



## Quick-Guide #15: Implementation and Sustainability

Implementing the action plan of a CWPP is a long-term, multi-year endeavor. Therefore, sustaining community interests and participation needs to be a primary objective throughout the protection plan development process. Implementation and momentum can also be complicated or challenged by changing conditions such as:

- New and emerging players
- Shifting priorities for community and agency representatives
- Re-evaluation of risk criteria to improve the project prioritization process
- Changing the scale of plan objectives
- Developing biomass markets

In addition, implementation of a CWPP may place new demands on the process including:

- ◆ Findings ways to maintain project momentum
- ◆ Establishing a system to record fuels treatments
- ◆ Developing a process for monitoring projects
- ◆ However, a focus on implementation during planning helps insure that objectives are achieved. It helps to keep in mind several lessons we've learned about the CWPP planning as it relates to implementation: Successful wildfire mitigation occurs through long-term implementation.
- ◆ Collaboration builds multiple skills and abilities for community action.
- ◆ Maximize implementation via multiple wildfire issue definitions where appropriate; integration across neighborhood and landscape scales, including key community and agency participants among various social networks; and ongoing shared learning and educational awareness;
- ◆ Keep participants informed and engaged by strengthening continual accountability through monitoring.
- ◆ Sustaining implementation of CWPPs is the ultimate measure of the successes that can result from building and integrating collaborative abilities, relationships, and resources.

How can we sustain community and agency relationships and abilities through collaboration to address these and other objectives during long-term CWPP implementation?

**Involve a wide variety of interests:** Because community wildfire mitigation needs to be based on community interests, involving a wide variety of interests will pool and integrate needed resources, skills, and capacities. Among these interests are the following:

- Suppression and public safety
- Fuel reduction and fire risk
- Forest health
- Prevention education/Defensible space
- High priority community values
- Biomass utilization (over)



**Address factors that contribute to collaboration:** There are a number of collaborative factors that can significantly improve the overall level of interest and participation needed for long term CWPP implementation: Wildfire definitions based on multiple interests/concerns; planning scales that create regional strategies and local action; sharing knowledge through educational awareness processes; and community and agency leaders who bridge networks, organizations, and scales.

***Issue definitions:*** Including a range of community's concerns and definitions about wildfire will determine what a CWPP will emphasize, who gets involved, and the extent to which it is "owned" by the community and agencies. An inclusive range of wildfire definitions (*sometimes called frames*) draw together various interests, networks of partners, and many types of resources. Multiple definitions or conceptual lens can broaden opportunities for improving safety for lives, property and communities; addressing forest health and land use patterns due to urban development; and biomass uses.

***Scales for strategy and action:*** Regional- or state-scale networks tend to focus on landscape-level planning and projects, coordinating treatment responses, prevention education, and shared learning. Community, neighborhood, and county-scale networks tend to be action-oriented, stressing on-the-ground mitigation. Combining these approaches can produce a more balanced, productive, and sustainable range of mitigation projects.

***Continued learning strengthens long-term implementation:*** Participants may begin by mapping values-at-risk, and proceed to organize technical resources; they also establish shared understandings of the wildfire problem, and heighten their knowledge of potential actions and available resources. Through these activities they create an expanded network of more capable and committed individuals and organizations (*sometimes called learning communities*).

***Community leaders and organizations (sometimes called intermediaries):*** Key or intermediary individuals and organizations have contacts with many other communities, agencies, and jurisdictions; they play strong leadership and bridging roles, bringing in new ideas and resources. Most importantly, they possess the time and skills to organize the knowledge of participants and to push action toward on-the-ground projects.

#### **Some Specific Suggestions to Maintain Implementation**

Although this study focused on CWPP planning, several of our cases had begun to implement their plans and they were able to suggest steps that ease implementation:

- ✓ Establish implementation and monitoring committees;
- ✓ Set short-term, achievable goals;
- ✓ Hire or appoint a CWPP Coordinator;
- ✓ Continue to support the community participants through information sharing between agencies and communities;
- ✓ Embed into larger county-level CWPPs to gain guidance for landscape scale projects;
- ✓ Link to a county-level hazard mitigation plan to increase resource integration;
- ✓ Tie the CWPP to Community Firewise Plans to incorporate neighborhood prevention, education, and mitigation activities;
- ✓ Integrate the CWPP with federal or state wildfire resource management and fuel reduction plans to maximize WUI protection;
- ✓ Build biomass use to expand restoration options.

