

La Plata County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Introduction

La Plata County, Colorado is home to 46,468 residents and 21,946 housing units, and is situated in the southwest corner of Colorado. The county encompasses 1,692 square miles with 1.08 million acres, and is a region with stunning landscapes ranging from high alpine peaks and meadows in the north to arid plateaus, sage plains and mesas in the south.

Land Ownership in Acres	Number of Acres
Private	461,185
San Juan National Forest	396,050
Bureau of Land Management	21,823
State of Colorado	23,287
Southern Ute Indian Tribe	179,055
Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe	1,685
Total	1,083,085

Over 3,300 new lots were created by major and minor subdivisions from 1993 to 2001. Newcomers from all over the world find the environs of this place desirable for home building in vegetation which, in most parts of this county, is at high risk for catastrophic wildfire. The population of La Plata County is growing at an average rate of 3.6% each year (1990 - 2000) which is considered a high growth rate. Much of this growth is happening in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) which is defined as:

...areas extending 1½ miles from the boundary of an at-risk community defined by the USFS and BLM's inventory and which lack emergency access routes; are in poor proximity to water sources; have areas with steep slopes; have high risk vegetation types; and/or that are in close proximity to fuels on public lands.



Most growth in La Plata County and southwest Colorado is happening in the WUI. This picture is a development very near the City of Durango which is a regional hub city and home to 15,000 residents. Thousands of similar structures exist throughout La Plata County with many more planned for development.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan -- The Process

In May of 2002, La Plata County, along with the four surrounding counties in southwest Colorado, unveiled Community Fire Plans (CFPs) as part of the National Fire Plan. Collectively, these five Community Fire Plans are considered national models for collaboration, and inter-governmental planning and action around wildfire education in rural and rural/resort communities. These CFPs provided the strategic framework that has driven myriad action items pertaining to mitigation, education, and emergency response. The five CFPs and our regional progress towards goal attainment can be found at this Web site: www.southwestcoloradofires.org.

Thus, this Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is an update to the 2002 Community Fire Plan for La Plata County, and is being revised based on the principals, requirements and guidelines established through the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 or HFRA.

The specific steps taken to complete the Community Fire Plan (CFP) and this CWPP include:

- Holding numerous meetings among state and federal firefighting entities, La Plata County Government and local fire protection districts.
- Conducting three separate mapping processes resulting in the newly created *La Plata County Fire Risk – Communities of Concern Map* (attached).
- Sending a questionnaire to over 1,000 residents of our county to gather input for the CFP and sending a survey to all the local fire chiefs seeking their ideas.
- Conducting key informant interviews with stakeholders.
- Taking formal input from the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado.
- Sending the CWPP draft to key stakeholders for review and comment.



