

FIRE & WATER

2026

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Placer County

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Watersheds

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Strengthening
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Message from PCWA General Manager Andy Fecko Building Resilience Together

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 edition of Fire & Water.

This annual publication, produced by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in collaboration with Gold Country Media, highlights the challenges—and opportunities—of natural resource stewardship in our region.

This year's edition highlights the people, projects, and

partnerships helping build a more resilient Placer County.

From forest restoration and watershed protection to water infrastructure improvements and wildfire preparedness, these stories reflect the work happening every day to protect the resources and services our communities depend on.

You'll also find practical information and ideas that can help you make your home, property, or business more prepared for the challenges we face today while protecting the resources we depend on for the future.

We are proud to partner with local agencies, utilities, fire districts, community organizations, and citizen groups who are helping lead this important work. Very special thanks to our contributors for sharing their knowledge, expertise, and stories.

We hope you find this edition informative, useful, and inspiring.

Enjoy the 2026 edition of Fire & Water.



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A Different Kind of Water Year

By Andy Fecko

California’s Mediterranean climate has always produced dramatic swings between wet and dry years. Today, warmer storms, shifting runoff patterns, and earlier snowmelt are requiring new approaches to managing water supplies across the state.

This year offered a good example. Warmer winter storms caused more precipitation to fall as rain instead of snow, filling reservoirs earlier in the season. By early April, snowpack levels were well below average, but much of that water was already in storage.

Hell Hole



PCWA’s water system was built to operate across a wide range of conditions. Water stored in the Middle Fork Project reservoirs, combined with supplies connected to the Yuba and Bear River watersheds through PG&E’s Drum-Spaulding system, helps provide reliability during both wet and dry years.

Reliable water service also depends on healthy watersheds. The forests surrounding PCWA’s reservoirs play a critical role in capturing, storing,

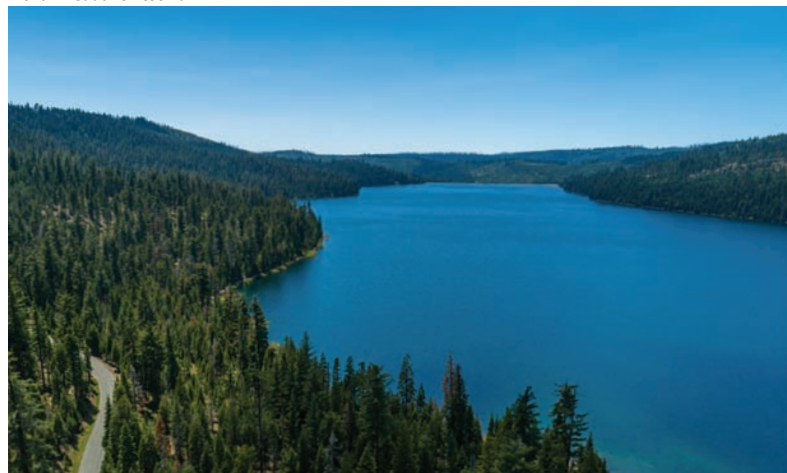
and filtering the water that eventually supplies homes, farms, and businesses throughout the region. Severe wildfires can damage those watersheds, increase erosion and sedimentation, reduce water quality, and threaten critical infrastructure. That connection between forests and water is one reason PCWA continues investing in forest restoration and watershed protection projects surrounding French Meadows Reservoir and within the Long Canyon watershed.

French Meadows Forest Restoration Project-Prescribed Fire area-7



At the same time, PCWA continues investing in hydrology forecasting tools, infrastructure improvements, reservoir storage, and long-range planning efforts designed to help manage changing conditions while supporting growing communities.

French Meadows Reservoir



Communities have a role to play as well. Across Placer County, more homeowners are creating landscapes that are both water-wise and fire-smart by improving irrigation efficiency, maintaining defensible space, and choosing plants better suited for California's hot, dry summers. PCWA supports these efforts through rebates and programs designed to help customers make their homes and landscapes more resilient.

Reliable water service depends on all of these pieces working together—healthy watersheds, resilient infrastructure, careful planning, and efficient water use.



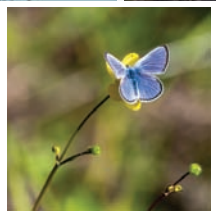
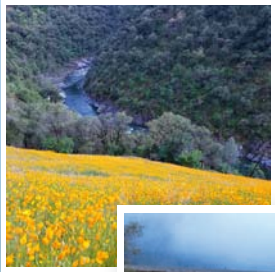
As a community-owned, nonprofit water agency, PCWA continues investing in the people, infrastructure, and natural resources that help Placer County prepare for whatever kind of water year comes next.

David Shield's residential water-wise garden landscape



AUBURN STATE RECREATION AREA

Canyon Keepers



The Auburn State Recreation Area Canyon Keepers (ASRACK) is a non-profit volunteer group that promotes healthy recreation in our beautiful canyons.

- Coordinates with the Mounted Assistance Unit patrols to monitor and provide assistance and information to visitors and report on trail and general environmental conditions in the ASRA state park.
- Hosts monthly meeting & guest speaker the first Tuesday of the month at the Canyon View Community Center.
- Organizes hikes, including guided history and river-canyon ecology walks.
- Provides docents that assist the professional ranger staff on weekends in the Confluence area with meet and greet information tables.
- Sponsors Leave No Trace canyon cleanups.
- Assists with Junior Ranger programs and Interpretation projects and demonstrations.



www.CanyonKeepers.org



WILDFIRE DOESN'T WAIT. NEITHER SHOULD YOU.

Living in Placer County means living with fire. The good news: you don't have to face it alone. **Free to low-cost programs, local councils and community resources** can help you harden your home, clear defensible space and connect with neighbors to reduce wildfire risk in your neighborhood.

FOUR WAYS TO GET FIRE-READY

01 RESIDENTIAL CHIPPER PROGRAM

Pile your brush. They'll chip it. Low-cost defensible-space cleanup through the Placer Resource Conservation District.

02 FIRE SAFE ALLIANCE OF PLACER COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Countywide resources and updates in one place. Sign up for the newsletter to stay ahead of the season.

03 FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

Six local councils working neighborhood by neighborhood on projects and prevention. Find yours.

04 FIREWISE USA COMMUNITIES

Join a nationally recognized program that helps neighbors organize and reduce wildfire risk together.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE & PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST.



- Fire Safe Alliance of Placer County Newsletter
- Fire Safe Councils of Placer County
- Firewise USA Communities



- Placer County Chipper Program



Protecting Our Water Supply by Restoring Forest Health

After nearly a decade of work at French Meadows, a new project aims to protect additional forests, watersheds, and infrastructure in the Sierra

High in the Sierra Nevada, the forests surrounding the French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs do more than provide a scenic backdrop for camping, boating, and hiking. They help capture and store the water that flows to homes, farms, and businesses throughout Placer County and the Sacramento region.

