

The Wildfire Round-up

Monthly meeting,

Third Weds. of the month,

7 - 8:30 p.m. Zoom Meeting

To participate & request the link
email info@affsc.org

Newsletter provided by:

Quarterly

October—December 2021

Fall



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Newsletter Editor
Jane Taylor

Message from AFFSC Chair - Janet Barentson

As a local Fire Safe Council, we are dedicated to educating our community about fire prevention, preparedness and evacuation with the intent of making our community safer and more resilient against wildfire. We have worked hard to become a FireWise Community, which included the implementation of a defensible space evaluation program, educational workshops, and participating in the update of El Dorado County's Wildfire Protection Plan. This spring, we focused on evacuation training, which we hoped to never have to put to use.

Extreme weather conditions, drought, bark beetle infestations and an overgrowth of vegetation challenge our prevention efforts. Once again, we are experiencing a record setting fire season in California, which hit home in August with the Caldor Fire. We all experienced it unfold in real time, as it rapidly grew to become El Dorado County's largest fire, bringing devastation to many homes and communities, especially our neighbors in Grizzly Flats.

Despite the toll this fire took on all of us in the community, I saw your efforts as a Fire Safe Council make a difference. The success of evacuations, whether attributed to Code Red, information shared by federal, state and local fire departments and fire safe councils, and the more basic efforts of neighbor helping neighbor, is something we can be proud of. I have heard more than once that our council members became a trusted voice to our neighbors in the time of crisis.

There will be opportunities to learn from this fire and improve in all aspects, including information sharing, evacuation procedures, home hardening and the effectiveness of vegetation treatment projects. We will use this information to improve our outreach efforts and shape future projects.

The work we are doing is truly making a difference.

Janet Barentson, Chair
Aukum Fairplay Fire Safe Council

October is Fire Prevention

Safety Month

And commemorates the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, which killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 buildings.

There are many ways that you can PREVENT unsafe conditions that lead to fire, but you should also always know what to do if there is a fire

BEFORE THE FIRE HAPPENS!



DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Keep your property lean and green to help protect your family and home.

Defensible space, coupled with home hardening, is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters a safe area to work in, to defend your home.

Defensible Space Zones

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 a third zone for defensible space. This law requires the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop the regulation for a new ember-resistant zone (Zone 0) within 0 to 5 feet of the home by January 1, 2023. The intensity of wildfire fuel management varies within the 100-foot perimeter of the home, with more intense fuels' reduction occurring closer to your home. Start at the home and work your way out to 100 feet.



Zone 0 – Ember-Resistant Zone extends 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc

Zone 1 – Lean, Clean and Green Zone—extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

Zone 2 – Reduce Fuel Zone
Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

Plant and Tree Spacing

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfires. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of brush and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger vegetation requires 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.

Allow extra vertical space between shrubs and trees. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the brush to the treetops like a ladder. This leads to more intense fire closer to your home.

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

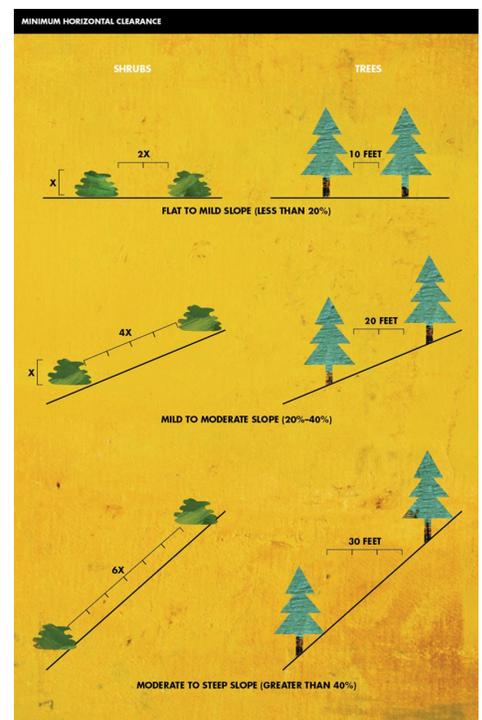


Example: A five-foot shrub is growing near a tree. $3 \times 5 = 15$ feet of clearance needed between the top of the shrub and the lowest tree branch.

