**Wheeler County Oregon**

**Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2019**

## 1.0 Executive Summary

The Wheeler County Community Wildfire Protection Plan CWPP) was initially written in 2006. This document is the 2019 update of the original plan, which continues to provide a solid foundation for this revision. The content of the 2006 CWPP was developed to meet the intent of the National Fire Plan (NFP) and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA). That document was prepared to support the planning efforts of all agencies and districts that participate in wildland fire management throughout Wheeler County. The primary focus of the Wheeler County CWPP is the numerous improvements and homes that occur throughout the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). A significant portion of Wheeler County consists of "Intermix Communities" where structures are scattered throughout the wildland area with no clear line of demarcation and wildland fuels are continuous within and outside of the developed area.

Natural resource management policy and changing ecological conditions have interacted in ways that have resulted in hazardous fuel situations throughout Wheeler County. These hazardous fuel conditions are the result of historic fire suppression policy, juniper invasion into sagebrush, grasslands and timberlands, changing climatic patterns, and lack forest management activity on federal lands. The large accumulation of fuels has made most areas in the county very vulnerable to potentially catastrophic wildfire with the resulting loss of important economic, social and ecological values. A variety of fuels around communities, ranches, and structures create problems for fire protection including but not limited to ponderosa pine and juniper forests, sagebrush, grasslands, and weed fields. Many of these fuels, such as dried grass, sagebrush and weeds, are highly flammable, burn rapidly, and resist control. A coordinated effort among all fire authorities and private landowners in the county is needed to manage hazardous fuels and reduce the risk of wildfire.

Wildland fire is a common occurrence in Wheeler County and lightning causes the large majority of those fires. Several wildland firefighting agencies are present in the county and are very effective at putting out fires rapidly. However, the demographics of Wheeler County continue to shift and while the net population dropped between the 2006 and the 2019, the number of structures in the WUI has continued to increase. As structures and improvements in the WUI proliferate so does the cost of fire fighting since protecting improvements from wildfire is more costly. The increasing number of residences in the WUI are often retirement homes or absentee landowners. At the same time family wage jobs in the county are declining and further shifting the demographics toward an older population. The number of volunteers for emergency services is declining while recreation use is increasing.

The goals of the 2006 Wheeler County CWPP were to:

1.1 Provide protection for the public and create a safe work environment for fire suppression forces.
1.2 Manage hazardous fuels within and near communities.
1.3 Prevent fire starts through communications to provide protection for communities from wildland fire effects.
1.4 Increase public awareness through informational programs.

The implementation of these goals in Wheeler County has been ongoing despite many significant changes within the county including the loss of the Wheeler Point Rural Fire department, the decline of the timber industry with the associated county-wide fiscal impacts, and a shift of permanent station location of the ODF Fossil Assistant Unit Forester from Fossil to John Day. The formation of Wheeler County Fire and Rescue provided a significant step forward in wildland fire protection for previously unprotected lands in Wheeler County. A major objective this Wheeler County CWPP update is to provide both flexibility and a realistic framework for the county to work from. It is important to note that while fuel reduction efforts have been implemented throughout the County in various fuel types and on different land ownerships, the efforts are being outpaced by the growth of various vegetation types in the County as a whole.

Currently, wildfire suppression authorities in Wheeler County include the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Wheeler County Fire and Rescue (WCFR), WC Ranches Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA), and Twickenham RFPA. Mutual Aid Agreements exist among the fire authorities for mutual aid and support in the event of a wildfire incident. However, each fire authority operates under regulations that dictate their specific area of responsibility.

The level of risk and hazard to individual homes will continue to be assessed as opportunities arise. Evaluation will consist of rating attributes such as means of access, surrounding vegetation (fuels), presence of defensible space, topography, roofing and other construction materials, available fire protection, and placement of utilities.

