

# WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION ASSESSMENT DISTRICT



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**Thank you for your support.**  
**Since 2006 we've:**

- Chipped** more than 6500 tons of vegetation through our annual chipping program
- Cleared** 250 miles of roadways through our vegetation road clearance program
- Treated 230** acres of flammable vegetation through fuels management projects
- Evaluated** over 800 properties to assess potential defensible space improvements

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Thank you for supporting the Santa Barbara City Fire Department. This year we are pleased to bring you an update on our efforts to mitigate wildfire risk in the WFSAD and across the entire City.

This calendar year began with unprecedented fires in the Los Angeles area. The Palisades and Eaton Fires have reminded us once again that wildfire can be a year around issue. Fires which began in vegetation quickly became urban conflagrations with sustained house-to-house transmission of fire. The vegetation was the initial ignition area but, these fires moved out of vegetation and into metropolitan areas of Los Angeles City and County.

Many lessons have been learned and many more will be revealed. Simply put, this has changed the wildland urban interface fire and how we manage and mitigate such complex incidents.

This last year we received two grants that have allowed us to expand our wildfire mitigation. We are pleased to partner with the City Parks and Recreation Department to provide increased fuels mitigation efforts.

In February 2023 the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department was awarded a \$525,000 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy in order to complete fuels reduction projects within the City's High Fire Hazard Areas. . This is a two-year grant that allows us to purchase equipment and to hire five fuels mitigation crew members. The crews are limited to parks and open spaces but, they have had a huge role in mitigating fire risk in the foothills. You may have seen their extensive work in Parma Park. They are hourly employees who work intermittently throughout the year.

Additionally, we received a \$2.9 million CAL FIRE grant for five years to continue fuels reduction in our open space parks. This will allow us to hire additional contractors, equipment, and to fund our fuels crew for an additional five years.

CAL FIRE is going to be announcing changes to local fire mapping very soon. This will include "LRA" or Local Responsibility Area (City of Santa Barbara) maps. We anticipate expanded areas of concern throughout our community due to their comprehensive analysis. Information will be provided to the community when the maps are released.

Lastly, Chris Braden has announced his departure from the City after 12 years of service. Chris has been with the WFSAD since the beginning and has built up your program from an initial idea to a comprehensive program which is the envy of the entire State. We cannot thank Chris enough for his contributions to our City and to the WFSAD. He won't be going far, you will undoubtedly hear about his new professional roles soon.