Horizontal Spacing

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the chart below to determine spacing distance.

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 branch.



Fire Wise Landscaping

Proper landscaping for wildfire isn't necessarily the same thing as a well-maintained yard. This type of landscaping focuses on plant characteristics, properties and maintenance 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 wild-fire resilient and reduce the risk to your home. Through proper planning and routine maintenance, you can conserve water and create a beautiful landscape.

Interested in having your property looked at for your defensible space plan? Contact the Aukum Fairplay Firesafe Council—email info@affsc.org.

EL Dorado County Chipper Program

Currently suspended. Keep an eye on the EDC website for updates, link below:

<https://www.edcfiresafe.org/chipping-service-suspended/>

CAL FIRE Damage Inspection Program

How does CAL FIRE go through each and every property after a fire. Click on the link below and watch the damage assessment process in action:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=82M07UXtxjY>

Wildland Fire Terminology

Curious about all the terminology the firefighters use? Follow the link below and you will have the whole glossary:

<https://www.fs.fed.us/nwacfire/home/terminology.html>

How to Celebrate Fire Prevention Month

Here are some ways that you can participate in Fire Prevention Month: Develop a fire escape plan with everyone in your household and practice it at least twice a year. Install smoke alarms in your home,  on every level, and outside each sleeping area.

Test them  once a month and replace the batteries at least once a year if required. Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what they should do if they hear one. Make sure all household members know two ways to escape from every room.

Establish a family meeting spot outside.



Staying Safe Immediately After a Wildfire

Wildfires can devastate the lives and property of community members. But the danger is not over after the flames are put out. Flash flooding and debris flows, rockfalls, structural damage, road instability, and damaged trees are just some of the dangers that can follow a wildfire and persist for weeks or months thereafter.

In the immediate aftermath of a wildfire, and as the rainy season approaches, keep these tips in mind:

Around Your Home

Stay away from your home or business until fire officials tell you it is safe to return.

Be aware of and use extreme caution around burned structures, trees, power poles, and other tall objects or structures that may have lost stability during the fire. Most burned structures and surfaces are unstable.

Do not touch any power lines.

Keep a “fire watch.” Look for smoke, sparks, ash pits, and embers throughout your house and on rooftops (e.g., in gutters). If you find any of these, contact your local fire department immediately and stay clear of the hazard.

Check for downed power lines and for the smell of natural gas before entering or inspecting your home. Turn off power until you have completed your inspection.

Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. Turn the flashlight on outside your home before entering because the battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.

Check for power. If it’s off, contact your local utility company. If you use propane, turn off

all valves and contact a propane supplier to arrange for an inspection. If you use heating oil or have solar panels, contact licensed technicians to verify that these systems are safe for continued operation.

Do not drink or use water from the faucet until emergency officials say it is okay. Water supply systems can be damaged and become polluted during wildfires or as a result of subsequent post fire flooding.

Check for damage to your well. If it has been damaged by fire, contact a local licensed and bonded well constructor or pump installer to determine the extent of the damage and what must be done to either repair or decommission the well.

Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, flood waters, or soot.

Make sure you have non perishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides a thorough checklist at: <https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/documents/files/checklist3.pdf>.

Have an evacuation plan in place and make sure all family members are familiar with it.

Have a battery powered AM/FM weather radio and a cell phone available to listen for emergency updates and weather forecasts.

Be aware of imminent post wildfire hazards. Flash floods and debris flows are very real and deadly hazards when it rains in a wildfire-burned area upstream or upslope of your location.

Around Your Neighborhood

Stay away from storm channels and natural drainages because rivers, creeks, streets, and canals can convey deadly flows of water and debris when it rains, especially after a wildfire.

Stay out of burned forests during windy conditions because the wind can topple burned trees.

