

Southwest Colorado

Community Fire Planning

Archuleta



Dolores



La Plata



Montezuma

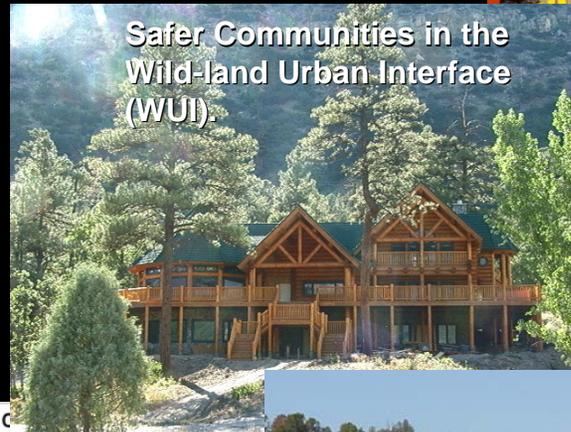


San Juan



Fire Planning in Southwest Colorado

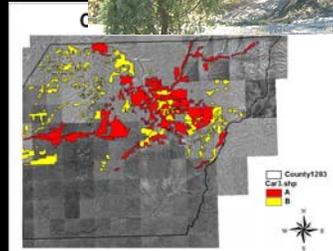
A multi-faceted, collaborative effort designed to tap into the knowledge of local governments and federal and state agencies to address forest health and wildfire risks.



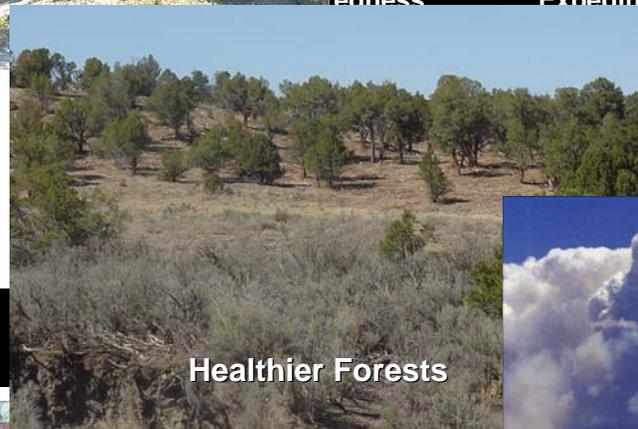
Community
Resilience &
Readiness



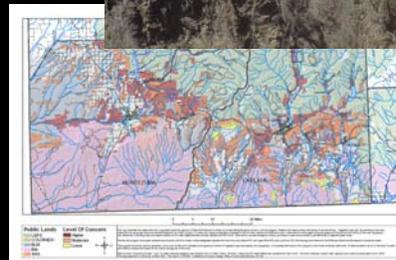
Expediting collaborative
boundary fuels
reductions.



Strategic mapping and risk analysis.



Healthier Forests



Seamless risk mapping and greater multi-jurisdictional coordination.



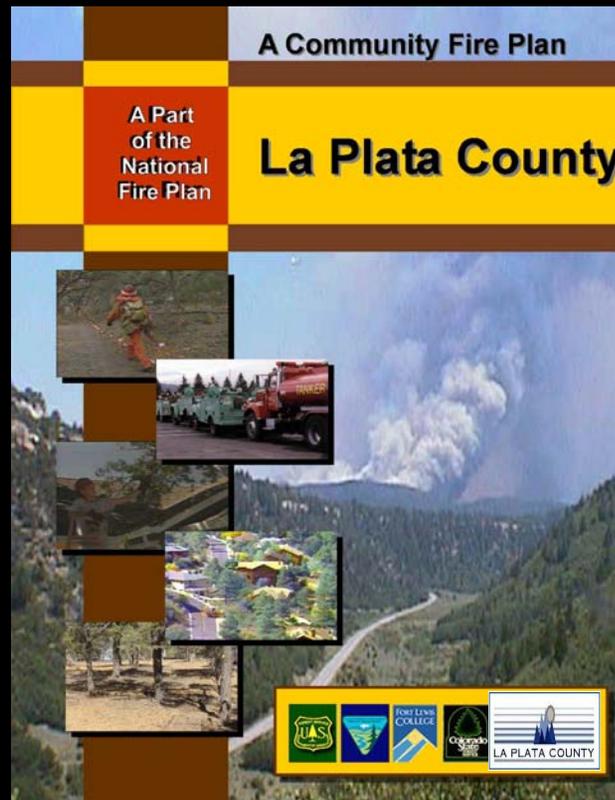
Biomass
economic
fuels redu



Improved
coordination of
emergency responses

Assistance in Developing CWPP's

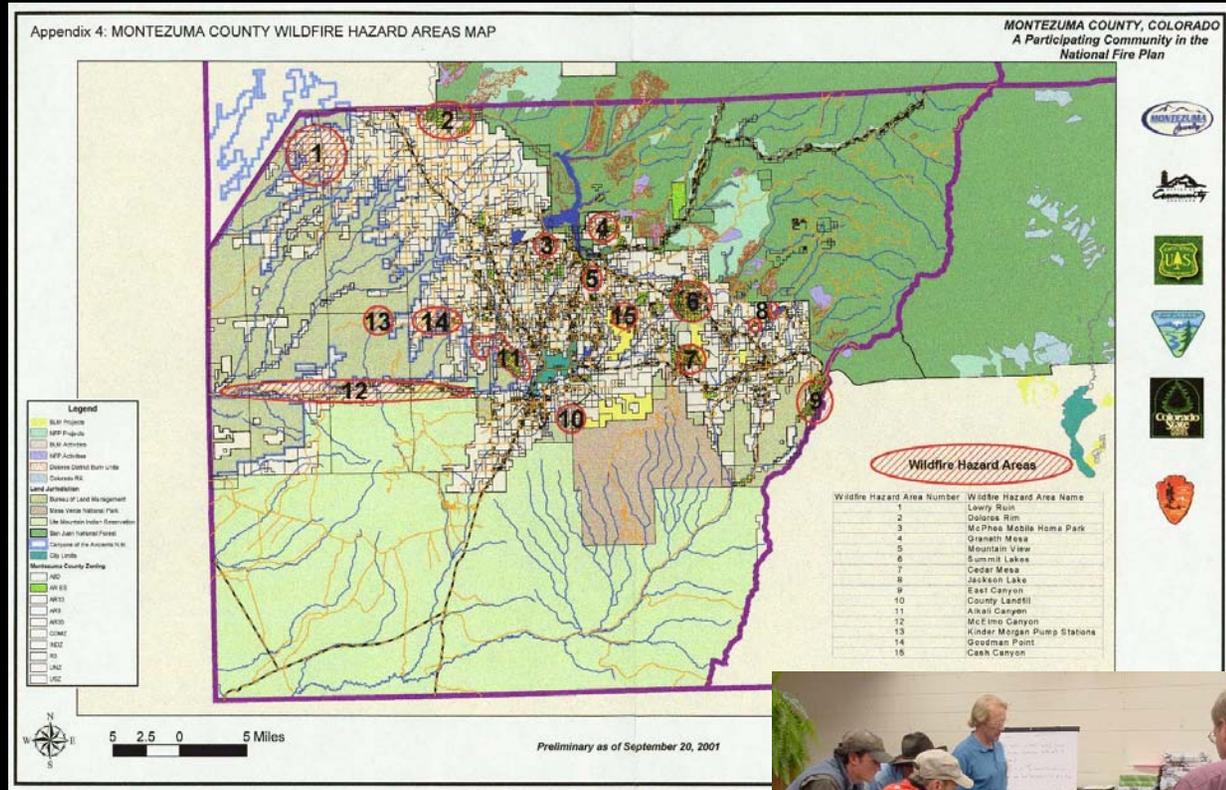
The Office of Community Services has assisted the participating partners of five southwestern Colorado counties in developing Community Wild-Fire Protection Plans (CWPPs).



