

Clayton Morgan Territory Fire Safe 2015 Summary Working Session #1 – July 29, 2015

I. **Introduction.** Ms. Miller welcomed the group and attendees introduced themselves.

- Elaine Baker, Concord CART (County Animal Reponse Team)
- Carina Bilodean, Intern, Save Mount Diablo
- Division Chief Robert Chew, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit
- Noelle Crosse, Contra Costa County Animal Services
- Councilmember Jim Diaz, City of Clayton
- Peg Gardner, Concord CARES
- Fire Chief Hugh Henderson, East Contra Costa Fire Protection District
- Krystal Hinojosa, Office of Supervisor Mitchoff Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
- John Howard, Watershed Manager Contra Costa Water District
- Dee McDonough, President DFSC Board of Directors
- Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator DFSC
- Cheryl Morgan, Director East Contra Costa Fire Protection District
- George Phillips, Lands Conservation Manager, Save Mount Diablo
- Division Chief Ed Orre, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit Forester
- Colton Rogers, Assistant Watershed Manager, Contra Costa Water District
- Tamara Steiner, Clayton Pioneer
- Kathy Woolfer, Contra Costa Fire Protection District

2. Program Overview.

What is a CWPP and a Fire Safe Action Plan:

Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator, Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC) provided an overview of the Contra Costa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A CWPP is a written document, mutually agreed upon by local, state and federal representatives and stakeholders, that identifies how a community will reduce its risks from wildland fire. As well as providing coordinated strategies, CWPPs have been critical for grant funding for fire safety activities. Since 2009 DFSC and partners in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties has been awarded over \$950,000 of grant funds for activities in the CWPPs. Community Wildfire Protection Plans are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA), passed by Congress November 21, 2003 and signed into law December 3, 2003. The HFRA established unprecedented incentives for communities to take lead roles in community wildfire protection. Twelve years after the legislation CWPPs continue to shape prevention and fuel reduction. The 2009 adopted plan and 2014 draft updated plan (adoption in progress) document are available for download at <http://www.diablofiresafe.org/publications.html> - CWPP.

In order to be federally recognized the CWPP must be signed by three entities:

1. The applicable local government (i.e., counties or cities)
2. The local fire department(s)
3. The state entity responsible for forest management – CAL FIRE.

There are three minimum requirements that also must be met:

1. Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.
2. Prioritized Fuel Reduction: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
3. Treatment of Structural Ignitability: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area.

The goal of the current planning process is to develop a section of the countywide CWPP that focuses on the Clayton Morgan Territory area.

Planning Process and Time Frame

An “Overview” was provided to the group that identified the 4 step planning process, timeframe, key outcomes, results and deliverables.

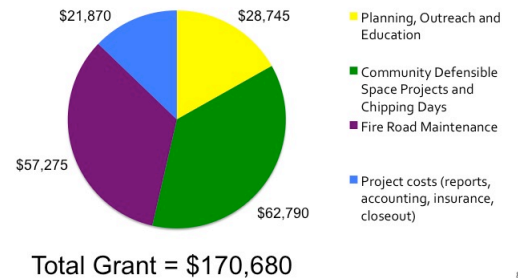
- Step 1: Kickoff, convene decision-makers, involve agencies, engage interested parties. Review existing assessments and on-going projects
- Step 2: Project identification and community information.
- Step 3: Fire Safe 2015 Action Plan development and assessment strategy
- Step 4: Draft and Final Fire Safe 2015 Action Plan

Download Overview at http://www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/Clayton-Morgan-Territory_overview_0215.pdf

The four anticipated outcomes of the planning process include:

