



Subaward Scope of Work/Narrative
Community Wildfire Defense Grants (CWDG)
Huerfano County CWPP Development
Huerfano County, Ross Hallihan

Colorado State Forest Service Financial Assistance Program
Attachment A

Lead Contacts

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CSFS Account Number: 2024 Community Wildfire Defense Grant – Underserved Fed Grant
#24-DG-11021600-067, 9/1/2024-8/31/2027

Work to be completed/deliverables:

This project will develop and implement a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Huerfano County. The importance of this project is to organize strategies around and direct resources toward mitigating wildfire risk across the 1,593 square miles of Huerfano. The CWPP will outline mitigation goals as well as proposed and active projects across the county and layout a broad overview of the mitigation needs and wildfire response challenges of WUI's and communities throughout Huerfano County.

This document will address the four broad challenges of the Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and the "Living With Wildfire" forest priority of our state's Forest Action Plan. The proposed and ongoing mitigation work that will be featured in the CWPP will focus on managing vegetation

and fuels through the strategic creation of shaded fuel breaks in priority areas, fuel reduction along county road ways, community "chipper days" to reduce slash in WUIs and NFPA aligned home assessments which advise methods of fuel reduction on private properties. These fuel reduction projects will help to protect communities, critical infrastructure and ecosystem resilience. Informational pieces contained within the "story map" that will accompany the CWPP will point homeowners to the basics of hardening structures, the importance of adhering to burn permits and bans, safe campfire use and resources for helping their communities become Firewise. This component will address protecting homes and managing human caused ignitions. The three fire protection districts will be major stakeholders in the creation of this document and the mitigation work outlined in the CWPP that will be done on roads to improve ingress and egress alongside fuel reduction in priority areas. This will improve the ability of our county to effectively and efficiently respond to wildfire. Taken together, the educational and mitigation components of this CWPP will be inline with our state's Forest Action Plan tenet of "living with wildfire" by implementing risk reducing projects and community education to lessen the impacts of inevitable, ecologically necessary wildfires.

This county features heavy Pinon Juniper forests in the North and Northwest, which rise up into the mixed Conifer forests along Greenhorn Mountain and the Wet Mountains range. It also has Spruce-Fir, Ponderosa, Gambel-Oak shrublands and mixed conifer forests along its western edge in the Sangre de Cristo and Culebra mountain ranges as well as mixed conifer forests around the Spanish Peaks and the Highway of Legends in its Southern and South-Western borders. These lands fall under the jurisdiction of one of our three fire protection districts (La Veta, Huerfano and Upper Huerfano) and feature public lands under the stewardship of BLM, USFS, CSFS and the Colorado Dept. of Parks and Wildlife. A county-wide CWPP will help to coordinate and standardize efforts to control the risk of future wildfires between and across these jurisdictions.

The county Department of Emergency Management will be working with a contractor to develop the CWPP, and once the document is complete, Emergency management will use the CWPP to coordinate with stakeholders to prioritize and carry out mitigation work across the county. Preliminary discussions with prospective contractors lay out a tentative timeline of 12-20 months. During this time we will be meeting with stakeholders and updating our communities with the CWPP development progress and soliciting their input.

Huerfano County is considered "underserved", and the CWPP will make sure that mitigation resources and fire fighting strategies are applied to those WUI's in the Northern and Western areas of our county that fall within the "Social Vulnerability Index" on the CSFS Forest atlas, as well as mitigating forests that may affect economically disadvantaged communities within Huerfano.

Though the CWPP will be developed to address the needs and conditions within Huerfano county, the planning process will recognize our borders with economically disadvantaged communities in neighboring Custer, Saguache, Alamosa, Costilla and Las Animas Counties; with an eye towards communication and collaboration around wildfire mitigation along those borders going forward.

This project will commence with bidding from contractors to help write the document itself. Once the contractor has been chosen, we will begin pulling together relevant stakeholders (Fire chiefs, CSFS Regional Manager, USFS District Ranger, BLM Fire Management Officer for the Rocky Mountains, Area Wildlife Manager and the county commissioners). We will also begin public outreach to our various WUIs and the boards of the Huerfano Firewise Communities. Emergency Management Departments of our neighboring counties will likewise be informed of the CWPP

development. These stakeholders will be formally made aware that the process of CWPP development is beginning through email.

