

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

GETTING READY FOR WILDFIRES

What We Can Do to Be More Fire Safe

Johnsville is in a fire prone area. There has not been a big fire in a while but experts say it is ***not a matter of if a fire will come but when.*** How it burns, how safely we evacuate and how our houses fare is up to us along with Plumas Eureka State Park. As members of a nationally

EMBERS AND SMALL FLAMES ARE THE MAIN WAY THAT THE MAJORITY OF HOMES IGNITE DURING WILDFIRES (NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION)

certified Firewise Community, we commit to increasing our awareness of wildfire safety and taking steps to make our homes, property and town more resistant to wildfire. That can be as simple as keeping our lawns mowed, needles cleared and trees and bushes pruned.

Wildfire Insurance Much of California has had homeowner fire insurance dropped or the premiums increased dramatically. As a **member of a Firewise Community we get a 10% discount in wildfire insurance through the California Fairplan.** This is

recognition of the work done by homeowners to reduce fuel hazard and harden homes.

Wildfire Preparedness Effective ways to prepare for wildfires include: reducing vegetation within 30 feet of the home (required by PRC 4291) and hardening the home to resist embers and flames. These actions keep homeowner's insurance & are required by many companies:

- enclosing the base of decks and porches, and removing flammable items below decks and next to houses
- thinning, pruning and clearing vegetation and fuels around our homes,
- hardening your home by installing ember resistant vent screens (1/8 inch mesh or fire specific vents), adding fire resistant siding (like hardiplank) or double paned windows.

Information and Resources The Plumas Fire Safe Council has excellent resources on wildfire fire safety at www.plumasfiresafe.org/ Includes green waste drops and chipping programs.

More great information is also at www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA

READY SET GO

Being ready to go early and fast is the most important way to safely evacuate. There is only one good road and safe way in and out of Johnsville during a wildfire, along Johnsville Road. We need to be ready to go at a moment's notice or if things look unsafe. CALFIRE has great information at www.readyforwildfire.org/

SAFER EVACUATIONS

Working with Plumas Eureka State Park and US Forest Service

Johnsville and our primary evacuation route (Johnsville Road) is surrounded by Plumas Eureka State Park (PESP). We are fortunate that PESP has been thinning and burning around town and along the road over the last decade. PESP is planning to do further work in the coming years to maintain what they have done and add more. The blackened ground and trees along the road look bad to some people but it is important to understand that this is temporary and in the long run it makes it a lot safer. When branches, shrubs, and down wood burn it gets black because the fuel is consumed. That means that there is less to burn when a wildfire comes through later. It will burn less intensely. Less intense fire means less heat and makes it safer to drive near if we have to evacuate rapidly. Most people saw the scary pictures of evacuations in the Camp Fire with flames all around and overhead. That is what PESP is working hard to avoid. The Beckworth Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest is also coordinating with PESP to do cooperative prescribed burns around the Johnsville area. They also provide important

KEEPING FIREWISE CERTIFICATION

Track your clearing and home hardening

Firewise Communities are voluntary, informal, grassroots organizations. There is no budget and no fees (we just have to demonstrate work equivalent to twenty-five dollars for each residence per year). Keeping track of time or money you spend mowing your lawn, raking needles, pruning or cutting trees and shrubs or home hardening are necessary to keep our certification. Just let our Firewise Community committee members know. As best you can, also estimate how much was removed (i.e. wheel barrow or truck loads of vegetation or wood removed) and where it went (i.e. to local green waste or chipping). Committee members include JoAnn Fites-Kaufman (community lead), Melissa Sheets, Don Fregulia, and Joe Anderson. The more we record and submit, the better it is for the Fire Safe Council, Plumas Eureka State Park, and Plumas County in grant applications. They count our efforts as in-kind contributions.

INDIVIDUAL FIREWISE HOME ADVISORY VISITS

Free Walk Around Evaluations

You can schedule a free fire hazard and risk home advisory visit. Just contact Jo Ann. At this time, they are on hold due to Plumas County COVID safety requirements. If you contact me, then I can put you on a list for later. Plumas County Office of Emergency Services has a checklist that they use, based in part on the CALFIRE checklist for defensible space. There are additional items on home hardening. They are not reported and are just for your use. There are no requirements to implement any of the recommendations.

FUTURE UPDATES AND INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON THE JOHNNSVILLE PUC WEBSITE. YOU CAN ALSO EMAIL JOANNEFITES@GMAIL.COM FOR INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS OR TO GET ON THE INFORMAL MAILING LIST FOR OCCASIONAL HOT TOPICS.