

Living With

WILDFIRE

in the Inland Empire

March 2024

Are You Ready?

This publication brought to you by



TOGETHER

We Can Make A **DIFFERENCE!**

Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council thanks its partners in wildfire prevention, education, preparedness and response.



Being ready for wildfire is all of our responsibilities. Together we can help mitigate the threat and risk of wildfire in the San Bernardino Mountains and throughout California.

– Shane Littlefield,
Unit Fire Chief, CAL FIRE
San Bernardino/Mono/Inyo Unit

... and **YOU!**

PRESENTED

BY:

This informative magazine would not have been possible without the contributions of the following: DuPlain Designs, Debbie Strong, David Haas/CAL FIRE, and MRFSC's Board of Directors (Laura Dyberg, Robert Tiberi, Terisa Bonito, Marlene Kiemel, Jim Taylor, Brenda Meyer and Lisa Joyce).

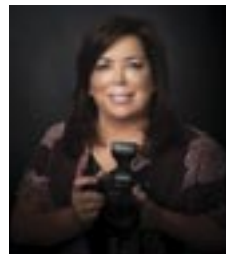
We cannot underscore the importance of being prepared for wildfire in our communities.

– Daniel R. Munsey,
Fire Chief/Fire Warden,
San Bernardino County
Fire Protection District

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CAL FIRE funding provided by California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment - particularly in disadvantaged communities.



Debbie Strong
PHOTOGRAPHER

All photography by
Debbie Strong

(unless otherwise noted)

Debbie Strong retired from CAL FIRE in 2018, after a rewarding 30-year career in the fire service in the CAL FIRE San Bernardino Unit. She began her fire service career in 1986 as a Volunteer Fire Fighter in the Devore community. She worked through the ranks of firefighter, engineer and fire captain. Her diverse career ranged from various assignments as a fire captain including working at a fire station, the Emergency Command Center, City Fire Marshal and Pre-Fire Engineering, which works closely with Fire Safe Councils in San Bernardino County. After retirement, Debbie took an interest in many photography genres including landscape, nature, astrophotography, photojournalism, macro photography, fashion and portraits. She periodically works as a freelance reporter and photographer for a local newspaper publication.



DuPlain DeSigns

Design and layout completed by
Marianne DuPlain.

Marianne DuPlain Originally from Seattle, Washington, Marianne graduated from the Seattle Art Institute in 1997. After several career choices, including 911 dispatching, forklift operator, marketing director at a flying club, real estate agent as well as coffee shop owner, she finally decided on graphic design and publishing. She then relocated to California and gained extensive experience over the last 25 years in design work. Now residing in northern Montana, Marianne continues to work as a freelance graphic designer.



Know Before You Go!

Fire restrictions on Forest Service lands change with the seasons. Check them before you head out and enjoy your visit!

Arson investigators examine a site of an illegal campfire that caused a small wildfire (Forest Service photo by Lisa Cox).

California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection



Since 1885 the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has protected the people, property, and natural resources of California. The men and women of CAL FIRE are dedicated to the fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands. The heart of the Department's emergency response and resource protection capability is a force of approximately 8,000 permanent and seasonal employees that help fulfill the department's mission to serve and safeguard the people and protect the property and resources of California.

FIRE PREVENTION

Preventing wildfires in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) is a vital part of CAL FIRE's mission. The Department responds to nearly 6,000 wildland fires that burn on average over 260,000 acres each year. Beyond its wildland fire fighting role, CAL FIRE is an "all-risk" department. The Department is always ready to respond - medical aids; hazardous material spills; swiftwater rescues; search and rescue missions; civil disturbances; train wrecks; floods, earthquakes and more.

OSFM

Since 1995, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has supported the mission of CAL FIRE by focusing on fire prevention. Through major program elements that include engineering, education, enforcement, and support from the State Board of Fire Services, OSFM has a wide variety of fire safety responsibilities.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Through its foresters and other natural resource professionals, CAL FIRE is responsible for the management and protection of California's natural resources under its Forest Practice, Urban Forestry, Fuel Reduction, Demonstration State Forest, Pest Management, Landowner Assistance, Environmental Protection and Regulation, Archaeology, Fire and Resource Assessment, and Nursery programs. CAL FIRE foresters promote conservation and the importance of our trees and forests to Californians of all ages.

WWW.FIRE.CA.GOV
WWW.READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG

THE WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT

Weather

Dry, hot and windy weather increases the likelihood of a major wildfire. These conditions:

- make ignition easier
- help fuels burn more rapidly
- increase fire intensity

High windspeeds, in particular, can transform a small, easily controlled fire into a catastrophic event.

Fuel

Fuel is required for any fire to burn. In a wildfire, fuels are usually living vegetation (trees, shrubs, brush, grass) and dead plant materials (dead trees, dried grass, fallen branches, etc.) Homes, when in the path of wildfire, can become fuel. The quantity, size, moisture content, arrangement and other fuel characteristics influence the ease of ignition, rate of fire spread, length of flames and other fire behavior.

Terrain

Of the topographic features, steepness of slope is among the most influential on fire behavior. Heat and gases created by a fire rise, drying out and heating up fuels further upslope. The steeper the slope, the faster a fire will spread. Other important factors are:

- “aspect” – (the direction a slope faces): south and southwest slopes are typically hotter and drier, increasing the likelihood of fire on these aspects
- “chimneys” – steep, narrow drainage

