Lakehills Fire Safe Council
Community Bulletin

Removing Fuel on Public Land

A tremendous amount of potential fuel has been removed from the parklands adjacent to residential properties. This was made possible with funding / grants and through 5 years of cooperation and partnership between agencies and neighbors!

This year’s project began after Thanksgiving: 3 weeks of vegetation management work was completed in the Shaded Fuel Break areas: 1) adjacent to the Lakehills and Southpointe neighborhoods, 2) behind Green Valley Vet Hospital near Lakeridge Oaks, and 3) in the Browns Ravine area behind Rolling Hills Estates and Marina. Keeping up with the fallen trees, the brush regrowth and tree limbing up seems never ending, but the removal of ladder fuel & wood debris is noticeable. Work will resume in January, so you may be hearing those CCC crews and their chainsaws in additional parkland areas.

Over the past 5 years of partnership, 68 acres have been treated and re-treated as necessary to maintain the Shaded Fuel Break. This much needed fuel reduction zone provides emergency responders a better chance to slow or halt wildfire. The fuel reduction zone also serves to keep our first responders safer and provides all of us more time if an evacuation is necessary.

This on-going accomplishment of reducing fuels also highlights the responsibility and obligation for all residents. Vegetation management on park / public lands is not enough. All property owners—especially those bordering the park boundary—need to clear overgrown vegetation. Establish defensible space by creating a 100 ft. area (minimum) adjacent to any combustible structures and providing wide defensible space zones. Just as we all are concerned about fire approaching from parklands, the Bureau of Reclamation and State Parks / FLSRA are equally concerned about fire initiating within private property and spreading to parklands. Public Agencies and Private Landowners—we share the responsibilities.

Evaluate your property for fire risk and be responsible for minimizing that risk. Now’s a good time to start. Create YOUR defensible space (page 3 offers details).

Do Your Trees Need Help?

The dry conditions of past years have taken a toll on some of the large trees in our neighborhoods. Do you have trees that need a health checkup or dead trees that require removal? Not sure how to start the process? Ask your neighbors for a suggestion or use the linked El Dorado County Fire Safe Council’s list of contractors and arborists. Always get more than one quote! << CLICK LINK >>

2018 Calendar — Save the Date!

This year, the theme of the Council’s meetings will be CAL FIRE’s READY / SET / GO program. Knowledgeable speakers and interesting presentations will share tips how to reduce risk and stay safe in the advent of a wildfire.

* READY: Taking preventive actions and creating defensible space before a wildfire
* SET: Preparation & steps to take when a wildfire occurs in our area
* GO: Evacuation during a fire and Returning after a fire

- March 13th - History of CA Fires
- April 10th - (Ready / Preventative)
- May 6th - Firewise Event (Set / Preparedness)
- June 12th - (Set / Preparedness)
- July 10th - (Go / Evacuation)
- August 14th - (Go / Evacuation)
- September 11th - (Go / After a Fire)
- October 9th - (Ready / Preventative)

Come join us for our monthly meetings held at the EDH Fire Station #85 on Tuesdays evenings and for our annual Firewise BBQ Event on Sunday, May 6th in the park. All are welcome!
Insurance Commissioner Orders FAIR Plan to Provide Coverage in Wildfire-Impacted Areas

On Thursday, Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones issued a cease and desist order requiring the California FAIR Plan to immediately terminate a recent moratorium on writing new fire insurance coverage in wildfire-impacted areas. The FAIR Plan, which exists as a state-sponsored “last resort” insurance plan for homeowners who can’t find insurance coverage from another provider, recently placed a moratorium on issuing insurance policies in certain zip codes impacted by wildfires.

