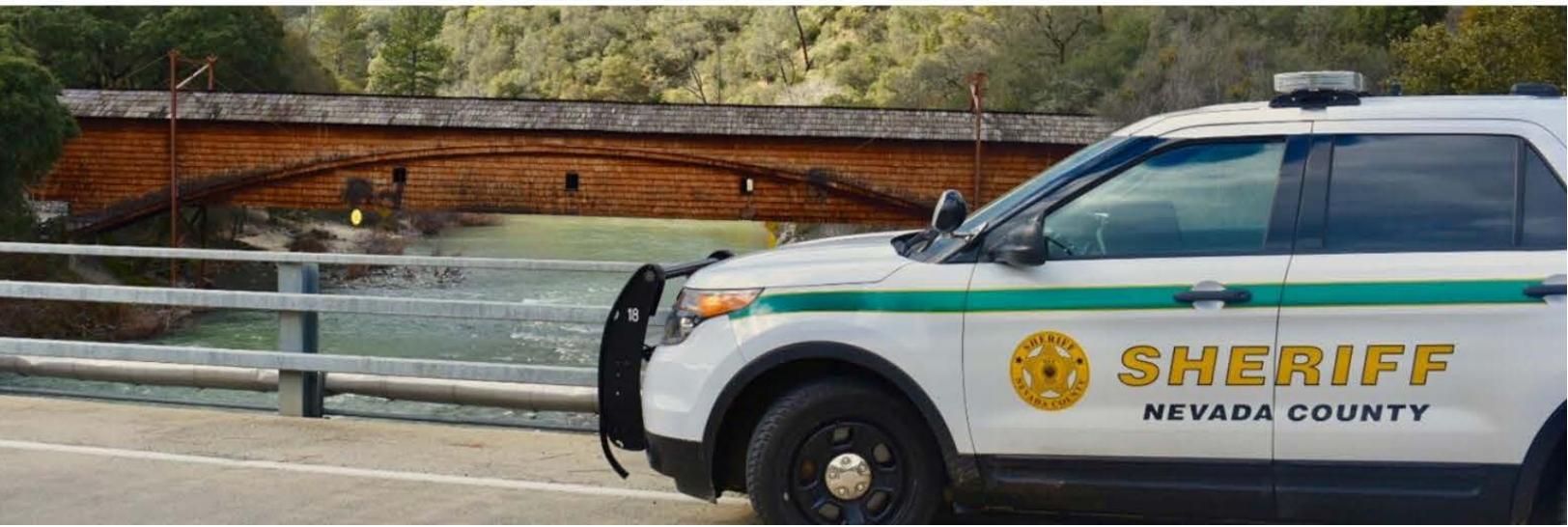




OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness Action Plan

COUNTY OF NEVADA



May 1, 2020

Dear Neighbors,

In Nevada County, we live with the peril of wildfire.

With 92% of County residents living in high fire severity zones, we have our work cut out for us. As the County's Emergency Services Director, I ask myself every day: *What more can we do to save lives in the event of a wildfire?*

If you're like me, you spend your weekends clearing flammable brush away from your home. This creates defensible space so that our courageous firefighters can get in close and combat the blaze. But the challenge is enormous when you consider there are over 27,000 individual property owners in the unincorporated parts of the County alone.

Less fuel along our public roads and private driveways means less intense fires. That makes it safer to evacuate when the time comes to leave. But here again the scale is daunting with 560 miles of County roads and over 1,500 miles of privately-owned roads.

Large-scale fuel breaks defend entire communities from catastrophic wildfire—like the 1,237-acre Ponderosa West Grass Valley Defense Zone. CAL FIRE has identified over a dozen fuel-break projects – some as large as 2,000 acres – designed to defend communities from South County to Truckee.

At the Office of Emergency Services, we partner with local fire districts, CAL FIRE, the Fire Safe Council, dozens of neighborhood-based Firewise Communities, Truckee, Grass Valley, Nevada City, and a team of stakeholders. We are guided by comprehensive plans with a consistent message: *We need to work together to remove enough hazardous vegetation to make a difference.* And then we must sustain that effort year after year.

Our work is guided by five initiatives:

1. Create **safer evacuation routes** countywide to save lives.
2. Improve **early warning systems** and emergency communications to reach everyone.
3. Establish **defensible space** around our homes and neighborhoods by reducing hazardous vegetation and encouraging voluntary compliance with defensible space standards.
4. Provide a coordinated approach to **wildfire response preparedness** through planning, community engagement, and project implementation.
5. Enhance **critical infrastructure** needed to respond to wildfires such as evacuation route improvements, water storage, fire hydrants, communication systems, and green waste facilities.

I encourage you to get involved. Prepare yourself and your family: check out ReadyNevadaCounty.org and sign-up for Code Red emergency alerts today. Meet your neighbors: join a Firewise Community group near you. Support your local fire district. Stay informed and be an advocate for greater public safety resources.

Sincerely,



Steve Monaghan, Director
Office of Emergency Services

INITIATIVE 1: Create safer evacuation routes countywide to save lives.

