

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Atlas Peak Fire Reduction Hazard Plan

Atlas Peak Fire Safe Council

January 15, 2012

Prepared by:
Tom Vreeland
Director APFSC

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Overview:

Atlas Peak is a region located in the wildland urban interface above the Silverado Country Club (SCC). A mountain peak is the region's namesake and is to the northern edge. The roughly 7,000 acres of Atlas Peak are accessed by a single, dead end road, aptly named Atlas Peak Rd. The road stretches a distance of 10 miles and there is no other reasonable access. One other road, Old Soda Springs Road, connects at the bottom of Atlas Peak road and it too doesn't have another outlet. The region is bounded most notably by Soda Canyon and Capell Valley.

The Atlas Peak region has roughly 200 residences and over 1,500 acres of vineyards planted. The residences are located along Atlas Peak Rd, though many have long, narrow access roads exceeding a ¼ mile in length. These private drives may service one or more residences and may also be gated. The terrain and vegetation are variable over the length of the main road, as is the density of housing.

The area was swept by a devastating wildfire in 1981 which resulted in significant loss of property. There have been numerous smaller fires over time, each with varying impact.

The Atlas Peak region can be divided into four areas for ease of description and understanding the different challenges the community presents. The lowest area (Area A) has moderately steep slopes and a relatively dense housing pattern above the slopes (affording great views at a price of fire danger). Planted pyrophytic vegetation is common, though there are extensive oak woodlands. The middle area (Area B) above Bubbling Well Pet Cemetery is rolling to flat terrain with more dispersed housing and some recent vineyard development. There are large areas of rock throughout this region which does not support vegetation. The area is still recovering from the effects of the 1981 fire with vast expanses of dense brush and small trees. Some groves of large trees, oak and pine, survived the fire. The upper area (Area C) is above slopes and also has widely spaced housing with relatively recent vineyard development. Old Soda Springs Road (Area D) is at the base of area A and north of SCC.

The extensive Atlas Peak area is defined by the main road and Milliken Creek. The main road provides only shallow access within this vast area. Most of the terrain is unbroken wildland, primarily dense in chaparral species.

Historical Background

The Atlas Peak Fire Safe Council is a fledging group organized in the latter part of 2010. There were no community organized efforts prior to this time. Residents of the area embraced fire safe activities to varying degrees, primarily encouraged by local fire officials, their own common sense and a basic fear of fire.

The group has gotten off to a slow start. The accomplishments include creating a community data base, a community mailing, a demonstration project to clear a roadside hazard, establishing a community phone warning program and submitted a grant proposal for calendar 2012.

A bell weather of residents concern for fire safety is the use of the Napa Firewise chipping program. In 2010 chipping season, residents estimated 3,759 hours of time spent clearing and preparing their chipping piles. This does not include the work performed by residents or their contractors where the chipping service was not employed. Weed abatement, either by spraying herbicide or cutting, is another time consuming activity not captured by chipping data.

A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance review and a preliminary wildfire assessment / vegetation management plan were completed in 2010 under the direction and assistance of Napa Firewise.

Plan and Community Involvement

This document shall be known as the Atlas Peak Fire Reduction Hazard Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The Atlas Peak Fire Safe Council has involved the following organizations via the parties listed for this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

- Local government: Bill Dodd, Supervisor, Napa County District 4
- Local Fire Chief: Tim Streblov, CAL FIRE Chief, Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit
- Local Fire Battalion Chief: Mike Parkes, Battalion 1415
- Local Fire Marshall: Peter Munoa, Napa County Fire Marshall
- Local residents: Atlas Peak Fire Safe Council

These decision makers were notified on January 17, 2012 by Tom Vreeland, APFSC, that the community was drafting a CWPP. They were invited to participate in the development and review of the plan.

Federal Agencies

The CWPP does not involve federal land nor is the area at risk or directly impacted by fires originating on federal land. Federal agencies are not involved at this time.

State / Local Agencies

The following state and local agencies that have jurisdictional responsibilities for the Atlas Peak Community are:

- CAL FIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Chief T. Streblov
- CAL FIRE, Napa County Battalion 1415 Chief M. Parkes
- Napa County Supervisors, Supervisor District 4, Bill Dodd
- City of Napa (contiguous watershed) Mayor, J. Techel

