

10. Working with Your Neighbors

Working with your neighbors to address wildfire management issues can be as simple as agreeing to maintain a common driveway and as complex as developing a landscape management plan that encompasses your property and that of your neighbors. While much can be accomplished on individual properties, working at a neighborhood scale can yield even greater benefits. Neighbors may include other private landowners, as well as the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). These agencies have mandates to work with local communities to address wildfire risk and fuels concerns. Take advantage of this!

Specific activities you can undertake on a neighborhood basis include the following:

- Develop an emergency phone tree. List all residents (those wishing to participate) and their phone numbers. Have an agreed-upon procedure for contacting those on the list. This can be a great way of disseminating information during a wildfire and other emergencies.
- Develop a neighborhood evacuation plan. Identify a safe zone (for example, an open field) where residents can congregate in case evacuation is needed. Address special needs (evacuation of animals, elderly residents, etc.).
- Share equipment.
- Identify and map firefighting resources (ponds, *pump chances*, equipment, and so on).
- Work with local agencies to identify key neighborhood resources at risk and develop plans to protect them. Create a map showing location of roads, water sources, bridges, and tactically important locations.
- Create a neighborhood-scale fuels reduction plan. Identify tactically important locations for fuels



Marty Main, Small Woodland Services.

Figure 32. Neighbors work with a professional forester to discuss fuels reduction options.

treatments such as ridgetops, major access roads, and the like. Identify areas that are particularly vulnerable, for example a group of dwellings on a steep, overgrown access road.

- Work with neighbors and other stakeholders to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), if one has not already been developed for your area. A CWPP identifies and prioritizes hazardous fuels treatments in a community and recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability. It is prepared through a collaborative effort involving local and state government representatives, federal agencies, and other interested parties. CWPPs help communities obtain federal grants for fuels reduction projects. They also influence how federal agencies address fuels reduction treatments in the wildland-urban interface.
- Update your plans on an annual basis.