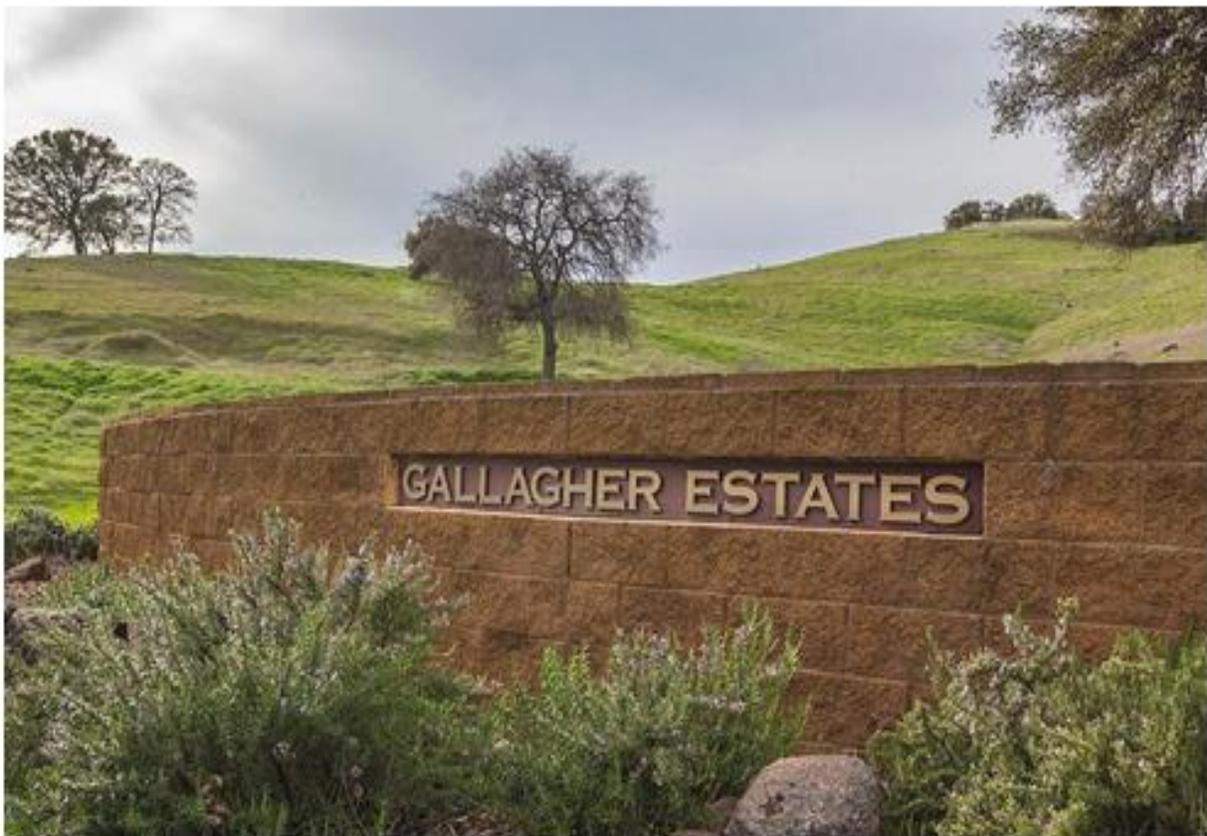


# *Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan*

*This is an ever evolving document*

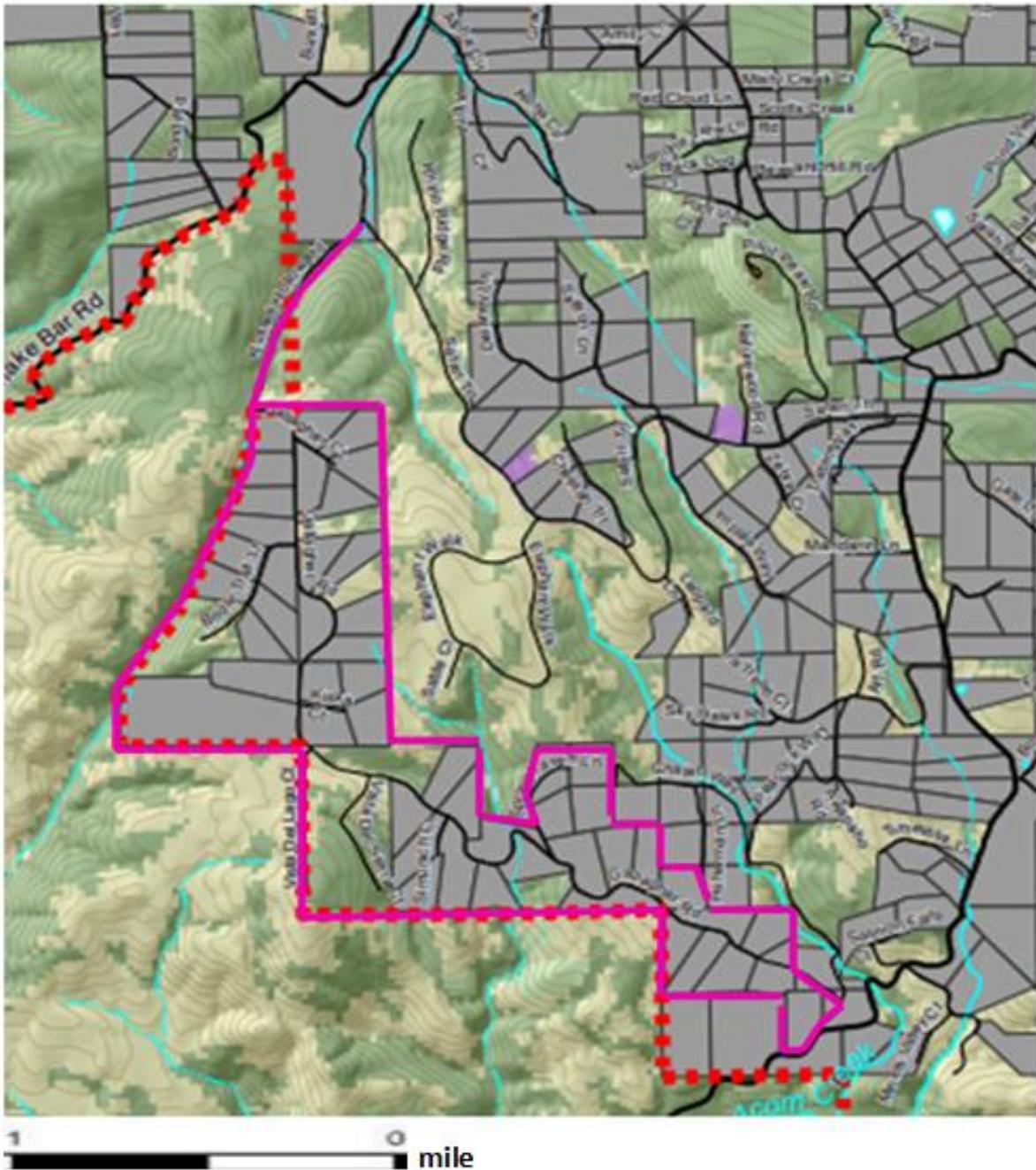
*A Committee of the Gallagher Road Landowners Association*



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# Gallagher Estates FSC Sphere of Influence



