

# **Forks of Salmon Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

**Produced by the Salmon River Fire Safe Council with a grant from the 2003 Community-Based Wildfire Prevention Grants Program. This BLM funding is through the Sacramento Regional Foundation Grant Number: 03-BLM0064**

December 31, 2004



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Forks of Salmon Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

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# **Salmon River Fire Safe Council**

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### **Background**

#### **Salmon River Subbasin Fire History**

The entire Salmon River watershed is at risk of catastrophic fire. One hundred plus years of fire suppression has had its effect on the fuels build up in the area. In 1911, the United States Congress passed the Weeks Act. Native American and uncontrolled European settler burning practices and a severe fire year in 1910, particularly in the western U.S., precipitated this Act. The Act set up the collaboration between federal and state fire agencies for the purpose of systematically and efficiently suppressing forest fires. Since 1911, records show that 44% of the basin has burned. Suppression, coupled with an abnormally wet century (increased vegetation growth), and federal agency management activities (such as logging with insufficient fuel cleanup and silvicultural practices), have contributed to the increased fire risk and damage in our forests. The Salmon River watershed is one of the highest risk fire areas on the Klamath National Forest. It has a high natural frequency of lightning occurrence. In recent years the Offield Fire (1973) burned the area near the confluence with the Klamath River. The Hog Fire (1977) burned extensively in the lower North and South Fork watershed and in Nordheimer and Crapo Creek watersheds. The total area was about 58,000 acres. In 1987, wildfires burned over 90,000 acres in four separate areas, covering much of the Salmon River subbasin, intensely re-burning many areas that had burned in the '77 fire. In 1994, the Specimen Fire burned approximately 7,000 acres (3,045 acres within the LSR). In 2002 the Forks fire, burned 1,400 acres to the north and east of Forks of Salmon. This fire was unusual for two reasons. One it was human caused, and two, it occurred in June, early in the season. A snow/wind storm in the winter of 1996 exacerbated the heavy fuels condition by breaking out the tops of trees and knocking trees over throughout the watershed. Previous and current years of drought and overstocking have also resulted in areas of heavy mortality. The conditions and threats in the watershed mandate that we identify needs and prioritize and complete projects in a timely manner to protect life, property, and this unique ecosystem. We must also reintroduce a natural fire regime to the Salmon River watershed. Suppression and fuels reduction activities are currently being used in the watershed. There is a critical need for more fuels reduction. As we look at the range of conditions and concerns, we can begin to piece together a cohesive strategy that will detail areas needing specific treatment or protective measures. The identification of priority areas will include the influence of these areas on each other and on adjacent areas – this will allow us to treat smaller areas that will have an impact on the larger landscapes in the basin.

#### **Project Background**

In 2003, the Salmon River Fire Safe Council received a grant from the BLM, through the Sacramento Regional Community Foundation. The Salmon River Restoration Council (SRRC) is the fiscal sponsor. This grant calls for development of a detailed fire and fuel management plan for the private properties in the Forks of Salmon Townsite, and performance of some recommended fuel reduction activities on the project properties. The overall goals of the Plan and project activities are to: 1) identify the current conditions of the properties and adjacent land as they relate to fire, and 2) reduce fuels in

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the planning area to a safe level that will maximize safety and protection of life and property, while eventually allowing fire to resume a more natural role in the area, and not tie up firefighting personnel and equipment in the event of a fire.

This is a cooperative planning document that suggests fuels reduction, and other activities that could protect life and property when future fires occur. This is not a binding agreement and no parties will be held responsible for not meeting any of the recommendations. In fact, it is expected that only some of the recommendations will be accomplished in the near future. However, this plan lays the groundwork for future fuels reduction activities and fire safe improvements when and if funding becomes available. This plan will help to procure funding for future fuels reduction and fire-safing by prioritizing areas of work and possible prescriptions to be done in these areas. The Plan will also raise awareness among all stakeholders.

Land boundaries and other data layers (streams, roads, etc.) are approximate; inclusion of these layers in this plan does not constitute agreement by any parties involved in the planning process.

#### **Forks of Salmon Historical and Current Background**

Prior to occupation of the Forks of Salmon area by Euro-American and Chinese settlers, spawned by the California Gold Rush of 1849, Native American Tribes populated the region. The major Tribes were the Konomihu, the Shasta, and the Karuk. Of these tribes, the Karuk is currently the only federally recognized Tribe, although the Shasta Tribe still has descendants living on the river.

Located at the confluence of the North and South Forks of the Salmon River this mining town was the supply center for many miles in all directions. For many years, supplies were brought to Forks by pack trains. There was a sawmill, a two-story hotel, bars and a store. Dorsey built the first hotel of any size in 1851 or 1852. It was later owned by the Bennett Co. The hotel was fortified by the miners during an Indian raid. The post office was started in 1858 and still serves the communities down river and on the South Fork. The school was the second one established in the district. The oldest school at Forks, a log cabin, was located at the present site of Otter Bar, between Forks of Salmon and Nordheimer Creek. The school that replaced it was built in Forks in 1915. The Old School, was built in 1930s, and still serves as a community club. The new school was built in 1962, with buildings added in 1978 and 1985. The hotel was torn down in 1940s by Charlie Woodburn, who used the lumber to build a house just up river.

