

FINAL

**Ponderosa Area
Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

March 2008

Prepared by
Cascadia Conservation District
with assistance from the
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1. Introduction

Homeowners in the Ponderosa development of Chelan County have been concerned about the effects of wildfire for some time. The Hatchery Creek, Round Mountain, Rat Creek, and Tyee fires in 1994 were in the vicinity and visible from the community. These events motivated the Ponderosa Community Club, Inc., Board to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan in 2002. This was a multi-resource plan that emphasized reduction of the risk of catastrophic fires and enhancement of forest health. In 2003 the Board applied for a National Fire Plan grant to begin hazard assessments, hold workshops to increase public awareness, complete fuels treatment on demonstration blocks, and prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The community desired to continue the program and applied for funding in 2005 and 2006 but were not successful. For the purpose of this project, the entire planning area is considered to be in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

Visions and Goals

The citizens value their homes, forested setting and privacy. Their overarching aim is to protect life and property of the community, its members, and essential infrastructure from fire through outreach, strategic planning and action.

The primary goal of the Ponderosa Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is to identify and implement projects that will protect people in the CWPP area, including residents, and firefighters and emergency personnel, from injury and loss of life. The secondary goal is to minimize or eliminate damage or loss of property and essential infrastructure due to wildfire.

All options for the utilization of biomass produced from fuels reduction projects will be pursued.

Community Awareness

The Ponderosa community and surrounding area are very aware of the need to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. While not yet directly impacted, recent large fires in the vicinity (Hatchery, Round Mountain and Tyee in 1994, Fisher fire in 2004 and the 2005 Dirtyface fire) have been on all sides of them. A structure fire within the community in August 2004 provided an added emphasis for action. That fire brought immediate response from 5 agencies as they were very nervous about a fire in the Ponderosa area.

The community hopes to provide an example that other communities can apply to their areas. The Ponderosa leaders, Board member and local Fire Chief have provided the community energy, input and guidance essential for the creation of this document. Additionally, it is the hope of the Ponderosa community that residents and property owners of the area will start, or continue, efforts to make their properties as "FireWise" as possible and implement defensible space. However, since most of the lots are too

small to effectively create defensible spaces and fully implement most of the “FireWise” recommendations, a community-wide alternative is needed.

Values

The property owners of the Ponderosa area value their homes, forest setting and privacy. They want to improve the safety of their community, and many individuals have already conducted work to reduce fuels around their homes and implemented fuels reduction projects in demonstration blocks. The assessed value of the Ponderosa community is approximately \$27,000,000. Through the CWPP effort they also hope to provide input on land management decisions for adjacent Forest and State lands. This will be accomplished through the identification of proposed projects on FS or State Managed lands in the CWPP and those ideas being communicated with the adjacent State and Federal land managers for consideration in the development of new or inclusion into ongoing projects.

2. Planning Area

The Ponderosa Area CWPP planning area is approximately 1,100 acres and includes the Ponderosa Community Club and surrounding area (see map on page 3). The planning area is bound to the west by the Wenatchee River, to the north by the Plain community clearings, to the east by the ridgeline above the Chumstick Creek drainage and to the south by the end of the Standing Rock Development. It includes most of Chelan County Fire District #4 and the immediate area of its first response responsibilities. The entire area within the planning boundary is considered the Wildland/Urban Interface.

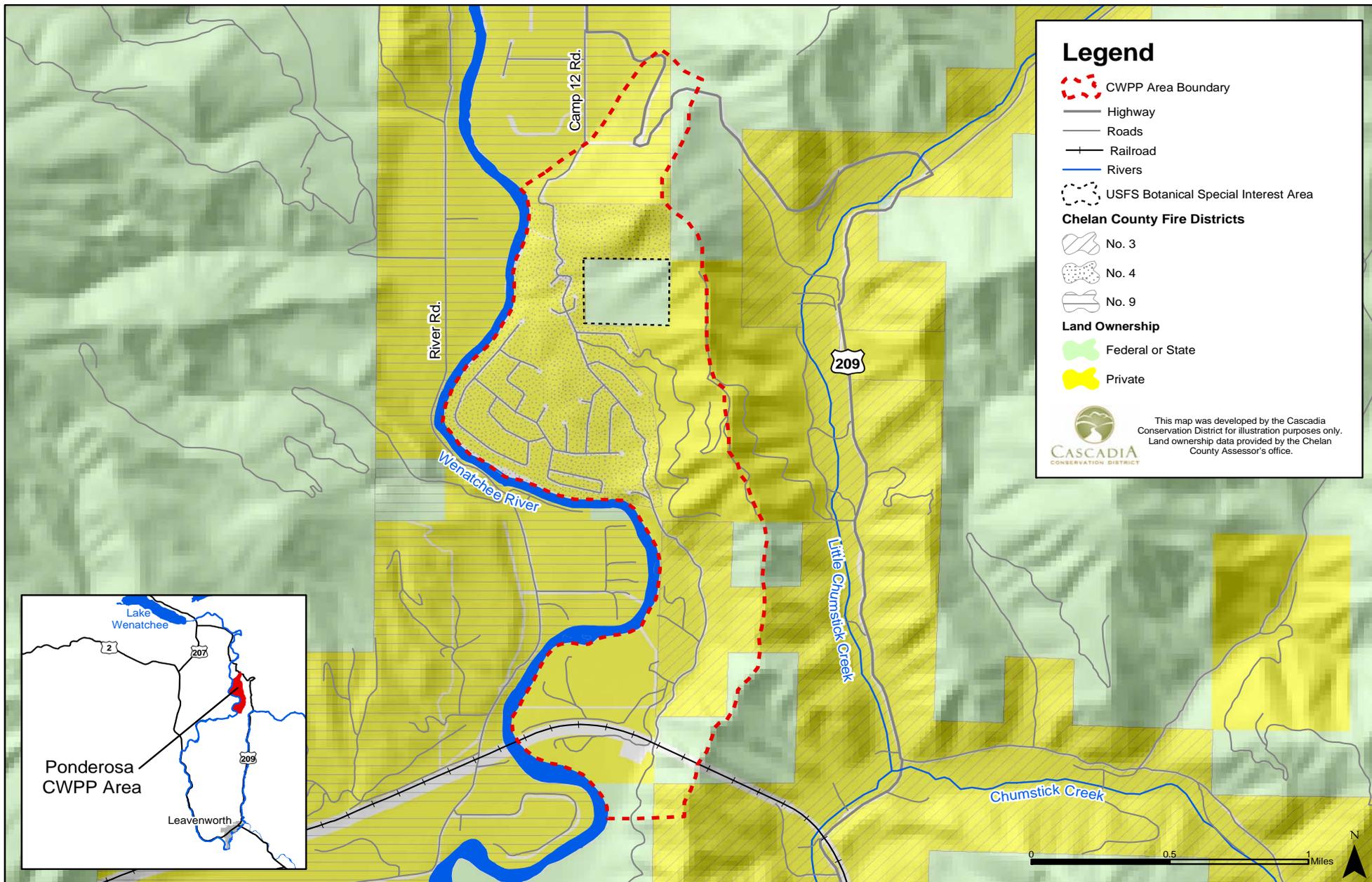
The 540-parcel Ponderosa Community Club comprises about 36% (400 acres) of the planning area. A 40-acre block of National forest land (NE1/4, NE1/4, Sec. 24) lies at the northeast corner of the development. The 12 parcel Standing Rock Development encompasses another 27% (300 acres) to the south and runs into about 20 acres (2%) of Washington State Department of Natural Resources land. A small subdivision lies at the south end of Ponderosa along the Wenatchee River and the remainder of the planning area (34%) 375 acres is in larger private ownerships (20 acres +) and are on steep ground with little development.

