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East Foothills FireSafe Council Receives U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grant for Defensible Space Fuel Reduction Programs in Santa Clara County

San Jose, August 14, 2008 – The East Foothills branch of the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a local non-profit organization dedicated to preventing wildfires in Santa Clara County, has been awarded a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC), to help residents build Defensible Space around their homes. This grant will allow the organization to focus its programs in the high fire risk areas in the East Foothills communities east of San Jose. The funding will be used for Defensible Space Chipping Programs and critically needed Community Outreach and Education efforts.

In 2007, the SCFSC Hazardous Fuel Reduction Chipping Program successfully protected over 1,400 homes, 4,250 people and \$1.4 billion in property values in Santa Clara County and we expect our 2008 accomplishments to be significantly higher. SCFSC has been working to create the East Foothills FireSafe Council (EFFSC) to help expand Chipping Programs to the East Foothills area where SCFSC completed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2007.

“This funding will allow additional chipping programs for the residents of the East Foothills,” says Allan Thompson, SCFSC Treasurer/Director and EFFSC Founder. “The East Foothills is a very high risk area where wildfires often start near homes. We hope our outreach and education efforts and free chipping program will help protect homes in these areas.”

With the early wildfire season and continued record temperatures, the threat of wildfire in Santa Clara County poses a real danger. Many areas in the East Foothills, such as Alum Rock Park’s south and west-facing slopes, provide the highly combustible vegetation to ignite and promote wildfires, threatening homes, structures, and lives.

EFFSC anticipates that it will complete 15 Defensible Space Chipping projects during the 2008-2009 period of this grant. Homeowners will be able to clear Defensible Space around permanent structures and the SCFSC will hire a contractor to chip the vegetation into mulch that homeowners can use. In addition, this grant can fund at least four Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAP) where SCFSC will pay for both the clearing and chipping for qualified senior citizens and disabled residents. 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.

To learn more about these free Chipping Programs, or the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, visit the SCFSC Website at www.SCCFireSafe.org. 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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife 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 the USDA Forest Service 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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