The major economy in Forks of Salmon from 1850 through the 1930s was mining. In its early days much of the surrounding timberlands were denuded of trees and vegetation for lumber to build houses, businesses, and other structures. Mining timbers were also used in great quantities to shore up the underground hard rock and placer mines that proliferated in the area. The miners may have also intentionally started fires so they could get a better look at potential mining ground. This maximum extraction and destruction of resources were in stark contrast to pre-mining management and use by Native Americans.

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From the mid 1960's through the mid 1990's logging held a major role in the local economy. Much of the watershed was impacted by this activity.

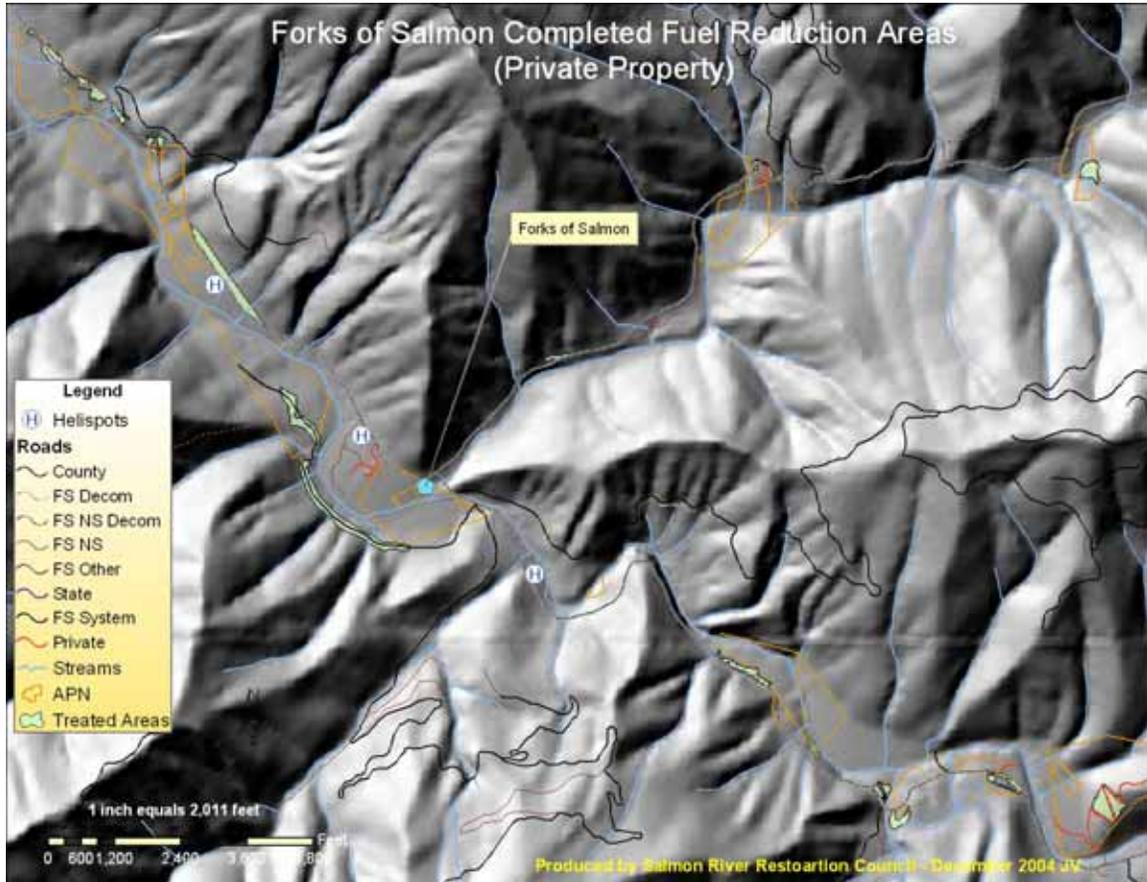
The Forks of Salmon community includes four neighborhoods within two miles of the downtown area. Downtown Forks currently consists of 12 residences on 5 parcels, a school, a post office and a community club. It should be noted that the 150 acre Rosemary Butte property has now changed hands and is in the process of being developed by a community organization. There will be many parcels and new residences on this property. The Mainstem neighborhood consists of 7 residential parcels and the County road maintenance facility. The Pollock's Gulch neighborhood on the North Fork consists of 4 residential parcels. The Knownothing Creek neighborhood on the South Fork consists of 15 residences spread over two miles.

Water is supplied to the Downtown area by a resident maintained town water system. The pipeline comes out of McNeil Creek about 1 mile above town. The residences in the other neighborhoods have varying individual water systems, maintained by the owners.

#### **Forks of Salmon Fire History and Current Fuels Conditions**

Like Sawyers Bar, early day miners cut timber for wood and burned off the surrounding landscape. More recent fire history shows fire burned down to the road at Forks of Salmon in the 1977 Hog Fire. The 1987 fire also burned close to the town. In 2002 the Forks fire burned 1,400 acres to the north and east of Forks of Salmon. Fuel reduction projects have been completed on portions of the private properties on the north fork, south fork and mainstem surrounding Forks of Salmon. Much of the private property still has hazardous fuels, especially in and around downtown Forks of Salmon. As mentioned above, the Forest Service closed its fire station in the early 1990s, leaving the only close fire suppression crew available – the Salmon River Volunteer Fire & Rescue (**see map on next page – Completed Fuel Reduction Areas**).

