

Wildfire Resiliency and Vegetation Management Working Group



El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
March 22, 2022



Wildfire Resiliency and Vegetation Management Working Group

Board of Supervisors -September 21, 2021

Directed the Chief Administrative Office to form a vegetation management and resiliency working group with the following goals:

“...to collaborate on lessons learned from the Caldor Fire in order to define funding streams and initiate a robust, community-based resiliency and vegetation management program that would accelerate the current County efforts.”



Actions Taken So Far

- Working group established and made up of the following:
 - Chief Administrative Office
 - El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
 - CAL FIRE – Amador El Dorado Unit
 - USFS – El Dorado National Forest
 - El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association
 - El Dorado County Fire Prevention Officers
 - El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts



Actions Taken So Far

- ▶ Hired a temporary help/part time Management Analyst to facilitate working group meetings and county engagement going forward.
- ▶ Contracted with the El Dorado Resource Conservation District to hire a county community wildfire protection coordinator funded for 18 months through a CA Fire Safe Council Grant.



Actions Taken So Far

- ▶ Submitted FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant (HMGP) Notice of Interest to CA OES. Grant proposal will focus on a high-risk area and implement a resilience pilot project utilizing a variety of treatments, including defensible space, home hardening, and hazardous fuels reduction.



HMGP Grant Proposal

- ▶ Total project cost - \$13.5 million
 - ▶ Grant amount - \$10.2 million
 - ▶ Required match - \$3.3 million
- ▶ Notice of Interest accepted February 28
- ▶ Currently identifying focus area(s)
- ▶ Sub-Application due April 8
- ▶ Grant period – 3 years from date of approval



HMGP Grant Proposal

➤ Project Phases

➤ Phase 1

- Environmental Review
- Right of Entry Agreements

➤ Phase 2

- Project Implementation
 - Defensible Space
 - Home Hardening
 - Hazardous Fuels Treatment



What We Found

- El Dorado County lacks an organized and unified approach to addressing wildfire hazard and risk. Although many valuable efforts are taking place, there is no single process for establishing priorities, coordinating projects and allocating resources.

- Recent examples of good projects where coordination could be better:
 - Transportation Commission Evacuation Planning Grant
 - DOT roadside right of way clearance Grant
 - CWPP Process



What We Found

- ▶ Public outreach and messaging occurs mostly independently by each of the agencies and organizations sharing project and educational information.
- ▶ The Caldor Fire also revealed the lack of defensible space in many areas, requiring fire fighters to complete ahead of the approaching fire.



What We Found

- ▶ The Caldor Fire demonstrated that cooperative and strategic vegetation management projects can be successful when there is coordination and engagement of stakeholders across jurisdictional boundaries.
 - ▶ Fire Adapted 50
 - ▶ Caples Prescribed Burn
 - ▶ Myers Fuels Treatments (Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team)



What We Found

- El Dorado County is responsible for maintaining and implementing:
 - County Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - General Plan Safety Element
 - Building codes incorporating Wildland/Urban Interface Building Standards (Chapter 7A)
 - County Vegetation Management Ordinance