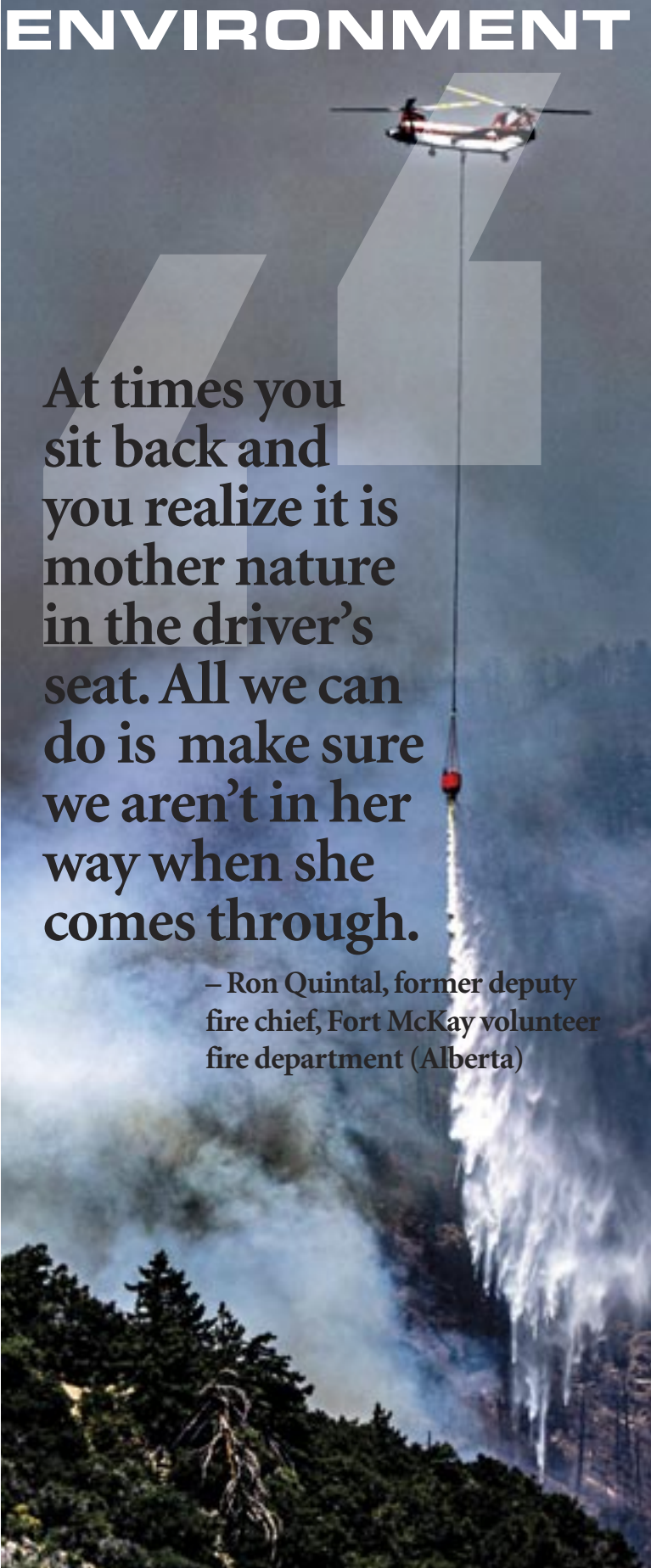
Endangered Species

Federal and state regulations have been established to protect rare and endangered plants and animals. Whenever there is any doubt about clearing or thinning brush, the US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife should be consulted.

Human Environment

As people move into wildfire country, the human-built environment becomes important in predicting loss of life and property.

- Combustible construction, especially roofs
 - Narrow roads, limited access
 - Lack of fire safe landscaping
 - Inadequate water supply
 - Poorly planned subdivisions
- ... are examples of increased risk to people living with the threat of wildfire.



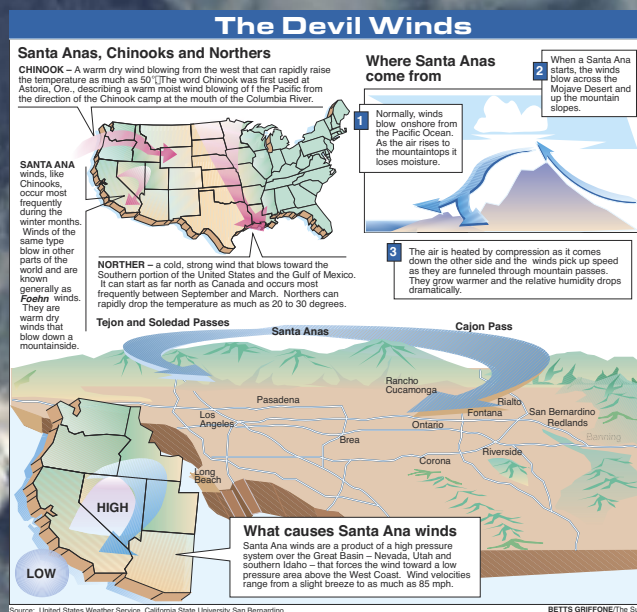
At times you sit back and you realize it is mother nature in the driver's seat. All we can do is make sure we aren't in her way when she comes through.

– Ron Quintal, former deputy fire chief, Fort McKay volunteer fire department (Alberta)

THE WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT

continued

Photo: Sources/Usage: Public Domain.
MODIS Satellite image of southern California wildfires in 2003.



How Santa Ana Winds Work

The Santa Ana winds are a fascinating and impactful weather phenomenon in Southern California. Here's how they work:

They originate from high-pressure air masses over the Great Basin and upper Mojave Desert. This area experiences dry and cool air due to its high elevation. This high pressure pushes air westward towards the lower pressure off the California coast. As this air travels, it is channeled through mountain passes and canyons, gaining speed creates strong, northeasterly winds that descend down mountain slopes towards the Pacific Ocean. As the air descends, it compresses, causing its temperature to increase and humidity to decrease. This is why the Santa Ana winds are typically hot and dry, often reaching temperatures in the 90's Fahrenheit (32C) even during the fall and winter.

Impacts

The hot, dry winds can be dangerous, contributing to wildfires and causing respiratory problems. They can also create challenging conditions for outdoor activities and damage trees and power lines. On the positive side, the Santa Ana winds can help to clear out wildfire smoke and improve air quality.

Additional details about the Santa Ana winds:

Wildfire Danger

The Santa Ana winds are infamous for their role in fueling devastating wildfires in Southern California. The combination of hot, dry winds, low humidity, and strong gusts creates the perfect conditions for wildfires to ignite and spread rapidly. The dry vegetation in the region is highly susceptible to burning, and the winds can easily carry embers long distances, starting new fires.

Public Safety Hazards

The strong winds can cause trees, branches and even power lines to fall over, creating hazards for people and property. The flying debris can injure people and cause damage to vehicles and buildings. The winds can also make driving conditions dangerous, especially for high profile vehicles.

The severity of the dangers associated with Santa Ana winds varies depending on the wind speed, humidity, and other factors. Local authorities often issue warnings and take preventative measures, such as closing parks and roads, when Santa Ana winds are expected.

LIVING WITH WILDFIRE



Photo Courtesy of Senior Airman Nicholas Carzis

The Wildfire Equation

Fire continues to be a part of our ecosystem. Fires start every day and your local firefighting resources quickly respond to control them.

PLUS

People are living in this fire environment. Many homes have been built and landscaped with no thought of wildfire. And they're often on narrow roads.

PLUS

With more people and homes, fires are more likely to happen—with devastating results.

PLUS

Today's wildfires can burn fast...and seasonal hot, dry winds drive fires even faster, making them impossible to control.