## Gallagher Estates FSC

Gallagher Estates FSC Treatment Area

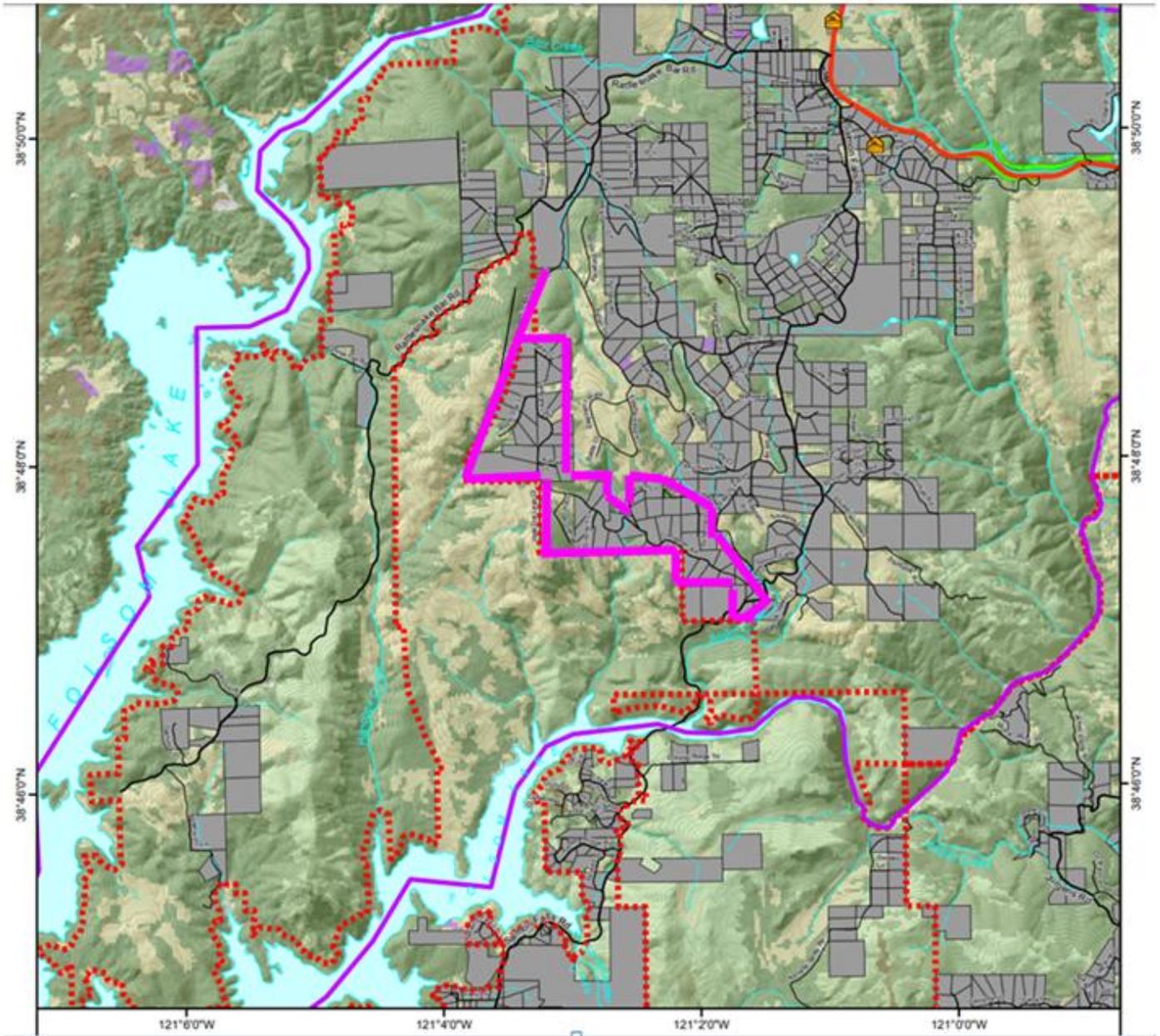
- Developed Parcel
- School
- Fire Station

### Vegetation

- Barren or Urban
- Grassland
- Shrub
- Oak and Mixed Woodland
- Forest
- Agricultural

- Highway
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Stream
- River
- Waterbody

# Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan



NOTE: Gallagher Road is about half way between El Dorado Hills, CA and Auburn, CA.

