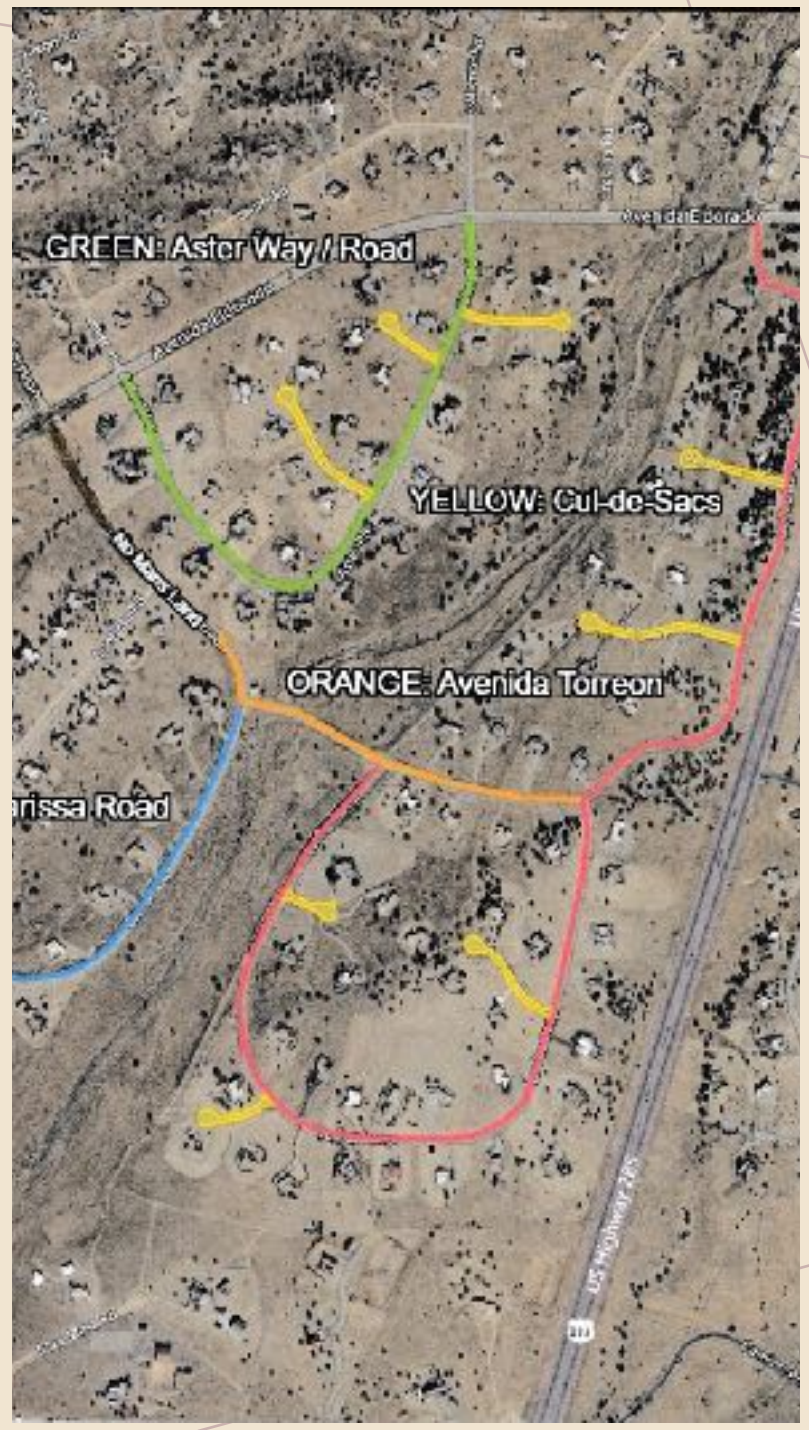
REPORT:
LA PAZ HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION----

SUMMARY OF THE ECIA' S
COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION

PLAN

Revision 1: September 21, 2025



Directly quoting part of their (ECIA's) mission statement:

The ECIA Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) seeks to unite the Eldorado community, surrounding neighborhoods, landowners, and public land management agencies around priorities for fire risk reduction, flood and erosion risk reduction, and preparedness for wildfire, flooding, and erosion.

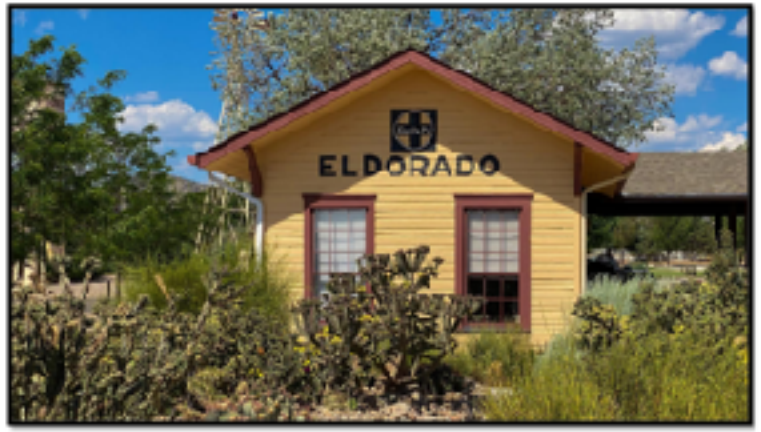
Their guiding document consists of a 152 page PLAN for 2025:

2025

Greater Eldorado Area

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Santa Fe County, New Mexico



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This “plan” is extremely detailed and wide–ranging in its background research as well as its summary of broad recommendations.

