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## MOFD releases draft of Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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The Moraga-Orinda Fire District presented a draft of its Community Wildfire Protection Plan, a guide to help district residents develop an understanding of wildfire and wildfire management. The plan identifies and prioritizes areas within the district for fuel mitigation efforts, and recommends ways to reduce the fire risk in those high-risk communities.

At the Dec. 16 district meeting, Fire Chief Dave Winnacker explained that the problem of accumulated fuels in the district has taken a long time to develop - more than 100 years in the making. Building homes in areas that had been grazed or allowed to burn, and then surrounding those homes with non-native vegetation, exacerbated the problem.

"It's going to take years to address this," Winnacker said. "The work required places a demand on resources that will outstrip availability."

The chief said the mitigation efforts will be prioritized starting with the most serious areas and where the community as a whole will achieve the greatest return on investment. "The Community Wildfire Protection Plan will guide that work," Winnacker said.

The 65-page document covers the wildfire risk in the district, strategies for reducing that risk, district priorities and the district action plan to tackle those priorities. "The purpose of the Moraga-Orinda Community Wildfire Protection Plan is to protect human life and reduce the loss of property, critical infrastructure, and natural resources due to wildfire," states the introduction to the document.

In order to address the subtleties and complexities of each district community, MOFD will hold three public workshops to go over the plan details and take public feedback. The first meeting is scheduled for Orinda Jan. 21, followed by Canyon Jan. 28 and Moraga Feb. 4. Meetings will be held at 6 p.m. as online teleconferences.

Having a Community Wildfire Protection Plan also qualifies the district for priority funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects carried out under the Healthy Forests Initiative, a federal initiative established in 2003 to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fires.

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