

# Hopland Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan



## Mendocino County Fire Safe Council

*Primary sources include input from the community and:*

*Mendocino County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2015)*

*<https://firesafemendocino.org/mcwpp-plan/>*

*Fire Vulnerability Assessment for Mendocino County, Aug 2020*

*<https://www.mendocinocog.org/files/7261d7732/FireVulnerabilityAssessment.pdf>*

*Mendocino County Evacuation Plan, Aug 2020*

*<https://www.mendocinocog.org/files/cbb6532a3/%2307c+EvacuationPlan071520.pdf>*

# CWPP AGREEMENT

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan, developed for the Hopland area:

- ✓ Was collaboratively developed and meets the intent of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. Interested parties and federal agencies managing land in the Hopland, California area have been consulted.
- ✓ Identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous-fuel reduction treatments, and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect this area.
- ✓ Recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the Plan area.
- ✓ Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only, utilizing a compilation of community issues and goals and projected fire mitigation strategies.
- ✓ Assists and encourages compliance with current county and state fire code standards.

The following attest that the standards listed above have been met and mutually agree with the contents of this Hopland Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan.



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3/3/2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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February 16, 2022

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Ted Williams, Chair  
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Date



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Scott Cratty, Executive Director  
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January 6, 2022

\_\_\_\_\_  
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# CHAPTER 1: RISK ASSESSMENT

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HOPLAND AREA

The unincorporated town of Hopland is located along US Highway 101 in Mendocino County, which is located on the Pacific Ocean in California's North Coast region. Hopland's elevation is 502', and the population of the area addressed in this Plan is estimated at 5,000.

World-class vineyards thrive in the surrounding area, and oak woodlands on rolling hills are the predominant landscape feature. This area is also largely comprised of steep slopes, with the major ridges oriented north-northwest to south-southeast. Populated valleys are surrounded by foothills and in some places by steep mountains. The Russian River flows through the Hopland area.

The region's main economy is agriculture; cottage industry, tourism, and recreation also contribute. Land use includes agriculture (predominantly wine grapes), livestock, and recreation. Cultivation of cannabis (marijuana), either illegally or now legally, is prevalent throughout the county and contributes to the local economy; it can also present a hindrance to fire-safety efforts due to the locations of grows, often situated in high-fuel areas with very difficult access. Wildland subdivisions and continuous areas of Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) are predominant around the town of Hopland and in the surrounding hills, and the population continues to grow.

Vegetative fuel types in the county consist of grass, oak woodlands, brush, mixed chaparral, heavy timber on northern aspects of ravines, and cut-over slash. Brush is usually composed of chamise on south and west-facing slopes, and mixed chaparral on north and east-facing slopes. Portions of this area have experienced recent wildfires, but many areas have not, and there is consequently a large build-up of wildland fuels ready to burn.

This area has a Mediterranean climate, with dry summers during which typically no rain falls from June through October. Average temperatures range from 37–56° F in winter and 90–105° F in summer. Historical average annual rainfall is 40 inches. The fire season in Mendocino County historically lasts from early June to mid or late October, but in recent years the average California fire season has increased by approximately 80 days, and after years of warming and drought, the Mendocino County fire season is now effectively year-round.

This area also experiences strong and erratic winds. The warmer the valleys become, the more erratic and stronger the winds. When ultra-dry air overlays parched vegetation, tinderbox conditions develop that are ripe for extreme fire growth. Wind gusts above hurricane force have been recorded in many locations in the county, and wildfires occurring during these wind events are extremely dangerous and destructive. The California Fire Alliance has identified this area as "very high risk", its highest category of risk ranking, and CAL FIRE has identified areas within 10 miles of Hopland as "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones".

The mountains and foothills present a considerable WUI challenge. A number of subdivisions are at risk from wildfire in the Hopland area, including the McNab Ranch, Russian River Estates, the Hopland Reservation, and the University of California Hopland Research and Extension Center. Many areas are served by secondary roads that serve as the only access, where that access could be severely impacted by fire. These roads are often the only way into a property, and are often private roads serving remote, rural homes, ranches, and outbuildings, many of these unnamed, narrow, winding, poorly maintained, overgrown, and locked with multiple gates. In order to facilitate evacuation, these areas have been

organized into Area-Specific Pre-Identified Evacuation Zones (see Appendix A: Figure E map), so that both law enforcement and fire officials can prioritize efforts and resources to locations in greatest need.

The entire population east of the Russian River is served by fire departments west of the river. In the 20-mile stretch from Calpella south to Hopland, there are only seven crossings serving a very large area with a sizable population. Significant delays in both law enforcement and fire/medical services could result during a major wildfire event. Given the limited river crossings, large-scale evacuations from east to west across the river could prove to be problematic.

The Hopland area is part of Planning Zone 2 in the Mendocino County CWPP, which includes the southeast and central portion of the county, assigned to CAL FIRE Battalion 3. Battalion 3 includes Ukiah, Redwood Valley, Hopland, and Potter Valley, and part of the Russian and Eel River watersheds.

The significant WUI throughout this area and the multitude of outlying subdivisions throughout the planning area are of considerable concern. Many of these areas have significant ingress/egress issues which include one or more of the following:

- Poor or non-existent addressing
- Unnamed or poorly identified roads/streets
- Steep, narrow and winding roads
- Limited to one access
- Heavy wildland fuel accumulations
- Access passing through areas of high wildland fire-fuel loads

In summary, all of the communities in this Planning Zone 2 are at a very high risk for wildfire.

## **WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) AND INTERMIX AREAS**

“Our whole county is a WUI!” So responded county residents at a public meeting to solicit input for the very first version of the Mendocino County CWPP in 2005.

Population dynamics in California have resulted in rapid development in rural areas with attractive recreational and aesthetic amenities. This demographic growth is increasing the size of the WUI, where wildfire poses the biggest risk to human lives and structures. WUI expansion in recent decades has significant implications for wildfire management and impact, creating an environment in which fire can move readily between structures and vegetation fuels, increasing the likelihood that wildfires will threaten structures and people.

The majority of Hopland area residents live not in the WUI *per se* but in the Wildland-Urban Intermix, in homes and small communities scattered throughout thick wildland fuels, with no clearly distinguishable boundaries. This situation resulted in part from a lack of decisive planning relative to wildfire danger in early settlement days, and partly from the strong desire of many Mendocino County residents to live in privacy, often surrounded by pines, tanoaks, chaparral, manzanitas, scotch broom, and other highly flammable vegetation.

This area contains a wide range of both natural and man-made assets at risk to wildfires. Fires threaten the natural environment as well as commercial and residential property. It is difficult to prioritize or rank these assets, but citizen and firefighter safety, homes, infrastructure including water and power supply, rivers and watersheds, air quality, soil, wildlife and associated habitat, recreation areas including tourist attractions, scenic beauty, historical buildings, cultural unique areas, timber, and rangeland all rank high.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDFIRE SEVERITY**

Wildfires are a natural part of the ecosystem, clearing out accumulations of underbrush, stimulating plant regrowth and releasing nutrients into the soil. Historically and prehistorically, Mendocino County forests are thought to have burned every two to twenty years, with many fires having been strategically ignited by Native Americans. These frequent, low-intensity fires promoted open, low-density tree stands that kept fires at the surface of the forest floor when they burned.

Today, the building of housing developments in WUI areas and the need to protect valuable resources has led to decades of fire suppression. This causes woody debris to accumulate and small trees and shrubs to become dense, contributing to high vegetative fuel loads. The result is a greatly increased risk of high-intensity fires with greater potential to move from the forest floor into the tree canopy, where they more easily spread and become more difficult to control.

Wildfire risk is further compounded by climate change. Research suggests that wildfire risk increases with predicted warmer temperatures and more frequent, severe droughts, which create extremely dry forest conditions that are more conducive to ignition and spread. The wildfire “season” may become longer as conditions become drier and hotter for a longer period of time.

Some trees also become stressed due to drought, and will die or succumb to disease and pests such as the bark beetle, which has killed thousands of trees in Mendocino County as a result of recent drought. An increase in dead, standing trees may contribute to high fuel loads. The potential for long, dry forest conditions, coupled with commonly high fuel loads, may result in more frequent, high-intensity wildfires that are likely to have adverse impacts on forest lands, carbon sequestration, and suppression costs as well as risks to life and property.

## **GROWING OF CANNABIS**

Cannabis (marijuana) cultivation has become a lucrative income source for many in Mendocino County. The plant is still federally illegal, but has drawn large numbers of people from all over the world, and the resultant population growth has primarily occurred in Wildland-Urban Interface and Wildland-Urban Intermix areas. Not only does this increase in rural population present dangers in itself, but many grows are indoors, increasing fire danger to structures throughout the county because of the electricity and power generation involved. Both indoor and outdoor growing operations present safety concerns and a tactical challenge to fire-suppression efforts.

Much of cannabis’ environmental and fire-hazard impact stems from the enormous amount of light needed to grow it. Plants can be grown indoors year-round and out of sight, and some indoor growers power their “grow lights” with electricity from the grid. This increases fire risk, as indoor cultivation can involve substantial nonpermitted modifications to electrical systems to power grow lights and fans. These modifications are rarely performed to code and can involve overloaded circuits, modified circuit panels, exposed wiring, and extension cords to power grow-lights and exhaust systems. These modifications also result in skyrocketing energy usage and increases in house fires, posing a risk not only to the homes themselves but to neighboring structures and wildlands. Fire fighters and law enforcement can also be jeopardized when electrical wiring deviates from legal standards.

Grow operations in state parks, national forest, and private landholdings are a significant issue infringing upon public safety and creating environmental and wildfire concerns. Those in more rural locations tend to use large diesel generators for power, and the fuel is often stored in containers ill-suited for diesel fuel, creating an enormous risk of fire as well as toxic spills. Poorly protected extension cords also often traverse through vegetation, potentially resulting in wildland fires, especially as the weather turns warmer and vegetation becomes drier.

Diesel spills associated with use of generators often leak into water supplies. The need for secrecy means that diesel spills go undetected, spikes or shorts in electricity are overlooked, wildlife are slaughtered, and untold gallons of toxic pesticides wash into rivers and creeks go unreported. With no tax revenue from cannabis, state agencies struggle to find adequate funds for cleanup and prevention, including fire safety.

Water consumption is another significant issue in the environmental impacts of cannabis growth. Each cannabis plant can use between 3 and 5 gallons of water per day. As the size and number of grows increase, the stress on water resources in drought-prone California also increases. Not only does this pose a risk to environmental values and resources, but it can create dire logistical complications during fire-suppression efforts.

## **RECENT WILDFIRE HISTORY IN CAL FIRE MEU BATTALION 3**

### **2018**

On July 27, 2018, the Ranch and River fires started within hours of each other near the communities of Potter Valley and Hopland respectively. Both fires grew rapidly, nearly becoming one. In order to more effectively manage them, fire officials combined the two into the Mendocino Complex Fire. The fires spread through portions of Mendocino, Lake, Colusa, and Glenn Counties, and caused the evacuation of more than ten communities, including the Hopland Reservation, and the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center, where an estimated 3200 of 5400 acres, including several research buildings, burned. The Mendocino Complex Fire burned 459,123 acres; the Ranch Fire alone reached 410,203 acres, becoming the largest modern California wildfire to date. The Mendocino Complex Fire destroyed 280 structures, and damaged 37 others, causing at least \$267 million in damages. It also forced the closure of Highway Route 20 and 175 in Mendocino County and routes 20, 29, 175 in Lake County. The impact to the transportation system included extensive damage to highways 20 and 175 in both counties. The total cost of removing hazardous trees, replacing metal-beam guardrails, signage, fencing, and drainage systems, and unclogging ditches and stabilizing denuded slopes, in addition to other roadway impacts in both Mendocino and Lake Counties, was over \$10,500,000.

### **2019**

On August 13, 2019, the Moose Fire started on McNab Ranch between Hopland and Ukiah, burning 225 acres. The fire forced evacuations in the area, but no structures were destroyed.

On October 28, 2019, the Burris Fire started near the community of Potter Valley along Hwy 20, burning 703 acres and forcing evacuations in the immediate area around the fire, evacuation warnings for the entire community of Potter Valley and from Hwy 20 South to Hwy 175 near Hopland. This incident also had agencies assisting from the State of Oregon, as resources were scarce due to the Kincade Fire burning in Lake and Sonoma Counties.

