

# Hidalgo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan



**Hidalgo County  
Emergency Services  
Office of the Fire Marshal**



**Sponsored by:**

Hidalgo County Board of Commissioners  
Hidalgo County Fire Districts  
Hidalgo County Fire Marshal  
New Mexico Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division

**Additional support from:**

BLM — Las Cruces District  
USFS — Gila National Forest, Silver City Ranger District  
USFS — Coronado National Forest, Douglas Ranger District  
Hidalgo County Cooperative Extension Service NMSU  
Malpías Borderlands Group  
Animas Foundation Diamond A Ranch  
Grassland Restoration, Inc.

**Funded by:**

New Mexico Association of Counties in partnership with Bureau of Land Management  
Las Cruces District

**Front Cover Photograph:**

**Looking northeast from Fitzpatrick's at the Pasco Fire and the Animas Mountains.**

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HIDALGO COUNTY  
COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)



We, the undersigned do hereby endorse and approve the Hidalgo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

**Hidalgo County Fire Marshal**

\_\_\_\_\_  
David Whipple

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Hidalgo County Board of Commissioners**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**New Mexico EMNRD Forestry Division**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Boykin, District Forester  
Socorro District

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**HIDALGO COUNTY  
COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP)**

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We the undersigned support the Hidalgo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

**COLLABORATING AGENCIES:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Childress, District Manager  
BLM Las Cruces District Office

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeanine Derby, Forest Supervisor  
Coronado National Forest

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Richard Markley, Forest Supervisor  
Gila National Forest

\_\_\_\_\_

# **COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN**

## **PURPOSE**

### **TO ADDRESS THE WILDFIRE NEEDS OF HIDALGO COUNTY**

Wildfires are a part of the natural process of life. Ecosystems are equipped for, and in fact thrive when fires are allowed to take their natural course. However, when human habitation and/or development mix with Wildland fuels, the Wildland Urban Interface is created. The Wildland Urban Interface or WUI, creates an environment where structures and infrastructure become “fuels” for Wildland fires. Developments in the WUI means both communities and individuals need to learn to identify wildfire hazards, prepare for wildfire events and learn what can be done before the fire to reduce the negative impacts. This Community Wildfire Protection Plan attempts to do just that. This plan should be used as a guideline to property owners and fire departments interested in addressing the wildfire hazards in their communities. The recommendations made are very general and the focus is on the privately owned WUI areas identified by the Core Team.

### **INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS**

The idea for community-based forest planning and prioritization is neither novel nor new. However, the incentive for communities to engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization was given new and unprecedented impetus with the enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003. This landmark legislation includes the first meaningful statutory incentives for The US Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to give consideration to the priorities of local communities as they develop and implement forest management and hazardous fuel reduction projects. In order for a community to take full advantage of this new opportunity, it must first prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Based on the needs of Hidalgo County, this Wildfire Protection Plan addresses the following issues;

- Wildfire hazards to the WUI and critical infrastructure,
- Public education and outreach,
- Hazard mitigation
- Fuels reduction projects
- Treatment of structural ignitability
- Improving firefighting capacity

The process of developing a CWPP can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the Wildland Urban Interface. It also can lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options and implications for the surrounding watershed. The language in the HFRA provides maximum flexibility for communities to determine the substance and detail of their plans and the procedures they use to develop them.

### **COMMUNITIES AND THE WILDLAND–URBAN INTERFACE**

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is commonly described as the zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped Wildland or vegetative fuels. This WUI zone poses tremendous risks to life, property, and infrastructure in associated communities and is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations firefighters face. Both the National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the



Environment place a priority on working collaboratively within communities in the WUI to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire. The HFRA builds on existing efforts to restore healthy forest conditions near communities and essential community infrastructure by authorizing expedited environmental assessment, administrative appeals, and legal review for hazardous fuels projects on federal land. The Act emphasizes the need for federal agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and it places priority on treatment areas identified by communities themselves in a CWPP.

### **BENEFITS TO COMMUNITIES**

In the context of the HFRA, a CWPP offers a variety of benefits to communities at risk from Wildland fire. Among those benefits is the opportunity to establish a localized definition and boundary for the Wildland–urban interface. In the absence of a CWPP, the HFRA limits the WUI to within ½ mile of a community’s boundary or within 1½ miles when mitigating circumstances exist, such as sustained steep slopes or geographic features aiding in creating a fire break. Fuels treatments can occur along evacuation routes regardless of their distance from the community. At least 50 percent of all funds appropriated for projects under the HFRA must be used within the WUI as defined by either a CWPP or by the limited definition provided in the HFRA when no CWPP exists. In addition to giving communities the flexibility to define their own WUI, the HFRA also gives priority to projects and treatment areas identified in a CWPP by directing federal agencies to give specific consideration to fuel reduction projects that implement those plans. If a federal agency proposes a fuel treatment project in an area addressed by a community plan but identifies a different treatment method, the agency must also evaluate the community’s recommendation as part of the project’s environmental assessment process.

### **COLLABORATION**

A core group of personnel from Hidalgo County and New Mexico State Forestry, Socorro District was established to provide direction for the CWPP preparation.

Six public meetings were held afternoons and evenings at the Hidalgo County Courthouse on December 3 and 17, 2007 and August 5, 2009. The purpose of these meetings was to encourage any group, organization, and/or persons to provide input and help with CWPP development. Specifically, meetings were held to establish a community base map, develop an initial CWPP outline, develop a community risk assessment, and establish community priorities and recommendations. Each meeting followed the same outline: present the purpose of the CWPP, provide an opportunity for questions and answers, and solicit group input. Input was also solicited from the USFS, Douglas and Silver City Ranger Districts, BLM Las Cruces District, Hidalgo County Fire Departments, Lordsburg Fire Department, and the Diamond A Ranch among others.

The following agencies were invited to attend the core team meeting:

- Hidalgo County Public Safety, Commission, and Road Department
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service - Gila National Forest

- US Forest Service - Coronado National Forest
- US Border Patrol
- New Mexico State Police
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- NRCS
- EMNRD State Forestry Division, Socorro District
- NM-DOT
- NM Game and Fish
- City of Lordsburg
- City of Virden
- Animas VFD
- Hidalgo County District 1 VFD
- Rodeo VFD
- Cotton City VFD
- Playas VFD
- Gila-Neblett VFD
- Virden VFD
- NM Department of Public Safety
- NMSU Extension Office
- Private land owners via newspaper

**Table 1. Core Team meetings**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
December 3, 2007 1300hrs	Lordsburg, NM
December 3, 2007 1800hrs	Lordsburg, NM
December 17, 2007 1300 hrs	Lordsburg, NM
December 17, 2007 1800 hrs	Lordsburg, NM
August 5 2009, 1300 hrs	Lordsburg, NM
August 5 2009, 1800hrs	Lordsburg, NM

The purpose of these meeting was to encourage any group, organization, and/or persons to have input and help with development of Hidalgo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. We welcomed any support and/or the possibility of joining the core group.

The plan will encourage the following:

- Encourage Interested Parties and Form a Core Team,
- Establish a Community Base Map,
- Develop an Initial CWPP Outline,
- Develop a Community Risk Assessment, and
- Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations.

**Meetings were held during the day and in the evening to encourage and give residents that work shift work the opportunity attend meetings.**

**Participating municipal and county fire departments:**

- Animas Volunteer Fire Department
- Cotton City Volunteer Fire Department
- Gila-Neblett Volunteer Fire Department
- Hidalgo County District. 1 Volunteer Fire Department
- Playas Volunteer Fire Department

Rodeo Volunteer Fire Department  
 Virden Volunteer Fire Department

**Contact:**

David Whipple, Hidalgo County Fire Marshal  
 115 EMS Lane  
 Lordsburg, New Mexico 88045  
 (575) 694-0628  
[ems2620@hotmail.com](mailto:ems2620@hotmail.com)

**TABLE 2. Core Team Members**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Cell</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>	<b>Address</b>
<b>Hidalgo County</b>	Whipple, David	(575) 694-0628	<a href="mailto:ems2620@hotmail.com">ems2620@hotmail.com</a>	115 EMS Lane Lordsburg NM. 88045
<b>NM State Forestry</b>	Dickey, Jack		<a href="mailto:jack.dickey@state.nm.us">jack.dickey@state.nm.us</a>	
<b>Animas FD</b>	Lasher, JT	(575) 548-2323 (575) 548-2340	<a href="mailto:animasfd@vtc.net">animasfd@vtc.net</a>	P.O. Box 409 Animas, NM 88020
<b>Hidalgo County Dist. 1 FD</b>	Talavera, Orlando	(575) 542-8812 (575) 538-1406	<a href="mailto:hfire20@yahoo.com">hfire20@yahoo.com</a>	115 EMS Lane Lordsburg, NM 88045
<b>Cotton City FD</b>	Payne, Clifford	(575) 548-2535 (575) 538-1406	<a href="mailto:cottonfr@vtc.net">cottonfr@vtc.net</a>	36 Hog Farm Road Animas, NM 88020
<b>Rodeo FD</b>	Escobar, Ramon	(575) 557-2372	<a href="mailto:rodeofd@gmail.com">rodeofd@gmail.com</a>	P.O. Box 64 Rodeo, NM 88056
<b>Playas FD</b>	Davis, Carol	(575) 436-0366 (575) 418-8030	<a href="mailto:cdavis@emrtc.nmt.edu">cdavis@emrtc.nmt.edu</a>	P.O. Box 9026 Playas, NM 88009
<b>Gila-Neblett FD</b>	Brunson, Robert	(575) 358-1081 (575) 418-8599	<a href="mailto:rbrunson@vtc.net">rbrunson@vtc.net</a>	Rt 1 Box 160 Duncan, AZ 85534
<b>Virden FD</b>	Mortensen, Lyle	(575) 358-2726 928-651-6343	<a href="mailto:vvfd@aznexus.net">vvfd@aznexus.net</a>	
<b>USFS- Gila NM</b>	Matthes Kieth	(575) 388-8263	<a href="mailto:kmatthes@fs.fed.us">kmatthes@fs.fed.us</a>	
<b>BLM-LC</b>	Bumgarner, Steve	(575) 525-4305	<a href="mailto:steve_bumgarner@blm.gov">steve_bumgarner@blm.gov</a>	
<b>Public Land Advisory</b>	Keeler, Judy		<a href="mailto:jfkeeler@vtc.net">jfkeeler@vtc.net</a>	
<b>Diamond A (Gray) Ranch</b>	Smith, Sam	(575) 548-2692	<a href="mailto:samsmith@vtc.net">samsmith@vtc.net</a>	
<b>WxFireGraph LLC</b>	Rogers, Kenny	(575) 894-1043 (575) 740-7468	<a href="mailto:Kenny@wxfiregraph.com">Kenny@wxfiregraph.com</a>	415 N Date T or C NM. 87901

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## COUNTY OVERVIEW

### COMMUNITIES

Hidalgo County has two municipalities: City of Lordsburg and Village of Virden and eight rural community areas: Animas, Antelope Wells, Cotton City, Playas, Rancho Cielo, Rodeo, Gila-Neblett, and the Windmill subdivision. In addition to the municipalities and communities, numerous remote ranches are located throughout the County. Essential infrastructure includes the Lordsburg Airport, Port of Entry at Antelope Wells; Interstate Highway 10, US and State highways, Southern Pacific Railroad, electric transmission lines, petroleum product pipelines; and radio communication sites on Big Hatchet Peak and Gillespie Mountain. Two historic/cultural areas are located in the County: Steins, a railroad ghost town and Shakespeare, a mining ghost town are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### WATER RESOURCES

The Gila River in the northern part of the county is the only naturally occurring water source in Hidalgo County. Water utilized for municipal consumption, agricultural irrigation, ranching, and firefighting is draw from aquifers. Some fire departments have water storage tanks.

### FIRE WEATHER

Weather plays a key role in wildfire. Lightning is often responsible for ignitions. Lightning ignites one-third of wildland fires and burns 81% of acres in wildland fires across Hidalgo County. The size and fire behavior that a wildfire becomes is dependent upon a number of factors such as relative humidity, wind and temperature, and the moisture content of fuels. There is only one RAWS located within Hidalgo County. The Hatchett RAWS is at an elevation of 4,300 feet. The historical weather for this RAWS, during the time frame of March 1 though July 10, years 1983-2008.

- **Relative Humidity and Temperature:** Relative humidity average low during fire season is 6%-12%. Average high temperatures of 83-112 degrees Fahrenheit during fire season. The low relative humilities and high temperature drive the fuel moistures down.
- **Fuel Moisture:** 1-hour fuel moistures average low of 1% to 2 % and average high of 12% to 16%. I-hour fuel moistures is a driving force for the spread of wildland fires within Hidalgo County.
- **WINDS:** 20 feet winds average 12-25 miles per hour. Windstorms can produce wind gusts of greater then 50 mile per hour, which can contribute to large fire growth in a short period of time. Wind is a major factor in the spread of wildland fires within Hidalgo County.

## LAND and VEGETATION

Hidalgo County includes both the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Desert ecological regions. Mountain ranges include the Peloncillo, Animas, Burro, Little Hatchet, and Big Hatchet Mountains. The Continental Divide traverses the Animas Mountains. Playas Valley lies east of the Animas Mountains. Animas Valley separates the Animas and Peloncillo Mountains to the west. High desert grasslands of Animas valley form a transition zone between the two ecological regions.

Vegetation types in the County include:

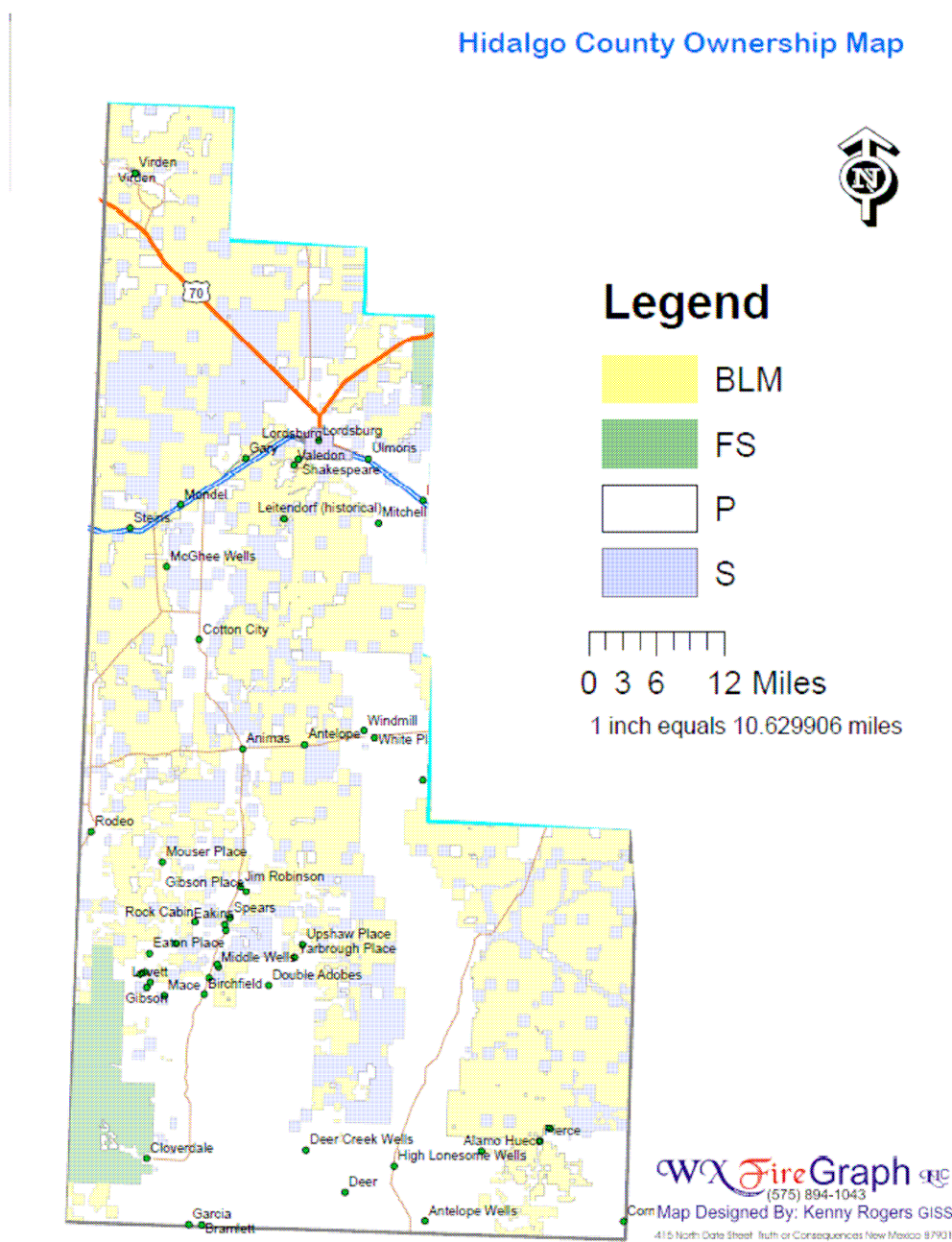
- Lakebed, Lower elevation, Upper elevation, High Desert, and Sacaton Grasslands;
- Grassland/riparian;
- Chaparral;
- Desert Shrublands;
- Riparian, Piñon-juniper, Piñon-juniper/oak, Oak, and Pine-oak Woodlands; and
- Pine and Coniferous Forests.

Fire behavior fuel models represented in the County are:

- Fuel Model 1 Grass Group (1 foot deep grass, very little shrub or timber present);
- Fuel Model 2 Grass Group (1 foot deep grass, open shrub lands and pine or oak stands present);
- Fuel Model 4 Shrub Group (6 feet deep fuels, with grass, chaparral, and shrub);
- Fuel Model 6 Shrub Group (2.5 feet deep fuels, general shrub lands);
- Fuel Model 8 Timber Litter Group (0.2 foot deep fuels; short needle conifers and or oak stands; needles, leaves, twigs); and
- Fuel Model 9 Timber Litter Group (0.2 foot deep fuels; long needle conifer and hardwood stands).

## Land Ownership

Landownership in Hidalgo County consists of a mix of private, State trust, BLM, and USFS. The largest concentration of private land is located in the Playas and Animas valleys and Animas Mountains. State Trust and BLM lands are distributed across the County. Gila National Forest land is located northeast of Lordsburg in the Burro Mountains. Coronado National Forest land is positioned in the southwest corner of the County in the Peloncillo Mountains. Landownership is divided 41% private, 39% BLM, 17% State trust, and 3% USFS. Map 1 shows the distribution of landownership in the County.



**Map 1. Hidalgo County Ownership Map.**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix B County Maps/CWPP Ownership 8x11 Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

## Fire History

Most fires in Hidalgo County occur during late spring and early summer, and are usually less than 100 acres. Effective initial attack by local fire departments contributes to keeping wildland fires relatively small. Additionally grazing by wildlife and livestock reduces fine fuels, which causes most fires not to burn well. In those years following a strong monsoon season, grass production is higher which usually results in more and larger fires, with lightning as the major cause. Where included in fire management plans, many natural ignitions (lightning) on USFS and BLM lands are managed to achieve resource objectives. Natural ignitions on lands within the Diamond A Ranch in the southwest and south central portion of the county are managed under contain/confine strategies to allow fire to be re-established on the landscape for ecological benefits. Otherwise fires started by lightning and all human caused fires are suppressed. Prescribed fires make up a majority of acres that are burned on BLM and USFS lands in Hidalgo County. Most prescribed burning is done to maintain and/or restore grasslands, piñon/juniper stands, and pine stands.

