



DESCHUTES  
COUNTY

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2040

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# Action Plan

Deschutes County Community Development

September 19, 2024

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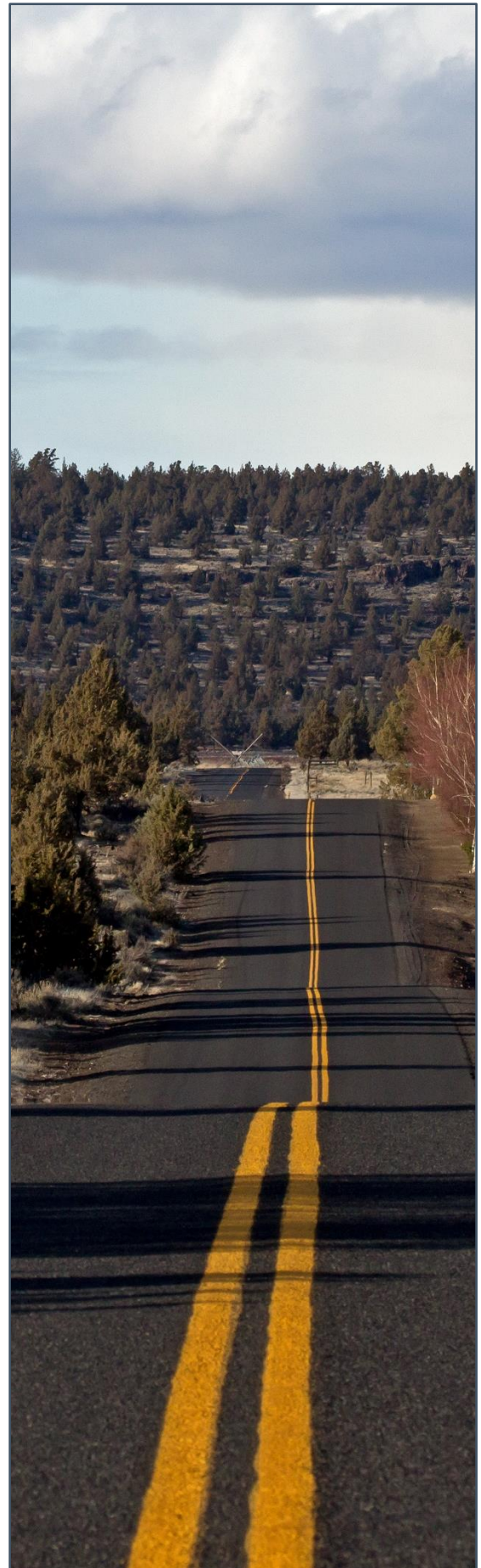
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# INTRODUCTION

Between March 2022 and September 2024, Deschutes County conducted an extensive process to update its Comprehensive Plan. Adopted in October, the *Deschutes County 2040 Plan* captures community values for growth, development, and conservation facing the county over the next 20 years.

The *2040 Plan* provides policy guidance for decision-makers to evaluate amendments to the County's zoning ordinances, new programs, agency coordination, and future grant opportunities and investments.

This Action Plan provides guidance on implementing the *2040 Plan* through specific actions. This document serves as a reflection point for specific projects and actions that were not fitting for inclusion in the high-level *2040 Plan*.



# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Throughout the development of the *2040 Plan*, community members, agency partners, and elected officials discussed issues relating to housing, economic development, farm and forest lands, destination resorts, conservation, and natural hazards. This Action Plan captures important strategies and outlines specific actions that the County could undertake to implement *the 2040 Plan's* goals and policies. As a reference document, it will supplement public comment to help inform the Community Development Department's annual work plan. For the Planning Division specifically, the Action Plan will identify specific projects for the Board of County Commissioners' consideration.

This document is organized by action types.



Readers can utilize the narrative portion of the document to understand the context of each strategy. Each strategy includes staffing resource requirements for each project. They range from “minor” to “significant” as noted below:

- A “minor” rating (2 to 6 months)
- A “moderate” rating (4 to 8 months)
- A “significant” rating (6 to 12 months)



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# Actions By Topic Area

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This section outlines items that require amendments to Deschutes County's zoning ordinance. Community engagement and Board of County Commissioner direction would determine the specific approach.