(Credit: Federal Emergency Management Agency)

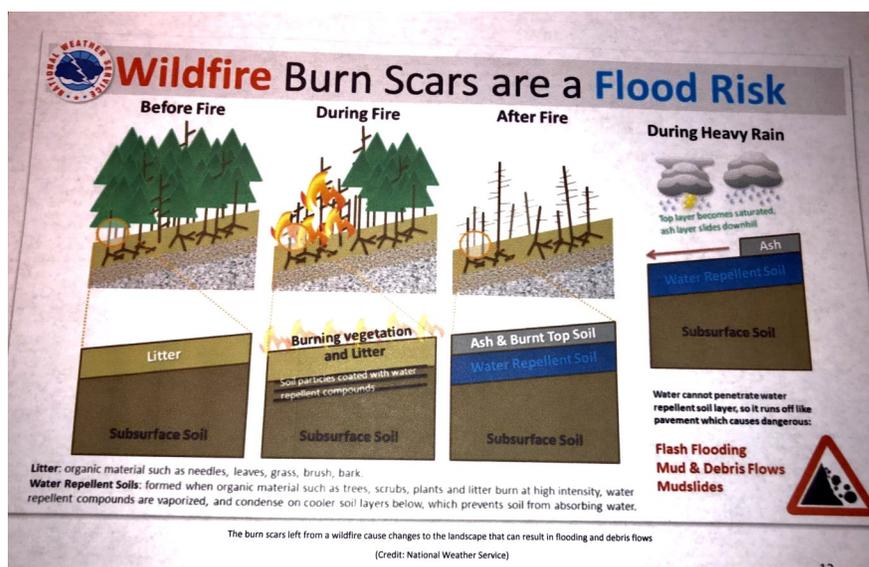
Post-Wildfire Hazards

By dramatically changing landscape and ground conditions in the area, wildfires increase the likelihood that rates of erosion and runoff will reach dangerous levels. For this reason, become aware of, and remain vigilant about, the following hazards. They can threaten lives and property even after the fire is extinguished.

A. Flooding Hazards and Flash Flooding

Flooding occurs when water accumulates and submerges land that is normally dry, and flash floods are exactly what the name suggests: floods that happen in a flash! In burned areas, flash floods occur most often when rainfall rates reach half an inch per hour. When it rains in a burn area, debris flows started by flash floods can travel many miles downslope from the burn area, where it may not even be raining.

Remember: it takes much less rainfall to cause flash flooding in a burn area than it would have taken before the wildfire occurred. In fact, thunderstorms that develop over burn areas can produce flash flooding and debris flows nearly as fast as National Weather Service (NWS) radar can detect the rainfall.



B. Flash Flood and Debris Flow Watches and Warnings

In California and other western states, post-fire flooding and debris flows are a significant threat after wildfires, both in terms of life-safety and property damage. Changes in land cover due to wildfire can cause upstream areas and streams to produce extremely large amounts of fast-moving runoff and sediment. For example, local experts estimated that debris flows carrying water, mud, boulders, trees, and tree branches reached up to 25–30 feet high and moved 25–35 miles per hour in the lower areas of Montecito, California, on January 9, 2018 (National Weather Service). They cannot be outrun; the fastest human runs just under 28 miles per hour.

When there is a threat or potential threat of flash flooding or debris flows, the NWS may issue Flood Advisories, Flash Flood Watches, or Flash Flood Warnings. Understanding NWS watches, warnings, and advisories can help you keep your family and community safe when it rains after a wildfire.

Be aware and continue monitoring conditions when the NWS issues a Flood Advisory.

A **Flood Advisory** is issued when a forecasted weather event may cause trouble.

Debris Flows—As water runs downhill through burned areas, it can create major erosion and pick up large amounts of ash, sand, silt, rocks, boulders, and burned vegetation (trees, shrubs, or plants), generating a debris flow (also commonly termed “mudflow”). These fast-moving, highly destructive debris flows are one of the most dangerous post-fire hazards because they tend to occur with little warning. They block drainages, damage structures, travel in unpredictable directions, and can endanger human life even miles away from the burned area.

and require action. You should continue monitoring local news outlets and your local NWS office for updates as conditions develop. A Flood Advisory is issued when flooding is not expected to be bad enough to issue a warning. Take appropriate actions to safeguard your family and property, and consider modifying travel plans.

Be prepared for a flash flood when the NWS issues a Flash Flood Watch.

