

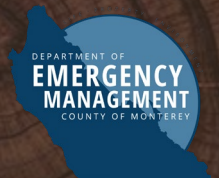
WILDFIRE READY

Monterey County

Wildfire County Coordinator Program



CALIFORNIA
Fire Safe
COUNCIL





Contents

1. Preface
2. Vision
3. WCC Grant
4. Information Gathering
5. Plans & Policies
6. Organization
7. Information Resources
8. Geospatial Information Resources
9. Potential Community Programs



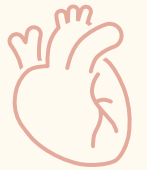
Preface



Los Angeles Times

4/14/2026

For the first time in County history, Monterey County is establishing a coordinated wildfire resilience program to strengthen and align existing efforts. This program is **weaving** into the rich history of **grassroots leadership**, an already robust and highly capable fire prevention community, and a strong record of **locally driven success**.



The County **recognizes** and respects the **foundational work** accomplished by fire agencies, the **Fire Safe Council of Monterey County**, Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, Fire Wise Communities, local fire protection districts, community organizations, and residents who have **long carried this mission forward**.

This initiative is not intended to replace or redirect what is working, but to **mutually reinforce proven approaches**, increase capacity, and responsibly scale impact. By working together, the County and its partners can **support local priorities and advance shared goals to protect life, property, and critical infrastructure**.



This program represents a **practical step forward**, grounded in **past success** and focused on **collective progress**.

Item #

3



Vision



Strategic Planning

Reduce wildfire risk through strategic planning, data driven prioritization, and oversight of prevention and vegetation management initiatives.



Coordination

Act as a force multiplier by aligning fire prevention agencies, community organizations, and private partners to maximize shared resources, expand program reach, and accelerate countywide risk reduction outcomes.



Common Operating Picture

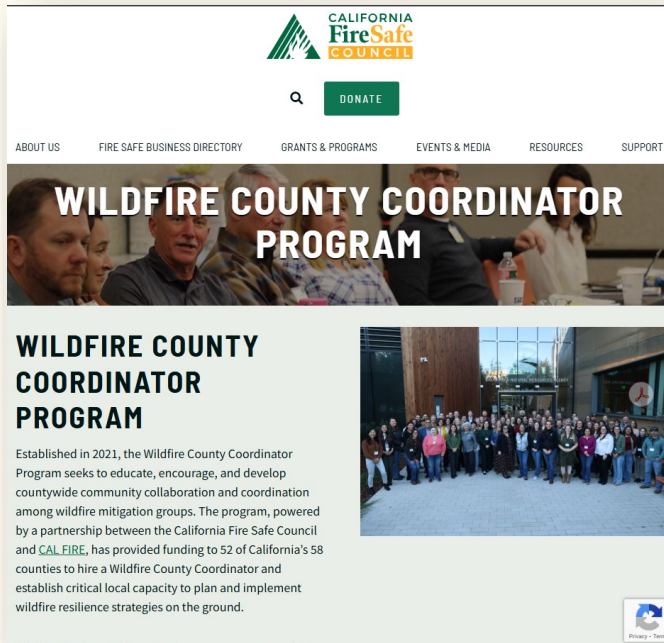
Provide centralized, countywide coordination of wildfire prevention, mitigation, and preparedness efforts to ensure alignment across jurisdictions, agencies, and partners.



WCC Grant

Established in 2021, the Wildfire County Coordinator Program seeks to educate, encourage, and develop countywide community collaboration and coordination among wildfire mitigation groups.

The program, powered by a partnership between the California Fire Safe Council and CAL FIRE. The Wildfire County Coordinators have served as a vital local resource to secure funding, implement mitigation projects, engage vulnerable populations, and build resilience in high-risk communities.



4/14/2026

Award

The Department of Emergency Management (DEM) applied for and was awarded funds from the California Fire Safe Council (CFCS) 2025 Wildfire County Coordinators Grant Program.

The grant will provide funding of \$151,500 with a performance period of January 1, 2026, to July 31, 2026, to fill a Wildfire County Coordinator Position.



Item #



1
Positions

**Wildfire County
Coordinator**



6
Months

**Performance
Period**



\$151k
Dollars

Award

1

Positions

**Wildfire County
Coordinator**

+14

Months

**Performance
Period**

+\$151k
Dollars

Extension

5



Grant Deliverables

1. Develop a plan, in concert with CAL FIRE unit or CAL FIRE contracted entity, to integrate the County Coordinators with their local CAL FIRE units and develop shared, locally appropriate resources.
2. Continue to contribute to the CFSC GIS Networking Portal.
3. Attend at least one (1) Qualified Entities Training hosted by CAL FIRE.
4. Host one (1) county-level training on the CWPP toolkit for stakeholders to encourage its use and adoption.
5. Develop a preliminary plan evaluating steps/actions needed to initiate a county-level CWPP, using best practices as outlined in the CWPP toolkit, and submit a report to CFSC based on findings.
6. Present project scope of work, deliverables, and impact to the county's board of supervisors to ensure that county leadership is informed of program impact and can effectively keep the County Coordinator tied into the county's priorities and plans.



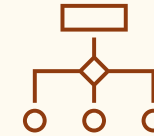
Los Angeles Times



Informational Interviews

Informational interviews conducted at the start of the grant gathered insights from local stakeholders, partners, and residents on wildfire risk, prevention practices, and barriers to mitigation. These conversations have helped inform countywide challenges, resource needs, and opportunities for the county to play a greater role in advancing coordinated wildfire risk reduction efforts.

