



Fire Safety News

Serving the communities of Castle Creek, Champagne Village, Deer Springs, Hidden Meadows, Jesmond Dene, Rimrock, The Welk Resort, and West Lilac

July 15, 2018

This edition of the *Fire Safety News* is dedicated to Deer Springs/CAL FIRE Paramedic Firefighter Dan Geary who passed away this month. Dan served our community for several years with honor and distinction. He will be missed.

Moosa Canyon Fuel Break



A view of Moosa Canyon showing heavy fuel loads with dead, dying and invasive vegetation which hasn't burned since 1969. Deer Springs Fire Safe Council photo.

Protecting our Community!

Fuel Break to Help Protect Hidden Meadows

CAL FIRE and The Deer Springs Fire Safe Council Working Together

CAL FIRE and the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council have undertaken a major fire prevention project by constructing a 50 to 100-foot-wide fuel break on the west rim of Moosa Canyon, a brush-covered gorge between Hidden Meadows and Valley Center that hasn't burned since 1969.

CAL FIRE, which responds to wildfires statewide and provides fire protection under contract to the Deer Springs Fire Protection District, has long identified Moosa Canyon as a possible extreme hazard if a wildfire were to break out east of the Canyon. The canyon runs southeast to northwest between Cougar Pass and Old Castle Road and, according to a fire scenario developed by CAL FIRE many years ago, a fire originating near Valley Center during a Santa Ana wind event could race into the canyon, where easterly winds could drive it up the slope into Hidden Meadows.

"If a fire were to come from the east and start heading up Moosa Canyon toward Hidden Meadows, this fuel break would provide an extra layer of protection and give firefighters a place to make a stand," said CAL FIRE Deputy Chief Nick Schuler. Female inmate crews from the Rainbow Conservation Camp will perform the hard work of clearing, hauling and chipping the fire-prone brush, Schuler said.

Schuler said that CAL FIRE has secured the necessary environmental clearances for the project and our local District Firefighters are contacting homeowners to request their permission to clear brush on their property. Nearly the entire 5 miles of the fuel break is on private property, and the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council is helping CAL FIRE contact the property owners.



CAL FIRE Rainbow Crew and the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council begin work on the Moosa Canyon to continue managing the hazardous vegetation. DSFSC Photo.

The Moosa Canyon project has four phases. Phase one along Alps Way in the southeastern part of the District has been completed. CAL FIRE and the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council are working together on phase three near Rolling Rock and Willow Park. The Council has contributed four full chipping days to the project funded by a grant from the CA Fire Safe Council. This phase should be completed in 2018. Phase two includes the area along Turner Heights Lane and Faircrest Way. Phase four stretches from Rolling Rock Road to the end of North View Court. Both of these phases are scheduled to be started in 2019 and 2020.



CAL FIRE Rainbow Crew harvesting dead, dying and invasive vegetation on steep and rocky slopes within Moosa Canyon. DSFSC Photo.

The CAL FIRE portion of the project is being paid for by funds from former State Responsibility Area fees that have been dedicated to fire prevention projects. Future funding will come from the state's greenhouse gas cap-and-trade initiative.

This isn't the first time that Moosa Canyon has been the subject of a fire-prevention project. In 2009 thru 2012 the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council managed the removal of 45 acres of dead, dying, diseased, and invasive vegetation around homes and structures along the 5 miles of the canyon's rim. Grants totaling \$169,000 from the CA Fire Safe Council paid for that project, with the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council contributing \$160,000 in volunteer and staff time. The new fuel break will expand on that project.



The Deer Springs Fire Safe Council chipping harvested vegetation along a key Moosa Canyon evacuation route. DSFSC Photo.

If you own property within the remaining phases along Moosa Canyon you will soon hear from CAL FIRE or the Fire Safe Council regarding this project, if you haven't already. Please sign the CAL FIRE form giving permission to clear brush on your property, as that will help ease the fire threat in the Deer Springs Fire Protection District and neighboring communities.



The CAL FIRE crew harvesting and stacking hazardous vegetation ready for chipping at the far eastern edge of Moosa Canyon. DSFSC Photo.

Wildfire behavior has been more severe than ever, so residents need to be equally diligent. Please do your part to increase the chances that your home will survive a wind-driven wildfire. Help the firefighters help you!

What is the "SAWTI"?



Red Flags indicate one level of the SAWTI.

Santa Ana Wildfire Threat Index

"SAWTI"

By Greg Lorton

Wildfire behavior has become more severe than ever, and the destruction resulting from these fires is increasing. To help emergency response agencies better plan for potential fires, these agencies are increasingly relying on computer modeling tools to predict threatening fire conditions, especially critical weather conditions. The National Weather Service issues red flag warnings when weather conditions will create a critical fire risk. These conditions typically include Santa Ana events with strong winds from the deserts, low humidity, and warm to hot temperatures although red flag warnings may be issued for elevated fire danger during other weather conditions.

Over the last six years, a sophisticated tool has been developed to assist emergency response agencies in planning and resource allocation for potential imminent major wildfires. This tool is called the *Santa Ana Wildfire Threat Index*, or SAWTI. This model predicts the likely severity of a wildfire if one were to occur during a Santa Ana wind condition.

The SAWTI model was developed through a joint effort of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the UCLA Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, and San Diego Gas and Electric.

The SAWTI model produces ratings for four different Southern California county zones –1. Los Angeles-Ventura, 2. Orange-Inland Empire, 3. San Diego and 4. Santa Barbara. The model only produces ratings during Santa Ana weather conditions. Otherwise, there is “no rating”. During Santa Ana conditions, there are four levels:

Marginal (yellow) – Upon ignition, a fire *may* grow rapidly.

Moderate (orange) – Upon ignition, fires *will* grow rapidly and *will* be difficult to control.

Extreme (purple) – Upon ignition, fires will have extreme growth, will burn *very* intensely, and will be uncontrollable.

It is well recognized that Santa Ana weather conditions lead to an increase in the severity of a potential wildfire. The SAWTI scale shows that not all Santa Anas are the same. While the SAWTI scale had reached the purple level when the Lilac Fire broke out on December 7, 2017, the level was only marginal during the red flag warning at the end of January.

The current ratings can be found at the SAWTI website:

<https://sawti.fs.fed.us/>

Helpful phone numbers

Immediate Emergency Assistance: 911

Emergency & Non-Emergency County Information Hotline (road closures, shelter locations, evacuation sites, fire related information, recovery assistance and more): 211

San Diego County Sheriff, San Marcos Station: 760-510-5200

San Diego Animal Services Emergency Dispatch: 619-236-2341
Deer Springs Fire Safe Council Informational Hot Line: 949-472-1401

Deer Springs Fire Stations

Station 1
8709 Circle R Drive
Escondido, CA 92026
760-749-8001

Station 2
1321 Deer Springs Road
San Marcos, CA 92069
760-741-5512

Station 3
10308 Meadow Glen Way East
Escondido, CA 92026
760-751-0820

We gratefully acknowledge ...

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<http://www.DeerSpringsFireSafeCouncil.com>

Or you can mail your donation to:

DEER SPRINGS FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
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DISCLAIMER: This information will provide a high level of protection to structures built in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area. However, there is no guarantee or assurance that compliance with these guidelines will prevent damage or destruction of structures by fires in all cases.

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