

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Elk Ridge One Subdivision

Colfax County, New Mexico



Cook's Peak Fire, April 21, 2022, photo taken by Kelly Caraway looking east from Elk Ridge One Subdivision entrance.

August 1, 2022

Previous Elk Ridge CWPPs:

February 6, 2006 and October 13, 2014; draft completed April 1, 2018

Please refer to the U.S. Forest Service, New Mexico State Forestry Division, local fire departments, and sources included in this document for updates.

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Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Elk Ridge One Subdivision
Southwest Colfax County, New Mexico

Introduction

Elk Ridge One Subdivision was originally purchased by Ocate Land Company on August 20, 1980, from Felipe and Anita Medina. Mr. and Mrs. Medina were residents of Taos, New Mexico.

A Plat of Survey for Elk Ridge One Subdivision was filed with the County Clerk, Colfax County, Raton, NM on April 5, 1982, in Book 8 of Plats page 203. On this Plat, a description states:

“A tract of land lying within section 30 Township 24 North, Range 17, east of the New Mexico principal meridian Colfax County, New Mexico, being more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the U.S.G.L.O. brass cap marking the N.W. corner of section 30, thence 500 degrees 08' 51" W, 422.9 feet to the point and place of beginning...”

On May 12, 1982, Protective Covenants for Elk Ridge One Subdivision were filed in Miscellaneous Book 105, page 68. This document was signed by Betty L. Fleissner, A General Partner.

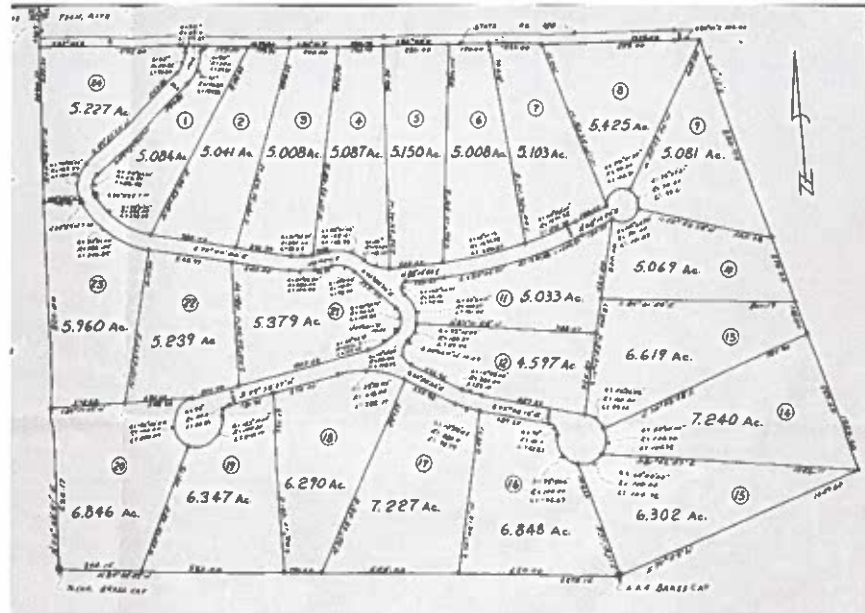
A Certificate of Platting and Dedication of Elk Ridge One Subdivision was written on September 28, 1982. It was signed by the following who represented Ocate Land Company, a New Mexico Partnership:

Betty L. Fleissner, Partner; Rodney E. Unger, Partner; Dianna L. Shelander, Partner by Betty L. Fleissner, Attorney-in-Fact; William E. Shelander, Partner by Betty L. Fleissner, Attorney-in-Fact; William E. Shelander, Partner by Betty L. Fleissner, Attorney-in-Fact; David A. Millner, Partner by Betty L. Fleissner, Attorney-in-Fact; and signed by Rodney E. Unger, a single man.

This Certificate of Platting and Dedication was recorded on October 25, 1982 in Miscellaneous Book 207, page 121.

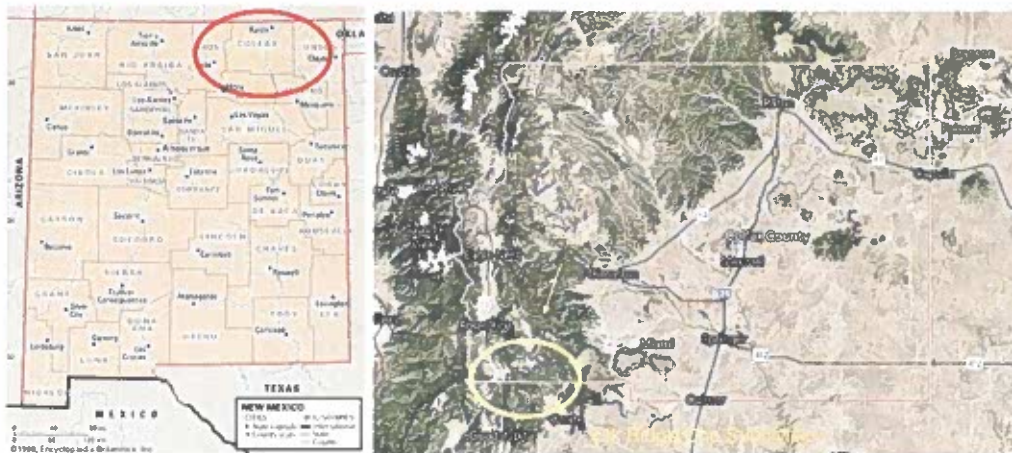
The first structure in Elk Ridge was built ca. 1997.

Elk Ridge One Subdivision Plat Map



Location 36.208750 N - 105.28803 W

Elk Ridge One Subdivision is located in southwest Colfax County, New Mexico, approximately 13 miles southeast of Angel Fire. It is located between Black Lake and Ocate. The subdivision is on mile marker five on the south side of New Mexico State Highway 120.



Description

There are 24 lots in Elk Ridge, with a total of 136.21 acres. The subdivision slopes from approximately 9,400 feet altitude at the north border to approximately 9,800 feet altitude at the south border. Beyond the entire south border there is a steep upward incline and beyond this incline is a plateau where Hidden Lake Subdivision is located. Hidden Lake Circle and Spruce Court are roads in close proximity to Elk Ridge. Beyond Hidden Lake Subdivision, toward the south, is Ocate Mesa.

Community CWPPs

This Elk Ridge One CWPP has been developed in conjunction with surrounding communities as listed at the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department; Forestry Division; Fire Prevention Programs:

[Community Wildfire Protection Plans \(CWPP\) - Forestry](#)

Surrounding communities of Elk Ridge include the following:

1. Hidden Lake and B-38 Communities
2. Black Lake
3. Angel Fire
4. Ocate-Ojo Feliz Volunteer Fire Department, Sierra Bonita-Rincon Volunteer Fire Department; both of Mora County.
5. Sandia Pueblo
6. Cimarron
7. Taos County (including Taos Pueblo)
8. Others

Step One of CWPP - Convene Decision Makers:

An Elk Ridge Subdivision meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 14, 2022 at the Angel Fire Community Center from 10:00 am to noon. The Community Center is located at 15 Cs Ranch Road, Angel Fire, NM. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the risk of wildfire, fuel reduction activities, and emergency responses. A draft of the Elk Ridge One Subdivision CWPP was provided prior to this date and individuals were encouraged to submit feedback.