General Description of the Area

The Ponderosa area is defined as the area east of the Wenatchee River and includes the entire Ponderosa Community Club, the Standing Rock Development and the hillside to the ridgeline between the Chumstick Creek drainage with the Plain community to the north and west. The only County owned access road to the planning area is from Plain via the Camp 12 Road that is gated at the south end of the Ponderosa development and becomes virtually impassible beyond the Standing Rock Development. All the remaining roads are private with varying standards. Most private roads/driveways are substandard for travel with structural fire vehicles, nevertheless, the Fire District can manage to access these roads/driveways but response time is increased as access is challenging.

Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Overview of the CWPP Area



The developments will be difficult to evacuate and defend in the event of a fast moving wildland fire. In the event that most home or property owners are in the developments and a fire was to threaten the communities it would be very challenging to efficiently get everyone out safely.

The vast majority of the home sites do not include adequate defensible space although some work has been initiated by individuals and assistance from a 2003 National Fire Plan Grant. The “greenbelts” (areas within and adjacent to homes) and other undeveloped areas within the planning area are stocked with heavy fuels. Specifically, some areas of the “greenbelts” and undeveloped lots have a lot of dead and downed fuels, ladder fuels and thick “dog hair” pine that make these areas a primary concern.

Fuel types are primarily overstocked, mixed conifer types with some openings along the arid south slopes. Heavy riparian vegetation exists along the Wenatchee River. The terrain is relatively gentle along the valley bottom but is very steep up to the ridgeline. A small “safe zone” exists within the planning area for suppression forces in case of a fast moving wildland fire in a worse case scenario.

Power is provided to most lots via overhead lines with only a few underground connections to the structures. The only public water system within the planning area serves the Ponderosa Community Club.

General Description of Existing Residential Areas

1) Ponderosa Community Club – This is a recreational-residential subdivision, initiated in the 1960’s, and contains 540 parcels on 400 acres, including about 127 acres of “greenbelt” scattered throughout the development. The road system is a series of loop roads with approximately 12 cul-de-sacs, but the only egress is the Camp 12 Road to Plain. The development is about 70% built out with a wide variety of building designs, most with metal roofs but few with adequate defensible spaces. Water is provided from five wells and is pumped to two water tanks with 140,000 gallon total capacity (one tank is 80,000 gallons and the other is 60,000 gallons). Three hydrants and 52 2 1/2” stand pipe exists in the development. Fire District #4 station is located in the center of the development. Overhead power lines provide electricity the development.

2) Standing Rock Development – This, too, is a recreational-residential subdivision. It was developed in the 1970’s and contains approximately 12 parcels, currently with 8 developed. Some of these are significant structures. The only road access is by the narrow, substandard Camp 12 Road, barely accessible with structural fire apparatus. There is no community water system and power is provided by underground power lines.

There is little residential development in the remainder of the planning area. Most of it is steep with only a few substandard roads. The exception is the small subdivision at the south end of Ponderosa and the residence along the Beaver Hill Road. It appears as though only half of the Standing Rock Development is in Fire District 4.

3. Planning Process

Background

The enactment of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 created the opportunities for counties to participate in community based forest planning and vegetation treatment project prioritization. This landmark legislation includes the first meaningful statutory incentives for the US Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to give consideration to the priorities of local communities as they develop and implement forest management and hazardous fuels reduction projects.

In order for communities to take full advantage of this opportunity, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan must first be prepared. The Ponderosa Area CWPP is meant to conform to the intent and letter of HFRA. Once implemented, the CWPP should help reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire in this community.

The process of developing a CWPP is intended to help the communities of Chelan County clarify and refine priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). It can also lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options and implications for the surrounding watersheds.

The language in the HFRA provides flexibility for a community to determine the substance and detail of CWPP's and the procedures used to develop them. Because the legislation is general in nature, Chelan County is providing assistance in the preparation of CWPP. CWPP's are being developed on the county fire district boundary scale in coordination with the landowners; fire district staff, and representatives of the United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Washington State Department of Natural Resources. There are ten Fire Districts in Chelan County and CWPPs are being developed for each. These CWPP's will be addendums to the Chelan County-Wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Priorities developed for each Fire District will be ranked for the County.

The CWPP's for Chelan County will be updated as appropriate (no more than once every three years) by the Chelan County Conservation District. It is expected that updates will be necessary in order to reflect work done to address issues identified in the CWPP's. Another important aspect of these plans will be the monitoring of effectiveness of projects implemented.

The wildland urban interface (WUI) is the zone where structures and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. This WUI zone poses tremendous risk to life, property, and infrastructure in associated communities and is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations firefighters face.

Both the National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment place a priority on working

collaboratively within communities in the WUI to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire.

The HFRA builds on existing efforts to restore healthy forest conditions near communities and essential community infrastructure by authorizing expedited environmental assessments, administrative appeals, and legal review for hazardous fuels projects on federal land.

The Act emphasizes the need for federal agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and it places priority on treatments identified by communities themselves in a CWPP.

The HFRA provides communities with a tremendous opportunity to influence where and how federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on federal lands, and how additional federal funds may be distributed for projects on nonfederal lands. A CWPP is an effective way to take advantage of this opportunity.

The HFRA requires that three entities (listed below) must mutually agree to the final contents of a CWPP:

- The applicable local government (County or Cities)
- The local fire departments; and
- The state entity responsible for forest management.

In addition, these entities are directed to consult with and involve local representatives of the USFS and BLM and other interested parties or persons in the development of the plan. The process is open and collaborative, as described in the Ten Year Strategy. Local and state officials, federal land managers, and a broad range of interested stake holders are involved.

In the absence of a CWPP, the HFRA limits the WUI to within ½ mile of a community's boundary or within 1½ miles where mitigating circumstances exist, such as steep slopes or the presence of a critical evacuation route. At least 50 percent of funds appropriated for projects under the HFRA must be used within the WUI as defined by either a CWPP or by the limited definition provided in the HFRA where no CWPP exists. For the Ponderosa Area CWPP, the WUI is defined as the entire project area.

Process and Partners

The residents of Ponderosa community Club have been concerned about wildland fire for many years. Recent fires (1988 - Dinkelman, 1994 – Tyee, Rat Creek, Hatchery Creek and Round Mountain, 2001 – Icicle Ridge, 2004 – Icicle Canyon and Fisher, and 2005 – Dirtyface) keep this concern alive. The current drought and recent low snow levels add to those concerns.