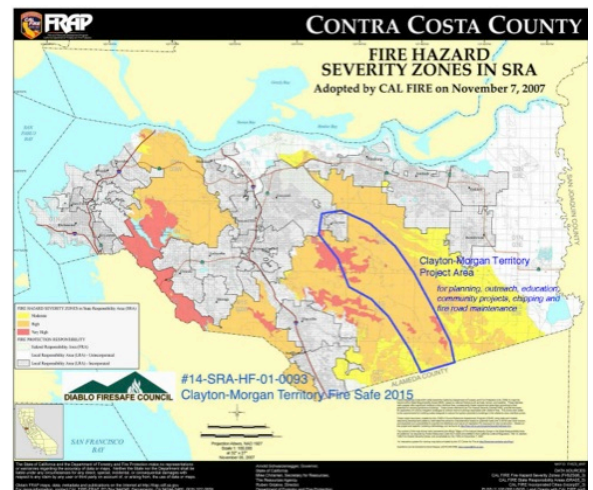
- 1) Community fuel reduction and chipping days – cost share funds spent on hazardous fuel reduction
- 2) Fire road maintenance – cost share funds spend on hazardous fuel reduction and minor repairs along high priority fire roads.
- 3) Clayton Morgan Territory Fire Safe 2015 Action Plan describing future collaboration, projects and funding strategies. This plan will become an Appendix to the Contra Costa CWPP.
- 4) Clayton Morgan Territory Pre-response Plan, including:
 - a) An operational plan for fire service and response agencies identifying houses, roads, staging areas, water sources, fuel breaks, local fire weather, fire behavior and other critical information. (For example see San Luis Obispo County Fire District at <http://www.calfireslo.org/PreAttack.html>)
 - b) A fire evacuation plan with map and emergency information aimed at community members. An example from Morgan Hill (East) was on display at the meeting.

Clayton Morgan Territory Fire Safe 2015 Action Plan



Grant Funding

Diablo Fire Safe Council received a \$170,680 grant for the project through the CAL FIRE SRA Fire Prevention Fund (http://calfire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_fund_grants.php) in July 2015. Grant ends December 2016. Grant includes four components: planning/outreach/education, community fuel reduction / chipping, fire road maintenance and project grant support. The project area extends from the City of Clayton south, from the valley to adjacent ridgelines along Marsh Creek Road and Morgan Territory Road to the county line. A map was distributed to the group that shows the CAL Fire Hazard assessment and the approximate project area.



3. Existing Wildfire Assessments, Projects and Resources: The group discussion included existing assessments, on-going projects, resources and issues unique to the project area:

- Contra Costa Fire Protection District (CCFPD) provides fire protection services for the City of Clayton. They provide annual weed inspections of private properties. The inspection process includes mass notification mailings, inspections and then abatement for those properties where the owners do not comply with CCFPD standards. See <http://www.cccfpd.org/exterior-hazards.php> for

deadlines and standards. There are several properties in the project area that repeatedly have to be abated and where the potential for vegetation fire is high.

- CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit (SCU) provides fire protection in the state responsibility areas (SRA) of Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara and a portion of San Joaquin Counties. A copy of the map showing Contra Costa County Fire Hazard Severity Zones in SRA was distributed (http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fhsz_maps_contracosta.php).

CAL FIRE SCU recently requested that the Mount Diablo area be included in an on-going “tree mortality assessment” to evaluate the effects of the drought and associated pests and disease. The assessment will include both data collected by satellite and through over-flights. Mount Diablo has seen increasing mortality among the Coulter pines due to drought and pine beetles (<http://www.sfchronicle.com/science/article/Bark-beetles-ravaging-drought-stricken-forests-in-6165431.php?cmpid=gsa-sfgate-result>).

CAL Fire also maintains CAL MAPPER, a centralized GIS program for tracking hazardous fuel reduction projects. CAL MAPPER is used during fire suppression activities to inform firefighters of areas of reduced fuel loads.

Another on-going program is CAL FIREs ignition prevention information to avoid starting fires. The “One Less Spark One Less Wildfire” campaign is active in throughout the state (see <http://www.preventwildfireca.org/OneLessSpark/>). CAL FIRE’s equipment use help sheet is available in both English and Spanish at http://www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/EquipmentUse.pdf. Several agencies have information in their contract specifications related to ignition prevention. Detailed mowing guidelines are available from the Unit.

