



# FEMA

Sharing Information  
Enhancing Preparedness  
Strengthening Homeland Security

**Lessons Learned  
Information Sharing**  
[LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)

**DISCLAIMER** *Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov) is the Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency's national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the emergency management and homeland security communities. The Web site and its contents are provided for informational purposes only, without warranty or guarantee of any kind, and do not represent the official positions of the Department of Homeland Security. For more information on LLIS.gov, please email [feedback@llis.dhs.gov](mailto:feedback@llis.dhs.gov) or visit [www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov).*

## INNOVATIVE PRACTICE

### Community Resilience: Nevada's Community Wildfire Protection Plans

#### SUMMARY

The *Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov)* team identifies innovative practices within the whole community and documents these practices for emergency managers to consider when developing plans and exercises.

The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) led an interagency effort to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) in all 17 counties. The NDF encouraged communities within the wildland-urban interface—the zone of transition between human developments and wildland/vegetation—to create plans that address wildfire response, mitigate hazards, and enhance community preparedness. As a result, all of Nevada's counties developed plans that provide communities with a prioritized list of hazards and step-by-step recommendations to protect people, infrastructure, and resources from wildfires.



The 2012 High Park Fire in Colorado destroyed 259 homes. (Source: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA))

#### DESCRIPTION

The Nevada's CWPP initiative grew out of the [Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 \(HFRA\)](#). The HFRA aimed to reduce the threat of wildfires and encourage public input into the planning process nationwide by offering financial incentives to communities with a wildland-urban interface to develop CWPPs. Communities can use CWPPs to conduct environmental assessments, identify and prioritize hazards, and develop strategies to address gaps that exist in local wildfire preparedness.

Nevada leveraged the HFRA's cost-sharing mechanisms to encourage communities statewide to create CWPPs. With more than 80 percent of Nevada's land controlled by the Federal government, officials realized that successful CWPP development required effective collaboration between community stakeholders and Federal land managers. The State also offered technical assistance and grant application assistance to communities that were developing CWPPs. As of September 2014, each of Nevada's 17 counties had a CWPP.

---

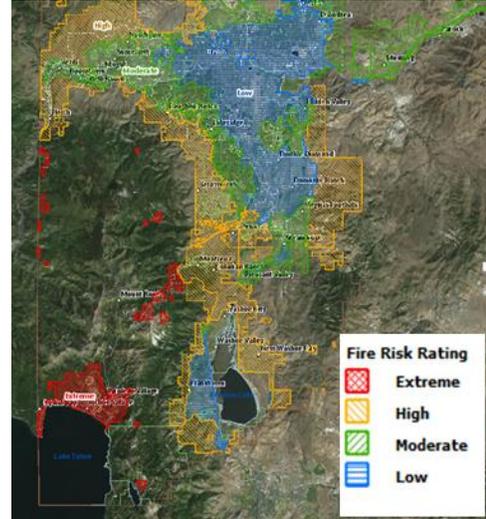
*LLIS.gov* defines Innovative Practice as successful and innovative procedures, techniques, or methods developed and/or implemented by the emergency management or response community to adapt to changing circumstances that others may wish to emulate.

## Creating the Plan

The NDF led the collaborative effort to create and implement CWPPs in Nevada. The NDF partnered with the United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, local fire departments, City Councils, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, County Commissions, residents, and volunteers from Nevada's 17 counties.

The CWPPs integrate best practices and expert advice while maintaining the flexibility to allow communities to meet their individual needs. The CWPPs must meet the following minimum requirements:

- **Collaboration**—Local and state officials must meaningfully involve Federal agencies that manage land in the vicinity of the community, as well as other interested parties, particularly non-governmental stakeholders;
- **Prioritized Fuel Reduction**—CWPPs must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel\* reduction treatments on both Federal and non-federal land and recommend the methods of treatment; and
- **Treatment of Structural Ignitability**—CWPPs must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures.