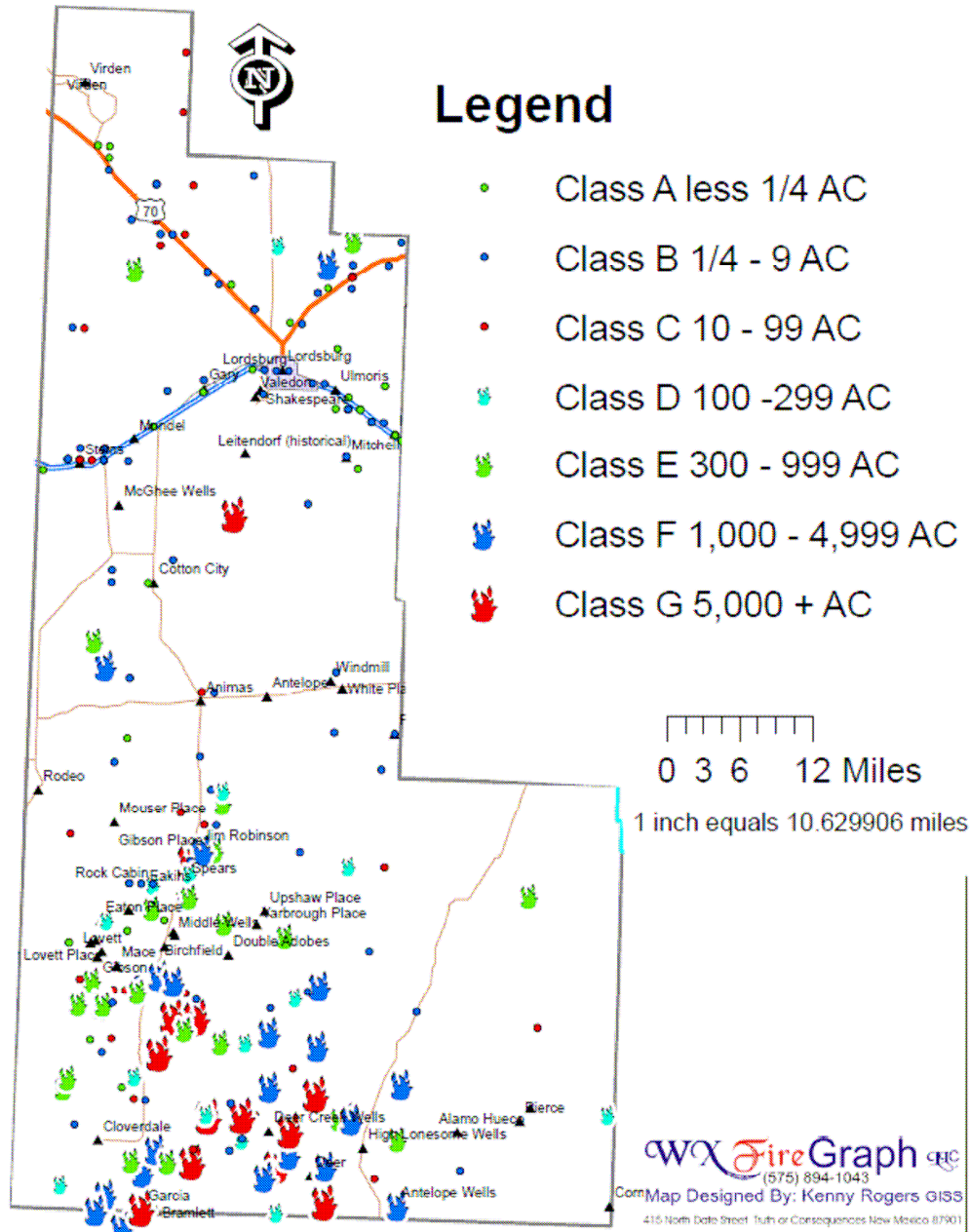
In the period from 1987 to date, 918 wildland fires occurred in Hidalgo County. Table 2 characterizes causes of wildland fires.

**TABLE 3. Fire Occurrence in Hidalgo County**

<b>Type</b>	<b># Fires or %</b>
<b>Children</b>	<b>11 fires or 1%</b>
<b>Railroads</b>	<b>24 fires or 3%</b>
<b>Campfires</b>	<b>32 fires or 4%</b>
<b>Incendiary</b>	<b>45 fires or 5%</b>
<b>Equipment Use</b>	<b>61 fires or 7%</b>
<b>Debris Burning</b>	<b>118 fires or 13%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>164 fires or 16%</b>
<b>Smoking</b>	<b>155 fires or 17%</b>
<b>Lightning</b>	<b>308 fires or 34%</b>

Human caused wildland fires account for two-thirds of wildland fires and 19% of acres burned. In comparison, lightning ignites one-third of wildland fires and burns 34% of acres in wildland fires across the County.

## Hidalgo County Fire History Map



**Map 2. Hidalgo County Fire History Map.**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix B County Maps/CWPP FireHistory 8x11 Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

Many lightning ignited wildfire occur in southern Hidalgo County on the Animas Foundation Diamond A Ranch. Grassland Restoration, Inc prepared a graphical fire history of the Diamond A Ranch from 1989 to present. Their maps are presented in Appendix D.



## **HIDALGO COUNTY WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE**

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) is commonly described as the zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped Wildland or vegetative fuels. This WUI zone poses tremendous risks to life, property, and infrastructure in associated communities and is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations firefighters face. Both the National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment place a priority on working collaboratively within communities in the WUI to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire. A Community Wildfire Protection Plan offers a variety of benefits to communities at risk from Wildland fire. Among those benefits is the opportunity to establish a localized definition and boundary for the Wildland Urban Interface. The Hidalgo County Core Team defined the Hidalgo County Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) by placing a WUI boundary around each of the communities in Hidalgo County as listed in Table 4. Most WUI areas within Hidalgo County have a threat of wildfire from within the boundary due to large amount and continuous light fuels growth inside the communities.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

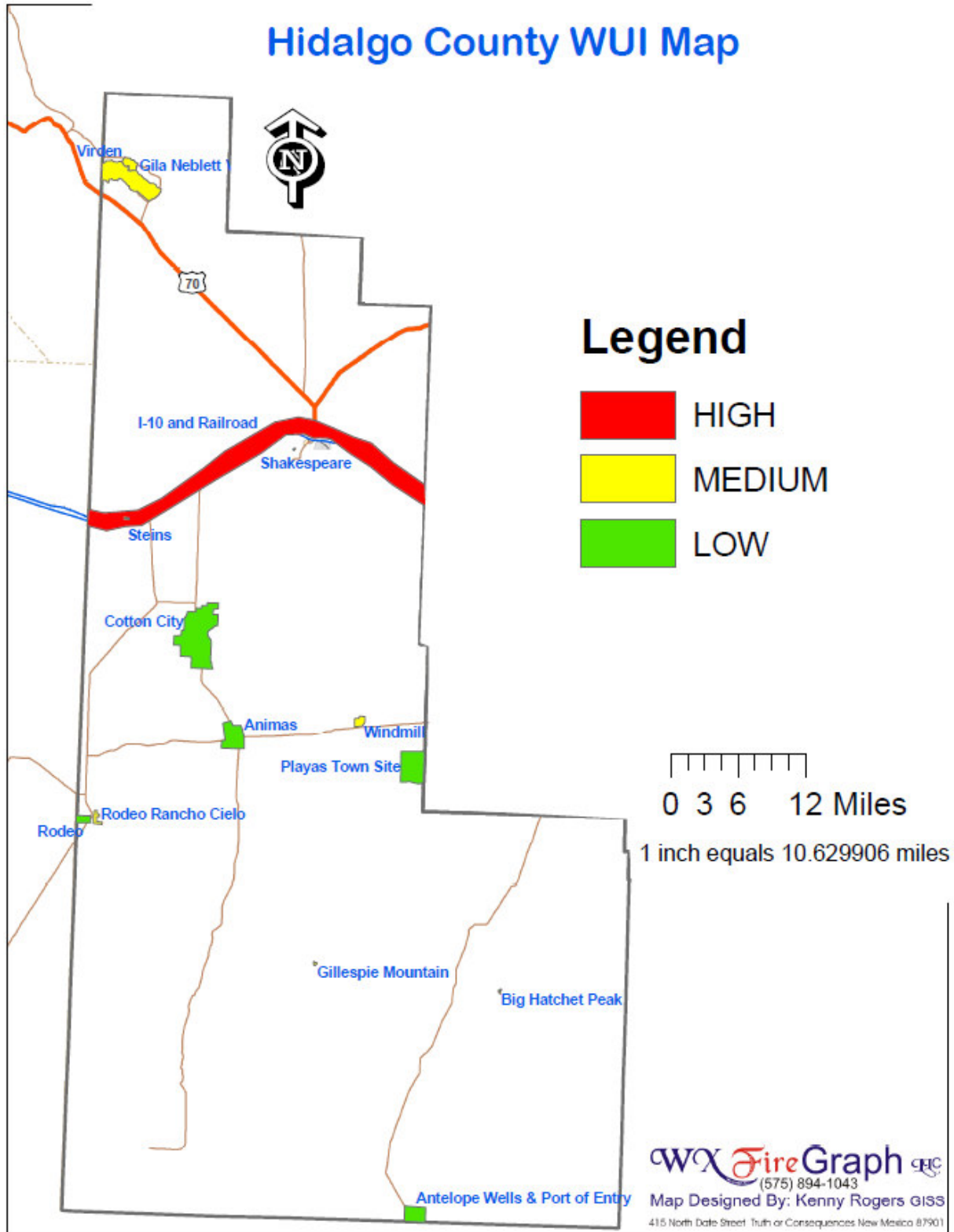
County WUI areas were evaluated and an average hazard rating was developed for each based on the following criteria:

- Building construction materials;
- Infrastructure (roads, bridges, driveways and turnarounds);
- Water availability.
- Interface concerns (vegetation fuels, terrain, slope, aspect, number of lots, estimated structure density, and closest fire department).
- Weather, fuels, and fire behavior determined WUI boundary. There is no standard distance for WUI boundary.

**Table 4. WUI Community Wildfire Risk Assessments**

<b>Number of sites</b>	<b>WUI-Name</b>	<b>AVG Hazard</b>	<b>Total per WUI Acres</b>
	<b><i>PLAYAS FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 5</i></b>		
1	Playas Town Site	Low	3663
2	Antelope Wells & Port of Entry	Low	1633
3	Windmill	Medium	455
4	Big Hatchet Peak (Repeater Site)	Medium	36
5	Gillespie Mountain (Repeater Site)	Medium	47
	<b><i>RODEO FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 9</i></b>		
6	Community of Rodeo	Low	532
7	Rodeo Rancho Cielo	Medium	300
	<b><i>HIDALGO COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 9</i></b>		
8	Transportation Corridor (I-10, SP Railroad, and various pipelines)	High	32941
9	Steins Ghost Town	Medium	37
10	Shakespeare	Low	12
	<b><i>VIRDEN FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 9</i></b>		
11	Virden	Medium	668
	<b><i>GILA/NEBLETT FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 9</i></b>		
12	Gila-Neblett Valley	Medium	5225
	<b><i>COTTON CITY FIRE DISTRICT ISO Rating = 9</i></b>		
13	Community of Cotton City	Low	9,152
	<b><i>ANIMAS FIRE DEPARTMENT ISO Rating=9</i></b>		
14	Animas	Low	2,490
	<b><i>Hidalgo County Total Acreage Ratings</i></b>		
	Total Acres	Low	17,882
	Total Acres	Medium	6,768
	Total Acres	High	32,941

The points correspond to a fire hazard rating of, low, moderate, or high. Assessments for individual properties can be done using the assessment form included in Appendix 1 of this CWPP to determine an individual's home or property Fire Hazard.



**Map 3. Hidalgo County WUI Map.**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix B County Maps/CWPP WUI 8x11 Nad27UTM13N.pdf](http://CWPP_Hidalgo_Appendix_B_County_Maps/CWPP_WUI_8x11_Nad27UTM13N.pdf)

## WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE PER FIRE DEPARTMENT

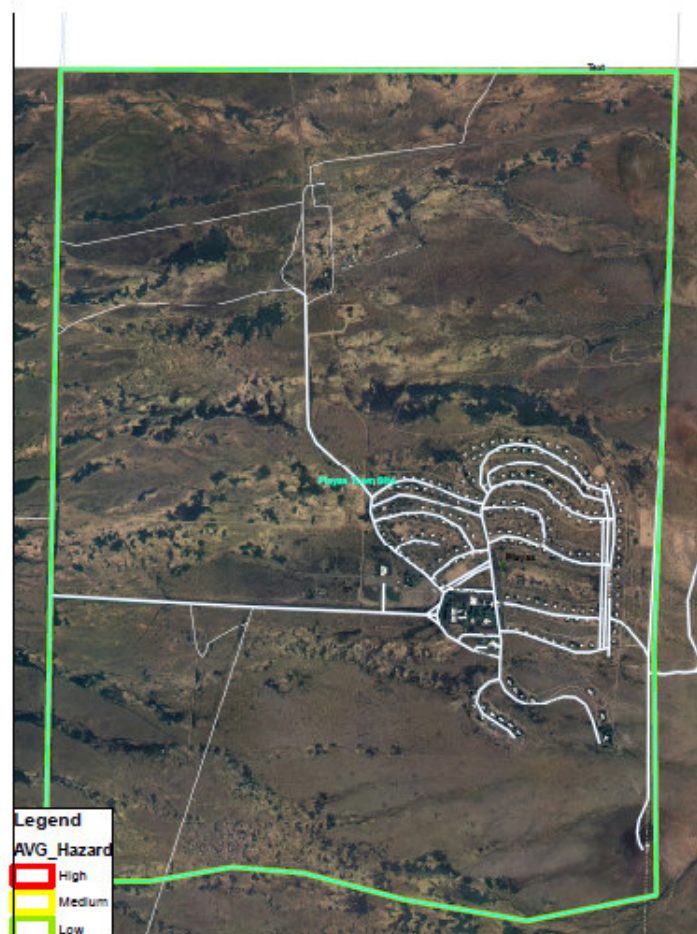
Playas Fire Department has a total of 5 WUI areas within its response district.

✓ **Playas Town Site**

Has one volunteer fire department within the town site. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers.

Water supply hydrants are throughout the town site. In the outlying areas of this WUI, water supply will be tenders. Road system is mostly paved and has good egress and regress. Vegetation is mostly Chihuahuan Desert Scrub. Terrain is less than 20%. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

### **CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map Playas Town Site**



0 0.1 0.2 0.4 Miles

1 inch equals 0.231688 miles

**WX FireGraph** LLC  
(575) 894-1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GIS  
415 North Gate Street, Suite 101, Roswell, New Mexico 87001

**Map 4. WUI-Playas Town Site**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

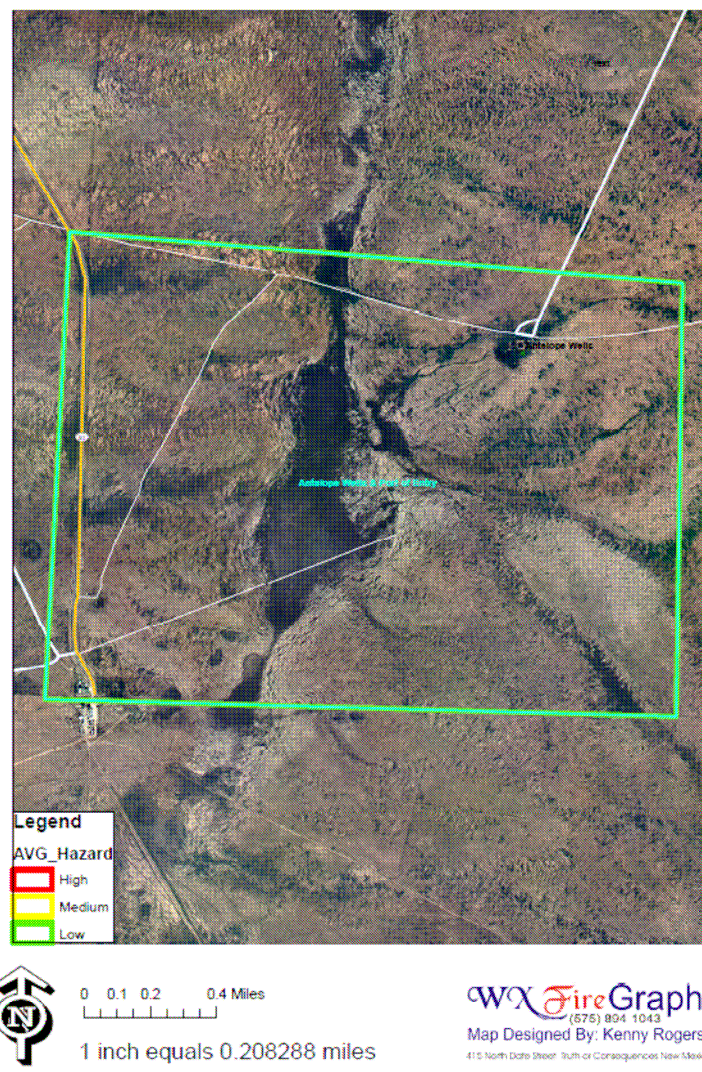
[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\Appendix\\_A\\_WUI\\_Maps](#)

[/WUI\\_Playas\\_Town\\_Site\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Antelope Wells & Port of Entry**

Located 45 miles south of Hachita, NM on State Road 81. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Playas fire department has a distance of approximately 66 miles of 2 lane-paved roads to respond to the Antelope Wells & Port of Entry WUI. Water supply has no hydrant or storage tanks, Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression and has a distance of 76 miles of 2 lane-paved roads. The road system is mostly paved and has good egress and regress. Vegetation is mostly Desert Grasslands. Terrain is less than 30%. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map**  
**Antelope Wells & Port of Entry**



*Map 5. WUI-Antelope Wells*

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps](#)

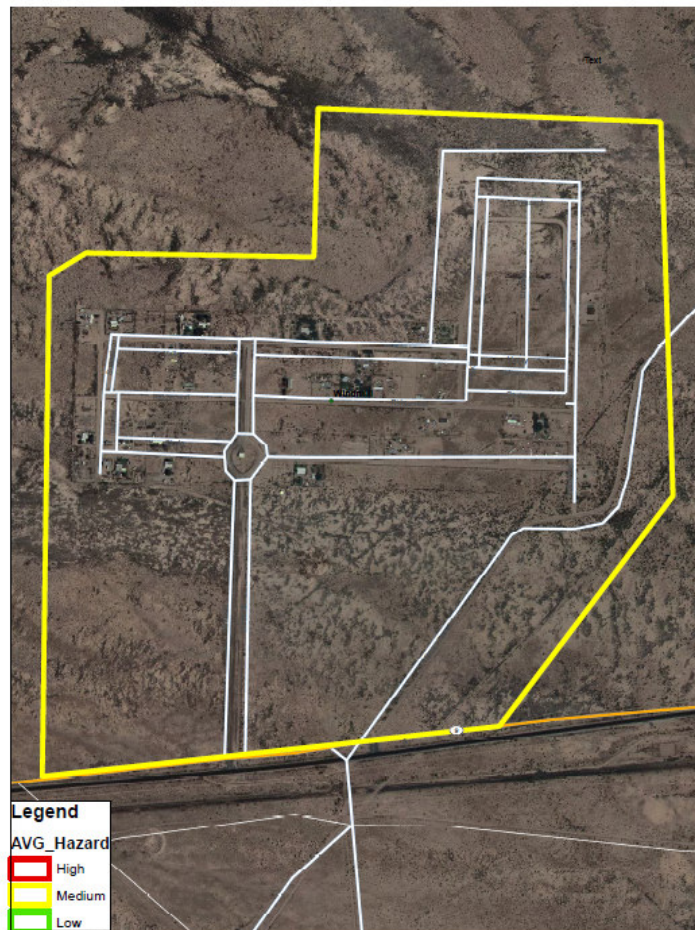
[/WUI Antelope Wells CWPP Nad27UTM13N 06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Windmill**

Located 8 miles Northwest of Playas, NM on State Road 9. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers.

