

# Shasta Lake Wildfire

## Information & Preparedness Guide

**A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE CITY OF SHASTA LAKE**

Produced by Cascade Regional Publishing and the City of Shasta Lake with additional stories, information and graphics from Cal Fire and others. A PDF download of this publication is available online at [cityofshastalake.org](http://cityofshastalake.org)



*Smokey Says ...*  
**SAFETY IS  
KEY**  
WHEN BURNING  
BACKYARD  
DEBRIS



KEEP YOUR DEBRIS PILE SMALL, NOT TALL



[SMOKEYBEAR.COM](http://SMOKEYBEAR.COM)



# Wildfire preparedness: We're in this together

Dear Shasta Lake Residents,

As I write this, California is facing one of the costliest wildfire disasters in modern U.S. history, with estimated damages and economic losses in Southern California ranging between \$250 billion and \$275 billion. To put that into perspective, the entire state budget is approximately \$320 billion. While the cause of this fire remains under investigation, its impact is undeniable.

Closer to home, the Park Fire tore through Butte and Tehama counties, rapidly consuming 5,000 acres per hour—an unprecedented and alarming rate. It burned more than 429,000 acres across Butte and Tehama counties, destroying over 700 structures. Tragically, this fire was the result of arson—an entirely preventable catastrophe.

In response to the Southern California fires, our City Council has sent a letter to Governor Newsom, urging a reassessment of public policies that hinder fuel reduction projects and infrastructure improvements. We emphasized the need for the state to reevaluate its regulations—particularly those related to environmental protections (CEQA), permitting, land use, labor, and contracting—along with the bureaucratic hurdles that delay or

prevent critical, life-saving projects.

Fuel reduction, emergency access roads, and vital infrastructure upgrades—such as water infrastructure projects—must be prioritized. With a population of 10,200, our city has, for the most part, struggled to make an impact on the decisions made by the State. However, we can take proactive steps to reduce risks within our community.

In 2022, the City published the first volume of the Wildfire Preparedness Guide, providing valuable information to help residents prepare for and prevent wildfires.

Since then, numerous fuel reduction projects have been completed throughout the city. To date, we have treated over 580 acres, established a shaded fuel break along the northern section, removed 117 hazardous trees along Lake Boulevard, and planned additional removals along Ashby Road and Cascade Boulevard. We've also collaborated with private property owners on fire mitigation efforts near homes and open spaces.

These projects have been made possible through over \$3.2 million in Cal Fire grant funding, with an additional \$900,000 recently secured to continue this critical work.



**Jessaca Lugo**  
Shasta Lake City Manager

While we can't control fire behavior, our goal is to slow its spread and ensure safe evacuations when needed.

Speaking of evacuations, if you haven't already, I strongly encourage you to sign up for Alert Shasta, the new emergency alert system provided by the Shasta County Office of Emergency Services through the Genasys app. This guide includes step-by-step instructions on how to register. Emergencies can happen anytime, so staying informed and prepared is crucial.

We also recognize the financial strain many residents are facing due to rising insurance costs or policy cancellations. The recent

Southern California wildfires will likely have further implications on insurance plans.

Understanding this challenge, the City took steps in 2024 to meet the requirements set by the Board of Forestry, earning designation as a Fire Risk Reduction Community (FRRC). This designation may help residents work with insurance providers, as many companies offer discounts for those living in an FRRC.

Additionally, residents should consider becoming a Firewise USA Community—by working together to educate one another and complete projects within their own neighborhoods.

All these efforts can further protect homes and potentially help maintain insurance coverage. More details on this are included later in this guide.

Shasta Lake is a remarkable community, rich in natural beauty and resources. If there's one key takeaway from this guide, it's this: reduce fire fuels on your property. If you need assistance, the City and the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District are here to help. At the end of the day, fire safety is a collective effort—we're all in this together.

- Jessaca Lugo  
City Manager  
530-275-7411

## Contents

Page 3.....City Manager Introduction

Page 4.....SLFPD Chief introduction

Page 5.....Fuel Reduction and Escape Routes from City

Page 6.....Know Your Zone - [protect.genasys.com](https://protect.genasys.com)

Page 8.....Firewise Communities and Chipping Program

Page 9.....City and SLFPD working together with Cal Fire

Page 10...City Publicly Owned Electric Utility

Page 12...Defensible Space

Page 14...Hardening Your Home

Page 15...Be Prepared, Be Alert, Be Safe

Page 16...Fire Smart Landscaping

Page 18...City Designate 'High' or 'Very High' Danger Zone

Page 20...Feyla's Fund Helps Those Experiencing Trauma

Page 22...Volunteer To Be a Firefighter with SLFPD

Page 23...Door-Yard Burning Permits

Page 24...Fire Insurance - The Big Unknown

Page 27...Pre-Evacuation List and What To Do If Trapped

Page 28...20 Most Destructive California Wildfires

Page 28...Report Unlawful Camping

Page 29...Fire Safety Plan Should Include Pets

Page 30...How to Replace Documents Lost Due to Fire

Page 31...Listg of Local Fuelbreak Reduction Contractors

Page 31...Agency Phone Numbers and Websites

This City of Shasta Lake publication made possible by a Cal Fire Wildfire Prevention Grant Program. Produced by Cascade Regional Publishing and the City of Shasta Lake. Writer: Aaron Williams. Writer, Editor and Layout: Ron Harrington. Additional contributions from City Staff, Cal Fire, CalMatters.org, California Fire Safe Council, Jim Miller - The Savvy Senior, and the Red Cross.

# Preparedness is key to protecting family, home and community

Residents and Business Community of the City of Shasta Lake,

The Shasta Lake Fire Protection District (SLFPD) is a dedicated team committed to safeguarding lives, property, and the environment. Since its inception on September 10, 1940, the department has grown into a highly skilled force, responding to fires, medical emergencies, and hazardous situations.

With approximately 25 firefighters, including support staff with one fully staffed station and two reserve stations, covering approximately 12.7 square miles, SLFPD ensures rapid and efficient responses to emergencies. Beyond firefighting, we also provide fire safety education, inspections, and emergency medical services.

As your Fire Chief, I am committed to serving and protecting our community. One of the most effective ways to do this is by educating the public on how to prevent disasters and how to safely react when they occur.

Wildfires are a natural part of many ecosystems, particularly here in Northern California, but they also pose serious threats to lives, property, and the environment. Being prepared can make all the difference in minimizing damage and ensuring your safety. This guide provides essential steps and tips to help you prepare for a wildfire.

As you go through this guide, please take note of the following key sections:

## Understanding Wildfire Risks

Familiarize yourself with your area and its fire zones. We encourage everyone to download the free Genasys Project app on



**Fire Chief Roger Moses**  
Shasta Lake Fire Protection District

your smart device to determine whether your home is in a wildfire-prone area or a high fire severity zone. SLFPD can also provide this information.

Stay informed about nearby fires by downloading the free Watch Duty app on your smart device.

## Creating Defensible Space

**Zone 1: Immediate Zone (0-5 feet around your home)**

- Remove dead plants, grass, and weeds.
- Keep gutters, eaves, and roofs clear of debris.
- Relocate woodpiles and other combustibles away from your home.
- Trim trees to ensure branches are at least 10 feet from other trees and your home.

**Zone 2: Intermediate Zone (5-30 feet from home)**

- Mow grass to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and trees.
- Clear vegetation around sheds

and outbuildings.

**Zone 3: Extended Zone (30-100 feet from home)**

- Remove heavy ground litter and debris.
- Eliminate dead plants and tree material.
- Maintain spacing between trees.

## Hardening Your Home

- **Roofing:** Use Class A fire-rated materials.
- **Vents:** Install ember-resistant vents to block embers from entering your home.
- **Windows:** Install dual-pane or tempered glass windows.
- **Siding:** Opt for fire-resistant materials like stucco, fiber cement, or brick.
- **Decks:** Use fire-resistant materials and keep them free of combustibles.

## Emergency Kit and Evacuation Plan

- **Emergency Kit:** Prepare a go-bag with essentials like water, food, medications, documents, personal items, clothing, and extra cash.
- **Evacuation Plan:** Develop and practice a plan. Know at least two routes out of your neighborhood and establish a family meeting point. Keep your vehicle fueled.

## During a Wildfire

- Stay informed by monitoring local news and official channels for updates.
- **Prepare to Evacuate:** Be ready to leave immediately. Load your emergency kit into your vehicle and ensure everyone is prepared.
- **Follow Evacuation Orders:** If authorities issue an evacuation order, leave without delay. Do not wait or assume there is time to gather more belongings.

## After a Wildfire

- **Returning Home:** Only return when authorities declare it safe. Watch for hazards such as hotspots, damaged power lines, or weakened trees.
  - **Inspect Your Property:** Assess damage, take photos for insurance claims, and document any losses.
  - **Health Precautions:** Be mindful of risks like smoke inhalation and contaminated water.
- Preparedness is key to protecting your family, home, and community from wildfires. By staying informed, creating a defensible space, hardening your home, and having a solid emergency plan, you can reduce the risks and impacts of wildfires.
- Stay safe and be prepared.

- Sincerely,

Chief Roger Moses  
Shasta Lake

Fire Protection District

## Additional Resources:

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA): [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)
  - Ready.gov Wildfires: [www.ready.gov/wildfires](http://www.ready.gov/wildfires)
  - Cal Fire: [readyforwildfire.org](http://readyforwildfire.org)
- You can also contact Shasta Lake Fire Protection District at 530-275-7474 to schedule a property inspection Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

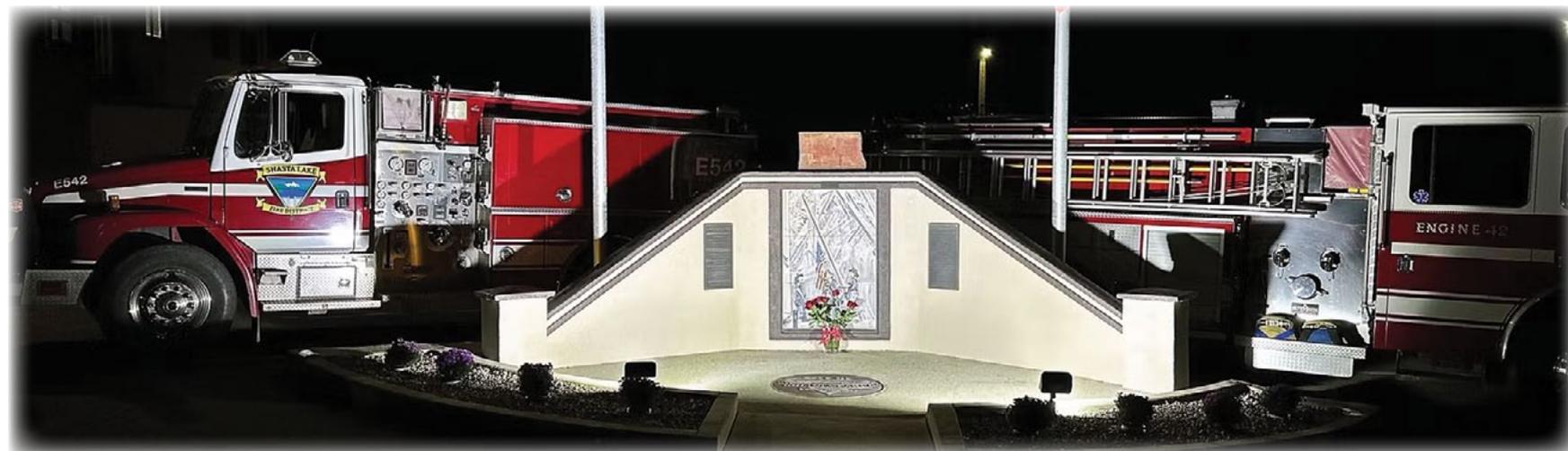


PHOTO / Battalion Chief Mike Schuneman for Shasta Lake Fire Protection District

# Fuel reduction and escape routes from city are priorities and foremost in mind

By Aaron Williams

The fight against wildfire isn't strictly won with fire personnel, trucks, dozers and air tankers.

The battle is also fought by community input, governmental foresight and the constant vigilance because those living in the North State know it's not a matter of if, but when.

## Fuel Reduction a priority for the City of Shasta Lake

"We have made a decision to make fuel reduction a priority for the city," said Whitney Zeller, Community and Economic Development Manager for the City of Shasta Lake.

The city has aggressively worked to receive grant funding for projects, large and small, to create fire breaks, gain access to remote areas, remove potentially hazardous trees, and brush and vegetation abatement.

"This type of work takes time, but the City made the decision that nobody was going to do it for us," said City Manager Jessaca Lugo. "We started small with some \$20,000 (grant funded) projects and have worked our way to where we're getting funding from the state for over \$3 million in projects.

"It's a full program. We can't guarantee that wildfires won't hit, but we can slow the fire and better ensure the safety of our residents."

The top-down strategy has been well-received not only by neighboring municipalities and agencies, but private land owners who have granted access for the City to help them mitigate fire danger. During 2024, 104 weed abatement notices were sent out to residents in the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District.

## Escape routes from fire foremost in mind

"This place has a high fuel load for Shasta County in our wildland, urban interface areas," said Greg McIntosh, Fuel Reduction Coordinator. "But we're busy eating the elephant one bite at a time."

McIntosh, who's been in his role for the past two years, said a lot has been learned over the past 24 months in terms of preparation for an eventual emergency.

"You have to think of worst-case scenario," he said.

To that end, the city has been



PHOTOS / City of Shasta Lake

Above, clearing done at North Shasta Lake Ridgetops. Below, the city property located behind Bizz Johnson Ballpark.



aggressively working toward ensuring escape routes - Lake Boulevard, Cascade Boulevard, Ashby Road and Pine Grove Avenue - are clear and accessible should a fire hit.

"The number one priority is to get everyone out alive," he said.

The city has worked to cut brush back 150-300 yards from the major thruways as well as tree mitigation.

"We knock those gray pines back because a fire will explode

them and cause them to fall over the road," McIntosh said. "If the escape routes are clear, you stand a better chance if the fire overruns you."

Additionally, work is being done to protect the water and electrical systems throughout the city.

"If you have 10 to 15 engines working on a fire, you have to ensure you have the ability to get water to the trucks," he said.

Other areas targeted by the

"This place has a high fuel load for Shasta County in our wildland, urban interface areas. But we're busy eating the elephant one bite at a time."

- Greg McIntosh  
Fuel Reduction Coordinator  
City of Shasta Lake

city include proactive outreach on homeless encampments that includes cleanup, interagency cooperation to create fire breaks and reduce fuel loads as well as community outreach with programs from the Shasta County Fire Safe Council and a new chipping project.

