

FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
DEFENSIBLE SPACE CURBSIDE CHIPPING PROGRAM
GRANT# 07USFS9460



ALPINE FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
FUNDING PROVIDED BY A NATIONAL FIRE PLAN GRANT FROM THE USDA FOREST SERVICE
THROUGH THE CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

Background:

The Alpine County communities of Markleeville, Woodfords, and the Woodfords Indian Community lie within pockets of wildland urban interface entirely surrounded by federal forest lands. Historically, wildland fires have spread from federal to private lands and vice versa, with the Acorn Fire of 1987 being the most destructive (26 homes lost.) The Alpine County Community Wildfire Protection Plan identifies neighborhood fuels reduction as a priority in each of the communities noted above. Coupled with the need for neighborhood fuels reduction is the recent adoption and pending enforcement of new defensible space regulations by the State of California (PRC 4291.)



Seeking to offer solutions to both these local needs, the Alpine Fire Safe Council applied for grant funding to establish the Defensible Space Curbside Chipping Program (DSCCP) in the spring of 2006.

This report describes: the project area, the desired outcomes, the four components of the program, (education, assessment, treatment, and performance assessment,) and the final outcomes, also known as "deliverables."

The Project Area:

The project area for the Defensible Space Curbside Chipping Program (DSCCP) is shown on the map in Figure 1. The four main unincorporated communities shown are Hope Valley, Woodfords, Markleeville, and the Woodfords Indian Community (WIC). The three latter communities are listed as Communities -At -Risk in the Federal Register. The vegetation types differ between the communities with Hope Valley and Markleeville in timber regimes and Woodfords and the WIC in primarily brush environments.

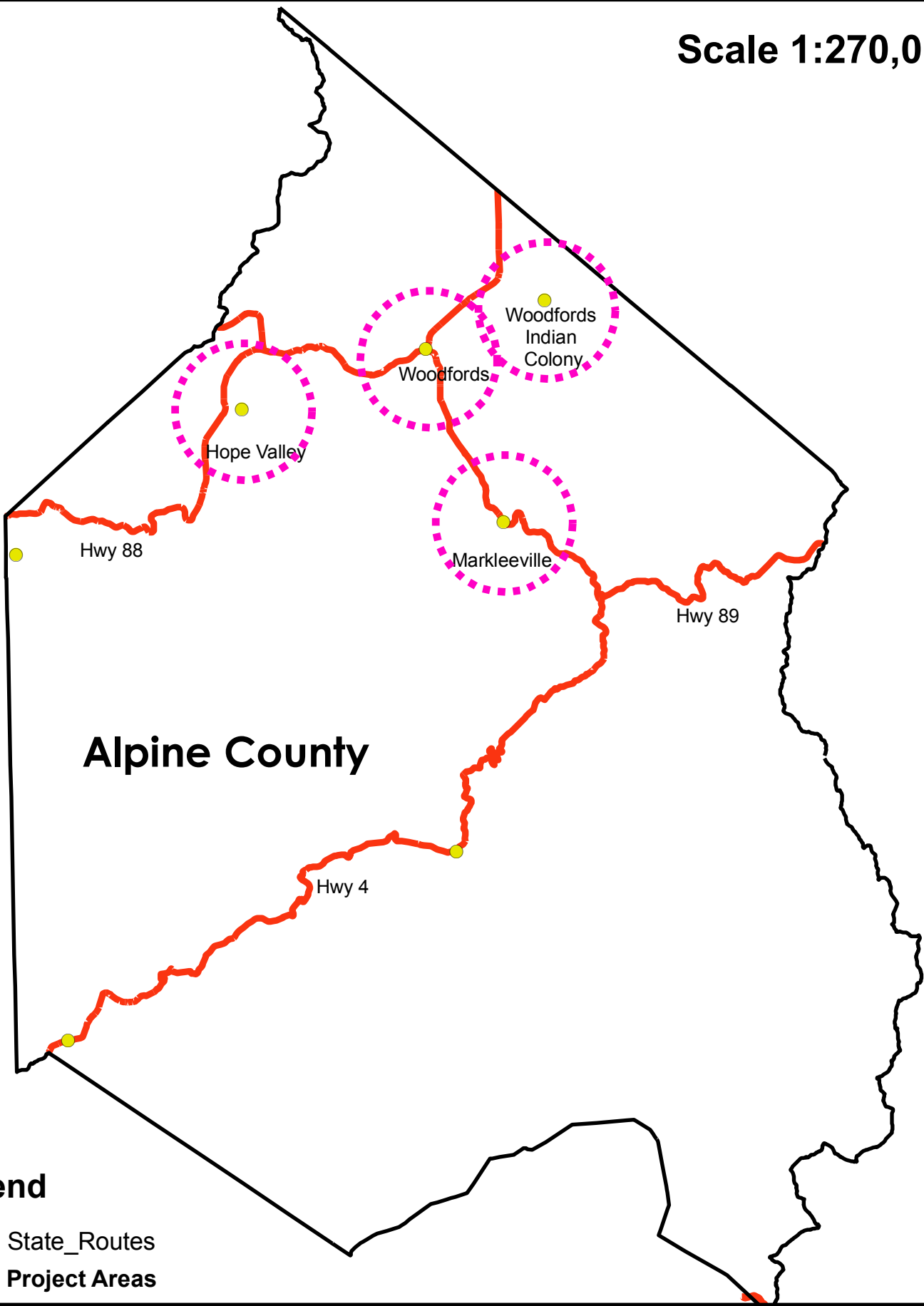
The project took place during spring and fall months with a three or four person crew and a chipper. The crew operated on existing roads on both public and private right of ways in the project area. No chipping took place during "extreme" fire ratings.