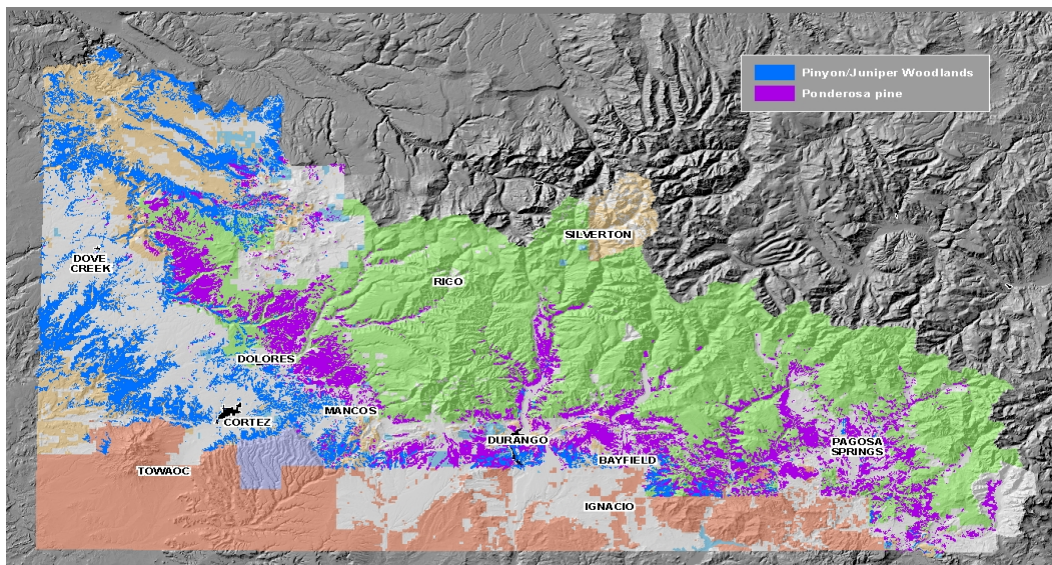
Valley Fire Burn Area

On June 9, 2002 exactly 11 days after the release of five Community Fire Plans for southwest Colorado, the historic Missionary Ridge fire broke out north of Durango followed by the Valley Fire just days later. These wildfires consumed **70,085** acres and burned **57** homes in the WUI. The final cost was **\$40.8** million dollars. Thousands of La Plata County residents were evacuated from their homes for weeks. **These devastating wildfires will be felt in this community for generations and serve as a constant reminder of the need to continue implementing the CWPP.**

10-Year Strategy to Reduce Fuels and Restore Watersheds

As background for the CWPP, it is important to note that in March of 2004, the San Juan Public Lands Center (BLM and USFS) released “A 10-Year Strategy to Reduce Fuels and Restore Watersheds”. This “living” document accompanies the CWPP by providing important background information and establishing a framework for setting priorities. The document...

- presents a vision for the Public Lands including these concepts:
 - *landscapes with fire resilient, healthy ecosystems, and resistance to damage from fire, drought, insects, and disease,*
 - *support for a wide range of multiple uses,*
 - *risks to subdivisions and communities are minimized, and*
 - *forest and land health is improved and/or maximized*
- describes the vegetation types, ecological environments and fire regimes in southwest Colorado and La Plata County;
- explains why this area is at risk for catastrophic wildfire;
- outlines significant issues facing the Public Lands such as:
 - extended drought
 - the Missionary Ridge Fire in 2002
 - continued growth in the WUI
 - extensive beetle kill in the pinyon pine and moderate beetle kill in other conifers
- discusses the significant devastation caused by the Ips beetle which has destroyed about 80% of the pinyon pine forests in this region;
- identifies priorities for fuel treatments by zones of priority; and
- serves as an ever-changing tool that can guide Federal actions.



Graphic: Vegetation types, southwest Colorado. Source: *10-Year Strategy to Reduce Fuels and Restore Watersheds*

La Plata County -- Community Wildfire Protection Plan Firefighting and Prevention Capacity

There are a number of entities involved in fire prevention and firefighting in La Plata County including:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)
- La Plata County (LPC) and La Plata County Sheriff
- Local Fire Departments
- United State Forest Service (USFS)

All of these organizations work with each other and community partners to share resources and information. Over the years strong partnerships have developed related to fire prevention and demonstration projects, firefighting, public education and accessing resources such as equipment, grants, and training. It is in the spirit of these partnerships that the CWPP is updated.

On Private and State Lands fire protection is provided by the fire districts of: Upper Pine, Los Piños, Fort Lewis Mesa, and by the Durango Fire and Rescue Authority (includes Hermosa Cliffs and Animas Fire Districts, the City of Durango Fire Department, and Mercy Medical Center's paramedics).

The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) fire programs provide effective readiness, and response and suppression of wildfires. This organization's greatest emphasis is on prevention and mitigation to lessen the chances of catastrophic wildfires on state and private lands in Colorado. The CSFS's activities include:

- a) promoting fire mitigation projects;
- b) assisting county governments in assessing wildfire hazards; and
- c) sharing information with diverse audiences on the importance of mitigating hazards on their forested lands to help protect lives and property.

