

A WILDFIRE

CAN HAPPEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY...

The Ridge and Manorville Fire Departments in collaboration with the Central Pine Barrens Commission and other municipal, state and federal land management agencies are developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for the Ridge, Manorville, and Calverton communities that are located within the Central Pine Barrens area. The Central Pine Barrens area has been identified as the area with the greatest potential risk for damage to and loss of property from wildland fire in all of New York State.

What does a Community Wildfire Protection Plan do?

- Identifies areas at risk for wildland fire.
- Makes recommendations for hazardous fuels treatments (vegetation thinning).
- Prioritizes areas for wildfire mitigation.
- Makes recommendations for actions that homeowners can take to reduce fire risk.
- Asks the public to share ideas about wildfire prevention and identify community values at risk.
- Helps your community secure funds for wildfire mitigation.

CWPPs came out of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003. This Act provided communities with the opportunity to influence how and where federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on federal lands and how additional funds may be distributed for projects on non-federal lands. A CWPP is the means through which the public can provide their voice in fuels management planning and wildfire protection for their community. This CWPP will identify fire hazards and community values at risk in the Ridge hamlet, and portions of the Manorville and Calverton hamlets that will be included in this plan and will provide recommendations to reduce the risk of wildfire to life and property.

The main goals of a CWPP as described in HFRA (2003) are:

- 1) **Collaboration** – must be developed by local & state government, consulting with federal agencies.
- 2) **Prioritized Fuel Reduction** – must identify the most at risk areas for treatment of hazardous fuel and recommend actions to protect communities and infrastructure.
- 3) **Treatment of Structural Ignitability** – must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area.
- 4) **Definition of a WUI** – Gives each Core Team of agency stakeholders the ability to define their own wildland urban interface (WUI) area, where homes and structures come into contact with wildland fuels.
- 5) **Community Risk Analysis** – Using field based or geographic information system methodologies, the Core Team assesses all hazards and risks associated with wildfire spread throughout the planning area.

- 6) **Discussion of fire fighting preparedness** – to identify ways to enhance wildfire response.
- 7) **Community Involvement** – to ensure that the planning effort incorporates public input and grass root level planning.

The Steps involved in the planning process are:

- 1) **Convene Decision Makers and form a Core Team** – a Core Team has been convened comprised of the Central Pine Barrens Commission, County and Town representatives, local fire departments, and state and federal agencies who meet regularly to develop the plan. The Core Team includes technical specialists in fuels and fire management.
- 2) **Engage Interested Parties** – The CWPP seeks input from you – the public – through public outreach and community surveys.
- 3) **Establish a Community Base Map** – The Core Team assists in developing baseline data maps of vegetation, fuels, infrastructure, landownership, hydrology and topography to graphically represent resources throughout the planning area.
- 4) **Develop a Community Risk Assessment** – The CWPP risk assessment is two-fold, A) it is a geographic information systems (GIS) model that uses fire behavior modeling programs to predict potential flame length, rate of spread and fireline intensity in the planning area if a wildfire starts, B) It conducts and completes on-the-ground community assessments to accurately assess risk and hazard for wildfire in communities across the planning area.
- 5) **Establish Community Priorities and Recommendations** – Using public input, the risk assessments and input from agency specialists, the Core Team develop a series of recommendations for each community at risk of wildfire. These include fuel reduction projects, public education and outreach, projects to reduce structural ignitability and ways of enhancing wildfire response capabilities.
- 6) **Develop a Draft Action Plan and Assessment Strategy** – All of the recommendations are formulated into Draft Action Plan tables, with dates for implementation and responsible agencies. Agencies and communities can then take this plan once it is finalized and seek funding to implement projects. *NOTE: The Action Plan comprises only recommendations for action–no actions included in a CWPP are mandatory on Public or Private land.*
- 7) **Finalize Community Wildfire Protection Plan** – The Draft CWPP will be made available for public comment in February 2016. The final plan will be completed by the end of March 2016.

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- For more information on the Ridge-Manorville-Calverton CWPP please contact the Central Pine Barrens Commission: Judy Jakobsen at jjakobsen@pb.state.ny.us or SWCA: Victoria Amato at vamato@swca.com
 - Find us on FACEBOOK! Search for: Ridge–Manorville–Calverton Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
 - Let us know how well your community is prepared for a wildfire by completing an online survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N2DZGCP>