A **Flash Flood Watch** is issued to indicate that current or developing conditions may result in flash flooding. However, flash flooding or debris flows are not imminent, and there may become uncertainty about the location or timing. In areas where ground conditions have been changed by wildfire, a watch is typically issued within several hours to days ahead of forecasted thunderstorms and rain events that could possibly generate flash flooding or debris flows. An example of this is the rainfall that occurred in the Thomas Fire burn area, which led to flash flooding and debris flows downslope of the burn area in Montecito, California, on January 9, 2018.

Take action to keep your family and community safe when the NWS issues a Flash Flood Warning.

A **Flash Flood Warning** is issued when a flash flood or debris flow is imminent or occurring. If you are in the warning area, take action immediately, as these conditions are often life-threatening. Debris flows result from short duration, high intensity rain events over ground that has been altered by a wildfire. Impacts from flash flooding and debris flows can occur many miles away from the burn area.

Even if you were not directly affected by the wildfire, it does not mean you are safe from the possibility of flash flooding or debris flows after it.

C. Rockfall

Rockfall is a natural process where rock fragments on steep slopes fall, bounce, or roll downhill. After a fire, this process may become more frequent because wildfires can burn hot enough to crack rocks (making them less stable and more likely to fall) and destroy trees, stumps, logs, woody debris, and roots that normally hold loose rocks in place. Rockfalls can be especially hazardous to life and property along roads, trails, and steep slopes near residential, industrial, and farm buildings.

Continued.....

Post Wildfire Hazards cont.

D. Roadway Erosion

Increased runoff from rain in a burn area may cause sediment buildup on and erosion of roadways. Thick cones and piles of sediment can build up on roadways and in drainage ditches. The latter may clog culverts, block flows beneath bridges, and cause erosion of embankments supporting roads. In heavy storms, this may lead to partially or completely collapsed roadways. These hazards make traveling in burn areas or in areas downslope of burn areas especially dangerous at night.

E. Burned and Distressed Trees

It is important for homeowners to check and monitor trees after a wildfire, because burned and distressed trees may fall at any time, with or without wind. Fallen trees may also get hung up in the branches of other trees and break away later. Remain alert and monitor the trees on your property.

Watershed Impacts after a Wildfire

The after effects of a wildfire on watershed can be drastic causing immediate issues and long term effects. Rates of erosion and runoff can increase to dangerous levels following wildfires in California. Normally trees, shrubs, grass and other protective groundcover help prevent soil detachment and allow rainfall to infiltrate into the soil. After a wildfire the extreme heat can bake the soil to the point that water is unable to penetrate and can cause excessive run off in a post wildfire area.

Before leaving a burned area, CAL FIRE will implement post-fire suppression repair efforts. This work includes:

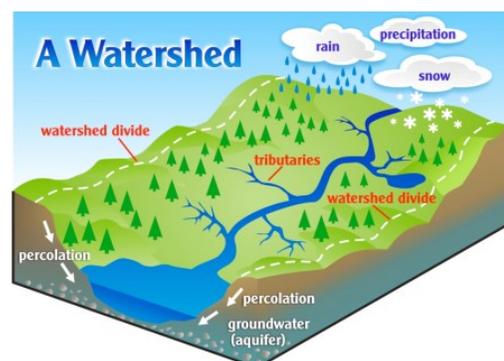
- Installing waterbars (ditches cut at an angle into the soil) on dozer firelines.

- Removing soil and organic debris from streams where fire lines crossed, and mulching fire line approaches where appropriate.
- Bringing road drainage structures back to pre-fire condition.
- Treating/reducing large concentrations of downed trees (slash) near roads and structures.
- Repairing damaged land improvements (e.g., water pipes, fences, gates) related to suppression activities.
- Addressing public safety issues, such as flagging/marking hazard trees threatening roads or structures for removal by professional fallers, and mapping/reporting downed power and phone lines.

Following selected wildfires, California state Watershed Emergency Response Teams (WERTs) are deployed to conduct post-fire assessments.

