

Fire Safe Council hosts Firewise workshop

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PUBLISHED: August 7, 2024 at 2:09 a.m.

OROVILLE – The Butte County Fire Safe Council is hosting a Firewise USA Leadership Workshop for residents interested in increasing their neighborhood’s wildfire preparedness.

The workshop is from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday at Cal Fire Station 66, 4795 Foothill Boulevard. To sign up to attend visit <https://buttefiresafe.net> and click on events tab.

The Firewise USA is a national program that teaches people how to organize their neighborhoods into Firewise Communities by taking the necessary actions to help reduce the risk of wildfire destruction by working together to create defensible space, fire-harden their homes and prepare evacuation plans. In addition to creating safer places to live, those living within certified Firewise communities may also receive a discount on their fire insurance.

“We’ll will provide information on how to establish a Firewise Community,” said Lauren DeTerra, Butte County Fire Safe Council director of community engagement. “By working with their neighbors, through volunteer efforts, to share information and take actions people can do a lot on their own to make their properties and those properties around them fire safe.”



The workshop will include an overview of how the Firewise Community program works; forms to apply to become a Firewise Community; and assistance with reviewing maps to help form boundaries Firewise Communities.

Three of the application requirements are creating a map that shows the boundaries of the proposed Firewise Community boundaries; a risk assessment of the area within those boundaries; and, a three-year action plan to address the risks.

Members of the Fire Safe Council team will provide those who volunteer to become a Firewise leader for their neighborhood assistance in completing these components of the application before submitting the plan to Cal Fire for approval.

“Having us help with the application is not a requirement but, we’re here to help,” said De Terra. “We’ll do either a walk through or drive through of the area with them to do the risk assessment; help them create the

boundary make; and, make suggestions for their action plan if they want us to before they submit their application. We are really here as support.”

Firewise Communities must have a minimum of eight residents but can include up to 2,500 homes making it viable for existing large neighbor organizations such as home owners associations to apply.

To become a certified Firewise Community does not require participation by all residents within its boundaries. However, the more neighbors who do participate the more effective the results.

“There’s just more momentum and typically better and faster results the more people you have participating,” said DeTerra. “It improves the chances of a neighborhood’s survival if the whole community is prepared.”

Currently there are 27 certified Firewise Communities in Butte County including the entire communities of Forest Ranch, Cohasset, Concow and Berry Creek. There is only one certified Firewise Community in the Oroville area in the Lake Wyandotte community.

“It would be a great goal but a huge goal to have every neighborhood, every community in the county designated as a Firewise Community,” said DeTerra. “What we’d like to see though, at the very least, is all of our communities in the wildland interface areas to be Firewise Communities.”

The Saturday Firewise USA workshop is currently the only one scheduled in the Oroville area but DeTerra said that if the workshop fills up and more people are interested the Fire Safe Council would be willing to schedule additional workshops. To schedule a training email DeTerra at ready@buttefiresafe.net