Based on the interviews with the Coordinating Group, fire authority officials, field observations, and discussions with the public the following recommendations and mitigation actions are proposed to reduce their risk of wildfire on a county wide basis:

- Improve coordination, communication and documentation between the various emergency response agencies and systems within the county.
- Work closely with USFS, BLM, BIA and NPS officials to create fuel breaks next to private lands and to minimize hazardous fuels on federal lands.
- Seek cost efficient methods and outlets for disposal of fuels generated from hazardous fuels reduction projects.
- Increase outreach and education efforts to all county landowners.
- Increase water developments and improve water sources around county.
- Complete a road hazard assessment to address and identify potential problems for evacuation and fire apparatus response during a wildfire situation, and actively seek opportunities to implement improvements to rural roads. Identify needs and assist with fulfillment of those needs for local fire districts.
- Seek grant funding for fuel reduction, public and youth education, and other relevant activities to help meet the goals and objectives of this CWPP.
- Work with ODF to permanently station Fossil Assistant Unit Forester in Fossil.

- Develop a County strategy under this CWPP that utilizes a three pronged approach in WUI areas by blending 1) fuels treatment, 2) emergency management, and 3) fire prevention.

# 2 Introduction

## 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the CWPP is to identify communities at risk, identify what constitutes the risk, and develop an action plan to mitigate the risk thereby providing for a community that is more resilient to the effects of wildland fire. For thousands of years wildland fires have moved across Oregon's landscape. In the early 1900's, European settlers began to suppress these fires resulting in unnatural fuels buildup. As a result, wildfires have increasingly impacted communities, especially those developing in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), an area where wildland fuels and residences are intermixed. The result has been an increase in the number of homes lost each decade to wildfire.

In response to a growing population living in and near the WUI, and often away from structural and wildland response, two significant pieces of legislation were passed. The Healthy Forest Initiative (HFI) of 2002, which reduces the amount of administrative delays for federal land management agencies to accomplish hazardous fuels reduction projects and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, which improves the statutory processes for hazardous fuel reduction projects on federal and private land, especially where communities are "at risk" from the effects of wildland fire. The HFRA invites communities to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) in collaboration with local governments, local fire departments and state foresters in consultation with their federal partners.

The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement (FLAME) Act of 2009 prompted the development of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The Cohesive Strategy is a national fire policy that calls for stakeholders to work collaboratively on achieving three goals: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response. In 2011, the Western Regional Strategy Committee was established to implement the goals of the Cohesive Strategy at a regional scale and in April 2014 a final phase in the development of the Strategy as written with defined goals, principles and core values. The Committee identified CWPP's as a primary tool for implementing broad-based stakeholder collaboration and locally appropriate strategies for achieving the Cohesive Strategy goals. Consistent with the national and regional strategies, the Wheeler County CWPP follows a collaborative approach to achieving the goals of the Cohesive Strategy.

## 2.2 Coordinating Group

The Wheeler County CWPP is a county-wide, strategic assessment of the risks, hazards, and mitigation and prevention opportunities associated with wildfire in our communities. This plan was initially developed in 2006 and is currently being updated. Funding for the update was provided through a grant funded by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District. The Wheeler County CWPP has not been reviewed annually in the past, however this will take place in the future. Annual review provides opportunities to identify changes or

updates; to evaluate effectiveness of coordination between cooperating agencies, community groups and neighborhoods; to evaluate progress in meeting specific performance measures; and to adjust any monitoring protocols as needed. Coordination and communication will be the critical operative requirements. The Wheeler County CWPP Steering committee will conduct a thorough review and risk assessment analysis every 5 years.