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## Emergency Response

In terms of emergency fire response, the Salmon River Volunteer Fire & Rescue has a 160-gallon fire engine and a 250-gallon water tanker that are housed in the downtown area, and can respond within minutes. The Forest Service work stations at Sawyers Bar and Petersburg are similarly equipped, with Type 3 Model 62, 500-gallon tankers, and 1500 gallon water tenders that can respond within 30 minutes, when manned during fire season.

## Methods

The purpose of the Forks of Salmon Fire Safe Plan is to guide fuel reduction activities designed to create a future condition that will minimize the risk of loss of life, property, and resources from fire. This Desired Future Condition will mimic the historic fire regime while protecting high value residential and resource areas from future fires. The Plan is being developed using the Fire Plan Framework created by the Salmon River Fire Safe Council. This framework identifies these planning steps:

1. Identify existing information:
  - a. Identify Fuel Modification Zones
  - b. Evacuation Plan (Emergency Access)
    - i. Notification Procedures
    - ii. Guidelines for evacuation
    - iii. Availability of Emergency Services

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- iv. High risk individuals (i.e. medical concerns, age factors)
- v. Location of Helicopter landings
- vi. Location of Safe Areas in Neighborhoods
2. Identify High Risk Areas (also identify low and medium risk areas)
3. Identify Opportunities
4. Identify Water Sources for fire protection efforts
5. Update Pre-Fire Plan (Residential Risk Assessment)
6. Identify Resource Values and Prioritize (Assets at Risk)
  - a. Manmade
  - b. Cultural
  - c. Natural

A Fuel Modification Zone (FMZ) is any area being assessed for the benefit of reducing fire risk, actions within a FMZ can include anything from no action, to shaded fuel breaks, to areas cleared to bare ground. The SRFSC's fuel reduction prescription policy was used to prescribe ground fuel reduction activities; this prescription policy recommends distances and types of fuel reduction activities that need to occur in different areas.

The Forks of Salmon properties have slopes less than 100%, so the techniques mainly call for a standard Shaded Fuel Break that breaks up fuel continuity and the fuel ladder and leaves at least 60-100% canopy cover (if available). The theory of a Shaded Fuel Break is that thinning out flammable and overstocked vegetation as well as dead and down fuel will reduce a future fire's ability to move through the forest with high (and destructive) flame lengths. It must be understood that a Shaded Fuel Break will not stop a fire, but will give suppression forces and landowners extra time for safely fighting the fire and accessing or evacuating the fire area, and minimize damage to larger trees. The trimming of the branches for 6-8 feet up the stem of the remaining trees will reduce a future fire's ability to climb the "Fuel Ladder" and burn the crowns of the remaining trees. Other variations on the standard Shaded Fuel Break will be used on some properties.

The above steps are being accomplished by:

1. Creating a GIS (Geographical Information System) map of Forks of Salmon that will identify the steps above.
2. Conducting a field visit with a planning team. The planning team consists of: Property owners – Creek and Betty Ann Hanauer, Richard Cormier, Les Harling, Rex Richardson, Craig Cody, Lloyd Ingle, and Sally Hutchinson. US Forest Service – Mike Kerrick, Engine Captain, Toby Herold, Fuel Officer; SRRC Staff – Jim Villeponteaux, and Lyra Cressey; Salmon River Volunteer Fire and Rescue – Robert Will; Karuk Tribe – Bill Tripp, Fuels Specialist. We will be meeting with the landowners periodically to review the draft plan.
3. The field team looked over the Forks of Salmon properties and made recommendations for what should be done to protect the high value areas and reduce fuels in the high-risk areas. The team also discussed recommendations

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for landowners' maintenance of their defensible spaces. The surrounding public property was discussed and recommendations were made for fuel reduction projects and fuel break construction on the public property portion of the Forks of Salmon watershed.

**Risks and Mitigation Measures** – What are the specific risks affecting the Forks of Salmon community?

1. **Risk:** Residences/structures have numerous potential ignition sources. These ignition sources include indoor and outdoor cooking facilities, propane appliances and propane tanks, wood burning stoves, firewood piles, kerosene lamps, welding equipment, and generators. These structures are constructed of wood with metal roofing for the most part. Many of the structures are built on post and beam, are wood-sided, and have wooden decks around them. These ignition sources have the potential to threaten both private and public property.  
**Mitigation Measures:** The majority of residences are well maintained, with yards, open areas and well spaced, limbed trees. Maintenance of these structures and their grounds reduces the risk of fire starts and hazard to people. Wooden decks could be replaced with non-flammable materials. The underside of balconies and above ground decks should be enclosed with fire resistant materials. It is recommended that any future building projects rely on fire resistant materials where practicable. A quick fuels cleanup should be conducted within 75ft of the structures, especially those structures that have vegetation encroaching around them, removing any dead and flammable debris that have accumulated. New residents and visitors should be briefed on fire safe practices.
2. **Risk:** Several properties are only occupied seasonally. During most of the year, buildings and properties of absentee owners tend to be neglected. Without maintenance, buildup of vegetation, accumulation of roof litter, and degradation of plumbing and water systems can occur.  
**Mitigation Measures:** Absentee and seasonal landowners should be conscientious of the upkeep on their properties. They should be encouraged to participate in fuel reduction programs available to them – reducing fire risk on their property will also reduce the risk to other properties and the public land. Residents should have an emergency fire plan including suppression and evacuation plans in place. New residents and visitors should be briefed on fire safe practices.
3. **Risk:** The Forks of Salmon community water systems are diverse and generally low tech, and marginal in efficiency. Many are in need of repair and upgrading. Water supplies are limited in summer months.  
**Mitigation Measures:** Some steps are being taken to remedy these problems. In Downtown Forks, a grant has been obtained from the Resource Advisory Committee to research and upgrade the old Forest Service tank and hydrant system. This 22,000 gallon tank will provide an emergency water hydrant

