

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



Guiding Principle Statement Hazardous Fuel Reduction Cost-Sharing and Commercial Timber Value

This guiding principle statement addresses the issue of the role of commercial timber value in cost-share projects supported and or managed by the Plumas County Fire Safe Council to assist private landowners to reduce hazardous fuels to protect homes and communities.

Issue

A goal of the Plumas County Fire Safe Council is to reduce hazardous fuels on as many acres as possible, especially on non-industrial private lands adjacent to or intermixed with communities in Plumas County. Fuel reduction projects supported by the council will result in a fuel profile that will not initiate or sustain a crown fire, and will produce flame lengths that are generally less than three feet in height.

The Council will assist private non-industrial forest landowners by sharing the costs to achieve fuel reduction goals using those methods that are best suited to the situation, including commercial timber harvest. Another goal of the hazardous fuel reduction program is to do the work in the most cost-effective manner possible and obtain the greatest value for each cost-share dollar.

There are several vegetation management options for use in hazardous fuel reduction. The options include, but are not limited to the following:

- Weed abatement to remove surface fuel.
- Chipping of dead and down woody debris to remove surface fuel.
- Pruning of limbs (both live and dead) that contribute to ladder fuels.
- Thinning of small trees and brush that may not have commercial value to remove ladder fuels.
- Thinning of trees with commercial value to increase inter-tree distance, reduce tree canopy density and offset costs associated with reducing other fuels.

Principles

The Council when providing cost share assistance to a landowner will enter into an agreement to assist in paying for:

- a) A Registered Professional Forester to assist landowners with the necessary permits and plans;
- b) Thinning operations, and
- c) Treatment of surface, ladder and crown fuels that meet the Council's standard.

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council expects that the landowner will address surface fuels, ladder fuels and the overstory fuel associated with larger trees and shrubs using one of the options described above. The landowner has the final say on which trees will be cut, however the Plumas County Fire Safe Council won't provide cost-share funds if the desired fuel profile is not attained.

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1 The PCFSC will cover all or a part of the costs of a Registered Professional Forester to develop the
2 project. When the thinning of trees involves a commercial timber harvest, up to 50% of the cost of the
3 RPF shall be paid by the landowner out of the revenue generated.

4 When a project involves commercial timber harvesting operations the Plumas Fire Safe Council
5 encourages a prescription of thinning from below.

6 The landowner will pay for the harvest costs including slash disposal as required by California Forest
7 Practice Rules when the fuel reduction project includes a commercial harvest component that provides
8 revenue sufficient to cover harvest costs.

9 The Council expects the landowner to reduce post-harvest surface and any remaining ladder fuels to
10 higher standard of fuel reduction than required by the California Forest Practices Rules¹.

11 Up to 50% of the treatment to attain the PCFSC standard and beyond that required by California Forest
12 Practice Rules, shall be paid by the landowner out of revenues generated.

13 The PCFSC may provide cost-share only for those acres that positively affect life and property.

14 The PCFSC reserves the right to negotiate the terms of the agreement in the interest of the county, and
15 communities.

16 **Definitions**

17 *Commercial timber harvest-* removal of timber products with commercial value.

18 *Cost-share-* Financial assistance to the landowner from the Plumas County Fire Safe Council that results
19 in fuel reduction near a home or community.

20 *Hazardous Fuel-* Combustible material that accumulates in the forest or other wildlands and is
21 concentrated on the ground surface as surface fuel or just above the ground surface as ladder fuel, or in
22 the tree canopy as crown fuel.

23 *Hazardous Fuel Reduction-* Active reduction of hazardous fuels by any of several fuel management or
24 silvicultural practices.

25 *Ladder Fuel-* Those fuels that convey flames from the ground to the canopy. Ladder fuels are generally
26 small trees, brush or tree limbs near the ground.

27 *Surface Fuel-* Those fuels that are located on the ground surface. Surface fuels are generally comprised
28 of litter and duff, grasses and forbs and down woody debris.

29 *Tree canopy-* Limbs and foliage that are on large trees and brush and the interrelationship thereof.

30 *Wildland-urban interface-* The area where communities and homes intermix with or are adjacent to
31 wildland vegetation, including forests and chaparral, that can readily burn and cause loss of life and/or
32 property.

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¹ The California Forest Practice Rules require that “All woody debris created by timber operations greater than one inch but less than eight inches in diameter within 100 ft. of permanently located structures maintained for human habitation shall be removed or piled and burned; all slash created between 100-200 ft. of permanently located structures maintained for human habitation shall be lopped for fire hazard reduction, removed, chipped or piled and burned; lopping may be required between 200-500 ft. where unusual fire risk or hazard exist as determined by the Director” (<http://fire.ca.gov/ResourceManagement/pdf/FPR200201.pdf>).