

Covelo Fire Protection District

PLANNING PARTNER ANNEX

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

2026



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Professional planning services for this plan update were provided by:



1 Introduction

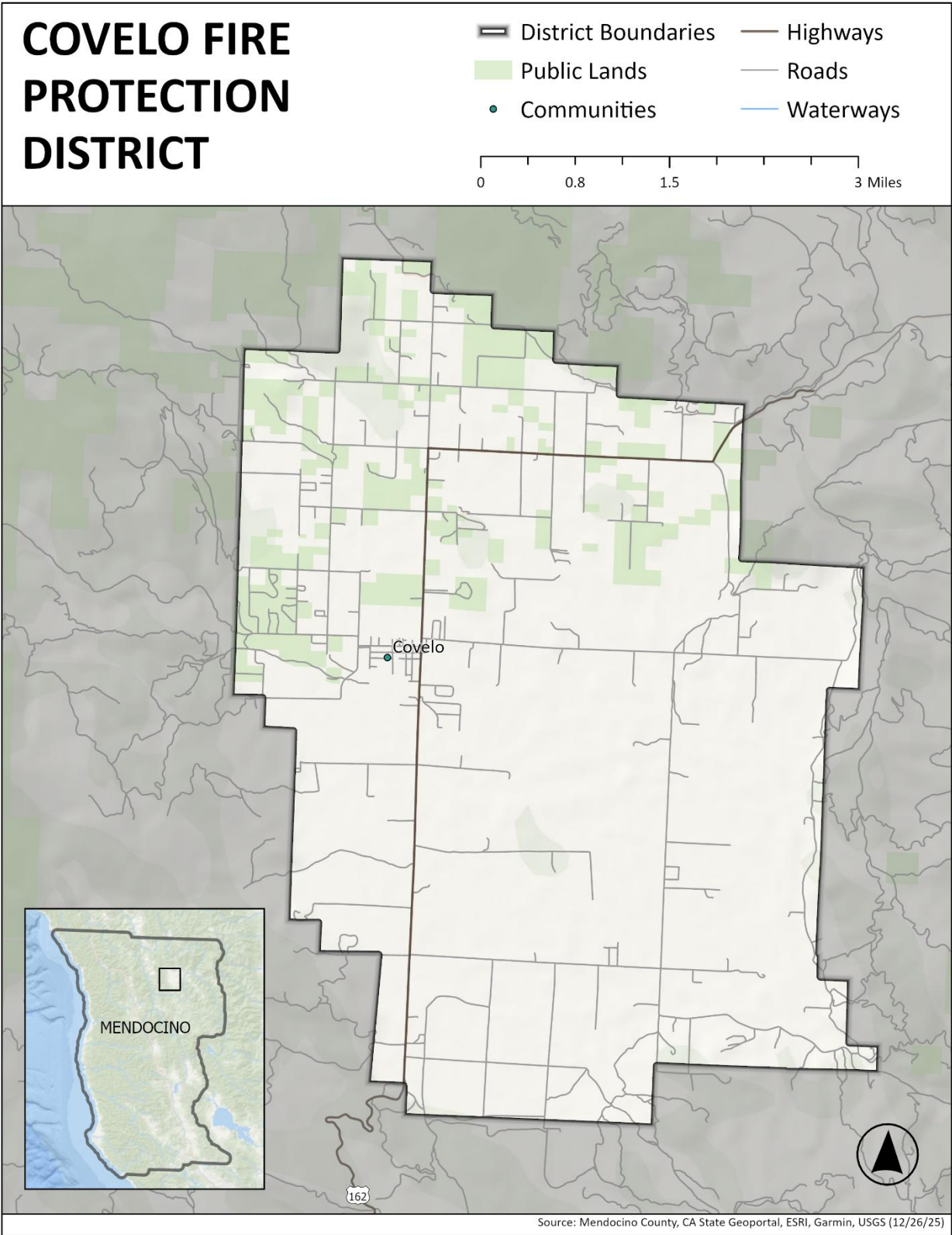
FIGURE 1 shows the Covelo Fire Protection District (FPD) boundaries. The FPD Fire Chief participated in the HMP planning process and provided input to inform this Annex. Additional information is provided in Appendix D of the Base Plan.

