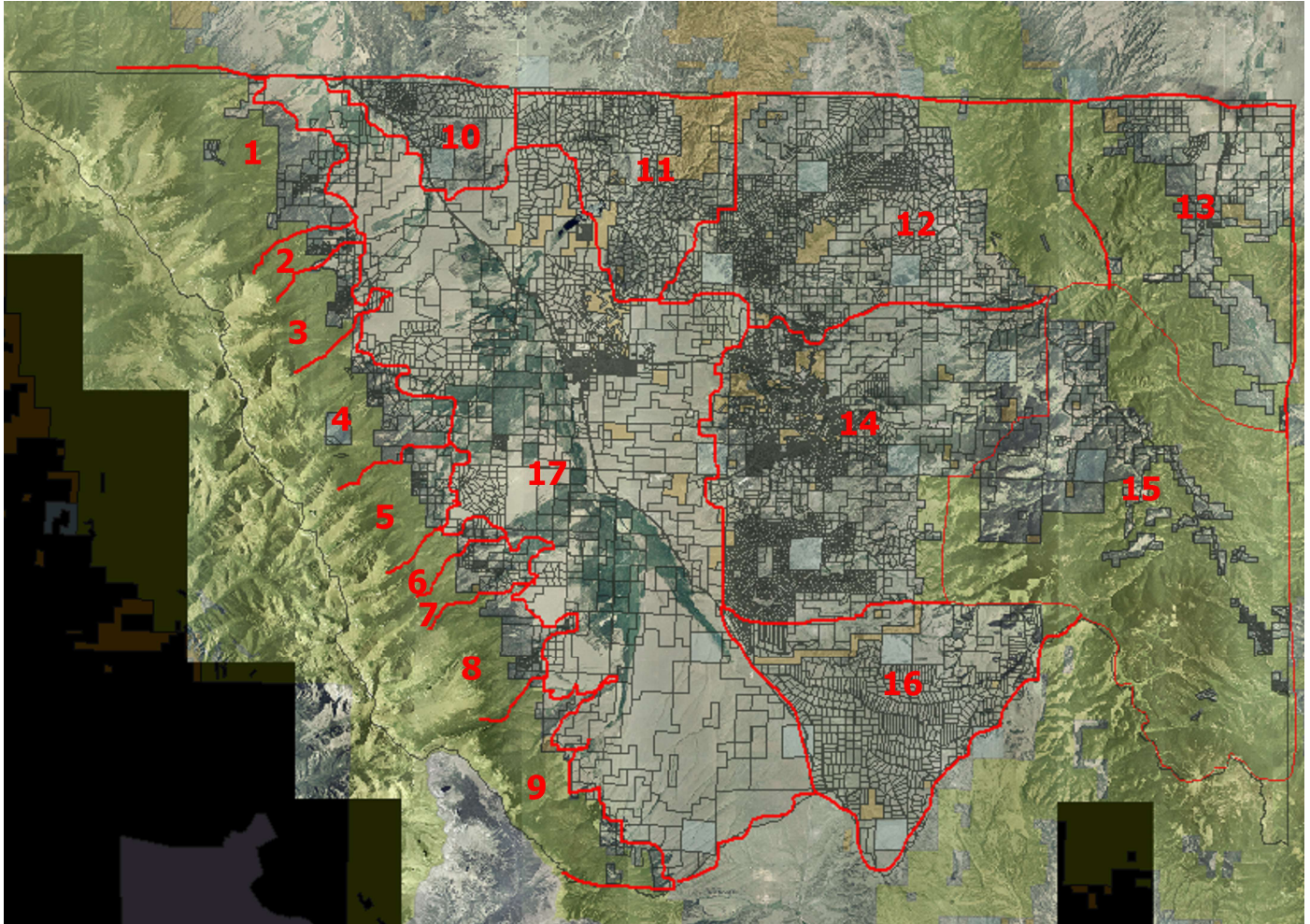


CWPP Highlights



Custer County landscape neighborhoods, 2007

Note: on the above BASE MAP, parcel densities appear BLACK/ GRAY SHADED. These density areas indicate especially hazardous areas in many parts of the county. Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are the large dark shaded area above the number “17.”

