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North Bart Neighborhood tackles wildfire risk

Submitted by Robert Fellows



CCCFPD Hand Crew 12 at work Photo Jack Baker

To reduce wildfire risk, the North BART Firewise Community held a Community Chipping Day event on Nov. 29. The community event covered North Thompson Road starting at Glen, Oak Hill Road north of Deer Hill, Orchard Road, their offshoots and several properties on Deer Hill. Chipping and hauling services were provided by Hand Crew 12 of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District as part of their Wildfire Mitigation Program. Twenty-two households followed stacking guidelines to put cuttings along the road by the day before the event to be chipped and hauled or broadcast as marked by the Firewise committee. Two households from the Glen Firewise community joined in the effort for their homes adjoining North Thompson. In some cases, neighbors and visiting family helped residents, sharing the work and sometimes the Thanksgiving turkey. Two good citizens allowed the use of their properties for placing stacks where residents didn't otherwise have

space along the street. The city of Lafayette supported the event by granting a no-fee encroachment permit and three A-frames for roadside signs for the event.

There were several goals: to create defensible space for homes by managing vegetation in accordance with Firewise recommendations, to help residents perform city required maintenance of the unpaved city right of way next to their homes, as well as help bring them into compliance with the county requirement of 10 feet of clearance of hazardous vegetation along fire apparatus access roads.

The benefit is for safer homes, with home insurance companies offering discounts for homes in Firewise Communities, as well as community safety by helping to protect evacuation corridors and fire apparatus access.

The work is ongoing. Another Chipping Day may be held in May 2024.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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