## **Fire Safe Plan Background**

Gallagher Estates is located about half way between El Dorado Hills and Pilot Hill off of Salmon Falls Road, in the western foothills of El Dorado County. The community was established in 1973. It is made up of about 10 acre lots in a community along the 3 mile long Gallagher Road. There are 67 lots with about 49 homes and 120 residents. Some residents have mobility issues and may require assistance in an emergency. About 40% of our residents are over age 65. Some residents own and raise domestic animals, dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, cows, goats, lamas, chickens, etc. which may need extra consideration and planning in case of an emergency. There are about 17 vacant lots in the sub-division, most with non-resident owners. The homes rely on wells as a water source. The homes also rely on PG&E and some solar systems for electricity. PG&E will cut power to our area in the event of a fire or certain other emergencies.

Gallagher Road is a private road maintained by the community via the Gallagher Road Landowners Association (GRLA). It is open to public access via Salmon Falls Road but it is gated at the north end to ensure it is not used as through access with heavy traffic to the State Park. The road beyond the gate is known as Russell Hollow Road that is periodically maintained by the county. Russell Hollow Rd is used for emergency purposes only. Emergency, fire and ambulance personnel are aware of the gate codes which they use as needed with no access problems. Russell Hollow Road is also an escape route if the Salmon Falls Road is not accessible. All home owners are aware of the gate code.

This area of the western foothills of El Dorado County is an area with highly combustible fuels and a complexity of terrain. Our community is bordered by large ranches and vacant parcels, with Folsom State Park to the west of us. Most of the bordering areas consist of grass lands and oak trees with an occasional pine tree.

In meeting with El Dorado County Fire Safe Council staff we learned there are new laws and county ordinances that we were unaware of. In El Dorado County, per ED County Regional Fire Protection Standard #B-003, there are standards for road size and clearances for emergency equipment. Also, we learned that ED County Ordinance No. 5101 dictates Vegetation Management and Defensible Space requirements for around residences and vacant lots. It is important for us to participate in such organizations as the ED County Fire Safe Council to ensure we know the latest laws, requirements, rules and opportunities to keep our community safe.

For fire and emergency services, GRLA members are in the El Dorado County Fire Protection District as the provider of structure fire protection. Fire Station 72 in Cool is staffed with 2 fire fighters. Fire Station 72 is about 10 miles north and 20 to 30 minutes away from our community. Fire Station 73 is located in Pilot Hill, about 5 miles or 20 minutes away, is no longer staffed. The Fire Lookout Station on top of Pilot Hill is staffed in 2019 for the first time in several years. The closest Cal Fire Station is in Pilot Hill and is about 20 to 30 minutes away. Occasionally we will have fire fighters from other areas respond to our fires if additional resources are needed or ours are working on other fires. These fire fighters may not know our roads and our water resources at the 35,000 gallon fire tank and pond hydrants. In some circumstances, the first crew can only prepare for fighting the fire until a second crew arrives which may take another 5 to 10 minutes. So, in some cases it is 25 to 40 minutes before fire crews can work on a fire. Also, county water hydrants are about 5 miles away and tenders are critical to fight a fire in our area. For a possible water source, in addition to the 2 water

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

hydrants, there are about 20 swimming pools and a number of 2,500 or so gallon water tanks that need to be equipped and identified as possible water sources.

### **Fire History**

GRLA members have long recognized the concern about fires in our area. The community through GRLA has established and maintains two water sources for fire fighters to use: a 35,000 gallon water tank and a fire hydrant with a large supply of pond water. Both can connect to fire equipment to supply water. Also, many residents offer their swimming pool water and water tanks as water sources for fire fighters if needed.

In our community there have been two house fires and both have resulted in the loss of the homes. In 2018 there was a fire visible a half mile north of our community that burned 17 acres and one house. In 2009 there was a three acre grass fire caused by an electrical short at a well head in the field. From these fires, we learned that it takes 20 to 30 minutes or more for fire equipment to get to our area. In some circumstances, the first crew can only prepare for fighting the fire until a second crew arrives which may take another 5 to 10 minutes. In some cases it is 25 to 40 minutes before fire crews can work on a fire. We are aware that we need to work with the local fire department in Cool to ensure they know of our water resources. Additionally, home owners are on their own to address the fire or emergency until the fire department arrives.

