

Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

Yosemite West Defensible Space Project Overview

Dear Neighbors,

YWPHI has been awarded a \$304,830 National Fire Plan grant from the U.S.D.A. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council (see <http://www.yosemitewest.org/grants.htm>) to reduce the risk of wildland fire. The grant will include work inside the community in 2010 and 2011 to create defensible space on an additional 50% of the parcels (or approximately 147 of the 293 parcels in Yosemite West), covering 55 of the 109 acres in Yosemite West. The project, identified as YW-006 on the Phase I Projects/Parcels Map, is described in Appendix H - Project Summary #1 of the *Yosemite West Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)*; <http://www.yosemitewest.org/ywcpwp.pdf>). The grant will also include work outside the community in 2011 to create a shaded fuel break on 82 acres on the western perimeter of the community.

Defensible space is the area within the perimeter of a parcel, development, neighborhood or community excluding physical structures where basic wildland fire prevention practices and measures are implemented, providing the key point of defense from a wildland fire or an escaping structural fire. Fuel reduction is essential to creating defensible space. Defensible space provides a margin of safety for firefighters, provides a point of defense or attack against fire and increases the survivability of any home and the entire community.

The Advantages

Participating in the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project and working collaboratively with YWPHI gives landowners several important advantages.

- YWPHI has written and submitted grant applications and secured more than \$530,000 funding in the past six years for this fuel reduction project and other fire safety projects that benefit all of Yosemite West.
- In California, the agencies that provide grants for fuel reduction projects work only with established nonprofit organizations (such as YWPHI) and other government or non-government entities. These grants are *not* available to individuals.
- The grant-funded project minimizes the financial and physical burden to the landowner in complying with the California's 100-foot defensible space law, PRC§4291.

- The project realizes substantial cost savings associated with economies of scale. It is more cost effective to perform fuel reduction on multiple acres owned by several landowners than to have landowners working independently.
- YWPHI represents the community through ongoing cooperation and collaboration with all of the agencies involved in implementing the National Fire Plan.
- The project liaises fire science specialists, foresters, and other specialists with professional expertise.
- YWPHI works with the donor, agencies and contractors on landowners' behalf.

The Goals

- The project improves community-wide defensible space by reducing surface, ladder and aerial fuels to create a fire-resilient forest to protect life, property and natural resources. The goal is not to increase property values, although that might be a result. Nor is the goal to “clear-cut” the forest or to harvest timber for commercial purposes or for improved forest health, although a healthier forest is a potential outcome.
- The project provides technical and cost-share assistance to landowners for fuel reduction to lessen the threat of wildland fire to their homes and the community.
- The project helps homeowners create a minimum of 100-foot defensible space in compliance with PRC§4291.
- The goal for unbuilt parcels is to remove all ladder fuels and trees less than 6 inches diameter at breast height (dbh), in effect creating a shaded fuel break. The project treats vacant lots with heavy buildup of small cedars, firs, manzanita and dead trees. Unbuilt lots on the perimeter of the community are especially important and are given priority, because they link up with the existing shaded fuel breaks adjacent to the community and substantially enhance defensible space for Yosemite West.
- Most landowners want to address the fire hazard, but may have differing ideas on how to address the problem. No two landowners likely have the same vision about how hazardous fuel reduction should be implemented in the community. The project endeavors to understand and thoroughly address landowners' concerns while utilizing the best fire science available.

The Process

Participation in this project is being offered to every property owner of record at the address listed by

Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

7585 Henness Ridge Road, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

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the Mariposa County Assessor's office as of April 2010.

To participate in the project, submit a signed **Letter of Commitment** (<http://www.yosemitewest.org/loc2010.pdf>), the legal document that addresses issues related to expectations, responsibilities and liabilities.

Fuel reduction work will resume in mid June 2011 with successful completion expected by October 2011. Digital photography for each parcel will be used to document the property before work starts and to show improvement after work ends. Please visit <http://www.yosemitewest.org/grants.htm> for updates.

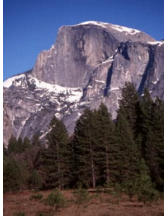
Thank you for your interest in collaborating with your neighbors to address the hazardous fuels that pose a risk to your safety, your home and the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Mock". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

John Mock, Ph.D.
Chair, YWPHI Fire Safety Committee

firesafety@yosemitewest.org



Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc.

Letter of Commitment for Participation in the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project

I/we _____

Print your name(s) above

(hereinafter called “Landowner”) give my/our commitment to participate in the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project. Landowner agrees to participate freely in the project. Landowner agrees and consents to fuel reduction work being undertaken on Landowner’s property.