The FPD involved several nonprofits and community organizations listed in Section 2 of the Base Plan through stakeholder surveys.

The West Business Development Center was one stakeholder that provided input through the stakeholder survey. The organization serves entrepreneurs and small business owners across incorporated and unincorporated areas, as well as areas outside the county. The Center noted that recent disasters, including COVID-19, wildfires, and drought, significantly disrupted small business operations. Many small businesses were identified as unprepared or underprepared for disaster impacts, resulting in operational disruptions and permanent closures.

The West Business Development Center identified key hazards of concern for the populations it serves, including coastal hazards, earthquakes, drought, extreme heat, flooding, mass earth movements, severe storms, tsunamis, and wildfires. This feedback was incorporated into the Base Plan under local vulnerabilities for applicable hazards, with additional discussion of small businesses as an under-resourced population to reflect concerns related to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Figure 1 Covelo Fire Protection District



2 Mitigation Strategy

The mitigation strategy is a central component of the hazard mitigation plan (HMP) and the primary outcome of the planning process. This strategy serves as a long-term framework for reducing vulnerabilities to hazards. While this document begins by focusing on the mitigation strategy, it is important to acknowledge the various components that informed the planning process. These inputs included decisions and information from the Planning Partners, Core Planning Team (CPT), and general public, in addition to the results of the risk and vulnerability assessment. All of this information is captured in detail across the County of Mendocino Base Plan and this Covelo Fire Protection District Annex.

2.1 Mitigation Goals

The Covelo Fire Protection District has adopted the hazard mitigation goals and objectives developed by the Core Planning Team and described in Section 1.1 of the Base Plan.

2.2 2026 Mitigation Actions

The Covelo FPD Chief identified and prioritized the following mitigation actions for the Covelo FPD based on the risk assessment and input from the public survey.

2.2.1 Coastal Hazards

No known hazard areas within the local government's boundaries. No perceived risk, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.2 Dam and Levee Incidents

While there is one levee in the Town of Covelo, no Covelo Fire Protection District-owned assets are located within any dam or levee inundation areas; therefore, no assets are at risk.

2.2.3 Drought

Hazard effects from drought do not currently present an immediate or impactful risk to the district's assets and are, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.4 Earthquake

- **High Priority**
 - (CF1) New Fire Station. Replacement of the existing station with a new building constructed to updated building codes.
 - (CF2) Replacement Generator for Existing Fire Station. Purchase a replacement generator for the station as the current generator has reached its useful life.

2.2.5 Extreme Cold or Freeze

- **High Priority**
 - (CF3) Engine Bay Insulation & Heating. Insulate the entire engine bay and purchase/install heaters.
 - (CF4) Engine Heaters. Purchase and install block heaters for the engines.

2.2.6 Extreme Heat

Hazard effects from extreme heat do not currently present an immediate or impactful risk to the district and are, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.7 Flood (Inland)

- **High Priority**
 - (CF5) Fire Station Grading. Regrade the land surrounding the station and re-route the existing irrigation system.

2.2.8 Mass Earth Movements

Hazard effects from mass earth movements do not currently present an immediate or impactful risk to the district's assets and are, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.9 Severe Storms

Hazard effects from severe storms do not currently present an immediate or impactful risk to the district's assets and are, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.10 Tsunami

No known hazard areas within the local government's boundaries. No perceived risk, therefore, not a mitigation priority.

2.2.11 Wildfire

- **High Priority**
 - (CF6) Fire Station Sprinklers. Purchase and installation of a sprinkler system inside of the station.
- **Medium Priority**
 - (CF7) Wildfire Education Campaign. Develop a wildfire mitigation public education campaign. Materials will be distributed as part of the continued public engagement that will annually occur at community functions including rodeos and festivals.

2.3 Mitigation Capabilities

Planning and regulatory, administrative and technical, financial, and education and outreach capabilities are powerful tools for implementing hazard mitigation. The FPD currently does not

have any mitigation capabilities to leverage and is reliant upon county capabilities when needed.

