

JANUARY 2025

# Lake Travis Fire Rescue & Tri-City Emergency Management

Advancing Crisis Preparedness and Community Resilience



**Presented By:**

BOBBY ABBOTT  
FIRE CHIEF  
LAKE TRAVIS FIRE RESCUE

WAHEEDA YOUSOFZOY  
TRI-CITY DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
LAKeway-BEE CAVE-THE HILLS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **1 Wildfire Risk Mitigation & Preparedness Update**

<b><u>2 Preparedness: Strengthening Our Response</u></b>
<b><u>3 Mitigation: Reducing Risks &amp; Enhancing Resilience</u></b>
<b><u>4 Current: Enhancing Our Ongoing Efforts</u></b>
<b><u>5 Current: Enhancing Our Ongoing Efforts Cont.</u></b>
<b><u>6 Planned: Building for the Future</u></b>
<b><u>7 Wildfire Mitigation: Mechanical Approaches</u></b>
<b><u>8 Wildfire Mitigation: Policy Interventions</u></b>
<b><u>9 Wildfire Fuel &amp; Mitigation Cost Since 2012</u></b>

# WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

In the wake of the devastating LA fires in early 2025, there have been concerns and questions raised as to whether a similar situation exists in our community. The central Texas region is primed for similar events, and many public safety experts argue that we have already experienced such events on a smaller scale here in the Lake Travis area.

The 2011 Steiner Ranch, Bastrop, and Spicewood fires were pivotal for wildfire mitigation efforts in the Lake Travis region of Texas. These devastating fires killed three people, consumed over 38,600 acres, and destroyed more than 1,700 homes, starkly highlighting the risks posed by wildfires in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). In the aftermath, Lake Travis Fire Rescue (LTFR) significantly expanded its fuel mitigation program to reduce the likelihood of future fires and enhance the community's resilience.

The 2011 fires exposed vulnerabilities in the region's preparedness for wildfires, particularly in areas where residential development encroached upon natural landscapes. Factors such as prolonged drought, high winds, and an accumulation of dry vegetation created a perfect storm for the fire to ignite and spread rapidly. In response, LTFR recognized the need to address fuel loads, educate the community, and collaborate with various stakeholders to mitigate future wildfire and natural disaster risks.

LTFR and the Tri-City Emergency Management Department have taken steps over the last few years to improve the area's emergency response systems; help mitigate wildfire seasonal storm impacts and assist the community in building a stable and resilient approach to: prepare for, mitigate, and recover from various crises including wildfires.

## TRI- CITY WARMING CENTER/ SHELTER RELIEF

Tri-City Emergency Management, in collaboration with key partners, has developed a shelter plan for the community, with the Fellowship Hall at Lakeway Church designated as the warming center/shelter relief location. Earlier this year, Tri-City Emergency Management hosted a "Shelter Fundamentals" training and "Simulation Exercise" and offered a refresher session on Thursday, January 16, 2025.



With over sixty-five committed volunteers, we are always looking to grow our team. If you're interested in joining, please reach out to Tri-City Director of Emergency Management, [Waheeda@lakeway-tx.gov](mailto:Waheeda@lakeway-tx.gov)

# PREPAREDNESS: STRENGTHENING OUR RESPONSE

## WILDLAND TABLETOP EXERCISES AND DRILLS

Regular participation in wildland related exercises has been a priority for LTFR and the Tri- Cities. These exercises have aided in identifying local strengths, as well as areas for improvement in wildfire preparedness and response.

## FIREFIGHTER WILDLAND TRAINING AND EDUCATION

LTFR works closely with partnering ESDs to ensure that local firefighters receive robust training in wildland firefighting response and tactics.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS

A well-informed, educated public is a key component of success when confronting any disaster. LTFR have invested in outreach through the hiring of multiple full-time employees dedicated to keeping the public informed. Additionally, Tri-City Emergency Management coordinates public outreach efforts with the Tri-City Communication Team for Lakeway, Bee Cave and LTFR.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION COORDINATOR BY LTFR

LTFR hired a full time Public Education Coordinator in 2024 with the goal of further serving the public through easily accessible, high quality outreach programs. The Public Educator continues to offer a multitude of publicly available classes, which range from basic fire safety demonstrations, to CPR/First Aid courses.



## Wildland Committees

LTFR takes an active role in the Capital Area Fire Chiefs Association (CAFCA) wildland committee, aiding in the development of multiagency policies and procedures related to wildland firefighting. LTFR and Tri-City EM participate in the County and City Wildland Committee (CCWC), held quarterly which ensures enlightenment with County initiatives.

