



Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association

Protecting and preserving the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.

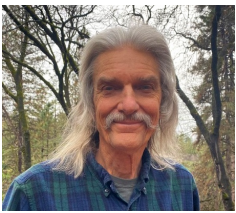
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(The Fire Safe Mitigation Worksheet is included at the end.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Will Hart



A Life Among the Trees

Spending my time these days splitting next winter's

firewood, my mind has drifted to thinking about trees. I guess splitting rounds all day will do that to you. But, we all love trees. They are one of the reasons why we live here. We breathe life into them as much as they breathe life into us. They have obvious great utility from firewood to house building to fine furniture. I've been lucky enough to live in three of the most beautiful places on earth, each with their own unique forest. I marked each by building a dining table from the local wood.

The Appalachians Mountains are rounded and smoothed by time. Once towering taller than the Himalayas, they tested the effect of gravity on rock. Like old people, what they lack in stature they make up for in wisdom. Mostly deciduous with a smattering of conifers, their forest is the most diverse in the world,

holding more species than any other, plentiful in oaks, hickory, ash, cherry, elm, walnut, and many more. The wood was as hard as the people, who didn't necessarily age but were whittled down by life. My table was a slab of walnut that had been used for target practice when it was small, and housed the lead bullets that polished to silver and ran dark streaks into the already dark beautiful grain.

The wood in the tropics was mostly soft with large fronds that floated in the silky trade winds. Palms of many varieties, but also with some hardwoods in the rain forest like monkey-no-climb or kapok with large spikes growing on the trunk. My table was of mahogany that had been recovered from a friends yard after Hurricane Hugo blew it down and took his house with it.

But now trees have a new importance and meaning: friend, woodwork, and hazard. We live life among the trees like living among friends, and it's hard to consider their potential danger. Last year I had to cut a large oak growing out of the center of our deck that made sitting pleasant in the summer heat. I am conflicted about cutting down a big beautiful Cedar that shades our house. I agonize everyday as I assess the consequences



Neighborhood Meetings

ALL ARE WELCOME!

June 2, Aug. 4, Oct. 6, Dec. 1

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Madelyn Helling Library

Community Room

of leaving it there. I love that tree, but it's too close to the house and poses an imminent danger. Defensible Space is a necessity that we all have to live with.

PG&E has also turned my mind to trees. I have met with several contractors working for PG&E in an effort to get them to clean up after they cut along our roads. After meeting with many residents who were similarly affected by PG&E there seems to be some movement towards a cleanup. They are working our road currently. It's taken months, but they are picking up logs. Hopefully this will not be a one-off, but the beginning of a new involvement by PG&E. As a community we have to insist that they pick up what they cut along our roads. If we stand together, it will work towards PG&E changing their policy. We cannot accept them leaving a fire hazard along our evacuation routes. Our community is working to clean up our roads and they have to be a part of that action. When they contact you tell them they can only cut what they haul away. I'll keep working to get this done.

My current table is a recovered redwood burl.

All the best, Will



Neighborhood Meetings



Topics discussed at the February and April meetings include:

- The Hwy 49 Scenic Corridor Committee, co-chaired by Eileen Jorgenson and Stan Hooper, with members from in and out of our immediate neighborhood, will be communicating with City and County officials to make sure that landscaping along the corridor conforms to the guidelines of the ordinance in place.
- Race Communications and Oasis Broadband are both active and are or will be offering services in our area. As a favor to Oasis, a survey was taken in our neighborhood to find out how many would be interested in service from Oasis, and 52 residents responded yes. There have been some favorable reports from people who have chosen Oasis. Meanwhile, Race has been installing utility boxes and cables along the roads within the 10 foot wide utility easement strip.
- Current membership numbers are reported at each meeting. At the date of the April meeting, GCHNA had 258 current members. Some of them will be up for renewal in April, May and June.

For more information about GCHNA meetings, the minutes are posted on our website.



A Firewise Presentation on Fuels Management Methods

This event on May 1 at the Madelyn Helling Library was co-hosted with other local Firewise Communities, and Jo Ann Fites-Kaufman was the speaker. GCHNA was well represented at the talk!

