

Annual Report

2018



The primary objective and purpose of this organization shall be to provide education, exchange information and foster fire prevention and fire safety within the County of Sonoma.

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From the President



I remember a time a couple years ago when our organization was preaching wildland fire safety and prevention to what seemed like an uninterested audience. I recall our members screaming from the rooftops “wildland fire safety is important” and “here is what you can do to be ready,” and “the Hanley Fire of 1964 will repeat” to a seemingly deaf audience. After the economic crash of 2008, I remember desperately trying to keep our organization afloat and our board members motivated to continue attending our monthly meetings – even decreasing monthly meetings to every other month. I remember brainstorming on ways to improve our image and obtain funding to cover our operational costs. I remember the struggle to make it clear that, even though I was the County Fire Marshal, Fire Safe Sonoma is its own entity and not a county branch. I remember trying to recruit new board members after some left to maintain our minimum number to operate. Through all that, with encouragement from my peers within Fire Safe Sonoma and the fire service in general, I decided to stay and carry on.

Then the wildfires happened! Now, consistent with typical human behavior, it seems everybody and their sister is interested in wildland fire safety and prevention. It is suddenly a “sexy,” important and worthwhile pursuit. This is good news for our citizens. Not just those living in the wildland areas but for those on the fringes and yes, those in urbanized subdivisions, too. We have learned how devastating and far-reaching a significant wildfire can be to all of us – not only to those who live in the forest.

This renewed interest in wildland fire safety and prevention makes me excited for the deeply passionate members of Fire Safe Sonoma because we have an opportunity to take advantage this new energy to inspire growth in our organization. We can also take advantage of the synergy that will evolve as we provide ideas, experience, information and expertise to other organizations that want to help solve the wildfire issues in and around our county.

People are once again realizing that, because of our combined experience as subject-matter experts, our positive relationships with the various county fire organizations and our close relationship to our county government, we are the premiere organization on this important topic. They are remembering that we have the combined experience and expertise to help others carry important messages regarding wildland fire safety and prevention. Moreover, they are realizing we are an organization that is here to help them along. Whether it is county government, fire agency, COPE group, homeowners association, conservatory or resource conservation district, as demonstrated in recent history, WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

As devastating as the recent conflagrations have been, I am excited about the resulting new focus on fire prevention and look forward to our group spreading some real goodness around our beautiful county, and the state as well.

Sincerely,

RMacIntyre

Roberta MacIntyre – President, Fire Safe Sonoma

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Executive Summary



Fire Safe Sonoma is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to increase awareness of wildfire issues in our county and help local residents and firefighting agencies to achieve improved wildfire safety. Formed in 1998, Fire Safe Sonoma has been instrumental in helping to educate residents about wildfire prevention and safety, especially through distribution of their publications *Living with Fire in Sonoma County* and “Ready, Set, Go.” Fire Safe Sonoma acts as a liaison between local communities and agencies, actively seeks grant funding for wildfire related projects, and manages grant programs.

The board of Fire Safe Sonoma is comprised of members with over a century of expertise in wildland fire safety. The Board President, Roberta MacIntyre, has over 35 years of fire service experience and served as the Sonoma County Fire Marshal for 7 years. The board VP, Vern Losh, has spent most of his adult life in the fire service, has served as the Sonoma County Fire Chief and currently is a fire safety consultant. The board Secretary/Treasurer, Ken Hite, has a long history of work with non-profits and is an expert in business operations and finance. Other members of our board include James Williams, the County Fire Marshal; Marshall Turbeville, a CAL FIRE Battalion Chief and the Chief of Geyserville FPD; Paul Lowenthal, the Assistant Fire Marshal for the Santa Rosa Fire Department; Linda Collister, the Fire Marshal for the City of Healdsburg, Nathan Garrett, a Forester and Senior Program Manager at Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Tyler Pits, a Natural Resources Program Manager at the California Conservation Corps.