2.3.1 Planning and Regulatory Capabilities

- The district currently has no Planning and Regulatory Capabilities in place

2.3.2 Administrative and Technical Capabilities

- The district currently has no Administrative and Technical Capabilities in place

2.3.3 Financial Capabilities

- General Obligation Bonds to Incur Debt

2.3.4 Education and Outreach Capabilities

- The district currently has no Education and Outreach Capabilities in place

2.3.5 Capability Enhancements

The district currently has limited capacity to implement mitigation and is considering expanding staffing capabilities with the hire of a new Assistant Chief. This position would support the Chief, who is the district's only paid, full-time employee. Additional funding is needed; the district plans to pursue external grant programs to improve its capacity to implement mitigation.

2.4 Planning Integration

The Covelo FPD plans to utilize the updated 2026 HMP during grant application development. The HMP will also inform the district's capital improvement planning, after that process is formalized.

2.5 Continuing Public Engagement

The Covelo FPD will continue to educate the public on hazard risk and mitigation solutions through several annual events, including the Blackberry Festival in August, Indian Days in September, and at community and high school rodeos.

2.6 Changes in Community Priorities

The Covelo FPD has observed a growing public focus on wildfire risk as the top hazard of concern. The public expects more mitigation resources.

2.6.1 Development Trends

The Covelo FPD does not anticipate an expansion of services or infrastructure; therefore, vulnerability is not expected to change due to growth.

3 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

3.1 Hazard Risk Ranking

TABLE 1 shows the rankings for the Covelo FPD. The Covelo FPD Chief identified the following hazards that do not currently present an immediate or impactful risk to the district's assets and are, therefore, not a mitigation priority: coastal hazards, dam and levee incidents, drought, extreme heat, mass earth movements, severe storms, and tsunamis.

Table 1 Covelo FPD Hazard Risk Ranking

Hazard	Risk Rank
Coastal Hazards (Flood, Sea-level rise, Erosion)	Not Applicable
Dam & Levee Incidents	Not Applicable
Drought	Not Applicable
Earthquake	High
Extreme Cold or Freeze	Moderate
Extreme Heat	Not Applicable
Flood (Inland)	Moderate
Mass Earth Movements (landslides, rock falls, debris flows)	Not Applicable
Severe Storms	Not Applicable
Tsunami	Not Applicable
Wildfire	High

3.2 Earthquake

3.2.1 Past Events

There are no unique earthquake events that have impacted the Covelo FPD in the past. Refer to section 4.8 Earthquake in the Base Plan.

3.2.2 Location

The Covelo FPD is located near the Maacama Fault, part of the San Andreas Fault system, which lies west of the district and can produce significant earthquakes. The region's seismic activity is influenced by the nearby Mendocino Triple Junction, and while other local faults exist, the Maacama Fault represents the primary source of large-magnitude earthquake risk for the

Covelo FPD and the surrounding area. Refer to Section 4.8 of the Base Plan for the location of fault lines in the county that could cause earthquake events in the city.

3.2.3 Local Exposure and Vulnerability

The Chief noted that the district's only station is very old and is the top asset of concern. It previously served as a bowling alley and has not been seismically retrofitted. Given the facility's age, the most cost-effective solution may be to build a new station.

Earthquakes can cause injuries, displacement, and emergency response needs within the Covelo Fire Protection District service area. Residents in older or vulnerable buildings may face greater risk. FPD staff and volunteers may also be affected personally while responding to community needs.

3.3 Extreme Cold or Freeze

3.3.1 Past Events

There are no unique extreme cold or freeze events that have impacted the Covelo FPD in the past. Refer to section 4.9 Extreme Cold or Freeze in the Base Plan.

3.3.2 Location

The entire Covelo FPD is vulnerable to the impacts of extreme cold or freeze.

3.3.3 Local Exposure and Vulnerability

The Chief noted that the district experiences regular impacts during extreme cold events that freeze water lines in the station, the engine's motors, and water pumps. Those are the top local asset concerns.

Cold or freeze events can create health risks for residents without reliable heat, shelter, transportation, or backup power. Older adults, people with disabilities, medically dependent residents, low-income households, and people experiencing homelessness may be more vulnerable. FPD staff may be called on to support emergency response, welfare checks, or access needs during cold-weather events.

3.4 Flood (Inland)

3.4.1 Past Events

The Covelo FPD has not experienced any major, widely documented flood events in recent years. Refer to section 4.10 Flood (Inland) in the Base Plan for information on regional flood events across the County of Mendocino.