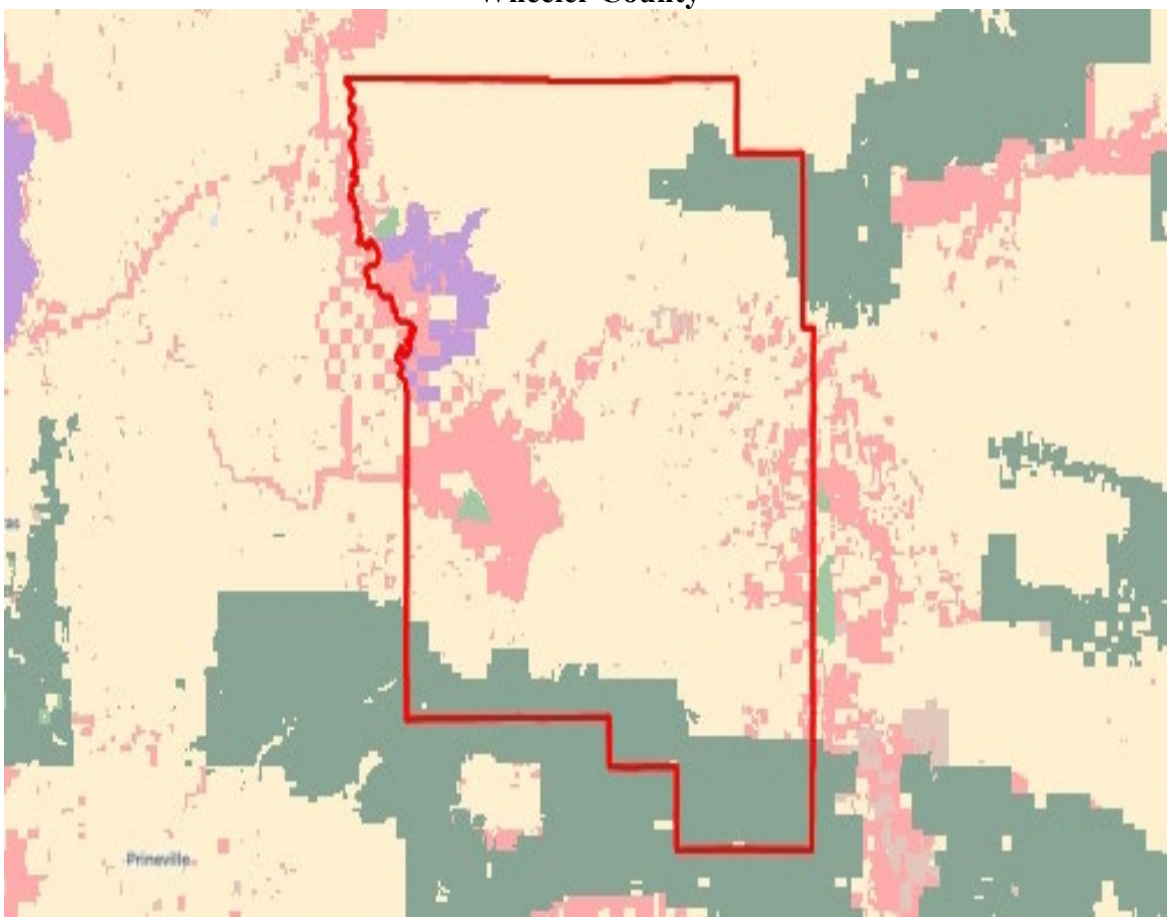
The Steering Committee will be composed of the following (at minimum):
Wheeler County Fire and Rescue Coordinator
Wheeler County Fire and Rescue Chief
Wheeler County Planner
Wheeler County Sheriff's Office
Wheeler County Emergency Management Director
Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Protection Officer
Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office
Chief W C Ranches Rangeland Fire Protection Association
Chief Twickenham Rangeland Fire Protection Association
Fossil Fire Chief
Spray Fire Chief
Mitchell Fire Chief
BLM Prineville District
USFS Ochoco National Forest
USFS Umatilla National Forest
National Park Service, John Day Fossil Beds

## 3.0 Wheeler County Profile

### 3.1 Land Base

Wheeler County covers 1,098,145 acres and 1,716 square miles. The majority of the land area, approximately 68 percent, is in private ownership and 29 percent is in federal ownership.

**Wheeler County**




### 3.2 Topography and Vegetation

The topography of Wheeler County is diverse, characterized by deep canyons with rocky rims around the John Day River, transitioning to gentler terrain in other areas. Much of the vegetation is sage brush steps and grasslands, frequently heavily occupied with western juniper. Productive forested areas occur in the southern, east central, and northeastern portions of the county.

Rugged topography with heavy stands of western juniper characterize much of Wheeler County's topography and vegetation as shown in the photos above and below.

The forested area above is on the Ochoco National Forest in the southwestern area of Wheeler County. The photo below lies in the northeastern portion of Wheeler County on former Kinzua company lands.

# 3 Wheeler County Profile

## 3.1 Demographics

Wheeler County was established in 1899, formed from portions of Grant, Gilliam and Crook Counties and remains Oregon's least populated county. The 1910 census shows a county population of 2443 residents. County population reached its peak in 1950 at 3313 at the height of the Kinzua wood products era. The 2018 census shows 1366 residents, a 41 percent decline from the peak in 1950. The state of Oregon grew in population from 2010 to 2018 by 9.4 percent, while Wheeler County's population declined during that period by 5.2 percent.

