

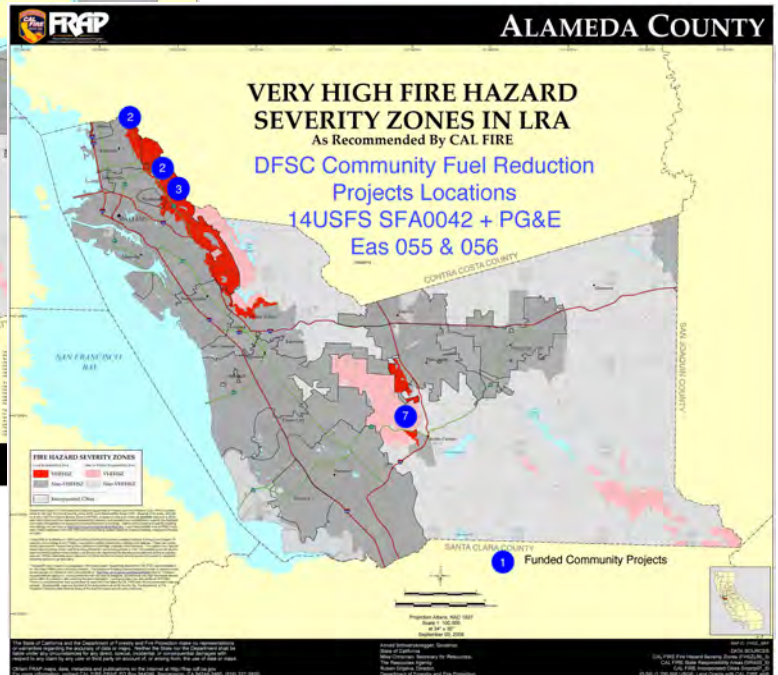
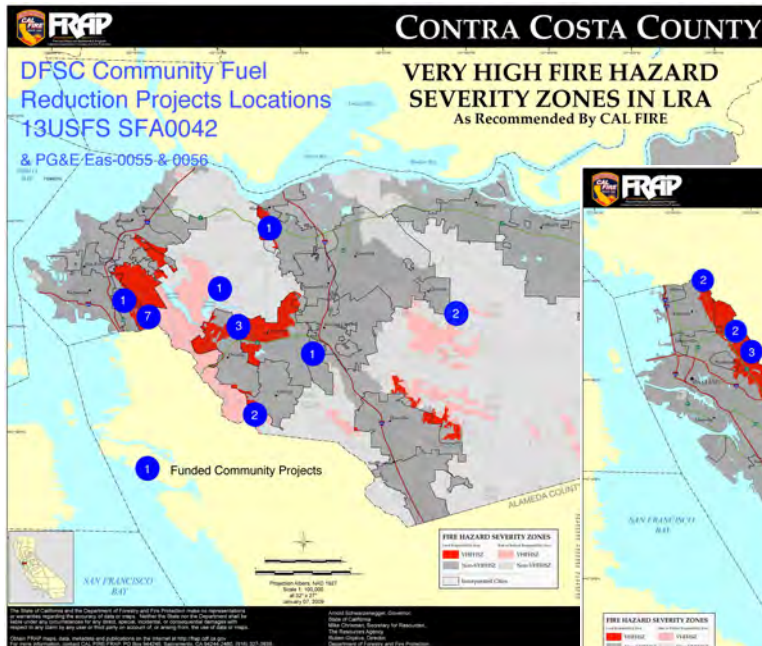
2013 – 2015 Defensible Space Program Success Stories

32 Projects!

During 2013 – 2015 Diablo Fire Safe Council partnered with 32 neighborhood groups to improve defensible space throughout Alameda and Contra Costa County. Each group consisted of a minimum of 5 neighbors linked by a common concern of wildfire hazards around their homes.

An offer of \$5,000 seed funding to promote defensible space was circulated throughout two counties working with elected officials, local fire departments and community members.

Priority was given to those communities identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plans adopted in 2009 and 2012. Funding was provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council. Matching funding was provided by grants from the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, as well as the community members.



Project statistics

Acres treated: 153 acres

Project Funding: \$172,562 USFS

Project Match: \$94,832 PG&E + \$103,260 & 2,527 hours community sweat equity = \$378,460

Homes directly treated: 568

Community members protected: 45,834



32 Neighborhood Projects

Seven groups of Kensington neighbors worked together from the El Cerrito to Berkeley borders. In El Cerrito, residents organized work on both homes and adjacent school property. Two groups of neighbors in Berkeley had trees professionally removed and sponsored seven volunteer days for understory removal. Three groups of Sleepy Hollow Orinda neighbors put into place what they learned from FIREWISE. The residents of Sunol completed seven projects, including communitywide dead tree removal and chipping days. Projects in Walnut Creek, Martinez, Rossmoor, Alhambra Valley, Clayton, two in Canyon and five projects in Oakland rounded out the year.

What did these 32 projects have in common? All of the residents took action when they heard about what they could do to make their neighborhood more defensible from wildfires. It typically began with a few individuals talking with their neighbors. Next, these neighbors put their heads together and completed the application to participate in the Diablo Fire Safe Council Defensible Space Cost Share Program. Successful projects received up to \$5,000 in assistance.

The projects varied from chipping or removal of homeowner cut materials behind Kensington homes, in Rossmoor in the community of Canyon and in Sunol. Work was done on private open space in Rossmoor, Sunol, Oakland's Hiller Highlands and Temescal, and on Save Mount Diablo lands. Other projects utilized right of entry agreements with East Bay Regional Parks District and limbed up trees and cut brush on parklands immediately adjacent to homes in Park Hills, Berkeley and on Canon Drive, Plateau Drive, Beloit Avenue, Los Altos Drive, Lake Drive, Purdue Avenue, Kensington Court, Kensington Avenue. A similar right of entry was used on the city owned Railroad Trail located in the Montclair neighborhood in Oakland. Projects on Miner Road, Orinda and Manzanita Drive, Oakland included sensitive ecosystems and endangered species, so biologists monitored the fuel load reduction work. A partnership of agencies used a CAL FIRE CDC crew to thin mature eucalyptus trees and protect a regional theater. In Orinda and Martinez professional tree experts focused on pines, redwoods, oaks and the ladder fuels below them.

As the final numbers were tallied almost \$100,000 in Federal Grant was leveraged by \$95,000 from Pacific Gas and Electric Company and over \$100,000 from the neighbors in the form of matching funds and 2,500 hours of sweat equity. Thanks to all the neighbors who helped make the program a success!