In 2002 the Ponderosa Community Club Board, spearheaded by Rob Zinc, a retired National Park Service Ranger from Sequoia National Park, applied to the Washington

State Department of Natural Resources for funds to develop a Forest Stewardship Plan to address the fuels and forest health conditions. This plan was completed and approved by the Board in October 2002 and included objectives to:

- Reduce the risk from catastrophic fires.
- Improve and enhance the forest health conditions.
- Develop treatment priorities and strategies that will qualify for forest and fuels treatment reimbursements to help offset the overall costs.

During this period the resident's awareness of the wildfire risk was discussed at the Association meetings and through their newspaper, the Pine Needler. The community members continue to be very concerned about fire risk to the community-owned greenbelt areas, to their properties and their ability to evacuate the area should fires occur.

In April 2003 PCCI was successful in receiving a National Fire Plan grant of \$100,000, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The grant provided for:

- Conducting risk assessments of community properties.
- Hold "Fire Wise" workshops for community members.
- Develop a fire protection plan for the community
- Implement demonstration treatments for defensible spaces and fuels reduction.

The fire station for Chelan County Fire District #4 lies in the center of the Ponderosa Community and Fire Chief, Bruce Merighi, has led the efforts for fire protection and defensible space development for many years. The Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Forest Service both recognize the extreme fire risk of the community and support remedial measures. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service added their support by funding the grant.

Risk assessments have been completed on 59 lots in the demonstration areas and risk assessment brochures were made available to the remaining residents. "Fire Wise" topics were included in the 2003 and 2004 spring annual meetings and a special workshop was held in May 2005. Fuels reduction and defensible spaces were accomplished on 59 properties and green belts, totaling 35 acres. PCCI has contributed over \$29,000 to the project, primarily through timber receipts. The results were well received by residents of the community. There is now a better understanding of how wildfire risk can be reduced and many are initiating treatment actions on their own.

The PCCI Board requested additional grants in 2004 and 2005 to continue the fuels treatment program. Both of these requests were not funded. It became evident that the Community Wildfire Protection Plan was needed before any additional assistance was forthcoming. At the May 2005 workshop a community committee was identified to participate in the development of the Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan. These, and other members, have attended other "Fire Wise" workshops in the vicinity and have helped to develop the Ponderosa Area CWPP.

The Ponderosa Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan is the result of these locally-led efforts and partnerships between private, local, state and federal interests. The CWPP serves as part of the foundation for the county-wide wildfire protection plan that is currently being developed. By basing the County-wide plan on individual CWPP's such as the Ponderosa Area plan, the goals, objectives and recommended projects will be developed by and remain specific to each community. (See Section 8, Mitigation Action Plan)

4. Assessment

Existing Information

A substantial amount of data is already available from several sources. Primary fire planning information/GIS data used in this plan came from Chelan County Fire District No. 4 (structure protection plan, evacuation plan, etc.), USFS Wenatchee-Okanogan National Forest, Wenatchee River Ranger District (large fire history, some vegetation information), and Washington Department of Natural Resources (historic/potential vegetation/potential vegetation, topography, fire cause statistics).

Vegetation

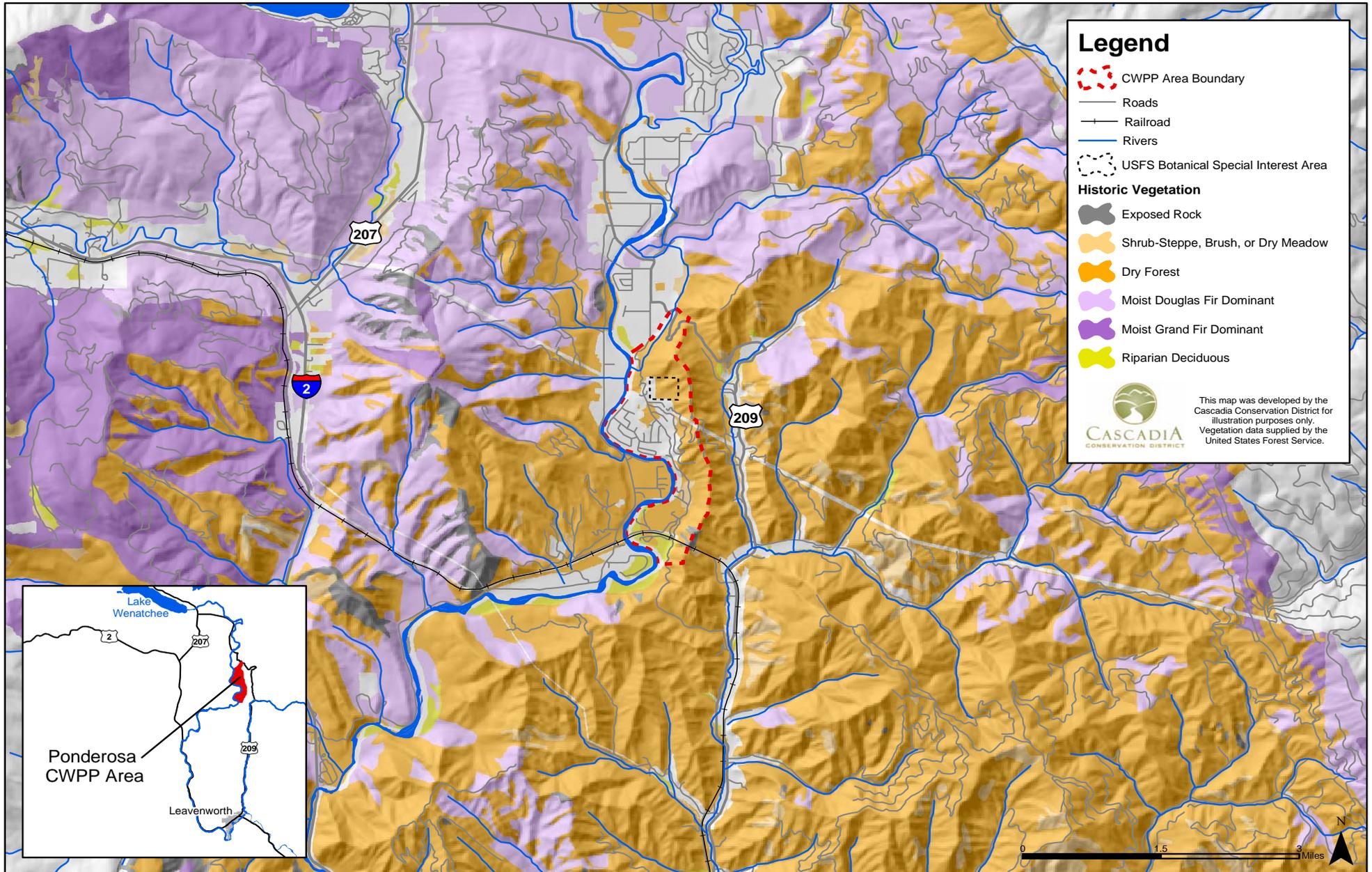
The majority of the planning area contains a mix of coniferous species (Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, with some grand fir and western redcedar in the damper areas. Riparian vegetation exists along the Wenatchee River. Grass shrub openings occur on the steeper, droughty hillsides and along the Bonneville Powerline clearing. Understory vegetation includes vine maple, rose, ocean spray and serviceberry on the deeper soils, with pinegrass fescue and sedges on the drier sites. The majority of the trees are 70-90 years old, coming in after the last harvest and major wildfire, with scattered remnant older trees. Ponderosa pine composition is being reduced by bark beetle attack and dwarf mistletoe is heavy in pockets of Douglas-fir.

