



Recommended & Action-Oriented Maps for Washington State CWPPs

Audience: Community entities leading CWPP development or updates in Washington State (fire districts, county emergency management, conservation districts, tribes, and local partners).

Purpose: This handout supports CWPPs reviewed by Washington DNR by clarifying which maps are expected or recommended, what decisions they support, and how communities can develop them using accessible tools. It is designed to be used as a planning, review, and implementation reference. It can be used alongside this [helpful list of relevant GIS layers](#).

How Maps Support CWPP Review & Implementation

Under Washington State CWPP guidance and HFRA intent, maps are used to:

- Define the **planning area and WUI**
- Describe **wildfire risk and contributing conditions**
- Support **prioritization of mitigation actions**
- Demonstrate **cross-boundary coordination**
- Inform **implementation, funding, and adaptive management**

Effective CWPPs prioritize **clear, decision-relevant maps** over technical complexity. Maps should be usable by partners and revisited as conditions and projects change.

CWPP Mapping Disclaimer (Optional callout for copy into CWPPs):

Maps included in this CWPP are intended for **strategic wildfire risk assessment and planning purposes only**. They do not establish regulatory requirements, land-use designations, or building code standards, and should be used in conjunction with local knowledge and partner coordination.

Core CWPP Maps (Strongly Expected for Review)

These maps form the baseline for CWPP consistency with WADNR and HFRA expectations. Each map should clearly visualize the information described below and be directly tied to planning and implementation decisions.

1. CWPP Planning Area Map

What the map should visualize: CWPP boundary, jurisdictions, land ownership patterns, major roads, and communities.

Purpose: Establishes the geographic scope of the CWPP, clarifies which partners and agencies are involved, and provides a consistent reference for all other CWPP maps.

2. Wildfire Hazard / Risk Map

What the map should visualize: Relative wildfire hazard or risk (e.g., low–high) informed by fuels, topography, weather patterns, and other contributing factors.

Purpose: Identifies where wildfire risk is greatest to support prioritization of mitigation actions, investments, and grant justification.

3. Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) Map

What the map should visualize: Areas where structures, infrastructure, and human development intersect with wildland fuels, using federal, state, or locally defined WUI criteria.

Purpose: Highlights where wildfire risk to people and property is concentrated. WUI identification in a CWPP is for **strategic wildfire planning purposes only** and does **not** establish or imply land-use regulation or building code enforcement.

4. Fire History Map

What the map should visualize: Locations, perimeters, and frequency of past wildfires within and adjacent to the planning area.

Purpose: Provides historical context for wildfire occurrence and behavior, helping communities understand past impacts and inform future planning assumptions.

5. Landownership & Jurisdiction Map

What the map should visualize: Public, private, tribal, and institutional land ownership and management boundaries.

Purpose: Clarifies land management responsibility, supports cross-boundary coordination, and helps identify feasible project partners.

Recommended Maps (Strengthen Prioritization & Implementation)

These maps are not always required but significantly improve CWPP clarity, usability, and implementation readiness.

Fuels & Vegetation Map

What the map should visualize: Vegetation type, fuel characteristics, and relative fuel loading.

Purpose: Identifies hazardous fuels and supports the design and prioritization of fuel treatment and forest management actions.

Fire Response & Suppression Resources Map

What the map should visualize: Fire stations, response areas, access roads, water sources, and fire breaks.

Purpose: Identifies response capacity and gaps, informing infrastructure investments and coordination.

Evacuation & Emergency Access Map

What the map should visualize: Primary and secondary evacuation routes, choke points, and safety zones.

Purpose: Supports life-safety planning, evacuation preparedness, and emergency response coordination.

Population & Critical Infrastructure Map

What the map should visualize: Locations of vulnerable populations and essential facilities such as schools, hospitals, utilities, and communication systems.

Purpose: Prioritizes protection of critical community assets and informs resilience planning.

Prescribed Fire & Fuel Treatment Map

What the map should visualize: Completed, ongoing, and planned fuel treatments and prescribed fire areas.

Purpose: Tracks implementation progress, supports adaptive management, and strengthens grant reporting.

Optional / Advanced Maps (Capacity-Dependent)

These maps may be included when data, expertise, and partnerships allow.

- **Fire Behavior Potential Maps** – Visualize modeled fire spread, intensity, and spotting potential to support evacuation and response planning.
- **Climate, Weather, and Wind Influence Maps** – Show prevailing winds, drought trends, or climate stressors to inform long-term resilience strategies.
- **Post-Fire Risk & Watershed Impact Maps** – Identify erosion-prone slopes and watershed vulnerabilities to support recovery and hazard mitigation.

Map-to-Action Crosswalk (For CWPP Action Plans & Grants)

Map Type	Key Decisions Supported	CWPP Action Plan Uses
Planning Area	Who is involved; where CWPP applies	Partner coordination; boundary clarity
Wildfire Risk	Where risk is highest	Prioritize mitigation & funding
WUI	Where people & homes are exposed	Outreach; home hardening; fuels projects
Fire History	How fire has behaved historically	Risk communication; planning assumptions
Fuels & Vegetation	Where fuels drive risk	Fuel reduction project design
Response Resources	Where gaps exist	Water access; road improvements

Map Type	Key Decisions Supported	CWPP Action Plan Uses
Evacuation	Where evacuation is constrained	Evacuation planning; signage; drills
Critical Infrastructure	What must be protected	Asset hardening; continuity planning
Treatment Areas	What work is complete or planned	Implementation tracking; grant reporting

Accessible Mapping Tools & Data Sources

CWPP leads do not need advanced GIS capacity to meet mapping expectations.

- **Living CWPP (LCWPP) Tool** – Public-facing CWPP development and project tracking platform
- **Washington DNR** – Wildfire risk, fire history, vegetation, and WUI datasets
- **County GIS Portals** – Parcels, infrastructure, roads, demographics
- **USGS EarthExplorer** – Satellite imagery and elevation data
- **ArcGIS Online / Google My Maps** – Low-barrier map creation and sharing

Common CWPP Mapping Misconceptions

- **WUI maps do not create regulations.** CWPP WUI identification is for strategic planning only and does not trigger building codes or land-use requirements.
- **Risk maps do not predict fire occurrence.** They show relative conditions to support prioritization, not certainty of fire.
- **More detail is not always better.** Clear, understandable maps are more useful than highly technical products.
- **Maps do not replace community knowledge.** Local experience and lived knowledge should inform and refine mapped data.
- **CWPP maps are not static.** They should be revisited and updated as conditions, projects, and priorities change.

Key Takeaways for CWPP Leads

- Maps are **planning and implementation tools**, not just CWPP figures
- Focus on maps that **directly support actions and funding decisions**
- Use **public, shared tools** to support transparency and long-term CWPP use
- Start with core maps and **build mapping capacity over time**

