

Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council *Newsletter*

Fall 2024

Issue 5



Meetings & Workshops

Please join us on Saturday, October 5, 9-11 am at Pioneer Fire Office, 7601 Mt. Aukum Road in Somerset. We will discuss a number of topics including input to the broader Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and we'll have a first responder guest speaker.

Also, see flyers attached to the end of this newsletter for important upcoming workshops we encourage you to attend:

- ✓ **Be Wildfire Ready** ... presented by the Office of Wildfire Preparedness & Resilience
- ✓ **Disaster Preparedness** ... presented by the West Slope Foundation
- ✓ **Prescribed Burn Planning for Landowners** ... presented by El Dorado-Amador Prescribed Burn Association

Lessons Learned: Moccasin and Pay Fires

We dodged a bullet, thanks to the impressive work by CAL FIRE, local fire departments (including Tribal), BLM, El Dorado National Forest, Sheriff's Office, and more. Both fires were during very hot, dry, July days, aligning with difficult terrain. Both could have exploded but did not, thanks to the low winds, aggressive ground and air attacks by firefighters, and some important earlier fuel reduction by residents. No lives and few structures were destroyed. Our thanks are profound. Our opportunity now is to learn from those fires.

The **Moccasin Fire** started near the end of South County's unincorporated Oak Hill Road, where dense vegetation caught from a house fire. It spread up the ridge towards many homes, but was stopped before destroying any, at just 52 acres.

The **Pay Fire** started when a tree fell on an electric line in a heavily vegetated area on the edge of Placerville. It could have been disastrous if it had spread south further into Texas Hill Estates or north into greater Placerville. Instead it was stopped at 77 acres.

Lessons Learned: Moccasin and Pay Fires (continued)

What went right? Where as a community might we do better? Lessons from these fires might help us dodge future, bigger bullets if we act on our knowledge.

1. Defensible space and fuel reduction work really helped in both fires. CAL FIRE emphasized that good defensible space of at least one threatened home helped CAL FIRE hold the north boundary of the Moccasin Fire. That helped not only the home itself, but also the whole community. For the Pay Fire, fuel reduction work in Texas Hill Estates had resulted in thinned fuels so that the fire slowed, enabling control there as well.



Texas Hill Estates fuel thinning project **before** the Pay Fire, showing denseness of vegetation nearby.



Texas Hill Estates fuel thinning project **after** the Pay Fire, showing how it helped keep fire intensity low.

2. Water was not an issue for either fire, helping quick control. A hydrant located far down Oak Hill Rd (most of which does not have hydrants) was a big help for the Moccasin Fire. Hydrants were plentiful in the vicinity of the Pay Fire.



3. The Placerville airport acted as an excellent fire break for the Pay Fire, just as defensible space can do. As the Pay Fire spread north and east through dense vegetation, northward movement into Placerville was easier to stop because of the wide airport runways. A large wildfire would likely jump such a break, but they can be very effective when wildfires are still small.



Lessons Learned: Moccasin and Pay Fires (continued)

4. Neither fire started where homes are close together (less than 30 ft from each other). That was a big help, because it meant that when the few structures that did burn threw off intense heat, there were no structures nearby for that heat to ignite. Dense neighborhoods are at risk of rapid home-to-home ignition.

5. Narrow roads were a big challenge in the more rural Moccasin Fire. The Moccasin Fire was centered on Moccasin Trail, a very narrow, rural road which made access tight for fire engines. Narrow roads are our legacy in many parts of the county and not easily widened, but adding turnouts where possible can help, along with thinning the vegetation along the side.

6. Non-reflective, makeshift or missing street and address signs were a hindrance in the Moccasin Fire. Address signs and street signs are really important, not just for evacuation notification, but also so firefighters can use them to stage their response: for giving directions, coordinating passing each other on narrow roads, assigning areas for firefighters to go to, etc. Firefighters had difficulty locating or identifying some streets and addresses on the Moccasin Fire due to missing or non-reflective signs. Fires can cause very smoky and dark conditions, even during the day.



Nice homemade sign still stands, but reflective sign has been installed also.

7. Fires spotting ahead of the main front can happen even when winds are light. Both fires had dangerous spot fires jump beyond their perimeters, even though the weather was not windy. That's because fires themselves have convection currents that move embers, and/or hilly terrain causes embers to travel downhill.



