



NORTHERN SONOMA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT 2021 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING WINE COUNTRY FOR OVER 100 YEARS

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Following two destructive wildfire years, drought, and COVID, there were many unknowns as we entered 2021. As we come to the end of 2021, we have been fortunate to have avoided a destructive wildfire. The fire district believes that through our combined efforts to prevent and prepare for emergencies, we have likely prevented wildfires and other emergencies from occurring. This is our goal!

The recent years have forced us all to change. The fire district has changed. Our “new normal” is focused on:

- How we can prevent an emergency rather than only responding to emergencies. **We are now spending more time, almost a 2-to-1 ratio, in prevention and preparedness compared to emergency response.**
- Promoting individual and neighbor helping neighbor preparedness programs such as the Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies (COPE) network. We know we cannot prevent all emergencies and know these efforts will save lives during an emergency. Please take the time to prepare yourself and work with your neighbors to have an emergency plan.
- We annually perform over 500 defensible space inspections or assessments.
- Operating as a regional fire district for Northern Sonoma County in coordination with the Cloverdale Fire Protection District. We are pursuing the annexation of Fitch Mountain, southern Dry Creek Valley, The Geysers, and Mill Creek areas into the fire district. This will provide a coordinated regional fire agency focused on embracing volunteerism and delivering the best fire and emergency services with local control.
- Aggressively embracing managing wildland vegetation through prescribed burning, chipping, roadside clearance projects, and shaded fuel breaks. The intent is to reduce wildfire intensity and ember production to allow fire suppression efforts to be more effective. We have prescribed burned over 500 acres since the fall of 2020.

Please visit our website at <https://www.northernsonomacountyfire.org> to learn more.



THE KINCADE FIRE DOCUMENTARY



The Kincaide Fire documentary was made possible by a generous donation and motivated by our desire for all of us to remember what happened and prevent it from happening again. Watch it today for free on YouTube shorturl.at/pqD24

FACTS ABOUT US

We serve the communities of Franz Valley, Knights Valley, Alexander Valley, Chalk Hill Road, The Geysers, Dry Creek Valley, Lake Sonoma, and Geyserville

Our fire district's jurisdiction is approximately 273 square miles

We average 1 – 2 emergency responses per day within the fire district and to help other jurisdictions

SAVE THE DATES

Annual Blood Drive
January 21, 2022

Fire and Emergency Expo
May 1, 2022

Wine County to the Rescue
July 16, 2022

**Fall Colors Pancake
Breakfast**
October 29, 2022

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE MAPS

The fire district recognized that other agencies who come to help us during an emergency do not know the location of every road and structure or previous wildfire history. This recognition led to the development of maps we have identified as “Pre-Attack” and “Neighborhood Information” maps. The Pre-Attack maps provide an area overview with roads, dots with colored labels for residences, and locations where it may be possible to construct a dozer line if conditions allow, ahead of a wildfire. These maps have been made available in paper and electronic format during recent years including the 2019 Kincade Fire and 2020 Walbridge Fire. The Neighborhood Information maps are based on established COPE neighborhoods (5-20 residences) and cover less of an area and provide more specific information regarding water sources, gates, etc.

BURN PERMITS

The burn permit process is confusing. Here are the permitting requirements:

- Air quality permits are required year round and are available online from the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District <https://nosocoair.org/open-burn-portal>. (All of the fire district is located in this air quality jurisdiction.)
- From the end of fire season (usually December) until May 1 of the following calendar year (winter and spring months), no other permits are required.
- If you are burning in CAL FIRE’s jurisdiction, which is referred to as State Responsibility Area (SRA), between May 1 and the end of fire season (summer and fall months), you will need a CAL FIRE burn permit. Your air quality permit will indicate if you are located in SRA. CAL FIRE burn permits can be obtained online for piles less than 4’x4’ and larger piles require a CAL FIRE site visit and inspection. Contact a CAL FIRE station, Cloverdale or Healdsburg, for a permit.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE

Most grant opportunities are not available to individual landowners unless it is in coordination with other property owners as part of a larger project and there is a non-profit or government agency to serve as the grant administrator (fiscal sponsor). The fire district submits grants for vegetation management projects that have strategic value to multiple residents and/or community. The development of a vegetation management project requires planning and willing property owners. The planning process requires defining the project boundary and where specific treatments will be implemented. The property owners must understand the treatment and agree to have it occur on their property. If you and your neighbors are interested in developing a vegetation management project in collaboration with the fire district, please contact the fire district.