Playas Fire Department has a substation inside the WUI are of Windmill. Water supply consists of a 30,000-gallon storage tank located at the substation. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 12 miles of 2 lane-paved roads. Road system is dirt and has good egress and regress. Vegetation is mostly Closed Basin Scrub along with desert grasslands. Terrain is mostly flat and less 20% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map**  
**Windmill**



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

1 inch equals 0.099822 miles

**WX FireGraph** LLC  
(575) 894 1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GISS  
415 North Date Street Truth or Consequences New Mexico 87901

**Map 6. WUI-Windmill**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps](#)

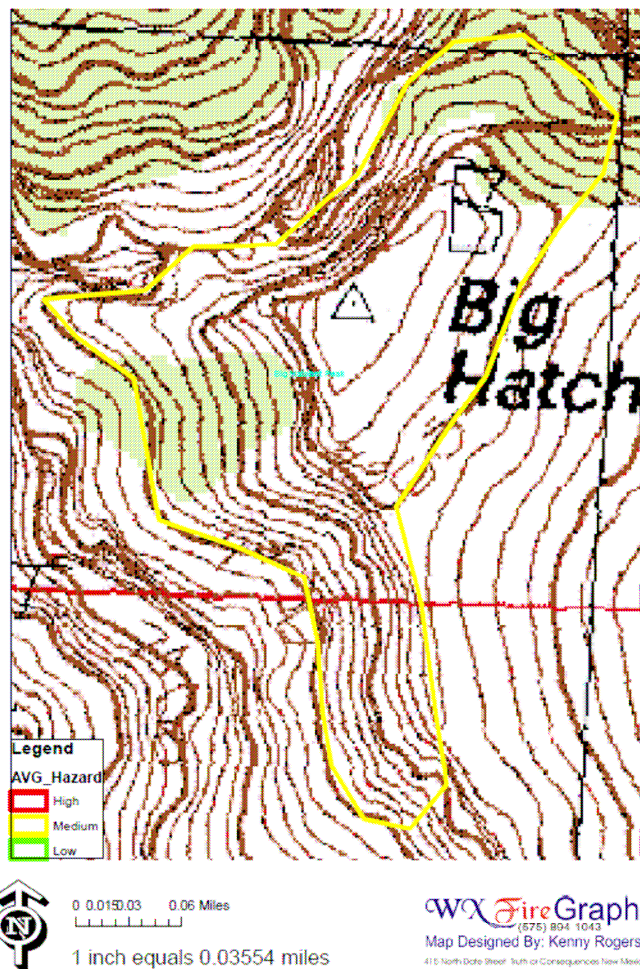
[/WUI Windmill CWPP Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Big Hatchet Peak (Repeater Site)**

Located 12 miles South of Hachita, NM on State Road 81, and 4 Miles East on County Road 11. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers.

Playas Fire Department has distance of approximately 32 miles of 2 lane-paved road, 4 miles of dirt roads to respond to the Big Hatchet Peak Repeater Site WUI. There is no water supply. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 42 miles of 2 lane-paved roads and 4 miles of dirt roads. Road system is dirt and has fair to poor egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Coniferous and Mixed Woodland. Terrain is mostly mountainous and up to 50% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels around the repeater site.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Big Hatchet Peak**



**Map 7. WUI-Big Hatchet Peak**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

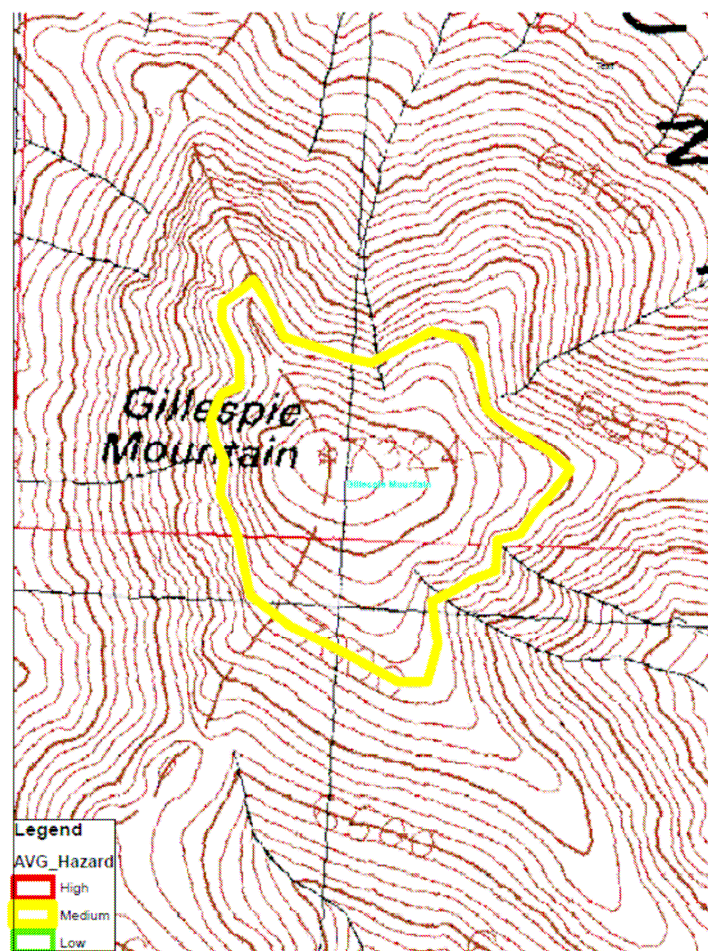
[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps](#)

[/WUI\\_Big Hatchet Peak\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Gillespie Mountain (Repeater Site)**

Located 12 miles Southwest of Playas, NM. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Playas Fire Department has a distance of approximately 22 miles of dirt and 2 track roads to respond to the Gillespie Mountain Repeater Site WUI. There is no water supply. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 42 miles of dirt and 2 track roads to respond to the Gillespie Mountain Repeater Site WUI. Road system is dirt and has fair to poor egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Mountain Scrub. Terrain is mostly mountainous and up to 50% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels around the repeater site.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Gillespie Mountain**



0 0.025 0.05 0.1 Miles  
1 inch equals 0.065762 miles

**WX FireGraph** gnc  
(576) 894 1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GIS  
410 North Echo Street, Suite 101, Corrales, New Mexico 87011

**Map 8. WUI-Gillespie Mountain**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps  
/WUI Gillespie Mountain CWPP Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

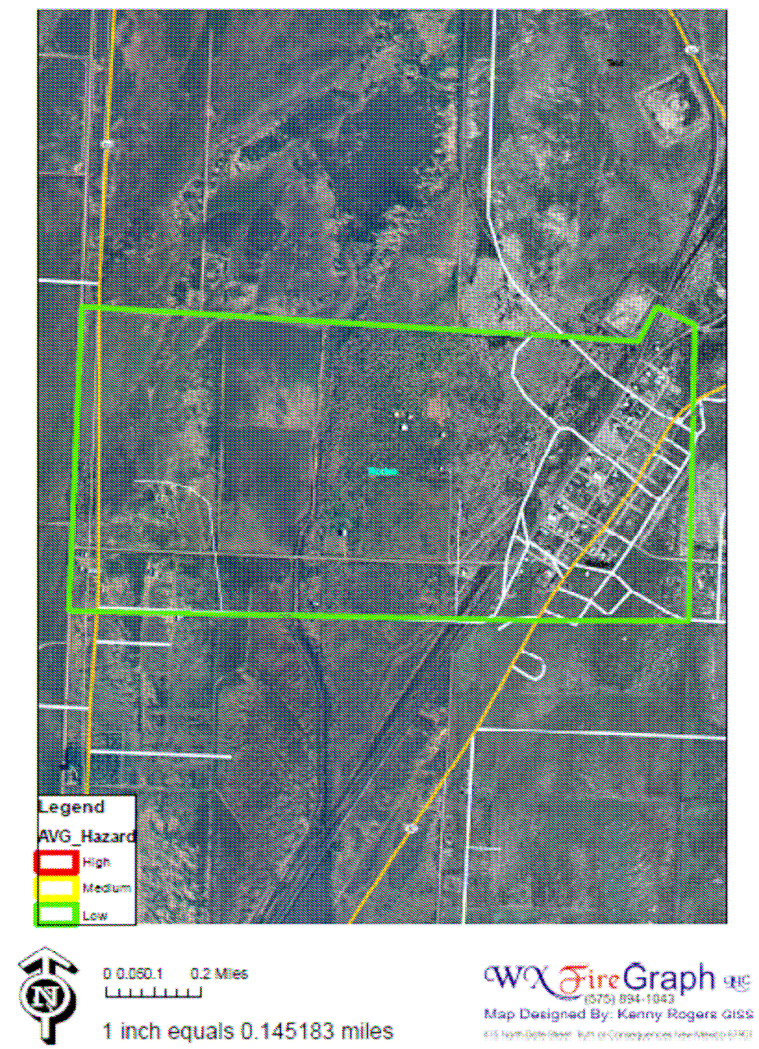


**RODEO Fire Department has a total of 2 WUI's in their area of response.**

✓ **Community of Rodeo**

Located 30 miles south on State Road 80 from Interstate 10. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Rodeo Fire Department is located within this WUI. Water supply consists hydrant system within the community. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 20 miles of 2 lane-paved roads. Road system is paved and dirt and has good egress and regress. Vegetation of mostly Desert Grasslands Terrain is mostly flat and less than 10% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Community of Rodeo**



**Map 9. WUI-Community of Rodeo**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

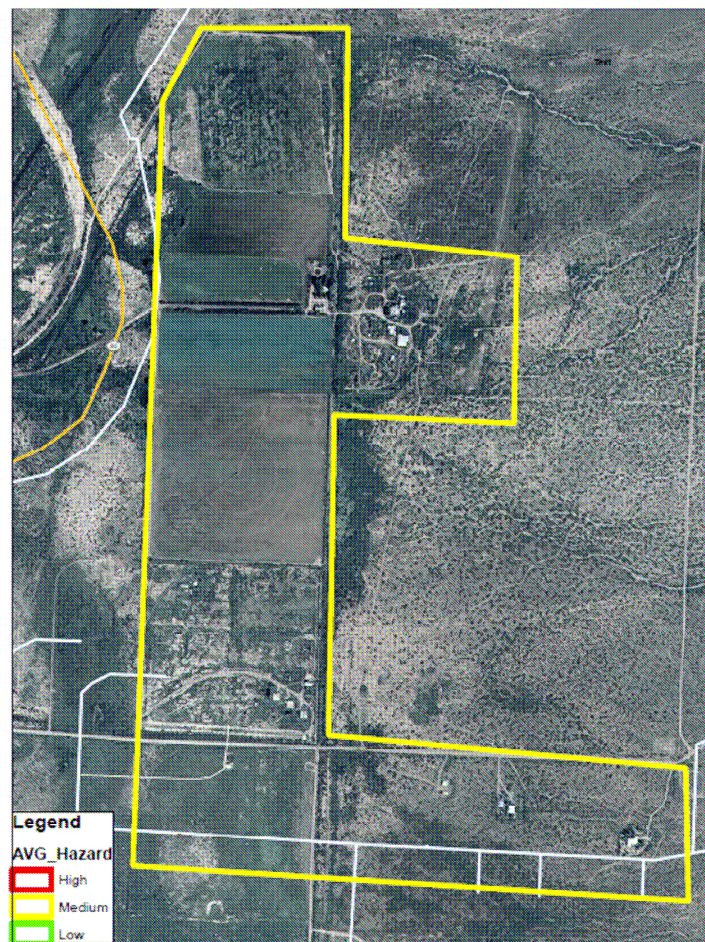
[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\Appendix\\_A\\_WUI\\_Maps](#)

[/WUI\\_Rodeo\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

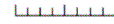
✓ **Rodeo Rancho Cielo**

Located 1 mile east of Rodeo, New Mexico. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Rodeo Fire Department is located 1 mile west of this WUI. Water supply consists of no storage tanks or hydrants. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 20 miles of 2 lane-paved roads. Road system is dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation of mostly Desert Grasslands Terrain is mostly flat and less than 10% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Rodeo Rancho Cielo**



0.03607 0.14 Miles



1 inch equals 0.097487 miles

**WX FireGraph** INC  
(575) 894 1043

Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GIS

415 North Dade Street - Suite 101 - Consequences New Mexico 87901

**Map 10. WUI-Rodeo Rancho Cielo**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps](#)

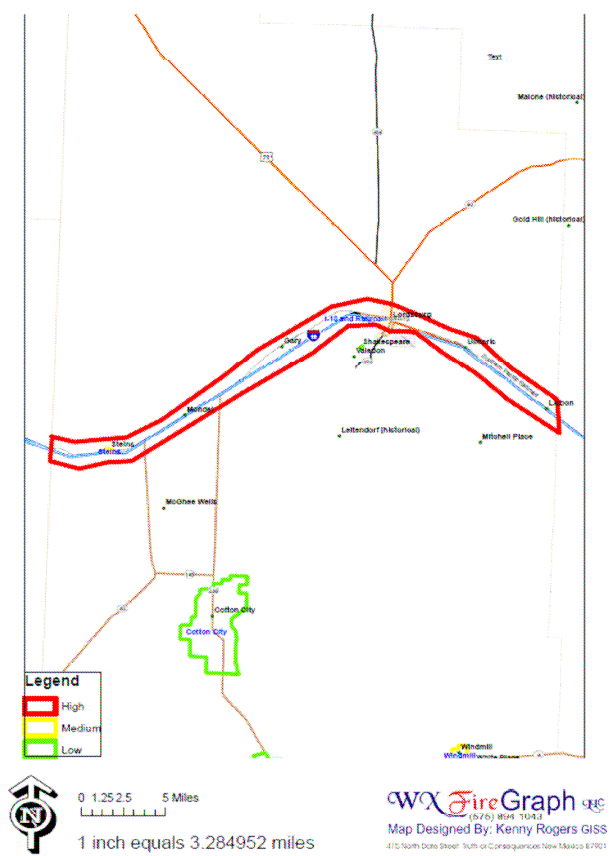
[/WUI Rodeo Rancho CWPP Nad27UTM13N 06052009MDY.pdf](#)

**HIDALGO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT** has a total of 3 WUI's in their area of response.

✓ **Transportation Corridor (I-10, SP Railroad, and various pipelines)**

Located in the north central part of county, run east to west though the county. Hidalgo county fire department responds to all but 3 miles of the 55 miles. Lordsburg Fire Department covers only within their city limits. This WUI has the largest number on human caused fires in the county. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Hidalgo County Fire Department is located within this WUI. Water supply consists of no storage tanks or hydrants. The only water supply is the water on Hidalgo County engines. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 25-75 miles of 2 lane-paved roads. Road system is paved interstate good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation of mostly Desert Grasslands, with a mix of Montane and Chihuahuan Desert Scrubs Terrain is mostly flat with some hills less than 40% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the interstate and railroad tracks. Set up a schedule for Highway Department and Railroad Company to maintain the vegetation with in this WUI. Post public education signs along the roadways. This should help educate the large numbers of visitors though this area and that unaware of the local fire risks.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
I-10 and Railroad**



**Map 11. I-10 and Railroad**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps\WUI I-10 CWPP Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Steins Ghost Town**

Located 22 mile west of Lordsburg, New Mexico. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Hidalgo County Fire Department is located 22 miles east of this WUI. Water supply consists of no storage tanks or hydrants. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 25 miles of 2 lane-paved roads and 3 miles on interstate highway. Road system is dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation of mostly Chihuahuan Desert Scrub Terrain is mostly flat and less than 20% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Steins Ghost Town**



00.015.03 0.06 Miles  
|-----|-----|-----|

1 inch equals 0.045044 miles

**WX FireGraph** gis  
(575) 894 1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GIS  
415 North Date Street Truth or Consequences New Mexico 87901

**Map 12. WUI-Steins Ghost Town**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Steins CWPP Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

✓ **Shakespeare**

Located 3 miles southwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Hidalgo County Fire Department is located 3 miles northeast of this WUI. Water supply consists of no storage tanks or hydrants. Animas Fire Department has the closest water tender to support fire suppression with a distance of 38 miles of 2 lane-paved roads and 1-mile dirt road. Road system is dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is mostly Chihuahuan Desert Scrub and Desert Grasslands. Terrain is mostly flat and less than 20% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Shakespeare**



**Map 13. WUI-Shakespeare**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps\WUI Shakespeare CWPP Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

**VIRDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT** has a total of 1 WUI in their area of response.

✓ **Virden**

Located 33 miles northwest of Lordsburg, New Mexico. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Virden Fire Department is located within this WUI. Water supply consists of 180,000 gallon storage tank and hydrants. Road system is paved and dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Chihuahuan Desert Scrub, Desert Grasslands and Salt Cedar. Terrain is mostly flat and less than 20% slope. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community. Salt cedar can produce extreme fire behavior, reduction and or total removal of this fuel type is recommended.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map**

**Virden**



0 0.050.1 0.2 Miles

1 inch equals 0.152464 miles

**WX FireGraph** LLC  
(575) 894 1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GISS  
415 North Datto Street Truth or Consequences New Mexico 87901

**MAP 14. WUI=Virden**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

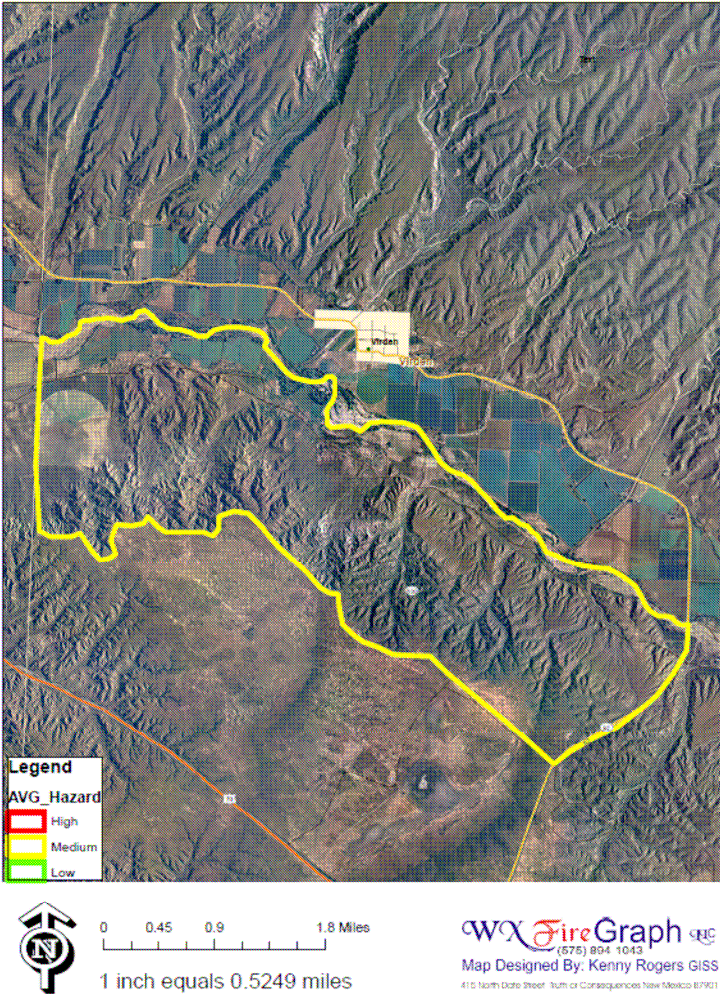
[CWPP HidalgoAppendix A WUI Maps/WUI Virden CWPP Nad27UTM13N 06052009MDY.pdf](#)

**GILA/NEBLETT FIRE DEPARTMENT has a total of 1 WUI in their area of response.**

✓ **Gila Neblett Valley**

Located on the south side of the Gila River south of Virden, New Mexico. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Gila Neblett Fire Department is located within this WUI. There are no hydrants or water storage tanks in this WUI. Some drafting from irrigation ditches is possible but not reliable. Road system is paved and dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Chihuahuan Desert Scrub, Desert Grasslands and Salt Cedar. Terrain is mostly flat in river bottom and up to 80% slope on canyons. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community. Salt cedar can produce extreme fire behavior, reduction and or total removal of this fuel type is recommended.

**CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map  
Gila Neblett Valley**



**Map 15. WUI-Gila Neblett Valley**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI GilaNeblett CWPP Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

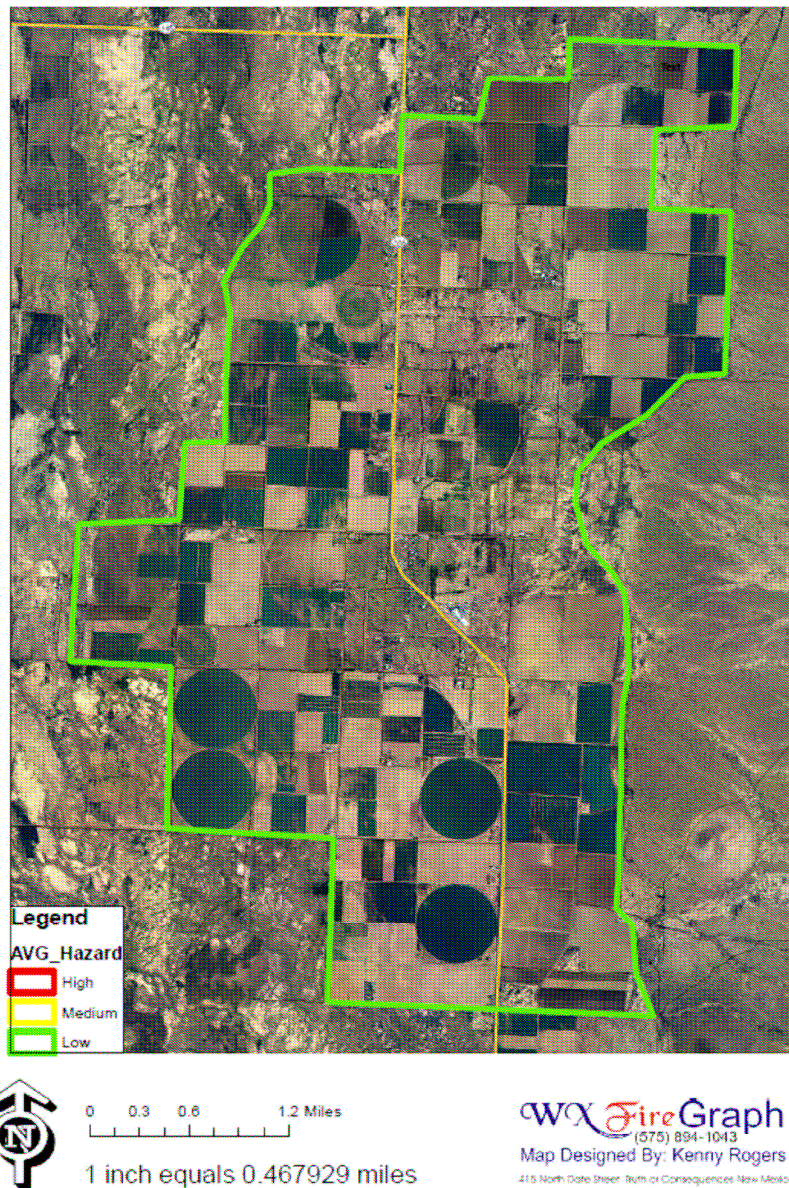
**COTTON CITY FIRE DEPARTMENT** has a total of 1 WUI in their area of response.

✓ **Community of Cotton City**

Located 25 miles Southwest of Lordsburg, NM on State Road 338. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Cotton City Fire Department is located within this WUI. Water supply consists of a 55,000-gallon storage tank and no hydrants. Road system is paved and dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Desert Grasslands. Terrain is mostly flat. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

## **CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map**

### **Cotton City**



**Map 16. WUI-Cotton City**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo\Appendix A WUI Maps\WUI CottonCity CWPP Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)



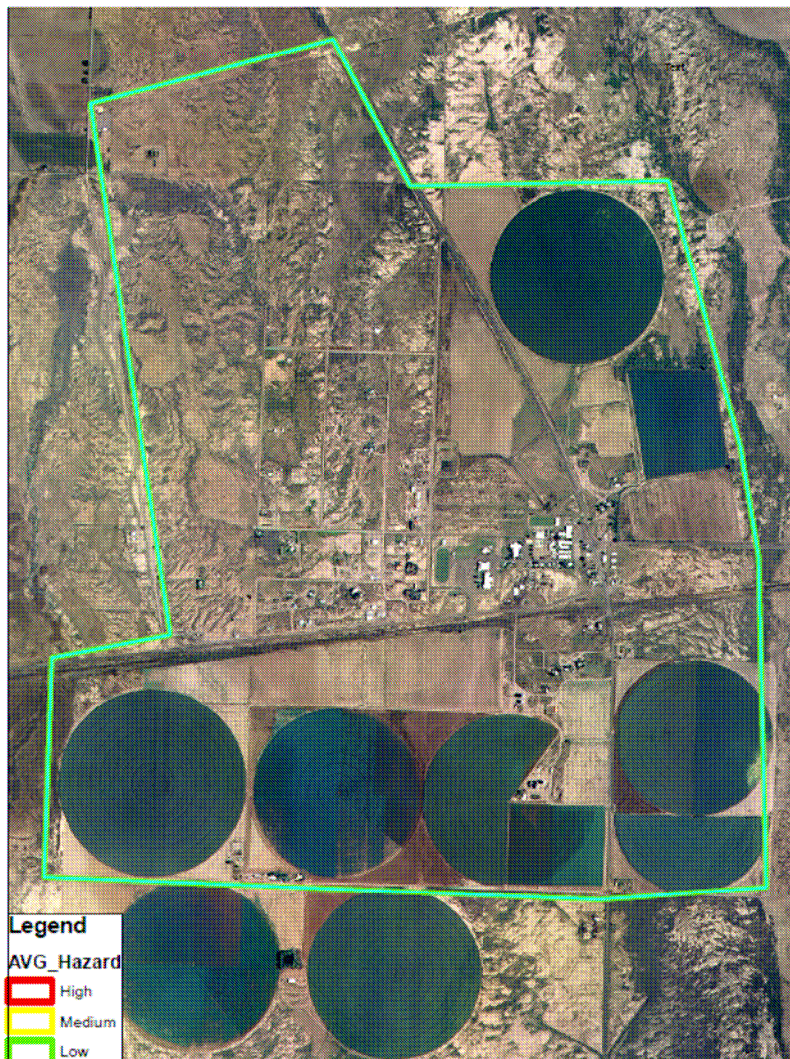
**ANIMAS FIRE DEPARTMENT** has a total of 1 WUI in their area of response.

✓ **Animas**

Located 36 miles Southwest of Lordsburg, NM on State Road 338. WUI Boundary runs along areas that favor wildfire suppression due to fuels, topographic influences, weather, and natural and manmade barriers. Animas Fire Department is located within this WUI. Water supply consists of a 100,000-gallon storage tank and no hydrants. Road system is paved and dirt and has good egress and regress depending on weather conditions. Vegetation is Desert Grasslands. Terrain is mostly flat. The core team recommended the reduction of fuels along the town site boundaries and within the community.

## **CWPP Hidalgo County WUI Map**

### **Animas**



0.0989018 Miles

1 inch equals 0.223185 miles

**WX FireGraph** INC  
(575) 894-1043  
Map Designed By: Kenny Rogers GISS  
415 North Date Street Truth or Consequences New Mexico 87901

**Map 17. WUI-Animas**

**Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\Appendix\\_A\\_WUI Maps\WUI\\_Animas\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **WUI Areas**

The risk assessment identified that the communities, historic/cultural areas, and communication sites in Hidalgo County are at medium to low risk from wildland fire impacts. These ratings do not diminish the need for fuel reduction/management in these areas. Concurrent with efforts to improve and maintain firefighting capacity are fire prevention and public education programs. One method of fire prevention and public education is “defensible space” workshops.

There is increasing recognition that the ability to live more safely in the Wildland Urban Interface, fire-prone environment depends on “pre-fire activities.” Pre-fire activities are actions taken before wildfire occurs which improve the survivability of people and homes by providing for proper vegetation management around homes, (defensible space), use of fire resistant building materials, and appropriate subdivision design. Combustible roofs, roofs, narrow roads, limited access, lack of fire-resistant landscaping, and inadequate water supplies are some of the issues that should be addressed. “Defensible space” includes the following:

- ❖ *Defining the defensible space*, a buffer zone, and a minimum of 30-feet of noncombustible area.
- ❖ *Reducing flammable vegetation, trees and brush around the home*, choosing plants with loose branching, non-resinous woody material, and high moisture content.
- ❖ *Removing or pruning trees*, thinning overcrowded or weakened trees, pruning low hanging branches, and limbing-up “ladder fuels”.
- ❖ *Cutting grass and weeds* regularly, keeping vegetation well watered.
- ❖ *Relocating woodpiles and leftover building materials*; stacking all wood, building debris and other burnable materials at least 30 feet away from the home, and clearing flammable vegetation within ten feet of wood/debris piles.
- ❖ *Keeping both roof and yard clean* (especially the roof) by clearing pine needles, leaves and debris from roof, gutters and yard to eliminate ignition sources.
- ❖ *Signs, addresses, and access*. Easy-to-read road signs and address numbers that are visible from the road allow firefighters to find homes quickly. Safe and easy access includes two-way roads that can accommodate emergency vehicles and give them space to turn around.
- ❖ *Rating roofs*: The roof is the most vulnerable part of the house in a wildfire. If not already fire resistant, roofs should be replaced with approved fire resistant materials.
- ❖ *Recycling yard debris and branches*; check into alternative disposal methods like composting, recycling, or selling the material to small wood/biomass businesses.

**Table 5. Proposed Wildfire Hazard Mitigation for Hidalgo County WUI's**

Wildland-Urban Interface and Infrastructure at Risk	Proposed Fuel Treatment, reduction of wildfire danger and improved FF response	Responsible Party
Hidalgo County Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Outreach and Education</li> <li>• Defensible Space around homes</li> <li>• Fuel Breaks along pasture fences and property boundaries</li> <li>• Fuel break along WUI Boundary</li> <li>• Fuels reduction by mowing, grazing, prescribed burn</li> <li>• Increased water storage capacity</li>   <li>• Maintain vegetation along road ways (Mowing)</li> <li>• Improved Radio Communications</li>   <li>• Increased Training for firefighters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments</li> <li>• Property Owners</li> <li>• Property Owners</li>   <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments</li> <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments and Property Owners</li> <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments/ Hidalgo county</li> <li>• State, County, and City Road Departments</li> <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments/ Hidalgo county</li> <li>• Hidalgo County Fire Departments Departments/NMSF</li> <li>• Property Owners</li> </ul>
Cell Towers & Repeater Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuels reduction by mowing, grazing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Owners</li> </ul>
Electrical transmission sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuels reduction by mowing, grazing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Owners</li> </ul>
Gas Plant Line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuels reduction by mowing, grazing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Owners</li> </ul>
Highways and County Roads Railroads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular Fuels reduction by mowing</li> <li>• Regular Fuels reduction by spraying.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NM-DOT and Hidalgo County Road Department</li> <li>• Property Owners</li> </ul>

**IMPLEMENTATION of PLAN**

Establish a committee to have Annual reviews and update to the CWPP.  
 Establish a County coordinator to oversee the progress of the CWPP.

**EVACUATIONS**

Development of an Evacuation Plan for Gila and Virden could be used for floods and fire incidents. Most areas have minimum evacuation needs.

**TREATMENTS**

Fire behavior responds to fuels, weather, and topography. Changes to fuels, for example from prescribed fire burning or thinning, are related to potential fire behavior at that site and have resulted in reduced severity of wildfires where fuel treatments have occurred. The two basic methods available for altering vegetative conditions are prescribed fire and mowing. The effectiveness of each of these methods in altering the structure of or reducing the amount of fuels is different. Each type of treatment has a different set of financial costs. The choice of which method to use, to achieve the best combination of risk reduction and environmental effects within the available budget, should be considered.

## **PRESCRIBED FIRE**

Prescribed fire is generally used to remove ground fuels, under-story vegetation, and small trees, and sometimes to kill larger trees. Prescribed fire is often seen as more environmentally benign than other methods for modifying vegetation. Prescribed fire projects are done to enhance wildlife and watersheds through removal of old and decadent growth and thereby stimulating new and vigorous growth of forbs and grasses in those spaces. Chemical treatments remove the woody brush species (creosote and mesquite) and accomplish the same objectives as prescribed fires.

## **MOWING**

Mowing is another option to help remove or reduce the grass in and around Hidalgo County. (Right of ways, private lands, and public lands) There has to be communications with NMDOT, Hidalgo County Road Department and private landowners. At the present time the state mows the right-of-ways once or twice a year. The core group is looking at ways to increase the width of the mowed area and the frequency the areas are mowed.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

Community fire education is critical to assist in the prevention of fire. Most residents are unaware of potential fire hazards that exist. Other residents are aware of the potential of fire, however, they do not know how to minimize these fire hazards. Many of the residents in Hidalgo County are in remote areas far from the limited fire fighting resources within the county. This makes it difficult for firefighting resources to respond to all fires in a timely manner. The goal of any fire education program should be to create an awareness of the potential hazards and effects of fire, with hopes to gain community support with hazard reduction efforts. It is imperative to adequately communicate the advantages of any fire hazard reduction program and to explain the alternatives available. It is also helpful to explore possible funding sources to aid in the implementation of such programs.

## **FIRE CHIEF'S MEETINGS**

The County Fire Departments in conjunction with Hidalgo County Fire Marshall meet once a month and work on Countywide projects together. One of the responsibilities of the Fire Chief's Meetings will be to monitor the projects identified in this plan and identify future projects. The Association will also be responsible for public outreach and education and updating this CWPP. The countywide fire departments will promote fire wise projects and activities throughout Hidalgo County.

## **OPEN BURNING REQUIREMENTS**

When determining which fuels treatment to utilize on your lands consider what will be done with the resulting materials. When doing a prescribed burn or burning slash piles, be aware that the NM Environment Department, Air Quality Bureau, Environmental Improvement Board has a statewide Open Burning Policy in place. Title 20 Environmental Protection, Chapter 2 Part 60 Open Burning states that effective December 31, 2003, open burning of vegetative material under this section shall meet the following requirements:

- For purposes of disposal of such material, burning of areas with non-piled vegetative material does not exceed ten acres per day, or burning of piled, vegetative material, including material gathered in a pit or open container, does not exceed one thousand cubic feet of pile volume per day. In determining daily

burn area and daily burn pile volume, areas or piles that are within three hundred feet of each other shall be considered to constitute a single burn if the burning occurs on the same day and on property under ownership or possessory control of the same person

- Burning shall be conducted at least 300' from any occupied dwelling, workplace or place where people congregate, which is on property owned by or under possessory control of, another person;
- Burning shall begin no earlier than one hour after sunrise, and shall be extinguished no later than one hour before sunset
- Burning shall be attended at all times
- The appropriate local fire department or dispatch or firefighting authority shall be notified prior to burning
- For burns exceeding one acre per day or 100 cubic feet of pile volume per day, the burner shall provide prior notice of the date and location of the burn to all households within one quarter of a mile of the burn
- If the burn will be within one mile of other people, you must visually monitor the smoke from the burn. Watch the smoke and note the color of the smoke and the direction it goes.
- The burner shall consider alternatives to burning prior to igniting a burn
- Material to be burned shall be as dry as practicable
- Effective June 1, 2004, open burning of household waste, other than vegetative material is prohibited.

For more information please contact New Mexico Environment Department, Air Quality Bureau, Smoke Management Program, 2044 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 1-800-224-7009.

## **FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS** **FUELS REDUCTION WITHIN HIDALGO COUNTY**

### **PORIORITIZED FUEL REDUCTION PROJECT NEEDS**

Input from community meetings indicates that support and funding of rural fire departments is the highest priority. Community members recognize that County volunteer firefighters are the first line of defense in any wildland fire situation. The fact that efforts to improve rural fire departments was identified as the highest priority does not reduce the value and need for fuel reduction projects that enhance firefighting efforts. The two outstanding needs indicated the requirement for a multi-faceted approach to mitigating wildland fire risk in the county. Priority ranking for fuels treatments and improving rural fire departments are presented below.

#### **PRIORITY 1 – TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUTURE CORRIDOR FUEL REDUCTION**

The risk assessment identified that transportation infrastructure in the county is at high risk from wildland fire impacts and is the top priority for fuel reduction and risk mitigation. Transportation infrastructure includes the interstate highway; federal, state and county roads; the railroads; pipelines; and electric transmission lines. Human caused fires account for the largest number of wildland fires within the county. Reducing fuels within these corridors will help to reduce the occurrence and size of human caused fires in these areas. Smaller accumulations and shorter grass will reduce

ignition potential, limit fire spread, and help to act as fuel breaks/suppression lines for approaching wildfires. The Hidalgo County CWPP recommends that the County, working with the Department of Transportation, State Forestry, State Land Office, federal agencies, and private property/utility owners develop and implement a program for periodic transportation infrastructure corridor fuel reduction maintenance.

- ✓ **Project one:** This project is to cut and burn the right-of-ways along county roads to establish a firebreak. This will assist in removing fuels along the roads in preparation for fire season.
  - • Acquire two Kubota model L28DT tractors with brush hogs
  - • Acquire two Kubota model L28DT tractors with weed burners
  - • Acquire an enclosed trailer to house control burn equipment
  - • Purchase control burn equipment such as signs, firing equipment, safety equipment and public education materials.
  - • Acquire assistance in purchasing fuel to operate this equipment
  - • Purchase PPE for fire departments to wear during control burns
  
- ✓ **Project two:** Coordinate the frequency of fuel treatments of roadways with NM-DOT, Hidalgo County Road Department, Federal Agencies, and Private land owners.
  - Prioritize identified road system in rank order of: high, moderate, or low.
  - Set up a frequency schedule of fuel treatments for each road system.
  - Have wildland coordinator tract results throughout the year.
  
- ✓ **Project three:** This project is to be able to make the public aware of high fire danger periods within Hidalgo County.
  - • Purchase 60 fire danger signs to be placed along the roadways in Hidalgo County
  - • Purchase 50 red fire danger flags to be distributed to municipal schools, fire departments and government facilities to notify the public of the fire danger.