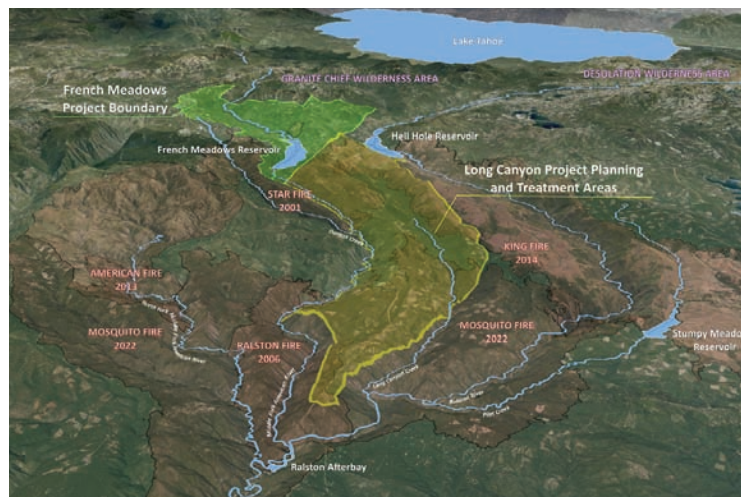
Crews carefully remove selected trees to reduce wildfire fuels and improve the health and resilience of forests surrounding French Meadows Reservoir.



But after decades of fire suppression, many of those forests have become dangerously overgrown, increasing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Dense vegetation and built-up forest fuels allow fires to burn hotter and spread faster, threatening watersheds, wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and the infrastructure that delivers water and hydropower to the region.

Nearly a decade ago, following the devastating King Fire, local, state, federal, and nonprofit organizations launched the pioneering French Meadows Forest Restoration Project to protect more than 28,000 acres of public and private lands in the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the American River. Today, after nearly 9,000 acres of forest treatment work, Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) and its collaborators are expanding those efforts into a new area of the Middle Fork American River watershed through the Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project.

Map of French Meadows Project Boundary and Long Canyon Project Planning and Treatment Area



Protecting Water at Its Source

The forests of the Middle Fork American River watershed function as a natural water system. Snow and rain falling in the Sierra are stored in forests, meadows, streams, reservoirs, and underground aquifers before eventually making their way to communities downstream.

When severe wildfires burn through those landscapes, the impacts can last for many years. High-intensity fires can damage soil, increase erosion, send sediment and debris into streams and reservoirs, and degrade water quality. Wildfires can also threaten wildlife habitat, campgrounds, roads, hydropower facilities, and other infrastructure throughout the watershed.

Expanding the Work to Long Canyon

Building on the success of the French Meadows Project, PCWA is expanding these efforts into the Long Canyon Creek Watershed with a similarly ambitious landscape-level effort in the Eldorado National Forest. Covering a planning area of 32,000 acres, the project is designed to protect sensitive habitat, improve forest resilience, and safeguard key PCWA facilities in the North and South Fork Long Canyon Creek basins, just below the French Meadows and Hell Hole Reservoirs.

Woody material generated during forest health treatments.



That connection between healthy forests and reliable water supplies is one reason PCWA has expanded its role in watershed protection and forest management efforts across the region.

Much like French Meadows, Long Canyon will use thinning, mastication, reforestation, and prescribed fire to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire. Its proximity to other completed and ongoing forest health activities on public and private lands means the work will help create a connected network of treated lands, multiplying the benefits across the Middle Fork American River watershed. The first season of field treatments is expected to begin in the summer of 2027.

Together, these two projects illustrate PCWA's sustained commitment to proactive, science-driven forest and watershed stewardship. French Meadows has already shown how multi-year investments can improve wildfire response conditions, protect water quality, and maintain the ecological integrity of a region central to both hydropower operations and community recreation. Through the Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project, PCWA is scaling this success—enhancing resilience across a larger interconnected landscape and ensuring that critical water resources and forest ecosystems remain protected for generations to come.



Rooted in Resilience

Five years of Regional Forest Health under Kerri Timmer's leadership

When Placer County established the Regional Forest Health (RFH) Division five years ago, the vision was ambitious: a countywide program to protect communities, infrastructure, and natural resources from catastrophic wildfire through proactive forest resilience work. As Coordinator Kerri Timmer retires this month, that vision is no longer aspirational. It is operational, scaled, and built to last.

Under her leadership, RFH grew from a concept into a fully functioning division with a clear mission: healthy forests, safer communities.

*“Healthy forests, safer communities.”
That through-line has guided every project the division has taken on.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

RFH's portfolio now spans on-the-ground implementation, large-landscape planning, and regional market development, anchored by the 22,000-acre French Meadows Ecological Restoration Project and including the Cabin Creek, Foresthill Divide, Olympic Valley Park, Yankee Jim's, and Colfax-Cape Horn projects. This work has advanced the County's 10-Year Action Plan, the Community Wildfire Protection Plan update, and new regional infrastructure such as the Tri-

County Memorandum of Association and the Biomass Development Opportunity Zone.

TRIBAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Just as meaningful is the engagement plan Kerri championed. Built on relationship-building rather than transactions, it established a framework for genuine government-to-government engagement, including Tribal stipends, and cultivated relationships with the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe, the Washoe Tribe, the United Auburn Indian Community, and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, alongside partners such as the Indigenous Futures Society and Sierra Business Council. Paired with outreach to landowners, fire safe councils, and Firewise communities, it wove local knowledge and shared stewardship into the foundation of the program.

COORDINATION AS THE MULTIPLIER

Perhaps her most lasting contribution is the partnership network she built. RFH today coordinates closely with CAL FIRE NEU, the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Placer Resource Conservation District, Tribal partners, and Firewise communities across the county. That collaboration is what turns individual projects into a countywide strategy and allows local dollars to leverage state and federal investment many times over.

WITH GRATITUDE

That foundation is Kerri Timmer's legacy. We thank her for five years of vision, persistence, and steady leadership. The work continues because of all she built.

Photo taken by Brie Anne Coleman, PCWA

The Work Continues

Welcoming Amanda Brenner, incoming Regional Forest Health Coordinator



“Wildfire doesn’t see lines,” Amanda says, and that belief has shaped more than a decade of forest health and wildfire resilience work. She joins the RFH team after serving as Program Director for the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, with earlier roles at San Mateo Resource Conservation District and Oregon State University’s College of Forestry Extension, working closely with CAL FIRE, local fires districts, the U.S. Forest Service, and landowners.

She holds a BS in Environmental Science from Southern New Hampshire University, earned while working in the field, and an Associate’s in Natural Resources with a focus in forestry and wildlife management from Front Range Community College in Colorado.

“My heart is in the forest resilience component of wildfire prevention and preparedness.”

SCALE AND PARTNERSHIP

Amanda’s signature efforts include the South Bay Prescribed Burn Association and the 143,000-acre West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project. She has a particular passion for capacity building: in her current role she chose local contractors who met every qualification but lacked equipment, then helped them grow into capable partners now supporting work across multiple programs. She also brings substantial experience partnering with Tribal communities, something she hopes to help strengthen and carry forward.

WHY PLACER COUNTY

After several years focused on wildfire prevention, Amanda is eager to return to what she calls the heart of her work. What resonates most with the RFH mission is working regionally rather than in silos: “In all my years in this work, it’s just not a possibility to work without collaboration.”

OFF THE CLOCK

Amanda is happiest in the woods, especially on or near water, where kayaking, canoeing, and swimming top her list. She rarely travels far without her two dogs: Pancakes, a vocal miniature dachshund, and Mabel, a cocker spaniel and dachshund mix. (Yes, Pancakes and Mabel. As in pancakes and maple syrup.) As one colleague put it during her interview, “Pancakes is going to fit right in.” So will she.