In 2018 the number of persons 65 years and older was 17.6 percent for the state of Oregon while the percentage for Wheeler County was over 35 percent.

While general information on Wheeler County still lists "timber" and "lumber" as an integral and important part of the economy, this is not actually the case. Historically wood products was strong and played a vital role in the economy but the last two decades have seen a drastic decline in the lumber industry all over eastern Oregon with dramatic effects on Wheeler County.

The significance of the population loss and wood products to decline in relationship to the CWPP lies in the loss of workforce, revenues generated and the aging population. Resources for ambulance, fire and law enforcement are extremely limited and volunteers hard to recruit. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) no longer has a permanent forest officer stationed at the compound on Highway 219.

### 3.2 History and Cultural Values

Wheeler County has a rich history and much of that history is still in evidence throughout the county. The discovery of gold in Canyon City in 1862 brought prospectors through the area in great numbers. They often utilized The Dalles Military which served as the main road through the area until the highway was built through Picture Gorge. The Dalles Military Road traverses through what is now the Antone Ranch, named after the city of Antone which forms the center of that ranch. Camp Watson was located in this area and the Camp Watson military cemetery is still in existence. Many other pioneer cemeteries occur throughout Wheeler County and provide an important link to the past. Preserving this history throughout Wheeler County is critical.

### 3.3 Fire Protection and other Emergency Services

**Fire Protection.** All lands within Wheeler County have fire protection resources. Fire protection in the County is provided by one or more of the following:

**City Fire Departments.** The three incorporated cities of Fossil, Spray and Mitchell in Wheeler County support fire departments. All three are operated with volunteer fire fighters.

**Rangeland Fire Protection Associations.** Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPA) are volunteer fire service organizations that provide direct wildland fire protection services to landowners within their association boundaries and to neighboring cooperators. As part of a coordinated effort to further wildland fire protection to non-classified forest and rangelands within the state of Oregon, Oregon Department of Forestry provides organizational assistance and support services to these rangeland associations. RFPAs in Wheeler County consist of WC Ranches, Twickenham, and Wheeler County Fire and Rescue.

**Federal Fire Protection.** The BLM, USFS, BIA, and NPS provide wildland fire protection on federal lands.

**State Fire Protection.** Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) provides fire protection on private forestlands within Wheeler County.

**Emergency Services.** Emergency services in Wheeler County, with the exception of sheriff's office responding in an official capacity, are entirely volunteer. This volunteer force is extremely limited and essentially only "one deep". That is, some of the volunteers perform more than one function such as serving on the volunteer fire department and serving as EMTs on the ambulance. The situation has arisen when the fire department has been actively engaged in a fire response and the need for an EMT arises and that individual is on the other end of the county fighting fire. The loss of family wage jobs in the county, the aging population, the lack of revenue coming into the county from consistent and dependable sources, the increase in recreation without matching revenue increases has pushed emergency services to the tipping point.

Wheeler County has become a destination for motorcycle enthusiasts, boaters on the John Day River, and campers. With that has come an increase in 911 calls to respond to fires, various motor vehicle and boating accidents, and search and rescue missions.

### 3.4 Critical Infrastructure

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act requires that CWPP's place emphasis on fire-safety both for communities and critical infrastructure. Traditionally, most communities in Wheeler County were located in valleys near water and or springs with better opportunities for livestock grazing and homesteads. However, over the last two decades development has moved outward into areas of drier vegetation, farther from main roads, with more wide-spread utility systems to support residential development.

As measures are identified to improve the county's ability to respond to and recover from the impacts of wildfire, hazardous fuel treatments and standards for adequate access must be considered. These standards need to be applicable to future as well as existing development, and incorporated into the development planning for areas of new growth. The analysis of a community's ability to withstand the destructive effects of wildfire must address not only actual fire threat to residences, but also the impacts on infrastructure including: electrical transmission and gas lines, transformers, cell towers, telephone and power lines, highways, BLM John Day River facilities, campgrounds, bridges, water systems, and communication sites and systems used by emergency personnel.

Specific areas of interest are access roads which must be adequate to accommodate both ingress for emergency responders and egress by residential/recreational populations. Hazardous vegetation must be treated not only around homes, but also along travel routes. These routes

must provide effective two-way travel with sufficient width to accommodate evacuation traffic and turn-around points for emergency vehicles.