On Tribal Lands the Bureau of Indian Affairs provides wildland fire protection on tribal lands. With La Plata County's southern portions being dotted and interspersed with private, federal, tribal and state lands, coordination between firefighting entities is imperative.

After the Community Fire Plans were released in May of 2002 and with the Missionary Ridge and Valley Fires breaking out days later, a Web site was established in partnership with the San Juan Public Lands Center, Colorado State Forest Service and Fort Lewis College - Office of Community Services:

www.southwestcoloradofires.org

This unique, locally-maintained site enjoys high usage and directs visitors to wildfire news, post fire recovery information, and downloadable documents including the CWPP, Firewise Council brochures, maps, information about mitigation, a list of local contractors and more.

On Federal Lands the USFS Columbine Ranger District and the San Juan Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management cover La Plata County. The Columbine District has one engine with a crew of five, and a nine-person fuels reduction crew. The 20-person San Juan Interagency Hotshot Crew is stationed in Durango but often works elsewhere across the nation. The crew is considered a national resource and is assigned to fires within and outside the county.

The Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch Center helps to make fire response quick and effective. The USFS, BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mesa Verde National Park and CSFS each contribute staff and resources to operate the full-time facility located in the San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burnett Court, Durango. And finally, an air tanker base is located in this county at the airport, and has improved firefighting capabilities.

La Plata County - Community Wildfire Protection Plan Goals, Strategies and Responsible Entity

Partners

- Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS)
- Durango Fire and Rescue Authority, Fort Lewis Mesa Fire Department, Los Piños Fire Protection District and Upper Pine Fire Protection District (Local Fire Protection Districts)
- Fort Lewis College – Office of Community Services (FLC-OCS)
- Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado (Firewise Council)
- La Plata County Planning Department, Government and Sheriff (La Plata County Government)
- Private Contractors
- San Juan Mountains Association (SJMA)
- San Juan Public Lands Center (USFS/BLM)
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe (SUIT)

Note: Some strategies are listed twice because they relate to more than one goal.

Goal: Reduce Risk in the wildland-urban interface (WUI)

Strategy #1) Utilize the new La Plata County Fire Risk - Communities of Concern map in myriad ways with governments, community groups, citizens and local, state and federal firefighting entities and public land management organizations to reduce wildfire risk especially in the Wildland Urban Interface.

(USFS, BLM, La Plata County, Fire Districts, CSFS, FLC-OCS, Firewise Council)

Strategy #2) Explore adding a Graphic Information System (GIS) layer to the La Plata County Fire Risk - Communities of Concern map that would show an inventory of treatments including the method of treatment done on private lands adjacent to the WUI, and use this map as a tool for federal fuel treatment project identification. (FLC-OCS, USFS/BLM, Private contractors, CSFS)

Strategy #3) Build the capacity of the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado's Neighborhood Ambassador Program through recruitment, training, and utilization, and by helping the program via ongoing development and capacity building (e.g. funding, publicity, media, participation, etc., etc.) (Firewise Council, SJMA, USFS/BLM, community and firefighting partners)

Strategy #4) Initiate fire mitigation projects on Federal Lands identified in the CWPP planning process after appropriate review processes are completed, and assist other fire managers with fire management activities in their jurisdictions. These projects will be carried out by the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with local communities, the local fire departments, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (USFS and BLM, with community partners)

Strategy #5) Support and advertise the existence of private contractors who are able to complete firewise prevention projects on homeowners' properties. (CSFS, media, April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month Committee)

Strategy #6) Encourage the development of private, small diameter wood products processing businesses including biomass technologies by: assisting businesses with grant writing and other means of finance such as linkage with the Wood Products Revolving Loan Fund managed by Region 9 Economic Development District; on-going meetings and discussions with a pellet manufacturer for location to southwest Colorado; supporting demonstration of whole tree pellet technology by placing a pellet stove at the Mountain Studies Institute in Silverton; and working in partnership with the BLM to develop products and markets for pinyon and juniper. (All partners)

