

**Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team
Operating Charter
4/2/2015**

Preamble

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team (TFFT) was formed in 2007 to implement the Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy) for the Lake Tahoe Basin. Following the Angora Fire of 2007, the governors of Nevada and California created the California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission to examine regulatory and social environments that influence fuels reduction in the Lake Tahoe Basin. In their final report (May 2008), the Commission recognized the necessity of multi-jurisdictional collaboration to accomplish fuels reduction projects, obtain and manage funding, and to plan and implement projects consistent with the Strategy and identified in geographically based community wildfire protection plans. The original Strategy (2007) was updated and endorsed by the executives of TFFT member agencies in August 2014.

The organizational structure of the TFFT utilizes the Incident Command System (ICS) familiar to fire professionals and emergency management personnel. Staffing is provided by TFFT member organizations on an as-needed basis. Basic staffing typically includes an Incident Commander (IC), a Planning Section Chief, an Information Officer, and an identified lead for each geographic division. Additional staffing is provided as dictated by resource availability and incident complexity, and typically includes an Operations Section Chief, a Finance Section Chief, a Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator, and a Data/GIS Specialist.

TFFT Role

Each Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) planning area forms an ICS geographic Division within the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. The member organizations coordinate the work that is being completed within the Divisions, and provide services to homeowners, such as defensible space inspections, tree removal permitting, and residential chipping. Annually the TFFT produces a comprehensive plan of work (Incident Action Plan) and follows-up with a yearly accomplishment report. The TFFT also seeks to instill a community culture of wildfire awareness and personal responsibility for threat mitigation by encouraging both the completion of projects associated with Fire Adapted Communities and the implementation of “Living With Fire” principles. In addition, member organizations manage public information through the Public Information Team. The PIT develops public information campaigns and coordinates media relations and public notifications.

Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC)

The Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) provides oversight of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. The MAC is comprised of the chief executives of the signatory agencies to the Multi-Jurisdictional Strategy. Each member agency has a single vote. The MAC provides general direction and political leadership for the TFFT, approves annual operations plans and assists with identifying funding opportunities. With input from the TFFT, the MAC approves an annual integrated calendar of TFFT and MAC meetings.

TFFT Mission

To protect lives, property and the environment within the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a Fire Adapted Community.

MAC
(Multi-Agency Coordinating Group)
Comprised of Signatories to the Multi-Jurisdictional Strategy

Incident Command
IC and Deputy IC filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer.

Public Information (Fire PIT)
PIO filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer. Includes public information/education staff from FPDs, FDs, USFS, CAL FIRE, UNCE, UCCE, TRPA

Fire Adapted Communities (Basin-wide Development Coordinator)
Section filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer. Coordination role supplemented by divisions.

Operations
Section filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer.

Finance
Section filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer. Includes funding and pass-through entities, e.g. CTC, Tahoe RCD

Plans
Section filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer. Includes TRPA and LRWQCB

Tahoe-Douglas (NV)
Division filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer
TDFPD
NDF
NDSL
USFS

North Lake Tahoe (NV)
Division filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer
NLTFPD
NDF
NDSL
USFS

North Tahoe - Meeks Bay (CA)
Division filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer
NTFPD
MBFPD
CTC
CAL PARKS
USFS
CAL FIRE

South Tahoe (CA)
Division filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer
LVFPD
FLFD
CSLT
CTC
CAL PARKS
USFS
CAL FIRE

Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting
Position filled by diverted/add-on work time by volunteer

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team

Divisions

WUI Priority Hazardous Fuels Treatment Projects;
Promotion and Development of Fire Adapted Communities as a Basin-Wide Organization

Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team
Operating Protocols and Principles
4/2/2015

TFFT Empowerment

The TFFT Operating Charter empowers the partner agencies to collaborate, plan and implement fuels reduction and other wildfire threat reduction programs consistent with the endorsed Lake Tahoe Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy) and local Community Wildfire Protection Plans throughout the Tahoe Basin.