Federal/State transportation corridors needing periodic fuel reduction maintenance include:

- Interstate Highway 10
- US Highway 70
- State Road 9
- State Road 80
- State Road 81
- State Road 90
- State Road 92
- State Road 113
- State Road 145
- State Road 146
- State Road 338
- State Road 464
- State Road 494

County roads needing periodic fuel reduction maintenance include:

- County Road A27
- County Road A21
- County Road A12
- County Road A9
- County Road C1
- County Road C2

- ✓ **Project Four:** This project is to cut and spray the right-of-ways along railroads to establish a firebreak. This will assist in removing fuels along the railroads in preparation for fire season.
    - • Railroad Companies currently has a spray program and maintains the railroads.
    - This has had a decrease in fires along the railroad's corridors.
    - Maintain a schedule of spraying with the Railroad Companies.
- Private corridors needing periodic fuel reduction maintenance include:
- Union Pacific Railroad
  - Ranch roads

A limited amount of fuel reduction maintenance work may be needed along Gila and Coronado National Forest roads in the Burro, Peloncillo, and Guadalupe Mountains. Additionally, roads crossing BLM lands may need similar treatment. Where fuel accumulations and topography are appropriate, fuel reduction work should be expanded beyond road corridors into adjoining Forest Service and BLM lands. Treatments to reduce fuels might include mowing and tree thinning and in fire-adapted ecosystems: prescribed fire or natural ignition fire management to achieve resource objectives.

Pipelines and electric transmission lines crossing the county are generally located in areas of grass and brush fuel types. The light, flashy nature of the grass/brush fuel type does not pose a major threat to pipelines, electric transmission lines and their associated facilities. Should there be significant grass and brush growth additional maintenance of these corridors may be needed.

## **PRIORITY 2 - DEFENSIBLE SPACE**

One of the priorities for Hidalgo County is to reduce fuels and to create effective defensible space zones around homes that are at risk of being affected by wildfires. Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire towards the structure. It also reduces the chance of a structure fire moving from the building to the surrounding wildland. Defensible space provides room for the firefighters to do their jobs. Your house is more likely to withstand a wildfire if grasses, brush, trees and other common wildland fuels are managed to reduce a fire's intensity. Creating an effective defensible space involves developing a series of management zones in which different treatment techniques are used. Develop defensible space around each building on your property. Include detached garages, storage buildings, barns and other structures in your plan. The actual design and development of your defensible space depends on several factors:

- ◆ size and shape of buildings
- ◆ materials used in their construction
- ◆ slope of the ground on which structures are built
- ◆ surrounding topography
- ◆ sizes and types of vegetation on your property.

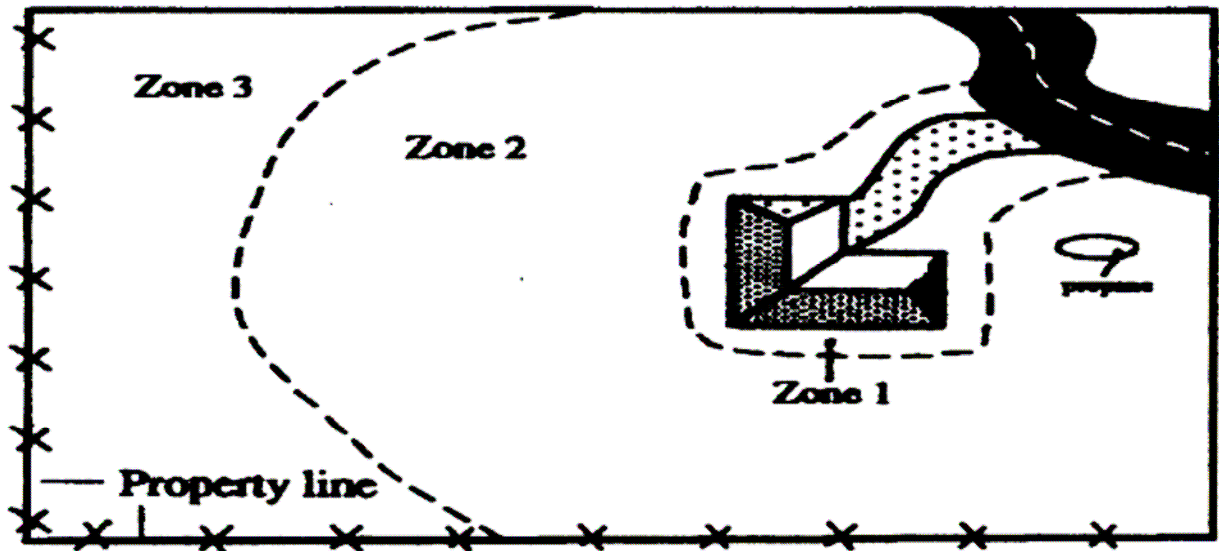


Figure 1: Forested property showing the three fire-defensible zones around a home or other structure.

### Zone 1

The size of Zone 1 is 15 feet, measured from the edges of the structure. Within this zone, several specific treatments are recommended.

- Plant nothing within 3 to 5 feet of the structure, particularly if the siding is a flammable material
- Decorative rock creates an attractive, easily maintained nonflammable ground cover.
- If the house has noncombustible siding, widely spaced foundation plantings of low growing shrubs or other “fire wise” plants are acceptable.
- Do not plant directly beneath windows or next to foundation vents. Be sure there are no areas of continuous grass adjacent to plantings in this area.
- Frequently prune and maintain plants in this zone to ensure vigorous growth and low growth habit.
- Remove dead branches, stems and leaves.
- Do not store firewood or other combustible materials in this area.
- Enclose or screen decks with metal screening.
- Extend the gravel coverage under the decks.
- Do not use areas under decks for storage.
- Remove all trees from Zone 1 to reduce fire hazards. If you do keep one tree, consider it part of the structure and extend the distance of the entire defensible space accordingly. Isolate the tree crown from any other surrounding forest by at least 15 feet. Prune it to at least 15 feet above the ground. Remove any branches that overhang the roof or are within 10 feet of the chimney. Remove all “ladder fuels” from beneath the tree. Ladder fuels are small shrubs, trees, tree limbs and other materials that allow fire to climb into the tree crown –the branches and foliage.



## **Zone 2**

- Selectively remove (thin) trees and large shrubs so there is at least 10 feet between crowns. Crown separation is measured from the furthest branch of one tree to the nearest branch on the next tree, not from tree trunk to tree trunk. On steep slopes, allow more space between tree crowns.
- Remove all ladder fuels (undergrowth) from these remaining trees.
- Carefully prune trees to a height of 10 feet.
- Thin the inner portion of Zone 2 more heavily than the outer portions. Gradually increase tree density as you approach Zone 3. As a rule of thumb, the recommended width of defensible space from the structure to the outer edge of Zone 2 will increase as slope percent increases.
- Isolated shrubs may remain, provided they are not under tree crowns.
- Prune and maintain these plants periodically to maintain vigorous growth.
- Remove dead stems from trees and shrubs annually.
- Limit the number of dead trees (snags) retained in this area. Wildlife needs only one or two snags per acre. Be sure any snags left for wildlife cannot fall onto the house or block access roads or driveways.
- Mow grasses (or remove them with a weed trimmer) as needed through the growing season to keep them low, a maximum of 6 or 8 inches. This is extremely critical in the fall when grasses dry out and cure or in the spring after the snow is gone but before plants green up.
- Stack firewood and woodpiles uphill or on the same elevation as the structure at least 30 feet away.
- Clear and keep away flammable vegetation within 10 feet of these woodpiles.
- Do not stack wood against your house or on or under your deck, even in winter. Many homes have burned from a woodpile that ignited as the fire passed. Wildfires can burn at any time of year in the southwest.
- Locate propane tanks at least 30 feet from any structures, preferably on the same elevation as the house. Clear and keep away flammable vegetation within 10 feet of these tanks.
- Do not screen propane tanks with shrubs or vegetation.
- Dispose of slash (limbs, branches and other woody debris) removed from your trees and shrubs by chipping, lop and scattering or by piling and burning.

## **Zone 3**

Zone 3 is an area of management for landowner objectives and is of no particular size. It extends from the edge of Zone 2 to your property boundaries. In this area you are encouraged to manage your forests in a more traditional manner. Typical management objectives for areas surrounding home sites or subdivisions are:

- Provide optimal recreational opportunities
- Enhance aesthetics
- Maintain tree health and vigor
- Provide barriers from wind, noise, dust and visual intrusions
- Support limited production of firewood, fence posts and other forest commodities; or grow Christmas trees or trees for transplanting.
- Prune trees along trails and fire access roads.
- Any approved method of slash treatment is acceptable for this zone, including piling and burning, chipping or lop and scatter.

### **PRIORITY 3 - FUEL BREAKS AROUND WUI BOUNDARIES**

Hidalgo County will assist federal and state agencies to reduce fuels and to create fuel breaks adjacent to a community's outer perimeter of homes. A fuel break is a strategically located block or strip of land in which a cover of dense, heavy or flammable vegetation has been permanently changed to one of lower fuel volume and reduced flammability. A well-designed fuel break may provide an area in which firefighters can attempt to stop an oncoming fire. In the past the Fire Department would use a dozer to scrape "fuel breaks" around developments in areas of overgrown graze land. After a concern about violating the "anti-donation" clause the practice was terminated. Clarification needs to be made and if allowable, the practice should be continued. When planning for fuel break locations, the following factors should be considered:

- Fuel types and loading
- Topographical features
- Prevailing winds
- Access
- Proximity to homes
- Archaeological sites should be avoided
- Presence of threatened and endangered species

**Acquire funding to assist federal and state agencies with fuel breaks.**

**Fuel breaks may be beyond the scope of the County. In that case, the NM State Forestry may be consulted. Hazardous fuels monies are available from state and federal agencies for more information visit the New Mexico State Forestry website, [www.nmforestry.com](http://www.nmforestry.com), or the local NRCS Office, or the Funding Sources list in Appendix H of this CWPP.**

### **TREATMENT OF STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY**

There is an increased interest to build subdivisions in undeveloped areas throughout Hidalgo County. As such, the Hidalgo County recognizes the need to provide guidelines to homeowners and communities to reduce the potential of structural ignitability. The recommendations include:

- The placement of water storage tanks anywhere those homes are going to be built.
- Public education and outreach.
- Implementing the guidelines made by the NM State Forestry Publication, *Living with Fire*.

The primary determinants of a home's ability to survive wildfire are its roofing material and the quality of the "defensible space" surrounding it.

### **ICC WUI Codes**

For homes and communities that are already established the suggestions made in the Action Plan, Proposed Wildfire Hazard Mitigation for Hidalgo County WUI's, address reducing structural ignitability. There are ICC WUI codes that may be adopted to assist Hidalgo County. The core group discussed this, but at this time there were no need to implement the ICC codes within Hidalgo County. Public education would serve Hidalgo County citizens in a more proactive way.

### **DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND FIREWISE ANNUAL CHECKLIST**

- Trees and shrubs are properly thinned and pruned within the defensible space.
- Slash from thinning is disposed of.
- Roof and gutters are clear of debris.
- Branches overhanging the roof and chimney are removed.

- Chimney screens are in place and in good condition
- Grass and weeds are mowed to a low height.
- An outdoor water supply is available, complete with a hose and nozzle that can reach all parts of the house.
- Fire extinguishers are checked and in working order.
- The driveway is wide enough with clearance of trees and branches adequate for fire and emergency equipment. (Check with your local fire department.)
- Road signs and your name and house number are posted and easily visible.
- There is an easily accessible tool storage area with rakes, hoes, axes and shovels for use in case of fire.
- You have practiced family fire drills and your fire evacuation plan.
- Your escape routes, meeting points, and other details are known and understood by all family members.
- Attic, roof, eaves, and foundation vents are screened and in good condition.
- Stilt foundations and decks are enclosed, screened or walled up.
- Trash and debris accumulations are removed from the defensible space.

## **IMPROVING FIREFIGHTING CAPACITY**

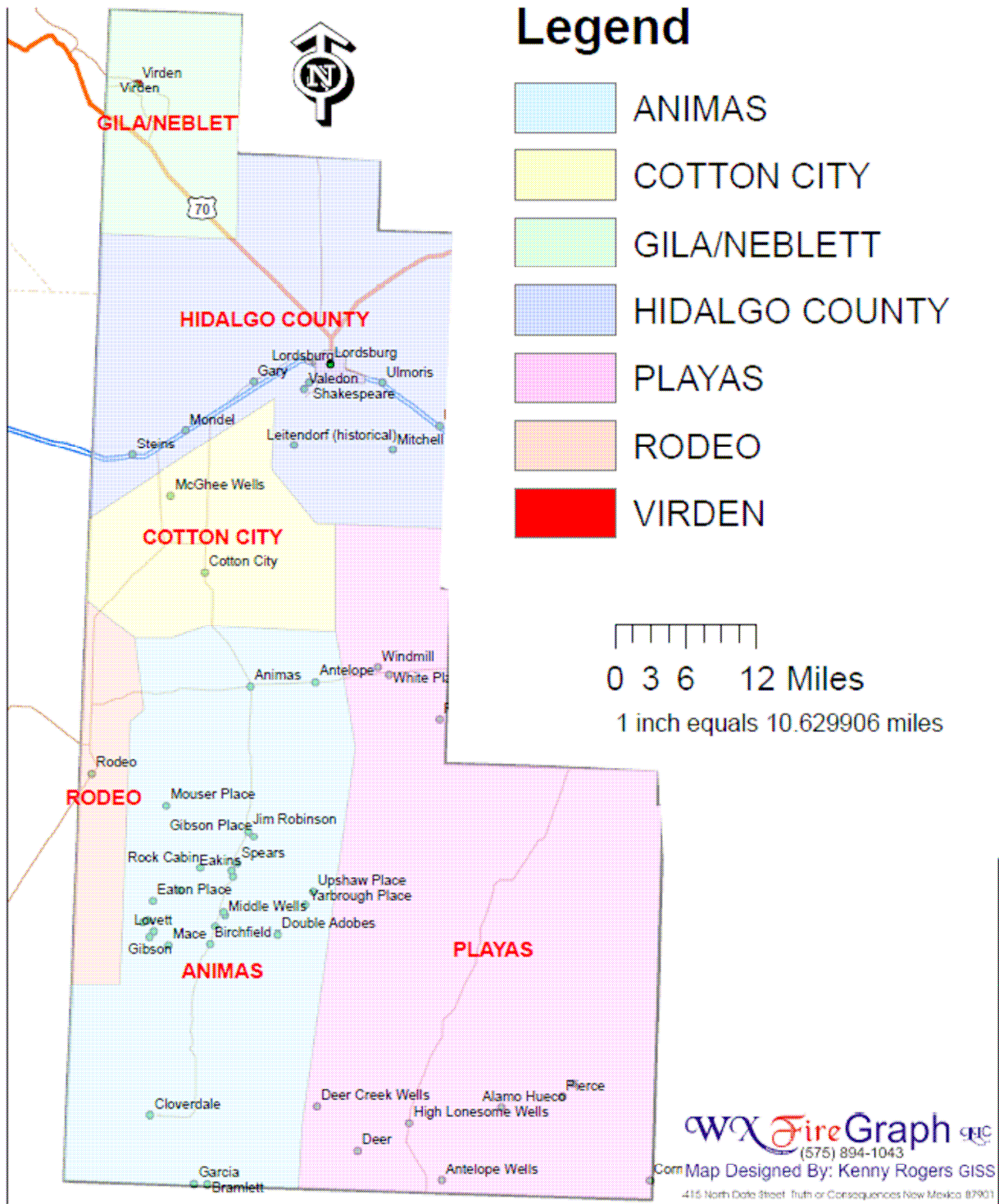
### **FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

Hidalgo County is served by two municipal fire departments: City of Lordsburg Fire Department and Village of Virden Volunteer Fire Department and six rural volunteer fire departments: Animas, Cotton City, Gila/Neblett, Hidalgo County District 1, Playas, and Rodeo. Table 1 lists the ISO insurance rating of each fire department.

**Table 6. Fire Department ISO Ratings.**

<b>Fire Department</b>	<b>ISO Rating</b>
Animas	9
Cotton City	9
Gila/Neblett	9
Hidalgo County District 1	9
City of Lordsburg	7
Playas	5
Rodeo	9
Village of Virden	9

# Hidalgo County VFD Response Area



**Map 18. Hidalgo County Fire Department Response Area.**

*Electronic Maps Disk:*

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix B County Maps/CWPP VFD Response Area 8x11 Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

## **WILDLAND COORDINATOR**

The first recommendation for improving fire response and capabilities is for the county to hire an experienced Wildland Coordinator. The position could be funded directly by Hidalgo County or through a grant. A Wildland Coordinator could coordinate efforts to address many of the recommendations made in this CWPP. For example, a Wildland Coordinator could:

- Work with the County Commission to improve firefighter safety,
- Create unification among the volunteer fire departments,
- Write grants to bring additional fire program money into Hidalgo County,
- Initiate fire education and public outreach programs,
- Coordinate efforts to bring about fuel break and encourage landowners to incorporate defensible space.

This recommendation should be a priority for Hidalgo County. A professional, experienced Wildland Coordinator could be a tremendous asset to Hidalgo County and the Fire Service within the County.

## **TRAINING**

Objective:

To seek instructors to provide certification training to a small number of students at a time (5 or less), due to the distance for volunteers to travel for training.

Provide training that can be broken down into small units to provide the opportunity for the shift-work schedules to attend training.

To build capacity and knowledge so that the recognized volunteer fire departments in Hidalgo County can not only assist the state and federal agencies in wildfire suppression and protection but can also be a complementary force to all wildland fire management activities. Members of Volunteer Fire Departments would serve as the Initial Attack with an Incident Commander until state and/or federal agencies arrive.

Seek funding and resources for training through NM State, BLM, USFS, Private Sector, and/or grants.

## **TRAINING EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**

Various training videos and manuals, including:

- “Essentials in Firefighting” and
- “Wildland Fire Training” (videos)

Every firefighter in Hidalgo County should have at least the introductory Wildland firefighter training courses. These courses provide training in the proper use of firefighting tools and apparatus, basic fire behavior, and weather. The minimum training recommendations include:

- S-130 Firefighting Training
- S-190 Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior
- I-100 Introduction to Incident Command System
- L-180 Human Factors on the Fire line
- RT-130 The annual fire line safety refresher

Additional and encouraged Wildland firefighting training courses include:

- S-131 Firefighter Type 1
- S-133 Look Up, Look Down, Look Around
- S-211 Portable Pumps and Water Use
- S-215 Fire Operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface
- S-290 Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior
- S-260 Interagency Incident Business Management

- L-280 Followership to Leadership

Training should be coordinated through the Socorro District Office of NM State Forestry. Training may be taken from any NWCG qualified instructor. Wildland firefighter training courses that are available in the southeastern portion of the state are posted on the Alamogordo Interagency Dispatch Center Website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/gila/fire/>). Other training may be available to the fire departments through the local Bureau of Land Management office. Funding may be available through New Mexico State Forestry to pay for instructors to conduct Wildland courses at the fire departments. APPENDIX F IS COMPLETE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIDALGO FIREFIGHTERS. For more information on qualifications and required trainings go to [www.NWCG.gov](http://www.NWCG.gov) and select NWCG publications, then Qualifications, or call the Fire Management Officer at New Mexico State Forestry.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Equipment needs include personnel protective equipment (PPE), tools and apparatus. Wildland fire clothing, PPE, is very different from the bunker gear used in structural firefighting. Every firefighter needs a full set of PPE that fits well and meets the minimum standards established by the National Fire Protection Association. PPE includes Nomex Wildland fire pants and shirt, leather gloves, an appropriate helmet, and a pair of high-topped leather boots with a vibram sole, no steel toe. Each firefighter also needs a fire shelter, which is to be carried on them at all times. Training in the proper deployment of the fire shelter is critical, and should be practiced periodically as a training exercise. Training shelters should be purchased as they are reusable and provide a cost effective way to provide periodic shelter deployment training. Other equipment needs include; a headlamp, goggles, water bottles, MREs, water, first aid kits, maps, compasses, Global Positioning Systems, sleeping bags, hand held radios for every firefighter, chainsaws, hand tools and bladder bags. Recommended hand tools include Pulaski, McLeods, shovels, and flappers. Because of the shortage of draft sites in the County, each Fire Department needs a Type II Water Tender. Each department should have at least one, preferably two, Type VI Wildland fire engine. The engine should be four-wheel drive and be equipped with a mobile radio, water tank and pump with draft capabilities, hose, hose adapters and valves, nozzles, spanner wrench, drafting equipment and Foam capabilities. Each engine should also carry a bolt cutter.