Strategy #7) Increase the number of locally developed community wildfire protection plans in at-risk subdivisions and communities throughout La Plata County partnering with federal and state agencies, the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado and its Neighborhood Ambassador Program and Homeowner Associations. (CSFS, USFS/BLM, Firewise Council, Neighborhood Ambassadors, HOAs)

Goal: Increase Public Involvement in Wildfire Prevention and Education

Strategy #1) Increase the capacity of the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado by ensuring the Council has adequate resources to carry out its mission working with key stakeholders across La Plata County, and the region. (USFS/BLM, Firewise Council membership, SJMA)

Strategy #2) Implement demonstration projects that will give communities and neighborhoods a visual picture of firewise strategies, combining these projects with public education meetings and campaigns. (Firewise Council, HOAs, April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month Committee, CSFS)

Strategy #3) Continue to utilize the resource of the web site: www.southwestcoloradofires.org for on-line information sharing with citizens and organizations in La Plata County and southwest Colorado. (FLC-OCS, USFS/BLM, CSFS)

Goal: Reduce Ignitability of Structures

Strategy #1) Initiate fire mitigation projects on federal lands identified in the CWPP planning process after appropriate review processes are completed, and assist other fire managers with fire management activities in their jurisdictions. These projects will be carried out by the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with local communities, the local fire departments, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (USFS/BLM working with partners)

Strategy #2) Support and advertise the existence of private contractors who are able to complete firewise prevention projects on homeowners' properties. (CSFS, media, April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month Committee)

Strategy #3) Utilize the La Plata County Firewise Council to educate local governments, builders, architects and other stakeholders about firewise construction techniques and materials. (Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado)

Strategy #4) Continue working collaboratively across jurisdictions to institute Plata County Government policies that, if implemented, will reduce the chances of catastrophic wildfires on private lands, and lands in the WUI, including adoption of driveway standards and fire mitigation policies as drafted in the proposed La Plata County Land Use Code Update. (La Plata County Government and Elected Officials, Fire Protection Districts, Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado)

Goal: Increase and strengthen the tools for local governments and fire departments to encourage Firewise policies and practices.

Strategy #1) Continue working collaboratively across jurisdictions to institute La Plata County Government policies that, if implemented, will reduce the chances of catastrophic wildfires on private lands, and lands in the WUI, including adoption of driveway standards and fire mitigation policies as drafted in the proposed La Plata County Land Use Code Update. (La Plata County Government, Fire Protection Districts, Elected Officials, Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado)

Goal: Increase the number of fuel reduction projects on federal lands in the WUI and other priority areas.

Strategy #1) Initiate fire mitigation projects on federal lands identified in the CWPP planning process after appropriate review processes are completed, and assist other fire managers with fire management activities in their jurisdictions. These projects will be carried out by the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, in partnership with local communities, the local fire departments, the Colorado State Forest Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. (USFS/BLM working with partners)

Strategy #2) Continue to build, create and strengthen partnerships to carry out this CWPP among federal, state, and local governments and agencies, and with private sector entities and non-profits. (All partners)

Strategy #3) Encourage the development of private, small diameter wood products processing businesses including biomass technologies. (All partners)

Key Approaches in CWPP Implementation

Community Base Map

The *La Plata County Fire Risk - Communities of Concern* map has been developed (see attachment) in response to completing this CWPP update. Previous maps were limiting because they were too vague, not easily used or did not take into consideration enough factors. This new map was developed in close concert with the local fire chiefs and La Plata County's Planning Department. The map illustrates the relative wildfire risks in the WUI and was completed using cutting-edge GIS technology. Relative risk assessments were done based on several factors including vegetation type and its potential as fuel using high resolution aerial photography. Slope and aspect analyses were also factored into the map's rating system on 30 meter Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) from the USGS. Other factors were also considered as "ground truth" mechanisms reported by the County planning staff and fire chiefs, including emergency access, proximity to water and potential fuels on Public Lands. The development of this map completes the Community Risk Assessment guidelines of the CWPP. This map is now widely used in our county to assess risk, identify areas for future fuel reduction projects on Federal Lands, and for decision-making in the County's land use development process.

