

# Be Prepared. Wildfire Season in the East Bay

East Bay   
Regional Park District  
*Healthy Parks Healthy People*



*Provided by the East Bay Regional Park District  
in partnership with the Hills Emergency Forum*



*East Bay Regional Park  
District's Eagle and  
CAL FIRE joining efforts  
to protect homes*

Photo: Euan Ramachan

## Working Together to Protect Communities

**W**e are members of the **Hills Emergency Forum (HEF)**, a collaboration of fire departments and public governing agencies working together to assess, prevent/mitigate, prepare and respond to fires in the East Bay hills. In May 2018, we announced the start of fire season. We asked for your help to create defensible space around your home, understand fire conditions, and have an evacuation plan ready to go.

Fire season and wildland fires are never predictable, and 2018 is shaping up to be one of the most catastrophic fire seasons in California's history. With over 6,000 fires occurring in California this year, we are still in the middle of a very dangerous fire season. On August 4, 2018, a national disaster was declared in Northern California, due to the massive wildfires burning. In fact, fire season is expected to last all year. The most severe months may still be ahead.

With our current dry conditions and upcoming seasonal Diablo winds, we must prepare for a large wildfire nearby. We need your help in creating defensible space around your home, preparing your family and pets for evacuation, and being especially diligent during extreme fire weather conditions. If you are a visitor to your nearby East Bay Regional Park, East Bay Municipal Utility District or UC Berkeley trails, know their rules during fire season.

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**Working Together:**  
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Your local fire department websites and phone numbers are listed below. Your agency can provide you with more specific information on defensible space, evacuation routes, and other important information to stay prepared during wildfire season.

**Be Safe!**

## Hills Emergency Forum Contacts

**Hills Emergency Forum**  
[www.hillsemergencyforum.org](http://www.hillsemergencyforum.org)  
[hillsemergencyforum@comcast.net](mailto:hillsemergencyforum@comcast.net)

**CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit**  
[www.fire.ca.gov/SCU/](http://www.fire.ca.gov/SCU/)  
408-779-2121

**City of Berkeley Fire Department**  
[www.cityofberkeley.info/fire/](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/fire/)  
510-981-3473

**City of El Cerrito Fire Department**  
[www.el-cerrito.org/133/Fire-Department](http://www.el-cerrito.org/133/Fire-Department)  
510-215-4450

**City of Oakland Fire Department**  
[www.oaklandca.gov/departments/fire](http://www.oaklandca.gov/departments/fire)  
510-238-3851

**East Bay Municipal Utility District**  
[www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com)  
1-866-403-2683

**East Bay Regional Park District**  
[www.ebparks.org/about/fire/](http://www.ebparks.org/about/fire/)  
510-881-1833

**Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory**  
[www.lbl.gov](http://www.lbl.gov)  
510-486-4000

**Moraga Orinda Fire District**  
[www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)  
925-258-4599

**University of California, Berkeley**  
[www.berkeley.edu](http://www.berkeley.edu)  
510-642-3734



# The Hills Emergency Forum (HEF)

**The Hills Emergency Forum** (HEF) was first formed in October of 1993 as a collaboration of local governing agencies in the Oakland-Berkeley hills. Over the past 25 years, we have successfully built interagency consensus on the development of fire safety standards and codes, incident response and management protocols, public education programs, multi-jurisdictional training and fuels reduction strategies.

This year marks the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the devastating October 21, 1991 Tunnel Fire/Oakland Hills Firestorm where 25 people lost their lives and over 2,800 structures were

destroyed. This fire provided the impetus for the development of the Hills Emergency Forum. However, it was not the first major urban wildland intermix fire in this region. Historically the East Bay has proven prone to wildland fire. The area's recorded fire history shows 14 major fires since the first fire documented in 1923. When mapped it becomes apparent that the fires often reoccur in the same general areas and show similar environmental conditions.

**Active members** include Berkeley Fire Department, California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), East Bay Municipal Utility District, East

Bay Regional Park District Fire Department, El Cerrito-Kensington Fire Department, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Moraga-Orinda Fire Department, Oakland Fire Department, University of California Berkeley.

**Additional Partners** in Fire Prevention Agencies include Alameda County Fire Department, City of Alameda Fire Department, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Piedmont Fire Department, Richmond Fire Department

**Hills Emergency Forum:**  
[Hillsemergencyforum@comcast.net](mailto:Hillsemergencyforum@comcast.net)



*Oakland Hills Fire Storm Aftermath, 1991*



# Wildfire Prevention More Important Than Ever at the East Bay Regional Park District

**The East Bay Regional Park District** encompasses an extensive network of parks comprising over 121,000 acres and 73 parks in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. We are a founding member of the Hills Emergency Forum and have worked side-by-side with our local jurisdictions and partners in completing fuel breaks, removing vegetation, and responding to fires on Park District and adjacent property. Highlights of work done in the East Bay Hills include:

**The Park District Fire Department** is committed to wildfire management and rapid

response to fires. Our 50+ members, aided by a helicopter, monitor and fight wildfires, including water drops throughout the Bay Area. We use sophisticated monitoring equipment to evaluate weather and wildfire conditions and to determine park user restrictions based on the data. We also use crews, equipment and cattle, sheep and goat grazing to thin and remove hazardous vegetation throughout the year.

**Fire Danger Restrictions** are posted through park signage and notices on the website. At times there may be restrictions in the parks. Smoking is prohibited in ALL East Bay Regional Parks.

A comprehensive **Fuels Management Plan** was adopted in 2010. It highlights 3,000 acres in the East Bay Hills for fuels management treatment including hazardous fuel removal and tree thinning, especially of invasive eucalyptus. Through hand crews and equipment, the District has treated approximately 1,000 acres. The overall goal of the Fuels Management Plan is to create well-managed healthy forests removing overcrowded trees and debris. Strategic thinning of forests allows native species such as oaks, bays, and willows to grow which are less prone to wildfire spread.

