



CONTACT

Chief Marshall Turbeville
Geyserville Fire Protection District
707-857-4373
mturbeville@geyservillefire.com

Geyserville Fire Protection District receives \$540,000 grant for Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project

GEYSERVILLE, CA – The Geyserville Fire Protection District (GFPD) has received a \$540,000 grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for the Lake Sonoma Watershed Fire Prevention Project. The project includes a variety of fire prevention and public education measures aimed at increasing community awareness of wildland fire safety and reducing the risk to the region's most important water supply that provides drinking water to more than 600,000 people.

The project will include cutting back vegetation along county roads, public workshops on fire prevention, development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, defensible space demonstration projects, home inspections, and fuel reduction guidance to help property owners plan and carry out vegetation management.

"This is great news for northern Sonoma County residents and the watershed," said Fred Peterson, board president of the Geyserville Fire Protection District, which includes much of the 83,000-acre Lake Sonoma watershed. "This grant will allow the Geyserville Fire Protection District and its partners to carry out immediate fire prevention measures, and it allows them to inform the community about making their homes and property safer by creating defensible spaces. We want residents to be aware that we live in a high fire danger area, and this fire prevention project will help us keep our communities safe, reduce the number of wildfires, and improve our responses to fires when they do occur."

A partnership of agencies and organizations worked to support the successful grant application, including Sonoma Water, GFPD, the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW), Fire Safe Sonoma, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship.

"We are absolutely thrilled to receive CAL FIRE support for this fire prevention project," said Fourth District Supervisor James Gore, whose district includes part of the watershed. "We learned some very painful lessons following the October 2017 Sonoma Complex Fires and this is another step we are taking to be prepared and do everything we can to prevent wildfires and reduce their damage."

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins' Fifth District also includes part of the Lake Sonoma Watershed. "Fire prevention and education are critical components of increasing the resiliency of our watersheds," she said. "This project will allow us to reduce roadside fuels, increase awareness of the importance of creating defensible spaces, and provide residents with important tools to increase the safety of their homes and their communities."

Lake Sonoma is the primary drinking-water source for 600,000 people in Sonoma and Marin counties. A high intensity wildfire in the Lake Sonoma watershed could alter the lake's water quality, lead to increased erosion, and reduce the lifespan of the lake as a reservoir. Powerlines and communication lines follow the roads in the watershed and will be more protected following the roadside fuel reduction. The communication lines serve areas without cellular telephone service and are essential for allowing residents and officials to communicate during emergencies.

The successful grant application grew out of the FireSmart Lake Sonoma program in 2018 that involved community meetings with Sonoma Water, fire districts and other agency partners, landowners, and community groups to develop ways to work together to increase the watershed's resiliency to wildfires, share home hardening and fuel management strategies around homes (defensible space), and build landowners' capacity to plan for and conduct larger scale fuel management on their properties.

The fire prevention education includes community chipping days, defensible space inspections, workshops, development of a property owner fuel reduction reference document, and demonstration of "defensible space residences" with work completed by a group that supports and trains at-risk youths in habitat restoration. Approximately 463 habitable structures with 2,000 residents will have the opportunity to benefit from this project, with 150 acres treated. The fire prevention education events will be advertised and open for anyone to attend and the property owner fuel reduction reference document will be publicly available.

The CAL FIRE grants are part of more than \$33 million statewide that is provided by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund for California Climate Investments (CCI), with an additional \$10 million coming from funding from CAL FIRE's Community Wildfire Prevention Program.