**Strategy 1.1 Update Forest Zones to be consistent with recent legislative changes.**

Revise the Forest Zone code sections to integrate new state legislation and case law interpretations.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 1.2 Explore code changes for accessory farm dwellings.**

The county code allows for secondary farm dwellings on properties in the Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) and Multiple Use Agricultural (MUA-10) zones. Code amendments could remove criteria that go beyond state law such as minimum acreage requirements.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 1.3 Amend code to provide flexibility for alternative and supplemental farm activities.**

Explore code amendments to provide flexibility for supplemental activities that are compatible with farming, such as farm stands or events.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 1.4 Amend code related to dock construction.**

Integrate recommendations from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Deschutes River Mitigation and Enhancement program related to dock construction.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 1.5 Integrate code for wildfire resiliency.**

Integrate state requirements for new development to follow home hardening, defensible space, and other resilient design strategies in areas prone to wildfires and other natural hazards as part of Senate Bill 80 (2023). Consider additional voluntary measures or incentives to encourage resilient development practices, not required by the state law.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 1.6 Amend code for public facilities in flood hazard areas.**

Evaluate and revise code, as needed, to prohibit the development of new essential public facilities and uses that serve vulnerable populations from being located within areas of high risk of flooding.

Staff Resources: Minor – may be eligible for grant funding.

**Strategy 1.7 Revise code to allow for a variety of housing types and options.**

Where consistent with state law, remove code barriers for alternative housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, or workforce housing in unincorporated communities.

Staff Resources: Moderate – may be eligible for grant funding.

**Strategy 1.8 Revise code to allow supportive services in unincorporated communities.**

Where consistent with state law, remove code barriers for supportive services such as small-scale medical facilities or retail that serve unincorporated community populations.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 1.9 Codify notification and consultation procedures with tribal government.**

Update county code to prescribe notification and consultation requirements for applicants and county staff for development and policy projects.

Staff Resources: Moderate



This section includes opportunities to develop tools, panels, events, and materials for community engagement and informing the public about land use and water resources.

**Strategy 2.1 Develop a strategy and schedule for education and outreach opportunities.**

Develop a schedule for Community Development Department updates, speakers, panel discussions, and handouts on land use law. Encourage informal opportunities for two-way conversations between community members, staff, and advisory boards, like the Planning Commission.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 2.2 Explore ex-officio student representation.**

Explore appointment of a student representative on the Planning Commission and/or other advisory committees. The position could be ex-officio to comply with current procedures.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 2.3 Set targeted number of meetings in various locations in the County.**

Conduct meetings in different locations of the county to encourage community participation. Meetings could include the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners, in addition to less formal events such as educational panels.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 2.4 Develop enhanced social media practices to advertise events.**

Work with the County Public Information Officer to advertise outreach events and public hearings via social media, to make events more accessible and approachable. Consider the use of new social media tools and visuals to capture interest.

Staff Resources: Minor



**Strategy 2.5 Hold a stakeholder panel to gather feedback on community engagement techniques.**

Utilize the Planning Commission to convene a stakeholder panel to gather feedback on the county's community engagement process and techniques and opportunities for improvement.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 2.6 Convene a panel of experts to identify best practices for forest land development.**

Gather feedback from experts on best practices for development on forest lands to mitigate natural hazards and disturbance of natural resources. Outcomes could inform future potential code amendments.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 2.7 Convene a panel of stakeholders to discuss the benefits and challenges of Destination Resorts.**

Convene a panel of stakeholders to discuss operational aspects of existing Destination Resorts in Deschutes County – including water, and the obstacles to developing additional resort facilities.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 2.8 Partner with organizations to provide educational materials related to rural land use.**

Contribute to and coordinate distribution of materials related to land use in Deschutes County and rural living, such as farm tax deferral, water rights leasing, and wildlife-friendly fencing to rural residents.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 2.9 Partner with organizations on efficient building and landscaping resources.**

Contribute to and coordinate the distribution of materials for resource-efficient building and landscaping techniques.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 2.10 Partner with organizations on alternative energy resources.**

Contribute to and coordinate distribution of materials for alternative energy facilities – small and large scale.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**2.11 Partner with agencies to develop materials related to controlled burning and air quality concerns.**

Contribute to and coordinate distribution of materials related to controlled burning projects and indoor and outdoor air quality concerns, including where to find information on fire activity.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**2.12 Partner with agencies to develop materials related to water conservation.**

Contribute to and coordinate distribution of materials related to water conservation for exempt users (i.e. residential wells) and water rights holders, including information for on-farm efficiency measures.