The following specific infrastructure sites in Wheeler County have been identified as critical resources:
Columbia Power Co-op Infrastructure
City, County & State road systems
Communication towers
USGS Structures – Gauging Stations
Refer to individual communities for crucial access issues for Emergency Management.

**4.0 Risk Assessment**

**4.1 Method.** The assessment process involved developing existing natural resource data that would then be judged using the assessments. The steps to develop this inventory involved multiple participating agencies and included:

- Reviewing 2006 CWPP communities "at-risk" from the threat of wildfire analysis and determinations;
- Reviewing much of the County in the field to get a sense of the topography, slope, fuel loading and fuel density;
- Developing wildland-urban interface (WUI) boundaries;
- Incorporating input from various County meetings;
- Utilizing the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer tool to review numerous aspects of wildfire vulnerability in the County;
- Establishing priority recommendations, an action plan and further assessment needs.

**5.0 Communities at Risk**

The 2006 CWPP identified 17 Communities at Risk (CARs) in Wheeler County. The number of CARs in the County has not changed however the definition of WUI boundaries has been updated to better reflect the risks and the reality of how fire would be fought on the ground. The WUI boundaries in this revised CWPP are drawn to capture the overall limitations of each fire protection district, fuel hazard, CAR's, and values-at-risk. Logical anchor points on the landscape were used to designate WUI boundaries, including natural fuel breaks, ridgelines, roads, and local knowledge of the area. A map is provided with approximately WUI boundaries delineated, however actual boundaries will be determined on the ground as dictated by site specific conditions.

**5.1 Wheeler County CARs**

The following cities, communities and areas were identified as CARs in 2006 Wheeler CWPP and this remains valid. It's important to note that in the thirteen years since the original CWPP was completed the vegetation, especially western juniper, has continued to grow and expand at alarming rates. While many landowners have taken advantage of opportunities to cut juniper there is often not enough funding to dispose of the down trees and slash, leaving numerous areas with large amounts of dead fuel on the ground. The narrative below summarizes each CAR.

**Fossil.** Fossil with a population of 447 in 2017 is the largest incorporated town and the Wheeler County seat. Fossil is in the northern portion of the County located at the junction of state highways 19 and 218. Juniper has encroached heavily on most of the lands surrounding town. In some areas juniper has been cut but the slash remains untreated creating an additional fire hazard along with the standing juniper. Fossil has good access and several evacuation routes. Many homeowners have treated fuels around their homes and created defensible space.

**Mitchell.** Mitchell with a population of 124 in 2017 is located on Highway 26 on Bridge Creek between the Ochoco and Keyes Summits. The city is situated next to Bridge Creek in a narrow canyon like area, with much of the infrastructure such as the school and fire department, located on the flat above town. Mitchell is extremely vulnerable to severe impacts from wildfire. In 2018 the United States Forest Service Pacific Northwest Regional Office commissioned an assessment of the exposure to wildfire of housing units within named human communities across the Pacific Northwest Region (Oregon and Washington). The purpose of the assessment was to identify the communities most threatened by wildfire. The fifty most-threatened communities in each state were identified. Mitchell was among the 50 most threatened communities in Oregon with the risk of burn probability ranked at 7 for the state. Mitchell is a historic town and the loss of even one structure would be devastating to the community. (Report can be found in the Appendix)

Main street in Mitchell is shown in the photo to the left with one of the businesses in a historic building below.


**Spray.** The town of Spray, population of 150, is situated along an arm of the John Day River. The river borders the city on the south side providing an excellent fire break while the north side extends up the hill. Generally, Spray is in a good position for fire defense and evacuation. However, this does not eliminate the need for home and business owners to keep flammable fuels reduced and to provide adequate defensible space for safe firefighting.

**Barnhouse Campground.** Barnhouse Campground is located on the Ochoco National Forest accessed by Forest Road 12. This facility is at serious risk of complete loss from wildfire due to the extreme levels of vegetation, ladder fuels, and heavy forest in the area. The evacuation route is also extremely dangerous.


**Baty Subdivision/Cougar Mountain Road.** The Cougar Mountain Road area is extremely vulnerable to severe impacts from wildfire. The area is covered with dense stands of juniper. Roads are narrow, often steep, characterized by blind curves and support heavy juniper encroachment right up to the ditch line in many areas. Preplanning for evacuation is absolutely critical in this area. Education of homeowners is paramount.