- ✓ **The CWPP recommends ongoing and continued use of this valuable planning tool.**

Fuel Treatments Map

Accompanying the *La Plata County Fire Risk - Communities of Concern* map, is a companion map developed by the USFS/BLM – San Juan Public Lands Center that shows already treated areas on public lands as well as future projects.

- ✓ **The CWPP recommends utilizing the map for action and public education.**

Communities-At-Risk Inventory

Local Federal Land fire managers, using national guidelines, have produced a list of Communities-At-Risk for La Plata County. This document, combined with the *La Plata County Fire Risk – Communities of Concern* map and the *Federal Fuels Treatment* map, clearly show priorities for fuel treatments until the year 2010. The inventory not only identifies communities at risk in three categories (WUI, Intermix and Occluded) but also documents risk factors such as fuels and terrain.

Finally, lists are given of federal fuels treatment projects over multiple years with latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates for each. Contact the San Juan Public Lands Center at 970-247-4874 for a copy of the list.

- ✓ **The CWPP recommends utilizing this inventory to define the WUI and prioritize future fuels treatment (s) projects.**

County Policies: Driveway Standards and Wildfire Mitigation in New Developments

Since the last writing of the Community Fire Plan, La Plata County's Planning Department, working with local fire protection districts, has developed draft policies for inclusion in this County's Land Use Code Revision, set to be voted on this year by the Planning Commissioners and Board of County Commissioners. These policies, if passed would reduce structural ignitability and increase community and firefighter safety by implementing the following rules codified in the Land Use Code Revision:

Driveways:

- sets minimum widths for driveways off of County Roads to increase accessibility for fire vehicles and emergency equipment
- provide exemptions for some agriculture buildings
- applies to all new residential, industrial and commercial properties or an existing property that is being increased by 100%
- sets guidelines for turn-outs for applicable situations
- sets gravel standards
- sets forth sign access guidelines
- sets standards for securing slopes
- establishes an appeals and waiver system, and allows some exemptions for certain situations

Wildfire Hazard Areas:

- the purpose is to ensure development avoids high wildfire hazard areas, where possible
- provisions apply to all new residential subdivisions
- includes criteria to identify areas of high risk and uses the *La Plata County Fire Risk – Communities of Concern* map
- submission of development applications to the CSFS and/or local fire protection districts for review of risk and suggestions regarding required mitigation
- requires developers to submit a wildfire mitigation plan as part of their application if the development is deemed to be in a high wildfire risk area after using the standards outlined in the Code

- topical areas of the plan include roof materials, defensible space, location to fire houses/stations, warnings to buyers regarding being in a risk area
- includes strategies for increasing home owner preparation and response

Find the draft La Plata County Land Use Code update at: www.co.laplata.co.us (as of 5/06). It is expected to be vote on in 2006.

- ✓ **The CWPP recommends that La Plata County's elected officials work closely with all stakeholders to develop and pass policies that increase safety in the WUI, and in areas of high concern and risk.**

Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado

In the 2001 Community Fire Plan, a recommendation was given as follows:
Encourage and support the implementation of a community-led and community-driven Fire Council in La Plata County that could carry out collaborative projects. The Council would be comprised of the local Fire Department Chiefs, the US Forest Service, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and BIA fire management officers, the Colorado State Forest Service, BLM, La Plata County officials, and representatives from potentially affected stakeholder groups such as realtors, insurance agents, environmental organizations, and homeowner associations, etc.

