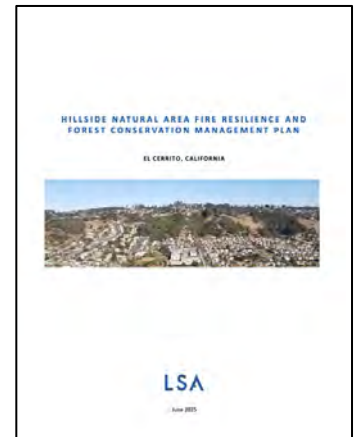
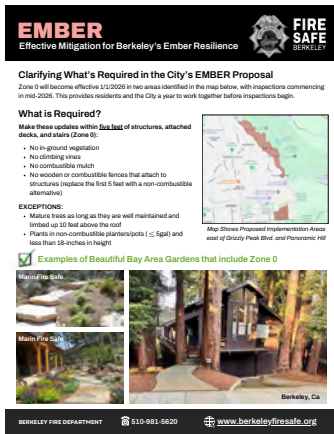




Annual Report 2025



City of Berkeley
City of El Cerrito
City of Oakland
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
East Bay Municipal Utility District
East Bay Regional Park District
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
University of California at Berkeley



HEF Mission

The mission of the Hills Emergency Forum is to coordinate the collection, assessment and sharing of information on East Bay hills fire hazards and further, to provide a forum for building interagency consensus on the development of fire safety standards and codes, incident response and management protocols, public education programs, multi-jurisdictional training, and fuel reduction strategies.



October 17, 2025

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends:

The HEF was formed in October 1992 in direct response to the need for a coordinated regional approach to wildland urban interface fires following the Tunnel Fire in 1991. This year our agencies reinforced the importance of HEF members' continued collaboration. Public interest in wildfire prevention remained high in 2025, especially after the devastating fires in Southern California in January.

The late rains and a cool summer left the Bay area facing regional impacts of excessive annual vegetative growth. The high levels of fuels slowed hazardous fuel reduction work. And the region continued to experience widespread, sudden die-back and severe tree mortality. During 2025, agencies stepped up selective tree removal to respond to increased fire hazards. Local fire agencies encouraged residents and employees to prepare for potential evacuation.

Planning, regional standards and research provided additional guidance, including adoption of CAL FIRE Local Response Area (LRA) fire hazard severity zone maps, update of the CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit Strategic Fire Plan, and adoption of the Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan in El Cerrito. Members continued peer-to-peer sharing of advanced implementation issues, biomass utilization, forest health, illegal dumping and hands-on skill training.

Active inspection, compliance and abatement programs have improved public safety of both private homes and public lands within Berkeley, El Cerrito, Kensington, and Oakland. These programs were reinforced throughout the year with public outreach and education, including new firewise communities.

Hazardous fuel reduction projects continued in full force. Members' fuel mitigation projects throughout the East Bay hills have expanded our system of strategic fuel reduction zones through use of goats, dedicated fuels crews, machinery, as well as prescribed fire. Furthermore, new grant funds increased our capacity for projects.

The 2025 Annual Report documents positive changes our agencies have brought to the Hills region. This report highlights the efforts of both the Hills Emergency Forum and individual members during the past year. We recognize that this is an ongoing effort and our work will continue.

On behalf of all the members of the Forum, I would like to thank the many individuals and organizations whose support and input have enabled us to advance our agenda of emergency preparedness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Clifford Chan".

Clifford Chan, General Manager
East Bay Municipal Utility District
HEF Chair 2024-25

❖ City of Berkeley ❖ City of El Cerrito ❖ City of Oakland
❖ California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection ❖ East Bay Municipal Utility District
❖ East Bay Regional Park District ❖ Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory ❖
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2025 Highlights

- I. Sustained Multi-agency Partnership to Manage East Bay Hills Fire Risk.
 - Interagency issues and collaboration with other agencies.
 - Mutual aid. Joint response/ mutual aid for wildfires fire both locally and outside of region.
 - Partnerships to reduce fire hazards, including Firewise Communities, Friends of Sausal Creek, Friends of Joaquin Miller, and other neighborhood groups.
 - Response to continued effects of tree mortality and increased risk of wildfire.
 - Grant funding: California Climate Initiative (CALFIRE Fire Prevention and State Coastal Conservancy grants), CalRecycle, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
 - Local funding measures from public support: Contra Costa County (X), Cities of Berkeley (FF), El Cerrito (H) and Oakland (MM).
2. Mitigation Planning, Environmental Review and Research
 - Santa Clara Unit Plan (CALFIRE).
 - CALFIRE fire hazard severity zone maps LRA updates.
 - Adopted Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan
 - Biomass utilization with carbonator
 - Fire Risk Reduction Community List (Berkeley, EBMUD, EBRPD and MOFD)
 - Environmental clearance and permits.
 - Diablo Firesafe Council adopt Updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan
3. Vegetation Management
 - Inspection, compliance and abatements programs in cities of Berkeley, El Cerrito, Kensington, and Oakland. Plant identification for defensible space inspector trainings. Home hardening program in Berkeley.
 - EBRPD: FEMA funded projects completed. Tree mortality, eucalyptus and other hazardous fuels reduced in several East Bay hill parks.
 - EBMUD: second growth eucalyptus thinning, pine bark beetle damaged pine removal, brush removal, mechanical mowing and native grassland enhancement.
 - Fuel reduction by goats on EBMUD, EBRPD, LBL, Oakland and UC Berkeley.
 - Fuel removal projects by CAL FIRE/ CDC Conservation Crew, CAL FIRE Fuels Crew, Civicorps, Student Conservation Association and private contractor hand crews in Berkeley, El Cerrito, EBRPD, EBMUD, LBL, Oakland, and UC Berkeley.
 - Vegetation Management Fuels Hand Crews: Alameda County Crew 8, CAL FIRE, Contra Costa County, EBRPD & MOFD.
 - Use of prescribed fire (pile burn and broadcast burn) by EBRPD, EBMUD and El Cerrito.
 - On-going maintenance of previous fuel reduction project areas.
4. Outreach and Communications
 - Firewise Communities
 - Community Wildfire Preparedness Day

Hills Emergency Forum (HEF) 2025 Annual Report

2025 Highlights

In fulfillment of its primary mission, the Hills Emergency Forum (HEF) continues to provide a sustainable framework for interagency communication, joint planning and coordinated response to the needs of our member agencies' various constituents. The organization's goals were developed over the years and grouped into the four areas of Assessment, Mitigation, Preparedness and Response. These goals continue to serve as milestones for our collective efforts. However, many of these goals are now in a "maintenance" mode. The following 2025 Annual Report covers the period from September 30, 2024 through October 1, 2025

ASSESSMENT

Across both Northern and Southern California, spring 2025 was warmer and drier than normal. Northern California experienced below-normal rainfall, a notable heat wave at the end of May, and about 2,400 lightning strikes—well below the 10-year average. Snowpack in the north Sierra declined rapidly, from 75–80% of normal on May 1 to 20–30% by month's end. In both regions, dead fuel moisture was low, and live fuels at lower elevations cured quickly. Coastal marine layers are showing signs of weakening, especially in Southern California, which may contribute to increased fire risk in coastal zones.

Wildfire activity is already trending above normal in both regions. Northern California saw a sharp rise in daily fires during May, with notable grassland incidents like the Midway and Catlett fires. Live fuels at higher elevations remained moist in early June, potentially slowing early fire spread, but both regions anticipate increasing fire potential as the season progresses and fuels continue to dry. Dry wind events, lightning, and potential heat waves are expected to be the primary triggers for large wildfires statewide.

Fire potential across California is expected to increase steadily through summer, with both North and South Operations forecasting above-normal large fire activity by July and August. In Northern California, a developing flash drought and early-season dryness are pushing conditions toward critical levels faster than usual. High-elevation forests and lowland grasslands in both regions are of particular concern. Compared to last year, there is a greater likelihood of significant timber fires, especially in the southern Sierra and inland zones. Models are aligning for an early and active season, with elevated risk continuing into September.

CAL FIRE 2025 Fire Season Outlook¹

Collaboration During High Fuel Loads and Wildfires

2025 continued to support the 2024 end of the drought throughout the East Bay and much of California. The snowpack in mountains and on-going rains and atmospheric rivers filled local reservoir water levels. The benefits of the wet weather were offset with dense grass crops and flush larger vegetation growth. Many hazardous fuel reduction projects, including grazing with cattle, sheep and goats, were extended due to the amounts of annual fuels. Inspections of private homes and defensible space treatments were also extended.

¹ Source: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents> Accessed 10/3/25.

2025 brought damaging wildfire activity throughout California. Two of the 20 most destructive California wildfires burned in January of 2025: the Eaton and Palisades fires in Los Angeles in January 2025 burned a total of 37,728 acres and were responsible for 16,246 structures and 31 fatalities. 2025 had 7,227 wildfire, over 521,770 acres, 31 fatalities and 16,479 structures damaged or destroyed.² (Note: in 2021, 2,2569,386 acres burned increasing the five-year average dramatically).

The 1991 Tunnel Fire in the Oakland Berkeley Hills remains the 5th most destructive and 3rd top deadliest since records began in 1932.³ In 2025, the HEF member areas only had small ignitions, many of which showcased the effectiveness of hazardous fuel reduction activities.

Public interest in wildfire prevention remained high as indicated by the support for state and local funding over the past 5 years. In November 2024, Oakland passed Measure MM by 71.23% of its voters.⁴ This parcel tax will generate \$2.67 million for wildfire prevention in Oakland's wildfire prevention zone for 20 years. In November 2020, 74.19% of Berkeley residents approved Measure FF with a parcel tax for \$8.5 million for emergency response and preparedness. Followed by Contra Costa County residents supporting Measure X, El Cerrito supporting Measure H, and Orinda residents voting in Measure R. Other local residents continued to benefit from budget increases. On June 27, 2025, the Governor signed a 2025-26 budget that includes: \$1 billion for Cal Fire Operations and Greenhouse Gas Reduction dollars, 12.5 million for a new community home hardening program and additional funds for various wildfire programs.⁵

HEF SLC member collaboration continued in 2025 with local and State law enforcement agencies. Over the 4th of July weekend the group collectively closed Grizzly Peak Boulevard from Claremont Avenue to Centennial Road to reduce the chance of wildfire ignition from illegal fireworks. The closure was coupled with roving patrols throughout the East Bay Hills with the result of no wildfires in the area. To reduce the potential for ignitions in strategic locations, the HEF SLC members continued to work together to block vehicular access to the popular scenic look-out areas, as well as coordinate continued enforcement.

