



Annex H Foresthill Fire Protection District

H.1 Introduction

This Annex details the hazard mitigation planning elements specific to the Foresthill Fire Protection District (FFPD), a participating jurisdiction to the Placer County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) Update. This Annex is not intended to be a standalone document, but appends to and supplements the information contained in the base plan document. As such, all sections of the base plan, including the planning process and other procedural requirements apply to and were met by the District. This Annex provides additional information specific to the Foresthill Fire Protection District, with a focus on providing additional details on the risk assessment and mitigation strategy for this special district.

H.2 Planning Process

As described above, the District followed the planning process detailed in Section 3 of the base plan. In addition to providing representation on the Placer County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC), the District formulated their own internal planning team to support the broader planning process requirements. Internal planning participants, their positions, and how they participated in the planning process are shown in Table H-1. Additional details on plan participation and City representatives are included in Appendix A.

Table H-1 District Planning Team

Name	Position/Title	How Participated
Chief Ian Gow*	Fire Chief	Attended meetings. Provided input on past hazards. Filled out hazard ID table. Provided information on capabilities. Provided information on past and future mitigation actions. Reviewed and provided information and edits to Annex.
Elsa Hucks	Placer County Fire	Reviewed document. Provided information and edits to Annex.
Luana Dowling	Placer County Firewise Communities Coordinator	Reviewed the Foresthill Annex, and discussed it at the Foresthill/Iowa Hill FSC meetings several times. It was also discussed it at the Placer Fire Alliance meetings in general and with respect to incorporation of projects from local CWPPs into the mitigation strategy of the LHMP.
Gary Kirk	Retired Battalion Chief	Reviewed document. Provided information and edits to Annex.

*Foresthill and Placer Hills FPD share one Chief officer and have no other Administrative staff to support this planning effort.

Coordination with other community planning efforts is paramount to the successful implementation of this plan. This Section provides information on how the District integrated the previously-approved 2010 Plan into existing planning mechanisms and programs. Specifically, the District incorporated into or implemented the 2010 LHMP through other plans and programs shown in Table H-2.

