

Lake County Fire Safe Council Strategic Plan (2025-2030)

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Adopted February 20, 2025

Purpose

This document describes a strategic plan developed for the Lake County Fire Safe Council (LCFSC) based on an all-day retreat conducted with Lake County Resource Conservation District (LCRCD) staff on December 17, 2024. It was later refined with community input via the second Preparedness, Action, Engagement, and Resiliency (PEAR) workshop hosted by LCFSC on January 10, 2025; focused review by an advisory committee; and additional feedback from other Lake County community members. The planning horizon for this document is from 2025-2030. It is important to note that the successful operationalization of this strategic plan is dependent on the consistent availability of dedicated funding. Likewise, many of these goals can only be achieved with the committed collaboration of partners, as laid out in the LCFSC charter, the completion and adoption of which is expected by June 2025.

Acknowledgements: Facilitators, Participants, Advisors, and Funders

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Advisory Committee:

- Jessica Pyska, District 5 Supervisor, Lake County Board of Supervisors
- Julianne Lewis, President, South Lake Fire Safe Council
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Funders:

- California Fire Safe Council County Coordinator Program
- Coalitions & Collaboratives' Action, Implementation and Mitigation Program
- County of Lake

Lake County Fire Safe Council “North Star” Statements

About these statements: “North Star Statements” are the guiding statements for the LCFSC. These elements are current, shared, and relevant.

Lake County Fire Safe Council Vision

A vision should be aspirational, inspiring, and alive with tangible “stretch” goals.

Recognizing that the work of wildfire resilience is complex, LCFSC serves as the central convener for partners engaged in this work in Lake County. By 2030, LCFSC reliably and effectively supports partner coordination and collaborative action by providing communication tools and facilitating opportunities to convene. By 2030, LCFSC also offers a high-quality, impactful, and broadly accessible suite of programs and resources that equip residents to reduce fuels and protect Lake County’s communities and landscapes.

Lake County Fire Safe Council Organizational Purpose

An organizational purpose is shared externally.

LCFSC convenes partners to coordinate wildfire resilience work and standardize messaging across Lake County and empowers all residents with the educational, physical, and financial resources to proactively protect their family, property, and community from wildfire.

Community Vision

The Community Vision emerged through the 2024-2025 PEAR workshops; the final language incorporates two rounds of participant feedback.

Lake County is a wildfire-adapted landscape. The Lake County wildfire mitigation network is composed of committed agencies, organizations, Tribal governments, and residents and is characterized by robust engagement, clear roles, collective responsibility, and equitably prioritized wildfire resilience projects. Together, these groups ensure the safety of Lake County’s communities and the health of its landscapes while fostering an awareness of the beneficial and cultural uses of fire among residents and landowners. The greater community welcomes and values Tribal leadership and Traditional/ancestral knowledge as Tribal governments and culture bearers are willing and interested in providing it. Resources and opportunities related to wildfire resilience are proactively made available to all community members.

Strategic Anchors and Action Planning

1. **Strategic Anchor 1:** LCFSC works in collaboration to further the Community Vision (above). Clear roles are critical for collaboration, and LCFSC works to iteratively clarify geographic boundaries, scale, and jurisdiction with partners as necessary while being sensitive to the context and historic dynamics between entities. LCFSC also defines those activities that fall within LCFSC’s purview as opposed to the broader LCRCD.
2. **Strategic Anchor 2:** LCFSC plans and coordinates activities, programs, and resources that support the ongoing development and implementation of the Lake County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) in coordination with partners. LCFSC monitors local CWPPs and other important plans to ensure county-wide coordination and equitable prioritization of projects.
3. **Strategic Anchor 3:** LCFSC prioritizes building and maintaining relationships with Tribal organizations, Spanish-speaking communities, and underserved populations. It

welcomes and values Tribal leadership and Traditional/ancestral knowledge as Tribal governments and culture bearers are willing and interested in providing it. This commitment imbues all of LCFSC programming.

4. **Strategic Anchor 4:** Programmatic stability and staff capacity are foundational to LCFSC's success. LCFSC identifies and secures sustained, diverse funding sources to support its long-term goals.

Goals and Objectives (2025-2030)

LCFSC staff will revisit the below objectives on an annual basis.