One thing we learned in the 2018 fire was that there was no good communication about what was happening, where it was, status of an evacuation order and much confusion resulted. There is no single source for our neighbors to get good and current information when an emergency occurs.

### **Opportunities to Improve Fire Safety**

Communication is critical to keeping our community safe. We need to know the latest requirements and rules for fire safety and to pass that information on to our neighbors. Defensible Space Requirements around residences and vacant lots changed on April 30, 2019, yet some residents and owners may be unaware of these. Also, rules for vent coverings have changed. GRLA needs to continue to communicate with the entities that respond to fires and emergencies to ensure they know how to get to our homes, where resources (water, folks with local information, etc.) are to help address any issue. We need to keep our neighbors informed of issues and actions they need to take to be safe in the event of a fire and for prevention.

An assessment of our risks needs to be done and projects prioritized so we can improve our fire safety. We need to ensure our road meets the required size and clearance requirements for emergency equipment. We need to have vegetation cleared along Gallagher Road to ensure a trailer chain or flat tire doesn't spark a fire. We need to have appropriate connections and information at water tanks so they can be used by fire personnel. Vacant lots may need to have certain clearances. We need vegetation clearances around homes, buildings, wells, and electrical sources in the fields. The clearance under trees and trimming of low hanging branches are also needed. These are just a few tasks that are obvious. Many of these risks have state laws and county

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

ordinances that could impose penalties on owners. Where possible we need to request grants to help resolve our issues.

GRLA members need to assess our risks, get grants to resolve risks where possible, communicate laws and requirements to our neighbors so they can be safe in the event of a fire, and take any steps necessary to improve the safety of our community. We need to work with our partners (the Cool Fire Station, CalFire, the Council, etc.) to ensure we get the best responses possible to any emergency.

### **Fire Hazards and Risks**

GRLA has a variety of fire behavior issues in our area. The vegetation and weather in the community can exhibit fire behavior with a rapid fire spread and flame lengths that make control by ground resources difficult.

### **Fuels types found in our area:**

<u>Fuel Type</u>	<u>Rates of Spread (Feet/Hour)</u>	<u>Flame length (Feet)</u>
Grass Oak Savana	5148	4
Grass Understory	2310	6
Light Brush 2'	1188	4
Intermediate Brush	2112	6

In our area the rates of spread might be impacted by local winds.

### **Major Risks and Potential Mitigation** (break into Risk and Mitigation sections)

1. Our community has a number of external fire threats. We are surrounded by large areas of vegetation on almost every side. During the dry summer months the winds into and out of the Sacramento Valley, the open grass and oak tree land and the western sloping foothills creates a potential for extreme fire behavior and rapid fire spread from a wild fire along our perimeter. The areas involved are mostly oak woodland with a grass understory with few roads. A possible threat to our community might come from a fire starting along Rattlesnake Bar Road, at the Peninsula Campground in Folsom State Park, or in one of our neighbor communities.