The **Landscape Neighborhoods** list is as follows:

Sangre de Cristo:

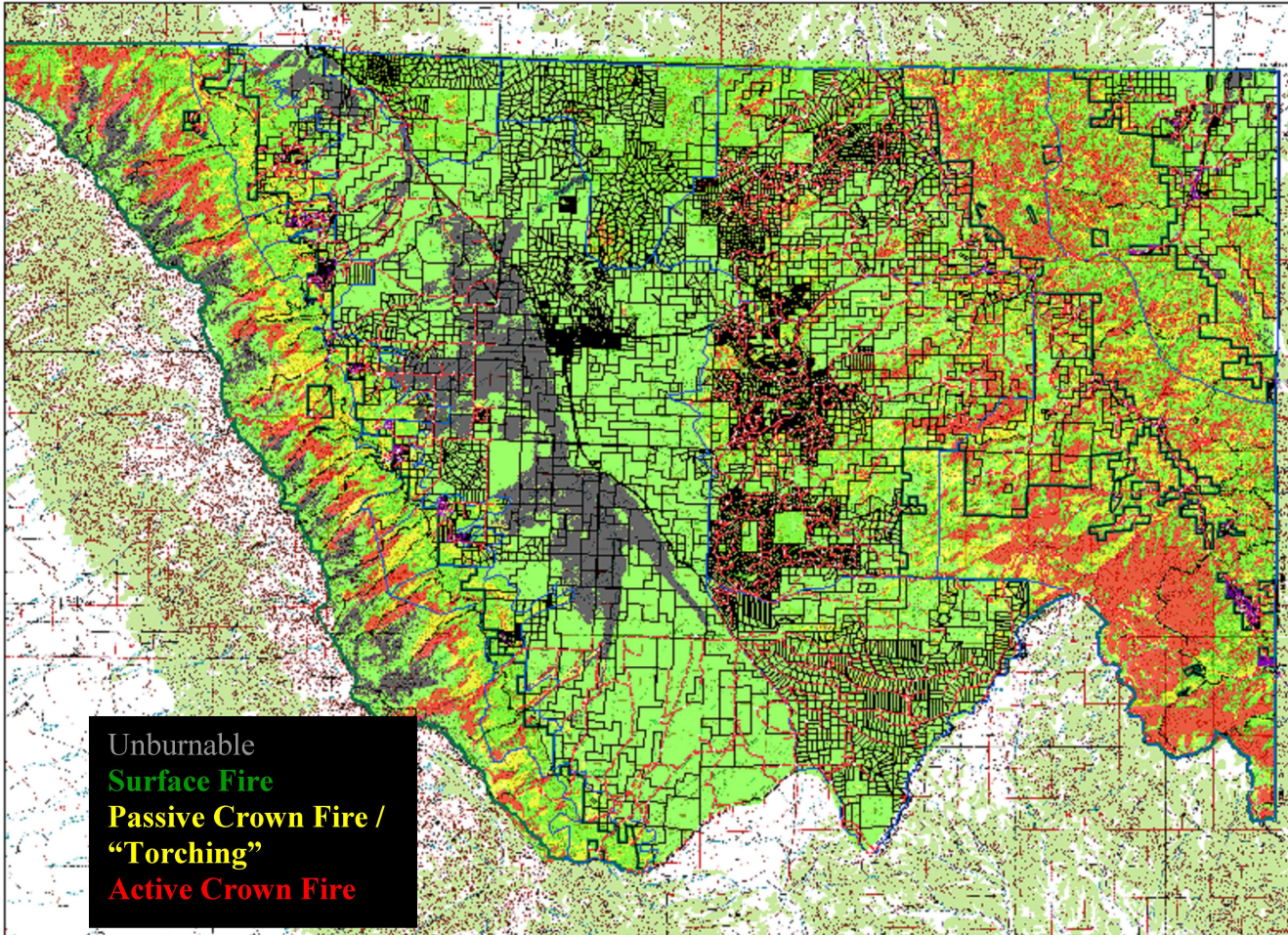
1. Brush Creek
2. Verdemont
3. Pines
4. Taylor Creek
5. Alvarado
6. Horn Creek
7. Macey Creek
8. Colony
9. Music Pass