Team Members:

All Elk Ridge One Subdivision Property Owners were provided a draft of their CWPP and invited to attend.

Core Team Members

Lot 1	Ronnie and Libby Porter
Lot 2	Victor Barillas represented by Juan Barrera
Lot 3	Brenda Camp
Lot 4	Kenneth and Judy Edwards
Lot 5	Greg and Jean Saathoff
Lot 6	Robert and Tina Floyd
Lot 7&8	Randy and Kim Wright
Lot 9	Sid Stockton
Lot 10	Randy and Ann Brackeen
Lot 11	Reggie and Katherine Rowe
Lot 12	Randy and Pat Smith
Lot 13&14	Kenneth and William Williamson
Lot 15	Robert and Frances Ellison
Lot 16	Kyle Carrington
Lot 17	T. Ed Cole
Lot 18	Mark and Rachael Fisher
Lot 19	Zachary Roadhouse and Leslie Elliott
Lot 20	Wade and Debra Carrington
Lot 21&22	Randall and Tamara Reeger
Lot 23	Hal Kirk and Rosalie McGowen
Lot 24	Kelly and Denise Caraway

Additional Core Team Members:

Angel Fire Fire Department, P O Box 610, Angel Fire NM 87710, (575) 377-3347,
[Angel Fire Fire Department](#)

Sheriff Leonard M. Baca
Colfax County, New Mexico, 1413 South 2nd Street, Raton, NM 87740,
(575) 445-5561, Fax (575) 445-2988

Nick Cardenas
Colfax County Fire Marshal, 230 North 3rd, Raton, NM 87740, (575)
445-8931, Cell (575) 447-1639, ncardenas@co.colfax.nm.us

Gil Carrillo
Moreno Valley Fire Department, Aspen Hill Fire Station Caretaker, 80
Aspen Hill CR B-38, (505) 269-6620, aspenhill1232@gmail.com

Arnie Friedt, New Mexico State Forestry
Cimarron District Forester, New Mexico, Energy, Minerals and Natural
Resources (EMNRD), P O Box 5, Ute Park, NM 87749, (575) 376-2204,
Fax (575) 376-2384, arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

Jonathan Grassmick, Sandia Pueblo, Ranch Manager
Rainbow Ranch, Bobcat Pass, (575) 377-0643, Pueblo of Sandia Lands
Department, 481 Sandia Loop, Bernalillo, NM 87004-7076, (505)
867-3317, option #8, jgrassmick@sandiapueblo.nsn.us

Fire Chief Bruce Jassmann
Moreno Valley Fire, District 6, Includes Aspen Hill Fire Station and Black
Lake Fire Station, P O Box 201, Angel Fire, NM 87710,
bruces_gravel77@hotmail.com, <http://www.morenovalleyfire.org>, (575)
595-1943, (214) 215-3215

Scott Jones, Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (CCCFC)
P O Box 2026, Angel Fire, NM 87710, (575) 613-5417,
scnsajones@earthlink.net

Marybeth Kochis, Hidden Lake Property Owners Association
P O Box 1329, Angel Fire, NM 87710, (575) 377-1544,
mkochis001@att.net

Gabe Kohler, Southwest Program Manager

The Forest Stewards Guild, 2019 Galisteo Street, Suite N-7, Santa Fe,
NM 87505, (505) 983-8992, Cell (509) 844-3048 (yes, area code is 509).
gabe@forestguild.org

Bobby LeDoux

New Mexico Association of Counties (and Colfax County Commissioner),
230 North 3rd Street, P O Box 1498, Raton, NM 87740, (575) 447-7167,
bledoux@co.colfax.nm.us

Gerald Moleski, Ocate/Ojo Feliz Volunteer Fire Department

1940 Highway 120, P O Box 82, Ocate, NM 87734, (575) 668-2103,
chiefmoleski@gmail.com

New Mexico State Forestry and Local Firewise Representative

Fire Management Officer Cimarron District-N2S, Cimarron District
Regional Coordinator for Firewise Communities, P O Box 5, Ute Park, NM
87749, (575) 376-2204, Cell (575) 447-7879, kevin.pacheco@state.nm.us

Micky Richardson

Sierra Bonita Rincon Volunteer Fire Department, 15 County Road A-44,
Guadalupita, NM 87722, (806) 676-8746, Landline (575) 387-6970, Fire
Station (575) 387-5215 if someone there, sbrfiredepartment@gmail.com

WarChief Fred Romero

Taos Pueblo WarChiefs Office, Office of Natural Resources, P O Box
2596, Taos NM 87571, (575) 758-3883, Cell (575) 779-6095, Fax (575)
758-2706, warchief@taospueblo.com,
warchiefsecretary@taospueblo.com

Joe Stehling, Hidden Lake Subdivision

Hidden Lake Property Owners Association, P O Box 1135, Angel Fire, NM
87710, (575) 377-0546, joestehling@earthlink.net

Bret Wier, Colfax County Commissioner, District 3

230 North 3rd Street, P O Box 1498, Raton, NM 87740, (505) 652-0039,
bwier@co.colfax.nm.us

Additional Decision Makers:

Joy Esparsen
New Mexico Counties 33 Strong, Deputy Executive Director, 444 Galisteo
Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 820-8111, jesparsen@nmcounties.org

Wendy Mason
Wildfire Prevention & Communication Coordinator, New Mexico State
Forestry Division, 1220 S. St. Francis Dr, Room 112, Santa Fe, NM 87505,
(505) 476-3209, Cell (505) 690-8210, wendy.mason@state.nm.us

Mark Meyers
Forester, Surface Resources, The New Mexico State Land Office, 310 Old
Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501, P O Box 1148, Santa Fe, NM 87504,
(505) 827-4453, mkmeyers@slo.state.nm.us

New Mexico Department of Public Safety
4491 Cerrillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87507, P O Box 1628, Santa Fe, NM
87504-1628, (505) 827-9000

Amanda Segura
Administrator, Colfax County, New Mexico, Lodgers Tax/E-911/Zoning,
230 North 3rd Street, P O Box 1498, Raton, NM 87740, (575) 445-9661,
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Manuel Torres
Cimarron District Timber Management Officer, New Mexico Energy,
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87749, (575) 447-7878, manuel.torres@state.nm.us

Susan Torres
Public Information Officer, New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural
Resources Department (EMNRD), 1220 South St Francis Drive, Santa Fe,
NM 87505, (505) 476-3226, susan.torres@state.nm.us