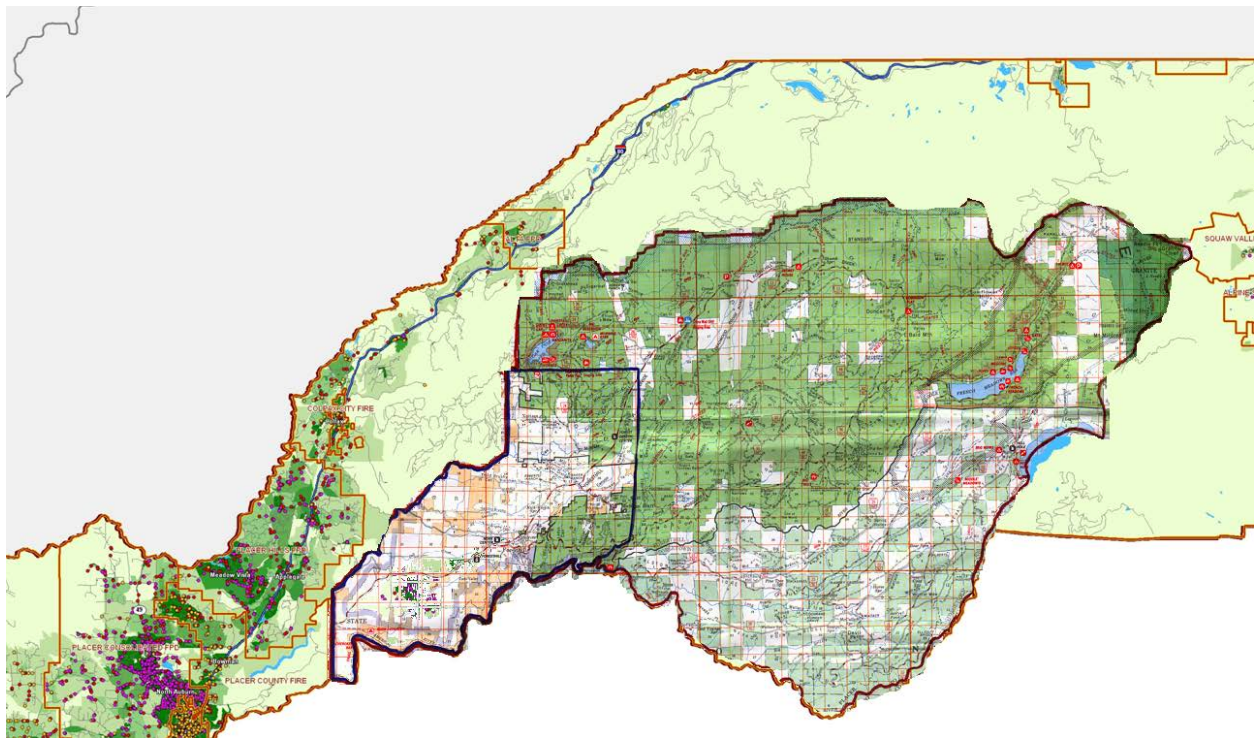
Table H-2 2010 LHMP Incorporation

Jurisdiction	Planning Mechanism 2010 LHMP Was Incorporated/Implemented In. Details?
Foresthill Fire Protection District	Overall, the District did not incorporate the 2010 LHMP Update into other planning mechanisms due to lack of funding.
Foresthill Fire Protection District	Foresthill Fire Protection District participated in Placer County CWPP planning process. Relevant items from the last plan as applicable to the District were incorporated into the CWPP plan implementation process.

H.3 District Profile

The District service area is illustrated in Figure H-1.

Figure H-1 Foresthill Fire Protection District



Source: Foresthill Fire Protection District

H.3.1. District Information and Background

The Foresthill Fire Protection District (FFPD) serves the greater Foresthill area including Todd Valley, Baker Ranch, Michigan Bluff, and Sugar Pine. The District provides local advanced life support to the community following the merge with Foresthill Ambulance Service. Fire stations located in Foresthill and Todd Valley respond to structure and wildland fires, vehicle accidents, and medical emergencies. The District is staffed by a combination of paid and volunteer firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics. The District was created in April of 1946, after over 15 years of service by the Foresthill Volunteer Fire Department.

Foresthill is located on a broad ridge between the North and Middle Forks of the American River. The Foresthill community covers approximately 11.2 square miles and is located at an elevation of 3,228 feet.

The community of Foresthill, California was founded in 1850 during the California Gold Rush when prospectors swarmed over the Sierra Nevada Mountain divide between the North and Middle Forks of the American River. After the gold played out, many Foresthill settlers turned to logging the tall trees that cover the divide and a dozen lumber mills were established in and around Foresthill. The harvesting of timber, just like gold, eventually became too costly to pursue and the mills were closed, causing many of the residents to seek employment “off the hill” in nearby Auburn and even Sacramento.

Foresthill, however, was not “down-and-out.” With the wonderful outdoor recreational opportunities of the Tahoe National Forest, beautiful lakes and snow covered mountains, and the improvement of Foresthill Road during the 1990s by the federal government, people seem to have rediscovered the Foresthill Divide. Land values are on the rise, beautiful new homes are springing up throughout the woods, and the new Foresthill High School makes K-12 education a unique mountain-top experience.

In the Foresthill area, wildland fire suppression is the primary responsibility of CDF and the USFS, with additional support provided through mutual aid. The District has primary responsibility for non-wildland fire incidents that include structure fires, vehicular fires, extreme weather events, mass casualty incidents, etc.

H.4 Hazard Identification and Summary

The District’s planning team identified the hazards that affect the District and summarized their frequency of occurrence, spatial extent, potential magnitude, and significance specific to the District (see Table H-3).

Table H-3 Foresthill Fire Protection District Hazard Identification Table

Hazard	Geographic Extent	Probability of Future Occurrences	Magnitude/Severity	Significance
Agricultural Hazards	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Avalanche	Limited	Unlikely	Limited	Low
Dam Failure	Limited	Occasional	Negligible	Low
Drought and Water Shortage	Extensive	Likely	Critical	High
Earthquake	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Flood: 100/500 year	Limited	Occasional	Negligible	Low
Flood: Localized Stormwater Flooding	Extensive	Highly Likely	Low	Medium
Landslides and Debris Flows	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Levee Failure	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Seiche (Lake Tsunami)	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Severe Weather: Extreme Heat	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	Medium
Severe Weather: Freeze and Snow	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	Medium
Severe Weather: Fog and Freezing Fog	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Severe Weather: Heavy Rains and Storms (Thunderstorms/Hail, Lightning/Wind/Tornadoes)	Limited	Highly Likely	Negligible	Low
Soil Bank Erosion	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Subsidence	Limited	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
Wildfire	Extensive	Highly Likely	Catastrophic	High
Hazardous Materials Transport	Extensive	Highly Likely	Critical	High
Geographic Extent Limited: Less than 10% of planning area Significant: 10-50% of planning area Extensive: 50-100% of planning area		Magnitude/Severity Catastrophic—More than 50 percent of property severely damaged; shutdown of facilities for more than 30 days; and/or multiple deaths Critical—25-50 percent of property severely damaged; shutdown of facilities for at least two weeks; and/or injuries and/or illnesses result in permanent disability Limited—10-25 percent of property severely damaged; shutdown of facilities for more than a week; and/or injuries/illnesses treatable do not result in permanent disability Negligible—Less than 10 percent of property severely damaged, shutdown of facilities and services for less than 24 hours; and/or injuries/illnesses treatable with first aid		
Probability of Future Occurrences Highly Likely: Near 100% chance of occurrence in next year, or happens every year. Likely: Between 10 and 100% chance of occurrence in next year, or has a recurrence interval of 10 years or less. Occasional: Between 1 and 10% chance of occurrence in the next year, or has a recurrence interval of 11 to 100 years. Unlikely: Less than 1% chance of occurrence in next 100 years, or has a recurrence interval of greater than every 100 years.		Significance Low: minimal potential impact Medium: moderate potential impact High: widespread potential impact		

