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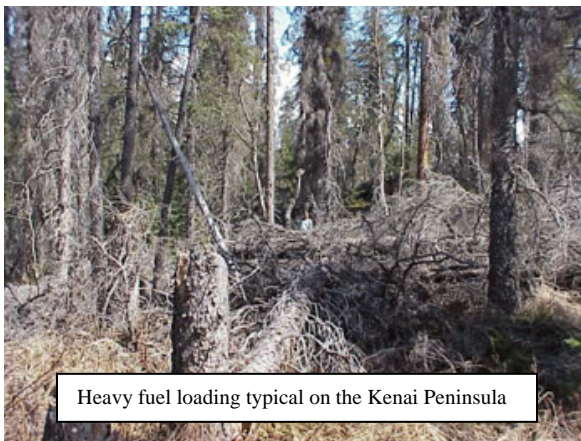
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## Making a Difference Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) Alaska

In May 2004, the Society of American Foresters, Communities Committee, the National Association of State Foresters, Western Governors' Association, and the National Association of Counties developed a guide for developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans. (<http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpp.cfm>).

The idea for community-based forest planning and prioritization is neither novel nor new. However, the incentive for communities to engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization was given new and unprecedented impetus with the enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003.

The Alaska Region formed the "Kenai Forest, Wildfire Protection, and Fuels Management Coordinating Committee" in 2003. The committee's goal is to increase collaboration and coordination on all strategic and project level planning to address the impacts of spruce bark beetle on over 1 million acres in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. The interagency committee includes representatives from the Kenai Peninsula Borough, State Division of Forestry, Chugachmiut, Kenai National Wildlife Refuge, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Kenai Fjords National Park, Alaska Region and other cooperators.



Heavy fuel loading typical on the Kenai Peninsula

In November 2003, the new Kenai committee chartered an interagency team to develop an "All Lands/All Hands" The team is lead by Warren Oja and includes State & Private Forestry employees Gary Lehnhausen and Jerry Boughton. The team completed a draft plan in early 2004, which will be finalized and approved by all cooperators in July 2004. A major finding in the plan is that wildfire potentially threatens approximately 51,000 Kenai Peninsula residents that live in 26,000 residential structures, and that the Borough has \$2.7 billion in cumulative property valuation (all residential, industrial, and commercial infrastructure). Furthermore, 89 percent of the Kenai Peninsula Borough valuation is located in 15 communities with either an extreme or high Wildfire Risk Rating.

One of the highest priorities that emerged from the planning effort is the need to complete community wildfire protection plans for 20 identified Kenai communities. These plans will be completed according to guidance in the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, which was signed by the President in December 2003. The majority of the hazardous fuel in the wildland urban interface that still needs treatment on the Kenai Peninsula is located on state and private lands. The recent loss of markets for the dead spruce (i.e., wood chips, pulp logs) is a very significant issue that will increase future treatment costs.

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For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit [www.healthyforests.gov](http://www.healthyforests.gov)