Quick-Guide #9: Key Components of CWPPs and Templates
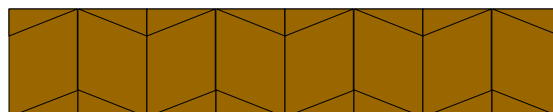
The Basics: From the perspective of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/tribalrelations/Policy/PL%20108-148%20HFRA.pdf CWPPs are defined by three minimum or required characteristics, the first focusing on process and the other two on content:

◊ *Collaboratively developed by interested parties and federal land agencies;*
◊ *Identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction;*
◊ *Recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures.*

Although obvious to many practitioners who have been working with CWPPs, these characteristics necessitate bringing together a set of participants who will be capable of establishing areas of agreement both on private and public lands, mobilizing resources, and taking strategic action to reduce catastrophic wildfire impacts. HFRA identifies a minimum of three players to fill the collaborative element of the CWPP: local government and leadership, representing property owners and community interests and values; the local firefighting organization; and the state forester who often has primary responsibility for the overall health of non-federal forest lands, including fire management. Federal land managers participate only to the extent requested by the local community—in some communities this has meant that a federal land management agency has provided the leadership to initiate the CWPP, but in other communities federal land managers have been asked only to review the final document.

With a core group of these key leaders, the wildland-urban interface (i.e., the spaces and boundaries where settled communities exist alongside more open forested and shrub lands) can be identified as a critical area of wildfire risk. Within this space a set of hazardous fuel reduction objectives and projects can be selected. And finally, actions can be identified to reduce the level of ignitability of structures in adjacent neighborhoods/subdivisions, and among key community buildings such as hospitals, public power facilities, schools, water treatment plants, etc.

Key Components: With the three HFRA elements as the fundamental guidelines, there is often a question -- what does a CWPP look like? What are its key components or parts? As the Healthy Forest Restoration Act has been implemented in hundreds of community situations and various wildfire risk environments, there has been a considerable amount of creativity. This is in part due to the flexibility of HFRA and related guidance, but also reflects the very important collaborative objectives of communities of interests and local needs for fuels reduction and wildland fire management. (more)

While maintaining the community-based character of CWPPs is essential for their success, benefits can result from having a general guide identifying some of the key components. From a wide diversity of experiences, the following major components have been derived as a somewhat typical, comprehensive, and adaptable framework:

◊ *Introduction/local context/legal regulations and governance authorities*
◊ *Community and WUI descriptions*
◊ *Community assessments including risk/and response capacities*
◊ *Community mitigation strategies/fuels/structures/educations/policies*
◊ *Action recommendations and implementation/timeframes/resources*
◊ *Monitoring plan*
◊ *Declaration of agreement and concurrence among the collaborative partners*

The details included in each of these components will vary, depending on the needs of the community. Remember, this is a community-driven plan. Examples of possible details in the prime components are provided below:

Introduction /Context/Authorities	**Outline/Overview of the Community and WUI**	**Community Assessments**
Geographic Area Descriptions and trends *Relevant Wildfire Regulations* *Federal/State/Local Policies* *The need for the CWPP* *Planning /coordinating group*	*Community attributes* *Basic WUI description* *Map of the area* *Relationship to the larger context/county*	*Fire regime and fuel types/ ignition risks* *Community values and attributes - e.g. housing, business, and public infrastructure* *Recreation areas/ Watersheds/Wildlife* *Historic/Cultural*
Community Mitigation Measures *Strategies* *Action plan and priorities* *Projects identified* *Treatment approaches* *Wildfire prevention/ education processes* *Defensible space actions to reduce structural ignitability* *Land use policies*	**Action Plan** *What action will occur, where it will occur, how, how often, who is responsible, and costs if known* *Usually prepared in the form of a spreadsheet*	**Monitoring** *Annually review of the action plan to determine progress/status on process and content* *Look at both the collaboration and the work accomplished.*

Collaboratively gain support and approval from the state forest service, the fire department, and the local community jurisdiction.

(more)

From the outset, the collaborative planning process will best succeed with clearly stated goals such as *to improve fire prevention and suppression, reduce hazardous forest fuels, restore forest health, promote community involvement, recommend measures to reduce structural ignitability, and encourage economic development in the community.*

Assembling a core leadership group, involving community residents and leaders, and gathering the information about wildfire risk and key community values helps establish a learning and decision-making process. Through this process the high risk wildland-urban interface is identified, along with specific projects and actions that will reduce hazardous fuels, reduce structural ignitability, increase community awareness, focus resources for priority projects, and strengthen capacities for achieving a variety of goals, including but not limited to wildfire management. With a range of projects and actions prioritized and a monitoring plan in place, leaders and representatives of the community, government, and land management agencies will find it relatively easy to declare their support and commitment to plan implementation.

It is worth looking at other CWPPs, general process steps and templates, and more detailed guidebooks that describe key components and the rationale for their inclusion. For a helpful link in this regard go to **Quick Guide # 17** for a list of examples of plans and other resources.