## Firewise Communities

Firewise Communities are groups of residents empowered to work together to minimize the risk in their immediate surroundings by ensuring defensible space on their property. Fire Safe Councils aid in fire-safe education and preparedness as well as fuel-reduction projects.

"We need to do our work, but also get the buy-in from stakeholders and community members," Zeller said. "One of our goals is to work with Fire Safe Councils and fire districts (and agencies) to offer guidance on how homeowners can reduce fuel on their property. One property owner can impact thousands of people."

"It shows them the urgency because the City is willing to help."

And while the summer fire season might be, thankfully, nearing its end, that doesn't mean the City rests during the fall and winter months.

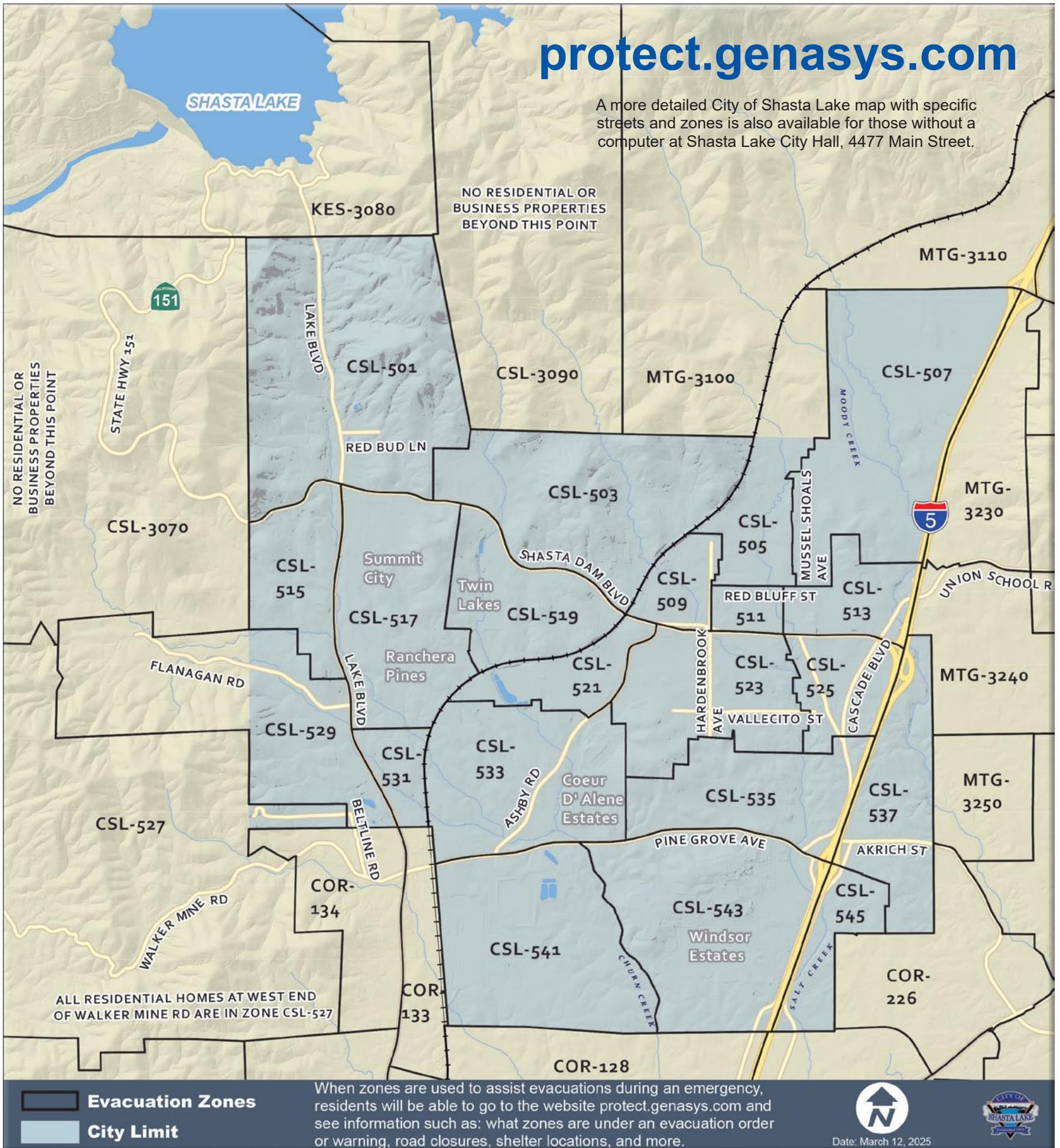
"In (fire) season, we can get out there and spray (vegetation) while we can get out the machinery and burn in the offseason," Zeller said. "We work to get the most out of the time."

And a new free chipping program from the Shasta County Fire Safe Council is also available. One was scheduled in Shasta Lake in early March, but they can be coordinated for future dates if enough people in the city request to have it done.

For more information on both Firewise communities and the chipping program, see page 8.



A more detailed City of Shasta Lake map with specific streets and zones is also available for those without a computer at Shasta Lake City Hall, 4477 Main Street.



GRAPHIC / Devon Hedemark, GIS Program Coordinator, City of Shasta Lake

Above, the Genasys Protect zones for the City of Shasta Lake and immediate surrounding areas. CSL (City of Shasta Lake) in the bluish zones are within the city limits of Shasta Lake. CSL in the light green/beige area are outside the city limits in the county, but are given the City of Shasta Lake CSL letter identification. COR is City of Redding. MTG is Mountain Gate. KES is Keswick. Online at [protect.genasys.com](http://protect.genasys.com) you can zoom in and narrow down your zone by each street. Those without a computer can pick up a more detailed printed copy than the above map at City Hall, 4477 Main Street, Shasta Lake.

Sign up: [shascom911.com](http://shascom911.com) • email [alertshasta@shascom911.com](mailto:alertshasta@shascom911.com) • Or call 530-245-6500 during normal business hours



# FIREWISE USA™

Residents reducing wildfire risks



DRONE CITY PHOTO / Adrian Rogers

## Helping create Firewise communities, chipping program among Shasta County Fire Safe Council’s current focus

By Aaron Williams

The old adage that there’s safety in numbers is one of the axioms behind the Shasta County Fire Safe Council’s push to create Firewise communities.

A Firewise community can be as few as eight homes and as many as 2,500 that band together to create a cooperative to work toward making their area more fire resilient.

“Instead of having one home that’s on an island, you now have a whole neighborhood that’s better able to withstand a fire,” said Ron Rusten, county coordinator of the Shasta County Fire Safe Council. “We’ve seen from fires like the Camp Fire and Carr Fire that when it gets into communities, it carries from home to home rather than tree to tree.

“The goal is to keep homes from catching fire.”

Home hardening, creating defensible space and other mitigation tools are all things residents can do with their neighbors to create a Firewise community.

The national program starts with creating an oversight board or committee who works with experts to create a checklist of risk assessment and a plan

**“Instead of having one home that’s on an island, you now have a whole neighborhood that’s better able to withstand a fire. The goal is to keep homes from catching fire.”**

**- Ron Rusten  
County Coordinator  
Shasta County Fire Safe Council**

to reduce those risks. These Firesafe communities can become recognized by Firewise USA and in some cases be eligible to petition their insurance company for rate breaks.

Rusten said the Shasta County Fire Safe Council works with those looking to start a Firewise community with the paperwork.

“We have all the paperwork and mentor them through the process,” he said.

There are 14 Firesafe communities in Shasta County, including Tierra Oaks Estates.

Rusten said developing an action plan and having a risk assessment is part of the process in applying and then working to enact that plan.

“You’re required to do one hour of field mitigation per year,” he

said, adding there’s an hour-long education component to it as well. “If you have 100 homes in your Firewise community that would equal 100 hours.”

Rusten said the mitigation work is as simple as removing brush, trimming hedges, cleaning gutters and raking leaves.

“My deal is that if we learn how to keep our homes safe, and our neighbors do too, then when that next fire comes through we have less to worry about,” he said. “If you protect your home that lessens the chance of it burning and then having to go through the insurance nightmare.

“There really is strength in numbers.”

### Chipping Program

One of the ways the Fire Safe Council works to help not only Firewise communities, but also everyday residents, is through a chipping program.

Started from a 2023 grant, the chipping program is available to all through online signups and done by location throughout the year.

They’ve done numerous chipping events in the county, including Redding, Lakehead, Shingletown, Montgomery Creek,

and Shasta Lake in early March, said Doug Young, project and outreach assistant for the Shasta County Fire Safe Council.

Residents can go to [www.shastafiresafe.org](http://www.shastafiresafe.org) and click on the “Free Chipping” link for a schedule of when it’s available in their neighborhood.

Residents can have two piles of organic material 8 feet wide by 4 feet high by 10 feet deep chipped at their residence.

“It’s the alternative to burning or hauling to the dump,” Young said. “Chipping is also a natural weed abatement that keeps the annual grasses from coming in as thick.”

Once residents sign up they’ll be notified by email when the chipper will be in their area.

“As long as we can get to the pile, we will chip it,” Young said about being able to access piles in a backyard.

### More Information

For more information on the chipping program or starting a Firewise community, go online to [ShastaFireSafeCouncil.org](http://ShastaFireSafeCouncil.org). You can also check the Cal Fire website on a Firewise Community at [readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/firewise-communities](http://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/firewise-communities).

By Aaron Williams

Fire doesn't care about city boundaries or jurisdictional lines.

That's why the city of Shasta Lake has worked on its own mitigation projects while maintaining a working partnership with Cal Fire.

The statewide fire agency is often helping on blazes around the city limits, such as the 2023 Ruby Fire, while pairing with the city on fuel reduction efforts.

"It's been a good partnership," said Aaron Hathaway, a Pre-fire engineer with Cal Fire. "Fire isn't department specific and working with the city, as we do with all our partners, has been beneficial."

He said the cooperation creates a collegial atmosphere so that when an incident occurs, "We're on the same page before we even start."

Shasta Lake City Manager Jessaca Lugo said the partnership starts in the planning stages, continues during an incident and into the post-mortem of looking for lessons on how to improve response and future planning.

"We really work hand-in-hand with Cal Fire," she said. "Before we start planning projects, we check and double check with them that it's a priority. We can do things they might not be able to do and we can use their expertise as well."

The City contracted with Cal Fire to have them on "automatic dispatch" to assist the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District for events in and around the city while working with Shasta Lake's leadership on projects that are mutually beneficial.

"It's really hard for us to get outreach to people and have them allow us on their property," Hathaway said.

He said those types of mitigation programs are the most useful and favorites to complete.

"If our mitigation efforts keep it (fire) from traveling into a subdivision, that's a win," he said. "If we've treated a roadside that hopefully keeps it from burning into a subdivision."

He praised city staff like Greg McIntosh, fuel reduction manager for the City, for tackling much of the bureaucracy and red tape involved with mitigation projects.

"People may see us working and might not understand the hours involved (behind the scenes) to ensure this is done correctly," he said.

He said the City is not only working on how the projects benefit the city's residents, but on environmental considerations and other issues.

McIntosh, who's been in the role for two years, said they learn from each incident and then work to put that knowledge to use for the inevitable next event.

You have to think about the worst-case scenario," he said. "You have to have some forethought."

# TEAMWORK

Cal Fire and the City of Shasta Lake and the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District not only team up during fires, they also work together on fire mitigation and other projects in the city

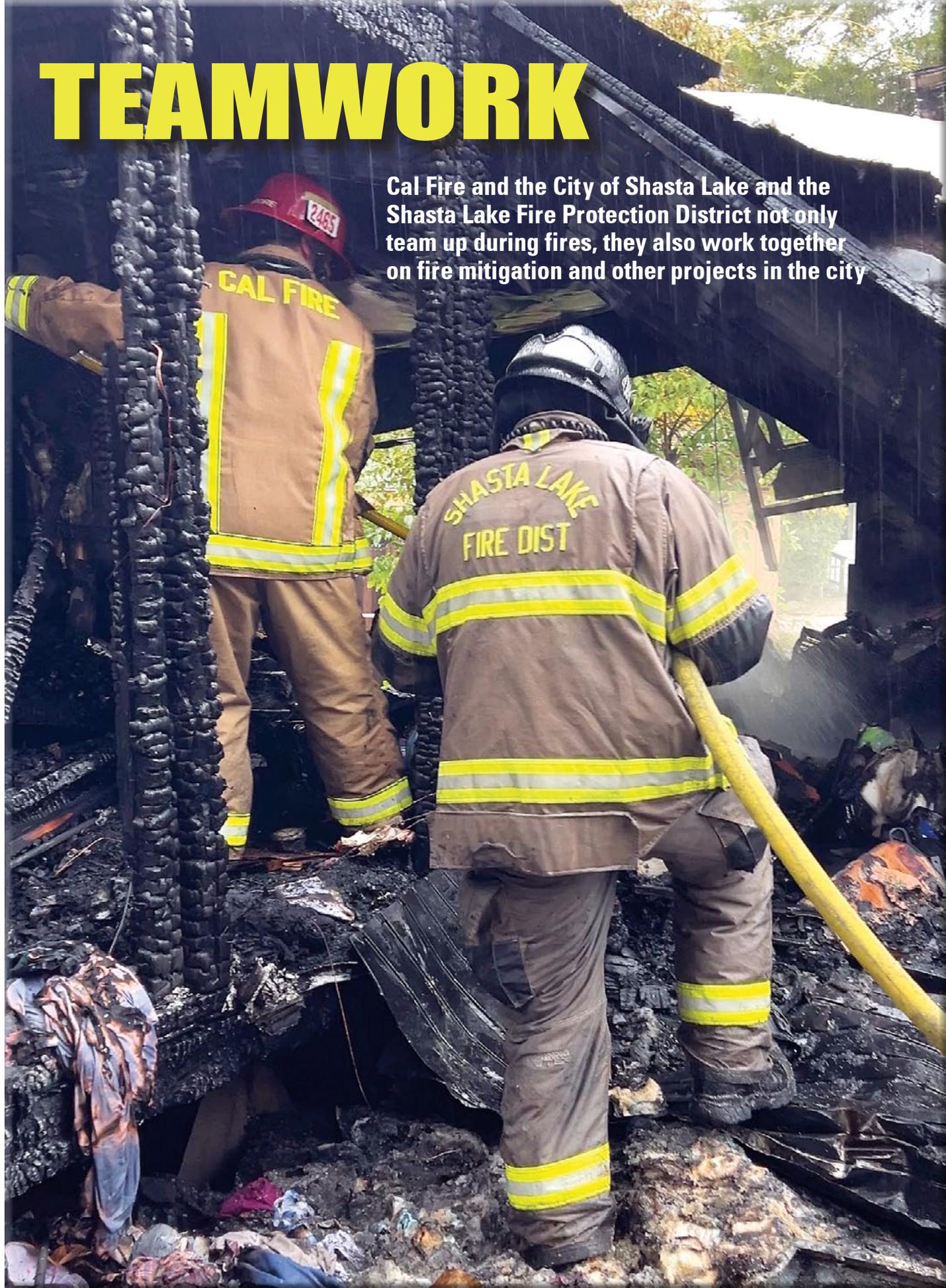


PHOTO / Sharyn Toso for Shasta Lake Fire Protection District

**The City of Shasta Lake not only works with Cal Fire on things such as fuel reduction projects they also are there during fires, including this one on Nov. 21, 2024, on Red Bud Lane. On the left is Cal Fire Capt. Tony Pescatore while on the right is Shasta Lake Fire Protection District Engineer David Mattocks.**

For the City and Cal Fire that includes projects like the 3M Project north of the city as well as working on a perimeter around the city.