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

2. Within the GRLA community a great deal of work has been done to reduce fire fuel and establish clearances along the roadsides. We need to ensure we have the needed roadside clearing and bring our main roads up to county standards for emergency equipment as needed. Roadside clearing on Gallagher Road, our primary access route, and Russell Hollow Road, our possible escape route, is needed. There are several areas of concern along Gallagher Road where dry grass and trees are adjacent to the road and could be fuel for a fire from any spark. Also there are vacant lots along these primary road ways that have not been maintained in a fire safe condition and can potentially make the streets impassable during a wildfire. Some occupied lots also need work along the roadside and to maintain fire safe conditions.
3. Some vacant lots present a hazard to the homes within the community by providing fuel for any spark or hot ember. As they have not been maintained their dry vegetation is a threat to land owners near by. Vacant lots need to be appropriately cleared and maintained for fire safety. Failure of vacant landowners who do not remove hazardous vegetation is a violation of El Dorado County Nuisances Code Section 25845 Chapter 9.02
4. Developed properties recently constructed are built with fire safe materials and roofs. Older homes may wish to upgrade part of their structures to meet certain fire safe standards. This will help reduce structure ignitions. Home owners may wish to review CALFIRE PRC 4291 and upgrade their structures to meet some of the Public Resources Code. Failure of the residents to have adequate defensible space for their homes is a violation of the California Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291.
5. The fire water tank with 35,000 gallons and pond hydrants are good sources for fire equipment to get water to fight fires. These are maintained and the local and county fire department staff are made aware of their location and potential usage. Occasionally we will have fire fighters from other areas respond to our fires if additional resources are needed or ours are working on other fires. We need to make sure any fire fighters who come to our area know about the 30,000 gallon fire tank and pond hydrants and will use them as needed.
6. For Fire and Emergency Services, our community is in the El Dorado County Fire Protection District as the provider of structure fire protection. Fire Station 72 in Cool is staffed with 2 fire fighters. The Fire Station 72 is about 10 miles north and 20 to 30 minutes away from our community. The closest Cal Fire Station is in Pilot Hill and has is about 20 to 30 minutes away. Occasionally we will have fire fighters from other areas respond to our fires if additional resources are needed or our fire fighters are working on other fires. These out of area fire fighters may not know our roads, may take longer to respond, 25 to 40 minutes, to an emergency and may not know our water resources at the 30,000 gallon fire tank and pond hydrants. When we have an emergency we need to meet with the fire fighters and ensure they have access to any resources they need.
7. Home owner based fire fighting resources are being established by some residents. With a 20 to 40 minute response time by emergency personnel, some home owners with water supplies are establishing high pressure fire fighting water pumps and equipment at their homes. Home owners recognize they are the first line of defense until the fire fighters arrive. This equipment deals with high water pressures and equipment many home owners have never worked with. It may be important to have fire fighters meet with the folks establishing these resources to discuss safety and how the home owner can interface with the fire fighters equipment. In particular how the fire fighters can access their water supplies if needed.
8. Fire lines and fire breaks need to be established along the perimeter of our community.

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

9. Fuel breaks and removal of understory vegetation are needed in linear areas surrounding our community, beyond 200 feet from homes
10. GRLA members need to establish a communication infrastructure to communicate with our neighbors. This is needed for ongoing information for prevention purposes and in the event of an emergency.
11. El Dorado County maintains Russell Hollow Road. It may not meet current standards for emergency equipment access with 26' width and 16' overhead clearance.
12. Russell Hollow Road needs to be maintained as a viable escape route in case of an emergency. This may involve clearance of vegetation along the road sides and ensuring any road wash outs, poor surface conditions, trees down and overhead clearance are repaired.
13. Grants for certain types of projects are available, as we've heard in the news. Some of our projects may require funds for tasks not traditionally done in our community that are too large for our volunteers to undertake. Examples might be: clearing a fire safe zone along Gallagher Road and other community roads, making Russell Hollow Road a reasonable access route for emergency equipment, making Russell Hollow Road a viable emergency route, making a community wide fire line, etc.
14. Some residents when faced with a potential evacuation were uncertain what the routes are and what they would take if they were to evacuate.
15. Some Property Owners may not meet the current Defensive Space requirement: 30' clearance around the house, next 70' foot clearance around the house, fields mowed appropriately, lower tree branches cleared, fire lines cleared as needed, fire breaks cleared as needed, etc. (Most of this is required by law)
16. All Property Owners may need to do home updates for fires: vents need 1/8 inch screens or fire safe covers, , replace windows with tempered glass, replace combustible roof with non-combustible fire resistant roofing, treat wood with fire retardant chemicals, replace combustible siding with non-combustible siding, clearing space around outdoor electrical, check exterior electrical boxes for potential shorts (earwigs, yellow jacket and other nests), grass growing into electrical boxes, water leaking into electrical boxes, , etc.
17. All Property Owners may wish to consider getting equipment needed in case of a fire or emergency: generator to run critical electrical equipment, phones to get updates on the emergency, backup power storage if desired, flashlights and batteries, high pressure water pumps and attachments if desired, trailers in good condition to haul animals or possessions if desired, (Note: PG&E will turn off electricity to our area in the event of a fire or other emergency.)
18. All Property Owners should consider Evacuation Plans and scenarios. This is especially true for folks with mobility issues who may need assistance. They may need to discuss assistance from neighbors who could help with an evacuation if needed.
19. All Property Owners may want to have access to a community communication platform for status of the event or emergency.

