

**El Dorado County**  
**COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN**  
**Community Tab for**  
**ROYAL EQUESTRIAN ESTATES FIRE SAFE COUNCIL**  
**ACTIVITIES**



Prepared for Inclusion in the:

**EL DORADO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL**  
Community Wildfire Protection Plan  
Diamond Springs, California

Prepared for:

**ROYAL EQUESTRIAN ESTATES FIRE SAFE COUNCIL**

**JANUARY 2017**

The Royal Equestrian Estates is located south of the community of Shingle Springs in the foothills of El Dorado County. The primary vegetation types in the community are oak tree overstory with a grass understory typical of Sierra Mountain foothills along with areas of chaparral primarily Manzanita and chemise brush vegetation. The community is made up of mostly 5 acre parcels sub divided into 77 properties with 59 of the lots with large homes and landscaping. Each lot has its own well providing water. There is also an EID water filled water storage tank and fire hydrant system that provides coverage directly for about half the properties and can load water tenders for the balance.

El Dorado County has a unique wildland fire environment owing to its Mediterranean climate, highly combustible fuels, frequent interface zones, and the complexity of its terrain. Fires burn with much greater intensity in this environment and are more costly and difficult to control creating a greater risk of loss of life, property, and resources.

The CALFIRE Ranger Unit Direct Protection Area (DPA<sup>1</sup>) on the west slope of the Central Sierra Mountain Range is experiencing explosive population growth. Most of this growth is occurring outside the incorporated cities the same areas that contain the most hazardous fuels and most difficult terrain. Most of the manmade values at risk from wildfire are also located in these areas.

The fire environment in El Dorado County is conducive to large destructive wildfires as shown by the fire history map. Over 70% of the CDF's DPA contains high to very high hazard fuels (brush and timber). (CALFIRE Amador El Dorado Ranger Unit Fire Plan)