Others:

10. Reed Road
11. Bull Domingo area
12. Silver Cliff Heights
13. Wetmore
14. East Hills
15. Wet Mountains – to San Isabel
16. Centennial
17. Main Wet Mountain Valley

CWPP Highlights

Custer County – all areas --- FIRE MODEL



Notes: Red is extreme fire hazard.... Yellow is next hazardous.

Black-shaded indicates high-density parcel areas.

10. The Fire Behavior Model maps illustrate the following:

- Crown fire behavior assessment computer model assumptions:
- *30 mph, 20 foot winds, 90% foliar moisture content, & 90th percentile remaining fuel moisture conditions*
- Gray = unburnable
- Dark green = surface fire only
- Yellow = passive crown fire/ “torching”
- Red = active crown fire

11. NOTE THE FOLLOWING FIRE BEHAVIOR AREAS IN THE SUBSEQUENT MAPS:

- Areas of yellow and red are prominent in:
 - Base of Sangres
 - Some Rosita areas
 - Silver Cliff Heights, and near the Oak Creek Grade main powerline

CWPP Highlights

- d. Wet Mountains, in National Forest (very prominent)
- 13. Especially note yellow & red, & some green (meadows)
- 14. Near subdivisions, especially small lots (a warning!)
- 15. In Tyndall Gulch Fire of 2006 (this indicates the model is accurate)

Community Priorities and Recommendations --- Custer County CWPP

Hazard rating and detailed analysis of the Landscape Neighborhoods led to the following three county-wide, community priorities and associated recommendations:

1. WILDFIRE CONDITIONS ARE EXTREME AND MORE PEOPLE ARE AT RISK

- Especially in our numerous older subdivisions (generally with small parcels) and recreational camps that have:
 - More highly ignitable structures
 - Higher density of structures
 - Increasing numbers of structures with increasing summer and year-round residents
 - More retiree residents with possible handicaps, difficult access, and remote communication
 - High, increasing, and concentrated short-term visitor use of recreational camps and forests
 - One-way in and one-way out access with few fire protection, safety, or escape routes
 - Narrow and sometimes-steep roads
 - Dense forest and brush vegetation, 100 years of accumulating, slow-decaying biomass
 - Areas close to or downwind of continuous and overgrown forests
 - Lightning-prone areas associated with lightning-ignitable vegetation and structures .

ALL THESE CONDITIONS WARRANT COMMUNITY-WIDE EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND, CORRECT, AND MODIFY.

-- Recommendations: a. Educate landowners about hazards, the reasons they exist (lack of fire, growth, slow decay, lack of use) and encourage action now and annually. b. Organize access and fuel modification projects in the Wet Mtn/San Isabel and Alvarado high-density neighborhoods. c. Identify the risk to firefighters from un-mitigated structures, access, and vegetation and warn owners of their resulting emergency status resulting from non-defensible property.

Action #2. EACH LEVEL OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION NEEDS TO TAKE ACTION

- County
- Fire Department
- Landscape neighborhoods
- Small neighborhoods/ subdivisions
 - Smallest scale action may be the most practical approach
 - Apply actions by individuals to help fix larger problems
 - Especially apply wildfire hazard reduction standards to new homes and driveways by active educational effort and possible inclusion in permits/ regulations – including specific improvement measures, such as Class A roofing, minimum driveway width and maximum grade, and fuel modifications around structures.

-- Recommendation: Involve each part of our community, from County authority down to the smallest scale of neighborhoods.

