



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Tennis Wick, Director of Permit Sonoma (707) 565-1925, Steve Mosiurchak, Fire Marshal (707) 565-1380

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:

Adopt a Gold Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California Proclaiming May 1 - May 31, 2025 as Wildfire Community Preparedness Month.

Executive Summary:

Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention Division is bringing this item to your Board in collaboration with Sonoma County Ag + Open Space; CAL FIRE; the Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association; and Fire Safe Sonoma - the countywide Fire Safe Council, to remind all Sonoma County residents about the importance of being ready for wildfire.

Additionally, in concert with State and National agencies who, every year in May, remind people of the importance of wildland fire safety and risk reduction, we would like to declare May, 2025 as Wildfire Community Preparedness Month in Sonoma County.

Discussion:

Approximately 95 percent of wildfires in California are human-caused and preventable. This fact, coupled with climate change, has increased the risks of wildfire in Sonoma County. At the same time, people are living where wildfires are a real risk. Much of Sonoma County's wildland ecosystems are fire dependent; they need fire to survive. Fire thins the vegetation, giving plants room to grow. It cracks seed casings and replenishes the soil, allowing new life to thrive. However, although fires are inevitable, we can all continue to work together and take steps to improve forest health while also protecting lives and property from loss due to wildland fires.

With that in mind, this year, our Wildfire Community Preparedness Month focus is to encourage groups and individuals living in wildfire-prone areas to reach out to their neighbors and encourage them to assist in this collaborative effort.

As co-sponsors of Wildfire Community Preparedness Month, The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, CAL Fire, The County Fire Chief's Association, Sonoma County Ag & Open Space and Fire Safe Sonoma are celebrating several collaborative wildfire safety and risk reduction accomplishments over the past year, and we are all looking forward to further reducing

wildfire risks. Here is what is going on:

Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division:

Relationships, Permit Sonoma Fire Prevention Division continues to support collaboration between natural resources, state and local partners. Our partnership has help fund and support community projects through grants, inspection and assessment programs, home hardening, large scale fuel reduction, chipper and outreach and education.

CAL FIRE

Building a Fire-Ready Future: Strengthening Our Defenses, Together. That is CAL FIRE's theme for May as we promote community and individual engagement and as a call to action to start or continue work on defensible space, home hardening, and emergency preparedness.

CAL FIRE's seasonal personnel were hired early this year due to the Southern California wildfires. The increase in staffing has allowed us to boost preparedness efforts, including increased fuels reduction work and conducting additional defensible space inspections. Last year we along with our partners were able to proactively use prescribed fire or good fire across a little over 1,800 acres of land throughout Sonoma County and we look to increase acres treated this year to make the county more resilient and reduce the threat from future conflagrations.

The Office of the State Fire Marshall also recently released updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps. These maps play an important role in setting the standard of where we apply critical wildfire mitigations like building codes and defensible space requirements.

Together we can create a fire-ready future!

The Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association

The overwhelming passage of Measure H by Sonoma County voters reflects strong public support for wildfire preparedness and prevention. This essential funding will significantly bolster our countywide efforts in vegetation management, fire prevention, and community resilience.

With Measure H now approved, we are committed to:

- Expanding and accelerating vegetation management programs to reduce hazardous fuel loads and lower wildfire risk.
- Strengthening public outreach and education to encourage fire-safe practices across all communities.
- Enhancing coordination with local, state, and federal partners to ensure a unified and effective wildfire prevention and response strategy.

The passage of Measure H represents a major milestone in protecting Sonoma County from the increasing threat of wildfires and supporting long-term community safety.

Fire Safe Sonoma is incredibly proud of the number of community champions that have stepped up and organized Firewise Communities in Sonoma County. In 2024, the number of Firewise Communities grew from 17 to 28, and there are currently 30 Firewise Communities in good standing in Sonoma County!

Firewise USA® is a voluntary recognition program that provides a framework to help neighbors get organized, find direction, and increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities from wildfire. Moreover, California has enacted regulations that require insurance companies to recognize Firewise USA designated communities by providing discounts to property owners.

In addition to all the projects and programs Fire Safe Sonoma has been providing for 26 years, they will be launching a new Measure-H funded project to provide several miles of roadside fuels reduction projects in select areas beginning as early as May of this year.

Wildfire Community Preparedness Month

As we recognize May as Wildfire Community Preparedness Month, there are steps residents can take now to be ready for wildfire. An emergency like a wildfire can cause a lot of stress, especially if you need to leave your home quickly. Here are some resources you will find useful:

- Unite with your neighbors - form your neighborhood or home owner's association into a Firewise Community. To learn more visit:
<https://www.firesafesonoma.org/sonoma-county-firewise-communities>
- Prepare the area around your home by creating defensible space. Visit <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/defensible-space/> to learn how to protect your home from wildfire
- When developing your home landscaping, consider designing a fire resilient landscape to help reduce your risk from wildfire. To learn more, visit the Resilient Landscape Coalition at:
<https://resilientlandscapescoalition.org>
- Learn about low-cost home hardening improvements: <https://youtu.be/tr-ciY3W9Ck>
- Know your Zone and be ready to evacuate <https://socoemergency.org/>
- Have a plan when it's time to leave - learn more with the Ready-Set-Go Program
<https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go/>
- Know the outdoor burning rules. Bay area regulates outdoor burning on all forestlands where we provide wildfire protection. Don't burn outdoors until you know the rules.
<https://burnpermit.fire.ca.gov/>.

Visit the Fire Safe Sonoma website for more information; www.firesafesonoma.org
<http://www.firesafesonoma.org>

Agency Updates

Sonoma County Ag + Open Space

Since 2021, Sonoma County's Vegetation Management Grant program has approved 74 community-led grant agreements resulting in 5,426 acres of treated areas, including over 92 miles of shaded fuel breaks, 630 homes with defensible space, 64 miles of roadside treatments, and 3,000 acres being grazed or treated with prescribed fire. In addition, close to 100,000 acres are now under a California Vegetation Treatment Plan and ready for implementation. These projects were developed and managed by proactive communities, organizations, Fire Districts, Tribes, Resource Conservation Districts and landowners interested in reducing the impacts of future wildfires in our County.

In August 2025, Ag + Open Space will complete a 2-year grant aimed at landowner capacity building in the Russian River watershed. This \$353,000 National Fish & Wildlife Foundation grant was matched by the PG&E Settlement funds to create the Resilient Forests and Watersheds workshop initiative. Together with Gold Ridge and Sonoma Resource Conservation Districts, Audubon Canyon Ranch's Fire Forward, Sonoma Ecology Center, Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Fire Safe Sonoma, and CALFIRE this initiative lead to:

- 50 in-person wildfire resilience and forest management workshops and field tours
- 187 landowners received direct technical assistance in fuels treatments, forest management or watershed protection
- 1,600 participants in all events!
- Comprehensive website for landowners, resource managers and the public.

Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, Permit Sonoma

Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division have taken the following steps to prepare for wildfires.

- Completed the Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, <https://permitsonoma.org/sonomacountycwpp>
- Created the Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Hub-site, <https://sonoma-county-cwpp-hub-site-sonomacounty.hub.arcgis.com>
- Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division Free Chipper Service <https://permitsonoma.org/chipperprogram>
- Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division SoCoAdapts Program <https://permitsonoma.org/socoadapts>
- Increased cameras for wildfire monitoring and potential fire detection <https://www.alertwildfire.org/region/northbay>

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

Agenda Date: 5/6/2025

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Att 1 Board of Supervisors Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

N/A