

# **Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

**Produced by the Salmon River Restoration Council with a Siskiyou County  
Resource Advisory Recommended Grant from the U.S. Forest Service Agreement  
Numbers: 03-DG-11050554-016 and 04-DG11050554-015**

December 31, 2004



**Salmon River Restoration Council  
Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

**Table of Contents**

Background .....	Page 3
Salmon River Fire History .....	Page 3
Project Background .....	Page 3
Sawyers Bar Historical and Current Background .....	Page 4
Sawyers Bar Fire History and Current Fuels Conditions ....	Page 5
Emergency Response .....	Page 6
Methods .....	Page 6
Risks and Mitigation Measures .....	Page 8
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Areas .....	Page 9
High Value Areas .....	Page 11
Emergency Access Routes .....	Page 12
High Risk Areas .....	Page 12
Recommendations .....	Page 13
Risk Area Priorities and Recommendations .....	Page 14
Interdisciplinary Resource Management Principals .....	Page 15
Maintenance .....	Page 16
Conclusion .....	Page 16
List of Appendices .....	Page 16

# **Salmon River Restoration Council**

## **Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

### **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 of the area. In 1911, the United States Congress passed the Weeks Act. Native American, 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 Creeks. 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). A snow/wind storm in the winter of 1996 exacerbated the heavy fuels condition by breaking out the tops of trees and knocking over trees 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 Restoration Council (SRRC) received a grant from the US Forest Service, through the Siskiyou County Resource Advisory Committee. This grant calls for development of a detailed fire and fuel management plan for the private properties in the Sawyers Bar 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. 2) reduce fuels in the planning area to a safe level that will maximize

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

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.

In 2002, the U.S. Forest Service, Klamath National Forest provided analysis of communities adjacent to forest lands and Sawyers Bar was rated as the number one community at risk.

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.

### **Sawyers Bar Historical and Current Background**

Prior to occupation of the Sawyers Bar 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. Sawyers Bar was probably a major Native American village and trading area, although artifacts were undoubtedly lost during the hydraulic mining era that stripped the soil from most of the Sawyers Bar Townsite.

The first Euro-American settlers came to the river shortly after the mid-California Strike, as noted on the Historic Plaque located outside the Sawyers Bar Town Hall: *“Sawyers Bar is perhaps the most picturesque of the Northern mining towns. It was founded in 1850 by Captain John Best & Party, who were guided to the spot by a friendly Indian. The town was originally called Bestville and had over 3,000 inhabitants. It owes its present name to the fact that on an adjacent gravel bar stood the camp of early day Mill Sawyers. The most noteworthy features are the block of century old frame buildings and the famous Catholic Church, counterpart of the southern mission. The Town’s first postmaster was John Daggett who, in 1882 became the (Lieutenant) Governor of California.”* Mining also brought in many support businesses, such as stores, hotels, stables, etc. Sawyers Bar was also a major regional center, providing goods and services to the many other towns, mines, and homesteads in the area.

The major economy in Sawyers Bar from 1850 through the 1930s was mining. In its early days much of the surrounding timberlands were denuded of trees and vegetation for

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

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.

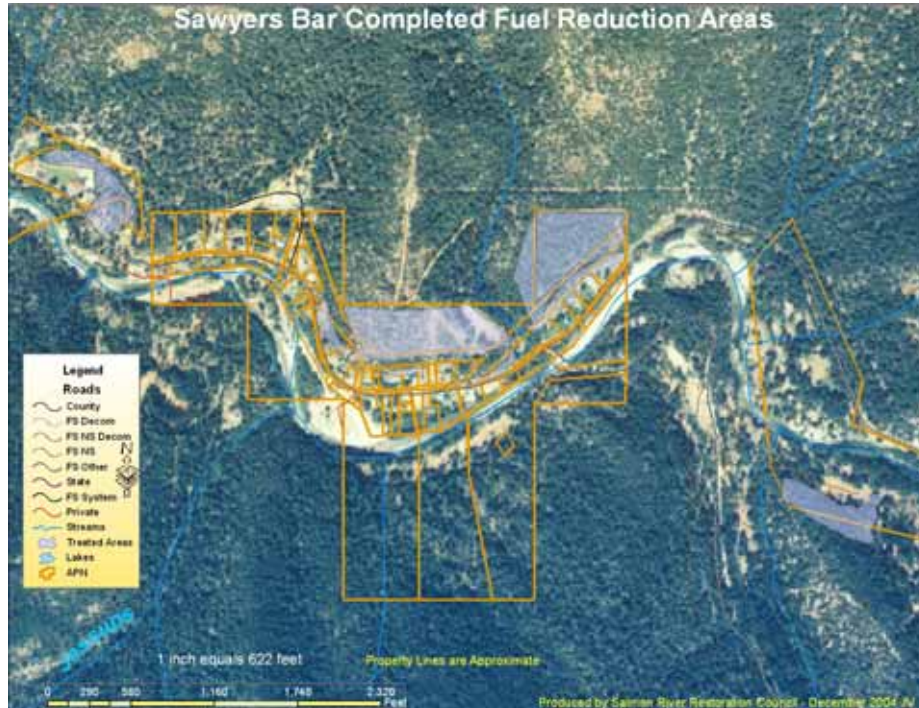
The first school district was established in 1875 and was housed in the Catholic Church located on the west end of town. This Church was the first Catholic Church in Northern California and continues to stand in its original location.