Community outreach and input is a crucial piece of CWPPs, so once we have our contractor chosen we will begin community meetings concerned with the CWPP. These meetings will be advertised through our county government's facebook page, the community newspaper and hanging/handing out fliers. Additionally, Huerfano County plans to adapt an electronic community survey that Chafee County used to gauge community perceptions of forest health, wildfire resilience, mitigation activities and preparation for major wildfire disasters. Chafee County's CWPP contains the template of the community survey they used and lists the survey itself as a "transferable tool available to other communities upon request". Huerfano County will reach out to Chafee for permission to use the survey, and adapt it as needed to better fit Huerfano.

Because of the size of the county and the space between our disparate communities, it will be necessary to hold these meetings in different locations across the county and have a recorded component. These meetings will be an excellent opportunity to not only get the public's input and feedback on the document, but also to provide them with literature (like the Home Ignition Zone pamphlet from the CSFS) and education about how doing mitigation on their own properties is an integral piece of the wider county mitigation strategy.

These meetings, both with jurisdictional stakeholders and the community, will be documented with: sign in sheets, meeting minutes and recordings/transcripts of any digital meetings/meeting components. For community meetings, we are planning to have most of them carried out in Walsenburg, which is the seat of the county. Our initial meeting will outline what the CWPP is and why its needed. After the initial meeting, others will be held throughout the development of the document to garner feedback. This will allow the community insight into our process and the ability to lodge suggestions, questions and concerns. We will also hold meetings in the other major communities in our county; La Veta, Cuchara and Gardner. These communities will be closer to the mitigation projects outlined in the CWPP and meetings in those locations will be a chance for community members who can't travel to Walsenburg to attend. These will be held around the "halfway point" of the CWPP's completion to ensure the attendees have time to reflect on its progress and make suggestions.

For the stakeholders, we will hold meetings with all identified stakeholders, and smaller meetings with stakeholder groups like the three fire district chiefs as needed since their input may need to be more ongoing and granular than say the BLM representative's.

Throughout this process, we will make sure to coordinate with our contractor so that information gleaned from community and stakeholder meetings is translated into the CWPP in an actionable manner. It will be important for representatives from our contractor to attend some of our community and stakeholder meetings themselves in order to speak to questions and concerns from these groups.

Milestone dates:

The final measurable artifact will be the completed CWPP which will contain relevant data on structure number within WUIs as well as acreage managed in proposed and already existing mitigation projects throughout the county. Early discussions with prospective contractors describe a timeframe for completing this document to fall within 12-20 months. As the process begins, we will create a "roadmap" with timeframes for particular milestones in the CWPP development and document the completion of these accordingly.

Year 1: Creating team, establishing meeting times, data collection, community outreach

Year 2: Compiling/analyzing data, drafting plan, sharing draft with community

Year 3: Project review, community review, Finalization

Total Project Deliverables: 1 CWPP developed and signed

Standards or Guidelines: (list if applicable)

The following CWPP minimum standards apply and are found at [Colorado State Forest Service \(colostate.edu\)](http://coloradostate.edu)

The following are updated minimum standards and guidelines for developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs), as originally directed per Colorado Senate Bill 09-001.

I. Plan Participants

A. Planning involves a core team that includes a representative from the local government, the local fire authority, and the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS). These representatives must agree that the CWPP is viable, complete, and realistic in terms of risk reduction and implementation. Each of these representatives possesses signatory authority for the plan.

B. Additional participants should include community members and local, state, and federal organizations and land management agencies, or their chosen representatives.

C. The plan must exhibit diverse collaboration with emphasis on involvement of community members/representatives.

- Community involvement and participation can be documented through meeting minutes, meeting rosters, or community surveys that clearly document meeting results including participant's name and affiliation. Tracking techniques vary, but providing evidence of a collaborative process is essential.

II. Plan Components

A. CWPPs must include:

- A definition of the selected planning area outlined on a map with an accompanying narrative. Delineate wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas within the chosen boundary.
- Identification of adjacent landowners (land that touches the community's external boundary)
- A community wildfire risk analysis that considers (at minimum) fuel hazards, fire history, common structure vulnerability characteristics, and community values to be protected (e.g., watershed, infrastructure, recreation features, wildlife habitat). Consider recent wildfire impacts in this discussion.
- Recommended methods to reduce structural ignitability

- An implementation plan that includes:
 - o Identification of wildfire risk reduction projects and activities (e.g., fuels reduction treatments, education campaigns, community demonstration site development)
 - ☐ Hazardous fuels reduction treatment projects must include treatment types (e.g., thinning, fuel break, prescribed burning) and methods (mastication, hand crew thin and pile, timber harvest) on federal and non-federal land as applicable within the planning area.
 - o A project area map that illustrates all proposed treatments
 - o A narrative and table that details the relative priority of each project and recommends an agency, group, or other entity as an implementation leader

