

Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council *Newsletter*

Fall 2023

Issue 3



FAIR Plan – Getting Fairer with New Discounts!

The FAIR Plan has offered a discount on policies in a participating Firewise Community since May 2018. Sand Ridge FSC became a FireWise Member in December 2022. Now, the FAIR Plan is offering two more wildfire hardening discounts:

- one for Protecting the Structure (home hardening),
- and another for Protecting the Immediate Surroundings of the dwelling (defensible space).

When applied, these discounts will reduce the wildfire portion of the policy's premium by 10% and 5% respectively, depending on what actions you have taken for your home and property.

Read the full article here: [CFP News Release](#)



Contact your Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council for a Home Hardening/ Defensible Space Assessment by sending an email to info@SandRidgefiresafe.org

These are non-enforcement, information- only visits.
No personal information is shared with any other agency.

West Slope Foundation Grant Award

We are thrilled to announce that our Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council has been awarded a \$5,000 grant by the West Slope Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization founded in 2021 after the Caldor Fire. The award was possible with support from the California Volunteers of the Governor's Office. From recent conversations with Fire officials, we realized that proper signage (street and house signs) is critical for first responders to quickly find addresses when responding to fires or first aid calls. To this end, we applied for these funds to upgrade street signs where necessary.

We have also planned a purchase of vent screen materials that we will be able to give to residents to upgrade their vents to the recommended 1/8th inch or less opening size to prevent ember intrusion during fires.

Once we receive the funds, we will announce more details and begin reaching out to property owners about signage.



Green Waste Days Coming to Sand Ridge

We are excited to announce that we have received money from the County Fire Safe Council to do a couple of Green Waste Dumpster Days in the Sand Ridge area. How these have worked in other parts of the county, is that we set up a large dumpster on a specific day and place and residents can bring any and all green waste to add to the dumpster for free. The intent is to make it easier for folks to get rid of any leaves, bush or tree pruning or downed trees.

The only things not accepted are stumps, logs over 18" in diameter, rocks, and dirt. All other foliage that was once alive can go into the dumpster. Please watch for a questionnaire that will help us tailor this program to our community's needs.



Sand Ridge Road Surfacing Update

Work is really happening on the unpaved 3.5 miles in the middle of Sand Ridge Road!

Why does the Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council care about the condition of the road? In every conversation that we have with fire officials, they will say that their Number 1 concern in a fire is access. They want to be able to evacuate residents if needed and they want to be able to get their crews and vehicles in as quickly and safely as possible. The resurfacing work that is beginning on the middle portion of Sand Ridge Road will help access greatly! Not only will it allow fire vehicles to get in more quickly, it will allow residents to evacuate. We plan for worse case scenarios (which we hope will never happen). One possibility that we are planning for is a large fire or other obstacle that blocks one end of Sand Ridge Road. With only one way out, the often rutted and potholed condition of Sand Ridge Road would be a major hazard in an evacuation.

What to expect:

County DOT and contractors have already removed vegetation from the sides of Sand Ridge Road and limbed up trees hanging over the road to at least 15 feet. Any vegetation that is left is the responsibility of the property owners.

Next steps include preparing the road for the upcoming double chipseal. The project includes roadside ditching, removing rock outcroppings, grading the road and adding additional asphalt grindings as needed. Per a resident that recently talked with the supervisor of the job, they will be working most days starting between 6 & 7 am, and should be done most days by 4:30. They are starting on the 49er side of the dirt road.

Once this work is completed, we should all cruise the whole length of Sand Ridge to familiarize ourselves with the length, curves, and tight spots in case we need to make a hasty exit one day.



FireWise Renewal Documents

Report your hours using this worksheet:



[FirewiseVolunteerHourlyWorksheet.pdf](#)

Examples of Time & Expenses:



[FirewiseTimeExpenseInvestmentExamples.pdf](#)

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held jointly with the Logtown FSC. Get to know some more neighbors and we will be hearing from a representative of BLM. We may also get an update on the recent Diamond Springs Fire.