Close interagency coordination is also critical for evacuation orders to be successful. HEF member jurisdictions have their residents covered by the Genasys (formerly called ZoneHaven Aware) community evacuation interface⁶ to facilitate evacuation coordination. AC Alert emergency messages and local Nixle alerts encourage residents to "find their zone." Oakland reinforced evacuation zone information on their annual inspection notices. LBL continued their evacuation modeling and planning. Drills provided not only the opportunity for interdepartmental coordination, but also for the community to familiarize themselves with fire weather and fire evacuation messages, status of home evacuation zones, and to practice their household decision making. City of Berkeley outdoor warning system

² Source: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents> and <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025/>. <https://www.fire.ca.gov/our-impact/statistics> Accessed 10/3/25.

³ Top 20 Largest California Wildfires and Top 20 Deadliest California Wildfires <https://www.fire.ca.gov/our-impact/statistics> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴ [https://ballotpedia.org/Oakland,_California,_Measure_MM,_Wildfire_Prevention_Parcel_Tax_Measure_\(November_2024\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Oakland,_California,_Measure_MM,_Wildfire_Prevention_Parcel_Tax_Measure_(November_2024)) Funding to be used to prevent wildfires by implementing City of Oakland prevention plans, including vegetation management, evacuation route protection, enhanced fire patrols during high danger periods, and goat grazing. Accessed 10/3/25

⁵ <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/governor-signs-325b-budget-with-negotiations-on-wildfire-forest-resilience-items-continuing-into-the-summer/> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁶ <https://protect.genasys.com/> Accessed 10/3/25.

currently includes 13 sirens to alert residents about all types of emergencies and providing both siren tones and spoken hyperlocal life safety instructions.⁷ The final two sensors will complete the on-going Phase II of the program. Berkeley's sirens system join the Oakland and UC Berkeley alert & warning sirens heard throughout the East Bay that indicate residents should follow local emergency broadcast news stations.⁸

Planning, Regional Standards and Research

Planning and Regional Standards

HEF member continued to update and implement adopted planning documents during 2025. Oakland developed metrics for their ten-year vegetation management plan and environmental impact report (EIR) approved in May 2024. The plan covers more than 1,400 acres of City owned property and 300 miles of roadside.⁹ In May, the CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit updated their 2025 Strategic Fire Plan with input from HEF members.¹⁰ Lawrence Berkeley Lab (LBL) has completed all of the recommendations in its previous 10-year Wildland Fire Plan. Wildfire evacuation planning began in July. This included fire modeling and evacuation modeling. As part of the National Preparedness Month activities, LBNL hosted a "lunch and learn" hybrid meeting focused on defensible space and wildfire evacuation.

In 2025, EBRPD continued work on their Nimitz Way and South Park Drive projects to remove dead trees in Tilden Regional Park. These were the first projects in the region that used the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP)¹¹, to streamline their California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. The Cal VTP program allows CAL FIRE, along with other agency partners, to expand their vegetation treatment activities to treat up to approximately 250,000 acres per year, contributing to the target of 500,000 annual acres of treatment on non-federal lands as expressed in Executive Order B-52-18.

Starting in 2021, CAL FIRE offered training on how eligible project proponents can use the CalVTP to comply with CEQA, if they are proposing vegetation treatments consistent with the CalVTP Program EIR. The CalVTP defines the vegetation treatment activities and associated environmental protections to reduce the risk of loss of lives and property, reduce fire suppression costs, restore ecosystems, and protect natural resources as well as other assets at risk from wildfire. The CalVTP supports the use of prescribed burning, mechanical treatments, hand-crews, herbicides, and prescribed herbivory as tools to

⁷ For locations and more information of the outdoor warning system see <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/outdoor-warning-system-emergency-siren-network> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁸ Siren Alerting and Warning System. Testing of outdoor sirens first Wednesday of every month at noon. <https://www.oaklandca.gov/Public-Safety-Streets/Emergency-Preparedness-Services/Emergency-Sirens-and-Alerts-Drills> . Accessed 10/3/25.

⁹ <https://www.oaklandca.gov/Public-Safety-Streets/Fire/Fire-Projects/Oakland-Vegetation-Management-Plan> . Accessed 10/3/25.

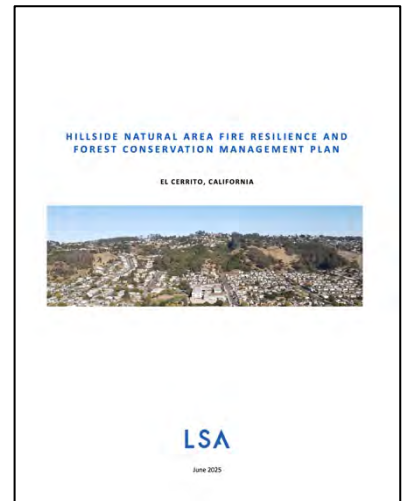
¹⁰ CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit 2025 Strategic Fire Plan. <https://34c031f8-c9fd-4018-8c5a-4159cdf6b0d-cdn-endpoint.azureedge.net/-/media/osfm-website/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/2025-santa-clara-contra-costa-alameda-west-stanislaus-west-san-joaquin-unit-fire-plan.pdf?rev=95ebefab3aff4d25b1258ba3d6d0cf5d&hash=5D2AB006F7000BF976ED9E808BCA198B> . Accessed 10/3/25.

¹¹ For more detail about California VTP see <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/calvtp-homepage-and-storymap/> Accessed 10/3/25.

reduce hazardous vegetation around communities in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), to construct fuel breaks, and to restore healthy ecological fire regimes. In 2023 East Bay Regional Park District certified their environmental documents of tiering off the CalVTP with a project specific analysis to cover the areas experiencing sudden tree mortality, as well as those areas not already covered by environmental documents. In 2025, there was a challenge to the program by the California Chaparral Institute in the California 4th Appellate Court (Division I). On June 30, 2025, the case was reversed and remanded to trial court with directions.¹²

On March 1, 2025 the Governor signed an Emergency Proclamation on Wildfire to fast-track wildfire prevention. The proclamation suspends environmental regulations, including CEQA and the Coastal Act, as needed to expedite fuels reduction projects. Projects include vegetation and tree removal, adding fuel breaks, prescribed fire, and more. The proclamation allows non-state entities to conduct approved fuels reduction work with expedited and streamlined approval. It directed state agencies to submit recommendations for increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire. This approach increased the California Vegetation Treatment Program's (CalVTP) efficiency and utilization, in order to continue promoting rapid environmental review for large wildfire risk reduction treatments. As of October 2025, they had approved 86 critical fuel reduction projects for suspension of certain requirements.¹³

In 2023, the City of El Cerrito received a grant from the Coastal Conservancy to prepare a plan for their Hillside Natural Area.¹⁴ The purpose of the Plan is to guide the City's fire fuel reduction, native forest conservation, and maintenance activities. The project includes: environmental site analyses, community and stakeholder engagement, CEQA analysis, and development and recommendation of best management practices. The final Plan and CEQA document were circulated for comment, in Spring 2025. The city Council adopted the Plan and CEQA declaration on June 3, 2025.



El Cerrito's Hillside Natural Area Plan, approved June 2025, will guide the City's future fire fuel reduction, native forest conservation, and maintenance activities.

The Fire Risk Reduction Community List (FRRC),¹⁵ as mandated by [PRC 4290.1](#), is "a list of local agencies located in a state responsibility area or a very high fire hazard severity zone that meet best practices for local fire planning."

The Fire Risk Reduction Community List was updated for the second time on July 1, 2024. The 2024 list continues to include the city of Berkeley, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and East Bay Regional Park District. Only 11 cities, seven counties and 32 other agencies from throughout California made the list for 2024-26. HEF member agencies are in the process of submitting new applications to be considered for the 2026-28 FRRC list.

East Bay Regional Park District was excited to expand on a major improvement in their hazardous fuel reduction efforts at the East Bay Regional Park District. In 2024, they introduced a more efficient task

¹² California Chaparral Institute et al. v. Board of Forestry and Fire Protection https://appellatecases.courtinfo.ca.gov/search/case/mainCaseScreen.cfm?doc_id=2909896&request_token=NilwLSEnTkg%2FWzBBSSFNXE5IUQO6UkxbKyluVzJSMCAgCg%3D%3D&start=1&doc_no=D083484&dist=41&search=party&auth=yes Accessed 10/3/25.

¹³ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/44774e7d2cb1438ca901a38793e2fdec/page/Approved-Projects-Dashboard> Accessed 10/3/25

¹⁴ <https://www.el-cerrito.org/1650/Hillside-Natural-Area-Plan> Accessed 10/3/25.

¹⁵ <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/fire-risk-reduction-community-list/> Accessed 10/3/25.

order process that significantly speeds up contractor hiring. In 2025, they increased the dollar amount of the contracts and set an annual cap for each contractor. Their team had carefully selected qualified contractors, approved by the District Board, enabling them to secure necessary work within just one week. This streamlined approach replaces the lengthy request-for-proposal process, allowing the District to respond quickly to hazardous fuels and strengthening their commitment to protecting communities and natural resources from the threat of wildfires.

CAL FIRE's Fire Severity Zone Maps were first introduced in response to the Bates Bill (AB337) in the aftermath of the 1991 Tunnel Fire in the Berkeley-Oakland Hills. Updates were provided with the introduction of Chapter 7A building codes in 2007 and 2009. These maps have provided important information related to high fire areas in both the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). The CAL FIRE FHSZ viewer <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/> allows for a search by address for fire severity information. In December 2022, an update of the SRA maps was based on a new model. The latest technologies were used in the mapping and included new factors now available such as: land use changes, recent fire history, new significant wind event data, as well as a model that is more spatially detailed.¹⁶ The updated SRA maps were effective April 1, 2024. Updates of the 2007-2011 LRA maps were released during the Spring of 2025. Comments from public meetings held by HEF member agencies were submitted to the Office of the State Fire Marshall. City of Berkeley adjusted their local zones slightly to reflect the state information, while City of Oakland decided to keep their more extensive Wildfire Prevention Zone boundaries¹⁷.

In March 2020, the Diablo Firesafe Council completed an update to the Alameda Countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) with community and HEF member agencies input. Diablo Firesafe Council continues the planning process to update to the 2022 Regional Priority Plan (RPP) for Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, funded through a grant by the California State Coastal Conservancy.¹⁸ Project goals are to: prioritize a portfolio of high- and medium-priority projects in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties; identify potential funding for identified projects and increase connections among stakeholders in the two counties.

