



Greenhorn Firewise Community

August 2026 Newsletter

Hello Neighbors...

This month (and through October) our newsletter focus is on situational awareness. It's hot and dry out there, and we are just getting into prime fire season.

Over the past few months we've covered just about everything you need to know about being ready during fire season, so with that in mind a lot of the content this month is reminders, but please don't miss the story near the end about some great volunteer work in our community.

The key to staying safe is to stay aware of weather conditions, know where to get accurate information, and not get complacent about your preparations.

Remember, 95 percent of wildfires are human caused, so let's be careful out there. Here's [an interesting article in CalMatters](#)) about some of the little ways that people have started big fires.

Reminders...

A few reminders of evacuation-related topics we've covered in the last couple of months:

- Keep your [go bags](#) ready (and make sure any medications are current). Also make sure you have a phone charger in your go bag or car.
- Always keep your gas tank **at least** half full (or your electric car fully charged).
- Know your [evacuation zone](#).
- Make sure you're signed up for [Nevada County Alerts](#).
- Review your [evacuation plan](#). Familiarize yourself with [evacuation routes](#) (including "back door" ones that may cross neighboring properties).
- Be extra cautious on [Red Flag Days](#).
- Consult [multiple information sources](#).
- [Leaving early increases your chance of survival](#).

Zone Zero (Immediate Zone) Maintenance

Don't forget to keep an eye on "Zone Zero"—the area of [defensible space](#) within five feet of your structures. Windy days can bring debris into gutters, roof valleys, under decks or stairs, and next to your foundation. Check these areas regularly and keep them clear of flammable material (including cushions, plants, and propane tanks) to protect your home and other structures.

What to Do If You See or Smell Smoke

If you see flames or a smoke plume developing, call 911! But what if you only smell smoke? [YubaNet has some tips](#) on how to proceed.

If You Are Trapped

We will continue to remind you to **leave early** in a dangerous situation—definitely if you receive an evacuation order, but even with an evacuation warning or before if you feel unsafe.

The more people who leave early, the less crowded Greenhorn Road, our single paved way out, will be.

However, there is always the possibility of being trapped—in your home, in your car, or on foot. [This CALFIRE slide show](#) details what to do in each situation. Get familiar with it ahead of time so you have the right resources with you and are less likely to panic.

Wildfire Smoke: Health Concerns

We've been lucky again so far this year with just a few days of light smoke. [The California Air Resources Board has a great website](#) with information about how wildfire smoke can affect your health, how you can protect yourself and your children (including DIY home air filters), and how to get information about air quality when you see smoky skies.

Handheld Radios for Emergency Communication

If, in an emergency, you plan to strictly use your cell phone...think again! Cell phones can be useful, but cell towers burn, and the number of calls in an emergency situation can overload the system, making cell phones ineffective. Many communities, especially in rural areas, are adopting the use of handheld radios to help residents communicate with each other in the event of an emergency.

Greenhorn Firewise has organized a [Radio Alert Group](#) to increase awareness and proficiency with GMRS handheld radios. If you are interested in getting involved, check out the following links:

- [Greenhorn Firewise Radio Alert Group](#)
- [Nevada County Amateur Radio Alert Service](#) (ARES). Learn more about Neighborhood Radio Watch and how you can get training for your neighborhood.
- [Radio-Active: You Bet's Evacuation Drill Planning](#). Informative video about how the You Bet Firewise Community (to our south and east) uses GMRS radios.

Volunteers Making Alternate Routes Safer

Greenhorn Firewise has been partnering with Banner Mountain Firewise on a County grant project to make the alternate route between our communities safer by removing and thinning roadside vegetation. This past spring, residents participated in a number of work days to remove ladder fuel up to 30 feet from each side of the roadway (with landowner permission). This work was on Jones Ridge Rd., Meadow Way, and Tumbling Creek Rd. Once the volunteer work is done, matching grant money will fund more difficult contractor work managed by the County (larger trees, steep slopes, etc.).

Here are a few statistics for the Greenhorn Firewise portion of the project:

- 8 work days
- 28 volunteers (12 from Jones Ridge, 7 from Manion Canyon, 2 from Hoppy Hollow/Raccoon Mountain, 7 from the Greenhorn Firewise board)
- 274 volunteer hours
- Value of volunteer hours at \$38.61 per hour: \$10,583

If you're interested in participating on additional work days this fall, please contact us (see below).

Community Survey

You can still [take our survey about what concerns you related to wildfire](#).

Have Questions or Concerns? [Contact your Section Representative](#) or email us at greenhornfirewiseboard@gmail.com.