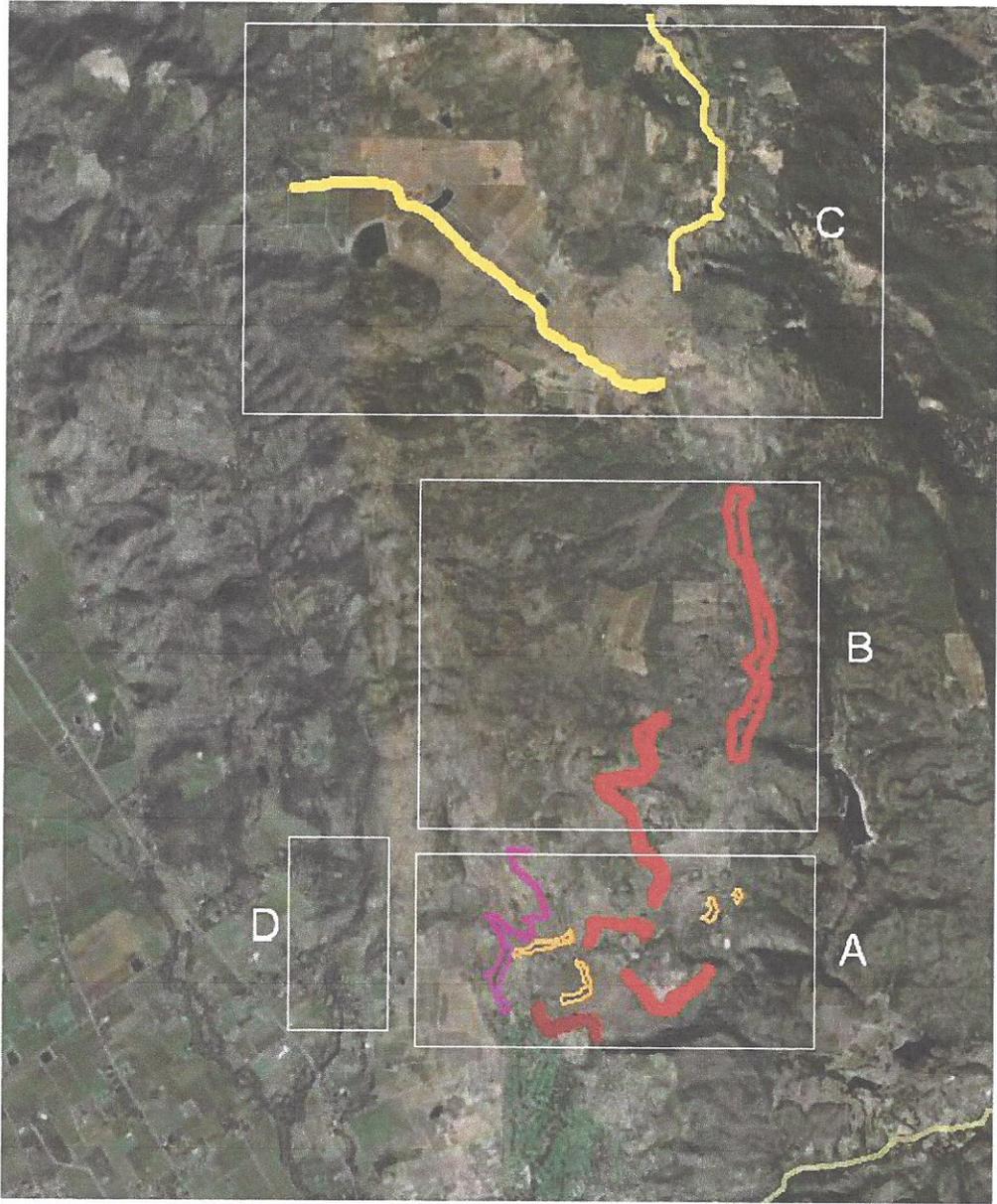
Interested Parties

The parties from our community that have shown interest in forest/fire management or may be interested in this CWPP are:

- The residents of the Atlas Peak region
- The Atlas Peak Appellation, association of vineyard owners and wine makers
- The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation
- Silverado Country Club

Community Base Map

Attached is a base map of the community(s) and adjacent landscapes of interest. Highlighted on the map are areas of concern. An overview map of the entire area is included along with maps of the four areas – A, B, C and D.



Step 5a – Develop a Community Risk Assessment

As designated on the base map, the following table lists the associated wildfire risk, as viewed by this (these) community(s).

Risk Area	Fuel Hazard	Risk of Wildfire Occurrence	Firefighting capability	Overall Risk
A	High	High	Difficult access	High
B	High	High	Difficult access	High
C	High	High	Difficult access	High
D	High	High	Moderately difficult access	High

Community Hazard Reduction Priorities

Based on the results of the community risk assessment, priority ratings have been selected for the communities and areas of community importance. The community recommendations for the type and method of treatment for the surrounding vegetation are listed in the following table.