**CWPPs Have been prepared for;
La Plata, Archuleta, Montezuma,
Dolores and San Juan Counties**

Initial Identification of Fire Hazard Areas

First, local fire authorities, the state forester, and county government representatives helped identify general areas of high “concern” in all five counties.

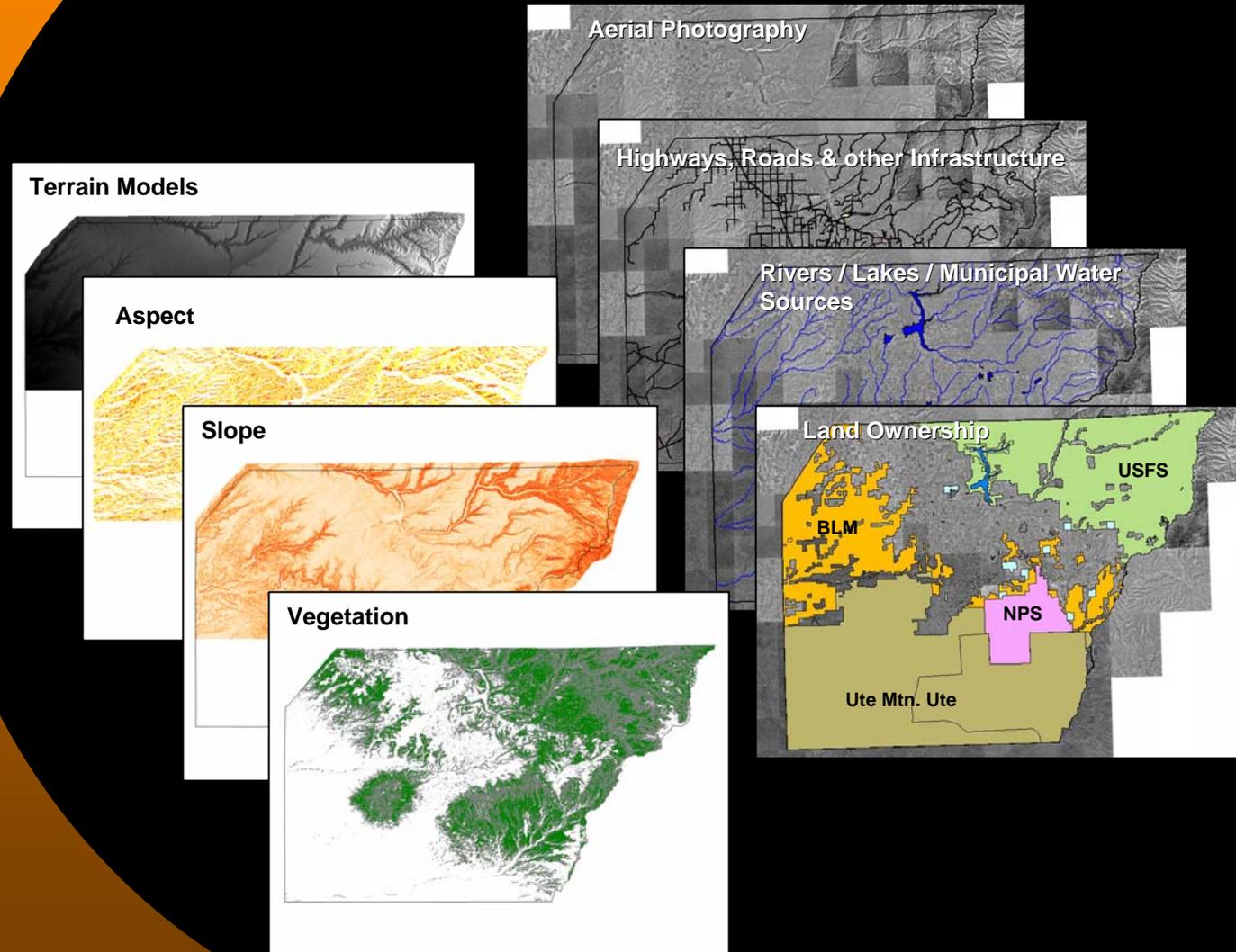


Fifteen areas of concern were initially identified in Montezuma County.



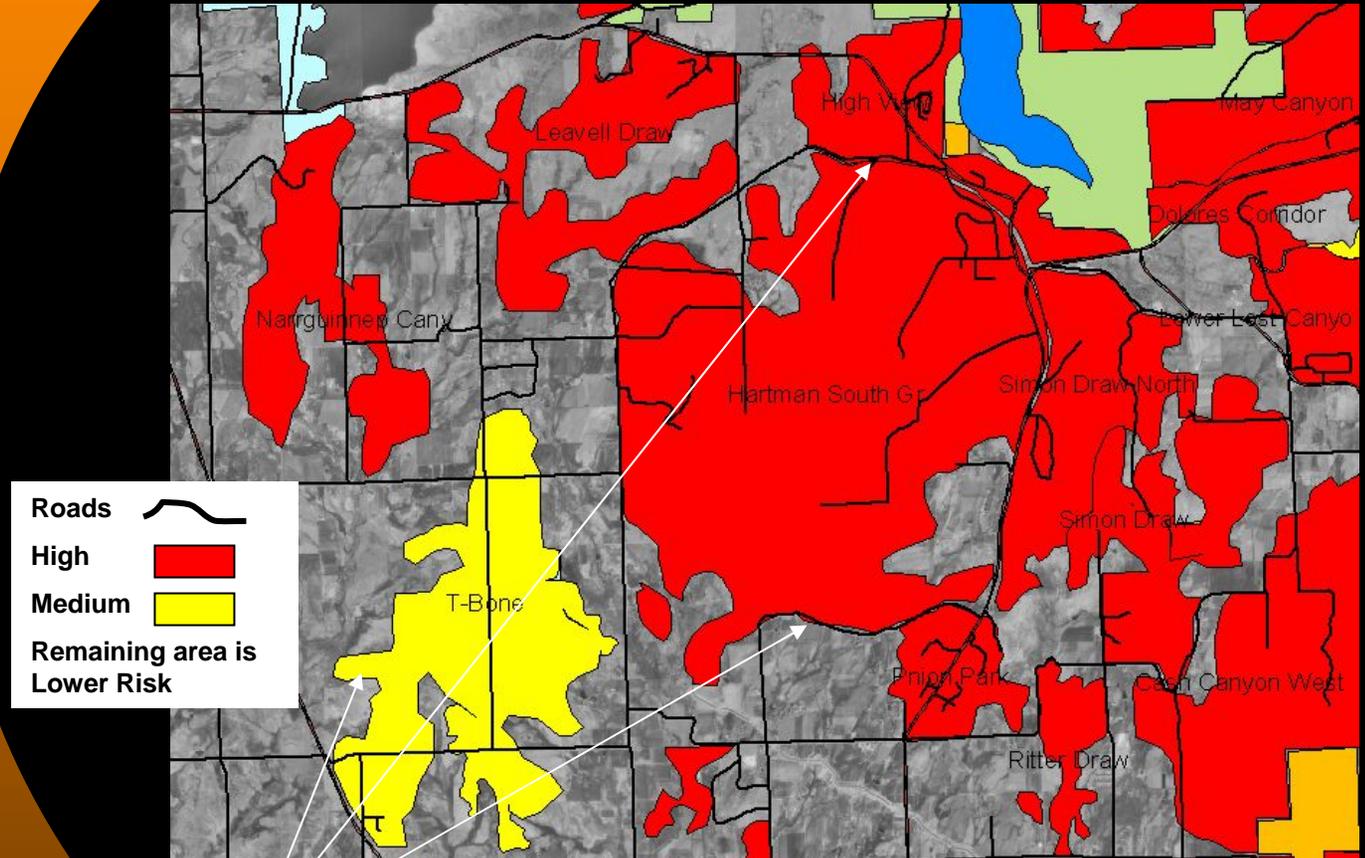
GIS Analysis of Initial Fire Hazard Areas