- WERTs identify types and locations of threats to life-safety and property (i.e., collectively known as “Values-at-Risk” or VARs) from debris flows, flooding, rock-fall, and surface erosion that are elevated due to wildfire.
- WERT members develop preliminary emergency protection measures for the identified locations, and communicate the findings to responsible local emergency management agencies.

Local jurisdictions may be able to obtain funding for implementation of emergency protection measures and mitigation projects from FEMA or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). This work may include installation of structure protection for identified Values-at-Risk, such as K-rails, sand bags, and Muscle Wall.



Returning Home After a Wildfire

Although wildfire damage can be immeasurable, the danger is not over after the flames are put out. Flash flooding and debris flows, structural damage, road instability, and damaged trees are just some of the dangers that exist after a wildfire. Keep these tips in mind:

- Stay away from your home or business until fire officials tell you it is safe to return.
- Flash floods are a very real and potentially deadly hazard after a wildfire, particularly as a result of rain falling over a burned area upstream of your location. Stay away from burned forests, storm channels, and natural drainages (rivers, creeks, and engineered channels can convey deadly flows of water and debris, especially after a wildfire). Have a battery-powered radio to listen for emergency updates, weather forecasts, reports of flash flooding, and news reports.
- Have an evacuation plan in place and make sure all family members are familiar with it.
- Be aware of and use extreme caution around trees, power poles, and other tall objects or structures that may have lost stability during the fire. Most burned structures and surfaces will be unstable. Stay out of burned forests during windy conditions, as burned trees are easily downed by wind. Do not touch any power lines.
- Keep a “fire watch.” That means look for smoke or sparks throughout the house and on rooftops (e.g., in gutters), etc. Look for ash pits or hidden embers. Stay away – they can burn you.
- Before inspecting your home, first check for the smell of gas. Turn off power until you’ve completed your inspection. Use a battery-powered flashlight to inspect a damaged home. (Note: the flashlight should be turned on outside before entering. The battery may produce a spark that could ignite leaking gas, if present.)
- Do not drink or use water from the faucet

until emergency officials say it is okay; water supply systems can be damaged and become polluted during wildfires or as a result of subsequent post-fire flooding. If your well has been damaged by fire, contact a local licensed and bonded well constructor or pump installer to determine the extent of the damage and what must be done to either repair or decommission the well.

- Discard any food that has been exposed to heat, smoke, flood waters, or soot.
- Utilities: If there is no power, check to make sure the main breaker is on. If the breakers are on and power is still not present, contact the utility company. If you have a propane tank or system, contact a propane supplier, turn off valves on the system, and leave valves closed until the supplier inspects your system. If you have a heating oil tank system, contact a heating oil supplier for an inspection of your system before you use it. If you have a solar electrical system, this system should be inspected by a licensed technician to verify that the solar panels and electrical wiring are safe for continued operation.



https://www.readyforwildfire.org/wpcontent/uploads/CA_LFIRE_ReturningHomeAfterAFire_revised.pdf



**IF WE CAN'T FIND YOU
- WE CAN'T HELP YOU!**



GET YOUR REFLECTIVE RESIDENTIAL ADDRESS SIGN!

When emergency responders are called to a given location, there may be a delay in response if crews are unable to see the address from the street, especially at night. GPS locations are not always accurate. The few extra minutes it may take to locate your address could cost you your home — or your life.

EMERGENCY ADDRESS SIGN FUNDRAISER - AFFSC

Sign details: 6" X 18" .063" aluminum covered with green reflective vinyl. 4" Reflective vinyl numbers on one or both sides. Fire resistant when mounted onto a metal post.

	Cost	# Needed	Subtotal
Vertical sign with up to 4 numbers one side	\$20	_____	\$ _____
Vertical sign with up to 4 numbers both sides	\$25	_____	\$ _____
Horizontal sign with up to 5 numbers one side	\$20	_____	\$ _____
Horizontal sign with up to 5 numbers both sides	\$25	_____	\$ _____
6 ft metal green post	\$10	_____	\$ _____
TOTAL			\$ _____



Name _____ Email _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Number to be on Sign - _____ For Information email to info@affsc.org

To Order mail this Order Form with check made out to **AFFSC**
PO Box 587
Mount Aukum, CA 95656

Funds are used for community wildfire prevention education.