Training, PPE, Equipment and Apparatus requirements are outlined in the New Mexico Resource Mobilization Plan and at the National Wildfire Coordinating Group website, [www.NWCG.gov](http://www.NWCG.gov).

## **ENHANCED 911 (E911)**

Not all areas of the county are covered by E911 emergency dispatch capability.

- Acquire funding to complete project.
- Hire a person for the oversight and completion of project.
- Acquire GIS.
- Assess ranch structures and improvements county wide (# of structures E-911 Data)

## **Communications**

There is a shortage of mobile and handheld radios in the county fire departments that are P-25 compliant and can be readily utilized on multi-agency incidents. Additionally, there are several areas in the county where radio and/or cell phone communications are not possible. Please refer to Appendix E for an analysis of radio communication coverage.

- Complete a study of the topography and locate the best places for repeaters and other communication equipment though out Hidalgo County.
- Acquire funding and purchase handheld P-25 compliant radios for each member of each fire department.
- Have a person in charge of communication in Hidalgo County to coordinate with each fire chief.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The fire departments across the county are not able to consistently provide their volunteers with wildland PPE. In some instances, fire department members either use structure firefighting PPE or street cloths.

- Funding – State (Volunteer Fire Assistance) and Federal (BLM - Rural Fire Assistance, FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program) grants are available to the county fire departments. However, the fire departments do not necessarily have the capacity to apply for the grants.
- Acquire funding for a grant writer.

## **FIRE APPARATUS**

Several fire departments have been able to acquire new structure firefighting apparatus including engines and tenders. These do not necessarily lend themselves to the remote, rugged nature of many wildland fires that the departments are called to suppress. Most fire departments have to rely on brush trucks, type 6 engines, and converted military trucks that are nearing the end of their serviceable lives. Proposed apparatus acquisitions for each department include:

- One Wildland Urban Interface unit (NFPA 1901 standard).
- Two type 6 wildland units, 4X4.
- Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gallon with Water pumpkins (water supply containers)

## **COMMUNITY FIREFIGHTING WATER SUPPLIES**

The rural fire departments can increase their firefighting capacity; improve their ISO ratings; and lower homeowner insurance premiums with the addition or upgrade of community firefighting water storage tanks and hydrants.

- Acquire funding for hydrants systems
- Acquire funding for water storage tanks.
- Acquire funding for water transportation systems.

## **RECRUITMENT and RETENTION of VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS**

Possible programs to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters include:

- Training – Offer local training, to small groups, in blocks scheduled around volunteer firefighter employment commitments. Training opportunities will build capacity and knowledge so that the fire departments in Hidalgo County can not only assist state and federal agencies in wildfire suppression and protection but

can also be a complementary force to all wildland fire management activities including deployment to incidents outside of the county and New Mexico. A suggested training plan is included in Appendix E.

- Stipend – Ask the voters to approve a tax increase to provide the volunteers with a “nominal fee” to help offset the costs of being a volunteer (fuel, clothing, child care).

Insurance – Provide low cost health, disability, and life insurance to the volunteer firefighters.

## FIRE DEPARTMENT FUNDING GUIDELINES

Currently fire funds are based on ISO rating which are based strictly on structural firefighting capabilities. Fire Departments in rural areas, like Hidalgo County, receive more wildfire calls than structure fire calls annually. However, funding from the State Fire Fund cannot be used to purchase Wildland fire apparatus, equipment, or Personal Protection Equipment. Each department needs to be able to assess the needs of their department and purchase equipment according to their individual needs.

- Acquire funding from other agencies both state and Federal.
- Have a program for volunteer departments to acquire PPE form wildland agencies.

## HIDALGO COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT NEEDS

Table 7. Fire Department Wildland Equipment Needs Assessment

Fire Dept.	Current Equipment	Additional Wildland Equipment Needs	Training Needs
<b>HIDALGO COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT</b>	ENGINE 8- Type1 Engine ENGINE 7- Type 6 Engine ENGINE 6- Type 6 Engine ENGINE 9- Type 5 Engine	<b>Priority 1:</b> Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901 <b>Priority 2:</b> Two type 6 Wildland units <b>Priority 3:</b> Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers) <b>Priority 4:</b> Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE ➤ Wildland approved pants/coveralls ➤ Wild land approved head gear ➤ Wild land approved gloves ➤ Wild land approved boots <b>Priority 5:</b> Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld <b>Priority 6:</b> Other equipment. ➤ Drip Torches ➤ Backpack pumps ➤ Fire shelters ➤ Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.	S-130/190, I-100 L-180 S-211 S-212 S-201 S-290 Annual Fire Safety Refresher
<b>COTTON CITY VOL. FIRE DEPT.</b>	STRUCTURE PUMPER 2- Type 1 Engine BRUSH TRUCK 1- Type 6 Engine BRUSH TRUCK 2- Type 6 Engine	<b>Priority 1:</b> Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901 <b>Priority 2:</b> Two type 6 Wildland units <b>Priority 3:</b> Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers) <b>Priority 4:</b> Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE ➤ Wildland approved pants/coveralls ➤ Wild land approved head gear ➤ Wild land approved gloves ➤ Wild land approved boots <b>Priority 5:</b> Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld <b>Priority 6:</b> Other equipment. ➤ Drip Torches ➤ Backpack pumps ➤ Fire shelters ➤ Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.	S-130/190, I-100 L-180 S-211 S-212 S-201 S-290 Annual Fire Safety Refresher



**ANIMAS  
VOL FIRE  
DEPT.**

ENGINE 1 – Type 2 Engine  
ENGINE 2 – Type 6 Engine  
TANKER 1 – Type 1 Water  
Tender

- Priority 1:** Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901
- Priority 2:** Two type 6 Wildland units
- Priority 3:** Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers)
- Priority 4:** Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE
  - Wildland approved pants/coveralls
  - Wild land approved head gear
  - Wild land approved gloves
  - Wild land approved boots
- Priority 5:** Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld
- Priority 6:** Other equipment.
  - Drip Torches
  - Backpack pumps
  - Fire shelters
  - Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.

S-130/190,  
I-100  
L-180  
S-211  
S-212  
S-201  
S-290  
Annual Fire  
Safety Refresher

**RODEO  
VOL. FIRE  
DEPT.**

PUMPER 1 – Type 1 Engine  
BRUSH TRUCK 1 – Type 6  
Engine

- Priority 1:** Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901
- Priority 2:** Two type 6 Wildland units
- Priority 3:** Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers)
- Priority 4:** Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE
  - Wildland approved pants/coveralls
  - Wild land approved head gear
  - Wild land approved gloves
  - Wild land approved boots
- Priority 5:** Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld
- Priority 6:** Other equipment.
  - Drip Torches
  - Backpack pumps
  - Fire shelters
  - Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.

S-130/190,  
I-100  
L-180  
S-211  
S-212  
S-201  
S-290  
Annual Fire  
Safety Refresher

**PLAYAS  
VOL. FIRE  
DEPT.**

ENGINE 3 – Type 2 Engine  
ENGINE 5 – Type 6 Engine  
ENGINE 5 – Type 1 Engine  
ENGINE 7 – Type 6 Engine

- Priority 1:** Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901
- Priority 2:** Two type 6 Wildland units
- Priority 3:** Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers)
- Priority 4:** Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE
  - Wildland approved pants/coveralls
  - Wild land approved head gear
  - Wild land approved gloves
  - Wild land approved boots
- Priority 5:** Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld
- Priority 6:** Other equipment.
  - Drip Torches
  - Backpack pumps
  - Fire shelters
  - Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.

S-130/190,  
I-100  
L-180  
S-211  
S-212  
S-201  
S-290  
Annual Fire  
Safety Refresher

**GILA-  
NEBLITT  
FIRE DEPT.**

GILA 3 – Type 2 Engine  
GILA 2 – Type 3 Water  
Tender

- Priority 1:** Wildland/urban interface unit NFPA 1901
- Priority 2:** Two type 6 Wildland units
- Priority 3:** Type 2 Water Tender, 2,500 gal. with Water pumpkins (water supply containers)
- Priority 4:** Wildland Personal Protective Equipment PPE
  - Wildland approved pants/coveralls
  - Wild land approved head gear
  - Wild land approved gloves
  - Wild land approved boots
- Priority 5:** Communications Radio Mobile and Handheld
- Priority 6:** Other equipment.
  - Drip Torches
  - Backpack pumps
  - Fire shelters
  - Weather kits/manual electronic weather stations.

S-130/190,  
I-100  
L-180  
S-211  
S-212  
S-201  
S-290  
Annual Fire  
Safety Refresher

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure this document remains a “LIVING DOCUMENT” and does not just reside on a shelf, several operational and monitoring tasks must be completed:

- Develop individual Community CWPPs to address specific needs for each WUI area.
- Establish and fund a Hidalgo County Wildland Fire Coordinator. This position will be a critical link between state and federal land management agencies and the Hidalgo County Board of Commissioners.
- Hold quarterly review and follow up meetings to keep plan implementation on track, to outline priorities and projects, and celebrate accomplishments.
- Conduct annual reviews and document update amendments or accomplishments.
- Track accomplishments on a simple document or spreadsheet and forward to members of the core group.
- Keep community leaders engaged in the prioritization, accomplishments, and long term planning needed to make this plan and its implementation a long-term success. Implementation of these recommendations is critical to long-term success of the Hidalgo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

It should be noted that this community wildfire protection plan does not provide specifics as to work needed in Hidalgo County to protect its communities, infrastructure, and watersheds from catastrophic wildfire or to restore forest and rangelands to a more health state. It also does not attempt to develop treatment prescriptions, management actions, or on-the-ground management options. The plan simply identifies areas, issues and concerns of community members and government officials as called for in the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. It is agreed that areas of concern presented in this plan will become the focal point for collaborative risk mitigation and forest and rangeland restoration activities for the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Land Office, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico Forestry Division, Soil and Water Conservation District and others.

All of the issues presented are of great importance to the citizens of Hidalgo County and cannot be isolated from the overall goal of safety and fire mitigation.

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# **Appendix A –WUI Maps**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Animas\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Antelope Wells\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Big Hachet Peak\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI CottonCity\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI GilaNeblett\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Gillespie Mountain\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI I-10\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Playas Town Site\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Rodeo\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Rodeo Rancho\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Shakespeare\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Steins\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Virden\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix A WUI Maps/WUI Windmill\\_CWPP\\_Nad27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

# **Appendix B- County Maps**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C County Maps/CWPP Hidalgo FireHistory 8x11 NAD27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C County Maps/CWPP Hidalgo Ownership 8x11 NAD27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C County Maps/CWPP Hidalgo WUI 8x11 NAD27UTM13N.pdf](#)

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C County Maps/CWPP Hidalgo VFD Response Area 8x11 NAD27UTM13N.pdf](#)

# Appendix C-Communication Maps

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/COMM\\_Big Hatchet Peak\\_CWPP\\_NAD27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/GRMC\\_Bill Evans VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/COMM\\_Gellespie Mountain\\_CWPP\\_NAD27UTM13N\\_06052009MDY.pdf](#)

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/WNMTC\\_Glenwood Brushy VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/GRMC\\_Hatchie VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/Jacks Peak VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

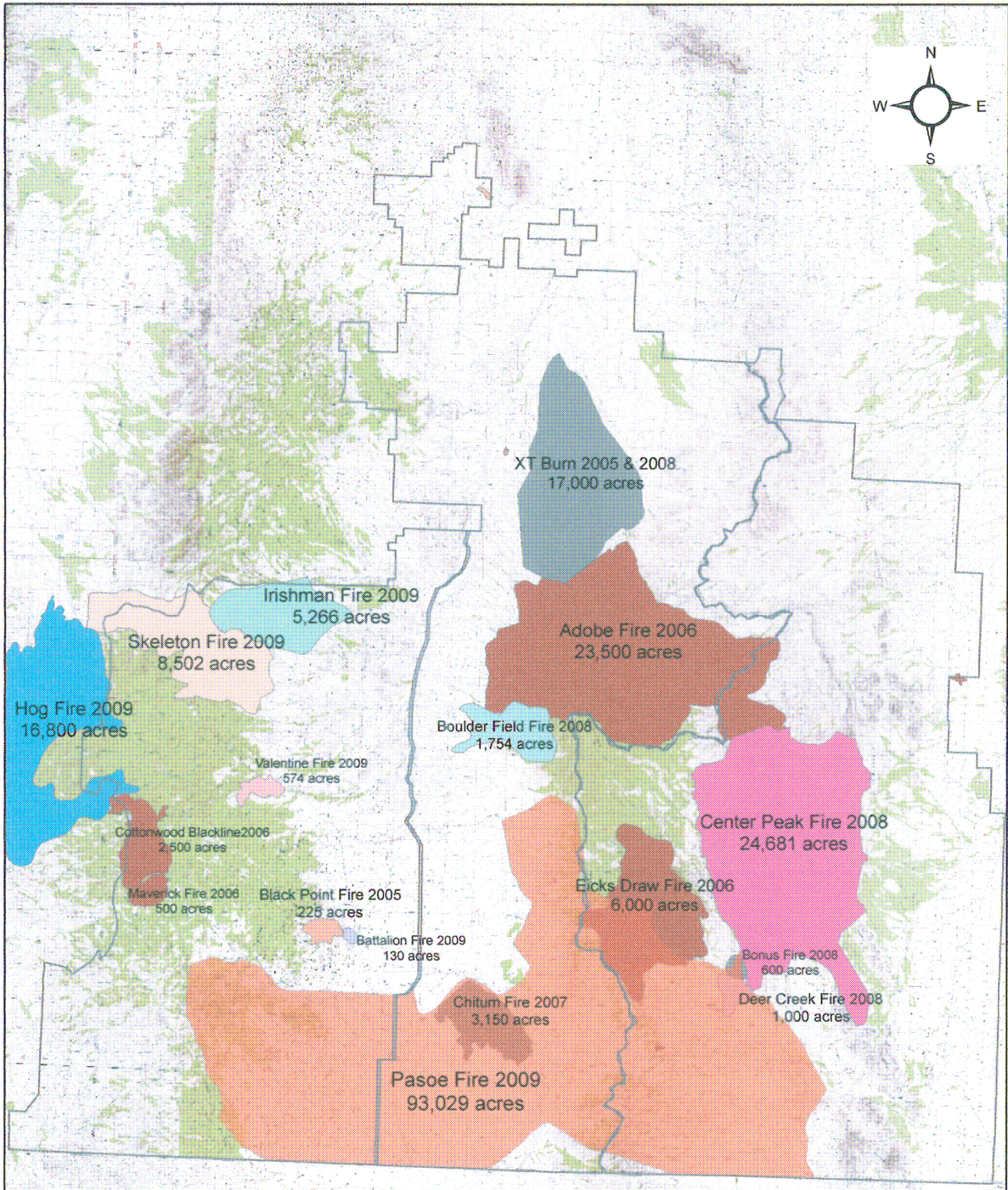
[CWPP\\_Hidalgo\\_Appendix C\\_Communication Maps/Lookout Mtn VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

# **APPENDIX D**

## **ANIMAS FOUNDATION DIAMOND A** **RANCH** **FIRE MAPS**

*Maps prepared by:  
Sam Smith, Grassland Restoration Inc.  
Used by permission:  
Animas Foundation Diamond A Ranch*

**Diamond A Ranch Central and Eastern Divisions  
Diamond A Ranch Western Division, LLC  
FIRES 2005-2009**

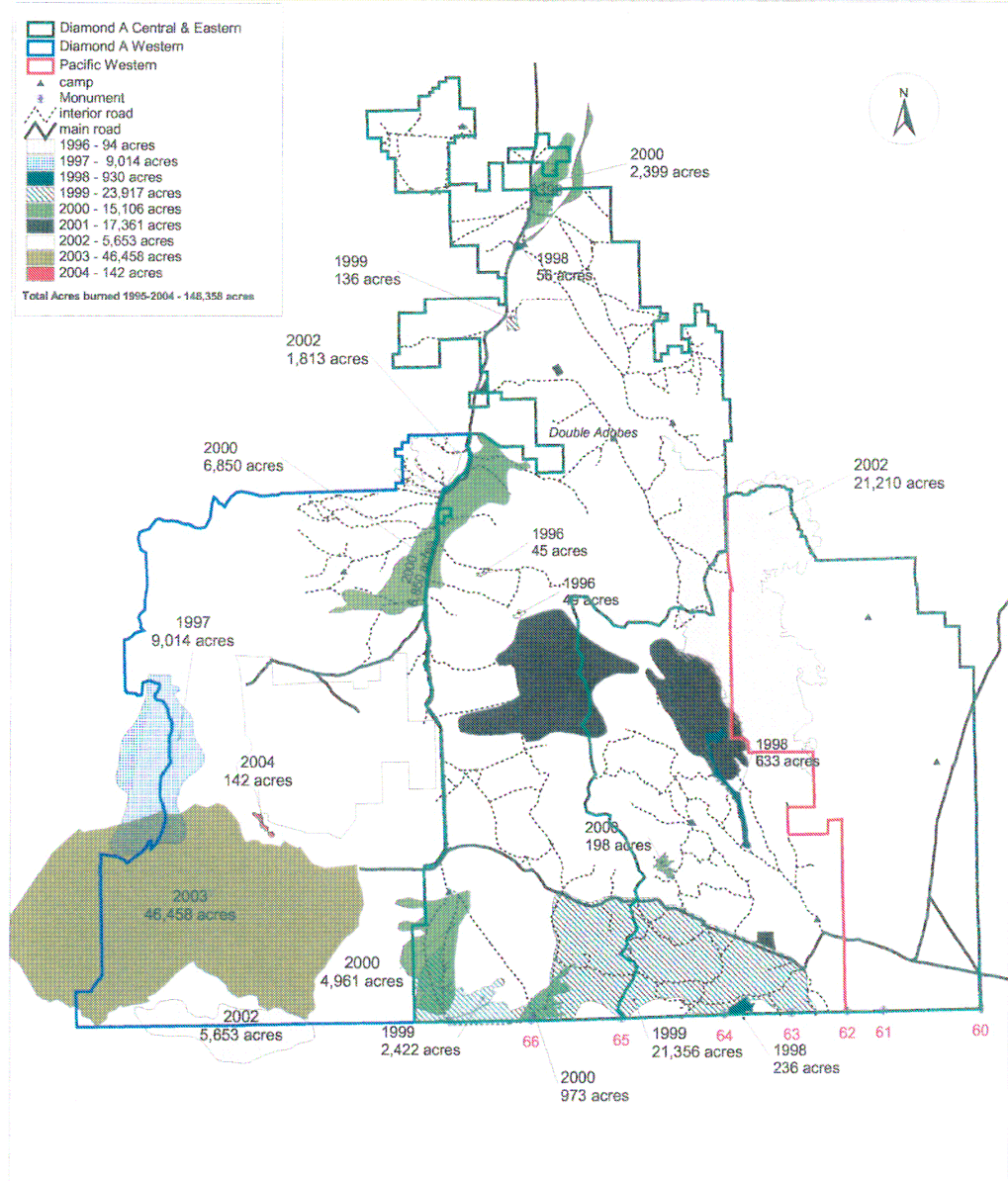


Scale 1:280,000  
0 2 4 8 12 16 Miles

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are for display and discussion purposes only.  
Grassland Restoration Inc. All Rights reserved.  
DO NOT COPY.  
(SWS - 23Sept.09)