Next, a more detailed analysis (using existing GIS base layers) helped refine the location of communities-at-risk (CAR) and also identify other CARs.



Community Risk Assessment

CARs were delineated using a variety of easily recognized physical and geographic features.

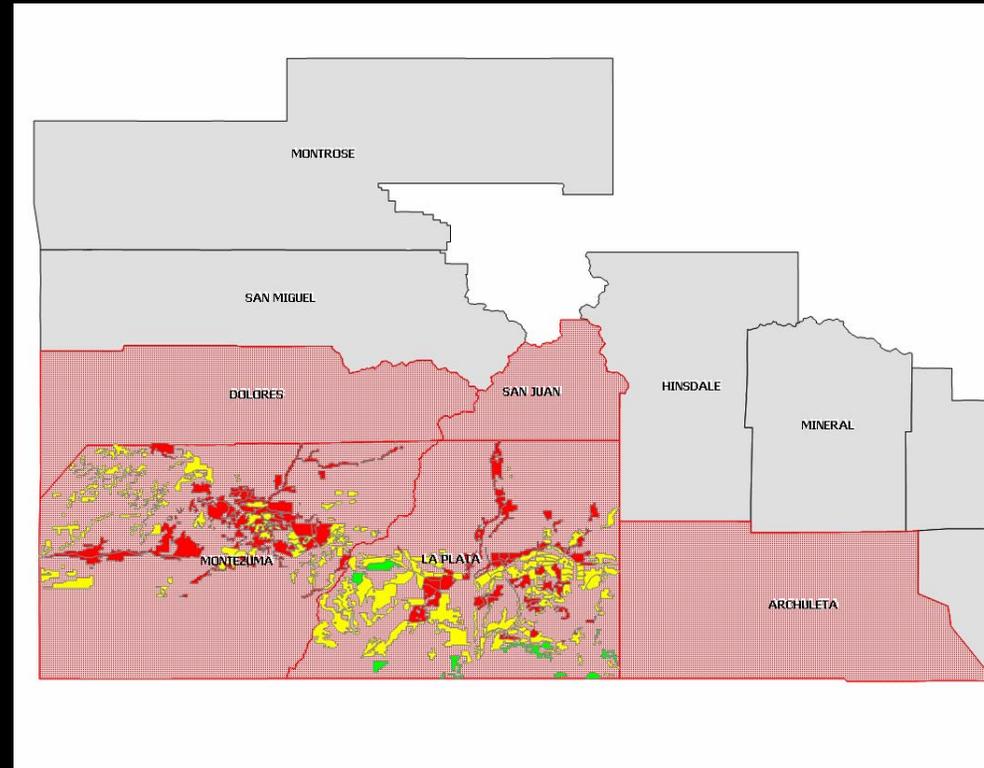


In other cases, the CAR boundaries were delineated by features such as roads.

Regional Community Risk Assessment Work

The Community Risk Assessment is an ongoing process regionally.

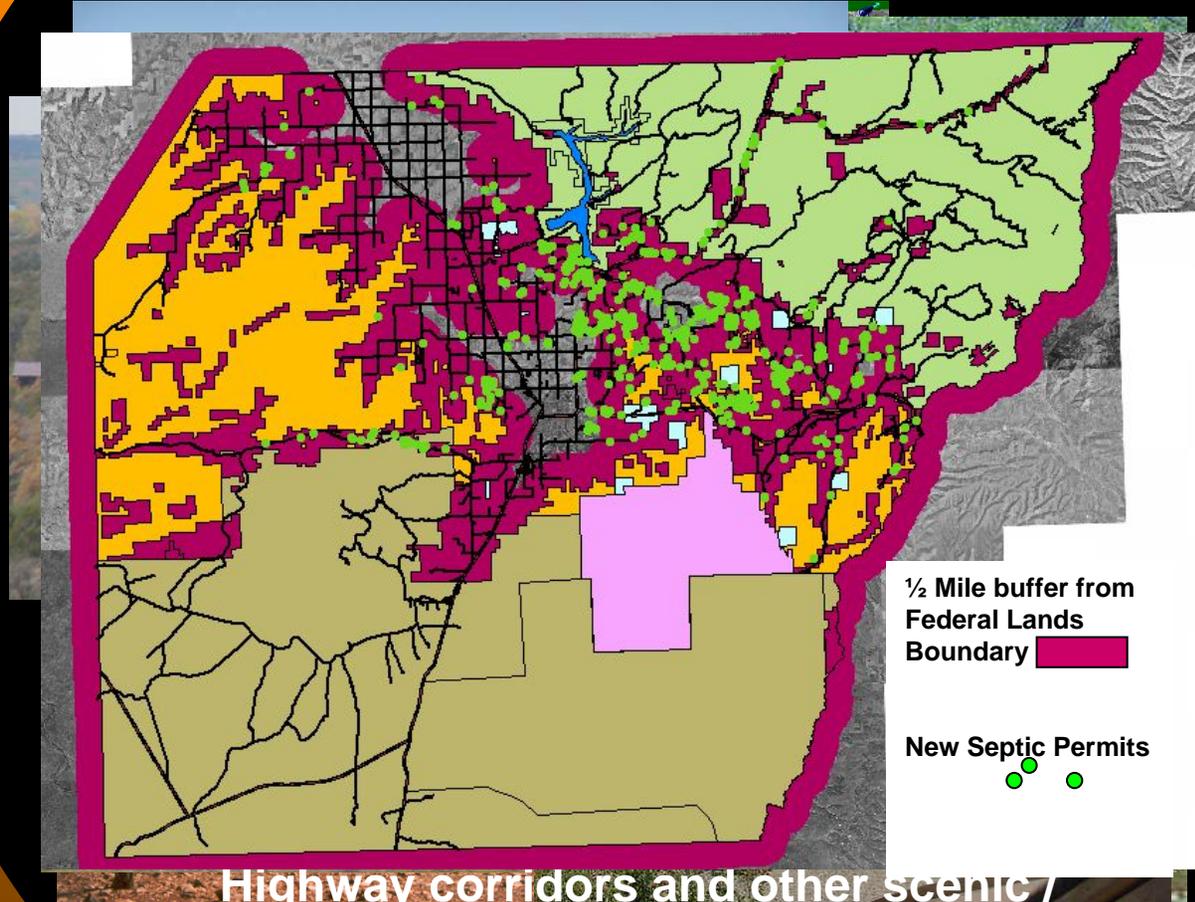
Mapping began in Montezuma County and has now been completed in La Plata County.