We are blessed with the passion for wildland fire prevention and safety afforded by Caerleon Safford who has had a long time affiliation with FSS. Caerleon is an independent consultant with expertise in wildland fire prevention who is held in high regard by all those who know her in the fire service community. Because of her years of consulting and project management for Fire safe Sonoma, the county's nonprofit Fire Safe Council she has become “the face of Fire Safe Sonoma”. Her work for us focuses on outreach, education, and planning for residents of Sonoma County's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).



Over the past decade or so Fire Safe Sonoma has managed over \$1 million in grant funded projects. Some of the noteworthy projects completed by Fire Safe Sonoma are as follows:

- The creation of the first comprehensive Sonoma County Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) funded by a grant from the California Fire Safe Council / USDA Forest Service.
- The creation and fulfillment of a Sudden Oak Death & Defensible space fuels reduction project funded by a grant from the Bureau of Land Management.
- The creation and fulfillment of three curbside chipper projects funded by grants from the California Fire Safe Council / USDA Forest Service.
- The creation and fulfillment of a roadside hazards fuel reduction and education project funded by a grant from the California Fire Safe Council / USDA Forest Service.

Our Accomplishments

This past year has been a flurry of activity for Fire Safe Sonoma. With a renewed interest in wildland fire safety in the aftermath of the 2017 fires, we have become the go-to organization for our expertise in this area. We have actively been interacting with the County of Sonoma, Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services, the Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association, homeowner's associations, and various Resource Conservation districts.

Annual Highlights

In addition to being a resource for other organizations, we provided several wildfire safety presentations to organizations and homeowners, we continued working on several grant-funded projects, we received funding for new projects, and we have submitted grant applications for future projects.

Public Education



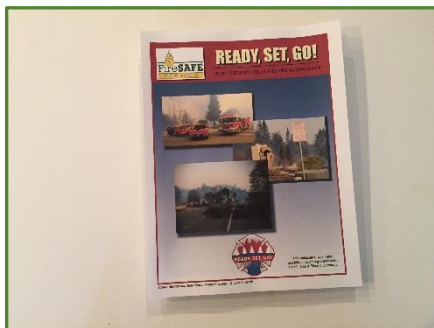
In 2018, we delivered more than 30 public presentations to audiences ranging from 20 to 500. The California Fire Science Consortium, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and homeowners groups from across the County have experienced our excellent presentations. Topics typically include how to harden buildings against wildfire ignition, defensible space, and how to organize local fire safe councils. Presentations generally last between one and three hours, and can include "walk around" assessments of homes. Please contact

us for a presentation for your group. the time. If you would like us to make a presentation to your group please feel free to contact us.

Ready Set Go

Over the past year, we worked collaboratively with the Sonoma County Fire Chief's Association to establish a Ready-Set-Go! Program. This is a Nationally recognized program we are adapting to the needs of Sonoma County.

In November, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provided \$50,000 to the organizations to fund printing of Ready Set Go booklets in English and Spanish and to develop wildland safety content messages deliverable through via social media and in-person events.



The Ready, Set, Go! (RSG), program educates residents about proactive measures to take before a wildfire, or other emergency, and actions to follow when communities are threatened. The program's three tenets encourage Sonoma County residents to get READY by preparing now for what threatens their community, to be SET by maintaining awareness of significant danger and to GO, evacuate immediately when the danger is current and life threatening.

Sonoma County Fair



The California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) and Farmers Insurance[®] joined Fire Safe Sonoma, Mayacamas Fire Safe Council, Insurance Information Institute, Santa Barbara Fire Safe Council, Ready America and Fire and Emergency Agencies staffed a booth at the Sonoma County Fair in August.

Our Work with Collaborators

Sonoma County CWPP Update

In November and December, we assisted the County of Sonoma with creating a Cal OES grant application titled *Sonoma County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update & LHMP Annexation*. Fire Safe Sonoma is a Stakeholder in this grant with specific obligations.

