



SRCA Newsletter Article March 2008



Fire Fuel Accumulating

As you know, the wild grasses took last year off...no rain. Not so this year! Here's what's coming. The grasses and weeds are growing and have a great start from the rains so far in 2008. By mid-spring they will reach up to six feet in many of our open areas, along our trails, and behind our homes. After May 15 this lush vegetation will quit growing, begin to turn brown, and dry out.

From July onward they will be flash fire fuel, which is extremely volatile and fast burning. If there is oil laden eucalyptus residue in the area, particularly in the neighborhood's firebreak areas, these flash fires can take on a whole new meaning. Long burning firebrands, smoldering like punk, can blow into nearby residential neighborhoods on winds created by the fire itself as it burns upward along hillsides.

Your best protection is to "fireproof" your homes as much as possible. Replace wood shingles! Cover openings into the attic with quarter inch screen, and much more. For additional information about this, please visit the Scripps Ranch Fire Safe Council (SRFSC) website at [www.srfiresafecouncil.org].

Next, protect yourself with defensible space. Now. That means remove the fire fuel from your 100-foot firebreak areas. This is a neighborhood project because the entire firebreak must be cleaned up, not just spots along the way. We have created more than 10 miles of firebreaks in the past four years. Many of these will need maintenance after May 15--easier with a weed eater than a chainsaw.

If your firebreak area is still laden with volatile fire fuel after the two big fires and still has not burned, count yourself among the lucky. If you're waiting for the city or someone else to create your "defensible space" for you, think long and hard about what's at stake. You could reach the SRFSC at 945-6303 or [srfiresafecouncil@mac.com].