Partner agencies are defined as those whose executives have signed the Strategy:

CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit
CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit
California State Parks
California Tahoe Conservancy
Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Department
Lake Valley Fire Protection District
Meeks Bay Fire Protection District
Nevada Division of Forestry
North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District
North Tahoe Fire Protection District
Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District
City of South Lake Tahoe Fire Department
Nevada Division of State Lands
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
US Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Supporting organizations are defined as those who are not signatory to the Strategy but either implement, support implementation or permit fuels reduction activities or public education activities related to wildfire threat reduction:

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
Tahoe Resource Conservation District
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension
University of California Cooperative Extension

Mission and Strategy

Mission

To protect lives, property and the environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin from wildfire by implementing prioritized fuels reduction projects and engaging the public in becoming a Fire Adapted Community.

Strategy

At its inception the TFFT adopted a two-pronged strategy to fulfill its mission. The first component was the completion of larger scale hazardous fuel reduction treatments to create strategically located shaded fuel breaks in the near-structure environment surrounding developed communities. This effort focused on non-federal land and utilized the treatment schedule outlined in the original 2007 Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy to guide project development and monitor accomplishments. At the same time the TFFT recognized and supported work on

federal and state lands being implemented by the US Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit; the Nevada Division of Forestry; The Nevada Division of State Lands; the California Tahoe Conservancy; and California State Parks.

The second component was a programmatic and organizational effort to develop a wildfire threat awareness and personal responsibility threat mitigation culture at the community level. This component included public education campaigns organized and implemented by the Fire Public Information Team (PIT). Additionally, it incorporated the organization of grass roots, community action groups that promoted the implementation of defensible space principles, organized demonstration projects, supported agency sponsored defensible space inspections, supported agency hazardous fuels removal projects and exercised peer pressure to broaden the effectiveness of homeowner action.

TFFT has determined that these two strategy components are still valid and provide the greatest potential for successfully advancing the TFFT Mission. The development, implementation, and monitoring of large scale fuel reduction and wildfire prevention projects is now guided by an updated Multi-Jurisdictional Fuel Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy, endorsed by the signatory agencies in August of 2014. The TFFT also recognizes its leadership is necessary to maintain and enhance the vital contributions of committed citizens and organized community efforts to fulfilling the mission of lower vulnerability and increased survivability.

Relationship of TFFT and the Multi-Agency Coordinating Committee (MAC)

The Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC) provides oversight of the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team. The MAC is comprised of the chief executives of the signatory agencies to the Multi-Jurisdictional Strategy. Each member agency has a single vote. The MAC provides general direction and political leadership for the TFFT, approves annual plan of work (Incident Action Plan), reviews and approves the annual accomplishment report, and assists with identifying funding opportunities. With input from the TFFT, the MAC approves an annual integrated calendar of TFFT and MAC meetings.

MAC Officers

A Chair, with the support and assistance of a Vice-Chair, each elected for a two-year term, shall lead the MAC. Any member of the MAC is eligible for election as Chair or Vice-Chair. The Chair is responsible for planning and conducting each MAC meeting, including preparing the agenda and ensuring that minutes are taken for review and approval at the subsequent meeting. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall undertake these responsibilities. The election of officers shall be in January of every other year, or in any other two-year cycle agreed upon by a majority of the MAC members, as defined above. In the event of a resignation, the office of Chair or Vice-Chair may be filled in a special election, with the new officer to serve the balance of the term.

TFFT Decision-Making

The TFFT operates by consensus. Whenever possible, decisions will be achieved through consensus. To this end, opposition to an item should be accompanied by a proposed solution. When a vote is necessary to achieve resolution and/or take a position, each partner agency shall have one vote. Under the ICS structure, final decisions rest with the Incident Commander and the command staff positions. Meetings of the TFFT may be scheduled or called in one of two ways: 1) Scheduled consistent with the integrated annual calendar of MAC/TFFT meetings adopted by the MAC; or 2) called by the TFFT IC on an “as needed” basis.