Evacuation Modeling

In July 2025, KLD Associates, Inc. finished an Evacuation Time Study contracted by the City of Berkeley predicting evacuation dynamics during a wildfire, tsunami, or other major emergency. It estimates evacuation times for different parts of Berkeley, considering the time of day, day of the week, and season.¹⁹

Key evacuation time estimates include:

- Panoramic Hill Fire: In this area, which is shared with the City of Oakland and has only one road in and out, estimated evacuation times range from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 45 minutes.
- 1923 Berkeley Fire Repeat: In a scenario replicating Berkeley's most destructive historical fire, evacuation orders would stretch from Berkeley's eastern edge and extend as far west as Sacramento Street, involving residents from Marin Avenue stretching as far south as the UC Berkeley campus. Evacuation times for this area range from 1 hour and 35 minutes to 4 hours and 35 minutes. Notably, phasing the evacuation (having those closest to the fire leave first) did not

¹⁶ <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/wildfire-preparedness/fire-hazard-severity-zones/> Accessed 10/3/25.

¹⁷ On June 18, 2025 City Council adopted the Wildfire Prevention Zone (WPZ) boundaries (the same language and map that was used in Measure MM) "following a finding supported by substantial evidence in the record that the requirements of Government Code Section 51182 are necessary for effective fire protection within the area."

¹⁸ <https://diablofiresafe.org/regional-wildfire-priority-plan> Accessed 10/3/25

¹⁹ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/8967c3cdffd3403b89505d8e24a76255> Accessed 10/3/25.

improve overall evacuation times—and in some cases, worsened them for both the broader area and those nearest the fire’s origin.

To better understand the risk to the community, the Berkeley Fire Department modeled how quickly the 1923 Berkeley Fire might spread today and compared it with evacuation time estimates from the Study. The modeling shows:

- Estimated evacuation time: 4 hours and 10 minutes (fall, midweek, midday)
- Estimated fire spread time: 5 hours from Berkeley’s eastern border to Shattuck Avenue
- Key takeaway: Most people will be able to evacuate—but some could be overtaken by fire on the road as they try to escape.

Based on these findings, the City of Berkeley will continue its policy to recommend Berkeley Hills residents leave the area early during periods of extreme fire weather.

Research

Structure Survival Research In 2025, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Wildland Urban Interface Group continued structure survival research, in collaboration with CAL FIRE and others²⁰. On March 7, 2025, they released an update to the Evacuation and Sheltering Consideration: Assessment, Planning and Execution (ESCAPE). On-going programs include Ember Exposure Characterization in WUI Fires, Fire Risk Reduction in Communities program, Improving WUI Community Fire Protection-Fire Resistant Building Design and Materials, and Reduction Ignition of Building Components in WUI Fires.

Peer to Peer Sharing: East Bay Regional Park District staff continued to offer field tours, presentations at conferences, seminars and through the media²¹ of the Anthony Chabot Regional Park project and biomass processing with the carbonator. CAL Poly Swanton Pacific Ranch offered webinars and field workshops related to fuels management in the WUI from a wide variety of speaker, many of which are posted on their website.²² CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit provided regular updates in 2025 on Bay Area Conditions, forest health projects and the Los Gatos Collaborative. Other opportunities for peer to peer sharing included:

- Support of FLAME, a regional working group in the nine Bay Area counties. The group focuses on implementation issues including project permitting, wildlife mitigation measures, biomass removal and prescribed fire, among other issues related to hazardous fuel reduction. This year, EBRPD sponsored a field tour to share their experience on eucalyptus thinning as well as grassland and scrubland management.
- CA Fire Science Seminar Series²³ included biweekly on-line discussions from February through May 2025 addressing topics such as: Lessons from LA, realignment of federal environmental

²⁰<https://www.nist.gov/el/fire-research-division-73300/wildland-urban-interface-fire-73305> and <https://www.nist.gov/publications/wui-fire-evacuation-and-sheltering-considerations-assessment-planning-and-execution-0> Accessed 10/3/25.

²¹Local News Matters: *Large-scale fire-fuel reduction project at Anthony Chabot Regional Park now complete.* (9/20/25) <https://localnewsmatters.org/2025/09/20/large-scale-fire-fuel-reduction-project-at-anthony-chabot-regional-park-now-complete/> Accessed 10/3/25.

²² <https://spranch.calpoly.edu/fuels> Accessed 8/19/25.

²³ <https://www.cafirescience.org/events-webinars-source/category/the-2025-california-fire-science-seminar-series> Accessed 8/19/25

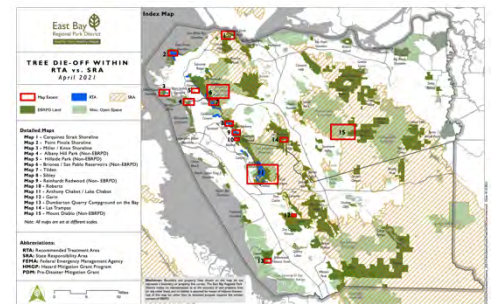
polies to recognize fire's role, shifts in seasonality, restoring natural conditions through the return of human-ignited fire and modeling key issues, new approaches and remaining challenges.

- East Bay Regional Park District sponsored a S-219 Firing Operations course at Shadow Cliffs, that included a training burn.
- A “Plant material identification for defensible space inspectors” training for Berkeley Fire.
- Sharing of experiences with illegal dumping on public lands: threat to wildfire ignitions and increase fire mitigation project costs.

Widespread Tree Mortality in the East Bay: An Update into the Current Situation and Mitigation Efforts

The concern over tree mortality continues in the East Bay Regional Park District. Hundreds of trees, from invasive species, like eucalyptus and acacias, to native pines and bay laurels, are dead or dying.²⁴ This mass tree death is attributed to various factors such as insects, diseases, and drought.

The Current Situation. The East Bay Regional Park District monitored approximately 1,500 acres of tree die-off in the regional parks alone. This alarming scale of tree mortality has demanded immediate attention from the District. In 2025, the East Bay Regional Park District completed tree dieback fuels projects at Tilden, Sbrante Ridge, Anthony Chabot, Claremont Canyon, Carquinez Strait, and Kennedy Grove Regional Park.



Understanding the Causes. Researchers from UC Berkeley and the US Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, have identified the causes behind this phenomenon. Two fungi, *Diaporthe* and *Dothiorella*, were isolated from acacia, showing recent die-back, indicating the presence of predisposing stress factors such as drought. These fungi, coupled with the extreme drought conditions experienced in the region, have accelerated tree death.

Mitigation Efforts. The East Bay Regional Park District has developed a Tree Die-back Mitigation Plan in response to this escalating issue. A successful 80-acre pilot project was conducted in Anthony Chabot Regional Park, indicating potential strategies to combat the problem.

In continuing its proactive approach towards environmental preservation, the District has engaged in the strategic deployment of a Carbonizer for processing the 667 acres at Anthony Chabot, leveraging insights gleaned from the successful 80-acre pilot project. Over the three-year project (2022-2025), the Department thinned 667 acres of unmanaged eucalyptus, and the new Carbonizer processed a total of 14,049 tons of the removed logs at Anthony Chabot, resulting in 822 tons of biochar that was distributed throughout the Parks for beneficial use. The Fire Department will utilize the Carbonizer to process biomass sustainably on a 32-acre project in 2026. This technology facilitates the transformation of biomass into biochar, a sustainable soil enhancer.

The Benefits of Biochar. Biochar's efficacy is underscored by its multifaceted benefits. It contributes to carbon sequestration, a critical process in the fight against climate change, and augments the soil's water retention capacity. The enhanced water retention, in turn, fosters an increase in soil nutrients and biodiversity. This progression not only aids in plant growth but also fortifies the soil ecosystem, thereby promoting a healthier environment.

²⁴ Widespread Tree Mortality. <https://www.ebparks.org/sites/default/files/Mapped-Dieback-Areas-April-2021.pdf>
Accessed 10/4/25.

The District's commitment to this initiative exemplifies its dedication to fuels management and fire prevention, underscoring the urgency of adopting innovative strategies to safeguard our natural resources and mitigate climate change impacts.

Sudden Oak Death (SOD) also continues to be a concern in the region.²⁵ The 2024 SOD Blitz results released in November (2025 results will be available November 2025). 2024 outbreaks in the northern and western parts of the East Bay were numerous, including a positive sample geographically associated with one of the oldest California infestations, south of Castro Valley. UC Berkeley, property, North Berkeley, and El Cerrito/ Arlington all have active outbreaks. In the East Bay (East) 313 trees were surveyed, with the estimated infection rate of 2.3% (versus 1.3% in 2022). However, SOD is established and reaches the urban areas of the western part of the East Bay. Noteworthy infestations are located in: Kensington, John Muir National Monument, Tilden, UC property, Huckleberry Preserve, Joaquin Miller and Montclair area in Oakland, Albany Hill and Leyden Creek.

Early Ignition Detection

HEF SLC members continue to participate in development of early ignition detection in the region. The City of Oakland launched a 24-month pilot program in May 2023 using artificial intelligence and ten high tech “N5Shield” sensors from N5 Sensors.²⁶ CAL FIRE is piloting 400 “ultra- early” sensors are from the German startup Dryad Networks in Jackson Demonstration State Forest.²⁷ These sensors and the supporting AI can spot fires in the smoldering phases when there isn’t visible flame.

Alameda and Contra Costa Counties are also covered by thirty-one cameras that are linked with others statewide and managed by University of California San Diego.²⁸ Cameras include : Berkeley Downtown, Briones-Rancho de la Rosa, Briones Tabletop, Chabot, Cummings Skyway , Evora Road, Fairview Alameda 1, Fairview Alameda 2, Garin Ridge 1, Grizzly Peak KPFA, Grizzly Peak Overlook (2 cameras), Highland Peak, Kregor Peak, Lafayette Dunsyre Drive, Lafayette Lucas Drive, Moraga Alta Mesa, Moraga Fay Hill, Mt Diablo (3 cameras), Mulholland Ridge, Nichol Knob 1, Oakland downtown (Clorox), Oakland Coliseum, Pinole Ridge, Rocky Ridge 1, Round Top, SRVFD Station 31, Sunol Ridge, Vollmer Peak (2 cameras), Wiedemann Hill, Wildcat Canyon, and William Rust Summit. The state-focused program manages a network of more than 1,000 monitoring cameras and sensor arrays, and collects data that provides actionable, real-time information to inform public safety.

Biomass Utilization

HEF SLC members continue to share information on biomass utilization and equipment related to hazardous fuel disposal. In 2025, the Carbonizer continued operating at the East Bay Regional Park District in Anthony Chabot Regional Park. The projects at Anthony Chabot have thinned logs from the

²⁵ Sudden Oak Death results at <https://nature.berkeley.edu/matteolab/?s=SOD+Blitz+2025+results> see also <https://www.suddenoakdeath.org/>. Accessed 10/3/25.

