



MENDOCINO COUNTY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

To inform, empower, and mobilize county residents to survive and thrive in wildfire-prone environments.

COMMUNITY CHIPPER PROGRAM FACT SHEET

Overview

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC), under its fiscal sponsor, the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD), is developing a Countywide Community Chipper Program. One component of this program includes grant funding for fire safety in Wildland-Urban Interface areas. MCFSC will be partnering with local residents and contractors to support safe egress for residents and safe ingress for first responders, and to increase wildfire preparedness by clearing high-risk brush and trees near homes, roads, and power lines.

Scope

The project includes landowners' voluntary involvement in "Chipper Days", where landowners cut brush and limbs in the "defensible space" immediately surrounding their homes, and place brush out along the roadway on a selected day when a certified crew will come by to chip and remove it. Things to know:

- ✓ brush must be clean of metal, rock, or other debris that may damage equipment or pose a risk to operators;
- ✓ piles should be no larger than one average pickup-truckload in size;
- ✓ cut ends should face in the same direction, ideally toward the road;
- ✓ brush-cutting should occur within a few days of Chipper Days, for easier chipping and reduced fire risk from piles sitting out on roadsides;
- ✓ crews should never be interrupted or distracted while working;
- ✓ landowners may choose whether chips will be removed or left onsite.



Initial Requirements

The project requires numerous legal documents including Landowner Access Agreements (LAA) to allow brush clearing and chipping along private property borders. Also required are a contract with tree-service companies, and insurance and liability filings. Other preparations include determination of priority areas, mapping, and "before" photography in GPS-marked locations so that "after" photos can be taken from those precise spots.

Neighborhood Involvement

After legal documentation is in place, a neighborhood informational meeting will be held to prepare residents for appropriate involvement in Chipper Days. "Before", "During", and "After" photographs are needed to document the project, community involvement, and the resulting improved fire safety. A trained local-volunteer "brush pile inspector" is extremely helpful to assure the efficiency and safety of chipping operations.

Final Reporting

Residents are requested to document all hours spent and dollars expended during meetings, buying equipment, working around their homes, or paying others to clear defensible-space brush. Most grant funding requires a match donated by community members, making continued funding possible. Residents are requested to cooperate with this and other requirements that help make Community Chipper Days possible and help make Mendocino County a safer place to live.



Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as part of the California Climate Investments Program. The Ukiah Valley Fire Fuels Reduction Project is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: www.cclimateinvestments.ca.gov.

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