### **2020**

The August Complex Fire was the first “gigafire” (spanning over a million acres) in the modern history of California. This massive wildfire in the Coast Range of Northern California affected Glenn, Lake, Mendocino, Tehama, Trinity, and Shasta Counties and forced evacuation of more than ten communities. It originated as 38 separate fires started by lightning strikes on August 16–17, 2020. On September 9, the Doe Fire, the main fire of the August Complex, surpassed the 2018 Mendocino Complex to become both the single largest wildfire and the largest fire complex in recorded California history. By the time it

was extinguished on November 12, the August Complex fire had destroyed 935 structures, taken the life of one firefighter, and seriously injured two others. It burned a total of 1,032,648 acres (417,898 ha), or 1,614 square miles (4,180 km<sup>2</sup>), about 1% of California’s 100 million acres of land, an area larger than the state of Rhode Island. The August Complex was managed by both the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

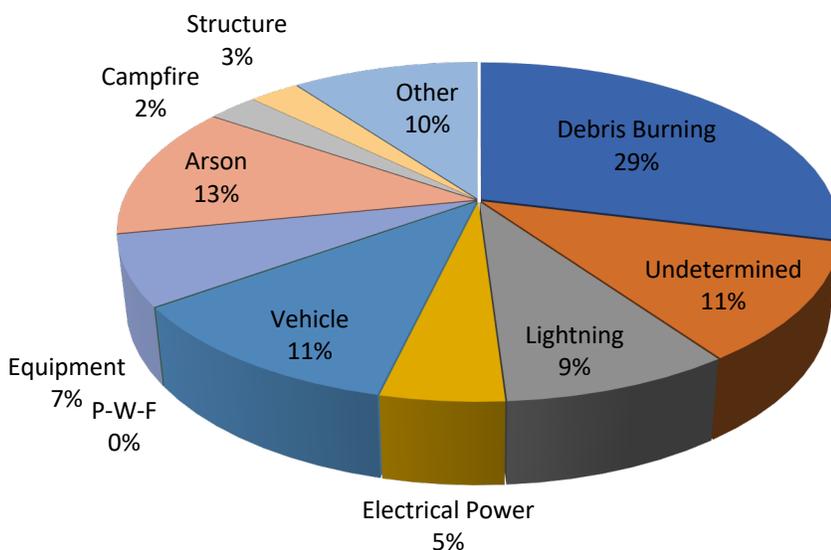
## FIRE SEASON 2020 IGNITION STATISTICS

In 2020, MEU responded to 151 wildland fires in Mendocino County, a significant increase from 131 wildland fires in 2019. The following fire-cause classes were responsible for the majority of the vegetation fires within the Mendocino Unit in 2020:

1. Debris Burning (43 fires for 29% of the total)
2. Arson (19 fires for 13% of the total)
3. Vehicle (18 fires for 12% of the total)
4. Undetermined (17 fires for 11% of the total)
5. Other/Miscellaneous (15 fires for 10% of the total)

These were followed by: Lightning (13 fires-9%), Equipment 10 fires-7%), Electrical Power 7 fires-5%), Campfire (4 fires-2%), Structure (3 fires-2%), and Railroad (0 fires).

### 2020 MEU Fire Cause/Burn Percentage



#### Debris Burning

Debris burning accounted for 43 fires or 29% of the total fires in the Unit. This cause class increased by a count of 5 fires from the 5-year average, likely due to continued drought conditions and private-property fuel reduction. With the dry fuel conditions and an increased number of residences conducting debris burning, the number continues to rise. Public service announcements regarding fuel reduction have also increased in recent years, leading to more residences participating in debris burning.

#### Electrical power

Electrical power accounted for 7 fires or 5% of the total ignitions in the Unit. Electrical fires started because of illegal or legal cannabis growing operations have been on the rise within the Unit over the

past decade. Due to the secretive nature of these operations and the individuals that conduct them, prevention is difficult. Most of the remaining fires started by electrical power are caused by trees, branches or birds into the power lines.

### **Illegal Campfires/Escapes**

Illegal campfires and campfire escapes accounted for 4 fires or 3% of the total ignitions in the Unit. Mendocino County has seen an increase in a transient population of workers to support the local cannabis industry. The workers are often in Mendocino County to harvest and trim cannabis. This population of transients known locally as “trimmigrants” often camp illegally during the summer months.

### **Equipment**

Equipment accounted for 10 fires or 7% of the total ignitions in the Unit. This classification continues to be one of the top causes of wildfire starts in the Unit. One of the main causes for these fires is from mowers, which can start a fire when blades strike rocks and/or friction belts ignite the chaff collected around the belt. Ironically, most of the mower caused fires occurred because of residents trying to clear their property for fire safety during the hottest parts of the day.

### **Lightning**

Lightning accounted for 13 fires or 9% of the total ignitions in the in the Unit. This cause class increased by 8 fires from the 5-year average. Not much can be done to prevent or alter this category.

### **Summary**

The MEU Fire Prevention Bureau continues to actively provide training to field personnel to educate and promote thorough and complete fire origin and cause investigations. As investigations continue to improve and become more accurate, more reliable data will help identify trends and areas sensitive to wildland fires, and MEU staff will work diligently to minimize or prevent fire starts through education, engineering, and/or enforcement. Identifying cause classes with the greatest potential to start significant fires will allow Unit Prevention staff to focus efforts such as enforcement on those areas and see direct results from their efforts.

## **THE CHIEFS’ CONCERNS**

In the summer of 2015, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council circulated a detailed questionnaire in which local fire chiefs expressed their departments’ needs; major needs are additional funding and more volunteers available during daytime hours.

The main issues facing local fire departments in 2015 were identified as follows:

- Diminishing numbers of younger, able-bodied volunteer firefighters available in rural areas due to two main causes: a) high housing costs that prohibit younger families from purchasing or even renting homes in rural areas, and b) lack of employment in the same areas. Younger adults who commute out of the area to work are not available during the daytime, and volunteer fire departments cannot cover costs of travel or lost work time.
- Laws and regulations imposed upon local fire departments by the California legislature and other governmental entities. The heightened requirements and liability resulting from such unfunded mandates are expensive and difficult for small rural volunteer departments.
- Lack of funds to replace aging and obsolete equipment necessary for both firefighter safety and effective fire suppression. Many departments are dependent on gifts of equipment from larger

departments, or on FEMA’s Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for the purchase of fire engines, protective gear, and other costly equipment. Those fortunate enough to receive grants for fire engines still face the requirement to raise 10% to 25% of the total amount as a “match.”

- A large number of emergency calls for which costs are not recovered, primarily of two kinds: 1) Traffic collisions involving non-residents, where local fire agencies’ response costs are not always recoverable; and 2) Calls to fires and medical aids outside of taxing districts. Local fire personnel routinely respond to mutual aid emergency calls outside of their districts — sometimes from any district — from a sense of duty. Such services are essentially provided free of charge.
- The requirement of all special districts to complete Municipal Service Reviews every five years. These MSR’s require time and fee payment beyond the capability of most rural fire districts. But if no current MSR exists, no development whatsoever may be allowed in the district.
- Local fire districts have formed an association, the Mendocino County Association of Fire Districts, to address funding for fire districts throughout Mendocino County.

Additional concerns in 2021:

- In rural areas of Mendocino County, cellphone coverage is very spotty. Local fire chiefs estimate that only 5–8% of the rural residents have landline phones, making evacuation notices additionally difficult.
- A major challenge in responding to wildfire in any rural area is making relevant information readily available to responders so that they know where to go, how to get there, and what conditions they can expect. Existing maps lack vital information such as: how many homes are along a threatened and perhaps unnamed road; the locations of critical resources, such as cell towers, that need special protection; whether roads are one-lane or perhaps too narrow for fire trucks; locations of responder-accessible water sources, and the volume of water available, etc. This information gap can cause critical time to be lost as responders are uninformed, misdirected or required to scout from a safe base location before moving into an area in need of urgent assistance. For out-of-area responders, the problem is further compounded by their unfamiliarity with our area and situation. Maps augmented with this information have already been developed for the Anderson Valley and Elk fire districts. The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council is currently (2021) working on an Emergency Responder Map Augmentation Project (ERMAP) for the Hopland area, funded by the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, to address these gaps in local map detail.
- A severe reduction in the CAL FIRE Conservation Camp program by which non-violent inmates in California would be trained and work in fire prevention and suppression efforts.

## **AT-RISK COMMUNITIES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Communities and at-risk facilities and infrastructure of particular concern for wildfire vulnerability in the Hopland area include:

- McNab Ranch
- The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians’ Hopland Reservation
- Russian River Estates
- University of California Hopland Research and Extension Center

| <b>Community or Area</b> | <b>Facility/Location</b>   |
|--------------------------|--|
| Hopland                  | Hopland Volunteer Fire Department, 21 Feliz Creek Road   |
| Hopland                  | Hopland Volunteer Fire Dept. # 612, 151 Henry Station Road   |
| Hopland                  | CAL FIRE Hopland Station, 11000 South Highway 101  |
| Hopland                  | Sanel Mountain Radio Microwave/Repeater (38° 56' 06" N x 123° 11' 38" W)   |
| Hopland                  | Hopland Rancheria Community Center, 3000 Shanel Road   |
| Hopland                  | University of California Hopland Research and Extension Center, 4070 University Road   |
| Hopland                  | Shanel Valley Academy (formerly Hopland Elementary School), 13710 Mountain House Road  |
| Hopland                  | Hopland Veterans Memorial Building, 110 Feliz Creek Road   |
| Hopland                  | Water-treatment ponds at Feliz Creek<br>Willow Water District water-treatment plant, Ralph Bettcher Drive<br>Two wells & pumphouses (near the Russian River just south of Hwy 175 bridge)<br>Two water tanks (one behind Superette on 101 and one above Hwy 175 east of Hopland) |
| Hopland Reservation      | Water-treatment plant (in Brutocao Vineyards near power station on Hwy 175)<br>Booster-pump station on Nokomis Road.   |
| Hopland gas stations     | Hopland Gas & Mart, 13501 US-101, Hopland<br>Hopland Food & Gas, 13600 Mountain House Rd, Hopland  |

## CHAPTER 2: RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES

### CAL FIRE MENDOCINO UNIT (MEU)

Area residents live in the State Responsibility Area served by CAL FIRE, so the Mendocino Unit Plan is a core element of this Plan.

CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit (MEU) is organized in the following manner: 1 Unit Chief, 3 Deputy Chiefs, 4 Assistant Chiefs, and 11 Battalion Chiefs. There are ten fire stations, one CAL FIRE/CDCR Conservation Camp, one Fire Center, one Air Attack Base, and one Helitack base available for response.

The MEU is geographically divided into six battalions, and the Hopland area is included in Battalion 3. The CAL FIRE Battalion map in the Appendix shows the boundaries of this district.

The Helitack Base located at Howard Forest (on Hwy 101 south of Willits) is the home of Copter 101, a Bell UH-1H "Super Huey" which serves multiple purposes, primarily initial attack on wildfires. This will be replaced by a new S 70 I Blackhawk in the summer of 2021, which will add night-flying capability. The Ukiah Air Attack Base provides 7-day coverage during the daylight hours in fire season. This base, in the hot and dry Ukiah Valley, has the advantage of rarely being impacted by fog, unlike others that are subject to coastal weather influences.

All Unit aircraft provide rapid initial attack and are especially valuable in the county's remote areas where steep terrain and narrow, winding roads greatly increase ground response times. In such situations, aircraft are often at scene and applying water or retardant before engines and dozers arrive, giving ground resources a needed boost. Aircraft also provide "eyes in the sky" for those on the ground, noting spot fires and giving other direction from above. Additional eyes are provided by the Mendocino County Cooperative Aerial Fire Patrol during fire season. Since 1950, the COOP Air Patrol has supplied a small aircraft to fly over the county to look for undetected fires by spotting smoke. CAL FIRE works very closely with the Patrol and provides direction to its pilot.

### MEU Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of CAL FIRE's Mendocino Fire Plan is to reduce total costs and losses from wildland fires by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management and increased initial attack success. Key objectives include:

- Collection and analysis of data from a variety of resources to evaluate potential projects and determine benefits provided to the communities and environment.
- Development of strong local relationships with stakeholders to develop and maintain a more natural fire-resilient landscape. These relationships will be key in establishing community buy-in to the responsibilities of living in the wildlands.
- Public Education on why fire-prevention techniques and requirement measures are so important in developing safer homes and communities.
- Fiscal policy strength to focus and monitor the wildland fire-protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.

