

# Communities at Risk and Community Wildfire Protection Plans

USDA Forest Service  
Northeastern Area  
State and Private Forestry

*Wildland Fire Management*



**Description:** Every year, wildland fires threaten or destroy hundreds of homes and other structures throughout the rural and suburban forests and grasslands of the Northeastern Area. Guided by the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), state wildland firefighting agencies and their federal and local partners are responsible for identifying communities at risk from wildland fires. In June 2003, the National Association of State Foresters developed guidelines for identifying and prioritizing at-risk wildland urban interface communities. States and federal agencies are being urged to identify and prioritize hazard mitigation projects and to connect with communities at risk to assist them with Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) offer the best opportunity to develop comprehensive, locally-supported solutions to WUI challenges. The purpose of these plans is to reduce the threat to communities from wildland fires today, and to maintain a reduced risk level in the future. Structured to meet local fire management needs, at a minimum they must: map the location of the wildland urban interface, address structural ignitability, identify and prioritize hazard reduction projects, and result from a collaborative effort among local, state, and federal partners. Signatories are the State Forester, local government, and fire department officials. Plans may address one or multiple communities at risk under a common jurisdiction.

## Key Issues:

- The challenge of protecting communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI) is growing for both wildland and structural firefighting services.
- Meeting that challenge requires effective coordination at all levels, from the community to local, state, and federal firefighting agencies.
- A quality, baseline assessment tool to identify communities at risk is essential for the states to adequately plan for a community's hazard mitigation and protection needs.

## Accomplishments:

States are at various stages of the process, both in identifying communities at risk and developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans. At present:

- All NA States are making progress in developing and implementing CWPPs.
- Sixteen states are actively working with at-risk communities to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans. In all, Northeastern Area States have completed about 111 plans.
- Four hundred and eighteen communities at risk are now covered by CWPP plans.
- Fire and Aviation Management has developed and distributed a reference CD for states to use to identify communities at risk and to develop CWPPs.

## Future Direction:

Fire and Aviation Management will continue to support efforts by updating the states on CWPP activities in NA and nationally, providing technical guidance in the development and implementation of CWPPs, and providing technical support to state programs.

**Kathryn Maloney,**  
Director  
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
610-557-4103 (4177-FAX)  
kmaloney@fs.fed.us

**Billy Terry,**  
Assistant Director  
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
(610) 557-4145 (4154-FAX)  
bterry@fs.fed.us

**Maureen Brooks,**  
Community Fire Planner  
11 Campus Blvd., Suite 200  
Newtown Square, PA 19073  
(610) 557-4146 (4154-FAX)  
mtbrooks@fs.fed.us

