



East Bay Hills Wildfire Prevention & Coordination

A grassroots advocacy effort to create a formalized agreement to reduce wildfire threat throughout the East Bay

Photo credit: Julia Sumangil Photography

Guiding Principles for a Regional Approach to Wildfire Prevention

Increasing Threats

In the face of increasing threats from wildfire, it is time for a new, more effective, regional approach to keep residents safe.

Regional Issue

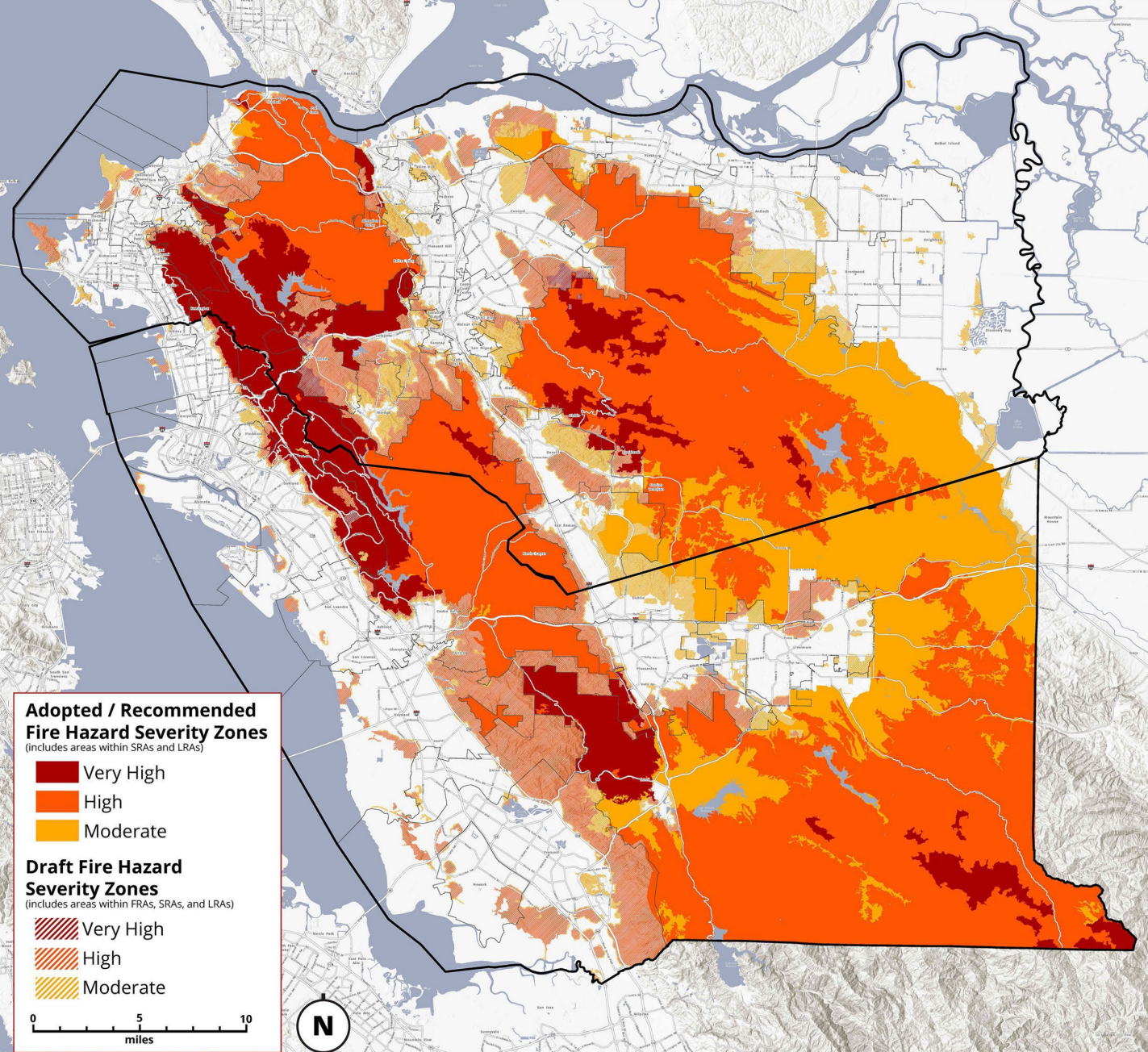
Wildfires do not respect political boundaries so fire prevention and vegetation management should be regional efforts.

Difficult to Coordinate

Coordinating among the many jurisdictions is a challenge without a specialized mechanism

CONTRA COSTA AND ALAMEDA COUNTIES Composite Fire Hazard Severity Zones*

*The fire hazard severity zones shown here are a COMPOSITE of three CAL FIRE datasets:
1) **ADOPTED** (Nov 2007) State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) with Very High, High, and Moderate fire hazard severity designations.
2) **RECOMMENDED** (Sep 2008, Jan 2009) Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs) with Very High fire hazard severity designation.
3) **DRAFT** (Sep 2007) fire hazard severity zones in Federal (FRA), State (SRA), or Local (LRA) Responsibility Areas.