B. CWPPs should include:

- Locally appropriate emergency notification resources
- Evacuation information
- Socially vulnerable population considerations (e.g., elderly, disabled, or alternate language)
- Commitment for revision, preferably 5 years

C. CWPPs may include:

- Post-fire considerations (e.g., flood hazard analysis, infrastructure concerns)
- Integrated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Plan elements

III. Level of Specificity

A. A CWPP may be developed for any level of community (e.g., homeowners' association, mountain town, fire protection district, or county). Large-scale plans (e.g., county or fire protection district) must contain an appendix listing all communities within the planning area.

B. In order to qualify as an approved CWPP, large-scale plans must identify landscape-scale fuels treatment projects (e.g., fuel breaks and cross-boundary treatment opportunities) for the highest risk communities within the project area. Include a map(s) that details project locations and approximates project boundaries.

C. While county-level plans may be used as umbrella plans for smaller communities, each community should develop an effectively scaled CWPP that supports their needs.

D. Communities represented in a large-scale plan that wish to receive credit for having an approved CWPP must:

- Identify and prioritize risk reduction activities unique to their subset community boundary
 - o Treatments should be supported by stakeholders, including representatives from the community (e.g., homeowners' association board, Firewise USA® Committee, city council).
- Develop an implementation plan specific to that community
- Include information in the plan at a level of specificity appropriate for the size of the community being addressed

E. The resulting document must be implementable, which means adequate detail about project-level design, layout, and execution is provided to allow work to begin, and the plan is supported by those who will put it into action.

IV. Approved CWPP

A. The Colorado State Forest Service will only accept CWPPs that contain the signatures of all core team members, including local fire department(s), local government(s), and a CSFS Supervisory Forester. Please note that CSFS personnel are not permitted to sign plans that do not clearly meet CWPP minimum standards.

B. After an approved CWPP has been submitted to the CSFS State Office, it will be posted on the CSFS website unless otherwise instructed.

V. Plan Lifetime & Update Process

A. In order to serve their intended purpose and remain useful, CWPPs must be updated on a regular basis. Plans should be updated every 5 years, at minimum. CWPPs greater than 10 years old are outdated and will not be prioritized when considered for competitive funding opportunities.

B. Updates may either be a preface to a previously approved plan or a new document with updates integrated into an existing plan.

C. CWPP updates must:

- Describe progress made and list all accomplishments since plan creation or last revision
- Address demographic changes (e.g., population flux, new housing development, infrastructure)
- Identify new risks that may have developed
 - o An updated community risk analysis is encouraged, at least for plans aged 5 years or more.
- List new risk reduction projects in a prioritized fashion
 - o Maps must accompany proposed fuels treatments.

D. Suggested update process:

- Review existing CWPP
- Engage stakeholders that have a vested interest in the plan (e.g., federal, state, tribal, emergency management, political subdivision)
- Host collaborative meetings
- Document completed projects and demographic and landscape changes
- Develop updated wildfire risk reduction priorities
- Update maps
- Distribute updated drafts to key stakeholders for review and input prior to final approval
- Finalize with core team signatures and submit to CSFS State Office

Additional Guidance to Consider when developing CWPP (Won't be applied to standards for reimbursement)

- Leaders Guide for developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/CWPP_LG.pdf
- Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/CWPP_Report_Aug2008.pdf
- CSFS HIZ Guide: https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021_CSFS_HIZGuide_Web.pdf
- Low Flammability Landscape Plants: https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/CSFS_CSU-Ext_Fact-Sheets_LFLP_FINAL_web.pdf
- Fire-Resistant Landscaping: Currently being updated but CSFS can share the unpublished details to inform metrics for Zones 1, 2 and 3 on grass height, tree number/cover, maintenance timing/frequency, defensible space, building damage potential, etc.
- Fuelbreak Guidelines for Forested Communities and Subdivisions: https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/fuelbreak_guidellines.pdf
- Colorado Forestry Best Management Practices Forest Stewardship Guidelines for Water Quality Protection https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2021_BMP_Report.pdf
- “Nine Fact Sheets That Will Make Your Job Easier: NFPA Resources about Wildfire-Resilient Homes” <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/nine-fact-sheets-that-will-make-your-job-easier-nfpa-resources-address-questions-from-residents-about-home-hardening/>
- “Basic Principles of Forest Fuel Reduction Treatments” [https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/skinner/psw_2005_skinner\(agee\)001.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/skinner/psw_2005_skinner(agee)001.pdf)