"There was a fire in Mountain Gate a few years ago that, because of our cooperative work, was kept

from becoming a Carr Fire-type incident," Hathaway said.

Lugo said the fires will keep coming, but learning from what went right and what didn't is crucial in helping keep the residents safer from an eventual fire.

"With each one of the fire incidents we all try to learn something," she said. "Greg will reach out to Cal Fire and find out what worked and see if we can duplicate that."

"It's got to be ongoing and year-round."

# City's local publicly owned electric utility dedicates substantial amount of work to reduce wildfire risks

From James Takehara  
Electric Utility Director  
City of Shasta Lake

The City of Shasta Lake operates its own local publicly owned electric utility that serves most of the city (some on the west side receive electricity from PG&E). Our mission is "to provide safe, reliable, environmentally-friendly electric service at the lowest possible cost, consistent with sound business practices."

We dedicate substantial attention to work that reduces wildfire risks, but State lawmakers and regulators are passing new mandates that conflict with our local priorities.

The Electric Lineworkers are key in meeting our mission, namely their constant attention and work to inspect and maintain our electric grid.

Making sure our equipment is kept in good working order is one of our core functions as an electric utility. We pair this with an aggressive vegetation management program to keep trees and other vegetations clear from our powerlines. The combination of efforts work to prevent powerlines from colliding with other things, and vice versa, to avoid power outages, or worse.

It boils down to a simple strategy: find issues, prioritize them, and fix them. It's the best way to avoid problems.

It's tempting to chase novel ideas to reduce wildfire ignitions, but the main catalyst of electric-ignited wildfire is the age-old problem: something touches energized powerlines. So, when we focus on our core functions, and we perform well, we simultaneously reduce wildfire risks in the summer and fall and reduce power outages during winter storms.

Doing the fundamentals well goes a long way to preventing today's problems. That's a good foundation, but we have further reduced wildfire risks using new technologies.

Engineering and grid design play an important role as we've changed some of the equipment we use to build the grid to further reduce wildfire.

We've been busy deploying



**James Takehara**  
Electric Utility Director  
City of Shasta Lake

new Cal Fire approved devices, such as fuses and lightning arrestors. The problem with the traditional devices is they each can spark or drop molten metal to the ground, a clear wildfire ignition risk. The new devices are specifically designed to avoid this, so we've covered the highest-risk areas with these new devices.

There's quite a bit of electrical engineering and planning involved since these new devices are not exactly a plug-and-play substitute for the older components. They seem to work as intended, so we're looking for places where we can expand their use.

Each year, the electric department reviews and updates its policy and planning document, the "wildfire mitigation plan," which can be found on the City's website ([cityofshastalake.org](http://cityofshastalake.org)), under Electric Department "Operations."

When drafting the plan, it became clear there will never be a zero percent chance of fire ignition. Also, electric-ignited fires account for just 1 out of 10 fires in the State.

We thought about if there is a way to prevent any fire ignition from becoming a catastrophic event. Then, we found an opportunity to enact a "wildland fire suppression agreement" with Cal Fire, and Shasta Lake Fire Protection District, funded by the electric department.

Combining the local knowledge of the district with the army and air force of Cal Fire is intended to bring rapid and decisive fire suppression response to keep fire

Each year, the electric department reviews and updates its policy and planning document, the **"Wildfire Mitigation Plan"** which can be found on the City's website **[cityofshastalake.org](http://cityofshastalake.org)** under **Electric Department "Operations"**

ignitions, regardless of cause, from growing to catastrophic events.

While we build on these successes, we face more abstract and academic challenges from new State policies that threaten our ability to serve our community.

New laws and regulations seem to come out of Sacramento every year dealing with every aspect of electric utility operations. One rule that's gaining traction appears to require that we send a binder of paperwork to the State for every job we plan to start, then wait up to 45 days for them to bless or curse the job. We're a small utility, but we still have multiple crews processing multiple job orders each day, so we're talking about a big pile of paperwork.

Paperwork isn't what prevents wildfire ignition. Planning, engineering, and lineworkers completing jobs is what works. We're trying to get these folks to improve their understanding on this. After all those tragic wildfires raged across the nation, it's clear to us the public expects its electric utilities to do better. This utility wants to stay focused on the tasks that work, but State policies like this are just wrong.

Another rule is forcing all utilities to start buying "zero emission" heavy equipment, including our bucket trucks. It's called, the "advanced clean fleets" rule, and we're extremely concerned.

Battery electric vehicles appear to be the most likely technology that will meet this mandate. The problem is electric vehicle bucket trucks most likely won't meet our operational needs.

Power outages happen.

Sometimes, these outages can be lengthy. Remember the massive power outages after the Carr Fire and February 2019? Our electric crews punished their vehicles in those events.

Sometimes, a bucket truck is left in position for days and is refueled on the spot because moving it before the job is done is impossible.

Forcing us to convert our fleet to become dependent upon the very same thing that's missing during a prolonged power outage (i.e., electricity) seems like a poor decision. If our bucket trucks rely on electricity, the power is out, and we can't charge our rigs, then we can't operate.

There's massive risk to society with this State policy. You should read up on what the CA Air Resources Board has been up to. Local news has been covering this too. They've been adopting new rules that will soon impact your choices when buying small equipment, backup generators, RVs, and there's even one kicking in 2026 (Advanced Clean Cars 2) that will affect your choices of new cars.

Electric department administration weighed in heavily on these and other topics. Regulators largely brushed off our concerns.

Working with other agencies, we were able to convince lawmakers of the regulator's overreach and we secured some concessions in law, but we'll need more.

Forcing utilities to bog themselves down in voluminous paperwork, rather than doing real work in the field, and forcing

utilities to buy untested, unreliable equipment at roughly four times the cost are surefire ways to harm everyday Californians.

We're working hard to make sure our "thought leaders" understand real-world concerns their policies have on this part of California. It seems we may be getting through, as even they've become more receptive that their policies and "affordability" are coming more into focus.

As a department of the City, the electric utility is a not-for-profit enterprise, offering our services at cost, and is overseen directly by locally elected officials. In contrast, the largest electric utilities in this State are owned by their investors (i.e., stockholders), are expected to earn more revenue than their costs (i.e., profit), and to return these profits to these stockholders. This difference in motivation underlying these two business models is profound for two main reasons.

First, we have no incentive to take on risky behavior to seek potential reward (profit). Second, our City Council members, who are held directly accountable by the voters in this City, scrutinize electric utility budgets with the understanding that more costs translates directly to higher electric rates.

Bottom line, we have an underlying motivation "to provide electric service...at the lowest possible cost consistent with sound business practices." As a result, the City's residential electric rates are about half that of the large for-profit utility that serves much of the north state.

It takes a team with diverse talents to provide electric service in a safe, reliable, and environmentally-friendly manner at the lowest possible cost, consistent with sound business practices.

Recent wildfire losses remind us of our own north state losses a few years ago and reiterates the age-old wisdom that guides our operations: do your job and do it well. For your local publicly owned electric utility, this consists of a year-round effort of maintaining and protecting our grid using long-standing practices and new technology, continually working to insulate our ratepayers from the negative effects of overreaching laws and regulation, and keeping cost management as an ever-present filter on our decision making.

Our efforts have resulted in more reliable service than a



PHOTOS / City of Shasta Lake

### Shasta Lake electric department employees at work in the city.

**"Forcing utilities to bog themselves down in voluminous paperwork, rather than doing real work in the field, and forcing utilities to buy untested, unreliable equipment at roughly four times the cost are surefire ways to harm everyday Californians. We're working hard to make sure our "thought leaders" understand real-world concerns their policies have on this part of California."**

**- James Takehara  
Electric Utility Director  
City of Shasta Lake**



nearby for-profit electric utility, where our customers experience half as many power outages that last half as long. But we've also managed to hold our electric rates to about half of that same for-profit electric utility.

To put a few numbers on it, we estimate our residential customers collectively save more than \$8 million a year under this comparison. With this savings, our community could buy 5.3 million hotdog meals at Costco

or cover all education and living expenses at a University of California campus for over 200 students. That's the benefit of local governance of your not-for-profit electric utility, a principle we tirelessly fight to preserve.

# Create defensible space, eliminate 'ladder effect'

Note: This article first appeared in the 2022 Shasta Lake Wildfire Information & Preparedness Guide.

By Aaron Williams

Nothing is 100 percent. But fire experts say you can increase your odds of having your house survive a wildfire by taking certain preventative steps.

First and foremost is creating defensible space - removing flammable vegetations from at least 100 feet around your structure. This doesn't mean living in a moonscape, but rather ensuring your property has a fire break surrounding it.

According to Cal Fire, creating defensible space around your home and other structures "not only provides the greatest chance for survival, it's also required by California law."

In addition to creating defensible space, fire experts also say clearing low-lying vegetation, removing wood piles from against the house or structure and eliminating the "ladder effect," vegetation that has a chance to climb on to your house are all manageable steps to increasing fire safety.

"It looks like it's here to stay," said registered landscape architect Michael Lander about the threat of wildfire encroaching anywhere in the North State. "Just thinking ahead about what can burn near your house and trying to minimize that is helpful. There is no fireproof plant."

But, he said, there are plants that are better in fire prone areas ... as well as ones to avoid.

Lander said juniper, rosemary and pines should be used sparingly as their resin burns hot. He said moisture-rich plants are preferable, but sometimes are the thirstiest.

"You just really want to keep things away from the house and not plant in huge quantities," Lander said.

He also recommends forgoing



## KNOW THE LAW - BE FIRE SMART

One hundred feet of Defensible Space is required under the Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291. Zones 1 and 2 currently make up the 100 feet of Defensible Space required by law. Assembly Bill 3074, passed into law in 2020, requires an ignition-resistant Zone 0 for Defensible Space.

wood-based mulch, opting instead for inert material like rock.

"I don't try to put anything combustible near the house," he adds. "It's almost better to keep paving around the house."

"I think people are really starting to become aware of those things."

There are resources available, including graphics depicting defensible space, on the Cal Fire website, [readyforwildfire.org](http://readyforwildfire.org) as well as plenty of web pages dedicated to the best things to plant around your house.

Tips for increasing fire safety around your house

1. Create 100 feet of defensible space around property
2. Make sure your house address is visible from the street, especially at night
3. Cut back overhanging tree branches from driveways and access roads
4. Remove dead leaves and needles from roof and gutters
5. Create "Lean, Clean and Green Zone" by removing all flammable vegetation within 30

feet immediately surrounding your home.

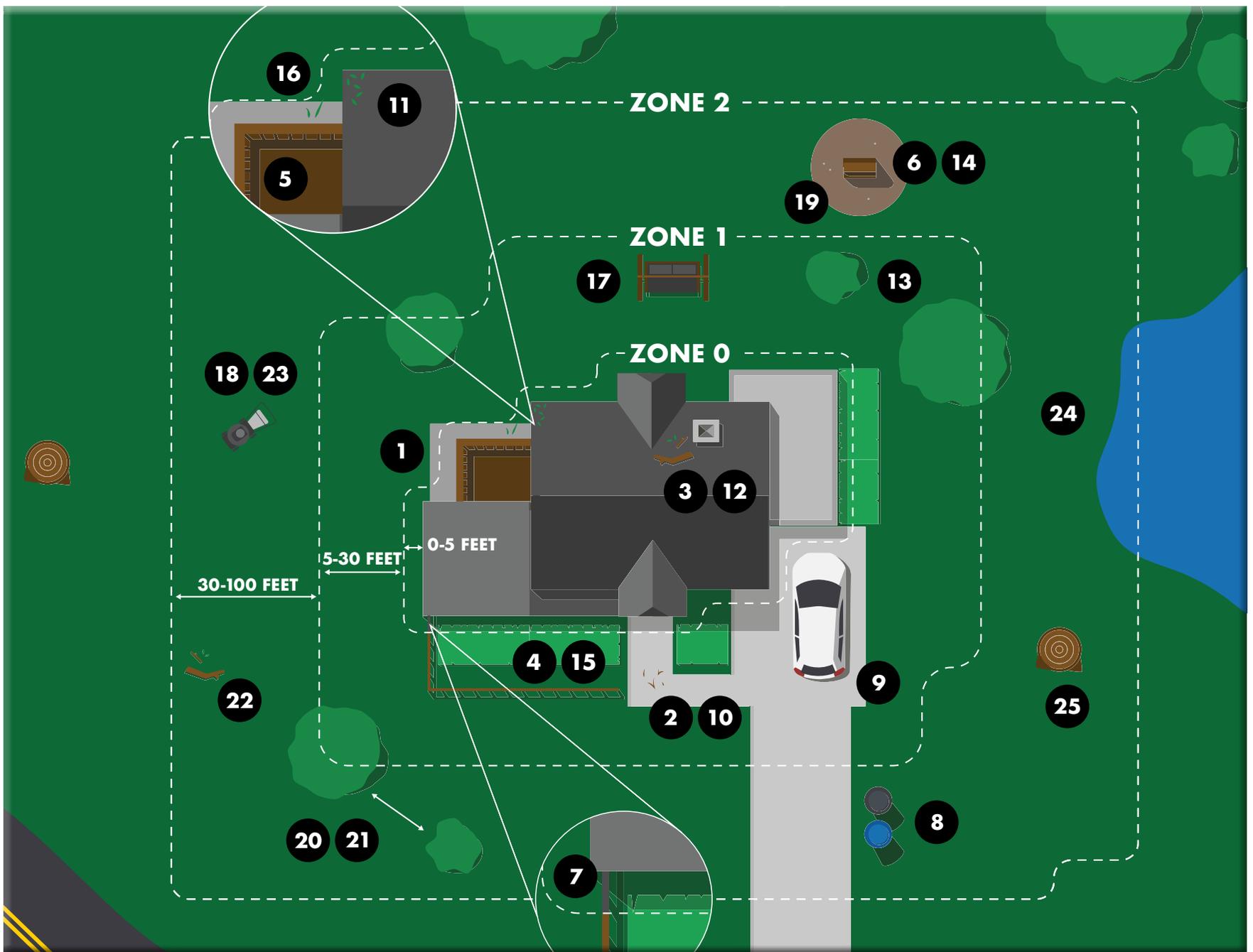
6. Remove lower tree branches at least six feet from ground
7. Landscape with fire-resistant plants
8. Stack wood piles at least 30 feet from all structures and remove vegetation within 10 feet of wood piles
9. Ensure eaves and areas where wildfire embers might land are debris free
10. Keep trees trimmed at least 10 feet from chimney



Cal Fire Wildfire Action Plan - Wildfire is Coming. Are You Ready?