Historically, ponderosa pine predominated in these stands with a scattering of Douglas-fir and other species. Age classes ranged from seedling to very large diameters. Understory vegetation was reduced by recurrent low-intensity wildfires. (see Vegetation Types map on page 9)

The planning area is predominately a ponderosa pine and mixed conifer dry forest type. Ponderosa pine is a shade intolerant species naturally adapted to survive in areas that experience fire on a regular basis (i.e. frequent fire regime, fire interval every 5-15 years). Fire plays a major role in how ponderosa pine is established and sustained on the landscape. Regular burning allows pine stands to flourish by removing underbrush and smaller competing trees. As the pines mature their bark thickens and their lower branches are self-pruned, which makes them better adapted in a fire environment. Older, pure ponderosa pine stands often have a wide, open, park-like feel with scattered large trees (12-25/acre) with grass and scattered brush species in the understory. Fire also provides benefits, and opportunities for a variety of plant species. The resulting increase in vegetation diversity benefits wildlife, as well as forest health-disease resistance.

Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Vegetation Types



When the natural fire regime is altered (primarily through fire suppression) ponderosa pine stands become denser. Shading and competition will inhibit the growth of pine and allow more shade tolerant species, such as Douglas-fir and grand fir, to become established along with other underbrush species. This overstocked condition will produce vertical and horizontal fuel profile continuities, which often result in stand replacement fires. Additionally, denser stands are often more susceptible to the spread of insects and disease which provide more dead fuels. Frequent fire regimes (with fires at intervals of 0-35 years) become unstable as fire frequency is disrupted (e.g. by fire suppression). These forest types rely on the dynamics of fire to lower competition amongst species, keep areas of disease and insects in check and clean up the dead and downed materials (fuel). If there are no fires in a 0-70 year period to manipulate the dry forest, the forest is considered in a Condition Class II. No fires over a longer period produce a densely stocked stand of pine and shade tolerant species with often results in stand replacement fires. This Condition Class III situation will result in the loss of forest cover, damage to watersheds, altered wildlife habitat, and potential soil damage when the inevitable uncharacteristic high intensity fire occurs. Some fuels treatment has reduced the risk but most of the areas in the planning area are in Condition Class II or III.

Fire Ecology

Weather, topography, and fuels affect wildfire behavior. The Ponderosa Area CWPP area, like other areas of Chelan County, is prone to severe weather conditions that can support extreme fire behavior. The landscape within the developments is gentle but with several sharp draws from the Wenatchee River that could act as fire chimneys. And the steep slopes above the developments could support severe fire behavior. Most stands have closed canopies, overstocked understory, and abundant ladder fuels. Continuous tall underbrush also predominates. Insect and disease infestations of mountain pine beetle and dwarf mistletoe are prevalent.

Since the weather and the topography of the community cannot be changed, the best approach to minimize the risk to people and potential property losses is to modify and/or reduce fuels surrounding the home, as well as at the landscape level. Fuels treatments within and adjacent to a community can improve safety for firefighters, help overall suppression efforts to be successful, and reduce potential risk/damage to individual structures/property. Wildlife habitat benefits can also be gained through fuels reduction and natural vegetation restoration projects.

Fire History

Fires are started naturally by lightning, in and around the planning area, every few years. But fires are also often started as a result of other causes, such as campfires, and debris burning. The Burlington Northern Rail Line runs across the south end of the CWPP area and this has been a frequent cause of fires historically, but have not been a source in the planning area recently (see Fire History map on page 9 for summary and location of fire starts.) The sizes of the fires have been small with only one larger than 10 acres. Typically, small fires of a few to several acres occur at 1-5 year intervals. No large fires have been experienced in the planning area in nearly 100 years but conditions are susceptible to a large, high severity fires similar to those that have recently occurred in

surrounding areas (1998 Tyee, Rat Creek, Hatchery Creek and Round Mountain Fires, 2001 Icicle Ridge Fire, 2004 Icicle Canyon and Fisher Fires and 2005 Dirtyface Fire). A major fire in the Ponderosa area has the potential to be a major disaster resulting in the loss of life and structures.

General Fire Behavior Potential

Most structures inside the planning area are within heavily forested areas. The green belt common areas are also heavily forested with closed canopies and ladder fuels and have ground fuels with depths of 4" or greater in many places and thick areas of brush. The small lot sizes (average 0.3 acres each) within the Ponderosa community result in buildings being very close together. Fires may move very rapidly through both the developed areas and the forested greenspaces. There is a high potential for spotting and control could be impossible if wind is a factor. The heavily forested draws could produce fast moving fires when driven by the steep slopes and sustained winds. The threat would soon be in all areas of the planning area with fire potential to involve all structures.

