

Out on a Limb . . . Forestry Tidbits from the Niobrara Valley

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Community wildfire protection update is complete

The new North Central Nebraska Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is hot off the press and will be distributed this month to fire departments, emergency managers, local, state, and federal government entities, natural resources agencies and organizations, and others who manage fire and hazardous fuels in Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, and Rock Counties. The CWPP updates the 2009 Central Niobrara Watershed Fire Management Plan and adjusts the plan boundary to coincide with the Region 24 and Holt County Emergency Management Area boundaries.

The CWPP identifies factors associated with wildfire risk and areas particularly susceptible to wildfire. It summarizes current protection capabilities, wildfire response capacity, and infrastructure. An action plan establishes a risk assessment procedure; summarizes risk reduction practices; makes recommendations for improving emergency preparedness, education, and training; and outlines strategies for reducing wildfire hazard through fuels management.

Other information in the CWPP includes fire district maps, historic fire maps, the most current contact information and equipment lists for fire departments and the 2015 Emergency Assistance for Wildfire Control quick reference handbook. The CWPP is intended to be a working document – a handy tool for fire departments, agencies, emergency managers, public officials, and land managers to use when addressing wildfire concerns in the six counties.

This has been a team effort. Local emergency planners, fire district personnel, elected officials, natural resources professionals, and landowners provided information and planning assistance to guide the preparation of this document. Having a current CWPP in place allows the Nebraska Forest Service to apply for funds to cost-share forest fuels reduction treatments in at-risk areas within the plan boundaries.

The CWPP will be distributed to local libraries in the six-county area and may also be viewed online at: <http://nfs.unl.edu/documents/CWPP/NorthCentral.pdf>

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Photo caption:

The North Central Nebraska Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Holt, Keya Paha, and Rock Counties is intended to help fire departments, emergency managers, public officials, natural resources agencies, and land managers address wildfire concerns. Air tankers such as this are one of the many tools available to provide quick and effective response to wildfires. *(Photo courtesy of Seth Peterson)*