Step Two of CWPP - Involve Federal Agencies

Randy Velasquez, Soil Conservationist

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico, Raton Service Center, 245 Park Avenue, Room 206, Raton, NM 87740-3800, (575) 445-9571, Ext 3; Fax (855) 538-5999, randy.velasquez@usda.gov

Kyle Sahd, Bureau of Land Management

United States Department of the Interior, Taos Field Office, 226 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571-5983, (575) 758-8851, Fax (575) 758-1620, ksahd@blm.gov

Carson National Forest

United States Forest Service, 208 Cruz Alta Road, Taos, NM 87571, (575) 758-6200

Amy Lueders

Southwest Regional Director, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, P O Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306, (505) 248-6911

Step Three of CWPP - Engage Interested Parties

Elk Ridge One Subdivision Neighbors:

Tim Volz

Volz Builders, 11170 Kliesen Street, Dodge City, KS 67801

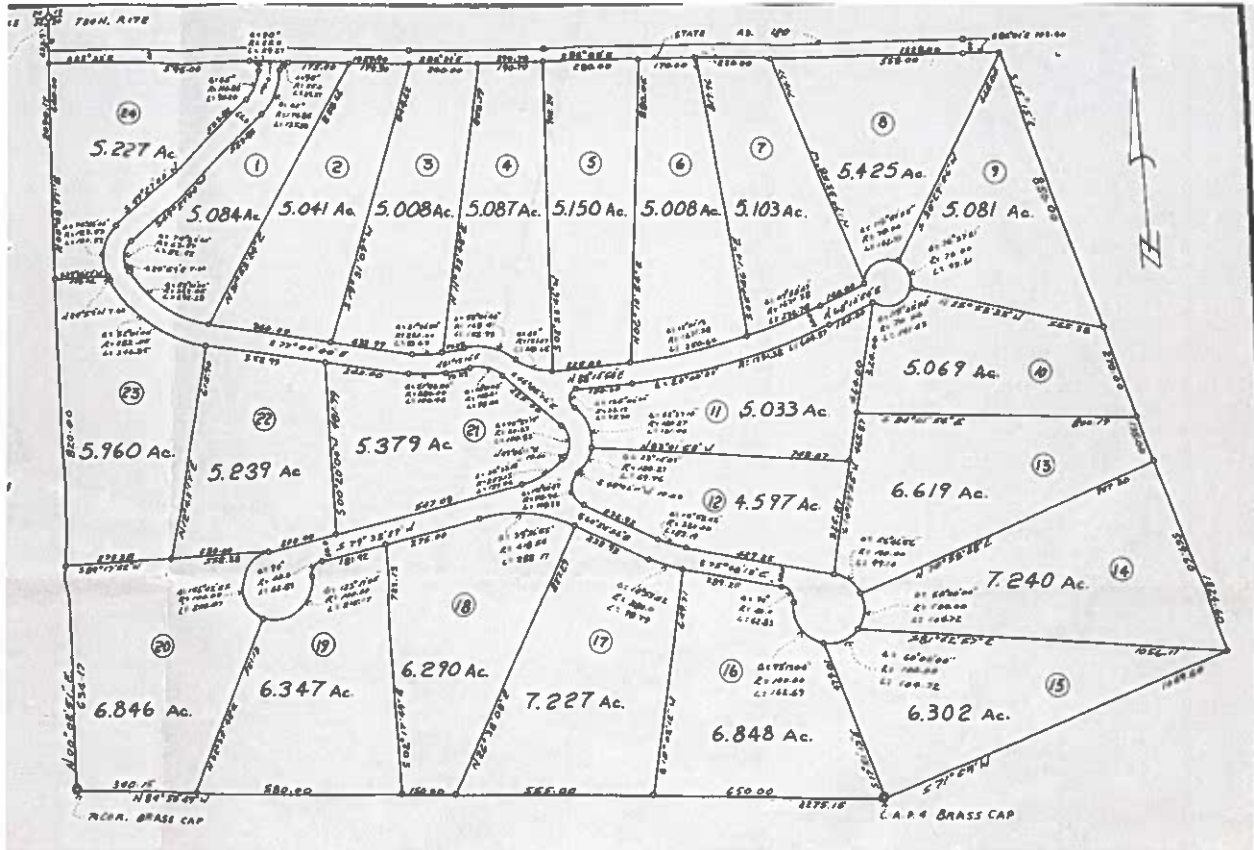
Bob and Kathy Bright

1181 County Road 5250, Ralston, OK 74650

Thomas C. Germscheid

P O Box 743, Angel Fire, NM 87710

Step Four of CWPP - Establish a Community Base Map



Elk Ridge One Subdivision Plat Map



Step Five of CWPP - Develop a Community Risk Assessment

A. Fuel Hazards

The Elk Ridge forest type includes primarily Engelmann spruce, fir, bristlecone pine, limber pine, and aspen. The area has a generous amount of on-site fuels (high fuel loading). Most lots have a moderate to large amount of heavy dead and down woody material. There is no record of a previous fire at Elk Ridge. On-site fuels include creeping juniper, a highly combustible ground cover.

The north portion of lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 24 have a meadow of bunch-grass. The remainder of the subdivision is forest. The land surrounding Elk Ridge consists of heavy, dense forests that are spotted with meadows. State land occupies the west and south borders.

B. Risk of Wildfire Occurrence

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD), Forestry Division, completes a Communities at Risk Report for the Governor and the New Mexico legislature by December 15 of each year. In the 2021 report, the risk of wildfire for Elk Ridge is High on a scale of High Risk, Medium Risk, and Low Risk. (see Table 2, Communities at Risk List 2021, page 12).

Communities in close proximity to Elk Ridge are Hidden Lake, Los Febres Mesa, Sierra Bonita-Rincon, and Guadalupita. Hidden Lake is in Colfax County; Los Febres Mesa, Sierra Bonita-Rincon, and Guadalupita are in Mora County. In the same Communities at Risk Report, these communities are listed as:

Hidden Lake	High Risk for Wildfire
Los Febres Mesa	High Risk for Wildfire
Sierra Bonita-Rincon	High Risk for Wildfire
Guadalupita	High Risk for Wildfire

The location of Elk Ridge within the forest, types of vegetation and risk of wildfire are represented in Cimarron Watershed Alliance maps. These maps are included in the Colfax County CWPP 2008.

