



Fire Safe Council of Nevada County
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May 5, 2015

County of Nevada
County Executive Office
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

RE: Forest Reserve Funds (Title III) Request for Fire Safe Council of Nevada County's Firewise Communities Program: The Fire Safe Council of Nevada County is requesting Forest Reserve Funds (Title III) in the amount of \$24,330.21 for fiscal year 2015-16 and \$23,113.70 for fiscal year 2016-17.

Agency/Organization Identification

Name: Fire Safe Council of Nevada County (FSCNC)
Contact Person: Joanne Drummond, Executive Director
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Project Title: Firewise Communities Program

Project Description: The FSCNC has developed and successfully delivered many fire prevention programs throughout Nevada County for the past seventeen years. We are proud of our success and actively seek funding to further our goal of establishing Firewise Communities. The risk of catastrophic wildfire in Nevada County is a real and ever-present hazard for our residents, and the natural environment including forests, watersheds, air quality and wildlife habitat. Of the three required elements for wildfire to occur --- heat, oxygen and fuel --- it is only the fuel load hazard that can be proactively altered so as to reduce the wildfire hazard in our County. According to the FEMA approved Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the number one natural hazard in Nevada County is wildland fire. The FSCNC is the ultimate delivery mechanism for wildfire education and prevention programs meeting the specified objectives of Forest Reserve Funds, Title III, to help reduce the risk of loss of lives, property and natural resources to wildfire in Nevada County through the implementation of the nationally recognized Firewise Communities USA program.

The FSCNC is requesting funding for our efforts to retain the existing Firewise Community annual certification for the communities of Lake Wildwood, Lake of the Pines, Friends of Banner Mountain, Mountain Lakes Estates, Tahoe-Donner Association, Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association, Greater Alta Sierra Community, Golden Oaks Homeowner's Association, Rattlesnake Ridge Estates, Ridgeview Woodlands Homeowners Association,

Cascade Shores Homeowner's Association, Glenwood-Maidu-Charlene Neighborhood and Rattlesnake Neighborhood Association. Funding would also provide for recruiting new communities to commit to become a designated Firewise Community through the national program recognition. The FSCNC has embraced the national Firewise Communities program and actively promotes and encourages a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and residents in the effort to protect lives, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire - before a fire starts. The FSCNC is proud to include the County of Nevada as a partner in these goals.

The FSCNC was recognized in 2010 by the National Fire Protection Association with the Firewise Leadership Award by quickly outpacing other counties in California in establishing new Firewise Communities. To date, FSCNC has worked with 13 individual communities in Nevada County to complete and/or retain their Firewise Community certification. Our Executive Director is certified by the National Fire Protection Association to complete Wildfire Hazard Assessments and works in conjunction with local fire chiefs, CAL FIRE and Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) to develop individual community wildfire hazard assessment reports, recommendations and associated action plans to pro-actively address the wildfire hazard. Four more communities are in the process of becoming Firewise Communities at this time (Toller Ridge Court, Greater Champion Mine Neighborhood, Brunswick East Condominiums, and Stonebridge Homeowners Association.) These communities should attain full certification by the end of 2015 pending their required Firewise Education Day event. The FSCNC has 8 communities on the waiting list for the certification including: The Gazebos; Sherwood Forest Subdivision; Stoneybrook Lane; Ananda Village; Darkhorse; Echo Ridge Community; Lake Vera Road Association; and John Born Road Association. We continue to actively promote the Firewise Community certification throughout Nevada County.

Continuing education for wildfire prevention is necessary due to the ongoing influx of new residents moving to the wildland from urban areas of our state. Most newcomers are unaware of the high wildfire hazard in Nevada County or how best to mitigate it on their property and in the community. New development is ongoing and the need for awareness of Firewise concepts is critical.

Organization Background: The FSCNC was established in 1998 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation serving all residents of Nevada County. Our organization is committed to delivering pro-active fire prevention programs and projects to reduce losses from wildfire and promote the national Firewise Communities program throughout Nevada County.

Our organization is audited annually by an independent CPA. Audit reports are available on our website at www.areyoufiresafe.com. Our organization is proud to have clean audit reports without exception.