- “Integrating Potential Operational Delineations (POD) Into Community Wildfire Protection Plans: Guidance for Community Planners” https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/PODs_CWPP_Guidance_August2022.pdf
- “Metrics and Considerations for Evaluating How Forest Treatments Alter Wildfire Behavior and Effects” https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_journals/2023/rmrs_2023_vorster_a001.pdf
- “Evidence for widespread changes in the structure, composition, and fire regimes of western North American forests” https://www.rmtrr.org/data/Hagmann_etal_2021.pdf
- USFS-RMRS-GTR-373 “Principles and practices for the restoration of ponderosa pine and dry mixed-conifer forests of the Colorado Front Range”: https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs_gtr373.pdf
- USFS-RMRS-GTR-365: “Visualization of heterogeneous forest structures following treatment in the southern Rocky Mountains” https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs_gtr365.pdf
- USFS-RMRS-310 “Restoring Composition and Structure in Southwestern Frequent-Fire Forests: A science-based framework for improving ecosystem resiliency” https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr310.pdf
- “San Juan Mixed Conifer Guidelines” https://cfri.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2022/03/MixedConiferForests_Chambers_Remke_Dec2021_FINA_L.pdf
- “Gambel Oak Ecology and Management in the Southern Rockies: The Status of Our Knowledge” https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_journals/2016/rmrs_2016_kaufmann_m001.pdf
- “Piñon and Juniper Field Guide: Asking the Right Questions to Select Appropriate Management Actions” <https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1335/circ1335.pdf>
- “A Field Guide for Selecting the Most Appropriate Treatment in Sagebrush and Piñon-Juniper Ecosystems in the Great Basin” https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr322.pdf
- “Historical and Modern Disturbance Regimes, Stand Structures, and Landscape Dynamics in Pinon–Juniper Vegetation of the Western United States” https://rmtrr.org/data/Rommeetal_2009.pdf
- CFRI “Sage-Oak 1 year Post Treatment Study Summary Report” https://cfri.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2024/02/SageOakSummaryReport_Weimer_Chambrrs_CFRI2401.pdf
- “CLIMATE AND DISTURBANCE FORCING OF EPISODIC TREE RECRUITMENT IN A SOUTHWESTERN PONDEROSA PINE LANDSCAPE” https://rmtrr.org/data/Brown&Wu_2005.pdf
- “Changes in forest structure since 1860 in ponderosa pine dominated forests in the Colorado and Wyoming Front Range, USA” https://www.rmtrr.org/data/Battaglia_etal_2018.pdf

- “Identifying Old Trees to Inform Ecological Restoration in Montane Forests of the Central Rocky Mountains, US”
https://www.rmtrr.org/data/Brown_etal_2019_TRR.pdf
- “Gradient analysis of latitudinal variation in Southern Rocky Mountain forests” (This is a study of vegetation on the east side of the Sangre’s, let me know if you want a copy)
- “Wildfire Risk Transmission in the Colorado Front Range, USA”
https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_other/rmrs_2014_haas_j001.pdf
- “The Cameron Peak Fire: Use of Potential Operational Delineations and Risk Management Assistance Products” <https://cfri.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2021/06/CameronPeakFirePODsReport.pdf>
- USFS-RMRS-GTR-289 “Fourmile Canyon Fire Findings”
https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs/rmrs_gtr289.pdf
- Grassland Overview Report (Link to be provided once it goes live in the next few weeks)
- Great Plains Fire Science Exchange (Information on Grassland and Rangelands)
<https://gpfirescience.org/>
- Saving the Farm and Ranch From Wildfire <https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/print-publications/e/wildfire-preparing-the-ranch-and-farm-e-1048.pdf>
- “Cottonwood Management: Ecology, Rehabilitation, Wildfire and Other Considerations”
https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Cottonwood_Management_QuickGuide_26June2015.pdf
- Great Basin Fire Science Exchange (Information on PJ/Sagebrush, etc)
<https://greatbasinfirescience.org/>
- Pike San Isabel National Forest, Forest Plan
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/psicc/landmanagement/planning>

Please complete Attachment B: Detailed Budget and Budget Justification

(Separate Excel Spreadsheet)