Before and during implementation of any pre-fire management activity, stakeholder input is sought in order to:

- Acquaint stakeholders with the process
- Bring their expertise and knowledge to bear on assets-at-risk
- Review the levels of service in these locations
- Identify areas where stakeholders consider levels of risk unacceptable
- Identify other beneficial results of various fuel management activities

### **MEU Battalion 3: Ukiah Area Including Hopland**

Battalion 3 borders Sonoma County to the south and Lake County to the east. It extends west almost to Yorkville and Comptche, and north past Redwood Valley. Battalion 3 is very diverse, encompassing a wide variety of vegetative fuel types, primarily oak woodlands, brush and mixed conifer stands. A significant portion of the Battalion 3 population lives in the rural communities, considered in the urban-interface zone, outside of formal service districts.

Fire protection for the SRA (State Responsibility Area) in Battalion 3 is provided by two Schedule B stations. (An exception is the 500-year flood plain along the Russian River, which is in the LRA and is the responsibility of the Hopland Fire Department.) Covering the southern half of the battalion is Hopland Station, located on Highway 101 approximately two miles north of Hopland (39.00285250636407, -123.120236005467).

CAL FIRE provides cooperative emergency services through a variety of aid agreements to the majority of fire departments or districts in Battalion 3. Local and federal governments provide fire and medical services within Battalion 3: Ukiah Fire Department, Ukiah Valley Fire District, Hopland Volunteer Fire Department, Potter Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Redwood Valley/Calpella Fire District, and the USDA Forest Service.

Battalion 3 works cooperatively with other public service agencies including: California Highway Patrol, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, Ukiah Police Department, Medstar Ambulance, Redwood Empire Hazardous Incident Team (REHIT), Tribal police agencies, CalTrans, Bureau of Land Management, and US Army Corps of Engineers.

Battalion 3 places very strong emphasis on fire prevention education and activities. The full scope of prevention activities in Battalion 3 includes; participation in school programs emphasizing home and fire safety, actively working with neighborhood fire safe councils, public education and safety programs, and defensible-space compliance inspections.

### **MEU Fire-Prevention Efforts**

Unit prevention efforts, coordinated with local fire departments wherever possible, include fair exhibits, burn and 4290 permit procedures, fire patrols, news media releases, public service announcements and outreach, school programs, structure and dooryard premises inspections, and membership in the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council.

MEU's Fire Safe program places some of the responsibility of fire protection on the homeowner and/or builder/developer. This includes defensible-space planning and incorporating basic fire-protection measures into a home or development being built. Each home, subdivision, and development constructed in the SRA should be designed with adequate emergency equipment access, building, street, and address identification, and a reasonable water supply for suppression needs.

Residents and planners within the SRA should understand the importance of planning for fire protection, the need for ongoing and proper clearance of flammable vegetation around structure (PRC 4291), and the benefits of greenbelts, fuel breaks, and controlled burns in and around structures and developments.

Currently, proper road signage and addressing of structures in the SRA is a major challenge for the Fire Safe Program. Mendocino Unit personnel continue to educate the public on the vital importance of, for instance, address signage in order to facilitate locating a fire and to avoid delays in response.

## **HOPLAND FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT (HFPD)**

The Hopland Fire Protection District serves 5,000 residents over 110 square miles, and operates out of two stations: the Main Station at 21 Feliz Creek Road in Hopland, and the North Station at 151 Henry Station Road, 6 miles north of Hopland off Highway 101. Staff is a combination of paid and volunteer workers.

Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings are assigned to localities by the insurance industry according to fire-suppression capabilities, available water supply, and other factors, with a rating of 1 as the best possible. Homeowners' fire insurance costs are calculated partly based on these ratings. The ISO rating in Hopland proper is 7, and 8 in rural areas.

Fires in wildlands, structures, vehicles, dumpsters, and similar situations account for only a fraction of the calls to which the district generally responds. Medical aid calls are by far the majority of calls, followed by traffic accidents and other rescue situations. Consequently, firefighters undergo training in medical response, extricating patients from vehicles, responding to hazardous materials ("hazmat") incidents, and a variety of other emergency skills. A high percentage of volunteers are First Responders or Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), both of which require significant training.

Firefighters often train with other departments, especially on training burns, in which abandoned buildings or wildland fields are burned for training purposes. Some firefighters travel out of county to obtain training and certification in specialized fields, and some trainings are brought in from out of county.

Mendocino County has an extraordinarily strong and effective mutual aid system among all agencies and for all types of emergency response. Local Fire Departments are quick to assist each other and CAL FIRE (and vice-versa), most often within the Mutual Aid Zones but beyond those as needed. CAL FIRE personnel and local firefighters (both paid and volunteer) work side-by-side as equals during wildfire events, and local fire departments, ambulance services, CAL FIRE, and REACH emergency transport helicopters work as one team on medical aid calls.

Local fire departments respond to wildfire events according to their locations, frequently assisting each other across district boundaries. Areas adjacent but not included in the District are referred to as the agency's "sphere of influence." Although they pay no taxes or fees, people in these areas still receive services; the county's emergency responders never refuse to help someone in need. However, this can be frustrating for cash-strapped departments and irritating for those who pay their share for emergency services. Most departments supplement their tax base income with at least one annual fundraiser (often a barbecue with live music); these are well-supported, very popular social events.

Based on current funding, the Hopland Fire Protection District can only guarantee the community one paid firefighter on call 24-7. HFPD plans to place a fire-assessment parcel-tax increase measure on the November 2021 ballot that would allow hiring of three more full-time employees to guarantee a 24-7 two-person response.

## **THE MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL (MCFSC)**

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, Inc. is a nonprofit public benefit organization whose mission is “To inform, empower and mobilize county residents to survive and thrive in wildfire-prone environments.” MCFSC was founded in 2003 following the realization that county residents tended to rely too heavily on fire-suppression resources without taking responsibility for their own safety, thus needlessly placing both themselves and firefighters in harm’s way. The first meeting of ten local and CAL FIRE chiefs determined that a countywide Fire Safe Council with local fire-safe groups under its umbrella would be the best model.

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council represents a coalition of individuals, businesses, and public and private agencies who share the goal of preventing loss of life, destruction of property, and damage to the environment caused by wildfire. The Council seeks to establish a broad partnership of stakeholders who will pool their resources and energies to pursue this common goal for the common good. Its goals are:

- Minimize wildfire losses of human lives, homes, animals, and natural resources;
- Educate residents, agencies, and other stakeholders about the nature and impacts of wildfire, fire-prevention strategies, and effective preparedness for wildfire;
- Secure and utilize funding to assist residents in education, outreach, community projects, and other activities that further the mission and objectives of the Council;
- Encourage road associations, homeowner groups, subdivisions, towns, neighborhoods, and other community groups to create their own neighborhood fire safe councils; and
- Act as an advocate for the people of Mendocino County in the area of fire prevention.

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council strongly encourages road associations, homeowner groups, subdivisions, towns, neighborhoods, and other community groups to create their own neighborhood fire safe councils. These groups need not have a formal or legal structure, only the desire to make themselves and their property better prepared and more fire safe, and to educate and encourage their neighbors to do the same.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD FIRE SAFE COUNCILS (NFSCs)**

As noted above, there are 34 Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils (as of March 2021) working under the umbrella of the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC). The MCFSC encourages the formation of NFSCs; the only requirement is a desire to make their local area fire safe, and to educate and encourage their neighbors assist in this effort. The MCFSC supports local councils in many ways including:

- Leading or participating in local educational events
- Providing educational materials for local distribution
- Connecting local councils with Fire Safe service providers and vendors, other councils, and anyone else who can assist their efforts
- Seeking grant funding for vegetation reduction or address/signage projects
- Providing financial services such as holding trust funds or administering grant funds

- Generally assisting with administrative, business, financial, and legal functions, leaving local groups free to do on-the-ground projects and education

Each NFSC identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, and identifies the best approaches to help protect the community and its essential infrastructure. Each NFSC recommends measures that homeowners and the community can take to reduce the ignitability of structures within the corresponding area.

## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

Public education and dissemination of fire-preparedness information is a major strategy in wildfire preparedness. Fire-prevention education and activities including: participation in school programs emphasizing home and fire safety, actively working with local fire safe councils, public education and safety programs, and defensible-space compliance inspections, all of which are carried out by CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit Battalion 3.

Fire Safety Education Programs are conveyed through school programs, fair exhibits, posters, flyers, printed materials, radio spots, community meetings, one-on-one contacts with wildland homeowners, and in recent years, the Internet. The information and education are provided to people of all ages.

Similar public education and outreach efforts are continuously conducted by the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, additionally including a semimonthly public radio program focused on various aspects of fire-safety such as home-hardening, neighborhood organizing, personal preparation, community resources, etc.

In 2020 the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council created a series of free videos on home-hardening (<https://firesafemendocino.org/homehardening/>) with topics (roofs, vents, etc.) ranked in priority order and presented in two versions: as a short and simple "what I can do right now" segment and as a longer video offering more thorough and technical instructions.

## **DEVELOPING/MAINTAINING ACCESS ROADS**

The Hopland area includes a large number of small, often private roads leading to subdivisions and very remote rural homes, ranches, and outbuildings. The McNab Ranch, UC Hopland Research and Extension Center, and Hopland Pomo Reservation in particular are served by secondary roads that are also narrow, winding and occasionally steep. Further compounding the issue, many of these roads serve as the only way in and out, and these roads can be severely impacted by wildfire, blocking safe access with no alternate route for escape or ingress. These roads therefore present a considerable risk to both the general public and responding firefighters during wildfire events.

Where there is a significant wildfire threat to a community or populated area with only one means of access, it is critically important that the primary way in and out be well documented and be made as fire-resistant as possible. Fuel-reduction projects by the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, including road-clearing, defensible-space clearing and chipper days, have recently (2020) been completed or are currently underway in portions of McNab Ranch, the Hopland Reservation and other locations.

Providing secondary access to these areas can be accomplished in one of two ways: construct new roads or improve existing undeveloped roads. The former is prohibitively expensive and further complicated by environmental concerns and steep topography, as well as easement-related concerns. Improving the existing unapproved or undeveloped roads is more cost-efficient and practical than constructing new roads, but involves challenges such as obtaining easements from property owners, and residents'

concerns about liability, noise, traffic and loss of privacy. Also, while the County's Fire Chiefs and Director of Transportation (County Engineer) thoroughly understand and support the need for secondary access routes in and out of populated areas, residents are often vehemently opposed to the development of secondary access routes through their neighborhoods. The McNab Ranch community, because of the significant population that would need to use McNab Ranch Road for egress, has a particularly urgent need for additional egress options and for the addition of ingress options for emergency personnel to help free up McNab Ranch Road for two-lane egress. Additional ingress for emergency personnel is also important for helping residents maintain and/or afford fire insurance as policies can consider the road distance from the nearest fire station when assessing policy coverage.

While improvements to private property with public funds is considered an illegal "gift of public funds," it should be noted that the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors authorized staff to work with Sherwood Firewise north of Willits to develop a new Benefit Zone that would provide a funding source for ongoing route maintenance through property tax payments made by local property owners. This may be an option for selected communities in the Hopland area.

## **ROAD NAMING AND ADDRESSING**

Many residences in this area are located on unnamed roads, and homes on these unnamed roads often utilize addresses based on the nearest named road. These may be quite a distance away and require several turns on other unnamed roads to reach them. This of course creates serious challenges to first responders in locating these populations, especially in the case of out-of-area responders on loan during major events. This can result in extended response times and critical delays in providing emergency services and evacuations.

On February 4, 2020, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) provided direction to streamline the process for renaming private roads in unincorporated Mendocino County at the behest of local residents, the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office and local Fire Chiefs. County staff is working to identify the most effective pathways to update this procedure. Presently, the County is preparing revised procedures that would allow for Local Fire Departments and the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office to identify a designated number of private road segments to rename each year, waiving fee and petition requirements, or process per Mendocino County Code Section 18.16.070(C).

The August 2020 Mendocino County Fire Vulnerability Assessment recommends that, upon adoption by the County Board of Supervisors, local area fire chiefs should work aggressively to name, rename, and address the roads, both private and public, in their individual areas of responsibility. Additionally, chiefs should continue to develop GIS electronic maps with GIS information to alleviate some of the street addressing problems.