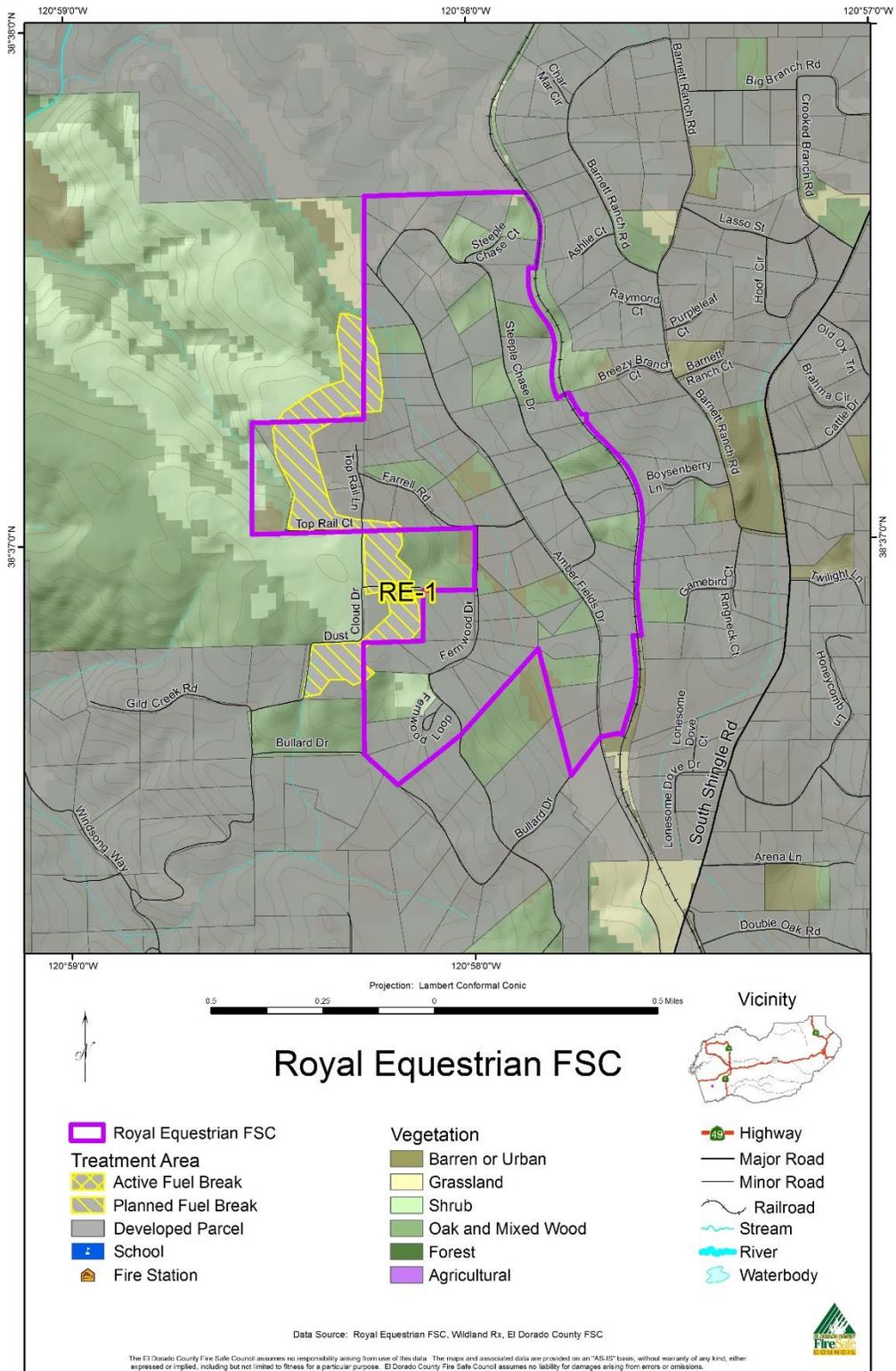
## **6.1 Fire History**

El Dorado County has increased its population and development over the past twenty years in the wildland vegetation and this has placed many additional homes at risk. Small fires often create wildland/urban interface fire protection problems previously only found in the most densely populated areas of southern California. Wildfire ignitions have increased in El Dorado County according the Amador-El Dorado Unit (CAL FIRE) Fire Management Plan.

Latrobe and Shingle Springs are listed in the Federal Register as communities at risk from a wildfire. The Royal Equestrian Estates community is located between these two communities with the same vegetation and hazards as Shingle Springs and Latrobe.

In 1976, before homes were constructed, the entire Royal Equestrian Estates area was burned over by the Quarry Fire which burned a total of 1940 acres. In 2006, the Deer Fire a wildfire started by accident at the EID sewage disposal plant in Marble valley, threatened the community from the west and burned 71 Acres.