READY - SET - GO!

[readyforwildfire.org](http://readyforwildfire.org)



It takes the combination of both Defensible Space and Home Hardening to give your home and property the best chance of surviving a wildfire. Below are examples of low-risk and high-risk scenarios.

**HIGH RISK**

**LOW RISK**

Unenclosed Eaves



Enclosed Eaves



Unscreened Vents



Screened Vents



Defensible Space Noncompliant



Defensible Space Compliant



**Zone 0 extends from zero to five feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.**

1. Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, concrete, and other noncombustible mulch materials. No combustible bark or mulch.
2. Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, branches, and vegetative debris. Check your roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
3. Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
4. Limit plants in this area to low growing, nonwoody, properly watered, and maintained plants.
5. Limit combustible items (outdoor furniture, planters, etc.) on top of decks.
6. Relocate firewood and lumber to Zone 2.
7. Replace within Zone 0 combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
8. Relocate garbage and recycling containers outside this zone.
9. Relocate boats, RVs, vehicles, and other combustible items outside this zone.

**Zone 1 extends five to 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures.**

10. Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds (vegetation).
11. Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof, and rain gutters.
12. Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney or stovepipe outlet.
13. Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.

**Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.**

14. Relocate exposed wood piles outside of Zone 1.
15. Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
16. Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks.
17. Create a separation between trees, shrubs, and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.
18. Cut or mow annual grasses to a maximum height of four inches.
19. All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet clearance around them, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.
20. Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees.
21. Create vertical space between grass, shrubs, and trees.
22. Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of three inches.

**All zones**

23. Mow before 10 a.m., but never when it's windy or excessively dry.
24. Protect water quality. Do not clear vegetation near waterways to bare soil. Vegetation removal can cause soil erosion, especially on steep slopes.
25. Logs or stumps embedded in the soil must be removed in Zone 0. In Zones 1 and 2 they need to be removed or isolated from other vegetation.

# HARDENING YOUR HOME



## FLYING EMBERS CAN DESTROY HOMES UP TO A MILE AHEAD OF A WILDFIRE. PREPARE (HARDEN) YOUR HOME NOW BEFORE FIRE STARTS.

### SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HARDEN YOUR HOME:

**Roof:** Your roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Homes with wood or shingle roofs are at high risk of being destroyed during a wildfire.

Build your roof or re-roof with materials such as composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces to prevent embers from entering and starting a fire.

**Vents:** Vents on homes create openings for flying embers.

- Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch to 1/4-inch metal mesh. Do not use fiberglass or plastic mesh because they can melt and burn.
- Protect vents in eaves or cornices with baffles to block embers. (Mesh is not enough.)

**ReadyForWildfire.org**

### Eaves and Soffits:

Eaves and soffits should be protected with ignition-resistant or non-combustible materials.

**Windows:** Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home ignites. This allows burning embers to enter and start fires inside. Single-paned and large windows are particularly at risk.

- Install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass.
- Consider limiting the size and number of windows that face large areas of vegetation.

**Decks:** Surfaces within 10 feet of the building should be built with ignition-resistant, non-combustible, or other approved materials.

- Remove all combustible items from underneath your deck.

**Exterior Walls:** Wood products such as boards, panels or shingles are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.

- Build or remodel your walls with ignition-resistant building materials, such as stucco, fiber or cement siding, fire-retardant-treated wood, or other approved materials.
- Be sure to extend materials from the foundation to the roof.

**Rain Gutters:** Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.

**Patio Cover:** Use the same ignition-resistant materials for patio covers as a roof.

**Fences:** Consider using ignition-resistant or non-combustible fence materials to protect your home during a wildfire.

### Additional Home Fire Safety Steps:

Go to [readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/hardening-your-home](https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/hardening-your-home) for more information on:

- Driveways and Access Road Information
- Address Visibility
- Equipment Use Safety
- Garage Safety
- Water Supply Access
- Ignition-Resistant Materials



# #CFSCWildfirePreparedness

Important Numbers: (fire department, family, pet shelters, etc)



## BE PREPARED

How to prepare for fire season to help you keep safe.



### MAKE A PLAN

- ▶ Create an evacuation kit. (See list)
- ▶ Have a physical map with nearest exits out of the neighborhood.
- ▶ Establish multiple evacuation routes.
- ▶ Designate a communal meeting location outside fire/hazard area.
- ▶ Prepare an evacuation plan for livestock and pets.
- ▶ Identify locations of potential large animal shelters.
- ▶ Have contact info for your local utility companies and fire department on file.
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with red flag warnings and local fire weather watches.



### INSIDE THE HOME

- ▶ Take photos of your home and belongings for insurance purposes. Store these photos/videos off-site or in the cloud.
- ▶ Remove flammable window shades, curtains, and furniture.
- ▶ Ensure your homeowners or renters insurance policy includes wildfire damage and familiarize yourself with policy coverage limitations.
- ▶ Replace standard vents with ember & flame-resistant vents. Cover all vent openings with 1/8" - 1/4" metal mesh.
- ▶ Replace all single-paned windows with dual-paned to prevent breakage/damage from high temperatures.



### OUTSIDE THE HOME

- ▶ **0-5 feet from all buildings and structures on your property:** create a barrier that is free of combustible materials such as firewood, lumber, outdoor furniture, motorized vehicles, hanging branches, dead vegetation, and garbage bins. This barrier includes all roofs, gutters, decks, and porches.
- ▶ **5-30 feet from all buildings and structures on your property:** Remove all dead vegetation, trim trees to keep branches 10+ feet from other trees. Create a separation between combustible items such as shrubs, trees, wood piles, and furniture.
- ▶ **30-100 feet from all buildings and structures on your property:** Cut grass regularly, maximum height 4". Create and maintain distance between shrubs and trees. Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark and small branches. Relocate firewood to this area and keep isolated from other combustibles.



### IN THE COMMUNITY

- ▶ Exchange current contact info with family and neighbors.
- ▶ Meet with first responders before a fire to clarify expectations.
- ▶ Hand out HELP signs to your community that can be placed in windows during an evacuation to communicate a need for assistance.
- ▶ Collaborate with community to establish safety zones, evacuation routes, communication channels, and resource availability.
- ▶ Evacuate elderly or disabled community members.
- ▶ Identify high risk members in your community and develop an outreach plan.

## BE ALERT

What to do during fire season if your community is at risk.



### WATCH AND LISTEN

- ▶ Check local news updates to monitor the fire hazard zone.
- ▶ Check local and professional social media accounts to monitor the hazard zone.
- ▶ Listen for radio alerts to monitor the hazard zone.



### REVIEW YOUR PLAN

- ▶ Practice evacuation procedures.
- ▶ Collaborate with other members of your household to make sure you're on the same page.
- ▶ Double-check current conditions: analyze weather patterns, road closures or alternative routes, etc.



### BE READY TO GO

- ▶ Monitor/adhere to evacuation orders by the local fire department.
- ▶ Fill your gas tank and keep it full.
- ▶ Have cash on hand.
- ▶ Be sure to keep your evacuation kit in your vehicle.



### EVACUATION KIT

- ▶ Face masks (N95 respirators are ideal)
- ▶ 3-day supply of non-perishable food and water
- ▶ Clean cotton clothing
- ▶ Batteries
- ▶ Flashlight
- ▶ First aid kit
- ▶ Birth certificate(s)
- ▶ IDs and/or passports
- ▶ Social Security card
- ▶ Prescriptions/medications
- ▶ Car titles
- ▶ Insurance papers/info
- ▶ Important family photos and belongings
- ▶ Pet food, carriers, and medications

## BE SAFE

What to do immediately before, during, and after an evacuation.



### BEFORE

- ▶ Turn your vehicle around so it is facing the road.
- ▶ Have a paper map with multiple evacuation routes shown.
- ▶ Adhere to any evacuation alerts, orders, or warnings.
- ▶ Close all doors and windows, but keep them unlocked.
- ▶ Locate pets, keep them near carriers/crates, determine shelter availability.
- ▶ Add any last minute to your evacuation kit and keep by door in case you need to evacuate on foot.
- ▶ Charge your cell phone and any other necessary electronic devices.



### DURING

- ▶ Evacuate as soon as you feel threatened, or when ordered by emergency managers.
- ▶ Leave a note inside your home with the names of people, vehicle plate number, planned destination, and what date/time you left.
- ▶ Leave interior and exterior lights on in your home.
- ▶ Call or text an out-of-area contact to let them know you are evacuating.
- ▶ When evacuating, follow the guidance of local emergency leaders to determine which of your multiple, predetermined evacuation routes is safest. If you are advised to use a specific route from emergency managers, use it.
- ▶ Avoid traveling on roads near burning vegetation.
- ▶ Drive cautiously, with headlights on, windows closed, and A/C on recirculate.



### AFTER

- ▶ Check in with Red Cross, neighborhood contacts, and family members.
- ▶ Once evacuated, let your out-of-area contact know you've made it out safely.
- ▶ Do not return home until officials say it's safe to do so, or you have an official escort.
- ▶ Check for hot spots, damaged trees, loose rocks, embers, and fire damage around your home.
- ▶ Do not drink from water supply until officials say it's safe to do so.
- ▶ Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, or soot.



### EMERGENCY RESOURCES

- ▶ Dial 211
- ▶ RedCross.org
- ▶ Fire.CA.gov
- ▶ CalOES.CA.gov

# FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS AND PLANTS TO AVOID

There is no fireproof plant, but here is a list of fire resistant and non-resistant plants. These lists are probably not all inclusive.

Juniper, rosemary and pines should be used sparingly as their resin burns hot. Moisture-rich plants are preferable, but sometimes are the thirstiest.

You just really want to keep things away from the house and not plant in huge quantities.

Also recommend forgoing wood-based mulch and opt instead for inert material like rock.

I don't try to put anything combustible near the home. It's almost better to keep paving around the house.

Also, just because a plant is fire resistant does not mean it is appropriate for all locations. Water, soil and sun requirements, as well as size and maintenance of plants, should be considered.

- Michael Lander

Registered Landscape Architect

## Fire Resistant Plants

### Fire-Resistant Trees

Tree selection should be done with care, since they will be in your garden for years.

- African sumac (*Rhus lancea*)
- Ash (*Fraxinus* sp.)
- California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*)
- California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*)
- Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
- Cork oak (*Quercus suber*)
- Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)
- Elm (*Ulmus* sp.)
- Flowering Cherry (*Prunus* sp.)
- Honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*)
- Loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*)
- Maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*)
- Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*.)
- Palo Verde tree (*Parkinsonia* sp.)
- Paperbark Tree (*Melaleuca* sp.)
- Purple leaf plum (*Prunus cerasifera*)
- Maple (*Acer*)
- Strawberry tree (*Arbutus unedo*)
- Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*)
- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)
- Tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)
- Victoria Box (*Pittosporum undulatum*)
- Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)
- White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*)

### Fire-Resistant Shrubs

- California lilac (*Ceanothus* sp.)
- Bronze loquat (*Eriobotrya deflexa*)
- Flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* sp.)
- Indian hawthorn (*Raphiolepis indica*)
- Lantana (*Lantana* sp.)
- Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)
- Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*)
- Mock orange (*Pittosporum* sp.)
- Monkey flower (*Mimulus* sp.)
- Pineapple guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*)
- Pink escallonia (*Escallonia* sp.)
- Rockrose (*Cistus* sp.)
- Rose (*Rosa* hybrid)
- Shiny xylosma (*Xylosma congestum*)
- Silverberry (*Elaeagnus pungens*)

## Fire-Resistant Groundcovers

- Ajuga (*Ajuga* sp.)
- Bellflower (*Campanula* sp.)
- Blue star creeper (*Pratia pedunculata*)
- Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*)
- Dwarf periwinkle (*Vinca minor*)
- Gazania (*Gazania* sp.)
- Lantana (*Lantana* sp.)
- Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.)
- Myoporum (*Myoporum parvifolium*)
- Periwinkle (*Vinca major*)
- Red Apple (*Aptenia cordifolia*)
- Rosea ice plant (*Drosanthemum hispidum*)
- Scaevola (*Scaevola* sp.)

## Fire-Resistant Perennials

- Bear's breech (*Acanthus mollis*)
- Bergenia (*Bergenia* sp.)
- Bird of paradise (*Strelitzia* sp.)
- Blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*)
- Calla lily (*Zantedeschia* sp.)
- Canna (*Canna* hybrids)
- Coral bells (*Heuchera* sp.)
- Coreopsis (*Coreopsis* sp.)
- Daylily (*Hemerocallis* sp.)
- Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*)
- Dusty miller (*Centaurea cineraria*)
- Euryops daisy (*Euryops* sp.)
- Foxglove (*Digitalis* sp.)
- Geranium (*Pelargonium* sp.)
- Lavender (*Lavandula* sp.)
- Lily-of-the-Nile (*Agapanthus* sp.)
- Lily turf (*Liriope* sp.)
- New Zealand flax (*Phormium* sp.)
- Penstemon (*Penstemon* sp.)
- Red-hot poker (*Kniphofia* hybrids)
- Sea pink (*Armeria* sp.)
- Wallflower (*Erysimum* sp.)

## Plants to Avoid

Many plants contain volatile oils, wax or pitch which burn readily and can cause embers to fly with the prevailing winds—spreading a fire quickly.

Here are a few plants to remove or avoid planting in landscapes in fire-prone areas.