Cimarron Watershed Alliance			
	Map	Elk Ridge One Subdivision	Notes
1.	CWPP Base Map Colfax Ownership Data from Bureau of Land Management Surface Ownership Figure 2, page 13	Elk Ridge is private land surrounded by large areas of State Land	
2.	Generalized Vegetation from Dick-Peddie Veg. Map of NM Figure 3, page 14	SubAlpine Coniferous Forest	
3.	CWPP Fuel Hazard FRCC Figure 4, page 15	High Fuel Hazard	
4.	CWPP Risk Map Figure 5, page 18	High Risk	
5.	CWPP Threat Level Figure 6, page 19	Very High Threat	
6.	CWPP Value Map Figure 7, page 21	Colfax E911 & Value	
7.	CWPP Risk Assessment Map Figure 8, page 22	Level 6 (Red) with Human Value	
8.	CWPP WUI Map Figure 9, page 23	Elk Ridge is recognized as Wildland Urban Interface	
9.	Moreno Valley Subwatershed CWPP Fuel Hazard Figure 11, page 28		Elk Ridge is within the Canadian River Watershed; however, Moreno Valley Subwatershed is located immediately west and northwest of Elk Ridge.

Weather is a significant influence on Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) wildfires. In the southern Sangre de Cristo Mountains, where Elk Ridge is located, a monsoon season typically occurs in July, August, and September. Otherwise, the climate is dry. Red River, NM, has been chosen for weather data based on its proximity and elevation. The National Weather Service data for Red River, NM:

National Weather Service Red River, NM (elevation 8,671 ft) - 42.9 miles from Elk Ridge (elevation 9,500 ft)					
Month	Climate Normals 1991-2020 Mean Average Temp F	Climate Normals 1991-2020 Mean Min Temp F	Climate Normals 1991-2020 Mean Max Temp F	Precipitation inches	Daily Monthly Normals 1991-2020 Total snowfall inches
Jan	21.0	6.8	35.2	1.05	19.1
Feb	23.3	9.4	37.2	1.46	26.1
Mar	30.5	16.2	44.8	1.85	31.4
Apr	37.7	23	52.3	1.99	26.7
May	45.8	29.6	62.0	1.79	6.2
June	54.5	36.3	72.4	1.11	
Jul	58.1	41.6	74.6	3.14	
Aug	56.3	40.2	72.4	3.01	
Sep	50.7	33.8	67.7	2.03	
Oct	40.4	24.7	56.2	1.78	9.7
Nov	29.6	15.5	43.7	1.59	19.0
Dec	21.6	8.1	35.1	1.22	18.5

The Colfax County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) refers to a USDA Forest Service Research Paper RMRS-RP-29. 2001. In this document, three general types of wildland fire are described.

1. A ground fire is one that burns in the ground fuels such as duff, organic soils, roots, rotten buried logs, and so forth. Ground fuels are characterized by higher bulk density than surface and canopy fuels. Ground fires burn with very low spread rates, but are sustainable at relatively high moisture contents. Fuel consumption through ground fire can be great, causing significant injury to trees

and shrubs. Although ground fuels can be ignited directly, they are most commonly ignited by a passing surface fire.

2. A surface fire is one that burns in the surface fuel layer, which lies immediately above the ground fuels but below the canopy, or aerial fuels. Surface Fuels consist of needles, leaves, grass, dead and down branch wood and logs, shrubs, low brush, and short trees. Surface fire behavior varies widely depending on the nature of the surface fuel complex.

3. A crown fire is one that burns in the elevated canopy fuels. Canopy fuels normally consumed in crown fires consists of the live and dead foliage, lichen, and fine live and dead branch wood found in a forest canopy. They have higher moisture content and lower bulk density than surface fuels. Three types of crown fires are generally recognized: passive, active, and independent.

(a). A passive crown fire, also called torching or candling, is one which individual or small groups of trees torch out, but solid flame is not consistently maintained in the canopy. Passive crowning encompasses a wide range of fire behavior, from the occasional tree torching out to a nearly active crown fire. The increased radiation to surface fuels from passive crowning increases flame front spread rate, especially at the upper end of the passive crown fire range. Embers lofted during passive crowning can start new fires downwind, which make containment more difficult and increases the overall rate of fire growth. Passive crowning is common in many forest types, especially those with an understory of shade-tolerant conifers.

(b). An active crown fire, also called a running or continuous crown fire, is one in which the entire surface/canopy fuel complex becomes involved, but the crowning phase remains dependent on heat from the surface fuels for continued spread. Active crown fires are characterized by a solid wall of flame extending from the fuel bed surface through the top of the canopy. Greatly increased radiation and short-range spotting of active crown fires lead to spread rates much higher than would occur if the fire remained on the surface. Medium and long-range spotting associated with active crowning leads to even greater rates of fire growth.

(c). An independent crown fire is one that burns in canopy fuels without aid of a supporting surface fire. Independent crown fires occur rarely and are short lived, requiring a combination of steep slope, high wind speed, and low foliar moisture content. Many apparently independent crown fires may actually be active crown fires in which the canopy phase is momentarily pushed ahead of the surface phase under the influence of steep slope or strong wind.

(Scott, Joe H. Reinhardt, Elizabeth D. 2001. Assessing crown fire potential by linking models of surface and crown fire behavior. USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, research paper RMRS-RP-29. 3-6).

A wildfire increases the risk in nearby communities. Selected fires near Elk Ridge have been:

1. Ojo Feliz Fire - April 12 - 18, 2006, Mora County. 17,000 acre forest fire, 5 structures destroyed, 67.2 km² area.
2. Rivera Mesa Fire - June 15 - 25, 2006, San Miguel County. Lightning caused. 72 km² area.
3. Horseshoe Fire, Cimarron Canyon State Park, April 28, 2010. Wind blew power lines down. Burned 300+ acres.
4. Head Start Fire, Mora County, off Hwy 518 on top of Holman Hill around mile marker 36. June 30, 2011. Fire sparked behind the Mora Head Start. Burned 20+ acre wildfire.
5. B-38 small fire, 2011, one mile west of Elk Ridge, on Highway 120 near Aspen Hill Fire Station, caused by a spark from chainsaw, easily contained with nearby resources.
6. Whitman Fire, Valle Vidal Unit, Questa Ranger District. June 28 - July 1, 2017. 300+ acres.
7. Galloway Fire - April 23, 2018, on Hwy 120 and the entrance to Hidden Lake. With rapid response from Aspen Hill Fire Station, the fire was contained the same day.
8. Ute Park Fire - May 31, 2018, contained June 19, 2018. This fire burned a total of 36,740 acres. The fire was located one mile east of Ute Park, New Mexico.
9. Morris Creek Fire - June 29, 2018, size 1,670 acres, located 18 miles west of Springer, NM.
10. Wilson Mesa Fire - Jul 20, 2020, located 14 miles northwest of Cimarron. Estimated acres burned: 155 acres.
11. Luna Fire - October 17, 2020 - Full containment November 10, 2020. 10,142 acres, 2 miles north of Chacon.
12. Rincon Fire - June 11, 2021 - West of Mora, New Mexico. Located 25 miles northwest of Las Vegas. Cause lightning.
13. Leased-land fire northeast (and near) Elk Ridge. May 16, 2021. Apparently started by lightning. Rapid response from multiple fire departments quickly contained this fire.
14. Prescribed burn between Elk Ridge One Subdivision and Black Lake, New Mexico. November, 2021.