# MITIGATION: REDUCING RISKS & ENHANCING RESILIENCE

Tri-City Emergency Management and LTFR updated and completed the Travis County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan. This comprehensive update ensures our region remains proactive in addressing potential hazards and securing resources for mitigation efforts. Key highlights include:

## Plan Approval:

1. The updated Travis County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan is approved in its entirety. The plan was approved on Oct. 16th, 2023 and will be renewed in 2028.
2. Funding Opportunities: The HMAP allows for each entity to pursue funding to implement the mitigation strategies outlined in the plan. Upon securing resources, these actions will be conducted promptly.

Tri-City Emergency Management and LTFR remain committed to mitigating risks and enhancing community resilience. We welcome any additional feedback or suggestions to further refine our mitigation efforts.

Public Copy: [HMAP](#)

## WILDFIRE MITIGATION SPECIALIST

In 2016, the City of Lakeway and LTFR entered into a cost-sharing agreement to hire a full-time Wildfire Mitigation Specialist who would be responsible for ensuring the city's and the District's needs were being met on topics of wildfire reduction, education, and advancing a number of joint projects. Dustin Dunn is our Certified Wildfire Mitigation Specialist and may be reached at ddunn@ltfr.org.

## COUNTY RESOURCE COORDINATOR

The Travis County ESDs hired a full time employee in 2023 to act as the County Fire Resource Coordinator (CRC). The CRC allows for county wide resource coordination during response to disasters while simultaneously providing the ESDs with a single, unified voice when communicating with partnering agencies. Additionally, the CRC serves as a liaison between the ESDs and the various emergency response agencies in the county, officing with the Travis County Department of Emergency Services. This has allowed for a single point of communication.

# CURRENT: ENHANCING OUR ONGOING EFFORTS



## TRI-CITY WILDFIRE SYMPOSIUM

Tri-City Emergency Management held an Active Fuel Mitigation Symposium on August 13th, 2024. The event was a success, thanks to the expertise and commitment of all participants, who helped advance wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts for Lakeway, Bee Cave, and The Hills.

During the symposium, key organizations—including LTFR, Travis County Parks, Balcones Canyonlands Preserve, Austin Water, the Travis County Fire Marshal's Office, Texas A&M Forest Service, TDEM, FEMA, Austin Energy, LCRA, and PEC—shared valuable insights. Presentations covered a range of critical topics such as fuel mitigation projects, wildland management strategies, conservation efforts, fire prevention, grant programs, and vegetation management priorities.

The discussions and strategies shared during the event have laid a strong foundation for enhancing our community's wildfire preparedness and resilience. Additionally, the creation of the Tri-City Wildland Mitigation Task Force was established.

## CREATION OF THE TRI-CITY WILDLAND TASKFORCE

The Tri-City Wildland Mitigation Task Force has been established to strengthen our efforts in wildfire prevention and mitigation across Lakeway, Bee Cave, and The Hills. This collaborative task force includes key agencies such as Lake Travis Fire Rescue, Texas A&M Forest Service, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), Austin Water, Travis County Parks, Travis County Fire Marshal's Office, LCRA, Austin Energy, PEC, and the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve. Together, we are working on a unified approach to enhance fuel mitigation strategies, improve wildfire prevention efforts, and ensure a more resilient community in the event of a wildfire. This collaborative effort marks a significant step toward preparing the Tri-City region for potential wildland threats, pooling resources, and expertise to make our communities safer. The Tri-City Wildland Task Force meets on a quarterly basis.

# DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED EVACUATION PLANS

The Travis County ESDs have developed the Wildland Action Plan, a document that outlines the unique hazards and complexities associated with evacuation throughout the county. The Wildland Action Plan establishes a framework for evacuation throughout the county while still allowing for the unpredictability of wildland response.

Tri-City Emergency Management is developing an all All-Hazards Evacuation plan to ensure community safety in various emergency scenarios. Biweekly meetings, held both in person and via Teams, include key representatives from each participating entity. The presence of decision-makers in these meetings is essential to guide the planning process and ensure alignment across efforts. Additional departments and agencies will be included as necessary to address all facets of this critical initiative.

We are also collaborating with regional, County, and State leaders to ensure our plan complements State efforts, enhancing overall response efficiency.