Restoring English Meadow for Water Reliability and Fire Resilience

High in the northern Sierra Nevada, where winter snowpack feeds the rivers and reservoirs that supply much of California's water, the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) has completed a restoration project at English Meadow aimed at strengthening both water reliability and wildfire resilience.

Located about 21 miles northwest of Truckee, the 200-acre montane meadow sits in the headwaters of the Middle Yuba River watershed, a key source of downstream water supply. The project reflects NID's broader strategy to protect water reliability in the face of climate change, watershed degradation, and increasing wildfire risk across the Sierra Nevada.

Healthy mountain meadows function like natural reservoirs. Their deep soils absorb snowmelt in spring and release it slowly into streams throughout the dry summer months, helping sustain flows during peak demand. This natural buffering is becoming increasingly important as warming temperatures reduce snowpack and shift runoff into shorter, more intense periods.

NID staff collect pre-project data on baseline conditions.



English Meadow also plays a role in wildfire resilience. Over time, historic disturbances and sediment buildup altered floodplain function, allowing drier vegetation to establish and increasing fire vulnerability.

Restoration work focused on rebuilding hydrologic function and ecosystem health. Crews installed large woody structures using locally sourced logs and rock to mimic natural log jams. These features slow high flows, reduce erosion, and spread water across the floodplain, increasing soil moisture retention later into the dry season and improving vegetation conditions.

About 175 acres of surrounding forest were thinned to reduce fuel loads and improve forest health, helping reduce the potential for fast-moving wildfire.

The project was supported by \$1.5 million in grants from the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, reflecting growing recognition that watershed restoration also serves as wildfire prevention infrastructure.

For NID, English Meadow reflects an evolving approach to headwater management, treating these landscapes as infrastructure that supports both water reliability and wildfire resilience in a changing climate.



"In the face of a warming climate, a meadow can be considered water in the landscape," said Neysa King, NID Environmental Resources Administrator. "These systems store water in the ground and release it later when it's needed downstream."



English Meadow in bloom



Building a More Resilient Water System

The Ophir Water Treatment Plant will expand overall treatment capacity and strengthen the reliability of water service in western Placer County.

The Ophir Project is a long-planned investment designed to help the Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) keep pace with increasing water demands while improving the flexibility and resilience of the overall system.

At its core, the project will add a new water treatment facility in Ophir, expanding PCWA's overall capacity and providing an additional location to treat water. As existing treatment facilities approach capacity, the Ophir plant will help reduce operational pressure on the system while supporting continued growth and long-term reliability.

The additional treatment capacity also improves system resilience by allowing PCWA to continue delivering reliable water service when other facilities are temporarily offline for maintenance, upgrades, or unexpected events.

The Ophir Water Treatment Plant builds on decades of planning and earlier investments that already bring water from the American River to local communities. Once complete, it will produce up to 10 million gallons of treated water per day in its first phase, with the ability to scale over time as demands increase.

The plant also reflects coordination between PCWA and the City of Lincoln. As a wholesale customer and funding partner, Lincoln is helping secure future water supply capacity to support its residents and businesses, while supporting reliable water service across the region. Funding follows a “pay it forward” model, where new development connections help fund infrastructure for future service while also improving reliability for existing customers.

Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2026, with the facility anticipated to be operational by 2030.



Rendering of the future Ophir Water Treatment Plant

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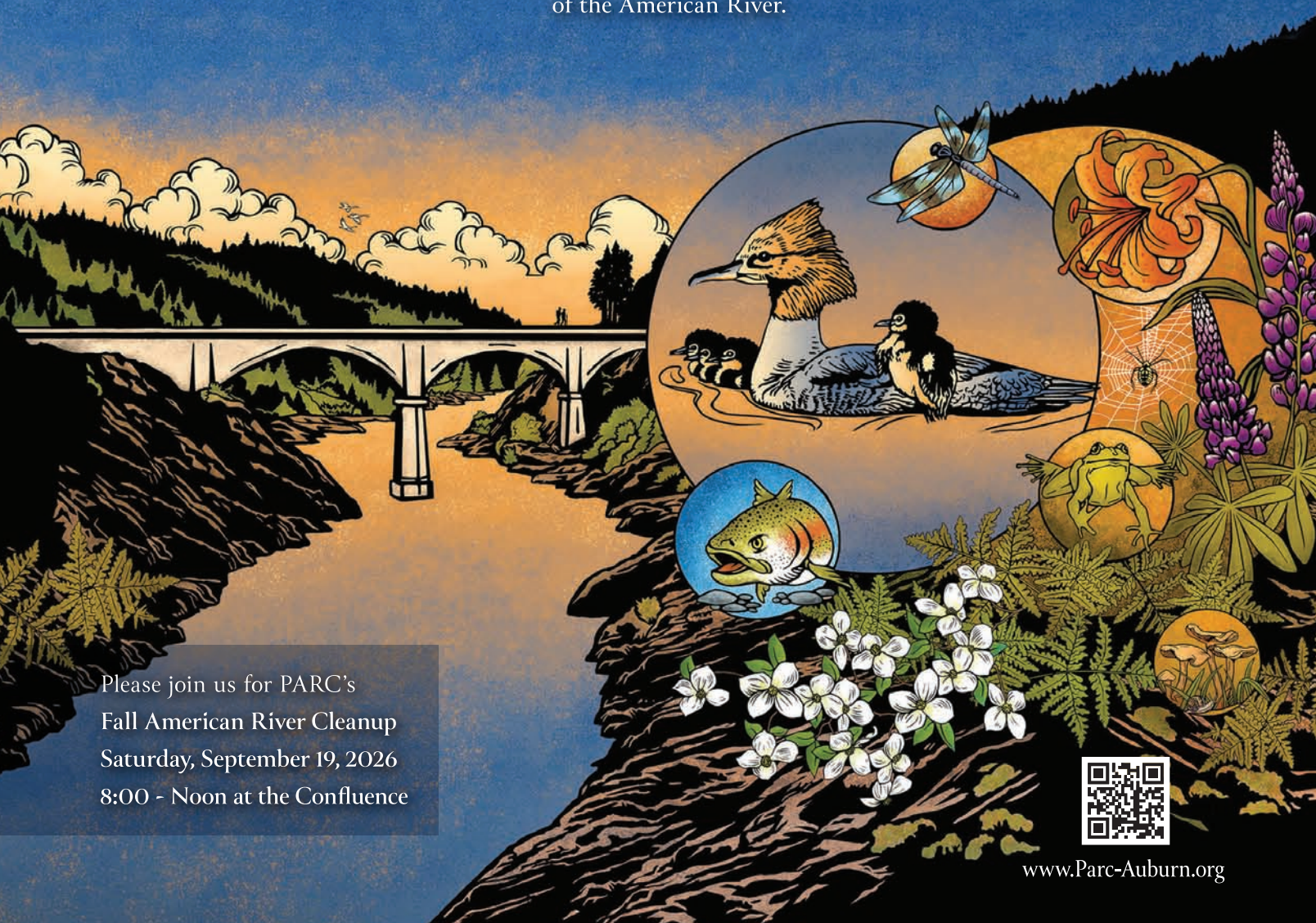




The American River

Protect American River Canyons works to conserve and enhance the natural, recreational, and cultural resources of the North and Middle Fork American River canyons.

PARC, a non-profit, seeks to build community through, collaboration, active stewardship and enjoyment of the American River.