EQUALS

DISASTER

- deaths and serious injuries
- natural resources & wildlife destroyed
- homes and treasures within lost
- neighborhoods devastated

Much of the southwest United States is considered a high fire hazard environment. Long before “modern civilization,” fires would periodically burn through—part of an environmental cycle that renewed, and re-invigorated living things.

All the natural factors necessary to support large, intense and uncontrollable fires remain. What's changed is an increased population with an increase of homes in these areas, often with little regard to fire's threat. This has caused an interference with the cycle of periodic fires. Result: greater fire potential to more and more people. Result: catastrophic fires causing huge losses and un-meetable demands on fire fighting resources. Result: a direct threat to your community, your home, your family!

There are things you can do to understand the threat and prepare for it. Prepare. “Pre” is the key. This magazine outlines steps you can take—long before a fire—to prepare your home and family to survive wildfire.

Every step you take in advance reduces risk to you, your family and your home—whether firefighters are available to help protect you or not.

Fire is, and always has been, part of the dynamics of the beautiful area in which you've chosen to live. Through advanced planning and preparation, we can be ready for wildfire.

Read on. Learn why wildfire is a real threat and the steps you can take to be prepared to meet that threat. Be prepared, not surprised.

Recent California Wildfire Statistics:

2020 Combined YTD (CAL FIRE & Federal)	9,917 fires	4,257,863 acres
2021 Combined YTD (CAL FIRE & Federal)	7,396 fires	2,569,386 acres
2022 Combined YTD (CAL FIRE & Federal)	7,477 fires	363,927 acres
2023 Combined YTD (CAL FIRE & Federal)	7,127 fires	324,917 acres

There is no longer a wildfire “season” in California — the threat is year-round.

Source <https://www.fire.ca.gov/stats-events/>

(Statistics include all wildfires responded to by CAL FIRE in both the State Responsibility Area, as well as the Local Responsibility Area under contract with the department. Statistics may not include wildfires in State Responsibility Area protected by CAL FIRE's contract counties.

Special thanks to University of Nevada, Reno Cooperative Extension, and Dr. Ed Smith, for developing the original version of “Living with Fire.” We have borrowed extensively from this excellent work.

HOW FAST IS WILDFIRE

Shown are three examples of vegetation common to our region with computer-generated estimates of how each would burn under common fire weather conditions. Predictions are based on a 20 MPH wind and a 20% uphill slope. Fuel moisture content is based on normal weather for August in our area.

Grass Fire



Speed: 4 miles per hour
Area: 2.5 acres per minute =
(6 football fields per minute) Fire size in 6 minutes: 27 acres
Flame length: 8 feet

Grass & Brush Fire



Speed: 1.7 miles per hour
Area: 4/5 acre per minute =
(1.1 football fields per minute) Fire size in 6 minutes: 5 acres
Flame length: 12 feet

Tall Chaparral Fire



Speed: 8.3 miles per hour Area: 6 acres per minute =
(8 football fields per minute) Fire size in 6 minutes: 36 acres
Flame length: 47 feet

WILDFIRE

The speed of spread and flame length would increase greatly during seasonal dry winds like “Santa Anas.”

Firebrands / Embers

Firebrands are burning embers produced by wildfire which are lifted high into the air and carried beyond the fire front. Firebrands are one of the major causes of homes burned due to wildfire.

Typical firebrand materials include pieces of burning vegetation, and, if houses are involved, wood shakes and shingles. Depending on wind speed and size of materials, firebrands can be carried more than 1 mile ahead of the fire front.

A shower of thousands of firebrands can be produced during a major wildfire event. If these firebrands land in areas with easily ignited fuels—including wood roofs— numerous spot fires can start. Homes located blocks away from the main fire front can be threatened.

Is there anything we can do? YES!

The keys to surviving wildfire are:

- 1** DEFENSIBLE Space
- 2** Fire-hardened HOMES
- 3** EVACUATION Planning



San Bernardino County is an amazing place. Our local mountains, deserts, rivers and lakes are gorgeous in their majestic diversity. Living in the mountains may be the most envious with its clear skies, beautiful lakes, and tight-knit communities.

One of the undertakings in the fire service over the past two decades is the movement towards Community Risk Reduction (CRR) as opposed to fire prevention. While fire prevention has focused on education and regulation geared towards structural fire safety, we know that many more risks, other than just structure fires, exist in our day-to-day lives and communities. Our firefighters know their communities better than almost any other organization out there. From going inside people's homes on medical calls, to inspecting new construction, to driving the streets daily, firefighters know their little corners of the world very well. With CRR, the focus is how a department can take this knowledge and regular interaction and use it to make the community safer from medical, fire, and man-made and natural disasters.

To manage risk, the Fire Service views CRR with five different elements known as "The Five E's". To reduce risk, we must provide **E**ducation, **E**ngineering controls, **E**nforcement of ordinances, **E**conomic incentives, and finally, if all the other "E's" fail... an effective **E**mergency response.

Our Fire District works closely with our emergency response partners; CAL FIRE, USFS, Big Bear, Running Springs fire and Arrowbear Lake fire departments, to provide an emergency response framework that makes each one of our fire agencies more resilient and effective in its emergency response. We meet regularly, plan regionally, train together, and look for ways to support each other in our CRR activities. Without these agencies, the Fire District would have a very difficult time adequately responding to major emergencies - we ARE better together! But what has all of this to do with you, a resident in our wonderful mountains? As explained in the paragraph above, the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District continuously strives to identify and mitigate risks. As a resident, you too can use risk assessment tools found on the sbcfire.org "Ready! Set! Go!" webpage <https://sbcfire.org/Programs/ReadySetGoFire.aspx>. The Residential Assessment Program (RAP) provides a great fire safe and defensible space checklist for your home. The Fire District cannot mitigate or respond to risks alone, we rely on our partners. You too should work as "neighbors helping neighbors"; join the Fire Safe Council, and work together to harden your homes and communities to wildfire. Your San Bernardino County Fire Protection District is proud to protect our mountain top communities. A heartfelt "thank you" to Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council and all the fire safe councils for your hard work and efforts to protect and keep our communities "fire safe". We could never do our job without you!

Daniel R. Munsey Fire Chief/Fire Warden
San Bernardino County Fire Protection District



The Running Springs Fire Department has been an integral part of the community of Running Springs within the San Bernardino mountains since 1951, protecting the community from wildfire and providing emergency medical response.



**For more information, visit www.runningspringsfire.org.
31250 Hilltop Boulevard • P.O. Box 2206, Running Springs, CA 92382
Andrew Grzywa, Fire Chief**

Serving the residents of Arrowbear Lake and the mountain communities for almost a half century with professionalism, compassion, and community involvement.