Staff Resources: Moderate



This section focuses on specialty projects that require exploring new or contentious land use topics. These projects differ from the other categories in that they require extensive planning processes, research, and resources.

**Strategy 3.1 Establish specialized expertise among CDD staff.**

Consider providing staff training that could inform rural policy-making. This includes technical expertise in areas related to natural resources such as wildlife, water, or natural hazards. Additionally, experiential learning related to agriculture and forestry techniques may also be informative.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.2 Study agricultural practices and appropriateness of EFU-Subzone requirements.**

In consultation with state agencies, agricultural operators, and advocacy groups, study current agricultural practices and development patterns in the different Exclusive Farm Use subzones in Deschutes County. Determine if there is a need to revisit and potentially lobby the legislature to change the sub-zone requirements, including minimum acreage limitations for land divisions.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.3 Explore the potential of a new “High Desert” zoning designation.**

Explore the potential for a new non-resource zoning category that emphasizes a balance between allowance of limited-scale needed housing, open space, and preservation of the high desert landscape. The zone could do this through larger minimum lot sizes (40 acres) and requirements for clustering of development. Farmland with poor soils and low productivity could contemplate rezoning into this category, rather than the County’s Multiple Use Agricultural – 10 acre minimum zone.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.4 Evaluate farm and forest regulations that are more extensive than state law.**

Review the County's farm and forest zoning requirements to identify and potentially remove criteria that go beyond state law.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 3.5 Explore requirements or incentives to cluster development in wildlife habitat areas.**

Conduct extensive community outreach and coordination with wildlife and development stakeholders to identify approaches for clustering development to protect wildlife habitat and migration corridors.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.6 Explore adopting regulations that mitigate development impacts on water resources.**

In partnership with the Oregon Water Resources Department, explore options for reviewing water availability for certain development projects.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.7 Develop a process and timeline for new information to be incorporated into the County's Goal 5 resource inventory.**

Establish a department policy for a process and timeline to incorporate new information into the County's Goal 5 resource inventories (scenic views, open spaces, wildlife, historical, and cultural resources).

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 3.8 Develop a dark skies educational and or incentive program to reduce the impacts of light pollution.**

Partner with organizations to provide incentive programs, such as free dark skies friendly lighting equipment.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 3.9 Continue to evaluate the impacts of short-term rentals and consider regulations to mitigate impacts, as appropriate.**

Monitor short-term rental activity and case law to determine if and how short-term rentals should be regulated in rural Deschutes County.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 3.10 Identify the potential need for master planning of rural economic development lands.**

Explore master planning Rural Industrial, Rural Commercial, and Rural Service Center areas and provide potential recommendations for code changes.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 3.11 Develop a Climate Action Plan.**

Identify, at a countywide scale, potential impacts of climate change, and mitigation actions to lessen negative impacts through a Climate Action Plan.

Staff Resources: Significant – consultant likely needed

**Strategy 3.12 Conduct a study to explore the creation of a County Parks and Recreation Department.**

Study the feasibility of creating a parks and recreation department.

Staff Resources: Significant – consultant likely needed

**Strategy 3.13 Conduct area-specific studies for the Three Rivers area as part of the Newberry Country Plan Update process.**

Conduct detailed natural resource, housing, and economic development analysis for the Three Rivers area as part of future code updates to the Newberry Country Plan.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 3.14 Explore updates to the Destination Resort code.**

Initiate community conversations to determine if Destination Resort regulations need to be updated.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 3.15 Rezone remnant parcel in La Pine Unincorporated Community to another appropriate designation.**

In coordination with the City of La Pinek consider rezoning the remnant parcel to a more appropriate designation.

Staff Resources: Moderate





This section recognizes that many rural planning and development requirements come directly from state law. Lobbying the legislature can provide opportunities to change it to reflect the experiences of Deschutes County.

**Strategy 4.1 Reevaluate appeal costs.**

Encourage the legislature to revisit the requirements for land use appeal processes and determine if changes are needed.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 4.2 Encourage evaluation of agricultural lands definition and non-resource lands designation process.**

Lobby for a comprehensive evaluation of the definition of farmlands for Central and Eastern Oregon counties, including a process to redesignate lands to a non-resource designation to allow for additional rural development.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 4.3 Evaluate exempt water uses.**

Lobby the legislature to evaluate regulations for exempt water users, including the potential for well monitoring and studies to determine the impact of rural residential development on water availability in Deschutes County.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 4.4 Designate Deschutes County as a critical groundwater area.**

Lobby for the legislature and Oregon Water Resources Department to study and potentially designate Deschutes County as a critical groundwater area. This designation could allow the County to adopt groundwater protection regulations through Oregon Planning Goal 5 and require applicants to provide hydrogeological reports, share wells, cluster development, and/or install observation wells for monitoring activities as part of development projects.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 4.5 Reduce irrigation inefficiencies.**

Lobby the legislature to establish programs that reduce water inefficiencies such as funding for equipment upgrades and/or additional staff to identify water not being applied to a beneficial use.