In April of 2003, the local Durango Fire and Rescue Authority sponsored a national Firewise conference in Durango. This conference, through a breakout session with La Plata County residents, underscored the emerging need for such a Council and showed broad community support.

So, in June of 2003, the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado was officially launched and is still going strong today. The group hosts bi-monthly Council meetings with active committees meeting in-between. They have developed an aggressive strategic plan including strategies, events and publications, and are this county's key central networking mechanism around wildfire education, policy and projects. Active members, which make up federal and state land management and fire-fighting entities, real estate interests, HOAs, citizens and other community stakeholders include:

- Bureau of Land Management ■ Cedar Mesa Ranches HOA ■ Colorado State Forest Service ■ Durango Area Association of Realtors ■ Durango Fire & Rescue Authority ■ Edgemont Ranch HOA ■ Electra Lake HOA ■ Elk Stream HOA ■ Fire Ready, Inc. ■ Florida Road and Water District ■ Fort Lewis College, Office of Community Services ■ La Plata County Planning Department ■ La Plata Electric Association ■ Los Ranchitos HOA ■ San Juan Mountains Association ■ Service Learning Initiative ■ Southern Ute Indian Tribe ■ Southwest Youth Corps ■ State Farm Insurance ■ Tyner Restoration ■ Tripp Creek HOA ■ USDA Forest Service ■ Vista De Oro HOA ■

- ✓ **The CWPP strongly recommends the continued support of the Council's efforts and recommends building the volunteer, staff and financial capacity of the Council so that it can continue to do good and effective work.**

(For more information on the Firewise Council, call 970-385-1210 or go to: www.southwestcoloradofires.org and click on the Firewise Council link.)

Neighborhood Ambassador Program

In December of 2004, a pilot program was started by the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado called the Neighborhood Ambassador Program. Built on research principals presented through research conducted by Fort Lewis College called *People and Fire in the West*, it was learned that one of the most trusted sources of information about wildfire prevention is from neighbors and friends – every day people who are trusted and known. The Neighborhood Ambassador Program recruits, trains and utilizes volunteers who serve as Ambassadors. So far, 20 Ambassadors are active. Examples of their duties at two levels includes:

Level I

The following is the basic set of responsibilities for being a Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador:

- Plan some type of educational campaign and/or event(s) during the annual April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month (refer to idea list.)
- Make contact with your local Fire Department/District so they are familiar with you and what you can offer. Get to know them and be a resource, when asked, in the case of wildfire. Share important information about your subdivision such as access roads, etc. and update annually.
- Ensure that the residents in your subdivision, through as many ways as possible, have access to the wildfire mitigation companies' contractor list kept by the Colorado State Forest Service.
- In the case of a wildfire, when and if asked, be a contact for fire information officers and others. Share information with neighbors in the subdivision verbally and through other methods such as distributing fliers, door hangers, e-mails, etc. or recruiting volunteers who can help you.
- Make a list of all possible locations for distribution of wildfire information in the event of a wildfire (e.g. bulletin boards, public gathering places, etc.)
- Inform residents and neighbors about the www.southwestcoloradofires.org web site.
- Link to the Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado in ways that make sense for your neighborhood or Homeowner's Association.
- Be an example of a home site where defensible space has been created.
- Work with local residents to ensure their addresses and street signs are visible.
- Attend an orientation meeting and then, stay in touch with the Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador contact person(s).

Level II

The following list includes *additional duties* that a Firewise Neighborhood Ambassador may choose to take on.

