George Williamson, called the meeting to order at 1:07 P.M. and the Council members and the audience made self-introductions.

## **Fire Safe Council Review and Planning Update**

The FSC Coordinator reviewed the December meeting agenda. Each FSC member received an information packet, containing the FSC Draft Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan,

prior to the FSC meeting and interested parties were e-mailed meeting notices. The Coordinator asked the FSC members to review the meeting summary of the November 10, 2003, FSC meeting.

**Acknowledgement of Fire Safe Council Anniversary.** The FSC Coordinator announced the FSC's one-year anniversary, and a cake was provided commemorating the event.

**Overview of Fire Safe Council Draft of Master Fire Protection Plan.** The FSC Coordinator summarized the goals of today's meeting and indicated that the MFPP consultants had revised the recommendations to emphasize the "*what*" (the outcome) and to remove the "*who*" (responsible party). The "*who*" will be addressed specifically in the implementation measures.

Robert Burnham, RNB Spatial Data, described the modifications to the Planning Compartments that were approved during the November FSC meeting. Planning Compartment maps were developed based on the "best available data" as well as additional background. FSC Members were encouraged to review the Planning Compartment maps on the wall of the meeting room.

Maps depicting the boundaries of the special district and other local agencies providing fire protection services and "response areas" for most fire departments as well as fire station locations were also available for FSC review. It was noted that the meaning of the "response areas" is not clear. Mr. Burnham asked the FSC to evaluate the meaning of "response area". Mr. Burnham also asked that FSC Members use their "local expertise" to evaluate the district and response area boundaries.

The following are some of Mr. Burnham's comments and questions to the FSC relating to "Response Area" v. "Jurisdictional Boundary":

- Volunteer Fire Departments that do not have "jurisdictional" boundaries very often identified response areas on the maps that were returned with their surveys.
- How do "Response Areas" relate to level of service?
  - Can residents living within a Response Area "count on" the fire department to respond or does good will determine whether or not there will be an emergency response – as apposed to an "obligation to serve"
- How does information regarding "response area" get disseminated to the public
- We need to clarify the meaning of "Response Area" because we are expected to identify "service gaps."
- (K. O'Neil). Are CSDs represented on the map?
- I have some questions about the data, and would like to see the type of department clarified (Fire Protection District, multipurpose special district [i.e., RID, CSD, CSA], city department, non-profit organization).
- These maps will go to the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association on Wednesday for their review.

## **General Discussion of Issues Relating to FSC Draft Plan.**

- K. O’Neil. (responding to general questions regarding how well “Dispatch” is covered in the FSC Draft Plan) CDF is only a “contractor”. Humboldt County pays for half of the cost and the Dispatch Coop pays for the remainder. You should talk to local departments about how things are working. CDF is getting additional requests to be served by the dispatch center and the capacity to provide additional services are just about “maxed” out. We need to do something different. How will dispatch continue in the future? This needs to be addressed, and the local departments are in a good position to make suggestions as to how best to address it.
- J. Moranda. The dispatch problem is primarily a funding problem.
- D White. Fire/Medical dispatch is “disjointed” in non-CDF dispatched areas. It is OK in Arcata. With many police operated dispatches, there is a problem dispatching fire (it is OK in Arcata). Arcata FPD is getting a good deal through Arcata Police, but it could overburden them.
- B Burnham. There are four main dispatches in Humboldt County. It is difficult to get countywide call volumes.
- F. Hizer. The increase in call volumes is largely medical.
- K O’Neil. Maybe we should survey the dispatch centers.
- D. White. Dale Bridges with the HCFCFA can provide data.

**Recommendations.** Because of the success of the FSC “group work” during the November meeting relating to Planning Compartments, the FSC Coordinator and Mr. Burnham led the FSC in a “hands-on” discussion of the Chapter 4 Recommendations.

Will Harling asked whether or not FSC Members can make new recommendations, and Kirk Gothier asked that FSC Members bring up anything else that might be missing from the recommendations.

Individual FSC Members were assigned to coordinate the review of Recommendation in Sections 1 through 6 of Chapter 4.

The following is a list of general comments made during the group exercise:

- Section 4.1 – Fire Protection Capability: Raise 4.3 to the “top”; There must be a “standard” for fire protection; the “standard for protection” should not limit development in places like Orleans where the community is an isolated “whole” in public agency lands; clarify the term “support”.
- Section 4.2 – Fire Safe Education. Fire Atlas information should be available for local departments (in a format that individual departments do not need to “download” the entire Atlas but can download only the needed section); Fire Safe information should be provided to real estate agents, homebuilders, and builders supply stores; Expand the use of mass media.
- Section 4.3 – Risk and Hazard Assessment: Update the County Fire Safe Standards; Old roads in subdivisions need to be improved; Projects don’t always adhere to Fire Safe

standards; There are enforcement issues relating to Fire Safe standards; GIS layers are based on 'macro' data and don't always match on the ground data – need to consult locals regarding field data; The term “Communities at Risk” should be used.

- Section 4.4 – Risk Reduction and Management. Add “fuel arrangement”; CDF does not have funding to inspect around homes - and if the insurance company does inspect and finds a violation the homeowner could lose their insurance; Placer County received funding to inspect; the Trinity “Big Red Truck” program was used as a fund raiser;
- Section 4.5 – Community Preparedness and Response. Evacuation should also include “notification;” There should be coordination with other neighboring County FSCs; The County should assist with the continuation of the FSC after the MFPP is complete; We need to define the future role of the FSC; The County role in Fire Safe regulations is missing; The County needs to take a more active role – we need to define the County role.
- Section 4.6 - Funding Sources and Fiscal Issues. The implications of SB 1207 (Romero - which amended Sections 6303 and 6304 of the California Labor Code) should be considered as it effects local departments and OSHA/insurance issues; Districts on the Avenue may need to reduce response area (Fruitland pays on average \$220 in workers compensation per call; Use the term “revenue’ instead of “property tax” in relation to funding exchange agreements with the County; Discussion regarding pooling costs with the County is already going on; Support allocation of a portion of Title II funds to local FSCs; Write grants to support continuation of FSCs; We need to direct grant writing to County Economic Development Division; Siskiyou has a representative of their Board of Supervisors at their FSC meetings.

At the end of the review session, there was a more general discussion of potential funding sources for implementation measures. The creation of a Countywide County Service Area (CSA), similar to CSA 4 which provides contract fire services in the northern portion of the County, was discussed. FSC members felt that this item would warrant discussion with the Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association.

### **Joint FSC – Humboldt County Fire Chiefs Association Meeting.**

The FSC considered the issues that should be discussed at a joint meeting between the HCFSC and the HCFCA. Issues include how to expend/consolidate/create/create new districts to serve un-served areas; what services to “pool” with Humboldt County; establishing a countywide CSA for funding; and dispatch. The joint meeting is proposed for mid-January.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 26th, 2004, from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. to be held at the USFS Six Rivers National Forest conference room.

**Other Meetings.** The FSC will likely hold public meetings in February and March, then reconvene in April and May to make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

### **Adjournment**

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 4:15 P.M.