The Commissioner’s order demanded immediate termination of the moratorium on the basis that the FAIR Plan has no statutory allowance to take such an action. Anyone who has been impacted by wildfires and denied coverage under the FAIR Plan should contact the California Insurance Commissioner’s Office through their consumer hotline at (800) 927-4357. The full press release from the Commissioner can be accessed here: << CLICK LINK >>

Senator Lara Introduces Legislation to Promote Fire Prevention and Access to Homeowners Insurance

On Wednesday, Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) joined local leaders, including Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery, to introduce the Wildfire Safety and Recovery Act, legislation aimed at helping California adapt to the “new normal” of extreme wildfire risk, keeping people and homes safe, and ensuring an ongoing strong market for insurers.

California residents impacted by wildfires have seen a dramatic increase in non-renewals and cancellations, and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), through its participation on the Tree Mortality Task Force, has worked to address this problem through the Insurance Subgroup.

“More Californians are at risk from catastrophic wildfire, and many are taking steps to protect themselves and their property,” said Placer County Supervisor Jennifer Montgomery. “Instead of dropping customers and putting insurance out of reach statewide, the Wildfire Safety and Recovery Act will allow insurers to continue to profitably invest in California and support responsible property owners and local communities who are stepping up to be fire safe.”

Among other actions, the Wildfire Safety and Recovery Act will:

• Prevent insurance companies from dropping or not renewing customers following a wildfire disaster;
• Require insurance companies to offer mitigation discounts and continued coverage to homeowners who make investments in wildfire safety; and,
• Require approval by the Department of Insurance before insurance companies reduce the volume of policies in high-risk areas, in order to minimize market disruptions for homeowners and communities.

Senator Lara’s press release, updated on Jan. 4th, can be accessed here: << CLICK LINK >>

President Trump approved Governor Jerry Brown’s request for a major disaster declaration to provide financial assistance to individuals recovering from devastating wildfires. President Trump gave the order after the Thomas Fire in Southern California burned more than 281,900 acres – now the largest fires in this state’s history. Governor Brown submitted the declaration request on December 20, 2017 for Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties.

Funding will be allocated for debris removal, community rebuilding, and temporary shelter for victims of wildfire damage. Among the specific Individual Assistance Programs highlighted in Governor Brown’s request for aid are the Individuals and Households Program, Transitional Sheltering Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Legal Services, Hazard Mitigation….The $81 billion disaster relief bill passed the House of Representatives before the holiday break, and negotiations are underway in the Senate ...
Contact your local CAL FIRE office, fire department, or Fire Safe Council for tips and assistance.

www.fire.ca.gov

**Why 100 Feet?**

Following these simple steps can dramatically increase the chance of your home surviving a wildfire!

A Defensible Space of 100 feet around your home is required by law. The goal is to protect your home while providing a safe area for firefighters.

1. **“Lean, Clean and Green Zone.”**

   - Clearing an area of 30 feet immediately surrounding your home is critical. This area requires the greatest reduction in flammable vegetation.

2. **“Reduced Fuel Zone.”**

   - The fuel reduction zone in the remaining 70 feet (or to property line) will depend on the steepness of your property and the vegetation.

Spacing between plants improves the chance of stopping a wildfire before it destroys your home. You have two options in this area:

   1. Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants. The amount of space will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.

   2. Large trees do not have to be cut and removed as long as all of the plants beneath them are removed. This eliminates a vertical “fire ladder.”

When clearing vegetation, use care when operating equipment such as lawn mowers. One small spark may start a fire; a string trimmer is much safer.

Remove all buildup – up of needles and leaves from your roof and gutters. Keep tree limbs trimmed at least 10 feet from any chimneys and remove dead limbs that hang over your home or garage. The law also requires a screen over your chimney outlet of not more than ½ inch mesh.

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1. These regulations affect most of the grass, brush, and timber-covered private lands in the State. Some fire department/jurisdictions may have additional requirements. Some activities may require permits for tree removal. Also, some activities may require special procedures for, 1) threatened and endangered species, 2) avoiding erosion, and 3) protection of water quality. Check with local officials if in doubt. Current regulations allow an insurance company to require additional clearance. The area to be treated does not extend beyond your property. The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has approved Guidelines to assist you in complying with the new law. Contact your local CAL FIRE office for more details.

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