**Mitigation Strategies and Tasks** Each Property Owner is responsible for their own property and for making it fire safe so it is not a danger to the community. Below is a list of Mitigation Strategies and Tasks needed to address or resolve each issue.

1. External fire threats surround our community with large areas of vegetation on every side. During the dry summer months the winds, open grass and oak tree land, and sloping foothills creates a potential for extreme fire behavior and rapid fire spread along our perimeter. A fire line around our perimeter and clearances around our homes are needed.

Task 1A. Fire Line to address external threats

Task 1B. Clearances around homes

2. Roadside clearing and bringing our roads up to county standards for emergency equipment is needed.

Task 2A. Roadside clearing

Task 2B. Bring roads up to county standards

3. All lots, developed and vacant properties, need be maintained in a fire safe condition.

Task 3A. All lots maintained to fire safe standard

4. Developed properties may need to upgrade part of their structures to meet certain fire safe standards to reduce structure ignitions. Home owners need to review CALFIRE PRC 4291 and consider potential upgrades to their structures.

Task 4A Structures to upgrade to reduce ignitions

5. We need to meet with any fire fighters who come to our area and inform them of our water resources, 35,000 gallon fire tank and pond hydrants, information about swimming pools and water tanks that they can use and ensure they have any resources and information needed.

Task 5A Meet fire fighters coming to an emergency to ensure they know water resources and have information needed

6. We need to meet with emergency responders prior to any emergencies and address any issues and concerns they may have with our area. We need be certain they know our gate codes for access, where our water resources are and a community contact if needed in an emergency.

Task 6A. Meet with emergency responders about concerns with our area and information they may need, like gate codes, water resources and contacts

7. Have fire fighters meet with the home owners establishing their own home based fire fighting resources to discuss safety and how the home owner's resources can interface with the fire fighters equipment. In particular, how fire fighters can access their water supplies if needed.

Task 7A. Fire fighters to meet with home owners with fire equipment related to safety

8. Fire lines and fire breaks need to be established along the perimeter of our community.

Task 8A. Fire lines around community perimeter

9. Fuel breaks and removal of understory vegetation are needed in linear areas surrounding our community, beyond 200 feet from homes

Task 9A. Fire break around community

Task 9B. Remove understory vegetation and establish clearances to trees

## Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan

10. GRLA members need to establish a communication infrastructure for our neighbors for both prevention information and current status in the event of an emergency.

Task 10A. Establish communications for prevention information

Task 10B. Establish communications in case of an emergency

Task 10C. Meet with and participate with the County Council and other partners to stay current on issues

11. We need to meet with El Dorado County related to maintenance of Russell Hollow Road to ensure it meets current standards for emergency equipment access with 26' width and 16' overhead clearance.

Task 11A. Ensure maintenance of Russell Hollow to meet emergency equipment standards

12. We need to help maintain Russell Hollow Road as a viable escape route in case of an emergency: clear road side vegetation, ensure wash outs and surface conditions are repaired, remove trees and obstacles, and ensure there is needed overhead clearance.

Task 12A. Maintain Russell Hollow Road as a viable escape route.

13. We need to request grants for certain projects.

Task 13A. Secure grants or other funding where possible for tasks.

14. Residents need to recognize what the potential evacuation routes are and what they would take if they were to evacuate.

Task 14A. Evacuation Plans

15. Property Owners Defensive Space compliance. 30' clearance around the house, next 70' foot clearance around the house, fields mowed appropriately, lower tree branches cleared, fire lines cleared as needed, fire breaks cleared as needed, etc. (Most of this is required by law)

Task 15A. Property Owners need to have Defensive Space compliance.

