



SAN BENITO WILDFIRE RESILIENCE

Program

Fire plays an important role in natural systems and cultural practices. It can benefit ecosystems by promoting ecosystem regeneration, increasing nutrient cycling, and maintaining biodiversity. Indigenous communities have used fire for millennia to shape landscapes, support ecological balance, reduce the accumulation of flammable materials, and other culturally important reasons. Historically, San Benito ranching families used fire to improve rangeland throughout the County. Wildfires can also cause long-term damage to property and ecosystems, and threaten human life. One of the most useful tools for collaborative wildfire prevention and response are Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP).

WHAT IS A CWPP?

As wildfire severity increases, communities need a plan to prepare for, reduce the risk of, and adapt to wildland fire events. A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is community-based and focused on identifying and addressing the local threats of wildfire as well as resources valued by the community. The federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) requires that CWPPs are developed by multiple agencies at the state and local level in consultation with federal agencies and the public. In 2024, a variety of local partners updated San Benito's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). To view the plan, visit: www.RCDSanBenito.org



River Fire, 2020. Photo by David A. Litman

NEXT STEP: DEVELOP A REGIONAL PRIORITY PLAN (RPP)

In 2025 the same partners will develop the **Regional Priority Plan (RPP)** for San Benito County. The **RPP** will:

- Describe the existing conditions of wildlands in the county
- Recommend a set of priority projects aimed at reducing risk and damage to sensitive resources and communities.

Having an RPP is a key requirement for continuing and expanding the region's funding for wildfire mitigation related projects.

This project is funded by a block grant awarded to the State Coastal Conservancy through the California Department of Conservation.



WHAT IS THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI)?

The WUI is the area where wildland fuels meet development, often in the form of homes, businesses, infrastructure (e.g., power lines, drinking water supplies), and other valuable assets. Targeting these areas for fire risk reduction projects is likely to have the greatest effect in protecting homes, livelihoods, and valued natural resources.

WHAT DOES A CWPP INCLUDE?

- A Countywide Wildfire Risk Assessment
- Wildfire Mitigation Strategies for Homeowners and Landowners
- Funding Opportunities
- Evacuation Routes
- And More!



WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PROGRAM?

The updated CWPP was developed with public input in 2024, including 1 virtual and three in-person community meetings, webinars, focus groups, comment cards, and email.

Feedback and suggestions received from community members were incorporated into the San Benito CWPP.

Core partners on the CWPP update include:

- San Benito Fire Safe Council
- San Benito Agricultural Land Trust
- San Benito Resource Conservation District
- San Benito Office of Emergency Services
- San Benito County Cattlemen's Association
- Bolado Park & Event Center
- University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Cooperative Extension
- City of Hollister Fire Department
- California State Parks
- Amah Mutsun Land Trust
- Bureau of Land Management
- Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association
- CAL FIRE and the National Park Service

The consultant team supporting this CWPP update includes Environmental Science Associates (ESA) and Spatial Informatics Group.



CONTACT US: sanbenitowildfireplan@gmail.com | Sign up to receive updates & info about community meetings