

FIRE PREPAREDNESS UPDATE #20
from the CVCA Firewise Team

Great News...! Our renewal application and updated 3-year *Action Plan* were accepted by the National Firewise USA® Program and CalFire. That means Carmel Views will remain a Firewise-recognized community for the next 3 years – just as long as we submit a report each fall on our community' Firewise investments. A **GIANT THANK YOU** to everyone in the community who helped by responding to Firewise information requests!

The new 3-year Action Plan and current Firewise certificate can be accessed [here](#) on the *Fire Abatement* page of the Carmel Views website. Your insurance company may request a copy of the Firewise certificate to provide a homeowner's insurance discount. (If any links in this email do not automatically open when you click on them, simply right click on the link and select "Open Hyperlink.")

Despite our community's gains, the recent horrific fires in Los Angeles should be sobering for all of us. Fires can and do affect suburban areas, like ours, with no fire history. According to news reports, homes that were well-hardened and had firesafe landscaping were more likely to survive the LA conflagrations.

Our community has already done a lot, but much more is needed to secure our safety from wildfires. According to our recent community *Risk Assessment*, Carmel Views homeowners need to get more serious about (1) hardening their homes, (2) making their landscaping firesafe out to 100 feet; and (3) fulfilling legal obligations to manage fuels adjacent to neighboring properties and roadways.

Fortunately, many excellent resources are available to help. Read on....!!

1) Familiarize yourself with CalFire's online information resources

CalFire's *Ready for Wildfire* website ([here](#)) now provides exceptionally clear guidance and advice on wildfire preparedness.

Check out the drop-down menus of the *Defensible Space* page ([here](#)) for how-to instructions about creating a safety buffer of defensible space. Note especially

the requirement for an “ember-resistant” zone from 0 to 5 feet away from your home. (Wildfire experts say that maintaining this cleared zone is one of the easiest and **MOST** effective preventative measures you can take.) Also, importantly, become familiar with spacing requirements for trees and shrubs. Spacing trees so that their canopies (green branches) are separated by at least 10 feet helps prevent fires from jumping between trees. Spacing is particularly important for pines, cypress, and other conifers that contain highly flammable oils and resins. (Although coastal oaks and other trees with leathery green leaves will burn at high temperatures, they are generally more ignition-resistant than conifers.)

The *Home Hardening* page ([here](#)) provides drop-down menus with a bounty of home hardening tips – ranging from roofs, windows, and vents to garages, fences, and gutters – along with links to retrofit guides and other online resources. And the *Evacuation* page ([here](#)) tells you how to prepare your family and home for evacuation and to stay informed and safe should an evacuation order be issued.

2) If reading isn't your thing, watch this video.

Several Firewise communities in Carmel Valley hosted a *Carmel Valley Firewise Preparedness* event on January 17, 2025. The event included presentations on:

- Homeowner's insurance by a representative of the California Department of Insurance;
- The ignition-resistant 0-5' zone by a representative of Monterey County Regional Fire District. (MCRFD services much of Carmel Valley, but not our community, which is serviced by Cypress Fire Protection District); and
- Evacuation procedures by representatives of the Monterey County Department of Emergency Management and Sheriff's Office.

A video of the event is available on YouTube [here](#). Slides of the presentations can be viewed on the Robles Firewise website [here](#) (about halfway down the page).

3) Participate in the upcoming CHIPPER DAY– starting March 3.

Yay! – another Chipper Day is near. Now is the time to have cut branches and brush removed from your property for FREE!!

The next Chipper period will run from March 3-14. That means you will need to have your piles neatly stacked along the roadside by **8AM on March 3**. Most members of the community are familiar by now with the program's requirements, but if you aren't, clear guidance can be found on the Cypress Fire Protection District website [here](#). Non-compliant materials may not be removed.

Please remember that February through August is nesting season for the native and migratory birds now filling our yards with birdsong. Exercise care when you are trimming trees and shrubs to leave bird nests undisturbed. For more on how you can both reduce wildfire risks AND protect wildlife, see this guide on *Conservation Fuel Management* available on the Carmel Valley Association website [here](#).

4) Volunteer to help keep Carmel Views Firewise

After more than 4 years on the job, Liz Chornesky is planning to leave the role of Firewise Lead this year. But who will take her place? Please step up and do your part to help Carmel Views stay Firewise!

Routine elements of the role include:

- Keeping up to date on Firewise resources and information;
- Writing quarterly *Fire Preparedness Updates*;
- Encouraging community action; and
- Submitting an annual report to Firewise USA® to renew our recognition status.

The work can easily be split between 2 or more people, and Liz will provide whatever support is needed.

Please contact Liz at CarmelViewsFirewise@gmail.com to volunteer. The tasks are fun and interesting – and a great way to learn about our community and meet people!

*Please email Liz Chornesky, the current Carmel Views Firewise Lead (CarmelViewsFirewise@gmail.com), and copy your message to the Board (cvcaboard@gmail.com), if you have any questions or comments about this or future **CVCA Fire Preparedness Updates**.*