

FOR 11/15/17 PUBLICATION

Wet weather marks the end of the Plumas County Fire Safe Council's inaugural year providing curbside chipping services. In its first year the program chipped green-waste piles at 81 locations across Plumas County. Residents in the State Responsibility Area (SRA), who formerly paid the SRA fee, were eligible to participate in the CAL FIRE funded program.

In preparation for chipping, landowners reported nearly 400 hours of clearing and piling on their properties. Almost a quarter indicated that they would have otherwise left the material on site if the program hadn't incentivize its removal. These numbers represent a significant investment by Plumas County residents to create Defensible Space around their homes and communities. Which is the goal of the CAL FIRE SRA "Fire Prevention Fund:" to reduce the risk of fire ignition and spread around communities and to educate homeowners about wildfire risks. With shrubs, small trees, and large branches cleared and chipped, ladder "fuels" that can carry flames in the trees' canopy become less of a hazard.

But the benefits are not just reduced risks from wildfire. Of participants who responded to the program survey, 63% would have otherwise burned the material. Fifteen percent would have transported the green-waste to a transfer station. In either case, chipping as an alternative benefits local air quality.

The chipping program will resume in 2018. Participation is simple: pile green-waste according to the program guidelines and fill out an application. The Plumas County Fire Safe Council will then contract a chipping operator on behalf of applicants. Up to 16 linear feet of material can be chipped free-of-charge.

Residents can prepare now by identifying a community representative willing to provide outreach and program applications to neighbors. The more participants in an area, the greater the hazard reduction is for the entire community. The Fire Safe Council's chipping program coordinator, Gary Parque, is available to answer questions at: 530-283-0829

Applications and more information can also be found on the Plumas County Fire Safe Council's website: plumasfiresafe.org.