**Camp Hancock.** Camp Hancock is at low to moderate risk from serious impacts by wildfire. The fuel break at the camp is refreshed annually and a water source is present at the camp. Evacuation processes should be introduced to each new set of campers. Good defensible space practices should be implemented annually at the beginning of fire season.

**Clarno.** The settlement around Clarno remains at moderate risk from serious impacts by wildfire. Good defensible space practices should be implemented annually at the beginning of fire season.

**Crystal Springs.** Crystal Springs camp remains extremely vulnerable to impacts from wildfire. Evacuation plans must be in place and evacuation drills practiced by participants while at the camp.

**Fairview Campground.** Fairview Campground is located on the Umatilla National Forest accessed by state Highway 207. This facility is at serious risk of complete loss from wildfire due to the extreme levels of vegetation, ladder fuels, and heavy forest in the area. The evacuation route is also extremely dangerous.

**Kinzua Golf Course.** Kinzua Golf Course area remains vulnerable to impacts from wildfire. Access roads are heavily vegetated and evacuation could be difficult.

**Kinzua Junction.** The settlement around Kinzua remains at moderate risk from serious impacts by wildfire. Good defensible space practices should be implemented annually at the beginning of fire season.

**Painted Hills.** The Painted Hills are at low to moderate risk from serious impacts by wildfire. Evacuation of multiple vehicles is the largest concern.

**Priest Hole.** Priest Hole is at high risk to serious impacts by wildfire. Evacuation of multiple vehicles is a large concern.

**Richmond.** The settlement of Richmond remains very vulnerable to impacts from wildfire. Numerous old structures that are very susceptible to ignition from embers occupy the area. Hardening of homes and good defensible space is critical.

**Service Creek.** The settlement around Service Creek remains very vulnerable to impacts from wildfire. Many structures that are very susceptible to ignition from embers occupy the area. Hardening of homes and good defensible space is critical.

**Twickenham.** The Twickenham area has moderate to high risk for impacts from wildfire. The 2018 Jennie's Peak fire (below) illustrated the extreme fire behaviors that can occur in areas with relatively light fuels under the right conditions. Hardening of homes, good defensible space, and preplanned evacuation routes are critical.

**Winlock.** The Winlock area remains extremely vulnerable to impacts from wildfire. Much of the area that was burned during the Wheeler Point fire was replanted into ponderosa pine. Those young pine stands are generally very dense and are scattered across the landscape. Hardening of homes, good defensible space and preplanned evacuation routes for homeowners is critical. Education of landowners is paramount.

Example of densely stocked pine plantations around the Winlock area.

| Community | Risk Priority 2006 | Risk Priority 2019 | Treatment Priority |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| Fossil | Low/Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| Spray | Low/Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| Mitchell | High/Extreme | Extreme | Very High |
| Barnhouse Campground | Moderate | Extreme | High |
| Baty/Cougar Mountain Road | Extreme | Extreme | Very High |
| Camp Hancock | High | Low/Moderate | Low |
| Clarno | Moderate | Moderate | Medium |
| Crystal Springs | High/Extreme | Extreme | High |
| Fairview Campground | High/Extreme | High/Extreme | High |
| Kinzua Golf Course | High/Extreme | High/Extreme | Very High |
| Kinzua Junction | Moderate | Moderate/High | High |
| Painted Hills | Low/Moderate | Low/Moderate | Low |
| Priesthole | High | High | High |
| Richmond | High | High | High |
| Service Creek | High | High | High |
| Twickenham | Moderate | Moderate | High |
| Winlock | High | High/Extreme | Very High |

## 5.0 Hazard Reduction Priorities

- Seek partnerships and opportunities with different agencies to provide assistance and funding for Wheeler County emergency services.
- Work with all CARs to implement good defensible space.
- Work with all CARs to develop evacuation plans.

- Develop "Welcome to Wheeler County" packets that provide information on the County along with good defensible space practices.
- Continue to have displays and tables at various community events with fire prevention messages.
- Meet annually to review the CWPP and identify areas of progress, new issues, and areas that need improvement.