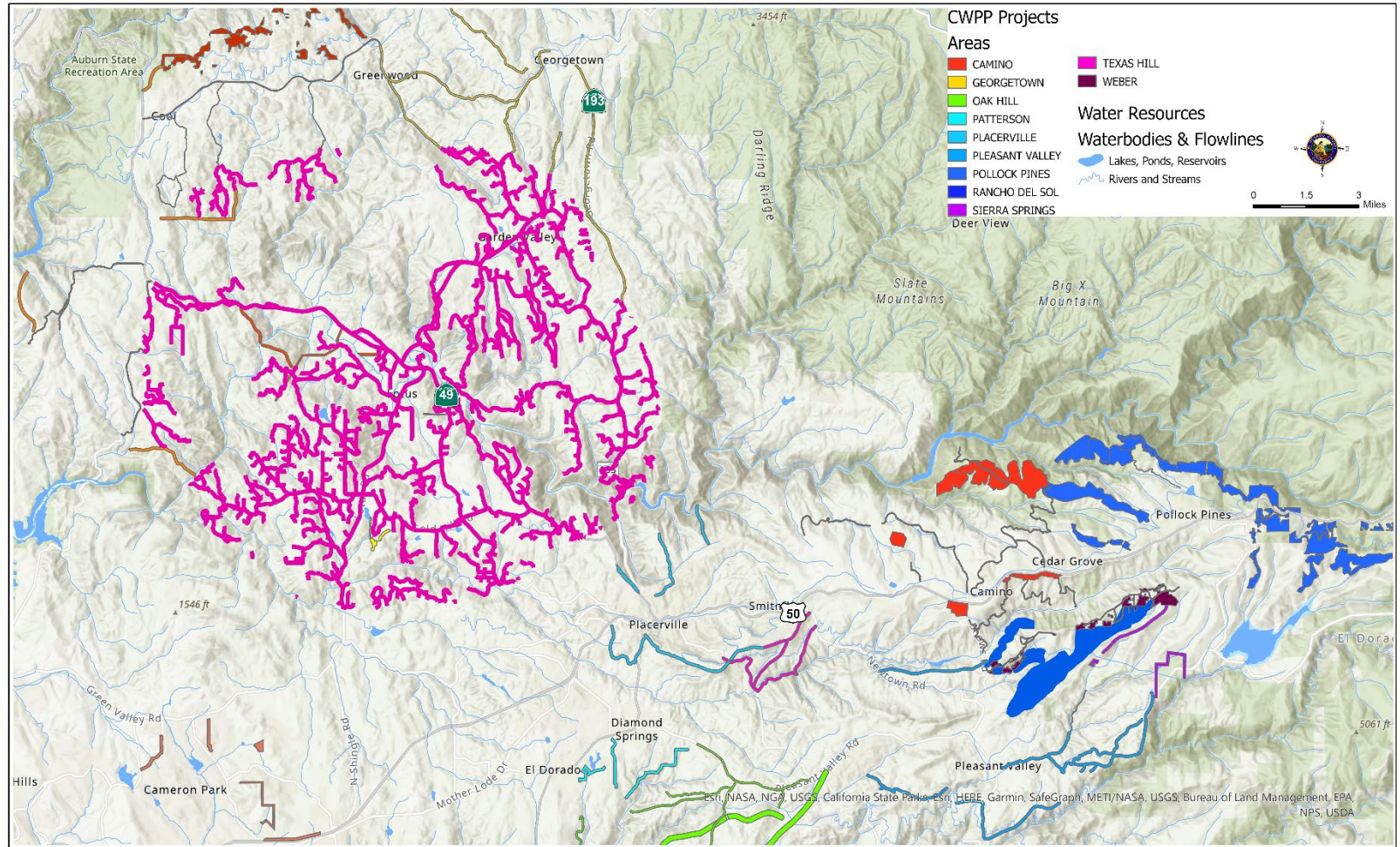


Working Group Goals and Timeline

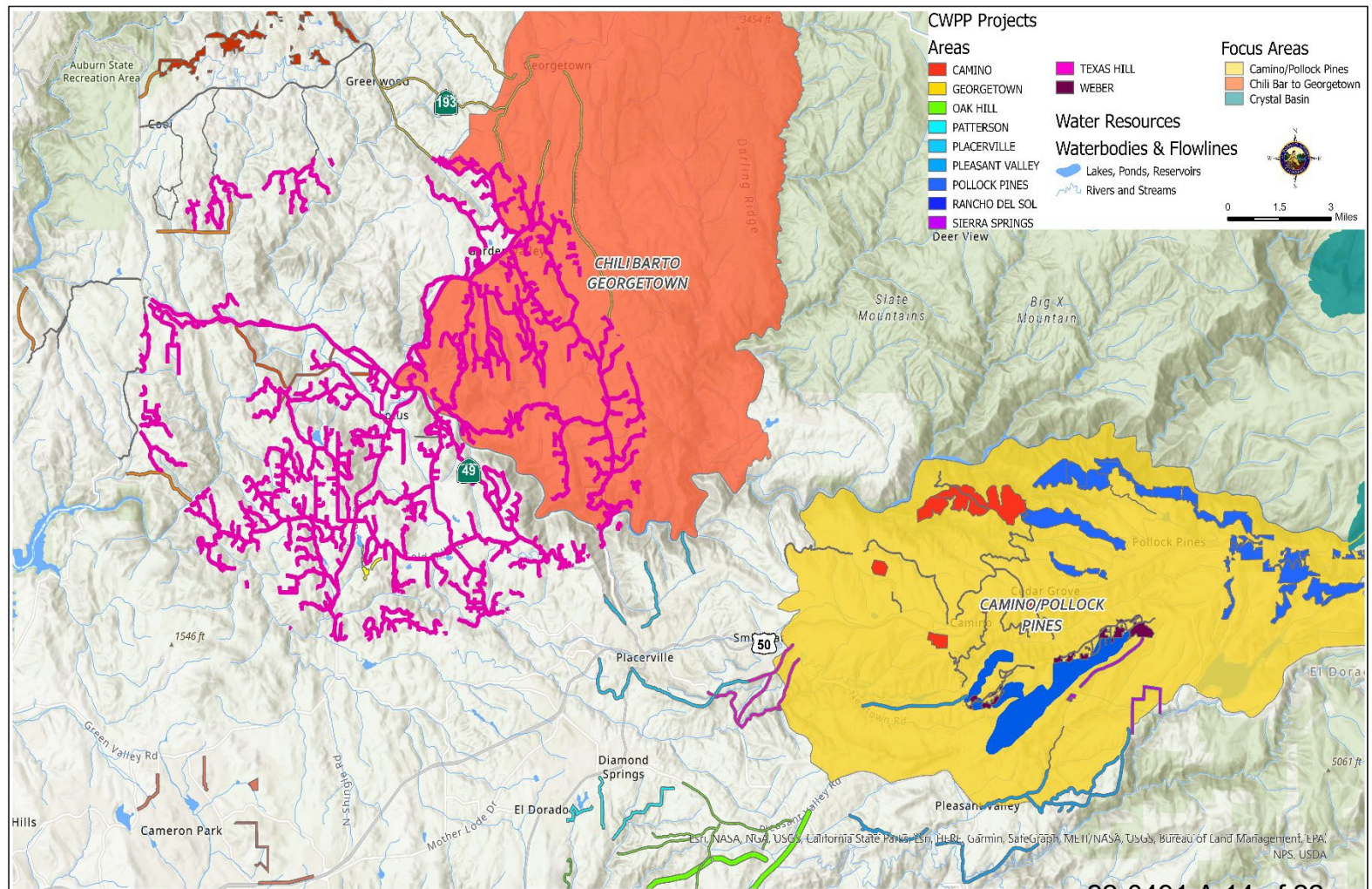
3 months and Ongoing

- Establish one data hub/collection point and standardized tracking method including map display
- Establish a coordinated approach to public outreach with consistent messaging across all media platforms

CWPP Projects



CWPP and SOFAR Projects





Working Group Goals and Timeline

6 months and Ongoing

- ▶ Perform a countywide risk assessment that identifies the areas most at risk.
- ▶ Identify measures of success, track and report on progress
- ▶ Establish a broad stakeholder based organizational structure with defined membership and roles/responsibilities including utilities, local, State and federal agencies, NGO's and existing collaboratives.



Working Group Goals and Timeline

12 months

- ▶ Conduct an evaluation of the current vegetation management program/ordinance and provide recommendations.
 - Review 2021 Statistics
 - Identify 2022 program building on 2021 activities.
 - Analyze how VMO fits into larger resiliency effort going forward.



Working Group Goals and Timeline

12 – 18 months

- Establish and implement a comprehensive wildfire protection strategy for El Dorado County.
 - Utilizes assessments at the watershed level
 - Aligns with State and federal plans and priorities
 - Emphasizes large multi-stakeholder efforts
 - Facilitates the prioritization of scarce and limited resources



Recommendations

- Add new theme to County Strategic Plan:
 - “Lead and facilitate the creation and maintenance of fire-adapted communities.”