Please join us for PARC's
Fall American River Cleanup
Saturday, September 19, 2026
8:00 - Noon at the Confluence



www.Parc-Auburn.org

A VISION FOR 2026 AND BEYOND FOR PLACER COUNTY



INTRODUCING CAL FIRE NEVADA-YUBA-PLACER UNIT CHIEF AND PLACER COUNTY FIRE CHIEF

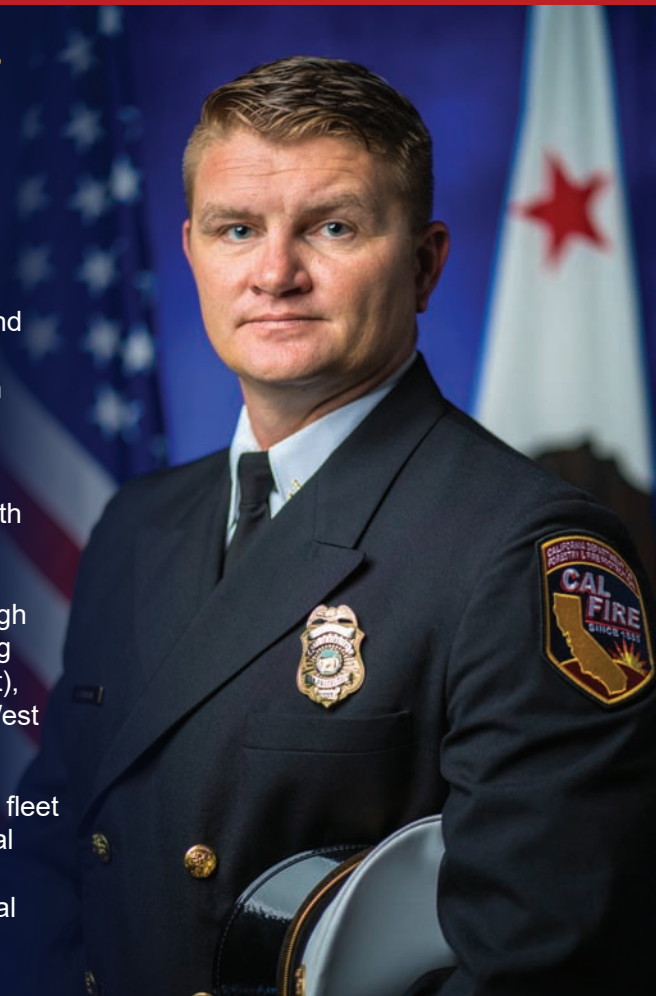
Jim Hudson

Promoted in December 2025 to serve as Chief of the CAL FIRE Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit (NEU) and Fire Chief of the Placer County Fire Department,

Chief Hudson brings more than 26 years of dedicated service, proven operational leadership, and a deep personal connection to the communities of our region.

Chief Hudson began his fire service career in 1999 as a Firefighter with the Higgins Fire Protection District in the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit. He joined CAL FIRE in 2000 and has served continuously within this region ever since. His career path reflects steady advancement through the ranks: Fire Apparatus Engineer/Paramedic, Fire Captain (including service in the Placer County Fire Department Cooperative Agreement), Battalion Chief (Training and Safety Bureau), Assistant Chief of the West Division, and most recently Deputy Chief of Operations.

In his role as Deputy Chief, he oversaw all ground and air operations, fleet management, command and control, training, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) for the unit and county. A certified Paramedic, Chief Hudson has consistently emphasized operational excellence, technical expertise, and the development of others.



As we approach the 2026 fire season, Chief Hudson's vision is clear and resolute: maintain unwavering readiness while building long-term community resilience.

PROVEN LEADERSHIP ON THE FRONT LINES

Chief Hudson's leadership has been tested in major incidents across California and beyond. He has served as Incident Commander on significant fires in Placer County, including the River and Bridge Fires. He acted as Deputy Incident Commander during the 2023 Lahaina wildfire response on Maui. Most notably, in January 2025, he served as Incident Commander for CAL FIRE Incident Management Team 2 during the Palisades Fire in Los Angeles County.

In that high-profile role, Chief Hudson coordinated thousands of personnel, managed complex air and ground operations under extreme Santa Ana wind conditions, integrated mutual aid including international resources, and provided briefings to high-level officials. These experiences have sharpened his ability to lead under pressure and strengthened the NEU's preparedness for future challenges.

LESSONS FROM THE PALISADES FIRE SHAPING LOCAL READINESS

The January 2025 Palisades Fire provided critical insights that Chief Hudson is directly applying to Placer County. Key lessons include the power of home hardening and defensible space in saving structures, the critical role of air operations as a force multiplier, the need for adaptive tactics in wind-driven fires with longrange spotting, and the importance of seamless interagency coordination and timely public communications.

For Placer County, these translate into enhanced prepositioning strategies during Red Flag conditions, and rigorous multi-agency exercises that replicate high-wind WUI scenarios.

READY WHEN IT MATTERS MOST

TRAINING PHILOSOPHY: BUILDING ADAPTIVE, SKILLED TEAMS

Training and mentorship have been hallmarks of Chief Hudson's career. He has served as Unit Training Chief and led instruction at statewide and national levels. His teaching portfolio includes:

- Advanced Incident Management Instructional Cadre Lead (nationally recognized Incident Management Team training)
- Incident Commander Instructional Cadre Lead
- Fire Ground Operations
- Technical Rescue
- Firefighter Survival and Rapid Intervention Crew Operations (RIC/RIT)
- Various other Incident Command System (ICS) trainings

Chief Hudson's training methods are practical, progressive, and rooted in real-world experience. He emphasizes hands-on drills, scenario-based simulations drawn from actual incidents, repetitive skill-building for muscle memory, and leadership development that prepares personnel for scalable, all-hazards responses. His approach fosters not only technical proficiency but also adaptability, inter-agency collaboration, and a culture of continuous improvement.

This means leveraging every available tool, every firefighter, every support staff member, and every community partner to meet the emergency needs of the residents we serve.



Having built his entire career serving this region, Chief Hudson knows Placer County's landscapes, risks, and strengths intimately.



He is committed to protecting lives, property, and the vibrant communities we all call home while honoring the legacy of past leadership and advancing a stronger future.

Chief Hudson's message to residents is one of shared responsibilities: Professional responders stand ready, but informed and prepared communities are our strongest defense.

PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- **Prevention and Mitigation:** Expanding defensible space education, vegetation management, and Firewise community initiatives in our growing wildland-urban interface.
- **Operational Excellence:** Sustaining top-tier training, modern fleet and equipment readiness, and seamless integration of ground, air, and EMS resources.
- **Collaboration:** Deepening partnerships with local fire departments, law enforcement, emergency management, water districts, and neighboring agencies.
- **People First:** Supporting and developing the dedicated men and women of CAL FIRE and Placer County Fire through mentorship, realistic training, and fatigue management protocols.
- **Innovation and Adaptation:** Incorporating lessons from major incidents like the Palisades Fire into planning, ensuring we evolve to meet emerging risks from climate trends, interface growth, and all-hazards emergencies.

Welcome, Chief Hudson. Placer County is stronger with you at the helm.

For preparedness resources, defensible space assistance, burn permit information, or training updates, [visit fire.ca.gov](https://www.fire.ca.gov).



UC Master Gardener
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Designing the New Water-Wise Fire-Smart Demonstration Garden

What happens when fire safety, water efficiency, and community collaboration come together? A new demonstration garden at South Placer Fire District's Station 18 in Loomis shows homeowners how beautiful landscapes can also reduce wildfire risk. We spoke with Division Chief Jeff Ingolia and UC Master Gardener Tece Markel about the project, and the lessons residents can apply at home.