- Acacia (*Acacia* sp.)
- Algerian ivy (*Hedera canariensis*)
- Arborvitae (*Thuja* sp.)
- Artemesia (*Artemesia* sp.)
- Bamboo (*Bambusa*, *Phyllostachys* and others)
- Cedar (*Cedrus* sp.)
- Cypress (*Cupressus* sp.)
- Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.)
- Fern Pine (*Podocarpus* sp.)
- Fir tree (*Abies* sp.)
- Fountain grass (*Pennisetum* sp.)
- Hopseed bush (*Dodonea viscosa*)
- Juniper (*Juniperus* sp.)
- Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia mexicana*)
- Miscanthus (*Miscanthus* sp.)
- Pines (*Pinus* sp.)
- Rosemary (*Rosmarinus* sp.)
- Spruce (*Picea* sp.)

## Some of the fire resistant plants, flowers & shrubs

For more, see the list on page 14, or visit your local nursery, landscape contractor or county's UC Cooperative Extension service for advice on fire-resistant plants that are suited for our area.



The **COREOPSIS PLANT** is popular due to its tolerance to a wide variety of soil types, its fire safe, making it the perfect addition to your landscape.



**FRENCH LAVENDER** is a fire resistant plant that thrives in dry growing conditions. This low-key plant will add beauty to your defensible space landscape.



The **CALIFORNIA LILAC** is the name of this colorful shrub. This fire resistant plant is drought tolerant and is covered with small pink and purple flowers when in bloom.



The fire resistant **RED MONKEY FLOWER** yields beautiful bright red blossoms. This evergreen shrub is also drought tolerant and a California native species.

# PLANT AND TREE SPACING

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfire. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of the shrubs and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger plant life will require greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

## VERTICAL SPACING

**Remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground.**

If shrubs are under trees, additional vertical space is needed. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the shrubs to the treetops like a ladder.



## FIRE-SAFE LANDSCAPING

Fire-safe landscaping isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. Fire-safe landscaping uses fire-resistant plants that are strategically planted to resist the spread of fire to your home.

The good news is that you don't need to spend a lot of money to make your landscape fire-safe. And fire-safe landscaping can increase your property value and conserve water while beautifying your home. For more information on fire-safe landscaping, visit: [readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping](https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping)

## MINIMUM VERTICAL SPACING BETWEEN TREES AND SHRUBS

To determine the proper vertical space between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees, use the formula below.

### Example:

A five-foot shrub is growing near a tree.

$3 \times 5 = 15$  feet of clearance needed between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree branches.

[ReadyForWildfire.org](https://ReadyForWildfire.org)



[readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping](https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/fire-smart-landscaping)

# More than 2 million acres of local land in California now designated as ‘high’ or ‘very high’ wildfire danger areas including most of the City of Shasta Lake

In some areas, hazards have surged. Buildings in the highest hazard zones will be subject to the strictest fire-resiliency rules.

By Julie Cart  
CalMatters.org

Reflecting intensifying wildfires and updated science, new state maps designate more than 2.3 million acres of local land in California as facing “high” or “very high” danger of wildfires.

In the wake of devastating fires in Los Angeles County, the Fire Marshal’s office is gradually releasing updated maps for local jurisdictions after Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order in early February. The previous statewide maps were released from 2007 through 2011.

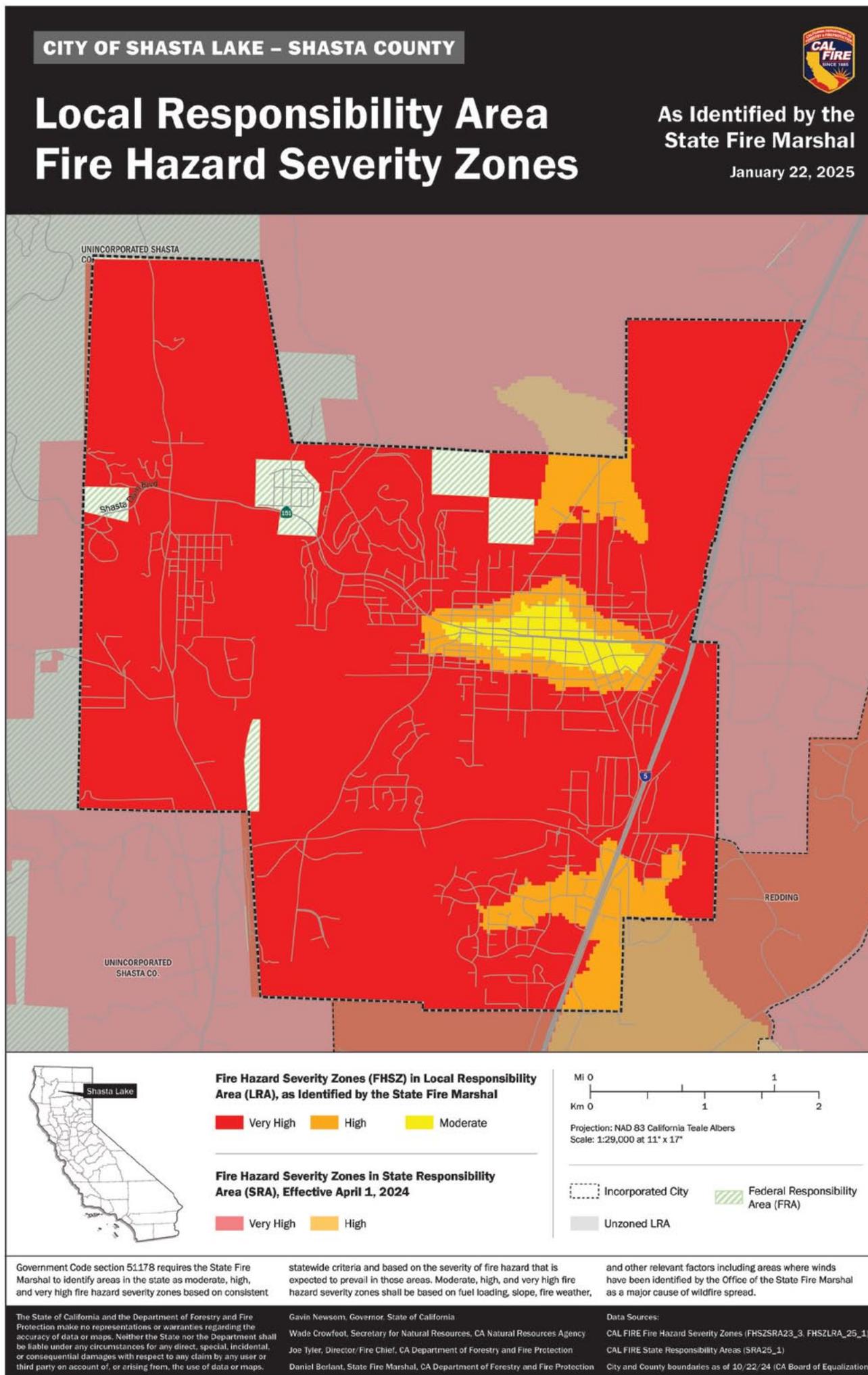
In those jurisdictions, city or county fire departments are first responders and enforce fire safety rules. The areas designated as “high” or “very high” would be subject to the strongest state standards for wildfire-resilient buildings.

Fire hazards in California have grown, in part, because of climate-driven droughts and a longer, more dangerous wildfire season.

“We are living in a new reality of extremes. Believe the science – and your own damn eyes: Mother Nature is changing the way we live and we must continue adapting to those changes,” Newsom said in a press release announcing the executive order. “California’s resilience means we will keep updating our standards in the most fire-prone areas.”

Statewide, 800,000 acres of land with local responsibility were classified in 2007 as “very high” hazard, the only category used at the time. The new maps now designate 1.16 million acres as “high” and an additional 247,000 acres as “very high,” according to a press release from the governor’s office. Fire Marshal officials said they cannot estimate what percent of total acreage that encompasses until local authorities review and adopt the maps.

The first maps that were released in February apply only to inland Northern California — Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Glenn, Lake, Lassen, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama and Yuba counties.



The other maps were released over the next six weeks.

In some cases, the recategorizing of the “very high” hazard acreage is substantial.

For example, in 2011, Lake County had just five acres of unincorporated land in that zone while the new list released in February identifies 10,881 acres. Yreka went from 723 “very high” hazard acres to 2,613 acres in the latest map, and Chico grew to almost 3,000 acres, compared with 117 in the previous map. Grass Valley’s acreage doubled, while Clearlake’s almost tripled.

On the other hand, a few areas within the 16 counties, most notably Placerville and Redding, fared better — their acreage in the highest hazard category dropped substantially.

While fire severity maps for local jurisdictions were more than a decade old, hazard maps for the 31 million acres under the responsibility of Cal Fire — almost a third of the state’s total area — were updated last year.

In 2021, the legislature required adoption of the state’s three severity classes for local responsibility areas: very high, high and moderate. Previously, only the highest designation was required in local jurisdictions.

State officials notified 404 cities and counties about the designation changes via a rolling regional schedule. Once an updated map is released, local officials have

four months to incorporate the recommendations for the new hazard rating.

Newsom’s order also directed the state Board of Forestry to adopt regulations requiring a five-foot ember-resistant zone around structures in the highest severity fire zones.

The ember-resistant zone is intended to address the threat of firebrands carried by winds from igniting a home that may be miles away from the fire front.

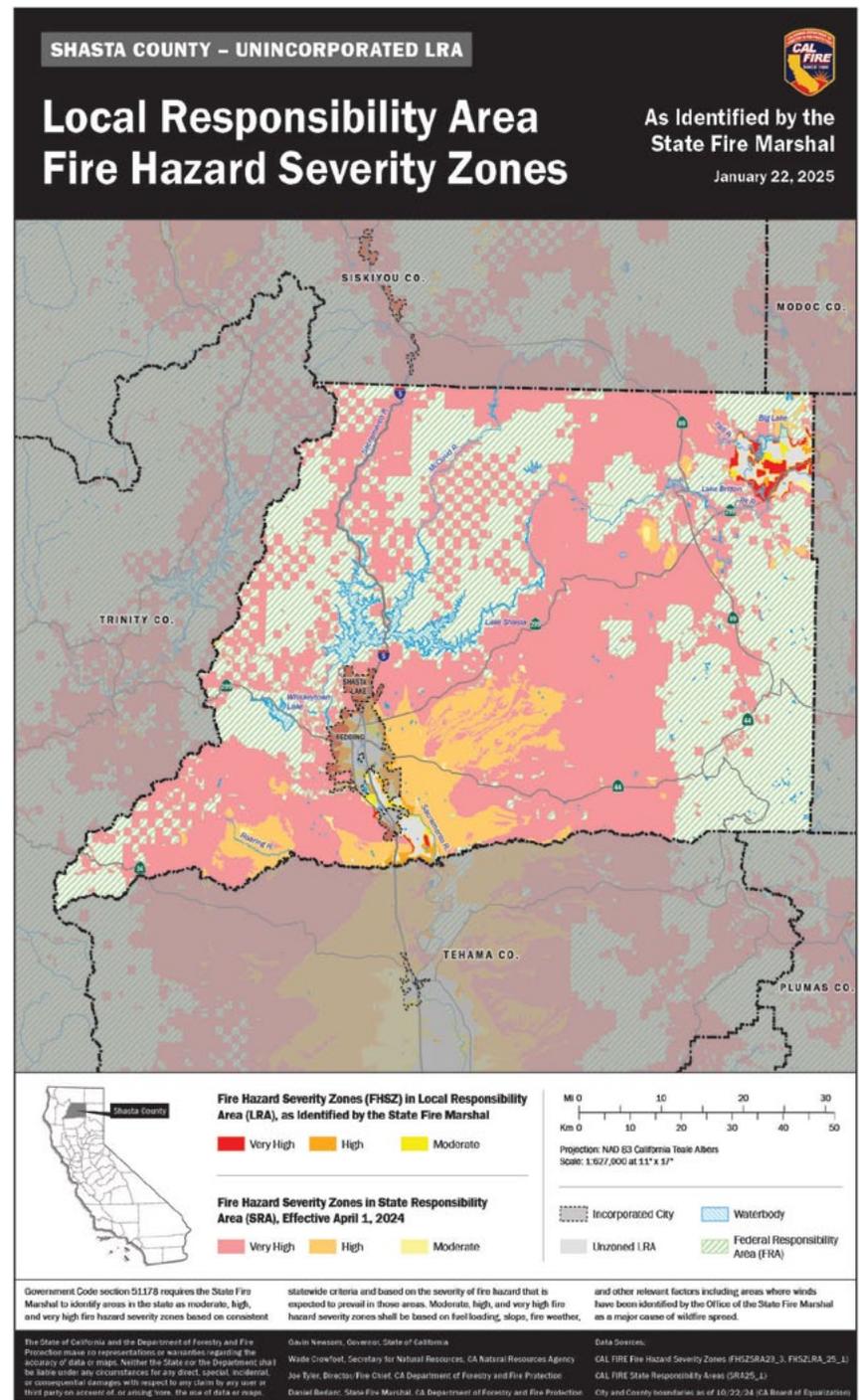
So-called Zone 0 state regulations are currently under development and would apply to new and existing buildings in the highest severity zones. Newsom’s order said the regulations are likely to apply immediately to new construction but would be phased in over three years on existing homes.

Fires were unusually active by early February, with 359 fires and nearly 58,000 acres burned, compared to a five-year average of 175 fires and 500 acres. They have also been deadly: 29 people had died in fires from January to February.

Officials said it does not bode well for the rest of the year.

“This is what 2025 is going to look like, unfortunately,” Cal Fire Chief Joe Tyler said while the fires in the L.A. area were still burning. “I need everybody to be prepared.”

*This article first appeared at CalMatters.org on Feb. 11, 2025.*



For more local information about the Fire Hazard Severity Zones go online to:

**cityofshastalake.org**

Then click on “Community” then “Shasta Lake Fire District” then “Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Update”

Also, a Special Meeting of the City Council and the SLFPD board members concerning this topic was held on March 11, 2025. An approximately 45 minute video of this meeting can be seen by going to the city website, then “Government” then “City Council Meetings” then click on the March 11, 2025 video.

Graphic on opposite page shows the updated fire hazard severity zones for the City of Shasta Lake as identified by the state fire marshal earlier this year. Almost the entire City is graded as high or very high. Above, the unincorporated areas of Shasta County and their fire hazard severity zones.

## ‘Ember casting’ pushes much of Shasta Lake into ‘very high’ danger zone

A new fire map for the city of Shasta Lake issued earlier this year by the State Fire Marshal lists most of the city as having a “high” or mostly a “very high” fire hazard severity zone.

That’s a more severe rating than the previous statewide maps that were issued from 2007 to 2011, and the City said it’s mostly due to two factors, including what’s known as ember casting.