Sonoma County's Northwest Roadway Safety, Fuels Reduction, and Community Chipper and Engagement Project

Fire Safe Sonoma teamed up with Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works to create a Northwest Roadway Safety, Fuels Reduction, and Community Chipper and Engagement Project Grant. CAL FIRE, who will be providing \$1 million for the \$1.2 million project, approved the grant.

This project is created to assess and treat fuel risks and tree mortality within the public right of way, on 30 miles of roads in northwestern Sonoma County, and will be led by the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW).

In conjunction, Fire Safe Sonoma, Inc. (FSS) will, lead community engagement, provide educational outreach, conduct wildland fire safety home assessments and provide coordination for the county chipper program within the project area.

Pepperwoods Fine-Scale Decision Support Data Toolkit

We assisted Pepperwood Preserve in creating a CAL FIRE grant application titled *Fine-Scale Decision Support Data Toolkit to Accelerate the Scale and Pace of Hazardous Fuel Reduction*. Fire Safe Sonoma is a Stakeholder in this grant with specific obligations.

Oakmont Village Association's Oakmont Fire Safety and Firewise Plan



We assisted the Oakmont Village Association in creating a CAL FIRE grant application titled *Oakmont Fire Safety and Firewise Plan*. Fire Safe Sonoma is a Stakeholder in this grant with specific obligations and is the fiscal sponsor.

Camp Meeker Fire Safe Council

We assisted the Goldridge Resource Conservation District with their grant application to CAL FIRE for fire planning on behalf of the newly created Camp Meeker Fire Safe Council. Fire Safe Sonoma is a Stakeholder in this grant with specific obligations.

FEMA Grant

Near the end of 2018 we applied to FEMA for a grant to fund a *Sonoma County Water Supply Pre-fire Planning Project*.

The goal of this project is to determine water supply requirements of targeted structures, to plan availability of and access to water sources, and to ensure sufficient water is provided at each fire site consistent with NFPA Standard 1144 “*Standard on Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting*.”

Within one-year the objective is create and have available a comprehensive set inventory of locations of water sources, establish water rights agreements with private and public property owners who will make their water available for firefighting, and formalize automatic and mutual aid response agreements for mobile water supply apparatus.

Our Ongoing Work

Along with making presentations, working with our collaborators and writing new grants for worthwhile projects, we have our ongoing programs we continue to focus on:

Community CWPPs: Template and Three Local Projects

This past year we continued our work on a CAL FIRE grant funded project to create a template for local communities to use to create community-scale Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and to create CWPPs for the Fitch Mountain, Fort Ross, and Mark West Watershed areas as prototypes. This two and a half year project will end in March 2019.

Living with Fire Booklet

Due to popular demand, we spent a fair amount of time this past year working on a re-write of our benchmark publication *Living With Fire in Sonoma County*. This 16-page booklet provides the public with a wealth of information on how to create a defensible space and how to maintain it. Our plan for the re-write is to update it and include more information regarding structural hardening.



What's Next

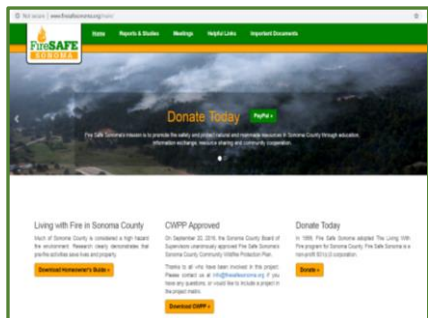
Grants

Our grant committee is always on the lookout for funding sources to fund worthwhile projects. To us, worthwhile projects are those that are consistent with the California Strategic Fire Plan, the local CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan, Sonoma County Plans (i.e. Strategic Plan, General Plan, Hazard Mitigation Plan and CWPP) and fire safety improvements identified in local area CWPP's. It is no secret that over the past decade or more we have been very successful with our grant applications.