Ms. Fites-Kaufman is a Firewise Community leader, retired UDFS Fire Scientist, and Chair of the new Fire Safe Nevada County Coalition. She is well educated on fire behavior.



She spoke about fire behavior and the various methods available to deal with hazardous vegetation. Cut-and-pile, masticate, chip or burn, pile burn or broadcast. She described biochar and its uses. The important takeaway from her presentation is to think about fuels management as a “remove it” or “rearrange it” strategy. Removing it from your property includes: green waste, grazing and burning. Rearranging is manual treatment left onsite and mechanized treatment. For the best fire safety, removing it is ideal.

GCHNA’s Firewise Committee is interested in educating people about the specifics of prescribed broadcast burning, which is effective in treating surface fuels. Ms. Fites-Kaufman reviewed the process that includes the permitting, establishing control lines, neighbors helping neighbors watch the fire, and mopping up. It’s another tool to add to our options, and there will be more information about trainings/workshops in the next newsletter.



Will Hart welcoming everyone to the presentation.

GCHNA thanks Ms. Fites-Kaufman for sharing her expertise with the community!

If you missed it, the presentation will be posted soon on the The Fire Safe Nevada County Coalition’s website. (www.firesafenccoalition.org)

TREASURER’S REPORT *by Janet Johnson*

Year End 2024 and approved 2025 Budget		
GREATER CEMENT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION		
	2024 ACTUAL	2025 Budget
REVENUES:		
Member Dues	\$ 7,710.00	\$ 7,290.00
Total Revenue	\$ 7,710.00	\$ 7,290.00
EXPENSES:		
Annual Picnic and/or Annual Meeting	\$ 2,173.03	\$ 2,500.00
Gifts, Donations (Chirp - \$100, Other - \$100)	\$ 100.00	\$ 200.00
Spring or Other Firesafe Educational Event	\$ 65.06	\$ 1,000.00
Newsletters	\$ 1,018.29	\$ 1,100.00
Liability Insurance	\$ -	\$ -
Meeting Room Rental	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00
Membership dues (Bear River Land Trust - \$120, Yuba Net - \$240)	\$ 360.00	\$ 360.00
Website, Software (Website - \$194.30; Little Green Light -\$486.00)	\$ 670.40	\$ 675.00
Misc: USPS Box, Printing, Supplies, Paypal Fees, etc.	\$ 348.50	\$ 350.00
Total Expenses	\$ 4,835.28	\$ 6,335.00
REVENUES LESS EXPENSES:	\$ 2,874.72	\$ 955.00
CASH FLOW AND BANK RECONCILIATION:		
Beginning Bank Balance, 12/31/24		\$ 8,150.42
2025 Revenues less Expenses Budget		\$ 955.00
12/31/25 Projected Balance		\$ 9,105.42

Vegetation Management for Defensible Space

In case you missed it, Pascale at YubaNet updated a great article on methods to clear your property, titled “Getting Ready for Peak Fire Season – Spring Cleaning” (<https://shorturl.at/oVG8t>)

It reviews and discusses pros and cons of each method in detail:

- Manual treatment – hand saws, loppers, chainsaws etc.
- Mechanized treatment – masticators, chippers
- Chemical treatment – herbicides
- Grazing – goats, sheep and cows
- Prescribed fire – piles or broadcast burns

Free Green Waste Mondays

Remember the upcoming free Green Waste Mondays at the McCourtney Station: May 12, May 19, and May 26 from 9 am to 3 pm.



*Committee Members (right to left):
Karen Wcislo, Will Hart, Ellen Hagan, Joy Elson.
Not pictured,
Cheryl Haines, Spencer Le Gate, and Mark Ball*

PGE Tree Work: Logs and Material Left Behind

Because of concern from property owners about the logs left by Mountain Enterprise after they do tree work for PGE, Will Hart met with 10 property owners to view the problems. He then met with OMS Field Services, a new subcontractor for PGE responsible for wood removal.

Approaching it from a community perspective has begun to pay off! Daisy Blue Mine Road has had logs removed already, and other roads are in line for clearing work.

