



Legislation Text

File #: 2022-0415, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma

Staff Name and Phone Number: Steve Mosiurchak, Fire Marshall (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 2-May 6, 2022 as Wildfire Awareness Week. (Countywide)

Executive Summary:

Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention Division is bringing this item to your Board in collaboration with CAL FIRE, Fire Safe Sonoma and other local partner fire agencies to work together to protect our community from wildfire. May 2-6, 2022 is National Wildfire Awareness Week in the State of California. The goal of Wildfire Awareness Week is to expand public awareness of wildfires and promote actions to reduce the risk from wildfire to homes and communities. Fire agencies are requesting residents and property owners to increase wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts, and specifically to:

1. Reduce wildfire ignitions
2. Prepare your building and your landscaping
3. Be ready to evacuate

Discussion:

Dry winter weather conditions have led to a year-round fire season, with the severity of the summer and fall fire season defined by warm dry windy conditions. The County of Sonoma has experienced devastating wildfires in three of the last five years and has had a 21-acre timber fire near Monte Rio in March. The largest documented historical wildfires have all occurred in the past five years. The 2017 Tubbs Fire currently ranks as the 2nd most destructive, and the 4th deadliest wildfire in California history. The 2017 Nuns Fire currently ranks as the 13th most destructive.

We need to learn to live with wildfire.

Permit Sonoma's Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, CAL FIRE, Fire Safe Sonoma, and local partner fire agencies collaborate to prevent wildfire and ensure there is an adequate response when a wildfire does occur. 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.

Wildfire Awareness Week places emphasis on the following items to ensure we are reducing wildfire ignitions and for residents and property owners to prepare their building, landscaping, and vegetation, and being ready to evacuate.

Reduce Wildfire Ignitions

Most wildfires are human caused. Residents and property owners should always consider if their actions will cause a wildfire and take precautions to prevent a wildfire from occurring. Routine tasks during warm and dry conditions can cause a wildfire. Please visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org <<http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org>> for more information.

- “Don’t do the Right Thing the Wrong Way” - Mowing grass is a common cause of wildfires while creating defensible space. These wildfires are caused by a blade striking a rock, cut grass contracting warm motors, setting a hot weed eater motor in dry grass, or lack of a spark arrestor. Mowing should only be done with the proper equipment, during cold and moist weather conditions, and with a water supply or fire extinguisher close by.
- Burn piles without proper clearance and adult in attendance. Create clearance and have water readily available. Do not burn under windy conditions.
- Dumping hot ashes or coals. Allow your ashes to cool in a metal container before disposing of them.

Prepare Your Building and Your Landscaping

“Defensible space” is a term used to summarize how landscaping and vegetation is maintained to reduce heat igniting your building and to reduce ember production. Firefighters also enforce for defensible space using state laws (Public Resources Code 4291) and county ordinance (Chapter 13A). “Structural ignitability” is a term used to describe how the materials and construction of buildings are able to withstand ignitions from the heat and embers produced by a wildfire. Structural ignitability is as important as defensible space due to the embers being the reason most buildings ignite and buildings can ignite other buildings adjacent to them independent of a wildfire. New construction is required to adhere to wildfire resistant building construction. Please visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org <<http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org>> for more information.

Be Ready to Evacuate

A rapidly spreading wildfire can overcome firefighters’ ability to stop or slow its spread. When this happens, firefighters coordinate to have Evacuation Warnings and/or Evacuation Orders implemented. Each resident needs to be prepared to evacuate as quickly as they can, and there may be a need for residents to evacuate before receiving an official notification. Take the time now to sign up to receive alerts and know your evacuation zone. Please visit <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go/> for more information.

- Understand alert and warning systems: <https://socoemergency.org/get-ready/sign-up/>
- Know your evacuation zone: <https://socoemergency.org/get-ready/evacuation-map/>

Agency Updates

Permit Sonoma’s Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division, CAL FIRE, Fire Safe Sonoma, and local partner fire agencies have taken the following steps to prepare for wildfires.

- Coordinating efforts to prepare a draft of the updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan

<https://permitsonoma.org/longrangeplans/proposedlong->

which will Permit Sonoma staff will bring to your Board in July 2022 for consideration.

- Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division Free Chipper Service
<https://permitsonoma.org/>
- Fire Prevention and Hazardous Materials Division SoCoAdapts Program
<https://permitsonoma.org/divisions/firepreventionandhazmat/socoadapts>
- Fire Safe Sonoma has assisted with grant applications, assembling a tool trailer that can be used by community groups to assist with defensible space and vegetation management projects, conducted over 200 home wildfire safety assessments, and delivered presentations focused on wildfire safety and education.
- CAL FIRE has issued grants, implemented prescribed burning, and provided technical assistance on strategic fuel breaks.
- CAL FIRE will have a firefighting hand crew available from the Los Guilicos Campus.
- Increased cameras for wildfire monitoring and potential fire detection
<https://www.alertwildfire.org/region/northbay>
- CAL FIRE and local partner agencies have performed over 2,500 defensible space inspections

The County of Sonoma has:

- Created the Vegetation Management Grant Program, administered by the Sonoma County Ag+ Open Space District with the first round of grants funded in 2021 and a second round funded in 2022.
- 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

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.

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