



## **Fire safety in Circle Oaks**

Information for Property Owners and Insurers

The Circle Oaks community was developed in the late 1960s. A homeowners association was founded at the same time. The community has had an active fire safety program since the year 2000.

### **The Vegetation Management Program**

In August 2008, a comprehensive vegetation management plan was developed by “*Defensible Space Incorporated*”, an independent consultant. This document gave the homeowners association the information and guidance necessary for managing the various types of vegetation native to the community. It has been used regularly since that time. To read the Vegetation Management Plan [\(click here\)](#).

### **Community Wildfire Protection Plan**

In 2009, the association developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The community was evaluated for fire risk by both an independent consultant and CAL FIRE. This evaluation was used to develop a program of projects which has been executed over time to make the community more fire safe. This plan is regularly updated approximately every three years. The plan is approved by the County Supervisor, CAL FIRE, the board of directors of the homeowners association and the Circle Oaks County Water District . To read the CWPP [\(click here\)](#).

### **Regular fire safety inspections**

The community has a Fire Safety Council which is responsible for managing the CWPP plan and its projects. Members of this council annually inspect every parcel in the community and provide the owners with advice on areas that need attention. This program has proven to be very successful in that of 179 homes, typically only four or five require additional follow-up. To see examples of the inspection forms used [\(click here\)](#).

### **A “Firewise Community”**

The National Fire Protection Association(NFPA) has a program called “Firewise Communities USA”. The Circle Oaks Community has been nationally recognized as a “Firewise Community” since 2008. To receive this recognition, a community must have a community risk assessment, have a Fire Safe Council, a CWPP, and spend a defined amount of money per capita in the community each year on fire safety projects. The community must also provide outreach and education to its members and conduct an annual “Firewise Day” where current topics and educational material on fire safety is covered. In California, USAA gives policy holders a discount on their premium if they live in a “Firewise Community”. Other insurance providers are expected to follow. To learn more about Firewise Communities USA [\(Click here\)](#).

**Water System Upgrade**

In 2010, the property owners of Circle Oaks approved (and paid for) a \$3.6 million bond to repair, improve and upgrade the water system. Storage capacity was increased by 130,000 gallons by replacing old and installing new bolted steel water tanks. (Current new capacity is 480,000 gallons). The storage now exceeds the CAL FIRE requirements for 2 hour sustained firefighting. The existing tank-to-tank pump was upgraded and a complete back-up pump system was installed, along with a new state-of-the-art computer management system. All 50 fire hydrants in the community were replaced with new, latest code-required equipment.

**The Napa Firewise Relationship**

The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation has been providing a county wide chipping program as well as funding grants for communities throughout the county for the past 10 years. The current manager of the homeowners association has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation throughout this time. He is currently the president of the Napa Communities Firewise Foundation. This relationship has helped the Circle Oaks Community with project work, educational materials, chipping and of course mitigation grants.

**Financially committed**

The Circle Oaks Homes Association has regularly spent 50-60% of its membership dues on annual fire safety work. The community has also been very successful in acquiring additional funds for additional fire safety projects from several grant providing organizations. The table below summarizes these monetary expenditures.

**Community fire safety expenditures and grant funding.**

Year	Expenditure	Grant Received	Grant From	Cash and In-Kind Contribution
2000	\$515	None		\$515
2001	\$50,934	None		\$50,934
2002	\$25,061	\$50,000	BLM	\$50,000
2003	\$97,201	\$50,000	BLM	\$50,000
2004	\$66,449	\$50,000	BLM	\$50,000
2005	\$78,622	\$25,000	BLM	\$35,000
2006	\$62,925	None		\$44,000
2007	\$83,315	\$45,000	BLM	\$45,000
2008	\$41,008	None		\$45,000
2009	\$44,174	\$75,000	USFS	\$59,500
2010	\$110,862	None		\$19,100
2011	\$22,245	None		\$67,390
2012	\$44,650	None		\$67,300
2013	\$55,150	\$6,000	NCFF	\$77,800
2014	\$58,572	\$4,000	NCFF	\$91,098
2015	\$52,400	\$7,000	NCFF	\$82,400

← 2015 Budgeted

- BLM - Bureau of Land Management Grant
- USFS - U.S. Forest Service Grant
- NCFF - Napa Communities Firewise Foundation Grant