Our mission statement is: *“To provide Firewise education and programs to enhance emergency preparedness for catastrophic wildfire to all citizens in Nevada County in order to reduce the loss of life, property and natural resources and to promote Firewise Communities/USA®; to network with other Fire Safe Councils, Firewise Communities/USA®, governmental agencies and foundations for the benefit of the citizens of Nevada County.”* This mission guides the FSCNC as we deliver community education and assistance programs with regard to fire prevention. Our goal is to enable individual communities to become official nationally recognized Firewise Communities through our direct technical assistance. The

FSCNC also provides direct assistance for the annual re-certification required by the national Firewise program.

The FSCNC is governed by a board of directors representing a cross-section of our community including professional firefighters, Registered Professional Foresters, businesses, the insurance industry, homeowners and governmental agency representatives.

The current 2014-2015 Board of Directors are listed below:

Position	Name	Representing
Chairman	Rick Nolle	Realtor
Vice-Chair	Bill Drown	Law Enforcement & Fire Protection Council
Treasurer	Michelle Ferrera	Certified Public Accountant
Secretary	Dennis Cassella	Member at Large
Director	Gretchen Bennitt	Northern Sierra Air Quality Mgmt. District
Director	Crawford Bost	Member at Large
Director	Barry Dorland	Patterson Fire Equipment
Director	Jeff Dunning	Insurance Industry
Director	Sean Griffis	CAL FIRE
Director	David Hanson	Member at Large
Director	Bill Houdyschell, RPF	Tahoe-Donner HOA
Director	Warren Knox	Greater Champion Mine Neighborhood Assoc.
Director	Rob Paulus	Member at Large
Director	Don Wagner	Nevada County Fire Chief's Representative
Director	Hank Weston	County Board of Supervisors
Associate Director	Mike Cherry	US Forest Service
Associate Director	Brian Mulhollen	Bureau of Land Management
Associate Director	Rand Smith	Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Alternate Director	Richard Anderson	Alternate, County Board of Supervisors

In 2012 the FSCNC Board of Directors updated our strategic plan to guide the FSCNC through the next five years (2013-2018) including our focus on establishing certified Firewise Communities. Our strategic plan focuses on four specific areas: Funding; Projects; Executive/Personnel; and Education. The FSCNC Board of Directors has formed committees to implement each of the goals and strategies in the corresponding section of the plan.

The FSCNC has worked aggressively to engage homeowners, residents, community leaders, planners, realtors and developers to address the wildfire issue and has achieved award-winning results in the past. Below is a highlight of our recent accomplishments:

Program Title	Description	Results
Firewise Communities <i>(funded by Nevada County Title III and USFS)</i>	Formal outreach and education on the Firewise Communities program to homeowner groups, road associations and communities at risk of catastrophic wildfire	Nevada County has 13 certified Firewise Communities, 4 in process and 8 on a waiting list. NFPA recently reported that Nevada County has more

		Firewise Communities than any other county in California.
Defensible Space Chipping Program <i>(funded by the No. Sierra Air Quality Mgmt. District grants, donations and memberships)</i>	Door-to-door service which rotates in various areas of the county each week	During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the chipping program was able to service 318 homes which cleared an estimated 557 acres producing over 14,000 cubic yards of material.
Special Needs Assistance Program <i>(funded by the Allstate Foundation & PG&E)</i>	Defensible Space clearing for qualified low-income seniors and/or certified physically disabled persons	The program cleared defensible space for 29 homes or approximately 51 acres of clearing.
Defensible Space Advisory Visit <i>(funded by Nevada County PI72, donations to the program and memberships)</i>	Personal consultation at individual residences to teach how to effectively create and maintain wildfire defensible space.	The program provided 88 one-on-one defensible space educational visits to Nevada County residents at their home
Education Workshops & Community Presentations <i>(funded by the Allstate Foundation)</i>	Various topics offered in a classroom setting for focused education on wildfire related issues.	Subjects include Firewise Communities, Creating Effective Wildfire Defensible Space, Scotch Broom Challenge and Emergency Preparedness. This program provided 42 educational presentations and workshops in the community last fiscal year
Scotch Broom Challenge <i>(funded by undesignated contributions)</i>	A community education and awareness program to control and reduce the highly flammable Scotch Broom and related varieties due to the impact to our landscape as wildfire ladder fuel. A landowner weed wrench loan program is available as part of this program	Working with cooperating organizations, the council challenged the community to control this highly flammable and invasive plant. 22 project sites were implemented in 2014, with 18 in 2015. Over 300 volunteers participated in this program. FSCNC Executive Director, Joanne Drummond, received the California Invasive Plant Council's <i>Ryan Jones Catalyst Award for Wildland Stewardship</i> in October 2014.
Children's Educational Outreach Program <i>(funded by the Allstate Foundation)</i>	In cooperation with local fire departments, the council provides age-appropriate educational material for in-school fire education presentations such as elementary Fire ABC's coloring book, middle-school Wildfire Activity Book and upper grades The Hidden Treasure-Forests & Woody Biomass and student take home flyers on fire safety topics	Over 5,000 schoolchildren annually receive this important fire safe program which includes not only home fire safety, but family evacuation planning and wildfire topics.
Education Lending Library	Fire related educational books, forestry periodicals, scientific	Titles include: Firewise Communities Fire Safe Inside &