What inspired creating a fire-smart demonstration garden?

Jl: Educating the public on defensible space and fire-safe landscaping is an important part of our mission. When the UC Master Gardeners approached us with the idea of creating a demonstration garden, we immediately recognized it as an excellent opportunity to provide valuable public education while also revitalizing an aging fire station located at one of the main entrances to beautiful downtown Loomis.

What did the landscape look like before?

South Placer Fire District Division Chief Jeff Ingolia (JI): The previous landscape had aging bark mulch, declining vegetation, and significant weed growth. While the original design was attractive when first installed, years of exposure and aging vegetation had taken their toll, and the area was ready for a thoughtful refresh.

Why was this project important?

Jl: We wanted to create a positive example for our community and give residents practical information they could apply to their own homes and properties. Serving the community extends far beyond emergency response. In addition to responding to fires, medical emergencies, and vehicle accidents, we are committed to educating residents on how to improve the safety and survivability of their homes during a wildfire.

UC Master Gardener Karen Lopez, UC Master Gardener Tece Markel, and Division Chief Jeff Ingolia



Who helped make the demonstration garden possible?

Jl: This project would not have been possible without the incredible support of our community partners, including the Town of Loomis, Placer County Water Agency, the UC Master Gardeners, High-Hand Nursery, Green Acres Nursery & Supply, Raley's, Pizza Factory, Boy Scout Troop 12, Enviro Sign, Sierra Pipe, Dias Tree Removal, The Home Depot, Valley Rock, and many dedicated volunteers - including our own hard working staff assigned to Station 18. Their generosity, time, and hard work were instrumental in bringing this project to life.

A special thanks goes to the outstanding members of the UC Master Gardeners of Placer County who devoted countless hours to the design, planning, coordination, and installation of the garden — this project truly reflects the power of community collaboration. Karen Lopez and Tece really went above and beyond to make this dream a reality.

How does the garden demonstrate defensible space principles?

TM: We did a lot of research to ensure the garden followed the principles of defensible space. For example, no plants were installed in Zone 0 (0-5 feet). The “island” plantings in Zone 1 (5-30 feet) were interspersed with non-combustible rock materials, and other plantings were situated so that no tree canopies would grow within 10 feet of the roof.

We also took into account how tall the plants would be when mature, so that they wouldn't create ladder fuel under other shrubs.

These guidelines were learned through various fire-wise entities, including the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Fire Network (UC ANR) (<https://ucanr.edu/program/uc-anr-fire-network>)

What are some of the garden's prominent features?

TM: Some prominent features include the use of various combinations of different-sized, colored non-combustible rocks and small boulders between planting “islands”. These swaths are laid out cross-slope to slow rainwater so it stays on the property. Using arborist mulch also helps capture rainwater.

We chose California native plants, which, in addition to being water-wise when properly watered and maintained, will add to the garden's biodiversity by attracting and feeding bees, butterflies, and birds.

Jl: One of the most important features of the garden is its demonstration of defensible space principles and how proper landscaping relates to structure protection. In particular, the garden highlights the importance of Zone 0 — the first five feet around a structure — as one of the most critical areas for reducing wildfire risk.

The garden also showcases fire-wise plant selection, proper vegetation spacing, and thoughtful landscape design practices that help reduce fire hazards around the home. Additionally, the interpretive signage and QR codes provide valuable educational resources that help visitors learn more about fire-safe landscaping and the specific plants used throughout the project.

What sort of irrigation system was installed?

TM: Sierra Pipe helped us with the general design of the Inline drip irrigation system, which is controlled by a Hunter Smart controller, and of course, PCWA's rebate helped with the cost of the system.

PCWA Rebates page



What are some favorite plants featured in the garden?

TM: It's so hard to choose favorite plants! I would say several of the sages, such as the 'Bee's Bliss sage and Winnifred Gilman Cleveland sage, which add blasts of purple flowers as well as fragrance. The native grasses and rushes offer a variety of different heights and structures, and the Western redbud adds seasonal bright pink flowers and bright green leaves after the bloom.

Where can people find many of the plants?

TM: The plants featured in the garden can be purchased at local nurseries, farmers markets, as well as plant sales at the UC Davis Arboretum plant sales and local native nurseries.

Arborist mulch and inline drop irrigation



What are some of the most important things for people to consider when planning a fire-smart yard?

TM: Some of the most important factors to consider when planning a fire-smart yard include using the Three Zone System, which involves creating defensible space through careful selection, placement, and maintenance of vegetation and other combustible materials near structures. By focusing on the placement and maintenance of your plants, you can create a fire-smart landscape that combines beauty and safety.

UCANR Prepare your landscaping page



The UC ANR website has a great section on how to implement the Three Zone System. (<https://ucanr.edu/program/uc-anr-fire-network/prepare-your-landscaping>)



Arborvitae mulch and inline drop irrigation

Anything else you would like the public to know?

JL: First and foremost, we want our community to know that the South Placer Fire District is here to serve them whenever and however they need us. We are proud to serve the residents and businesses of Loomis and Granite Bay, and we are deeply grateful for the continued support we receive from our community.

Our personnel are dedicated professionals who train tirelessly to respond when emergencies occur. We hope this demonstration garden serves not only as a beautiful addition to the community but also as a meaningful example of how thoughtful planning and fire-safe practices can help protect their homes, property, and loved ones.



A Fire Safe Landscape Depends on Proper Placement and Maintenance of Plants

Minimize fire pathways to your house and other structures by maintaining horizontal and vertical space between plants, trees and flammable materials.

Any plant can burn given the right conditions, but by correct placement, and irrigating and maintaining them properly you can have a landscape that is both beautiful and fire safe. By choosing plants native to California, this demonstration garden also provides habitat for local insects and birds.

The best way to fire safe your landscape is to plan the placement of your plants, trees and shrubs around the perimeter of the building and between planting islands, leaving 6-foot spaces.

Maintain your landscape by keeping it properly irrigated, pruning to open up plant structure, and removing dead plant material.

Be aware of, and remove, hidden combustible material in your landscape. Dead or dry leaves and twigs can accumulate under ground covers or inside shrubs that have been hedged or improperly pruned. An ember falling on this hidden fuel can easily cause fire.

Avoid hedging shrubs, which causes a build-up of dead and dry twigs inside that can catch embers and ignite. A better alternative is to prune shrubs into a more natural shape when they are young by selecting a few main stems.

Reduce the potential for embers to ignite materials next to structures

- Zone 0, the 5' perimeter surrounding your home, should be completely free of anything that can catch fire, including plants.
- Keep roofs and gutters clean of debris.

Minimize fire pathways to the house

- Zone 1, 5-30' from your home, should be "lean and clear."
- Remove combustible materials such as twigs, needles and leaves, dry grasses, shrubs, woodpiles, building materials, cardboard boxes, and solvents.
- Create separation between vegetation groups by planting in "islands" surrounded by bare mineral soil, stone or paved walkways.
- Keep tree canopies 10' from your house and other trees.
- Remove and thin out lower branches of trees and shrubs to break fire's vertical path (or "fuel ladder").

Mulch Matters

Properly placed organic mulch is important for plant and soil health. It retains moisture and inhibits weeds, reducing fire risk, but the mulch itself is flammable.