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system for the Forks. The Knownothing Creek ditch has been out of use for a number of years. This system is also being considered for a renovation. Nine residences could benefit from the repair of this central system. Funding sources are being looked into for the rejuvenation of the Knownothing system. Individual residential water systems should be maintained and upgraded, with an emphasis on greater water storage. It is recommended that property owners should have a minimum storage supply of 2,500 gallons. Residents should be encouraged to conserve water in the dry months by the use of low volume sprinklers and drip systems on timers in areas that must be kept watered. Low volume sprinklers could be placed along the eaves of buildings, to be used during a fire event.

4. **Risk:** The emergency access routes from Forks of Salmon include the county road 1C01 that runs north east up the North Fork, 1C02 that runs south east up the South Fork, and 2B01 that runs northwest down the Mainstem. Forest Service road 39 runs from Forks up the Picayune ridge, past Black Bear saddle to Sawyers or Cecilville. These roads are narrow, winding, and often have high fuel loading on both sides. During large fire events, smoke can cause very low visibility, making driving more hazardous.  
**Mitigation Measures:** Fuel reduction along these routes, where applicable, would make access and egress safer. Within the town, grass, sweet pea plants, and berry vines should be weed whacked every year before they become a fire hazard. All of the emergency access routes, roads and trails, should be regularly maintained and kept free of rocks, fuels and debris. CB Radios should be used during high traffic, low visibility times.
  
5. **Risk:** All the private property in the Forks of Salmon project area is surrounded by National Forest land, which through years of fire suppression and neglect, has high fuel loading. Much of this area was burned over in the 1977 Hog Fire, 1987 fires, and 2002 Forks fires, and as a result the regrowth is predominately highly flammable brush.  
**Mitigation Measures:** Fuel reduction activities should be performed on public lands in the “wildland urban interface.” Prescriptions such as shaded fuel breaks and controlled under-burns should be employed to create buffers around private property and in water supply drainages.
  
6. **Risk:** The recent sale of the 156 acre Rosemary Butte property, with intentions to divide and develop, will place additional demand on existing infrastructures and resources, especially water supplies. In addition, the increased population in the area will increase the chances of accidental fire starts.  
**Mitigation Measures:** This development has the potential to greatly revitalize the Forks of Salmon community, by providing space for new residents and families. As long as care is taken to practice fire safety, the new community should be able limit the increased risk of fire. With cooperation, and education, residents can integrate fire safety into their planning process,

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and build a fire resilient neighborhood. Fire resistant homes and landscaping, well thought out water systems, and fuels reduction should be elements of this planning.

#### **Planning Areas - Areas of Increased Consideration**

##### **Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Areas**

Public meetings have been held in each Salmon River community to gain input on WUI areas. WUI areas for the Salmon River are being defined by community members, the US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Karuk Tribe, Salmon River Fire Safe Council, and Salmon River Volunteer Fire and Rescue. The areas generally apply to public property surrounding private property. We've expanded the definition to include high value areas in addition to residential, including historic sites, municipal water supplies, emergency access routes, and high fire risk drainages that threaten residential areas. Also, special consideration is given to connecting with Forest Service under-burn projects.

We have divided prescriptions into several initial categories that are rated by the level of fire risk (High, Medium, and Low) (See appendix 1 for prescription policy tables). Fire risk is defined as the fuel loading in an area combined with other factors (i.e. type of vegetation, ignition sources, slope, aspect, and elevation).

The technique generally used for the fuel reduction prescriptions mainly call for a standard Shaded Fuel Break that breaks up fuel continuity and the fuel ladder and leaves canopy cover of at least 60%. As shown in numbers 2 and 3, proximity to a structure or other high value area would prescribe more vegetative material removed (with higher maintenance) than in outlying areas.

- 1 Sensitive and Unique Areas (i.e. ESA, Historical sites, and other Special areas on private and public properties). Shall be analyzed on a site-specific basis with input from all appropriate federal, state, and tribal agencies that have responsibility for the resources at risk.
- 2 Residences and High Value Areas (i.e. water tanks, communication systems, fuel storage, etc.). New State law defines the minimum distance of defensible space surrounding a residence as 100ft. The previous minimum distance of defensible space surrounding a residence was 30' – Some insurance companies 200', or more.
- 3 Emergency Access (and egress) Routes – Does not guarantee that local residents and fire fighters will be able to safely egress or access area under extreme fire conditions.

