

Land Use Planning & Wildfire Forum

Presentations

Creating fire-adapted communities through better land use planning in the
wildland-urban interface

January 24-25, 2018 | St. Julien Hotel, Boulder, CO



Communities At-A-Glance

Huerfano County, CO

Ashland, OR

Bemidji, MN

Communities At-A-Glance

Huerfano County, CO

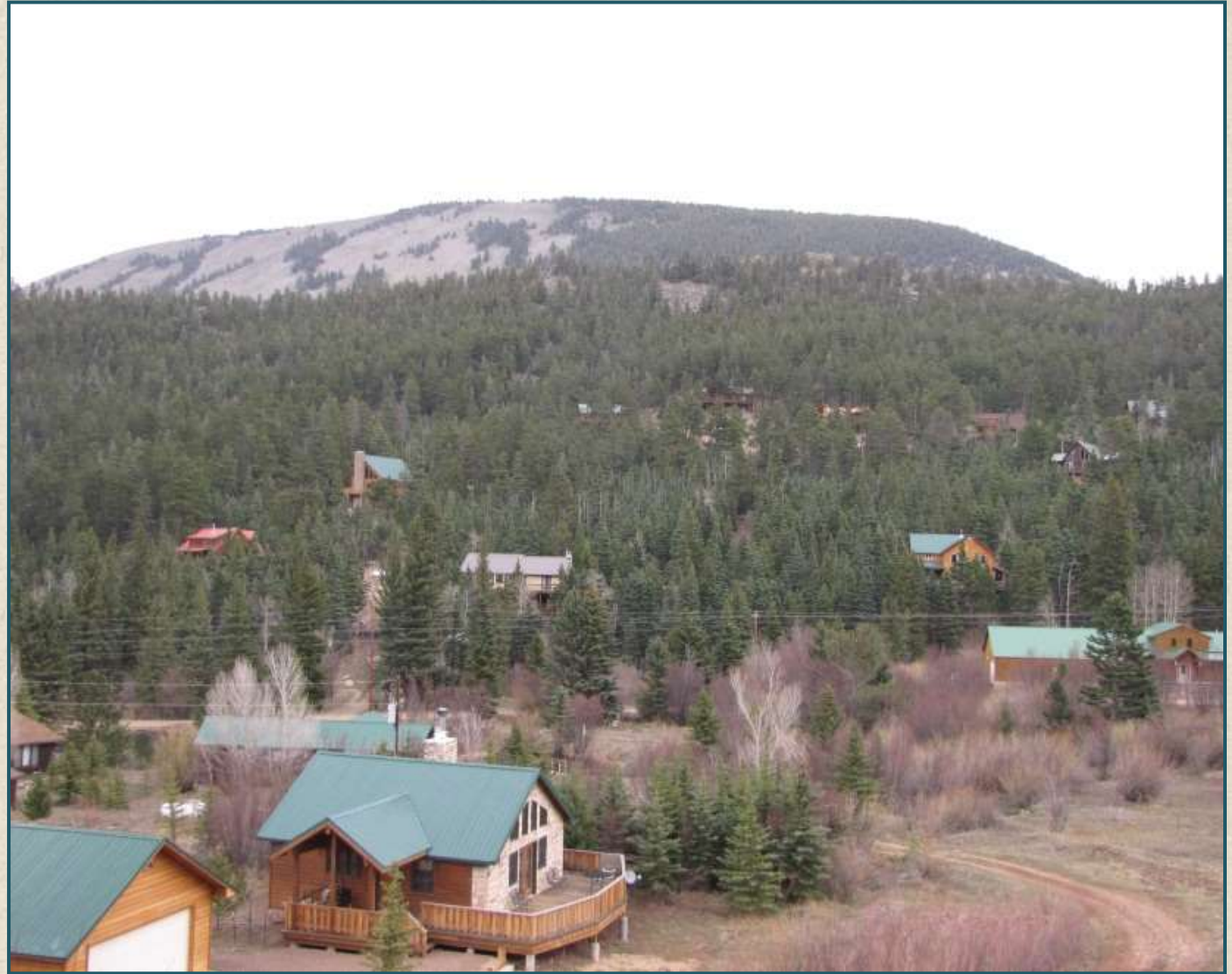
Paul Branson

Wildfire Mitigation Program Manager
Huerfano County



Overview

- ~6,400 population/1,593 sq mi
- 8,741 structures/5,009 residential
- 145 subdivisions with ~15,000 platted parcels, 45 designated WUI areas
- High % 'Intermix' including 2 towns & 2 villages
- Most WUIs: "absentee owners"
- Restricted economy & infrastructure
- 2 "Subsistence Rivers": All municipal and most industrial/agricultural water
- Limited response capabilities