- Strengthen collaboration with local partners, fire agencies, and community organizations
- Understanding the operational landscape, including key agencies, roles, and existing programs shaping wildfire prevention and risk reduction efforts across the county.
- Understand barriers residents face in completing mitigation work (e.g., cost, labor, awareness)
- Understand current capacity and gaps in existing wildfire prevention programs
- Understand the relationship between local fire protection districts and county permitting processes and ensure consistent implementation of mitigation standards.
- Explore opportunities for the county to expand or coordinate services more effectively



14

Agencies



26

Meetings



20+

Hours

Plans & Policies





Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Provides a comprehensive assessment of wildfire risk countywide and a coordinated strategy to reduce risk, protect lives and property, and improve community resilience through prioritized mitigation actions, fuel reduction, and emergency planning.



Key Benefits

CWPP's are not required by the State or Federal government; however, a CWPP development or update process can be leveraged for the following benefits:

- Increases eligibility and competitiveness for wildfire mitigation grant funding
- Ensures planning reflects current science, community conditions, and risk priorities
- Supports coordinated implementation of fuel reduction and preparedness measures

4/14/2026

Authorship

- The Fire Safe Council For Monterey County has been the lead author of the CWPP in previous updates.

Approval and Adoption

At a minimum, the following must approve and sign the CWPP to be considered updated:

- A Representative from the applicable local government
- Local fire department
- State entity responsible for forest management (i.e. CAL FIRE).

Enabling Statutes

- Federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (H.R. 1904 or HFRA)

Publication Dates

- The Monterey County Board of Supervisors adopted the first MCCWPP in 2010.

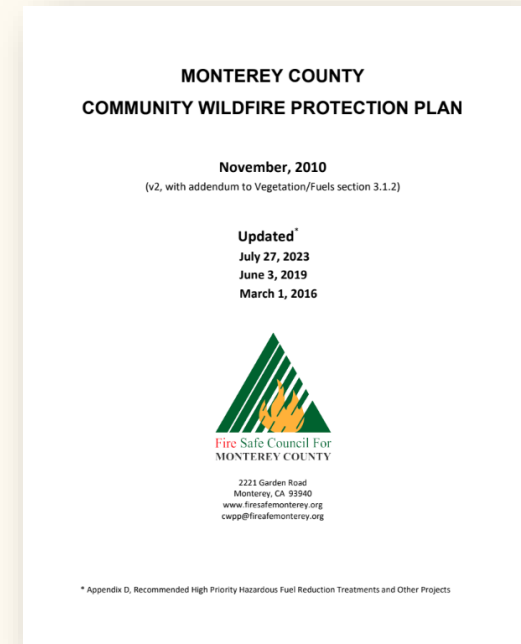
Update Frequency

- CWPPs are required to be updated every 10 years and formally adopted. The MCCWPP has been updated March 2016, June 2019, and July 2023.

Next Update

- The current MCCWPP update began in 2024 and is currently in the process of being updated.

Item #



Update	Expiration Date
November 2010	November 2020
November 2027	November 2037



CWPP Re-Write



It is recommended that the County pursue grant funding to comprehensively update the countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan, ensuring it reflects current conditions, modern fire science, and community priorities given that the existing plan has not been revised since 2010.

CWPP Re-write Goals:

- **Align with current fire science:** Reflect advancements since 2010 to ensure strategies are modern and effective.
- **Update risk data and mitigation practices:** Use current data and proven approaches to better target risk reduction.
- **Improve mapping tools and dashboards:** Provide clearer, more actionable maps to support planning and response. Increase transparency and track progress through accessible data tools.
- **Enhance stakeholder engagement:** Leverage the update to gather broad, meaningful input.
- **Increase community input:** Ensure diverse voices and local knowledge inform decisions.

2026 State Fire Capacity Grant Program



1

CWPP Re-write & Planning Process

Proposed Scope



24

Months

Performance Period



\$200k

Dollars

Not to Exceed Amount



CWPP Re-Write Draft Workplan

Phase 1 Research and Data Gathering	Phase 2 Stakeholder Engagement	Phase 3 Community Engagement	Phase 4 Plan Development	Phase 4 Adoption / Ratification
Winter 2026-27	Winter 2027	Spring / Summer 2027	Summer / Fall 2027	Winter 2027
Deliverables	Deliverables	Deliverables	Deliverables	Deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research Gather data sources Evaluate hazards Conduct risk assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CWPP Toolkit Workshop Stakeholder Meetings Fire Protection District Workshops Community Engagement Plan Risk Assessment and Priority Areas Section Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan Development Project identification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 1 Community Workshop District 2 Community Workshops District 3 Community Workshops District 4 Community Workshops District 5 Community Workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Enhanced Mapping Products Performance Metrics and Dashboard Framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Safe Council for Monterey County Final Review Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association Approval CAL FIRE BEU Unit Approval Monterey County Board of Supervisors Adoption



Wildfire Prevention Ordinances

Work with Housing and Community Development Department to advance a coordinated wildfire prevention strategy that aligns permitting, environmental policy, and home hardening standards to reduce risk before disaster occurs. By removing regulatory barriers and incentivizing verified mitigation actions, the County strengthens life safety, protects property, and builds long term community resilience.

Building Permit and Home Hardening Alignment

Re-evaluate and revise permit process for the purpose of increasing coordination and efficiency that aligns building requirements with current home hardening standards to reduce administrative delays and improve compliance.

