



Firefighter and community efforts make a difference in CA wildfire

Blog Post created by [Megan Fitzgerald-McGowan](#) on Sep 19, 2017

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Members of Cascadel Woods Fire Brigade at April 15 work day - Carol Eggink

When reading through annual Firewise USA renewals, you never know what you might find. Typically we hear about community chipper days, educational booths, outreach efforts and larger scale vegetation removal projects. This year, Cascadel Woods shared the day their community had to evacuate due to the fast moving [Mission Fire](#). Joining the [Firewise USA recognition program](#) in 2010, Cascadel Woods's residents have worked hard to reduce their risk from wildfire, and on September 3, 2017, those actions paid off:

"On this day we were evacuated from the subdivision due to a fast fire moving up the mountain. It was the Mission Fire. The fire crossed our only road out and about 50 residents were trapped inside the subdivision. We have and maintain a shelter in place for just this type of event. There are four Fire Boxes with equipment in the subdivision and the equipment was laid out and made ready, just in case. As it turned out, the fire stopped at the entrance of our subdivision and the fire crews were able to maintain a clean line around our subdivision due to the fire preparedness we had accomplished over the year. Three homes just outside the subdivision were totally destroyed. We had a few spots where the fire crept onto a few properties which were butted up to the National Forest, but no major structures were lost. A small out building was lost next to the forest land. Not bad for our small community." – Carol Eggink



View of Mission Fire smoke column from Cascadel Woods home prior to evacuation - Carol Eggink

Efforts from sites like Cascadel Woods make my heart soar. Not only are they taking action to protect themselves, but their efforts assist responding firefighters. As a former wildland firefighter, I can't tell you the number of times my crew and I looked at our assignment on a fire and wondered "what will we find when we get there?" When an individual homeowner or group of neighbors take the time to reduce the vegetation around their homes and properties it truly does make a difference. Often, fire behavior is altered in a way that provides an opportunity for firefighters to engage the fire directly, in a safe manner. Cleared areas such as the meadow in the Cascadel Woods also provide a secure area for fire fighters to retreat to if needed.

Cascadel Woods is one of over [1400 recognized Firewise sites](#) across the county working hard to reduce their risk from wildfire. Are you ready to take action? Check out the [Firewise USA toolkit for tips](#) on how to prepare.