3.4.2 Location

Although there are no documented historical flood events causing damage, Covelo FPD is still vulnerable to localized flooding, especially near Town Creek and other low-lying areas during

periods of heavy rainfall. Flooding has sometimes affected State Route 162, leading to road closures that may hamper emergency access.

3.4.3 Local Exposure and Vulnerability

The Chief noted that in the winter, the station's engine bay floods and water flows through the structure. This is caused by grading around the station. This is the top asset of concern.

Flooding can create life-safety risks, displacement, and access challenges for residents in affected areas. People with limited mobility, limited transportation, lower incomes, or limited access to emergency information may need additional support. Flooding may also make it harder for FPD personnel to reach residents quickly.

3.5 Wildfire

3.5.1 Past Events

The Covelo FPD has experienced several significant wildfire events since the previous HMP update. Details of these events are provided below. For information on regional wildfire trends across the county, refer to the 4.15 Wildfire section of the County Base Plan.

- **August 2020: Creek Fire** - A wildfire burned approximately 820 acres near Covelo around Highway 162 and Short Creek Road. It destroyed three structures and prompted evacuation warnings as crews worked to contain the blaze.
- **August 2020: August Complex Fire DR-4558-CA** - The fire significantly impacted the Covelo and Round Valley area of northern Mendocino County after a series of lightning-caused fires ignited and merged into a massive wildfire complex. Large portions of the surrounding Mendocino National Forest and nearby wilderness areas burned, and communities around Covelo experienced evacuation orders and prolonged smoke impacts as the fire spread through remote forestlands. Overall, the August Complex became California's first "gigafire," burning more than 1 million acres, with an estimated ~400,000 acres burned within Mendocino County, much of it in the mountains and forests surrounding the Covelo region.
- **July 2024: Mina Fire** - A fire burned about 98 acres northwest of Covelo around the 97500 block of Mina Road. It led to evacuation warnings and threatened timberlands and structures in the area.¹
- **July 2024: Pepperwood Fire** - A smaller wildfire north of Covelo near Buck Mountain burned roughly 12.5 acres with no reported injuries or structure loss, but required firefighting resources and posed a local hazard.²
- **July 2025: Medicine Fire** - A wildfire burned northwest of Covelo in late July 2025, first reported on the afternoon of July 27 near Rifle Range Road. The wildfire grew to about

¹ [MINA FIRE: INCIDENT UPDATE ON 07/10/2024 AT 8:42 AM | CAL FIRE](#)

² [PEPPERWOOD FIRE NEAR COVELO 85% CONTAINED • THE MENDOCINO VOICE | MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA](#)

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263 acres, prompted mandatory evacuations for local residents (later lifted), and threatened more than 200 households and over 500 people. As of August 1, Cal Fire had the blaze 75 % contained, and three firefighters were injured during suppression efforts. The cause of the fire remained under investigation.³