Figure 1: Royal Equestrian Estates FSC Map

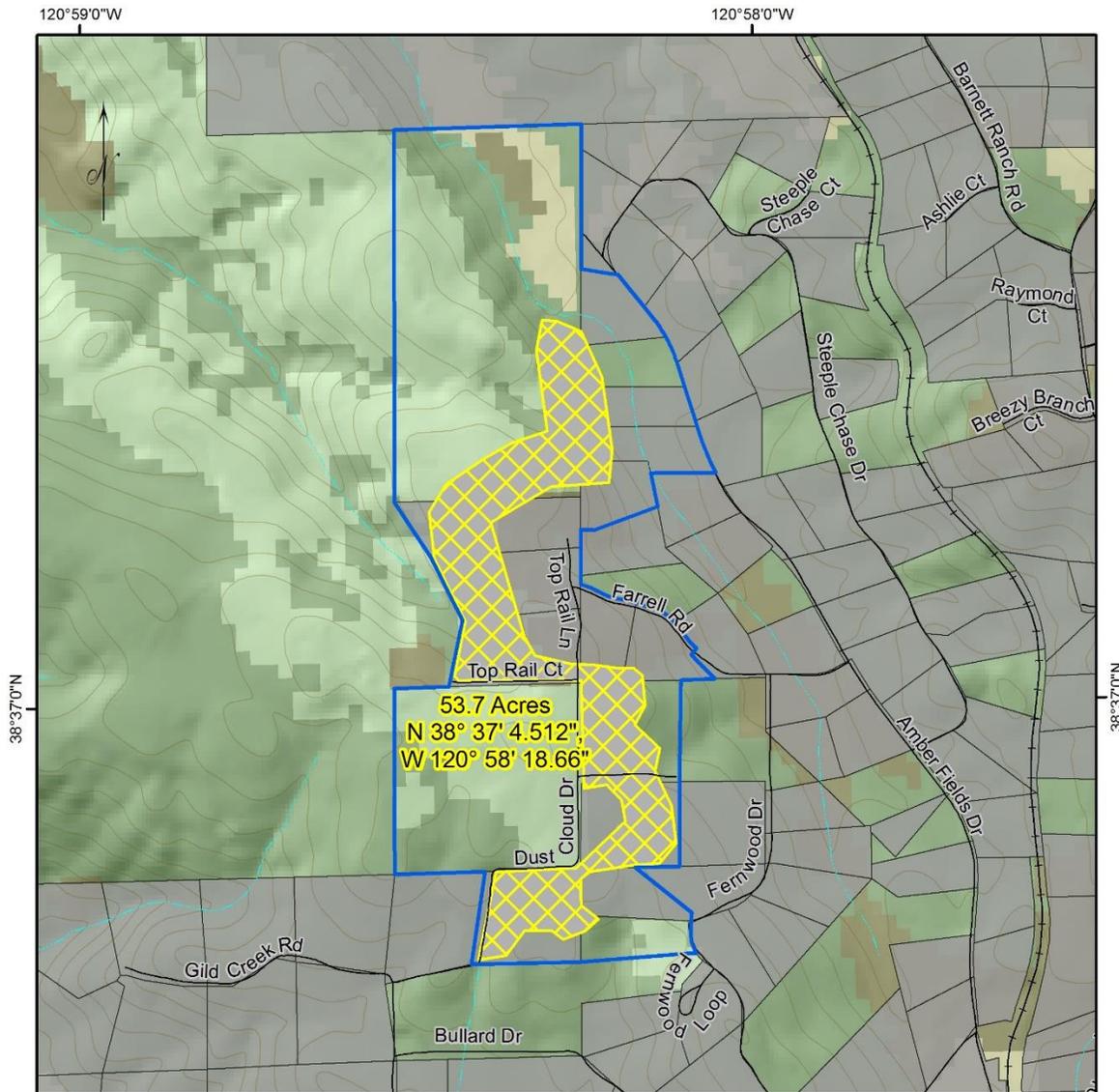


## **Fire Risk Mitigation Projects Summary**

### **Fuel Breaks**

- A. Construction on Western Border** – The Community has acquired funds through a \$98,000 grant to finance the construction of a fuel break along the Western boundary (REE 1) that will provide an opportunity for suppression resources to take advantage of a change in fire behavior that will allow for stopping a wildfire from entering the community. This highest priority external threat to Royal Equestrian Estates (REE) comes specifically from the west Marble Valley. To mitigate this threat from the west will require the implementation of a project to reduce the fuels along the western boundary of the REE Home Owners Association (HOA). The treatment will include the construction of a 54-acre shaded fuel break as shown on the following map.

As REE implements its fuel break construction there will be opportunities for neighboring communities to add to the fuel break for their protection as well. There are numerous communities along South Shingle Road that would benefit from an enhanced fuel break above Marble Valley.



120°59'0\"/>

### Royal Equestrian Fuel Break Project (RE-1)

- |                   |                     |                 |            |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Project Area      | Grassland           | Forest          | Highway    |
| Planned Treatment | Shrub               | Agricultural    | Major Road |
| Developed Parcel  | Oak and Mixed Wood  | Barren or Urban | Minor Road |
| Perennial Stream  | Intermittent Stream | Railroad        |            |

Data Source: El Dorado County & Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District

The El Dorado County Fire Safe Council assumes no responsibility arising from use of this data. The maps and associated data are provided on an "AS-IS" basis, without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, including but not limited to fitness for a particular purpose. El Dorado County Fire Safe Council assumes no liability for damages arising from errors or omissions.



## **B. REE Community Recreation Trail and Railroad right of way**

The Royal Equestrian Estates HOA has a developed equestrian trail system that follows along much of the outside boundary of the REE. The trail is well defined along the northern, eastern and southern boundary of the community. This trail system if maintained to a width of 10 to 20 feet would provide a very good fuel break in the grass woodland portion of the estates. Through annually maintaining a trail tread to mineral soil of 6 to 10 feet wide with the grass and brush mowed to 10 feet wide on each side of the tread, the trail could provide an opportunity for suppression forces to use the trail as a control line during a wildfire. It is recommended that this trail system be accurately mapped so that local suppression forces would know that it exists and place it into their pre-attack planning. Once the trail has been constructed to the specifications and maintained annually it could be part of a fuel break system protecting the community from a wildfire threatening the community from the north, east and south.

Also along the eastern boundary of the REE HOA is a railroad right-of-way which could be incorporated into a fuel reduction zone along with the equestrian trail. The vegetation, primarily grass and small brush, on either side of the rails could be mowed or cut 10 feet on each side of the rails. This could be done in concert with the right-of- way owner of the rails – a joint powers authority. If the rails are put into service or maintained as a recreational trail again the owner of the right-of-way would have the responsibility for the treatment to prevent fires caused by the right-of-way use.