Arrowbear Lake Fire also assists Running Springs Fire, San Bernardino County Fire and CAL FIRE with Mutual Aid as requested.

Under the direction of Fire Chief Paul Lindley, the combination of Volunteer and Paid Call Crews are dedicated and passionate about their role in the community.

Contact www.ablfd.org for more information.

STEPS TO DEFENSIBLE SPACE

The Three “R’s” of Defensible Space

REMOVAL

Eliminate entire plants, particularly trees and shrubs from the zone. Examples: cutting down a dead tree or cutting out a flammable shrub.

REDUCTION

Remove plant parts such as branches or leaves. Examples: pruning dead wood from a shrub, removing low branches and mowing dried grass.

REPLACEMENT

Substitute more hazardous vegetation with less flammable plants. Examples: removal of a dense stand of flammable shrubs and planting an irrigated, well-maintained flower bed.



Firefighters can control about 97% of all wildfires that start. 3% overwhelm even the best-equipped, well-staffed agencies. That's when your advanced preparation REALLY counts.

Defensible space, coupled with home hardening, is essential to improve your home's chance of surviving a wildfire. Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surround it. This space is needed to slow or stop the spread of wildfire and it helps protect your home from catching fire—either from embers, direct flame contact or radiant heat. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters a safe area to work in, to defend your home.

Three zones make up the required 100 feet of defensible space:

Zone Zero Ember-Resistant Zone

Zone 0 extends 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. The ember-resistant zone is currently not required by law, but science has proven it to be the most important of all the defensible space zones. This zone includes the area under and around all attached decks and requires the most stringent wildfire fuel reduction. The ember-resistant zone is designed to keep fire or embers from igniting materials that can spread the fire to your home. The following provides guidance for this zone, which may change based on the regulation being developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

- Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, concrete and other noncombustible mulch materials. No combustible bark or mulch
- Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches and vegetative debris (leaves, needles, cones, bark, etc.); Check your roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
- Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet.
- Limit combustible items (outdoor furniture, planters, etc.) on top of decks
- Relocate firewood and lumber to Zone 2
- Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attached to the home with noncombustible alternatives.
- Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers outside this zone.
- Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles and other combustible items outside this zone.

Zone 1 – Lean, Clean and Green Zone

Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Remove all dead plants, grass and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks, balconies and stairs.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

Zone 2 – Reduced Fuel Zone

- Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.
- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Create vertical space between grass, shrubs and trees. (See diagram)
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.
- All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet of clearance, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.

Zone 1 and 2

- “Outbuildings” and Liquid Propane Gas (LPG) storage tanks shall have 10 feet of clearance to bare mineral soil and no flammable vegetation for an additional 10 feet around their exterior.

Local Ordinances and Insurance

Many local government agencies have local ordinances for defensible space or weed abatement. These local ordinances will often be more stringent than the State’s minimum requirements listed above. Check with your local fire department or fire protection district for any additional defensible space or weed abatement ordinance requirements. Likewise, many insurance companies have already adopted Zone 0 requirements for defensible space.



Plant and Tree Spacing

The spacing between grass, shrubs, and trees is crucial to reduce the spread of wildfires. The spacing needed is determined by the type and size of brush and trees, as well as the slope of the land. For example, a property on a steep slope with larger vegetation requires greater spacing between trees and shrubs than a level property that has small, sparse vegetation.

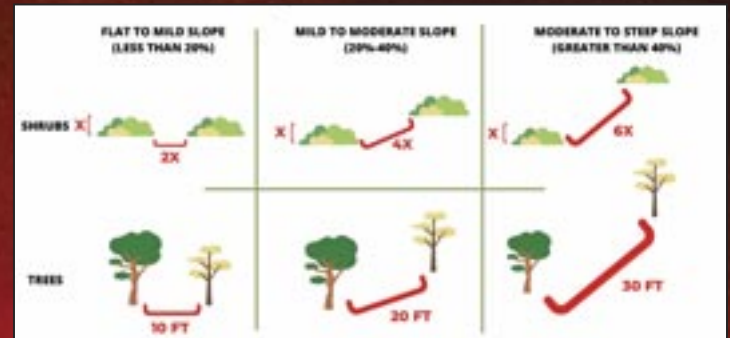
Vertical Spacing

Remove all tree branches at least 6 feet from the ground. Allow extra vertical space between shrubs and trees. Lack of vertical space can allow a fire to move from the ground to the brush to the treetops like a ladder. This leads to more intense fire closer to your home. To determine the proper vertical spacing between shrubs and the lowest branches of trees, use the formula below.



Horizontal Spacing

Horizontal spacing depends on the slope of the land and the height of the shrubs or trees. Check the chart below to determine spacing distance.



Safety doesn't happen
by accident.

– Author Unknown



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Together

We Have the Power to Keep the Future Bright

An emergency can happen at any time. There are some simple and basic steps you can take, like having a preparedness plan, some basic supplies and staying informed. SCE has invested in a variety of improvements and innovations to help prevent wildfires and act quickly when they occur to keep you and your community safe.

We are proud to partner with the **Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council**

For information on Wildfire Safety and Public Safety Power Shutoffs, please visit sce.com/wildfire