Data for three adjoining counties is currently being developed and will soon be joined with the existing database.

Community Risk Assessment

Additional factors were considered in the selection and ranking of the communities-at-risk including:



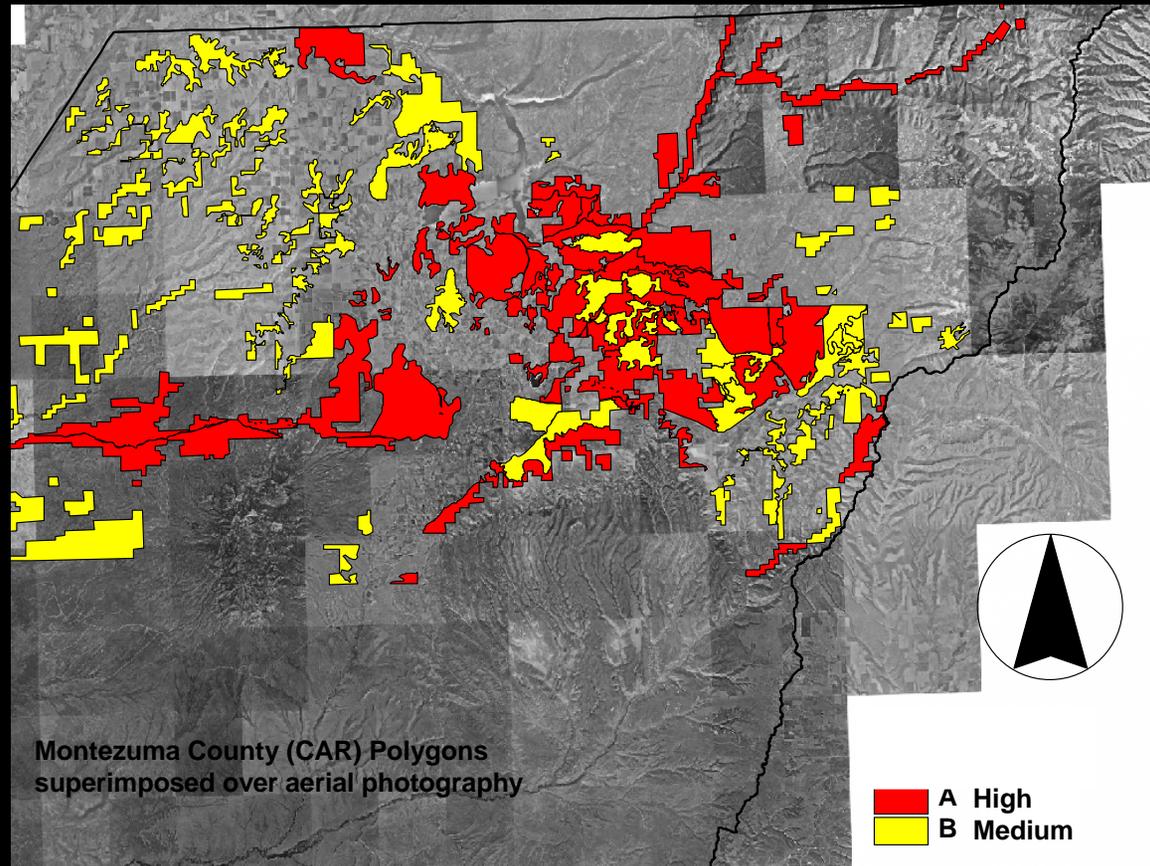
Highway corridors and other scenic /
County road development patterns
County recreation resources
Land infrastructure and residential /
Key sensitive areas including
Archaeological / historical resources
municipal and agricultural water

Community Risk Assessment

After careful analysis, a CAR map emerged.

The CAR polygons identify High and Medium Risk areas.

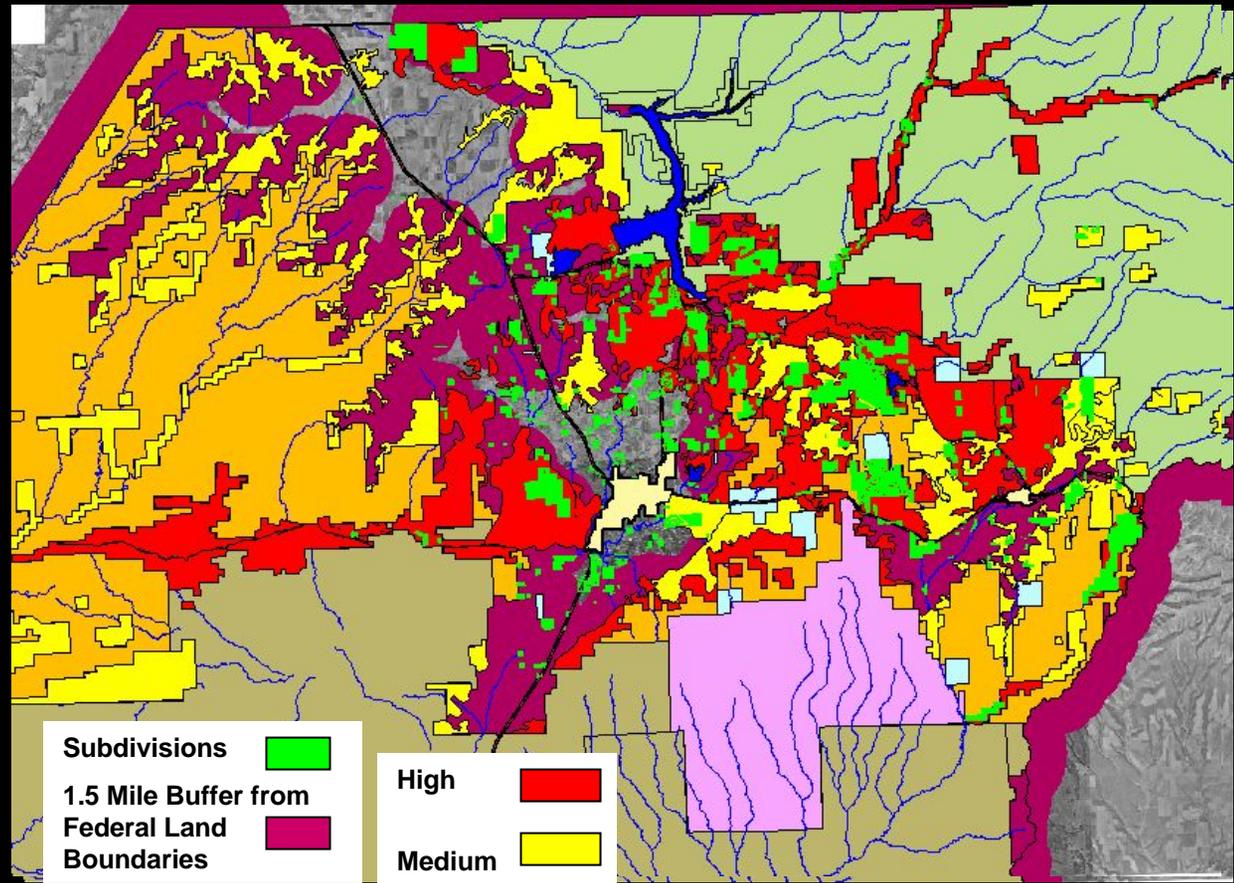
Remaining areas are considered Lower Risk.