H.5 Vulnerability Assessment

The intent of this section is to assess the District’s vulnerability separate from that of the planning area as a whole, which has already been assessed in Section 4.3 Vulnerability Assessment in the main plan. This

vulnerability assessment analyzes the population, property, and other assets at risk to hazards ranked of medium or high significance that may vary from other parts of the planning area. For more information about how hazards affect the County as a whole, see Chapter 4 Risk Assessment in the main plan.

H.5.1. Assets at Risk

This section considers the District’s assets at risk, specifically critical facilities and infrastructure, natural resources, and growth and development trends. Table H-4 lists District assets, valued at \$6.5 million, identified by representatives from the District as important to protect in the event of a disaster.

Table H-4 Foresthill Fire Protection District—Critical Facilities, Infrastructure, and Other District Assets

Name of Asset	Facility Type	Address	Replacement Value	Hazard Info
Station 88	Essential	5981 Gold Street Foresthill, CA 9563	\$3,000,000	N/A
Station 89 (District Office)	Essential	24320 Main Street Foresthill, CA 95631	\$500,000	N/A
Station 90	Essential	20540 Foresthill Rd Foresthill, CA 95631	\$3,000,000	N/A

Source: FFPD

Natural Resources

Several state or federally listed species as identified in Section 4.3 of the base plan may be found within the District boundaries. However, data specific to the District was unavailable, thus an accurate assessment of sensitive species and habitats present within District boundaries could not be made.

Growth and Development Trends

Foresthill Divide is located between the Middle Fork and North Fork of the American River. With the views in the area, developers are planning subdivisions on the canyon rims directly adjacent to unmaintained Bureau of Reclamation lands.

According to the 2007 Capital Improvement Plan for the District, the 2007 service population was estimated at 7,300. Using the plan’s 3 percent assumed growth rate, new development is anticipated to increase the service population between 2007 and 2030 by 7,100 for a total service population of 14,300 by year 2030. The plan indicates that an estimated \$12.6 million in capital improvements will be necessary by 2030 to meet the growing demands of the District’s service area.

As Foresthill area grows there will be further demand for emergency services, more vehicle accidents, and more fires. The development of the commercial property will also bring with it, an increase in use and storage of hazardous chemicals and associated environmental concerns.

Development since 2010

There has been minor development since 2010, but the development has had little impact on the vulnerability of the District.

Special Populations

It is important to note that there are several elderly, disabled, and low income people in the Foresthill area. In the case of a wildfire evacuation, these people may not have transportation. Likewise, in the event of a power outage during the winter months, these special populations may not be able to get to a shelter for warmth.

H.5.2. Estimating Potential Losses

This section provides the vulnerability assessment, including any quantifiable loss estimates, for those hazards identified above in Table H-3 as high or medium significance hazards. Impacts of past events and vulnerability of the District to specific hazards are further discussed below (see Section 4.1 Hazard Identification for more detailed information about these hazards and their impacts on the Placer County planning area). Methodologies for calculating loss estimates are the same as those described in Section 4.3 of the base plan. In general, the most vulnerable assets are those located within the floodplain, in the wildland urban interface, other priority hazard areas, unreinforced masonry buildings, and buildings built prior to the introduction of modern building codes.

An estimate of the vulnerability of the District to each identified hazard, in addition to the estimate of risk of future occurrence, is provided in each of the hazard-specific sections that follow. Vulnerability is measured in general, qualitative terms and is a summary of the potential impact based on past occurrences, spatial extent, and damage and casualty potential. It is categorized into the following classifications:

- **Extremely Low**—The occurrence and potential cost of damage to life and property is very minimal to nonexistent.
- **Low**—Minimal potential impact. The occurrence and potential cost of damage to life and property is minimal.
- **Medium**—Moderate potential impact. This ranking carries a moderate threat level to the general population and/or built environment. Here the potential damage is more isolated and less costly than a more widespread disaster.
- **High**—Widespread potential impact. This ranking carries a high threat to the general population and/or built environment. The potential for damage is widespread. Hazards in this category may have occurred in the past.
- **Extremely High**—Very widespread with catastrophic impact.