WILDFIRE-MONITORING CAMERAS

WEATHER STATIONS

COVERED CONDUCTOR

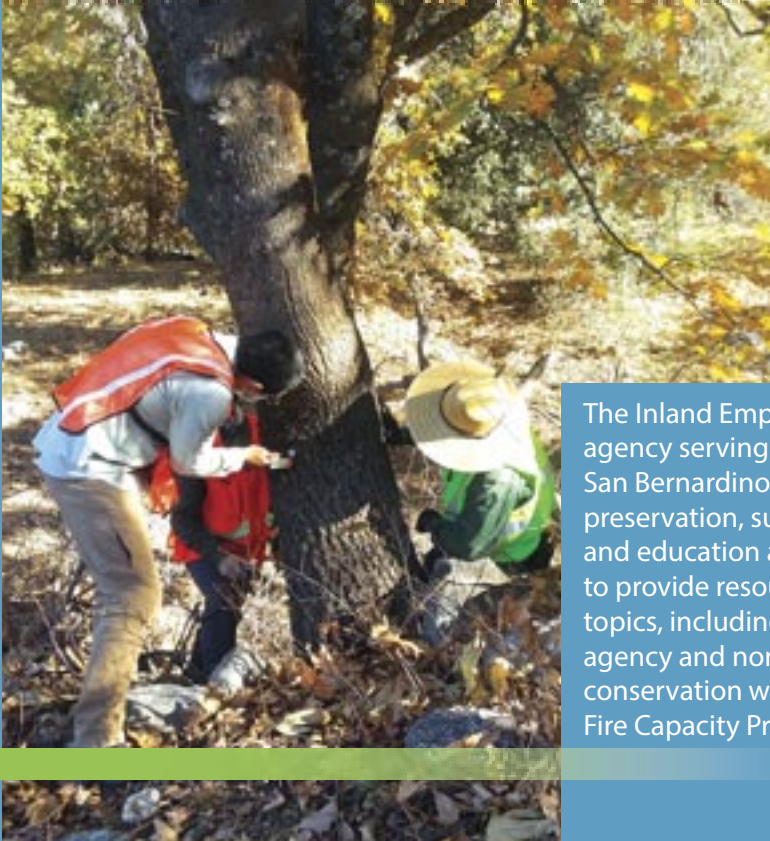


SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
EDISON



INLAND EMPIRE

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



The Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD) is a public agency serving the Upper Santa Ana Watershed, including portions of the San Bernardino Mountains. The IERCD's mission focuses on open space preservation, sustainable agriculture, forest health and fire resiliency, and education and outreach. IERCD staff work with private landowners to provide resources and technical assistance on a variety of conservation topics, including forest health and fire resiliency, and collaborate with agency and non-profit partners to increase the pace and scale of conservation work. The IERCD also oversees the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program for the San Bernardino Mountains.

More information about the IERCD and its programs can be found at www.iercd.org



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

WHO IS THE NRCS? The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that works with private landowners to help them protect their natural resources and keep watersheds healthy. NRCS emphasizes voluntary, science-based assistance, partnerships, and cooperative problem solving at the community level.

THE PROBLEM Due to extreme fire behavior, unprecedented landscape-scale fires, and wind events, the impact to California's forests has been widespread and destructive. Events following the damage from fires can be detrimental to watersheds, public safety, and long-term recovery of these landscapes. Responding quickly after a fire and offering select practices may offer a long-term solution to address the long-lasting impacts of high intensity fires.

NRCS ASSISTANCE TO PRIVATE FORESTLAND NRCS can provide technical and financial assistance for private forestland owners to promote healthy and productive forests, reduce soil erosion, enhance fish and wildfire habitat, and minimize impacts to water quality and reduce wildfire risks. NRCS can also provide post-fire resource protection and public safety in areas affected by wildfire.

Contact Us www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/ca/home/

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Redlands Service Center
Tomas Aguilar Campos (District Conservationist)
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Victorville Service Center
Holly Shiralipour (District Conservationist)
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Email: Holly.Shiralipour@usda.gov

EVACUATION

GET READY

Long before fire threatens, plan your evacuation.

Make a list of items you want to take with you during an evacuation. Here's an example, but prepare your own list.

Important Stuff

- prescriptions, medications
- eyeglasses
- important documents (birth certificates, passports, insurance papers & inventory, personal phone & address books, tax records, digital storage devices, children's school records, inoculation and vaccination records, photos, art)
- jewelry
- pet, pet food, leash, carrier
- child's favorite toy
- other...

- Keep your "Important Stuff" list handy.
- Keep sturdy boxes ready for collecting things on your list.
- Prepare an Emergency Supply Kit.
- Have a corded phone in the house. Cordless home phones do not work when the power is out.
- Copy all important documents and store with a friend or family out of the area.
- Keep a regular address book in addition to what may be stored in your computer or cell phone as this equipment may not work if power is out or towers are down.
- Learn how to manually open and close your garage doors. If power goes out, automatic garage door openers will not work.

Create an Action Plan – see pg 16

You may not be home when wildfire threatens. Authorities must close roads for safety and you may not be able to enter. Make arrangements in advance for persons or pets who will be home when you're not.

Emergency Supply Kit

When fire threatens, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. Assemble a 72-Hour Emergency Kit that includes items you'll need if you have to evacuate.

Store them in easy-to-carry containers such as back-packs, plastic crates...

- a three-day water supply (1 gallon per person per day)
- a three-day food supply for family and pets that won't spoil and a way to open containers.
- one change of clothing & shoes per person
- one blanket or sleeping bag per person
- a first aid kit that includes family prescriptions
- spare eyeglasses & sunglasses
- emergency tools, battery powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries extra set of car keys, phone chargers, power banks
- sanitation supplies
- special items for infants, elderly, disabled
- goggles (for high wind or blowing embers)
- work gloves
- painter's masks or small filter masks to wear during evacuation, if smoke is thick
- more ??? use your imagination

- If possible, involve your children in the planning – let them feel part of the process. Review and update your "Important Stuff" list & 72-Hour Emergency Kit periodically.
- Plan how you'll transport and house your pet for a long-term evacuation.
- If you have large animals, learn how to prepare. Call your local Department of Animal Control or Humane Society.

Two Ways Out—just as your home escape plan should include two ways out of every room, identify two ways out of your neighborhood in case the usual way out is blocked by emergency vehicles or fire.

GET SET

When evacuation seems likely, put your plan into action.

Take a deep breath, and remember that you have planned well. Remember, too, that lives always take priority over property.

- During fire season, always have at least half a tank of gas in your car. Gas stations may not operate if power goes out. And you may not be able to evacuate by the shortest route out of your area.
- Use your list of "Important Stuff." Collect those items in boxes you can easily carry.
- Face your car out, so you have the best visibility when you do have to leave.
- Load your "Important Stuff" and 72-Hour Emergency Kit into the car.
- Load pets at the last minute when the family leaves.

And if there's time...

- Be sure all windows and doors are closed.
- Close metal window blinds.
- Remove light curtains and other thin combustibles from windows.
- Cluster lawn furniture and other things that might snag firefighter hoses.
- Leave exterior lights on. It helps firefighters find the house in the smoke.
- Don't leave garden sprinklers on — they can waste critical water pressure.
- Turn off air conditioners and attic fans. These could draw smoke and embers into your home.

N PLANNING

GO! Get moving!

