

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

Recent wildfire events in the State of Wisconsin and across the country have heightened awareness of the destructive potential of wildfire. Residents of Barnes and Drummond and local community leaders have become increasingly aware of the tangible wildfire threat facing their communities. In light of this threat, the Towns have elected to engage in a collaborative planning process with state, county and Federal partners to identify strategies and priorities for the protection of life, property, and natural resources.

This region of Northwestern Wisconsin has some of the largest contiguous tracts of pine forest found in the state. Of particular concern are the large areas of fire prone jack pine. Windstorms are common in this area, which has seen numerous major storm events, including a July 1999 windstorm which resulted in large areas of blown down timber. It is feared that prolonged dry conditions, such as those experienced across much of the region in 2005 could desiccate fuels and further elevate the risk of wildfire.

The communities of Barnes and Drummond are growing, with increasing numbers of people residing and recreating on the forest. Most wildfires in Wisconsin, including the project area are caused by the actions of man. As human encroachment on wildlands and forest usage increases, so does the risk that a wildfire may start.

The Barnes-Drummond Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a community-based collaborative effort between the local governmental units, state and federal agencies, and Bayfield County. This plan will provide the local communities with an opportunity to influence where and how county, state and Federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on surrounding lands. As well, the collaborative approach to preparing the plan ensures successful implementation of the plan's mitigation action plan. Furthermore, adoption of the plan will allow the communities to apply for Federal funding for hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to give the communities of Barnes and Drummond, local fire departments, Bayfield County, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and USDA Forest Service the information and tools necessary to reduce the potential risks to the community from the devastating effects of wildfire. The plan seeks to establish priorities for protection of life, property and critical infrastructure within the wildland-urban interface (WUI), or the areas where human development intermixes with wildland vegetation and fuels.



This plan is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) as defined by the Federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA). Title I of the HFRA defines a CWPP as a plan for an at-risk community that –

- (A) is developed within the context of the collaborative agreements and the guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by the applicable local government, local fire department, and state agency responsible for forest management, in consultation with interested parties and the Federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the at-risk community;
- (B) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-Federal land that will protect 1 or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and
- (C) recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community.

The HFRA establishes three minimum requirements for a CWPP. The first requirement is for collaboration in plan development. A CWPP must be developed as a collaborative effort between local and state government, in consultation with Federal Agencies and other interested parties. A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuels reduction treatments and recommend types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and critical infrastructure. Finally, a CWPP must recommend measures which private landowners and communities can utilize to reduce the ignitability of structures within the planning area.

Furthermore, HFRA provides communities with opportunities to influence where and how Federal agencies implement hazardous fuels reduction projects on Federal lands and how other Federal funds may be allocated for other projects on non-Federal lands.

HFRA also establishes that the contents of the final plan must be mutually agreed upon by the participating local units of government, the local fire departments and the state entity responsible for forest management.

PLANNING OBJECTIVES

This plan has two primary objectives, which are identified under sections (A) and (B) of the HFRA definition. The first objective is to identify and prioritize the surrounding area, both Federal and non-Federal lands, for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, as well as recommending measures for achieving hazardous fuels reductions. The plan addresses this objective through a comprehensive risk assessment and analysis and the development of standards and guidelines for hazardous fuels reductions. The second objective is to recommend measures for reducing structural ignitability throughout the at-risk area, which the plan addresses in a comprehensive mitigation action plan. Additionally, it is an objective of this process to improve interagency coordination and cooperation in wildfire planning and protection. The mix of ownership and jurisdictions



within project area pose great challenges for coordination, but also offers opportunities for utilizing the strengths of each agency to improve overall preparedness.

While the risks of wildfire will never be totally eliminated, it is recognized that the actions taken by resource management agencies, county, Federal, state and local units of government and private landowners can greatly reduce the risk of wildfire and its impact on the community.

WILDFIRE PLANNING HISTORY

This planning project is the result of series of investigative actions and initiatives set forward by Federal, state and local resource management agencies, county and local government and local emergency response personnel in response to an expressed need to reduce the risks to life, property and infrastructure from the potential effect of wildfire. The following text is a general synopsis of the events leading to the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the communities of Barnes and Drummond in Bayfield County, Wisconsin.

Initiating the Process

In late spring of 2004, The Washburn District hosted a meeting with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Bayfield County Forestry to determine knowledge, interest and applicability of the *Healthy Forests Initiative* (HFI) and the *Healthy Forests Restoration Act* (HFRA). Following this meeting, it was determined that there was sufficient interest to collaborate and follow the guidelines of the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) to identify and prioritize risk areas.