Biological and Tree Policy and Defensible Space Alignment

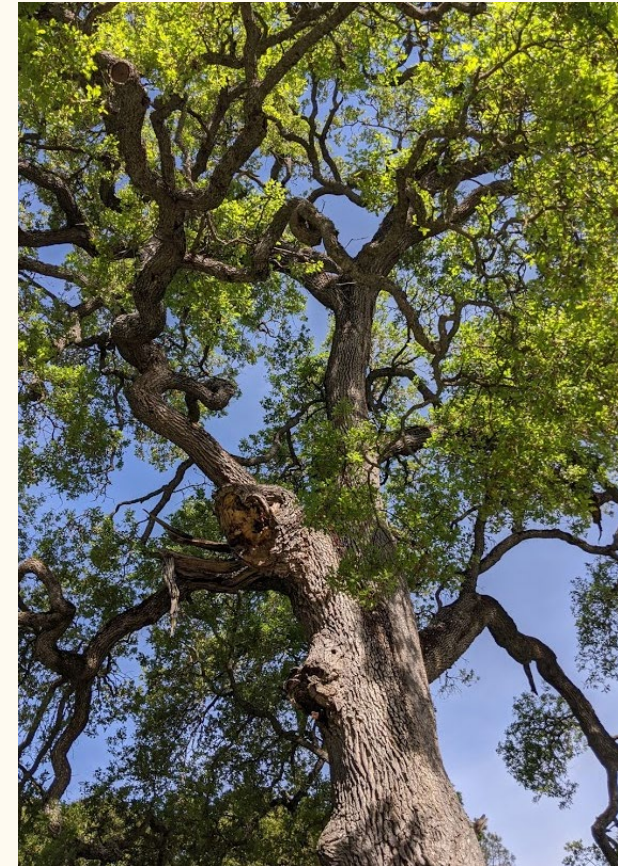
Integrate biological resource protection policies with defensible space requirements to reduce regulatory conflicts and provide clear, risk based guidance to property owners. This alignment will support environmental stewardship while prioritizing life safety and structure protection in high fire hazard areas.

Homeowner Wildfire Resilience Certificate Program

Develop and implement a standardized Wildfire Resilience Certificate Program that recognizes homeowners who complete verified home hardening and defensible space actions. The program will incentivize proactive risk reduction, promote community wide mitigation, and strengthen overall wildfire readiness.

Property Owner Implementation and Permit Navigation Resources

Establish clear, accessible property owner resources that provide step by step guidance for navigating the wildfire related permit process, reducing confusion and processing delays. By standardizing information, improving transparency, and aligning requirements across departments, the County will promote compliance, accelerate risk reduction projects, and enhance overall public safety outcomes.





Fire Risk Reduction Community Designation

Supporting safer planning for wildfire-prone communities.

The Fire Risk Reduction Community List, as mandated by PRC 4290.1, is "a list of local agencies located in a state responsibility area or a very high fire hazard severity zone...that meet best practices for local fire planning."

Approval

- The List is developed and maintained by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, with the first iteration beginning July 1, 2022 and updated every two years thereafter.
- The last application process was 2024; the 2026 application period has closed.

Benefits

- An approved local agency will receive priority for grant applications Wildfire Prevention Grant.
- The Fire Risk Reduction Community List is also included under the California Department of Insurance’s Safer from Wildfires regulations in Title 10, Section 2644.9(d), as a mandatory factor insurers must take into account and reflect in their rating plans.

Application

- Must reapply every two years to remain on the list.





Fire Risk Reduction Community Designation

#

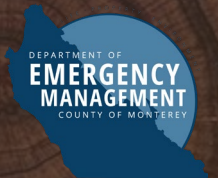
Must meet all of criteria (1)-(4)

- 1 Adopted a **local ordinance** designating **Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ)** pursuant to Government Code § 51179(a) and submitted it to the Board pursuant to 14 CCR § 1280.02.
- 2 Submitted the **findings** for all **tentative and parcel maps approved for areas located in SRA or LRA VHFHSZ** to the Board pursuant to 14 CCR § 1266.02. The applicant shall provide a list of subdivisions submitted to the Board since January 1, 2019, or since the last time the Local Agency submitted an application.
- 3 The **safety element** of the Local Agency's **general plan** has been submitted to the Board for review pursuant to Government Code § 65302.5(b) within the **last eight years**, and all recommendations have been adopted.
- 4 **Implementation** of the most recent **fire safety recommendations** from the Board as presented in the report(s) from the CAL FIRE Subdivision Review Program, pursuant to 14 CCR § 1267.01, for each community reviewed within the jurisdiction.

Must meet two of criteria (5)-(10)

- 5 Adopted **one or more local requirements** which **exceed the minimum regulations** adopted by the state in the Fire Safe Regulations (14 CCR §§ 1270.00-1276.04).
- 6 Adopted **one or more local defensible space ordinances, rules, or regulations** which exceed state minimum regulations in 14 CCR § 1299.03.
- 7 Adopted a **Wildland Urban Interface code** stricter than Chapter 49, Part 9, of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations.
- 8 Adopted a **zoning ordinance, special district, or special overlay zone** that includes **fire hazard mitigation** requirements which **exceed state minimum requirements**.
- 9 Adopted a **comprehensive retrofit code** or plan for **existing homes**.
- 10 Identified **wildfire** as a **high priority hazard** in a Local or Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP or MJHMP) updated within the last five years, or as a low or medium priority hazard with the inclusion of one or more mitigation actions,
and has **adopted** the MJHMP into the **general plan safety element**.