²⁶ <https://n5sensors.com/wildfire/> Accessed 10/3/25.

²⁷ Dryad <https://www.dryad.net/post/cal-fire-pilots-dryad-networks-ultra-early-wildfire-sensors-ahead-of-next-fire-season> and <https://www.cafirescience.org/events-webinars-source/category/the-2025-california-fire-science-seminar-series> Accessed 10/3/25.

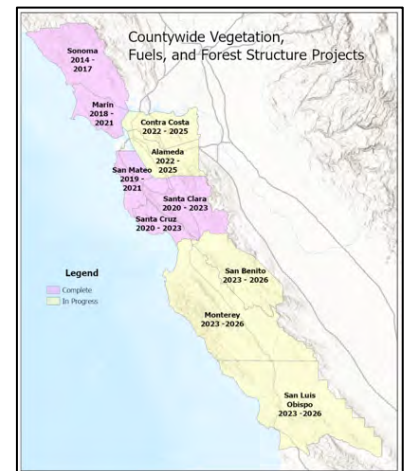
²⁸ At the end of 2022 AlertCalifornia became the third-generation wireless network based at the University of California San Diego. (Previously AlertWildfire consortium that continue to focus on other parts of California, Nevada and Oregon). For live feed see <https://ops.alertcalifornia.org/cameras>. Cameras covering the East Bay can be seen at <https://ops.alertcalifornia.org/tileset/10498>. Accessed 10/3/25.

eucalyptus forest from 2022- 2025. The Carbonizer processed approximately 80 tons of biomass from approximately two acres a day. It reduced biomass by 90%; from 14,049 tons of logs to 822 tons of biochar. Staff estimated it reduced truck traffic 10-fold by using the Carbonizer instead of trucking materials to the co-generation plant in Woodland. The TigerCat Carbonizer is one of several technologies available for biomass utilization.²⁹ Air Burners Inc is a competing manufacturer with similar firebox, air curtain burner and bio-charging equipment. CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit has available a “ring of fire” biochar kiln to be able to produce biochar with limited smoke production. Members look forward to seeing additional methods of biomass utilization.

In July, UC ANR offered a biomass utilization field day at the UC Berkeley Richmond Field Station. Discussions included biomass utilization, demonstration of portable sawmill, solar kilns and furniture building. This was the second of a series of three lectures and three field days in 2025 with experts from UC Berkeley, UC Merced and UC ANR.³⁰

Countywide Fine Scale Vegetation Map and Landscape Database Project

On May 15, 2025, the Alameda and Contra Costa Fine Scale Vegetation map was posted.³¹ Growing populations, global climate change, altered fire regimes, invasive/non-native plants and animals, habitat fragmentation, plant diseases and pathogens, noise, light, and air pollution, and other human and natural impacts threaten the health of the area's natural and man-made resources. To effectively care for the ecosystems and infrastructure, citizens, landowners, politicians, managers, and government agencies must know the location and distribution of resources across the landscape, and they must monitor change over time. To fulfil these needs, five consortia have developed throughout the Bay Area to provide this critical information. Sonoma led the first Bay Area vegetation and landscape program. After the Sonoma County project was completed in 2017, a network of organizations that steward Mount Tamalpais in Marin County, decided to move forward with a similar project. Shortly after a consortium was able to fund and implement a parallel countywide effort in San Mateo. Primarily because of the usefulness of the Sonoma County data in understanding the behavior of the Sonoma County 2017 Complex wildfires, a fourth consortium expressed interest in a similar mapping project for Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties. The usefulness of the maps expanded with the Napa County Firewise Foundation project that used the fine scale vegetation map to create a 5-meter fuel model for Napa County. All of the map products of these efforts are accessible via a web site and are freely available.



On May 15, 2025, the Alameda and Contra Costa Fine Scale Vegetation map was posted on <https://pacificvegmap.org/>

In 2023, a consortium of interested agencies, including HEF members, expanded the process to Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. CAL FIRE's California Climate Investments grant program selected to fund the initial Wildfire Risk Assessment Mapping. EBRPD, CAL FIRE and Kass Green and Associates led the two-county effort to create the Bay Area Wildfire Risk and Fine-scale Vegetation Maps. In Fall 2023, the consulting team developed the wildfire risk and hazard data sets, with input from HEF members and other stakeholders. The data is envisioned as being used for wildfire mitigation project planning and response, as well as for climate change adaptation, restoration planning, watershed and flood management, wildlife habitat management, open space prioritization, disease monitoring and cannabis

²⁹ <https://airburners.com/>. Accessed 10/3/25.

³⁰ <https://ucanr.edu/site/woody-biomass-utilization> Accessed 10/3/25

³¹ Pacific Veg Map hosts the maps <https://pacificvegmap.org/>. Accessed 10/3/25.

mapping. A story map for Alameda and Contra Costa Wildfire Hazard and Risk serves as a central hub for information in the HEF members jurisdictions.³²

MITIGATION

Inspection, compliance and abatement programs

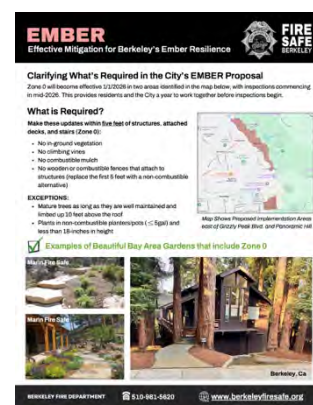
The cities of Berkeley, El Cerrito (including the unincorporated community of Kensington), and Oakland all have active inspection, enforcement and abatement programs for vegetative fuel reduction on private properties. In 2025, Lawrence Berkeley Lab completed annual inspections focused on Wildfire Temporary Refuge Buildings. Inspections of all buildings will resume as they are planning for Zone 0 implementation. The fire departments also comply with AB38 disclosure requirements working with property owners so they can access certificates of compliance or reports when they sell to show compliance with the annual inspections. This year HEF SLC continued to offer a classroom and field training, *Plant Identification for Defensible Space Inspectors*, with the new Berkeley Fire Department intern inspectors.

City of Berkeley. On July 17, 2025 the Berkeley City Council approved the Berkeley Ember Initiative to create Zone 0 ember exclusion zones in Fire Zone 3 and 4 (Grizzly Peak Boulevard and Panoramic Hill areas). The new rules will prohibit plants and other flammable items within 5 feet of homes, effective January 1, 2026. They largely mirror best practices state fire officials have championed for years. Inspections will start May 2026, with the remaining high fire areas in the Berkeley hills will receive education about the effectiveness of Zone 0.

In November of 2020, Berkeley voters approved Measure FF, a parcel tax that provides funding for wildfire hazard mitigation and prevention, in addition to other Berkeley Fire Department (BFD) programs and projects. With the support of Measure FF, funding the BFD formed the Wildland Urban Interface Division (WUI Division) in July of 2021. The WUI Division has a dedicated Staff focused solely on citywide wildfire hazard mitigation and strengthening community wildfire resiliency. This includes significant expansion of the Defensible Space Inspection Program, support for creation of Firewise Communities, the approval of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP),³³ development of an Evacuation Time Study³⁴ and other programs.

The last four years, Berkeley has removed over 300 hazardous trees mostly eucalyptus and Monterey pine from city parks, paths, and street rights-of-way. Many other trees have been trimmed or cut back.

The BFD Defensible Space and Home Hardening Inspection Program inspects all of Berkeley Local Agency Very High Fire Severity Zone. With the passage of new local amendments to the fire code that include a strict zone zero starting in 2026, the inspectors shifted their approach to inspections this last June. Now offering scheduled inspection services, across a much smaller zone, full access inspections have increased from 36% to 65%, and residents now join the inspectors for the inspection 56% of the time, up from 12%



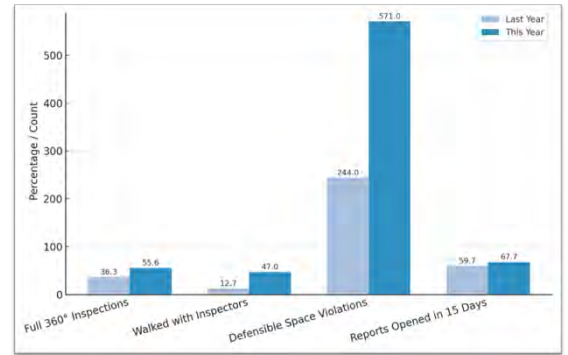
Berkeley City Council approved the Berkeley Ember Initiative to create Zone 0 ember exclusion zones.

³² For Alameda and Contra Costa County information see <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/897739f1db094f86bd2f3d9354fcc3dc> Accessed 10/3/25.

³³ Berkeley Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). <https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/disaster-preparedness/community-wildfire-protection-plan> Accessed 10/3/25.

³⁴ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/8967c3cdffd3403b89505d8e24a76255> Accessed 10/3/25.

last year. The number of violations found has increased substantially as well, likely due to the full access to private property. As of 2025, residents in Berkeley's High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones can grant the Fire Department permission to access the resident's property to conduct defensible space inspections while they are away by signing a Right of Entry (RoE) Agreement through the DSI software. Without a RoE or verbal permission from the homeowner, inspectors are restricted to inspect what they can see from the public street. Since June, 100% of the inspections have either been full access with ROE or full access with the resident walking around. These inspections help identify legally required actions to reduce wildfire risks around homes in the Berkeley Hills.



The Fire Intern Program develops a mission-specific workforce assigned to monitor hazardous vegetative fuel on or near structures, collect data, and identify reduction activities. Paid Fire Interns conduct defensible space and home hardening inspections and assist the department with educating the public on how to prepare their homes, property, and family in the event of a wildfire. BFD uses DSI software³⁵ to generate custom reports for each property owner listing any defensible space violations and home hardening recommendations, including wildfire education resource links. Property owners can clear violations with photo evidence on-line. If the owners do not bring the properties into compliance, Berkeley has a system of abating non-compliant properties and collecting from property owners with property taxes.

The BFD "ChipperDay" program was initiated citywide in March 2023. During 2025, the Berkeley Fire Chipper program has made 990 pick-ups removing 3,212 cubic yards of hazardous vegetation. This makes the 2025 season the most effective on record for this program. In addition, residents in some areas of the Berkeley hills that pay a special tax can participate in the [Vegetation Debris Bin Program](#), a seasonal program for the disposal of large volumes of vegetative debris. For smaller amounts of debris, residents can place vegetation in their compost bin for regular weekly pickup. The City also arranges for purchase of [pre-paid paper plant-debris bags](#) that can supplement the compost bin.



