

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


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