



# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS 2014-2024

**Publication #128.** OFSC free services and communications are received by thousands in Oakland and the East Bay. We are only able to continue doing this with the help of supportive donors like you. **SUPPORT**

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## CONGRATS TO #4

Kaiser School Neighborhood Fire Break (in Hiller Highlands) is  
Oakland's FOURTH Firewise USA® Recognized Site!



Frank Kelly, the resident lead, had this to share about the experience:

"Our neighborhood was badly damaged in the 1991 Oakland Firestorm and is still home to several survivors. One of those survivors, Sue Piper, began creating a Firewise community for us but was delayed by the pandemic and then moved out of state. Attempts to continue her efforts were stymied by several early participants dropping out.



At a meeting to create a local Neighborhood Watch area it became apparent that there were still many neighbors interested in wildfire safety but who happened to live outside of the boundaries of Sue's original Firewise community area. A National Night Out gathering was used to publicize our Firewise efforts to everyone in the neighborhood and determine the overall level of interest. (Those who did not attend that gathering received personal solicitations.)

We eventually **achieved a 40% neighbor participation rate** and changed our Firewise community boundaries to allow all interested neighbors to participate. We also retained the adjacent Henry J. Kaiser Elementary School, which has been a wonderful partner. Our application was completed and submitted in December 2023 and approved in January 2024.

The whole process has been a great way for us to educate ourselves about our wildfire risks, learn practical ways to lessen them, and work together for a safer place to live."

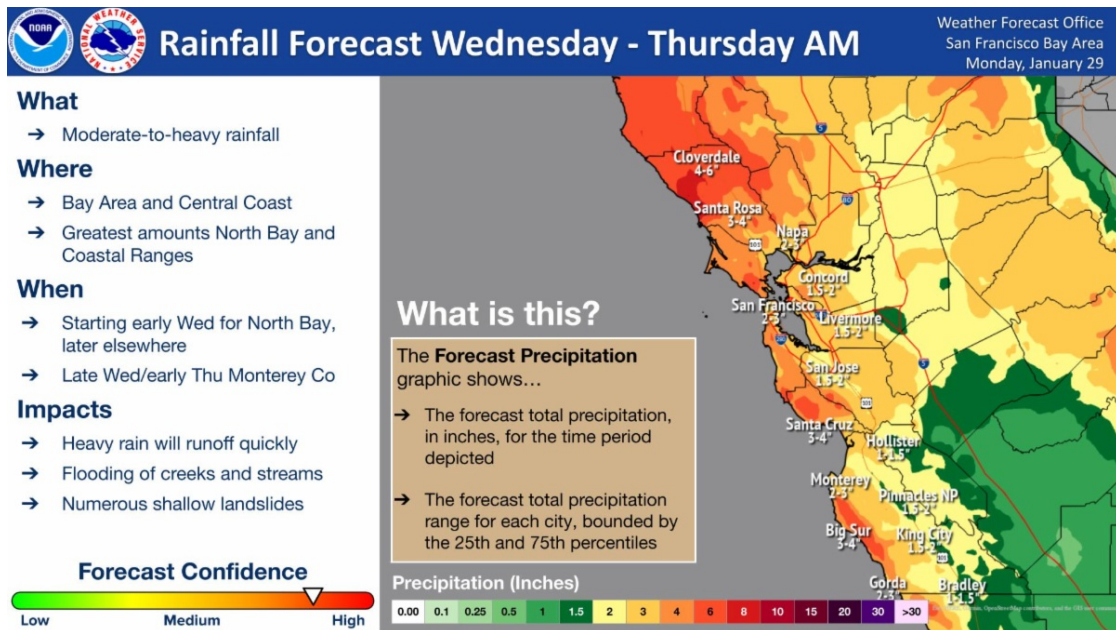
The NFPA **Firewise USA® recognition program** was designed to help residents learn about wildfire risks and provide a self-directed, collaborative framework for

neighbors to work together to reduce these risks by engaging in fuel reduction and home hardening activities.

Oakland Firesafe Council is encouraging Oakland neighborhood groups to join the growing network of more than 1,500 Firewise USA® sites from across the nation by taking ownership in preparing and protecting their homes and communities against the threat of wildfire.