Drought and Water Shortage

Likelihood of Future Occurrence—Likely

Vulnerability—High

Drought is a significant hazard, especially to the forested areas of the District. Drought conditions stress and leave the forest susceptible to disease and insect infestation. As a result of recent drought conditions

throughout California, infestations of the Pine Beetle are on the rise. Several areas within the District forests show signs of Pine Beetle and thus will become more vulnerable to wildfire. Drought conditions also may impact the water supply of people residing within District boundaries.

Flood: Localized Stormwater Flooding

Likelihood of Future Occurrence–Highly Likely

Vulnerability–Medium

Flooding due to canal and stream runoff can affect individual homes and neighborhoods. This can cause problems for fire responders as they may have to take alternate routes to fires and other emergencies.

Severe Weather: Extreme Heat

Likelihood of Future Occurrence–Highly Likely

Vulnerability–Medium

Extreme heat is a concern to the District. During extreme hot weather, the risk of wildfire increases. This can be further exacerbated during periods of drought. Also vulnerable to the effects of extreme hot weather is the elderly population located within District boundaries. The District contains a significant elderly population, with some residing in homes that have not been sufficiently updated to protect against extreme temperatures.

Severe Weather: Freeze and Snow

Likelihood of Future Occurrence–Likely

Vulnerability–Medium

Freeze and snow is a concern to the District. During periods of freeze and snow, pipes in both residential and commercial buildings freeze and crack, and transit becomes difficult with many roads in the area freezing over. The impact to the area road system is not just a concern to residents, but also to the emergency service crews who can become immobilized during emergency situations. Snow and winter weather conditions can close Foresthill road in the winter, stranding Iowa Hill residents. Also vulnerable to the effects of freeze and snow is the elderly population located within District boundaries. The District contains a significant elderly population, with some residing in homes that have not been sufficiently updated to protect against extreme temperatures.

Wildfire

Likelihood of Future Occurrence–Highly Likely

Vulnerability–High

Several communities served by District are listed on the National Fire Plan’s “Communities at Risk” list as set forth in Section 4.3.12 of the main plan. These include the communities of Baker Ranch, Foresthill, Hidden Treasure, Michigan Bluff, Shirrtail, Sugar Pine Reservoir, Todd Valley, and Yankee Jims.

Over one hundred years of aggressive fire suppression under the national fire suppression policy has rendered wildlands severely overgrown. Much of the private land in the District's area is in the wildland urban interface with increasing residential development.

As more people move into the area and impacts from recreational demands increase, there will be more human-caused wildfire starts each year. The increased number of widely scattered homes within the District adds greatly to the danger, complexity, and cost of fighting these fires.

Currently, many of the communities in the District are limited to one route ingress and egress in the event of a major wildfire. Historically, these routes are closed during major events, stranding many people, including visitors, away from their families and homes.

Forest overgrowth due to the efficiency of modern firefighting techniques, and to society's current election to limit forest thinning and harvesting, is a serious problem. If wildfire does not impact the forest first, native insects will eventually kill millions of trees. Explosions in insect populations usually start during a drought, when the lack of water combined with too many trees per acre render the trees too weak to fight off the insect attacks. Without a change in management practices on public lands, there is little hope of avoiding a kill off of trees similar to the kill off experienced by other national forests.

The rural nature within the District boundaries makes the area particularly susceptible to fire due to the heavily forested, cross-compartmented nature of the terrain. The abundance of natural fuels, coupled with extreme low humidity common in the area during fires season, creates potentially volatile situations for both residents and responders.

The most notable recent wildfire to impact the District occurred in September of 2006. This wildland fire, started by a campfire on Ralston Ridge outside of Foresthill, grew to over 4,000 acres in size. The towns of Michigan Bluff, Foresthill, and Volcano were threatened. Infrastructure damage primarily involved damage to power lines

Hazardous Materials Transport

Likelihood of Future Occurrence–Highly Likely

Vulnerability–High

Hazardous materials transportation poses a risk to the public and to District staff. These incident pose a physical risk to District staff, and can tie up staff for many hours.

H.6 Capability Assessment

Capabilities are the programs and policies currently in use to reduce hazard impacts or that could be used to implement hazard mitigation activities. This capabilities assessment is divided into four sections: regulatory mitigation capabilities; administrative and technical mitigation capabilities; fiscal mitigation capabilities; and mitigation education, outreach, and partnerships.

H.6.1. Regulatory Mitigation Capabilities

Table H-5 lists regulatory mitigation capabilities, including planning and land management tools, typically used by local jurisdictions to implement hazard mitigation activities and indicates those that are in place in the District.