Wildland-Urban Interface Boundary

Identifying and forecasting county growth patterns is an essential element in defining a county's wildland-urban interface or WUI.

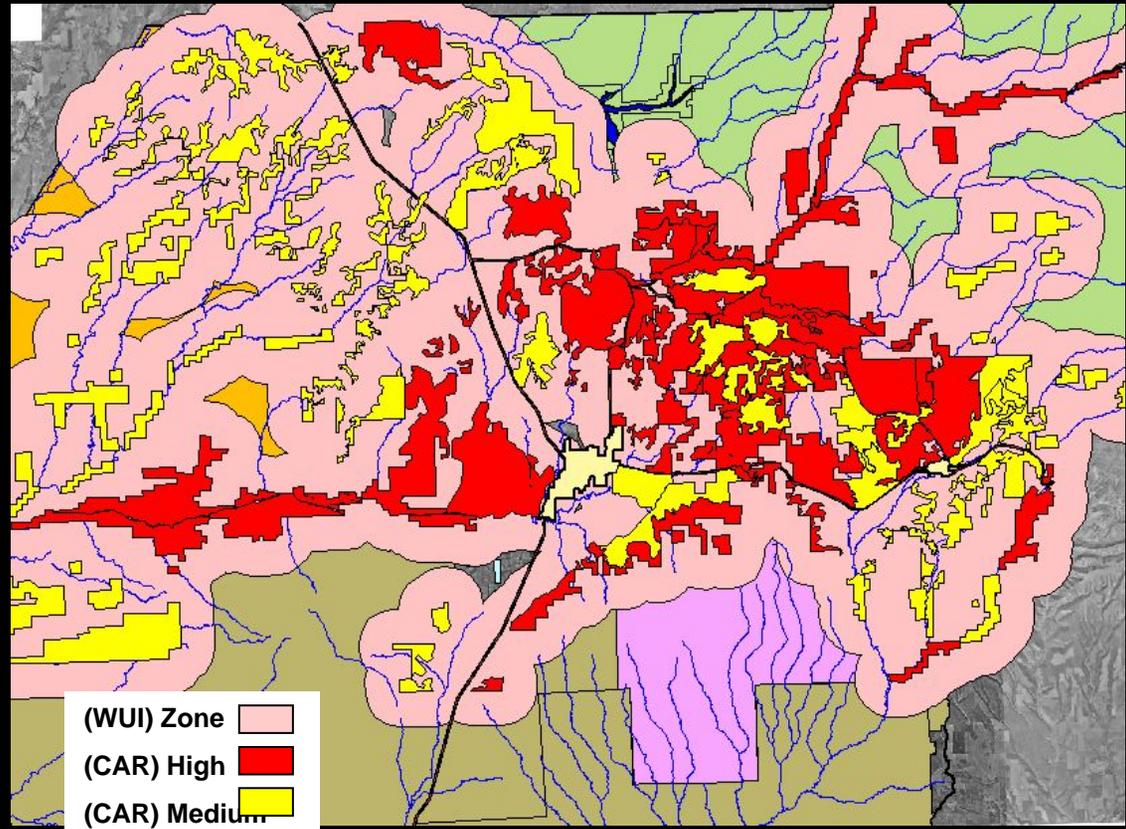
In the absence of a CWPP, Section 101 (16) of the HFRA Act defines the wildland-urban interface as "(ii) an area within 1 ½ miles of the boundary of an at-risk community."



More than 60% of the population in Monterey County is within 1.5 miles of federal land and therefore subdivisions lie within 1.5 miles of federal lands.

Wildland-Urban Interface Boundary

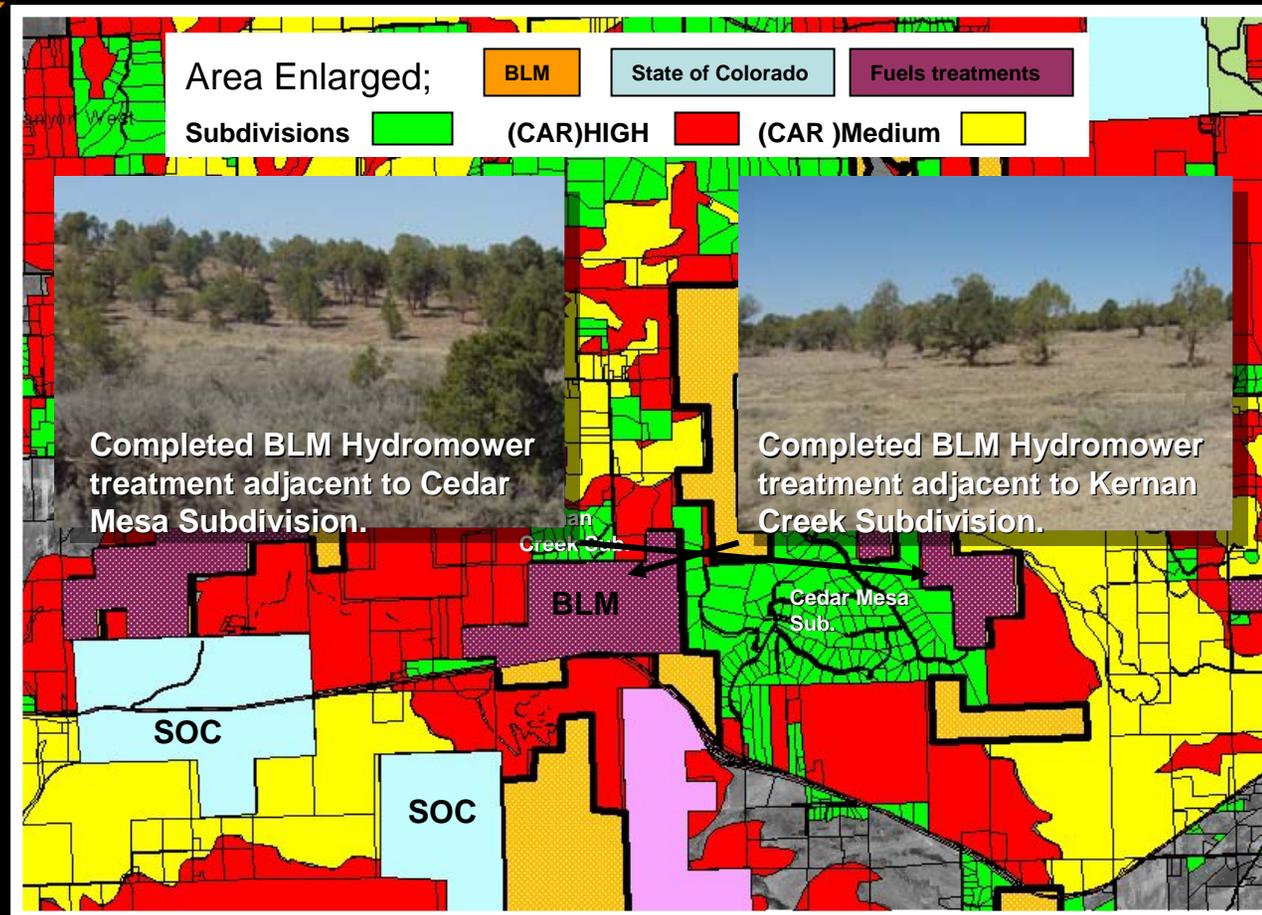
In accordance with HFRA, all five southwest Colorado counties have CWPPs, and therefore have the right to define their own WUI boundaries.