# Animas Foundation Diamond A Ranch Central & Eastern Divisions Diamond A Ranch Western Division, LLC Fires 1995-2004

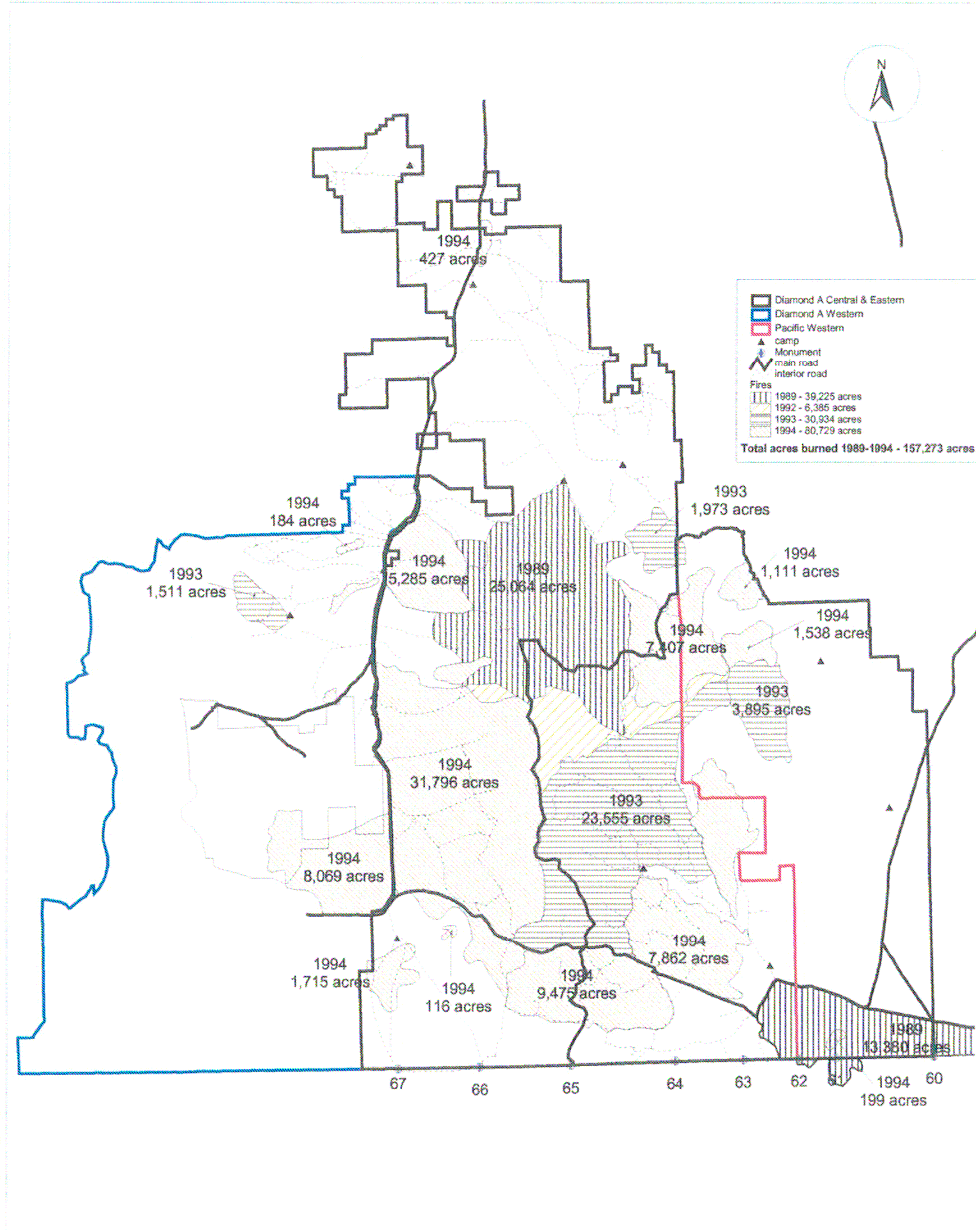


Scale 1:235,000

6 0 6 12 Miles

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# Animas Foundation Diamond A Ranch Central & Eastern Divisions Diamond A Ranch Western Division, LLC Fires - 1989-1994



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**APPENDIX E**  
**RADIO COMMUNICATION**  
**ANALYSIS**

## 1. Communication Sites

### **Objective**

The objective is to mitigate the threat of an intense wildfire that could threaten the communications equipment at the site. Hidalgo County has very limited communications - communication is poor or non-existent in most parts of the county. The maps of communication converge below will help identify the problem areas. A plan needs to be developed to resolve the communication areas. The plan should include time frames and funding sources.

## 2. Communication Needs

### **Objective**

The objective is to improve communications between federal, state, county and local entities to maximize the use of current communications infrastructure and improve communications where they are currently inadequate and unsafe. Work Completed and Work Scheduled are itemized in the Action Plan.

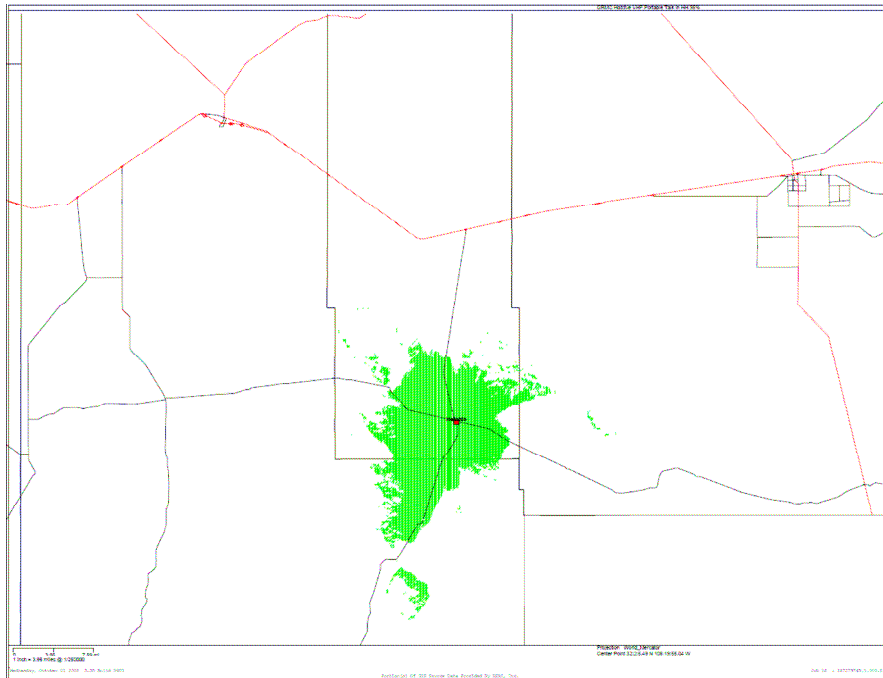
## 3. Communications/Emergency Operations Plan

### **Objective**

The purpose of this plan is to describe how Hidalgo County will handle emergency situations and/or disasters within its jurisdiction. It assigns responsibilities for emergency preparedness and planning and for coordinating Emergency response activities before, during and after any type of emergency or disaster.

## 4. Communication Sites in surrounding Counties

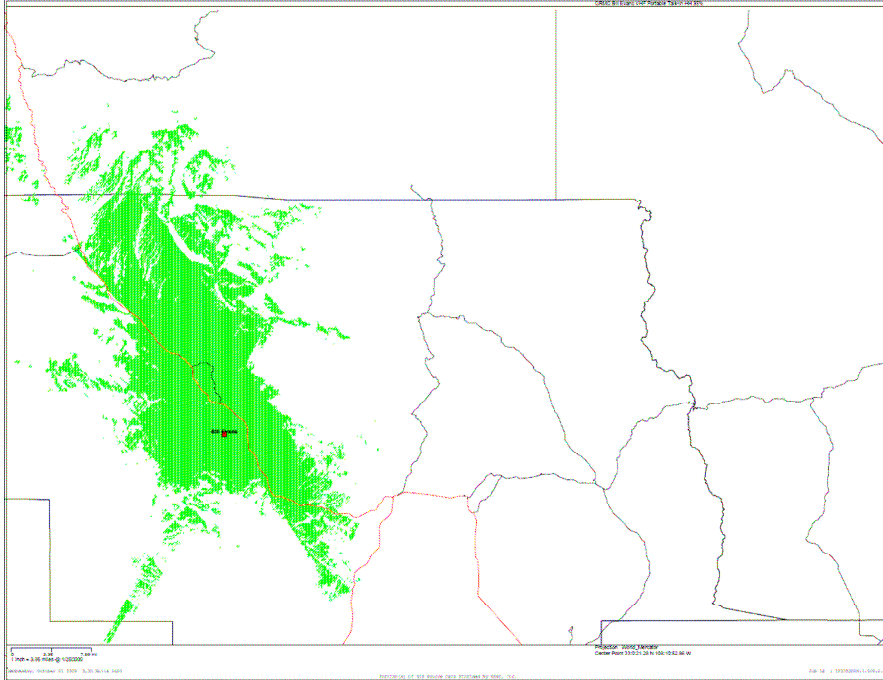
### **GRMC Hatchet VHF Portable Talk in HH 95%**



### **Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C Communication Maps/GRMC Hatchie VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

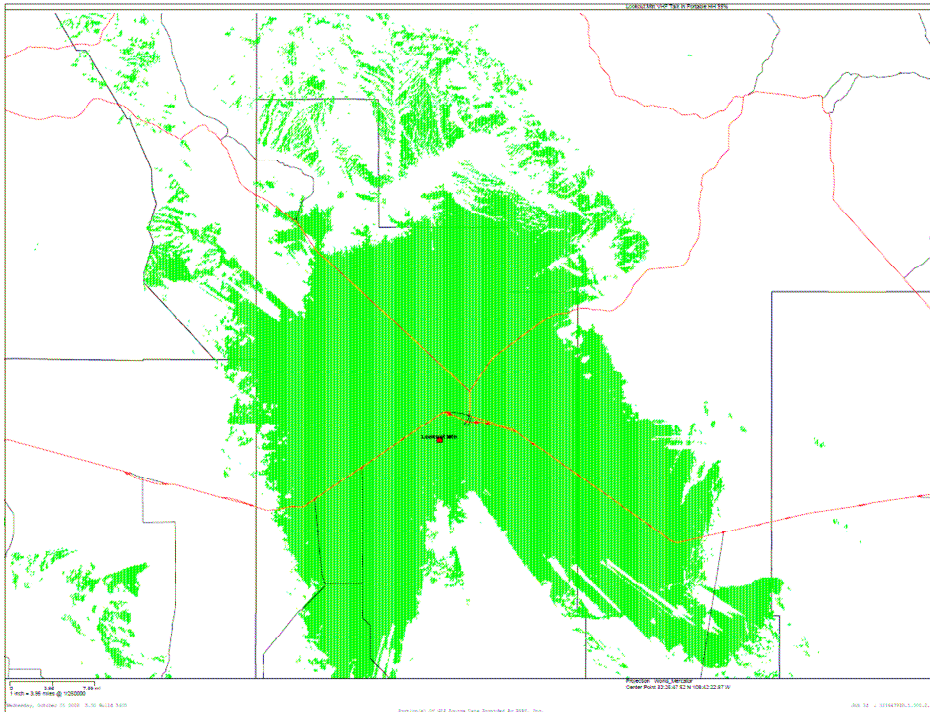
### Bill Evans VHF Talk in Portable HH



### Electronic Maps Disk:

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C Communication Maps/GRMC Bill Evans VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

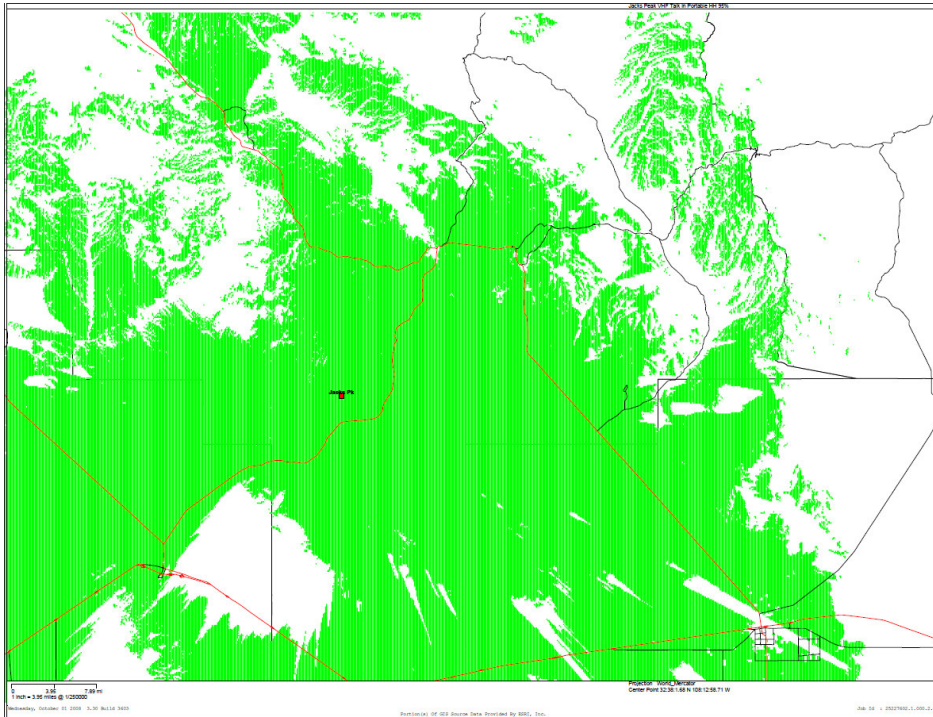
### Lookout Mtn VHF Talk in Portable HH



### Electronic Maps Disk:

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C Communication Maps/Lookout Mtn VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

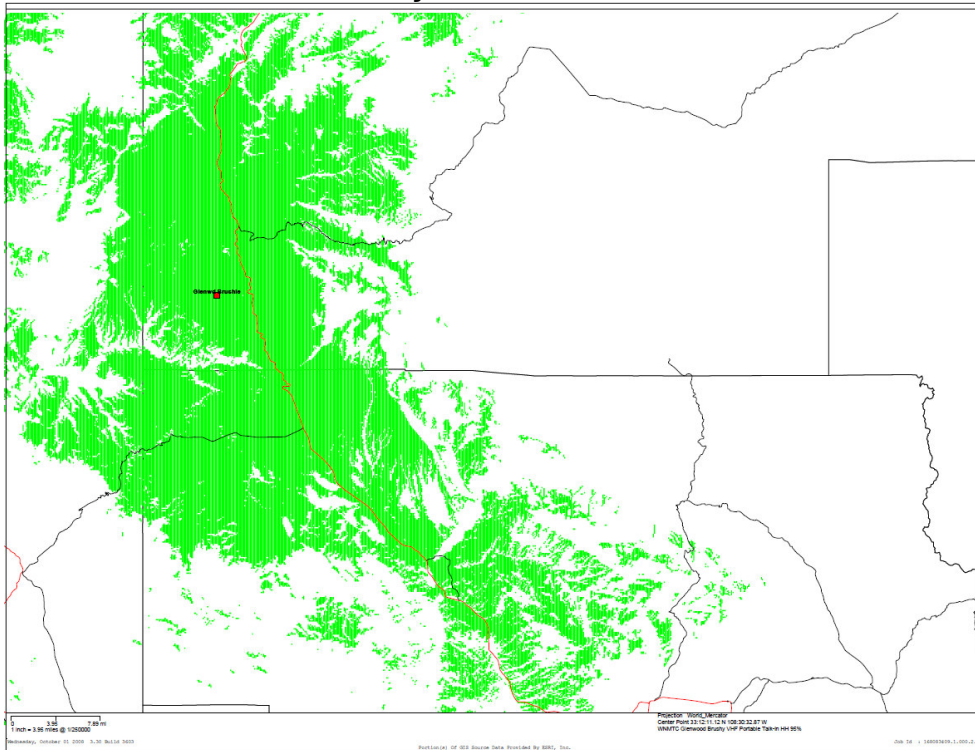
## Jacks Peak VHF Talk in Portable HH



### **Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix C Communication Maps/Jacks Peak VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

## WNMTC Glennwood Brushy VHF Talk in Portable HH



### **Electronic Maps Disk:**

[CWPP Hidalgo Appendix B Communication Maps/WNMTC Glennwood Brushy VHF Talk in Portable HH.PDF](#)

**APPENDIX F**  
**FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
**WILDLAND FIRE**  
**TRAINING PROGRAM**

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT WILDLAND FIRE TRAINING**

### **Objective**

- To seek instructors to provide certification training to a small number of students at a time (5 or less), due to the distance for volunteers to travel for training.
- Provide training that can be broken down into small units to provide the opportunity for the shift works schedules to attend training.
- To build capacity and knowledge so that the recognized volunteer fire departments in Hidalgo County can not only assist the state and federal agencies in wildfire suppression and protection but can also be a complementary force to all wildland fire management activities. Members of Volunteer Fire Departments would serve as the Initial Attack with an Incident Commander until state and federal agencies arrive.
- Seek funding and resource for training though NM State, BLM, USFS, Private Sector and/or grants.

### **Required Training to meet the minimum standards of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)**

(Reference - Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide, PMS 310-1, May 2008)

The following Introduction Courses are Required to be qualify in the positions of Firefighter Type 2 and Firefighter Type 1. These need to be offered on an annual basis.

- Introduction to ICS (I-100) 4 Hours
- Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service (L-180) 4 Hours
- Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)
- Firefighting Training (S-130) 30 – 35 ½ Hours
- Firefighter Type 1 (S-131) 8 Hours
- Look up, Look Down, Look Around (S-133) 4 Hours
- Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (S-190) 6-8 Hours

Required NIMS training for all firefighters NIMS ICS 700

### **FIREFIGHTER TYPE 2 (FFT2)**

- **REQUIRED TRAINING**
  - ✓ Introduction to ICS (I-100) 4 Hours
  - ✓ Human Factors in the Wildland Fire Service (L-180) 4 Hours
  - ✓ Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (S-190) 6-8 Hours
  - ✓ Firefighting Training (S-130) 30 – 35 ½ Hours
  - ✓ Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)
- **REQUIRED EXPERIENCE**
  - ✓ None

### **FIREFIGHTER TYPE 1 (FFT1)**

- **REQUIRED TRAINING**
  - ✓ Firefighter Type 1 (S-131) 8 Hours
  - ✓ Look Up, Look Down, Look Around (S-133)
  - ✓ 4 Hours Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)
- **REQUIRED EXPERIENCE**
  - ✓ Satisfactory performance as a Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2) plus



- ✓ Successful position performance as a Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1) on a wildland fire incident

### **INCIDENT COMMANDER TYPE 5 (ICT5)**

#### ➤ **REQUIRED TRAINING**

- ✓ Firefighter Type 1 (S-131) 8 Hours
- ✓ Look up, Look Down, Look Around (S-133) 4 Hours
- ✓ Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)

#### ➤ **REQUIRED EXPERIENCE**

- ✓ Satisfactory performance as a Firefighter Type 2 (FFT2)  
plus
- ✓ Successful position performance as an Incident Commander Type 5 (ICT5) on a wildfire incident.

#### ➤ **OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- ✓ Wildland Fire Chain Saws (S-212)

The following Intermediate Courses are required to be qualified in the following positions and need to be offered on a biannual basis.