MILESTONE

- A. Annually, Public Works brushes approximately 50-70 miles and mows an estimated 40-50 miles (approximately 10 feet from the shoulder) of its 560 miles of county-maintained roadway system. This maintenance cycle is completed every 8-10 years and is funded by gas-tax, vehicle license fee, and grant funds.

INITIATIVE 2: Improve early warning systems and emergency communications to reach everyone.

MILESTONES

- A. Annually, increase the number of Nevada County residents enrolled in Code Red Emergency Alerts by 5,000 residences, with a goal of achieving countywide enrollment by 2025.
- B. Annually, contract with 211 Connecting Point to provide over-the-phone, Code Red Emergency Services enrollment support.
- C. Achieve CalOES Type III qualification for the County of Nevada Public Information Officer.
- D. Annually, convene Nevada County Joint Information Center (JIC) participants to review protocols, roles, and tools with local media and stakeholders to maintain efficient systems for relaying critical information to the public in an emergency.
- E. Annually, through advocacy assist local in-print, web-based, and radio media to remain resilient to power shutoffs in order to communicate critical information to the public.
- F. Annually, collaborate with County and private partners to implement hazardous fuels reduction around critical telecommunications infrastructure. Conduct a planning meeting with telecommunications, critical infrastructure stakeholders and fire personnel to identify potential hazardous vegetation reduction opportunities and points of potential failure.
- G. Engage fire suppression community to ensure all vehicles are equipped with Hi-Lo emergency evacuation siren capability.

INITIATIVE 3: Establish defensible space around our homes and neighborhoods by reducing hazardous vegetation and encouraging voluntary compliance with defensible space standards.

MILESTONES

- A. Seek voluntary compliance with the Nevada County Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance by conducting up to 1,500 annual site visits with homeowners on defensible space guidelines. Continue to coordinate with local fire districts and CAL FIRE to develop targeted priority regions based on risk level. Utilize enforcement as a final resort.
- B. Annually, provide 500 tons of free residential green waste disposal programming to Nevada County residents.
- C. Contract with the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County to increase the number of National Firewise USA certifications, or re-certifications, to at least 15 communities.

INITIATIVE 4: Provide a coordinated approach to wildfire response preparedness through planning, community engagement, and project implementation.

MILESTONES

- A. Utilize comprehensive plans to guide response, operations, and mitigation planning efforts such as: Emergency Operations Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Safety Element of the Nevada County General Plan, and CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit Plan.
- B. Continue to develop Nevada County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations, management, public information, logistics, finance/administration, and planning/intelligence staff capacity to respond to an emergency. By the end of the year have 10 Key personnel EOC Type III qualified.
- C. Increase public awareness around emergency preparedness and fire prevention by continuing the *Ready Nevada County* community outreach and education campaign, which utilizes a multi-media approach including video, website, social media, radio, strategic partnerships with retailers, billboards, signs, local media advertising, outreach events, speaking engagements, workshops and town halls to promote an increased state of readiness.
- D. Year-round, aggressively pursue and obtain grant funding to implement unmet needs and priorities identified in local and regional plans.
- E. Coordinate with first responder stakeholders to develop criteria which identifies high risk and priority areas for targeted program implementation.
- F. Draft the Mass Care Shelter Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan to support evacuees during an emergency.

- G. Draft the Evacuation Annex to the Emergency Operations Plan to set standards and provide guidelines for conducting evacuations during an emergency.
- H. Update and maintain the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan on a 5-year cycle.
- I. Update and maintain the Emergency Operation Plan on a 5-year cycle.
- J. Expand the reach of our *Ready Nevada County* community education campaign with a specific focus on vulnerable populations

INITIATIVE 5: Enhance critical infrastructure needed to respond to wildfires such as evacuation route improvements, water storage, fire hydrants, communication systems, and green waste facilities.

MILESTONES

- A. Identify key evacuation route improvement projects on both county and private roads.
- B. Encourage agricultural water storage and shared use with fire suppression community. Collaborate with local community and fire Districts on mapping fire hydrants and water storage options in IncidentView and in the EOC incident dashboard.
- C. Engage private telecommunications providers around increased resiliency during power shutoffs and greater defensible space around critical infrastructure.
- D. Inventory backup power needs to improve resiliency of critical public safety infrastructure during an emergency.
- E. Develop partnerships and a plan to construct a centralized, year-round collection site for green waste disposal free to Nevada County residents and at low-cost to commercial operations.

References

CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit Plan (2019)

California Forest Action Plan (2010)

Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada (2018)

National Action Plan: An Implementation Framework for the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (2014)

Nevada County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2016)

Nevada County Emergency Access Route Study (2000)

Nevada County Fire Plan *Draft* (2007)

Nevada County General Plan Circulation Element (2010)

Nevada County General Plan Safety Element *Draft* (2020)

Nevada County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (2018)

North San Juan Community Fire Plan (2017)

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy Strategic Plan 2019-2024

Truckee Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2016)

USDA Wildfire Wildland and People (2013)