Reflecting current and forecasted growth patterns, the Montezuma County CWPP defines the County's WUI as the area within 1 1/2 miles of the boundaries of the high and medium CAR.

Cross-Boundary (WUI) Fuels Treatments

The CAR map facilitates cross-boundary treatments within the WUI.



Many landowners within the CAR have been actively creating defensible space and thinning fuels on their property. The BLM has targeted areas adjacent to the high-risk areas for fuels treatments.

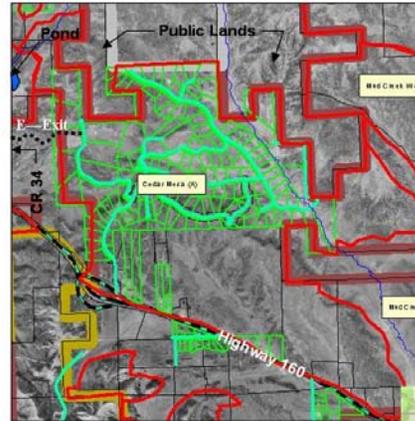
Community Hazard Reduction Priorities

In Montezuma County, a more detailed analysis of the 118 CAR polygons identified occurred.

The analysis:

- establishes hazard reduction priorities,
- identifies fuel mitigation methods,
- makes recommendations to reduce structural ignitability.

Montezuma County Community Fire Plan Cedar Mesa Fire Management Classification (A) Latitude: N37 21.602' Elevation: 7,143' Longitude: W108 24.176'



Left: The aerial map indicates that the Cedar Mesa Polygon is a patchwork of forested areas, shrub cover, and open meadows. Vegetation is dominated by Pinion and Juniper stands, Sagebrush, and grasses. Pinion trees have been experiencing a high mortality rate in the area due to Ips Beetle infestations.

Below: The topographic map shows the central portion of the polygon to be an area of high ground with numerous "chimney" canyons (indicated by black arrows) converging near the middle. The Cedar Mesa Subdivision lies directly across the area where these chimneys converge. Fuels treatments on public land to the west have been done using a Hydro-ax. Additional mechanical treatments are planned on the east side.

The Cedar Mesa Polygon is bounded on the south by Highway 160, public lands to the north and east and west, and including CR 34 to the west. The polygon contains Montezuma County's largest subdivision. The Cedar Mesa Subdivision consists of 139 lots with one main access road. There is an approved emergency exit on the west side of the subdivision which crosses BLM lands and links with CR 34. Access into the subdivision is from Highway 160 via the Mesa Verde exit. Subdivision Roads are adequate for emergency vehicles. Some private drives may need additional work to ensure emergency access. The Cedar Mesa Subdivision has fire hydrants and there are hydrants across Highway 160 at the Mesa Verde entry. Other possible alternative water sources include Mud Creek to the east and a small pond to the north west of the polygon.

Mitigation Measures may include a strong campaign to educate residents and property owners about defensible space, thinning, and the development of an evacuation plan. (Work is already underway by the Homeowners association)

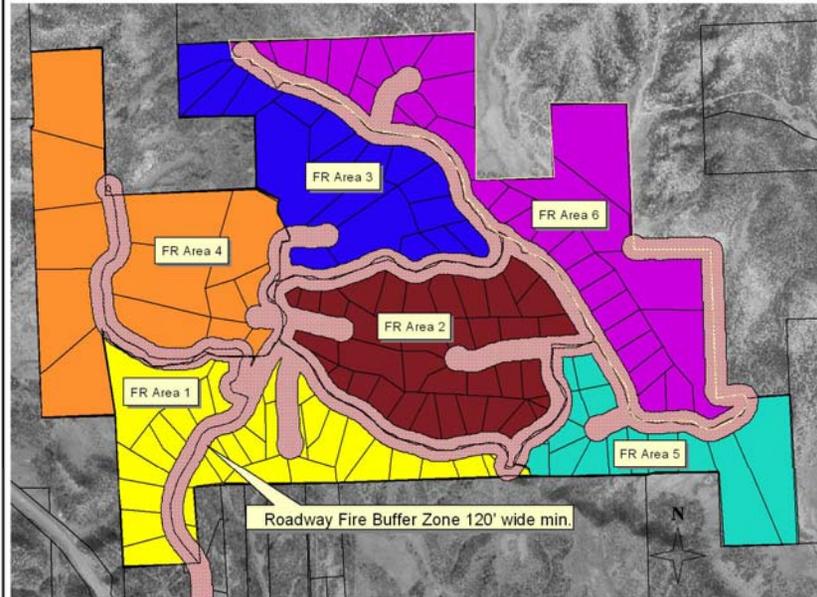


Mitigation Methods include hand thinning in areas adjacent to structures, and limited hydro mowing. Concurrent hydro-mowing on adjacent lands is also recommended.

Community Outreach & Capacity Building

In response to landowner concerns over appropriate mitigation priorities, a pilot mitigation plan was developed for the Cedar Mesa Subdivision.

Cedar Mesa Fire Plan (Fuels Reduction Priority Areas Phases 1 & 2)



Phase 1

Roadway Fire Buffer Zone
Consists of approximately 45 acres.

Phase 2

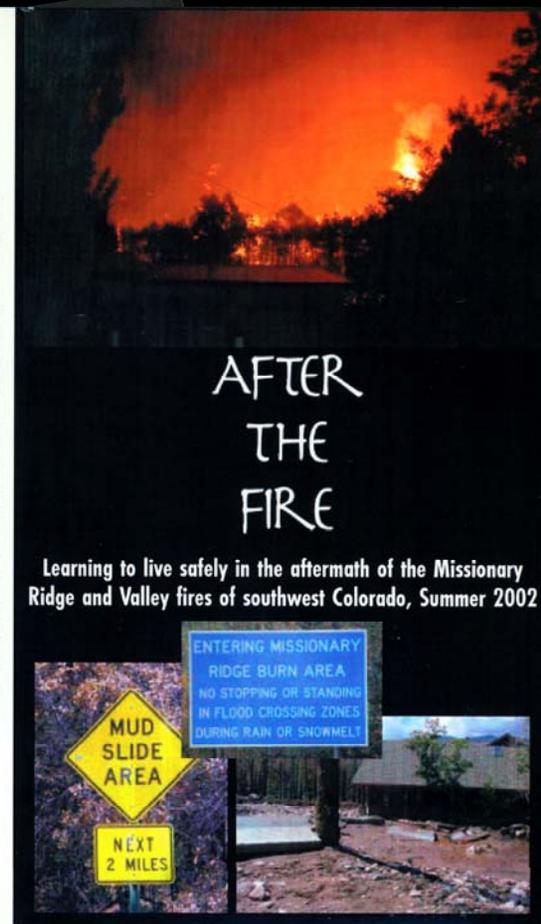
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 1
Consists of 31 lots covering approximately 277 acres.
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 2
Consists of 36 lots, covering approximately 319 acres.
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 3
Consists of 18 lots, covering approximately 258 acres.
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 4
Consists of 13 lots, covering approximately 397 acres.
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 5
Consists of 14 lots, covering approximately 185 acres.
- Fuels Reduction Priority Area 6
Consists of 29 lots, covering approximately 436 acres.

