

## Community Residents Attend Firewise Workshop

On Thursday March 20, the University of California Cooperative Extension and the Plumas County Fire Safe Council conducted a Firewise Workshop in Graeagle for community members in the eastern portion of the County. Invitations were extended to County Supervisors, realtors, insurance companies, community services districts and homeowner association members. The one-day workshop was possible with a grant from the Bureau of Land Management, as part of the National Fire Plan and Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative who provided lunch

Local Firewise workshops are part of a nationwide effort of the National Fire Protection Association designed to share what has been learned about the “*wildland/urban interface problem*” since it was identified in 1985, when 1,400 homes were lost to wildfire.

Local participants worked through state-of-the-art simulation and mapping exercises to learn first hand of the complexities involved in creating communities and citizenries that are prepared for the inevitable effects of wildfire. Participants learned about wildland fire interface fire hazards; designing Firewise homes and landscaping; and incorporating Firewise planning in to existing and developing communities.

Participants now better understand that it isn't always the flames directly adjacent to the structures that cause the home to be lost. It is often the ember blizzard, with tens of thousands of sparks, frequently traveling up to ¼ mile away when trees and brush explode in flame. It is these embers that land in receptive fuelbeds such as shake roofs; pine needles or through openings into an attic, or under a deck; that cause many homes to burn and threaten communities. Actions taken by residents can have a dramatic effect on the resulting property damage and loss from these catastrophic wildfires. According to research in southern California, homes with non-combustible roofs and at least 30 feet of defensible space have a survival rate of 85%. By increasing defensible space to 60 feet, the survival rate goes to 95%.

Plumas County residents are and will continue to be “at risk” of wildland fires. Many have experienced the threat from wildland fires in the past, such as the: Willow Fire-1987, Portola Fire-1988, Layman Fire 1989, Greenhorn Fire 1990, Cemetery Fire-1999, Mt Hough Complex fires-1999, Horton Fire-1999, Storrie Fire-2000 and Stream Fire-2001.

For more information you can visit the Plumas County Fire Safe Council's web site at [www.plumasfiresafe.org](http://www.plumasfiresafe.org). Residents are also invited to become members and attend the monthly County Fire Safe Council meetings, on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:00 am at the Quincy Fire Hall.