*-Chris Mailes, Fire Chief*

# 2025 DEFENSIBLE SPACE CHIPPING

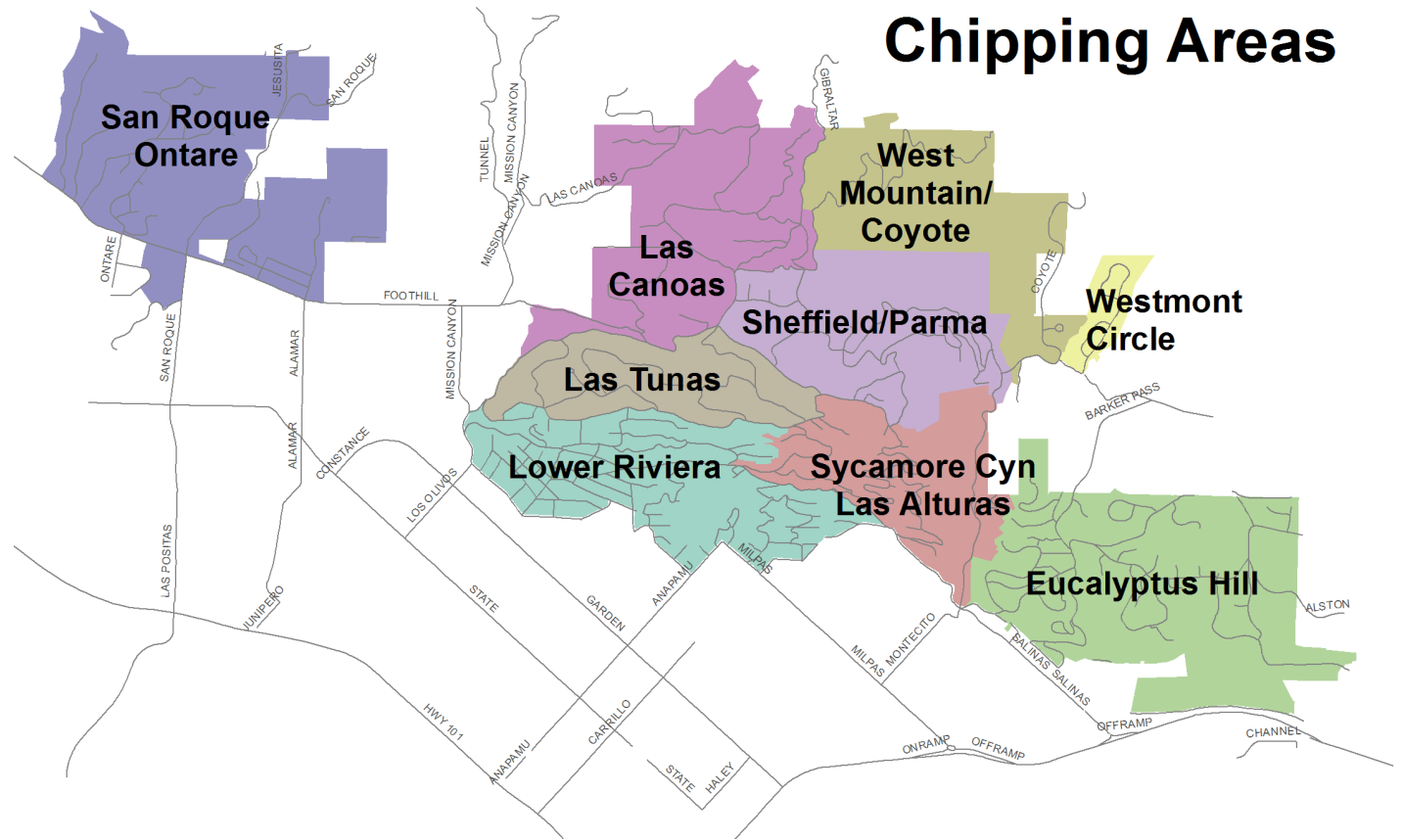
Sheffield/Parma.....	March 24
Las Canoas.....	April 7
Sycamore Canyon/Las Alturas.....	April 21
Lower Riviera.....	May 5
Eucalyptus Hill.....	May 12
San Roque/Ontare.....	May 27
Las Tunas.....	June 9
Circle/Westmont.....	June 26
West Mountain/Coyote.....	June 23

**Exotic pest plants that will NOT be chipped include:**

- Arundo • All species of ivy •
- Castor bean • Fennel •
- All species of broom • Ice plant
- Tobacco weed
- Any type of grass • Tamarisk
- Any kind of Bamboo

Please put your cut vegetation out on roadways **no sooner than two weeks** and **no later than 7am the morning** your chipping area is scheduled to begin (second passes will not be made).

Please refer to the map of chip areas below. For further detail visit our website at [SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD) or call us at (805) 564-5737



## CHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS



Chipping services are provided to encourage property owners to create defensible space and provide a cost effective way to dispose of cut material.

As part of the City's environmental efforts, our goal is to re-use 100% of all chipped material. To achieve this goal we need your help. If you can use chips on your property please contact us at (805) 564-5737. A load of chips is approximately 14 cubic yards. Partial loads are not available.

The chipping instructions (right) outline the specific requirements. Vegetation that does not meet these requirements will not be chipped and will be left on site. The property owner will be responsible for the legal disposal of any material that cannot be chipped.

- Cut vegetation must be stacked by the first day of the chipping schedule in your area.
- Cut vegetation should be laid out in a pile along the street outside the drivable roadway.
- The cut end of all vegetation must face the street so we can easily handle the material.
- Brush should be left in long lengths (4-7 feet). This makes it is much easier to chip.
- Cut branches should be no greater than 10 inches in diameter.
- Material in plastic bags will not be picked up.
- Twine or string must not be used to tie vegetation.
- Rocks or other debris will not be chipped.
- Long piles OK as long as they are not over 4 feet in height.
- Old dead vegetation that has been lying around for years will not be chipped (this type of vegetation damages chipper blades).
- Pine needles or other leaf litter cannot be chipped.
- Piles pushed or moved by mechanical means, i.e. tractor, will not be chipped.
- Grasses, palm fronds, succulents or agaves will not be chipped.



# DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATIONS

## WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible Space is the landscaped area around your home maintained to reduce the fire danger to structures and your property. A good defensible space area is key in providing a buffer between an approaching wildfire. It can make the difference between saving or losing your home.

**Defensible Space Evaluations are informative and FREE to all residents of the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District**



## Defensible Space Tips

**Reduce Fire Ladders:** Separate and space your plants both horizontally and vertically.

**Reduce Ignition Sources:** Embers may blow miles ahead of the fire. Frequently check and remove leaves and debris from roofs and gutters. Check under decks and porches, deck furniture, play/storage structures, doormats, and potted plants.

**Trees:** Remove branches from the ground a minimum of 6 feet or 1/3 the total height of the tree. Remove all dead branches.

**Brush:** Remove dead fuel and limb up 2 feet from the ground. Keep separation between shrubs, brush and trees.

**Grass:** Mow to 4 inches from the ground.

**Debris Piles:** Do not pile wood chips or mulch on your property. Spread and maintain them no greater than a 4 to 4 inch depth. Compost should be kept in an appropriate container.

**Ornamental Plants:** Should be irrigated, maintained and pruned year-round.

## WHAT IS INVOLVED IN A DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATION?

During a Voluntary Defensible Space Evaluation we meet you on site and walk around your property. We will discuss your current landscaping, exterior building construction, assess its current condition for things that are beneficial as well as any additional interior improvements that can be made.

## AVOID FLAMMABLE SPECIES

Many species of ornamental and invasive vegetation should not be planted due to their flammable characteristics within the high fire hazard area. These are some of the species not allowed to be planted within the high fire hazard area:

- Acacia
- Castor Bean
- Honey Suckle
- Pampas Grass
- Bamboo
- Coyote Bush
- Ivy
- Pepper Trees
- Bottlebrush
- Cypress
- Juniper
- Periwinkle
- Bougainvillea
- Cedar
- Madrone
- Pine Trees
- Broom Species
- Douglas Fir
- Manzanita
- Sage
- Camphora
- Eucalyptus
- Melaleuca
- Spruce Trees
- Cape Plumbago
- Fountain Grass
- Palm Trees
- Sumac

For a full list see 'High Fire Hazard Area Landscape Requirements' at: [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Wildland](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Wildland)

**FOR A VOLUNTARY DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATION PLEASE CALL (805) 564-5737**

## BE PREPARED

In addition to preparing your defensible space it is important to utilize services that can provide critical information in the event of a wildfire or other natural disaster. Signing up for **READY SBC Alerts** will register your phone number and/or email address for alerts during emergencies. A message will be sent regarding potential safety hazards or concerns to the voice, email, or text communication methods that you have registered. Registration only takes a minute and can be found at:

[ReadySBC.org](http://ReadySBC.org)

**READY SBC.org**  
SIGN-UP • PLAN • UNDERSTAND



Santa Barbara City's **READY, SET, GO!** guide is part of a national campaign that provides a wildland fire action plan for homeowners and information critical in preparing for a wildfire. This guide covers defensible space strategies, fire-wise landscape management tips specific to our local landscape and provides a personal wildfire action plan to prepare before having to evacuate. A copy of the guide can be found on the WFSAD website under the "Helpful Links" tab on the left menu:

[www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD)

If you would like a copy of Ready, Set, Go!, please contact the Fire Services Specialist at:

**(805) 564-5737**

## ROADWAYS MUST BE MAINTAINED

Each year the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department clears approximately 14 miles of vegetation along roadways within the WFSAD. Flammable vegetation along roadways creates hazardous conditions, especially during an evacuation. Burning vegetation along roads can force the closure of important evacuation routes, impedes the ingress of first responders and the egress of residents evacuating from areas. It is critical all property owners in the High Fire Hazard Area Zones maintain vegetation bordering roadways on their property year round.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

# VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Each year the City of Santa Barbara Fire Department conducts fuel reduction within Vegetation Management Units as outlined in the 2021 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Vegetation management is also completed within the Community Fuels Treatment Network (CFTN). The CFTN is an area that ties together fuel reduction projects completed by Santa Barbara City, Montecito and Santa Barbara County.

Vegetation management focuses on the removal of flammable vegetation by preferentially removing exotic pest plants, thinning, pruning and limbing existing vegetation to remove fire ladders, pruning out dead material, and thinning out continuous areas of brush. Vegetation management is focused outside property owners required defensible space areas.

