

Burning Issues

Community Cleanup Day – April 25



Before

Photos by Marjorie Kline



After

Looks like a beautiful day from these shots, though our hardy volunteers actually endured a couple of light but persistent rain showers throughout the day. Nevertheless, they did an outstanding job clearing the area around the Knipe water tank up on Panorama Rd. A big thank you to Kirk Rowe and Richard Francis of AHCWD as well as Sarah Johnston and Marjorie Kline of AHEPC, who worked extra hard on the logistics of getting people and equipment all in one place and working smoothly. And, of course, **THANK YOU to all the participants!**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MAY 8

As you may know, we will have an evacuation drill for 10 cars only on Saturday, May 8. We wanted to let you know what to expect as you may very well see law enforcement, fire fighters, and other local agencies such as San Jose Water Company and Santa Clara County Park rangers out and about. In the days leading up to the drill you may see fire crews taking pictures in the area.

Saturday, May 8, 9am-1pm:

- The crews will be staging at the Miller Point parking area before going into the neighborhood.
- Santa Clara County Sheriffs will be in the area simulating how they would go to houses to ask people to evacuate. They will only be knocking on the doors of those people who are part of the drill.
- Fire crews will be approaching the same houses after that to perform their tagging/evaluation process.
- Those evacuating will be proceeding to the end of Aldercroft Heights, up to Summit via the San Jose Water Company access road to Wright's Station, then back to Miller Point for a debrief.

Plan ahead!

There may be impacts to the roadways, so please plan extra time if you need to leave during the drill.

HIZ (NOT HERS)

What Is HIZ? The Home Ignition Zone is your home and everything around it, up to 200 feet from the foundation. It includes vegetation and other structures like decks, furniture, fences and out-buildings. The HIZ is divided into 3 zones: The **Immediate** (0-5 ft. from the furthest attached exterior point of the home), the **Intermediate** (5-30' from the furthest exterior point of the home) and **Extended** (30-100, out to 200').

According to the National Fire Protection Association, a retired USDA Forest Service scientist named Jack Cohen developed the HIZ concept in the 1990's after researching how homes ignite when caught in wildfires. Embers and small flames are the culprits. Embers are burning pieces of airborne wood and/or vegetation that can be carried more than a mile through the wind and can cause spot fires. Maintaining a clear HIZ is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of damage from embers. Under the Public Education tab at nfpa.org, you can find downloadable fact sheets to tell you how. For the especially curious, they also offer an online course, *Understanding the Wildfire Threat to Homes: An Overview of Fire History, Fire Basics, and How Homes Burn*.

What is an HIZ Assessment? A Home Ignition Zone Assessment is a review of the vulnerability of your house and landscape to wildfire and ember-ignition. During this assessment, an evaluator will review defensible space and home hardening principles and make specific recommendations based on your property. In our area, the evaluators are trained volunteers who work under the auspices of the Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council.

How Can I Get One? This program is just now back up and running after the pandemic shutdown. Go to <https://sccfiresafe.org/prepare/defensible-space-and-hazardous-fuel-reduction-hfr/> to apply for your assessment. There is currently no charge for an HIZ Assessment. Here's a reminder, however, that the SCCFSC will gladly accept donations, and you can even direct your donation exclusively to Aldercroft Heights.



Rakesh Bharania has left us with a pretty thorough write-up of the current fire road and possible evacuation route from Panorama Rd. all the way to Old Mine Rd. Now we just need someone from NAA to be the point person for implementing some of Rakesh's recommendations. Can you help? Who do you know who could?



Tip of the Month



Walk around your house and remove anything flammable within 30 feet. Things like wood piles, spare lumber, vehicles and boats can become a large source of fuel for embers or surrounding fire.

Stay safe out there!