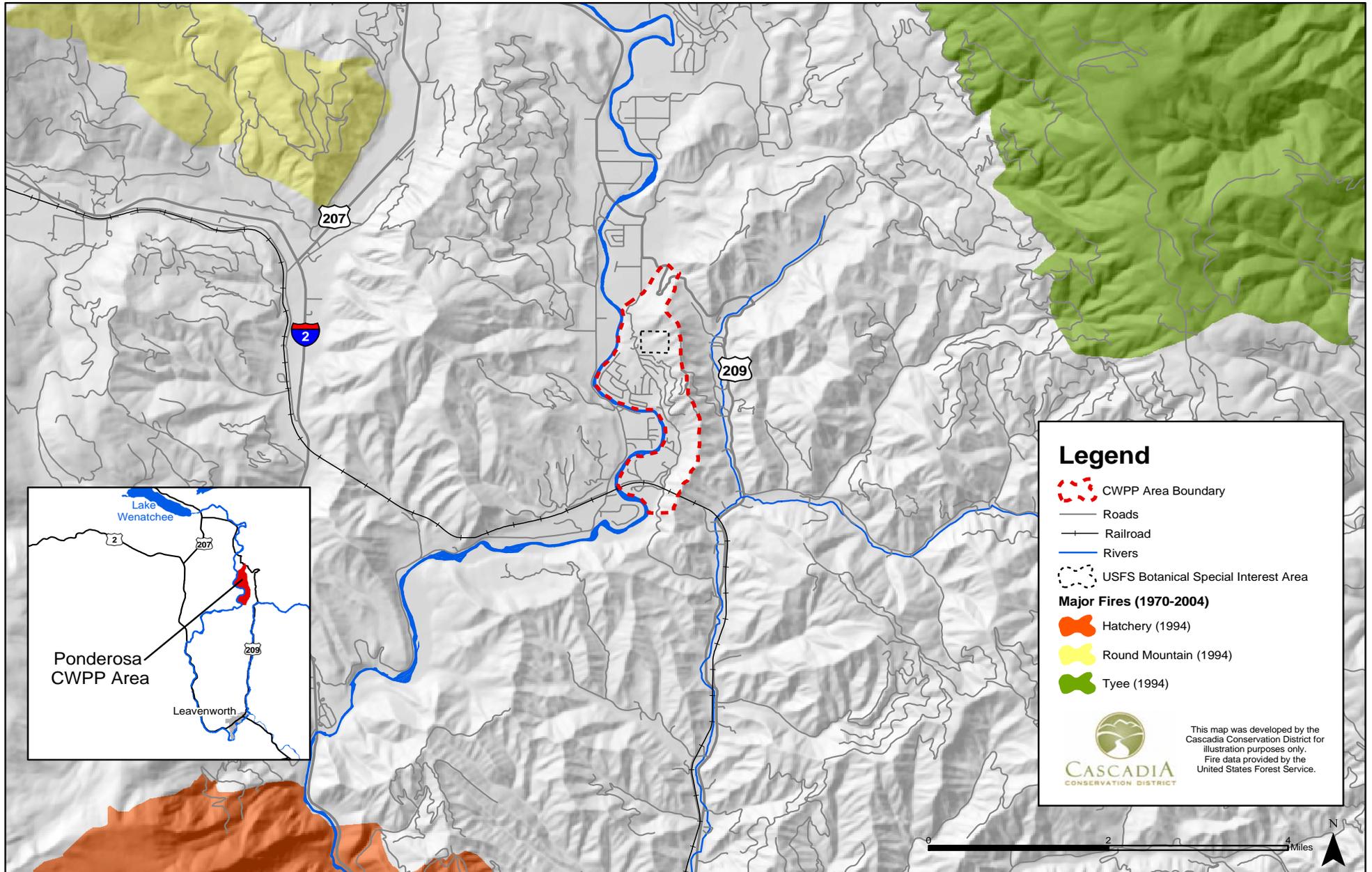
On the positive side less than 1% of the homes in the area have shake roofs, with most being metal. This reduces the risk of shakes becoming a firebrand source for starting new spot fires. But many have wood or even shake siding and there are many wood and lumber piles that could contribute to spotting. Should structures become involved; spotting potential from the structures themselves will be significant.

Fuels Hazards

The WADNR has classified the planning area as part of the "high risk" Leavenworth Wildland Urban Interface area. Past activities such as logging and fire suppression have altered the normal fire regime; stand species, composition and structure and forest health. Dense overstocked stands dominated by trees under 12 inches in diameter are increasing the fire hazard. Pockets of trees are affected by mountain pine beetle. (WADNR GIS, see previous Vegetation map). Trees often have contiguous crowns and ladder fuels and continuous tall underbrush also predominates on the landscape. All of these variables provide a continuous fuel profile which can create conditions for an intense and fast moving fire.

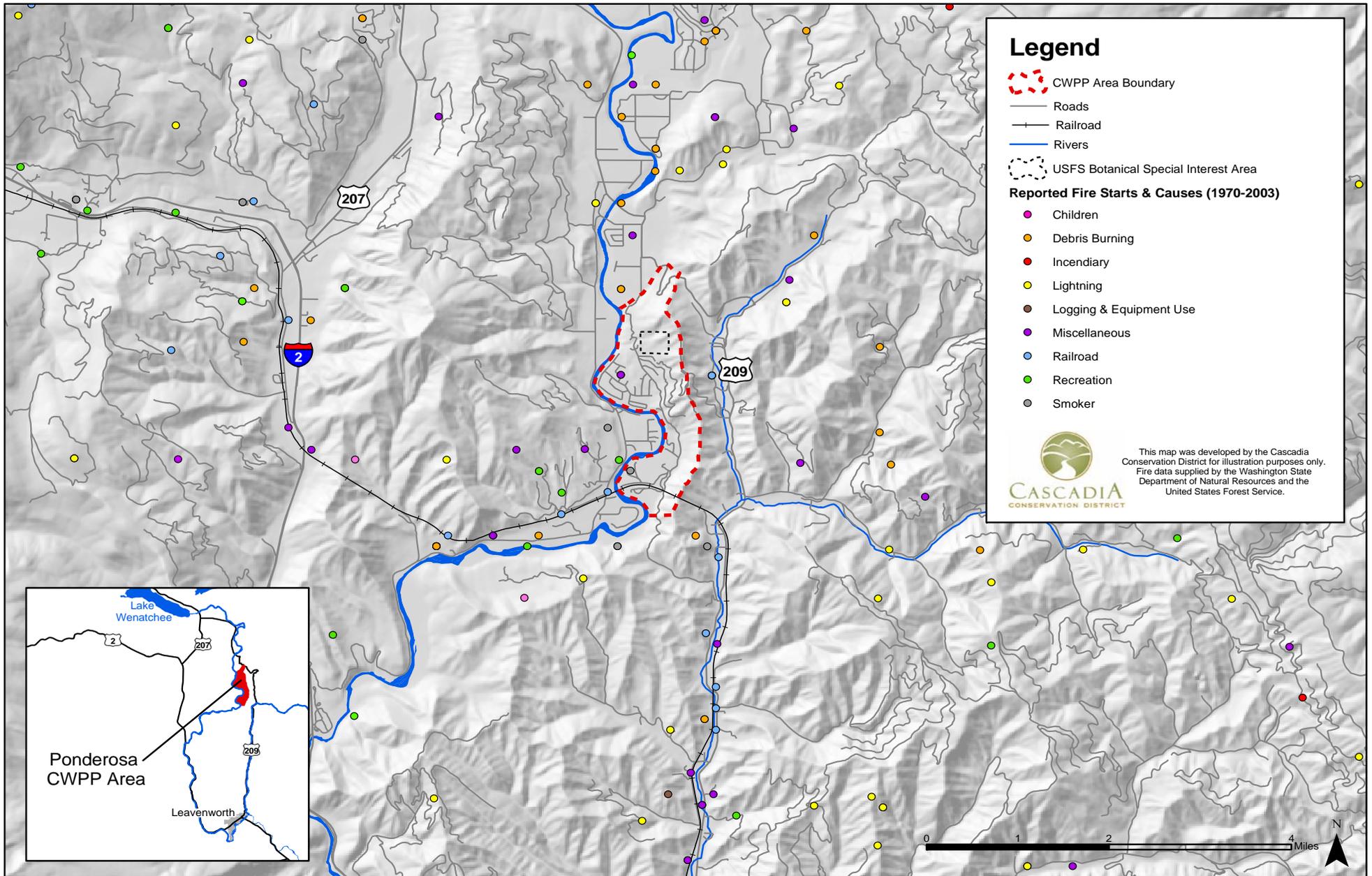
Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Major Fires 1970-2006