- Proposed task under this theme:
 - “Prepare countywide Wildfire Protection Strategy.”

- Establish a process/governance structure led by El Dorado County through a dedicated Wildfire Resiliency Office to prioritize and coordinate efforts on a countywide level based on a comprehensive wildfire protection strategy.



Recommendations

- ▶ Resiliency Office reports to the CAO and consists of the following staff:
 - Wildfire Resiliency Program Manager
 - Fire Safe Coordinator
 - HMGP Implementation Staff
 - Support from the GIS and Veg Mgt Programs



Recommendations

- Resiliency Office responsibilities include:
 - Implementing the countywide Wildfire Protection Strategy
 - Preparing and coordinating wildfire and vegetation management related updates to the County Hazard Mitigation Plan and General Plan Safety Element.
 - Engaging on building code changes and Wildland/Urban Interface Building Standards (Chapter 7A)
 - Managing HMGP Grant
 - Facilitating program priorities and stakeholder coordination for County Vegetation Management Ordinance
 - Convening a broad countywide stakeholder group



Summary of Board Action Items

- ▶ Receive and file a presentation from the Vegetation Management and Wildfire Resiliency Working Group
- ▶ Approve in concept the establishment of an "Office of Wildfire Resilience" in the Chief Administrative Office
- ▶ Designate \$3,300,000 of excess contingency funds as the local matching funds for a federal Hazard Mitigation Grant to conduct defensible space, home hardening work and hazardous fuels reduction in the County



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QUESTIONS?