- Fulfill all duties in Level I.
- Establish an email tree through which residents in your subdivision can receive information
- Assemble contact information for homeowners with addresses, phone numbers (work, home, cell), and e-mails.
- Assemble a list of out-of-state land/home owners and their contact information.
- Ensure that all street signs and addresses are read-able.
- Gather information on residents with special needs such as those who are elderly or physically impaired and may need special assistance.
- Provide information on homes that have animals that may need evacuation or rescuing.
- Report regularly to your Homeowner's Association, if you have one.
- Provide a map of your subdivision showing the following:
 - ✓ Locations of homes and other structures.
 - ✓ Road layout.
 - ✓ Possible water supplies (ponds, cisterns, etc.)
 - ✓ Location(s) of heavy fuel loads (thick forest, lumber piles, stump piles, etc.)
 - ✓ Location of hazardous materials (paint, oil for roads, gasoline storage, etc.).
 - ✓ Location(s) of above and/or below ground propane tanks.
 - ✓ Location(s) of power lines and power poles and the name of the electric company.
 - ✓ Location(s) of gas lines and name of gas company.
 - ✓ Location of any bridges and provide bridge weight limits.
 - ✓ Locations of any archeological or cultural resources.
- ✓ **The CWPP recommends expanding and enhancing all aspects of this successful project including increasing funding for coordination, recruiting more Ambassadors, and including more ambassadors from the surrounding counties.**

April Wildfire Prevention Month

As a result of the partnerships built locally and regionally over the years and through the 2001 CFP processes, in 2003, a strong region-wide education program was launched called: *What are You Waiting For?* April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month. Over 20 partners have joined together to produce a month of events, forums, publicity endeavors (e.g. newspaper

inserts), tours to demonstration sites, video production and releases, and events at local fire houses. In 2005 and 2006, an exciting addition to April's itinerary was the 15 neighborhood-based education events entirely planned and implemented by the Neighborhood Ambassadors.

- ✓ **The CWPP recommends continuing April Wildfire Prevention and Education Month as a key tool for carrying out broad, mass media education around key wildfire and firewise principals and practices, and recommends the continued expansion of the Ambassadors' role in "wildfire month."**