In order for its usefulness to be meaningful---
a localized plan (La Paz) be outlined, discussed, developed and adopted…

The following pages are excerpts of the ECIA plan which show how
they have thought about it and some actions they have put in place…

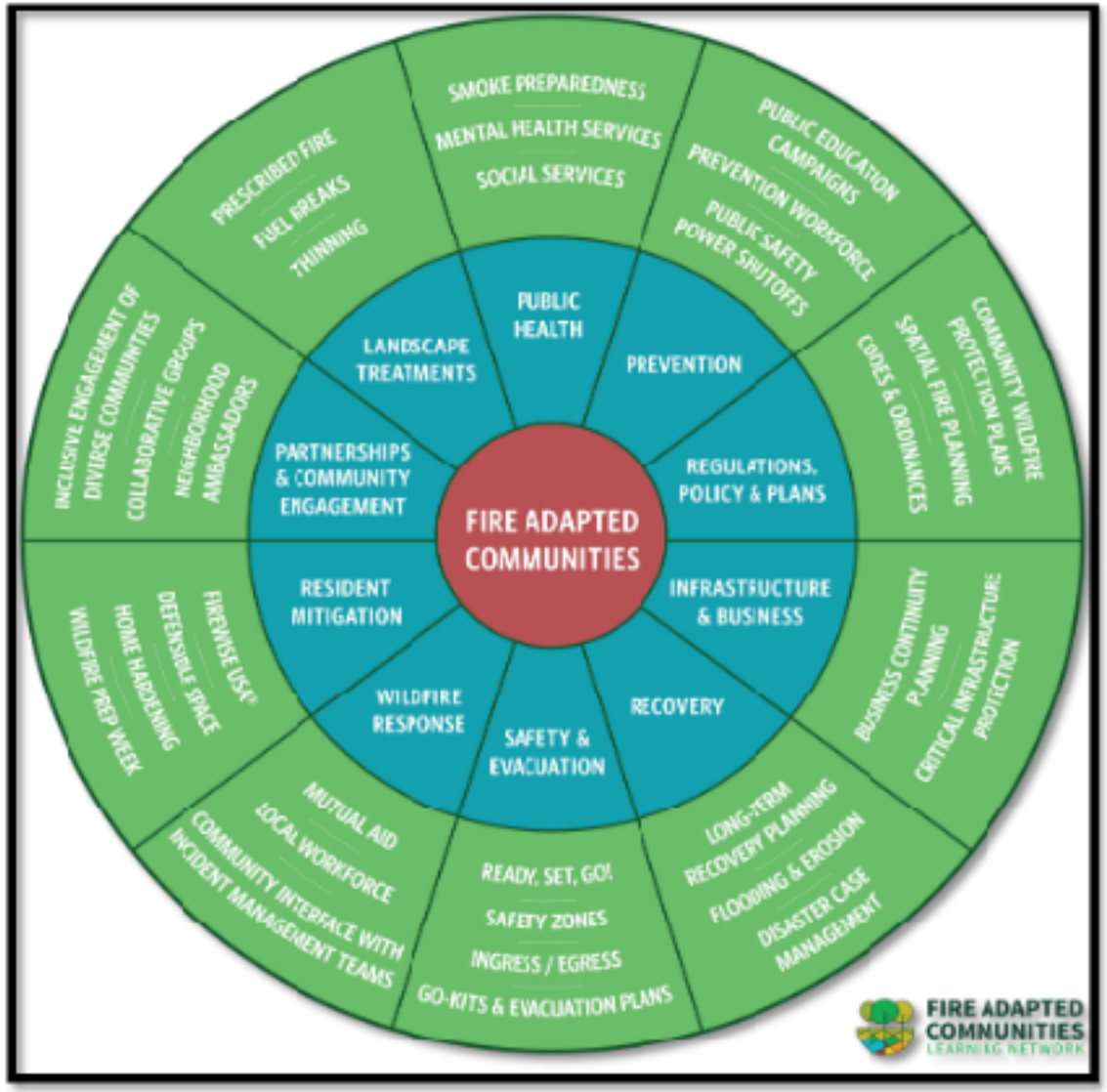

Figure 26. The Fire Adapted Communities diagram describes a set of components that make up community wildfire adaptation and gives examples of specific programs and activities that communities can undertake to reduce their wildfire risk and increase their resilience (Fire Adapted Communities n.d.).

Tensions may arise between the need for developing fire resiliency in the landscape and the need for maintaining and enhancing ecological resiliency and scenic quality across the landscape. Both needs can be argued and defended with scientific underpinnings that may require careful reconciliation. A first step toward the reconciliation of these needs will likely be found in defining mitigation treatments at a site-specific scale and within a specific time period.