- Evacuation notification may come in several ways: over the radio, reverse 911 (you receive a call at your home), drive by loud speakers, aerial loud speakers, etc. Don't wait to be told to evacuate. Authorities may not have time to order an evacuation. If you feel threatened, leave on your own initiative.
- Do Evacuate when you are told. Staying behind puts you and your family at serious risk. It also risks the lives of firefighters and diverts critical resources of the firefighting agencies if they have to stop attacking the fire to help you evacuate at a later time.
- Obey orders of law enforcement and fire officers. They understand the risk and are acting on current fire information.
- Drive with your headlights on for visibility.
- Drive calmly and with special attention to fire trucks. They are not as maneuverable as your car.
- Do not block the access roadway for fire trucks.
- If fire overtakes you, you are far safer in the car than out.
- Check with your child's school on their Student Release policy. They should have plans to protect children in place or to bus them to safer locations. To avoid mass congestion during evacuation, pick-up should be arranged after the crisis passes.
- DO NOT call 9-1-1 for non-emergencies.

BEING EVACUATED - Where, How Long & Why

- Check in at an Evacuation Center as soon as possible. Law enforcement officials can direct you or look for location information on the television, radio or websites such as www.fire.ca.gov/incidents, <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov> and Facebook. Whether you stay or not, your checking in will help others know you are safe.
- Your insurance policy may cover food and hotel lodging during this time - verify that in advance, including the daily amounts and timeframe covered. Many insurance companies will provide you with immediate cash advances if you have your policy information with you. Even if you stay with friends or family, track your expenses for insurance purposes.
- Bringing blankets, sleeping bags and even tents may make your stay at a local shelter more comfortable. Remember, pets are not allowed inside the shelter.
- Evacuation may be in effect for hours or days or weeks. Emergency officials make decisions based upon human safety first. Please respect their decisions.
- Remember, even if the fire is under control or "out", going home may take time as emergency officials and utilities must make sure the area is safe for re-entry. Downed power lines, missing guardrails, sewer and water availability and roadway obstacles are among the many things which must be addressed for safety reasons.
- Do not attempt to re-enter an area until officials allow it.
- Keep informed about the status of the fire and evacuation: websites www.fire.ca.gov/incidents, <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov> and Facebook; bulletin boards at shelters and agency fire information booths, radio (KFRG 95.1, KHWH 98.9, KZXY 102.3, KCDZ 107.7, KBHR 93.3), fire information hotline (US Forest Service 909-383-5688). Phone apps such as Watch Duty and PulsePoint can be useful as well.

INSURANCE - How Ready Are You?

Many residents who lost their homes in the 2003 firestorms discovered they were seriously underinsured. When was the last time you actually read your policy to see what is covered and what the coverage amounts are? Speaking with your insurance agent is the best course of action, but some important points to remember are noted below.

- Know what your policy limits are and discuss these limits with your agent. Make sure you have guaranteed replacement cost coverage, with a built in inflation factor. Rebuilding costs in California can be much higher than one can imagine. Your agent should be able to provide rebuilding costs by zip code. If you are still unsure, hire a licensed contractor to provide a written estimate as to what it would cost to rebuild your home as it stands today.
- Make sure your contents are insured adequately. Remember that antiques, collectibles and jewelry are usually NOT covered under standard contents replacement coverage. You will need a separate rider for these items. Video or photograph your home inside and out, record serial numbers and model numbers of your appliances and electronic items. Store these recordings away from your home in a safe deposit box or storage area and/or digitally.
- Check your policy for coverage known as Additional Living Expense (ALE) which lists the amount of time you have to live in temporary quarters until your home is rebuilt or repaired. Discuss this coverage with your agent and make sure you understand any limitations that may exist in your coverage.
- Check your policy for coverage in the event you are evacuated. Will it cover expenses for lodging and food while evacuated? If so, for how long and what are the daily dollar limits?
- Vehicles damaged by fire should be covered under your auto insurance policy, but verify this coverage now with your insurance agent.
- If you are a renter, obtain a renters insurance policy for furniture and contents.
- Mark your calendar to review your policy annually. The values to rebuild your home or your contents may increase significantly, especially if you make home improvements.

Finally, make sure you take your policy or a copy of it with you in the event you are evacuated. If you need assistance with food and lodging or if you lose your home from fire, you must contact the insurance company or agent as soon as possible. Having a copy of your policy in hand will make things less confusing for you family during this very stressful time.





CREATE A DISASTER ACTION PLAN

Your Disaster Action Plan must be prepared, and familiar to all members of your household well in advance of a wildfire. Use the checklist below to help create your plan. Each family's plan will be different, depending on a variety of issues, needs, and situations.

Ask friends or relatives outside your area if you would be able to stay with them, should the need arise. Check with hotels, motels and campgrounds to learn if they are open. Also get set by learning about your community's response plan for each disaster.

Your Disaster Action Plan Checklist

Create an evacuation plan that includes:

- A designated emergency meeting location outside the fire or hazard area. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- Several different escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.
- Have an evacuation plan for pets and large animals such as horses and other livestock.
- A Family Communication Plan that designates an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. (It is easier to call or message one person and let them contact others than to try and call everyone when phone, cell, and internet systems can be overloaded or limited during a disaster.)

Be Prepared:

- Have fire extinguishers on hand and train your family how to use them (check expiration dates regularly).
- Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are located and how to safely shut them down in an emergency.
- Assemble an Emergency Supply Kit for each person (see page 14).
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your emergency supply kit.
- Keep an extra Emergency Supply Kit in your car in case you cannot get to your home because of fire or other emergency.
- Have a portable radio or scanner so you can stay updated on the fire.
- Tell your neighbors about Ready, Set, Go! and your Disaster Action Plan.

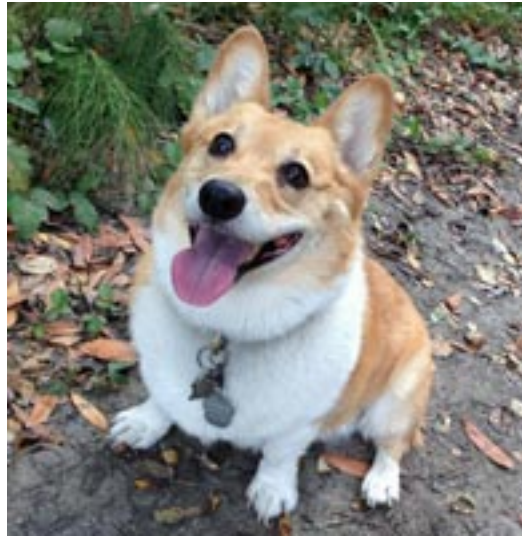
Source: CAL FIRE



Animal Evacuation

Pets

- Plan ahead. Know where you will take or leave your pets. In case you are not home when disaster strikes, arrange in advance for a neighbor to check on or transport your pets. Make sure your neighbors have your contact numbers (cell phone, work, home, etc.). In the event of evacuation pets may not be allowed inside human emergency shelters - have an alternate prearranged location to take your animals.
- Make sure your pets are always wearing properly fitted collars with personal identification, rabies and license tags.
- Each animal should have it's own pet carrier. Birds, rodents and reptiles should be transported in cages. Cover cages with a light sheet or cloth to minimize their fear.
- Store vaccination/medical records, veterinary contact information, proof of ownership, a current photo, and a Disaster Preparedness Kit in one location.