Organization





Fire Warden

The County Fire Warden shall perform such duties relating to fires and fire protection and prevention as prescribed by the laws of the State of California and as required by the Board of Supervisors.

Monterey County, California - Code of Ordinances Title 2 - ADMINISTRATION Chapter 2.33 - COUNTY FIRE WARDEN

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors codified the County Fire Warden Position under Monterey County Code of Ordinances in 2011.

Memorandum of Understanding

In 2011, the County entered into an agreement with the California Department of Forestry (CALFIRE) to serve as Fire Warden AND Fuel Mitigation Officer. This agreement was ratified by the Board and expired in 2016 (5 Years). This agreement requires significant revision and renewed execution with Board approval.

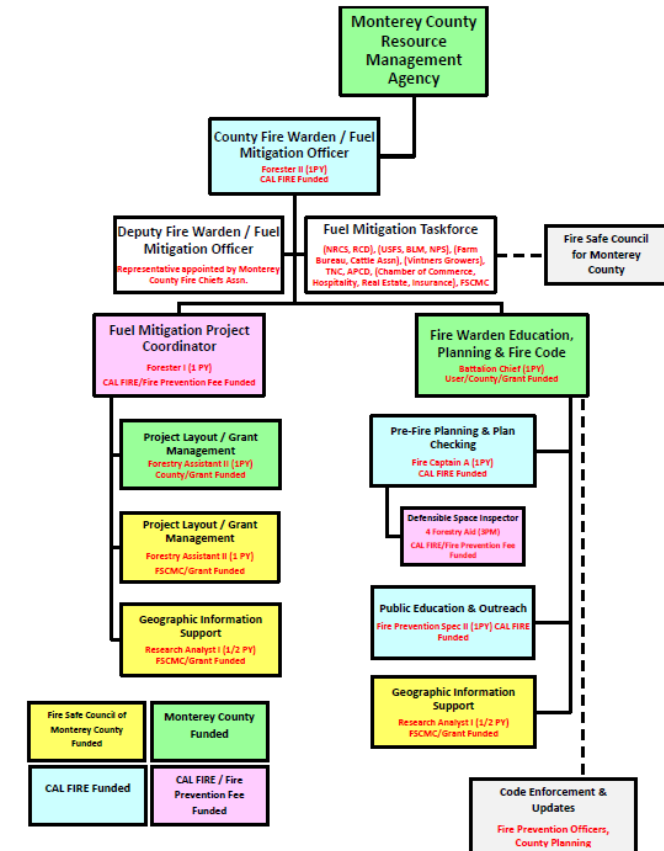
Appointment of Fire Warden

This position is appointed by a majority of the Board of Supervisors. The last time a person was appointed by the Board of Supervisors was in 2011 with the appointment of Unit Chief, Rick Hutchinson. The appointment will need to be updated with Board approval and support from the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association.

Previous County Funds Allocated

BOS allocated \$152,500 from General Fund Contingencies to fund increased FY 2014-15 costs for Fire Mitigation Project/Grant Management and Fire Plan Review positions supporting the County Fire Warden for six months beginning January 2015.

Organizational Structure for Fire Warden and Fuel Mitigation Officer Functions





Fuel Mitigation Officer



Despite early support for appointing a Fire Warden and efforts to coordinate across agencies, staffing gaps, uncertain implementation of agreements, and short-term contracting has limited the County’s ability to establish a sustained overarching and comprehensive fire fuel mitigation program.

Leadership and Staffing Challenges

- At that time, there was general support to appoint the CalFire Chief for the San Benito-Monterey Unit, Rick Hutchinson, as the County Fire Warden and Fuel Mitigation Officer. Chief Hutchinson retired shortly thereafter, and the County was not successful in filling these positions.

Interagency Coordination Efforts

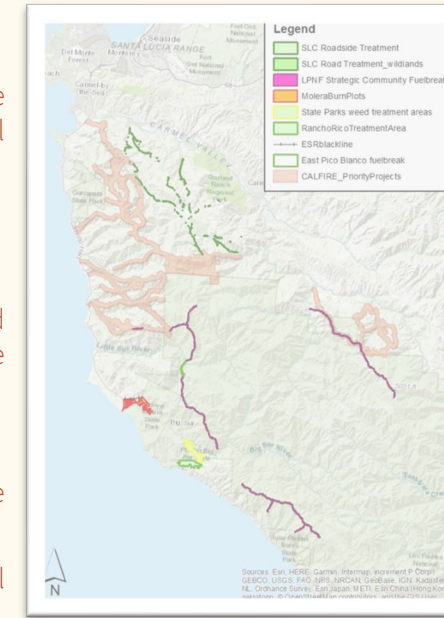
- RMA attempted to work with fire agencies to establish a coordinated approach to fire mitigation.
- An MOU was negotiated to formalize collaboration between the County of Monterey, CalFire, Monterey Fire Safe Council, and local fire protection districts, departments, and brigades to support the Fire Warden Office. It is unclear if this agreement came to fruition.

Partnership Development and Contracting Exploration

- The Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCD) expressed interest in contracting with the County to provide fire fuel mitigation services.
- Staff initiated development of an agreement modeled after an existing contract between RCD and the Agricultural Commissioner’s Office for technical assistance, weed management, and related services.

Memorandum of Understanding & Funding

- In 2018 the Board directed the Resource Management Agency to negotiate and draft a contract with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County for Board consideration to provide personnel services to address a wide range of fire fuel mitigation issues and objectives.
- In 2018, the County entered into an agreement with RCD to provide staff and services to address a wide range of fire fuel mitigation issues and objectives for a total amount not to exceed \$150,000, for a period of ten months beginning August 28, 2018 to June 30, 2019.
- The MOU between the County and RCDMC was cancelled by HCD in approx. 2022.