The town now consists of approximately 87 private and county parcels on about 165 acres. Approximately 30 people now live in the town on a permanent basis, with another 40 people residing on a seasonal basis. Water is supplied by a municipal water system administrated by the Sawyers Bar County Water District. The water system is comprised of the 2000-acre Jessups Gulch watershed, and the 900-acre Tanners Gulch watershed. A series of hydrants and fire hose boxes are located throughout the town for fire protection. Water storage consists of two metal tanks located to the north and above the center of town – one with a 11,560 gallon capacity and one with a 36,720 gallon capacity.

### **Sawyers Bar Fire History and Current Fuels Conditions**

The early day miners cut timber for wood and burned off the surrounding landscape. The Townsite itself was hydraulically mined, which cleared most of the vegetation prior to the building of the town. The major recent fire influences on the Sawyers Bar area were a 9-acre fire in 1963 that burned part of the western side of town, and a larger fire in early 1965 (after the December, 1964 flood). The 1965 fire burned most of the historic buildings in the center of town, and burned much of the vegetation and other structures above town. This burned area now has predominantly dense brush with some hardwood and conifer vegetation. Forested areas in and around the town tend to have high fuel loading where fuel reduction has not recently occurred (**see map on next page – Recent fuel reduction**).

# Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004



## Emergency Response

In terms of emergency fire response, the Forest Service Workstation at Sawyers Bar has a Type 3 Model 62, 500-gallon tanker that can respond within 10 minutes, when manned during fire season. The Salmon River Volunteer Fire & Rescue has a 160-gallon engine and a 250-gallon tanker that can respond within 30 minutes.

## Methods

The purpose of the Sawyers Bar 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 (SRFSC). 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
    - 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)

## **Salmon River Restoration Council**

### **Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

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 Sawyers Bar properties have slopes less than 100% (excluding the county owned property above the center of town), 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 Sawyers Bar that will identify steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 above.
2. Conducting a field visit with a planning team. The planning team consists of: Property owners – Richard Marshall, Sheldon Wilson, Nick Letsos, Marilyn Letsos, Lorelei Diamond Holzem, and Steve Hodge; US Forest Service – Toby Herold, Fuel Officer; Don Hall, Community Assistance Specialist; SRRRC Staff: Petey Brucker and Jim Villeponteaux; Salmon River Volunteer Fire and Rescue – Robert Will; Karuk Tribe – Bill Tripp, Fuels Specialist. We will be meeting with the landowners more to go over the draft plan.
3. The field team looked over the Sawyers Bar 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 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 Sawyers Bar watershed.