All vegetation management activities include a biological and ecological evaluation prior to conducting work in order to protect environmental resources. By targeting fuel reduction activities in areas most prone to wildfire we can decrease the overall risk wildfire poses to the City.



**BEFORE**



**AFTER**

Over the previous years, Vegetation Management projects have been primarily focused within the Community Fuels Treatment Network (CFTN), including the Ontare, Las Canoas, West Mountain, Skofield Park and Parma Park areas.

## WILDFIRE RESILIENCY PROJECT

In October 2023, the City of Santa Barbara was awarded an approximately \$2.9 million **CAL FIRE** grant to support hazardous fuels management in parks, plus additional open space areas. In collaboration with the City Fire Department, the grant will allow for biological resource reports to be conducted in 11 locations and work plans to be executed in 15 open space areas. These include areas in the WFSAD like Parma Park and Skofield Park

Vegetation management projects in these open space areas will target the removal of invasive and non-native species in addition to the clearing of dead and overgrown vegetation that poses a hazard to surrounding communities.

The City of Santa Barbara Fire Department has also hired multiple full-time crew members who will be conducting fuel reduction projects by hand cutting and chipping vegetation. All cut material will be chipped and disposed of by broadcasting on site. Non-native and invasive species that cannot be chipped will be disposed of at the landfill.

This is a multi-year grant with ongoing project work that will continue for at least the next 5-years.



## SPOTLIGHT ON FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

The national Firewise USA recognition program provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and community and to reduce wildfire risks at the local level.

In 2024, we saw a significant increase in the number of Firewise Communities within the City as neighborhoods have identified the need for additional measures to be taken in order to protect their homes to the threat of wildfire. By creating Firewise Communities with the assistance of the Santa Barbara Firesafe Council, these community members actively engage with their neighbors to create a multi-year strategic plan and share collaborative efforts to have a significant impact to wildfire safety in the City. Furthermore, these additional community efforts can reduce insurance rates in communities with the Firewise USA designation.

Firewise USA sites in Santa Barbara City include: Coronada Circle, Cima Linda Lane, Sycamore Canyon, Santa Barbara Highlands, Northridge Road, and Arriba Way.

We would like to thank these communities for their efforts to increase their community's Defensible Space clearance and reducing the potential impact wildfires pose to the City.

For more information on the Firewise USA program, you can visit: <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa>



**FIREWISE USA**  
Residents reducing wildfire risks





CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
FIRE DEPARTMENT

**SBFD Website**

[SantaBarbaraCA.gov/FIRE](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/FIRE)

**CWPP Website**

<https://cwpp.santabarbaraca.gov>

**WFSAD Website**

[SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD](http://SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD)

**SBFD Facebook**

[Facebook.com/SantaBarbaraCityFire](https://Facebook.com/SantaBarbaraCityFire)

**Ready SBC**

[ReadySBC.org](http://ReadySBC.org)

City of Santa Barbara  
Fire Department  
925 Chapala Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

**SIGN UP FOR A FREE  
DEFENSIBLE SPACE EVALUATION**



Just snap the above QR code with your smartphone and it will take you to our sign up form. You will be contacted to set up an appointment within 1-2 business days. You can also visit:

**[www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/WFSAD)**

Click on Defensible Space Evaluations on the menu to the left.

**YOUR ASSESSMENT DOLLARS PROVIDE FOR:**

**Vegetation Management Projects • Defensible Space Evaluations • Vegetation Chipping  
Public Education & Outreach • Vegetation Road Clearance**

**Santa Barbara County  
Fire History**

Year	Fire Name	Acres	Homes Lost
1955	Refugio	84,770	Several
1964	Coyote	67,000	100+
1971	Romero	14,538	4
1977	Sycamore	805	234
1977	Hondo	10,000	0
1979	Eagle	4,530	5
1990	Painted Cave	4,900	524
1993	Marre	43,864	0
2002	Sudden	7,160	0
2004	Gaviota	7,440	1
2007	Zaca	240,207	0
2008	Gap	9,445	0
2008	Tea	1,940	238
2009	Jesusita	8,733	80
2016	Sherpa	7,474	0
2016	Rey	32,606	0
2016	Canyon	12,518	0
2017	Alamo	28,687	1
2017	Whittier	18,430	16
2017	Thomas	281,893	1,063
2019	Holiday	113	24
2019	Cave	3,126	0
2021	Loma	7	0
2021	Alisal	16,970	12