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Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District News

Summer 2018

Air Curtain Incinerator

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In a collaborative effort of the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District, Cypress Fire Protection District, and CAL FIRE, fire crews have been conducting a fuels reduction project to improve forest health and reduce hazardous fire fuels by removing brush and dead or dying trees. Prescribed burns, pile burning, and leaving chipped vegetation onsite are traditional vegetation handling options, but recent accumulations of drought-stricken dead and dying trees has made disposal of the material difficult. Grinding logs or hauling them to a green waste disposal site is expensive, and burning piles of logs creates smoke and puts a lot of particulates into the atmosphere.

The use of an air curtain incinerator provides for improved fuels management, safer wildfire mitigation efforts, and less pollu-

tion. Air Curtain Incinerators or “Curtain Burners” are self-contained, and their vegetation mitigation process is relatively simple.

The curtain burner is started with fine flammable vegetation and a liquid accelerant, then the box is filled (Continued on page 2)



Customer Feedback

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

- July 30—August 10 Residential Chipping
- August 1 Board Meeting
- September 9—October 18 CERT Basic
- September 19 Board Meeting
- October 27 Emergency Preparedness Fair and Zombie Run

Air Curtain Incinerator (Continued from Page 1)

with large diameter material like tree trunks. The curtain burner is powered by a small, 4 cylinder engine that drives an internal fan providing additional air to intensify the incineration process and creating an internal air curtain so that no unintended fire or embers can escape. At full capacity the curtain burner is capable of consuming 5-7 tons of material per hour with virtually no smoke or particulate emissions. The burner will be operating around 8 hours a day until the collected material is consumed. Smoke production will be limited to the initial ignition and might be visible from a distance. However, when running at its full operating temperature the curtain burner will be unnoticeable.

When fire engine and hand crews are on-site during the

operation each day they will assist with burning and provide for fire safety. Weather conditions are closely monitored and the burn would be postponed if conditions were found to be unfavorable. Additionally, the Monterey Bay Air Resources District is contacted each planned burn day to ensure any burning meets local laws and requirements.

A smaller curtain burner, approximately half the size, was tested in April of last year, in the Point Lobos area. The results were extremely good and the decision was made to obtain the larger model. Kim Bernheisel, the Fuels Project Manager, said, "The curtain burner is the best solution right now because it is efficient, economical and environmentally friendly."

Firescaping with Rockrose

Looking for an attractive, fire resistant, drought tolerant plant for your landscape? Try rockrose, a cute, fast growing evergreen shrub that thrives on heat, strong winds, salt spray and drought. Plant the shrubs in full sun, in practically any soil that drains well, and water regularly during their first growing season. After that, they grow to a bushy 3 to 4 feet tall with little watering or fertilizing. You will see flowers from late spring through summer.



FALL SAFETY

Each year, millions of senior citizens suffer from falls in their homes. Many falls do not cause injuries, but one in five falls cause serious injuries such as broken bones or head injuries. Falls can cause wrist, arm, ankle, and hip fractures. Falls that cause head injuries can be especially dangerous if the person is taking blood thinners. Injuries from falls can make it hard to get around, do everyday activities or live independently. The Center for Disease Control reported that the 2014 Unintentional Fall Death Rate for persons over age 65 was about 58 per 100,000 falls. Often, the falls could have been prevented.

One thing that can prevent falls is to make the home safer. Reduce trip hazards by better housekeeping and getting rid of things you could trip over. Pet toys, electric cords, clothing items, and other potential trip hazards should be removed. Outside, garden hoses and yard tools should be properly stored and uneven ground or pavers should be repaired. Use only slip resistant rugs, and consider adding grab bars for your tub, shower and toilet. Railings on both sides of stairs double the safety.

Making your activities around the home safer can prevent falls. Carry smaller amounts of items when using stairs so you have at least one free hand. Use a device to reach for items on a high shelf, don't climb. If you have to use a stool, use one with a handrail. At night, turn on a light before walking through a room.

If you do fall, knowing the right way to fall can reduce the impact. Turn to the side if you are falling forward or backward. Try to land on a muscular part of your body such as your thigh, upper arm, or buttocks. Avoid landing on your hip. Protect your head by raising your arms to cover your face. If you know you are going down, relax your body and go limp so your body glides to the ground and does not impact rigidly. Avoid stretching out an arm or leg to "break" the fall. Once down, take a moment to assess your body before you get up. If all seems well slowly get back to your feet. If you have any pain or an injury, seek medical attention.