Table H-5 Foresthill Fire Protection District's Regulatory Mitigation Capabilities

Plans	Y/N Year	Does the plan/program address hazards? Does the plan identify projects to include in the mitigation strategy? Can the plan be used to implement mitigation actions?
Comprehensive/Master Plan	N	
Capital Improvements Plan	Y	
Economic Development Plan	N	
Local Emergency Operations Plan	Y	
Continuity of Operations Plan	N	
Transportation Plan	N	
Stormwater Management Plan/Program	N	
Engineering Studies for Streams	N	
Community Wildfire Protection Plan	N	
Other special plans (e.g., brownfields redevelopment, disaster recovery, coastal zone management, climate change adaptation)	N	
Building Code, Permitting, and Inspections	Y/N	Are codes adequately enforced?
Building Code	N	Version/Year:
Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Score	N	Score:
Fire department ISO rating:	Y	Rating: 4
Site plan review requirements	N	
Land Use Planning and Ordinances	Y/N	Is the ordinance an effective measure for reducing hazard impacts? Is the ordinance adequately administered and enforced?
Zoning ordinance	N	
Subdivision ordinance	N	
Floodplain ordinance	N	
Natural hazard specific ordinance (stormwater, steep slope, wildfire)	N	
Flood insurance rate maps	N	
Elevation Certificates	N	

Acquisition of land for open space and public recreation uses	N
Erosion or sediment control program	N
Other	N
How can these capabilities be expanded and improved to reduce risk?	

Source:

As indicated above, the District, in conjunction with the County, has several programs, plans, policies, and codes and ordinances that guide hazard mitigation. Some of these are described in more detail below.

Codes and Ordinances

FFPD, through Placer County has adopted the 2007 California Fire Code. FFPD also defers to Public Resource Codes 4290 (Fire Safe Access) and 4291 (Defensible Space). The Fire Marshal reviews pre-development plans for ingress and egress, fire flow requirements, fire hydrant placement, and placement of shaded fuel breaks. Plan reviews for single family residence in and out of hydrant areas are done as well to ensure proper access and water supply for fire suppression.

Foresthill/Iowa Hill, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2006

The Foresthill/Iowa Hill CWPP summarizes wildfire dangers and issues within the Foresthill/Iowa Hill areas. The CWPP also catalogs community wildfire protection needs and identifies corrective action and community projects that will mitigate some of the problems. Communities served by the CWPP with prioritized projects include Michigan Bluff, Baker Ranch, Foresthill, Todd Valley, Yankee Jims, Shirrtail, Sugar Pin Reservoir, Hidden Treasure, Iowa Hill, Kings Hill, Big Dipper, and Roach Hill.

Foresthill/Iowa Hill Risk Assessment Plan, 2006

The Foresthill/Iowa Hill Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategies (RAMS) process helps provide consistent out-year planning for fire mitigation activities, prevention education, and fuels treatment/biomass programs. RAMS prioritizes fire management units and communities by risk and hazard and develops a strategic out-year budget and program of work for the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council. This RAMS Plan is an amendment to the Placer County Fire Plan/Placer County CWPP, and represents information that was developed collaboratively by members of the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council and cooperating state and federal agencies.

Capital Improvement Plan, 2007

The Capital Improvement Plan for the District identifies and budgets projects for new public facilities that will be needed to serve the FFPD projected development and increase in service population through 2030.

Foresthill Divide, Iowa Hill Divide Emergency Plan, 2006

The Emergency Plan for the area provides specific planning information, direction, and coordination guidance on a functional as well as an organizational basis for first responding and contributing agencies facing emergencies in the Foresthill and Iowa Hill areas.

H.6.2. Administrative/Technical Mitigation Capabilities

The District is staffed by a combination of paid and volunteer firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics. The FFPD was created in April of 1946, after over 15 years of service by the Foresthill Volunteer Fire Department. The FFPD presently employs a staff of 53, including a Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Marshal, Administrative Captain, three Battalion Chiefs, two Station Captains, three Lieutenants, an administrative assistant, EMTs, firefighters, and paramedics, and is run by a five person Board of Directors.

Three fire stations house the fire engines, brush units, rescue units, a water tender, and three ambulances. Fire Station 88 is located on Gold Street, Station 89 on Foresthill Road near the Placer County corporate yard, and Station 90 is at the intersection of Foresthill Road and Happy Pines Road. The District office is located at 24320 Main Street at the old Safety Club building. Table H-6 identifies the personnel responsible for activities related to mitigation and loss prevention in the District.