Bio Char Kiln Workshops

Nevada City is having two Bio Char Kiln workshops: on May 4th it was at Hirschman’s Pond, and on May 17th it will be at the Old Airport from 9 am to 3 pm. Come learn what it is all about with a hands-on demonstration by the Bio Char Coalition. No registration is needed.

Hirschman’s Pond and the Old Airport - both Nevada City Owned Properties

Nevada City has been clearing undergrowth on the Old Airport property 100 feet from roadways. It has also masticated the entire perimeter of the property to enable fire trucks to access the property in case of a fire.

Hirschman’s Pond has seen some cutting of dead trees. No further mastication work will be done this season. Both properties are addressed in the city’s Community Wildfire Prevention Plan, so are on their radar for future fire mitigation work.

Free Services provided by OES to Local Firewise Communities *by Joy Elson*

This spring, the Office of Emergency Services (OES) offered free green waste dumpsters to qualifying Firewise Communities, and our Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood is one of them!

With the help of residents responding to surveys to assess the need, Joy Elson has coordinated with Steve Renz, Defensible Space Inspector with OES, for green waste dumpsters to be placed in our neighborhood over two upcoming weekends. Details have been provided via email to the neighbors who responded to the surveys.

In addition, OES implemented a free chipping program, and Joy worked with Steve to coordinate this service for 25 properties. Feedback on the chipping crew has been all very complimentary!

A huge thanks goes to Steve Renz

for all of his efforts arranging for the green waster dumpsters, and especially for his dedication, flexibility and attention to detail to get SO many piles in our neighborhood chipped, thereby removing the fire danger they pose. One property had 18 large piles!



Fire Safe Mitigation Forms

Your Fire Safe Mitigation data will be due by October 31. It is needed annually so that we can qualify for the renewal of our Firewise Community Certificate. **Remember to keep track** of the time and money you spend making your home more fire safe (defensible space, home hardening, green waste bins, etc.) so that you will be ready to fill out the online form when it is posted.

The Mitigation Form Worksheet is included at the end of this newsletter.



New Non-Profit to Help Firewise Communities
by Karen Wcislo

The **Fire Safe Nevada County Coalition (FSNCC)** launched this month, led by experienced Firewise Community leaders and fire experts.

Their Mission Statement:

The Fire Safe Nevada County Coalition is a local, non-profit volunteer-driven organization dedicated to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire in Nevada County. We support and empower residents, visitors, communities – especially Firewise Communities – through mentoring, sharing best practices, fire safety projects, and education. Through collaboration, we strive to create a more resilient landscape and community.

Read their first newsletter:

<https://shorturl.at/nLaNO>

Visit their new website:

fireasafenccoalition.org.

They have already begun mentoring by offering two 'How to Pile Burn' workshops and an upcoming workshop for Firewise Committee leads to train them how to write an action plan and the five-year risk assessment. This is very exciting!



Private, Dead-End Roads Must Be Safe For Firefighters and Equipment

By Ellen Hagan

Many of us live on private, dead-end roads. In the event of a large-scale wildland fire, our fire departments may not commit crews down roadways they deem unsafe and where they can't readily turn around to get out in a hurry.

Here's what firefighters need us to do to help them do the job we ask of them. Obviously, a paved road is best, but a graded, graveled unpaved road is better than one that is not. Hazardous vegetation should be cleared a minimum of 10' on either side of the road. Vertical clearance for all vegetation is a minimum of 15' from the driving surface. Don't allow tree limbs to create a canopy across the road.

If your road is one-lane, turnouts are needed every 400'. They should be a minimum of 12' wide and 30' long. There should be a direct line of sight from one to the next.