15. Cook's Peak Fire, April 17, 2022 to May 18, 2022. Began north of Ocate, Mora County, NM, and spread north and northeast through Rivera Mesa, Ortega Mesa in Colfax County. Approximately 60,000 acres burned.
16. Calf Canyon/Hermit's Peak Fire. April, 2022. Continues to burn June 25, 2022. Largest wildfire in New Mexico history. Began northwest of Las Vegas, NM. As of this date, 341,735 acres have burned, it is 78 percent contained, and there are 1,464 personnel working the fire. The fire encompasses San Miguel, Mora, and Taos Counties. The north perimeter of the fire was nine miles from Elk Ridge.

For additional information, refer to [NM Fire Info](#).

Based on the Communities at Risk Report; Cimarron Watershed Alliance maps; weather; general types of wildfire; history of nearby wildfires; and the Colfax County CWPP focus on crown fires; Elk Ridge One Subdivision CWPP is directed at crown fire potential and treatments. In addition, Elk Ridge is focused on surface fuels that support the continued spread of crown fires.

C. Homes, Businesses and Essential Infrastructure at Risk

There are eight homes in the subdivision. All homes are constructed with metal roofing. Two homes are log structures. Five homes have wood siding, and one home is stucco/brick.



Utilities

Elk Ridge lots 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 15, and 24 have private, functioning water wells. These lots have outdoor frost-free faucets that are located near their homes.

Electricity, land-line telephone, and fiber optic internet are buried underground along the easements of the subdivision roads. Utilities remain underground until approximately one-half mile west of Elk Ridge on Highway 120 where they become above ground lines on electrical poles and proceed toward Black Lake, NM. The telephone and internet systems could be used to communicate the threat of a wildfire and any instructions received from emergency personnel.

Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (575) 758-2258, outages (575) 758-6100

Kit Carson Fiber Optic (575) 758-4838

Centurylink Land-Line Phone (866) 642-0444

Ingress and Egress

Elk Ridge One Subdivision has one road that is used for both ingress and egress. This road is located between Lot 1 and Lot 24 and intersects with New Mexico State Highway 120. There are four emergency exits.

1. Between Lots 8 and 9 there is a path that could be used to access Highway 120.
2. Egress could also be obtained by utilizing Lot 7 driveway and continuing northeast via a path through the meadow.
3. Another emergency egress could be the Lot 24 driveway to Highway 120.
4. From the southeast part of Elk Ridge, there is a trail proceeding east to Highway 120.

Roads

The roads of Elk Ridge One Subdivision consist of Elk Ridge Road, Bear Paw Road, and Bear Paw East and West. These roads are constructed of dirt, pit run and other gravel materials. There are three cul-de-sacs which are located on the northeast, southeast, and southwest corners of the subdivision. The roads are wide enough for emergency vehicles to access easily. The cul-de-sacs allow large vehicles to turn around without problem. In addition, the roadways provide firebreaks.

D. Other Community Values at Risk

Community wildlife and vegetation are considered a value to those who live at Elk Ridge One Subdivision.

Wildlife - bears, mountain lions, bobcats, linx, wolves, elk, deer, coyote, skunk, chipmunks, squirrels, ermine, garter snake, mice, rats, porcupines, others

Birds - turkey, grouse, bald eagle, owl, crow-raven, hummingbird, stellar jay, grosbeak, rosy finch, cassins's finch, junco, pinyon jay, warbler, woodpecker, tanager, chickadee, hawk, others

Plants - rocky mountain iris, western yarrow, candy tuft, wild rose, wild strawberries, columbine, narrowleaf paintbrush, osha, mountain parsley, showy daisy, chokecherry, cow parsnip, carduus nutans, purple asters, Verbascum thapsus (mullein), others

Insects - butterflies and others

Archeological evaluation of Lots 3, 7, 8, 10 and 20 have been done according to thinning-clearing grant specifications. As of this time, there have been no archeological findings.

Elk Ridge is part of the Canadian River Watershed. It is in close proximity to Moreno Valley Watershed. Both are considered an important value to the community and could be negatively affected by wildfire. Private wells and septic systems could burn and affect the watershed as well.

Large parcels of New Mexico State Land surround Elk Ridge and are valuable to the area and the state.

Manueles Canyon

Two miles east of Elk Ridge, and between Ocate and Black Lake, NM, is Manueles Canyon. This five mile canyon occupies both Colfax and Mora Counties. It has a small creek, Manueles Creek, which flows to the east and becomes Ocate Creek, and later empties into the Canadian River. Trees include spruce, fir, aspen, bristlecone pine, ponderosa pine, aspen, scrub oak, and cottonwood. There are various species of thick ground cover. Wildlife is similar to Elk Ridge, with the exception of small trout in Manueles Creek. Volcanic rock can be seen. New Mexico State Highway 120 is a narrow, one lane road that courses through the canyon. In some areas, steep rock walls are on either side of the road. Within Manueles Canyon is an 87 acre parcel of New Mexico Bureau of Land Management property (BLM). This property is two miles east of Elk Ridge on the north side of Highway 120. Large areas of New Mexico State Land are leased and are located around the BLM land.

The historical value of Manueles Canyon and surrounding area is described in Marvin C. Overton III's "Twixt Angel Fire and Ocate; Life Thirty Years Before Angel Fire." Also "Museum of New Mexico; Office of Archaeological Studies, by Sarah H. Schlanger and Linda J. Goodman; Submitted by Timothy D. Maxwell, Principal Investigator, Archaeology Notes 95, 1993.

A wildfire could proceed quickly within Manueles Canyon. It could drastically impact the flora and wildlife. The watershed would be negatively affected. The road could close for emergency personnel, the public, and possibly those needing an evacuation route.

E. Local Preparedness and Firefighting Capability

A priority for Elk Ridge property owners is the participation in the Firewise-USA program. Elk Ridge has been recognized as an Active Participant since 2006.



Property owners have worked to make their property and community more defensible. Each year, the total number of hours spent on wildfire reduction activities have been reported to Firewise-USA.

The subdivision has an annual Labor Day meeting to review wildfire safety. Property owners have also collaborated via mail and email about fire safety issues, fuel reduction grants, and Firewise-USA. Members of the community have participated in various projects to remove dead standing trees and ground surface fuel.

Elk Ridge property owners have discussed the causes of wildfire which are natural (lightning) causes and human causes. The United States National Park service states that 85 percent of wildland fires are caused by humans. Human causes include intentionally set fires, equipment malfunctions, downed power lines, sparks from exhaust, unattended campfires, burning of debris, discarded ash or cigarettes, firearms, fireworks, etc. Another cause is dragging chains when pulling a trailer or camper. All causes of wildfire have been reviewed. As in the Colfax County CWPP, any Elk Ridge fuel mitigation activities have focused on reducing ground surface fuel that can feed crown fires. Additional focus is how to decrease the risk, or slow the progression, of crown/canopy fires.



