Start at the House
and Work Out

Pathways to fire adapted Communities
Homeowner Action is Key

• The future is bringing increasing risks.
• WUI residents can greatly impact the survivability of their homes in a fire prone environment.
• On one hand, it’s very simple...
Start with the **House** and work out
On the other hand, Some significant challenges

- Homeowners need to really understand exactly what they need to do
- They need to take action to do it
- It can be very expensive
- Home hardening less understood, and retrofitting is entirely voluntary
- Demographics: Aging communities, language
Some significant challenges

- We’ve been really good at putting them out.
- 72% more homes in the WUI since 1960s.
Oddly, this never made it into any of my previous slide shows...

Photo Credit, John Burgess/The Press Democrat
How do wildland-urban fire disasters occur?

Severe fire conditions
(Fuel + wx + topo)

Wildland fire
(Rapid spread + high intensity)

Home ignitions
(Widespread)

Fire protection resources
(Overwhelmed)

Fire Protection
(Reduced effectiveness)

Many totally destroyed homes

Jack Cohen
How do wildland-urban fire disasters occur?

Severe fire conditions (Fuel + wx + topo) → Wildland fire (Rapid spread + high intensity) → Home ignitions (Simultaneous home ignitions)

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So how can we do this?
Motivators...
Sticks: Regulation and Enforcement

• Defensible Space Regulation
  • California Public Resource Code 4291
  • Local Hazardous Vegetation Ordinances (Sonoma County Code Chapter 13A)

• Inspections:
  • Educational intent OR
  • Inspection followed by abatement for non-compliant parcels.
Regulation and Enforcement

• Inspection programs provide direct one-on-one educational opportunities.
• Providing incentives helps achieve acceptance and compliance
  – Chipper Programs
  – Special Needs Assistance Programs
Sonoma County’s Regulatory Environment
38 Fire Agencies:

CAL FIRE, Municipalities, Districts, Volunteer Fire Companies
Inspection and Enforcement

- What agency will inspect in the SRA?
  - CAL FIRE, Local Agency?
- What Standards and Regulations should be used?
- Staffing?
- Public acceptance?
It’s Complicated.

What have we got in place right now?
Awesome Education Programs

– Ready, Set, Go
– NFPA Firewise USA
– Fire Adapted Communities
– One Less Spark
– UC Cooperative
– IBHS
Better yet, we have Awesome Allies!

- Fire Agency Personnel
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Watershed and community forest groups ...

Residents!
Residents

• Care deeply about their homes and communities
• Understand the community’s needs and local environment
• Stupendous skills and knowledge!
• Want to do something
• Take one community sparkplug add some connections and information, and you’ve got a ...
Fire Safe Council!

• Grassroots, community-based
  – As big as a County-wide as small as a neighborhood

• Objective: Help create local communities that are better adapted to wildfire prone environments.
Fire Safe Council!

- Education and outreach
- Planning, such as Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Community fuels reduction projects
Community Wildfire Protection Plans

- Collaboratively developed
- Identify community assets and risks
- Prioritize methods and strategies to reduce risk
- Identify funding sources and local solutions
Our Mission:

• To promote wildfire fire safety through education, information exchange, resource sharing and community cooperation.
  – Community presentations
  – Planning
  – Encouraging collaboration across agencies
  – Fuels Management Projects / grants
• Projects:
  – Creating a template for communities to use to create Community Wildfire Protection Plans
  – Building up our outreach capacity
  – Partnership with UCCE, RCD
  – Increasing collaboration across agencies
What do we need?

We need you to create a Fire Safe Council

Join us at a Fire Safe Sonoma Meeting
   – What do you need that we can help provide?

Funding...Donations welcome!
Help us help you!

• Wondering what you can do in your neighborhood?
• Start a Fire Safe Council!
• Lets work together to “Start at the House and work it out”

www.FireSafeSonoma.org
info@firesafesonoma.org