

FireSmart Community Workshop

Hopland Fire Department, June 2, 2019, 9:30am-3pm

This workshop was funded by PG&E's Resilient Community Better Together Grant and by Sonoma Water. A big thank you to, Hannah Bird, of Hopland Research and Extension Center, Imil Ferrara, of Mendocino RCD, Terri McCartney, of the HoplandTribe, Chris Keifer, for the amazing lunch, and the Hopland Fire Department for hosting!

Meeting Highlights

- 50 Hopland residents spent the day meeting their neighbors, learning from local fire preparedness experts, and discussing their hopes and concerns for fire resiliency. Priorities identified include increasing coordination and planning as a community, bringing back prescribed burns, acquiring funding, and increasing overall preparedness.
- Attendees heard from Chief Franklin, of Hopland Fire, and Anne Crealock, of Sonoma Water, about the fire history, challenges, and opportunities in the Mendocino watershed. We also heard from Tricia Austin of Cal Fire about how to make your home defensible, and from Mary Mayeda of Mendocino RCD about healthy forest management practices.
- Attendees did site visits to Veteran's Memorial Hall and the home of resident Topsy McCarn to learn more about home defense and preparation.

Purpose: To understand what the residents of the Lake Sonoma watershed want to do, and don't want to do, in order to inform collective action on fire resiliency. A worksheet distributed with further resources can be found [here](#).

<p>Objectives To build a fire-resilient Hopland, with communities that work together to be fire resilient in their homes, neighborhoods, and on their natural and working lands.</p> <p>Priority Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Galvanize community to organize and work together on action that will prepare them for the upcoming fire season, around their home, their neighborhoods, and on their land. 2. Share critical information about home defense, vegetation management and explore neighborhood action on those topics 3. If enough interest, recruit leadership and build momentum to start a FireSafe Council out of the workshop. 	<p>Agenda 9:30: Welcome & Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stories from Hopland - what's our history with fire? 10:00: Mendocino Fire Hazard map, with Chief Franklin and Sonoma Water 10: 25: Group Activity: What are we doing now, and what do we wish to do in the future? 10:45: Break 11:00: Expert Presentations & Q&A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Living with Fire: Tricia Austin, CalFire ● Stewarding your lands: Mary Mayeda, Mendocino RCD 12:00: Group Discussion: Sustaining the Momentum 12:30: Lunch 1:15: Travel to Site Visits</p>
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NOTES

Team Welcome and Introductions

The FireSmart project team, Ag Innovations and Sonoma Water (SCWA), began by introducing the context for the project and key reasons why Sonoma Water joined the project.

Genevieve Taylor - Ag Innovations Executive Director and Senior Facilitator

Presented here are key highlights from Genevieve's introduction:

- Ag Innovations facilitates collaboration around challenging issues at the intersection of agriculture and natural resources.
- A resilient watershed and healthy forest adapts to fire; a resilient community is also adapted to fire. We are partnering with Sonoma Water in order to support both people and land to work together to become resilient and fire adapted.
- Today's workshop is designed to gather information to inform future planning.
- Our hope is that we can set a good foundation for collective action with our partners: FireSafe and the Mendocino RCD, CAL FIRE, and local FIRE departments.



Dialogue Guidelines

Genevieve presented the following guidelines as the group entered into the discussions and presentations for the day.

1. We are all in this together
2. Suspend certainty
3. Be prepared for nuance
4. Listen openly
5. Share the floor generously
6. Take care of yourself



Bob Keifer and Genevieve Taylor

Highlights from conversation with Bob Keifer: Stories from Hopland and our history with fire

- Native Pomo occasionally used fire to manage land.
- When the Spanish came, they brought sheep, which are very effective at keeping brush down and lowering fire risk.
- In the 1950's, prescribed burning was adopted, but has more recently been used only on a limited basis because of risk and subsequent regulations.
- It is possible to build a fire proof home, but you need to use new materials and technologies.