Elk Ridge has participated in the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (CCCFC). This organization serves as a venue to discuss and share methods of fuel reduction, addresses treatment of structural ignitability, educate the public about fire safety, and organize a fire response plan for the CCCFC area.

Aspen Hill Fire Station

The local fire response is the Aspen Hill Fire Station, a division of Moreno Valley Volunteer Fire Department. This fire station was built in 2011. Community volunteers brought their own tools and equipment to construct the building. These individuals included:

Robert "Bob" Brown, Roy Weyker, Michael Turri, Shawn Agnew, Bruce Kelly, Scott Jones, Will Fox, Pat Steele, Brian Lindsey, Jim Griffin, Terrence Spenser, Randy Wright, Randy Brackeen, John Maples, Gary Johnson Alvin "Johnny" Johnson and Ben Pigman.

In addition, money earned from community fund-raising dinners; donations from individuals, the Pueblo of Sandia, and businesses were used to finance the project. When completed, ownership and responsibility was transferred to Colfax County.



The Aspen Hill Fire Station is located at mile marker 4 of Highway 120, one mile west of Elk Ridge One Subdivision. After volunteer firemen arrive at the station and prepare for response, the travel time to the Elk Ridge area is approximately five minutes with limited on-board water.

Elk Ridge Emergency Evacuation Plan

The emergency evacuation plan for New Mexico is the **Ready, Set, Go!** plan prepared by the International Association of Fire Chiefs' RSG! Program, the USDA Forest Service, and the U.S. Fire Administration. Refer to:

[Ready, Set, Go! New Mexico](#)

READY (red) - maintain an adequate defensible space around your home. Remove dry brush and vegetation away from the outside of your home starting

with a 5-foot zone and working your way out to 100-200 foot zone. Remove wood and wood furniture away from your home. Store firewood away from your home. Do not store flammable material near your home or your propane tank.

SET (yellow) - prepare yourself and your home BEFORE a wildfire arrives.

- Create an action plan that includes evacuation for your home, family and pets. Gather important documents such as insurance documents, passports, birth certificates, deeds. Gather photos, computers, cell phones, and personal identification.
- Assemble an emergency supply kit for each person in your household. This should include medications, eyeglasses or contact lenses, basic medical records, hygiene supplies.
- Leave interior and exterior lights on so that firefighters can see your house.
- Follow current recommendations for propane and stand-by generator management.
- Prepare a Family Communication that includes important evacuation and contact information.
- Stay informed by following media, fire alerts, and emergency notification.

GO (green) - A Colfax Emergency Notification System has been established for Colfax County. Elk Ridge property owners are encouraged to register at

[Public Code Red Web](#)

Also refer to Colfax County New Mexico, Floodplain Management and Emergency Management, (575) 445-7050, cell (575) 707-3579, Raton, NM. Load your emergency supply kit and evacuation bags. **There is no time to waste.** If you feel threatened, then evacuate early. Otherwise, the evacuation order and exit routes will be determined by county officials.

- In Elk Ridge, develop and practice an emergency evacuation plan. The preferred route of exit is the Elk Ridge main road that intersects with Highway 120. Alternate routes would be north down the path between lots 8 and 9, north from the driveway of lot 7 and north from the driveway of lot 24. Residents should assist elderly neighbors or others with physical limitations. Pets should be contained and evacuated. Each property owner should develop an emergency evacuation plan and practice it with residents of their home.

- When evacuating, the preferred route is west toward Black Lake. Emergency vehicles will be approaching while residents are evacuating. The safety of both are extremely important. If possible, residents may need to pull along the roadside to allow emergency vehicles to pass. The highway east to Ocate is a narrow, one lane road. There are very few places to pull over. If residents need to exit toward Ocate, be aware of the narrow road and proceed cautiously.

Communication

Refer to the following sites for official updated information:

[New Mexico Fire Information](#)

[InciWeb](#)

[USDA Forest Service, Department of Agriculture](#)

[New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources, Forestry Home](#)

[New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#)

[American Red Cross](#)

Shelter Sites

Shelter sites may be established. Check with Colfax County Sheriff's Office at (575) 445-5561, or the Mora County Sheriff's Office at (575) 387-2222 for directions.

Electrical Service

It is a common practice for electricity service to be discontinued in an area that has been evacuated. This practice is for firefighter safety, and it reduces the risk of additional fires due to downed power lines. When Elk Ridge was evacuated during the Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) sent a text message out on May 11, 2022, to customers "In Alignment with the Forest Service, KCEC is safely shutting off power to BlackLake Estates & Hidden Valley [sic] areas Click Outage Map..." On May 14, 2022, KCEC again sent a text message "KCEC Crews are re-energizing power to Hidden Lake, Black Lake Estates, and Black Lake areas in accordance with the Forest Service - Click the link for the KCEC Outage Map..."

Prep Work by Firemen

After an evacuation is declared, firemen will assess 'values' such as homes and structures if time and safety allows. Prep work around a home may be done such as pulling wood away from homes and setting up water pools and sprinklers. Not all homes

will be eligible for prep work. If firemen determine that too much work would be required to make a home defensible, they have to pass over this home and go to the next. Firemen will turn off propane at a propane tank. Bulldozers may be working on fire containment lines in the area.

Air Quality

Air quality due to smoke may be a threat. Check with the [New Mexico Environment Department](#), or call them at (505) 827-2855, or (800) 219-6157. The 24 hour environmental emergency number is (505) 827-9329.

Step Six of CWPP - Establish Community Hazard Reduction Priorities and Recommendations to Reduce Structural Ignitability

The location of Elk Ridge is within a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), or where structures are built near or within wildland forested areas. It is an area where there is an extreme risk of wildfire. Woody residue, dry seasons, and wind create a high fuel load. Any weather or man-made incident may be the only igniter needed to cause a catastrophic event.



The first Elk Ridge home was built ca. 1997. In 2002, property owners met and discussed the need to reduce community hazards and reduce structural ignitability. It was realized that these actions could positively impact the surrounding

community as well.

All Elk Ridge property owners are informed of activities and are welcome to participate at any time.

A. Firewise-USA

In 2006, the Colfax County Fire Marshal and the Moreno Valley Fire Chief introduced Firewise-USA to Elk Ridge. The subdivision joined Firewise-USA and began to incorporate wildfire safety standards. Property owners recognized that Firewise Immediate, Intermediate, and Extended Zone interventions would reduce both structural and community hazards.

B. Firewise-USA Immediate Zone

Work was focused on the Immediate Zone, 0-5 feet away from structures. Flammable materials such as mulch, flammable plants, leaves, needles, and stacks of firewood were removed from this zone. Anything stored under decks or porches was removed.