Desired Outcomes and Benefits:

1. Reduce wildfire risk to residents through the reduction of fuel loads around a total of 120 structures in three communities.
2. Widespread distribution of defensible space regulations and maintenance information.
3. Broad community support for establishing an annual defensible space program.
4. Post-project documentation for use in future defensible space presentations in the community.

Scale 1:270,000



Alpine County

Legend

- State_Routes
- - - Project Areas

Alpine County Chipping Program

Figure 1

0 1.5 3 6 Miles



The Project Framework:

Four components formed the project framework: education, assessment, treatment, and performance assessment. A description of each component and its implementation follows.

1. Education

The education component focused on informing the community residents and property owners of the need for defensible space and changes to the Public Resource Code 4291. This was accomplished by the following means: multiple direct mailings to the property owners, local posting in Markleeville and Woodfords, website posting on www.alpinefiresafe.org, a local display at the library, a presentation to the seniors group and local homeowners association, announcements at the County Board of Supervisors meetings, newspaper announcements in the Record-Courier, and the development of a defensible space power point for use in future presentations. All efforts to inform residents of the program included phone and website contact information for program questions or additional information.

2. Assessment

Assessment refers to the effort to identify specific defensible space problems at resident's homes. This took place through the use of "Courtesy Fire Safe Reviews." These reviews consist of a checklist based on CALFIRE inspection forms. Initially, the reviews were conducted by the Alpine Fire Safe Council with volunteer assistance. During the program, CALFIRE personnel became available to assist in performing the reviews, thereby reducing training costs for volunteer inspectors. This review process allowed the inspectors to advertise the chipping program directly to the residents. The review process resulted in some residents hiring the chipping crew to perform fuels reduction work separate from the chipping program.

3. Treatment

The treatment phase began with the acquisition of environmental compliance documents. Once these were obtained, the AFSC sent out a Request for Proposals to potential contractors for the project. **Fire Stop** was selected and a signed contract followed. The Project Manager (Jeff Brees) met with the contractor to set the project dates and notifications began. Requests for service were collected by phone or email and organized by the Project Manager. Once the crew began field work, the crew supervisor met or spoke daily with the Project Manager regarding progress and additional requests.

4. Performance Assessment

To monitor contractor performance the Project Manager maintained daily contact through meetings, phone calls and email. Photo monitoring also played an important part in documenting crew work and fuels encountered. Additional information was derived from a phone survey of participants by the Project Manager. Finally, a letter from grateful participants suggested that the DSCCP was integral in helping protect their home from the "Burnside Fire" in September 2008 (see Appendix B.)

Final Outcomes versus Desired Outcomes:

1. The project exceeded our goal of protecting 120 homes with approximately 152 homes protected.
2. Courtesy Fire Safe Reviews, five separate mailings, two public meetings, three newspaper items, website postings and a library display helped to meet our goal of the widespread distribution of educational materials for defensible space.
3. The program did not have sufficient participation to suggest that there is broad support for an annual program but the quantity of materials chipped increased significantly during the course of the project.
4. The program met the objective for post-project documentation with photos, spreadsheets of participants, and a defensible space power point presentation that will serve as useful tools in the near future.

For the statistics on "deliverables" please see Appendix A.

APPENDIX A -STATISTICS

Estimated project cost: \$23,706.00

Actual project cost: \$22,317.68

Chipping requests: 103

Homes protected (est.): 152

Population protected (est.) 600

Total cu. yards chipped: 899

Total tons chipped: 73

Acre equivalence: 29

Cost per acre: \$770.00

Fuels reduction "side projects "generated through the availability of the chipping crew in the area: 13

APPENDIX B-SUCCESS STORY

246 High Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
September 8, 2008

Jeff Brees, Coordinator
Alpine Fire Safe Council

Dear Jeff,

We would like to thank you and the Fire Safe Council for supporting the Chipping Program these last two years.

When we heard about the program last summer (2007), we were encouraged to accelerate our efforts to clear and thin growth around our cabin in Hope Valley. Your contractors were then able to chip all the slash we had accumulated that season.

When we heard about the program's continuing into 2008, we extended our clearing and thinning even further, as recommended by evolving fire-safe standards. By all accounts (Cal Fire, US Forest Service, BLM, Alpine Fire Department, National Park Service, etc.) the resulting thinned area made defending-and yes saving--our cabin from the recent Burnside Fire (NV-HTV-001015) possible. We are very grateful.

Now we are hoping that the slash still in front of our cabin from this year's work will be able to be chipped yet this fall.

With sincere gratitude,
Melanie Mayer
Angela Christmann
James Christmann