



Welcome to the BCFSC's July 2025 Newsletter

This month, we pause to honor the one-year anniversary of the Park Fire—a tragedy that forever changed the lives of our Cohasset community members. The courage of selfless, strong, and resilient people—many of whom have faced wildfire's relentless return more than once—continues to drive our purpose. Their perseverance through heartbreak and ash reminds us why this work matters so deeply.

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."
— Confucius

Mitigations that Matter



*“Just as fires start with a single spark, the work of the Council moves at a deliberate and steady pace—connecting one landowner at a time to carry out the mitigation efforts that will support human life in a fire-adapted landscape.” — **Andrea Dunlap, Creative Director at [Rain Industries](#)***

We recently had the pleasure of spending an afternoon in the field with **Andrea Dunlap** —creative director, storyteller, and powerful voice at the intersection of fire, climate, and community. We toured the landscapes of Butte County, sharing stories and strategies for proactive wildfire resilience and regenerative land design.

One of our stops brought us to a **BCFSC prescribed underburn unit in Magalia**, where we reflected on the ecological shifts that followed the spring burn. Members of the **Berry Creek Rancheria** shared their observations: just days after the burn, flickers and deer had returned, rolling in the ash and feeding on the phosphorus- and potassium-rich soil left behind. For those with **Traditional Ecological Knowledge**, these are not just signs of recovery—they’re lived experiences of the powerful, healing effects of good fire on a fire-adapted landscape that has gone far too long without it.

We also visited Doe Mill Ridge in Forest Ranch, where fire scars meet ongoing pre-fire work. Through the **WUI-Wide Doe Mill Ridge Mastication Project**, we’re clearing dense understory fuels to nurture a healthier, more resilient forest—one capable of standing as a strong carbon sink and welcoming the return of good fire to the land. This work not only lessens the risk of extreme CO₂ emissions from high-severity wildfires, but also helps safeguard lives and fortify the resilience of those living in Butte County’s Wildland Urban Interface.

For millennia, people have lived in rhythm with these landscapes. It is only in the past few centuries that this balance has been so deeply disturbed. True restoration is a generational journey—one that asks for patience, long-term vision, deep community connection, and an unwavering commitment to ecological and social healing.

A heartfelt thank you to Andrea Dunlap of Rain Industries for joining us in the field and taking the time to understand not just what we do at the Butte County Fire Safe Council—but why we do it. Andrea captured the spirit of the day in her thoughtful video and write-up in **[Fire News, Now](#)**, her monthly collection of wildfire, climate, and fire

technology stories (We highly recommend giving it a read and subscribing!)

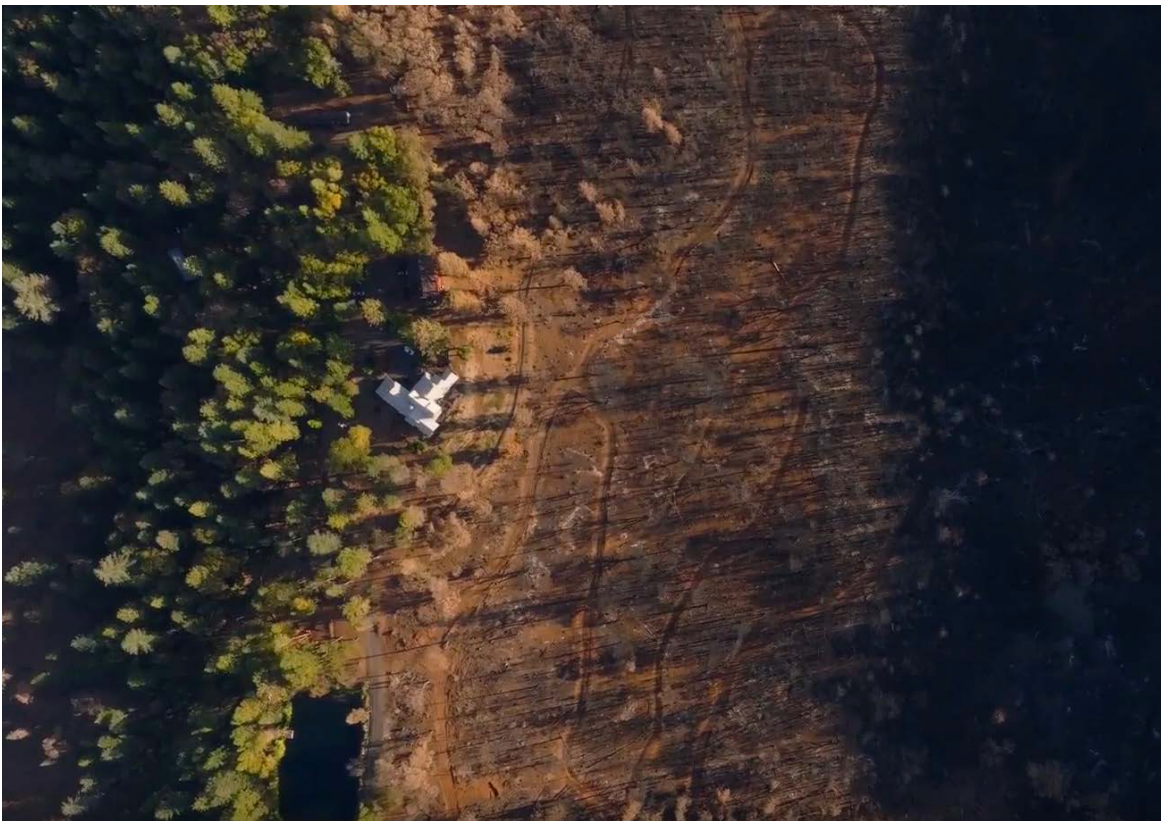
“The Council opens one gate at a time—piecing the land back together, because fire does not honor property lines.”