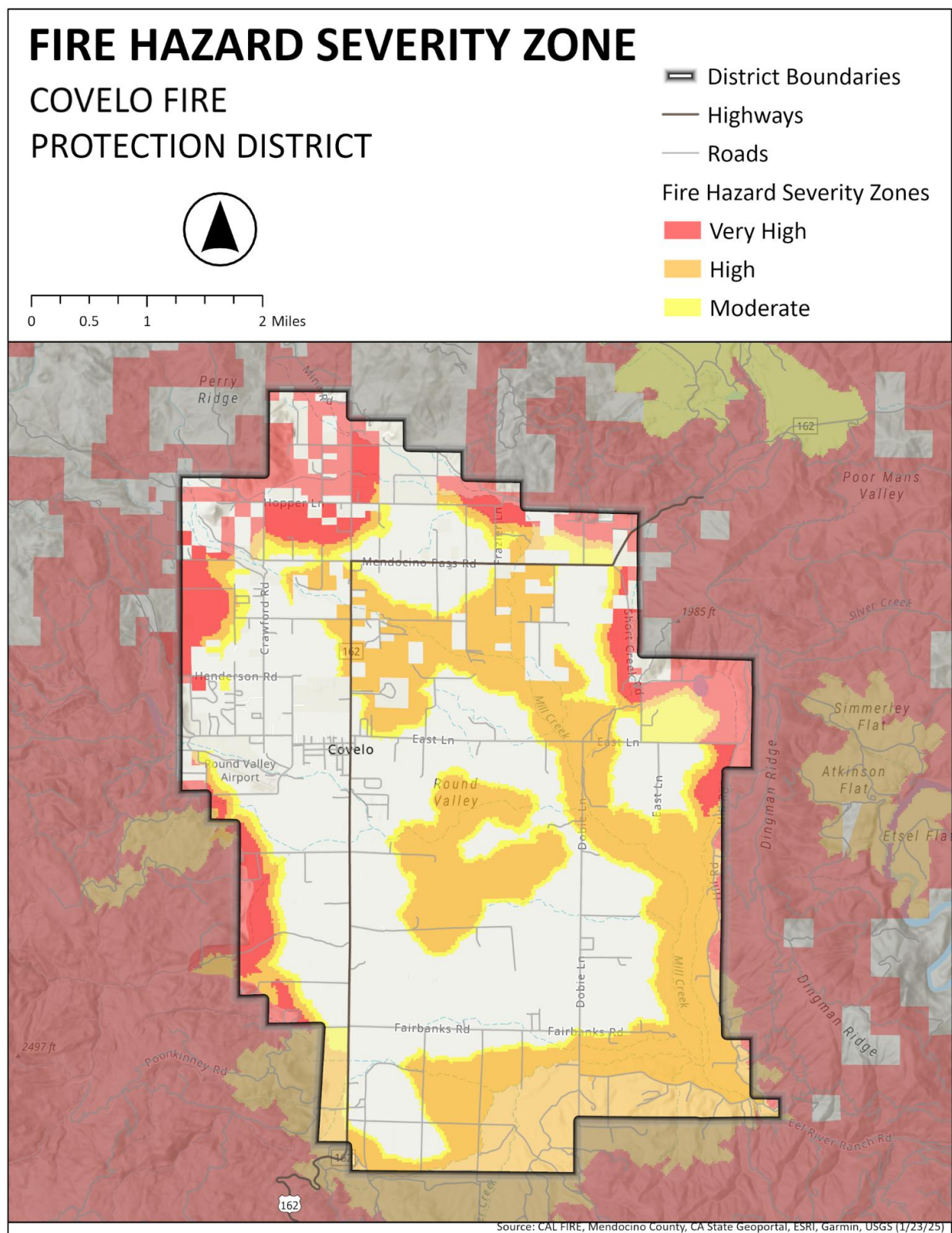
3.5.2 Location

Wildfire risk in the Covelo FPD is particularly pronounced in the surrounding wildlands and foothills where flammable vegetation and rugged terrain are common. For example, recent wildfires such as the 2025 Medicine Fire, which burned northwest of Covelo near Rifle Range Road, Hopper Lane, and Mina Road/Highway 162, demonstrate that areas on the outskirts of the community adjacent to grasslands and brush are vulnerable to wildfire ignition and spread.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) classify areas as having moderate, high, or very high wildfire hazard based on factors such as fuel loading, slope, fire weather, and wind conditions that influence fire behavior and spread (CAL FIRE). State Responsibility Areas (SRA) are generally rural or undeveloped lands where CAL FIRE provides wildland fire protection, while Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) are more developed areas where fire protection is provided by local fire agencies. SRA and LRA were mapped together to provide full coverage of the planning area. **FIGURE 2** shows the Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Covelo FPD.

³ [THE LATEST: 'MEDICINE FIRE' IS 75% CONTAINED • THE MENDOCINO VOICE | MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA](#)

Figure 2 Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Covelo Fire Protection District



3.5.3 Local Exposure and Vulnerability

The Chief noted that all the district assets, including the station, equipment, vehicles, and engines, are potentially at risk from a large wildfire. The top concerns aside from staff impacts is the station and housed vehicles.

Wildfire can affect people through direct fire exposure, smoke, evacuation, and displacement. Risk may be greater for residents in areas with limited access, limited transportation, or limited ability to maintain defensible space. Older adults, people with disabilities, lower-income households, people with respiratory conditions, and FPD staff and volunteers may face increased risks during response and recovery.

Appendix A Adoption Resolution