Pet Disaster Preparedness Kit

- Pet carrier for each pet
- Two week supply of food and water
- Non-spill food and water bowls
- Pet first-aid kit
- Medications and dosing instructions
- Cat litter box and litter
- Plastic bags for waste disposal
- Paper towels
- Disinfectants
- Leashes/collars/harnesses
- Blankets
- Toys and treats
- Newspaper



If You Must Leave Your Pet

- If you must leave your pets, bring them indoors.
Never leave pets chained outdoors!
- Use a room with no windows and adequate ventilation, such as a utility room, garage, bathroom, or other area that can be easily cleaned.
Do not tie pets up!
- Leave only dry foods and fresh water in non-spill containers. If possible open a faucet to let water drip into a large container or partially fill a bathtub with water.





WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DRONE DURING A FIRE

"There's a drone in the area," a voice on the radio said. "All aircraft, hold your position outside the area." We all look up, squinting our eyes at a bright blue sky from the Cajon Pass. "There it is," said the battalion chief, pointing to an area above a hill. A quadcopter, with its four arms spread, hovered above the so-called Devore Fire. It was May 2021 and we all thought that the public knew that this was not allowed. How wrong we were.

That's why each year, the public relations arms of wildland fire agencies put out educational messaging about flying drones during incidents. "If you fly, we can't!" the posters say. But it's still happening.

There were 21 documented reports of drone incursions in 2020, including during the 33,000-acre Apple Fire just across Interstate 10. And it happened on the San Bernardino National Forest before that, too: The 2016 Blue Cut Fire and 2015 Lake Fire, for example.

TFRs, or Temporary Flight Restrictions, are often put into place during major incidents to, in part, prohibit recreational drone usage. Even when no TFR is in effect, it is not allowed to interfere with the work of suppressing a fire. That follows Federal Aviation Administration policy and best practices to avoid mid-air collisions with firefighting aircraft, risks to on-the-ground firefighters and hampering the effectiveness of wildfire suppression operations.

Aerial firefighting aircraft, including air tankers, lead planes and helicopters, fly at very low altitudes, just hundreds of feet above the ground, and in the same airspace as drones. This creates the potential for a mid-air collisions and pilot distraction that may result in a serious or fatal accident.

When a drone is spotted in the area of a wildfire, fire managers may have to ground all aerial firefighting aircraft until they can confirm that the drone has left the area and they feel confident that the airspace is safe again. This can cause wildfires to become larger, more costly and to unduly threaten lives, property, and natural and cultural resources.

Individuals who have been determined to have endangered manned aircraft or people on the ground with a UAS and/or interfered with wildfire suppression may be subject to civil penalties, including fines of up to \$25,000, and potentially criminal prosecution.

So if you have a drone, let's keep it on the ground when that smoke starts rising. Leave the airspace to our brave pilots and air crew.

Zach Behrens former Public Affairs Officer
for the San Bernardino National Forest.



Additional Safety Steps to Prepare

Learn the plan for your local school. Parents of school age children should contact their school district or visit their websites to learn what steps the district will take to ensure student safety. This may include school closures and evacuations.

Know all your local access roads and understand that some may be blocked depending on the emergency or conditions. Have an alternate route. Stay informed of road and highway conditions by visiting the Caltrans' website at quickmap.dot.ca.gov.

Have an emergency plan and a disaster kit ready to go. For more information, see page 14. Don't forget to have supplies for your pets.

During Emergencies

Follow all orders by public safety officials. Sign up for San Bernardino County emergency alerts at <https://www.smart911.com/smart911/ref/reg.action?pa=sbcountry> and CAL FIRE alerts at <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/> or find local information at RimCommunities.org. Phone apps available include WatchDuty and PulsePoint.

Don't wait until it's too late. Leaving promptly when evacuations are called for helps save lives and ensures emergency responders are available to focus their efforts on dealing with the emergency.

Heed all evacuations. When time allows Evacuation Warnings will be issued for at-risk areas to allow residents and businesses to leave when it is safest to do so. Persons with access and functional needs, the elderly, those with very young children and people with large animals should seriously consider leaving now. As stated above, the safest time to leave is before the danger is close. Evacuation Orders will be issued based on Incident Commanders determinations that an area is no longer safe.

Monitor official weather reports and heed weather alerts. Understand that the weather where you are can be different than in surrounding areas.

As always, **in case of emergency, dial 9-1-1.**

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

What else can you do?







By preparing ahead, your house has a better chance of surviving a wildfire. When a wildfire is immediately threatening your area, take the following steps to protect your home.

First, if you see a fire approaching your home, report it immediately by dialing 911. Stay on the phone to answer additional questions the emergency dispatcher may ask.





Next, dress properly to prevent burns and lifelong scars. Wear long pants and cotton or wool long-sleeve shirts or jackets. Gloves provide added protection. Do not wear short sleeve shirts

If You Cannot Evacuate Your Home

When A Fire Approaches

-  Stay inside your house, away from outside walls.
-  Close all doors, but leave them unlocked.
-  Keep your entire family together and remain calm.
-  Remember: If it gets hot in the house, it is many times hotter and more dangerous outside.

After the Fire Passes

-  Check the roof immediately, extinguishing all sparks and embers. If you must climb onto the roof, use caution, especially if it is wet.
-  Check your yard for burning woodpiles, trees, fence posts or other materials.
-  Keep the doors and windows closed.
-  Continue rechecking your home and yard for burning embers for at least 12 hours.

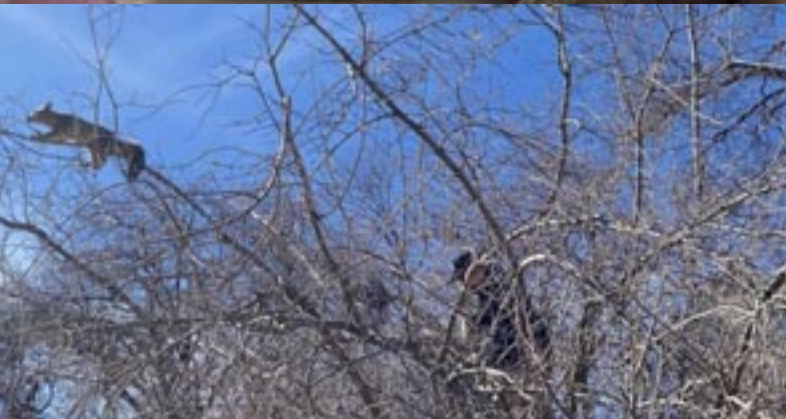
WILDLIFE &

Photos Courtesy of Pond Digger Wildlife Rehab Foundation unless otherwise noted.