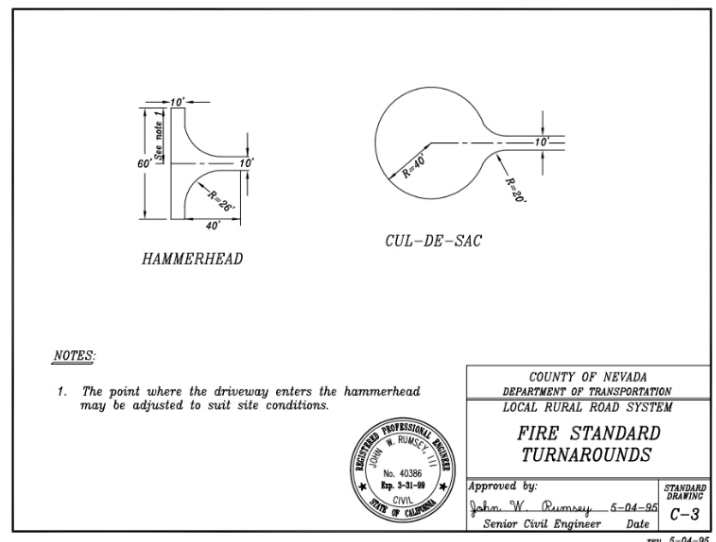
Fire trucks and water tenders are large and heavy, and need a wide roadway surface.

Often times it isn't just one truck that responds, but multiple fire apparatus. They need space and turnarounds are critical. For a cul de sac, the terminus bulb should have at least a 40' radius. For a Hammerhead T, the long axis should be a minimum of 60' and the leg should be a minimum of 40'.

So, let's do our part to help our firefighters do their job. Now is the perfect time to reach out to your neighbors and make them aware. Meet, walk the road together and assess its safety. Take particular note of the "look" of the road where it meets Cement Hill Road or Hwy 49. It should look safe and "inviting." Then make a plan and organize to get the work done. There are resources to help.

- Your GCHNA Road Rep can help you develop compliance plans.
- Nevada County offers Defensible Space Inspections that can be requested from the ReadyNevadaCounty website under Defensible Space.
- CalFire has some great information about defensible space.
- The Nevada County Consolidated Fire District website at www.nccfire.com is a useful resource.

Fire season is here! The safety of your road might make the difference in whether your home survives a wildfire or not. Act now.



Evacuation Planning Tip



*This information is part of
Nevada County's Preparedness Tool Kit
(<https://rb.gy/h3akft>)*

Find Your Five and Share Your Plan

*Source: Nevada County website
(<https://rb.gy/kbagi2>)*

Increase your preparedness by sharing your evacuation plan with five trusted emergency allies.

The more connected we are, the more likely we are to get accurate information in a timely manner and survive an emergency. You and your family may not be together during a fire, so consider communication strategies for your loved ones. Check in often with your five emergency allies, especially on Red Flag Warning days and hold each other accountable for maintaining well-stocked Go Bags.

Remember, everyone communicates in different ways. Find what works for your group and agree to be there for each other in the event of an emergency.

Ask an out-of-state friend or relative to be your family's emergency contact. During a disaster, it is often easier to call long distance than make a local call. Plan for all members of your family to call this person with their location.

When selecting your five Emergency Allies who know your plan, consider coaches, childcare providers, relatives outside the area, and neighbors on shared evacuation routes.

LOCAL INTEREST

My Winter Tale

by Spencer LeGate



A splendid spring has blossomed in Cement Hill country. We're bringing out the necessary garden tools, scheduling outdoor gatherings and the usual recreations.

The wet and chilly months are not so cheerfully anticipated. Doris Day vocalized an appreciation of Paris when it "drizzles" in a famous song. But it was because her love was there, not because of the inclement weather.

When we reflect on that age we refer to as the winter of our lives, the emotion most often suggested is one of sadness and decline. There are among us those who look forward to winter's onset. For at least four months of the year there is a scant chance that a broiling sun will drive us indoors. Sun aversion appears to accompany aging. I worked long summers as a youngster piling lumber in a planing mill in full sun without complaint, ignoring the dangers of exposure to the sun. I don't find the sun so friendly anymore. We do recognize the downsides of the rain, wind and snow. Unrelenting showers, day after day can work on the nerves, keep us from projects, and worse, bring destructive forces.



The reduced pace of winter activities dovetails with the slowing rhythms of life as we age. Who does not enjoy relaxing in the comfort of hearth and home before a crackling fire savoring one's favored refreshment content with the inactivity that winter rain has provided? An actual turbulent storm whipping moaning trees can stir the emotions teetering between fear and exhilaration. There is an special pleasure in winter to step out from the warmth of one's home into a calendar photo of a recent dusting of snow. The sounds and silences are glorious and uplifting.