- Initial Attack Incident Commander (S-200) 16 Hours
- Crew Boss (Single Resource) (S-230) 24 Hours {S-290 is a prerequisite for S-230}
- Engine Boss (Single Resource) (S-231) 16 Hours {S-230 & S-290 is a prerequisite for S-230}
- Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S-290) 32 Hours

### **ENGINE BOSS, SINGLE RESOURCE (ENGB)**

#### ➤ **REQUIRED TRAINING**

- ✓ Intermediate Wildland Fire Behavior (S-290) 32 Hours
- ✓ Crew Boss (Single Resource) (S-230) 24 Hours
- ✓ Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)

#### ➤ **REQUIRED EXPERIENCE**

- ✓ Satisfactory performance as a Firefighter Type 1 (FFT1)
- ✓ plus
- ✓ Successful position performance as an Engine Boss, Single Resource (ENGB) on a wildland fire incident

#### ➤ **OTHER TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

- ✓ Basic ICS (I-200) 16 Hours
- ✓ Followership to Leadership (L-280) 16 Hours
- ✓ Basic Air Operations (S-270) 16 Hours
- ✓ Interagency Incident Business Management (S-260) 16-20 Hours
- ✓ Ignition Operations (S-234) 32 Hours
- ✓ Engine Boss (Single Resource) (S-231) 12-16 Hours

### **INCIDENT COMMANDER TYPE 4 (ICT4)**

#### ➤ **REQUIRED TRAINING**

- ✓ Initial Attack Incident Commander (S-200) 16 Hours
- ✓ Annual Fireline Safety Refresher (RT-130)

➤ **REQUIRED EXPERIENCE**

- ✓ Satisfactory performance in any Single Resource Boss position (CRWB, DOZB, ENGB, FELB, FIRB, HMGB, TRPB)  
plus
- ✓ Successful position performance as an Incident Commander Type 4 (ICT4) on a wildfire incident

The following Courses should be offered to improve firefighter skills.

- Basic ICS (I-200) 16 Hours
- Followership to Leadership (L-280) 16 Hours
- Portable Pumps and Water Use (S-211) 24 Hours
- Wildland Fire Chain Saws (S-212) 36 Hours
- Fire Operations in the Willand/Urban Interface (S-215) 28-32 Hours
- Engine Boss (Single Resource) (S-231) 12-16 Hours
- Ignition Operations (S-234) 32 Hours
- Interagency Incident Business Management (S-260) 16-20 Hours
- Basic Air Operations (S-270) 16 Hours

**TRAINING EQUIPMENT NEEDED:**

Various training videos and manuals, including:  
“Essentials in Firefighting” and “Wildland Fire Training” (videos)

# APPENDIX G

## Wildfire Hazard Home Assessment Form

<b>Community Name:</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>My Points here</b>
<b>My fire protection provided by:</b>		<b>(choose the best one)</b>
1. The Main road to my house is best described as:		
Two or more primary roads	1	
One road, primary route	3	
One way in and out	5	
2. The main road to my house is:		
20 feet wide or more	1	
Less than 20 feet	3	
3. The main road to my house is:		
Smooth road, grade <5%	1	
Rough road, grade >5%	3	
Other		
4. My Driveway is best described as:		
Loop Road, cul de sacs with Outside radius > 50 ft		
Loop Road, cul de sacs with Outside radius <50 ft	1	
OR		
Dead end driveway less than 200 ft to my house	3	
Dead end driveway longer than 200ft to my house	5	
5. My Lot Size is:		
More than 10 acres	1	
Between 1-10 acres	3	
Less than 1 acre	5	
6. Street signs in my community are:		
Present (4" in size & reflective)	1	
Not Present	5	
<b>VEGETATION</b>		
7. The vegetation or "fuels" around my home are:		
Light Fuels, grasses	1	
Medium Fuels, light brush, small trees	5	
Heavy Fuels, dense brush, timber	10	
Slash, down & dead fuels	10	
8. I have cleared the "fuels" around my house:		
More that 100ft of treatment around my house	1	
30-70 ft treatment from my home & bldgs	5	
No defensible space treatment, the fuels are right up to my house	10	
<b>TOPOGRAPHY</b>		
9. Slope around my house is best described as:		
Less than 9%	1	
Between 10-20%	4	
Between 21-30%	7	
Between 31-40%	8	
Greater than 41%	10	
<b>ADDITIONAL RATING FACTORS</b>		
10. Rough topography that contains steep canyons around or on the way to my house	2	
11. Areas with a history of higher fire occurrence than surrounding areas due to special situations such as heavy lightning, railroads, escaped debris burning, arson, etc around or near my home	3	
12. I live in an Area that is periodically exposed to unusually severe fire weather and strong winds	4	

DRAFT 10-12-2009

**ROOFING MATERIALS**

- 13. Construction Material of my roof
  - Class A roof: example non combustible tile or metal 1
  - Class B roof 3
  - Class C roof: ex. 5
  - Non- rated: ex. Wood shingles 10

**MY HOUSE IS MADE MOSTLY OF:**

- 14. Materials
  - Noncombustible siding & non combustible deck 1
  - Noncombustible siding with a wood deck 3
  - combustible siding and deck 10

**AVAILABLE FIRE PROTECTION**

- 15. Water Source Available (on site)
  - 500 gpm hydrants <1000 ft apart 1
  - Hydrants above or draft site 2
  - No hydrants or draft site 3
- 16. Water source Available (off-site)
  - Source within 20 min. round trip 1
  - Source within 21-45 min. round trip 5
  - Source > 46 min. round trip 10

**UTILITIES (GAS, ELECTRIC)**

- 17. Placement
  - All underground utilities 1
  - One underground, one above 3
  - All aboveground 5

**ADD UP YOUR POINTS**

- 1. Low Hazard <49 points
- 2. Moderate Hazard 49-68 points
- 3. High Hazard 69-83 points
- 4. Extreme Hazard 84+ points

# **APPENDIX H**

## **FUNDING SOURCES**

The following section provides information on federal, state, and private funding opportunities for conducting wildfire mitigation projects.

### **FEDERAL FUNDING**

**Source:** Predisaster Mitigation Grant Program

**Agency:** Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS FEMA)

**Website:** <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pdm/index.shtm>

**Description:** The DHS includes FEMA and the U.S. Fire Administration. FEMA's Federal Mitigation and Insurance Administration is responsible for promoting predisaster activities that can reduce the likelihood or magnitude of loss of life and property from multiple hazards, including wildfire. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 created a requirement for states and communities to develop predisaster mitigation plans and established funding to support the development of the plans and to implement actions identified in the plans. This competitive grant program, known as PDM, has funds available to state entities, tribes, and local governments to help develop multi hazard mitigation plans and to implement projects identified in those plans.

**Source:** Funding for Fire Departments and First Responders

**Agency:** DHS, U.S. Fire Administration

**Website:** <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/fireservice/grants/>

**Description:** Includes grants and general information on financial assistance for fire departments and first responders. Programs include the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program (AFGP), Reimbursement for Firefighting on Federal Property, State Fire Training Systems Grants, and National Fire Academy Training Assistance.

**Source:** Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

**Agency:** National Resource Conservation Service

**Website:** <http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/cig.html>

**Description:** CIG State Component. CIG is a voluntary program intended to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Under CIG, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds are used to award competitive grants to non-federal governmental or nongovernmental organizations, tribes, or individuals. CIG enables the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to work with other public and private entities to accelerate technology transfer and adoption of promising technologies and approaches to address some of the nation's most pressing natural resource concerns. CIG will benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. The NRCS administers the CIG program. The CIG requires a 50/50 match between the agency and the applicant. The CIG has two funding components: national and state. Funding sources are available for water resources, soil resources, atmospheric resources, and grazing land and forest health.

**Source:** Rural Fire Assistance

**Agency:** Department of the Interior

**Description:** DOI program focused on rural fire department training, and the purchase protective fire clothing and firefighting equipment and public education. Departments that serve a community of less than 10,000 people located near federal (BLM) land are eligible. The maximum award is \$20,000 and requires a 10% cost share which may include in-kind services. For more information contact the DOI at 202-606-3211

**Source:** Volunteer Fire Assistance

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service

**Website:** <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/partners/vfa/>

**Description:** USDA Forest Service funding will provide assistance, through the states, to volunteer fire departments to improve communication capabilities, increase Wildland fire management training, and purchase protective fire clothing and firefighting equipment. This grant may also be used to fund a Wildland Coordinator Position in the County. The maximum grant amount is \$25,000 and is a 90%, 10 % cost share. For more information and an application, go to NMForestry.com

**Source:** State Fire Assistance Hidalgo County

**Agency:** USDA Forest Service

DRAFT 10-12-2009

**Description:** USDA Forest Service program providing financial and technical support directly to state Wildland fire agencies to enhance firefighting capacity of state, local and rural organizations. The program also supports community based hazard mitigation and an expanded public service fire prevention program. Funds have been awarded for private lands defensible space thinning. For more info contact the USFS Regional Office at 505-842-3344

**Source:** Fire wise

**Agency:** Multiple

**Website:** <http://www.firewise.org>

**Description:** The Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT) of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group is a consortium of Wildland fire organizations and federal agencies responsible for Wildland fire management in the United States. The WUIWT includes the USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, USDI BLM, USDI Fish and Wildlife Service, USDI National Park Service, FEMA, U.S. Fire Administration, International Association of Fire Chiefs, National Association of State Fire Marshals, National Association of State Foresters, National Emergency Management Association, and National Fire Protection Association. There are many different Fire wise Communities activities that can help homes and whole neighborhoods become safer from wildfire without significant expense. Community cleanup days, awareness events, and other cooperative activities can often be successfully accomplished through partnerships among neighbors, local businesses, and local fire departments, at little or no cost. The Fire wise Communities recognition program page (<http://www.firewise.org/usa>) provides a number of excellent examples of these kinds of projects and programs. The kind of help you need will depend on who you are, where you are, and what you want to do. Among the different activities individuals and neighborhoods can undertake the following actions often benefit from some kind of seed funding or additional assistance from an outside source:

- Thinning/pruning/tree removal/clearing on private property—particularly on very large, densely wooded properties
- Retrofit of home roofing or siding to noncombustible materials
- Managing private forest
- Community slash pickup or chipping
- Creation or improvement of access/egress roads
- Improvement of water supply for firefighting
- Public education activities throughout the community or region

Some additional examples of what communities, counties, and states have done can be found in the National Database of State and Local Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs at <http://www.wildfireprograms.usda.gov>. You can search this database by keyword, state, jurisdiction, or program type to find information about wildfire mitigation education programs, grant programs, ordinances, and more. The database includes links to local websites and e-mail contacts.

**Source:** The National Fire Plan

**Website:** <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/>

**Description:** Many states are using funds from the NFP to provide funds through a cost-share with residents to help them reduce the wildfire risk to their private property. These actions are usually in the form of thinning or pruning trees, shrubs, and other vegetation and/or clearing the slash and debris from this kind of work. Opportunities are available for rural, state, and volunteer fire assistance.

**Source:** Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

**Agency:** DHS

**Website:** <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/safer/>

**Description:** The purpose of SAFER grants is to help fire departments increase the number of frontline firefighters. The goal is for fire departments to increase their staffing and deployment capabilities and ultimately attain 24-hour staffing, thus ensuring that their communities have adequate protection from fire and fire-related hazards. The SAFER grants support two specific activities: (1) hiring of firefighters and (2) recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters. The hiring of firefighters activity provides grants to pay for part of the salaries of newly hired firefighters over the five-year program. SAFER is part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants and is under the purview of the Office of Grants and Training of the DHS.

**Source:** The Fire Prevention and Safety Grants (FP&S)

**Agency:** DHS

**Website:** <http://www.firegrantsupport.com/fps/>

**Description:** The FP&S are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants and are under the purview of the Office of Grants and Training in the DHS. FP&S grants support to projects that enhance the safety of the public and firefighters who may be

exposed to fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and mitigate high incidences of death and injury. Examples of the types of projects supported by FP&S include fire-prevention and public-safety education campaigns, juvenile fire-setter interventions, media campaigns, and arson prevention and awareness programs. In fiscal year 2005, Congress reauthorized funding for FP&S and expanded the eligible uses of funds to include firefighter safety research and development.

## STATE FUNDING

**Source:** State and Private Forestry Programs

**Agency:** National Association of State Foresters

**Website:** [http://www.stateforesters.org/S&PF/coop\\_fire.html](http://www.stateforesters.org/S&PF/coop_fire.html)

**Description:** The National Association of State Foresters recommends that funds become available through a competitive grant process on Wildland-Urban Interface hazard mitigation projects. State fire managers see opportunities to use both the State Fire Assistance Program and the Volunteer Fire Assistance Program to improve the safety and effectiveness of firefighters in the interface, as well as in other Wildland fire situations. To ensure firefighter safety, minimize property and resource loss, and reduce suppression costs, land management agencies, property owners, local leaders, and fire protection agencies must work cooperatively to mitigate interface fire risks, as well as to ensure that Wildland firefighters receive the training, information, and equipment necessary to safely carry out their responsibilities. The 2007 Western WUI Grant Program is a specific grant available under the State Fire Assistance Program. It includes opportunities for hazardous-fuels reduction, education, and community and homeowner actions. An application and instructions can be found at: [http://www.firesafecouncil.org/news/attachments/2007\\_CDF\\_application-process\\_final168.pdf](http://www.firesafecouncil.org/news/attachments/2007_CDF_application-process_final168.pdf)

**Source:** New Mexico Association of Counties 2007–2008 Wildfire Risk Reduction Program

**Agency:** New Mexico Association of Counties

**Website:** <http://www.nmcounties.org/wildfire.html>

**Description:** This program targets at-risk communities by offering seed money to help defray the costs of community wildfire protection projects. During the past two years, the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program has primarily funded projects for the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), a prerequisite to all other activities. In 2007, priority was given to projects that requested funding for hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention, and community outreach activities that were identified in completed Cwpp.

## PRIVATE FUNDING

**Source:** The Urban Land Institute (ULI)

**Website:** <http://www.uli.org>

**Description:** ULI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. The institute has more than 22,000 members worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land-use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service. The mission of the ULI is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. ULI and the ULI Foundation have instituted Community Action Grants ([http://www.uli.org/Content/NavigationMenu/MyCommunity/CommunityActionGrants/Community\\_Action\\_Gr.htm](http://www.uli.org/Content/NavigationMenu/MyCommunity/CommunityActionGrants/Community_Action_Gr.htm)) that could be used for Fire wise Communities activities. Applicants must be ULI members or part of a ULI District Council. Contact [actiongrants@uli.org](mailto:actiongrants@uli.org) or review the web page to find your District Council and the application information.

**Source:** Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

**Website:** <http://www.esri.com/grants>

**Description:** ESRI is a privately held firm and the world's largest research and development organization dedicated to geographic information systems. ESRI provides free software, hardware, and training bundles under ESRI-sponsored Grants that include such activities as conservation, education, and sustainable development, and posts related non-ESRI grant opportunities under such categories as agriculture, education, environment, fire, public safety, and more. You can register on the website to receive updates on grant opportunities.

# **APPENDIX I**

## **A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE**

This reference guide is included to provide tips and recommendations to homeowner's on how to reduce structural ignitability and improve preparedness when it comes to wild land urban interface fires.

### **BEFORE THE FIRE**

#### **Reducing Structural Ignitability**

#### **Building Materials**

- Roofs – the most vulnerable part of a home to ignition by falling embers. Metal roofs provide the best resistance to ignition. Slate, tile, Class an Asphalt shingles also provides fire resistance. Avoid wood and other combustible materials for roofs. Keep gutters clear of debris such as leaves.
- Siding, decks and fences – noncombustible materials are recommended, adobe, stucco, block, brick, noncombustible siding. Keep the area below the deck clear of leaves and debris, screen off the area leaving openings no larger that one-half inch. Do not stack firewood on or below deck or right up against the home. Keep other flammable materials, paint, oil, gasoline in approved containers away from the home and any ignition source.

#### **Potential Ignition Sources**

- Chimneys and Fireplaces – Inspect you chimney and damper at least twice a year. Clean the chimney before first use and periodically thereafter, depending on frequency of use. Have the spark arrestor inspected and confirm that it meets the latest safety code. Keep chimneys and stovepipes clear of leaves, limbs and debris.
- Ashes – Never place hot ashes in a nonmetal container or dump them on the ground. Place in a metal container and either soaks with water or covers and allows cooling for several days before disposing.
- Propane Tanks – should be at least 30 ft. from any structure. Keep flammable at least 10 ft. from tank. Learn how to turn the tank off and on. In case of fire, turn off the gas before evacuating *if* time and safety allow.
- Fireworks – never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks or other incendiaries unattended.
- Smoking – Never throw lit cigarettes, cigars, etc. into a fuel source such as dead leaves, dry grass, debris, etc. Always use an ashtray and make sure to fully extinguish.



## **Defensible Space**

- Zone 1 – this is the area closest to the structure. This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 ft. on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plantings should be limited to carefully space low flammability species. If possible maintain a mowed green lawn. Remove dead vegetation and leaves, exposing mineral soil is recommended in a 2 ft. wide perimeter along the foundation of the structure. Focus on fuel breaks such as concrete patios, walkways, rock gardens, and irrigated grass or garden within this zone. Gravel is recommended over wood chips or pine needles.
- Zone 2 – Low flammability plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing, and the irrigation system should extend into this section.
- Zone 3 – Place low-growing plants and well-spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation low.
- Trees – all trees within the safety zones should have lower limbs removed to a height of 6-10 ft. Remove all branches within 15 ft. of your chimney or overhanging part of your roof.
- Ladder fuels – are short shrubs or trees growing under eaves of the house or into the tree canopy that can “carry” fire up. The removal of ladder fuels within about 100 ft. of the structure will help limit the risk of crown fire around the structure.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION**

Community fire education is critical to assist in the prevention of fire. Most residents are unaware of potential fire hazards, which exist. Other residents are aware of the potential of fire, however, they are not does not know how to minimize these fire hazards.

Many of the residents in Hidalgo County are in remote areas far from the limited fire fighting resources within the county. This makes it difficult for firefighting resources to respond to all fires in a timely manner.

**The goal of any fire education program should be to create an awareness of the potential hazards and effects of fire, with hopes to gain community support with hazard reduction efforts. It is imperative to adequately communicate the advantages of any fire hazard reduction program and to explain the alternatives available. It is also helpful to explore possible funding sources to aid in the implementation of such programs.**

**More information can be obtained at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org), or by visiting your local NM State Forestry Office in Socorro.**

## **Access**

Limited access may prevent firefighters from reaching homes in the event of a WUI fire.

- In the event of a WUI fire, leave your gate open
- Keep driveway uncluttered and at least 12 ft. wide
- Slope of driveway should be less than 10 percent
- Trim overhanging branches to allow at least 13.5 ft. of overhead clearance
- Ensure overhead line are at least 14 ft. above ground
- Consider a turn around within your property at least 45 ft. wide especially if you driveway is more than 300 ft. in length.
- Bridges must be designed to hold the weight of a fire engine

### **DURING THE FIRE**

**When Fire Threatens** – Before an evacuation is called

- Do not jeopardize your life
- Park your car facing the direction of escape with windows rolled up
- Place all valuable you want to take with you in the vehicle
- Open your Gate
- Close all windows, doors, vents in house
- Disconnect automatic garage openers
- Leave exterior doors unlocked
- Close all interior doors
- Move furniture away from windows and glass doors
- Remove lightweight curtains
- Close heavy curtains, drapes, and blinds
- Leave a light on in each room
- Turn off propane tank
- Move firewood and flammable patio furniture away from house
- Connect garden hoses to outdoor faucets
- Place a ladder against the side of home opposite the direction of the approaching fire

**When Evacuation is Ordered**

- Leave immediately
- Check out at designated location, if one is set up
- Do not try to enter an area that is being evacuated

### **AFTER THE FIRE**

- Do not attempt to return until it has been deemed safe to do so
- Check for hazards, such as gas or water leaks and electrical shorts
- Turn off damaged utilities