Staff Resources: Minor



This section identifies topics overseen by other county departments or outside agencies and the importance of coordination and collaboration.

**Strategy 5.1 Support a countywide strategic plan.**

Consider adopting a countywide strategic plan to provide clarity to community members on key strategic initiatives and funding decisions with measurable targets.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 5.2 Support a countywide wildfire air quality response program.**

Support a countywide wildfire air quality response program that addresses threats and impacts of poor air quality.

Staff Resources: Moderate – grant funding may be available.

**Strategy 5.3 Coordinate with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of State lands on incentive programs.**

Coordinate with agency staff on incentive programs to improve wildlife habitat and wetland areas.

Staff Resources: Significant

**Strategy 5.4 Coordinate with the Department of Geologies and Mineral Industries on the reclamation plan process for exhausted mineral sites.**

Develop an updated reclamation plan for mining sites that exhaust their mineral or aggregate resources.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 5.5 Coordinate with Solid Waste and non-profit organizations to educate the public on construction waste.**

Support the Solid Waste Dept, Environmental Center, or other community groups to use community education to reduce the generation of waste, in particular construction waste.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 5.6 Identify county-owned land located within city limits that could be used for affordable and workforce housing.**

Coordinate with Property Management to identify county-owned land in city limits that could be used for affordable and workforce housing and assist in request for proposal processes.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 5.7 Coordinate with non-governmental partners to encourage small farming enterprises.**

Work with farming advocacy groups and non-governmental organizations to distribute resources for small-scale or new farmers.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 5.8 Encourage juniper removal to reduce wildfire risk.**

Reduce the prevalence of Juniper as a means of reducing wildfire risk, particularly in developed areas such as rural neighborhoods.

Staff Resources: Minor

**Strategy 5.9 Discuss fire protection opportunities in non-protected wildfire risk areas.**

Promote discussions to address fire protection and wildfire smoke in unprotected lands in the County.

Staff Resources: Moderate

**Strategy 5.10 Vulnerable Population Mapping.**

Map the location of high-risk, high-need populations and update emergency recovery plans to prioritize emergency preparedness.

Staff Resources: Moderate

# Deschutes County 2040 Comprehensive Plan

## Action Plan - September 19, 2024

Code Updates			
	Strategy	Potential Partners	Staff Resources
1.1	Update Forest Zones to be consistent with recent legislative changes.	Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)	Moderate
1.2	Explore code changes for accessory farm dwellings.	DLCD	Minor
1.3	Amend code to allow flexibility for alternative and supplemental farm activities.	DLCD, Farm Bureau, High Desert Food and Farm Alliance	Moderate
1.4	Amend code related to dock construction.	ODFW, DLCD, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Moderate
1.5	Integrate code for wildfire resiliency.	DLCD, ODF	Moderate
1.6	Amend code for public facilities in flood hazard areas.	FEMA, DLCD	Minor
1.7	Revise code to allow for a variety of housing types and options.	DLCD, COBA, COAR	Moderate
1.8	Revise code to allow supportive services in unincorporated communities.	DLCD	Moderate
1.9	Codify notification and consultation procedures with tribal governments.	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Klamath Tribes, Burns-Pauite Tribes	Moderate
Education & Outreach			
	Strategy	Potential Partners	Staff Resources
2.1	Develop a strategy and schedule for education and outreach opportunities.	County Public Information Officer (PIO)	Minor
2.2	Explore ex-officio student representation.	Legal	Minor
2.3	Set targeted number of meetings in various locations in the County.		Minor