 **1.3K**
Acres

Treated Fuel Breaks

 **560**
Trees

Eucalyptus Tree Removal

- Carmel Valley Fuel Break
- Los Padres Strategic Community Fuel Break
- North County Eucalyptus Tress Removal
- Monterey County Public Works – Coastal Development Permitting
- Monterey County Regional Priority Plan for Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience



Wildfire County Coordinator

The Wildfire County Coordinator position is responsible for planning, coordinating, and administering countywide wildfire mitigation, preparedness, and response programs. This position will be held within the Community Resilience Division of the Department of Emergency Management.

Classification

Based on work activities and recruitment provided in the County Coordinator Handbook and grant guidelines, the Monterey County Human Resources Department classified this position as an Emergency Services Planner.

Allocation

The Board of Supervisors approved the allocation of one (1), full-time permanent Emergency Services Planner position within the department. Due to funding limitations, the department is only able to cover the salary and benefits of a permanent, part-time position.

Recruitment

Recruitment and hiring for this position shall be conducted in accordance with applicable county personnel and recruitment policies and procedures where required. This position will be recruited as a part-time permanent position.

Workplan

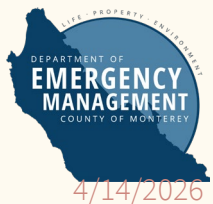
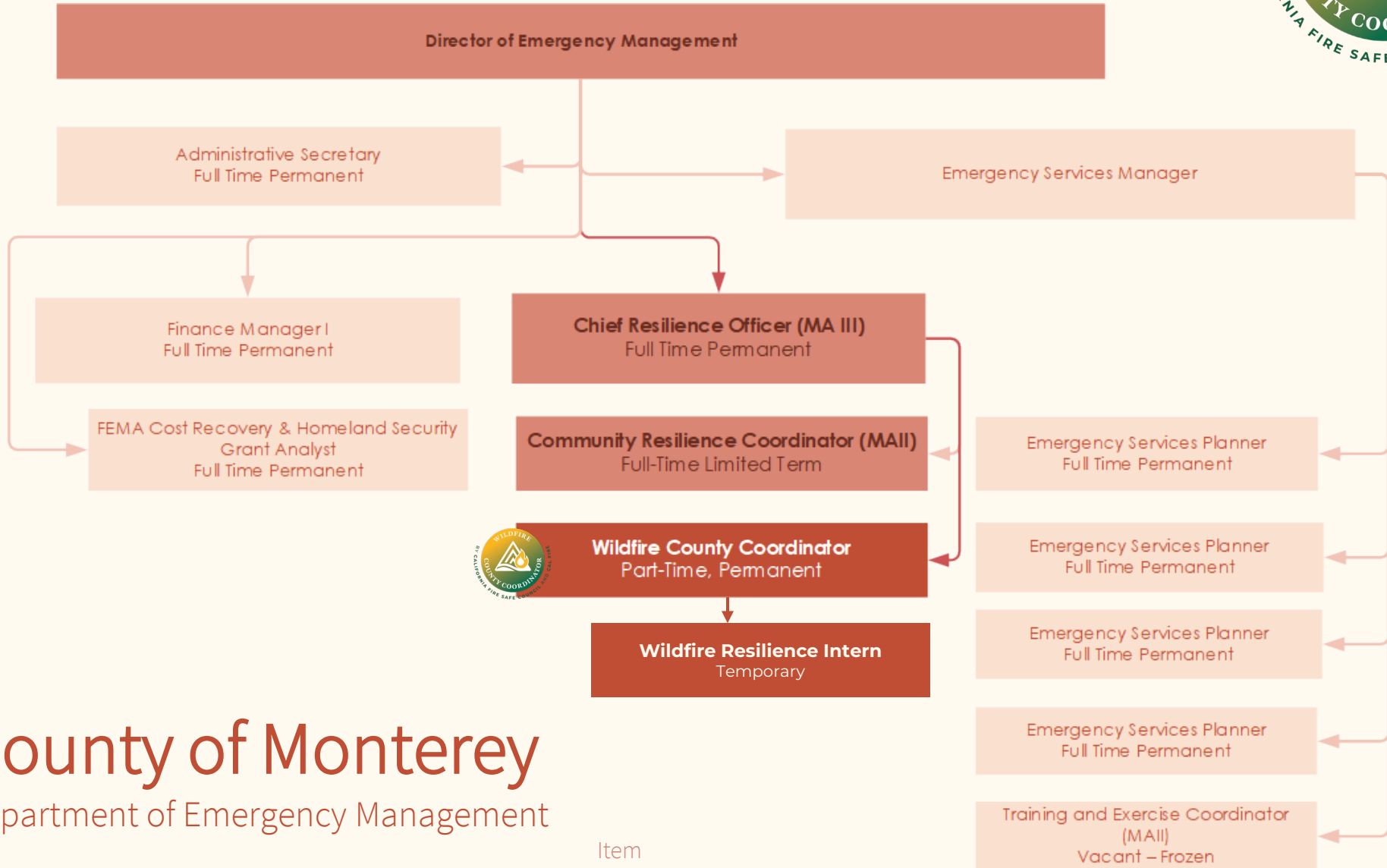
The department has begun collaborating with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County and other stakeholder agencies to identify goals, objectives, and deliverables for this position.



