



***For Immediate Release***

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**Wildfire Awareness Week, May 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

*Santa Clara County FireSafe Council promotes education and safety*

San Jose, May 3, 2013 – The early wildfire season this year, with thousands of acres currently burning throughout the state, makes wildfire a reality throughout California and for many communities within Santa Clara County. May 5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> has been designated by Governor Jerry Brown and CAL FIRE as Wildfire Awareness Week to promote wildfire safety, education and prevention.

The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a non-profit organization dedicated to wildfire prevention, is working with fire agencies and other partners to reach out to residents with our Defensible Space Chipping Programs and Community Outreach and Education Programs. In 2012, these programs, which reduce hazardous fuels in selected areas of the county, helped protect 3,625 homes, 10,850 people and \$3.6 Billion in property values. In addition, we completed 9 Special Needs Assistance Projects for qualified seniors, low-income and disabled residents and worked with partner stakeholders to complete 7 fuel break evacuation route projects.

The FireSafe Council, Smokey Bear, and partner fire agencies, including CAL FIRE, Santa Clara County Fire Department, San Jose Fire Department, and Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department, will be participating in community events to educate the public, especially those living in Wildland Urban Interface areas, to create and maintain Defensible Space clearance around homes and structures 100 feet or to the property line (per Public Resources Code 4291 – a state law which went into effect in January 2005). Efforts are also targeted at raising awareness for fire-safe behavior for all residents, including youth, planning to visit city, county and state parks.

“A large number of wildfires are human caused and therefore preventable” states FireSafe Council President, Jerry Serpa, Assistant Chief with the Spring Valley Volunteer Fire Department. “There are wildfires burning throughout the state and we have battled several small grass fires in our area. We face another long, risky fire season and need residents to be smart and engage in fire-safe activities.”

To learn more about free Defensible Space Chipping Programs or volunteer with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, visit [www.SCCFireSafe.org](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org) or call (408) 975-9591.

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](http://www.SCCFireSafe.org), e-mail [info@SCCFireSafe.org](mailto:info@SCCFireSafe.org) or call (408) 975-9591. SCFSC appreciates tax-deductible donations of any amount.

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