1. **Goal 1: LCFSC steps into a Lake County-wide convening role.**

Objectives:

- a. Continue to host monthly hybrid LCFSC meetings to coordinate between partners and community leaders in service of the Community Vision.
- b. Develop engaging and productive monthly meeting agendas one week in advance that actively further CWPP and Community Vision priorities via the following actions: clearly indicate what topics will be discussed, e.g., differentiate between defensible space-scale and landscape-scale project updates; indicate whose participation will be critical; and provide regular reports on Firewise Community engagement by June 2025.
- c. Clarify jurisdictions with local FSCs, including Konocti FSC, South Lake FSC, and the emergent Clearlake FSC by June 2025.
- d. Develop and adopt a charter that captures partner roles, responsibilities, and expectations by June 2025.
- e. Regularly engage in local FSC meetings to reciprocally share updates on activities and identify opportunities for collaboration by June 2025.
- f. Establish new channels of communication and regular meetings with unsupported Firewise Communities by June 2025.
- g. Work with existing local-level Regional Coordinators to step into the role of County-level Regional Coordinator; serve as the primary liaison with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) on behalf of Lake County by September 2025.
- h. Update LCFSC's website and develop and launch a shared calendar by September 2025.

2. **Goal 2: LCFSC develops and refines an improved system for tracking progress on the Lake County CWPP and facilitates the CWPP update process.**

Objectives:

- a. Develop a system for tracking CWPP progress by July 2025; work with partners to launch the system for tracking CWPP progress by January 2026, and revisit and refine the system in July 2026 if necessary.
- b. Continue to proactively support the Lake County Community Risk Reduction Authority's (RRA) existing system to identify funding opportunities and catalyze collaboration around CWPP implementation.
- c. Lead the update process for the Lake County CWPP as required every five years.

3. **Goal 3: LCFSC prioritizes relationship-building with Tribal entities; hires bilingual, Spanish-speaking staff; and develops more sophisticated and effective outreach programming to reach all underserved populations in Lake County.**

Objectives:

- a. Continue to dedicate LCFSC staff time to building relationships and fostering intercultural awareness and appreciation with Lake County's Tribal governments, environmental departments, and staff by attending Tribal events, meeting with Tribal representatives, and pursuing other opportunities for engagement.
- b. Hire and onboard a bilingual, Spanish-speaking staff member to lead LCFSC outreach efforts to monolingual, Spanish-speaking communities by January 2026.
- c. Generate list of at least 12 existing and potential partner organizations, prioritizing community organizations that actively work with underserved populations, to guide continued partnership development by January 2026.
- d. Develop outreach tracking tools that capture engagement with and input from underserved populations by January 2026; revisit and refine tools in July 2026 if necessary.
- e. Develop and publish a quarterly LCFSC newsletter—to be shared via email and in local publications, e.g., the Lake County Record-Bee, etc.—to update Lake County residents on available resources, opportunities for technical and/or financial support, etc. by January 2027.
- f. Develop a broadly accessible educational program curriculum in both English and Spanish dedicated to fostering a culture of wildfire awareness and safety by January 2027; launch the educational program in partnership with local FSCs, Firewise Communities, community organizations, and/or local schools by July 2027.

4. **Goal 4: LCFSC maximizes its prior investments in defensible space programming and the development of the Mobile Tool Cache and continues to invest in implementation and maintenance within the 100-foot zone.**

Objectives:

- a. Demonstrate regular utilization of the Mobile Tool Cache by averaging at least four monthly rentals by September 2025.
- b. Expand the Mobile Tool Cache with the addition of a trailer to increase mobility and accessibility by January 2026.
- c. Follow up with all 100 residents that participated in LCFSC's defensible space pilot program and track ongoing maintenance needs by September 2026.
- d. Secure at least \$500,000 to fund additional defensible space programming by January 2026 and continue to identify additional funding as necessary to ensure the continuation of the program.
- e. Develop and launch a system for the equitable prioritization of program participants and treat at least 100 new homes by January 2027.

5. **Goal 5: LCFSC increases the diversity of its funding sources to ensure programmatic stability and continued staff capacity.**

Objectives:

- a. Develop and implement a donor engagement strategy and contact at least 12 new foundations and/or private donors by January 2027.
- b. Secure at least six private donations by January 2029.

