

Wildfire Safe Neighbors NEWS



Learn from Phil John — a very special friend of Ready Raccoon

Phil A. John (aka "Ready") created our mascot, Wildfire Ready Raccoon, in the wake of the 2008 fires that threatened many of Butte County's communities. Over the course of the 30 years that Phil called Paradise home, he found creative ways to motivate our communities' residents to be prepared for wildfire by maintaining defensible space, hardening buildings and knowing evacuation strategies.

Phil frequently advocated for wildfire safety by speaking to community groups, attending events, presenting at schools and marching in local parades as the "Wildfire Ready Raccoon." In addition, Phil volunteered through the Town of Paradise's Emergency Operations and also served on the Paradise Ridge Fire Safe Council for over a decade.

After the Nov. 8, 2018 Camp Fire, Phil helped our community recover in tremendous ways and was interviewed by

reporters globally. Phil and Ready made a difference! Phil passed away on June 11, 2019. He is dearly loved and missed by his wife Michelle, their three children and three grandchildren, and the Fire Safe Council family.

We hope that you enjoy Phil/Ready's story based on a 2012 interview. We invite you to join the Fire Safe Council team!



Phil John

Join us as a friend!

Your membership in Friends of Butte County Fire Safe Council means you are helping to make your community more fire safe and keeping our forests healthier.

What we do

Healthy Forests

- Chipper Program
- Forest Thinning Projects
- Project Tours

Firesafe Neighbors

- Local Fire Safe Councils
- Weed Wrench Loans
- Presentations

Prepared Community Members

- Youth Programs
- Evacuation Plans
- Home Visits

Member benefits

- ~Window sticker
- ~Membership card
- ~Invitation to community tours and events
- ~Informative newsletter

Membership levels

- \$35 individual (annual)
- \$45 family (annual)
- \$125 sponsor, church/business/club (annual)
- \$500 lifetime



Use the enclosed envelope to make a donation. Call 530/877-0984 to make a credit card donation or go to ButteFireSafe.net

Q: When was Wildfire Ready Raccoon born and what has he been doing?

A: Ready Raccoon was born after the fires of 2008 that burned through and threatened many of Butte County's communities. He loves going to community fairs like Gold Nugget Days and Johnny Applesed Days. He enjoys walking in parades and handing out his trading card to share with interested children.

Q: What is Wildfire Ready working on now?

A: He's writing a second book titled "The Story of Wildfire Ready...how Ready Raccoon Became Wildfire Ready." He's also working with Paradise High school on a rap song and video.

Q: Where can people learn more about Ready's wildfire safety message?

A: Ready's tips can be found at the Paradise Fire Safe Council paradisefiresafe.org or Butte County Fire Safe Council www.buttefiresafe.net.

Moving forward and helping our communities

By Jim Houtman
Project Manager

Jim Houtman has served Butte Fire Safe Council since March of 2019. He brings with him a 30+ year firefighting career, including working for the City of Chico Fire Department. Jim is instrumental in overseeing fuels reduction projects throughout the county and providing fire safety home visit information for community members.

Our world as we knew it changed on November 8, 2018. The Camp Fire has been, and will continue to be, a defining

“We’re adding new facets of services to this ‘new’ world we face.”

moment in our community’s history. It has changed everyone’s view of how wildfire behaves and brought awareness to the devastating effects that wildfire can have on any community.

With the one-year anniversary of the Camp Fire, we still see our communities in a process of trying to recover and move forward. We also see a renewed wildfire awareness in Butte County residents—as well as the within Californians who live in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

The Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) was not immune to the effects of the fire.

Four of our five staff members lost their homes and were forced to relocate. BCFSC’s office narrowly escaped the flames but suffered extensive smoke damage.

Like the rest of our communities, we pushed forward to put the pieces back together as best we could. Adjusting to the “new normal” had many challenges for us all, including extensive cleaning, bottled water, wi-fi hotspots, debris removal vehicles, road closures and so many more little things.

Slowly moving forward, we like so many, have chiseled our way back into the community—and we marvel at its resiliency.

Every day here at BCFSC is different. We are changing to meet the needs of our communities. From our staff of five

we have grown to 16. We are forging new ground and new concepts on a daily basis.

With growth, however, comes growing pains. We are a creative, adaptable and mindful team that is trying new and innovative ways to continue the work we



have always done while adding new facets to this new world we face. This includes tree removal assistance and extending our Chipper Program in the Camp Fire footprint to participating in numerous exciting collaboratives to assist and rebuild our communities.

We believe our role in the community is as important now as it ever was.



Jim Houtman

We are continuing to support and develop FireWise Communities along with our many local Fire Safe Councils. While many lost everything, we are encouraged to see that Forest Health and Fuel Reduction / Watershed Protection Projects have played an important role in our communities. The successes from past work saved so much in the Camp Fire footprint—Paradise Lake, Paradise High School, Pine Ridge School, Camelot Safety Zone and so much more.

For the past 20 years the BCFSC has always had the mission of fire safety, wildfire hazard education, mitigation and wildfire recovery.

We will continue to serve the citizens of Butte County to create communi-

ties that are resistant to the devastating impacts of wildfire. We are committed to developing new and exciting programs to assist our communities to be good land managers of our beautiful landscape. And lastly, we strive to be a shining example of a full-service Fire Safe Council for the rest of California.





“Before” and “after” photos from the Residents’ Assistance Program

Sixteen households in our community received free assistance in making their landscaping more firesafe through participation in a Residents’ Assistance Program funded by a recent grant from PG&E. Butte County Fire Safe Council administered the grant.

Under the grant, the program was available to county residents who are elderly, disabled or low-income. The council is awaiting further funds to continue the program in the future.

The photos here show how the

project assisted Magalia homeowners to remove trees and brush to make their home more firesafe.

For more information about programs offered by the Butte County Fire Safe Council, call 530/877-0984.

SAVE THE DATE: Dec. 6 – Annual Wildfire Safety Summit (Paradise)



Join a tour & discover the latest community projects!

Join the Butte County Fire Safe Council and your fellow community members for a walk in the forest to see recent projects and how they’re helping our local forests.

Call BCFSC at 877-0984 for information about these free and informative upcoming forest project tours:

- Nov. 14; Forest Ranch
- Nov. 16: Paradise
- Dec. 12: Forbestown

Community Fire Safe Council meetings are open to all			
Butte County	1st Wed	9 am at Town Hall	5555 Skyway, Paradise
Paradise	2nd Wed	9 am at Terry Ashe Park	6626 Skyway, Paradise
Berry Creek	2nd Sat	9 am at the Park	300 Rockerfeller Rd., Berry Creek
Yankee Hill	2nd Sun	9 am to Noon	Old School House
Forest Ranch	3rd Tues	7 pm at the Community Center	15807 Forest Ranch Rd., Forest Ranch
Feather Falls	3rd Wed	6 pm at the Grange	18334 Lumpkin Rd., Feather Falls
Forbestown	2nd Tue	6 pm at the Forbestown Community Hall	19100 New York Flat Rd., Forbestown
Lake Wyndotte/Oroville	4th Fri	10:30 am at the Cornucopia	515 Montgomery St., Oroville
Cohasset FSC	3rd Sat	2 pm, Cohasset Community Center	Cohasset Community Center, Cohasset

Your community-based Fire Safe Council has new services & programs



*Have you heard
Ready
Raccoon's
tips for being
wildfire ready?*



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Paradise, CA 95969
530/877-0984 (p)
530/877-0986 (f)

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**READY
RACCOON'S
MANY
ADVENTURES!**



INSIDE: Join us on a tour or at a community meeting!