The Mission of the Salmon River Fire Safe Council is to help plan, implement, and monitor the reinstatement of natural fire regimes in the Salmon River ecosystem in a manner that protects life, property, improves forest health, and enhances the resources

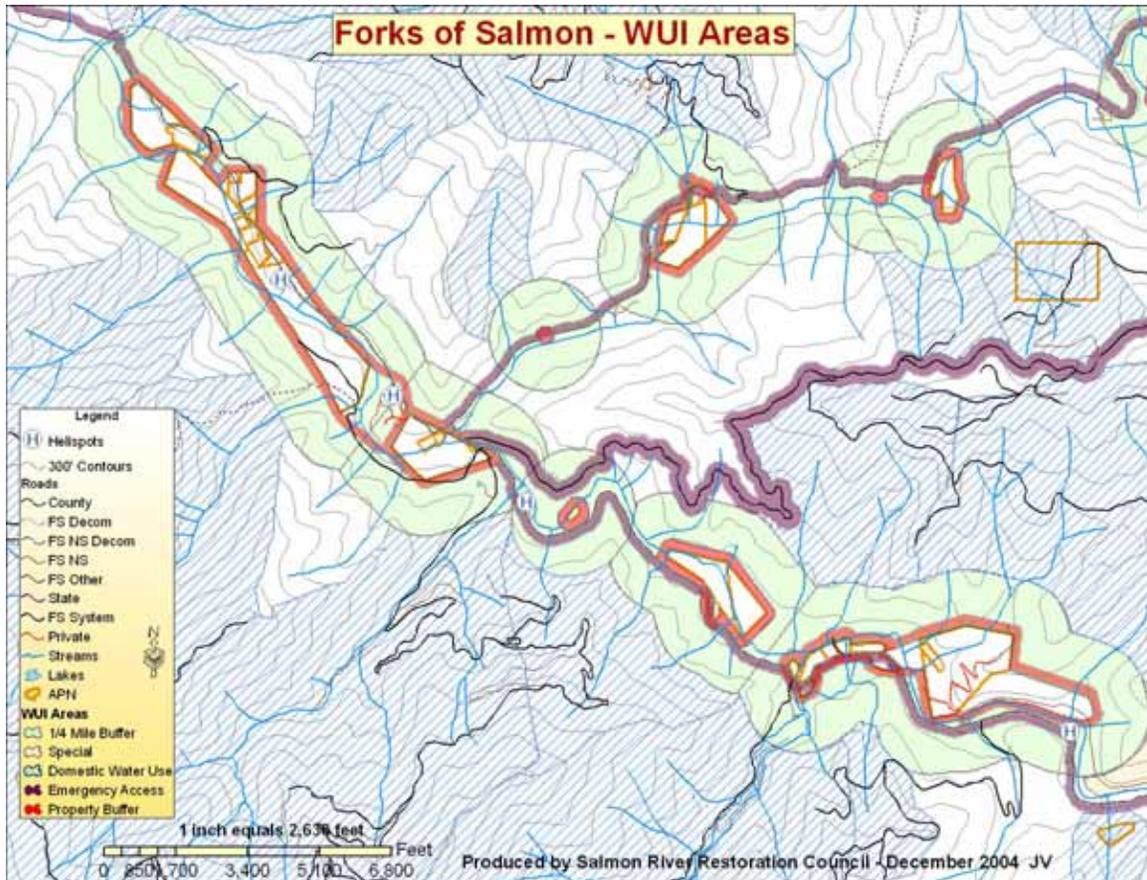
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valued by its stakeholders. Along with cooperators, the FSC is developing prescriptions for fuel reduction activities in WUI areas. These treatment variations are described below for the 5 different WUI area types that have been established.

1. Emergency Access Routes – Approximately 200 feet above and below road (Use number 3 in prescription policy tables).
2. Property Buffers – Approximately 200 foot areas on public property surrounding individual properties, neighborhoods, and towns (Use number 2 in prescription policy tables).
3. Domestic Water Use – Use handpiling in jackpot areas, pullback from leave trees where appropriate, and underburning to achieve fuel reduction and watershed protection. 300 foot Shaded Fuel Breaks on ridge tops to protect watershed from outside fires, where appropriate.
4. ¼ Mile Buffers - On public property surrounding individual properties, neighborhoods, and towns. Use handpiling in jackpot areas, pullback from leave trees where appropriate, and underburning to achieve fuel reduction and watershed protection.
5. Special Areas – These would include areas below properties located high on slopes, as well as culturally or biologically significant areas (Use number 1 in prescription policy tables).

These are suggested treatments; actual projects will dictate treatments in specific areas. Treatment areas will also be prioritized based on maximum benefit to private residences, other high value areas and protection of public resources (**see Map on next page**).