What's a gardener to do?

- Use inorganic materials in the 0-5' zone surrounding structures. Paving stones, gravel or decomposed granite are perfect because they are not flammable.
- Mulch planted areas in the 5-30' lean and clear zone with partially composted arborvitae wood chips under 3" in size.
- Mulch should be no more than 3" deep.
- Irrigate mulched areas to keep them moist.
- Avoid highly flammable materials such as shredded rubber, pine needles and shredded cedar bark.

Scan for mulch factsheet

Protecting What Matters Most



A strong water infrastructure system is one of the most important ways to protect our community from wildfire and other emergencies. Through pipeline upgrades and improvements that enhance system reliability, the City of Lincoln is investing in projects that support fire protection and help ensure safe, dependable water service. Working together, the City and our residents are strengthening community resilience and making a meaningful difference.



916.434.2450



www.lincolncalifornia.gov/water



Lincoln Public Works
Department

Securing Roseville's water future: *Innovation, investment, and the people behind every drop*

Ever wonder where your water comes from when you turn on the tap in Roseville?

Every time you turn on the tap in Roseville, you tap into a journey that starts high in the Sierra Nevada. Snowmelt and rainfall flow into the American River, collecting in Folsom Reservoir before entering Roseville's system.

The water is carefully cleaned and tested at the Barton Water Treatment Plant to meet strict safety standards. Then it travels through hundreds of miles of underground pipes to homes, schools, parks, and businesses.

It's a simple act—turning on the faucet—but behind it is a team working daily to keep it safe, reliable, and ready for the future.

"This isn't just water. It's our future," said Sean Bigley, Environmental Utilities Director. "We've been planning, investing, and protecting this system for over a century. That commitment only grows stronger with time."

In the early 1900s, Roseville made a bold move by purchasing a private water company to ensure residents had access to clean, reliable water. That legacy lives on today through wise investments, diverse water sources, and strong regional partnerships.

Regional collaboration: Planning, delivering together

In California, reliable water doesn't happen by chance. It takes teamwork. Roseville partners with Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) and other regional water providers to strengthen our collective water future. We share resources, coordinate plans, and step in to help each other when needed, because when one agency thrives, we all do.

One example of regional teamwork is the Roseville-PCWA Cooperative Pipeline. This 14-mile project would bring water straight from PCWA's Middle Fork Project to Roseville's treatment plant, skipping Folsom Reservoir. That means more flexibility during drought and less pressure on current supplies. It's still in early planning, with federal funding in the works to move it forward.

"Water doesn't stop at city borders, and neither do we," says George Hansen, Roseville's Water Utility Manager. "Working together with our neighbors means we can adapt faster, respond smarter, and give our communities the water they need to grow and thrive. These partnerships allow us to plan together but also share resources."



Not all water wears the same hat

Think of our water supply like a brilliant retirement plan: diverse, balanced, and built for the long haul. We don't rely on just one source to keep Roseville running. Instead, we use a mix of:

- Surface water from the American River—our primary source—through contracts with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Placer County Water Agency
- Groundwater we store and save for dry spells
- Recycled water, delivering more than a billion gallons annually for landscaping and industrial uses

This three-part strategy allows us to handle whatever comes our way—droughts, smart growth, new regulations—while delivering clean, reliable water daily.



Why it matters:

A one-source water strategy is risky today. Droughts are frequent, the weather is less predictable, and communities are growing fast. By planning and using various sources, we can respond quickly, stretch our resources, and stay ahead of challenges, not behind them.



The big picture:

Our approach isn't just about solving today's problems. It's about ensuring future generations have the same access to high-quality, reliable water as we do now. When water works, everything else can, too—our economic prosperity, neighborhoods, and way of life.

Water reliability is the backbone of any community, and it's essential for daily life and economic development," says George Hanson, Roseville's Water Utility Manager. "That's why we take a proactive, diversified approach. It ensures we always have a dependable water source ready for our residents and businesses, no matter the conditions."

Groundwater banking: Saving water for a dry day

Think of groundwater as our rainy-day fund. When water is plentiful, we store the extra underground so it's ready when dry years hit.

In 2023, the City stored 2,134 acre-feet of water, enough to supply more than 6,400 households for a year.

So far in 2026, Roseville has stored 4,515 acre-feet of water underground, or nearly 1.5 billion gallons, enough to meet the annual water needs of about 9,000 homes.

These efforts help strengthen long-term water reliability and make better use of available water when conditions allow.

Here's how it works:

- In wet years, we store excess surface water in underground aquifers.
- In dry years, we use that reserve to meet demand and ease pressure on rivers and reservoirs.
- Roseville has six active Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) wells, with two more being built.

We're also a key player in the Sacramento Regional Water Bank, a collaborative effort to boost regional groundwater storage.



"Water is too important to leave to chance," said Hanson.

"Groundwater banking gives us a buffer against the unpredictable."

With room to store nearly twice as much as Folsom Reservoir, this approach helps ensure water is available when our community needs it, now and in the future.



CITY OF
ROSEVILLE
CALIFORNIA
**Environmental
Utilities**



Sacramento River



Sites Reservoir location

Smarter systems, stronger supply

Having enough water is essential, but it's just the start. True water reliability means managing every drop with purpose and planning. In Roseville, we've built a system that is ready for the future. It's designed to adapt, protect, and perform. That takes smart infrastructure, bold investments, and a team that's always on it, day and night.

Here's how we're turning innovation into resilience for Roseville's water future:

The RiverArc Project: A regional partnership that boosts Placer County's water reliability by shifting supply from the American River to the more available Sacramento River. It uses existing infrastructure to access surplus water, supports groundwater sustainability, and allows us to switch sources based on conditions, helping protect the environment and meet future demand.

Sites Reservoir: This off-stream reservoir in Colusa County will be a game-changer for Northern California. While Roseville won't draw directly from it, our partnership in the project supports a more flexible, reliable water system across the state. Sites will take pressure off Folsom Lake, boost environmental flows for fish and wildlife, and help store water when it's plentiful for use when it's needed most.

These investments stretch our supplies, preserve our environment, and prepare us for future challenges.

From mountain snowmelt to your kitchen sink

Every drop in Roseville begins in the Sierra. Snowmelt flows into Folsom Lake, then to the Barton Road Water Treatment Plant for treatment and 24/7 monitoring. It travels through 700 miles of pipes—enough to reach San Diego and back—stored in tanks that keep pressure steady and water flowing. But the real strength? It's the people behind it. Meet Dan and Sunny.

Dan, Water Treatment Plant Operator

With nearly 19 years of experience, Dan is one of the reasons your water is safe, clean, and ready when needed. His day starts before most of us are up, and part of his job includes monitoring tank levels, testing water quality, and ensuring the treatment plant runs like clockwork.

"I came to water because I wanted a job that mattered," Dan says.

"Now I can't imagine doing anything else. It feels good to know my work makes a difference every day."



Sunny, Water Conservation Worker

Sunny brings over 15 years of experience in irrigation and landscaping, and a passion for helping people use water wisely.

She works one-on-one with residents to troubleshoot leaks, and gives expert advice on how to fine-tune irrigation systems, and convert thirsty lawns into sustainable landscapes.

"I love helping people see that small changes can make a big difference," she says.

"Every saved drop adds up, and I'm proud to be part of that."

See some of our other water pros at roseville.ca.gov/waterpros

Where does your water bill go?