Identifying and Prioritizing Communities

The planning team prioritized the “at-risk” Bayfield County communities according to factors including amount of public lands, fire history, fuel model types and housing density. A GIS model was developed and analyzed resulting in Barnes and Drummond receiving the highest priorities. Furthermore, the Forest Service believed that there were continued opportunities for hazardous fuels reduction projects in Drummond. The WDNR also felt strongly that the Town of Barnes has very high-risk housing development.

In September of 2004, the WDNR and Bayfield County organized a field trip to the Town of Barnes to examine wildfire related issues such as road design, signage, road width and emergency vehicle access. The group also toured the Potawatomi Estates residential development and identified road access issues.

Based on information collected, it was determined that a Community Wildfire Protection Plan was needed for the Town’s of Barnes and Drummond. The planning team determined that a single plan could be created for both jurisdictions due to their proximity to one another and the emergency resources shared between them.

The Pre-Planning Process

A pre-planning process began in November of 2004, with the development of project goals, timeline and general work plan. The planning team retained the Northwest Regional Planning Commission as a planning facilitator and project coordinator. Funding for the proposal was secured through the Department of Natural Resources.

In December of 2004, the planning team decided to proceed forward with the project and to engage the local Town Boards and fire departments. In January of 2005, representatives of the planning team attended Town Board meetings to outline the proposal and to solicit local participation. In February of 2004, the planning team presented a formal presentation to local community leaders and fire departments. Again, the group sought participation from local entities and requested each partnering community and fire department appoint a member to serve on a formal Community Wildfire Protection Planning committee.

The Town's of Barnes and Drummond, along with their respective fire departments formally agreed to participate in the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The communities designated planning committee representatives and the formal process was initiated with a kick-off meeting in May of 2005.



II. PLANNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION



The Steering Committee created in May of 2005 was the principal body directing plan development. The members of this committee are listed below. The composition of the committee included representatives from the local jurisdictions, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, and Bayfield County. Representatives from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) facilitated committee meetings and drafted plan narrative. Select members of the Steering Committee were granted voting privileges as part of an “Executive Committee,” which was formed to make critical decisions

using a consensus based approach.

Using other CWPP planning processes as a guide, NWRPC developed a model which could be accomplished in an 8-month timeframe. Planning milestones were established based on the CWPP requirements outlined in the HFRA.

From May of 2005 through December of 2005, a total of 8 Steering Committee meetings were held. Meeting locations alternated between the Town of Barnes and the Town of Drummond. Agenda and minutes of each regular Steering Committee meeting are contained within the Appendix.

At each meeting the Committee engaged in open discussion and commentary relative to the pertinent issues and action items described in the meeting agenda. Early efforts focused on establishing goals and objectives, defining the WUI, describing existing conditions and mapping planning units. Middle stages of the process involved developing a hazard assessment model. Using Committee defined inputs, and data provided by the participants, a series of models were developed by NWRPC and presented to the Committee for discussion and revision. The later stages of the process focused on the development of a hazardous fuels reduction projects and general wildfire mitigation actions.

The draft plan was presented to and formally adopted by the Drummond Town Board of Supervisors on 12-24-2005 and the Barnes Town Board of Supervisors on 12-20-2005.



BARNES-DRUMMOND CWPP STEERING COMMITTEE

Jay Gallagher	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Al Tatzel	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Don Luebbe	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Tom Salzmann*	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Jack Meinke*	Town of Barnes
Del Jerome*	Town of Drummond
Mark Jerome*	Town of Drummond - Fire
Dick Collyard	Town of Barnes
Dixie Chermack	Town of Barnes
Tom Renz*	Town of Barnes-Fire

Neil Paulson*	Bayfield County
Jan Victorson	Bayfield County Emergency Management
Kirby Dernovsek*	Bayfield County Forestry

Chris Worth*	US Forest Service
Jerry Jaskowiak	US Forest Service
Jennifer Maziasz	US Forest Service
Cheri Ford	US Forest Service
Scott Posner	US Forest Service

