



Oak Hill Area
**FIRE SAFE
COUNCIL**

January 2020 Newsletter

Dear Oak Hill Area Fire Safe Council Residents,



2019 was the council's first year and – thanks to help from many of you – we made a great start!

1. Identifying fire **safety** and **egress** problems in our area
2. Hosting community meetings – with topics ranging from **defensible space and hardening homes** – to **evacuation and safety alerts** – to **fire insurance**
3. Building a **website** (www.OakHillFireSafe.org)
4. Connecting with local **fire departments**
5. **Supporting neighborhood** road clearance
6. And last but not least, getting our **first grant!**

With your help (remember the council is all-volunteer!), we plan to continue to ramp up progress in 2020. Now, for some of what's coming up...

Keep an eye on your mail



We want everyone to know how to make their home and area safer from wildfire. You can get great information from our website www.OakHillFireSafe.org, but also watch for our first USPS mailing.

If you see our logo on an envelope, please don't roundfile it! There's useful info inside!!

5 council goals for 2020

Some New Year's resolutions – already in progress!

1. Contact more residents – by mail as well as via meetings and the website
2. Help implement GMRS (General Mobile Radio Service) backup communication
3. Expand our work to identify egress problems and evacuation routes
4. Keep supporting neighborhoods in taking on road clearing projects
5. Pursue grants to help us reach out to more people and create better egress

Neighborhoods who are making a difference. Yours can too!

Egress is a critical issue for our area. *If there's a fire, can we get out and can firefighters get in?* [Read how neighborhoods made their areas safer from wildfire.](#)

Check out the website for photos and stories about how your neighbors are hardening their homes, making defensible space, and improving entrance and exit roads to their neighborhood (and learn [how to publish your story](#) too!)



What's your fire risk?

Are you in a high-risk area or just moderate? How does the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) evaluate your danger? The answers affect your safety and your fire insurance. [Click here for more info.](#)

While you're there, be sure to take a look at the new links in that section: [PG&E's Latest Strategies](#), [PG&E's Weather Map](#) and [A History of California Wildfires](#). You'll find details about new cameras, progress on hardening transmission lines and more. PG&E's installed 29 weather stations in the last two years, including one within our council boundaries at Horizon Drive and Horizon Court on the south end of Oak Hill Road. We show you how to access those weather stations on the website.

When cell service (and internet and phones) go down, radio to the rescue!

During PG&E's outages this year, many of us found ourselves not only without internet or cell service, we couldn't even use our plain old landlines, which used to be the last thing to go out in a power outage. Not anymore. Imagine what would happen if there were a fire and the only way you could get notification was door-to-door. (That didn't work well in the Camp Fire.)



Hank's Exchange neighbor tries out GMRS (2-way radio)

[At the April 14th community meeting](#), Alan Thompson and the El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club will tell us about GMRS aka "Radio for the Rest of Us." They have been working hard in our county to establish a network of inexpensive, easy-to-use handheld radios that can be used for communication during an emergency.

Learn how you can be one of the first to get GMRS so you can communicate in an emergency even if cell towers, the internet, and landlines are down.

Dates to save

You're invited to meet with your neighbors and hear excellent speakers (if we do say so ourselves - we've tried hard to bring you speakers who really know what they're talking about and can provide information you can act on) at the council's FREE community meetings, starting in February

2nd Tuesday of each month

5:30 PM

Firefighters Memorial Hall

3734 China Garden Road in Diamond Springs

(behind the Fire Station on Main Street)

Some "don't miss" meetings...

February 11th - John Wilcox and Kristin Oase-Guth from the County Vegetation Management Ordinance Implementation Team tell us about what's coming next (Enforcement starts in June)

March 10th - a stunning presentation by Alan Thompson titled [Phones, Fires, and Failures](#) about communication problems in the past two years of wildfires, including the Camp Fire

April 14th - Alan and the El Dorado County Amateur Radio Club tell us about GMRS aka ["Radio for the Rest of Us"](#)

May 12th - New information about how to harden your home against an ember storm during a wildfire. Hardening your home is a key to saving homes and possibly lives too. Simply put, this means taking steps to make your home less likely to ignite in a fire.

Check the calendar at www.OakHillFireSafe.org for details....

- [Monthly calendar](#)
- [Community Meetings](#)

How to be firewise, waterwise, and wildlife-friendly

February 1st – Join Master Gardeners Robin Stanley, OHAFC Hardening Home Committee Chair Alice Cantelow and retired CAL FIRE Chief Deputy Director Mark Stanley to learn how to balance esthetics and safety to increase the chances your property and home can withstand a wildfire. 9AM-12PM, Bethel-Delfino Ag building (where the Farm Advisor and 4H offices are), 311 Fair Lane, Placerville.

American Foresters' meeting – Can we save California from burning?

February 21st & 22nd – Society of American Foresters' [Winter Meeting](#) will look at whether the pace and scale of change can save the State of California from burning. Lake Natoma Inn in Folsom. Open to all (but not free).

Would you like to help with the Fire Safe Council?

If you'd like to help the FSC's cause to make our area safer from fire, please let me know. (Please send your questions and suggestions for meeting topics and website articles too!)

When you help with the Fire Safe Council, you not only help with a good cause, you also get to know your neighbors better. This past year has been tremendously gratifying – full of hard work but a lot of fun too. ***And, as an all-volunteer, grassroots effort, we need every one of you! I hope you'll join us.***

Sincerely,

Linda Azevedo

Chair

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