A special meeting of the Shasta Lake City Council and the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District board was held March 11 to address the report.

The State broke up cities and counties by a three-tier rating system

of an area’s severity as having a “moderate,” “high,” or “very high” wildfire danger.

“What Cal Fire did under their fire hazard versus risk was update their model,” City Manager Jessaca Lugo said at the meeting. “And the model has now created a layer that looks at what’s called ember casting and also ...a 50-year worst case scenario.”

In the context of wildfires, the “ember cast” model refers to the phenomenon where strong winds carry burning embers (or glowing pieces of wood) miles away from the main fire, potentially igniting new fires in distant locations. For example, the Summit City area of Shasta Lake,

which wasn’t in the very high wildfire danger zone in the previous map, is now included in that tier due to ember casting, Lugo said.

And the 50-year worst case scenario doesn’t look at current conditions but rather what is the worst that could happen over the next 50 years.

“So, an area like Paradise, right now, that basically has no tree canopy and no brush (due to the Camp fire), they’re in the red (very high danger zone),” she said.

Lugo also addressed what most people are likely wondering which is how this map will affect their home owner’s insurance.

According to the state insurance commissioner, Ricardo Lara, “This map is not supposed to be used by the insurance companies,” Lugo said. “(But) it’s a public map. It’s not a private map. So, it’s hard to say whether this map will be used” by insurance companies to determine rates or coverage. See pages 24-26 for more on the insurance issue.

For more on the March 11 Special Meeting, you can view the roughly 45-minute video on the city’s website at cityofshastalake.org.

For more on the state’s fire hazard severity zones, including its history, go online to the Office of the State Fire Marshal at osfm.fire.ca.gov.

# Helping children cope during and following a fire



PHOTO / Vadim Ratnikov

## ‘Feyla’s Fund’ helps those experiencing trauma including from a fire

By Aaron Williams

It’s difficult enough to experience a life-altering disaster like wildfire as an adult.

But the effect on a child can be much more devastating and even long-lasting.

Adrienne Cushman, Director of Strategic Collaboration and Integrated Response with the Children’s Legacy Center, knows this first-hand.

She and her husband lost their home in the 2018 Carr Fire and though her daughter was only 2 years old, the blaze still impacts her daughter six years later.

“At first, we asked each other ‘How do we explain this to her, she’s only 2 years old?’” Cushman said. “All she knows is that I’m sleeping at Nana’s house. After a couple of days, we sat her down and said our house had a lot of owies and that we wouldn’t be able to live there until the helpers came in and fixed the owies.”

Cushman said she adjusted well because she had the support of trusted adults.

And that, Children’s Legacy Center Executive Director Kimberly Johnson said is the key to helping children and even teens deal with the trauma of life-altering emergencies.

She relates it to flying on an airplane that encounters turbulence.

“When that happens to me, I try to look at the flight attendants and see how they’re reacting,” she said. “They’re not flying the plane, they’re just passengers, but they have an understanding of the situation.”

It’s the same, she said, with real-life emergencies and how your children look toward their parents. If they appear calm, it can help to soothe their nerves and vice versa.

“They don’t know what’s going on and they’re trying to fill in the gaps,” she said. “That’s where having conversations that are age-

**“If it’s affecting us, you can believe it’s affecting them, too. But if the groundwork has been laid, they are able to connect with someone they can trust to give them honest information.”**

**- Kimberly Johnson  
Executive Director  
Children’s Legacy Center**

appropriate are important.

“If it’s affecting us, you can believe it’s affecting them, too. But if the groundwork has been laid, they are able to connect with someone they can trust to give them honest information.”

She said the best way to begin, and continue, laying that foundation is through activities and interests of the child.

“For young people, especially teens, that sit-down eye-contact interaction can be hard,” Johnson said. “But if you get them in the car or out doing something the interaction can be easier.”

Cushman said as her daughter got older she began understanding and processing the Carr Fire on a deeper and personal basis.

“The Carr Fire is a notable point in her story,” she said. “She’s met other kids at school who’ve had a similar experience and it’s been important to know she’s not alone.”

And though Cushman’s daughter wasn’t old enough to understand the magnitude of what the Carr Fire meant to the town, she said it’s very much a part of who she is.

“When you look at it from an adult perspective, she didn’t physically experience it and (perhaps) shouldn’t have lasting trauma, but our body knows and keeps score,” she said. “That’s true



for adults and children.”

Cushman said her daughter is aware of fire incidents around the area. There was a recent fire near their Quartz Hill Road neighborhood and she said she saw the smoke.

“She said ‘It looks far away though,’” Cushman said. “So we got out the Watch Duty app and we were able to look at the fire and air attack response.”

Johnson said that kind connectivity is crucial.

“It’s all about the engagement,” she said.

Part of a settlement with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. from the 2020 Zogg Fire in Igo was earmarked for the Children’s Legacy Center as “Feyla’s Fund.” The \$7 million endowment, named after 8-year-old Feyla McLeod who died in the fire along with her mother Alaine, is to be used to establish emergency services for children and families who’ve experienced trauma through a crisis like a wildfire. Some of those services include counseling and therapy in the immediate aftermath of a crisis event, but also for triggering events that might happen years from now.

“The idealist in me is that people would have everything they need,” Johnson said. “In the immediate

## How to teach kids about emergency preparedness

Emergency preparedness is something everyone in the household should learn, including children. But approaching the topic of emergencies with youngsters requires finesse. Children are capable of comprehending many things, especially when information is presented in age-appropriate ways.

The American Red Cross recommends parents narrow down the subject matter when discussing disasters and emergency readiness with kids. The local library may have books in their children’s section and there are plenty of online resources that address safety skills and emergency preparedness in language that children can understand.

In addition, the Red Cross notes there are mobile apps designed to teach and reinforce important safety skills in informative but fun ways. For example, the Monster Guard app is geared toward kids between the ages of seven and 11 who are asked to join the Monster Guard and prepare for real-life emergencies at home and in other environments.

Children may not understand everything that goes into preparing for an emergency, but they may be more inclined to get involved if they are given tasks they can handle. Children in Pre-K to grade 2 can learn how to dial 9-1-1 or practice “Stop! Drop! And Roll!” safety techniques. Older children can be tasked with making emergency supplies shopping lists and helping to put away these items, or working with parents to devise a home evacuation plan.

Once families determine which emergency plans they should put into effect, they can role play with children to help make sure that everyone recognizes what to do in the case of an actual emergency.

Important phone numbers can be posted in a key location (and programmed into mobile phones), and children should know what to do in the event they get separated from their guardians during an emergency. Children also can help pack go bags with key items they don’t want to part with should they need to evacuate home due to an emergency.

aftermath of these recent hurricanes (in Florida), people aren’t needing to sit with a therapist, they need a meal or place to stay.”

She said post-event is when the need arises for those affected to seek out a therapist.

“Trauma is trauma,” she said.

“And even long term, five or 10 years, there can be things like seeing smoke in the air that could trigger someone’s trauma.”

# Volunteer to be a firefighter



## The need is there in Shasta Lake for Reserve Firefighters

*From the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District*

The Shasta Lake Fire Protection District has a long history of service to the community.

In the beginning, the District was called Central Valley Fire Department. It was formed in the early 1940s by the men working on Shasta Dam. The Central Valley - now Shasta Lake Fire Protection District - firefighters have served the community and protected its citizens.

Over the past two decades the level of volunteerism has been on a steady decline for all organizations. That decline, coupled with the ever-increasing training requirements, make it difficult to keep volunteer firefighters. The need is still there and the following is the process for someone wanting to become what the Fire District now calls a Reserve Firefighter.

First, no experience is needed.

Fill out application and provide your DMV print out.

If accepted, the first training is assigned using computer-based learning and covers State required new hire subjects. The second level of training qualifies the Reserve Firefighter to respond on apparatus to calls. The third level completes the requirement to be a basic firefighter.

All training after that is annual recurrent training.

Minimum time commitment is two 24-hour shifts per month at their convenience.

For each 24-hour shift the reserve receives a nominal fee of \$100, for fuel and non-issued gear.

All gear for responding is provided by the District.

### **Where and How to Apply**

If someone is inspired to give back to their community they can start by picking up an application at the main Shasta Lake Fire Protection District building located at 4126 Ashby Court, Shasta Lake, or online at [www.shastalakefpd.org](http://www.shastalakefpd.org).

For more information, visit the website or call the SLFPD at 530-275-7474.

# Door-Yard Burning Permits

No Fee

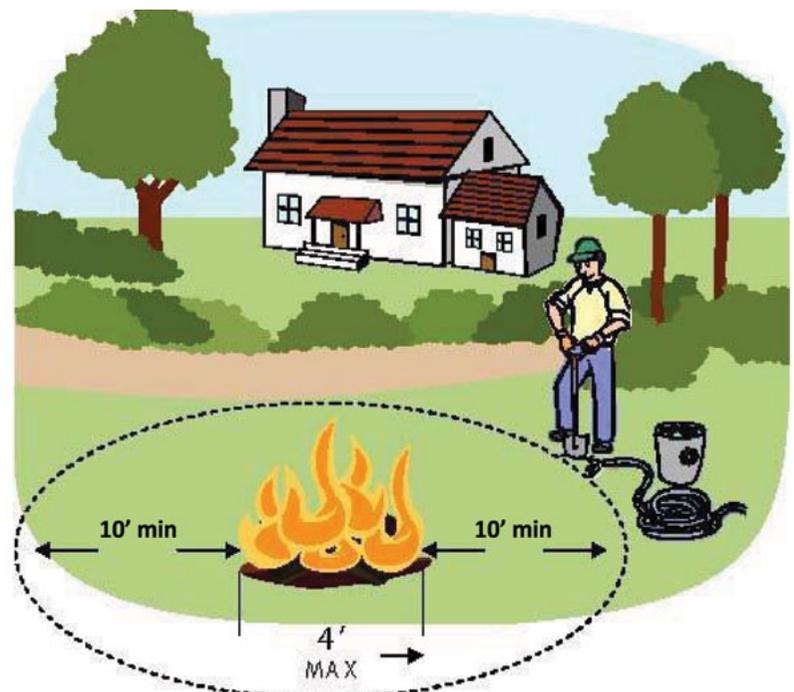


Available Online at  
**shastalakefpd.org**

Door-yard burning within the City of Shasta Lake is allowed from Nov. 1 - April 30 ONLY

## Shasta Lake Fire Burning Regulations

1. Dry vegetation may be burned from November 1 thru April 30 ONLY. You may only burn dry, cut vegetation from your yard.
2. A completed permit must be present with you during any burn operation.
3. Burn only on designated burn days. Burning days within the designated months are established by the Shasta County Air Quality Management District (AQMD). You must call AQMD at 530-224-8777 each day after 9:00 a.m. to determine if burning is permitted on that day (no burning allowed prior to 9:30 a.m.).
4. No burn barrels or burning containers are allowed for door-yard burning.
5. You may not burn paper, cardboard, garbage, construction materials, animal or human waste, fabric or clothing, plastic or rubber items, roofing or tar materials or any other manmade products. Please note that the burning of any item which creates a public nuisance is prohibited.
6. Maximum pile size 4-foot diameter.
7. Areas within 10 feet of the outer edge of the pile are maintained free and clear of all flammable material, vegetation, and any structures.
8. Adult (18 years or older) in attendance with a water supply and shovel until fire is dead out.
9. All fires must be extinguished (dead-out cold) by 5 p.m. No exceptions.
10. No burning shall be undertaken unless weather conditions (particularly wind) are such that burning can be considered safe.
11. Mechanically created piles must be inspected by Shasta County Air Quality Management District and the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District prior to burning.
12. Violations of any of these rules may result in a citation or further legal action from the Fire Department or other agency.



Door-Yard Burning Permits available online at  
**ShastaLakeFPD.org** or in person at  
**Shasta Lake Fire Protection District**  
**Main Station - 4126 Ashby Court, Shasta Lake**  
**Open every day 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.**  
Call AQMD after 9:00 a.m. to see if it is a burn day 530-224-8777

# The Big Unknown

ARE  
YOU  
COVERED ?



**FIRE INSURANCE**

## Following SoCal fires, no one is sure what the future holds for home insurance, but a City and SLFPD ‘2-year distinction’ might result in discounts for some

By Aaron Williams

It's no secret that California's increased wildfire risk has a consequence that impacts nearly every homeowner - the possibility of drastic insurance rate increases.

And with the recent Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire in Los Angeles, the future of insurance in California, especially wildfire-prone areas known as wildland-urban interface, faces uncertainty.

On one hand, insurance companies can't continue to absorb multi-million, and in some cases multi-billion, dollar losses due to wildfire.

On the other, homeowners can't feasibly continue to shoulder double-digit policy increases.

Meanwhile, the FAIR Plan, California's last-resort insurance option, needed an infusion of cash as state regulators allowed the program to collect \$1 billion from private insurance companies doing business in California to pay its

claims, according to a New York Times report.

The crisis is here and has many homeowners up and down the state wondering: Where do we go from here?

Jeff Okrepkie is a Santa Rosa native, a city councilman and works in commercial insurance. He also lost his home in the 2017 Tubbs Fire, one of the first major wildfires to encroach on previously unthinkable urban areas.

He said short term, the claims from the Palisades and Eaton fires will be paid by insurance companies and the FAIR Plan, but like many, he questions the long-term implications for state homeowners.

"I don't know how we solve it. We should've figured this out years ago," he said. "Long term I don't know what will happen. It's not an easy solution. There's a possibility but it's not one conversation and it's not one group. Consumer groups, government and insurance industry

**"I don't know how we solve it. We should've figured this out years ago...It's not one conversation and it's not one group. Consumer groups, government and insurance industry (officials) all have to be in the same room. No one solves this on their own."**

**- Jeff Okrepkie  
Santa Rosa City Councilman  
who works in commercial  
insurance and lost his own  
home to a fire**

(officials) all have to be in the same room.

"No one solves this on their own."

Three weeks prior to the Palisades Fire, Insurance

Commissioner Ricardo Lara announced regulations that expanded coverage for residents in "wildfire-distressed areas."

The edict said insurance companies must increase coverage in those fire-prone areas, ensuring they write policies for at least 85 percent of their statewide market share.

In March, California Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara said he would grant State Farm's request to raise home insurance premiums by 22% on average if the company agrees to certain conditions — and wins approval at a public rate hearing in April, according to a Calmatters.org story in March.

Lara's conditions are that State Farm, the state's biggest provider of homeowners insurance, commit to pause canceling and not renewing policies through the end of this year. He also is asking that its parent company, State Farm Mutual, give or loan the California entity, State Farm General, \$500

million to help boost its finances. In addition, State Farm must prove its need for the interim rate increases at a hearing April 8, where it must present updated and more detailed data.