Is 100 Feet Enough?

Defensible space is the room between your home and the wildland area that, under normal conditions, creates a buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame impingement or radiant heat. Defensible space is essential for structure survivability during wildfire conditions and for the protection of firefighters defending it.

Long ago, The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection determined through a series of devastating fires that if homeowners in the wildland areas maintained 30 feet of clearance around their homes, firefighters could do a better job of defending them. Years later, that distance was determined to be inadequate by the Department due to increased fire behavior

in the drought ravaged wildland areas, and it was increased to 100 feet. Today, lessons learned in the extreme fire behavior of the Detwiler, Tubbs, and Thomas fires seem to indicate that even 100 feet may not be adequate.

Today, fires burn more intensely because years of drought have produced record low fuel moistures, temperatures are higher, and we are getting more frequent wind events. So if you live in an area where there are accumulations of unburned vegetation, continuity of fuels, vegetation that would produce a significant amount of embers during a fire (like eucalyptus trees), wind events are common, and your home is on a slope, then 100 feet is probably not enough.

New Fire Captain in Fire Protection

Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District is pleased to announce the assignment of Colette O'Conner to the Fire Protection and Planning Bureau. Colette brings a great deal of experience into the Bureau, having started with CAL FIRE (CDF) right after graduation from high school. She has worked as a Firefighter, Engineer, and Captain in wildland and contract fire protection and has also held the Training Captain position. Her previous assignments were in Tuolumne-Calaveras and San Mateo-Santa Cruz. Colette will be responsible for doing commercial inspections, plan reviews and defensible space inspections. "I'm happy", she said, "to be joining the staff and working on the *prevention* side of fire fighting."



Emergency Assistance List: Help Us Help You

Do you think you might need some assistance to evacuate in the event of an emergency? If you are non-ambulatory, have limited mobility, special medical needs, or do not drive a vehicle, then you should be on our Emergency Assistance List. The Firefighters will either help you, or arrange for assistance, to ensure you get the help that you need.

To register, you may contact Fire Captain John Spooner at 831 624-2374, or visit our website at <http://www.CarmelHighlandsFire.org/contact>. All emergency contact information is kept confidential and is only used by Fire Department staff to assist you in the event of an emergency. Help us help you.

Defensible Space Inspections

Inspectors began checking the 100 feet of defensible space around your home beginning Tuesday, May 1, 2018. They will be looking for things that would reduce the survivability of your home in a wildland fire, such as leaf or needle litter on your roof, tree branches overhanging chimneys, fire wood stacked against the house, and overgrown vegetation around your home. Remember, defensible space is required by law. If you have any questions, stop by the station and get a copy of *Homeowners Checklist: How to Make Your Home Fire Safe*, contact Fire Captain Kim Bernheisel at 831 601-7628, or visit www.fire.ca.gov.

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Dedicated to Cooperative Fire Protection.

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Emergency Notifications

The CodeRED emergency notification system serves as the backbone of the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District's emergency planning and communications outreach to residents, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members, and staff. The system sends telephone calls, text messages, emails, and posts to social media channels to inform residents and better protect life and property. It can be used to send out emergency notifications to residents living on a single road in the District. To be sure to get your emergency notifications, you should sign up for the CodeRED service each year. Visit www.CarmelHighlandsFire.org and click on the CodeRED logo to enroll your contact information including telephone and cell phone numbers, and email addresses. No one should automatically assume they are in the emergency contact database.

Another emergency notification system is Alert Monterey, which is used by Monterey County. It is used to notify large areas of the county of major disasters. It uses an initial database of residential and business telephone numbers that are gathered from public domain sources, and it also requires residents to provide telephone and cell phone numbers and email addresses to ensure the best chance of delivering an emergency notification. You can register online at www.AlertMontereyCounty.org.

Additionally, during an emergency you should tune your radio to AM 1700 to receive important information such as whether to evacuate, which evacuation routes to use, and where evacuation shelters are located. This radio station is located at the fire station and broadcasts a looped message that is frequently repeated.

If you have questions or are having difficulty enrolling visit our website at www.CarmelHighlandsFire.org or call the Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District CodeRED Coordinator, John Spooner, at 831 624-2374.