



Anchorage Fire Department
Wildfire Mitigation
Program Report - August 2008

Submitted by

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Anchorage Fire Department

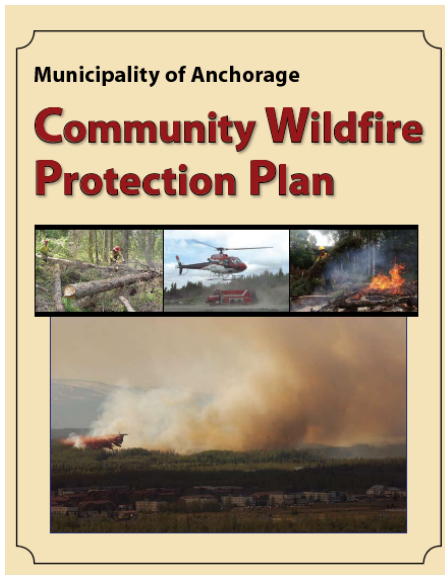
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Executive Summary

The Anchorage Fire Department (AFD) continues to provide the Municipality of Anchorage with high quality Firewise education for residents, forest treatment projects to protect neighborhoods and a skillful fire suppression force to meet the challenges of fire at the wildland urban interface. Funding through federal appropriations has been supported by the Alaska Delegation and their recognition of local needs throughout the State to prevent catastrophic fires in and near communities. Additional support is funded through the US Forest Service Forest Health Protection grants. These funds are directed toward renewed forest health in the wake of the spruce bark beetle epidemic.

Through the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, AFD published the Municipality of Anchorage Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in January 2008. The CWPP documents the components of wildland fire mitigation in Anchorage and lays out a plan to continue local preparedness in the coming years. Through its implementation, AFD will continue to work closely with residents and other local agencies to prepare for wildland fire and other disasters. Self reliance and preparedness will save lives in an emergency. A well trained fire suppression force is critical to manage the challenges that such an event can impart on a community.



Anchorage's wildfire program consists of three elements that are designed to address our community's exposure to wildland fire. *Firewise education* to residents instills awareness and the urgency to be prepared for a disaster. Treating the home ignition zone by implementing Firewise principles and being prepared to act during a fire are both critical to survival of life and property. *Forest treatment* projects reduce the fuel loading that accumulates in and around neighborhoods. Sound forest management practices limit fire spread while supporting healthy forests at the wildland urban interface. The Anchorage Fire Department

maintains a well-trained staff of firefighters along with advanced firefighting equipment and apparatus to provide fast and effective *fire suppression*. High speed water delivery from the AFD Flight Crew and Rotor 1 has proved critical in many fire calls during recent summers.

The AFD Wildfire Mitigation Office manages the Firewise education and forest treatment elements of the program and carries out the technical work of mitigating our community's exposure to wildland fire. Through due diligence and continued communication with the residents, the MOA can survive a wildland fire without having an associated residential disaster.



Wildfire Mitigation Office Staff

Forester

Susanne U. Rodman is the forester for the Anchorage Fire Department. She coordinates forest treatment projects with public land managers to reduce wildland fire fuels while supporting forest health. She manages the operational functions and contractors for these projects while also communicating with the local community councils to address neighborhood concerns. Sue monitors expenditures, manages grants and writes reports for the wildfire program. She has both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in forestry while retaining the certified forester credential through the Society of American Foresters. She is the chair of the SAF Fire Working Group, co-chair of the Alaska Northern Forest Cooperative, and co-chair of the Firewise Task Group within the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group. Sue has worked in field forestry since 1994.

Aviation Manager & Fuels Specialist

Jason T. Kohler serves as the fuels specialist and the aviation unit manager for the Anchorage Fire Department's contract helicopter "Rotor 1." As the fuels specialist, he works closely with the department forester, evaluating public and private lands in the effort to reduce wildland fire fuel loading and associated fire behavior. He is also responsible for performing wildland fire training needs, red carding of department personnel and ensuring that the annual wildland refresher is completed. During the summer months while Rotor 1 is on contract, he supervises the flight crew and manages staffing needs, vendor payments, training, and emergency response through coordination with the battalion chief. He assists the AFD wildfire coordinator with the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group needs and is an ad hoc member to the Fire Training Committee. He has been fighting wildland fire since 1992 throughout the country and carries several national qualifications in both operations and aviation under the National Wildfire Qualification System.

Fire Education Specialist

Jennifer M. Klugh serves the Anchorage Fire Department as the Firewise education specialist and supporting public information officer. She works with private residents to implement Firewise principles and she promotes fire education throughout the community. Jennifer supports AFD public events by coordinating fire education outreach. She also serves as the AFD web editor. When on-duty as the public information officer, she responds to incidents serving as the AFD spokesperson, conducts media interviews, and coordinates press events. She has a Bachelor's of Science degree in zoology and has been working in the field of wildland fire education since 2002. Jennifer is the chair-elect of the Education and Prevention Committee within the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group.

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The Anchorage Fire Department would like to thank its local, state and federal partners in developing and maintaining an active wildland fire awareness program in the Municipality of Anchorage.