<i>(funded by the Allstate Foundation)</i>	studies, DVD's (and videos) are loaned to individuals for focused learning.	Out; Wildfire: Preventing Home Ignitions; Foresters: Growing Forests for Our Future; the Society of American Foresters <i>Journal of Forestry</i> ; Be Cool About Fire Safety; Making Your Home Firewise; Fire Wars; and an Ounce of Prevention to name a few.
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It is noteworthy that virtually all programs and projects offered by the FSCNC are provided at no cost to participants. We do not require any contribution for accessing services or participating in fuel reduction projects (with one exception for homeowner's insurance defensible space verifications.) Due to the lack of funding for grant writing and overhead/administration, in 2009 the council's board of directors provided a suggested donation schedule for all of our programs which has proven to increase the direct financial contributions from the community. These dollars serve as local matching funds for the various grant programs funding operations that grants do not provide for. In July 2010, the council began a membership program to help begin to fill the void that funding under the Title III program will leave. According to our independent CPA audit for the 2013-2014 fiscal year, the council raised nearly \$35,000 in donations, over \$8,000 from memberships and close to \$14,000 from fundraising activities. The audit report verified over \$300,000 of in-kind contributions through volunteers and material contributions to our programs. This amount is close to a dollar-for-dollar match of our total program for this fiscal year. We are humbled by the strong support of our community and are pleased with our progress to become more self-reliant outside of grant funding. Our administration costs are only 5% of our program which is also remarkable. Comprehensive information on our organization including our audit and annual reports may be found by visiting our website at www.areyoufiresafe.com.

Another value of the Firewise Communities program in Nevada County is through the ability of homeowners to retain their homeowner insurance coverage. Many insurance companies have issued non-renewal notices to residents living in Nevada County due to the very high wildfire hazard (as rated by CAL FIRE.) Beginning in 2012, USAA, a national insurance carrier began visiting the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County with the objective of touring our certified Firewise Communities to determine if the ground conditions warranted an effort to establish a rate reduction profile. Their visits were successful in verifying a reduced fire hazard in certified Firewise Communities and they have filed a rate reduction program with the California Insurance Commissioner for homeowners living within certified Firewise Communities. This is a testament to the results that our efforts yield in terms of the ability to retain homeowners insurance as well as potentially qualify for financial savings through rate reductions in premiums. It also demonstrates the success of the Firewise Communities program in terms of creating a sustainable desired condition on the ground for wildfire prevention.

Amounts Requested: \$24,330.21 for fiscal year 2015-16 and \$23,113.70 for fiscal year 2016-17. Total funding = \$47,443.91.

This proposal qualifies for the Forest Reserve Funds under Title III to implement the Firewise Communities program throughout Nevada County. The Title III portion of funding in the current 2014-15 fiscal year represents nearly 8% of the total fiscal year board approved budget.

This funding will provide for up to 20 community Firewise educational presentations during 2015-16 and 2016-17 fiscal years. Potential Firewise Communities are identified throughout the year as ongoing education and outreach for the Firewise program continues as part of our formal Strategic Plan.

Tasks include: homeowner presentations, homeowner association board of director presentations, community wildfire hazard field assessments, written hazard assessments with mitigation recommendations, planning for Firewise Community education day celebrations including vendor booths, equipment and product demonstrations, assistance with grant applications for project funding identified in Firewise community assessments, media relations, press releases, and talk radio guest speaking as necessary to entice communities to make an application for formal Firewise Community designation.