Table H-6 Foresthill Fire Protection District's Administrative and Technical Mitigation Capabilities

Administration	Y/N	Describe capability Is coordination effective?
Planning Commission	Y	In coordination with Placer County
Mitigation Planning Committee	N	
Maintenance programs to reduce risk (e.g., tree trimming, clearing drainage systems)	N	
Mutual aid agreements	Y	
Other		
Staff	Y/N FT/PT	Is staffing adequate to enforce regulations? Is staff trained on hazards and mitigation? Is coordination between agencies and staff effective?
Chief Building Official	Y	In coordination with Placer County
Floodplain Administrator	N	
Emergency Manager	Y	In coordination with Placer County
Community Planner	N	
Civil Engineer	Y	In coordination with Placer County
GIS Coordinator	Y	In coordination with Placer County
Other		

Technical	Y/N	Describe capability Has capability been used to assess/mitigate risk in the past?
Warning systems/services (Reverse 911, outdoor warning signals)	Y	In coordination with Placer County
Hazard data and information	Y	
Grant writing	N	
Hazus analysis	N	
Other		
How can these capabilities be expanded and improved to reduce risk?		

H.6.3. Fiscal Mitigation Capabilities

Table H-7 identifies financial tools or resources that the District could potentially use to help fund mitigation activities.

Table H-7 Foresthill Fire Protection District's Fiscal Mitigation Capabilities

Funding Resource	Access/ Eligibility (Y/N)	Has the funding resource been used in past and for what type of activities? Could the resource be used to fund future mitigation actions?
Capital improvements project funding	N	
Authority to levy taxes for specific purposes	N	
Fees for water, sewer, gas, or electric services	N	
Impact fees for new development	Y	Used for capital expenses
Storm water utility fee	N	
Incur debt through general obligation bonds and/or special tax bonds	Y	
Incur debt through private activities	N	
Community Development Block Grant	N	
Other federal funding programs	N	
State funding programs	N	
Other	N	
How can these capabilities be expanded and improved to reduce risk?		

H.6.4. Mitigation Outreach and Partnerships

Table H-8 identifies education and outreach programs and methods already in place that could be/or are used to implement mitigation activities and communicate hazard-related information. Additional information can be found after the table.

Table H-8 Foresthill Fire District Mitigation Education, Outreach, and Partnerships

Program/Organization	Yes/No	Describe program/organization and how relates to disaster resilience and mitigation. Could the program/organization help implement future mitigation activities?
Local citizen groups or non-profit organizations focused on environmental protection, emergency preparedness, access and functional needs populations, etc.	N	
Ongoing public education or information program (e.g., responsible water use, fire safety, household preparedness, environmental education)	N	
Natural disaster or safety related school programs	Y	School programs
StormReady certification	N	
Firewise Communities certification	Y	
Public-private partnership initiatives addressing disaster-related issues	N	
Other	N	
How can these capabilities be expanded and improved to reduce risk?		

FFPD has many mutual aid agreements and partnerships in place to ensure the safety of the people and property within District Boundaries. Partnerships and/or mutual aid agreements are in place with the following entities:

- CAL FIRE
- USFS
- BLM
- Placer County Sheriff's Office
- Placer County OES
- California Highway Patrol (CHP)
- American Medical Response (AMR)
- American Red Cross
- Placer County Water Agency

The District works closely with the Foresthill/Iowa Hill fires Safe Council, CAL FIRE, USFS, BLM, and private land owners.

H.6.5. Other Mitigation Efforts

The District is involved in a variety of mitigation activities including, public education, fuels management projects, and other activities to reduce fuel loads and fire risk. These mitigation activities include:

- Defensible space inspections
- Continual fire safety education
- In process of becoming a Firewise Community
- Firewise workshop
- Firesafe Council
- Business Inspections
- Fire Education in Schools
- Shaded fuel breaks within Foresthill/Iowa Hill areas
- Fuel Reduction Projects
- Fuels Reduction: Chipper Program

H.7 Mitigation Strategy

H.7.1. Mitigation Goals and Objectives

The District adopts the hazard mitigation goals and objectives developed by the HMPC and described in Chapter 5 Mitigation Strategy.

H.7.2. Mitigation Actions

The planning team for the District identified and prioritized the following mitigation action based on the risk assessment. Background information and information on how each action will be implemented and administered, such as ideas for implementation, responsible office, partners, potential funding, estimated cost, and schedule are included.

Action 1. *Completion of Fuels Management Projects within the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council, Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council and Placer Sierra Fire Safe Council Areas of the Western Slope of Placer County.*

Issues/background: The consequences of large wildfires in Placer County are a significant concern to its residents, decision-makers, and the three local fire safe councils on the western slope of the County. The planning area of the three fire safe councils consists of approximately 248,000 acres of diverse vegetation, with the majority covered by hardwood and conifer woodlands. Given the vegetation types in the area and the historic Fire Return Intervals (FRI), approximately 14,000 acres could burn annually if steps are not taken to provide prevention programs.

The western slope fire safe councils with the help of local fire agencies have defined 35 projects covering 3,245 acres. These projects consist of roadside hazard reduction, vegetation treatments, fuel breaks, and vegetation removal projects.

Other Alternatives: Continue to educate the public and private landowners on the need to take mitigation measures to prevent catastrophic wildfires from occurring in their area. The limited individual efforts may help some, but the need to establish large connected fuel breaks and defensible space zones are critical.

