

FIREWISE PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Given by Ms. Luana Dowling, Placer County Firewise Coordinator
at the Saddleback Board Meeting on 8/22/18

At the last Saddleback HOA Board meeting, **Ms. Luana Dowling, Placer County Firewise Coordinator**, provided an overview of the **Firewise Fire Prevention Program** and described program requirements, benefits, and answered several questions for the HOA residents in attendance.

Saddleback residents may recall that a Firewise Home Fire Safety brochure was included in the last HOA newsletter that was mailed to all residents. Essential features of the Firewise program are fire prevention measures that should be taken by residents in a wildland environment, that if followed, will provide defensible space to prevent wildfire from spreading in our neighborhood.

Besides creating a safer place to live, **being certified as a “Firewise Neighborhood” could also mean lower risk of house insurance cancellation and a possible reduction in insurance premiums.** Several residents in attendance shared stories of insurance cancellations and rate increases. One only has to recall the devastation in Santa Rosa last year, or this year’s terrible fires in Redding and other locations to know the importance of this program.

So what does it take to be a Firewise neighborhood? The first steps have already been taken by the HOA Board. We have invited Ms. Dowling for an informational briefing and by unanimous vote of the HOA Board Directors present, have agreed to further explore developing the program at Saddleback. The next steps are up to all of us.

1. In the near future, and as Ms. Dowling’s schedule permits, an HOA fire safety assessment will be conducted over a one to two day period of time. This will be an assessment from publically available areas in the neighborhood where the general physical condition of properties will be evaluated for weeds, brush, dead trees, and similar fire hazards. Also, mitigating conditions will be noted such as access to fire ponds, any water tanks, etc. that could be used for fire suppression. Specific property conditions will not be documented in a report, only general conditions that will lead to general recommendations for our HOA. HOA residents are invited to participate to understand the criteria that is being used and the rationale for the recommendations. The assessment time/date will be announced when that information becomes available.
2. Our HOA needs to establish a “Firewise Committee” that must consist of at least 4 residents and one HOA Board member to review the Firewise report recommendations and establish a Plan of Action to address neighborhood fire safety deficiencies. **Interested residents should contact David Franklin**, the

HOA Architectural Committee Chairperson if you are interested in participating.
See below for contact information

Firewise Committee responsibilities include:

- The Firewise Committee will hold **periodic meetings to address fire safety progress** and provide input to Ms. Dowling regarding the Firewise assessment recommendation closure
- **Coordinate an initial Firewise information meeting for all HOA residents**, and periodic (annual) Firewise meetings with HOA residents to share information and report progress on becoming a Firewise community.
- **Share information about brush chipper programs** and other fire risk reduction measures.
- **Coordinate periodic fire safety work parties** to assist our neighbors that lack resources to reduce fire risk.
- **Seek grant funding where appropriate** for community fire safety projects.
- **Track volunteer fire prevention hours.** A very minimal requirement of one manhour per resident per year is required to maintain Firewise accreditation. If we simply mark our hours (approximately) on a calendar and provide a summary that should be sufficient and not too burdensome.

This may seem like a lot of requirements, but with any new program, a few upfront details and rules are necessary. We only have to reflect a few moments about the beauty that surrounds us here at Saddleback to know that preventing **wildfire needs to be a high priority for each of us, and that we all have a part to play.**

Thank you for considering this important program. More to follow soon.

DAVID FRANKLIN, Saddleback Architectural Committee Director

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