16. All Property Owners may need to do home updates for fires: vents need 1/8 inch screens or fire safe covers, replace windows with tempered glass, replace combustible roof with non-combustible fire resistant roofing, treat wood with fire retardant chemicals, replace combustible siding with non-combustible siding, clearing space around outdoor electrical, check exterior electrical boxes for potential shorts (earwigs, yellow jacket and other nests), grass growing into electrical boxes, water leaking into electrical boxes, , etc.

Task 16A. Property Owners need to have home updates for buildings to be fire resistant.

Task 16B. Property Owners to check for possible ignition sources and proper clearances.

17. Property Owners may consider getting equipment needed in case of a fire or emergency: generator to run critical electrical equipment, phones to get updates on the emergency, backup power storage if desired, flashlights and batteries, high pressure water pumps and attachments if desired, trailers in good condition to haul animals or possessions if desired, (Note: PG&E will turn off electricity to our area in the event of a fire or other emergency.)

Task 17A. Property Owners may want equipment needed in case of a fire or emergency

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

18. Property Owners should consider possible Evacuation Plans scenarios. This is especially true for folks with mobility issues who may need assistance in an emergency. They may need to discuss assistance from neighbors who could help with an evacuation if needed.

Task 18A. Property Owners need to create an Evacuation Plan

19. Property Owners may want to access to a community communication platform for status of the event or emergency.

Task 19A. Property Owners may need establish access to a community communication platform.

## **Task Plan by Priority:**

The County Wildfire Project Plan (CWPP) describes a basis for project priority. Using the CWPP priorities and the Tasks related to each Mitigation Strategy, our task priorities are:

### 1) Evacuation Routes Out of the Community

1. Tasks 1A, 8A, 9A - Fire Lines (breaks) around community to address external threats
2. Task 2A - Roadside clearing
3. Task 2B - Bring roads up to county standards for emergency equipment
4. Task 11A - Maintain Russell Hollow to meet emergency equipment standards
5. Task 12A - Maintain Russell Hollow Road as a viable escape route.
6. Tasks 14A, 18A - Property Owners need to create Evacuation Plans

### 2) Private Residences

1. Task 1B - Clearances around homes
2. Task 15A - Property Owners need to have Defensive Space compliance.
3. Task 9B - Remove understory vegetation and establish clearances to trees
4. Task 16A - Property Owners need to have home updates for building to be fire resistant. Ensure that structures are compliant with current building codes for structures in the WUI.
5. Task 16B. Property Owners to check for possible ignition sources and proper clearances.
6. Task 4A - Structures to upgrade to reduce ignitions
7. Task 17A - Property Owners may want equipment needed in case of a fire or emergency (water pumps, generators, etc)
8. Task 7A - Fire fighters to meet with home owners with fire equipment related to safety (water pumps, generators, etc)

## **Gallagher Road Landowners Association Fire Safe Plan**

### 3) Major Roads and Highways

1. Task 2A - Roadside clearing
2. Task 2B - Bring roads up to county standards for emergency equipment

### 4) Power Production and Transmission Infrastructure

1. Task 17A - Property Owners may want equipment needed in case of a fire or emergency
2. Task 7A - Fire fighters to meet with home owners with fire equipment related to safety

### 5) Communication Infrastructure

1. Task 5A - Meet fire fighters coming to an emergency to ensure they know water resources and have information needed
2. Task 6A - Meet with emergency responders about concerns with our area and information they may need, like gate codes, water resources and contacts
3. Task 10A - Establish communications for prevention information
4. Task 10C - Meet with and participate with the County Council and other partners to stay current on issues
5. Task 10B - Establish communications in case of an emergency
6. Task 19A - Property Owners may need to establish access to a community communication platform.

### 6) Vacant (undeveloped) Parcels

1. Task 3A - All lots maintained to fire safe standard
2. Task 9B - Remove understory vegetation and establish clearances to trees

### 7) A task in general:

1. Task 13A - Secure grants or other funding where possible for tasks.

NOTE: Each Property Owner is responsible for their own property and for making it fire safe so it is not a danger to the community.