Existing Planning Mechanism(s) through which Action Will Be Implemented:

Responsible Office: Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council, Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council, Placer Sierra Fire Safe Council, and Placer County Fire Safe Alliance.

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The total cost estimate of \$4.7 million is needed to treat 3,245 acres at an average cost of approximately \$1,450 per acre.

Benefits (Losses Avoided): Using the unincorporated areas of Placer County as an example, there are 624 parcels in the very high category of “values at risk”, and over 56,000 properties in the high “values at risk” category. With a median home value of \$259,000 in the Sacramento region, the loss of 10 homes plus suppression cost would significantly surpass the cost of the planned mitigation projects.

Potential Funding: Grants, loans and subsidies available for such projects.

Schedule: These projects would be ongoing through the period of this document. Grant funding is generally available through yearly cycles and would be sought for specific projects prioritized by each independent Fire Safe Council.

Action 2. Foresthill Biomass Project

Issue/Background: The mission of the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council is to protect natural resources, human life, and property improvements by mobilizing all citizens to help them make their homes, neighborhoods, and the community fire safe. The reduction of excess vegetation, a.k.a. fuels, in the area is one of our focus statements. Clearing the forests of fuels makes them more healthy and sustainable and fire resistant. Recycling those fuels and turning them into energy makes it cheaper or even profitable to remove these fuels. It also offers an alternative energy source to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and foreign oil. It would stimulate the economy of the local area with jobs to clear and haul fuels, run a plant and market wood by-products such as soil amendments, particle board, wood chips, and many others.

Other Alternatives: No action leaves our forests severely over grown with brush and a fire hazard to the whole community. Continued mastication of fuels, which is very expensive and does not remove the fuels from the forest.

Existing Planning Mechanism(s) through which Action Will Be Implemented:

Responsible Office: Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council: Chairman Luana R. Dowling.

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: Costs will vary depending on the size of the biomass plant. A beginning estimate is \$300,000 for a small plant to power a building the size of the high school. The cost to put a plant on the ground, collect, haul, and convert the fuels to energy and/or products – and how much money can be made via selling energy to the grid and selling wood by-products is still to be determined.

Benefits (Losses Avoided): By combining fuels recycling with fuels removal, it becomes economically advantageous to remove fuels, whereas the current method of chipping the fuels and leaving them on the forest floor is very expensive, and less effective because fuels are not removed, merely rearranged, and no use is made of the woody remains after fuels treatment.

Potential Funding: Grants, loans and subsidies available for such projects.

Schedule: 1-3 years

Action 3. *Assess and Enhance Foresthill Fire Protection District (FFPD) New Subdivision, Hazard Fuels Clearing and Maintenance Ordinance. Put Programs in Place with Homeowners Associations in CC&R's and Maintenance Contracts.*

Issue/Background: Rapid containment of wildfires and structure fires are a high priority for the FFPD. This project would evaluate appropriate requirements for hazard fuel clearing and maintenance and propose an ordinance for adoption by the Foresthill Fire Protection District Board of Directors. This ordinance will be based on the State Standard on Hazard Fuels Reduction for Suburban and Rural areas and/or on the Urban-Wildland Interface Code.

Other Alternatives: The alternative is to continue to rely solely upon the land developer and subsequent absentee property owners to provide hazard fuels reduction and maintenance. This has been attempted with other subdivisions in the Foresthill area, and the results are not acceptable.

Existing Planning Mechanism(s) through which Action Will Be Implemented:

Responsible Office: Fire Chief Kurt Snyder, Foresthill Fire Protection District.

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The cost to evaluate requirements and prepare the ordinance would come out of normal operating expenses. The cost to the developers of the subdivisions approximately \$1,200 per acre initially. Maintenance would be minimal if kept up on a yearly basis. If added to Homeowners Association CC&Rs it would be easier to implement.

Benefits (Losses Avoided): Homes in the FFPD area are presently valued at a median price of over \$400,000 with many homes selling for a far higher cost. The \$1,200 per acre cost to the developer for hazard fuels reduction represents one-half of one percent of the value of the median home price. Hazard Fuels Reduction and Maintenance is an inexpensive way to improve fire suppression capabilities for a home. It also increases the fire safety of the surrounding homes and wildlands because the faster a structure or wildland fire is contained, the less likelihood that it will spread.

Potential Funding: Grants, loans, and subsidies available for such projects.

Schedule: Complete assessment and ordinance proposal by the end of calendar year 2010.

Action 4. Todd Valley Shaded Fuel Break

Issue/Background: The Foresthill Divide is a ridge separating the North and Middle Forks of the American River above the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) in Placer County. The communities of Todd Valley, Michigan Bluff, and Foresthill are located above the ASRA, overlooking the two forks of the American River.