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council's ERMAP (Emergency Responder Map Augmentation Project) received funding in early 2021 from the Community Foundation of Mendocino County to build on mapping projects done in Anderson Valley and Elk, creating online-accessible maps with detailed relevant information needed by responders regarding unnamed rural roads, roads too narrow for fire trucks, water sources, Knox boxes, etc. This will significantly improve responder safety and effectiveness, and the project model can be applied for fire districts countywide.

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council's Reflective Address Sign Program also offers metal reflective address signs, providing hundreds of these signs a year to facilitate first-responder identification of individual residences and businesses.

As discussed below, a priority project for the area is to develop more complete and readily accessible first responder maps for the remote portions of the Hopland service area.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE 4290 & 4291**

The Wildland Urban Interface presents major concerns for fire prevention. Many homes are located in hazardous locations either in ignorance of, or in disregard for, fire prevention practices. Enforcement of California Public Resources Codes 4290 (addressing building construction requirements) and 4291 (addressing defensible space requirements) is necessary to correct the errors of past residential and commercial developments. Fire loss reductions must be attempted through better fire-safety planning with participation by all political bodies and stakeholders.

As of 1991, in accordance with PRC 4290 and Title 14 CFR, the design and construction of structures and developments within the SRA shall provide for emergency access, temporary refuge areas, pullouts, signing and building numbering, private water supply reserves for emergency fire use, and vegetation modification.

As mandated by California PRC 4291, property owners in mountainous areas, forest-covered lands or any land with flammable vegetation must create at minimum a 100-foot defensible space (or to the property line) around their homes and other structures.

Under the law, property owners or those who control a property must establish a:

- 30-foot clean zone (or to the property line) and a
- 70-foot reduced fuel zone (or to the property line).

This does not mean the property must be clear-cut to bare soil; it involves thinning and breaking up the continuity of ladder fuels and large areas filled with contiguous shrubs that can readily transmit fire.

Forest Practice personnel, working under the direction of the Fire Prevention Bureau, conduct compliance-monitoring inspections of defensible space requirements around buildings and structures.

## **VEGETATION TREATMENT PROGRAM**

The Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) is a CAL FIRE cost-share program utilizing prescribed fire, and mechanical means of addressing wildland fire-fuel hazards and other resource-management issues on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. The use of prescribed fire mimics natural processes, restores fire to its historic role in wildland ecosystems, and provides significant fire hazard reduction benefits that enhance public and firefighter safety.

VTP allows private landowners to enter into a contract with CAL FIRE to use prescribed fire to accomplish a combination of fire-protection and resource-management goals. Projects are prioritized that fit within MEU's priority areas (e.g., those identified through the Fire Plan) and are considered to be of most value to the Unit.

CAL FIRE administers several state and federal forestry-assistance programs with the goal of reducing wildland fuel loads and improving the health and productivity of private forest lands. California's Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) and other federal programs that CAL FIRE administers offer cost-share opportunities to assist individual landowners with land-management planning, conservation practices to enhance wildlife habitat, and practices to enhance the productivity of the land. The Department also delivers the Forest Stewardship Program which combines funds from state and federal sources to assist communities with multiple-ownership watershed and community issues related to pre-fire fuels treatment, forest health, erosion control, and fisheries issues.

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC) also works to identify important local fire-preparation projects and to seek grant funding for them. Additionally, the MCFSC oversees local fire safe councils and works to obtain grant funding for vegetation reduction and other wildfire-mitigation projects.

## FUEL-TREATMENT METHODS

CAL FIRE has determined through experience that three treatment methods stand out as being the most effective as well as environmentally friendly. Multiple and continual projects of these kinds by CAL FIRE, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, and the Mendocino Prescribed Burn Association are ongoing.

**Chipping:** Homeowners are educated and mobilized through the MC Fire Safe Council's and MEU's Community Chipper efforts. Homeowners are required to clear flammable brush and ladder fuels from their own defensible space per PRC 4291 requirements, and a chipping crew chips their brush piles.



**Prescribed Burning:** Areas are identified that would most benefit from use of controlled fires to create anchor points and a natural barrier during a larger event. Prescribed burning can also provide many benefits to the local wildlife and environment.



**Shaded and Non-Shaded Fuel Breaks:** Natural barriers and topography determine areas that can serve as a primary or secondary fire-control line. These lines use roads, rivers and topography to compartmentalize target areas. Mechanical operations are primarily used to create these fuel breaks.



## EMERGENCY ALERTS AND EVACUATION PLAN

Emergency alert systems are a primary strategy in wildfire preparedness. Upon receiving a request from the Incident Command Post, the Sheriff's Watch Commander will make the following English/Spanish bilingual notifications: Director of Emergency Services (County Chief Executive Officer); Assistant Director of Emergency Services (Sheriff); and Emergency Services Coordinator. See <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/executive-office/office-of-emergency-services/emergency-notifications-and-alerts> for information about the county alert system.

In August 2020, Mendocino County adopted an Evacuation Plan as an annex to the Mendocino County Emergency Operations Plan. The pdf version is available at: <https://www.mendocinocog.org/files/cbb6532a3/%2307c+EvacuationPlan071520.pdf>

Mass notification will be done in accordance with current county policies and procedures. As of May 2021, the current plan is in draft form and being reviewed by operational partners. It will soon move to the Disaster Counsel and Board of Supervisions for adoption.

Upon authorization, the Watch Commander will post the orders or notices as follows:

- County Emergency Alerting Systems (MendoAlert and Nixle)
- Media Blast: social media and websites, Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) and news releases (radio, print, television).

- Consistent with neighboring counties, law and fire field units will go door-to-door or use their HI-LO siren function and PA systems to alert residents of evacuation orders.

However, according to a survey conducted as part of the 2020 Mendocino County Fire Vulnerability Assessment, a large number of respondents were either unaware or confused about the County's MendoAlert and Nixle systems. Two-thirds of respondents have not enrolled, and many claimed that these notification systems do not work, or fail when the power is down.

In rural and remote areas, emergency communications can be very difficult. Focus needs to remain on continual improvement of countywide and neighborhood alert systems.

In January 2021, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council dedicated one of its Neighborhood Fire Safe Council leadership meetings to the creation and use of neighborhood emergency alert systems. MCFSC offers NFSCs discounted rates on such systems through DialMyCalls. That meeting was very well attended, and feedback was highly positive. In gathering information for this plan the McNab Fire Safe Council expressed the need for better early notice systems particularly in scenarios like one in which smoke is coming into the area from a prescribed burn or distant fire and locals are unsure if they should be preparing for evacuation. Given that local fire agencies do not have personnel to add new notification services the MCFSC will convene a meeting of Hopland area neighborhood FSCs to determine if they might want to develop a self-alerting system similar to those in place in Brooktrails, Ridgewood and Greenfield.

### **Emergency Amateur Radio Communications**

In the event that traditional forms of communication (telephone, cell phone and internet) become non-operational, the County Office of Emergency Services (OES) will activate the Mendocino County Auxiliary Communications Service (MACS). Upon notification, MACS personnel will activate the amateur radio room at the Emergency Operations Center. Volunteer amateur radio operators, at the direction of the OES, will be dispatched to critical facilities within the County.

Amateur radio operators will maintain communications with their appropriate emergency operations centers (Office of Emergency Services, Health and Human Services Administration, or Mendocino County Office of Education) for the duration of the event, in accordance with the MACS emergency procedures manual.

### **Evacuations**

Evacuations in Mendocino County will involve multiple jurisdictions due to the direct impacts of transportation routes, the location of safe zones or refuge areas, evacuation centers, pet/livestock shelters, and the need for mutual aid resources.

Large-scale evacuations will also require issuance of public warnings and orders. The County Office of Emergency Services, through the Sheriff's Dispatch Center, is responsible for these notifications. A high level of coordination is necessary to effectively communicate protective actions, evacuation corridors, and shelter information to evacuees in both English and Spanish.

Shelter/welfare unit leaders estimate that 5 percent of evacuees will require public shelter assistance. Evacuations will likely involve a variety of buildings including residential, commercial, and other. The geographic area of an evacuation may cover a wide area with a variety of rural to urban terrain and land uses.

The process for the selection of evacuation routes, evacuation centers, shelters or termination of evacuations will vary based on the specific hazard, degree of vulnerability, number of people impacted, and projected area of event impact.

### **Hopland Area Evacuation Zones (also see Maps in Appendix)**

**Zone 2A—Community of Hopland.** This area has been established to identify an area susceptible to both flooding and a wildfire event. It starts at Highway 101 at Feliz Creek and includes all addresses and side streets both east and west of Highway 101 to Laurette Lane. It contains approximately 60 homes, 40 commercial buildings and a lumber yard.

**Zone 2B—Hopland/Sanel.** This zone is established for flooding. Typically, people will self-evacuate for a flood. The major concern is for individuals who have access and functional needs.

**Zone 2C—Hopland Reservation.** This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It starts at the intersection of Nokomis Road at Highway 175. It includes all addresses and side streets within the Reservation and contains approximately 55 homes, 10 commercial buildings, a school, and a former casino facility now used as a community center.

**Zone 2D—Hopland/Russian River Estates.** This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It starts at the intersection of Highway 101 at Henry Station Road. It includes all addresses and side streets in the Russian River Estates and contains approximately 110 homes.

**Zone 2E—Largo/McNab Ranch Road.** This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It is defined as all addresses and side roads from McNab Ranch Road. It contains approximately 200 parcels with over 200 homes and 2 commercial buildings. All minor roads on the ranch—McNab Ranch Road, Feliz Creek Road & Drive, Goat Rock Road, Lakeside Drive (dead-end), Lane Drive (dead-end), Shigom Road (dead-end), Bus McGall Road, Moose Road (dead-end), plus connections with Butler Ranch and Nelson Ranch Roads—funnel into McNab Ranch Road to reach Highway 101. As noted above, the McNab Ranch community has a particularly urgent need for additional egress options and also for the addition of ingress options for emergency personnel to help free up McNab Ranch Road for two-lane egress.

The designated Emergency Evacuation Shelter for the Hopland area is the former Sho-Ka-Wah Casino at the Hopland Reservation, 3000 Shanel Road, 707-744-8766, 38° 58' 59" N x 123° 03' 26" W. The former casino's parking lot is also designated as a Temporary Refuge Area.

## CHAPTER 3: ACTION PLAN AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Note: full spreadsheet with more project detail can be found on the Mendocino Fire Safe Council’s website (<https://firesafemendocino.org/hopland-cwpp/>).

### ACTION PLAN TABLE

Project Types in the following table include:

- FR — Fuel reduction
- RESP — Responder support
- EDU — Community education and outreach
- INF — Critical infrastructure
- PL — Planning

| Prior-ity (1-5) | Project Type | Project Description  | Project Lead            | Project Status             | Funding Source   | Target Completion Date |
|-----------------|--------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1               | RESP         | Create responder maps (showing rural roads, residences, key infrastructure, water resources, etc) available online or at egress locations for Russian River Estates, McNab Ranch and the Hopland Reservation | MCFSC                   | Underway                   | Community Foundation Grant                                     | 11/01/21               |
| 1               | RESP         | Increase HFPD volunteers from 20 to 30   | HFPD                    | Underway                   | N.A.   | 06/01/23               |
| 1               | RESP         | Provide cooperative emergency services through a variety of aid agreements   | CAL FIRE                | Underway/Maintenance       | CAL FIRE   | Annual                 |
| 2               | INF          | Increase water storage available for firefighting—three 15,000-gallon tanks  | HFPD                    | Underway                   | One tank bought with community donations; exploring other don. | 06/01/23               |
| 2               | FR           | Shaded fuel break along the west side of 101 in Hopland from Legions Hall to Hewlett Sturtevant Rd   | HFPD, CAL FIRE or MCFSC | Need to define est. budget | TBD  | 6/1/2025               |

|   |      |  |                          |                    |       |          |
|---|------|--|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|----------|
| 2 | RESP | Install Knox Box-type facilities at base of rural roads with maps, etc in key communities (est. 3-6 boxes) | HFPD                     | Needs project lead | TBD   | 6/1/2023 |
| 2 | FR   | Coordinate with UC HREC to develop and implement prescribed burns & mechanical vegetation management       | CAL FIRE, HREC           | HREC               | TBD   | 6/1/2022 |
| 2 | FR   | Roadside clearing/shaded fuel break creation along Old River Road from Hwy 101 to Talmage                  | CAL FIRE                 | Needs est. budget  | TBD   | 6/1/2024 |
| 2 | INF  | Develop improved evacuation plans for the McNab Ranch area including exploring added egress options        | HFPD, NFSCs              | Needs project lead | TBD   | 6/1/2024 |
| 2 | INF  | Develop formalized emergency ingress options for first responders to shorten arrival time and distance     | HFPD, NFSCs              | Needs project lead | TBD   | 6/1/2024 |
| 3 | INF  | Install a new warning system siren in Hopland  | HFPD                     | Needs funding      | TBD   | 6/1/2023 |
| 3 | PL   | Develop communication plan to improve real-time community notification during wildfire events              | NFSCs                    | NFSC-specific      | NFSCs | 6/1/2022 |
| 3 | PL   | Identify/create safe areas for evacuation  | HFPD, NFSCs              | Needs project lead | TBD   | 6/1/2024 |
| 3 | INF  | Increase water-pumping capacity and back-up power for Russian River Estates in case of a power outage      | HFPD & Russian River FSC | Needs Budget est   | TBD   | 9/1/2022 |
| 3 | RESP | Mark hydrants/water sources with signage or blue reflectors in roads                                       | TBD                      | Needs project lead | TBD   | 9/1/2022 |
| 3 | INF  | Replacement of Russian River Estates' deteriorating water-supply pipes                                     | Russian River Estates    | Needs Budget est   | TBD   | 6/1/2025 |
| 3 | RESP | Reflective address signs posted for all locations at Hopland Reservation                                   | HBPI                     | HBPI               | HBPI  | 6/1/2022 |

|   |     |   |      |                    |     |         |
|---|-----|---|------|--------------------|-----|---------|
| 3 | FR  | Veg. management plan at Sewage Treatment Plant & on MacMillan Dr            | HFPD | Needs project lead |     | Annual  |
| 4 | E&O | Ongoing wildfire education & outreach through media, website & publications | HFPD | Needs project lead | N/A | Ongoing |