Thank you for your support!



A post office box has been established for AFFSC. The new address is:

AFFSC

P.O. Box 587

Mount Aukum, CA 95656

A Fuel Break is not a “force field”

We often hear about fuel breaks and their importance in protecting communities and natural resources. Just what is a fuel break and how does it work?



A fuel break is an area where vegetation has been reduced and/or modified to reduce the intensity of an approaching fire and allow fire fighters to be more effective with suppression efforts. They typically range from 100 to 300 feet wide or more depending upon the size and type of vegetation and are placed along ridgelines, roadways, or other strategic locations. They involve a carefully planned thinning of dense vegetation to reduce the fire's intensity and keep it from easily moving from the ground into the overhead tree canopy. A fuel break is not a “force field” that by itself will guarantee protection of a community from wildland fire. It will, however, provide fire fighters a better chance of slowing or stopping a fire's spread when used in conjunction with air tankers dropping fire retardant and/or fire firefighters on the ground using water, bulldozers and carefully applied back fires. In some cases, a fuel break's greatest value may be to simply slow a fire long enough to allow residents time to safely evacuate. Fuel breaks are most effective in protecting communities when done in conjunction with other activities including roadside vegetation clearance and defensible space.

Effective immediately: No Burning including charcoal BBQ's allowed in Pioneer Fire Protection District Fire Service areas.

More info: <http://pioneerfire.org/>

Current Restrictions in Place

- The fire restrictions prohibit all campfires and use of charcoal barbecues except in the established fire rings or stoves at the North Eagle Lake, Ramhorn Springs, Pit River and Boulder Reservoir campgrounds, and in the Hobo Camp Day Use Area. Portable stoves and lanterns using gas, jellied petroleum or pressurized liquid fuel are allowed. Users must have a valid California campfire permit on BLM managed lands within California. Visitors should be extremely careful with their use. Wildland visitors should carry shovels, water and fire extinguishers. California campfire permits are available free online at <http://www.preventwildfireca.org/Campfire-Permit/> or at all BLM, U.S. Forest Service and Cal Fire offices.
- No smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, or at a designated, developed recreation site, or other designated area.
- No motor vehicles or internal combustion engines off established roads or trails. Chainsaws equipped with spark arresters may be used until 1 p.m. daily.

No possession or use of fireworks, including California fire marshal-approved “safe and sane” devices.



Related News around the Community



Four generations of the D'Agostini family hosted temporarily displaced neighbors at the South County Evacuation Center at the D'Agostini Ranch on Mount Aukum Road in El Dorado County.

Our community **THANKS YOU** for your generosity!



The PVFA fire extinguisher fundraiser collected over a five month period a total of \$915!!! THANK YOU to all the local businesses who participated and supported this (in no particular order):

- Mediterranean Vineyards,
- Creekside Cork & Brew,
- Katie's Cafe,
- Mt. Aukum Store,
- Miller Vineyards,
- Oakstone Winery,
- Skinner Vineyards,
- Masteroserio Winery,
- Polynesian Girl Wine,
- E 16 Winery,
- Perry Creek Winery,
- Toogood Estate Winery,
- Windwalker Winery,
- Cantiga Winery,
- Mederios Family Wines
- Busby Cellars.



The PVFA appreciated everyone who participated in this fundraising program!!

Thank you!!



FIREWISE USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

OUR MISSION: Mitigate loss of life and property from the effects of catastrophic wildfire through community education, mobilization and action.

JOIN US!!

We continue to meet regularly over Zoom, Council meetings every 3rd Wednesday at 7 pm. Let us know anytime you wish to participate. We want to hear from you and what your needs are to be wildfire safe.

To participate and request the Zoom link, email info@affsc.org and ask that your email be put on the distribution list for upcoming meetings.

- ◆ Let your neighbors know to contact us so we will have their emails for important seasonal information.
- ◆ Our contact is info@affsc.org.
- ◆ See our website at www.affsc.org for all sorts of information and links.
- ◆ Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Nextdoor](#)



Aukum Fairplay Fire Safe Council Boundaries

