



Oak Hill Area
**FIRE SAFE
COUNCIL**

March 2021 Newsletter



FIREWISE USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to 2021. Time to get motivated for the upcoming fire season!

We'll take a look here at the County inspections coming to our area, see some great efforts of our neighbors, and learn about an upcoming talk on living with wildfire and nature too. We'll also highlight the latest on future wildfire trends and how our actions today matter. And we will share an extra way to get emergency information.

Doing Your Part for Defensible Space:



Let's Work to Meet the County Vegetation Management Ordinance

In an effort to increase the number of people creating and maintaining defensible space at their homes and to reduce the damage from wildfires, the County has implemented an ordinance that requires homeowners to comply with the State law mandating 100 feet of defensible space. That does not mean cleared space, remember, just defensible. Trees should be limbed up, shrubs

separated from each other, and no ladder fuels left (shorter trees or shrubs right below or next to taller plants).

County defensible space inspections this year will emphasize 2 areas - **one of which is Hanks Exchange, lower Oak Hill Rd and its feeders.** These homeowners should have already received a notice from the County, along with information about the inspections and requirements. After an initial assessment, subsequent visits will be made to work with homeowners towards compliance. For more information, visit the El Dorado County Vegetation Management [website](#), which includes a copy of the form that will be used.



Limbing up trees is very important

Keep first 5 ft clear of anything flammable
No pine needles on roof, No broom on deck, No mulch or plants next to house, etc!

Recent Neighborhood Sightings



Folks reducing wildfire risk

Big Oak Rd area - after thinning a massive stand of Manzanita (left).



Slash is ready for the chipper (left).

Even though the county's free chipping program has ended for now, you can hire a tree company to chip your down wood. It's important to stack it correctly, as shown.



Skyridge Rd, Zandonella area - Even when a road is narrow, clearance on either side like this makes it easier for cars to get out and fire trucks to get in.

Living with Wildfire - upcoming talk

“Living with Wildfire” will be the topic of a zoom talk **March 23 at 7 PM**. Alice Cantelow, defensible space/harden home chair for OHAFSC will speak about findings from recent large fires in the State as to what is particularly effective at reducing risk to our homes. The presentation will be given to the online monthly general meeting of the El Dorado Chapter, California Native Plant Society.

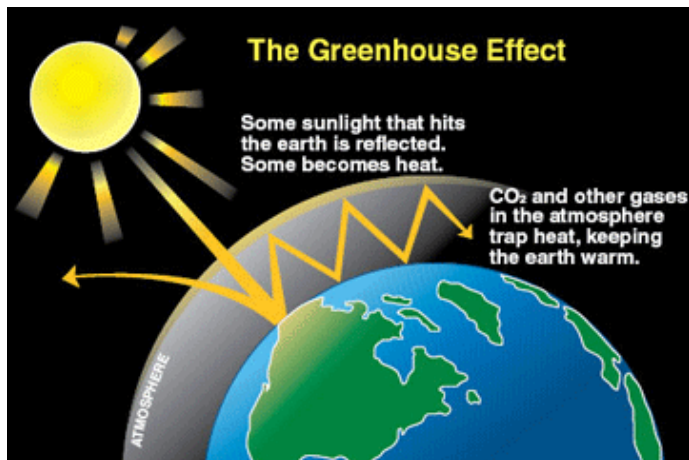
Defensible space can be strategic and effective without clearing the ground, by limbing up trees, thinning where necessary, and creating islands of shrubs. Even

more important, we can learn to “harden” our homes against wildfire. Effective retrofits, from low cost to more extensive, will be presented.

Click [here](#) to sign up at the El Dorado Chapter CNPS website for the Zoom presentation!

Wildfires, Our Changing Climate, and What You Can Do About It!

Defensible space and hardening homes not only help individual homes survive, they can also help reduce the severity of wildfires in the community and the smoke they produce. And that reduced smoke can actually help reduce the severity of **future** wildfires. How? By reducing carbon dioxide and other “greenhouse gases” being emitted with that smoke. These various greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, which has already led to changes in our climate, including droughts, a longer fire season - and an expected increase in wildfires that turn severe.



