



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 4/30/2024

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Steve Mosiurchak, Fire Marshal (707) 565-1380

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial 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, 2024, as Wildfire Awareness 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, we want to celebrate the positive impact our local wildfire mitigation groups have had over the past several years and, in concert with State and National agencies, declare May 2024, as Wildfire Awareness Month.

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.

As climate change and wildfires continue to present an ever-growing threat to residents in Sonoma County, more communities are teaming up to collaboratively address them by organizing as Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE), local Fire Safe Councils, and Firewise Communities. With that in mind, this year, our Wildfire Awareness Month focus is to encourage groups and individuals living in wildfire-prone areas to complete projects that can help make their homes and communities safer from wildfire.

Fire Safe Sonoma is incredibly proud of the number of community champions that have stepped up and organized Firewise Communities in Sonoma County. By the end of 2023, there were 7 local Fire Safe Councils and 17 Firewise Communities with 3 pending reviews, and it is expected that this level of participation and enthusiasm will continue to grow.

As co-sponsors of Wildfire Awareness Month, Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, CAL Fire, The County Chief's, and Fire Safe Sonoma are celebrating the positive impact our local wildfire mitigation groups have had on countless homes and communities over the past decade. These agencies also partner with the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and the Sonoma County Department of

Emergency Management for alert and warnings, and evacuations.

The Sonoma County Fire Chiefs Association places a very high priority on the Fire Prevention measures and education that will be the focus of Wildfire Awareness Month. These have proven to be effective in enabling our citizens to be safer and our communities to be better protected and more resilient to wildfire. Many of their member agencies, including the Santa Rosa FD, Sonoma County Fire District and the Sonoma Valley Fire District will all be hosting events in coordination with Wildfire Awareness Month. We look forward to seeing our community members at these important events!

Additionally, CAL FIRE will increase its staffing with the hiring of seasonal firefighters, having air tankers and an additional large firefighting helicopter available at the Sonoma County Airport, require burn permits in addition to air quality permits, and eventually implement a burn permit suspension.

As we recognize May as Wildfire Awareness 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 homeowner'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

Board of Supervisors

- Provided funding for local partner agencies to perform defensible space inspections.
- Provided funding to have additional firefighters and apparatus available during Red Flag Warning conditions.

Sonoma County Ag + Open Space

The Sonoma County Vegetation Management Grant program has funded 65 vegetation management grants since 2021 that have led to 630 defensible homes/public infrastructure treatments, 82 miles of shaded fuel breaks, 64 miles of roadside treatments, over 3,000 acres using prescribed burns or grazing, and 45,500 acres under vegetation treatments over the next 10 years under the California Vegetation Treatment Program. 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.

Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division

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

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