



EVACUATION AND THE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANNING PROCESS

Although a CWPP is not the place where most communities develop community evacuation plans, the process does provide an opportunity to bring partners, community leaders, and planners together. The CWPP planning process can help facilitate the discussion and evaluation of existing evacuation plans to identify any gaps or unmet needs, which can be integrated into the CWPP action plan to strengthen and enhance your current evacuation plans, routes, and infrastructure.



EVACUATION SOUND PRACTICES WEBINAR



WAFAC welcomed three experts to discuss evacuation planning and the recommended best practices to strengthen community evacuation plans. Louise Comfort and Kenichi Soga from UC Berkely and MJ Johns from UC Santa Cruz shared insights from their comprehensive report, [Literature Review of the State-of-the-Science in Wildfire Evacuation](#).

LESSONS LEARNED

Community-Driven Evacuation Planning: Because the burden of safe evacuation often falls on a well-informed community (typically organized by volunteers and supported by public agencies), it's essential to involve proactive non-governmental community entities early in the planning process. Their participation helps build the bridges necessary for successful collaboration with emergency management officials.

Evacuation as a Collaborative Dialogue: Evacuation planning should be approached as an ongoing dialogue and partnership between public, private, and nonprofit sectors. During the CWPP process, it's important to evaluate existing evacuation plans alongside these stakeholders to identify opportunities for joint action.

Simulation Tools are Critical: Evacuation simulation tools are valuable in understanding the technical limitations of infrastructure under stress and the social dynamics of how communities will actually respond, particularly populations with higher needs or limited access to resources. If a community does not have access to technical simulation programs/software, tabletop exercises with planning partners and key stakeholders can help them to think through the factors that go into those simulations.

Expect the Unexpected: Wildfire events and environments are highly dynamic and unpredictable. Planners are encouraged to explore a wide range of "what-if" scenarios to stress-test assumptions and ensure evacuation strategies are resilient under multiple conditions.

RESOURCES

Smart and Connection Communities

Developed by the [SOGA Research Group](#), Smart and Connected Communities is an innovative project aimed at developing a framework and toolkit to enhance wildfire resilience at the community level.

UC Santa Cruz Wildfire Games

A collection of mini games aimed at helping communities develop resilience and preparedness against wildfire. Play today:

- [Firesafe Friends](#)
- [Firewise Citizens](#)

Literature Review of the State-of-the-Science in Wildfire Evacuation

Practical wildfire evacuation lessons are reviewed and summarized.

Researchers work to improve wildfire evacuation planning (WSU Insider)

Evacuation & Readiness (Wildfire Risk to Communities)