

**Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area
Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

September 2007

Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Introduction

Members of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side community, in consultation with local, state and federal agencies and other interested parties have collaboratively developed the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This CWPP was created according to the guidelines of *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities*, March 2004, Communities Committee, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Foresters, Society of American Foresters, Western Governors' Association. The handbook was designed to lead the community through a process that includes eight steps to completion of a CWPP. Several public meetings were held to guide the community through the eight steps. Debbie Alpe, Jackson County Extension Agent, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension facilitated the CWPP meetings. Technical assistance was provided by Curran Trick, Jackson County GIS Department. The *Jackson County Fire Plan* and the *Jackson County Firefighters Response Guide* were both completed in 2003. The Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP supplements and enhances the information presented in these county documents. All resource materials used are listed in the Appendix.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) directs the federal agencies to collaborate with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and in the prioritization of treatment areas as defined by a community's CWPP. It identifies strategies for reducing wildfire fuels while improving forest health, supporting local industry and economy, and improving fire fighting response capabilities.

Objectives of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan

- Engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization.
- Provide mechanism for federal agencies to give meaningful considerations to community priorities.
- Facilitate open community discussion regarding management options.
- Provide maximum flexibility for communities to determine the substance and detail of their plans.
- Merge the goals and objectives of the landowners with the needs and expectations of the community regarding fire risk reduction.
- Coordinate fire protection strategies across property boundaries.
- Coordinate the grant funding and federal program budgets to achieve the most effective results with limited funding.

Development of the Plan

The CWPP Handbook specifically outlines eight steps community members should take to complete a viable CWPP. The Rainbow Lakes/West Side community elected to utilize this eight step approach to guide their CWPP process. By following this facilitated approach, the community and agency partners engaged in focused discussion related to all critical CWPP topics and succeeded in developing a plan that genuinely reflects the concerns and recommendations of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area. The entire collaborative process was completed within a six month period between July and September 2007. The eight steps to completion are outlined in the following sections.

Step 1- Decision Makers Convened

The decision makers for this CWPP are listed below. These officials were notified on June 27, 2007 and invited to participate in the development of this plan.

- Local Government: Jackson County Board of County Commissioners
- North Park Fire and Rescue Chief: Jeff Benson
- Colorado State Forest Service District Forester: Brook Lee

Step 2 – Federal Agencies Involved

The representatives of the federal agencies managing land in the vicinity of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Wildland Urban Interface are listed below. Most of these people attended a widely advertised initial community meeting inclusive of all interested landowners, businesses, and agency people in Jackson County. This meeting was held the morning of Saturday, March 18, 2006 at the North Park High School. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the CWPP process and to encourage residents of Jackson County to work with key agency representatives to initiate completion of their individual community CWPPs. Federal agency representatives initially invited and subsequently involved include the following people:

Agency	Representative	Date Invited to Participate
Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest	Ann Kiser, Parks District District Ranger	February 7, 2006
Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest	Randy Lownes, Parks District Fire Management Officer	February 7, 2006
Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest	Mark Westfahl, Parks District Forester	February 7, 2006
Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest	Carl Maass, Forester	May 16, 2006
Bureau of Land Management	Lynn Barclay, Fire Mitigation Education Specialist	February 7, 2006
Bureau of Land Management Kremmling Field Office	Bill Wyatt, Fuels Staff, Fire Archaeologist	February 7, 2006
Bureau of Land Management Kremmling Field Office	John Ruhs, Field Manager	February 7, 2006

Step 3a – State and Local Agencies Involved

The representatives of the state/local agencies that have jurisdictional responsibilities in the vicinity of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Wildland Urban Interface area are listed below. Most of these people attended the meeting described above held the morning of Saturday, March 18, 2006 at the North Park High School.