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

**Risks and Mitigation Measures** – What are the specific risks affecting the Sawyers Bar community?

1. **Risk:** There are numerous closely spaced and some stacked residences and shops with potential ignition sources. These ignition sources include indoor and outdoor cooking facilities, wood burning stoves and fireplaces, 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 year-round residences are well maintained, with open areas surrounding and well spaced, limbed trees. Some of the other residences are used infrequently and tend to develop yards of tall, dead grass. Maintenance of these structures and their grounds could reduce 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. Fuels cleanup should be conducted within 100 feet of the structures, especially those structures that have vegetation encroaching around them, removing any dead and flammable debris that have accumulated. The proposed shaded fuel break to the north of residential areas could help reduce the risk of a fire moving from private to public lands. New residents and visitors should be briefed on fire safe practices.
2. **Risk:** Many Sawyers Bar 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:** For the most part, Sawyers Bar residents are fire aware and are conscientious with their actions, however, seasonal occupants may need to be reminded to be fire safe. 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 Sawyers Bar town water storage and hydrant system are in need of repair and upgrading. The town occasionally runs out of water in the summer.  
**Mitigation Measures:** Funding needs to be found to repair the Sawyers Bar water system. Not all of the hydrants and stand pipes are functioning, and the main line needs repair. Putting in more water storage would also significantly reduce the possibility of running out of water in the dry months. We suggest 20,000 gallons of additional water storage for the town. Residents should be encouraged to conserve water in the dry months by the use of low volume



## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

sprinklers and drip systems on timers. Low volume sprinklers could be placed along the eaves of buildings, to be used during a fire event. When water does run low, the Sawyers Bar Water Board could take the lead on water rationing or rotating water use.

4. **Risk:** The emergency access routes from Sawyers Bar include the county road (1C01) that runs east and west through the residential area. This is a narrow, winding road, originally constructed in the mining days; most of the road is in good condition. The residences are generally right along the road in the town. Outside of the town, the 1C01 has high fuel loading on each side. The other emergency access route (2E001) runs up Eddy Gulch – eventually to Cecilville, or Forks of Salmon. This road is rocky but has high fuel loading on either side.

**Mitigation Measures:** Fuel reduction along these routes, where applicable, would make access and egress safer. Within the town vegetation such as grass, sweet pea, 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.

5. **Risk:** The Jessups Gulch and Tanners Gulch watersheds are at risk for wildfire. If they burned, the quality of the town's water supply could be significantly degraded. The sediment produced could negatively impact the water system by clogging up the tanks, pipes and filters.

**Mitigation Measures:** Fuel reduction activities should be performed in these watersheds. The Forest Service is in the process of a timber sale in the Jessups Gulch watershed, which includes some fuel reduction. The sale also includes some clear cut areas, where the fuel load is likely to increase in the future. The planned fuel reduction should be completed, and maintained.

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

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

Public meetings have been held in Cecilville, Forks of Salmon and Sawyers Bar 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 residences, 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 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).

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

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.

### **Types of fuel reduction areas:**

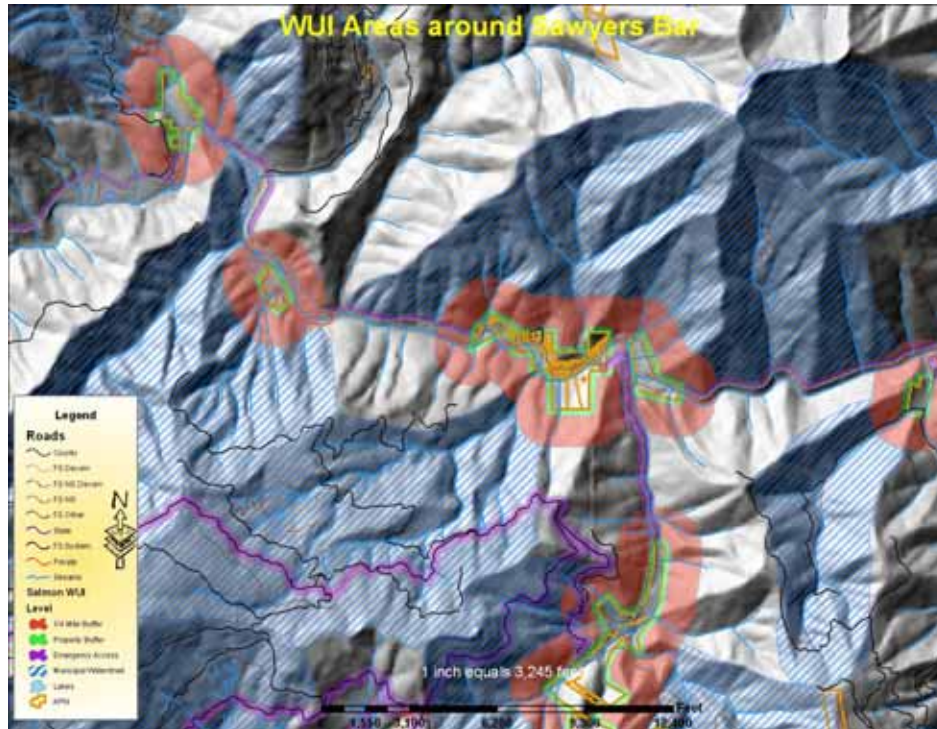
- 1 Sensitive and Unique Areas (i.e. ESA, Historical sites, and other Special areas on private and public properties). Shall be analyzed on a site-specific basis with input from all appropriate federal, state, and tribal agencies that have responsibility for the resources at risk.
- 2 Residences and 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.
- 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 and property, improves forest health, and enhances the resources valued by its stakeholders. Along with cooperators, the SRRC, through the SRFSC, 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).

## Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004

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.



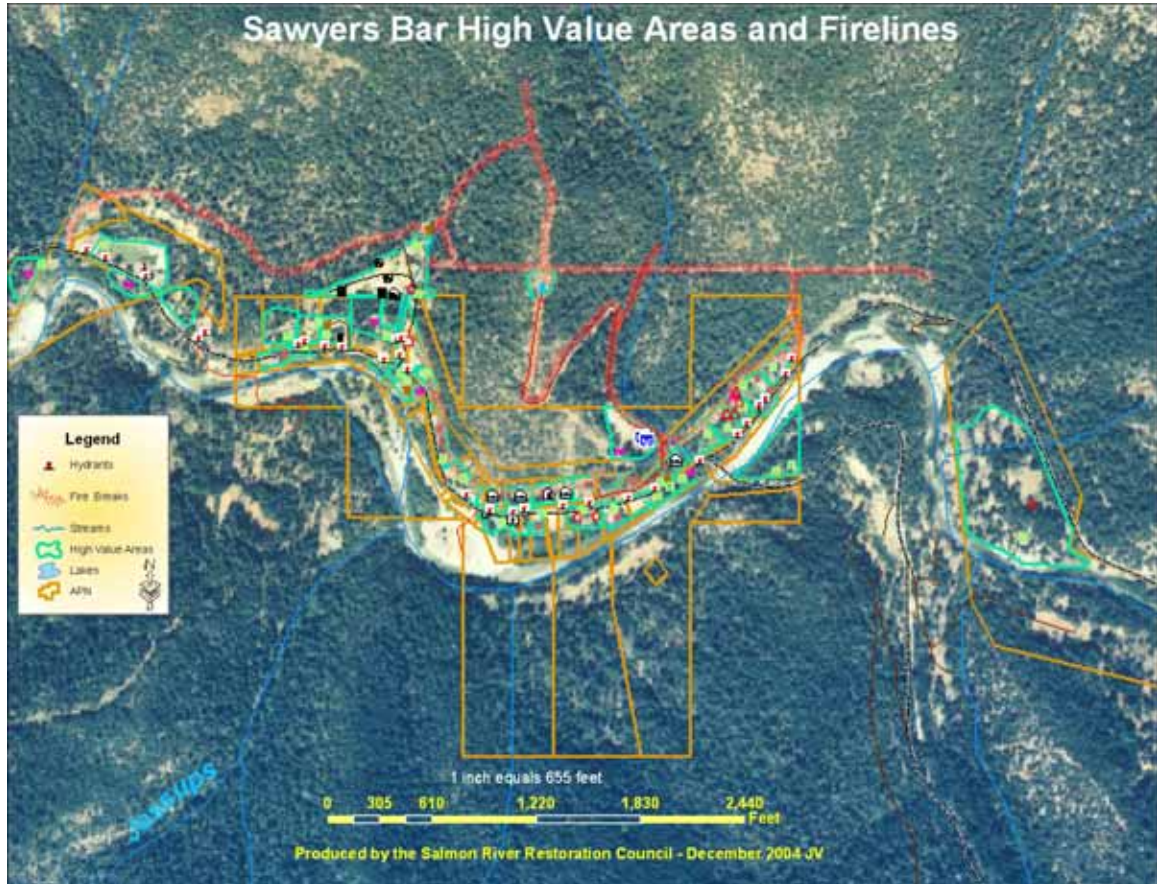
Map of WUI Areas around Sawyers Bar

### High Value Areas

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

1. Residence areas – we identified over 50 residences and 50 other structures within or directly adjacent to the Sawyers Bar area (see map 2 – Structures)
2. Community safety area – one large grassy area is identified on the map at the Sawyers Bar School playground (High Value polygon # 52). There is also a large open river bar between the Sawyers Bar Post Office and the river.
3. Community water system– Sawyers Bar has a County Water District that provides potable water and fire suppression hydrants throughout the town. Water comes from Tanners Gulch on the north side of town in the winter and from Jessups gulch on the south side of town in the drier months. The system stores water in two large tanks above the center part of town (High Value polygon # 80). The tanks are 11,560 gallons and 36,720 gallons. The water is then distributed to houses and to the hydrants with buried 3 inch steel pipe.
4. Historic Sites – historic buildings (including the Catholic Church: High Value polygon # 98) and sites are included in other high value areas (**See Map on next page**).

# Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004



## 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. The main county road, 1C01, travels through Sawyers Bar. It is the best emergency access route because of the quality of the road. The county road up Eddy Gulch (1E001) leads to the Forest Service road system that connects to Cecilville, and Forks of Salmon.

From Sawyers Bar there are three main escape routes, they are as follows: 1) Up County road 2E001 (Eddy Gulch road), this connects to Cecilville – either FS road 39 (Six Mile road) southeast to the main county road on the South Fork (1C02) several miles above Cecilville, or FS road 39N23 (Bacon Rind road) south, this road connects to the main county road on the South Fork (1C02) at Cecilville. 2) To Forks of Salmon – west on 1C01, 15 miles. 3) Etna, Callahan, and Highway 3 are upriver (east), via the Sawyers Bar Road, county road 1C01.