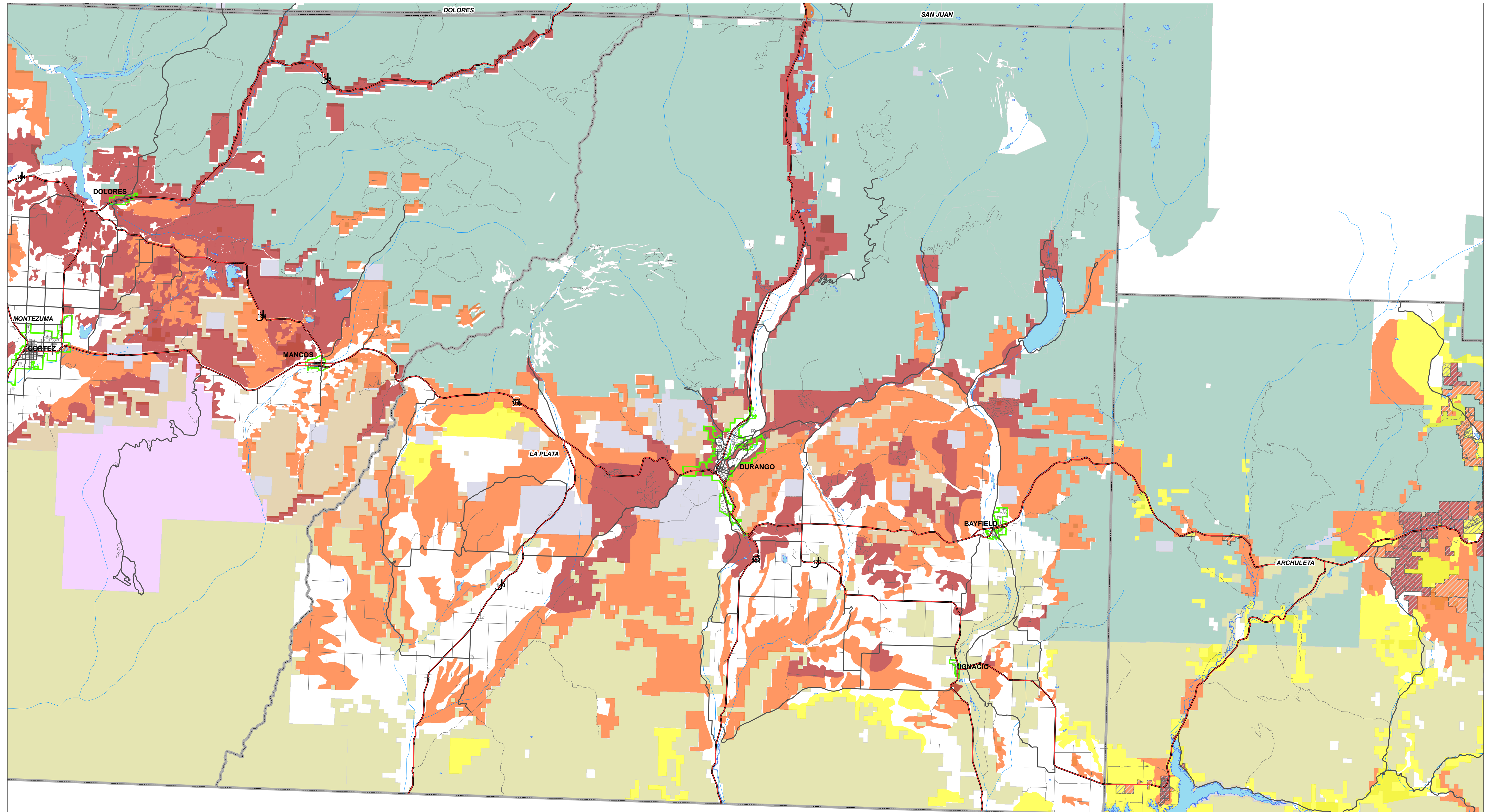
Summary

This CWPP compliments and builds upon the nationally recognized Community Fire Plan done in 2002. It incorporates key principals and guidelines arising from the HFRA. The plan lays out an ambitious program for:

- reducing structural ignitability;
- increasing community safety;
- continuing successful education and community mobilization endeavors;
- reducing risk in the WUI;
- accomplishing important federal lands fuels treatments; and
- continually enhancing partnerships between federal and state agencies and among community organizations and local governments.

As in the past, success of this CWPP can only be realized through sustained, careful and effective partnership building among all affected stakeholders.

La Plata County Fire Risk Zones



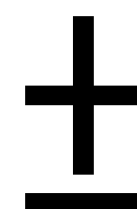
Public Lands

- USFS
- COLORADO
- BLM
- BIA
- NPS

Level Of Concern

- Higher
- Moderate
- Lower

0 2.5 5 10 Miles



This map illustrates the relative fire risk in populated areas La Plata County, Colorado by encapsulating fire-prone zones in colored polygons. Relative risk assessments were based on several factors. Vegetation type and its potential as fuel were determined by using high resolution aerial photography. Topography was utilized by conducting slope and aspect analysis on 30 meter Digital Elevation Models (DEMs) from the USGS. Other factors include emergency access, proximity to water and proximity to potential fuels on adjacent public lands.

The fire risk polygons have been reviewed and revised by the fire chiefs or their designated deputies from the various fire protection districts or departments.

The polygons should be used as guidelines, since none of them are completely homogeneous in terms of vegetation type and density, and topography. It is possible that many of the polygons could contain relatively safe zones. In these situations we err on the side of caution and make an assessment based on the overall average risk of the zone.

Data Sources, Projection & Scale: Color 1/3 meter aerial photography was obtained from La Plata County. DOQQs (1 meter) and 30 meter DEMs were obtained from the USGS. Color 1 meter aerial photography used for Archuleta County was obtained from the National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) The land ownership, stream, lake, highway and county boundary data is from CDOT.

The map projection is UTM Zone 13 NAD 1983. The scale is 1:175,000. Created by Fort Lewis College, Office of Community Services, 7/5/06.