

Marin County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan

What is a Public Works Plan?

Public Works Plans (PWP) are meant to provide a single document that establishes a framework for comprehensive and streamlined planning, reviewing, and permitting in the Coast for a suite of related activities that would otherwise trigger the need for individual Coastal Development Permits.

Why is a Public Works Plan needed?

Vegetation treatment activities to reduce wildfire risk and increase landscape resiliency are often considered “development” (Public Resources Code § 30106) under the California Coastal Act and would require a Coastal Development Permit. Coastal Development Permits can take years to acquire with a high cost associated. The Marin County Forest Health and Fire Resilience PWP provides a planning authorization tool based on the concepts and structure of the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) that allows for the streamlined review and authorization of individual vegetation management projects in Marin County’s Coastal Zone, using principles, strategies, and best management practices that align wildfire risk reduction planning with the protection of coastal resources.

Why are future vegetation treatment projects that could be covered by the PWP needed in Coastal Marin?

Fire return intervals (average length of time between fires) in Marin County were an average of 15 to 18 years for the period from 1450 to 1850 and since then have significantly increased. As a result, over the last hundred years grassy woodlands and shrublands in northern California have transitioned to denser forests and shrublands. Additionally, forest, woodland, chaparral, and grassland landscapes throughout Marin County are undergoing significant change due to climate change (particularly longer, hotter dry seasons, declining coastal fog, and more intense rain events), the spread of invasive species, and the toll of sudden oak death and other forest pathogens on regional ecosystems and overall forest health. Altered fire regimes, climatic patterns, and increased fuel loads are driving larger and more catastrophic wildfire. In the Marin County Coastal Zone, the Mount Vision Fire burned over 12,000 acres in the Point Reyes National Seashore in 1995. The Mount Vision Fire is one of the county’s most destructive wildfires that destroyed 45 structures in Inverness Park. The devastation resulting from the Mount Vision Fire serves as a reminder of the threat of wildland fire in the Coastal Zone. More recently, the 2020 Woodward Fire burned over 4,900 acres in the Point Reyes National Seashore that closed trails and other areas in the park to the public and was seen as ecologically beneficial. Future vegetation treatment projects would be designed to also be ecologically beneficial.



What is the process for approving future projects under a Public Works Plan?

Marin Wildfire, in partnership with Marin County, member fire agencies, public and private landowners, technical advisors, the Coastal Commission, and other partners are leading a regional prioritization effort to identify, design, permit and implement multiple mission critical forest health and fuel load reduction projects within the Program Area (refer to figure on next page) in the Coastal Zone over the life of the PWP. Future projects would be intended to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire to communities and ecosystems, and improve ecological conditions and trajectories for the vegetation communities and habitats within the Coastal Zone.

Future projects processed under the PWP would require the submittal of a Notice of Impending Development (NOID) to the Coastal Commission, which would include public and agency notification.

What are the next steps for this Public Works Plan?

The public draft of this PWP is available for a 6-week period that started July 18, 2025 and will end August 29, 2025. The next steps for the PWP involve:

- Fall 2025 – Final Public Works Plan will be provided to Marin Wildfire Board of Directors for review consideration of approval
- Winter 2025/2026 – Final Public Works Plan Application will be provided to the Coastal Commission for review and consideration of certification
- Winter 2025/2026 – Certified Public Works Plan will be available

After certification, future projects under the PWP can be proposed following the required processes in the PWP.



MARIN WILDFIRE PREVENTION AUTHORITY