Agency	Representative	Date Invited to Participate
Colorado State Forest Service	John Twitchell, Forester	February 7, 2006
Colorado State Forest Service	Brook Lee, Forester	February 7, 2006
Colorado State Forest State Parks	Tim Metzger, Park Ranger	February 7, 2006
CSU Cooperative Extension	Debbie Alpe, Extension Agent	February 7, 2006
Jackson County Commissioner	John Rich	February 7, 2006
Jackson County Commissioner	Naida Crowner	February 7, 2006
Jackson County Commissioner	Mike Blanton	February 7, 2006

Director, Jackson County Emergency Management	Kent Crowder, Jackson County Administrator	February 7, 2006
Jackson County GIS	Curran Trick	May 23, 2006
North Park Fire and Rescue	Jeff Benson, Fire Chief	February 7, 2006
Jackson County Sheriff	Rick Rizor	February 7, 2006

Step 3b – Interested Parties Engaged

The residents from the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area WUI that took leadership roles on the core CWPP planning team are listed below. These people met to organize a strategy for convening their community to complete the CWPP on July 27, 2007. These people and other landowners who participated in the process by attending one or more meetings, received meeting announcements, agendas, and notes, and/or communicated via telephone or e-mail are listed in the Appendix.

Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP Core Team Members
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Step 4 –Community Base Map Established

After considering the location of the inhabited areas, the critical human infrastructure and the risk of wildfire, the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area community identified a base map representing a WUI zone around their community assets. The map includes an area approximately 216 square miles on the west side of Jackson County. The WUI includes private lands with several BLM and State lands interspersed between private lands and the USFS/Routt National Forest and the Mount Zirkel Wilderness Area to the west. Natural and man-made barriers used to define the WUI boundary include Lake John and the Delaney Butte Lakes State Wildlife Areas on the northeast end, following Jackson County Road 5 “The Ridge Road” on the east side of the WUI, then cutting southwest across the south edge of T6N. R82W, following the Jackson County boundary north thru the Mount Zirkel Wilderness Area to the northwest corner of T9N.R82W at Ute Pass. The base map of the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area WUI is included. The boundaries of the WUI map include the following values at risk.

Inhabited areas at potential risk to wildland fire:

- Rainbow Lakes Subdivision.
- Dispersed private properties with/without cabins, homes and other structures.

Areas containing critical human infrastructure and values: escape routes, watersheds and municipal water supplies, viewsheds and power or communication structures. These include:

- Jackson County Roads 5, 7, 18, 20, 22, 22W, and 24
- USFS, BLM, State and private roads
- Mountain Parks Electric, Inc.(MPEI) has various electric lines situated in the WUI. Maps provided by MPEI are included in the Appendix.

Step 5 –Community Risk Assessment

Inserted in this section is the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP Risk Assessment completed during a community meeting Friday, July 27, 2007 attended by 10 residents (listed in Appendix). Community protection is the responsibility of everyone involved. CWPPs will facilitate agency decision-making and prioritization of projects. Fire can come from within or without the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area WUI. To follow are some of the hazards and values at risk identified by the community.

Fuel Hazards and Risk of Wildfire Occurrence

- Infected Lodgepole with a high mortality rate/ high beetle infection
- Some landowners have completed or are currently completing extensive defensible space projects to protect structures. Other landowners have done nothing and may increase risk to neighbors.
- Area is in HIGH risk for wildfire.
- Also have sagebrush stands that could spread fire
- Fire Chief, Jeff Benson has recently completed a Rainbow Lakes Subdivision assessment with specific recommendations provided to individual property owners. Generally, he notes some landowners are working on removing the dead and dying trees but some need to work harder to remove ladder fuels and burn slash piles in the winter months.

Homes, Businesses, and Essential Infrastructure at Risk

Homes and Businesses

- There are approximately 71 homes and/or structures
- Most to all homes are log or wood frame construction.
- Most homes have wood decks or porches
- Most roofs are fire safe using either asphalt/fiberglass shingles or metal roofing.
- Some homes are visible from the main county roads. Visibility of some homes from the main road is increasing with the recent timber cutting going on in the area.
- Businesses in the WUI include many ranches including but not limited to Silver Spur, Swift, Boettcher, Headwaters, Jackson, Lucky Penny, Darl Peterson, North Fork, Latham, Knox, Chedsey, Wattenberg, Tointon, Lone Pine and the Beaver Creek.
- Other businesses include:
 - *Meemo in the Mountains
 - * Spaulding Oil
 - * Make It Happen Construction (Schafer)
 - * Tri-State/Buffalo Creek Outfitters
 - * Several guide and outfitting businesses
 - * Schafer/Lux Sawmill
 - * Online Education (Carver)
 - * Swift Trucking
 - * North Park Wildlife Rehabilitation (McLachlan)

Roads, Driveways and Structures

- Most to all county roads have signs posted.
- Some county roads are paved (including 12W and 7)
- Most are dirt or gravel
- Most are 2 lanes
- Most roads will support fire emergency equipment.
- Most private roads are 1 lane dirt roads.
- There are a few private loop roads
- There are dead end county and private roads and some have adequate turn around space for emergency vehicles.
- Most driveways are accessible to fire trucks.
- Few homes and vacant properties have addresses posted. Some have house numbers but no names. On JCR 22 all properties are marked with the address number and most with names also.