>>> OFSC Guide **Firewise USA®**

## WET WEDNESDAY ON THE WAY



From **National Weather Service SF BayArea**: "We're still looking for a storm system to bring rain and wind impacts to the area late Tuesday night into early Thursday morning. Flooding and downed trees are possible so keep up with forecast changes from a reliable weather source!" (@NWSBayArea 1/29/2024)  
Check out these related **safety tips** from NWS and review this OFSC Guide:

>>> OFSC Guide **Winter Storm Preparedness**

## HOME INSURANCE SURVEY



Finding and keeping home insurance is a time-consuming and expensive problem for many local residents these days. The consumer help non-profit United Policyholders offers **shopping** and **buying** tips and is working hard to advance **solutions**.

**UP IS ASKING FOR YOUR INPUT...** help them keep their finger on the pulse of a challenging situation. Please take a few minutes to share your household's status by completing UP's brief **SURVEY**

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**>>> OFSC Guide Home Insurance**

## SWEEPING AWAY THE BROOM

Big shout out to Friends of Sausal Creek (FOSC) and volunteers who recently did some **serious vegetation management** in Oakland's Wood Park. FOSC had this to share on social media:



"Last weekend volunteers helped remove 20 cubic yards of invasive French broom from Wood Park!

French broom outcompetes native vegetation, changes the soil composition to make it more desirable for only itself, and can completely alter the functioning of an ecosystem by eliminating biodiversity.

It grows rapidly and has prolific seed production. An average-sized plant can produce 8,000 spring-loaded seeds per year, which eject out several feet away from the parent plant and are able to remain viable in the soil for up to 30 years!

If left unmanaged, these plants can grow to dense monocultures which inhibit wildlife movement and **increase fire hazard frequency and severity. French broom burns frighteningly readily and provides ladder fuels** that can carry fire up to the canopy layer.

**This restoration work protects surrounding homes and the ecosystems from fire** and prevents new broom seeds from spreading. It will be exciting to see how bird populations and native plant communities change on this slope as the small oak seedlings growing here have more space to fill in and provide habitat and food sources." (Friends of Sausal Creek Instagram post, 1/20/2024)

Volunteers regularly work on fuel reduction and restoration in Oakland parks and open spaces, and **new volunteers are always welcome**. For information and schedules of volunteer opportunities visit the OFSC page **PARK STEWARDS**



## MORE ITEMS OF NOTE



### #ReadyOakland

2024 Outreach, Training, & Exercise **CALENDAR**



### California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force

Year in Review 2023 **READ**



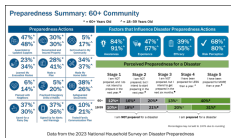
### California Fire Safe Council Mitigation Messenger

The theme for this edition of CFSC's Quarterly Newsletter is "Technology & Resilience" **READ**



### Office of the State Fire Marshal's New Website

Intended to provide an enhanced and modern web experience, the website's new features increase searching ability site wide. **VISIT**



### FEMA 2023 National Household Survey on Disaster Preparedness

Review the **RESULTS**



A house burns near a road after the Knolls Fire burned through the area on October 26, 2019 in Sonoma County, California. Forced by high winds, the Knolls Fire has burned over 10,000 acres in a matter of hours and has prompted evacuations in the Geyserville area.

### When Disaster Strikes in English Only

"Despite the many languages spoken in the Bay Area, Alameda and Solano Counties only send out emergency alerts in English, leaving at least one in ten Bay Area residents at risk of missing life-saving information in the face of disaster..." **ARTICLE**

## BETTER TOGETHER IN 2024



Working together contributes to the well-being and safety of each other, our neighborhoods and our communities in Oakland (and beyond). By working together we can meet the present and future wildfire preparedness and prevention needs. Despite losing major grant funding last year from the City of Oakland, OFSC is still striving to help our communities be prepared and ready for disasters. We're seeking financial support to help fund activities in 2024 such as:

- Providing free workshops
- Offering Firewise USA® support
- Developing new wildfire safety programs
- Nurturing connections with other East Bay partners in preparedness

Your **tax-deductible contribution** would help us to continue on with these and other important, potentially **life-saving endeavors**.

THANK YOU for all that you have done so far in supporting OFSC's work and thank you for ANY donation you are able to make now.

SUPPORT

*Oakland Firesafe Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. Donations are tax-deductible.*



Oakland Firesafe Council (OFSC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the risks of wildfire danger to people and property through preparedness education, programs and materials, outreach, advocacy and volunteer opportunities.

**CONTACT**

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