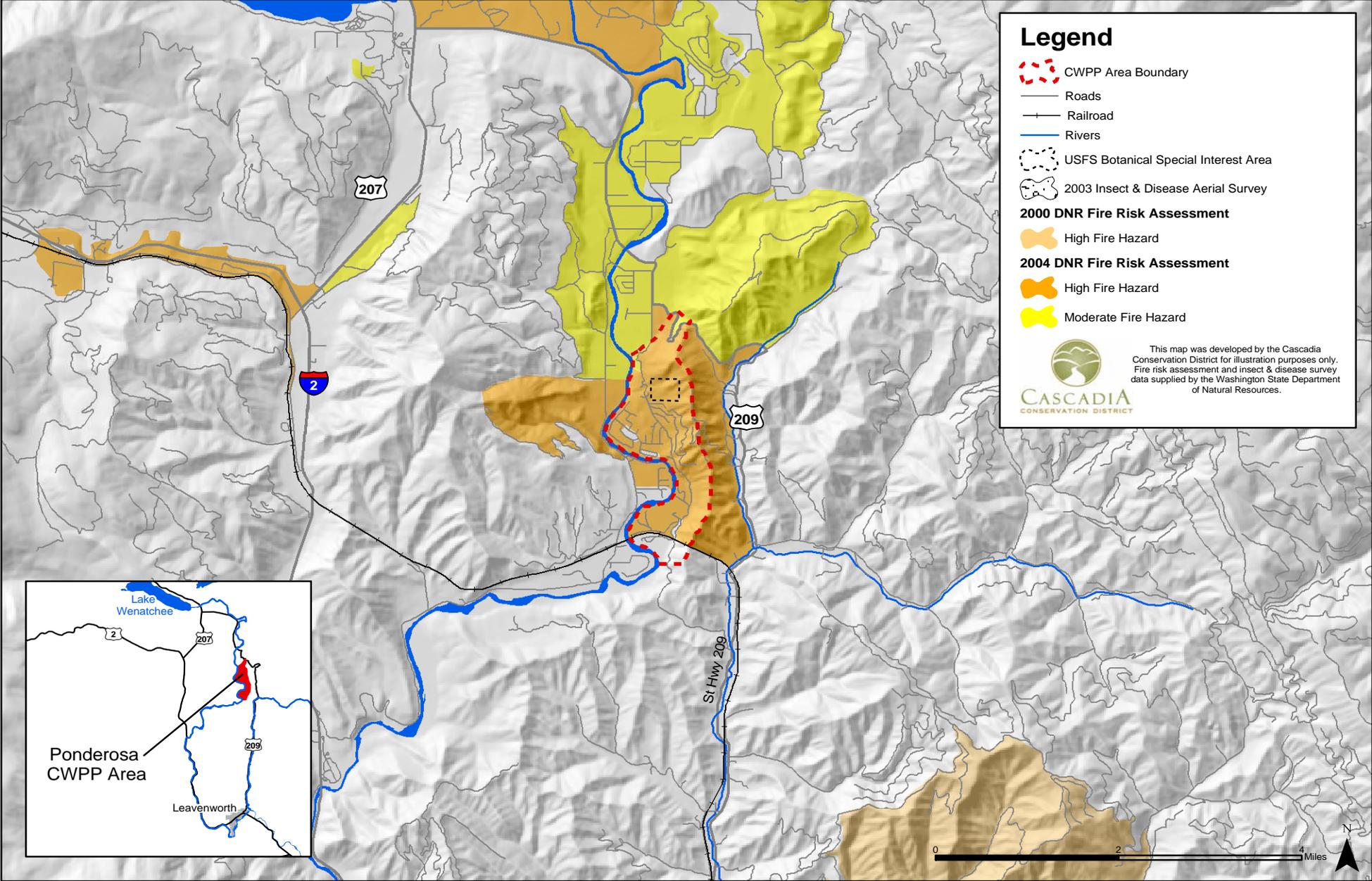
Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Reported Fire Starts & Causes 1970-2003



Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Fire Risk Assessment and Insect & Disease Survey Data



Protection Capabilities

Chelan County Fire District #4 is responsible for protection of the fire protection district which includes the Ponderosa Community Club. The developed private lands to the north and west are protected by Chelan County fire District #9 (Lake Wenatchee) and to the south by CCFD #3 (Leavenworth). The Washington Department of Natural Resources has protection responsibilities for the undeveloped private lands and the Forest Service for federal lands. The District maintains mutual aid agreements with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and all the fire districts within Chelan and Douglas Counties. The district also has an automatic aid agreement with CCFD #3 (Leavenworth) and CCFD #9 (Lake Wenatchee/Plain) for any wildland or structure fire.

The District is an extremely small department covering approximately 896 acres. The Fire District does not have any paid employees, but has 12 motivated volunteers. CCFD #4 fire station is located within the Ponderosa community.

Current Equipment

1-Type I	Engine
1-Type II	Tender/Interface Engine (2,400 gallons)
1-Type III	Engine/brush truck
1-Type VI	Brush/rescue truck

The objective of the Chelan County Fire District #4 structure protection plan is to immediately evacuate all residents if their escape route could possibly be compromised. Strategy decision shall take into account the following tactical considerations:

1. The Ponderosa area is in a very fire-prone setting. It lies at the edge of the valley bottom with steep incised draws and headwalls that are heavily timbered. Fires would move rapidly through the area with a high probability of spotting, torching and crowning.
2. The development contains very small lots with a wide variety of structures. Most of the homes would require more effort to defend than what is likely to occur given the potential risk to fire fighters. The vast majority of structures, in an event of a major wildfire, are not considered to safe to defend.
3. The primary consideration of the District is the protection of the lives of the residents and the safety of the firefighters.
4. The District practices a policy of aggressive initial attack and containing structure fires to the building and protecting the adjacent forest. For any fire call within the Ponderosa area CCFD #9 and CCFD #3 are automatically dispatched.
5. While life safety and structural protection are the primary responsibilities of the District, the district also responds to adjacent wildfires.

6. Wildfires escaping initial attack rapidly expand and require a multi-jurisdictional response. This requires joint training and communications. Currently there is a positive relationship with local partners but this requires constant maintenance.
7. Chelan County Fire District #4 and its local partner cooperators cannot assemble enough structure protection capabilities to protect all the development within the Ponderosa area. Successful defense from wildfire will depend upon structural triage, and time for pre-treatment with mobile tactics. Resources from state and federal agencies will be necessary to implement the strategies described. In the face of a fast moving or crown fire all efforts would be focused on evacuation of all residents and fire fighters.
8. The Ponderosa community has a community water system and stand pipes throughout the development. Water can also be drafted from the Wenatchee River, but refill capacities for an extended structural attack are limited. While refill capacity is at approximately 1,800 gallons a minute, in the event of a fast moving wildfire Fire District #4 staff would not stay in the community without safe zones and good escape routes.

Structural Vulnerability

Residences within the Ponderosa community are in a suburban, forested setting entwined within the forested landscape. Access, topography, slope and fuels play a role in each structure’s fire risk, as well as the condition of adjacent structures. Timber mixed with light fuels creates a fast moving fire situation with the highest potential for large fire loss. The close proximity of the structures, the limited escape route and lack of safety area limits the amount of protection the district can supply during a major wildfire event.