Wildfire History

- 7 large recent fires (from 13,500-27,500 acres)
- Multiple ignitions and smaller fires annually in 3 FPDs. 2016=59, 2017=21 (from Dispatch CAD)
- Extended wildfire season - includes ALL seasons
- Seasonal lightning & high % human error
- Conditions primed for more large wildfire events (existing fuels loading +frequent Red Flag conditions)



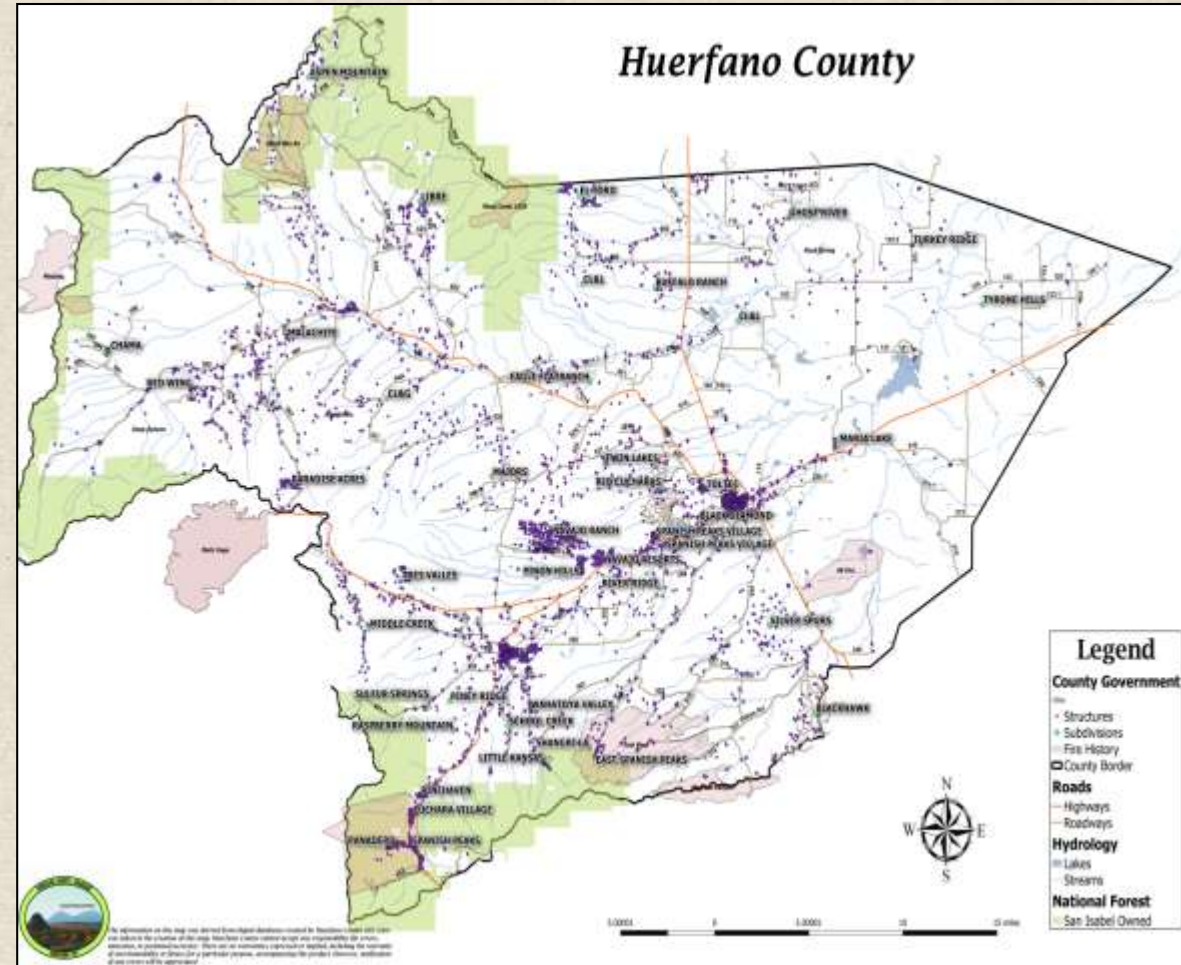
CPAW Process

- Compile Documents for Review (Comprehensive Plan, existing Codes/Regulations, CWPPs, MHMPs, etc)
- Recruit stakeholders (diverse membership)
- Coordinate meetings & agendas
- Develop site tour fieldtrips
- Develop maps, acquire neighborhood, structure & hazard data
- Review CPAW recommendations
- Regular CPAW Team conference calls



