



For Immediate Release

Contacts: Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Jenn Viane Riese, JennVR@SCCFireSafe.org, (408) 975-9591

Allan Thompson, AllanT@SCCFireSafe.org, (408) 272-7008

Santa Clara County FireSafe Council Receives U.S. Forest Service Grant for Defensible Space Fuel Reduction Programs in South Santa Clara County

San Jose, June 20, 2008 – 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 for \$103,450 from the U.S. Forest Service 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 of Morgan Hill, San Martin, Gilroy and south San Jose. The funding will be used for the SCFSC 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. SCFSC has been working toward expanding its Chipping Programs in the Croy Fire Area, which was severely burned in 2002, and to the area near the Summit Fire last month.

“The Defensible Space Chipping programs that the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council offers are an important tool in preventing wildfires,” says CAL FIRE Division Chief Bill Murdock. “Homeowners living in wildland areas who can’t afford to chip their own brush can look to these programs for help. We hope that residents will be proactive and take advantage of these free programs to help protect their homes.”

Considering the recent Summit and Martin Fires in and near this area, the need for these programs is clear. Many of the hillsides surrounding Santa Clara Valley are densely forested and well populated. The risk for loss of life and structure is very high, and the SCFSC Defensible Space Chipping Programs are designed to minimize this risk. SCFSC anticipates that it will complete 50 Hazardous Fuel Reduction Chipping projects over the 18 month 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 ten Special Needs Assistance Programs (SNAP) where SCFSC will coordinate both the clearing and chipping for qualified seniors 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. 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 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.

###