



Oak Hill Area
**FIRE SAFE
COUNCIL**

Rains have finally come!



December 2020

Newsletter

Dear Neighbors,

Greetings at the end of a difficult 2020. Despite all the low points, there have been some activities to celebrate!

Fire safety efforts continue

With all the at-home time, many in our area were able to tackle projects to prepare their homes to resist wildfire damage. People created or expanded their defensible space, including 5-foot completely clear zones next to their houses, and/or worked to “harden” their homes. We applaud everyone’s efforts! This can be a great time to take on projects yourself.



Removing dense brush at house next to Oak Hill Rd



Homeowner installing fiber cement siding over old wood siding, Twitchell Rd area

Fall 2020



We ourselves have been putting up non-combustible fiber cement siding in strategic places - a 3 year project - and replacing our old dilapidated wooden decks with non-combustible rock/brick/concrete

patios and steps (photo, above). It's hard but satisfying work, helping ourselves and our whole area to be more fire resilient.

Address signs a success - Arrows available too!

Over 92 address signs have been made and delivered to Oak Hill area residents over the last several months. We thank Loren Azevedo for getting all those large, reflective signs out into the community!

We also thank all the residents who have purchased them. Most of the cost goes towards materials, but a small portion of each goes to further our Oak Hill Fire Safe Council's efforts.

Large helpful arrows (3 by 7 inches) can also be bought now with your address sign.



This large reflective sign can help Emergency Responders locate you more quickly.

Get Your Emergency Address Sign – Just \$25 - \$30

Possible Insurance Discounts

Because our Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council was recognized as a “Firewise USA Community” in April 2020, you may qualify for a 5-10% discount on your home’s fire insurance. [Learn more.](#)

Chipping program has ended temporarily - what to do now with the branches and slash?

We hope you were able to take advantage of the free chipping offered by the greater El Dorado County Fire Safe Council last fall. That grant from PG&E has now ended, but volunteers are diligently seeking grant funds for next year. *Stay tuned!*

But what to do with the slash you're creating now? Numerous small piles (no bigger than 4 ft in diameter) kept at least 100 ft from your house, out in the open, and away from each other are best. If you decide to burn, now that the rains have come, be sure to have shovel and water at the ready, clear 10 ft around the pile, and be in attendance for the entire time.

For Burn Day Info, year round, Call EDC AQMD, **530 621-5897**

General burning requirements, **contact [Cal Fire](#)**

Video from Cal Fire: [Residential Landscape Debris Burning](#)

Alternatives to burning, **go to [Cal Fire](#)**

Or, if you can, consider instead just letting piles decompose- enriching the soil, helping wildlife, and keeping carbon sequestered. Keep piles small for fire safety (4 ft diameter, 12 inches high max).

And what about that great pile of chips you may have now? Spread it on paths or around plants as mulch, but for fire safety don't let it pile too deep (2-3 inches max), and keep chips at least 5 feet away from your house. Chips can smolder and even send

fire up your wall, if they are in that critical first five feet.



Meetings pause for winter, but excellent webinars are available

Past Zoom meetings of our own and others are available to watch. We recommend:

[Hardening your Home against Wildfire](#) (OHAFFSC June 2020). Includes information specific to the Oak Hill area, like wind direction and fire risk.

[Radio communication during fires](#) (El Dorado Co Amateur Radio Club, August 2020). Learn about an important alternative communication method available in our area.

[Wildfire Home Retrofit Workshop, with Steve Quarles](#) (Tahoe Living With Fire, November 2020). A 2 hour long but highly informative presentation by one of the real gurus on home hardening. Good if you want to go further than the OHAFFSCC's zoom presentation.

[El Dorado County Vegetation Management and Defensible Space Ordinance](#) (El Dorado County, May 2020). A presentation by El Dorado County staff, describing the requirements of the new County vegetation management ordinance.

Time to make your house inventory!

Winter can be a great time to hunker down inside and take care of your insurance inventory, by writing down everything you own. What a chore! Yes, but it's crucial if you ever need to be reimbursed correctly after a fire.



Use photos and videos to help - maybe find a way for your family to turn it into a fun, creative holiday project? Once you've finished, be sure and store all inventory documentation away from your home, preferably with out of town relatives or friends.

Banners to inspire

We hope you've enjoyed the 5 Banners we've been rotating around the Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council area, kind of like a gentle "to do" nudge. A **big** thank you to Eliza Anker for donating her graphic design work!

Watch for them again in the Spring!







A **big** thank you also to Katie Meyer (Zandonella), Steve Marsh (Hanks Exchange), Oak Hill Church of Christ, and the Oak Hill Fire Station for letting us display these banners on their property.

Wish the banners were put in your neighborhood too next Spring? [*Contact us*](#)

Thanks to Linda, Steve, and Mary

Between health issues and moving, we've lost three of our best founding members of the Council. We thank them **SO MUCH** for their service!!

Linda Azevedo, who had served as Chair since our inception, stepped down over the summer. Her leadership, commitment, and insightfulness really allowed us to create and build our Fire Safe Council, bringing neighbors together to help each other prepare for the threat of wildfires. Linda's grace and upbeat attitude will be sorely missed!

Steve Gregorich, our webmaster, has also stepped down. He did an outstanding job of creating and maintaining our vibrant and informative website. His attention to detail and determination have left our new webmaster, Mark Griner, and all of us, with a wonderful resource. He also worked tirelessly to grow our email list, so that we could

continue to communicate with area residents after our mailing grant funds ran out. And he continues to help the council by refurbishing radios. Thank you Steve!

Mary Humphry left the area last Spring, but her legacy lives on! She coordinated all of our early outreach efforts, including meetings and informing residents of our existence. She also lent her excellent design work to all of the Council's first newsletters. Like Steve and Linda, she too is sorely missed!

We always welcome residents to assist with serving our Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council community. It really is a great chance to meet and work with some of your fellow residents, all while helping to improve your community! *Contact us* if you'd like to join us or attend a Board meeting. We can always use more helpers!

Happy Holidays and Best Wishes for the New Year from your Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council. Sincerely,

Lester Lubetkin, Chair

And the Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council Team

Tom Daher, Treasurer

Becky Leighton, Secretary

Mark Griner, Webmaster, Radios committee chair

Mark Leighton, Emergency evacuation committee chair

Alice Cantelow, Defensible space/harden homes committee chair

Gary Rathbun, Email communication

Loren Azevedo, Address signs

Katie Meyers, at large

Mark and Carolyn Pappas, at large

info@oakhillfiresafe.org

P.S. Remember to sign up for [Code Red, CAL FIRE Twitter, and PG&E alerts](#)