



# City of Colfax Hazardous Vegetation Ordinance

“CREATING DEFENSIBLE SPACE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY OF  
COLFAX”

# Objectives:

- ▶ Outline the First Responder, City Government and the Communities roll in the Defense of a Community from the threat of Wildland Fires.
- ▶ What is Defensible Space and Hazardous Vegetation?
- ▶ Review Defensible Space statistics from Recent Fires.
- ▶ What does the State or Placer County have for Hazardous Vegetation Ordinances?
- ▶ What does the City of Colfax have and or need?
- ▶ Outline the points within the City of Colfax Ordinance.

# “The Defense of a Community relies on a Partnership”

## This partnership is between;

- ▶ First Responders – CAL FIRE/PCFD, City of Colfax FD, PCSO, CHP and Placer Co OES.
- ▶ City Government – City Council, City Planning and Building Departments and Fire Planners.
- ▶ The Community – Home Owners, Business Owners and Landowners.

# First Responder's Roll:

- ▶ Training and Planning before the Incident.
- ▶ Coordinated Response during the Incident.
- ▶ Development of Pre-Incident Plans.
- ▶ Construction of Fuel Breaks.
- ▶ Perform Defensible Space Inspections.
- ▶ Providing Subject Matter Expertise to City Government Officials.
- ▶ Public Fire Safety Education and Support.

# City Government's Roll:

- ▶ Development of Planning and Building Laws in Support of a Defensible Community.
- ▶ Coordinating their Goals and Objectives with First Responders in Community Development.
- ▶ Establish Sensible and Attainable Objectives for the Community in the form of Hazardous Vegetation and Defensible Space Ordinances.
- ▶ Educate and Support the Community in it's efforts to attain a Defensible Community.

# Community's Roll:

- ▶ Be Prepared, Get Engaged, Don't be a Victim, Be a Survivor!
- ▶ Sign up for Placer Alert. The County's Emergency Notification Tool for the Community. Sign up at [www.placer-alert.org](http://www.placer-alert.org)
- ▶ Learn about Preparing for Evacuations through the Ready/Set/Go page on the CAL FIRE public website. Visit the Ready for Wildfire Website. [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org)
- ▶ Provide your Home it's Defensible Space. Visit the Ready for Wildfire Website for ideas. [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org)

# What is Defensible Space?

Defensible Space is an area surrounding a structure that when properly created and maintained, provides that structure enough distance from the burning vegetation and or other material that under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure.

Fire Fighters will not Engage a Structure that has ignited and does not have Defensible Space! The resource is better used on Structures that have Defensible Space and more Importantly for the concern of the Fire Fighter's Safety!

# What is Hazardous Vegetation?

Hazardous Vegetation is vegetation that is flammable and endangers the public safety by creating a fire hazard including, but not limited to seasonal and recurrent weeds, stubble, brush, downed limbs, low hanging branches, dry leaves, pine needles and tumble weeds.

Hazardous Vegetation must be dealt with Annually.

# Defensible Space Statistics:

2018 was a Tragic, Record Setting Fire Season In California! These Statistics come from that year.

- ▶ 7,571 Wildland Fires on Federal, State and Local Lands
- ▶ 1,846,462 Total Acres Burned
- ▶ 150 Fire Fatalities, 6 First Responders & 144 Civilians. Just recently increased by an additional 50 victims related to the Camp Fire.
- ▶ 22,703 Structures Destroyed
- ▶ 1,496 Structures Damaged
- ▶ 24,199 Structures Destroyed or Damaged

# Defensible Space Statistics cont.:

## Lesson Building Points;

- ▶ 93% of all Structures that catch fire during a Wildland Fire will be destroyed due to a lack of Defensible Space.
- ▶ 85% of all Structures that catch fire during a Wildland Fire and Survive, due so because of Fire Fighters Defensive Actions in support of the Home's Defensible Space.
- ▶ 50% to 66% of Structure Ignitions come from Ember Cast.
- ▶ 33% to 50% of Structure Ignitions come from Radiant Heat.