APPENDIX

“Scanning the Landscape”: Summary of Trends

During the 2024 strategic planning session, LCRCDD staff reflected on trends and forces affecting LCFSC and its ability to further its vision and achieve its organizational purpose. Below is a summary of those trends. This discussion strongly influenced the development of the North Star statements, strategic anchors, goals and objectives listed above.

Strategic Plan Summary: Key Points

1. Political Landscape and Local Reality:

- Combat a nationally polarized political landscape with local advocacy and locally tailored approaches
- Respond to gaps in regional collaborative coverage (e.g., North Coast Resource Partnership, State Coastal Conservancy, etc.) by embracing and strengthening regional identity across Lake County
- Align local priorities with state-level climate initiatives (e.g., California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force) to maximize funding opportunities

2. Social Dynamics:

- Build trust and reduce resistance to change through personal and inter-organizational connections and visible successes (e.g., defensible space program, mobile tool cache, etc.)
- Reduce skepticism of governmental and/or private entities (e.g., PG&E, etc.) through transparent, collaborative, and effective processes
- Recognize and alleviate post-wildfire trauma in community engagement efforts
- Acknowledge diverse opinions on land management and prescribed fire

3. Environmental Trends:

- Adapt to and prepare for extended wildfire seasons; hotter, drier summers; and increased tree mortality due to drought, invasive forest pests, and other threats
- Promote wildfire-adapted landscapes and, importantly, regular maintenance cycles

4. Legal and Economic Challenges:

- Advocate for clearer parameters and policies around prescribed fire and share educational resources to mitigate landowner concerns around legality, safety, and insurance barriers
- Increase awareness around insurance coverage challenges and promote strategies and incentives for residents (e.g., Firewise Community renewal and/or establishment)

5. Technology and Communication:

- Utilize new technology (e.g., AI, mobile phone apps, Watch Duty, etc.) to improve emergency communications and information- and resource-sharing
- Utilize mail, printed materials, and other forms of communication to ensure accessibility for senior and homebound populations
- Maintain awareness of how connectivity issues affect rural areas to enhance accessibility and participation

6. Collaboration Opportunities:

- Explore the possibility of establishing a fuels crew with local fire departments and other potential partners to mitigate local contractor shortage

- Work closely with Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance (TERA) to shift public attitudes towards an embrace of "good fire" through education and advocacy
 - Foster partnerships with Tribes, Native communities, and other Tribal-led organizations to elevate Tribal knowledge and practices to support effective land management
 - Work closely with local FSCs (e.g., Konocti FSC, South Lake FSC) to fill gaps and tailor LCFSC's presence to varying levels of need across Lake County
- 7. Momentum and Long-Term Vision:**
- Harness growing excitement around prescribed and cultural fire, including a desire for increased capacity and support for vegetation management work, and facilitate greater application of "good fire" on the landscape
 - Promote the County-level PEAR vision of wildfire-adapted communities and a resilient forested landscape through more sophisticated coordination and communication efforts

Summary of Community Insights

Underserved Community Needs Summary (Key Points)

During the 2024 strategic planning session, LCFSC staff discussed learnings from a recently conducted survey as well as other messages and insights gained from interactions with landowners. The majority of the following insights were gleaned in November and December 2024 from two go bag distribution events in partnership with La Voz de la Esperanza and Circle of Native Minds and are illustrative, but not reflective, of the entire County. Over 100 low-income residents were surveyed, the majority of whom were monolingual and Spanish-speaking.

- 1. Perceived Risk and Wildfire Preparedness:**
 - High levels of perceived risk and/or concern over wildfire (~85% of respondents) paired with relatively low levels of preparedness
 - Significant interest in brush removal and defensible space work, including requests for shared tools and capacity-building resources
- 2. Language and Accessibility:**
 - Strong demand for resources and emergency communications in Spanish, highlighting a gap in reaching monolingual and non-English-speaking community members
- 3. Education and Programming:**
 - Calls for more educational resources and programming related to wildfire preparedness, prescribed fire, and defensible space
 - Online and/or Zoom resources were requested to increase accessibility
- 4. Historical Impact and Recovery:**
 - The Boyles Fire left lasting effects on community members with many expressing a deep need for support and recovery resources