Progress Tracker		Status
✓	Position Classification	Complete
✓	Position Allocation	Complete
...	Recruitment and Hiring of Position	In Progress
☐	Develop Position Workplan	TBD
☐	Qualified Entities Training	TBD



Wildfire County Coordinator



County of Monterey
Department of Emergency Management



Fire Safe Council Monterey County

A local Fire Safe Council is a community-based group that works to reduce wildfire risk and improve safety in fire-prone areas, often by securing grant funds to support mitigation projects. It also helps neighborhoods become Firewise Communities by promoting vegetation management, public education, and coordinated emergency planning to protect homes, lives, and the surrounding environment.

About

FSCMC is a 501©(3) non-profit corporation committed to helping protect lives, property, and resources from harm by wildfires, and to educating the public on wildfire dangers and how to reduce them.

A Fire Safe Council is a community-based group of residents working alongside fire agencies to:

- Identify local wildfire risks
- Organize defensible space, home hardening, and fuels reduction projects
- Educate neighbors about preparedness and evacuation

Oversight

The Board of Supervisors does not have oversight authority of the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County.

Officers And Directors:

- Michael Caplin, Interim President (Palo Colorado)
- Jamie Tuitele-Lewis, Vice President (Resource Conservation District of Monterey County)
- Pam Peck, Treasurer (Palo Colorado)
- Alecia Hull, Secretary (Pacific Grove)
- Richard Bates, (Carmel Valley)
- Lonnie Trykowski, (Carmel Valley/Rancho Tierra Grande)
- Michael Waxer (Seaside)

Staff:

- 1 Part Time Position - Vacant

Advisors:

- George Nunez (CAL FIRE, Unit Chief, San Benito-Monterey BEU Unit)
- Glenn Church (Royal Oaks)
- John Schweisinger (GIS advisor)
- Sam Balesteri (CERT)
- Scott Carlton (Vegetation Management, PG&E)
- Rayner Marx (Fire Adapted Big Sur)
- Tim Montgomery (CAL FIRE, Unit Forester, BEU Unit)
- Bob Vitale (Aromas)
- Wanda Vollmer (Peace of Mind Preparedness)



California Fire Safe Council



Fire Safe Council for Monterey County



Fire Wise Communities



Fire Wise Communities

Firewise Communities are neighborhoods recognized for taking proactive steps—like reducing vegetation hazards, improving home hardening, and organizing residents—to lower their risk from wildfires.

- Achieving Firewise USA® recognition is a collaborative and ongoing process.
- Create a board or committee of volunteers to represent your community.
- Complete a community wildfire risk assessment every 5 years.
- Each site is required to annually invest the equivalent of one volunteer hour per dwelling unit

Fire Safe Council for Monterey County provides information, resources, and guidance to communities developing and maintaining Fire Wise Community status.

- 1 Form a core group
- 2 Develop a wildfire risk assessment plan
- 3 Create and maintain a wildfire action plan
- 4 Engage the community
- 5 Apply for recognition



Information Resources





Wildfire Ready Monterey County

A centralized, all county inclusive Fire Safe Monterey County brand and webpage provides a single, trusted source for wildfire prevention information, ensuring consistent messaging, reduced public confusion, and coordinated action across all fire prevention stakeholders.

Branding

Establish a unified Fire Safe Monterey County identity that aligns with Ready Monterey County while recognizing all participating fire protection districts.

Webpage

Develop and maintain a centralized, accessible webpage that consolidates prevention resources, local guidance, and jurisdiction specific contacts.

Materials

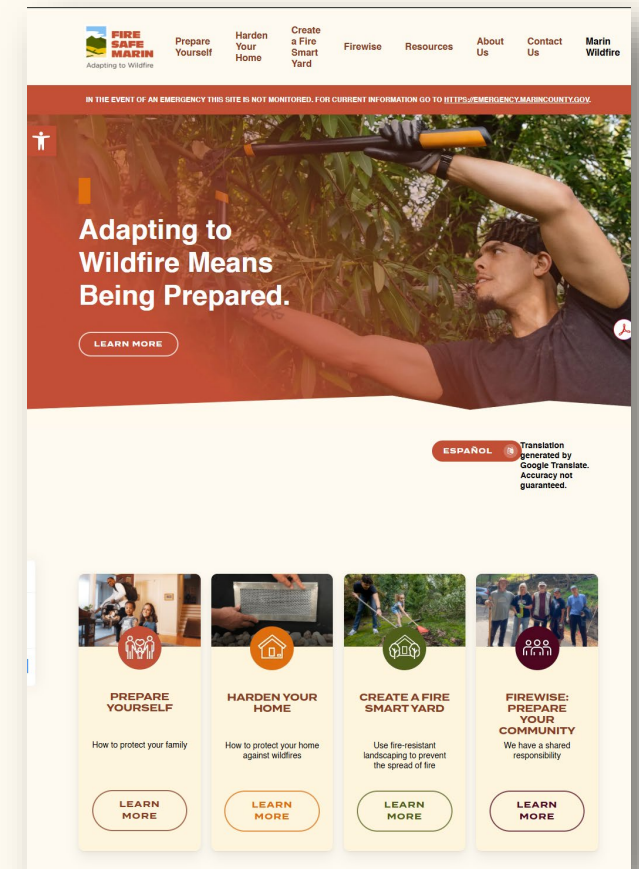
Standardize and develop co branded digital and print materials to support consistent outreach, education, and community engagement countywide.