Review of [Mendocino Fire Hazard map](#), with Chief Franklin and Sonoma Water

Hopes and Concerns for Fire Resiliency in our Area

(generated by participant post-it)

Hopes:

Prescribed Burns:

- Brought back as a land management technique
- Prescribed burn association in Hopland – Neighbors connecting to actively manage vegetation
- Prescribed burns to improve feed for wildlife and mitigate fire danger – Improve percolation

Community Working Together:

- Community/ county can come together to cut, clear, and chip wood
- The whole community working/ learning together and implementing of plan.
- Supportive, cooperative, informed, community
- Community collaboration funded and informed and connected. Mitigation plan. Exit plans for all areas

Funding:

- State releases more funds to Mendocino to increase fire safety.
- Huge budget surplus now (\$2+ billion)

- Better preparation by individual owners.
- More financial support for CalFire state wide, as well as local Fire Dept.
- Cost share programs to help residence owners upgrade to approved "Hardened Home" specs

Preparation:

- To not feel hopeless when wildfire occurs
- To feel more confident in preparedness
- To collaboratively reduce fire risk by proactive mitigation measures
- More fire hardened homes. Safer community
- Create unoccupied houses list (To track 2nd homes)

Egress:

- Better access to exits
- Improve access roads for one-way in and out of properties, (i.e. McNab Ranch down to Hopland)

Concerns:

Lack of Community Networks

Lack of Access & Egress Preparedness

- Evacuation
- Communication
- Ability to reach disabled/elder landowners
- Access for firefighters
- Cost and resources required to be prepared

Need for Community Planning & Vegetation Management

- People not prepared or willing to put in effort
- Inadequate vegetation management and home defense
- Inadequate fuel reduction along roadways and on private lands
- Dropping of vegetation onto the landscape if more than 100 feet from the road, adding more fuel to the landscape.
- Not enough water or access to be able to stop fire or escape.
- Not enough communication
- Poor visibility
- Funding for vegetation management along roads
- The overgrowth on ridge to the west of Old Hopland behind the Catholic church- Dangerous!
- Insufficient professional or volunteer firefighting staff to support this area due to budgetary constraints

Miscellaneous

- People not changing habits quickly enough or with enough commitment
- Apathy and overwhelm at the magnitude of work needed
- Not enough is being done
- Climate change
- Suppression techniques have jeopardized public lands-- fuel load

Community Survey- Living with Fire in the Lake Sonoma Watershed

Of the 32 community members surveyed...

50% were interested in collaborating on fire safety measures:

- Organizing or participating in a Fire Safe Council (6)
- Neighborhood organized vegetation management and chipping (7)
- Collaboration around more grazing to manage vegetation in the area (5)
- Participating in the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) (3)

30% were interested in learning more about fire safety and resiliency

- Talking with a professional Forester about setting up a forest management plan (5)
- Learning about a Prescribed Burn Association (PBA) (2)
- Learning about volunteering in the volunteer fire department (2)
- Talking with CALFIRE about their vegetation management program (especially if you own or manage 20+ acres) (2)
- Learning about volunteering in the volunteer fire department (2)

Other ideas for community collaboration:

- Bring more informational Fire Safety/Preparedness/Resiliency programs to the library
- Start a Fire Safe Council at McNab
- Reflective posts on county road
- Communication devices
- Fuels reduction

Community Wish List

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signage ● Clear around houses ● Communication system w/ community and neighborhood ● Comprehensive brush clearing throughout Hopland ● Establish neighborhood/road associations ● Trim trees ● Bring goats or grazing animals onto property ● Fuels reduction along road (Oaks/Poison Oak) ● Maintain 30ft clearance around buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other ways to keep wood chips wet around trees and buildings, esp grow mushrooms with them so the forest floor is wetter ● Extra hands ● Wood chipper ● Instructions guides and fire safe consultants ● Money ● Tools to remove the scotch broom ● Neighbor training to create a walkie talkie network ● Learning more about prescribed burns |
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