Your monthly bill covers more than what comes out of the tap. It supports the entire system that keeps your water safe, reliable, and sustainable today and in the future.

We plan rates carefully to meet legal and financial obligations, invest in infrastructure improvements, and minimize customer impacts. Every dollar goes directly toward providing service—nothing more.

Your bill helps fund:

- Maintenance of 700+ miles of pipes, multiple storage tanks, groundwater wells, and pump stations
- Barton Water Treatment Plant operations – the people, the treatment process, the chemicals, and the maintenance
- Upgrades to aging infrastructure
- Rebates, water-wise calls, and customer programs
- A skilled team of operators, engineers, and support staff

Saving water is easier than you think

We're building a reliable water future, but it takes all of us. Small changes at home can lead to big savings on your bill and for the community.

Roseville makes it easy:

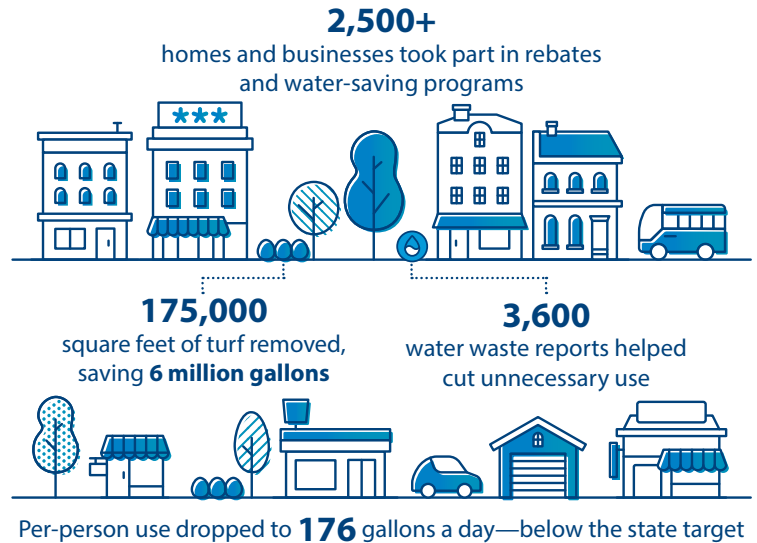
- Cash for Grass rebates to replace lawns with water-wise landscaping
- Toilet rebates for high-efficiency upgrades
- Free Water-Wise House Calls with personalized tips

*"Conservation is a partnership,"
said Bobby Alvarez, Water
Conservation Administrator.*

*"Every action, big or small,
makes a difference—and
we're here to help."*



How water efficiency adds up over a year



**Want to save water with us?
Visit roseville.ca.gov/savewater**



Explore. Learn. Grow.

Ever wonder how water gets to your faucet—or what happens after it goes down the drain? At Roseville's Utility Exploration Center, hands-on exhibits, free workshops, and the Inspiration Garden make those systems come to life.

"We like to say the UEC highlights where utilities meet life," said Brayden Mitchell, Utility Exploration Center Supervisor. "When people can see, interact and ask questions about things, that's when they begin to understand the full story."

Admission is free, and there's something for all ages.



**Scan here to learn more about the
UEC or visit roseville.ca.gov/explore**

Local Projects • Local Jobs • Local Energy

Turning organic waste into local power for a stronger *community*.

What is Biomass?

Biomass is renewable energy made by turning wood waste and natural materials into electricity. It is carbon-neutral, reliable, and helps manage fire-prone landscapes.



Agricultural

Fruit pits, nut shells,
pruning scraps, rice hulls



Urban

Yard trimmings,
construction wood,
non-recyclable organics



Forest

Sawmill byproducts,
harvested undergrowth,
and fire-fuel clearing

The benefits of managing overgrown forestland are clear: new jobs, funded local projects, and energy made from material that would otherwise go to waste. Pioneer Community Energy's biomass programs transform local organic waste into steady and renewable electricity, reducing wildfire fuel, supporting healthy forests, and keeping power close to home.

Projects in Our Community

Through local contracts and project innovation, Pioneer is working to invest in biomass locally. Investments include a biomass project in Grass Valley through the Bioenergy Market Adjusting Tariff (BioMAT) program, one of six confirmed BioMAT projects with 20-year Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).

Although primarily focused on projects in its service territory, Pioneer is actively working with developers throughout California on projects that help promote reliable electricity and reduce wildfire risk.



Your Power. Your Choice.

PioneerCommunityEnergy.org

(916) 758-8969
2510 Warren Dr., Ste. B
Rocklin, CA 95677



Planning for the Community He Calls Home

Brian Rickards isn't just planning for Placer County's water future—he's living it every day.

Brian has been with PCWA for 11 years and serves as Planning and Development Services Manager. In this role, he helps guide how PCWA's water systems keep pace with a growing region—ensuring that communities have the water they need, when they need it.

A Loomis resident, husband, and father of three active boys, Brian understands firsthand how important reliable water is for families, neighborhoods, and the community he calls home. Water is part of the lifestyle his family and many others in Placer County depend on.



"I hope readers understand that the work we do at PCWA is deeply personal to me," Brian said. "I'm not just planning for today's customers, but also for the future residents of Placer County, including my own kids and the generations who will rely on the water resources we protect."

At PCWA, Brian helps plan, improve, and maintain the water system that serves Placer County. His work includes tracking how water is used across the system, identifying and reducing water loss, and helping lead the planning and construction of new pipelines, treatment facilities, and other infrastructure.

He also helps coordinate the data, reporting, and planning efforts that keep the system running efficiently and in compliance—while working

closely with regional partners to strengthen connections between water systems and improve reliability during changing conditions.

"A big part of my role is making sure our water system stays strong and reliable for the long term," Brian said. "That means understanding how water is being used, where we can improve, and making smart investments in infrastructure."

He added that providing reliable water is truly a team effort.

"No one agency can do this alone. It takes coordination, trust, and shared commitment to make sure our communities have the water they depend on—now and in the future."

"Keeping water reliably flowing is both a responsibility and a privilege. The work I do on planning, system improvements, water loss management, and long-term reliability supports the entire team, and I take pride in being part of a much larger effort that customers rarely see."

Before joining PCWA, Brian worked on public infrastructure projects across California, including with State Parks. Today, he brings more than 20 years of experience to his role, helping lead major efforts like the future Ophir Water Treatment Plant—an investment that will strengthen the region's water system for decades to come.

But for Brian, success isn't just about projects, **it's about people.**

"Reliable water doesn't happen by accident, and it doesn't happen alone," he said. "It takes teamwork—across agencies, across communities—to make sure we're prepared for the future."



That same sense of teamwork carries into his life at home, where he and his wife, Jen, stay busy raising their three boys and staying connected to the community they love.



Helping Communities Stay Safe When Smoke is in the Air

Air Quality Monitoring

The Placer County Air Pollution Control District (District) operates an air quality monitoring network year-round. The District continuously monitors two major pollutants: ozone and particulate matter (PM).

Smoke contains a complex mixture of particles and gases, including PM_{2.5}. These tiny particles can travel deep into the lungs and affect your health. During wildfires, the District may deploy temporary air monitors in impacted communities to track particulate levels more closely.

Air Quality Index (AQI)

The U.S. EPA created the Air Quality Index (AQI) to make air quality information easier to understand. The AQI uses a color-coded scale to show whether air quality is healthy or unhealthy. Current AQI conditions are available at www.AirNow.gov.