### **MEU BATTALION 3 PRIORITY AREAS & PROJECTS**

CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit Battalion 3 works cooperatively with other public service agencies, including California Highway Patrol, Mendocino County Sheriff’s Office, Ukiah Police Department, Medstar Ambulance, Redwood Empire Hazardous Incident Team (REHIT), Tribal police agencies, CalTrans, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

MEU priority projects include:

#### **Hopland Fuels Reduction Project**

Identify fuels reduction project in and around the community of Hopland. Projects identified will be accomplished by removing understory fuels, brush, small trees along both sides of various roads, create fire breaks and conduct VMP prescribed burns where appropriate. Projects will have the potential to reduce the number, intensity of large damaging fires, and increase public safety. The fire hazard reduction will include a shaded fuel break along roads to improve ingress of emergency responders and egress of residents. Fire control lines constructed with crews and dozers will be established on ridges around Hopland. The shaded fuel break included vegetation thinning, understory reduction and removal of the ladder fuels. The area consists of steep terrain covered in a mix of grasslands, conifer and mature brush.

#### **University of California – Hopland Research and Extension Center (HREC)**

The VMP that had been in place for HREC expired in March 2021. Work on a replacement VTP with a 10-year time frame of prioritized burns – focusing on developing CEQA readiness for the overall property with burns over the initial years to protect the HREC core infrastructure and to create buffers between HREC property and the Hopland Band, the town of Hopland and the Fetzer properties, respectively. HREC would like to collaborate on the burns with the goal of improving public safety and also as an opportunity to control invasive species. In outlying years the overall plan should allow for ongoing cyclical strategic burns and thinning as needed.

Located east of Hopland and part of the Russian river watershed, the HREC VMP is a project with University of California Extension Office that will utilize prescribed fire, and some mechanical means, to address wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State and Federal Responsibility Area lands. This Vegetation Management Project has the potential to help reduce the number and intensity of large damaging fires, increase public safety, increase and maintain water quality and quantity in a managed watershed, protect and improve soil productivity, establish and maintain desired plant communities, improve air quality over the long term, improve forage and browse for livestock, and provide training for personnel in incident organization, operations, fire behavior, firing methods, and effects of weather influences.

## **MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL PROJECTS**

In 2020 the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council created a series of free videos on home-hardening, with topics listed in fire protection-priority order. Each topic is presented in two video versions: as a short and simple “what I can do right now” segment and as a longer video offering more thorough and technical instructions. These videos are available at <https://firesafemendocino.org/homehardening/>

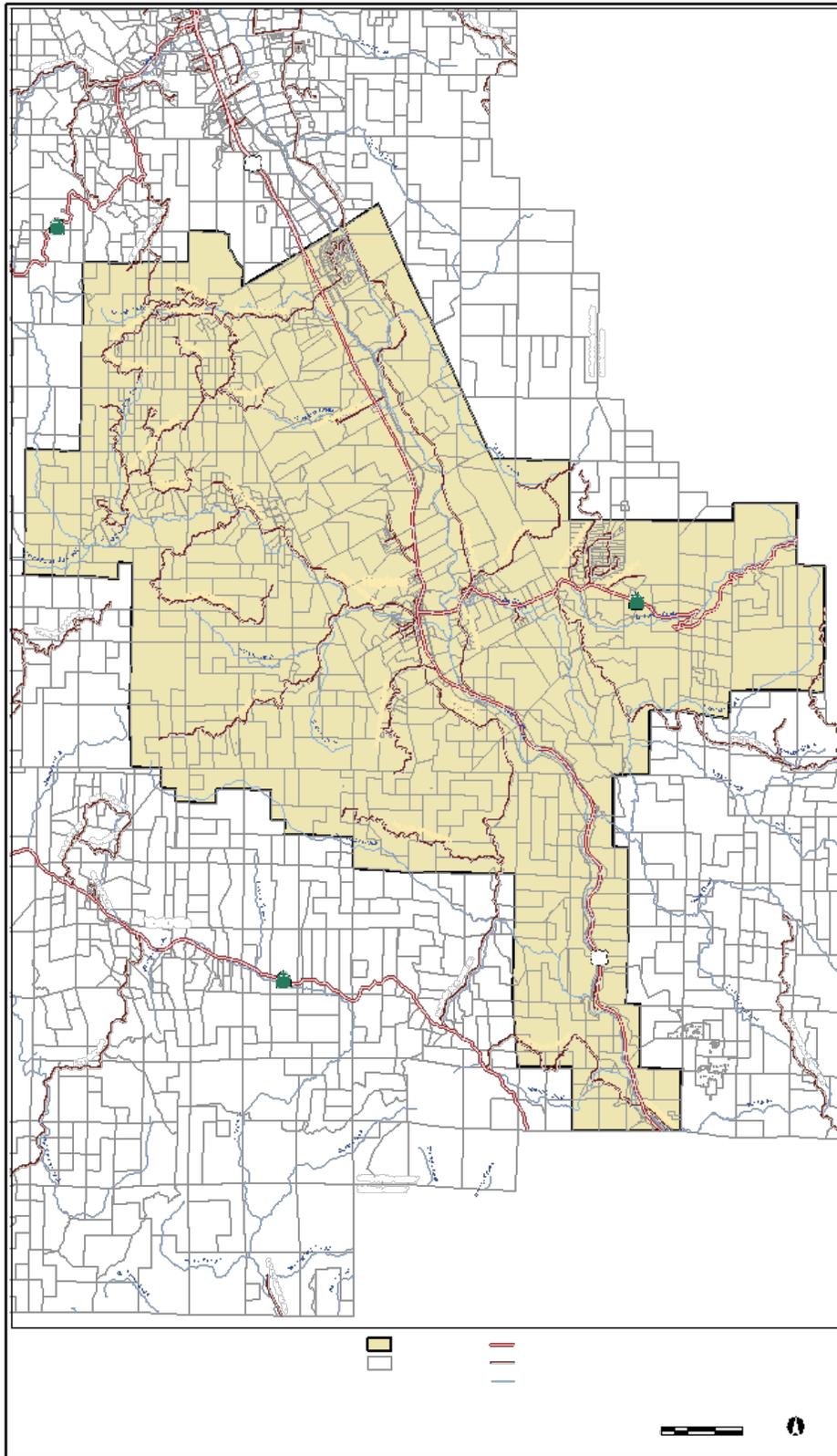
MCFSC is also committed to continuing free Chipper Day services in the Hopland area, as well as its DSAFIE services (Defensible Space Assistance for the Income-Eligible) which provide assistance to those who are physically and financially unable to achieve defensible space around their homes, to make their homes and neighborhoods safer from risk of wildfire.