WILDFIRES



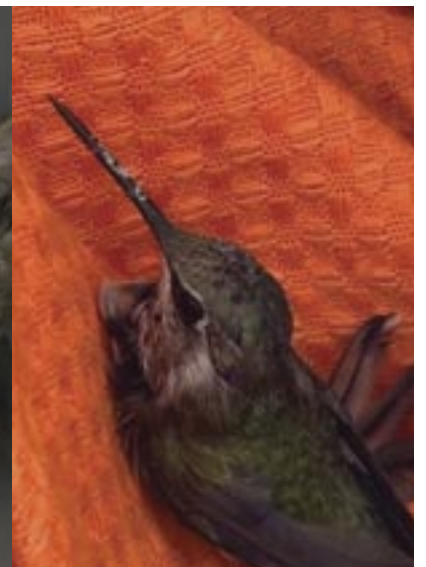
Photo courtesy National Wildlife Federation



Thankfully (and somewhat quixotically), the American spirit rarely shines as brightly as it does after tragedy. We come together and house our neighbors who had to flee disaster, often with just the clothes on their backs. Even on an enormous scale of devastation where thousands or more might be displaced, people will come together, and communities will get rebuilt. It's not quite so straightforward or indeed possible to do the same with our wildlands. Wildfire will cleanse the land of life more thoroughly anything imaginable, destroying habitat, resources such as food and minerals, and most lifeforms in its wake. And yet humans are not the only clever creatures around, many animals have been factoring humans and our communities into their survival for centuries. Even timid and shy creatures can display steely resolve and tolerate close-proximity to humans when survival dictates it. If your home is near the wake of wildfire's destruction you might have a few 'visitors' passing through your property looking for a new home. Show these living organisms the same compassion and empathy you do for the humans that live in your community.

Here are some helpful tips to give those creatures the best chance to rebuild their lives as well. First and foremost, bring your pets in for as long as you can after the flames subside. Air quality will be poor anyway, but this is the safest thing to do for your pets and for fleeing wildlife. If you see unusual wildlife activity, try not to disturb them. Let them rest and take shelter in a safe place away from the flames, they will likely move on soon enough. Your bushes, wood piles, gazebos, and trees will make great temporary shelter while they catch their breath.

While some would bristle at the suggestion that any sort of food be put out for fleeing wildlife, few argue against providing wildlife with fresh water sources especially in wildfire areas. If you have water features such as ponds or bird baths, feel free to fill them up with fresh water. If you maintain bird feeders, you can similarly make sure they're well-stocked and remain so. Similarly, consider putting out nesting materials or a nest box specific for a favorite local bird species. Birds have different preferences for nesting boxes, but a quick search in your go-to search engine can let you know exactly what dimensions your target bird species would be drawn to.





No time would be better to consider going native with your landscaping than when the area experienced wildfire destruction. While it'll take some growth cycles before established vegetation replaces fire follower species, it'll be important to maintain populations of local pollinators so that their species has an established footing to expand from when the burned forest turns green again.

If you encounter hurt wildlife, be sure to reach out to permitted wildlife rehabbers. Don't offer up wild animals to the first person that wants to take them off your hands from a Facebook post. Here in the Inland Empire, CA Department of Fish & Wildlife permitted rehabilitators are Bear Paw Ranch (909-790-1010 or 909-289-0166) and Big Bear Alpine Zoo (909-584-1299). They are respected and experienced in the care of almost anything you might find in the wild. Please keep in mind that animal rehab centers are staffed by volunteers and not on-call 24/7. They are knowledgeable professionals with finite resources and you should remain courteous and mindful, even if you get an answer you did not want to hear. Should you place an animal in their care, consider also leaving them a donation to help keep them going. It might also make the difference in that animal's future care. Veterinary care, medicine, and animal food are not free after all. And they always welcome new volunteers.

Should you need to capture an injured animal, your safety should always come first. Be sure to wear gloves, long sleeves, pants, and closed toe shoes. Have a blanket and appropriately sized box with airholes handy. If possible, limit the animal's field of vision and guide it to a corner or confined space. Be quick and firm (but not overly so) and use the blanket to contain and capture the animal and place gently into your box. Birds of prey have shockingly powerful talon grasp, and any animal can bite and scratch so be mindful of those body parts whenever attempting to handle wild animals. In an open field, multiple people might be needed to capture an injured animal. In the case of large mammals or any animal you are not comfortable securing in this way, contact the above listed rehab facilities, or CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife, Inland Region, (909) 484-0167, AskRegion6@wildlife.ca.gov



Photo Courtesy of Debbie Strong





RIM COMMUNITIES RESOURCE ALLIANCE COMING SOON!

To learn more, follow us on
Instagram @rimcommunities or
contact us at: hello@rimcommunities.org

The Rim Communities Resources Alliance is a fledgling nonprofit born out of the 2023 blizzard with the mission to empower communities by providing comprehensive disaster preparedness, response, and recovery resources. Through rigorous vetting of resources and collaboration with local, county, state and federal emergency services, we serve as a unified hub connecting nonprofit organizations with those in need during and after disasters.

RCRA is in development of a disaster preparedness and response website that will serve as a unified and vetted resource for our community before, during, and after a disaster. During a disaster/emergency, the application will have real-time resources/information from various entities, including emergency services, schools, first responders, faith communities, and non-profit organizations, on where to get help for emergency shelters, food, utility assistance, and essential services.

The organization's vision is to identify community needs and gaps in disaster preparedness and relief efforts, we endeavor to create sustainable funding solutions that address these challenges effectively. Our primary goal is to support and uplift communities in the face of emergencies, ensuring equitable access to vital resources and promoting resilience through compassionate community care.



BE PREPARED.



NOT SURPRISED!

Preparedness, when properly pursued, is a way of life, not a sudden, spectacular program.

– Spencer W. Kimball, religious leader

We cannot stop natural disasters but we can arm ourselves with knowledge; so many lives wouldn't have to be lost if there was enough disaster preparedness.

– Petra Nemcova, model, tsunami survivor



There's no harm in hoping for the best as long as you're prepared for the worst.

– Stephen King, author



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