You can explore Andrea’s reflections here: **[Fire Has a Place](#)**

As we look forward, we renew our commitment to this regenerative work—because the work of restoring land does not end when the flames are gone.



Rooted in Resilience



The 2024 Park Fire burned over 450,000 acres and destroyed more than 700 structures. It was both the largest and most destructive wildfire in California in 2024. The Park Fire ignited the afternoon of July 24, and fueled by record-breaking heat, strong winds, and dry fuels, grew to nearly 45,000 acres in nine hours. The fire's rapid growth threatened the communities of Cohasset and Forest Ranch, and caused a series of evacuation orders, impacting thousands of residents.

Yet, the worst-case scenario did not materialize. Today, [the Green Island in central](#)

Cohasset and the **Green Wall in Eastern Forest Ranch** are living proof that proactive, landscape-level fuels reduction works. These pockets of protection didn't happen by chance; they are the result of years of intentional, dedicated collaboration between the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC), and dozens of local, State and Federal agency partners.

Butte County's communities continue to adapt to a changing climate by taking practical, actionable steps to reduce wildfire risk and build both ecological and community resilience. In Forest Ranch, neighbors recently partnered with **New Cal Metals**, **O'Brien Mountain Home**, **Vulcan Vents**, and The BCFSC to retrofit the beloved Forest Ranch Community Center, hosting a hands-on event focused on vent retrofits and home hardening techniques. Similarly, Merry Mountain Village in Southern Butte County recently came together for a community workday, burning piles to reduce hazardous—another testament to the power of collective action.



Working Toward Solutions: Status Update for FEMA Project Participants

We want to sincerely thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we navigate the complexities of the **FEMA PJ0497 Hazard Mitigation project**. As a grassroots 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we recognize the significant delays that have occurred and deeply appreciate your commitment throughout this process. The Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) has been operating under ongoing uncertainty surrounding FEMA and other federally funded programs.

These challenges include frequent changes and limited access to clear information, which have made it increasingly difficult to move forward with confidence. After much deliberation, we've made the difficult decision to step away from FEMA funding for this project. This choice was not made lightly, but it is necessary to ensure we can continue to serve our communities now and into the future.

We are actively working to fold as many FEMA participants as possible into alternative grant programs. However, these sources are far more limited and require us to be strategic in how we prioritize properties across Butte County. We are currently coordinating the implementation of two project categories - **Defensible Space Clearance** and **Hazard Tree Removal**. Please note that while we have secured limited

supplemental funding, assistance is currently being prioritized based on the constraints of the grant boundaries. The BCFSC remains dedicated to finding solutions and securing alternative funding to continue supporting landowners like you.

Participants can learn more about the solutions being explored for their community through current alternative funding sources by visiting our [\[www.buttefiresafe.net/FEMA\]website](http://www.buttefiresafe.net/FEMA) or by calling our office at (530) 877-0984.

Thank you for your understanding and continued commitment to wildfire safety in Butte County.

Introducing the Poems on Fire StoryMap



We're excited to share the launch of the [Poems on Fire StoryMap](#) — an interactive experience that weaves poetry, history, and imagery to explore Butte County's fire-impacted landscapes. This collaborative project offers a unique, reflective journey through the fire scars that shape our region, honoring both the grief and the resilience that follow wildfire.