The IC conducts TFFT meetings. In the absence of the IC, other designated primary staff members may be assigned this responsibility. This may include a Deputy IC, if one has been selected. An organizational chart for the MAC and TFFT has been endorsed and is attached. It is incumbent on the MAC to pledge adequate staffing to fulfill the TFFT roles through adjusted work assignments including continuing salary/benefits, or direct financial contributions to hire and fund required personnel.

Key TFFT Roles and Responsibilities

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team has established the following key roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled by the TFFT:

1. Producing a Basin-wide annual plan of work (Incident Action Plan). This plan should be comprehensive and include all planned hazardous fuel treatment projects irrespective of jurisdictional divisions.
2. Tracking hazardous fuel treatment accomplishments and reporting against the IAP as well as the prescribed schedule in the Multi-Jurisdictional Strategy. At a minimum, this report should be compiled on an annual basis. The report should be comprehensive, including treatment completion, and the status of treatment progress for both initial entry as well as needed phased treatments irrespective of jurisdictional divisions.
3. Tracking and annually reporting on accomplishments related to homeowner and community initiatives including defensible space recommendations, and other defensible space completion projects such as curbside chipping and/or disposal of accumulated debris and fuel.
4. Seeking opportunities to increase funding support for hazardous fuel treatment and needed defensible space work.
5. Sharing resources and information about best management practices for grant application development, project management, and financial management.
6. Providing public education and promotion to create a widespread culture of wildfire awareness and concern.
7. Providing encouragement and support to revive community based action groups and expand community involvement to create a Basin-wide organization of Fire Adapted Communities.
8. Serving as a focal point for information, resource sharing, response to inquiries, resolution of conflict, impact monitoring, and the coordination of Basin-wide wildfire threat reduction.

Professional Conduct

All TFFT members agree to the following code of conduct:

- Be professional and respectful;
- Be outcome focused and avoid subjects or issues that are not directly related to or detract from accomplishing the mission;
- Listen for understanding;
- Resolve issues and work toward consensus in a timely manner;
- Be sensitive to others and the political environment;
- Proactively identify issues and clearly communicate expectations;
- Be mindful of potential conflicts of interest;
- Actively engage in considering needs across the missions of participating agencies and entities;
- Allow a minimum of two weeks review time prior to TFFT consideration of any item requiring a decision of formation of formal advice.

Commitment to Communication

Communication is critical to the success of the TFFT and implementation of the Multi-Jurisdictional Fuels Reduction and Wildfire Prevention Strategy (Strategy) and will occur at multiple levels among participating agencies. Although TFFT members will communicate informally with agency technical staff through ordinary Basin and regional discourse, it is the responsibility of each member to ensure that pertinent information regarding the needs of the TFFT and the Strategy is fully committed from the agency executives to the technical staff and from technical staff to executives within his/her agency.

All members have the responsibility to communicate TFFT activities and priorities and to solicit input from contemporary groups and any other stakeholders, as agreed to by the TFFT.

The TFFT will support communication protocols to ensure opportunities to benefit from “lessons learned. This is an informal process for receiving input on TFFT activities that can occur in one or more ways, including through direct communication with executives of participating agencies; through direct communications with other TFFT members; or through communications with stakeholders and interested members of the public.

TFFT meetings are open to the public, but will generally not be conducted as public meetings unless otherwise agreed to by consensus of the members. Non-members may make presentations to the TFFT, provided that said presentations are included on the meeting agenda in advance.

Public announcements, including news releases and other information relative to efforts or activities of the TFFT will be disseminated on a case-by-case basis through one of the following channels: 1) by the Fire Public Information Team (PIT); 2) through a joint press release issued by TFFT agencies by explicit consent. Press releases will be reviewed and approved by the IC prior to release.