Virtual and in-person meetings brought together representatives from Pedernales ESD 8, LTFR, WCID 17, Bee Cave Police Department, Lakeway Police Department, Travis County Parks, Tri-City Communications Directors, Travis County Sheriff's Office, and Lakeway Municipal Utility District. These agencies are working together to create a comprehensive and coordinated evacuation. Additional county, regional and state stakeholders will be joining the planning team to ensure alignment in processes and procedures.



TRI-CITY ALL HAZARDS PLANNING TEAM

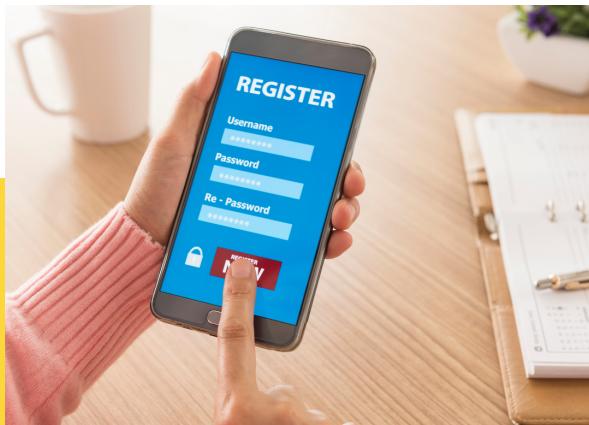
## TRI-CITY UAV EXERCISE



# PLANNED MEASURES: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

## REVIEW AND UPDATE EMERGENCY PLANS

Tri-City Emergency Management is in the planning process of updating and creating several emergency plans. The plans include the Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Operations Center Plan, Crisis Communications Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan, and various others. The implementation of these plans will be a coordinated effort with LTFR and various stakeholders.



**WARN CENTRAL TEXAS**  
<https://warncentraltexas.org/>

**VOYENT**  
<https://voyent-alert.us/community/>

## PUBLIC WARNING INFORMATION SYSTEM

WarnCentralTexas and Voyent Alert are public notification platforms designed to deliver critical information to residents. Constituents are encouraged to register for WarnCentralTexas, which serves as the primary platform for countywide emergency notifications. Meanwhile, the Voyent Alert platform is used specifically for localized, Tri-City area notifications, ensuring tailored communication for our community.

## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

LTFR has actively supported the establishment of Firewise Communities in the Lake Travis area. The Firewise USA program, developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), provides a framework for neighborhoods to collaboratively reduce wildfire risks. Through this program, communities such as Steiner Ranch, Homestead in Bee Cave and the City of Lakeway have developed action plans to address local hazards, conduct risk assessments, and implement fuel reduction projects.

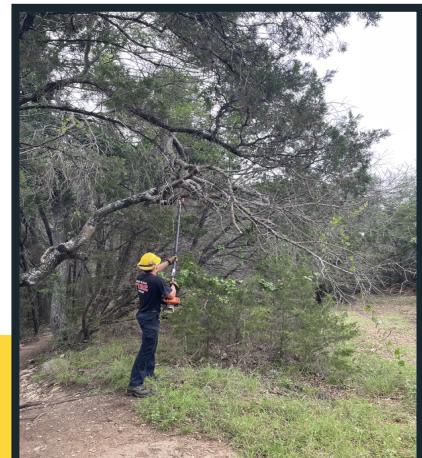
LINK: [NFPA Firewise USA](#)

# WILDFIRE MITIGATION: MECHANICAL APPROACHES

Wildfires are an escalating concern fueled by climate change, increasing urban-wildland interface (WUI) development, and decades of fire suppression policies. Wildfires' intensifying frequency and severity pose substantial threats to lives, property, and ecosystems, necessitating robust mitigation strategies. Broadly, these strategies fall into two categories: mechanical mitigation and policy interventions. Mechanical approaches focus on physical landscape modifications to reduce fuel loads and fire spread. At the same time, policy interventions encompass legislative, regulatory, and planning mechanisms to shape human behavior and land management practices.

## MECHANICAL MITIGATION APPROACHES

Mechanical mitigation encompasses a range of physical interventions designed to reduce fire hazards by directly managing vegetation and other fuels. Common techniques include fuel reduction, thinning, prescribed burns, and firebreak construction. Each of these methods has distinct objectives and applications in wildfire management.



# WILDFIRE MITIGATION: POLICY INTERVENTIONS

Policy interventions focus on shaping human behavior, land use, and resource management through legislation, regulations, and planning initiatives. These approaches aim to address the root causes of wildfire risks and promote long-term resilience.