# Existing Defensible Space Laws:

- ▶ Land outside of established Cities “Unincorporated Land” falls under State Responsibility Area “SRA”.
- ▶ Land inside of established Cities “Incorporated Land” falls under Local Responsibility Area “LRA”. The City of Colfax is “LRA”
- ▶ In the “SRA” Homeowners are required to provide Defensible Space to their Structures through the enforcement of Public Resources Code “PRC” 4291. This law only applies to developed properties.
- ▶ In Placer County’s Unincorporated Land “SRA” the County of Placer has strengthened PRC 4291 law by adopting an additional ordinance for vacant parcels.
- ▶ In the “LRA” PRC 4291 does not apply. Cities are responsible for their own Defensible Space Laws.

# What does the City of Colfax Have or Need?

## Have:

Currently the City of Colfax does not have any Law providing direction or supporting the Partners in Defense of the Community with Hazardous Vegetation by providing Defensible Space.

## Need:

The Hazardous Vegetation Ordinance to provide that needed Direction and Support to the Partners and Community!

# Ordinance Overview:

## 5 Components to the Ordinance;

- ▶ Expectation for the Owner or Responsible Party of an Improved Parcel.
- ▶ Expectation for the Owner or Responsible Party of a Neighbor to an Improved Parcel.
- ▶ Expectation for the Owner or Responsible Party for Unimproved “Vacant” Parcels.
- ▶ Expectation for the Owner or Responsible Party of Roadside Easements.
- ▶ Enforcement for the Ordinance.

# Improved Parcel:

The Owner or Responsible Party of an Improved Parcel Shall;

- ▶ Provide clearance around Structures on that Property from Hazardous Vegetation to a distance of 100' or to the property line which ever is closest. With the first 30' being the most critical.
- ▶ Provide 10' of clearance from Dead or Dying Vegetation to the Structure, Roof or Chimney.
- ▶ Keep the Roof and Gutters clean of Leaves, Needles or other Hazardous Vegetation.
- ▶ Maintain 5' of clearance around the Structure free of Leaves, Needles or other Hazardous Vegetation.

# Neighboring Improved or Unimproved “Vacant” Parcel:

The Owner or Responsible Party of any Parcel that Neighbors an Improved Parcel Shall;

- ▶ In the event that a Neighboring Structure is closer than 100’ to it’s Neighboring Parcel’s Property Line.
- ▶ And that Neighboring Parcel has Hazardous Vegetation closer than 100’ to that Structure.
- ▶ Provide to the Neighboring Improved Parcel the remaining fuel reduction of Hazardous Vegetation needed to provide the Structure on the Neighboring Parcel the required 100’ of clearance.

# Unimproved “Vacant” Parcels.

The Owner or Responsible Party of any Unimproved “Vacant” Parcel not Adjacent to Improved Parcels Shall;

- ▶ Parcels  $\frac{1}{2}$  Acre or Smaller – Cut and Remove all Weeds and Grasses to a Height of 6” or less, Prune and Remove Ladder Fuels to a Height of 10’ and Remove all Hazardous Vegetation.
- ▶ Parcels Larger than  $\frac{1}{2}$  Acre – Provide around the Perimeter to a Distance of 25’ of it’s Property Line, Cut and Remove all Weeds and Grasses to a Height of 6” or less, Prune and Remove Ladder Fuels to a Height of 10’ and Remove all Hazardous Vegetation.

# Roadside Easements:

The Owner or Responsible Party of any Roadway serving as Ingress or Egress Shall;

- ▶ Create and Maintain a 10' wide Fuel Modification Area adjacent to the shoulder of the Roadway.
- ▶ All Trees, Hazardous Vegetation and Ladder Fuels shall be pruned and removed to a Height of 15' above the road surface.

# Enforcement Procedures:

## Education is the Key!

- ▶ CAL FIRE Statistics show 80% of all first time visits, are Compliant.
- ▶ Educational Workshops, Scheduled site visits and Neighborhood visits.
- ▶ Enforcement will be Complaint Based.
- ▶ Will follow existing City Ordinance Enforcement Practices.
- ▶ Grace period ends Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.



Questions?