Berkeley offers several other assistance programs for their residents.³⁶ In 2025 BFD expanded the Residents Assistance Program (RAP) after receiving \$1M in grant funding from CAL FIRE. The program provides financial or logistical support to residents who face physical or financial challenges, or those 65 and over, in addressing defensible space violations. The Home Hardening Program offers complimentary gutter-guards, deck screening and metal mesh wildfire screen for vents. In 2025, they continued their Eucalyptus Understory Cleanup Program, offering a free one-time service to clear the understory of eucalyptus trees on private property. To date, this program has treated more than 35 private properties, treating the understory of more than 430 trees and removing more than 511 cubic yards of fire-hazardous vegetative debris.

BFD Firewise communities' outreach and education began in 2022. Presently BFD has 19 recognized Fire Wise Communities, and three communities awaiting approval, and there are 15 additional communities

³⁵ Defensible Space Inspection software by Fire Aside <https://www.fireaside.com/dsi> Accessed 10/3/25.

³⁶ City of Berkeley Fire Department programs: <https://www.berkeleyfiresafe.org/programs>. Accessed 10/3/25.

actively organizing to become Firewise. In addition, BFD has begun holding quarterly FireWise leader meetings.

Berkeley also received a grant in collaboration to fund the Alameda County Coordinator³⁷ for the second year to foster county-wide collaboration and coordination among wildfire mitigation groups, enhancing overall wildfire resilience strategies and community preparedness. In the first year of the grant, BFD commissioned a fire pathways analysis.³⁸ This report is for all jurisdictions in Alameda County and can be used for grant applications, prioritizing projects, and collaborating with community groups dedicated to wildfire safety and neighboring jurisdictions.

Also active in 2025 is the Berkeley [Outdoor Warning System](#) for alerting people of emergency conditions. The outdoor warning system will broadcast siren tones and spoken life safety instructions over any of the 15 sirens located on top of buildings throughout Berkeley. It will be used alongside other [alert and warning tools](#), including [AC Alert](#), [Berkeley's Emergency Map](#), and [Wireless Emergency Alerts](#).³⁹

Finally, the [Fire Safe Berkeley](#)⁴⁰ website (launched in the spring of 2023) continued to add information on all of the BFD Wildfire programs and project progress. A new website is expected late 2025.

City of El Cerrito (also serving the community of Kensington) inspects private properties in El Cerrito (14,000 properties) and Kensington (3,500 properties) within their very high fire hazard severity zones. For those homes and vacant lots that were not in compliance in 2025, notices were sent to the property owner in April requiring compliance. El Cerrito staff also worked with East Bay Sanitary to provide free green-waste disposal bags. Abatement followed for those parcels that continued to have hazardous fuels. In 2025, while all parcels were inspected, the focus was on repeat offenders. Cost associated with abatement is added as a lien to the property through the Contra Costa County Assessor's office. Last year the City spent \$45,000 to bring properties into compliance, and estimate that over \$18 million in property was saved.

From June through August 2025, Kensington Fire Protection District continued to have reimbursement grants available for Kensington residents who removed hazardous vegetation, prioritized by vegetation types and proximity to structures and roadways.⁴¹ Kensington residents also are eligible to apply for Contra Costa County Measure X funds for programs such as chipping days, evacuation route cleanups, Firewise USA community strategic plan projects, home hardening outreach and low-income exterior hazard control program.⁴²

³⁷ <https://www.acc-news.org/> Accessed 10/3/25.

³⁸ Fire Pathways Analysis. <https://www.acc-news.org/xyloplan-alameda-county-analysis> Accessed 10/3/25.

³⁹ Outdoor Warning System: <https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/our-work/capital-projects/outdoor-warning-system-emergency-siren-network>. Alert and warning tools: <https://berkeleyca.gov/safety-health/disaster-preparedness/emergency-notifications>. AC Alert <https://member.everbridge.net/453003085612570/login>. Berkeley Emergency Map <https://protect.genasys.com/search>. Wireless Emergency Alerts. <https://warn.pbs.org/>. Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴⁰ Fire Safe Berkeley website: <https://www.berkeleyfiresafe.org/> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴¹ <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/grant> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴² Contra Costa Measure X program <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/contracosta-county-wildfire-mitigation-program-measure-x> Accessed 10/3/25.

City of Oakland began the season with 23,579 scheduled inspections of homes and vacant parcels in their very high fire hazard severity zone.⁴³ Oakland Fire Department (OFD) suppression had 20,481 initial inspections and the Vegetation Management Unit's (VMU) five full time inspectors completed the remaining 3,097 initial inspections, as well as following up of non-compliant properties. As of September 30th, 91.2% (23,307) of inspections have been marked compliant. All inspections should be wrapped up early November. Oakland continues see success with the ACCELA system (adopted in 2018) that allows inspectors to enter information directly into the digital system and homeowners to set up an account and view the specific issues with their properties. OFD has had great success since implemented in 2020, with proof of abatement provided by property owners before 45 days to avoid additional in-field inspections, as well as a fee, following a non-compliant initial inspection. This has eliminated the need for unnecessary in-field inspections and have assisted in less fees for property owners. They have also received positive feedback from most property owners for allowing them to provide proof of abatement and feel a part of our process.

In 2025, Oakland Fire updated their website with new FAQs videos and resources. Other than the inspection program, OFD began working with Oakland Public Works and Civicorps this year to clear around 100 city parcels and roadsides in Oakland's very high fire severity hazard zone. The co-operation with Public Works has allowed OFD's Vegetation Management Unit to focus more on making sure city lots are abated from hazardous vegetation.

OFD continued another multi-year goat grazing contract (begun in 2024) to ensure all of the city owned open spaces had hazardous vegetation munched away from our favorite furry firefighters. This year the Oakland City Council honored ECI, Inc. (goat herder) for 30 years of grazing services.

Oakland Public Works Tree Services continued an evacuation route 2023-2024 grant from CAL FIRE to remove dead dying and diseased trees within the public right of way along 7.5 miles of Skyline Boulevard between Shepherd Canyon Road and Keller Road in Grass Valley. Skyline Boulevard is a main evacuation route traversing the ridgeline. Trees on this roadway have presented historical challenges with falling during wind events and blocking traffic.

Oakland Public Works Tree Services, Oakland Fire and CAL FIRE Fire Crews also continued their working partnership in 2025 to reduce hazardous fuel loads in Joaquin Miller Park to protect significant infrastructure and popular use areas.

Hazardous fuel reduction projects

In 2024, CAL FIRE began a new "Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Monitoring Program" to comply with PRC 4137 and provide the legislature with an accounting of fire prevention activities when a fire occurs near a grant funded fuel treatment project. The project is an example of the importance of fuels treatment and demonstrated the collaborative effort between the members of the Hills Emergency Forum to strategically connect projects. During 2025, there were not fires that were reported, though several ignitions started near fuel treatment areas that were kept small.

The El Cerrito / Kensington Fire Department (ECFD) continues to manage the fire fuel loads, fire trail and the fuel breaks within their 90 plus acres of city owned Hillside Natural Area and the miles of urban interface with Wildcat and Tilden Regional Parks. This is achieved through multiple partnerships with CAL FIRE, Diablo Fire Safe Council, East Bay Regional Park District and their own community groups.

⁴³ For more information about the Oakland inspection program see: <https://www.oaklandca.gov/services/wildfire-district-inspections>. Accessed 10/3/25.

Their fuel management efforts include: prescribed burns, mechanical methods (masticator and mower) and hand-crews (weed eaters and chainsaw). The focus continues on dead and dying trees. In 2023, El Cerrito received a grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy to develop a comprehensive, updated Hillside Natural Area Fire Resilience and Forest Conservation Management Plan. The Plan and California Environmental Quality Act review were completed and adopted June 3, 2025.

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) continued their forest management hazardous fuel reduction projects, including: the ongoing removal of decadent pines on the eastern shore of San Pablo Reservoir, and the augmentation of fuel breaks in Orinda. Combined management tactics, including herded goats, mechanical mowing, hand labor, and pile burning, were used to reduce fuel loading and enhance native plant populations. Maintenance of established fuel treatment areas continued by EBMUD Rangers, CAL Fire hand-crews, volunteers and contractors to reduce wildfire fuels and enhance native plant species growing throughout the fuel treatment area. At the Lafayette Reservoir Recreation Area, 12 dead Monterey pines were removed to reduce wildfire hazard. EBMUD hand-crews reduced fuels and limbed-up trees on 5 acres along the residential interface. EBMUD continued to remove dead Monterey pines from the 330-acre forest on the east side of San Pablo Reservoir. Fuel management activities included: pile burning operations conducted by EBMUD rangers and CAL Fire hand-crews, and log deck burning with EBMUD Rangers. Smoke conditions were monitored by MOFD's portable Beta-Attenuation Mass Monitor. EBMUD collaborated with MOFD's on implementation of the Tunnel East Bay Fuel Break on the Upper San Leandro Reservoir watershed. The District completed annual maintenance to provide ingress for wildfire suppression on over 150 miles of fire roads on watershed lands in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) In alignment with its 2010 Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan, along with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has demonstrated a steadfast dedication to the management of parklands spanning from Richmond to Castro Valley. In 2024, the EBRPD Fire Department secured \$12 million in funding for tree mitigation efforts that continued during 2025. This achievement was supported by contributions from State Senators Nancy Skinner and Bob Wieckowski, U.S. Senator Alex Padilla, and U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell. Additionally, the Grants Department successfully obtained in 2024 an extra \$2.8 million through a collaborative grant with Calfire, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, U.C. Berkeley, and the Berkeley Fire Department for a fuel break along Grizzly Peak Boulevard that was active in 2025. The District also received \$2 million from the California State Coastal Conservancy to support its fuel management projects during 2025. This funding will aid the development of 130 acres across Tilden Regional Park, Anthony Chabot Regional Park, Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline, and a 34-acre shaded fuel break in Lake Chabot Regional Park. Furthermore, the District plans in 2025 to acquire new vegetation management equipment to enhance the capabilities of its Fuels Crew.

The EBRPD employs various equipment and techniques for these treatments, including mechanical methods, manual labor, grazing, and controlling eucalyptus stump re-sprouting. These measures form part of a comprehensive strategy to mitigate wildfire risks and foster effective resource management. With these resources, the District is well-positioned to significantly advance its efforts in protecting natural landscapes and ensuring community safety.



The collaborative grant along Grizzly Peak Boulevard was active in 2025 as shown from the before and after photos looking south from Four Corners.