Okrepkie said one solution being bandied about is separating coverage of “named” wildfires into policies much like is done with earthquake insurance.

He also said insurance companies should dive deeper on a macro level to look at individual properties, rather than “redlining whole areas.”

“I think it’s a good solution, but not a perfect one,” he said. “It’s either going to become accepted that insurance is as much as your mortgage. Or, we get creative.”

He pointed to the fact that the Palisades Fire, the Maui Fire and Marshall Fire in Boulder, Colo., all happened in winter months as a sign that the issue of wildfire isn’t going away.

“We can’t keep working in silos,” he said of solution seeking. “Maybe this subject will be the great unifier.”

As climate change has exacerbated the frequency and intensity of wildfires in the state, many insurance companies have

dramatically raised rates, dropped coverage in certain areas and even stopped writing new policies.

This leaves homeowners vulnerable to rapid rate increases, confused about where to turn and angry rising costs could force them to make a choice whether to stay in their home or be forced to move.

California is not alone in this affordability crisis as insurers often find themselves paying out more in claims than premiums due to increased volume of claims as well as rising construction costs and materials.

The state limits how quickly companies can inflate rates, though a proposal by Gov. Gavin Newsom would expedite insurance company requests.

Proponents, including those in the insurance industry, claim it would stabilize a volatile market while critics and watchdog groups say it circumvents the public’s ability to challenge over-inflated policy changes.

A recent study published by economic professors from UC San Diego, UC Berkeley and the University of Alaska-Anchorage, along with an environmental science and management

**The City and fire district both earned a two-year distinction through the recent California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection’s “Fire Risk Reduction Community List.” The designation allows residents, with defensible space and other fire prevention actions, to petition for additional discounts on their homeowner’s insurance premiums. Talk to your insurance agent.**

professor from UC Santa Barbara, theorized climate change and varied risk-pricing strategies have helped exacerbate an insurance market that has dealt with billions in losses from natural disasters.

**City of Shasta Lake and SLFPD on State’s “Fire Risk Reduction Community List” for two years**

One of the ways in which the City of Shasta Lake is working to help its citizens is through grant-

funded mitigation projects that reduce fuel load in fire-prone areas.

Another is through the recently announced inclusion on the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Fire Risk Reduction Community List. Both the City of Shasta Lake and the Shasta Lake Fire Protection District earned the two-year distinction.

The designation allows residents, with defensible space and other fire prevention actions, to petition for additional discounts on their homeowner’s insurance premiums. It also allows the City and fire protection district priority in seeking Wildfire Prevention Grants.

City Manager Jessaca Lugo said good government includes all parties in the conversation on wildfire issues.

“We, as Californians, need to do what is necessary to reduce the fire threat, but also include insurers in the conversation as to what’s causing them to leave,” she said.

She said having local insurance offices with “feet on the ground” helps when agents can visit properties and give honest feedback.

“Every community in the state is dealing with this issue,” she said.

## California lawmakers propose fixes for ‘insurance industry in shambles’

*From pushing for oversight of the FAIR Plan to providing tax breaks for premiums, California lawmakers try to fix insurance market problems.*

By Levi Sumagaysay  
CalMatters.org

The fires that reduced Altadena, Pacific Palisades and other Los Angeles-area neighborhoods to rubble have also shined a harsh light on California’s raging insurance crisis.

Lawmakers have proposed a variety of bills to address the issues illuminated by the disaster, plus others that predate it. Some of the legislation would be the first of its kind in the nation.

### The fire-insurance provider of last resort

One measure would put the state’s top two lawmakers on the governing committee of the FAIR Plan, the association of insurance companies that’s required by law to provide fire insurance to property owners who can’t find it anywhere else.

The FAIR Plan said earlier this year that it was at risk of running out of money due to claims from the LA fires and asked for a \$1 billion lifeline. Its member insurance companies

were on the hook for that amount, and could try to pass along up to half of the cost to their customers.

The plan has become more important over the past several years as insurance companies have stopped renewing or writing new policies in California, so state officials have a keen interest in its solvency and ability to serve a growing number of customers. But the plan is not run by the state, it is run by a management team that’s accountable to the pool of insurers.

Lawmakers hope that adding state officials to the group of people overseeing the FAIR Plan will help it run better and improve the lives of its customers.

“The association has grown to such an extent that its financial capacity to pay claims after a catastrophic fire is unlikely,” says Assembly Bill 234, a bill by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, a Democrat from the Los Angeles area. “Increased transparency is imperative.”

Calderon’s bill calls for the speaker of the Assembly and the chairperson of the Senate Committee on Rules to immediately become non-voting members of the FAIR Plan’s governing committee. Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara, who has limited authority over the plan,

backs the bill. The FAIR Plan has not taken a position on the legislation, according to plan spokesperson Hilary McLean.

If the bill passes, California could be the first state to put lawmakers on a FAIR Plan board, although several states have insurance department representatives on boards for their own FAIR Plan equivalents, said Stephen Jablonski, president of Property Insurance Plans Service Office, a nonprofit that tracks state residual property insurance plans.

California’s FAIR Plan would not disclose the members of its governing board.

Concerns about the FAIR Plan go beyond its financial stability. As the fire insurance provider of last resort, issues surrounding the way it serves its customers have come up again and again. Placing state officials on the plan’s board could help address some of those issues.

In early February, Betty Ryder and her husband received a renewal notice for one policy on their Los Angeles-area home but not for their FAIR Plan policy, which is when they discovered that they did not have fire insurance on the property all of last year despite paying for it.

That meant the couple was uninsured at a time when their home was particularly vulnerable: Ryder

and her husband live in Tujung, a neighborhood that Ryder said was “right between the three fires” that burned in Los Angeles County earlier this year.

Ryder got on the phone with her broker, her mortgage company and a representative from the FAIR Plan to figure out what happened. The agent for the FAIR Plan told her the plan had incorrectly applied someone else’s payment to her account and that it canceled her policy after that realization.

So, she started writing letters: to the president of the FAIR Plan, to Lara, to her mortgage company, to her broker.

“I was in tears,” she said. “We’re old, we’re in our 70s,” she added, referring to herself and her husband, William.

A week later, a representative from the FAIR Plan told her they found the correct check issued by her mortgage company last year, and that the amount has been applied to her reinstated policy. A relief, but there’s a remaining problem: The Ryders have already paid into their mortgage company’s escrow account for this year’s policy. They have not received a refund for the \$5,300 check her mortgage company issued

**- Please see page 26**

to the FAIR Plan last year, so as of now they have paid double for this year's policy.

Ryder has not heard back from the FAIR Plan about a possible refund, nor has she received a response from Lara's insurance department. The department said it has assigned someone to her case.

McLean said she would not discuss individual cases with CalMatters.

"In the limited instances where the California FAIR Plan is regretfully in error, it works to correct the mistake in its customer's favor," McLean wrote in an email. "If the FAIR Plan receives a duplicate payment, the FAIR Plan will refund the duplicate payment with interest."

But Lili Thompson, an account manager for an insurance agency in Chico, told CalMatters that the FAIR Plan often makes errors, and that she has customers who have had experiences similar to Ryder's. When they do, it's hard to get those issues resolved because it's tough to get the plan to address problems in a timely manner, Thompson said.

"We don't have access to billing information, which is constantly incorrect," Thompson said. "Payments aren't applied. Or there's a balance of 3 cents, or \$4 or \$10, and they cancel (policies)."

In fact, Thompson submitted a complaint about the FAIR Plan to the Insurance Department in January. It read in part: "Our agency is having significant problems with the FAIR Plan as a whole. Issues with billing, renewals, cancellations have been reoccurring at an alarming rate."

In an emailed response seen by CalMatters, an insurance department compliance officer urged Thompson to tell her clients to file complaints with the department "so we can address their specific situation."

CalMatters wrote about similar complaints against the FAIR Plan — delays in payments, slow response times, poor customer service — about a year ago. At the time, McLean said the plan was dealing with increased volume and had hired more staff to deal with it all. She also mentioned that the FAIR Plan had transitioned to a new software system and insurance agents and brokers were still learning it.

Asked what the FAIR Plan has changed in the past year, and why the same types of complaints persist, McLean again pointed to the plan's "historic growth over the past several years," and mentioned that it has hired even more staff to deal with claims from the January Palisades and Eaton fires.

Another bill that addresses the FAIR Plan's financial stability is Assembly Bill 226, aimed at allowing it to spread out claims payments over time. It would do that by allowing the

**"Our insurance industry is in shambles right now. For the next few years it's not going to be great. If we can allow our constituents to write off some of that increase, maybe they can get some sort of relief."**

**- Republican Assemblymember Heath Flora of Ripon on AB 1354 which he and fellow Republican Assemblymember Greg Wallis of Rancho Mirage have proposed that would allow California taxpayers to write off the rising costs of their fire insurance premiums for the next five years.**

FAIR Plan to obtain bond financing through the California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank.

Assemblymember David Alvarez, co-author of the bill with Calderon and Democrat from Chula Vista, told CalMatters: "We wanted to make sure if there was an event of (the LA fires') magnitude, insurance companies wouldn't use that as a reason to not cover California."

He added that this legislation is just another "tool" to "maintain insurers in California, and get claims paid in a way that doesn't cost consumers." Alvarez also noted that the bill, which was first introduced last year, had no opposition. The FAIR Plan supports it.

#### **Paying claims without full inventories**

Senate Bill 495, by Sen. Ben Allen, a Democrat from El Segundo, would make California the only state in the nation to require insurers to pay claims in full without first seeing itemized inventories from policyholders.

It also gives consumers at least 180 days, up from 60 days, to provide proof of loss to their insurance companies after a declared state of emergency.

"A lot of insurance companies have already been doing this," the senator said in an interview with CalMatters. "It's a hassle for them to go through all the (inventory) lists, too."

Allen said he has been going to town halls in his LA-area community and hearing from "people who have lost everything." Getting rid of the inventory requirement "really cuts out an important barrier for a lot of people especially during a very difficult moment," he said.

Lara backs the bill, and last week his department released a list of insurance companies that have agreed to pay at least 75% of contents coverage without a detailed inventory. A majority of companies operating in the state have — with some agreeing to provide 100%.

Insurance industry representatives opposed a similar bill in the 2004-05 legislative session and plan to do so again. Rex Frazier, president of the Personal Insurance

Federation of California, said the bill could raise costs for insurance companies, which would pass the higher costs on to consumers.

"Why require overpayment and require insurers to increase rates when people are already worried about the affordability of property insurance?" he said.

#### **Insurance premium tax write-offs**

Assembly Bill 1354, by Assemblymembers Heath Flora and Greg Wallis, would allow California taxpayers to write off the rising costs of their fire insurance premiums for the next five years. Flora, of Ripon, and Wallis, of Rancho Mirage, are Republicans.

The tax credits would reduce the amount of personal income taxes people would pay to the state. They would be based on the difference between their current premiums and their premiums from 2023, plus any current assessments or charges. If passed, the tax credit would apply to individuals with annual adjusted gross incomes not exceeding \$150,000, with the limit being \$300,000 for joint taxpayers. Owners of individual homes and properties with four dwelling units or less, and individual condos and mobile homes, would qualify as long as their property values do not exceed \$3.3 million.

Flora told CalMatters he expects premiums to rise in the short term as the insurance department's new regulations are implemented, but that he hopes it all means insurers will start writing policies in the state again.

"Our insurance industry is in shambles right now," he said. "For the next few years it's not going to be great. If we can allow our constituents to write off some of that increase, maybe they can get some sort of relief."

But he doesn't yet know what it would cost the state — and its taxpayers. Flora said he plans to ask the Legislative Analyst's Office to look into it.

"There will be a hit to the general fund," Flora acknowledged, adding that "in California, we spend a lot of money on a lot of different things. But fundamentally, people cannot buy homes without insurance."

Amy Bach, executive director of the consumer advocacy group United Policyholders, does not support the bill and said "if we're going to have insurance companies benefit from taxpayer funds paid toward premiums," the state should extract some concessions from insurance companies, including getting them to write more policies.

Bach said what she is in favor of is tax credits for mitigation expenses. For example, one bill would establish state grants for fire-rated roofs and other expenses, while another would allow for tax-free savings accounts for the purposes of mitigation or deductibles in case of a disaster.

Douglas Heller, director of insurance at Consumer Federation of America, agreed, saying taxpayer dollars would be better used preventing catastrophe and loss in the state.

#### **Fossil-fuel company liability**

Senate Bill 222, by Sen. Scott Wiener and several co-authors, would allow insurance companies and individuals to sue fossil-fuel companies over damages from climate-related disasters — part of a wave of efforts to hold the industry responsible for climate change. Hawaii is also considering a similar bill.

"Disasters that are so much more frequent and so much bigger in scale than five to 10 years ago (are) not random," said Wiener, a Democrat from San Francisco, during a press conference. "That's because of climate change being fueled by companies."

The idea is that allowing individuals, insurers and the FAIR Plan to try to recoup some costs from disasters would provide an alternative to insurance companies simply raising their rates.

A business group that represents insurance companies warned against the legislation, saying it could lead to increased costs for consumers. Though California Business Roundtable does not publicly disclose all its members, it does include executives from the insurance and fossil-fuel industries, said Brooke Armour, president of the California Center for Jobs & the Economy, the group's information arm.

Center for Climate Integrity, a co-sponsor of Wiener's bill, has been trying for almost a decade to hold the fossil fuel industry accountable for climate change. Iyla Shornstein, political director at the group, said if nobody holds the oil industry responsible for disaster costs, insurance rates will only continue to "skyrocket and overburden victims."

