



Legislation Text

File #: 23-1571, Version: 1

Chief Administrative Office, Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience, recommending the Board consider the following:

- 1) Receive and file an update on the development of the County's Wildfire Strategy and general program activities and initiatives to date; and
- 2) Adopt and endorse the Wildfire Strategy incorporating any changes as directed by the Board or as determined necessary by staff throughout the implementation of annual work plan activities therein.

FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

On September 21, 2021 (File No. 21-1515, Item No. 38), the Board directed the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to convene a Vegetation Management and Wildfire Resiliency Working Group (Working Group) with the goal of including public, private, faith-based and non-profit organizations 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 current County efforts. Following this direction, the CAO established the Working Group consisting of representatives from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), CAL FIRE, El Dorado County Fire Safe Council, El Dorado County and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association, and El Dorado County Fire Prevention Officers Association.

On March 2022 (File No. 22-0491, Item No. 33), the Board, based on recommendations from the Working Group, took the following actions:

- Added a new Strategic Plan theme to "Lead and facilitate the creation and maintenance of fire-adapted communities," with an associated task to "Prepare a countywide wildfire protection strategy."
- Established a process/governing structure led by the County through a dedicated Wildfire Resilience Office to prioritize and coordinate efforts on a countywide level based on a comprehensive wildfire protection strategy.
- Designated \$3.375 million in excess contingency funds for a federal Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to conduct defensible space, home hardening, and hazardous fuels reduction in the County.

Following the Board's action above, the Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience (OWPR) was established under the Chief Administrative Office (CAO). Representatives from the agencies and organizations in the original working group, plus representatives from the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team and El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services were brought together to form the Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience Coordination Group (Coordination Group) to make recommendations to the CAO on policy matters and an annual work plan for the OWPR.

The Coordination Group has met on a biweekly basis and has worked extensively to prepare a Wildfire Strategy. The purpose of this Wildfire Strategy is to be a comprehensive wildfire prevention

and preparedness strategy for the County that fosters the creation, coordination, and maintenance of fire-adapted communities and that is in alignment with federal, state, and local policies, plans, and initiatives. While the Wildfire Strategy provides an organizational framework, identifies key work plan activities and a general strategy for the County, it's important to note that the intent is that this is a dynamic overall Wildfire Strategy and as new stakeholders, interested parties, strategic elements, initiatives, or opportunities for enhancements to improve efficiency and/or effectiveness arise, they can be incorporated into the document.

The proposed County Wildfire Strategy identifies and focuses on the seven (7) core strategic elements below, and further detailed in Attachment A:

- Public Outreach
- Policy
- Data Management and Sharing
- Planning
- Funding Coordination
- Project Coordination - West Slope
- Project Coordination - Tahoe Basin

Through the development of the Wildfire Strategy, and consistent with previous Board action, OWPR and the Coordination Group have also created a 2023 annual work plan for OWPR which has been incorporated into the document. With a dynamic Wildfire Strategy, this work plan is meant to outline the key initiatives for OWPR and as new tasks/projects are identified, they can be added. For 2023, activities include, but are not limited to:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update - Western El Dorado County
- Hazard and Risk Assessment
- Coordination of Planning Efforts
- GIS Data Hub/Mapping Tool
- Information Outreach
- Defensible Space Program
- California Wildfire Mitigation Program Grant (FEMA HMGP)
- Firesafe Coordinator Grant (State Fire Safe Council)
- Firewise Communities

In conjunction with the Coordination Group and other working groups established since the creation of OWPR, staff have made significant progress on a number of these activities. Most notably, this includes the finalization of the County Wildfire Strategy, rollout of the first phase of the public facing GIS Data Hub/Mapping Tool, review and input on the General Plan Safety Element Update, preparation of a revised Defensible Space Ordinance, hiring of OWPR staff, and award of the Phase 1 California Wildfire Mitigation Program Weber Creek project. Staff are currently in the process of getting a request for proposal submitted to contract out for the CWPP Update and Hazard and Risk Assessment, with an estimated completion timeline of Summer 2024. Many of the above annual activities are ongoing in nature or will span multiple years; however, staff continue to make significant progress and will continue to explore opportunities for additional coordination and efficiencies.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board may choose not to adopt and endorse the Wildfire Strategy or direct staff to work with the Coordination Group to make further changes, including annual work plan activities.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

See Discussion/Background above.

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Chief Administrative Office
CAL FIRE Amador El Dorado Unit
Eldorado National Forest
El Dorado County Fire Chiefs Association
El Dorado County Fire Safe Council
El Dorado County Fire Prevention Officers Association
El Dorado and Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation Districts
Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team
El Dorado County Office of Emergency Services
Surveyor's Office
El Dorado Water Agency
Department of Transportation

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no change to Net County Cost associated with this item. Funding for annual work plan activities included in the Wildfire Strategy has been included in the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget and/or will be provided through federal and state grant funded programs that have been or are anticipated to be awarded.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Good Governance, Healthy Communities, and Public Safety

CONTACT

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