Typical spot fire ahead of main front

8. Narrow, one way in/out roads of the Oak Hill area meant that evacuation orders and warnings had to be more extensive. Typical spot fire ahead of main front Fires can change their direction and behavior rapidly, and the Sheriff's Office (OES) needed to account for the narrow roads that could hinder evacuations, as they designated the orders, warning areas, and road closures. OES was on scene at the Moccasin Fire in 15 minutes, and at the Pay Fire in assisting quickly with getting firefighters in and residents out, according to Officer Whitlock.

9. The Perimeter website was a great help, and RAVE alerts went out. Many residents in evacuation warning and order areas mentioned that they had received the RAVE alerts, and that they went to Perimeter again and again, as a helpful tool to monitor their evacuation situation. It was noted that street names were hard to access on Perimeter for roads designated as evacuation routes.

Sign on Oak Hill Rd. installed by residents



Further information on the Crozier Fire will be available when we have more information.

Get Your Defensible Space/Home Hardening Assessment

Trained assessors are ready to provide you with a free “assessment” to help your property survive a wildfire, which also helps the community at large. We focus on home hardening improvements and defensible space requirements. These tips can help you apply for fire insurance discounts, get your house ready for upcoming defensible space “inspections” by authorities, get ready for a real estate sale defensible space inspection, or simply help you to prioritize the projects around your home.

Please email us at info@sandridgefiresafe.org to schedule. It only takes about an hour.

FireWise Renewal

It's that time of year again for the Sand Ridge Fire Safe Council to renew it's FireWise designation. Having a FireWise designation means that we work as a community to reduce wildfire risk in our neighborhood.

In order for us to continue our designation, we need your support by providing us with the hours you've spent, or contractors you've paid, to do work around your home in relation to defensible space and home hardening improvements.

The following pages provide examples of time and expense investments, and we've included a form we ask you to **complete and send in no later than October 20.**



TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES

Investing the equivalent of one volunteer hour (valued at \$25.43) per residential dwelling unit within the site's boundary in annual wildfire risk reduction efforts is a requirement of the national recognition program's criteria for maintaining an "In Good Standing" status. Examples of potential actions, activities, and expenses that can be used in meeting the total investment are listed below. These are only examples, it is not a comprehensive list.

COLLABORATION WITH FORESTRY, FIRE, AND RELATED EXPERTS:

- Consultation time with forestry/fire professionals on areas at risk
- Coordination of arborist, landscaping, etc. estimates for vegetation maintenance in common areas
- Regional coordinator's time mentoring/working with residents
- Time spent performing fire risk overviews at individual homes

COORDINATION OF PROJECTS, MEETINGS, ETC.:

- Coordination of wildfire related outreach events
- Coordination of wildfire educational presentations with subject matter experts
- Resident leader's program administration time
- Travel time to risk reduction meetings, orientations, trainings, and workshops

EDUCATION/TRAINING EVENTS AND MEETINGS FOR RESIDENTS:

- Attendance at evacuation/preparedness trainings
- Attendance at wildfire-related education/informational meetings and events
- Home improvements/modifications training
- Fire-resistant plant species workshop
- Safety and personal protective equipment training
- Vegetation management training

IMPROVEMENTS/MAINTENANCE ON THE HOME AND OUTBUILDINGS:

- Chimney spark arrestor installation
- Repairs to retrofit open-eaves style construction to soffited-eaves
- Modifications of deck to increase the gap between boards from $\frac{1}{8}$ inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch
- Inspection of roof; replacement of shingles as needed
- Inspection/repairs of eaves and soffits to ensure construction materials are in good condition
- Removal all flammable materials from under decks and porches
- Removal of debris between deck board gaps/joints
- Removal of debris on the roof and in the gutters as needed
- Replacement of missing deck boards to reduce ember entry to area under decks
- Replacement of vinyl gutters with metal gutters
- Replacement of wood fencing sections where attached to the house with a noncombustible product
- Resident or contractor labor to perform ignition-resistant exterior improvements (e.g., new Class A roofs, mesh screening added to attic and crawl space vents, siding repairs, replacement of wood fencing attached to siding, etc.)
- Installation of weatherstripping along the perimeter of garage doors to help keep embers out
- Use of a sealant (such as caulking) to cover gaps in open-eave areas



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RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES (continued)

IMPROVEMENTS/MAINTENANCE WITHIN THE HOME IGNITION ZONES:

- Clearing of debris at the base of combustible fences
- Clearing of vegetation beneath and around large stationary propane tanks
- Creation of a permanent non-flammable footprint under large stationary propane tanks
- Creation of a non-flammable footprint under decks with gravel, stone or concrete
- Creation of small fuel breaks by adding hardscaping (e.g., driveways, walkways/paths, patios, stone walls, etc.)
- Delimbing and removal of lower tree branches
- Relocation of firewood piles to at least 30 feet from the home and other structures
- Mowing lawns and trimming native grasses and weeds as needed
- Raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, and ground debris
- Replacement of combustible mulch material with stone/gravel
- Replacement of highly-flammable vegetation with fire-resistant species
- Reduction of ladder fuels
- Stacking/piling of slash and other debris for chipping or curbside pickup
- Thinning or removal of trees

NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY FOCUSED PROJECTS:

- Debris removal and maintenance of commonly owned areas
- Coordination of rental equipment and contractors for community-wide wildfire risk reduction projects
- Door-to-door canvassing to get new neighbors involved in reducing wildfire risks

- Grant writing/oversight for wildfire risk reduction projects
- Mentoring adjacent neighborhoods on the importance of reducing wildfire risks
- Organizing, coordinating, planning, and implementation of the annual education/outreach events/activities
- Participation and attendance at Firewise board meetings, including development and updating of action plans
- Participation in group risk reduction activities for residents physically unable to do the work themselves
- Participation in national Wildfire Community Preparedness Day projects
- Reduction of vegetation/fuels from adjacent ingress and egress routes
- Resident's time attending/participating in annual wildfire education/outreach events
- Participation in risk reduction orientation to new residents
- Writing wildfire educational articles for the neighborhood newsletter or community website

EXPENSE EXAMPLES:

- Chipper/power equipment rental/purchases, fuel, oil, and repair costs
- Chipper/power equipment associated costs: fuel and oil
- Chipper/power equipment maintenance/repair costs
- Contractor/labor expenses to perform risk reduction work (e.g., arborists, landscapers, professional forester services, roofers, etc.)
- Costs for community-wide clean up days (e.g., dumpster rental, compostable leaf/lawn bags, etc.)
- Costs to replace flammable mulch materials with stone/gravel



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TIME AND EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES (continued)

- Costs to replace flammable plant species with fire-resistant options
- Costs to replace wood fencing sections where attached to the house with a noncombustible product
- Food/beverages for risk reduction group/volunteer projects
- Ground litter and debris disposal/hauling fees
- Hardscaping materials and related costs to create fuel separation
- Home improvement expenses to reduce impacts from heat and embers (e.g., roof, deck, fencing, gutters, siding, vents, windows, etc.)
- Mileage at the current IRS rate for attendance at wildfire related meetings, dropping off slash, securing rental equipment, etc.
- Portable toilet rental for volunteers working on clean-up projects
- Production costs for risk reduction flyers, signs, and related mailing expenses
- Spark arrestor installation costs
- Tool purchase/rental (e.g., loppers, pole saws, weed trimmers, rakes, etc.)
- Tree removal and separation/spacing expenses
- Safety equipment for neighborhood workdays (e.g., ear and eye protection, gloves, etc.)
- Value of hourly volunteer labor (e.g., residents, scout groups, CERT members, students, etc.) and the associated services and materials required for them to participate in risk reduction projects



Name: _____ Date: _____

Community Name: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: _____

Hours Worked

_____ **Dwelling Unit/Home**

Examples include: Removing pine needles and leaf litter from roof and gutters, replaced vinyl gutters with metal gutters, ignition-resistant exterior improvements, installing screening on vents, flammable items removed from under decks and porches, inspect roof and replace missing shingles, etc.

_____ **Landscaping (0–100 ft from base of dwelling unit)**

Examples include: Installation of hardscaping, replacing combustible mulches with stone/gravel options, tree and shrub removal, raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, ground litter/debris, tree trimming/limbing, moving firewood, lawn and native grass maintenance, etc.

_____ **Common Area**

(HOA or other Homeowner jointly owned property within the site boundary) Activities include: Tree thinning, mastication and brush removal, grass maintenance, fire break construction, etc.

_____ **Miscellaneous**

Meetings, presentations, program administration, home site visits, etc.