C. Firewise-USA Intermediate Zone

Within the Intermediate Zone which is 5-30 feet from structures, the recommended space between crowns is a minimum of eighteen feet, with an increase of this space according to slope. The mature canopy of a tree should be no closer than ten feet from



a structure. Shrubs and vegetation should be limited to small clusters. In Elk Ridge, vegetation was cleared around propane tanks. Since ladder fuels could lead to crown/canopy fires, trees were pruned up to six-ten feet from the ground. Shorter trees were pruned not to exceed $\frac{1}{3}$ of their overall height. Removing dead standing trees increased the space between crowns.

Using Firewise-USA recommendations, surface woody residue was cleared and removed. On Elk Ridge Road, property owners moved residue near the road. As a large Vermeer chipper from Colfax County was pulled down this road, residue in the form of small-to-moderate diameter trees and slash were fed into the chipper.

A ground-cover vegetation in Elk Ridge is creeping juniper. This juniper is more prominent in the east area of the subdivision. The plant is highly flammable. Even though it is a slow and difficult process, property owners have begun to clear property of this vegetation.

D. Firewise-USA Extended Zone

Firewise-USA recommendations include an Extended Zone which is 30-100 feet, and up to 200 feet from structures. The goal is not to eliminate wildfire, but to interrupt a fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground. Subdivision members have disposed of surface fuels including dead plant and tree material. Dead standing trees have been disposed of. When trees have fallen because of weakness and/or wind, property owners have removed this dead-fall as quickly as possible. In the extended zone, it is recommended that trees 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopy tops and trees 60 to 100 feet from a home should have at least 6 feet between canopy tops. These canopy distances are dependent on slope, the type of trees, and other conditions. Firewise-USA recommends that residents check with local forestry professionals to get specific advice for each WUI community.



Bob and Nancy Brown, Firewise-USA Elk Ridge Meeting

Bob Brown was the original Elk Ridge representative for the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (CCCFC). Because of this participation, Mr. Brown learned of a CCCFC Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project. The plan was prepared in the summer of 2013 by Harry A. Morrison, Colfax County Forester. Bob Brown coordinated with interested property owners, and a contractor came and completed the work. Woody residue and dead standing trees were removed. Large masticators came to chip up slash material and remove ladder fuel. Lots 4, 11, 12, and 21 took advantage of this grant. In addition, this grant provided thinning and clearing for property east of Elk Ridge.

E. Additional Activities to Reduce Hazards

The New Mexico State Land Office did clearing on a designated fire break west of Elk Ridge in 2009.



New Mexico State Land Office
Wildfire mitigation work immediately west of Elk Ridge 2009

Mitigation Activities

In 2018, Elk Ridge Lot 1 was awarded a grant from the New Mexico Association of Counties that was administered by the New Mexico Forest Stewards Guild. Fuel reduction and clearing was done for one-half of this lot.

For Lot 7, Sam Berry, New Mexico Forest Stewards Guild completed a Home Hazard Assessment on May 7, 2019. The goal for this evaluation was to help the property owner recognize wildfire risks.

In 2019, three Elk Ridge lots were awarded a United States Department of Agriculture Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant. Lots 3, 10, and 20 had standing dead, woody residue, and slash removed from their properties.

In 2021, Elk Ridge Lots 7 & 8 were awarded a USDA Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Enhancement E666F grant. Standing dead, woody residue, ladder fuel, and slash was removed from these lots.

Some property owners have pulled material into burn piles. After obtaining a burn permit from the Colfax County Fire Marshal, the Red River dispatch center is called prior to starting each fire. Burn piles are closely monitored. At all times, water is available. When completed, the Red River dispatch is again called and notified that a fire had been extinguished.

Small chipping machines were used by some members.

Throughout the Elk Ridge One Subdivision fuel reduction process, owners incorporated Firewise-USA guidelines. While selected property owners performed fuel reduction activities themselves, others used a professional service.

Wildfire mitigation and maintenance activities are ongoing.

A Summary of Elk Ridge Fire Mitigation Activities are Included in the Following Table:

Elk Ridge One Subdivision Community Hazard Reduction and Reduction of Structural Ignitability							
Lot/ acres	Property Owner	Home on Property	Full or Major Fuel Reduction	Significant Fuel Reduction	No fuel reductio n at this time	Water Well Available	Generat or for Water
1 5.084	Ronnie and Libby Porter	Yes		Yes, by self and Forest Guild/NM Assoc of Counties grant, summer 2018		Yes	Yes
2 5.041	Victor Barillas represented by John Barreda				No reduction at this time		
3 5.008	Brenda Camp		USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant summer 2019				
4. 5.087	Kenneth and Judy Edwards	Yes	Yes, by self and 2013 Grant			Yes	
5. 5.150	Greg and Jean Saathoff	Yes	Yes, by self			Yes	Yes
6. 5.008	Robert and Tina Floyd	Yes		Yes, by self		Yes	Yes
7. 5.103	Randy and Kim Wright	Yes	Yes, by self and USDA Conservation Enhancement Grant 2021			Yes	Yes
8. 5.425	Randy and Kim Wright		Yes, by USDA Conservation Enhancement Grant 2021				
9. 5.081	Sidney Stockton				No reduction at this time		
10. 5.069	Randy and Ann Brackeen	Yes	Yes, by self and USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant 2019			Yes	
11. 5.033	Reggie and Katherine Rowe			Yes, by 2013 grant			
12. 4.597	Randy and Pat Smith			Yes, by 2013 grant			

Elk Ridge One Subdivision Community Hazard Reduction and Reduction of Structural Ignitability							
Lot/ acres	Property Owner	Home on Property	Full or Major Fuel Reduction	Significant Fuel Reduction	No fuel reductio n at this time	Water Well Available	Generat or for Water
13. 6.619	Kenneth E. and William B. Williamson		Yes, by self ca. 2007				
14. 7.240	Kenneth E. and William B. Williamson		Yes, by self ca. 2007				
15. 6.302	Robert and Frances Ellison	Yes	Yes, by self			Yes	
16. 6.848	Kyle Carrington			Yes, by self			
17. 7.227	Thomas Ed Cole			Yes, by self ca. 2010			
18. 6.290	Mark and Rachael Fisher			Yes, by self ca. 2010			
19. 6.347	Zachary Roadhouse and Leslie Elliott		Yes, by self				
20. 6.846	Wade and Debra Carrington		Yes, by USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grant 2019				
21. 5.379	Randall J. and Tamara J. Reeger			Yes, grant ca. 2013			
22. 5.239	Randall J. and Tamara J. Reeger				No reduction at this time		
23. 5.960	Hal Kirk and Rosalie McGowen				No reduction at this time		
24. 5.227	Kelly and Denise Caraway	Yes	Yes, by self			Yes	Yes
136.21 total acres		8 homes = 33.3%	12 lots = 50%	8 lots = 33.3%	4 lots = 16.7%		

F. Mobilizing Our Community After a Wildfire

After a wildfire is extinguished, the danger is not over. Elk Ridge may experience flash flooding, structural damage, road instability, damaged trees, and other hazards. Structures, trees, power poles, and tall objects are unstable. Do not approach the subdivision until officials have declared it safe.