Fire Hazard Map displaying wildfire-hazard rating for communities (developed for Washoe County)

(Source: Washoe County Assessor's Office-<http://caymancommercial.biz/Officespacetol/easeartillery.pdf>)

Throughout the state, the NDF promotes adopting risk reduction measures and projects in CWPPs by developing relationships with communities and landowners. The NDF engages the community by sending forestry officials to conduct presentations for local officials about new wildfire protection programs, explaining how participating in these programs can close resiliency gaps.

## Executing the Plan

In Nevada, the NDF uses the CWPP to guide projects and direct grants to areas with the greatest need for hazardous fuel reduction. Individual CWPPs identify high-priority threats, and the NDF collaborates with communities to develop projects to mitigate those threats.

Additionally, to guarantee that landowners carry out regular maintenance of their property, each grant has a mandatory 10-year maintenance requirement that landowners must uphold after the completion of initial fuel reduction efforts. The NDF also set aside grant money for community fuel reduction projects through the [State Fire Assistance Program](#). For example, the NDF provided a grant to conduct fuel break construction on non-federal

### Follow-on Resiliency Efforts

Local communities improve community resilience by completing resiliency projects and efforts based on issues identified in CWPPs. In Nevada, community efforts and projects focused on addressing long-term resiliency in the wildland-urban interface. In areas with high-hazard levels, communities developed and implemented fuel-reduction efforts to mitigate the frequency and impacts of fires. Despite variations among plans, communities generally saw improvements in resiliency and capacity, increased community participation, and improved relationships.

---

\* According to the United States Forest Service's [Fire Effects Information System](#), "Fuel is comprised of living and dead vegetation that can be ignited. ... Fuel components refer to such items as downed dead woody material by various size classes, litter, duff, herbaceous vegetation, live foliage, etc."

land in Jarbidge, NV. To increase community involvement, firefighters and handcrews helped each landowner treat their property, and Conservation Camp crews assisted in hand thinning and chipping hazardous fuels. The treatment covered 40 acres of private land.

### Updating Plans

Communities regularly update their CWPPs to ensure that plans reflect growth and changes in the community and meet current needs. Carson City, NV, used its own funds to hire a resource-consulting firm to update the city's plans. The State also developed a step-by-step questionnaire to help other communities identify areas that require updating. Municipalities looking to update their CWPPs can use this [CWPP template](#) as a guide for identifying emerging threats and resiliency projects.

### APPLICABILITY

With the increase of large-scale development in wildland-urban interface zones, communities need to develop strategies to reduce wildland fire risks, conduct hazard mitigation, and improve community preparedness. Without plans to address wildfire preparedness, at-risk communities leave themselves vulnerable to threats that can endanger life and property, compromise critical infrastructure, damage ecosystems, and reduce economic activity. Proper planning [can also mitigate](#) secondary fire-related issues, such as increases in air pollution, soil erosion, and landslides.

The NDF approach can serve as an example for developing, executing, and maintaining similar plans in other states. Resources from the State of Nevada and other subject-matter experts that could help develop and update CWPPs, include:

- The State of Nevada's [Living With Fire](#) website – Provides plans for all 17 of Nevada's counties including updated plans, such as Carson City's updated 2009 plan.
- The [Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a CWPP \(August 2008\)](#) – Developed by the National Association of State Foresters, this guide contains both instructions and technical information about how to develop, execute, and update a CWPP that adheres to HFRA-specific requirements.

### REFERENCES

Living With Fire: Washoe County CWPP Template; University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. Accessed on August 18, 2014. [http://www.livingwithfire.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CWPP-TEMPLATE.final\\_.pdf](http://www.livingwithfire.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CWPP-TEMPLATE.final_.pdf).

National Association of State Foresters. Briefing Paper: Community Wildfire Protection Plans. May 11, 2005.

Pete Anderson, State Forester-Firewarden, Nevada Division of Forestry. Email interview, June 25, 2014. Personal interview, March 17, 2014.