Money Spent

\$	Chipper Costs: Purchase/rental, fuel & oil, disposal fees, etc.
\$	Other Equipment Costs: Chain saw purchase/rental, power equip. purchase/rental, hand tools, protective equipment, etc.
\$	Contractor Costs: Arborists, landscapers, professional forestry services, debris removal, etc.
\$	Home Improvement Costs: Roofs, decks, windows, vent screening, retrofits, etc.
\$	Landscaping/DIY
\$	Miscellaneous
	Vehicle mileage

Additional Notes: _____

New Insurance Discount for Unincorporated Areas of the County

El Dorado County is one of just 7 entire counties across California to be designated as a “**Wildfire Risk Reduction Community**”, worthy of an insurance discount for residents. This designation by the California Board of Forestry is due to the hard work of the EDC Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience, CAL FIRE, Fire Protection districts, EDC Planning and Building Dept. and others. It does not by any means imply that we are wildfire-proof, but it does mean that we have important safe guards and plans in place and in the works - that we are meeting best fire planning practices. Being on the list also means that our county will have priority for many wildfire prevention grants.

Insurance Discount. Some insurance agents are just learning about this designation, which only happened in mid-June. It is one of two community programs -- the other being the Firewise program -- mentioned as eligible for discounts on the Calif. Insurance Commissioner’s discount website Safer From Wildfire. If you live in the broad unincorporated area of the County, talk to your own broker, and point them to the list of communities. Unlike the Firewise Community Discount that some areas are eligible for, there is no certificate needed.

Our role as residents. The county will need to reapply every two years to stay on the list, showing that progress is being made on risk reduction. Our job now as residents is to help see those plans come to fruition, by our own defensible space and home hardening efforts, and by supporting fuel reduction projects along our roads and in our communities.

See the following 2 pages for further information.

CALIFORNIA BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

RESOLUTION NO. 2024-02

**RESOLUTION OF THE STATE BOARD OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION APPROVING
THE FIRE RISK REDUCTION COMMUNITY LIST 2024**

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 4290.1, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) develops and maintains a Fire Risk Reduction Community List of local agencies that meet best practices for local fire planning; and

WHEREAS, The Board has adopted implementing regulations as set forth in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, sections 1268.01 through 1268.04; and

WHEREAS, The Board updates the Fire Risk Reduction Community List to be effective every July 1st of even-numbered years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, The **Fire Risk Reduction Community List 2022** shall no longer be effective as of July 1, 2024; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The Board hereby approves the **Fire Risk Reduction Community List 2024**, to be effective July 1, 2024.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 19th day of June 2024, by the following vote:

AYES: Terry O'Brien (Chair), Mike Jani, Rich Wade, Chris Chase, Dawn Blake, Ali Jahangiri

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Liz Forsburg Pardi (Vice Chair), Katie Delbar, J. Lopez

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a Resolution of the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, that said Resolution was passed and adopted by the affirmative and majority vote of said Board at a meeting held on June 19, 2024, and that said Resolution has not been modified, amended, or rescinded, and is now in full force and effect.

CALIFORNIA BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

Date: June 19, 2024



NAME: Edith Hannigan
TITLE: Executive Officer



2024 Fire Risk Reduction Community List

Cities

- CITY OF BERKELEY
- CITY OF CALABASAS
- CITY OF CHULA VISTA
- CITY OF MURRIETA
- CITY OF RANCHO CUCAMONGA
- CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
- CITY OF SARATOGA
- CITY OF SHASTA LAKE
- CITY OF SONORA
- CITY OF WESTLAKE VILLAGE
- TOWN OF TRUCKEE

Counties

- BUTTE COUNTY
- SAN DIEGO COUNTY
- EL DORADO COUNTY
- NAPA COUNTY
- SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
- LOS ANGELES COUNTY
- PLACER COUNTY

Non-City/County Agencies

- ALPINE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- ALPINE SPRINGS COUNTY WATER DISTRICT
- ARROWBEAR LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT
- BIG BEAR FIRE AUTHORITY
- BREA FIRE DEPARTMENT
- CHINO VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
- CHULA VISTA FIRE DEPARTMENT
- EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT
- EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
- ELK COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
- HUMBOLDT COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- KERN COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT
- LEGGETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- MEEKS BAY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- MONTEREY COUNTY REGIONAL FIRE DISTRICT
- MORAGA-ORINDA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- NORTH SONOMA COAST FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- NORTH TAHOE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- PLACER RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
- RANCHO SANTA FE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- RANCHO CUCAMONGA FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- SACRAMENTO MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT
- SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- SANTA LUCIA COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT
- SHASTA LAKE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- SONOMA VALLEY FIRE DISTRICT
- STANISLAUS COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION
- TRUCKEE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- VENTURA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
- YOLO COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

BE WILDFIRE READY!