Expense	Amount
Salary, taxes, insurance and fringe benefits to conduct Firewise Communities education, outreach and direct assistance to individuals in obtaining and annual certification and retention of the official Firewise Communities USA program	\$41,743.91
Supplies, printing, travel, advertising	\$ 1,000.00
FSCNC Administration (supplies, printing/copies, travel, portion of general liability and volunteer insurance, portion of annual fiscal compliance audit, rent, repairs and maintenance and utilities based on hours worked)	\$ 4,700.00
Total	\$47,443.91

Use of Requested Funding: The funding requested provides for the FSCNC to conduct education, promotion and implementation of the national Firewise Communities concept with our institutional base of operations providing fire prevention programs throughout Nevada County. Specifically, our requested Forest Reserve funds will be utilized for staff, program expenses and administrative costs to develop and retain Firewise Communities in Nevada County. The Executive Director oversees all programs, including Firewise, and actively works to educate individuals and communities to engage in the national Firewise program. The responsibilities of the Executive Director include public speaking engagements with local service groups and individual homeowner associations to educate them about wildfire, planning community Firewise events, defensible space and ember intrusion on structures education and coordinating the Firewise Communities program including field assessments and report writing. Additional duties include media relations, which highlight these activities with radio, print and television media outlets. The annual Prepare for Fire Season Guide is coordinated by the Executive Director of the Fire Safe Council of Nevada County in collaboration with the Forest Service, Cal Fire, BLM, PG&E and the Nevada County Fire Chief’s Association featuring Firewise Communities education and promotion of landowner assistance programs to help enlist communities.

The FSCNC has been nationally recognized as a leader in community-based fire prevention, and was the proud recipient of a US Department of Agriculture Bronze Smokey Award in 2001.

Since then the FSCNC expanded the awareness and participation in the Firewise Communities program and direct landowner education and assistance with the Defensible Space Chipping program, Special Needs Assistance program, Scotch Broom Challenge, Children's Education and community outreach and education. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is the sponsor of the national Firewise Community program. The FSCNC was given the 2010 Firewise Leadership Award from NFPA in recognition of the success of our efforts to establish Firewise Communities in Nevada County. There are only seven awards given across the nation and the FSCNC was the only organization in the State of California honored.

Our Executive Director, Joanne Drummond, was profiled in 2013 in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) *Strategic Foresight Initiative Report: Toward More Resilient Futures* in the "Big Issues. Strong Leaders. Bold Action." section on the wildfire mitigation topic. She also received the California Invasive Plant Council's *Ryan Jones Catalyst Award for Wildland Stewardship* in October 2014 for creating the Scotch Broom Challenge.

The Fire Safe Council is dedicated to continuing to fund this effort through private grants, community memberships and donations after the expiration of the Title III grant program as is our stated mission. The FSCNC is the only organization in Nevada County solely dedicated to wildfire prevention.

Success Measurements

The Firewise Communities program serves all Nevada County residents willing to participate. The expected outcome is to add designated Firewise Communities throughout all of Nevada County to the national registry. Our goal includes re-certification of the 13 existing Firewise Communities and to add a minimum of 4 additional Firewise Communities with hopes of securing up to 6 as a result of our efforts. Further benefits include an overall reduced risk of wildland fires, the creation of safer evacuation routes, and reduced potential for structural loss due to awareness of the effectiveness of defensible space and hardening of structures in the event of catastrophic wildland fires. Other measurements of success through earned media placements for Firewise objectives are tracked to indicate the success of our educational and outreach efforts. The expected outcome for media relations activities would include 12 print and radio placements. The timeline to complete the process to become a certified Firewise Community typically takes 12-18 months from securing the commitment, to completing the formal wildfire hazard assessment, writing the report with recommendations, developing an action plan and hosting a community education day.

Thank you for considering funding the Firewise Communities program at the FSCNC. The County's continued support and strong partnership with the FSCNC will create more Firewise Communities in Nevada County while improving overall public safety through wildfire fuel mitigation. If you would like further information or need clarification on items contained herein, please contact me at (530) 272-1122 x 4.

Sincerely,



Joanne Drummond
Executive Director