

SOUTH SKYLINE FIRESAFE COUNCIL (SSFSC)

Reduced Cost Roadside Fuel Reduction and Free or Reduced Cost Chipping for Defensible Space

January 2011

web site: www.southskylinefiresafe.org

ROADSIDE FUEL REDUCTION

(‘Fire Break’)

Do you live on a private road or lane off the public road that needs ‘opening up’ for safer passage in a big wildland fire? The South Skyline FireSafe Council is now helping groups of homeowners get connected to the Cal Fire roadside fuel reduction program and we will help defray the costs. This program uses a crew of 15 CA Department of Corrections’ most trusted and trained inmates led by a Cal Fire fire captain to clear and chip or burn brush, limbs, and small trees to create ‘shaded fuel breaks’ along public and private roads and lanes and other fire breaks. Your road group will need to apply some months in advance for the program. (During the fire season these crews are busy digging containment lines around fires.) We can help you with your planning and application process; see our contact information at the end of this insert. Your group will need to provide a (rental) toilet for the crew and will be charged about \$200 per day to cover equipment costs, but the SSFSC will help defray those costs.

Also, the CDC will set a requirement for the number of trained volunteer observers of the crew, typically two. Volunteers from your group should take the required training and we can help locate additional trained volunteers to help your project. The training takes about 4 hours and is most conveniently received on March 17 at the Las Cumbres Community Center. See the ‘Volunteers Needed’ article in this January issue of *Skylines* for more information. Sign up for the training on the SSA Membership Form insert in this *Skylines*, in the South Skyline FireSafe Council section. Return that form to the SSA membership chairperson as instructed.

FREE OR REDUCED COST CHIPPING FOR DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Free brush chipping programs for defensible space for San Mateo and Santa Cruz County homeowners were announced a year ago. The

programs for those counties are nearly exhausted of funds. The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council program will continue for at least another year and will do chipping in Santa Cruz County along its border with Santa Clara County. When these funds are exhausted our South Skyline FireSafe Council offers partial reimbursement for chipping to establish or improve your defensible space. Contact us (see names below) for more information. As you know your legal defensible space is out to 100 feet around your home and significant permanent structures. On your downhill side you are likely to want more defensible space, so extending the brush cutting out to 150 feet can be included. It also typically includes 30 feet on each side of your driveway of reasonable length. In all counties the chips are blown out on your land, not carried away. Here is more on the programs noted above:

SAN MATEO COUNTY: The San Mateo FireSafe Council is just finishing its grant for county-wide chipping, having done about four days’ chipping for that area. They have reserved one more day of chipping for us in our San Mateo County area for this winter/spring. Contact us immediately if you wish to be included in this program as we try to determine when chipping will occur.

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY: The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County is about finished with its grant. Contact us immediately to determine if help is still available, and then help us find others in the area to be involved in the program to make up a day’s chipping. Also, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council will do your chipping if you live in Santa Cruz County within about a half mile of Skyline Blvd. Las Cumbres residents have had their community pile chipped twice by this Santa Clara FireSafe program.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY: The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council has two grants in progress and they are the most generous grants. First is chipping for defensible space. This program includes 30 feet each side of your driveway as defensible space. Please have a 1/2 hour minimum chipping or you haul to a nearby chipping location. They may even do some chipping along private roads. Contact us.

The second grant is for SOD (sudden oak death) tree removal within the defensible space area. This program requires that you have essentially done your defensible space or agree to make significant progress shortly. The smaller limbs are chipped up and the trunk and branches are cut into 16 inch lengths and left at the site. The tree must be declared dead (or badly infected) by an arborist, but this is handled by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council.

For both programs you apply to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council on their form, so go on line to www.sccfiresafe.org/Chipping. They in turn will ask for our coordination. They use their contractors, but it is coordinated by one of our South Skyline FSC coordinators so we have full days of contractor work. Upon completion of the work you will be asked to make a donation to be used as seed money for future grant requests.

ALL COUNTIES: The South Skyline FireSafe Council has a partial reimbursement program for defensible space chipping and roadside fuel reduction when no other program is available. This program is for defensible space chipping that you are planning to contract out or planning to rent a chipper for doing the chipping yourself. Contact your area coordinator. He/she must come see what you are chipping and that it is defensible space you are clearing. You must submit your invoice to us, see address below. Also, we will help your private road group with costs of the Cal Fire - CDC crew expenses. Refer to the Roadside Fuel Reduction paragraph above.

SSFSC Volunteer Coordinators:

- The Skyline South of Rte 9 to Bear Creek Rd:
Ken MacLean 354-5636, email:
kenymac@verizon.net
- Rte 9 east & north along Skyline to Page Mill -
Alpine: Jim Craik 408-868-9610, email:
frances@addisonmarketing.com or Dick
Schwind schwindr@yahoo.com
- Rte 9 west: Mike Begley 408-867-3973, email:
michaelbegley@earthlink.net

- Portola Heights: Bill Sorich 650-949-0761,
email: hedstorms@earthlink.net
- Middleton Tract: Lori LaRue email:
lorilarue@earthlink.net
- Portola State Park Road and Upper Alpine
Road: Judy Grote 650-949-1437, email:
judygrote@gmail.com (note: our FireSafe
Council does not extend down Alpine Rd
below the State Park Rd, but if someone there
wishes to coordinate we will be happy to work
with you.)
- Rocky Creek - Heacocks area: Ken Broome
650- 529-1810; email:
broome.assocs@gmail.com
- Rapley Ranch West - Langley Quarry Rd
area: Ami and Dick Jacqua, 650-851-1243 (no
internet)
Also, you can contact Dick Schwind for all
areas.

The CalFire Chief has stated, "Those Bonny Doon fires could have occurred almost anywhere in the county". Are you (mostly) prepared? First, achieve the Defensible Space for your home. The mutual aid Fire Company likely to respond to save your home could arrive in a huge city fire engine. Some firefighter in his heavy turnout gear will probably need to hike up/down your driveway to check out your defensible space, access and turn around for their engine, your 2 1/2 inch fire hydrant valve hookup access, and the defensible space for their \$1/4 million (or so) fire engine! Without these why should they not go on to the next house?

A major wildfire will typically rain down on your home fire embers from a fire front as far away as a mile or so. These embers can move around and collect like a small snow drift 'looking' for access, even a crack, to lodge in and start your home on fire. Under a deck is a particularly vulnerable site. 1/8 inch galvanized wire screening is suggested over your house vents and vulnerable places.

Please Save for your Reference to our Programs.

Thank you for your generous support of the South Skyline FireSafe Council, a non-profit organization
Rt. 2 Box 324, La Honda, CA 94020
www.southskylinefiresafe.org
Pres: Dick Schwind 408-867-9422; V.P. Ken MacLean 408-354-5636; Treas: John DeLong 408-867-3205; address: SSFSC, Rt. 2 Box 324, La Honda CA 94020