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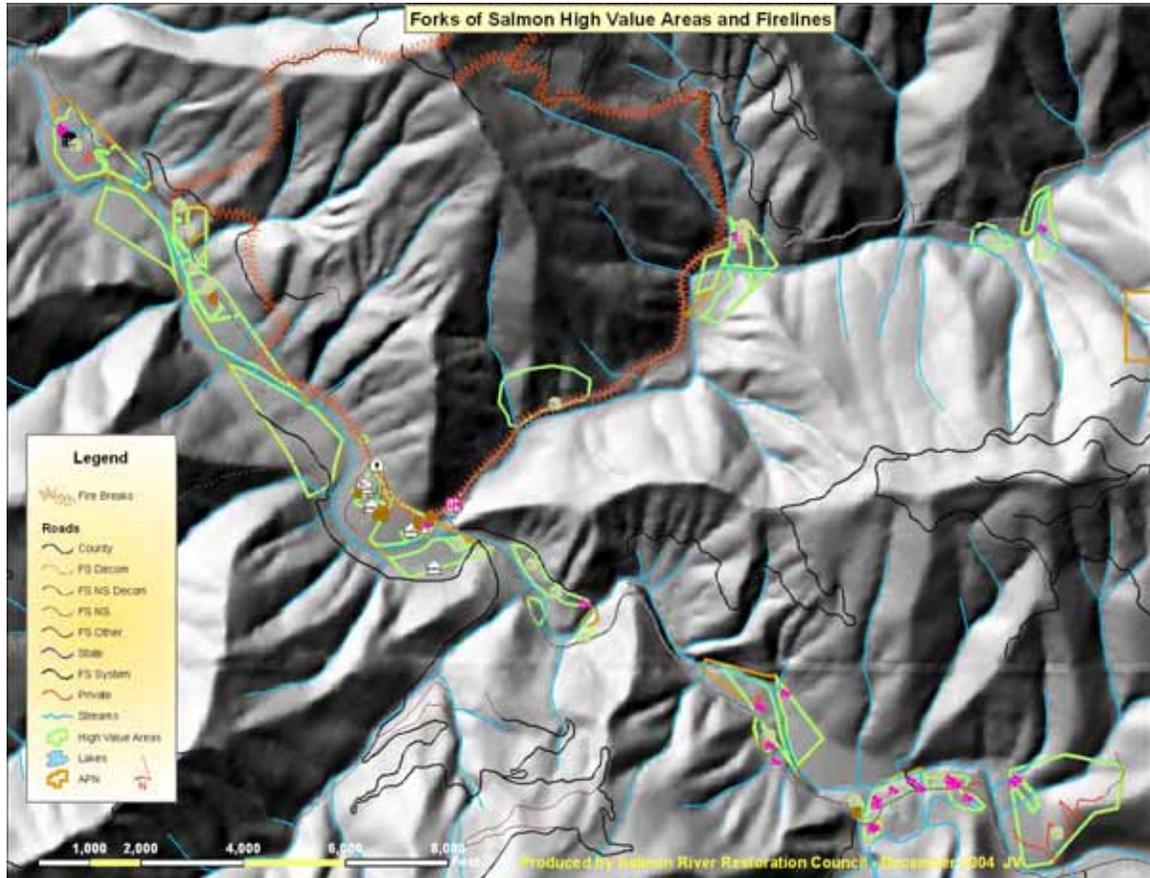
Map of WUI Areas around Forks of Salmon

## High Value Areas

The areas we identified as high value fell into several categories:

1. Residence areas – we identified over 40 residences and 50 other structures within the four Forks of Salmon neighborhoods (see map 2 – Structures)
2. Community use areas – Forks of Salmon School, Community Club, Fire and Rescue Hall, Post Office and Community Park.
3. Community safety areas – Forks of Salmon School playground, Brazille Field, Otter Bar, Missouri Bar, the Old Dump (mp 1 on North Fork).
4. Community water systems– The Downtown Forks water system provides domestic water to the Downtown residences. This system originates in the McNeal Creek watershed. A 22,000 gallon storage tank, formerly used by the Forest Service is located on the hill above the Post Office. If this tank is reactivated, it will serve as a fire emergency system. A RAC recommended project (funded by Forest Service) is in the process of reactivating the tank and hydrant system. The Knownothing Creek Ditch water system, originating about 1 mile up Knownothing Creek, is currently non-functional, but proposed for restoration.
5. Historic Sites – historic buildings and sites (including Old School, cemeteries, Old Post Office) are included in other high value areas (**see Map on next page**).

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## Emergency Access Routes

Safe access to the property by emergency personnel, as well as egress by residents and other individuals, is a high priority for fire planning. There are three main routes accessing Forks of Salmon. Sawyers Bar Road (1C01) runs northeast up the North Fork to Sawyers Bar (15 miles) and Etna (40 miles). Cecilville Road (1C02) runs southeast up the South Fork to Cecilville (18 miles) and Callahan (48 miles). Salmon River Road (2B01) runs northwest down the Mainstem to Somes Bar and Highway 96 (17 miles). All four Forks neighborhoods lie along these main roads. In addition, Forest Service road 39 runs from Forks up the Picayune ridge, past Black Bear saddle to Sawyers Bar or Cecilville. These roads are narrow, winding, and often have high fuel loading on both sides. CB Radios are recommended for emergency use and on roads in times of heavy traffic.

## High Risk Areas

Fire risk is defined as the fuel loading in an area combined with other factors (i.e. ignition sources, slope, aspect, and elevation). We identified areas with various levels of fire risk. These areas are identified on the GIS map as colored polygons. Each polygon is numbered and has a team-assigned priority. These areas overlap with other area types. Fuel reduction and/or maintenance activities will be performed on most of these areas (residential, water system, and safety zone).

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### Plan Recommendations

#### Suppression, Prevention, Restoration, and Maintenance Recommendations

Reducing fuels within the property will help protect structures from burning should a fire come onto the properties, but fire can still threaten yard and house. According to a Los Angeles Times analysis of the 2003 San Diego County Cedar Fire, “Fire-resistant construction and vigilant removal of flammable vegetation significantly improved the odds of a home’s survival.” They found that vegetation was the largest single factor in whether a house burned. Most structures in our communities burn from the inside out, but in wildfires, most structures burn from embers getting into eaves, or under decks, or woodpiles close to house, etc. Shake roofs are also very likely to catch on fire from embers. There are many things you can do to reduce the risk of **Structure Ignitability**.

