

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy-Progress Report**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2008 (Proposition 84)**

**Grantee Name:** Fire Safe Council of Nevada County

**Project title:** FSCNC Defensible Space Advisory Visit

**SNC Reference Number:** SNC 070065      **Submittal Date:** April 6, 2012

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**Check one:**

**6-Month Progress Report**  
 **Final Report**

6-Month Progress Reports should reflect the previous six months. Final Reports should reflect the entire grant period.

**A. Progress Report Summary:** (Please provide a general description of work completed during this reporting period.)

This report covers the period June 10, 2008 through February 29, 2012 and includes program activity during the funding freeze and stop work order. We have conducted seven training sessions resulting in 91 trained volunteer Defensible Space Advisors. Ongoing outreach to the community to promote the program has been continuous and embedded in all public relations activities including homeowner presentations, Firewise Communities education, annual prepare for fire season guide (inserted into The Union newspaper prior to 4<sup>th</sup> of July each year), county fair (free fire truck keychain if you sign up for a visit), talk radio interviews, website and annual reports. We provided a total of 635 advisory visits during the grant period. We matched the grant funds with nearly \$27,000 of local funding to expand the program and keep it going during the funding freeze and stop work order.

**B. Deliverables or Outcomes completed during this Reporting Period or Milestones Achieved:** (Include specific information, such as public meetings held, agency participation, partnerships developed, or acres mapped, treated or restored.)

Seven classes of Defensible Space Advisors have been trained producing 91 volunteer advisors to serve the community with individual on-site educational visits on creating and maintaining defensible space (California Public Resource Code 4291.) Advisory visits also educate homeowners on California Public

Resource Code 4290, which addresses access requirements to their residents for emergency services as well as the new 2008 Wildland Urban Interface Building Codes, designed to harden structures from ember intrusion during wildfire events. Instructors have included Chief Tim Fike with Nevada County Consolidated Fire District, Battalion Chief Dave Stonum with CAL FIRE, retired Nevada County Office of Emergency Services Director Dennis Cassella, retired CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Rob Paulus, UC Master Gardener Lynn Lørsensen, retired Forest Service siviculturalist Karen Schmike along with directors and staff from the Fire Safe Council.

From the initial grant period from June 10, 2009 through the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2009, 69 individual on-site defensible space advisory visits were completed. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, 269 individual on-site home advisory visits were completed. During the 2009-2010 fiscal year, 237 individual on-site home advisory visits were completed. During the 2010-2011 fiscal year, 38 visits were completed. And from July 1, 2011 through February 29, 2012 a total of 22 visits were performed. The total visits provided are 635, which exceeds the expected 500 visits in our grant proposal. Volunteer advisors provided over 692 hours, with another 128 hours provided by our volunteer instructors.

Estimated acreage treated based on the creation of defensible space through the education received is approximately 952, recognizing the footprint of the home and the required 100 feet, or more, of defensible space required pursuant to state law.

**C. Challenges or Opportunities Encountered:** (Please describe what has worked and what hasn't; include any solutions you initiated to resolve problems. If your project is not on schedule, please explain why here.)

We feel one of the largest challenges with this grant was the stop work order and freezing of funding. It is often difficult to implement projects for small non-profit entities without advance funding. We were fortunate in that our community stepped up and provided their time and energy at no cost and during our fiscal crisis, the majority of volunteers donated their mileage to the program. This has allowed us to continue to provide visits in excess of our estimate, but has required much more staff time for volunteer coordination. Additional staff hours were also incurred due to the 27% increase in home site visits delivered and coordinated through the office. Local matching funds from the Allstate Foundation assisted in keeping the program alive while our Prop 84 grant funding was frozen. Our budget report details the amount of these contributions that were not included in our original grant proposal, but were realized during the performance of the program.

Another huge challenge was other state grant funding being frozen simultaneously which caused an immediate reduction in staffing and therefore many projects were neglected until such time as the funding resumed and staff levels were increased to pick up the backlog of work.

**D. Unanticipated Successes Achieved:** (Please describe any additional successes beyond completing scheduled tasks or meeting scheduled milestones.)

Often the results of education are not recognized by changes in human behavior. In many cases, repeated education is necessary in order to have the information be acted upon. We were pleasantly surprised to learn from the prevention staff at the Nevada Yuba Placer Unit of CAL FIRE, that compliance with the defensible space law (PRC4291) in Nevada County has increased over the past three years. This report came from Chelsea Fox and was published in the 2011 Prepare for Fire Season Guide. While we measure the program's success in terms of number of advisory visits given, we did not anticipate such strong response to the education and assistance provided in terms of immediate action on the part of homeowners.

**E. Compare Actual Costs to Budgeted Costs:** (Please refer to your grant agreement to list your deliverables/budget categories and budgeted costs compared to actual costs incurred during this reporting period in the table below.)

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>Budgeted SNC Dollars</b>	<b>Actual Grant Dollars</b>	<b>Community Dollars/In-Kind</b>	<b>Total Program</b>
Volunteer Training	\$200	\$373.47	\$1,547.57	\$1921.04
Volunteer ID/Networking	\$630	\$780.44	\$98	\$878.44
Volunteer mileage ( and hours)	\$5,040	\$1,444.43	\$7,145	\$8589.43
Program promotion	\$552	\$550.	\$252	\$802.
Printing/Handouts	\$1,500	\$1,374.66	\$156	\$1530.66
Volunteer Coordination	\$2,610	\$5,999.10	\$6,672.34	\$12671.44
Photo Monitoring	\$100	\$110.	\$0	\$110.
Overhead/Employee Fringe	\$0	\$0	\$10,403	\$10,403
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,632</b>	<b>\$10,632</b>	<b>\$26,873.91</b>	<b>\$37,505.91</b>

**Explanation:** (if needed)

Expenditures from June 10, 2008 through February 29, 2012 are shown including matching dollars and in-kind contributions from the community. We have exceeded our estimates for number of volunteers trained and advisory visits given. **During our fiscal crisis and beyond, volunteers have largely donated their mileage to the program and**

therefore mileage is under budget. Having more volunteers and delivering more visits has required substantial additional staff time for coordination and therefore this line item is over budget.

**F. Do you have information to report on the project-specific Performance Measures for your project?** (If so, please list the Performance Measures below and describe your progress.)

The performance measure for our grant is number of advisory visits provided. We have exceeded our goal of 500 and have provided a total of 635 advisory visits.

**G. Were there any other relevant materials produced under the terms of this Agreement that are not a part of the budgeted deliverables? If so, please attach copies.** (Include digital photos, maps, media coverage of project, or other work products.)

In order to keep costs low, the council provides some educational information from our community partners such as CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management and the California Fire Safe Council and therefore no new materials were produced, but rather copied for our educational purpose.

**H. Next Steps:** (Work anticipated in the next 6 months, including location and timing of any scheduled events related to the project.)

We are hosting another training session in May 2012 as we have a number of new volunteers wanting to receive training to provide advisory visits in the community. We had 2 Realtors take the last class and will once again offer it to the Nevada County Association of Realtors in order to bring them into the program to assist in educating landowners when listing their properties for sale. Many properties are in foreclosure and have been neglected. Having Realtors understand the requirements of the law and ensuring they are met during the escrow transaction will serve to get the desired work completed sooner than later. Properties that are in compliance with PRC4291 are much more desirable to prospective buyers and therefore a win-win situation for all parties. The Defensible Space Advisory Visit program will continue through funding from undesignated donations to the council. Our board of directors has seen the value in the program demonstrated by the action taken by residents engaging in the program through creation of their defensible space.