Lawrence Berkeley Lab (LBL). LBL continues to maintain their property using goat herds and hand labor to reduce annual fuel loads. This year they continued their use of goats with 400-700 goats on the lab for 4-5 weeks, and with additional resources directed to tree removal. Invasive eucalyptus and diseased/dead trees of other species were removed and chipped in conjunction with low-level limb maintenance and other surface fuel removal. In 2024, LBL staff worked with their Berkeley neighbors on a perimeter survey to better understand how they expose the adjacent residential properties and how the neighboring homes expose the Lab to fire spread. This has led to joint hazardous fuel reduction efforts that will benefit all. During 2025, LBNL removed hazardous trees along the main egress route (Cyclotron Road), as well as other areas that were identified as the highest risk. Work was performed by a tree removal vendor and the Alameda County Crew 8. More than 250 hazardous trees were removed along with ladder fuels and vegetation adjacent to some buildings.

Tunnel East Bay Hills Vegetation Reduction Project. In January 2022, the Moraga Orinda Fire District Board accepted a \$6.38 million CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant for the Tunnel East Bay Hills shaded fuel break, which includes East Bay Municipal Utility District Lands. In 2025, work continued on the fuel break that will extend the North Orinda Shaded Fuel Break, completed in 2019, to the east and south around the communities of Orinda and Moraga. It will connect with the Lafayette Walnut Creek shaded fuel break underway by Contra Costa County Fire Protection District to be completed late 2025.⁴⁴ East Bay Municipal Utility District, John Muir Land Trust, St Mary's College and Town of Moraga are all partners in the Tunnel East Bay Hills project that includes lands these organization manage.

The Oakland Vegetation Management Unit is responsible for inspecting City owned parcels, and managing fuel reduction in open space and parklands. Fuel breaks are treated and maintained through a variety of means within the City's approximate 1,300 acres of parklands and open space primarily in conjunction with their extensive goat grazing program. In the past year using 11 city lot clearing contracts, Oakland completed work on 82 city parcels and 40 miles of roadside, reduced the threat of fire. The hazardous fuel reduction enables firefighters to establish a safe anchor point when responding to wildland fire events. Oakland combined abatement practices of grazing and contractor hand-crews have reduced fuels adjacent to its major neighborhood egress routes. In 2024, City Council approved a two-year goat grazing contract for \$2.6 million to continue the program in 2025. The following locations were grazed resulting in achieving the goal of ground fuels vegetation not exceeding 4 inches in height within 100 feet of established fuel breaks and access fire trails for Type III and Type VI apparatus.

- Sheffield Village
- Joaquin Miller Park
- Shepherd Canyon Park
- Kings Estates
- Grizzly Peak Open Space
- Dunsmuir Heights
- Castle Canyon Open Space
- Knowland Park
- Oak Knoll Naval Redevelopment

Oakland Public Works Agency also continued to work in 2025 on two 2024 grant funded projects removing dead and dying pines and other aged trees in Joaquin Miller Park and along Skyline Drive. CAL FIRE hand-crews assisted with work in Joaquin Miller Park, with biological monitoring provided by Friends of Sausal Creek, and volunteers from Friends of Joaquin Miller.

In 2025, University of California, Berkeley (UCB) continued hazardous fuel reduction funded through a grant from the CAL FIRE Fire Prevention program, as well as planning for the collaborative Grizzly Peak Boulevard project. UCB completed their annual defensible space work around the 25 buildings in the Hill Campus, expanding their areas to include work along Rimway by the Stadium, and Strawberry Dam

⁴⁴ <https://www.cccfpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Con-Fire-Lafayette-Walnut-Creek-Shaded-Fuel-Break-Groundbreaking-Ceremony.pdf> Accessed 10/3/25.

adjacent to the Jordan Fire Trail. The campus also completed follow-up maintenance on the Centennial Drive Evacuation Support project completed in 2020, the “Claremont Canyon Evacuation Support Project” completed in 2022, and “Jordan Fire Trail Evacuation Support Project” completed in 2023.

Goats Reduce Hazardous Fuel Loads.

Goat herds continue to be an effective technique for vegetation management to reduce hazardous fuel loads. City of Oakland, East Bay Municipal Utility District, East Bay Regional Park District, and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory all have ongoing contracts with the various herds that work in the East Bay. Oakland’s goat grazing program cleared 1,200 acres of City lands from April to September. The EBRPD implemented its goat grazing program consisting of 890 acres within Ardenwood, Anthony Chabot Regional Park, Camp Arroyo, Claremont Canyon, Carquinez Strait, Redwood Regional Park, Sobrante Ridge Regional Park, Sibley Regional Park, Kennedy Grove Regional Park, Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, Miller Knox Regional Park, Lake Chabot Regional Park, Cull Canyon Regional Park, Las Trampas Regional Park, Bishop Ranch Regional Park, and Garin Regional Park.

Hand-crews in the Region.

2025 saw active use of local hand-crews. Alameda County Crew 8 worked with East Bay Municipal Utility District staff on the Castro Valley Watershed, learning new skills and removing hazardous vegetation. New agreements have been established for Crew 8 to work on LBL projects, as well as with UC Berkeley adjacent to the Botanical Garden. The EBRPD “Diablo Crew worked the Ten Hills Trails, with a larger acreage planned for 2026. California National Guard hand-crews, CAL FIRE Sunol engine crew and two fire fighter one crews worked with City of Oakland in Joaquin Miller Park. Contra Costa County runs “Crew 12”, and the California Conservation Corps also take on projects on HEF member properties.



Alameda County Crew 8 at work.

This past year EBRPD assisted East Bay Civicorps with their grant through the Watershed Center to help build the capacity with chainsaw training, and working towards firefighting qualifications (such as hose lays, wildland classes, line construction, etc).

Additional Fuels Reduction Coordinator and Fuels Crews and equipment: Supercharging Fire Prevention Efforts in Regional Parklands.

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) is taking decisive action to address the urgent need for fuel vegetation management and tackle the alarming tree die-off in regional parklands. In a groundbreaking move, the EBRPD Board has approved funding for a fifth full-time fuels reduction coordinator, ensuring the continuation of crucial fire prevention initiatives. This year alone, the EBRPD has ramped its efforts by bolstering its staff capacity. It is expanding the fuels crew from 12 to a formidable 16-person team. The growth of the Fuels Management Department has been nothing short of staggering, increasing by a remarkable 240% over the last five years. Equipment such as the automated “green climber” leverage the work of the crews.

With these strategic measures in place, the EBRPD is fully committed to creating safer parklands for everyone. By investing in dedicated personnel and resources, the District makes a resounding statement: fire prevention is a top priority.

Use of Prescribed Fire

Use of prescribed fire continues to expand throughout California. Several HEF members regularly use prescribed fire to manage vegetative fuel loads.

In 2025, East Bay Regional Park District sponsored the CA-219 Wildland Firefighting - Firing Operations training in conjunction with Alameda County and Livermore Pleasanton Fire Departments. The field classes burned approximated 16 acres at Shadow Cliffs. A multi-jurisdiction prescribed fire also was held at Sleepy Hollow School in Orinda with Contra Costa County Fire, Moraga Orinda Fire, East Bay Municipal Utility District and East Bay Regional Park District. These successful prescribed burns provided both hazardous fuel reduction and opportunities for fire fighter training.

East Bay Municipal Utility District, East Bay Regional Park District, and El Cerrito also conducted pile burns to process cut materials from their hazardous vegetation removal projects on San Pablo Reservoir, in Anthony Chabot, Tilden Regional Park, Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, Claremont Canyon, and the Hillside Natural Area in El Cerrito.

Funding

Grant Funding

During 2025, HEF SLC member collaborated on applications to several grant programs including the CAL FIRE California Climate Initiative grant programs in Forest Health and Fire Protection. In 2024, East Bay Regional Park District, in collaboration with City of Berkeley, East Bay Municipal Utility District and University of California Berkeley was awarded \$2.8M for the Grizzly Peak Strategic Fuel Break Collaboration. A story map <https://www.berkeleyfiresafe.org/grizzly-peak> provide project updates on the work throughout 2025.

The CAL FIRE Fire Prevention grant program continues to be very competitive. The 2025-2026 applications were due August 8, 2025, and will award both California Climate Initiative and Prop 4 funding. There was no solicitation in 2024 for award in 2025. In 2024, two HEF members received funding for work during 2025.⁴⁵ City of Berkeley received \$1.007M to implement the “Berkeley Hills Defensible Space Resident Assistance Program.” City of Oakland received \$1M for tree pruning and removal in the public right-of-way along evacuation routes in their “Shepherd Canyon to Grass Valley Evacuation Route” project. Alameda County Fire Department (\$313,536) and Contra Costa County Resource Conservation District (\$299,957) also received funds.

UC Berkeley continued their \$2.9 wildfire mitigation program funded by a CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention grant. In 2025, with the planning and approvals complete, a request for proposal was issued, contract awarded, and work begun. The grant is to be completed by spring 2026.

Moraga Orinda Fire District continued progress on the \$6.38M grant funded project to develop the Tunnel-East Bay Hills Fuel Break awarded in 2021; including work on East Bay Municipal Utility District Lands.

In December 2021, City of Oakland Public Works Department received \$824K for the Skyline Boulevard Evacuation Route project to remove approximately 250 dead and dying or otherwise hazardous trees. In August 2024, the City received an additional \$1M in grant funds to expand work

⁴⁵ Wildfire Prevention Grants <https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/wildfire-prevention-grants> Accessed 10/3/25.

along arterial roads that branch off of Skyline Boulevard, while also extending the project to include Shepherd Canyon Road, Joaquin Miller Road, and out to Grass Valley Road in the East Oakland hills⁴⁶

East Bay Regional Park District continues progress with their FEMA and California Climate Initiative grants from the California Natural Resource Agency through the State Coastal Conservancy for forest health, demonstration projects, and community outreach. In 2024, the department successfully secured a total of \$13.8 million in funding from various sources, which significantly bolstered their efforts in fuels management and wildfire prevention. The funding was sourced as follows: \$4.5 million from CA State Direct Funding, \$3.2 million from the Fire Department General Fund, \$2 million from the California State Coastal Conservancy, and another \$2 million through a FEMA Grant specifically targeted for the Anthony Chabot area. Additionally, they received \$1.3 million from a CALFIRE Grant aimed at the Grizzly Peak Strategic Fuel-Break, \$700,000 from District Measure FF, and a \$100,000 grant from Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Cal Recycle to remove dead pines near South Park Drive, Tilden. The District also received \$100,000 grant in late 2024 through the California Firesafe Council for goat grazing in Wildcat Canyon-Alvarado area, as well as re-entry eucalyptus thinning. The District will match this grant 1:1 as work is completed in late 2025. In 2025, the department was awarded two new FEMA grants. The FEMA HMGP Grant for \$3.2 million for initial treatment work in select areas of Tilden and Claremont Canyon Regional Parks, and a FEMA PDM grant of \$1.4 million to treat additional areas in Anthony Chabot Regional Park.