Some suggestions on how to make your home and property more fire safe:

- keep grass short and/or green in open spaces and community safety areas
- inspect and maintain town water system, and tanker fill sites
- if possible, work with your neighbors to establish a community water storage/hydrant system
- have a minimum water storage supply of 2,500 gallons on your property. Clearly mark all emergency water sources
- install sprinkler systems, and maintain outdoor faucets and hoses to protect houses in case of fire
- roads should have adequate turnouts for traffic, and continue to be well maintained to accommodate firefighting equipment. Roads should be clear of rocks and other obstacles, and road sides should be free of highly combustible fuels, and overhanging limbs
- buildings should be made of fire-resistant materials whenever possible
- cover eaves, leaving only a few well screened ventilation openings, to prevent embers from lodging there in a fire
- Remove dead leaves and needles from your roof and gutters.
- select fire-resistant vegetation for landscaping, and keep the ground 100 feet from structures clear or green (see appendix for fire safe plants)
- maintain the grassy and landscaped areas around structures on an annual basis to refresh their fire-resistant properties
- create a “defensible space” by removing all flammable vegetation at least 100 feet from all structures
- stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles
- Locate propane tanks at least 30 feet from any structure and maintain 10 feet of clearance
- Cover burn barrels with non-flammable screen with mesh no larger than ¼ inch
- target firewood gathering in areas with higher fuels concentrations and increased dead and down material (and clean up areas where firewood is collected)
- update the residential risk assessment
- create a Structure Fire Evacuation & Suppression Plan for all structures

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- create guide to fire safe and unsafe practices and go over these practices with visitors and new residents
- consider quarterly fire drills so everyone knows what to do in an emergency – this may also provide indications of areas that need work
- establish a system of emergency communications for Forks of Salmon neighborhoods
- create fire sheds (preferably out of fire proof and/or fire resistant materials) that would house fire tools, water pump, emergency fire equipment (such as fire shelters, oxygen, fire extinguishers, etc.), and a copy of the Structure Fire Evacuation & Suppression Plan for all structures
- consider purchasing a small foam unit that can be used to protect your home in the case a wildfire is close (talk to Salmon River Fire Safe Council or Salmon River Volunteer Fire and Rescue for more information)
- consider installing a low volume misting system on the outside of your house that can protect your home in the case a wildfire is close (talk to Salmon River Fire Safe Council or Salmon River Volunteer Fire and Rescue for more information)

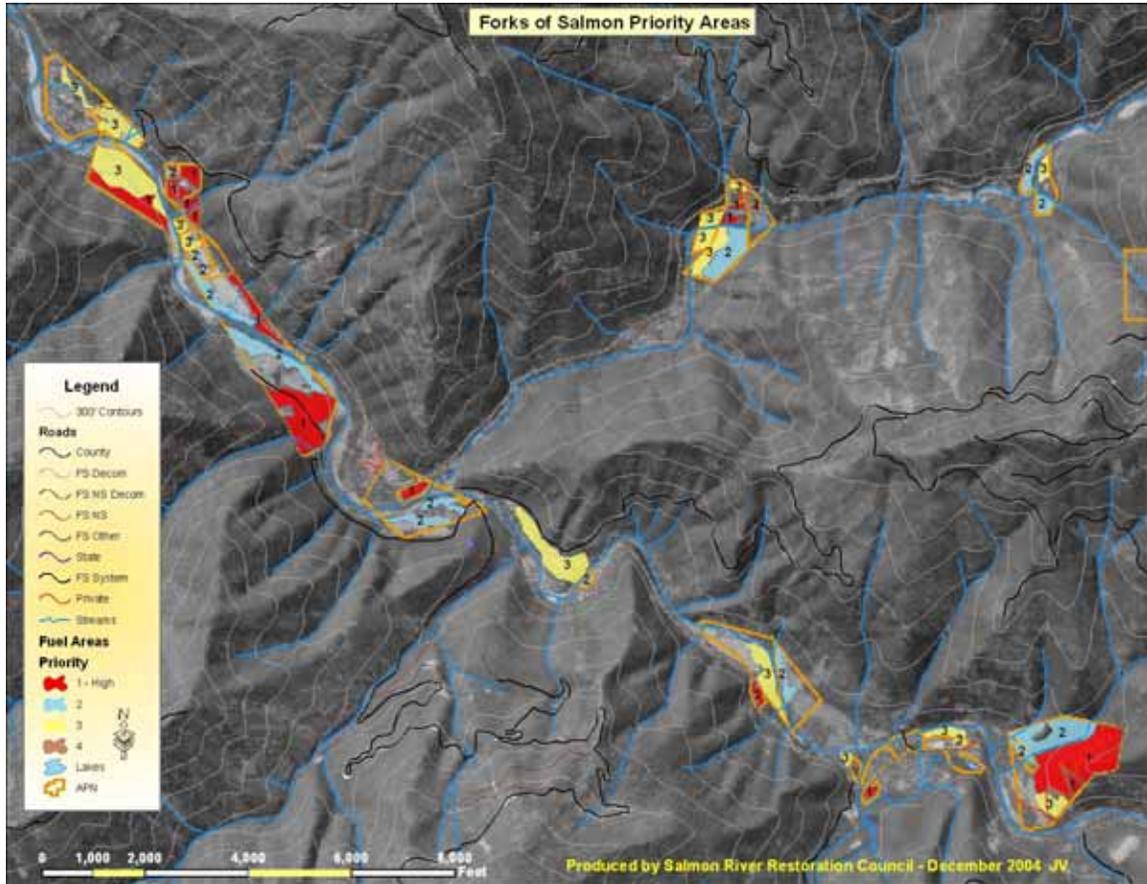
Other suggestions for making your home fire safe are listed in the CDF Brochure: “*Fire Safe, California.*” Be aware that there could be federal, state or county laws/regulations pertaining to fire safety. A USFS Fire Prevention Specialist or a fire specialist from the community would be glad to personally visit the property and give specific recommendations for fire safe building, fuel storage, water storage, and fire safe landscaping.