# APPENDIX A: MAPS

Figure A: Mendocino County CAL FIRE Battalion Map

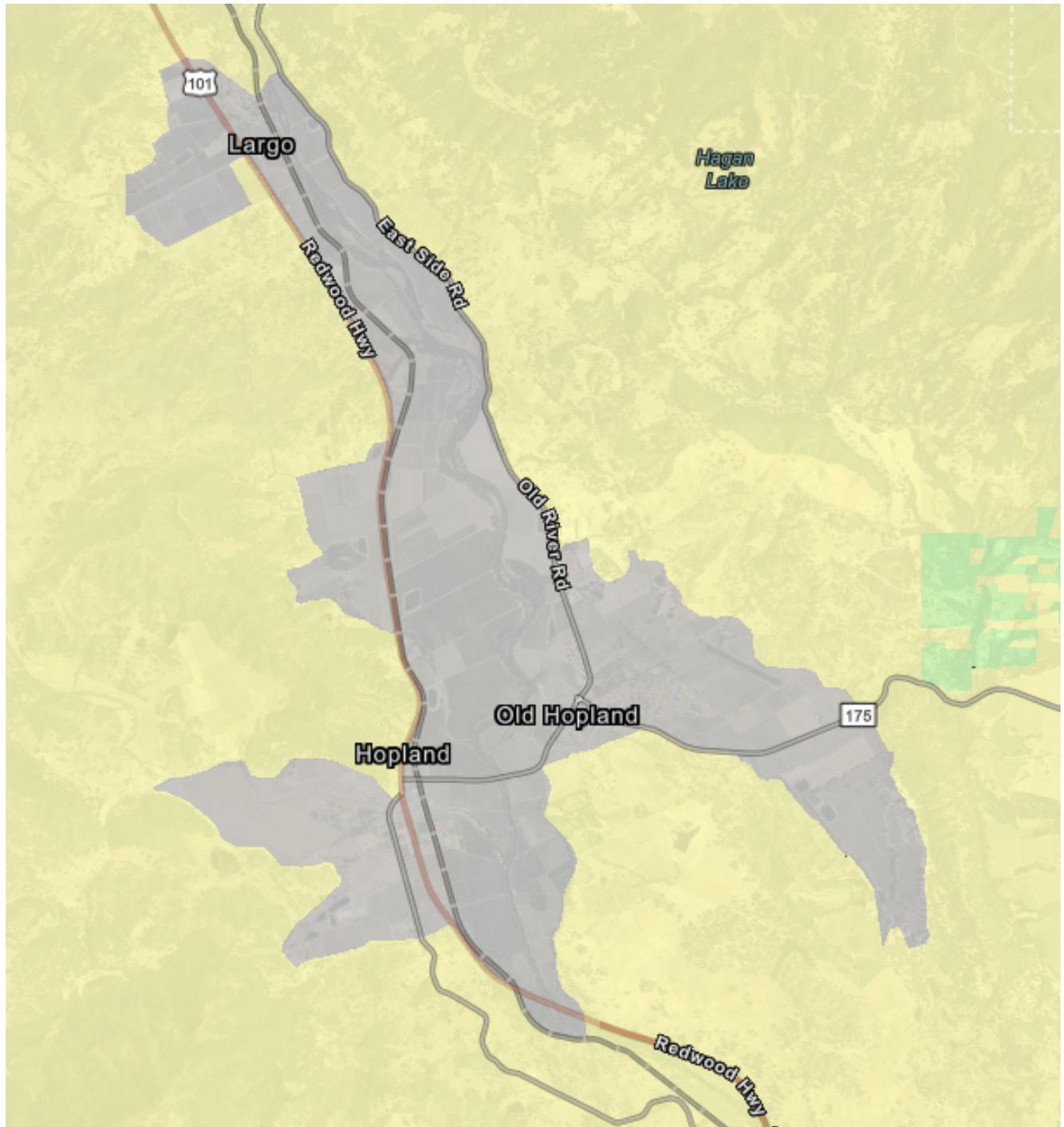


**Figure B: Hopland Fire Protection District Map**

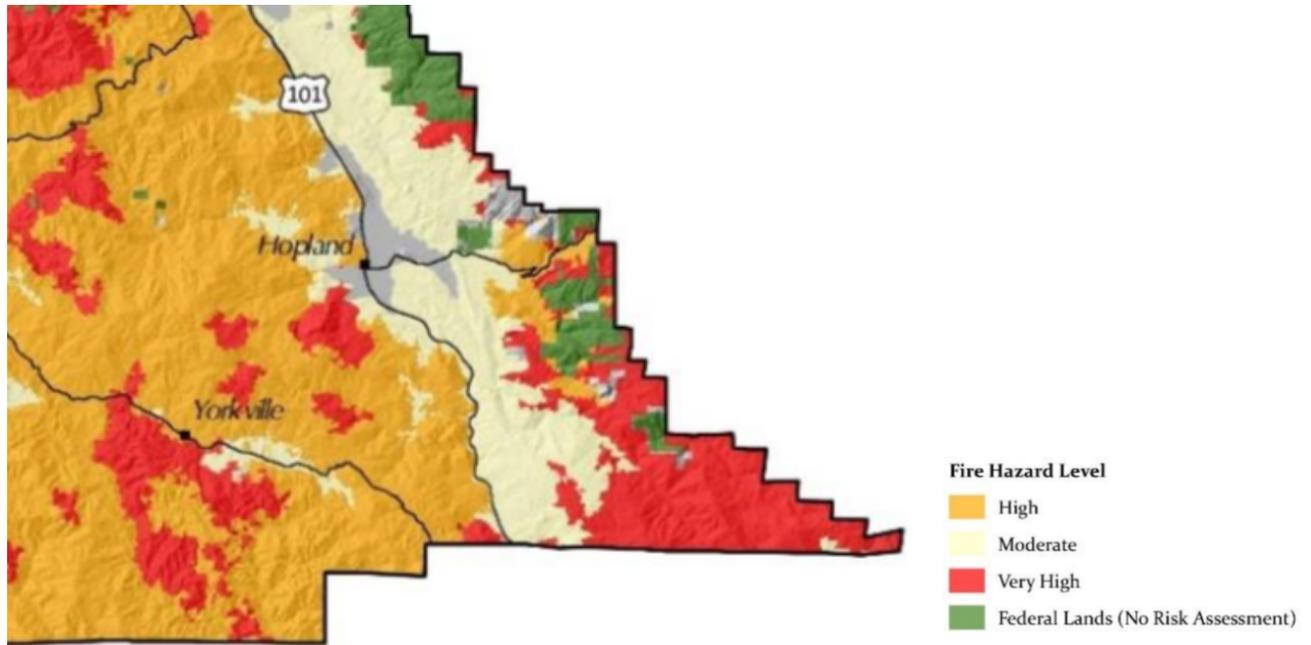


**Figure C: Hopland LRA vs SRA Map**

*Grey area is Local Responsibility Area; yellow area surrounding it is State Responsibility Area.*

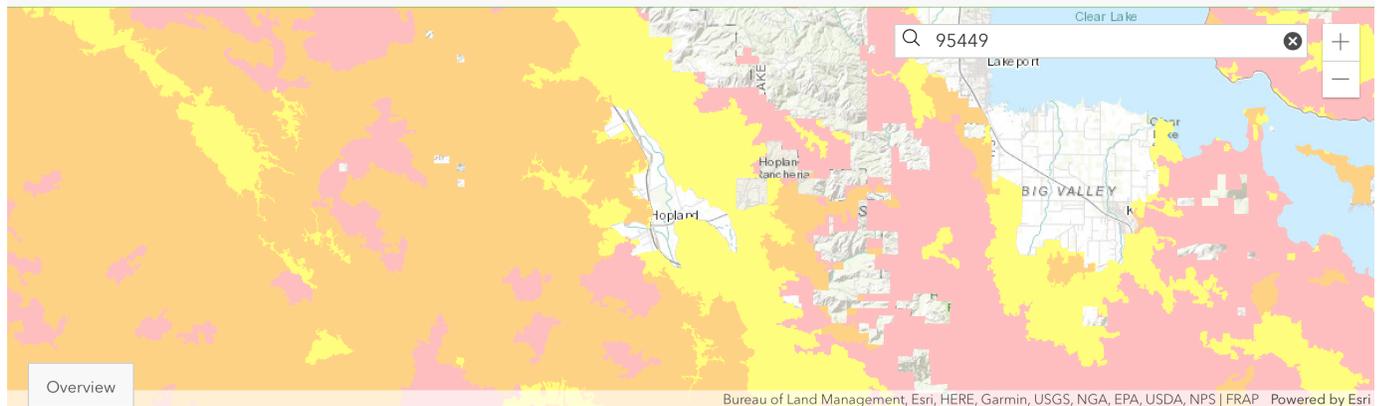


**Figure D: Hopland Area Fire Severity Zones**



**California Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)**

Last updated 2 months ago



[gis.data.ca.gov](https://gis.data.ca.gov)

**LEGEND**

**County Boundaries**

□

**FHSZ in LRA**

■ VHFHSZ

**FHSZ in SRA**

■ Very High

■ High

■ Moderate

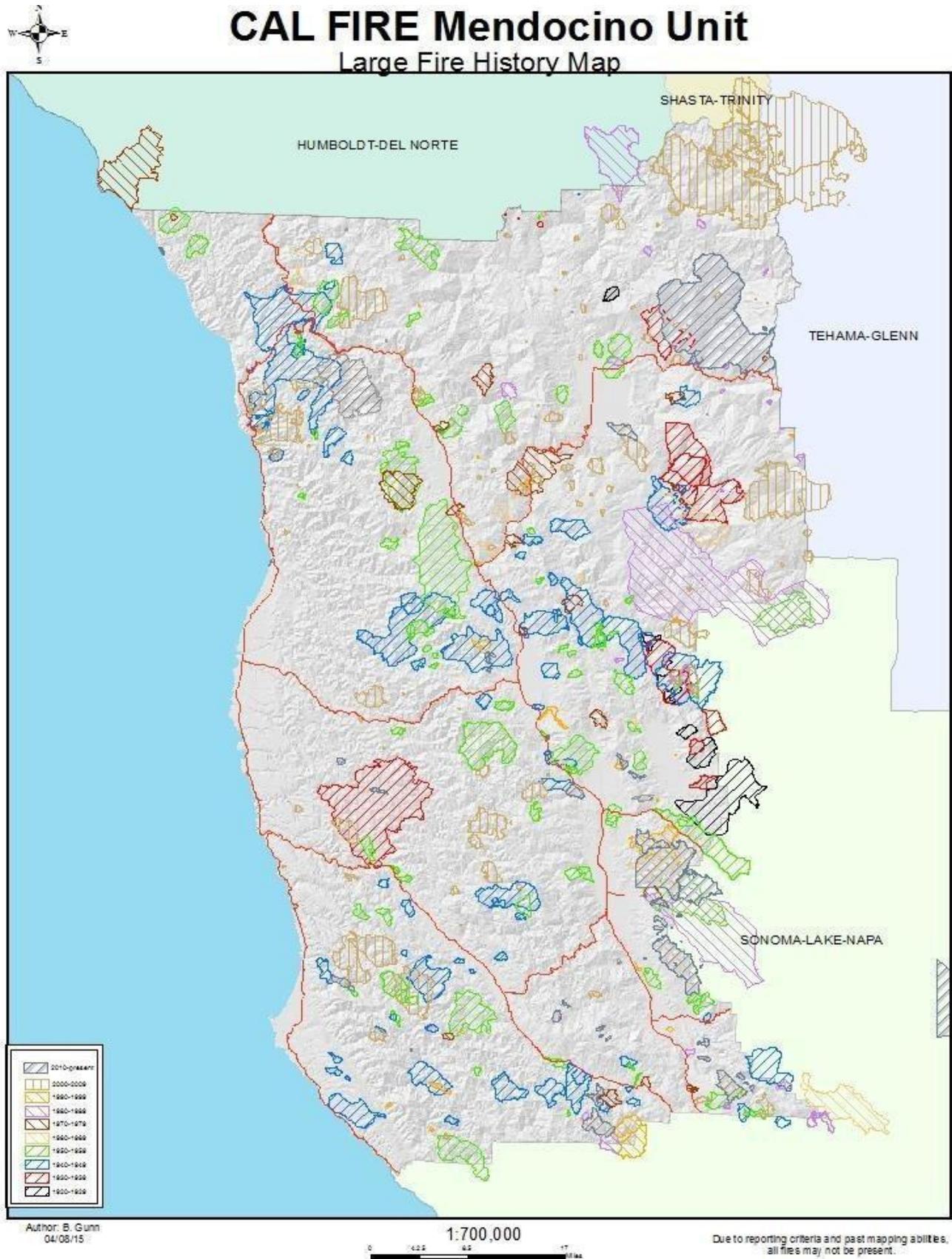
**SRA**

■ Local Responsibility Area (LRA)

■ State Responsibility Area (SRA)

■ Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)

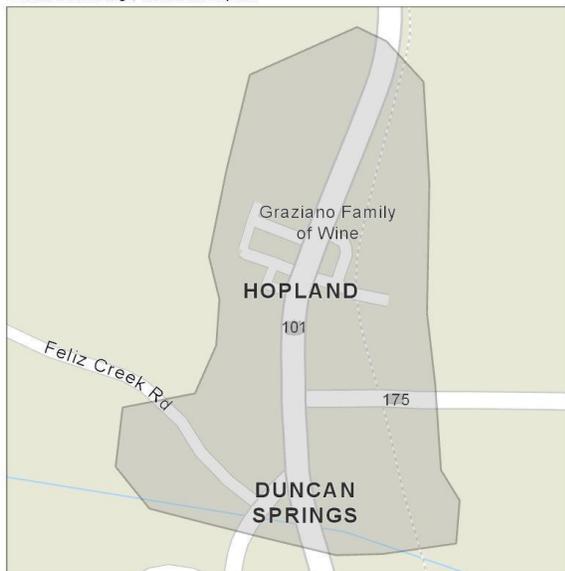
Figure E: CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit Large Fire History Map (2015)



# Figure F: Hopland-Area Evacuation Zones

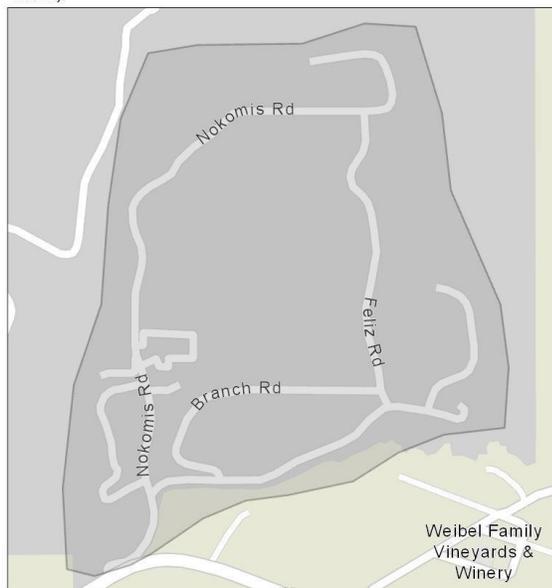
## Zone 2A - Community of Hopland

This area has been established to identify an area susceptible to both flooding and a wildfire event. It starts at Highway 101 at Feliz Creek and includes all addresses and side streets both east and west of Highway 1 to Laurette Lane. It contains approximately 60 homes, 40 commercial buildings, and 1 Lumber yard.



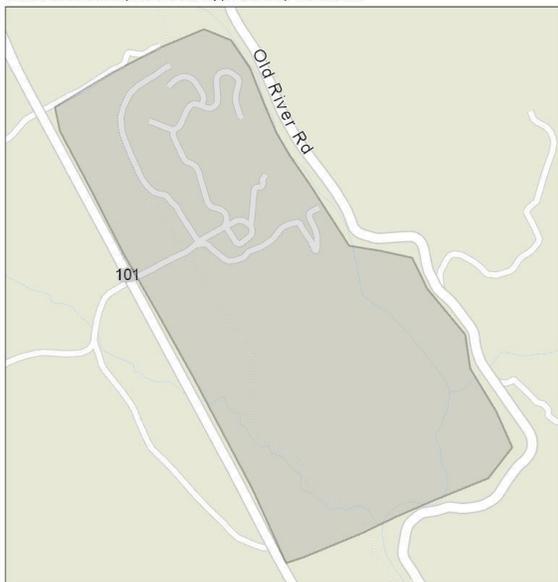
## Zone 2C - Hopland Rancheria

This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It starts at the intersection of Nokomis Road at Highway 175 (all addresses and side streets within the Rancheria are included).