Opportunities for Wildfire Prevention Coordination

- » **Established coordination exists amongst fire officials**
- » **East Bay WUI areas with highly local needs and requirements (non-native species, high density)**
- » **No dedicated staff for regional wildfire prevention coordination**
- » **No interjurisdictional framework for policy making**
- » **Uneven enforcement of vegetation management regulations and state fire code**
- » **Regional coordination increasingly prioritized in State and Federal programs**

Existing Wildfire Prevention Coordination Efforts

- » **Chiefs' Associations (Alameda & Contra Costa Counties)**
- » **Hills Emergency Forum (HEF)**
- » **East Bay Regional Communication System Authority (EBRCSA)**
- » **Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)**
- » **Regional Priority Plan (RPP)**
- » **EBRPD Wildfire Risk and Fine Scale Vegetation Mapping**

Our Work to Date

- » **2019-2021:** Oakland Firesafe Council (OFSC) members began fundraising and speaking with local jurisdictions about wildfire prevention coordination; engaged Placeworks Consulting
- » **Dec 2021-Jun 2022:** OFSC facilitated five meetings amongst 25+ local agency and elected officials to explore collaboration options--from existing mechanisms to a JPA
- » **Summer 2022:** Stakeholders agreed to work towards an MOU structure and delegated drafting to subset of stakeholders (working group)
- » **Dec 2022:** Hanson-Bridgett law firm presents draft MOU to working group
- » **Spring 2023:** MOU finalized with input from working group
- » **June 2023:** Stakeholders meet, agree to present MOU to jurisdictions

Working Group Members

Alameda County

Office of Supervisor **Keith Carson**, Fire Chief **William McDonald**

Contra Costa County

Office of Supervisor **John Gioia**, Fire Chief **Lewis Broschard**

City of Berkeley

Councilmember **Susan Wengraf**, Assistant Fire Chief **Dan Green**

City of Oakland

Deputy City Administrator **Joe DeVries**,

Deputy Fire Chief **Damon Covington**/Fire Chief **Reginald Freeman**

City of Pinole

Mayor Pro Tem **Maureen Toms**

City of Richmond

Councilmember **Gayle McLaughlin**, Fire Chief **Angel Montoya**

Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District

Fire Chief **Dave Winnacker**

Funding Partners Supporting MOU Development*

- » Bay Area Air Quality Management District
- » Donner Family Fund
- » California Coastal Conservancy grant via Bay Area Council
- » CSAA Insurance Group
- » PG&E
- » Numerous community members and neighborhood groups in the East Bay Hills
- » Alameda County
- » Contra Costa County
- » City of Berkeley
- » City of Oakland
- » City of Pinole
- » City of Richmond
- » Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District

* Through donations to 501(c)(3) sponsor Oakland Firesafe Council (OFSC)



Memorandum of Understanding

*for coordination of wildfire prevention activities to protect the
East Bay Hills in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties*

MOU: A Simple Platform

- » **Explanation of wildfire risks in East Bay Hills**
- » **Description of wildfire prevention activities performed by Participating Agencies and current collaboration efforts within counties**
- » **Desire to improve coordination, enhance efficacy & efficiency**
- » **Goal of increasing each Participating Agency's level of service to residents and property owners**
- » **No alteration of jurisdictional boundaries, cooperative efforts, or individual jurisdiction authority**

Shared Intent / Potential Activities

Once formed, Participating Agencies will jointly decide on activities. The following have been discussed:

- » **Collaboration on strategies and policies to minimize wildfire hazards in the East Bay Hills including vegetation management**
- » **Assist in adoption of consistent codes for fire prevention**
- » **Partner to apply for state, federal, and other grant funds**
- » **Plan for wildfire response including evacuations across jurisdictions**

East Bay Hills Regional Wildfire Prevention Coordinating Group -- Structure



- » **Each Participating Agency appoints: Member and alternate from governing body (council, board)**
- » **Fire Officials to advise on strategies and policies**

Principles and Duties

- » **Hold open and public meetings**
- » **Establish goals, procedures and programs**
- » **Designate a fiscal agent; develop plan for staff support**
- » **Institute a dues structure and/or apply for grants as needed**
- » **Adopt annual budget**



NEXT STEPS

- » Presentations to potential Participating Agencies' governing bodies
- » Adjust MOU to incorporate feedback
- » Ratification/approval by City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, Fire District Boards
- » GOAL: Initial meeting in 2023

A firefighting aircraft is shown in flight, dropping a large volume of red fire retardant over a forested hillside. The scene is set against a backdrop of a wildfire, with thick smoke and fire visible in the background.

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