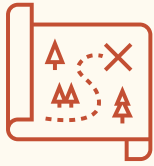


WILDFIRE READY Monterey County

EXAMPLE

Progress Tracker	Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Brand Logo	TBD
<input type="checkbox"/> Website Development	TBD
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Resource Development	TBD





Geospatial Information

Geographic Information Systems provide a coordinated common operating picture that integrates risk, assets, and mitigation activities across jurisdictions to support coordinated wildfire prevention, planning, and decision making.

Geospatial Information System Hub

Create a Fire Safe Monterey County GIS Hub. Collate and centralize authoritative geospatial datasets to support coordinated wildfire planning, operational decision making, and interagency information sharing.

Fire Wise Community Parcel Mapping

Identify and map participating parcels to prioritize defensible space outreach, track program coverage, and reduce community level wildfire risk.

Vegetation Management Program Projects Status

Maintain a current, countywide view of Vegetation Management Program projects to support scheduling, planning, strategizing, and risk informed resource allocation.

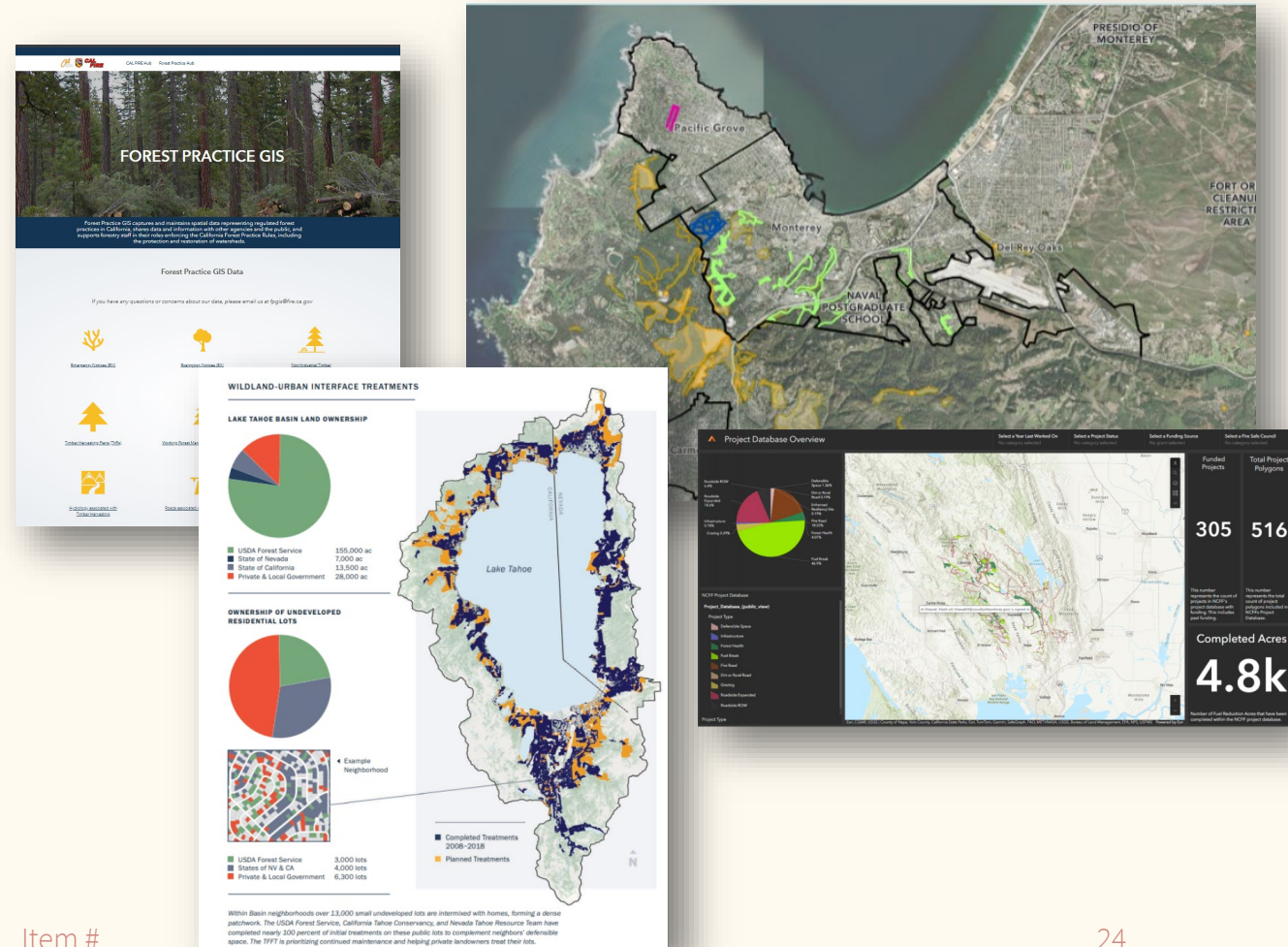
Vegetation Risk Reduction Dashboard

Provide a standardized dashboard to monitor vegetation risk reduction activities, performance metrics, and progress toward countywide mitigation goals.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan StoryMap

Present the Community Wildfire Protection Plan through an accessible, map based narrative to communicate risk, priorities, and actions to partners and the public.

4/14/2026



Item #

24

Potential Community Programs



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Potential Community Programs

Community programs play a critical role in reducing wildfire risk by making mitigation actions more accessible, affordable, and coordinated across neighborhoods. By supporting collective efforts like vegetation management and home hardening, they help create safer, more resilient communities at scale.



Defensible Space Assessments

Property assessments that identify vegetation and structural risks, providing homeowners with specific actions to improve defensibility.



