

Annual Firewise Resident Leader Meeting

2/6/26

Prepared by Karen Caldwell

Tuolumne Fire Safe Council, Firewise Program Coordinator

Firewise Program 2025 Accomplishments

Total # Firewise Communities at end of 2025= 22

4 new communities added in 2025

- Scenic Brook (west side Phoenix Lake Rd)
- Old Mono Road (Cold Springs)
- Pinewood/Upper Sullivan (Twain Harte)
- Cedar Ridge (Kewin Mill Rd. North)

2026 New Applications - pending

- Strawberry Meadow View (Strawberry)
- Curtis Creek Ranch (Sonora)
- River Drive (Strawberry)

2025 Total Risk Reduction Investments by 22 Firewise Communities

Chipper Costs	\$12,777
Other Equipment Costs	\$398,534
Contractor Costs	\$347,172
Home Improvements	\$948,698
Grants	none
Vehicle Mileage	\$1,855
Landscaping	\$145,986
Miscellaneous	\$18,688
Hrs. Worked Calculation	\$1,145,760
Total Risk Reduction Investment	\$2,662,869

Total Cubic Yards of Vegetation Removed: 11,660.01 cu. Yds.

2025 Volunteer - Hours

Dwelling Unit	Landscaping	Common Areas	Admin	Total Hours
8,879.5 hours	20,024 hours	3,898.5 hours	1,410 hours	34,212 hours

Independent Sector, Value of Volunteer Time

34,212 hours X \$34.79 (National Value 2025) =

34,212 hours X \$40.14 (CA value 2024) =

Total “National” Investment value for 2025 = \$ 1,190,235.48

Total “California” Investment value for 2025 = \$ 1,373,269.68

CALFIRE: Chief Jeff Cox and Colby Seibel led a discussion about the Qualifying Entity (QE) Training held 1/24-25. Many Firewise Community Leaders attended. At the end of this course, attendees are certified to conduct p.r.c. 4291 (defensible space) “assessments” on residential properties. CALFIRE sponsored the training and is very supportive of Firewise Communities providing educational assessments to homeowners as a service.

Assessments ARE NOT Inspections. Many of you are planning to offer residents defensible space assessments. This consists of a walk around with a property owner to discuss and share information about opportunities to improve the defensible space around their home. Karen raised concerns about the perception that Firewise is doing compliance inspections. There was agreement that there must be clarity that these Assessments are about education and assistance. We should avoid the word compliance.

- Assessors must be invited onto the property by the owner.

- “Compliance” inspections can only be done by CALFIRE or the City of Sonora if you reside inside Sonora boundary.
- Opportunity to educate and get improved defensible space in the community.
- Data collected is to be used for broader trend analysis by CALFIRE. It will NOT be used or stored with “compliance” data.
- It’s up to us to make this a positive tool and experience for our communities.

LIVING WITH FIRE SERIES: <https://tuolumnefiresafe.org/living-with-fire-series/> Please help spread the word.

The Tuolumne Fire Safe Council and the League of Women Voters of the Mother Lode have partnered to sponsor an event to educate residents on the increasing risk of wildfire threat to our homes, businesses, infrastructure, and natural resources. The goal is to improve knowledge and understanding of the many factors that influence wildfire behavior and how we can learn to live with wildfire through adaptation and participation of all.

Through the generous support of the Columbia College Foundation and Black Oak Casino Resort the Living with Fire Series has become a reality.

The event will feature films, speakers, panel discussions, and audience participation activities. Each session will build on the other, but each also stands alone. The event is **FREE and open to all**.

When: March 7, 14, 21 (Saturdays) from 9am-1pm. Come to 1, 2, or all 3 sessions.

Green Waste Disposal (fee sites) If anyone knows of other green waste facilities, please let Karen know.

The Plainview Rd. green waste site is now owned by **Wise Woodworks**. They are open Monday thru Saturday, 8am-4pm. Plainview Road is at the top of Twain Harte grade.

The **Cal Sierra Earth Resource Facility** is located at 14909 Camage Ave., Sonora (off of Tuolumne Road). They are open Tuesday – Saturday, 8 am - 3:30 pm.

Acronyms

YSS = Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions: Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) is a collaborative group of diverse interests working together to assist the United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Yosemite National Park and private land managers in achieving healthy forests and watersheds and in developing recovery and restoration plans for the Rim Fire and other areas in need of rehabilitation. YSS is located in Tuolumne County.

SERAL Project = The Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) project is a massive, multi-year forest management initiative on the Stanislaus National Forest (California) designed to restore forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and support the local economy across over 100,000 acres. Developed collaboratively with Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS), it focuses on proactive thinning, prescribed fire, and, in some areas, post-fire recovery.

WUI = Wildland Urban Interface

TUCARE = Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources and Environment, Inc., (TuCARE) was established to enlighten and advise the public on conservation and the wise use of natural resources.

TFSC = Tuolumne Fire Safe Council

County Green Waste Disposal Program - Debbie Reagan, Tuolumne County

Debbie reported that last year's trial of the green waste disposal program (chipper and bags) was a success. She is already booking with Firewise Communities for 2026 events. Contact Debbie if you want to schedule an event for this year.

Debbie Reagan, Solid Waste Director

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209-533-6583

TUCARE donation to TFSC (Tuolumne Fire Safe Council) for Neighborhood Fuels Reduction Project in Firewise Communities

TUCARE (Tuolumne County Alliance for Resources & Environment) has provided \$50,000 grant to the TFSC for fuel reduction projects for recognized Firewise Communities. Please see the attached. The group discussed options for how to spread and make these funds available to the individual Communities.

Some suggested a process should be developed to spread the funds based on the size of the Community. Others supported an equal spread to all 22 communities. Decision was to spread evenly for this year. For future grant opportunities, the group can look at other options.

Each Community will be reimbursed for up to \$2000. The remainder may go to the 3 new communities that are in for approval. The funds will be managed by the TFSC who will issue reimbursement checks upon receiving receipts/documentation from the community. Each Community must submit an application for fuels reduction project(s). Examples might include: chipper/dumpster rental, service contract for faller, spring clean-up event, roadside clearing, etc.)

Karen Caldwell will be sending out the application form soon.

Reporting at the end of your work project will be required. Funds expire after December 31, 2026.

Overall, it was a good meeting with a jam-packed agenda and full turnout. Need to look at how to better organize and manage our time next year.

Thank you to all of the guest speakers and to everyone who attended.