Previous to a wildfire, trees and plants have served to reduce soil erosion. This protection may no longer exist. Any moisture could cause dangerous flooding and mudslides. Use caution within Elk Ridge, Highway 120 toward Black Lake and Highway 120 toward Ocate.

Community considerations include:

- Be aware that trees, power poles, and other tall objects may be unstable
- Do not touch power lines
- Do not drink water from a faucet until officials say it is safe
- Keep a battery powered radio for communication
- Contact electrical power company, propane company, or other appropriate resources for any instructions or inspections
- Before any clean up, photograph property for insurance purposes

After a wildfire, our community must work together to start the recovery process. Elk Ridge will need to appoint at least one Post-Fire Coordinator. The coordinator will work with officials to seek assistance and help with coordinating our response.

Post-wildfire treatments include hill-slope treatments, erosion barrier applications, channel treatments, road and trail treatments. An Elk Ridge coordinator should contact officials for recommended treatments and any financial assistance for this work.

Refer to [*After Wildfire: A Guide for New Mexico Communities*](#) for additional information.

Goals

Elk Ridge One Subdivision Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Goals			
	Goal	Goal met/not met	Comments
1.	Inform and educate property owners with regard to wildfire mitigation, benefits of Firewise-USA membership.	Met	Ongoing. <u>Short term goal</u> is to review with property owners the Firewise-USA Immediate Zone recommendations.
2.	Participate in the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (CCCFC)	Met	Continue participation
3.	Improve signage through the community.	Met	Street signs and 9-1-1 fluorescent signs have been established.
4.	Collaborate with property owners and surrounding community with regard to this 2022 CWPP	Not met	In progress
5.	Communicate with the New Mexico State Land Office in Santa Fe, NM, about the possibility of having them complete wildfire mitigation measures on state land south and west of Elk Ridge.	Not met	Need to determine if this service is available.
6.	Maintain subdivision roads for evacuation, emergency vehicle access, and as fire breaks within the subdivision.	Met	Work has been done during the fall of 2020. <u>Short-term goal</u> is to thin Bear Paw cul-de-sacs
7.	Work with neighboring communities to coordinate fire mitigation activities.	Met	Met February 17, 2022 with Colfax County CWPP, Taos County CWPP, and Angel Fire CWPP committees along with many other community members. Ongoing process
8.	For interested members, have a property inspection done by a forester or county fire marshal to provide wildfire defensible suggestions.	Not met	Needs discussion.

References

Colfax County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), New Mexico Forestry Division, Resource Protection Bureau

<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/community-wildfire-protection-plans-cwpp/>

After Wildfire: A Guide for New Mexico Communities, www.afterwildfirenm.org

Cimarron Watershed Alliance, P O Box 626, Cimarron, NM 87714. www.cimarronwater.org

Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities (CCCFC). Scott Jones (575) 613-5417

Colfax County, Emergency Notification System,
<https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/GAF053DCB942>

Colfax County Fire Marshal, for Burn Ban information, Wildfire Information, and Burn Permits, Nick Cardenas, Colfax County Fire Marshal, 230 North 3rd, Raton, NM 87740, (575) 445-8931, Cell (575) 447-1639, ncardenas@co.colfax.nm.us

Firewise-USA,
<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>, Kevin Pacheco, New Mexico State Forestry and Local Firewise Representative, Fire Management Officer, Cimarron District-N2S, Cimarron District Regional Coordinator for Firewise Communities, P O Box 5, Ute Park, NM 87749, (575) 376-2204, Cell (575) 447-7879, kevin.pacheco@state.nm.us

Floodplain Management and Emergency Management, Thomas Vigil, 116i S. 3rd St., Raton, NM, 87740 (575) 445-7050, cell (575) 707-3579, tvigil@co.colfax.nm.us

New Mexico Association of Counties, New Mexico Counties 33 Strong, 444 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, NM 87501, (505) 983-2101, www.nmcounties.org

NM Fire Info, Government Organization, <https://nmfireinfo.com>

New Mexico Forest Stewards Guild, Gabe Kohler, Southwest Program Manager, The Forest Stewards Guild, 2019 Galisteo Street, Suite N-7, Santa Fe, NM 87505, (505) 983-8992, Cell (509) 844-3048

New Mexico State Land Office, Mark Meyers, Forester, Surface Resources, The New Mexico State Land Office, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87501, P O Box 1148, Santa Fe, NM 87504, (505) 827-4453, mkmeyers@slo.state.nm.us

Overton, Marvin C. III, 'Twixt Angel Fire and Ocate; Life Thirty Years Before Angel Fire,' 2005.

Schlanger, Sarah H. and Linda J. Goodman; *Archaeological Tests and Ethnohistoric Research at LA 74220, An Early Twentieth-Century Sheep Camp Near Ocate, Mora County, New Mexico*, Museum of New Mexico; Office of Archaeological Studies, Submitted by Timothy D., Maxwell, Principal Investigator, Archaeology Notes 95, 1993.

Scott Joe H. and Reinhardt, Elizabeth D., Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture Research Paper, *Assessing Crown Fire Potential by Linking Models of Surface and Crown Fire Behavior*, 2001, Res. Pap. RMRS-RP-29, Fort Collins, CO, 2001.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), 245 Park Avenue, Room 26, Raton, NM 87740. www.nrcs.usda.gov

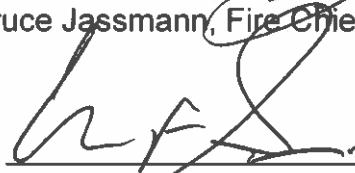
Signatures



Arnie Friedt, EMNRD Cimarron District Forester



Bruce Jassmann, Fire Chief, Moreno Valley, New Mexico

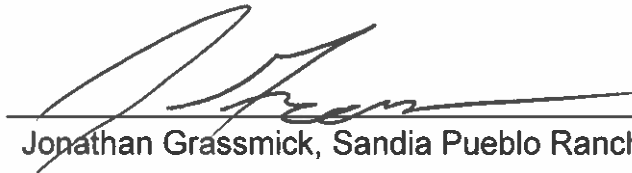


Chief of Fire and EMS, Angel Fire Fire Department

Nick Cardenas, Colfax County, New Mexico, Fire Marshal



Bret Wier, Colfax County, New Mexico, Commissioner, District 3



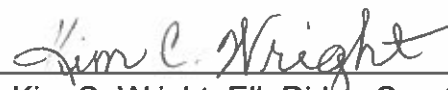
Jonathan Grassmick, Sandia Pueblo Ranch Manager

War Chief Fred Romero, Taos Pueblo, Office of Natural Resources



MATHIS - Field Manager

Kyle Sahl, Bureau of Land Management,
United States Department of the Interior Taos Field Office



Kim C. Wright, Elk Ridge One Subdivision