PLACER COUNTY
OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

M E M O R A N D U M

To: **Honorable Board of Supervisors**

From: David Boesch, County Executive Officer
by: John McEldowney, Program Manager of Emergency Services

Date: July 21, 2015

Subject: **2015 Lake Tahoe Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update**

ACTION REQUESTED

Approve the 2015 Lake Tahoe Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update

BACKGROUND

Wildfires are inevitable in the Lake Tahoe Basin, and can become disasters when they threaten lives, burn homes, destroy infrastructure, and damage watersheds. Developing and implementing strategies to make communities in the Lake Tahoe Basin more fire-adapted can mitigate such disasters. This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update provides key fire protection strategies that can be implemented by fire agencies, land managers, policy makers, community leaders, residents and visitors. This complete and comprehensive plan will make Lake Tahoe Basin communities better prepared for the next wildfire. Approving this plan will help to protect the lives, property, and environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA), passed by Congress in December 2003, began a fundamental shift in wildfire policy to move the costs of fire suppression and the responsibility for pre-fire planning to the communities at-risk for fire. Prior to the Act there was very little discussion between at-risk communities and federal land managers about the threat of wildfire. When there was a fire, the federal government typically paid the bill for suppression. However, as the frequency of large disaster fires increased through the 1990's, suppression costs to the federal government increased exponentially and reached levels considered unsustainable.

The HFRA created a national policy that at-risk communities are responsible for wildfire planning and required that federal land managers consider the input of local communities when planning fuels reduction projects. The Act also created a requirement that communities prepare Community Wildfire Protection Plans prior to being eligible for federal fuels reduction grants. Lake Tahoe's Congressional Delegation embraced the HFRA policy requiring local wildfire planning. Community and forest surveys and inventories were included that documented the need for more defensible space. This information was used to develop project lists, cost estimates, and fuels reduction prescriptions. This was the first time multi-jurisdictional projects were developed for the Basin. CWPPs are extremely valuable as a tool for engaging the community, and informing the planning and implementation of fuels reduction projects. In the last 10 years, many of the initially identified fuel reduction projects have been completed, and this updated plan has been developed to identify new projects, and to provide a new set of

collaborative actions that can be taken to improve landscapes, communities, and wildfire response.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no net County cost to the General Fund as a result of this action.

Attachments:

2015 Lake Tahoe Community Wildfire Protection Plan on file with the Clerk of the Board.