## 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.

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

Fuel reduction and/or maintenance activities will be performed on most of these areas (residential, water system, and safety zone).

### **Plan Recommendations**

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

Reducing fuels within the property will help protect structures from burning should a fire come onto or near 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 – areas with sweet pea should be cleared annually
- inspect and maintain town water system, including hydrants, stand pipes, and tanker fill sites
- 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, especially the roof (metal is best).
- open decks should be skirted to prevent embers from igniting dry material underneath.
- structures should be 100 feet from flammable tree species or brush. Larger trees should have their limbs removed for the lower 12 feet.
- the residential risk assessment should be updated.
- install sprinkler systems, and maintain outdoor faucets and hoses to protect houses in case of fire.
- cover eaves, leaving only a few well screened ventilation openings, to prevent embers from lodging there in a fire (use ¼ inch minus metal screen).
- select fire-resistant vegetation for landscaping, and keep the ground 100’ from structures clear or green.
- maintain the grassy and landscaped areas around structures on an annual basis to refresh their fire-resistant properties.
- target firewood gathering in areas with higher fuels concentrations and increased dead and down material (and clean up areas where firewood is collected).
- create a Structure Fire Evacuation & Suppression Plan for all structures.
- create guide to fire safe and unsafe practices and go over these practices with visitors and new residents.

## **Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

- consider quarterly fire drills so everyone knows what to do in an emergency – this may also provide indications of areas that need work.
- create fire tool 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.