We hope this work helps you feel a deeper connection to the lands we live in, drive through, and care for. We also hope it inspires continued investment in the many community efforts that strengthen our collective safety and support forest health in Butte County.

Each wildfire has brought both tragedy and opportunities to strengthen community ties. We remain deeply grateful to our firefighters, first responders, and Tribal partners, whose traditional ecological knowledge is vital to restoring balance to these landscapes.

Looking ahead, we envision a future where cultural burning, led by Tribal communities, and prescribed fire are practiced at a scale that reduces devastation while nurturing ecosystems. May this StoryMap foster connection, reflection, and support for the work that lies ahead — from grassroots action to Tribal-led initiatives that protect our forests and communities.

Explore the StoryMap

News & Notables

This spirit of collaboration, learning, and action continues to inspire us. We're excited to partner with local radio station [KZFR](#) this summer for a special series: *Living with Wildfire: Voices from Butte County*. Tune in to [90.1FM KZFR Chico](#) this August to hear powerful conversations about wildfire, land stewardship, and resilience in the places we call home.

Thank you to [KZFR](#) for uplifting these important stories!

Our Forests & Foothills

Fire News, Now: **Butte County Special Edition**

Free Green Waste Disposal for Butte County Residents in the Wildland Urban Interface

California: **Forestlands Closed to Public Access** Due to Wildfire Risk

Air quality alert issued as Green Fire, others burn in Shasta-Trinity National Forest

Plumas National Forest enters **Stage I Fire Restrictions**

Beyond Butte County

CAL FIRE Launches Online Viewer to **Monitor Vegetation Burn Severity From California Wildfires**

Stay Informed: **Daily Wildfire Stats** from the National Interagency Fire Center

[Canada's forests may be burning faster than they can grow back](#)

[We set a big chunk of California wilderness on fire. You're welcome](#)

[Wildfire destroys a historic Grand Canyon lodge and other structures](#)

[Oregon's record-breaking wildfire season ends with more than 1.9 million acres burned](#)

Tools & Tips

[Do You Live in a Firewise Community?](#)

[Our No-Cost Chipper Program is available County-Wide!](#)

[Butte County Evacuation Zone Map](#)

[Keep Posted on Wildfires and Prescribed Burns with the Watch Duty App](#)

From Our Executive Director



This July marks the one year since the Thompson and Park Fires. The Park Fire, which began in Chico, impacted the communities of Cohasset, Richardson Springs, and Forest Ranch, while the Thompson Fire affected the community of Oroville-- leaving behind not only a changed landscape, but also a trail of memory, resilience, and communities dedicated to rising from the ashes.

In the face of devastation, residents showed remarkable courage, compassion and an unwavering commitment to their community. The individuals, communities, and organisations that responded--and continue to support recovery-- embody the very definition of resilience. This is evident throughout Butte County, especially given the compounded impacts of wildfire over the past seven years. Many have faced wildfire's return more than once. Their perseverance in the face of unimaginable loss inspires our work every day and reminds us why it matters so deeply.

Restoration isn't linear. It's iterative, messy and often humbling. And for those who've walked a recovering landscape, it can also be breathtaking. In autumn, native grasses emerge where ash once settled. Wildlife corridors begin to take shape in newly opened forests. A prescribed burn might drift like memory--smoke curling through pine, light filtering through black oak-- reminding us that both land and people are capable of healing.

We are deeply grateful for the first responders, community members, county officials, and all those continuing the hard work of recovery in Butte County. Standing together, we embody the strength, hope and determination that define this region.

Together, we honor the past, nurture recovery, and forge a future where our communities and forest thrive in harmony--resilient, connected, and prepared.

Sincerely,

Taylor Nilsson
Executive Director
Butte County Fire Safe Council
(BCFSC)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taylor Nilsson', with a large loop at the start and a trailing flourish.

Help us Achieve our Mission



At the Butte County Fire Safe Council, we work every day to protect forests, homes, and communities from the growing threat of wildfire. Our mission is rooted in love for the land and the people who live here. Through fuels reduction, Firewise education, and ecological restoration, we're creating a safer, more resilient Butte County.

But we can't do it alone. Your donation helps us train volunteers, remove hazardous fuels, empower landowners, and strengthen our shared defenses.

Your support directly powers our essential programs—and every contribution truly makes a difference. Each year, 10% of all donations to the Butte County Fire Safe Council are shared with our seven local Fire Safe Councils to fund impactful, community-based wildfire prevention projects.

Give today and help us protect what we all share.

Make an Impact



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