Curbside Chipping

Community programs that collect and chip cleared vegetation at the curb, helping residents remove wildfire fuels and overcome disposal barriers.



Green Waste Disposal

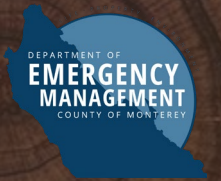
Disposal services (e.g., drop-off or haul-away) for yard debris generated from fuel reduction, encouraging ongoing vegetation management.

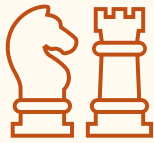


Home Hardening Financial Incentives

Grants or rebates that offset costs for retrofits (e.g., vents, roofing, ember-resistant upgrades) to make homes more resistant to wildfire ignition.

Next Steps





Wildfire Resilience Strategic Planning Day

A half-day, facilitated workshop bringing together government, fire agencies, and fire prevention partners to align on shared wildfire resilience priorities and strengthen coordination across efforts.

Purpose

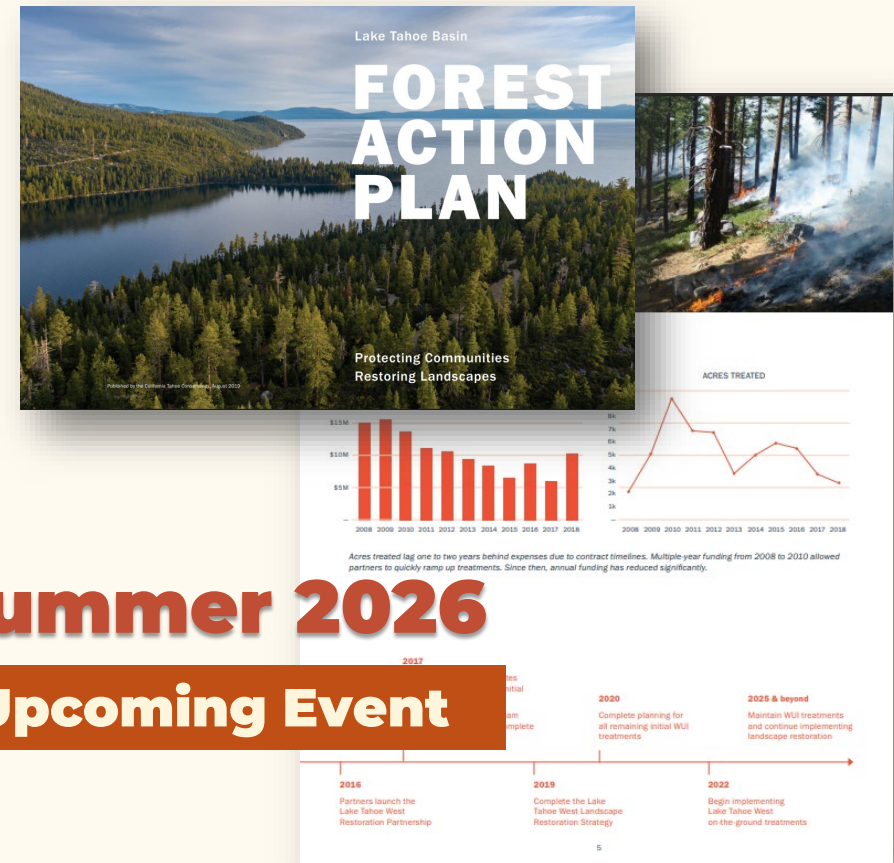
To provide a structured, moderated setting for stakeholders to synthesize current efforts, identify gaps, and co-develop strategic directions for countywide wildfire risk reduction.

Format

The session will be led by a neutral moderator and include guided discussions, small-group breakout exercises, and plenary alignment discussions focused on actionable outcomes.

Focus Areas

- Current wildfire risk landscape and operational challenges
- Coordination between agencies and jurisdictions
- Program gaps in mitigation, outreach, and implementation
- Opportunities for expanded county role and resource alignment
- Prioritization of near- and long-term resilience strategies



Recommendations

Item # RES 26-047: Wildfire County Coordinator Grant Extension – On Consent

- a. Authorize and approve the Director of the Department of Emergency Management or designee to submit a grant application to the California Fire Safe Council for the 2025 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) County Coordinator Grant Program Extension for an additional amount not to exceed \$151,500 with an amended performance period of July 1, 2026, to October 15, 2027, to build on the current goals of the program and support the Wildfire County Coordinator position dedicated to enhancing wildfire resilience through stronger local planning, community engagement, and coordination with state and local fire protection districts and other partners; and
- b. Authorize and approve the Director of the Department of Emergency Management or designee to execute all necessary forms and documents for the application to this grant; and
- c. Direct and authorize Department of Emergency Management staff to accept an award upon approval without returning to the Board of Supervisors.

Item # RES 26-044: 2026 State Fire Capacity Grant Program

- a. Authorize and approve the Director of the Emergency Management or designee to submit a grant application to the 2026 State Fire Capacity Grant Program for a total amount not to exceed \$200,000, with a 24-month performance period of October 1, 2026, to September 30, 2028, to fund the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as well as potential hazardous fuels reduction and maintenance projects on non-federal lands and wildfire prevention and mitigation education and outreach efforts; and
- b. Authorize and approve the Director of Emergency Management or designee to execute all necessary forms and documents for the application to this grant; and
- c. Direct Department of Emergency Management staff to return to the Board of Supervisors for approval prior to acceptance of any grant awards.

Provide further direction to staff.

adapting to
wildfire