Todd Valley represents the most concentrated residential development in the wildland/urban interface in the county. The 35,000 acre ASRA provides recreational opportunities to over 900,000 visitors per year. The main attraction to this public space is its natural, unaltered environment. With this ever increasing use comes and equal increase of human caused fires. The forest cover in the canyons provides abundant fuel for wildfires. Placer County has been at or near the top of the list of the fastest growing counties in the United States consistently for the past several years. The communities of Todd Valley, Michigan Bluff, and Foresthill, home to 7,000 residents, are no exception. According to the Cal Fire (formerly CDF), ASRA was the source of 125 ignitions in the period 1990-2005. The entire region is listed by Cal Fire as a “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.”

The neighborhoods are on the Federal Register list of “Communities at Risk” because wildfires, originating in the canyons, progress rapidly up the steep slopes threatening property and lives. This project will construct a modified shaded fuel break: a defensible location to be used by fire suppression resources in the control of oncoming wildfires and prevent wildfire spread by removing hazardous fuels in a tactical area. A fuel break between the ASRA and these communities will protect residents and property from wildfire originating in the ASRA and the ASRA from wildfire originating in the communities. The shaded fuel break, approximately 137 acres will be constructed on private lands adjacent to Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) lands and U.S. Forest Service Tahoe National Forest (USFS) lands. A large percentage of the property owners on these private lands are in full support of the project as documented by their participation in the Fire Safe Council survey and public meetings associated with the planning processes.

Other Alternatives: If you look at the fire history on the Foresthill Divide it’s not a question of IF but WHEN a devastating wildfire will occur. To do nothing in the Todd Valley area would leave residents open to a devastating firestorm. The Placer County Chipper Program has been used very successfully in this area, but is still far from making a significant continuous connected shaded fuel break. Continuous public education is also an alternative.

Existing Planning Mechanism(s) through which Action Will Be Implemented:

Responsible Office: Luana R. Dowling: FFSC Chairman

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: Approximately \$1,200 per acre. 50/50 match with property owners and a federal grant. The Property in the canyon is State Recreation Area owned by Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). This recreation area has been the area of several fire starts in the past. It's only a matter of time.

Benefits (Losses Avoided): Benefit to the 3,000 residents of Todd Valley is life safety as well as property protection. At the current County median value per home of over \$400,000 per home, the 1,100 homes in Todd Valley are valued at \$440,000,000. Having a strategically planned shaded fuel break will not only save lives, but also assist firefighters in gaining timely access to protect homes.

Potential Funding: Grants, loans, and subsidies available for such projects.

Schedule: An initial phase (Phase 1) has been funded through a National Fire Plan grant and will be completed in August of 2009. Phase 2, if funded will be completed in 2011.

Action 5. *Completion of Fuels Management Projects within the Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council, Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council and Placer Sierra Fire Safe Council Areas of the Western Slope of Placer County.*

Issues/background: The consequences of large wildfires in Placer County are a significant concern to its residents, decision-makers, and the three local Fire Safe Councils on the western slope of the County. The planning area of the three fire safe councils consists of approximately 248,000 acres of diverse vegetation, with the majority covered by hardwood and conifer woodlands. Given the vegetation types in the area and the historic Fire Return Intervals (FRI), approximately 14,000 acres could burn annually if steps are not taken to provide prevention programs.

The western slope fire safe councils with the help of local fire agencies have defined 35 projects covering 3,245 acres. These projects consist of roadside hazard reduction, vegetation treatments, fuel breaks, and vegetation removal projects.

Other Alternatives: Continue to educate the public and private landowners on the need to take mitigation measures to prevent catastrophic wildfires from occurring in their area. The limited individual efforts may help some, but the need to establish large connected fuel breaks and defensible space zones are critical.

Existing Planning Mechanism(s) through which Action Will Be Implemented:

Responsible Office: Foresthill/Iowa Hill Fire Safe Council, Greater Auburn Area Fire Safe Council, Placer Sierra Fire Safe Council, and Placer County Fire Safe Alliance.

Priority (H, M, L): High

Cost Estimate: The total cost estimate of \$4.7 million is needed to treat 3,245 acres at an average cost of approximately \$1,450 per acre.

Benefits (Losses Avoided): Using the unincorporated areas of Placer County as an example, there are 624 parcels in the very high category of "Values at Risk," and over 56,000 properties in the high "Values At

Risk” category. With a median home value of \$259,000 in the Sacramento region, the loss of 10 homes plus suppression cost would significantly surpass the cost of the planned mitigation projects.

Potential Funding: Grants, loans, and subsidies available for such projects.

Schedule: These projects would be ongoing through the period of this document. Grant funding is generally available through yearly cycles and would be sought for specific projects prioritized by each independent Fire Safe Council.