



The SCFSC Fireplug

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In This Issue

- FireSafe & W.E.R.C. 1
- Director Spotlight 2
- Welcome June & Brian 3
- Recent Support 4

Wildfire Protection for All Residents of Morgan Hill

Defensible Space clearing for the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center

Nestled among the foothills of the Diablo Mountains in Morgan Hill sits the quiet, secluded sanctuary for wildlife known as W.E.R.C. – the Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center. Home to injured, sick and orphaned animals such as birds of prey, bobcats, reptiles, and jackrabbits, W.E.R.C. operates as a temporary rehabilitation refuge and releases animals back into their native habitat healthy, wild, and free. Licensed by California Department of Fish and Game and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to care for native wildlife, it is the only such facility in Santa Clara County.

The CAL FIRE Santa Clara County unit knew that the W.E.R.C. property was in great need of clearing and maintenance as many animal cages had overhanging trees and branches. Structures needed appropriate Defensible Space and posed a serious fire threat.



Before and after the FireSafe Council's free Defensible Space clearing.

“This was a one of a kind project for us because we not only helped the W.E.R.C. facility and the surrounding properties, but are also protecting the wildlife that resides here,” states Kellie Guerra, South Santa Clara County FireSafe Council Area Manager.

During several site visits, the FireSafe Council worked with CAL FIRE on clearing and safety recommendations and with W.E.R.C. to ensure the safety of the animals. As a non-profit organization, W.E.R.C. qualified for the Special Needs Assistance Program, which provides free Defensible Space clearing and chipping. The result was the clearing and chipping of five large piles of hazardous fuel and the removal of nine dead, dying, or otherwise dangerous trees.

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FireSafe Director Spotlight: Getting to Know the Team *Chris Hughes, Pacific Gas and Electric Company*

This month the spotlight is on Chris Hughes. Chris is a Forester with PG&E and a member of our Board of Directors.

How long have you been involved with the FireSafe Council? Why did you become involved?

I have been involved with Fire Safe Councils since 1997 and a member of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council since 2001. With my responsibilities with PG&E, my participation is a great fit as both organizations are working towards similar goals: with proper education, residents can have a beautiful, fire wise garden that is also compatible with the high voltage lines.

What is your main role or area of expertise within SCFSC?

I'm current on the Board of Directors where my experiences with contracts and running projects with PG&E has come in handy with providing advice to the council.

What are some of the biggest challenges and opportunities for the FireSafe Council?

The biggest challenge that we face as a FireSafe Council is that property owners believe that the fire will only happen in their neighbors yard. One thing I have learned working with fire professionals is that its not a matter of if a fire starts, but simply a matter of when.

What is your favorite thing about Santa Clara County?

I enjoy the densely covered hills in Santa Clara county especially taking shade under them on a warm day. Such wonderful natural sites seems at odd to an area known for its technology.

Describe a memorable project or event. Why did it make such an impression on you?

Several years ago, while braining storming fundraising ideas, we ended up with PG&E donating a tree suitable under power lines, and a landscape contractor who was attending the FireSafe Council meetings donated the planting of the tree. The combination went up for a silent auction and brought in a good deal of money. It really showed me how, working together, we are greater then our parts.



Chris presents the FireSafe Council with a grant check on behalf of PG&E

Welcome June Salisbury

Santa Cruz Mountains resident and SCFSC Lexington Hills Area Manager

Born in San Diego, at the Naval Hospital three days before her father shipped out at the end of the Korean War, June's family settled in Los Gatos in 1963 where she attended Los Gatos High School, West Valley College, and San Jose State University.

June and her husband Scott, a general contractor, bought property in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1974. Interested in alternative structures, energy saving, and environmentally friendly homes, they built a geodesic dome house where they raised their daughter and still live today.

June spent 25 years at Loma Prieta School District, as a bookkeeper and Business Manager, involved in construction projects for the district continuously starting in 1983 thru 2004 including repairs/reconstruction due to damage from the 1985 Lexington Fire.

Most recently, June has been enjoying her family, travelling and learning about viticulture and tending her 400 Zinfandel grape vines. She works as a part time bookkeeper and is also a hardcore San Francisco Giant's fan.

The FireSafe Council is pleased to welcome June to our team where she is using her finance and management experience and skills to assist our Treasurer Allan Thompson. June is working closely with the c0-Area Manager, Kim Gardner, and Board of Director Rick Parfitt to plan upcoming fuel reduction projects in the Lexington Hills area.



A career in education, June brings her experience, enthusiasm and talent to the FireSafe Council

Welcome Brian Turner

Volunteer Firefighter joins us as a SCFSC Project Coordinator



As an EMT and Volunteer Fire Fighter, Brian brings service and dedication to the FireSafe Council

After Brian graduated from high school, he started working towards his EMT certification to pursue a career in fire service. Completing EMT and Firefighter classes at Mission College, Brian has been an EMT and Volunteer Firefighter with Uvas Volunteer Fire Department for nearly two years and is actively involved with South Santa Clara County Fire District's Volunteer/PCF program.

While attending Mission College, Brian was President of Mission College's Fire Technology Student Association coordinating meetings with guest speakers from local Fire and EMS departments and organizing events for the Student Association including the Mission College Fire Technology GAME DAY, where Mission College students sell tickets to a San Jose Giants game and donate proceeds to the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn foundation.

Brian's education, and professional and volunteer work benefits our programs and services. As a Morgan Hill resident, he's been involved in planning chipping projects for the South Santa Clara County FireSafe Council and is a part of our Community Outreach and Education team, planning events and Youth Education projects throughout the County.



The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC) is a non-profit organization composed of individuals, public and private agencies and companies that share a common, vested interest in preventing and reducing losses from wildfires.

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“Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires.”

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Thanks to the following who have made recent contributions to support our programs.

Aldercroft Heights County Water District

City of Morgan Hill

Santa Clara Valley Water District

CAL FIRE

Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Bear Creek Stables

Redwood Estates Services Association

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If you prefer to donate by mail, please mail your check payable to the:

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