



For Immediate Release

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Santa Clara County FireSafe Council Receives USDA Forest Service Grant for Defensible Space Chipping Programs and Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Tree Removals

Los Gatos, March 15, 2010 – The USDA Forest Service has selected the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a local non-profit organization dedicated to preventing wildfires in Santa Clara County, for a \$156,485 grant to help residents build Defensible Space around their homes including the identification and removal of trees infected with Sudden Oak Death Syndrome (SOD). Funding will be used for the SCFSC Defensible Space Chipping Programs for residents in the high risk communities near Morgan Hill, San Jose, Lexington Hills, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno and Saratoga.

These communities are all too familiar with the devastation caused by wildfires; Recent fires, such as the 2008 Summit Fire and the 2009 Loma Fire, are reminders to be proactive and diligent in creating and maintaining Defensible Space. Due to the high concentration of SOD infected trees, these communities are at greater risk as these dead and dying trees increase the fuel load leading to even more hazardous fire conditions. This grant will enable SCFSC to pay for removing these trees as well as chipping limbs and brush to help create a healthier and safer environment.

“Defensible Space is important to increase a home’s ability to withstand a wildfire,” states CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Darrell Wolf. “It also provides firefighters a safe place from which to defend a home. SOD is a serious problem in our County and dry, dead trees pose great risk to residents and firefighters.”

In addition, SCFSC Defensible Space Chipping Programs also provide chipping services for homeowners who clear the fuels around permanent structures. SCFSC contractor’s chip the vegetation into mulch that homeowners can use. In addition, this grant includes Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAP) projects where SCFSC will pay for both clearing and chipping for qualified seniors, low income and disabled homeowners. Through Federal Grants and local matching funds, SCFSC is able to provide these services to the community free of charge. SCFSC appreciates tax-deductible donations of any amount. Donations can be sent to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, 44 South 16th Street, San Jose, CA 95112.

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is “Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires.” The council meets at 2:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Interested organizations and individuals are welcome to attend! For more information and meeting locations, see www.SCCFireSafe.org, e-mail info@SCCFireSafe.org or call (408) 975-9591.

Funding for this Chipping Program provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the USDA Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council and by matching funding from companies and individual contributors. Our Community Outreach, Education and Youth programs and other council activities are also funded by National Fire Plans grants from the USDI Bureau of Land Management and by grants and donations from local agencies, companies, foundations, organizations and individual donors. The views and conclusions contained in this press release are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, local government or fire agencies, or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute an endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council or the U.S. Government.

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