Saturday, September 9th 9:00 am

6109 Quartz Dr. (off Crystal Blvd.)

Coffee and Donuts too!

Treasurer's Report

We currently have \$1849.34 in our Treasury. The majority of this money was raised at our fundraiser last June and October and through other generous donations. We have recently purchased a web domain to allow us to create a website.

Darlene Myers, Treasurer



FireWise Renewal Period

We are beginning our renewal process for our FireWise Certification renewal. This is an annual process by which we collect data and celebrate all of the great work that we collectively are doing to make our community safer from wildfire. By completing this renewal, we will collectively be able to continue to get insurance discounts as a participating FireWise Community.

What we need from you: Please fill out the attached form estimating the time and money you have spent over the past year (November 2022 – present) to improve your defensible space by weed-eating, mowing, trimming trees, removing dead vegetation, etc., and/or any projects you have done to your home or other permitted structures to make the more fire safe like replacing the roof, new decking, new siding, etc. Also include any work you have done on private roads (any except Sand Ridge Road, Union Mine Road, or Hwy 49) to fix pavement, grading, removing vegetation from along the sides, etc.

No personal info will be reported. Data will be compiled and we will only report the number of properties participating and the total hours/dollars spent.

If you have already sent in a form, THANK YOU! Do not send it in again unless you have additions.

Please remember that this program does not expect or require us to demonstrate perfection. Rather, by documenting the work that we are doing, it seeks to continue to educate participating communities as to best practices and to encourage communities to CONTINUE to do the work required every year to keep our homes and properties safe. This is NOT a ONCE and DONE project!



Area Fire Updates

Rontree Fire

In late July, a fire broke out a little too close to home in Somerset near Pioneer Park. All the stars were aligned on this incident from the initial spotting of the fire by Engine 38 of the Pioneer Fire department and being first on scene to a massive and quick response by CalFire including air and ground support. The fire started with a slow progression, and began to quickly move. Pioneer Fire, CalFire and all involved were able to stop the forward progress which burned 13.75 acres. No structures or lives were lost.

Chief David Whitt and his team recently spoke at the Mt. Aukum Fire Safe Council meeting to share what they witnessed and to give us many important reminders on how to prepare for wildfire. The reason I say we were lucky is (1) Engine 38 happened to spot smoke while driving and was first on scene; (2) no other big fires had consumed personnel, so CalFire had firefighters and equipment at the ready; (3) Chief Whitt patrolled the area finding spot fires that were squelched quickly.

Pioneer Fire is a small but strong team who can be the first responders to local fires in some of our area. Chief Whitt states his dream is for every home to have 5,000 gallons of water accessible by the fire department with proper fire hose fittings. He also shared the importance of home hardening and defensible space. Also, finally, he reminded us that it is prudent for all of us to be mindful of fire conditions by checking weather reports on humidity before using power tools in dry weather.

The Rontree Fire is alleged to have started because of a homeowner mowing weeds during undesirable conditions.

It's also important to note that you will not be contacted unless there is an evacuation order. Be sure to sign up for RAVE (<https://calalerts.org/index.html>) to receive any evacuation notices. A good way to know what fires are happening near you is to download the Watch Duty app (<https://www.watchduty.org/>) on your phone and sign up for alerts.

Your home can survive wildfire with good home hardening and defensible space clearing. Again, defensible space clearing is best done in winter and spring and if you must do some maintenance during hot, dry weather, plan for the best day and time by reviewing weather conditions and working before 10 am.

For a home hardening and defensible space assessment on your home, please contact the Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council. It's free and confidential! Even if you think your home is prepared, we guarantee to share with you tips that you've never considered.

Let's all work together to make Sand Ridge ready for wildfire!