## 6.0 Recommendations to Reduce Structural Ignitability

The following measures are recommended for homeowners and communities to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan. The Steering Committee agreed that this can be accomplished by following ***Firewise USA*** principles which include:

### Step 1

- If there is a home or other structure on the property, then a fuel break is required to be established around it. A structure is defined as a permanently sited building that is at least 500 square feet.
- If no home or other structure exists on the property then fuel reduction treatment is not required on the property.
- If the home has flame- resistant roofing (Class A, B, or C), then a 50 foot fuel break is required. If it is roofed with cedar shakes or other flammable material, the fuel break must be 100 feet in size.
- A fuel break begins at the outside edge of a home's furthest extension. This may be the edge of the roof eave, or the outside edge of a deck attached to the home. The shape of the fuel break mirrors the footprint shape of the home and anything that is attached to it.
- A fuel break's distances are measured along the slope, and does not need to extend beyond the property line.
- The fuel break may use natural firebreaks such as a rock out cropping or a body of water, or it can be completely man-made.
- The vegetation within the fuel break must meet the following guidelines:
  - o Ground cover should be substantially non-flammable or fire resistant.
  - o Dry grass should be cut to a height of less than four inches.
  - o Cut grass, leaves, needles, twigs and similar small vegetative debris should be broken up so that a continuous fuel bed is not created.
  - o Shrubs and trees should be maintained in a green condition, be substantially free of dead plant material, and have any potential "ladder fuels" removed.
  - o Trees and shrubs should also be arranged so that fire cannot spread or jump from plant to plant.

### Step 2

- On a driveway that is at least 150 feet long, it is necessary to remove obstructions over the driving surface, and create a fuel break along the driveway's fringe. The clearance above the driving area must meet these specifications:
  - o The horizontal clearance must be at least 12 feet
  - o The vertical clearance must be at least 13 ½ feet

- The fuel break along a driveway fringe must extend 10 feet from each side of the driveway's center line, creating a total fuel break area that is at least 20 feet wide, including the driving surface.
- The vegetation must be modified to the same standards as a fuel break around a structure. The driveway fuel break's distance is measured along the slope, and does not need to extend beyond the property line.

**Step 3**
Sparks from a chimney connected to a fireplace or wood-burning stove could catch tree branches on fire. To reduce the chance of this happening, trim all branches 10 feet away from a chimney that vents a wood-burning fireplace or stove.

**Step 4**
All dead branches overhanging any portion of the roof must be removed. Also remove accumulations of leaves, needles, twigs, bark and other potentially flammable debris that may be on the roofing surface, in the valleys or in the rain gutters.

**Step 5**
Keeping the space under wooden decks and exterior stairways clean – and enclosed – is one of the best ways to keep a house safe during fire season. Firewood, lumber, dry needles, leaves, and other litter need to be cleaned out.

**Step 6**
Firewood and lumber piles near a structure can become a source of intense, sustained heat if they should catch fire. This could ignite nearby vegetation, or cause windows to break, admitting fire into the structure. During the months of fire season, move firewood and lumber piles at least 20 feet from any structure. A better solution is to put firewood and lumber into an enclosed shed.

## 7.0 Action Plan

- Improve coordination, communication and documentation between the various emergency response agencies and systems within the county.
- Work closely with USFS, BLM, BIA and NPS officials to create fuel breaks next to private lands and to minimize hazardous fuels on federal lands.
- Seek cost efficient methods and outlets for disposal of fuels generated from hazardous fuels reduction projects.
- Increase outreach and education efforts to all county landowners.
- Increase water developments and improve water sources around county.
- Complete a road hazard assessment to address and identify potential problems for evacuation and fire apparatus response during a wildfire situation, and actively seek opportunities to implement improvements to rural roads. Identify needs and assist with fulfillment of those needs for local fire districts.
- Work with ODF to allow WCFR to staff fires that do not present high potential to get away rather than ODF ordering crews and equipment from long distances.

- Develop a County strategy under this CWPP that utilizes a three pronged approach in WUI areas by blending 1) fuels treatment, 2) emergency management, and 3) fire prevention.
- Utilize WCFR for initial attack.

**8.0 Performance Measures**

- Annual review of the CWPP.
- Acres of hazardous fuels reduced by private landowners, USFS, BLM, BIA and NPS.
- Number of outreach or education events held.
- Number of "Welcome Packets" distributed to new residents of the County.