As a result, treatments must be selective, strategically located, and rotational in spatial extent to ensure optimal soil health and habitat integrity over time. Furthermore, prioritizing areas of intervention, ignition sources, fuel types, and treatment techniques will further nuance the approach and increase the possibility to reconcile conflicts between needs for fire safety and the needs for ecological and cultural resource conservation and enhancement. Stewardship plans can address such priorities and identify the most suitable, site-specific treatment strategies for reconciling seemingly diverging needs regarding fire resilience and overall ecosystem resilience.

For example, priority should be given to the interruption of continuous vegetation patches, the removal of ladder fuels, and removal of highly flammable noxious weeds, such as cheatgrass (Figure 25). At a landscape scale, priority interventions may need to address the hazards associated with wind-driven wildfire advancing from the west and burning upward into the Greenbelts toward denser vegetation and homes on the ridgelines. The Greenbelts are also susceptible to flooding from the East. Table 4 summarizes treatments for Cohesive Strategy Goal 1 aimed at restoring and maintaining landscapes.

Defensible Space Zones

Targeting trees, shrubs, and other vegetation in the immediate vicinity of a house can also make the home more fire resistant. Firewise USA recommends three zones of defensible space that provide useful guidance for County residents:

Zone 1: Immediate Zone (0'-5' from the house or structure): the non-combustible area

This area may include outdoor plants, decks, outdoor furniture, and the outside walls and coverings (aka cladding). Science indicates that this is the most vulnerable area to embers and flames and should be most aggressively maintained for fire resistance. When prioritizing work, start with the home itself and then move to the area within 5 feet of the home.

Recommendations include:

- Clean roofs and gutters of dead leaves, debris, and pine needles that could catch embers.
- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles (if applicable) to prevent ember penetration.
- Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing ⅛ metal mesh screening.
- Clean debris from exterior attic vents and install ⅛ inch metal mesh screening to reduce embers.
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken windows.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors (e.g., mulch, flammable plants, leaves, needles, and firewood piles) However, composted mulch and large bark and chips are less flammable. Remove anything that can burn that is stored underneath decks and porches.
- Remove tree limbs that extend into this zone. Fire-prone trees should be aggressively pruned or, ideally, removed.
- Provide adequate spacing between all plants.

Zone 2: Intermediate Zone (5' to 30' from the home or structure): the landscaping/hardscaping area

This area may include careful landscaping and must include fire breaks (non-flammable areas) that can help influence and decrease fire intensity and progression.

Recommendations include:

- Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks.
- Create fuel breaks with driveways, walkways, paths, patios, and decks.
- Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.
- Remove ladder fuels (vegetation underneath trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns. Prune trees up to 6 to 10 feet from the ground; for shorter trees do not exceed a third of the overall tree height (e.g., prune piñon or juniper trees to a height of at most 6 feet; when pruning fruit trees, apply bark protection to prevent sun scald).
- Limit trees and shrubs to small clusters of a few each to break up the vegetation continuity across the landscape.
- Space trees to a minimum of 18 feet between canopies (of piñon-juniper clumps or individual tall trees) with the distance increasing with the percentage of slope.
- Plan tree placement to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than ten feet to the edge of the structure.

Zone 3: Extended Zone (30' to 100' and in some cases out to 200' from the home or structure): the wider landscaping area

The goal in this zone is to interrupt the fire's path and keep flames small and on the ground. Because of other factors such as topography, the recommended distances to mitigate for radiant heat exposure range between 100 to 200 feet from the home.

Recommendations include:

- Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter and debris.
- Remove dead plant and tree material.
- Remove small conifers (seedlings and saplings) growing between mature trees.
- Remove vegetation adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings within this area.
- Trees 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopies (adjust spacing according to site specific conditions and expert advice).
- Trees 60 to 100 feet from the home should have at least 6 feet between canopies (adjust spacing according to site specific conditions and expert advice).

Mowing

Mowing is a nuanced, subtle issue. By mowing early (February-early March), the impacts on birds and wildlife are relatively low as the migratory bird season starts in mid-March. If residents choose to mow later, they should mow in strips to leave certain bands of taller grasses and mow a fire break of 5-10 feet per strip. Mowing cheatgrass in early April eliminates the plant before it sets seed. This reduces the regeneration of this invasive weed over time, reduces fire risk associated with this grass, and stimulates native grasses that better cover the soil against erosion.

It is not recommended to mow in May-June, because it depletes cool season grasses over time; these types of grasses that are useful but rare in the landscape due to past overgrazing. If residents feel a need to mow in May-June, it's again recommended to mow selectively in bands, and don't repeat mowing the same bands in successive years in order to maintain biodiversity in the grass cover. If the mower's stubble height is set to 4 inches, optimal fire safety height is achieved while not compromising soil cover and wind erosion risks. This height is also good for strengthening the root mass of grasses; removing more would over time weaken the grass's vigor and cover.

While mowing in mid-to-late summer is acceptable, again, for the protection of insects and wildlife, mow in strips and selectively. Mowing in the fall is less of a problem. By waiting until the blue grama grass has matured (late September-early October), mowing also spreads the seed across the landscape and