Landowner agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc. (YWPHI) and Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council, and the officers, directors, agents, employees, members, and participants in both YWPHI and the Yosemite/Sequoia Resource Conservation and Development Council (collectively, the “Indemnitees”) from and against any and all liability of any type, including but not limited to, all claims, demands, costs, expenses, obligations, liabilities, judgments, losses, damages, recoveries, and deficiencies, including interest, penalties and reasonable attorney fees and costs arising from any acts, errors, or omissions of any of the Indemnitees in the performance of or in connection with or related to the fuel reduction services or other services of any type under the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project. The foregoing obligations of the Landowner are expressly intended to extend to and encompass liability arising from the sole and/or active negligence of any of the Indemnitees.

Landowner agrees that YWPHI is not obligated to provide services under the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project and is not liable in the event that it does not provide services for any reason, or for the negligent or incomplete performance of services under the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project.

The funds for the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project are limited and YWPHI may refuse or be unable to provide service to anyone.

This Letter of Commitment can be amended only by prior written notification of either party executing this Letter of Commitment.

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Landowner agrees to participate in the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project in each of the following ways:

1. Landowner agrees to allow fuel reduction services to take place on Landowner's property. Landowner is the legal owner of the property where services will be performed. Landowner hereby agrees and consents to YWPHI and the contractor(s) designated by YWPHI under the Yosemite West Defensible Space Project entering Landowner's property for purposes of arranging for the performance of the below indicated services in connection with this project:

- Remove ladder fuels (fuels that provide vertical continuity between strata, thereby allowing fire to carry from surface fuels into the crowns of trees or shrubs with relative ease).
- Remove coniferous trees less than 6 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) measured 5 feet from base, except hardwood trees (dogwood, oak, big-leaf maple, willow, alder).
- Create horizontal spacing between shrubs and horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and trees. The amount of space will depend on the steepness of the slope and size of the shrubs and trees.
- Reduce shrubs and trees near driveways and parking areas to provide 6 feet horizontal and 15 feet vertical clearance.
- Chip debris generated and blow chips back onto the property. Landowner agrees to comply with YWPHI and the contractor's decision on where chips are deposited.

Landowner agrees to flag any ladder fuels, coniferous trees less than 6" dbh or shrubs, using pink "Do Not Cut" flagging tape provided by YWPHI and available in the mailbox shed, that Landowner does *not* want removed, no later than May 1, 2011. The contractor(s) will *not* remove any single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery, plants used as ground cover, deciduous trees, or any trees larger than 6" dbh unless they act as a ladder fuel. The contractor(s) will remove limbs through the use of pole saws and is *not* responsible for removing any limbs that the contractor(s) cannot reach through the use of pole saws.

Landowner agrees that scheduling will be determined by YWPHI and the contractor(s) and that Landowner may *not* be able to arrange for fuel reduction services on a specific date and time.

2. Landowner agrees to maintain defensible space created by this project. The forest will grow back. Maintaining your defensible space can become part of your annual spring routine. The work will be easier, because this initial treatment will leave you with more defensible space.

3. Landowner acknowledges YWPHI's efforts to obtain the grant funding this project by supporting YWPHI activities.

Landowner has read this Letter of Commitment, understands its terms, and has voluntarily entered into these agreements.

Landowner Name(s):

Landowner Signature(s):


Local Address:

House Vacant Lot

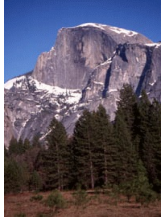
Email:

Today's Date:

YWPHI Representative's Signature:



John Mock, Ph.D.
Chair, YWPHI Fire Safety Committee



Yosemite West Property & Homeowners, Inc. **2011 In-Kind Contribution**
 www.YosemiteWest.org

Yosemite West Defensible Space Project

The hours of volunteer labor that you put in each year for fire safety activities on your property have a dollar value. This value and any out-of-pocket expenses is called an *In-Kind Contribution*. It is used to satisfy the community match required by our 2010 and 2011 National Fire Plan grants from the USDA Forest Service and National Park Service through the California Fire Safe Council.

Landowner Name(s): _____

Local Address (House or Vacant Lot): _____

Indicate your 2011 In-Kind Contribution for fuel reduction that improves community-wide defensible space through the two options below. Include only hours or expenses after 1-1-2011.		
#1 Time volunteered to conduct fuel reduction valued at a fixed rate of \$18 per hour.	# Hours worked	Amount
Brushing the forest floor - raking pine needles, picking up pine cones, removing dead/downed wood, increasing space between shrubs Thinning the forest - removing dead trees, reducing ladder fuels, increasing space between trees Improving access to your property - reducing vegetation/trees near driveway and/or parking areas Debris removal - hauling to the community burn pile, burning on your property, piling for curbside chipping		\$
#2 Out-of-pocket expenses incurred for hiring independent labor to conduct fuel reduction.		
Name payee(s) and briefly describe services provided:		\$
Total 2011 In-Kind Contribution:		\$

Please complete and submit your *In-Kind Contribution* form(s) by July 1, 2011 to:

YWPHI, 7585 Henness Ridge Road, Yosemite National Park, CA 95389-9108.

Email any questions to firesafety@yosemitewest.org.