

## **THE CASE FOR FUNDING FIRE PREVENTION FUEL MITIGATION**

### **NCFF Talking Points**

**Problem:** Catastrophic wildfires are happening every year, either in or threatening Napa County. This leads to:

- Death and injury,
- Damage and destruction of property,
- Substantial unanticipated costs for residents,
- Resident fear and dissatisfaction (often resulting in leaving the area),
- Higher costs and lower availability of insurance,
- Bad publicity for the area,
- Loss of tourism,
- Negative impact on the wine, hospitality and other industries in the area,
- Reduction in property values (Covid is temporarily creating demand for country properties, but post-Covid, properties in high fire danger areas will become unsaleable causing house values to decline), real estate industry income, and property tax base,
- Loss of tax revenue to the county and state,
- Enormous expenses to fight fires and deal with the aftermath,
- Harmful (and persistent) microscopic particles from wildfire smoke that create lasting health problems for residents.

The current model for pre-fire risk mitigation consists of a highly fragmented landscape of different organizations pursuing limited resources to drive education and fuel reduction efforts. Current sources of funds and the means by which they can be awarded is not an effective use of anyone's resources, and does not make enough of a difference.

#### **Causes of increased fire risk.**

1. Changing weather patterns with extreme conditions (lightning, drought, high winds)
2. Excessive fuel (vegetation)
3. Regulatory obstacles for decreasing fuel management strategies
4. Increased residential populations in the WUI

There is only one of these that we can control: **Excessive fuel**

#### **Recent Fires Create an opportunity.**

Recent large scale wildland fires have created an opportunity to make substantial fuel reduction progress due to the following:

- 1) Large scale reduction in fuel sources while at the same time creating substantial amounts of new standing fuel
- 2) Improved access to remote strategic locations with new and reestablished fire roads
- 3) Increased community awareness about the need to act in responsible ways.

**We must engage in serious, sustained and continuous Fuel Reduction, including establishing shaded fuel breaks, fire breaks and clearing along roads to provide ingress for first responders and egress for evacuating residents.**

**Economics: An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure**

- Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent every year fighting wildfires
- Billions of dollars of loss are incurred every year from wildfires due to lost homes and buildings, lost crops, lost business.
- Loss of sales taxes and reduced property values means reduced revenue for county and cities, for schools, infrastructure, staffing, and services
- A few million dollars spent well on fuel reduction every year, could save hundreds of millions...and make life better in Napa County

**Why NCFE?**

- NCFE has worked tirelessly for the last two years to streamline and centralize this process (although we still face a highly fragmented and insufficient source of funds to pursue known strategies)
- Countywide volunteer organization with a proven track record and low overhead
- We can be nimble and focused
- Experience executing on several million dollars of fuel mitigation work to date
- We have an approved countywide plan for fuel mitigation projects

**The Ask**

- \$4-6M annually for a sustained period of years
- Help to cut through the red tape