Denise Romanek, Secretary

Kinsley Fire

I reached out to Incident Commander Chief Richards. Below is an excerpt of the email I received from Chief Richards in response:

I'm happy to share some of the details we observed on last week's fire. I have listed your questions below with responses.

Was there good defensible space on the property or around it?

There was good defensible space around the houses in the immediate area. This aided in the suppression activities and provided safe parking for fire apparatus.

Did the large aircraft that showed up super quick and dropped retardant make a big difference on this fire?

Yes, the air tanker assigned to the fire made a positive impact by dropping retardant around much of the fire perimeter.

What was problematic about the area that slowed you down?

The area is in a remote location, this created extended response times and delayed the initial suppression efforts.

The road conditions?

The road conditions from Hwy 49 to the scene had a few challenges, those challenges were narrow sections, blind corners, and steep grades. This is typical in rural areas.

Access to water?

There is limited water in the area. We used two water tender apparatus to shuttle water from a fire hydrant at Monitor Rd x Hwy 49. There was a swimming pool in the area of the fire; we used it as a storage tank for the water tenders.

Overall, the fire went well and was suppressed in a short amount of time. One recommendation I would have is the use of clear and visible street signs and addresses. Even though we have modern maps and turn by turn directions, it is nice to have location information posted.

We do not know the cause of this fire, and frankly that is not as important as the outcome. Fires are part of our environment and we will never be able to prevent all fires. Our goal should be to prepare for fires whether they begin miles away or in our own backyards. Your defensible space is your most important first step!

As Chief Richards noted above, it will take some time for fire personnel to arrive to any location along Sand Ridge Road. Your defensible space buys time for them to get here, will help prevent a fire that starts at your home from escaping into the woods, and will provide space for fire fighters to do their job safely. The other item I noted from this conversation was that CalFire shuttles water from Hwy 49 and Monitor (the closest fire hydrant). This is why they have to close Sand Ridge Road to traffic during a fire. Calfire will have vehicles going back and forth. The last item I noted from this conversation is that he recommends better signage for our area. This means both street signs and house signs. See our announcement about a mini-grant from the West Slope Foundation that we will use to address some of our substandard signage!

Elizabeth Standeven, Chair

FREE

TO LEARN MORE VISIT
WestSlopeFoundation.org

ARE YOU READY?

A disaster is coming...It's not IF, but WHEN!

	SESSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS	DATES & TIMES	LOCATION
WEEK ONE	SESSION # 1 A PLACE TO START	THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED.	SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2023 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 2 ESSENTIALS	WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ITEMS YOU NEED TO TAKE WHEN EVACUATING.	SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2023 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 3 WHERE TO GO	WHAT YOU NEED TO SAFELY AND QUICKLY EVACUATE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS.	SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 4 DON'T DO IT ALONE	THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.	SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 5 HELP IS ALL AROUND YOU	WHO THE PLAYERS ARE DURING A DISASTER RESPONSE.	SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 2023 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 6 LET'S TALK	VITAL COMMUNICATION DURING DISASTERS.	SATURDAY OCTOBER 14, 2023 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 7 SAFETY BARRIER	PROTECTING YOUR HOME, WHETHER YOU OWN OR RENT IT.	SUNDAY OCTOBER 15, 2023 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET
	SESSION # 8 PREPAREDNESS PAYS OFF	WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN EVACUATED.	SUNDAY OCTOBER 15, 2023 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FIREMAN'S HALL 7060 Mt. Aukum ROAD SOMERSET

We highly recommend you to take all 8 sessions in order to help ensure YOU ARE READY!



Attending all 8 of the Disaster Preparedness Workshop Sections provides the peace of mind that comes from knowing you have a disaster plan. The workshop includes 63 practical and easy to use checklists and forms, the expertise of 9 disaster experts, 13 fun and informative activities, a free Go Bag and Evacuation Tote to take home and so much more.



STOP PROCRASTINATING REGISTER NOW!

SCAN CODE or VISIT US ONLINE