Bridges, Cattle Guards, Culverts, and Gates

- Most to all county and private bridges and cattle guard would support fire equipment.
- Some to most cabin bridges will support emergency equipment
- Most to all culverts are adequate in the WUI
- Some cattle guards may be too narrow to allow emergency equipment access but wings on some can be folded down.
- Some gates may be locked, but could be cut with bolt cutters carried in fire trucks.

Utilities

- All telephone lines are underground.
- Cellular/Mobile phone service is limited – Network is Verizon, Union, or AT&T
- Some homes have landlines, some do not
- Most electrical lines are above ground, some of the Lux's electric in underground.
- Most propane tanks are above ground, few are underground and unmarked

Water

- All use wells
- Some have ponds and springs available for use by emergency equipment
Ponds available are Carver, McLachlan, Raney, Manville and Caldwell and the Martin spring.
- An important community value is to protect the North Platte watershed

Other Community Values at Risk

- Trails
- Livestock and wildlife
- Homesteads
- Richardson Cabin (6823 JCR 22)
- Grizzly Ranger Station
- Campgrounds
- Barns and cabins scattered throughout WUI

- Lillywhite Cabin
- Gamber Cabin on JCR 1
- Scenic “viewsheds”
- Fluorspar and Coal Mines
- State watersheds
- Slow Rock

Local Preparedness and Firefighting Capability

- Some community members have individual or family evacuation plans
- Deb McLachlan’s residence can possibly be used for a “checkoff point”
- Response time to Rainbow Lakes / West Side area is a minimum of 20 minutes
- Some residents have small generators

Insurance

- The West Side has no ISO rating. Most properties are insured.

Step 6 – Community Fire Hazard Reduction Priorities and Recommendations

Inserted in this section are the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP Priorities and Recommendations endorsed by the community during a meeting Friday, August 24th, 2007 attended by 7 residents and agency representatives (listed in Appendix).

Fuel Treatment Projects

High Priorities

- Slash piling – designate a better place for slash, ex: county or federal land
- Strongly encourage neighbors and other landowners to do work on their properties.
- Clear right-of-ways along roads and powerlines
- Discuss fuel breaks around community areas with the USFS
- Encourage federal and state partners to prioritize projects on the West Side
- Ask for feedback regarding specific projects on USFS and BLM in the area
- Inquire about the BLM project on Sheep Mountain

Reducing Structural Ignitability

High Priorities

- Many private property owners have begun extensive work to reduce structural ignitability and they would like to see more of their neighbors do the same.
- Rainbow Lakes/West Side area residents intend to accomplish the recommendations made by Fire Chief Benson and the CSFS District Forester to continue work in their area.
- Broaden turn-around space on private and county roads for emergency equipment

Emergency Preparedness

High Priorities

- Rainbow Lakes/West Side area residents need to create individual and possibly community evacuation plans.
- Discuss further the meeting place in the event of a evacuation, practice evacuation plans
- Discuss annual communication meetings or notices within the Rainbow Lakes/West Side area regarding evacuation plans and education.
- Explore funding opportunities and grants for fire suppression projects.
- Request fire danger notices/signage for recreators
- Prioritize meeting participants
- Standardized signage needs to be addressed.

The tables below outline Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area WUI projects, responsible parties and level of priority for implementation.

