

APPENDIX G: Communities At Risk (CAR)

Most of the population centers in Lake County were designated in the 2009 CWPP at the federal or state level as “communities within the vicinity of federal lands that are at high risk from wildfire”—more commonly known as “Communities at Risk” or CAR. These CAR designated communities are:

- Anderson Springs,
- Blue Lakes,
- Cobb,
- Clearlake,
- Clearlake Oaks,
- Glenhaven,
- Hidden Valley Lake,
- Kelseyville,
- Loch Lomond,
- Lakeport,
- Lower Lake,
- Lucerne,
- Middletown,
- Nice,
- The Geysers,
- Upper Lake, and
- Witter Springs.

For the 2009 CWPP, the County of Lake Community Development Department identified and recommended the following additional 13 communities to also be designated as Communities at Risk:

- Buckingham,
- Clear Lake Riviera, *(Since renamed the Kelseyville Riviera)*
- Coyote Valley,
- Double Eagle,
- Harbin Hot Springs,
- Kono Tayee,
- Lake Pillsbury,
- Morgan Valley,
- Riviera Heights,
- Riviera West,
- Soda Bay,
- Spring Valley, and
- Twin Lakes.

Designation of Wildland-Urban Interface Areas

As described throughout the CWPP, the wildland-urban interface (WUI) is a general term describing the area where homes and wildland meet. It also has a federal definition as the “line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuel as defined in the Federal Register.”³ It is within the WUI that specific federal management actions take place to reduce fuel risks based on guidelines established by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA). “The HFRA provides administrative procedures for hazardous-fuel-reduction projects on [USFS] and BLM lands in the WUIs of at-risk communities. The act encourages the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans under which communities will designate their WUIs, where HFRA projects may take place.”⁴

Concurrently, federal agencies are charged with developing WUI designations for the properties they manage. As per HFRA, this 2023 Plan may update the 2009 Plan WUI designations for Lake County, California. These 2009 designations were developed combining CAL FIRE’s WUI designation, Mendocino National Forest’s Proposed WUI Defense Zones⁵, Community-Identified High Risk and Project Areas, Community-Identified Values and Assets, and issues of topography, landscape characteristics, access, fire threat designation, fire weather, etc. Projects in these designated areas should be prioritized for funding and implementation under the National Fire Plan.

The end of this appendix outlines the Lake County WUI designation developed for the 2009 CWPP. Additional WUI areas were added in the Double Eagle, Morgan Valley, High Valley, and Harbin Hot Springs areas, as well as infilling gaps along Highway 29, north of Scotts Valley, and around Spring Valley. Federal agencies accept CWPP WUI designations, including those previously identified by CAL FIRE. Federal agencies work with Lake County Fire Safe Council, South Lake Fire Safe Council, and other interested community members to agree on projects proposed within Lake County WUI areas.

The map will be updated to reflect any new or removed designations once reviewed by USFS, CalFire and the Community Development Department.

³ Federal Register. “Implementation Direction for Identifying and Prioritizing Hazardous Fuel Reduction in Wildland-Urban Interface/Intermix.” Region 5. January 4, 2001. Vol. 66, No. 3. Pp. 751–754.

⁴ Healthy Forests Initiative and Healthy Forests Restoration Act. February 2004. *Interim Field Guild, Title I, Wildland-Urban Interfaces Within or Adjacent to At-Risk Communities*. FS-799. p. 15.

⁵ “WUI Defense Zones were created off of the WUI boundaries designated by the California Fire Alliance using 1990 Census Block data. The Mendocino National Forest used these boundaries and adjusted the lines topographically (along ridgelines, drainages, roads, etc) while staying close to the original boundaries set by the Fire Alliance. Fire and fuels management often use topographical features for fire suppression as well as for project boundaries. It is generally the most efficient and safest way to suppress fires as well as keep prescribed burns within project boundaries due to how fire behaves to topography.” Caves, Tom. Mendocino National Forest. Personal communication. March 4, 2009. “The forest’s WUI boundaries are meant to be adjustable as needed by collaborating with local Fire Safe Councils and other user groups in meeting their needs and the Forest’s needs to create projects and boundaries that best serve and protect communities and the National Forest. When these WUI boundaries were created, Lake County did not have an official Fire Safe Council that served the Upper Lake Ranger District area. The intent was that when there was one, we could adjust the boundaries if and when there was a need determined by the Fire Safe Council and the Upper Lake District fire/fuels management.” Darner, Hinda. Mendocino National Forest. Personal communication. March 4, 2009.

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