Our Nevada County with dramatic changes in elevations has the full spectrum of weather. Can we presume that those who live in the upper reaches do so because of the snow? I've spent winters in Chicago. A Cement Hill winter by contrast is like relaxing on a sunny beach in Tahiti. There are some who will not bid the season adieu with fond memories.

So long Winter 2024-25, we hardly knew thee.



~ GCHNA STEERING COMMITTEE ~

To contact GCHNA for membership related questions or to reach a member of the Steering Committee, please send an email to members@gchna.com.

Officers

- **President:** Will Hart
- **Secretary:** Ellen Hagan
- **Treasurer:** Janet Johnson
- **Membership:** Joy Elson

Committee Leaders

- **Firewise Committee:** Karen Wcislo
- **Events:** Open Position
Interested in joining the Events Committee?
Send an email to members@gchna.com

At Large

- Christy Barden
- Eileen Jorgensen
- Spencer LeGate

Neighborhood Representatives

Airport Road: Uli Paulin (includes Tower Hill Road, West Airport Road, East Piper Lane and Sheriff Road)

Applewood Lane: Elena Rayo (includes Indian Shack Road)

Augustine / Daisy Blue Mine / Excelsior Ditch Camp Road: Will Hart (includes Leisure Lane and Lazy Oaks Drive)

Gochine Drive: Dale Tom Creighton (includes Mt. Auburn Circle)

Sunrock Road: Marlene Widmann

Indian Flat Road: Joanne Brown (includes Indian Trails, Country Circle, Woods Ravine Ct. and Robinson King Road)

Wet Hill Road / Lower North Bloomfield Road: Sierra Buryn (includes Sierra Springs Circle and Elliot Way)

West End Cement Hill: Ellen Hagan (includes Sunshadow Circle, Cedarsong Road and Garesio Ranch Road)

Upper Cement Hill: Jeff Coleman-Hunt (includes Pine Tree Place, Diamond Oak Drive, Bodie Ridge Road, Sky ranch Road and Elysian Way)

Central Cement Hill: Joy Elson (includes Golden Oaks, Crystal View, Whispering Oaks, Merryhill Way, Gold Court, Spanish Quartz, Ragon Road and Fox Hill Road.)

Lower Cement Hill: Brian Waag (includes West Piper, Deer Crest, Rancheria Court, Red Hill Road, Foster Driveway, Picton, Picton Way and Foster Road)

Southside Cement Hill: Debbie Wandro (Highway 49, including Columbine Court, Delphine Lane, Shoshoni Trail, Old Faithful Court, Carli Way, Crooked Arrow Lane, John Barleycorn Rd., Frost Court and Cavanaugh Lane)

GCHNA MEMBERSHIP – JOIN OR RENEW

Dues: \$30/year

(If you are unsure of your renewal date, send an inquiry to members@gchna.com.)

Pay online at www.gchna.com or mail this form with your check to GCHNA, PO Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959

Name(s) _____

Property Address _____

Mailing Address _____
(if different)

Phone(s) _____

Email(s) _____

What year did you purchase your property or start living in our Cement Hill neighborhood? _____

- I am / We are: ☐ Owners ☐ Renters
- Do you live here full time? ☐ yes ☐ no
- Interested in becoming involved? ☐ yes
- Would you like to help plan the next neighborhood gathering? ☐ yes



SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER



Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Association

PO Box 1343, Nevada City, CA 95959

Contact Information

GCHNA

President:
president@gchna.com

Treasurer:
treasurer@gchna.com

Membership / Website:
members@gchna.com

Firewise Committee:
firewise@gchna.com

OTHER

Ferrellgas: 530-265-5896
www.ferrellgas.com

**Nevada County Coalition
of Firewise Communities**
www.nccoalitionfwc.com

GCHNA Mission Statement

To protect and preserve the rural qualities of our neighborhood by providing a forum for group action as needed.