Looking to the future, the East Bay Regional Park District has initiated outstanding grant applications totaling \$7.5 million, which, if secured, will further advance their strategic objectives in ecological resource management and wildfire mitigation. Through these financial resources and strategic partnerships, the East Bay Regional Park District continues to strengthen its capacity to protect communities and natural resources from the devastating impacts of wildfires.

HEF SLC members tracked the progress and successful voter approval on November 5, 2024 of Prop 4 (*Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024*). They look forward to the additional funding and new funders this \$10 Billion bond will add to wildfire grant mitigation programs in the coming years.

Increased Internal Funding.

During 2022-25, a number of HEF member agencies dedicated internal funding increases and new programs related to wildfire hazard reduction. East Bay Regional Park District provided funding for the its project utilizing the carbonizer to develop biochar. The used the services of Earth Foundries⁴⁷ who received 2 grants to increase the use of mobile pyrolysis with Tigercat Carbonizer and the develop the Bay Area biochar market.

Public Supported Funding – bonds and parcel taxes

In November 2020, Berkeley residents voted for Measure FF to create a parcel tax generating \$12.7 million for emergency response and preparedness. In 2025, the funds continue to be used for an enhanced vegetation management inspection program, implementation of the approved Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the City's Safe Passages program focused on evacuation, and risk

⁴⁶ <https://www.kron4.com/wildfires/oakland-hills-wildfire-evacuation-routes-get-1-million-boost/> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴⁷ Earth Foundries, Inc. announced two 2022 CAL FIRE Workforce and Business development awards for healthy resilient forests. <https://www.earthfoundriesinc.com/news/>. Updates <https://www.earthfoundriesinc.com/biochar-market-development/> Accessed 10/3/25.

reduction in collaboration with adjacent agencies. Funding also will be used for emergency response and 911 upgrades.

In November 2024, Oakland residents voted for a similar parcel tax Measure MM. This parcel tax will generate \$2.67 million for wildfire prevention in Oakland's wildfire prevention zone for 20 years. Additional ballot measures that included increased funding for wildfire related services were approved by the residents of Contra Costa County (Measure X), City of Berkeley (Measure FF), City of El Cerrito (Measure H), and City of Orinda (Measure R).

Legislation and policy of interest.

HEF SLC members received regular updates on 48 pieces of legislation related to wildfire during 2025, with 13 were sent to the governor, and enrolled into law by the end of the legislative year. Updates included legislation on: local grant assistance, bond measures; prescribed fire; home hardening and defensible space; biomass disposal; planning and development; environmental review and exemptions; and insurance and tax credits;

The Governor's Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force continues to implement their comprehensive strategy from the "California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan."⁴⁸ The plan identifies four goals that closely tie with the Governor's budget. Highlights of the FY 2025/26 *Wildfire and Forest Resilience* expenditure plan includes: \$82.2 Million for forest health program, \$79.5 million for Regional project in forms of block grants, \$59.1 million for fire prevention grants, \$33.4 million for resilient state-owned lands program, \$22.4 to State Conservancies watershed improvement and wildfire resilience and \$9.1 million for the Wildfire Mitigation Program. Several of the goals to reduce wildfire risk for vulnerable communities, improve the health of forests and wildlands and accelerate action to combat climate change also closely align with HEF member activities:

- Increase pace and scale of forest health projects (building a network of fuel breaks around vulnerable communities).
- Strengthen protection of communities (expanding home hardening, defensible space and preparedness planning to create wildfire adapted communities).
- Manage forests to achieve the state's economic and environmental goals.
- Drive innovation and measure progress.

Regional Forestry and Fire Capacity Program (RFFC) grants support regional leadership to build local capacity and fund projects that create fire-adapted communities and landscapes by providing ecosystem health, community wildfire preparedness, and fire resilience. The grants funded with these Guidelines utilize the \$72 million appropriated to the Department of Conservation for the RFFC Program.⁴⁹ Grant funds are managed by the State Coastal Commission (SCC) in our region. SCC received \$20.28M of the funding to pass on to subgrantees, such as EBRPD.

The Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division⁵⁰ was formed in 2022 by the Office of

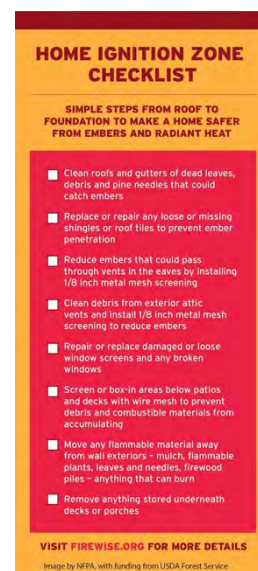
⁴⁸ California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan adopted January 2021 outlined 99 key actions. See <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/> for progress. Expenditure plan for 2025-26 <https://ebudget.ca.gov/2025-26/pdf/BudgetSummary/ClimateChangeandEnvironment.pdf> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁴⁹ 2025 Regional Forest & Fire Capacity Program <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/grant-programs/Pages/Regional-Forest-and-Fire-Capacity-Program.aspx> . Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵⁰ Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/>. See <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/wildfire-public-education> for webinars. Accessed 10/3/25

the State Fire Marshal in response to AB9 (Wood, 2021). The programs within the division allow CAL FIRE to continue to build local and regional capacity, as well as developing, prioritizing, and implementing strategies and projects that create wildfire prepared communities. The division is responsible for mapping fire hazard severity zones, providing land use planning assistance to local governments (including Safety Elements of General Plan, subdivision review for compliance with AB2911 (Friedman, 2018) and NFPA Firewise USA recognition), development of the Strategic Fire Plan for the State, wildfire preparedness with fuel reduction, fire prevention and public education year-round, building construction methods and codes, wildfire prevention grants, incident data and statistics and utility wildfire mitigation. Updated high fire hazard severity zone maps were effective April 1, 2024 for the SRA, and in 2025 for the LRA maps.

Safer from Wildfire. State Insurance Commissioner Lara continues increased focus on availability and affordability of residential and business insurance. A wildfire mitigation partnership of state agencies developed the “Safer from Wildfire⁵¹” program, a common insurance framework of mitigation actions for existing homes and businesses. The 2024 state law (CCR) § 2644.9, recognized and rewarded wildfire safety and mitigation efforts made by homeowners and businesses. The regulation is the first in the nation requiring insurance companies to provide discounts to consumers under the Safer from Wildfires framework. Every action under Safer from Wildfires will qualify homeowners for an insurance discount.⁵²



Zone 0. AB3074 (Friedman, 2020) updated the requirements of defensible space with the introduction of an ember resistant zone located zero to five feet from structures, also called “Zone 0” or the “home ignition zone.” Local ordinances may require additional distance than mandated by State law.⁵³ Executive Order N-18-25, signed February 6, 2025, included requirements to accelerate the work of the Board of Forestry to adopt regulations by December 31, 2025. A Draft Rule was circulated in June 2025. As of September 2025, it appears the Board of Forestry is on track to finalize guidance related to these regulations. HEF members support the science of “Zone 0,” to reduce structure ignitions. They have been preparing their residents during their annual inspections for future requirements.

PREPAREDNESS

Outreach and education

Red Flag Watches and Warnings

A Red Flag Warning means that critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now...or will shortly. A combination of strong winds...low relative humidity...and warm temperatures can contribute to extreme fire behavior. National Weather Service.

⁵¹ Safer from Wildfires <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/200-wrr/Safer-from-Wildfires.cfm> and <https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/105-type/95-guides/03-res/Insurers-Currently-Offering-Discounts.cfm> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵² As of October 14, 2022 insurers have to reflect and take into account specified mitigation factors in their rating plans for the purpose of segmenting rates, creating a risk differential or surcharging a premium due to wildfire risk. https://legaldocs.insurance.ca.gov/CyberDOCS/Libraries/DOCS_WEB/Common/frameset.asp?initpage=%2FCyberDOCS%2FLibraries%2FDOCS_WEB%2FCommon%2Fviewdocact.asp&initarg=lib=DOCS_WEB%26doc=350963%26rendition=html Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵³ Text of AB3074 (Friedman, 2020) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB3074. Board of Forestry rulemaking hearings <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/defensible-space-zones-0-1-and-2>. Accessed 10/3/25

The National Weather Service red flag announcements trigger HEF member fire agencies to add staffing, increase fire patrols, and pre-position equipment to enhance response effectiveness for potential fires. When weather conditions increase the risk of ignitions and uncontrolled wildfire, East Bay Regional Park District and East Bay Municipal Utility District both close trails and recreation areas, and increase park and watershed patrols to reduce the chance of ignitions. Oakland also closes their popular Joaquin Miller Park and restrict barbecues in any city park during red flag warnings. The most recent addition to the region's red flag protocols was the restriction of parking along Grizzly Peak Boulevard from 9PM to 6AM during these periods of critical fire weather. In 2024, El Cerrito launched a Red Flag Parking Pilot on several key streets. Expanded in 2025, "No parking on Red Flag Days" are posted on one side of designated streets from June through November. A similar, but customized effort is in the works with the Kensington Fire Protection District. They created 30 red flag banners to place in high traffic or visible areas.

The Wildfire Forecast & Threat Intelligence Integration Center (WFTIIC) serves as California's integrated central organizing hub for wildfire forecasting, weather information, threat intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination.⁵⁴ WFTIIC also coordinates wildfire threat intelligence and data sharing among federal, state, local agencies, tribal governments, utilities, other service providers, academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations.

The East Bay Regional Park District owns and maintains four Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) within Alameda and Contra Costa counties. RAWS stations from other agencies, including ones maintained by the Oakland Fire Department, CAL FIRE, and others, form a network providing essential real-time readings to aid in predicting high fire danger in the region. EBRPD and other agencies use this information to determine daily fire danger and impose restrictions such as restricting campfires, cooking fires, and equipment used in the wildland. EBRPD has updated the fuel models used in calculating fire danger. Adopting these newer fuel models will provide more accurate predictions and incorporate the most recent weather data to ensure they can keep the parks safe for their visitors, employees, and neighbors. Spot forecasts allow the local fire departments to request a forecast specifically for the conditions in their locale.

During high fire danger conditions, PG&E may pre-emptively turn off power to threatened areas⁵⁵. Public safety power shutoffs create a double threat - a potentially multi-day power outage combined with high fire risk. In a fire-prone area such as the Berkeley hills, it is critical to prepare for these events. Shutoffs may last as long as six days. Once the fire danger has passed, PG&E must inspect all power lines and electrical infrastructure before restoring power. If power goes out during a PSPS event, everyone needs to be prepared for an extended outage.