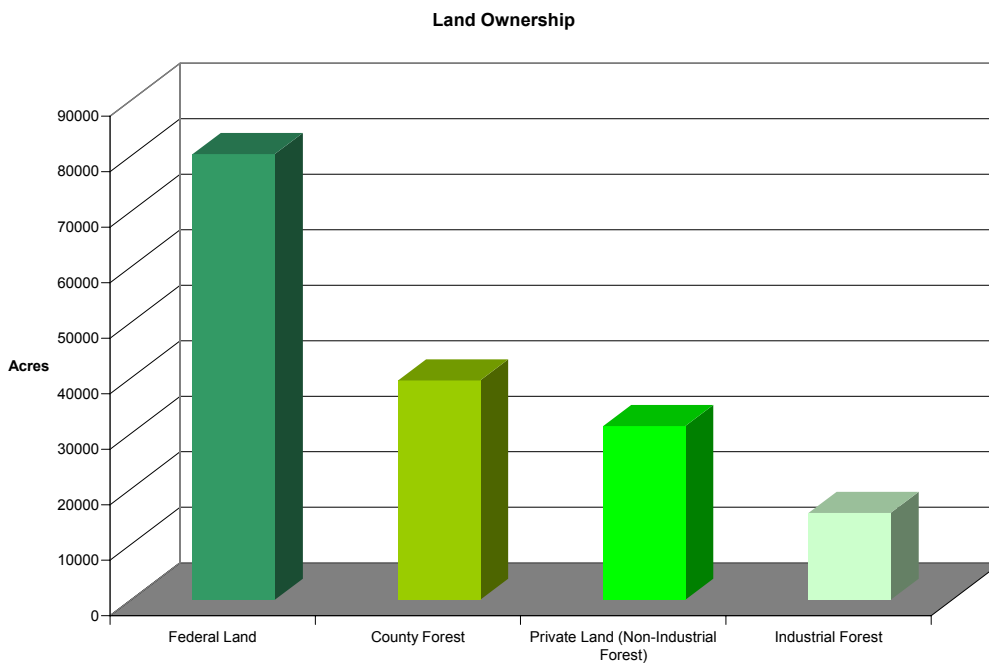
*Executive Committee Member

III. PROJECT AREA

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The project area is located approximately 60 miles southeast of Duluth, Minnesota in southwestern Bayfield County of northern Wisconsin. Communities within the project area include the civil Towns of Barnes and Drummond and two unincorporated places. Total land area within the project boundary is roughly 171,056 acres, which includes 119,794 acres of publicly owned and managed lands. The project area is depicted in **Map 1**, Community Base Map.

Figure 1, Barnes-Drummond Land Ownership



CLIMATE

Climate conditions within the project area are classified as continental, with long, cold winters and relatively short, warm summers. Average annual precipitation is about 33 inches, with 50 to 60 inches of snowfall. The mean summertime temperature is 65 degrees, with a wintertime mean of 6 degrees. Natural variations in precipitation levels can and do occur within the project area, occasionally resulting in excessive moisture conditions, or drought. Seasonal variations in precipitation, temperature and humidity can create periods of high vulnerability to wildfire, particularly during the spring and fall.

ECONOMICS

The area is predominantly rural in nature with a recreation and tourism based economy. Limited commercial and industrial development occurs within the project area, employing some local residents. The 2000 Census indicated that most project area residents worked outside of their home communities, with many commuting to areas outside of Bayfield County. In 2000, the median household income for Drummond was \$37,500, while in Barnes this figure was \$28,250. The median household income for Bayfield County was \$33,390.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The project area is located within the heavily forested region of Wisconsin referred to as the “Northwood’s”. Upland forest cover encompasses approximately 154,000 acres, while wetlands occupy over 16,000 acres of the land base. Surface water resources account for the remaining 8,300 acres.

Glacial processes have heavily influenced local topography. Much of the project area is generally characterized by hilly terrain, pitted by numerous kettle lakes and wetlands. Forest cover types generally consist of mixed broad-leaved deciduous, maple, aspen, red pine and mixed coniferous species. On the relatively flat glacial sand outwashes, jack pine, red pine and shrubland species are common.

The project area is located within two primary drainage basins, Lake Superior (LS) and the Mississippi River (MR). Lands within the area are drained via portions of six major watersheds including the Upper St. Croix and Eau Claire River (MR), Totagatic River (MR), Upper Namekagon River (MR), Bois Brule River (LS), White River (LS) and Iron River watersheds (LS).

Wetlands are well distributed throughout the project area, except within the glacial sand outwash area. The dominant wetland type is forested, with emergent/wet meadow and scrub/shrub wetlands also present.

The project area supports habitat for numerous species of animals, plants and insects, including several threatened, endangered and sensitive species. A portion of eastern Drummond lies within an elk “buffer zone,” established as a part of the Clam Lake experimental elk study project.

POPULATION AND GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The total population of the Town’s of Barnes and Drummond grew at a faster rate than that of Bayfield County during the period 1980-2000. Both municipalities are expected to increase in population through the year 2020. Current and projected population statistics are depicted in **Tables 1 and 2**.

Table 1, Population 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	Change
Barnes	493	473	610	+23.7%
Drummond	442	417	541	+22.4%
Bayfield County	13,882	14,008	15,103	+8.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 2, Population Projections 2005-2025

	2005(EST)	2010	2015	2020
Barnes	662	763	855	946
Drummond	541	572	586	600
Bayfield County	15,652	15,643	15,986	16,319

Source: Bayfield County Land Use Plan, Wisconsin DOA