## Zone 2D - Hopland/Russian River Estates

This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It starts at the intersection of Highway 101 at Henry Station Road (all addresses and side streets in the Russian River Estates are included). It contains approximately 110 homes.

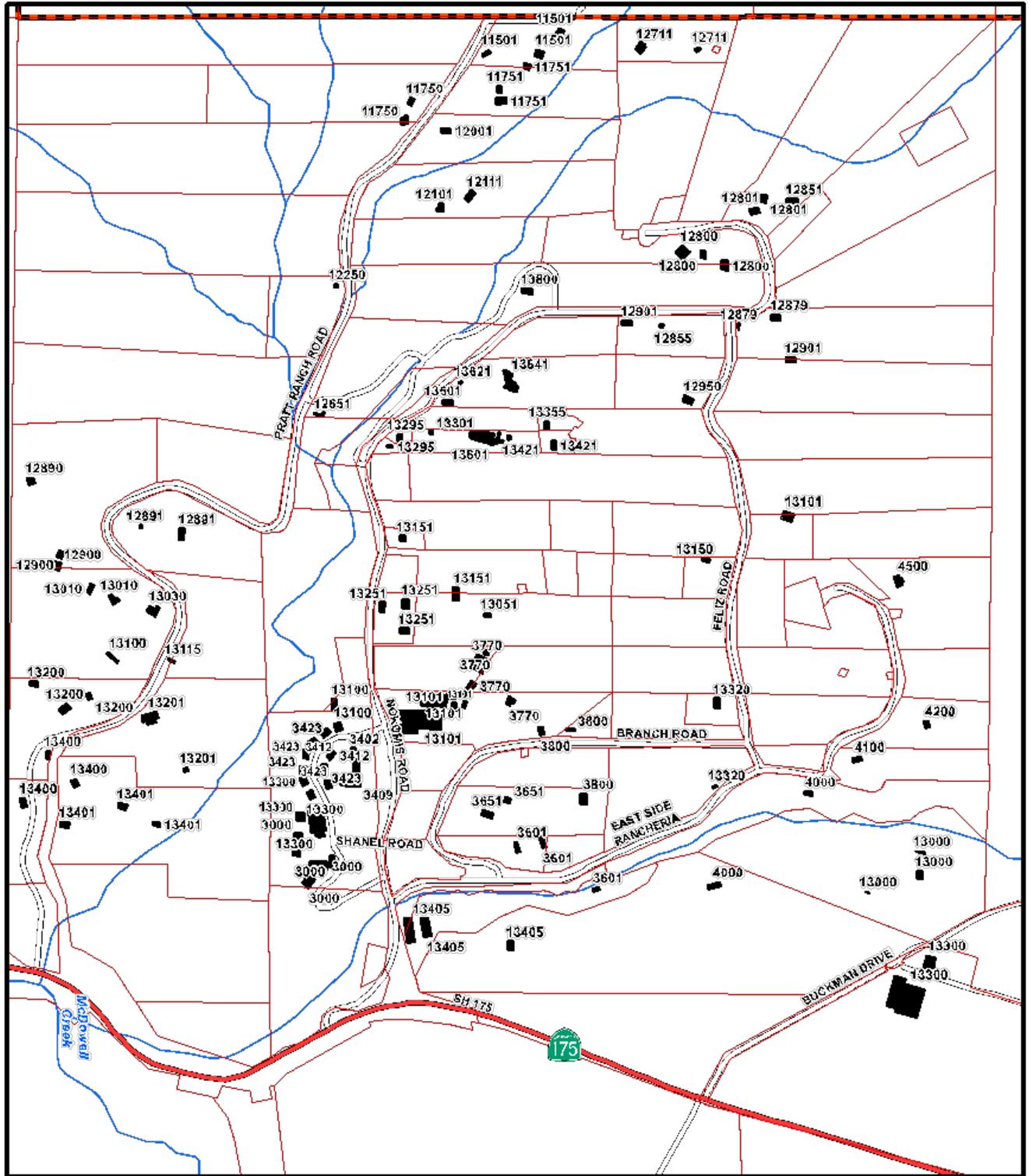


## Zone 2E - Largo/McNab Ranch Road

This zone is established primarily for wildfire evacuations. It is defined as all addresses and side roads from McNab Ranch Road. It contains over 200 homes and 2 commercial buildings, and about a dozen side roads funnel into McNab Ranch Road to reach Hwy 101.

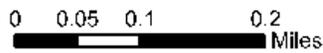


Figure G: Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Reservation Map

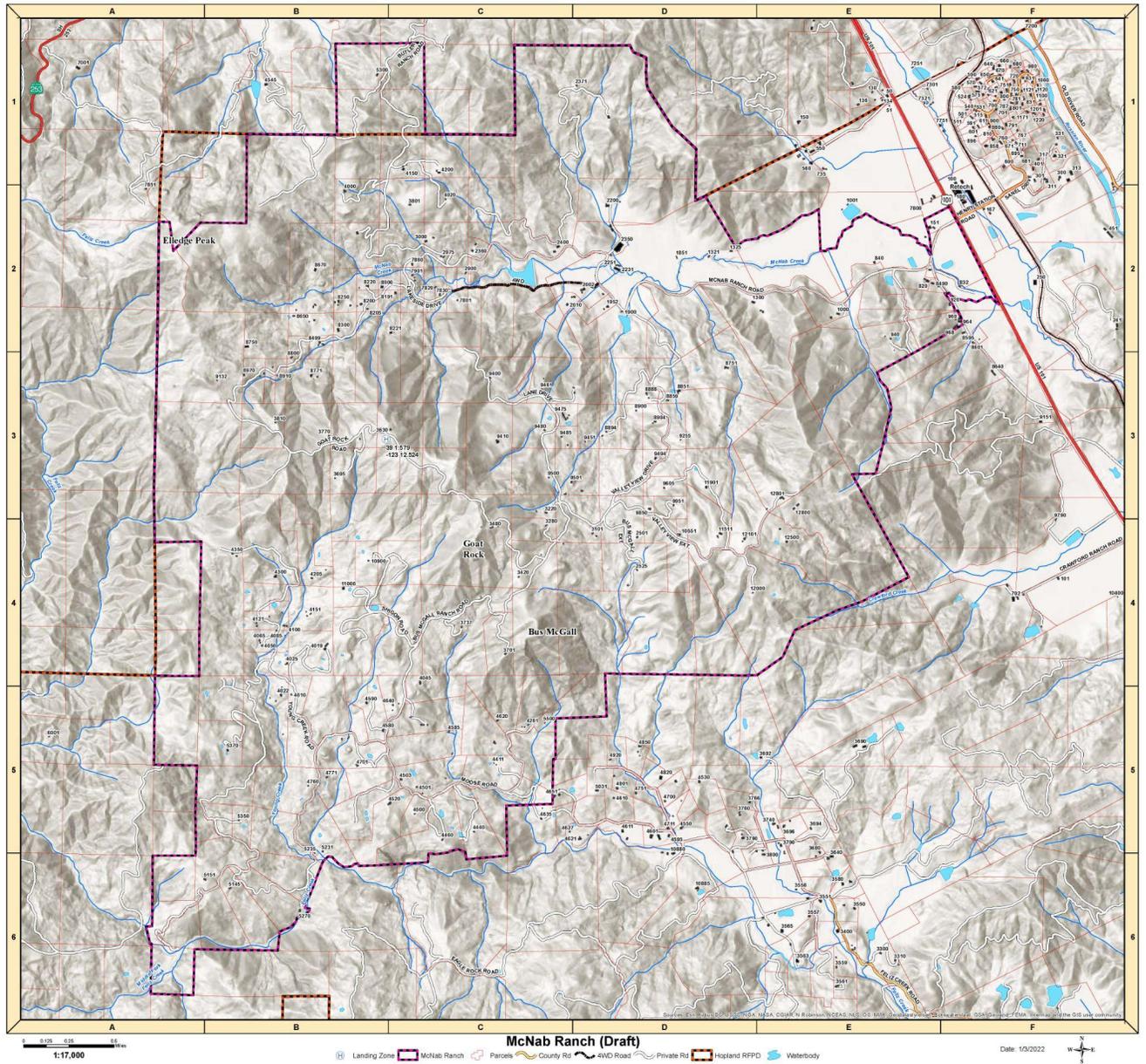


- Hopland RFPD
- Parcels
- Streams
- Buildings Footprints

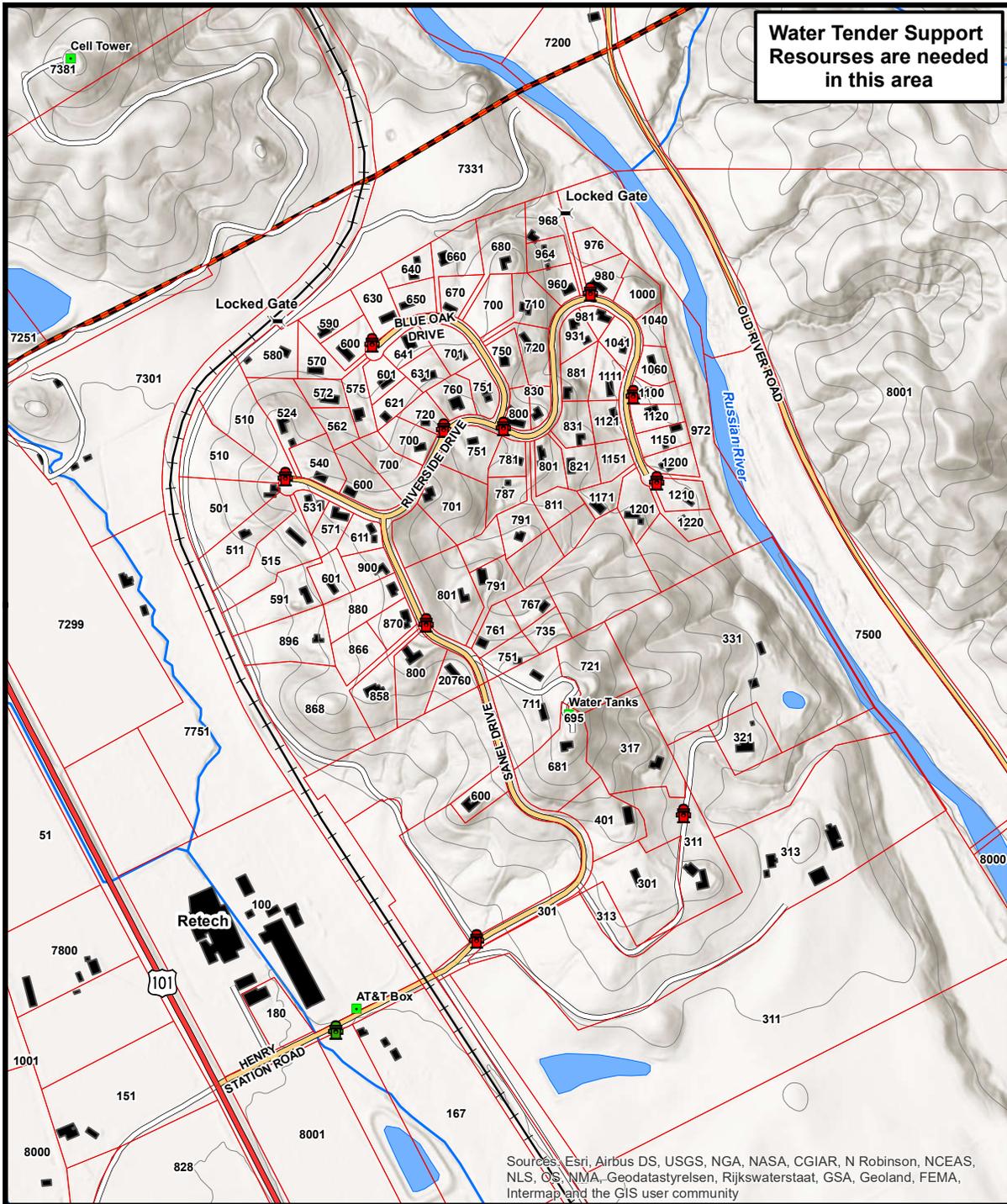
### Hopland Band of Pomo Indians Reservation