Grants and other opportunities for individual landowners include the following:

The County of Sonoma funds a free residential chipper service from spring into fall of each year (<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/PRMD/Fire-Prevention/Vegetation-Management-Services/Curbside-Chipper-Program/>).

CAL FIRE California Forest Improvement Program: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/california-forest-improvement-program-cfip/>

North Bay Forest Improvement Program: <https://afterthefireusa.org/our-programs/before-the-fire/nbfip-intro/>

National Resources Conservation Services: Contact Petaluma Office (andrew.loganbill@usda.gov)

University of California Cooperative Extension : https://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/Disaster_Resources/Fire/

HOW WE PROVIDE SERVICES

We have 1 staffed fire station in Geyserville, and volunteer staffed fire stations in Franz/Knights Valleys, Alexander Valley, and the Dry Creek Valley. Our nearest ambulances are located in Healdsburg and Cloverdale. Ambulances are also located in Calistoga and Middletown and may respond into portions of Sonoma County. We have agreements with our neighboring agencies for emergency responses. You will see the Healdsburg Fire Department, Cloverdale Fire Protection District, Dry Creek Rancheria Fire Department, Sonoma County Fire District, CAL FIRE, Calistoga Fire Department, and South Lake County Fire Protection District and us all working together.

DONATE

Please send all donations to the Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters’ Association, Post Office Box 1042, Geyserville, CA 95441

FUELS CREW

The "Fuels Crew" started from a CAL FIRE Grant in 2018. The Fuels Crew is composed of primarily part time employees whose sole purpose is to complete vegetation management projects throughout the year independent of emergency response. In 2021, the Crew finished the Geyserville Roadside Clearance Project. Work done as part of this project was credited with stopping the spread of the 2019 Kincadee Fire along Coyote Ridge Road. The Crew also performed work along Franz Valley Road, Fitch Mountain, Geyserville Avenue, and River Road. The Crew also chipped material generated from community workdays.



VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTER

The Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District is looking for individuals who want to serve the community as a volunteer firefighter. As a volunteer firefighter, you will respond to emergency medical calls, wildland and structure fires, technical rope rescues, water rescues, and vehicle extrications. You will work shifts alongside full-time firefighters and do everything they do. Prior experience is desirable but not necessary. The district will provide all required training. Come join the team!



WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER

Your donations are funding a new wildland firefighter crew to perform wildland firefighting functions, prescribed burning, and support of other fire department operations. During the Walbridge Fire, we discovered a need for additional crew members as resources were at an all-time low with multiple fires around the state. We also learned that there are many individuals trained to the level of wildland firefighter who are willing to come forward at times of need. These individuals cannot commit to full-time and/or year-round firefighting positions, or they are not interested in all-risk firefighting (medical emergencies and structure firefighting). Our goal is to give these individuals a way to serve the community during times when the community is most at risk. Donations have funded the gear and hiring of this crew.



ABOUT YOUR FIRE DISTRICT

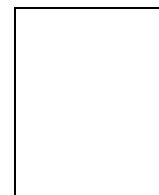
The Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District is an independent special district with an elected five-person board of directors. The District had its beginnings in 1904, when 24 citizens of Geyserville signed up to be volunteers of the Geyserville Volunteer Fire Department. In 1964 the Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company was formed after the Hanley Fire of 1964 took a similar path as the Tubbs Fire of 2017. The Geyserville Volunteer Fire Department took in the boundaries of the Alexander Valley School District in 1975 and formed the Alexander Valley Division of the Geyserville Volunteer Fire Department. In 1996 the Geyserville Volunteer Fire Department became the Geyserville Fire Protection District. The Geyserville Fire Protection District annexed the Knights Valley Volunteer Fire Company in 2019 and changed its name to the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District. The fire district is funded by property taxes, grants, and donations to the Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters' Association.



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This newsletter is a collaboration between the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District and the Geyserville Volunteer Firefighters' Association (GVFA). It is published annually in the Fall. It is intended to provide information to the community about news and events as it relates to the Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District. If you are receiving this newsletter then our records show one of the following: You live within the fire district, you own property within the fire district, you are a registered voter, or you have donated money to the GVFA. If you think that you have received this newsletter in error or would like to be removed from our mailing list please contact us at (707) 857-4373.

The Large Fire History Map Shown Below is Available to View as a PDF at shorturl.at/exLY3