*This article first appeared on March 11, 2025, at CalMatters.org.*

# PRE-EVACUATION PREPARATION STEPS

ReadyForWildfire.org

When an evacuation is anticipated, follow these checklists (if time allows) to give your home the best chance of surviving a wildfire:

## OUTSIDE

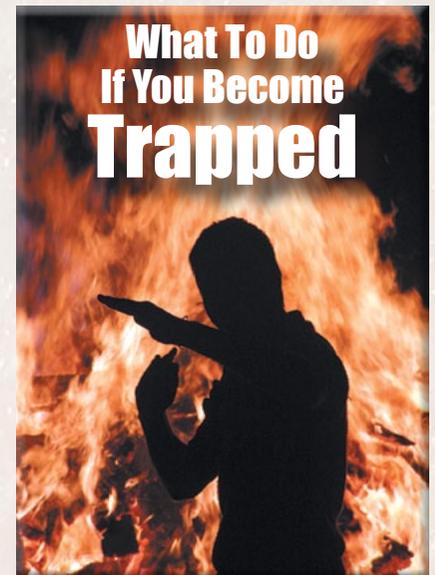
- 1 Gather up flammable items from the exterior of the house and bring them inside (patio furniture, children's toys, door mats, trash cans, etc.) or place them in your pool.
- 2 Turn off propane tanks.
- 3 Move propane BBQ appliances away from structures.
- 4 Connect garden hoses to outside water valves or spigots for use by firefighters. Fill water buckets and place them around the house.
- 5 Don't leave sprinklers on or water running; they can affect critical water pressure.
- 6 Leave exterior lights on so your home is visible to firefighters in the smoke or darkness of night.
- 7 Put your Emergency Supply Kit in your vehicle.
- 8 Back your car into the driveway with vehicle loaded and all doors and windows closed. Carry your car keys with you.
- 9 Have a ladder available and place it at the corner of the house for firefighters to quickly access your roof.
- 10 Seal attic and ground vents with pre-cut plywood or commercial seals.
- 11 Monitor your property and the fire situation. Don't wait for an evacuation order if you feel threatened and need to leave.
- 12 Check on neighbors and make sure they are preparing to leave.

## INSIDE THE HOUSE

- 13 Shut all windows and doors, leaving them unlocked.
- 14 Remove flammable window shades and curtains. Close metal shutters.
- 15 Move flammable furniture to the center of the room, away from windows and doors.
- 16 Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
- 17 Leave your lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.
- 18 Shut off the air conditioning.

## ANIMALS

- 19 Locate your pets and keep them nearby.
- 20 Prepare farm animals for transport and think about moving them to a safe location early.



## While in Your Vehicle

- Stay calm
- Park your vehicle in an area clear of vegetation.
- Close all vehicle windows and vents.
- Cover yourself with a wool or cotton blanket or jacket.
- Lie on vehicle floor.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials - **Call 911.**

## While on Foot

- Stay calm.
- Go to an area clear of vegetation, a ditch or depression on level ground if possible.
- Lie face down and cover up your body.
- Use your cell phone to advise officials - **Call 911.**

## While in Your Home

- Stay calm and keep your family together.
- Call 911 and inform authorities of your location.
- Fill sinks and tubs with cold water.
- Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked.
- Stay inside your house.
- Stay away from outside walls and windows.

Source: Cal Fire  
ReadyForWildfire.org

If there is an evacuation due to a fire  
**PLEASE DON'T LEAVE YOUR SPRINKLERS ON  
OR YOUR WATER RUNNING**  
It can affect critical water pressure needed by firefighters



# Top 20 Most Destructive California Wildfires

FIRE NAME (CAUSE)	DATE	COUNTY	ACRES	STRUCTURES	DEATHS
1 CAMP (Powerlines)	November 2018	Butte	153,336	18,804	85
2 EATON (Under Investigation)*	January 2025	Los Angeles	14,021	9,413	17
3 PALISADES (Under Investigation)*	January 2025	Los Angeles	23,707	6,833	12
4 TUBBS (Electrical)	October 2017	Napa & Sonoma	36,807	5,636	22
5 TUNNEL - Oakland Hills (Rekindle)	October 1991	Alameda	1,600	2,900	25
6 CEDAR (Human Related)	October 2003	San Diego	273,246	2,820	15
7 NORTH COMPLEX (Lightning)	August, 2020	Butte, Plumas, & Yuba	318,935	2,352	15
8 VALLEY (Electrical)	September 2015	Lake, Napa & Sonoma	76,067	1,955	4
9 WITCH (Powerlines)	October 2007	San Diego	197,990	1,650	2
10 WOOLSEY (Electrical)	November 2018	Ventura	96,949	1,643	3
11 CARR (Human Related)	July 2018	Shasta County, Trinity	229,651	1,614	8
12 GLASS (Undetermined)	September 2020	Napa & Sonoma	67,484	1,520	0
13 LNU LIGHTNING COMPLEX (Lightning/Arson)	August 2020	Napa, Solano, Sonoma, Yolo, Lake, & Colusa	363,220	1,491	6
14 CZU LIGHTNING COMPLEX (Lightning)	August 2020	Santa Cruz, San Mateo	86,509	1,490	1
15 NUNS (Powerline)	October 2017	Sonoma	54,382	1,355	3
16 DIXIE (Powerline)	July 2021	Butte, Plumas, Lassen, & Tehama	963,309	1,311	1
17 THOMAS (Powerline)	December 2017	Ventura & Santa Barbara	281,893	1,063	2
18 CALDOR (Under Investigation)	September 2021	Alpine, Amador, & El Dorado	221,774	1,003	1
19 OLD (Human Related)	October 2003	San Bernardino	91,281	1,003	6
20 JONES (Undetermined)	October 1999	Shasta	26,200	954	1

"Structures" include homes, outbuildings (barns, garages, sheds, etc) and commercial properties destroyed.

This list does not include fire jurisdiction. These are the Top 20 regardless of whether they were state, federal, local or tribal responsibility.

\*Numbers not final \*DINS Disclaimer: These numbers are preliminary based on aerial assessments dedicating heat sources which can include chicken coops, outbuildings, sheds, water containers, etc. \*Validated inspections are currently being ground-verified by Damage Assessment Teams.



2/7/2025

## Report Unlawful Camping in the City of Shasta Lake

It is unlawful and a public nuisance for any person to sleep or camp, to occupy camp facilities, or use camp paraphernalia in areas not limited to public right-of-way, public trails or parks, private unimproved property, & private property without owner consent.

Chapter 8.10 of the City of Shasta Lake Municipal Code Section 8.10.030



Report Illegal Encampment - 530.245.6096



# Fire safety plan should also include pets



## Many ways to safeguard everyone in the event of fire

A fire safety plan should include all members of a household, including pets.

The American Humane Society says each year more than 500,000 pets are affected by house fires. The National Fire Protection Association estimates that nearly 1,000 home fires each year are accidentally started by pets.

Pets are curious animals and they may investigate open flames from unattended candles, fireplaces or grills. Pets may start fires by accidentally turning stove knob covers or biting on or playing with electrical wires and outlets. Young pets may be especially inquisitive and boisterous, so fires may be prevented by keeping young animals behind gates or in secure areas when there are open flames.

There are many ways to safeguard everyone in the event of fire. Here are some steps to include in a fire safety plan.

- Check and replace smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly. Monitored smoke detectors can be helpful if you regularly leave pets home alone, since firefighters will be alerted and can respond.

- Take inventory of where pets like to hide or nap. This can prove helpful if you need to evacuate a home quickly due to fire. Remember that pets can sense stress and may

be more difficult to catch if they feel something is amiss, advises the ASPCA. Therefore, try to remain as calm as possible.

- Keep pets near exits when you are not home to make it easier for firefighters to enter the house and save the animals. The Red Cross also recommends placing collars and leashes as well as pet carriers near the exits.

- Invest in a pet safety sticker and hang it in a visible window to alert firefighters that you have pets inside. The sticker includes important information, such as the number of pets, type of pets and veterinarian contact information.

- Plan escape routes and practice evacuations. Make sure at least one family member is in charge of grabbing pets and getting outside safely so others can focus on evacuation. Identify all exits and what to do if one or more exits is impassable.

- Have a game plan should the house be damaged and uninhabitable. Line up a place to meet outside and explore pet-friendly accommodations at a hotel, friend or family member's house.

Fire safety plans should include all members of the household, which includes companion animals.



# How to replace important lost documents

*A fire takes out your home before you had a chance to gather all of your important documents. Or you had an emergency fire escape plan, but you were out of the area when the fire hit and it took out your home and you lost all of your important documents. What do you do? Jim Miller, the Savvy Senior, has the answer on how to retrieve copies of some of those documents.*



**By Jim Miller**

Dear Savvy Senior,  
How do I go about replacing some important documents that were lost when our home of 50 years burned down? We lost everything including our house deed, car titles, old tax returns, Social Security and Medicare cards, birth certificates, marriage license and passports.

*- Suffering in SoCal*

Dear Suffering,  
I'm very sorry to hear about the loss of your home, but you'll be pleased to know that replacing most of the lost documents you mentioned is pretty easy once you know where to turn. Here are the resources to help you get started.

### **Birth Certificates**

If you were born in the United States, contact the vital records office in the state where you were born (see [CDC.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm](http://CDC.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm) for contact information). This office will give you specific instructions on what you need to do to order a certified copy and

what it will cost you – usually between \$10 and \$30.

### **Car Titles**

Most states offer replacements through a local department of motor vehicles office. You'll need to complete a replacement title application form and pay the application fee, which varies by state. You'll also need to show ID and proof that you own the car, such as your vehicle registration or your license-plate number and VIN (vehicle identification number).

### **Property Deed**

To access your house deed, contact your county clerk's office, where deeds are usually recorded. You may be charged a small fee to get a copy.

### **Marriage Certificate**

Contact the vital records office of the state you were married in to order a copy (see [CDC.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm](http://CDC.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm)) You'll need to provide full names for you and your spouse, the date of your

wedding, and the city or town where the wedding was performed. Fees range from \$10 to \$30.

### **Social Security Cards**

In most states, you can request a replacement Social Security card online for free at [SSA.gov/myaccount](http://SSA.gov/myaccount). When you get there, click on "Replace your Social Security Card" and answer a few questions to verify your identity.

### **Medicare Cards**

If you're enrolled in original Medicare, you can replace a lost or damaged Medicare card by calling Medicare at 800-633-4227, or by logging into your [MyMedicare.gov](http://MyMedicare.gov) account, where you can print or request a new card to be mailed to you for free. If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, such as an HMO, PPO, or PDP, you'll need to call your plan to get your card replaced.

And, if you get Railroad Retirement Board benefits, you can get a replacement card by calling 877-772-5772.

### **Tax Returns**

To get copies of old tax returns start with your tax preparer, who usually keeps copies of your returns on file. You can also get copies of federal returns directly from the Internal Revenue Service. You'll need to fill out and mail in IRS form 4506. To download this form [IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f4506.pdf](http://IRS.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f4506.pdf) or call 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you a copy. The cost is \$30 for each return requested.

### **State Returns**

And to get copies of your state tax returns, contact your state's department of revenue who will also require a request form. See [TaxAdmin.org/fta-members](http://TaxAdmin.org/fta-members) for state contact information.

### **Passports**

If your U.S. passports were valid, you'll need to first report them as lost or stolen so they can be canceled. You can do this online at [PPTform.state.gov](http://PPTform.state.gov) or in person when you apply for a new passport at a Passport Application Acceptance Facility, which are located in many U.S. post offices. See [iafdb.travel.state.gov](http://iafdb.travel.state.gov) to locate one near you. You'll also need to submit Form DS-64 and Form DS-11. The replacement fee is \$130 per passport.

*Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.*

# FUELBREAK & VEGETATION REDUCTION CONTRACTORS

Company	Phone	Company	Phone
A Beautiful Tree Service	530-354-8722	KW Reynolds	530-378-2554
A Cut Above Tree Service	530-643-2155	Landscape Tree Company	916-417-1599
A-1 Tree Service & Stump Removal	530-221-9427	M&S Wesley Tree Service	530-343-6809
Able Tree Services	530-859-8733	McCanless Excavating & Construction	707-498-5352
About Trees	530-246-2477	Miller Timber	541-740-7905
Arbor Pro Tree Service	530-524-2642	MLU Services	530-515-0673
Arden's Tree Service	530-395-1322	Mowbray's Tree Service	928-308-0107
Bill's Tree Service	530-356-4323	Mountaineer's Fire Crew Inc.	530-227-3489
Blue Tent Farms	530-200-2929	Nor Cal Tree Expert	530-416-0425
Bundy's Tree Service	530-515-3766	Northern Trees Tree Service Inc.	530-768-1330
Cal North Forestry	530-200-8123	Professional Stump Grinding	530-604-9940
Complete Tree Care and Service	530-343-8877	Professional Tree Service	530-247-1669
Core Ten Resources Inc.	530-941-8450	Redding Tree Pro	530-941-8733
Crossfire Tree & Vegetation Services, Inc.	530-892-8430	Redding Tree Service	530-241-1199
Crowder Tree Specialist	530-899-1853	Red Mountain Forestry	208-431-8777
Dan Gibson Arborist Services	530-864-5001	Runyon's Tree Service	530-396-2945
Davey Tree	530-378-2674	Sierra Vista Vegetation Removal & Tree Services	530-549-5588
Mark Ewing	530-200-1274	Tip Top Land Solutions	530-722-8823
Firestorm Wildland Fire Suppression	530-898-8153	Trickle Creek Excavation	530-529-6506
FNC Tree & Mastication	530-953-8922	Tyrell Resources Inc.	530-243-8733
Frederic's Landscape & Tree	530-715-0230	Union Reforesters	530-224-1272
Jose Gutierrez Contracting	530-228-4496	Utility Tree Service	530-226-0330
Intergrazers	530-681-0290	Valley View Tree Services	530-786-8402
Isiah Thompson	530-945-2724	Warner Enterprises, Inc.	530-227-3499
J. Cota Forestry	530-459-3546		
Junior's Tree Service	530-526-3350		

List is not all inclusive and should not be construed as recommendations by the City of Shasta Lake.

## Some of the agencies mentioned in this publication with their websites and phone numbers

### Cal Fire

readyforwildfire.org and fire.ca.gov  
 Cal Fire's Arson Hotline. Report suspicious fires.  
 Remain anonymous. 800.468.4408

### City of Shasta Lake

cityofshastalake.org • 530.275.7400  
 GIS Maps - cityofshastalake.org/gismaps  
 Know Your Zone - protect.genasys.com/search  
 Report Illegal Encampment - 530.245.6096

### Shasta Lake Fire Protection District

shastalakefpd.org • 530.275.7474  
 AQMD - To see if burning is permitted that day  
 call 530.224.8777 after 9 a.m.

### Shasta County Fire Safe Council

shastafiresafe.org • 530.360.0120

### Office of the State Fire Marshal

Fire Hazard Severity Zones • osfm.fire.ca.gov

### California Department of Insurance

insurance.ca.gov • 800.927.4357

### Federal

ready.gov/wildfires  
 ready.gov/financial-preparedness  
 National Fire Protection Association - nfpa.org

### CalMatters.org

News site covering California issues

# Let's Protect Our Area



**Be prepared. Not scared.**

Please stay diligent in helping prevent wildfires



**4477 Main Street  
Shasta Lake, CA 96019  
530.275.7400**

A PDF download of this publication available at  
**CityofShastaLake.org**