The resulting mitigation plan divided the subdivision into neighborhood "Fuel Reduction Areas" (FRAs). One lot owner per FRA would be the point person for monitoring and coordinating their neighborhood's efforts. Roadway owners helped identify which lots they would serve the best. The Cedar Mesa Subdivision is the largest subdivision in the Mesa area with a history of roadway owners being active in creating defensible space on an individual basis but were also interested in a plan that would address the subdivision as a whole.

Community Outreach & Awareness

As a corollary to the CWPPs, a number of outreach activities designed to raise community awareness and preparedness have been organized.

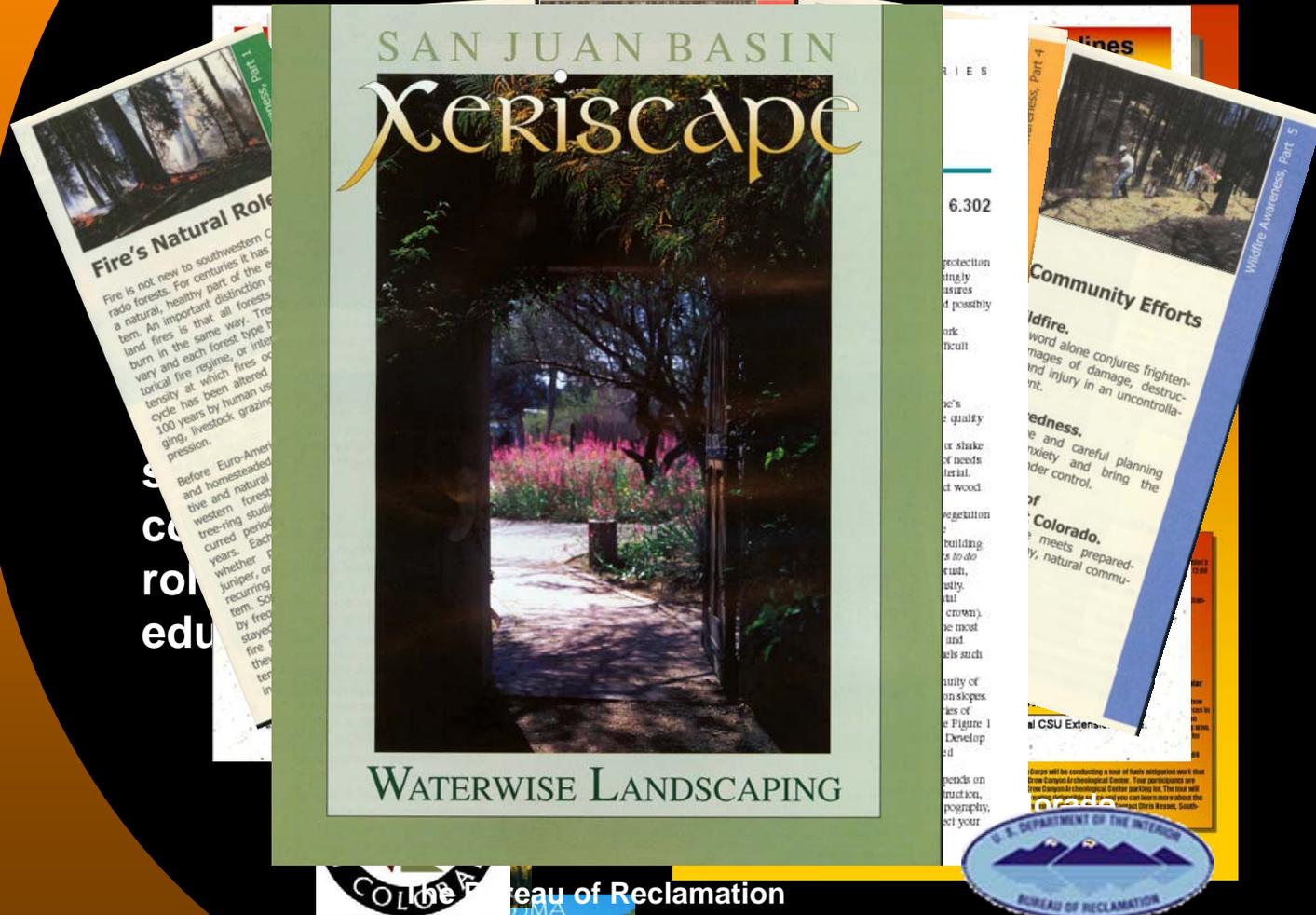
The month of April has been designated as National Wildfire Preparedness Month. Close to 1000 homeowners have been designated as "First Line of Defense" homeowners. Activities have included "Wildfire Preparedness Home and Garden Shows," local television stations, the Anasazi Heritage Center, and local schools. These activities are designed to raise community awareness and preparedness in the event of a wildfire.



Ongoing Outreach and Community Education

Educational media produced by CWPP partners include:

In April, Wildfire Prevention and Education Month will continue to bring the message of defensible space and healthy forests to the community using a variety of tools.



Colorado Bureau of Reclamation



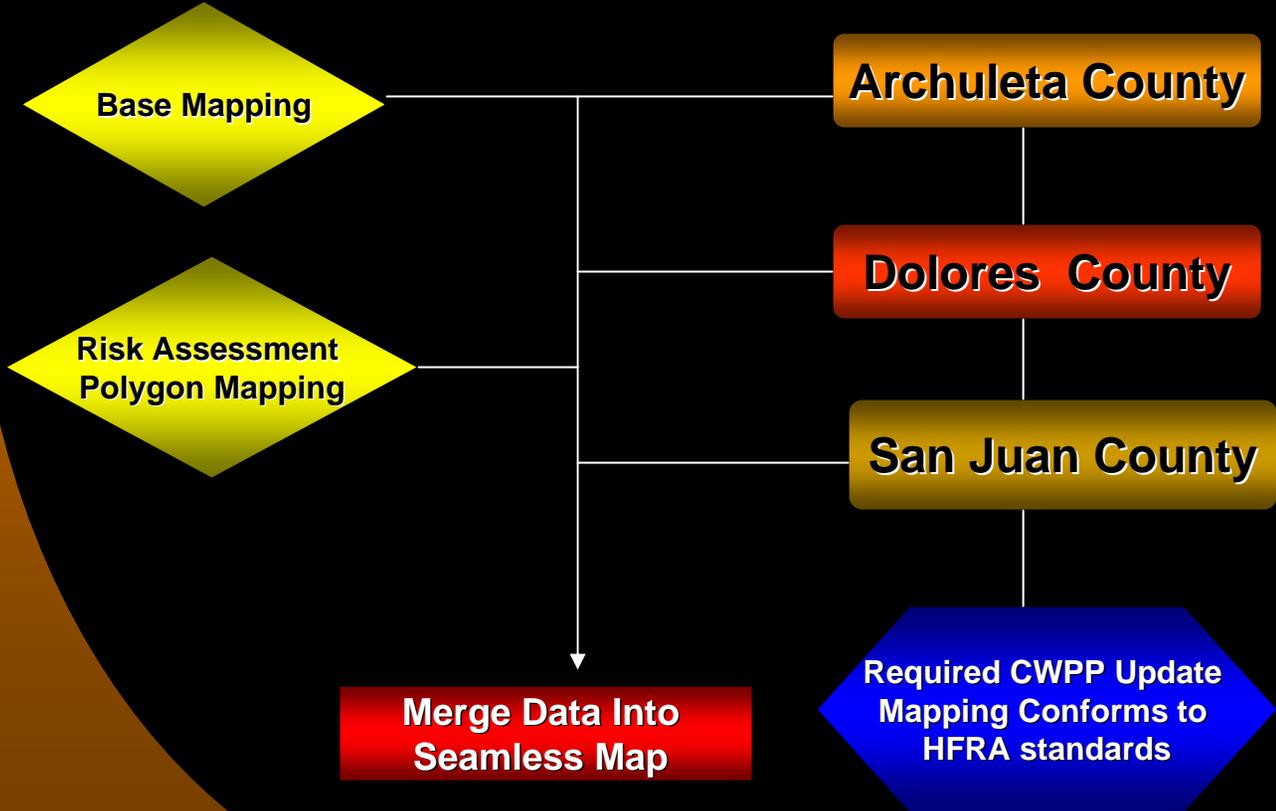
The Colorado State Forest Service The San Juan Mountains Association

Ongoing Work

FY 06 - Oct. 1 2005- Sept. 30 2006

Community Risk Assessments and Registries
(Based on the analysis templates established through the work completed in Montezuma and La Plata Counties)

Because the five existing county plans were developed prior to the passing of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, updates to these plans are currently underway.