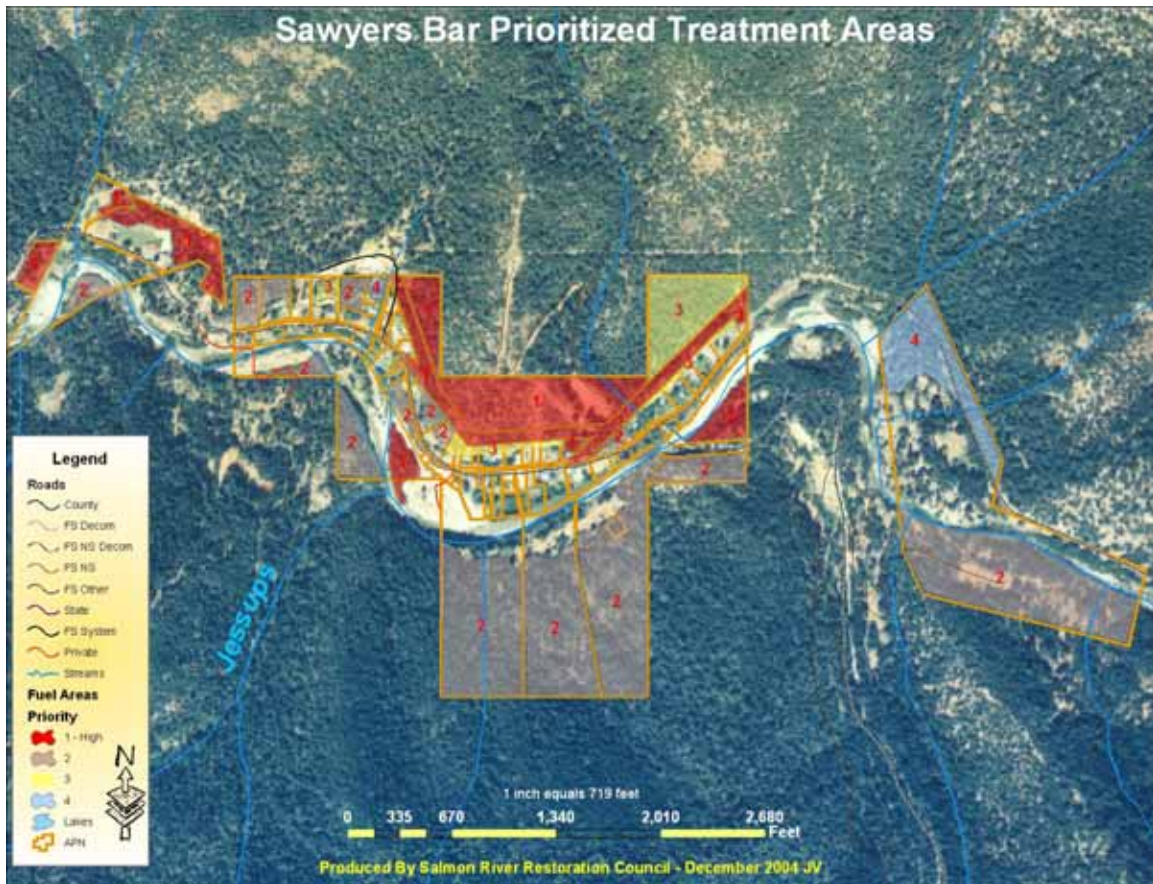
### **Risk Area Priorities and Recommendations**

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 project area that have been prioritized by the team.

1. The red-shaded areas are the #1 (highest) priorities 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 area above town (polygons 410, 423, 425, 426 and 430) will be first priority for a fuels reduction treatment. The standard shaded fuel break treatment will allow young re-growth trees and brush from a previous fire to promote formation of shade/canopy cover. The Forest Service will also be addressing a 200’ fuel break around the town. The 1<sup>st</sup> priority polygons will use a standard shaded fuel break. 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’ around 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. These areas are generally north facing slopes and are in relatively good shape. 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 include the areas adjacent to 1<sup>st</sup> priority areas (polygons 422, 413). The Liotsakis property (polygon 413) is maintained for fuels by the landowner. These areas should have a standard shaded fuel break.
4. The powder blue-shaded areas are the 4<sup>th</sup> priority. The Letsos property (polygon 369) has been treated for fuels and is currently maintained. The cemetery (polygon 414) should be treated for dense cover of vine (vinca minor) that dries

## Salmon River Restoration Council Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004

out in the summer. We recommend using a standard shaded fuel break technique for these areas (See **Priority Areas Map below**).



### 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.

# **Salmon River Restoration Council**

## **Sawyers Bar Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2004**

### **Maintenance**

Sawyers Bar Landowners need to establish 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, controlled under-burning where appropriate, 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 become 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 important 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**

As stated previously, the town of Sawyers Bar has been determined by the U.S. Forest Service to be the number one community at risk for danger of fire in the Klamath National Forest. This designation was based on number of fire starts/thousand acres/decade, fuels loading, and vegetation type. Although the town lies in an advantageous slope position, at river level, there are several high risk fuels areas surrounding the town, and most of the houses are old and made of materials that are highly vulnerable to fire. The defensible space in Sawyers Bar 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. At present the Forest Service has plans to create a 200' shaded fuel break buffer around the town of Sawyers Bar. This buffer will tie in with past and ongoing Salmon River Restoration Council and landowner fuels reduction projects. A cooperative effort will be needed in order to make Sawyers Bar a fire safe community.

### **Appendices:**

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