

Plumas County Fire Safe Council



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Press Release

Plumas NF approves funding for Fire Safe Council Hazardous Fuel Reduction Projects

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council is announcing its success in obtaining funding for three Hazardous Fuel Reduction (HFR) projects. The Council received notification from Plumas National Forest Supervisor Jim Pena of his decision to approve funding of these projects recommended by the local Resource Advisory Council (RAC). The purpose of these projects is to reduce hazardous forest fuels on private lands in and around Plumas County communities. Treating wildland fuel adjacent to communities has a major affect on how a wildland fire behaves. Thinning overstocked forests to mitigate fire severity has a direct relationship on how intensity a fire burns, and whether or not torching, crowning or spotting will occur.

The three projects consist of reducing the potential for catastrophic stand replacing fire on 625 acres in three communities. The communities of Graeagle, Gold Mountain and Genesee asked the Fire Safe Council to assist them in obtaining funding assistance. These projects received joint funding by the Plumas NF and Plumas County Board of Supervisors, using Title II and III funds from Public Law 106-393 (HR-2389), and include contributions by the communities and landowners.

To properly administer the projects, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors, approved funds to hire Registered Professional Foresters, should the projects get funded. Now that they are funded, the foresters will prepare treatment prescriptions, file the necessary paperwork to comply with the State of California Forest Practices Act and federal environmental requirements, hire contractors, and supervise the projects.

Two, of the three, community representatives offered their comments on hearing that the projects were approved for funding. Joyce Paczynski, project leader for Genesee, stated that, "Once we learned that homes can survive a wildfire and that reducing the fuels around the homes and community is one of the keys, then the decision to thin our forest

was obvious.” George Sipel, of Gold Mountain Homeowners Association says, “That in November of 2002, we awoke to a wildfire burning below our community, and were awakened to the fact that we live in a fire environment, and we need to prepare our community to survive them.” Both Joyce & George expressed appreciation to the Fire Safe Council, Board of Supervisors, RAC, and Jim Peña, for their support. George added that, “What makes the Greagle and Gold Mountain projects even possible, is a commitment by Greagle Land & Water Company to treat their company lands so as to provide a fuelbreak around our communities.”

Plumas County’s Fire Safe Council has now successfully obtained funding for 1,600 acres of fuel reduction in 17 County communities and has hired 5 local foresters to manage these and other projects. According to Mike De Lasaux, Council Chair and UC Cooperative Extension Forester, “Reducing hazardous fuels in Plumas is critical to reducing threats to our communities, offers significant benefits to firefighter safety, and can directly improve the safety of their home, and environment following a wildland fire.” Mike also expressed his appreciation to the Board of Supervisors, RAC and the Plumas NF, for their continued support of Council activities.

The Council continues to work on a number of projects, including assisting elderly and disabled citizens create their defensible space around their homes, strive to obtain funds for another 200 acres of hazardous fuel around another community, and work to develop a community fire plan to make Plumas County communities at less risk from wildfires and more competitive for mitigation funds.

For more information on Plumas County Fire Safe Council’s activities you can visit their website www.plumasfiresafe.org, call 1-800-283-0829, or attend their monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at the Quincy Fire Department on Lawrence Street.