

Cascade Shores Firewise Committee

Dear Cascade Shores Resident or Owner,

Cascade Shores is an official “Firewise Community” and is part of the national FIREWISE movement. Supported and guided by fire officials, FIREWISE seeks to reduce the risk of devastating wildfires in wooded areas. We work with the direction of the Nevada County Fire Safe Council which sponsors numerous FIREWISE communities within our county. Our standing is subject to review and renewal each year.

Does FIREWISE mean that we are fire safe? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!!** Instead, what it means is that we have acquired needed information and put into place some practices which can help us to become a safer place as we move forward. We have a dedicated Firewise Committee. We have worked closely with the Fire Safe Council and with fire officials to learn about hazards and mitigating dangers. A professional assessment, Cascade Shores Community Wildfire Hazard Report, was published to pinpoint specific risks and issues in Cascade Shores. Our annual fire safety education days and our efforts to remind residents with various road signs have helped to raise awareness. Our Committee sponsors Americorps fuel reduction projects in Cascade Shores. We partnered with emergency services to update evacuation plans. We try to coordinate “30-day Clean-up Notices” with fire officials who are stepping up their property inspections. The Hazard Report and other information is available to you at cascadeshores.org where you can also find out about clearance rules and tap into local resources for fire prevention. Click on “Fire Safe Council” at the homepage’s left index. Look here for future postings and updates.

How can we protect ourselves and our property from a forest fire bearing down on Cascade Shores? The most important thing is to have a family evacuation plan in place. With enough warning time, you can take steps to prepare your property. Make a list of essentials to take with you. Decide on a emergency meeting place for your family members. Refer to our publication, Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Guide.

Nobody is being asked to fight a fire that has gotten into the tree canopy. However, we are asking you to check your property for places where a small fire might find its way into the big trees. Surface areas on your lot or on your house or deck can become the footholds for the ignition of a larger fire. Please be aware that wind blown burning embers, or firebrands, can pelt your property well ahead of the main fire front, potentially causing numerous spot fires. To quote from the Hazard Report, “these tiny firebrands may represent the most significant threat of fire within the community.” No, we can’t defend against a forest fire bearing down on us, but we can reduce our risks from these burning embers by taking away the obvious dangers presented by surface debris and thick brush. The facts are that nearly half the homes lost to wildfire each year in this country are not consumed by the fire front. Instead, they burn because of these embers, even when the main fire may have been stopped miles away. Do your part and clear your property (out to 100 ft.) of serious fire “footholds.” Vacant lot owners should thin out overgrowth and deadfall to provide ample firebreaks.

How can we help?

1. If you are unsure about how to make your property safer, ask for a “Defensible Space Advisory Visit” from a Firewise trained volunteer. No charge.
2. If you are having trouble clearing out 100 feet from your home because of an adjacent property, we may be able to advise.
3. If you are low income, elderly, or handicapped, we may be able to secure assistance in clearing your property.
4. Refer your fire insurance agent to our website and mention our “Firewise Community” designation. Some companies are give policy discounts to these safer communities.
5. Contact us if you need an extra, current Evacuation Guide.
6. If you have any ideas or want to help in supporting our work, please let us know, call Christina at 707-484-1918.