

PC FSC Press Release

Home Ignition Zone Educational Consultation Community Workshop Offered

Plumas County has over 60 communities considered at risk from a wildfire. Is your community and its homes prepared for fire season? Do the homes have defensible space? Does your community know what it takes to make homes fire safe? While California requires that every structure have defensible space, there is virtually no enforcement of it in Plumas County. Therefore many fire departments and community organizations are looking for ways to help educate their residents on protecting their homes from wildfire.

The Plumas County Fires Safe Council in cooperation with the Graeagle Fire Protection District, Plumas NF, and Cal Fire, is hosting a one day *Home Ignition Zone* (HIZ) Educational Consultation Workshop, on May 6, 2008. The workshop is open to fire departments and members of community organizations who are interested in learning how to become a voluntary HIZ consultant. The Home Ignition Zone includes the home and surrounding vegetation which can be at risk from flames and embers. Homeowner's actions, or lack of, often play a decisive role in determining the winners and losers in a wildfire. Homeowner's prior actions also play a key role in firefighter safety when structure protection actions are necessary. The workshop will provide specific information on how to lessen the risk of damage from wildfire, or injury to firefighters. The workshop will involve both classroom and field exercises on how to provide an Educational Homeowner Ignition Zone Consultation.

Following the workshop, representatives of the participating communities will be encouraged to set up a process to notify their community and offer free Home Ignition Zone Consultations. Trained consultants will educate members of their community on mitigating wildfires impacts to their homes and community. The project is modeled after a successful program in the Gold Mountain Community, where trained consultants are invited to visit their neighbors' homes and together they walk the properties assessing the HIZ. The project is funded by the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

Members of fire departments, community service districts, and homeowner associations are welcome to participate in this free one day workshop. Attendance may be limited to 25, and pre-registration is requested so that sufficient educational materials are available. If demand exceeds the available slots then additional workshops can be offered. Workshop attendees will learn how to evaluate the risk of losing homes when a wildfire threatens, what causes homes to burn, what defensible space is, how forest fuels affect fire behavior, factors affecting firefighter safety when they provide structure protection, and how to safely burn dooryard materials. Participants will be provided with source materials to help them in providing the voluntary consultations to others in their community.

To further participation, PC FSC is complying with the American Disabilities Act (ADA) by making every reasonable attempt to accommodate any attendee or participant needing special assistance beyond what is normally provided. Please contact John Sheehan at 530-283-3739 at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled workshop to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is feasible.

For more information or to participate in the workshop, contact Graeagle Fire Chief Ed Ward at 836-1340 or Jerry Hurley at 832-4705. For more information on the Plumas County Fire Safe Council activities, visit our website at www.plumasfiresafe.org.