Ongoing Work

FY 06 - Oct. 1 2005- Sept. 30 2006

Update Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Input from Stakeholders

OCS Staff
& Contractors

Local FPD

SJPL

CSFS

County GIS

County Sheriff

Archuleta County

Montezuma County

La Plata County

Dolores County

San Juan County

CWPP Updates
Conform to
HFRA standards

Updates will be completed for Archuleta and Montezuma Counties.

Ongoing Work

Progress will be analyzed on planned and completed WUI treatments in an effort to facilitate the collaborative support for expedited mitigation.

FY 06 - Oct. 1 2005- Sept. 30 2006

Assess progress on cross- boundary WUI treatments

Inventory of treatments

Private Land
WUI Treatments

Federal WUI
Treatments

Planned Federal
WUI Treatments

Progress Review by
Counties / SJPL / CSFS

Archuleta County

La Plata County

Montezuma County

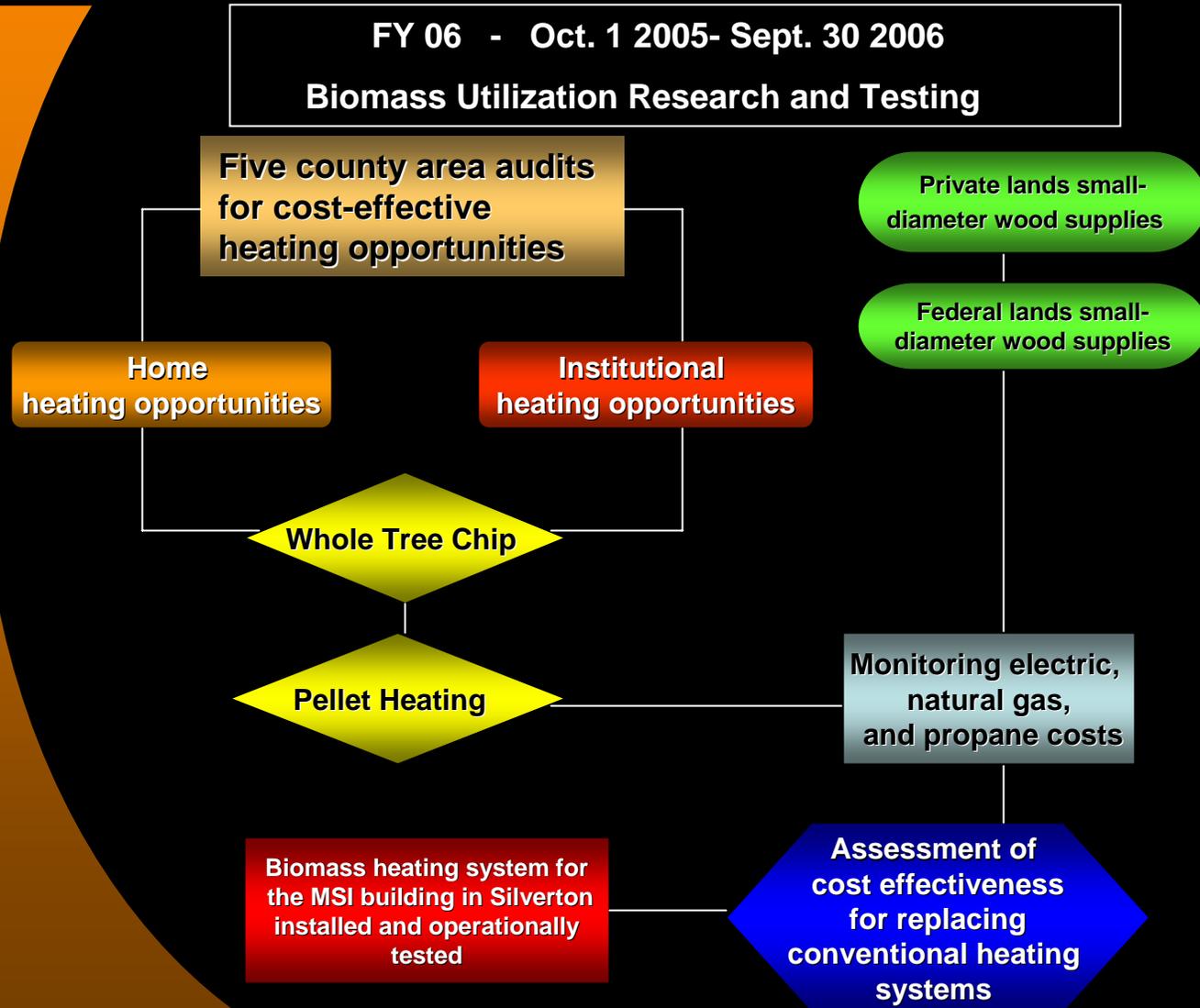
Dolores County

San Juan County

Assessment integrated
into seamless
maps and CWPPS

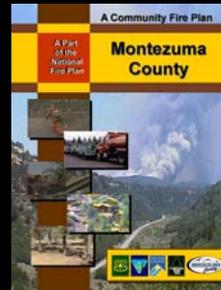
Ongoing Work

Opportunities for biomass utilization will be explored as a means to create demand for small-diameter wood products and associated waste from mitigation projects.



An Ongoing Story of Success

Fire planning in southwest Colorado is a multi-faceted and successful collaborative effort to create safer communities, stronger economies, and healthier forests.



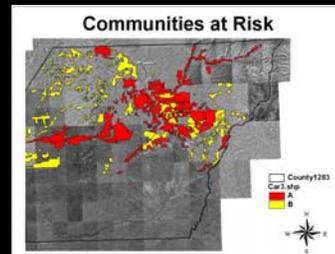
Community Wildfire Protection Plans



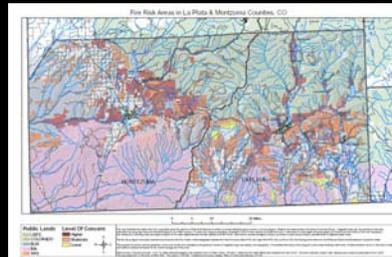
Community awareness and preparedness



Expediting collaborative cross-boundary fuels treatments



Strategic mapping and analysis



Seamless risk mapping and greater multi-jurisdictional coordination



Monitoring progress on cross-boundary WUI fuels treatments



Biomass utilization and economic incentive for fuels reduction.