Health Impacts of Smoke

Smoke exposure can cause asthma attacks, chest pain, coughing, headaches, irritated sinuses, nausea, runny nose, scratchy throat, stinging eyes, and shortness of breath. Some may begin to experience smoke impacts sooner than others. These individuals are referred to as sensitive groups by the AQI and includes children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with heart or lung disease.

When Smoke is in the Air

Residents should monitor local air quality conditions at <https://fire.airnow.gov>.

Steps to reduce outdoor smoke exposure:

- ✓ Reschedule outdoor activities if possible.
- ✓ Use an N95 respirator. Cloth masks do not filter fine smoke particles.
- ✓ Take frequent breaks and avoid strenuous activity. Breathing harder increases smoke exposure.

Steps to reduce indoor smoke exposure:

- ✓ Keep windows and doors closed.
- ✓ Set your HVAC system to recirculate air.
- ✓ Use a portable air cleaner.

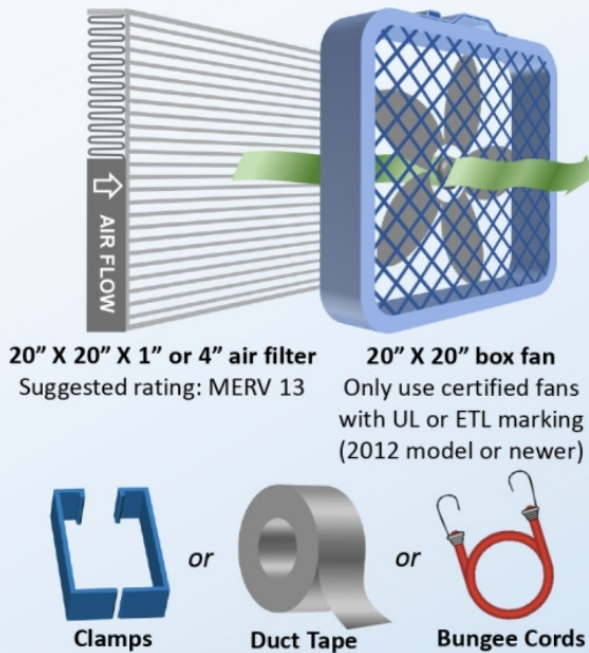
Particulate Matter Air Quality Index	
0 to 50	Good
51 to 100	Moderate
101 to 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
151 to 200	Unhealthy for All
201 to 300	Very Unhealthy for All
301 to 500	Hazardous for All

For more information about wildfire smoke and how to protect your health, visit www.placerair.org/8126/smoke, scan the QR code, or call (530) 745-2330.



DIY Air Cleaner to Reduce Smoke Indoors

Materials



Assembly

1. Attach the air filter to the back of the box fan using either clamps, duct tape or bungee cords.
2. Check the filter for the direction of the air flow (marked on the side of the filter).
3. Replace filters when dirty.

The Placer County Air Pollution Control District Woodstove Changeout Program

Now Accepting Applications!

Uncertified wood stoves and inserts (generally pre-1988) waste firewood, pollute the air, and create dust in the home. Apply now to upgrade to a new, clean-burning device.

- 1 Submit an online application
- 2 Receive a voucher
- 3 Visit an approved participating retailer
- 4 Install new stove and destroy old stove
- 5 Enjoy cleaner air!

Eligible Replacement Devices:

- Wood stoves/inserts
- Pellet stoves/inserts
- Electric stove heaters
- Electric heat pumps

Eligible Devices to Replace:



Apply online!

Get \$2,500 or more to replace your old wood stove!
(restrictions apply, see website for complete program requirements)



(530) 745-2330



www.placerair.org



woodstovechangeout@placer.ca.gov



Burn Wise
Program of U.S. EPA

www.epa.gov/burnwise



BE FIRE READY!

The **Placer West Fire Safe Council** is comprised of volunteers from Western Placer County. We engage local residents to raise awareness about wildfire risks and promote fire-safe practices.



Through community events and informational campaigns, we help to ensure that everyone in our communities are informed and prepared. We provide valuable resources and training sessions to educate community members on wildfire preparedness and safety measures empowering residents with the knowledge to protect their homes and families from potential wildfire threats.

Working hand-in-hand with local organizations, government agencies and fire professionals, we foster strong partnerships to enhance community resilience against wildfires. Together we develop and implement effective strategies to keep our neighborhoods safe and fire-ready.



✓ CHECKLIST

Research shows taking simple, scientifically proven steps can help reduce the risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire. Band together with homeowners in your community to follow this list of actions throughout the year.

- Clear** — ignitable material such as needles and leaves from roof, gutters, eaves, porches and decks.
- Repair** — any loose or missing roof shingles/tiles and caulk any gaps or openings on roof edges.
- Replace** — exterior vents with 1/8 inch metal wire mesh under-eaves, soffits and wall vents.
- Relocate** — items kept under decks or porches; swap out vegetation in these areas for rock or gravel.
- Replace** — mulch with hardscaping, rock, gravel or stone.
- Remove** — ignitable objects within the first 5' of structures like firewood, trash cans, patio furniture and vegetation.
- Protect** — water dry grass and shrubs, trim brown vegetation and dispose of yard waste.
- Prune** — low hanging branches (6-10 feet for taller trees, 1/3 of tree height for smaller trees); remove any tall grasses, vines and shrubs from under trees.
- Contact** — neighbors and create a plan to address shared wildfire safety concerns together.



Be informed- sign up for Placer Alert
www.placer.ca.gov/2426/Placer-Alert



QUESTIONS?

Toll Free: 833-286-3473

email: pwfsc.org



FIRE-SMART EXPO & GARDEN



SOUTH PLACER FIRE DISTRICT

Saturday, October 3 | 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Parking lot at South Placer Fire Protection District Station 18
5840 Horseshoe Bar Road, Loomis



Coffeeberry



Bees Bliss



Soft Rush



Ray Hartman



Pigeon Point

* Photo by Dale Kuroda

Celebrate the New Fire-Smart Garden for Placer County

See how thoughtful plant selection, spacing, irrigation, and maintenance work together to reduce fire pathways while supporting a healthy, climate-ready landscape.

Learn About:

- Creating defensible space through everyday yard decisions
- Maintaining a clear 0-5 foot zone around structures
- Keeping the 5-30 foot area lean and clean
- Reducing horizontal and vertical fire pathways
- Proper pruning and mulch placement
- Fire-smart, water-wise plants suited to local conditions

Free event.

No registration required. All are welcome.

Learn more: southplacerfire.org

Fire-smart landscaping resources: ucanr.edu/county/placer/nevada-counties/fire-smart-landscaping

Hosted By:



UC Master Gardener
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources



UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources



Wildland Tree Specialist, Inc.

BEFORE



AFTER



Fire Defense services

- Defensible Space
- Tree Removal
- Brush & Debris Removal
- Wildfire Fuel Reduction
- Forestry Mulching
- Fuel & Fire Break Construction
- Right of Way Clearing
- Egress Widening

Property Maintenance

- Land Cleanup
- Land Management / Land Prep
- Chipping
- Mastication
- Blackberry Removal / Brush Clearing
- Tree Pruning
- Storm & Fire Cleanup
- Hazardous Tree Removal
- Field Mowing



Luke: 916-626-9222

wildlandtreespecialist@gmail.com

Fully licensed and insured