YOUR VOICE, YOUR PLAN, OUR FUTURE

We Want to Hear From You Attend a Workshop

**Pioneer School
Somerset**
October 2nd, 2024
6:00-8:00pm

**Golden Sierra
Garden Valley**
October 3rd, 2024
6:00-8:00pm

**Pinewood School
Pollock Pines**
October 5th, 2024
9:00-11:00am

**Fire Hall
Diamond Springs**
October 5th, 2024
1:00-3:00pm

**CSD
Cameron Park**
October 5th, 2024
4:00-6:00pm

The Office of Wildfire Preparedness and Resiliency is updating the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Western El Dorado County. A CWPP is a collaborative, community-driven plan that provides strategies and actions to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfires.



CONTACT US

Office of Wildfire
Preparedness and Resiliency
360 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA
(530) 621-5569
wildfireready@edcgov.us

VISIT THE WEBSITE
FOR MORE INFORMATION



shorturl.at/tqRSw

PLEASE TAKE
THE PUBLIC SURVEY



shorturl.at/5JU8R

ARE YOU READY?

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOPS

TO LEARN MORE VISIT
WestSlopeFoundation.org

		SESSIONS	DESCRIPTIONS	DATES & TIMES	LOCATION
DAY ONE	PREPAREDNESS	A PLACE TO START	THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PREPARED.	SATURDAY, SEPT. 7 - OR - OCT. 19 9 AM - 3 PM	WEST SLOPE FOUNDATION 8171 MT. AUKUM ROAD, SUITE 103 MT. AUKUM, CA
		ESSENTIALS	WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ITEMS YOU NEED TO TAKE WHEN EVACUATING.		
		DON'T DO IT ALONE	THE IMPORTANCE OF GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.		
		SAFETY BARRIER	PROTECTING YOUR HOME, WHETHER YOU OWN OR RENT		
DAY TWO	EVACUATION & RECOVERY	LET'S TALK	VITAL COMMUNICATION DURING DISASTERS.	SATURDAY, SEPT. 28 - OR - NOV. 9 9 AM - 3 PM	WEST SLOPE FOUNDATION 8171 MT. AUKUM ROAD, SUITE 103 MT. AUKUM, CA
		WHERE TO GO	WHAT YOU NEED TO SAFELY AND QUICKLY EVACUATE PEOPLE AND ANIMALS.		
		HELP IS ALL AROUND YOU	WHO THE PLAYERS ARE DURING A DISASTER RESPONSE.		
		THIS TOO SHALL PASS	WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN EVACUATED.		

We highly recommend you attend both days in order to help ensure **YOU ARE READY!**



These **FREE** Disaster Preparedness Workshops will allow you to get your household ready for **WHEN** the next disaster strikes. Some of the items you will receive for **FREE** by attending the workshops are: Easy to Plan/Follow Checklists, Animal Preparedness, Home Hardening, and More!



Get Started Today
REGISTER NOW!

SCAN CODE or VISIT US ON-LINE

El Dorado-Amador Prescribed Burn Association Prescribed Burn Planning Workshop for Landowners

When:

September 28, 10 AM to 1 PM

Where:

**El Dorado Hills Fire Station 85
1050 Wilson Blvd. El Dorado Hills**

Purpose:

**To Assist Landowners in Preparing
Prescribed Burn Plans**

Cost: \$20 (Lunch Provided)

Register Here



(Space is limited)



MAPS

Mapping of your property and
burn units



OBJECTIVES

Preparation needs and fire
effects objectives for your site



PERMITS & LIABILITY

How to meet the legal
requirements for your project



IGNITIONS AND HOLDING RESOURCES

Burn day actions, resources
and responsibilities for
managing your burn



NOTIFICATIONS AND POST-BURN ACTIONS

What notifications are required
and how to patrol and monitor
your burn project



HOW TO WORK WITH THE PBA

How to partner with PBA
volunteers for support before
during and after your burn