Fuel Treatment Projects

Project or Activity	Responsible Party	Priority Level
Designate a better place for slash	Private landowners	High
Discuss fuel breaks around community areas with the USFS	USFS	High
Encourage landowners to work on their properties	Private landowners	High
Clear right-of-ways along road and powerlines in WUI	USFS, BLM, County and MPEI	High
Encourage federal and state partners to prioritize projects on the West Side	USFS, BLM, CSFS	High
Ask for feedback regarding specific projects on USFS and BLM on the West Side	USFS, BLM	High

Projects to Reduce Structural Ignitability

Project or Activity	Responsible Party	Priority Level
Create defensible space and reduce fire hazards on private property	Private landowners	High
Complete recommendations made by NP Fire and Rescue and CSFS	Private landowners	High
Broaden turn-around space on private and county roads for emergency equipment	County and Private landowners	High

Projects to Increase Emergency Preparedness

Project or Activity	Responsible Party	Priority Level
Create individual and possibly community evacuation plans	Private landowners	High
Decide upon a meeting place for residents in the event of an evacuation, practice evacuation plans	Private landowners	High
Discuss annual communication plans within the Rainbow Lakes/West Side area	Private landowners	High
Explore funding opportunities and grants for fire suppression projects	Private landowners	High
Request fire danger notices/signage for recreators	USFS	High
Prioritize meeting participants	Private landowners	High
Post standardized address signs	Private landowners, Jackson County	High

Step 7 –Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

- The Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area community recommends all above stated priorities be considered for projects to accomplish in this WUI. All projects listed are considered valuable and important to the residents of this WUI. Private residents, Jackson County, North Park Fire and Rescue, Colorado State Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest will be responsible for initiating projects based on land ownership and/or jurisdiction.
- The community recognizes that all private individuals, Jackson County, and partnering agencies experience budget constraints. However, the projects listed in this CWPP are considered critical and important in the effort to protect life and property in the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area and therefore deserve immediate attention.
- The Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area community recommends that projects listed above as *Highest Priorities* be completed immediately in 2007-2008.

Step 8 – Finalizing the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

- Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties and land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of Rainbow Lakes/West Side have been invited to participate and provide input to the process by mail, e-mail, telephone, and face to face during CWPP meetings.
- Identified and prioritized areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect the Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area.
- Recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

Signatures

The following mutually agree with the contents of this Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

Michael A. Blanton _____ Date _____
Signature

John C. Rich _____ Date _____
Signature

Landel R. Weddle _____ Date _____
Signature

Fire Chief, North Park Fire and Rescue

Jeff Benson _____ Date _____
Signature

District Forester, Colorado State Forest Service

Brook Lee _____ Date _____
Signature

Jackson County Administrator/Director of Emergency Management for Jackson County

Kent Crowder _____ Date _____
Signature

Jackson County Sheriff

Rick Rizer _____ Date _____
Signature

District Ranger, Parks District, Routt-Medicine Bow National Forest

Mike Wright _____ Date _____
Signature

Field Manager, Kremmling Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

David Stout _____ Date _____
Signature

Appendix

Resource Materials Used

- *Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003*
- *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities*, March 2004; Communities Committee, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Foresters, Society of American Foresters, Western Governors' Association
- *Community Wildfire Protection Plans-Guidelines for Implementation*, Colorado State Forest Service, August 2005
- *Community Fire Planning Workbook*, State of Utah, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands.
- California Fire Alliance website CWPP template, www.cafirealliance.org.
- *Leaders Guide Supplement*, International Association of Fire Chiefs
- *Jackson County Fire Plan, 2003*
- *Jackson County Firefighters Response Guide, 2003*

**Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP Risk Assessment Meeting
July 27, 2007 at The Wattenberg Center
Participant List**

Present:

1. Tony Martin
2. Lavonn Martin
3. Robert Manville
4. Penny Manville
5. Fred Lux
6. Janet Lux
7. Lance Shafer
8. Jim Dustin (Press)
9. Pat Carver
10. Randy Basaraba
11. Deb McLachlan
12. Bill Wyatt
13. Jason Zayatz
14. Brook Lee
15. Jeff Benson
16. John Rich
17. David Stout
18. Mike Blanton
19. Mike Wright
20. Curran Trick
21. Deb Alpe

**Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP Priorities and Recommendations
August 24th, 2007 at The Wattenberg Center
Participant List**

Present:

1. Dawn Borg
2. Fred Lux
3. Janet Lux
4. Martin Dumler
5. Sheila Caldwell
6. Deb McLachlan
7. Lance Shafer
8. Jason Zayatz
9. Dawn Beall
10. Bill Wyatt
11. Deb Alpe
12. Curran Trick
13. Brook Lee

**Rainbow Lakes/West Side Area CWPP
Mountain Parks Electric, Inc.
Electric Line Maps**