Key Contacts

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>
Chelan County Fire District #4	Main Station RiverCom	(O) (509)763-0221 911 or (509) 663-9911
Chelan County Fire District #4 Administration	Chief Bruce Merighi	(H) (509) 763-3581 (C) (509) 679-2274
Chelan County Sheriff	Sheriff Mike Harum RiverCom	(O) (509) 667-6851 (C) (509) 630-1700 911 or (509) 667-6851
Wenatchee River Ranger Dist. (USFS)	FMO Keith Satterfield	(509) 548-6977
Central WA Interagency Comm.		

Center (CWICC)		(509) 662-4393
Chelan County PUD		(O) (509) 663-8121 (E) (877) 783-8123
Ponderosa Community Club	President Bill Griffin	(H) (206) 542-8257
	Mgr. Bob Melson	(O) (509) 763-0320

5. Risk Evaluation

An area risk assessment was completed by WDNR (NFP-299 area risk assessment) that grouped planning area rather than analyzing risk to individual structures. **The fire risk assessment for the Ponderosa CWPP planning area is ranked as high.**

Access

There is only one access road in and out of the planning area that is designated as an emergency evacuation route. This is the County Camp 12 Road – a narrow double lane, paved road from Plain through the Ponderosa subdivision, then a one-lane, private, primitive road through the Standing Rock development, which then becomes virtually impassible beyond. This road passes through dense timber with forest canopy overhanging the road. It would not be considered a fire or fuel break. A one-way loop road provides access to a portion of the Ponderosa subdivision but the remaining roads are narrow with approximately 12 col de sacs.

Not all the roads in the planning area are paved and some are not in a suitable condition for fire equipment, especially in the steeper, outlying areas. Road access has been identified as a critical concern. The availability and improvement of the Camp 12 Road to the Chumstick Valley to serve as a secondary access for emergency evacuations has been identified as a need.

Evacuation

Chelan County Emergency Management Program administers the evacuation of the Ponderosa and surrounding area. However, given the long distance between Fire District #4 and the sheriff's office, Fire District #4 would be the most likely administer an immediate, emergency evacuation of the Ponderosa area. Since there is only one access route evacuation would have to occur well ahead of any approaching wildfire or during an incident starting in Fire District #4.

Staging Area for Tactical Resources

Chelan County Fire District #4 is the only agency for any fire originating within the Ponderosa Community Club. Washington Department of Natural Resources is the primary agency for fire protection on the surrounding forested private and state lands and US Forest Service is the primary agency responsible for management of fires on federal lands. Chelan County Fire District #4 will provide first response with automatic aid

resources available from two neighboring districts and mutual aid from most departments in Chelan and Douglas Counties.

There are no pre-determined staging areas. The chiefs in the area are aware of all possible staging areas and will call for a staging location that is appropriate to the situation.

Fire District Headquarters

Chelan County Fire District #4, Station #1, 21300 Cayuse Street

Mainline (509) 763-0221

E-mail bruce401@nwi.net

The incident command post will be located at the discretion of the Incident Commander for the incident.

Water Supplies

The location of water sources and capabilities available for firefighting efforts has been identified. Fire hydrants are available within the Ponderosa subdivision with a total storage capacity of approximately 140,000 gallons. Total storage capacity is subject to change based on use. The tanks are not always full for water purity reasons and the daily draw down by the community for potable water dramatically reduces the total fire flow capabilities. The Wenatchee River can be accessed at the Community Building to draw additional water. Additional undeveloped drafting locations are located in the Standing Rock development.

Fuel Breaks and Safety Zones

There are no safety zones within the planning area and the single access road could easily be cut off with an approaching wildfire. There is a small safety zone for one fire fighter team in the Ponderosa Community Club and an even smaller safety zone in the Standing Rock Ranch region of the planning area. An immediate primary treatment goal is to complete the development of a safety zone south of the Bonneville Powerline clearing below the Camp 12 Road on an existing community green belt. Maintenance of this area will also be needed. This area would provide an area for fire fighter use only to go if trapped by a wildfire. This area has been flagged with white ribbon/blue dots, but is much work remains in order to complete the project. (See Planned and Proposed Projects map on page 20).

A second primary treatment goal is to survey the Camp 12 Road to determine the appropriate trees to be removed in order to create a fire break along the road to provide a safer evacuation route for residents and access route for suppression forces. This would be the creation of a 50-foot wide shaded canopy fuel break on each side of the road. (See Planned and Proposed Projects map on page 20)

6. Current Activities

Protection Measures

Fire protection for the Ponderosa area is provided by Chelan County Fire District #4. Depending on time and location, response times average 5-9 minutes.

Existing Procedures

The Ponderosa Community Club has organized and conducted some community based types of projects that have increased the awareness and understanding of the residents regarding the fire risk and the reduction of fuels loads around individual homes. Grant funds obtained through the National Fire Plan program have been utilized as a catalyst for these actions and additional funds have been requested to continue these efforts. These projects reduced fuels on some green belt and demonstration lots. However, a fair amount of work still exists to complete these projects.

Project Proposals

A 2006 grant application (project proposal) was submitted but did not receive funding that would have provided for the development of the safety zone on community green belt and also development of the shaded fuel break along County Camp 12 Road. Another grant application was submitted to treat the fuels in the remainder of the community green belt. Additional proposals are to expand the Camp 12 Road fuel break to the openings at Plain and through the Camp 12 Subdivision. (see Ponderosa Area CWPP Completed, Planned and Proposed Project map on page 20)

Coordination with Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service Activities

In order to maximize the efficiency of fuels reduction work on private land, it is desirable for complimentary projects to take place on adjacent Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service managed lands. This will be accomplished by identifying areas of concern to the Ponderosa Area on those lands (See map of planned and proposed projects on page 20).