#### **Risk Area Priorities and Recommendations**

The field planning team identified specific locations and made recommendations intended to decrease the risk of future fires destroying homes and other high value areas. The Priority map shows areas within the property that have been prioritized by the team.

1. The red-shaded areas are the #1 (highest) priority for action. They are areas of high fuel loads and are at risk of fire threat to residents, historical buildings and public use sites. The standard shaded fuel break treatment will train young re-growth trees and brush from a previous fire to promote formation of shade/canopy cover. The 1<sup>st</sup> priority polygons will use a standard shaded fuel break (see Appendix 1 – Prescription Policy). The distances along the roads for treatment are 150’ above the road and 200’ below the road, where practicable. In residence areas, the ground 100 feet from structures needs to be clear or kept well watered and green.
2. The tan-shaded areas on the map are the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority. All of the Priority 2 areas should be treated using a standard shaded fuel break.
3. The yellow-shaded areas are the 3<sup>rd</sup> priority. These areas should have a standard shaded fuel break.
4. The powder blue-shaded areas are the 4<sup>th</sup> priority. We recommend using a standard shaded fuel break technique for these areas (**see Map on next page**).

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## Interdisciplinary Resource Management Principals

In laying out fuel reduction projects, interdisciplinary resource management principals should be used to design effective activities that meet the objective of reducing fire risk without loss of other environmental components. Using noxious weeds as an example, the project planner should look at existing noxious weed maps, inventory information, and management plans to be aware if and where priority species occur in the project area. Fuel reduction crews should be educated in weed identification and there should be a plan for mitigation if new sites are found – flag area out, avoid sites, bring in noxious weed removal crew, cleaning of vehicles, tools and clothing of workers in infected area. Recommendations could be made to improve such sites by planting native vegetation.

This general interdisciplinary resource management approach should consider other components, such as wildlife and wildlife habitat (species retention, timing of activities, nest disturbance), fisheries and fisheries habitat (erosion mitigation, protection of riparian vegetation and cover, tanker fill access – may need to be rocked), scenic objective (from landowners perspective and wild and scenic quality), toxic materials, and historic and cultural resources.

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### **Maintenance**

Forks of Salmon Landowners need to consider a maintenance schedule for any fuel reduction activities completed on their properties. These maintenance activities may include annual fire safe landscaping near residence areas, annual cutting of vegetation in open or vacant spaces, especially the sweet pea that grows along the road, controlled under-burning when safe and applicable, ongoing water system maintenance and upgrade, and periodic maintenance of standard shaded fuel breaks. The standard shaded fuel breaks can be kept up with quick annual or biannual maintenance, but there will probably be a need for more labor-intensive maintenance every 5 to 10 years. Funding may be available for the 5 to 10 year maintenance activities. We encourage the landowners to stay involved with the Salmon River Restoration Council and the Salmon River Fire Safe Council for upcoming information and opportunities. Public use sites, open areas and roadsides would benefit from yearly maintenance to keep back encroaching seedlings and brush. Maintenance could be accomplished through activities such as routine yard and garden maintenance, firewood gathering, livestock grazing, and/or annual burning. Maintenance is crucial for the long-term success of fuels reduction and fire-safing activities. Although it is highly recommended, landowners are not bound to perform this maintenance.

### **Conclusion**

The area around Forks of Salmon has experienced 3 major fire events since 1977. Those previously burned areas continue to be high risk, brush dominated hillsides. Although the neighborhoods lie in advantageous slope positions, at river level, there are high risk fuels areas surrounding them. Much of the private properties are surrounded by public land, which has not yet been treated to reduce high fuel concentrations. Most of the houses are old and made of materials that are highly vulnerable to fire. The defensible space in Forks of Salmon can be improved with fuel reduction, maintenance of homes and yards for both full time, and seasonal residents, the use of fire-resistant building materials, and water system improvements. There is also a good opportunity for coordination between the landowners and the Forest Service on mutually beneficial activities.

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 – Fuel Reduction Prescription Policy
- Appendix 2 – Completed Fuel Reduction Areas Map
- Appendix 3 – WUI Areas around Forks of Salmon Map
- Appendix 4 – High Value Areas and Fire Lines Map
- Appendix 5 – Prioritized Treatment Areas Map