



July 11th, 2023

Dear Mineral Residents,

Thank you for hosting the Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC) at the Mineral HOA meeting on July 1st to further discuss the *Mineral & Stringtown Hazard Tree Removal Project (Project)*. We at the RCDTC recognize that trees are important aesthetically and ecologically to the community. I work in natural resource management because I am passionate about healthy forests, waterways, wildlife, and all of Northern California's natural wonders. However, the forests we see in California today are struggling and require active stewardship. The Project was developed with Mineral Firewise volunteers to recreate a healthy forest stand and to help protect the community from wildfire. Mineral is within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. I am writing to you all to express the importance of prioritizing quality over the quantity of trees on your property and in your community.

Many species and landscapes in California have evolved with low to moderate intensity fire. This resulted in fewer, healthier trees per acre and less vegetation on the forest floor; historical photos in the Mineral Post Office help paint this picture. However, wildfire and cultural fire suppression policies within the last century have negatively impacted our forests, which are now overstocked to ignite and propel extreme fire behavior. All the components for a successful campfire – think tinder (dry pine needles, dry grass, leaves), kindling (dry sticks), and fuel (dead, dry wood) – have been building up year after year on the forest floor as surface fuels. The disruption of historical fire patterns has also caused the unchecked growth of ladder fuels (shrubs and small to medium diameter trees). This not only creates horizontal and vertical connectivity between surface fuels and tree crowns, but this creates competition among trees for limited resources. In a warming climate, conifers are becoming less resilient to drought, pests, disease, and wildfire, and instead serve as fuel for catastrophic, high intensity wildfires like the 2018 Camp Fire and the 2021 Dixie Fire. In other words, the greater the fuel load, the greater the fire danger.

Defensible space and hazard tree removal are just a few of the strategies that can help reduce home loss from wildfires as there is less surrounding ignitable material which consequently helps emergency personnel defend your home. A common barrier to defensible space creation is the labor and cost; the *Project (treats "big trees") and our TinderSmart Tehama **defensible space program (treats smaller diameter trees and shrubs) are available at no additional cost to complete fuel reduction work that would otherwise cost you thousands of dollars out of pocket. When homeowners choose to not participate in these programs and/or address ignitable material, they are not only risking the protection of their own property, but the safety of their neighbors and the entire community.



I encourage everyone to observe the work that the contractor, P31 Enterprises, Inc., started along White Fir Lane at the end of June, as I believe the treatment will demonstrate that we are not “clearcutting” the landscape. The trees that were removed were dead, dying, diseased, or were contributing to horizontal and vertical fuel connectivity. To protect the healthiest trees, we must remove less resilient species and surrounding excess fuel loads. The finished Project will present a diverse, healthy, and better spaced mosaic of tree species of different ages across the Mineral community.

I implore all Mineral residents to sign up for the Project to proactively protect the community. It is not a question of *if* another wildfire will occur, but *when*. We want to put our best foot forward to protect this special place that means so much to so many. The RCDTC staff are always here to answer any questions or concerns that you may have. Thank you, and I look forward to collaborating towards a fire-adapted Mineral.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Barrett".

Jon Barrett

District Manager

Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

(530) 727-1280

For more information, visit: www.tehamacountyrcd.org/mineral-stringtown-hazard-tree-removal

*Submit an Inquiry Form for the Project: <https://form.jotform.com/rcdtc/mineral-hazard-tree-removal>

**Sign up for defensible space assistance: <https://form.jotform.com/rcdtc/tindersmart-dsa-application>

Contractor

Josh Saint - P31 Enterprises

Operations

(706) 429-5069