Firewise Communities

The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) program, Firewise USA, has provided a framework for communities to develop and implement local solutions for wildfire preparedness. Berkeley, El Cerrito, Kensington and Oakland all have recognized Firewise USA neighborhoods⁵⁶. In 2025, Firewise neighborhoods were formed in:

- Berkeley - North Berkeley Hills, San Diego-Indian Rock, joining 11 others formed in previous years,
- El Cerrito/ Kensington – 700 Coventry, Arcove Island, Arlmont, Beloit, Blakemont, Colgate-

⁵⁴ <https://wftiic-calema.hub.arcgis.com/> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵⁵ https://www.pge.com/en_US/residential/outages/public-safety-power-shutoff/psps-updates-and-alerts.page Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵⁶ <https://nfpa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Viewer/index.html?appid=c4a788340df748f18d98d8363145bb67> Accessed 10/3/25.

Columbia, College District, Edgemoor, Eldridge, Highland Hilltop, Kingston, Purdue, Rincon, Shakespeare Cluster (along Avon Rd), Sunset, Tilden Firewise (Parkside, Plateau & Canon Drive) and Westminster joining three others from 2023 and 2024 for a total of 20.

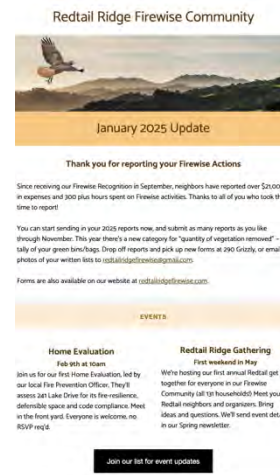
- Oakland - Portal Neighbors, Valley View, Crane Way, Grand View, LaMasNa Plus, Crowing Ridge HOA and Sayre/Saroni, joining six others from 2022, 2023 and 2024. An additional neighborhood group is under review.

Several other neighborhoods are in the pipeline for recognition as Firewise USA.

New public information materials

Public interest in wildfire prevention increased in January 2025 with the Los Angeles 2025. Member agencies continued to emphasize the critical role residents have in wildfire prevention. Public information materials related to wildfire preparation, public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events, defensible space, home hardening and evacuation are distributed by HEF members using websites, social media, remote and in-person presentations, including:

- The Berkeley Community Fire Safety Town Hall presentation⁵⁷ on April 15, 2025 focused on proposed changes to the city's fire code, particularly focusing on vegetation removal near homes in high-risk wildfire areas. Berkeley also developed a new webinar released Sept 11th about the Resident Assistance Program.⁵⁸
- Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara and Assemblymember Dawn Addis held a virtual town hall on August 13, 2025 for a conversation for the latest updates on the changing insurance market and how California is addressing the homeowner insurance crisis.⁵⁹
- On February 18, 2025 Kensington sponsored a community presentation on funding opportunities aimed at reducing wildfire risks in Kensington. A panel of representatives from the California Fire Safe Council, Diablo Firesafe Council, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Wildcat Firewise and the Kensington Fire Protection Districts provided insights into available funding resources.
- On May 3, 2025 Kensington held a Community Wildfire Preparedness Day to focus on home hardening, Firewise Communities alerts and warnings, and community participation.⁶⁰ They also promoted a program on evacuation readiness and a community block party on October 11th continued their outreach through Firewise Communities and neighborhood emergency preparedness block parties, as well as using their wildfire preparedness workbook as a starting point for emergency planning.⁶¹ Neighborhood groups are encouraged to develop contact lists as well as register for CWS (Contra Costa County's Community Warning System). Topics and issues discussed varied by group but included: red flag warnings and related parking changes, vegetation removal, home hardening, undergrounding powerlines, home insurance cancellations, evacuation preparedness and pursuing Firewise Community recognition. Some groups have



⁵⁷ Berkeley Town Hall presentation April 15, 2025. [San Francisco Chronicle](#) and [Berkeleyside](#) Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵⁸ Resident Assistance Program <https://berkeleyfiresafe.org/programs> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁵⁹ <https://a30.asmdc.org/video/20250813-virtual-insurance-town-hall> Accessed 10/3/25

⁶⁰ Community Wildfire Preparedness Day. The Fire Plug Spring Edition <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/files/a746e937c/FINAL+2025.04++Spring+The+Fire+Plug.pdf> . Accessed 10/3/25.

⁶¹ Kensington Neighborhood Emergency Preparedness Block Party. <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/neighborhood-emergency-preparedness-block-party> and 2022 Kensington Wildfire Preparedness workbook <https://www.kensingtonfire.org/wildfire-preparedness-workbook>. Accessed 10/3.

integrated adjacent Berkeley or El Cerrito residents, such as the Wildcat Firewise neighborhood.

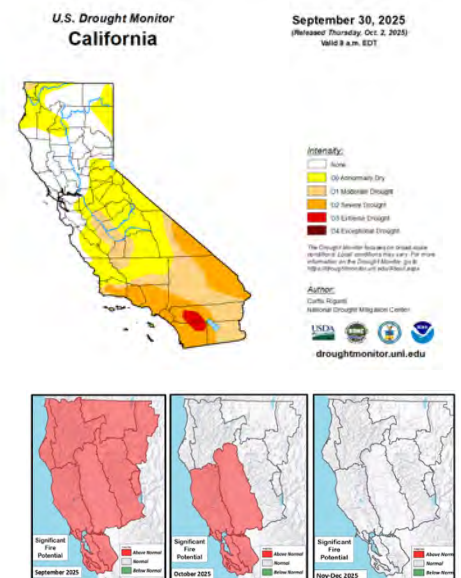
- UC ANR new home hardening information, including insights from the January 2025 Los Angeles fires, and low cost actions to harden homes.⁶²

Participation in regional coordination and conference. In 2025, the East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments continued to meet. Made up of elected officials from nine member agencies, including HEF members Berkeley, Oakland and El Cerrito. This group grew from a grass roots group's development in 2023 of a draft memorandum of understanding promoting regional wildfire prevention and vegetation management.⁶³ Four additional HEF member agencies are active as regional advisors in exploring options to improve regional coordination of wildfire prevention. Current priorities are home hardening and vegetation management.

RESPONSE

2025 response activity

Throughout the year, HEF SLC members received regular updates on drought conditions and significant fire potential⁶⁴ to be able to respond to the heightened potential for wildfires. 2025 continued the switch made during 2023 from the extreme drought of 2022 to "none." Most of the year experienced "normal significant fire potential," with a caution of increased initial attack expected during dry breezy weather. In October, the Predictive Services North Ops Monthly Outlook predicted "normal" potential for significant fire potential in the East Bay, in October 2025 through January 2026. The Fire Size Potential Forecast from the Wildfire Forecast and Threat Intelligence Integration Center (WFTIIC) provided additional information on a weekly basis.⁶⁵



The area managed by HEF members was benign in terms of wildfire, compared to the rest of the state. As of October 6, 2025, the largest fire in Alameda and Contra Costa counties was the 358 acres *Somersville Fire*, near Somersville Road and James Donion Blvd, 3 miles southeast of Pittsburg, on June 18, 2025.

Local fires were kept small due to nearby hazardous fuel reduction projects, and included:

- A vehicle fire on Redwood Road near Skyline Blvd, Oakland in January 2025. This was the sixth intentional fire in eight months. It burned from the roadside into an adjacent to treated area and was kept small.
- A 0.1-acre fire on Sunday 4/6/2025 burned into EBRPD treatment area
- A 10-acre fire at Lake Chabot by EBRPD public safety building over 4th July weekend.

⁶² <https://www.youtube.com/?@ucanrfirenetwork> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TQDP3v2eil> Accessed 10/3/25.

⁶³ East Bay Wildfire Coalition of Governments (formerly East Bay Hills Wildfire Prevention and Vegetation Management and Joint Powers Agency) <https://eastbaywildfire.org/> Accessed 10/3/25

⁶⁴ North Ops Fire Forecast: https://gacc.nifc.gov/oncc/predictive/outlooks/Outlook_NOps.pdf Accessed 8/21/25.

US Drought Monitor: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>. Accessed 10/4/25.

⁶⁵ Wildfire Forecast and Threat Intelligence Integration Center (WFTIIC) <https://hub.wftiic.ca.gov/> Accessed 10/4/25.

- A less than 1-acre fire at crest the of dam at San Pablo Reservoir over the 4th of July weekend.
- Also over the 4th of July weekend were 2 fires on UCB lands at Clark Kerr Campus and Vista Parking lot. Both were kept small at less than one-quarter acre.

In addition, 12 wildfires of over 5 acres were recorded in the region, primarily in the eastern portions of the two counties.⁶⁶

- *Calaveras Fire*. Calaveras Road and Indian Creek Road, Sunol. 16 acres. August 5, 2025.
- *Eden Fire*, Arthur H. Breed Highway (I-580), northeast of Fairview. 18 acres. August 3, 2025.
- *Fairmont Fire*, Lake Chabot Road, Castro Valley. 6.6 acres. July 3, 2025.
- *Grant Fire*. Highway I-580, southeast of Altamont. 13 acres. August 29, 2025.
- *Green Fire*, I-580 West of Grant Line Rd Altamont Pass. 75 acres. June 22, 2025.
- *Kirker Fire*, Kirker Pass Road & Nortonville Road, Pittsburg. 14 acres. July 10, 2025.
- *Midway Fire*, Patterson Pass Road and Midway Road, Altamont. 261 acres. May 22, 2025.
- *Mission Fire*. Mission Road and Andrade Road, near Sunol. 64 acres. June 16, 2025.
- *Morgan Fire*, north of I-580. 12 acres. July 5, 2025.
- *Rodeo Fire*, Southeast of Claves Court and Stirling Drive, Rodeo. 65 acres, June 23, 2025.
- *Victoria Fire*, Victoria Land and Tesla Road Altamont. 15 acres. July 8, 2025.
- *Walnut Fire*, Walnut Boulevard near Camino Diablo, Brentwood. 51.2 acres. May 18, 2025.

⁶⁶ CAL FIRE incidents in Alameda and Contra Costa County, map. <https://www.fire.ca.gov/incidents/2025>
Accessed 10/4/25.



ANNUAL ROTATION OF HEF CHAIR

2026	East Bay Regional Park District
2027	City of Oakland
2028	University of California, Berkeley
2029	City of Berkeley
2030	Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
2031	City of El Cerrito
2032	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)
2033	East Bay Municipal Utility District