

Wildfire season heats up

CalFire issues burning ban

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Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District's largest vegetation fire of the year occurred Sunday afternoon on Bureau of Land Management property off Hogan Dam Road.

Firefighters from CalCo, CalFire and San Andreas Fire responded to the scene south of New Hogan Lake at 4:46 p.m. and contained the blaze to 3.5 acres.

"The grass is dry and the fire season is here," said CalCo Fire Chief Rich Dickinson.

Fortunately, it was not as warm as the day before, he added.

CalCo had two engines and a water tender at the scene. They were joined by nine engines, two water tenders, two hand crews, a dozer and air attack provided by CalFire.

The cause of the fire at the site used for a shooting range is under investigation by CalFire and the BLM.

The outdoor burning of debris has been banned in the area as of Tuesday.

"The increasing fire danger posed by dead grass and hotter, drier conditions in the region is prompting CalFire Tuolumne – Calaveras Unit to suspend all burn permits for outdoor residential burning within the State Responsibility Area of Calaveras, Tuolumne, eastern San Joaquin, and eastern Stanislaus counties," CalFire announced on Monday.

The suspension took effect at 8 a.m. Tuesday and bans all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris such as branches and leaves.

"California wildfires continue to threaten our communities," said Chief Joe Tyler, CalFire director. "With the conditions set for an early start of the 2022 fire season, it is imperative that we collectively take preventative steps now to prepare, and we ask all Californians to do their part in wildfire preparedness."

"Conditions across TCU continue to warm and dry, while community members exercise wildfire preparedness measures by creating defensible space and hardening their homes," said Deputy Unit Chief Charles Blankenheim. "It is imperative these actions are conducted in a safe manner by utilizing alternatives to burning such as green waste disposal or chipping."

While outdoor burning of landscape debris by homeowners is no longer allowed, CalFire TCU is asking residents to take that extra time to prepare your home for wildfire by creating defensible space and hardening your home ahead of wildfires.

Here are some tips to help prepare homes and property:

- Clear all dead and or dying vegetation 100 feet from around all structures.
- Landscape with fire resistant plants and non-flammable ground cover.
- Find alternative ways to dispose of landscape debris like chipping or hauling it to a biomass energy or green waste facility.

CalFire TCU may issue restricted temporary burning permits if there is an essential reason due to public health and safety. Agriculture, land management, fire training, and other industrial-type burning may proceed if a CalFire TCU official inspects the burn site and issues a permit.

The suspension of burn permits for residential landscape debris does not apply to campfires within organized campgrounds or on private property. Campfires may be permitted if the campfire is maintained in such a manner as to prevent its spread to the wildland. A valid campfire permit is required and can be obtained online at www.ReadyForWildfire.org.

For additional information on how to create defensible space, home hardening, evacuation planning and how to be prepared for wildfires, as well as tips to prevent wildfires, visit www.ReadyForWildfire.org.