**Figure H: McNab Ranch Map**



**Figure I: Russian River Estates Map**



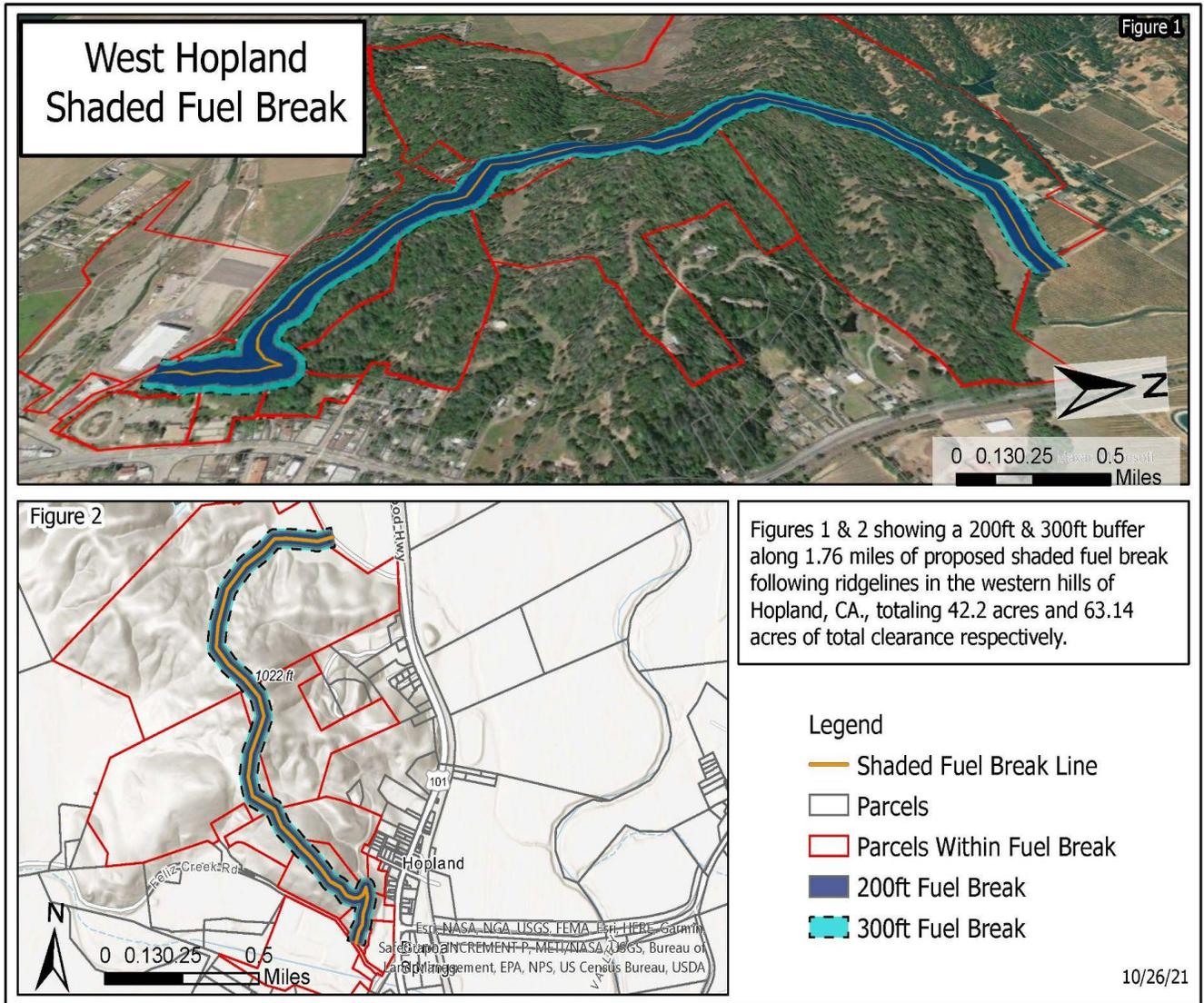
**Russian River Estates (Draft)**

0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles

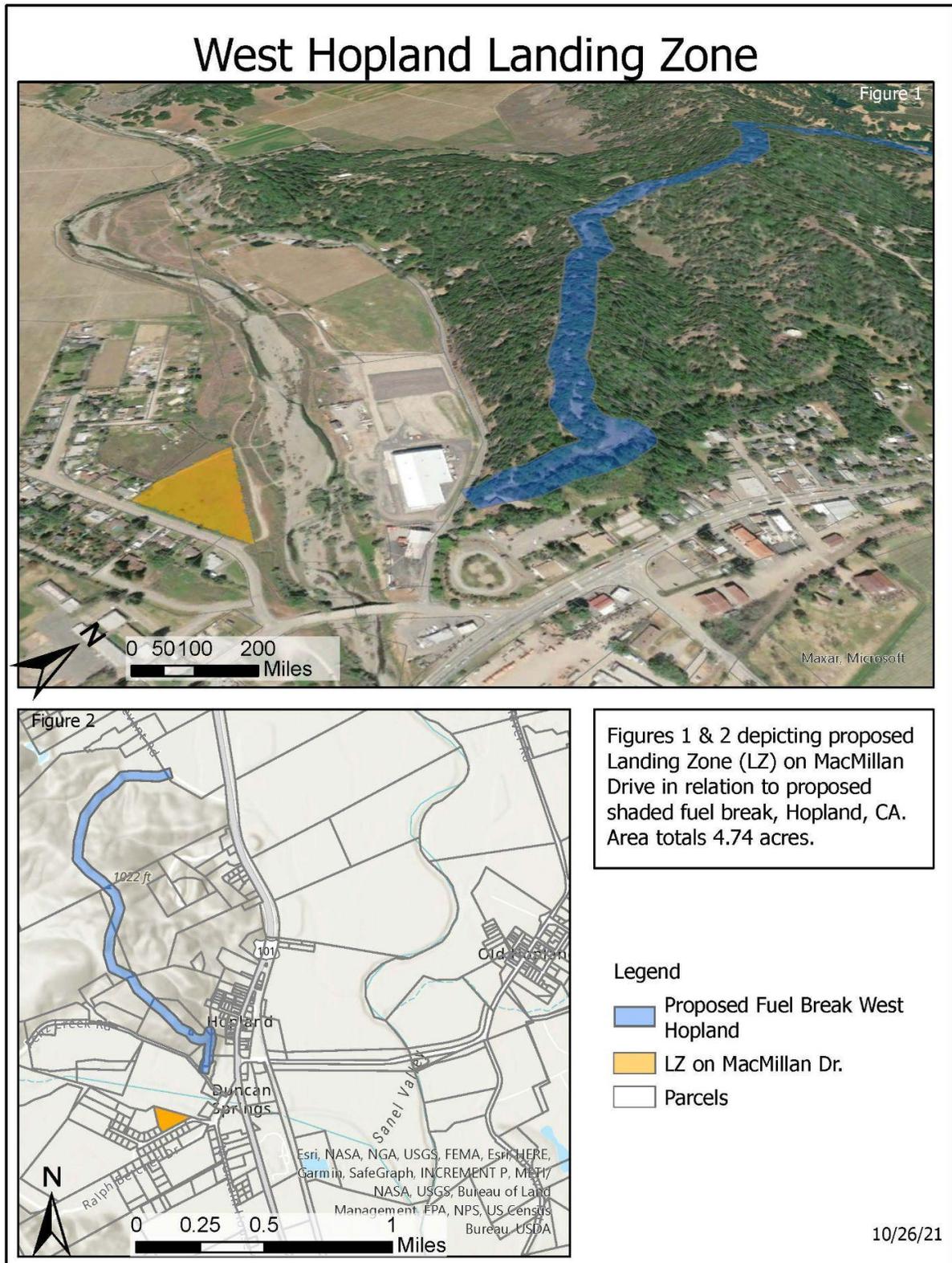
Infrastructure
  Parcels
  County Rd
  Hopland RFPD
  Waterbody

N  
1:8,000

**Figure J: Proposed Shaded Fuel Break—Hopland Western Hills**



**Figure K: Proposed Helicopter Landing Zone—MacMillan Drive, Hopland**



**Figure L: Proposed Roadside Clearance—Old River Road, Hwy 101 to Talmage**

## Roadside Clearance- Old River Road, Hopland, CA

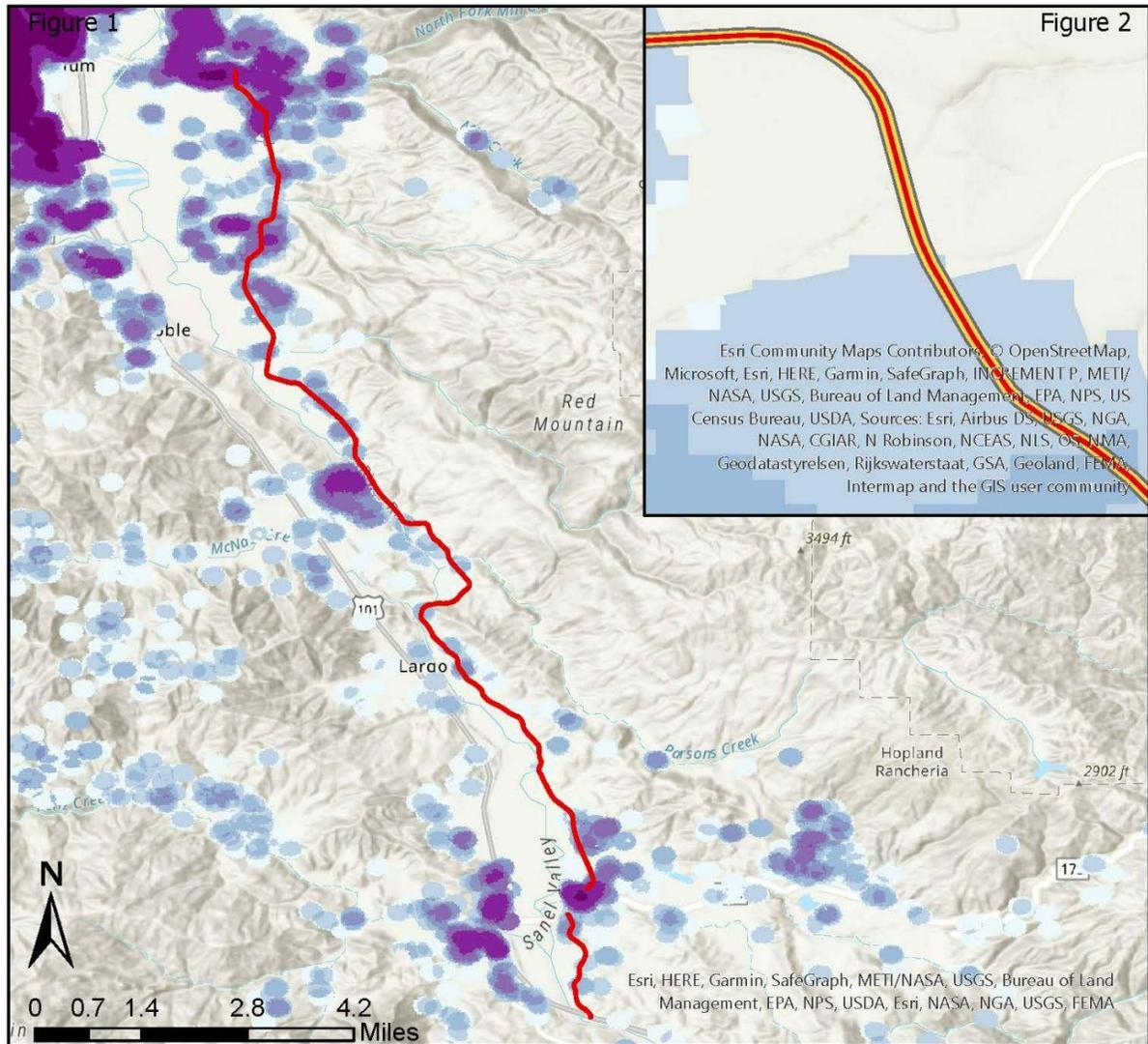


Figure 1 indicating the entire length of Old River Road from Hwy 101 north to Talmage, CA. A distance totaling 14.4 miles. Figure 2 shows the proposed 20 ft buffer along either side of the road, an area of 69.97 acres.

- Old River Road
  - Proposed Roadside Clearance
- Housing Density**
- Below Density Rating
  - Very Low
  - Low
  - Medium
  - Medium - High
  - High
  - Very High

12/10/2021

**Figure M: Hopland Research and Extension Center—10-Year Prescribed Burn Plan**