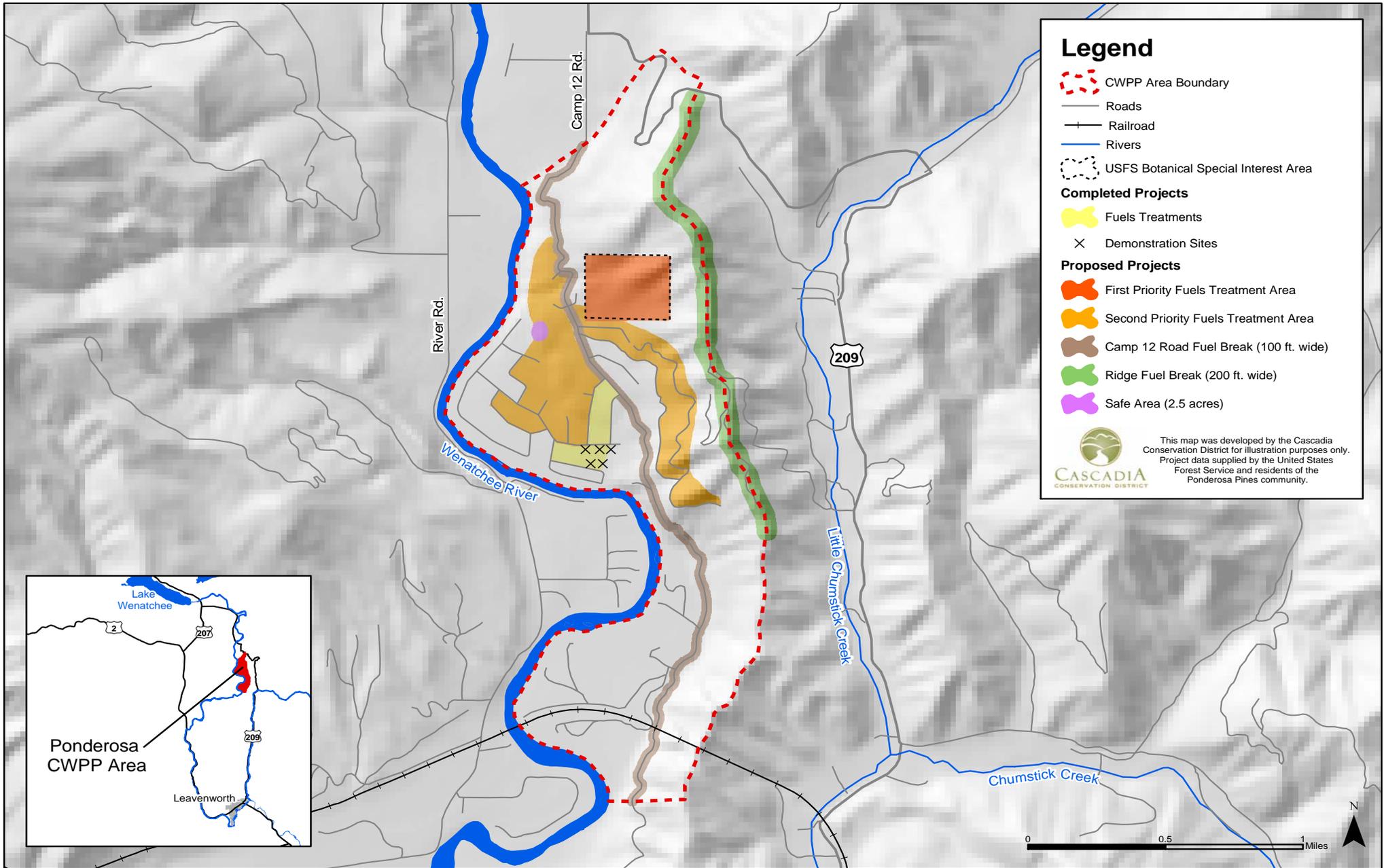
A primitive road exists along the ridgeline on the east end of the planning area between the Chumstick Drainage and the CWPP area. Development of a fuel break, if developed appropriately, along this ridge could protect the area from a wildfire approaching from the Chumstick.

The Forest Service has fuels treatment projects planned on Natapoc Mountain, to the west of the planning area and areas north of Plain. The National Forest managed lands immediately adjacent to Ponderosa has been set aside as a botanical natural area but the extreme fuels loading is a major threat to the adjacent homeowners and the entire community along its boundary. The possibility that this area could be thinned to reduce fuel loading and risk this area poses yet still protect the sensitive plants will be pursued with the Forest Service.

The CWPP is recognized as the instrument necessary to organize and educate the public to further encourage and develop future projects to address wildfire concerns.

Ponderosa Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Completed & Proposed Projects



7. Plan Maintenance

The Ponderosa Community Club Inc. Board will be responsible for monitoring existing projects and coordinating future projects aimed at wildfire prevention and protection within the Ponderosa Area CWPP area. Board members will take on the task of coordinating with outside groups and agencies to investigate, write and submit grants. This group is also responsible for partnering with appropriate agencies to review and update this CWPP as appropriate under the direction and assistance of the Chelan County Fire District #4, Cascadia Conservation District, Department of Natural Resources and the Wenatchee River Ranger District. Maintenance of specific projects implemented through this plan will be identified as part of the project proposal.

8. Mitigation Action Plan

The priority projects of the Ponderosa landowners are to survey the Camp 12 Road to determine the appropriate trees to be removed in order to create a fire break along the road and to complete the development of a safety zone south of the Bonneville Powerline clearing below the Camp 12 Road on an existing community green belt. Maintenance of this area will also be needed. This area would provide an area for fire fighter use only to go if trapped by a wildfire. A secondary priority is to continue the fuels treatment actions on the community owned green belts. (see Completed, Planned and Proposed Project map on page 20.) The objectives of these projects are to better provide a safe evacuation route and safe area if trapped and to reduce fire intensity within the community. Additional priorities are the continuing education of the landowners and the ongoing maintenance that will be required.

There are three main categories of mitigation actions identified by members of the Ponderosa CWPP committee. Categories include fuels reduction, education and outreach, and fire prevention and suppression in the WUI area. Recommendations are organized into categories and are listed in order of priority.

The Ponderosa Steering Committee will prioritize the recommendations and the top ten items will be put into an action plan and funding will be sought to implement these projects. Additionally these ten top items will be recognized as the highest priority projects for implementation by the Ponderosa area landowners.

- Fuels Reduction

1. Survey the Camp 12 Road to determine the appropriate trees to be removed in order to create a fire break along the road.
2. Implement fuels reduction on strategically located areas that will have the greatest benefit for the entire project area. The objective of the proposed project (see map on Page 20) is to help reduce the potential of a wildfire moving from public to private lands and vice versa across the landscape. Particular attention will be

placed on Forest Service botanical area (section 13) at the entrance of the Ponderosa community.

3. Clean up existing slash piles from previous fuels reduction efforts.
 4. Educate landowners about the need to reduce fuels around homes and property.
 5. Reduce fuels on land to the east of the planning area
 6. Encourage the USFS to continue current fuels reduction activities at the landscape scale with an emphasis of restoration of low intensity fire regime and creating strategic fuel breaks that will enhance local fire suppression efforts and utilize “natural” fuel breaks where feasible (such as ridge tops, highways, rock outcrops and irrigated pastures). Encourage similar activities on other National Forest lands adjacent to private ownership within the CWPP area as the risk assessment and prioritization process continues (see map on page 20 for areas identified during this planning process).
 7. Identify extreme hazard sites and work with landowners to reduce fuel loads of these sites to improve safety for an entire area.
 8. Treat vegetation along roads and driveways to improve site access and fire fighting. Removing the material rather than letting it lay is desired.
- Education and Outreach
 1. Participate with Forest Service opportunities. Community members will work with the Forest Service to pursue fuel treatments on Forest Service managed lands that complement adjacent private fuel reduction efforts. Emphasis on public lands nearest to private property should have the highest priority for fuel reduction efforts. Opportunities to incorporate cooperative agreements (such as utilization of the Wyden act) should be pursued.
 2. Conduct annual FireWise Workshops in the spring.
 3. Compile and make available to general public fire risk information and actions being initiated to reduce these risks.
 - Improving Protection Capabilities/Human Safety
 1. Emergency Safety Issues
 - A. Consider establishing addresses in a logical and consistent manner for all roads and homes. Many lanes/driveways/roads do not have addresses at the beginning of the lane. This could cause emergency responders to lose valuable time searching for the correct location.
 2. Final development and continued maintenance of the one small existing safe zone.