- Contra Costa Water District pre-fire fuel management program includes maintenance of fuel breaks, fire access roads, as well as grazing. They have recently fenced for cattle grazing a new section of the watershed on the east side. They have information they can share for the pre-attack map.
- CoCoCART (Contra Costa County Animal Rescue Team) is a non-profit group with an outreach and education program countywide. Their mission is to shelter animals during a declared emergency (<https://www.facebook.com/cococart>). They work with Contra Costa County Animal Services and are developing a volunteer large animal rescue program. They also have contacts with the Concord Mount Diablo Trail Ride Association (<http://www.cmdtra.org>).
- The community in south Morgan Territory Road has an organized local response and support system that was used during the Morgan Fire in 2013. They have resident emergency personnel (police and fire fighters), volunteer firemen, equipment, phone tree systems, animal rescue, etc. The Morgan Territory Road portion of the project area is different from Marsh Creek Road and Clayton.
- Save Mount Diablo uses volunteers each year to achieve weed abatement standards on their properties. They are an intermediary that buys lands and then transfers to a long-term land management agency, so they typically only manage lands for 1 to 5 years. In 2014 they worked with DFSC and CAL FIRE on fuel reduction project focusing on roadside clearance and near homes in Curry Canyon. They maintain information on sensitive resources and restoration areas on their lands that can be added to the pre-attack map data base. They would like to find an alternative to discing for fuel breaks due to the noxious weeds that invade after soil disturbance. They also request input from the fire agencies on what fire roads are most useful. Contra Costa Water works with San Ramon Valley Fire District whose contractor blades fire roads from the south end of the mountain. There is a high ignition history along Vasco Road (located east of project area).
- Supervisor Mitchoff’s office has a monthly newsletter they can use to communicate fire safety messages to the public. Similarly, the Clayton City Council and Clayton Pioneer can help reach residents with information.

- East Contra Costa Fire District (ECCFD) serves Brentwood, Oakley, and unincorporated communities of Bethel Island, Discovery Bay, Knightsen, Byron and Marsh Creek and Morgan Territory. ECCFD has had a contract for the past 14 years with CAL FIRE to complete weed abatement inspections (LE100) in the area. Projects include roads and trails and fire breaks east of March Creek and Morgan Territory to Round Valley and an evacuation plan for the corridor. The Morgan Territory community has a long history with response to wildfire issues and is aware of community members special needs as well as the network of unimproved roads that could be used in emergencies. Facilities that may have special needs populations include: Diablo Valley Ranch Drug and Alcohol Rehab center on Marsh Creek Road (private), Marsh Creek Detention Facility (Contra Costa Sheriff's Office) both on Marsh Creek Road, as well as the Curry Creek mobile home park on Morgan Territory Road.
- Other public lands agencies that have been invited to participate but were unable to attend the meeting include: East Bay Regional Park District (Morgan Territory Regional Preserve and Round Valley Regional Preserve) and Mount Diablo State Park.

4. Preliminary Project Ideas

Ms. Miller provided two examples of DFSC projects that were completed in 2014 and could be examples for the current program. In summer-fall 2014 eight neighbors on Oak Hill Lane received \$10,000 cost share to hire contractors to remove dead trees, limb-up trees, provide roadside clearing and brush removal, as well as chip homeowner cut materials. The cost share funds were matched with over 520 hours of sweat equity valued at almost \$13,000. DFSC also worked with Save Mount Diablo who worked with CAL FIRE to identify key locations in Curry Canyon and Wright Canyon. They used the \$5,000 cost share to hire a contractor to remove dead trees, small pines and brush to improve emergency access and reduce the fuel load. They also worked with the neighbors on Aspara Drive. Over 100 volunteer hours and cash match valued at over \$6,700.

The 2014 CWPP Update listed 10 different strategies that could provide ideas for future ideas. See http://www.diablofiresafe.org/pdf/2014-Draft_Contra_Costa_County_CWPP_Update.pdf Section 2.4.

1. Collaborative partners
2. Risks of ignitions
3. Fire weather
4. Community at risk hazards
5. Defensible space
6. Structure survivability
7. New and infill development
8. Fuel management on public and large scale private lands
9. Protect facilities and infrastructure
10. Local preparedness and firefighter capability.

5. Expanding Participation in the Planning Process

Outreach methods for the planning effort include email updates (a constant contact list will be developed), media release, information on websites and newsletters with links for planning partners to share with their audiences, presence and presentations (e.g. a booth at the Clayton farmer's market). DFSC requests that stakeholders spread the word about the project with their groups, and recommend anyone else who should be added to the contact list.

6. Next Steps

The next meeting is on Wednesday, Aug 26, 10 AM – Noon, Clayton Community Library. We will continue to share assessments and community information. We will also brainstorm future project identification for both short term fuel projects and fire road maintenance projects, as well as long term projects.