

FIRE MITIGATION SUB-COMMITTEE

By Mary Jo Wallen & Eileen Domer

On February 16, 2019 five landowners volunteered to work on a Fire Mitigation Sub-Committee that was approved by the Timberlake Board. Members are Ron & Rachel Schali, Tim & Eileen Domer and Mary Jo Wallen. Shirli Henderson is the Board Representative.

Our Mission Statement is: Timberlake subdivision is designated as at very high risk of a devastating crown wildfire. We will research and recommend interventions that decrease the risk of a wildfire in the Timberlake subdivision. Through education and institution of specific projects Wildfire Mitigation will become an intrinsic part of the duties and responsibilities of every landowner and of the TRLA Board of Directors

A fire mitigation program is needed due to the worsening drought conditions throughout the Southwest. Pictures of what happened in California last year sum up the terrible consequences. Timberlake was designated as one of two high risk areas in McKinley County in a 2013 CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), prepared by various forest and state agencies. The 2018 update indicates we are now one of *eight* areas in the County.

On February 24, 2019 we submitted a \$500 grant proposal sponsored by State Farm and the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). Part of the application process was to have friends, family and neighbors vote on our proposal. We only had a few days to accomplish this, but we ended up with 111 votes for our project. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO WAS ABLE TO VOTE. The grant would help defray printing and other costs the committee will incur.

Whether we get the grant or not, we will be participating with a training program on Saturday, May 4th at 10 a.m. at the Ranch House – on the nationwide “Wildfire Preparedness Day “. Hundreds of events are taking place all over the U.S. Our Emergency Evacuation Coordinators will attend along with a representative from the Volunteer Fire Dept. HOWEVER, WE NEED MORE COORDINATORS, SO IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT MARY JO WALLEN OR NANCY WILLS. Contact information for Mary Jo is: 1-505-783-4207 (local) or 1-505-269-5022 (cell) and Mrsdw19dw@aol.com. Contact information for Nancy Wills is 1-505-783-2457 (local) or 1-520-975-0528 (cell) and nancysws@hughes.net.

We will widely distribute the “Ready, Set Go” brochure to landowners and verify if street address signs are visible at each driveway to assist emergency vehicles. The 12-page brochure provides important information about protecting your home by creating a three zone buffer between structures and the surrounding wildland. Suggestions about how to resist ember attacks on your home and creating your own Action Plan are also included.

We will provide the “Ready, Set, Go” brochure and other informative materials to landowners at the Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, May 25th. We hope to have a special presentation concerning this topic at the Annual Meeting as well as others throughout the year.

A sign-up sheet for landowners who are interested in having a risk assessment prepared for their property will be available. We are presently contacting various forest agencies, fire depts., etc. to determine who is available to provide this very important program for us. Costs of this program are yet to be determined. We are hopeful that we can participate in a grant thru the McKinley County Fire Dept. The deadline is April 12th and we will enter discussions starting sometime during the week of March 4th.

During the next six months we will be investigating the benefits of becoming a “Firewise Community”. This is a program administered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) that began in 2002. Firewise recognition is achieved after a community completes a 5-step process:

1. Obtain a wildfire risk assessment as a written document from our State Forestry agency or fire department.
2. Form a board or committee and create an action plan based on the assessment.
3. Conduct a “Firewise Day” event.
4. Invest a minimum of \$2 per capita in local Firewise actions for that year.
5. Submit an application to your Firewise liaison.

“Firewise is a designation, fire adapted is a lifestyle”.

The Committee’s goal is to raise the spirit of community thru wildfire mitigation and make fire mitigation a permanent project. TRLA spends a considerable amount of our dues to maintain our roads. Road conditions are not just for our benefit, the conditions must be good for emergency vehicles to access our property. *Remember: if a fire truck cannot access your house because the driveway is too narrow, they may not be able to save your home.* Just as road maintenance is important fire mitigation is of critical importance as well. TRLA will need to consider spending time and dues money on fire mitigation. Landowners have primary responsibility for their property but we need to work together in this endeavor. The Board will play an essential role. A fire has no boundaries. A fire anywhere in or near our subdivision can wipe out the entire subdivision.

If you have any questions about the Committee, Mary Jo is the main contact. If you have any question about our Emergency Evacuation Coordinators, please contact Mary Jo or Nancy Wills. Our contact information is in the fifth paragraph.

TIMBERLAKE IS A GREAT COMMUNITY. WE ALWAYS HELP EACH OTHER, SO THIS IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED. THANK YOU.