

Press Release

Fire Safe Council Receives Grants to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

The Plumas County Fire Safe Council (PC FSC) has been awarded two grants from the State of California and one federal grant to treat 172 acres of hazardous fuel conditions in the La Porte Road Community along the Quincy-La Porte Road in American Valley.

State grants are from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and Cal Fire. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) awards grants to eligible entities under Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coast Protection Bond Act of 2006. Cal Fire awards grants pursuant to the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002. Additionally, in 2011, the Plumas County Resource Advisory Committee recommended funding assistance by the Plumas NF of Secure Rural Schools, Title II funds, for this project.

In pre-European settlement times, wildfires frequently spread across landscape, burning at low intensity. Those fires thinned, pruned and fertilized our forests by removing natural accumulations of forest litter, brush and smaller trees. Today, with the suppression of fires and other factors, our forests have become overgrown and subject to high-severity wildfire. Present day unmanaged forests have an excessive number of trees, with small and medium sized trees creating a fire ladder into the larger trees which provides ideal conditions for high-severity stand replacing wildfires. The problem is compounded where we have homes intermixed with those wildland fuels, referred to as the wildland-urban-interface. These overstocked forests, with excessive fuel loading, burn intensively and generate millions of match like embers that rain out in front of the main fire igniting new fires or homes.

Fire managers know and science has proven that the only way we can manage wildfire intensity and the embers produced is to reduce wildland fuel loading. Efforts to reduce fuel loading focus on mechanically thinning forests from below by treating surface and ladder fuels and creating forests conditions similar to what existed with historically frequent fire. Treatments break up the vertical and horizontal continuity of the forest so it becomes less likely that a surface fire will become crown fire. Hazardous fuel reduction not only creates a more fire resilient forest but it also improves wildlife habitats, and watershed health. There are many examples in our Plumas County where properly treated forests have survived the disturbance of a wildfire versus untreated forest that were totally destroyed, when burned by the same wildfire.

These new grant funds will be used to compliment prior treatment activity by PC FSC in the community and comprise a total reduction of hazardous fuels on 350 acres. Participating landowners will also contribute to the project cost. With

funding assistance from these agencies, PC FSC is on track to accomplish hazardous fuel reduction treatments on 4,400 acres of private lands in 20 communities, since 2003. Mike De Lasaux, Council Chair, said, “on behalf of the Plumas County Fire Safe Council I would like to offer our thanks and appreciation to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Cal Fire, the Board of Supervisors, the Plumas National Forest and other agencies who have provided funding to help mitigate wildfire threats to many Plumas County communities”. Mike went on to say, “because of the high frequency of lightning, in Plumas County wildfire is the greatest threat of a natural disaster. And we know that homes and forests can survive an eventual wildfire by reducing hazardous fuel conditions and creating defensible space”.

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