

## **SANTA PAULA AREA CHIP AWAY PROJECT 2018**

Incorporated in 2010, the Central Ventura County Fire Safe Council is a 501©3 non-profit mutual benefit organization with a mission to reduce the threat of wildfire to farms, ranches, urban neighborhoods and infrastructures through an aggressive program of action, education and collaboration.

The primary goal of the Chip Away for Fire Safety Project is to help facilitate and increase weed abatement activities in and around the City of Santa Paula and other locations throughout the Santa Clara River valley by offering a clean, no-cost alternative for disposal of excess tree trimmings and vegetation. This project is funded by a grant from the US Forest Service.

After the devastation caused by the Thomas Fire in December, many people are concerned about the safety of their property should another fire break out. Although local fire departments have strict rules about vegetation management and can aid in education and enforcement, everybody is a stakeholder in the community. “The Central Ventura County Fire Safe Council is delighted to be able to offer this free service to residents of Santa Paula, especially at this time when we are all so aware of the fact that we must all play our part in reducing the chance of having another disaster like we just experienced with the Thomas Fire.,” said Mike Burns, Board President.

Homeowners and residents are encouraged to sign up for the free chipper service ahead of time by going to [www.cvcfiresafe.org](http://www.cvcfiresafe.org) and completing a simple online registration form. Priority will be given to those who sign up ahead of time but the project team hopes to be able to provide the service to all comers. On the day of the event, homeowners will be asked to have their pile set out alongside the road or in the driveway by 8:30am. A chipper and crew will go to each address and chip the vegetation. The resulting biomass can either be left in a pile or removed for disposal. If this is a drop off event, please bring your trimmings to the designated location between 8am and 2pm for chipping.

For residents of the Santa Paula area, the dates and locations are as follows:

Santa Paula Community Center on two dates: Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Please bring your trimmings between 9am-2pm.

Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, we will chip in the Cherry Tract neighborhood

Saturday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, we will chip in the Oaks neighborhood

Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, we will chip along South Mountain Road

Finally, in September, we will have a dropoff event at Steckel Park on Saturday, September 15<sup>th</sup>.

The second component of this project is to increase public awareness about the importance of defensible space, fire prevention and education to reduce the future threat of fire. A Homeowner

Toolkit consisting of a drawstring backpack containing a first aid kit, flashlight, gloves and informational literature about home safety and Firewise landscaping, will be given to the first 20 participants on each date. Representatives from the local Fire Department and from the Fire Safe Council will be on hand to answer questions.

We have also designed a youth outreach program focusing on 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders. The goal is to educate these students on wildfire/home fire safety and empower them to get involved in protecting their homes, neighborhoods, and natural resources and to participate in awareness-raising community projects. In addition to discussing and viewing pictures of real life scenarios from the Thomas Fire, we are using materials made available by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). There will be two one-hour-minute sessions with take-home activities. The program will be held at Boys and Girls Club locations in Santa Paula, Fillmore and Piru.

The key to the success of this project is not only the strong partnership we have formed with the Santa Paula City Fire Department and Ventura County Fire but the part that individual homeowners and residents will play by clearing their properties of excess vegetation and taking advantage of this free disposal service. Their efforts and support are what will make this a success.

We would also like to thank the City Manager's office for their help in getting the word out about the chipper events.

For more information and to sign up, please go to [www.cvcfiresafe.org](http://www.cvcfiresafe.org)