Workshops

We have committed to conduct several workshops over the next year that will provide opportunities for other fire safe councils and fire agencies to learn how to establish localized fire safe councils, create a CWPP, and other topics of importance. Our first “how to establish a localized fire safe council” workshop is planned for June of 2019. Stay tuned for more events!

New Media



Currently we are delving into the social media world. We are undergoing advanced training on social media and we are learning how to use “new media” to promote our message. As we enter 2019 we will be rebuilding our website and adding new social media tools to our toolkit. We will also be exploring the creation of short YouTube videos that should attract a demographic we are currently missing.

Strategic planning

Recognizing the importance of strategic planning and given that we have not gone through a formal strategic planning process for several years, we have committed to go through a formal strategic planning process and developing an updated Strategic Plan early in 2019. The fruits of this process will be an updated mission and goals married to short, medium and long range plans.

The Numbers



Fire Safe Sonoma operates on a cash accounting basis with our Fiscal Year ending on December 31 annually.

In 2018 we had unrestricted revenue of \$15,764 and expenditures of \$7762. We received a \$50,000 restricted grant to fund the Ready-Set-Go program and have spent \$3,208 of the grant amount to date.

End of Year Account Balances	Beginning Bal	Ending Bal
Unrestricted Funds	\$20,817.00	\$28,816
Ready Set Go (Restricted Funding)	\$50,000	\$46,792

Our Partners

CAL FIRE Foresters and Firefighters



CAL FIRE foresters and firefighters at Region, Unit, Division, and Battalion levels are available to help residents in the development and planning for fire safe projects. However, during the fire season there may be limited staff availability at all levels, during the winter months CAL FIRE staff is a great resource.

The County of Sonoma



The County of Sonoma, in particular Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services, has been a stakeholder in Fire Safe Sonoma since its creation. We have worked collaboratively with “County Fire” on many projects and programs. County Fire has long been an advocate for Fire Safe Sonoma and has proved to be a fantastic resource for us and that relationship grows stronger every day.

Sonoma County Fire Chief’s Association



Our local fire agencies are concerned about wildland fire risks in their response areas, and will be pleased to know that residents in their area are attempting to make their homes more fire safe. Local fire departments have a very clear understanding of issues in area neighborhoods and sharing information with local agencies is mutually beneficial. Give your local fire department a call or attend their special events and get to know them.

The California Fire Safe Council



The statewide California Fire Safe Council (CFSC), is a nonprofit organization and member of the California Fire Alliance, and consists of public and private organizations. The CFSC's mission is to preserve and enhance California's human made and natural resources by fostering wildfire protection. The CFSC accomplishes its mission through public education programs and by funding local fire safety projects. The CFSC distributes fire prevention education, evaluates legislation pertaining to fire safety, and assists local organizations to initiate fire safety programs. The CFSC has funded five projects for Fire Safe Sonoma, including the Sonoma County CWPP.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company



PG&E must inspect all the power transmission lines in the county yearly and maintain them clear of vegetation. PG&E is committed to reducing the number of outages and wildfires caused by vegetation. PG&E is always ready and willing to provide grant funds to organizations like Fire Safe Sonoma for vegetation management and educational projects.

Other Fire Safe Councils

The Sea Ranch Fire Safe Council, the Mayacamas Fire Safe Council, the Camp Meeker Fire Safe Council and others, which act at a neighborhood or community level, make great strides in increasing local awareness of wildfire issues and serve to focus attention on issues in their area. Fire Free Fitch, formed in 2007 by one person concerned about wildfire issues in her neighborhood has made great strides. They have organized emergency planning, held numerous educational workshops, and launched multiple chipper programs. The formation of local fire safe councils across the county will be tremendously helpful in coordinating projects and several communities have expressed an interest in forming one. If you are interested in forming a Fire Safe Council in your neighborhood, please contact Fire Safe Sonoma.



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