## FIREFIGHTING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Who is responsible for the fire hydrants?

The water districts are responsible for the fire hydrant maintenance. Most water districts use a third-party testing company to assess and repair the hydrants. The fire department enforces the fire codes (in the cities and county areas) for where and when they are installed, depending on how old the community is. We have excellent working relationships and communications with our water districts, and they are very responsive to our needs. The Lake Travis community enjoys better than average Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings due to the established fire suppression and prevention activities and access to a stable water distribution system operated by the various water districts.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Vegetation management policies mandate the maintenance of defensible space around homes and infrastructure. These regulations often require property owners to clear flammable vegetation within specified distances and maintain fire-resistant landscaping. While such policies effectively reduce fire hazards, their enforcement depends on adequate funding, public compliance, and oversight.

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

In collaboration with Lakeway's City Forester, Bee Cave Parks & Facilities, LTFR, and Pedernales ESD 8, we are actively working to reduce fuel loads in high-risk areas, aiming to mitigate wildfire risks.

Our efforts are guided by a comprehensive vegetation management plan that prioritizes actions based on risk assessment, accessibility, and terrain considerations.

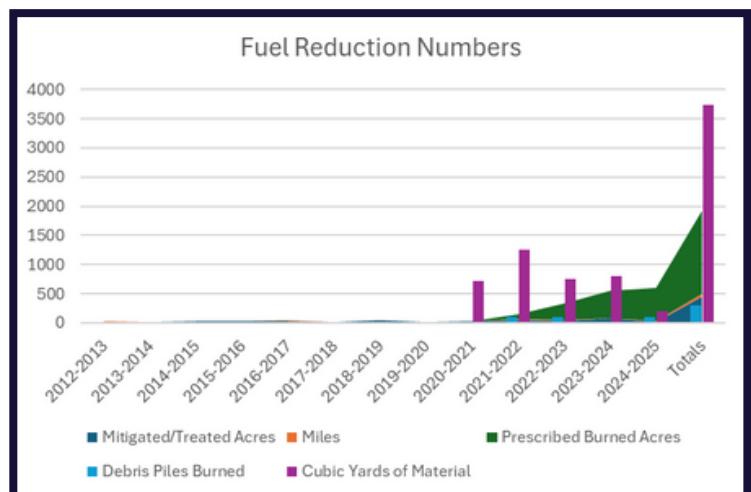
Additionally, we are coordinating with local water districts, including Lakeway MUD, Hurst Creek, WCID-17, and WTCPUA, to gather critical data and ensure sufficient water supply and capacity to support firefighting operations effectively.

# WILDFIRE FUEL & MITIGATION COST SINCE 2012

Through annual maintenance and operation budgets, contracts, and grants, LTFR, Travis County, and the cities have funded more than \$7,996,676+ towards mitigation efforts in and around the South Lake Travis communities since 2012. This includes cost-shared positions and projects between Travis county, the cities, and LTFR for mechanical mitigation efforts in targeted areas such as greenbelts and preserve areas, community parklands, publicly owned open spaces, community education and outreach, and debris cleanup and removal after winter storms. Some of the expensed funds have been federally reimbursed up to seventy-five percent.

## FUEL REDUCTION NUMBERS

Fiscal Year	Mitigated/Treated Acres	Miles	Prescribed Burned Acres	Debris Piles Burned	Cubic Yards of Material
2012-2013	22.3	2.79			
2013-2014	19.7	2.46			
2014-2015	35.4	4.43			
2015-2016	32.2	4.03			
2016-2017	39.3	4.91			
2017-2018	17.21	2.15			
2018-2019	42.26	5.28			
2019-2020	14.57	1.82			
2020-2021	34.1	4.26			721
2021-2022	51.9	6.49	96	100	1,253
2022-2023	37.4	4.68	295	100	750
2023-2024	75.73	9.47	460		807
2024-2025	22	2.75	570	100	200



City of Lakeway, Village of The Hills, Travis County BCP, Lakepointe MUD, Travis County ESD4, Travis County Fire Marshals Office, Travis County Parks, WCID 17, LCRA, West Travis County MUD No. 5, Apache Shores HOA, The Terrace at the Preserve HOA, Belvedere HOA, Steiner Ranch Masters Association, Wild Basin

## STORM MARA OPERATIONS COST

### TRI-CITY STORM MARA DEBRIS CLEANUP OPERATIONS