Legend: AP = Atlas Peak Rd, OSS = Old Soda Springs Rd, SCC = Silverado CC

Risk Area	Type of Treatment	Method of Treatment	Overall Priority
A, northwest of Westgate above Canyon Crest at Silverado Country Club (SCC)	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	1
D, canyon between Atlas Peak Rd (AP) and Old Soda Springs Rd (OSS)	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	1
A, 2300 thru 2400 block AP	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Modify fuels around cluster of homes - pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	2
B, 2500 block AP	Hand crew labor and	Modify fuels around	2

	equipment as required	cluster of homes - pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	
B, 2700 block AP	Hand crew labor and tree removal equipment	Remove and kill eucalyptus and pines along the road	2
B, 2800 through 2900 block AP	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Modify fuels around cluster of homes - pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	2
D, OSS	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Clear roadway access with pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing along roadside	3
C, AP above Foss Valley	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Clear roadway access with pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing along roadside	4
B, City watershed land, south of AP above Bubbling Well	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing	5
A, canyon below Bubbling Springs	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Remove and kill eucalyptus and pines, lop and scatter	5
B, east of Bubbling Well	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Remove and kill eucalyptus and pines, lop and scatter	5
A, AP	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Clear roadway access with pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing along roadside	1
B, AP	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Clear roadway access with pyrophytic species removal, crown thinning, limbing up and brush clearing along roadside	2

C, Circle S Ranch	Hand crew labor and equipment as required	Open road existing, but not passable road as a second evacuation route	1
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Additional Concerns. Prompted by the Vegetation Management study are:

1. Engage in practices that promote a healthy Oak Forest.

The area surrounding Atlas Peak is an oak woodland. This forest type has grown in this area for millennia. Fires have often burned through this vegetation type, yet the forest persists. It is this persistence that directs us to emulate some features of the oak woodland in managing the landscape.

An oak woodland will not stay an oak woodland if nature takes its full course. Nature is dynamic. All forests pass through a succession of stages until the site is captured by a final dominant species, called the climax vegetation. As an example of this process, stages of growth in the Atlas Peak area allow pine eucalyptus to become the climax species by overtopping the oak trees, ultimately killing them. Pine and eucalyptus will not persist forever, however, as pines are highly flammable and their abundance normally results in a hot fire (a stand-replacing fire) which kills all vegetation and replaces the forest with bare burned ground.

2. Reduce and remove Pyrophytes, and non-native species.

It is a goal of this plan to enhance the oak woodland largely through a reduction of the flammable components. A second important goal is to cause flammable non-native vegetation to be removed. The desired future condition is an oak woodland with large scattered trees providing abundant shade, but with an understory that is open which will not easily ignite the overstory.

3. Emphasize & improve defensible space.

Assuring 100' minimum defensible space around all structures reduces the threat of direct flame impingement and ignition of structures from radiation. Every year we conduct individual property lot inspections with home owners, and advise them of needed work. We will continue to perform this essential service.

4. Recognize the need and plan for maintenance – forever.

As the years go by and major work is completed, be certain to budget for and manage vegetation re-growth as an “always with us” task.

5. Provide information and guidance on structure ignitability.

Inform residents as well as potential developers of vacant land of the latest low-ignition building requirements in the State through newsletters and educational meetings.

Additional Efforts:

6. Maintaining Knox Box - Insure gates have Knox box and are clear of surrounding vegetation.

7. Reflective House Numbering – Insure reflective street addresses be maintained at AP and along private roads as appropriate.

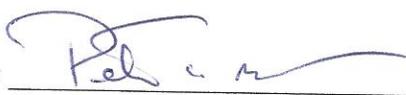
8. Phone alert program - Maintain resident data base of contact information and phone alert, warning program.

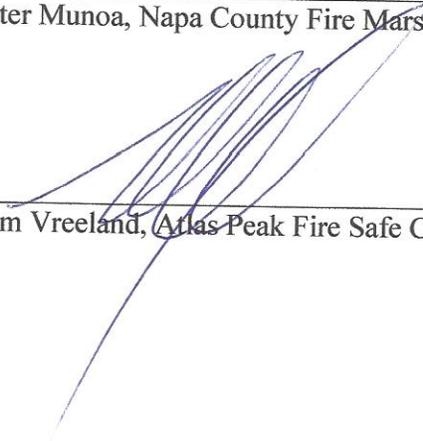
The following entities mutually agree with the contents of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

Agreed:  Date: 5/29/12
Bill Dodd, Supervisor
Napa County District 4

Agreed:  Date: 6/11/12
Tim Strelow, Chief CAL FIRE
Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit

Agreed:  Date: 6/2/12
Mike Parkes, Battalion Chief 1415 1415 (P)

Agreed:  Date: 6/1/12
Peter Munoa, Napa County Fire Marshal

Agreed:  Date: 1-30-12
Tom Vreeland, Atlas Peak Fire Safe Council