Purpose

- Communicate information quickly and efficiently about matters of neighborhood interest to its members and associates.
- Raise funds and supply volunteer labor for projects that enhance or improve our neighborhood.
- Be an organization through which our neighbors can meet and get to know each other in meetings and social gatherings.
- Work to reduce fire hazards in our community.
- Promote safety on Cement Hill Road and local trails.
- Collaborate and communicate with Nevada County Board of Supervisors and Departments.
- Identify and help preserve historic sites in the area.
- Represent and provide balance of diverse interests in reviewing and prioritizing projects or issues of concern to our neighborhood.
- Support other neighborhood associations as their interests coincide with GCHNA.

Newsletter Team

Editor: Ellen Hagan **Design & Layout:** Joy Elson
Thank you to all of our authors and photographers!

Previous Issues are available on our website.





Greater Cement Hill Neighborhood Firewise Community
FIRESAFE MITIGATION (Risk Reduction Investment)
WORKSHEET (Submit your data online by October 31)

Are you making your property more fire safe? Let us know!

Every year, in order to maintain our Firewise Community status, we have to report how much time and money our residents are spending to maintain defensible space and make our neighborhood safer from wildfires. Your feedback is important! Our Firewise Community gets credit for any time and money you are spending on fire safe activities, including all clearing of your property, home hardening improvements, neighborhood outreach and meetings.

All responses should be a number only. If the question doesn't apply to you, leave it blank. We do not need lots of detail, just the hours and money spent. We do not need your receipts, just the approximate amount you have spent.

Please use this document as a worksheet so you are ready when the online submittal form is posted.

DO NOT SUBMIT THIS WORKSHEET.

For more information, visit:
<http://www.gchna.com/firewise-community/>

If you have any questions, send an email to:
firewise@gchna.com.

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Email _____ Phone _____
Property Address _____

FOR CALENDAR YEAR _____

SECTION 1: TIME SPENT (HOURS)

A. Home and Structures on Property - Number of Hours: _____

Examples:

- Remove pine needles and leaf litter from roof and gutters
- Replace vinyl gutters with metal gutters
- Improvements to exterior to increase resistance to ignition
- Install fire resistant screen vents
- Enclose soffits and eaves
- Clean and clear under decks and porches (flammables and vegetation)
- Add fire resistant roofing, siding or decking
- Inspect roof, replaced missing shingles
- Trim back trees close to the house or structure that hang over roof tops
- Move firewood 30 feet from house and cover with a fire safe tarp

B. Landscaping 0 - 100 feet from base of dwelling unit - Number of Hours: _____

Examples:

- Installation of hardscaping
- Replace combustible mulch with gravel and stone
- Removal of trees and shrubs
- Raking and removal of pine needles, leaves, ground litter and debris
- Trimming/limbing of trees
- Removing firewood
- Lawn and native grass maintenance
- Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks

C. Common Areas / Roads - Number of Hours: _____

Examples:

- Tree thinning
- Mastication and brush removal
- Grass maintenance
- Fire break construction
- Work/road parties

D. Miscellaneous - Number of Hours: _____

Examples

- Firewise meetings: attending, preparing for, communicating about, presenting at, and program administrating
- Home site visits
- Radio check-ins
- Neighborhood chats

TOTAL HOURS (Sum of questions A to D) (\$) _____

SECTION 2: MONEY SPENT

A. Equipment Costs – Amount Spent (\$) _____

Examples

- Chipper purchase or rental
- Chain saw purchase or rental
- Power equipment purchase or rental
- Purchase of hand tools or protective equipment
- Fuel and oil cost
- Vegetation disposal fees

B. Contractor Costs – Amount Spent (\$) _____

Examples

- Arborists
- Landscapers
- Professional forestry services
- Removal of debris
- Mastication services

C. Home Improvement Costs – Amount Spent (\$) _____

Examples:

- Improvements to roofs, decks and windows
- Vent screening
- Retrofitting
- Mulch replacing
- Hardscaping
- Water systems/pumps

D. Landscaping / DIY (do it yourself) – Amount Spent (\$) _____

E. Miscellaneous – Amount Spent (\$) _____

TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT (Sum of questions A to E) (\$) _____

SECTION 3: MAJOR PROJECTS

Describe any large project you did on your property, including:

- Major remodel of house and decking
- Improvement of fire safety features
- Responding to snowmageden damage
- Road work parties

**Thank you for your efforts to make our neighborhood more fire safe and
for helping us renew our Firewise Community Certificate.**