Key Opportunities/Challenges

- Leveraged recent 2015 ICC Building Code adoption & built Momentum to adopt 2015 WUI Code.
- Process informed current WUI Mapping & Hazard Assessment process.
- Revealed an absence of wildfire recognition in local codes, regulations and planning.
- Illustrated local stakeholder participation challenges.
- Provided a template for moving forward.
- Served to support other complimentary wildfire awareness and/or preparedness programs.



Future Steps

- Revise/upgrade regulations, Comprehensive Plan, etc.
- Preparations for 2015 ICC WUI Code adoption and enforcement.
- Complete County CWPP.
- Acquire NFPA Firewise Assessment Training for County staff & FPDs.
- Refine and/or complete local wildfire hazard assessments.
- Further expand wildfire public outreach capabilities.



Contact



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Communities At-A-Glance

City of Ashland, OR

Alison Lerch

Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator
Ashland Fire & Rescue



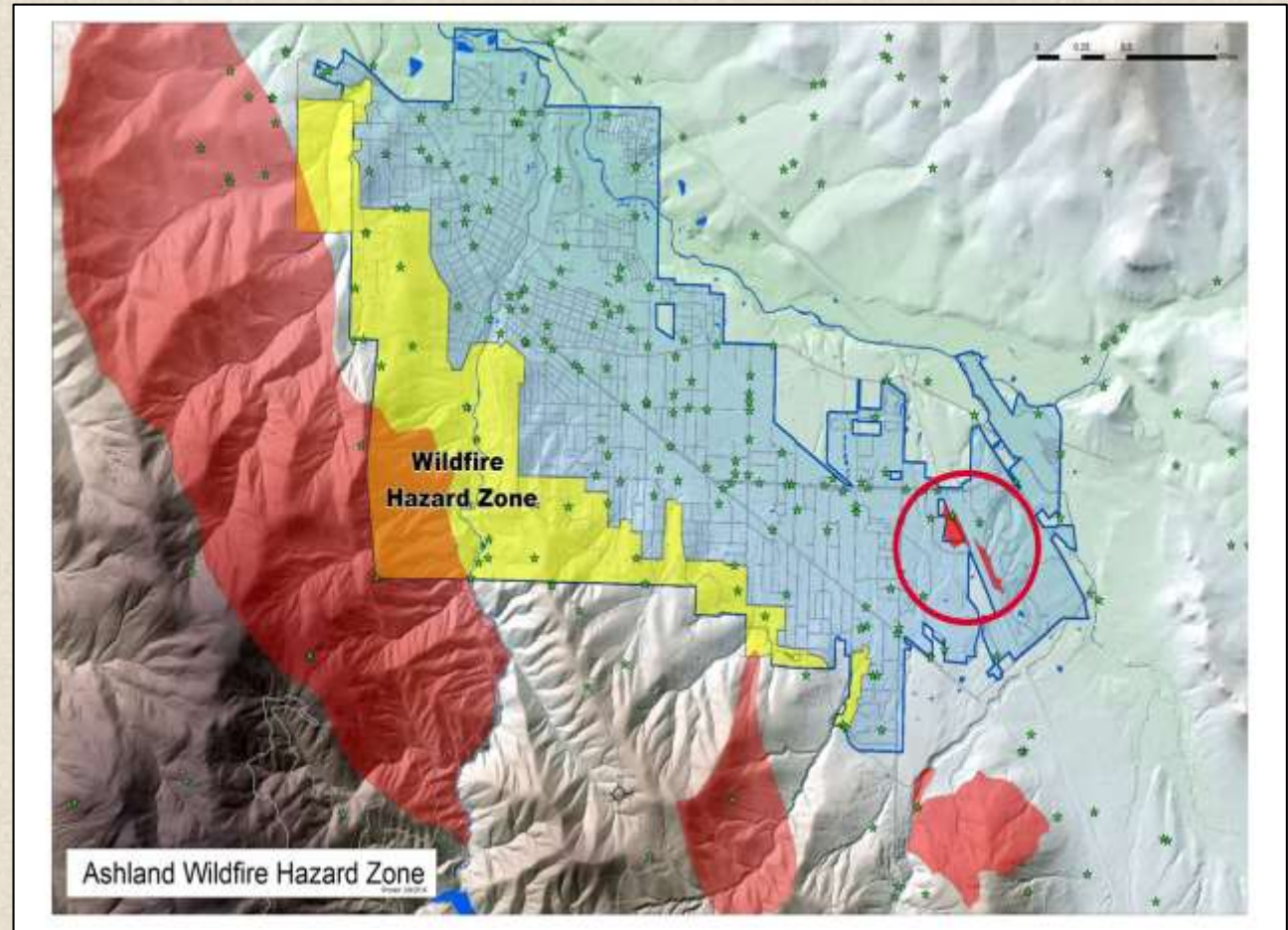
Overview

- Population: 21,639
- Dry forest, Mediterranean climate
- Municipal watershed
- Wildfire History:
 - 2010: Oak Knoll Fire
 - 2009: Siskiyou Fire



CPAW Process

- Technical planning assistance
- Review the City of Ashland draft Wildfire Mitigation Ordinance
 - New construction and additions over 200 square feet
- Expand the Wildfire Hazard Zone to the entire city



CPAW Process

- Field Tour & Planning Meeting (2017):
 - Ashland Fire & Rescue
 - Planning Department
 - Planning Commission
 - Wildfire Commission
 - Tree Commission
 - Mayor
- Recommendation memo was handed out to all parties the week prior
- Answered questions and provided valuable information face-to-face



Key Opportunities/Challenges

- CPAW made a huge impression on the Planning Team
- Addressing the wildfire risk in Ashland without watering down the ordinance
 - Mature trees within 30 feet of a structure
 - 5 foot fuel free area
 - Branch distance from structure no less than 10 feet
- Balance priorities of the City with the need for wildfire adaption and resilience



Future Steps

- Incorporated recommendations including proper distances and new key words (ex: “fuel modification area” instead of fuel break)
