

Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign, Department & Agency Updates

Many County agencies have integrated wildfire planning and project implementation. Following is a brief overview of some of the critical work that is being done by County Agencies.

[The County Administrators Office](#) continues to work in a coordinating role with departments to identify, communicate and facilitate funding opportunities related to the Resiliency Campaign.

[Ag + Open Space](#) continues to complete the recovery actions identified in the approved Framework. The Vital Lands Initiative, to be considered by the Board in April of 2020, prioritizes projects that further recovery and resiliency, promote wildland/urban buffers, and enhance the ability of natural and working landscapes to adapt to a changing climate. Ag + Open Space relies on the best available science to identify the highest priority areas for new land protections, resiliency-focused land management actions, and to inform the specific language negotiated for acquired conservation easements. NASA-funded research results and geospatial data resources continue to be used by the County and other partners in planning, prioritization and decision support for fuels reduction and resiliency management actions.

[Regional Parks](#) continues to implement recovery efforts in parks impacted by the 2017 and 2019 fires and resiliency efforts across park lands to reduce the risk of future wildfires. Many actions were approved in the Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

Recovery Regional Parks continues to monitor natural recovery park lands from 2017 fires (Shiloh Ranch, Hood Mountain, Sonoma Valley, and Mark West Regional Parks) and from 2019 fire (Shiloh Ranch and Foothill Regional Parks). Regional Parks continues to rebuild infrastructure damaged by the 2017 and 2019 fires. All trails that were closed due to damage from 2017 fires are open. Work to rebuild trail and bridge damage from 2019 fires is ongoing.

Resiliency Regional Parks continues significant vegetation management including implementation of shaded fuel breaks, mowing, and grazing. Shaded fuel breaks are 'thinning from below' treatments that keep the tree canopy in place but remove shrubs, branches and other 'ladder fuels'. Shaded fuel breaks are in strategic locations like trails, roads and ridge lines to provide strategic support for firefighting. Shaded fuel break projects are in process or in planning at Shiloh Ranch, Foothill, and North Sonoma Mountain Regional Parks. Annual mowing and grazing control approximately 5,000 acres of vegetation with plans to expand grazing into new park lands in 2020. Regional Parks also implemented its first prescribed fire in organizational history and trained staff in basic wildland firefighting to continue to expand the use of prescribed fire as weather and resources allow.

[Sonoma Water](#) continues to spearhead efforts by multiple entities to improve fuels management for reduced wildfire risk in the 83,000-acre Lake Sonoma watershed, via their FireSmart Lake Sonoma program that engaged with private landowners, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), local fire districts, the US Army Corps of Engineers, Resource Conservation Districts and UCCE staff, among other stakeholders. The collaborative learning, community organizing and partnerships invigorated by the FireSmart program are generating partnered funding requests, short-term implementation pilots and long-term planning of fuels treatments and improved watershed health that is protective of water supply water quality. A CAL FIRE grant awarded to FireSmart Lake Sonoma partners funds two Community Wildfire Protection Plans, roadside vegetation management, a GIS-based landowner tools for vegetation management, defensible space inspections, and defensible space demonstration projects.

Sonoma Water Grants Submitted, as part of a team with the Conservation Biology Institute and the U.S. Geological Survey California Water Science Center, submitted a \$ 400,000 request to the North Coast Resource Partnership's Proposition 1 Integrated Regional Water Management Grant Program in March 2019. If funded, the team would develop a decision support system that identifies and prioritizes the location and type of fire risk mitigation projects needed to be most effective in protecting the Lake Sonoma Watershed.

[Transportation and Public Works](#) (in partnership with Fire Safe Sonoma and Permit Sonoma) are implementing the 'Northwest Roadway Safety, Fuels Reduction, and Community Chipper and Engagement Project', funded by a \$1 million Fire Prevention Grant from CAL FIRE. To enhance support for community-based fire planning efforts, CAL FIRE recently approved the expansion of the grant's supplemental chipper program to Occidental and Camp Meeker. Transportation and Public Works is also part of the 'Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project', funded by a CAL FIRE grant. Staff are removing fuels along several roads within the project area.

The [Agricultural Commissioner](#) continues to help prevent invasive species on lands disturbed by the fires through inspection of incoming plant shipments.

[University of California Cooperative Extension \(UCCE\), Sonoma County](#), is working on a number of projects to support the expansion of a robust vegetation management program in the county. A recipient of CAL FIRE funding on the collaborative "Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project", UCCE is developing an online geospatial reporting tool to help landowners assess where on their properties to prioritize fuels reductions projects to mitigate against wildfire hazard. The reports will serve as jumping off points for landowners to apply for cost-share grants through CAL FIRE and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to implement fuels reduction projects on their properties.

UCCE continues to support Sonoma County's prescribed burn association, the Good Fire Alliance (GFA), by providing staff time for program administration, prescribed burn planning and implementation. The GFA conducted three burns in 2019 and has over ten in the planning stages for spring and fall of 2020.

UCCE is collaborating with CalPoly in developing a GIS to identify suitable grazing lands in the wildland urban interfaces of Sonoma County. Upon completion, this geospatial information will help the county expand the use of contract grazing to reduce wildfire fuels in our high-risk WUI areas.