We hear a lot about how carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels are causing the climate to change across the globe. But there are other gases and pollutants that also trap heat and are changing our climate - such as those in smoke. Some of these are referred to as “*short lived climate pollutants*” and one in particular is small carbon particles from the incomplete combustion of wood

as well as oil and gas. These particles have a high heat-trapping potential, but remain in the atmosphere for relatively short periods of time. In contrast, the excess carbon dioxide being released will remain in the atmosphere for 300 to 1,000 years. So these short-lived gases are a great pollutant to focus on because if we act quickly to reduce these gases, it will reduce a part of the warming while giving us a bit more time to deal with carbon dioxide emission reductions.



“From a climate perspective, wildfires should be the first things on our minds for many of us in the US”, says Stanford University professor Marshall Burke. Wildfire smoke, and the associated small carbon particles make up half of all health-damaging air pollution

in the western US. Besides making the air unhealthier, the smoke from wildfire is adding to climate change.

What are some of the things we can do? Reducing the greenhouse gases we emit will help to reduce one of the factors leading to more intense fires and the longer fire season. Studies have found that while it is important to do things around our homes, there is also a need to take some collective measures at the community, regional and national level.

Besides creating and maintaining defensible space, chipping or mulching the material you remove rather than burning will help.

You don't have to burn your slash!
For **Alternatives to Burning** [click here](#)

Maintaining healthy vegetation around your home is also important, in that the plants collect carbon from the atmosphere and store it in their leaves, stems, roots and in the soil. And working with your neighbors and community to improve the access into your home is critical. Firefighters can't come in to your home if the road isn't maintained and treated to reduce dense vegetation along the edges.

Did you know that 12 percent of the energy used in California is used to move, treat and heat or cool water? Even for those of us on wells, we need energy to pump and heat the water we use. So conserving water helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions too.

At the collective level, working within our communities or across the State, we can make a difference by supporting efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, such as:

- ❖ reducing the burning of oil and gas
- ❖ encouraging farming practices that retain carbon in the soil and require less water
- ❖ improving the health of our forests by prescribed burns and other management measures to reduce the forest fuel loading
- ❖ supporting El Dorado County's efforts to reduce dependence on landfills or continue improving the landfill to capture methane, increase recycling (particularly of organic waste), upgrading to more efficient wood stoves
- ❖ encourage the adoption of other sustainable practices.

If you would like to learn more about what you can do to help reduce carbon emissions and other greenhouse gases, and thereby the number of severe fires, here are some useful websites:

- * [El Dorado County's Air Quality Management District](#)
- * [10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Climate Change](#)
- * [Simple Ideas from UC Davis](#)

Did You Know There is an Oak Hill Neighborhood Radio Watch?

We heard many questions last year that were not answered in the previous Neighborhood Radio Watch article at the OHAFC website. So we have posted a more thorough and helpful article.

The Oak Hill Neighborhood Radio Watch is not a project of our Oak Hill Fire Safe Council. It is a serious effort by the El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club (EDCARC) that can provide an additional dependable communication source in the event of a fast-moving wildfire where other forms of communication go down or are over-loaded.

Our new webpage was designed to tell the complete story of the Oak Hill NRW and to answer questions from our local community about it. You can learn what the NRW does and what it does not do; why another means of communication is needed; what is required for you to become part of the local NRW; how to get a GMRS radio license; how to get your own low-cost, GMRS radio and how to get your questions answered. [Click here to go to the new article on our website.](#)



Events, Emergencies, Disasters and Our Community

See this amazing production by the El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club (EDCARC). Just made available, it will affect how you think about wildfires and our community. It is a must see. [Click here to watch.](#)



Don't Forget to Use Your Waste Vouchers from El Dorado Disposal!

For those that use El Dorado Disposal for your trash collection and recycling, you should have received several vouchers in the mail, giving you a chance to dispose of one large appliance, one load of waste, curbside pick-up of paint or electronic waste, and a pick-up load of green waste.

These expire by March 31, 2021!

Stay Safe as you prepare your home and community for the upcoming Wildfire Season.

Sincerely,

Lester Lubetkin, Chair

And the Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council Team