- Bring the ordinance to the planning group January 31st for final review
- Start the process of adopting the revised ordinance (~5 months)
 - Planning Commission Approval
 - City Council Approval
 - Goal: Before next fire season



Contact



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Communities At-A-Glance

City of Bemidji, MN

Casey Mai

Planning Director

Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board
(GBAJPB)

David Hoefler

Fire Chief

Bemidji Fire Department

Overview

- North Central Minnesota (first “City” on the Mississippi)
- Lake & forest (pine/hardwood) – flat terrain
- Greater Bemidji Area (GBA): 51 sq. miles
- Two local government units:
 - City of Bemidji
 - Northern Township



Wildfire History

- Average 30 wildfires per year
- Spring season most active
- Most fires < 5 acres
- Multi-agency response
 - MN DNR/USFS
 - Air resources (local Base)
 - Heavy Equipment
- Nearly all human ignited

Table 3.4 - Summary of Recent Wildland Fire in Beltrami County

Fires since 2002	584
Average Size (Ac)	42.54
Median Size (Ac)	1

Top 3 Causes	Number of Incidents
Debris	227
Arson/Incidiary	221
Misc	60

Suppression Costs	585,856
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Permitted Fires Resulting in Wild Fire	65
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Source: MN Dept. of Natural Resources.
May 1, 2012.



CPAW Process

- First Site Visit: Jan/Feb 2017
 - Field tour
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Reviewed the Comprehensive Plan
- Second Site Visit: May 2017
 - Met with JPC/JPB members



CPAW Process

- Community growth into intermix/interface areas.
- Increasing wildfire season (intensity, severity, & frequency)
- Minimal consideration for wildfires in planning and land use.
- Joint application:
 - MN DNR, Planning, Fire Dept



Key Opportunities/Challenges

- Collaboration between GBAJPB, Bemidji Fire Department, & MN DNR
- Challenge is the Bemidji Fire Dept. serves a larger area than what the GBAJPB serves



Future Steps

- Educate key stakeholders, developers, & homeowners
- Implement wildfire mitigation efforts
- Consider & adopt CPAW recommendations



Contact



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