2.4	Develop an enhanced social media practice to advertise events.	PIO	Minor
2.5	Hold a stakeholder panel to gather feedback on community engagement techniques.		Minor
2.6	Convene a panel of experts to identify best practices for development on forest zoned lands.	ODF, private property owners, ODFW, advocacy groups	Moderate
2.7	Convene a panel of stakeholders to discuss the benefits and challenges of Destination Resorts.	Destination Resort owners, Oregon Water Resources Dept (OWRD), advocacy groups	Moderate
2.8	Partner with organizations to provide educational materials related to rural land use.	Soil and Water Conservation District, Irrigation Districts, County Departments, Fire Professionals	Moderate
2.9	Partner with organizations on efficient building and landscaping resources.	Building official, PIO, non-governmental organizations	Moderate
2.10	Partner with organizations on alternative energy resources.	Energy advocacy groups, Environmental Center	Moderate
2.11	Partner with agencies to develop materials related to controlled burning projects and air quality concerns.	Project Wildfire, Emergency Manager	Moderate
2.12	Partner with agencies to develop materials related to water conservation.	OWRD, cities, irrigation districts	Moderate
<b>Specialty Project</b>			
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Staff Resources</b>
3.1	Establish specialized expertise among CDD staff.		Significant
3.2	Study agricultural practices and appropriateness of EFU-Subzone requirements.	DLCD, Oregon Dept of Agriculture (ODA), Farm Bureau, High Desert Food and Farm Alliance, Farmers, advocacy groups	Significant
3.3	Explore potential of a new "High Desert" zoning designation.	DLCD, Oregon Dept of Agriculture (ODA), Farm Bureau, High Desert Food and Farm Alliance, Farmers, advocacy groups	Significant



3.4	Evaluate farm and forest regulations that are more extensive than state law.	DLCD, Legal	Moderate
3.5	Explore requirements or incentives to cluster development in wildlife habitat areas	DLCD, ODFW, COBA, COAR, advocacy groups	Significant
3.6	Explore adopting regulations that mitigate development impacts on water resources.	DLCD, OWRD, COBA, COAR, advocacy groups	Significant
3.7	Develop a process and timeline for new information to be incorporated into the County's Goal 5 resource inventory.	DLCD, ODFW, COBA, COAR, advocacy groups	Significant
3.8	Develop a a dark skies educational and or incentive program to reduce impacts of light pollution.	Dark Skies - Local Chapter	Minor
3.9	Continue to evaluate the impacts of short-term rentals and consider regulations to mitigate impacts, as appropriate.	Finance, Assessor	Minor
3.10	Identify the potential need for master planning of rural economic development lands.	DLCD	Moderate
3.11	Develop a Climate Action Plan.	County Admin, Solid Waste, Health, Property Management, Facilities, etc.	Significant
3.12	Conduct a study to explore the creation of a County Parks and Recreation Department.	County Admin, Finance, Property Management, etc.	Significant
3.13	Conduct area-specific studies for the Three Rivers areas as part of the Newberry Country Plan Update Process.	Local groups	Moderate
3.14	Explore updates to Destination Resort code.	Property owners, COAR, COBA, DLCD	Moderate
3.15	Rezone remnant parcel in La Pine Unincorporated Community to another appropriate designation.		Moderate
<b>Lobbying</b>			
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Partners</b>
4.1	Reevaluate appeal costs.	Lobbyist	Minor
4.2	Encourage evaluation of agricultural lands definition and non-resource lands designation process.	Lobbyist	Minor
4.3	Evaluate exempt water uses.	Lobbyist	Minor

4.4	Designate Deschutes County as a critical groundwater area.	Lobbyist	Minor
4.5	Reduce irrigation inefficiencies.	Lobbyist	Minor
<b>Coordination</b>			
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>	<b>Partners</b>
5.1	Support a countywide strategic plan.	County administration, all departments	Moderate
5.2	Support a countywide wildfire air quality response program.	County emergency manager, forester	Moderate
5.3	Coordinate with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Department of State lands on incentive programs.	ODFW, Department of State Lands (DSL)	Significant
5.4	Coordinate with DOGAMI on reclamation plan process for exhausted mineral sites.	Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI)	Moderate
5.5	Coordinate with Solid Waste and non-profit organizations to educate the public on construction waste.	Solid waste	Minor
5.6	Identify County owned land located within city limits that could be used for affordable and workforce housing.	Property Management	Moderate
5.7	Coordinate with non-governmental partners to encourage small farming enterprises.	Advocacy groups, irrigation districts, soil and water conservation district	Significant
5.8	Encourage juniper removal to reduce wildfire risk	County forester	Minor
5.9	Discuss fire protection opportunities in non-protected wildfire risk areas.	Fire districts	Moderate
5.10	Vulnerable population mapping.	County emergency manager	Moderate