Action #3. SET FIRST PRIORITIES FOR ACTION BY LIFE THREATS, as follows:

- 1. Access and escape/ evacuation routes (trim, widen, and improve roads and driveways)
- 2. Ability to fight fire (water sources, fuelbreaks, individual homesite defensible space, fire dept. preparedness)
- 3. Imminent fire danger and severity (localized extreme fuel loading, high winds)

CWPP Highlights

- 4. Location, type of materials and orientation of structures.
- 5. Emergency contact system for people in wildfire zones.

-- Recommendation: Evaluate most important of these for each neighborhood.

Action #4. DETERMINE PRIORITIZED FUEL TREATMENTS, WITH LEAST COST AND MOST PROTECTION FIRST, using these recommendations:

- a. Thin/ otherwise reduce vegetation 50-100 feet (150 feet on steep slopes), on both sides of roads in forests
- b. Restore natural and new meadows, starting with small tree and brush reduction first
- c. Create fuel breaks using “Zone 2” Defensible Space (see Note) treatments for fuel reductions on perimeters of dense forest and dense structure subdivisions and on both sides of main powerlines, overlapping property boundaries in cooperative projects.
- d. On the Sangres, thin a buffer along the boundary of National Forest with private lands uphill at least 100 yards or to the Rainbow Trail (similar to c. above), preferably in conjunction with similar projects downhill 100 yards on private lands (total width of fuel break 600 feet.)
- e. Create individual Defensible Space and treated structure ignition “Zones 1 and 2” (see Note) around homes/ structures (these work, as evidenced in many recent Colorado wildfires!)

Note: See CSU- Cooperative Extension Publication No. 6.302, Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones (in **Appendix**). Understand and follow the descriptions of the three defensible space management zones, including detailed forest treatment prescriptions, beginning with Zones 1 and 2 (shown in this publication) nearest homes, and extending into Zone 3 at a distance from homes.

-- Recommendation: Pick most effective and practical fuel treatments for each neighborhood local CWPP, and determine their priorities -- some as neighborhood community projects and others as individual owner projects.

Action #5. USE PREFERRED FUEL TREATMENT METHODS AND TYPES

- a. Thin for aesthetic forest vegetation treatments, rather than clearing tall forests, and more economically utilize forest materials to lower treatment costs.
- b. Remove, chip, or pile-burn small trees and brush for aesthetic fuel breaks and ladder fuel reduction, and for improved escape routes and safe zones
- c. Control brush, sprout, and tree regeneration by prescribed burns, mechanical cutting or mowing, and possibly environmentally safe chemicals
- d. Allow controlled wildland fire use on National Forests, especially Wilderness Areas to lessen massive fire hazard threats to “landscape neighborhoods” and restore ecological balance.

-- Recommendation: Consider these preferred treatments as projects are designed.

Action #6. ENCOURAGE TREATMENT OF STRUCTURE IGNITABILITY, by these recommended priorities:

- 1. Roofs – materials and treatments, on new structures and changes + vents/ valleys / gutters
- 2. Walls – materials and treatments for exterior siding to be less flammable
- 3. Debris close or on structures – educate and remind owners about annual maintenance
-- Utilize publication “Wildfire and Your Forest Home – Reduce the Risk” by Wet Mountain Fire Protection District (in Appendix.)
- 4. Projections – stairs, decks, porches made of flammable material (wood) and in direct contact with vegetation of any kind, create a link between wildland fuel and homes. Break this link with concrete pads, rock, non-flammable landscaping.

-- Recommendations: Treat debris annually, and modify roofs and walls as needed. Use non-flammable material and landscaping to separate structures from wildland fuels. Educate builders and landowners on new construction standards to mitigate structural ignitability.

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Action #7. DEVELOP FIRE-FIGHTING WATER SOURCES, especially near or in dense land parcel neighborhoods.

- 1. Access to ponds by fire department trucks
- 2. Install draft (water pumping) facilities
- 3. Mapping of installed facilities and access for fire department
- 4. Maintain each year all installed facilities
- 5. Identify and helicopter-use draft ponds, including mapping locations and capacities

-- Recommendation: Include these considerations in each neighborhood's local CWPP.