### **Provide roadside hazard reduction** along key ingress and egress routes inside the REE.

The REE Fire Safe Council (FSC) has successfully mobilized property owners to provide proper defensible space alongside critical roads on their properties. They should continue to maintain this.

If voluntary efforts are not successful, then contracted services can accomplish this at an estimated cost for roadside hazard reduction is \$2000/acre.

### **Clear Vacant Lots / Improve Defensible Space** – To both assist vacant lot owners and developed property owners in improving fire safety, there are several projects that can be undertaken including:

**Chipping /mulching program.** The REE FSC has successfully sponsored annual community “Chipper Days” over the past 10 years to assist and encourage lot owners in the community to meet the State and County standards for fuels treatment by vegetation reduction efforts and using CalFire grant funded programs to have free chipping services chip the material on site. These programs should be continued.

**Vacant lots** – there remain several vacant lots that have not been treated. This is now the most significant internal fire risk for REE. The REEFSC reports that many attempts have been made over the years to encourage the owners of these lots to provide some treatment with only limited success. REE HOA may wish to consider implementing rules or CC&Rs similar to those adopted by many other local jurisdictions that require vacant lot owners to provide some defined level of treatment.

The Royal Equestrian Estates Homeowners Association will work with the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council to establish several chipping days where the chipper will be exclusively available for the residents. A program to help economic disadvantaged or persons with physical limitations has

been developed by the El Dorado County Fire Safe Council and can be used by homeowners unable financially or physically to clear their property. The intent is for this to supplement the El Dorado County Fire Safe council chipping program. Estimated cost for five chipping days is \$3,800.

**Seek funding to strengthen the Defensible Space Program.**

The REE HOA may seek \$6,000 to enhance the Defensible Space Program which includes the inspection for compliance with California’s Defensible Space Program. Various sub-projects will be considered to enable the program to improve the defensible space situation within the subdivision; for example, the establishment of advisors and assistance to the remote owners of vacant lots to treat their properties.

**Implement a volunteer defensible space program of inspections and education**

- a. If the volunteer inspection program is not sufficiently effective and material fire risks remain threatening the community, consider an abatement CC&R change that would involve contract clearing and billing the lot owner. This type of program has been successfully implemented in other communities and homeowner’s associations.

**Explore funding to increase the number of Fire Hydrants / Maintain them**

- a. **Explore Cost / Benefit of installing additional Fire Hydrants** – REE was developed in two phases and the first phase which comprises about half of the REE HOA Properties does not have any fire hydrants. The second phase does have fire hydrants. The REE FSC has met with EID to develop rough costs of EID constructing sufficient pipeline capacity to the REE development and found it to be cost prohibitive at this time. And this did not include the very significant additional costs to dig up and install the pipes and hydrants in REE roads as well as to install a pumping station. However, as adjacent areas are developed REE will remain vigilant to see if there are potential future synergies available as other water infrastructure is installed to potentially cost effectively bring water supply to REE. At present the lack of fire hydrants is recognized by the El Dorado County Fire Protection District and a water tender is dispatched to all reported fires in REE. It has been recognized that the cost of installing Fire Hydrants is currently too high to really benefit the community and that the use of water tenders is a good trade off and beneficial to the community.
- b. **Maintain Fire Hydrants-** The property owner’s water supply is provided by individual wells. The fire hydrant system and water to the hydrants is supplied by the Eldorado Irrigation District and is critical to effective community interior and exterior fire defenses. The Homeowners Association has a vested interest in their community water delivery system and has established a program of volunteers that,
  - i. Tests each fire hydrant annually
  - ii. Checks the water level and operational status of their 66,000-gallon water storage tank quarterly.
  - iii. Drains and has the water tank inspected inside and out every five years with re-lining and any other needed maintenance accomplished as needed.

This program should be continued. It may also be helpful for the REE FSC to contact the El Dorado Irrigation District and Eldorado County Fire Protection District to see if there are any further actions or programs that could be implemented to ensure that these systems are fully operational and well maintained and/or if these programs should be directed by the Fire District.

**Summary of proposed treatment by cost for the Royal Equestrian Area.**

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>PROJECT NUMBER</b>	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>TREATMENT TYPE</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>MILES</b>	<b>ESTIMATED COST</b>
Royal Equestrian	1	REE-1	West Side Fuel Break	Fuel Reduction	54		\$98,243
Royal Equestrian	2	REE-2	Riding Trail Fuel Reduction	Fuel Reduction	20	4.0	\$40,000
Royal Equestrian			Total Royal Equestrian		74	4.0	\$138,243