**Fire weather information** is gathered from each of the Remote

Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) and is translated into public notifications about the potential fire danger and threats to public safety. These fire danger notification signs can be found in many of the parks and display the current level of dangerous fire potential.

**Funding** for East Bay Parks Fuels Management projects are through Measure CC (expires in 2020, up for extension as Measure FF on November 6 ballot); FEMA Grant for \$5.7 million, and Park District General Funds.

Although your HEF member agencies' work to reduce the risk of severe wildfires is extensive, it's the collective efforts of homeowners and neighbors that can have the greatest positive impact. By reducing fire fuels around your home, you can prevent small fires from becoming large disasters. An evacuation plan can keep your family safe during times of fire. Check with your local fire department for any additional defensible space or weed abatement ordinances or special evacuation requirements.

## Protect Your Home – Create Defensible Space:

- Reduce fire fuels around your home – cut and remove overgrown brush.
- Prune branches away from roofs and chimneys.
- Clean needles, leaves and debris from rain gutters.
- Fire harden your home by installing fine wire mesh screen over roof, eaves and foundation vents.
- Remove all items from under your deck; do not use the space for storage.
- Watch for Red Flag warnings and follow all restrictions on trimming, mowing and power equipment.

## Evacuate When Necessary:

- Be prepared for the worst. Have a plan for gathering family members, pets and valuables in case an approaching wildfire requires evacuation.
- Obey all evacuation orders. Learn different evacuation routes by vehicle or on foot.
- Don't wait to be told to evacuate. If you feel threatened, leave.
- Do not block the roads for fire engines and emergency personnel.

Visit your local fire departments website for more information on defensible space requirements and evacuation procedures. CAL FIRE has more tips on wildfire preparedness and an evacuation checklist at [www.readyforwildfire.com](http://www.readyforwildfire.com).

**GET READY, GET SET, GO!**  
Wildfire Is Coming. Are You Ready?

GET PREPARED FOR WILDFIRE BEFORE IT STRIKES BY FOLLOWING THE READY, SET GO! GUIDE:

**BEING READY**

- 100 FT: CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE. 100-FEET OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE IS REQUIRED AROUND YOUR HOME. LEARN HOW TO MAINTAIN THE TWO ZONES OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE NEEDED.
- UP TO 1 MILE: HARDEN YOUR HOME. FLYING EMBERS CAN DESTROY HOMES UP TO A MILE FROM WILDLAND AREAS. LEARN HOW TO PROTECT AND HARDEN YOUR HOME FROM A WILDFIRE THREAT.

**GETTING SET**

1. WHAT
2. HOW
3. WHO
4. WHEN

- PREPARE YOUR HOME AND FAMILY FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING TO EVACUATE.
- CREATE A WILDFIRE ACTION PLAN.
- ASSEMBLE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT.
- FILL OUT A FAMILY COMMUNICATION PLAN.

**BEING READY TO GO**

- PRE-EVACUATION STEPS. PREPARE BOTH THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF YOUR HOUSE FOR EVACUATION. GET THE CHECKLISTS.
- REVIEW YOUR EVACUATION PLAN CHECKLIST.
- EVACUATION STEPS. WHEN IMMEDIATE EVACUATION IS NECESSARY, GET READY TO GO!

- ENSURE YOUR EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT IS IN YOUR VEHICLE.
- COVER-UP TO PROTECT AGAINST HEAT AND FLYING EMBERS. WEAR LONG PANTS, LONG SLEEVE SHIRT, HEAVY SHOES/BOOTS, CAP, SUN BANDANA TO COVER FACE, GOGGLES OR GLASSES. 100% COTTON IS PREFERABLE.
- LOCATE YOUR PETS AND TAKE THEM WITH YOU.

**ONE LESS SPARK ONE LESS WILDFIRE** | **CAL FIRE** | FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG](http://READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG) #READYFORWILDFIRE



# Members in Action – Agency Updates

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)



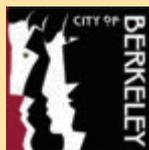
assists with reducing fire fuels in several maintenance areas on East Bay Regional Park District lands in the East Bay Hills. The conservation crew's work includes cutting brush, trimming trees, creating brush piles and conducting pile burns from cut materials on EBMUD watershed lands, adjacent to Grizzly Peak Boulevard, the San Pablo Recreation Area, Lafayette Reservoir watershed and watershed lands adjacent to the communities of Orinda and Lafayette.

## El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department



has developed a partnership with CAL FIRE and their CDCR crews. This partnership has been instrumental in the maintenance of crucial fire fuel reduction zones between their Natural Area Parks and the neighborhood interface zones surrounding these parks. This relationship has been so effective that El Cerrito/Kensington Fire Department has expanded the program and the partnership with East Bay Regional Park District to maintain the existing fire fuel reductions zones along the miles of parkland urban interface with the City of El Cerrito and the Community of Kensington.

## City of Berkeley Fire Department



annually inspects over 1,000 parcels in designated high fire risk zones for hazards such as excess vegetation. This year due to excessive vegetation cover City of Berkeley included inspection of 330 additional parcels with no additional staffing. The Fire Department also conducts complaint-driven inspections throughout the City. Residents must clear combustible brush and vegetation adjacent

to building property lines and roadsides. Tree branches must be cleared from any chimney, stovepipe, or overhang over a building. All leaves, needles, and dead vegetation must be swept from roofs. This program is operated in cooperation with the East Bay Regional Park District, which has programs to reduce combustible material in the wildland urban interface zone on its property adjacent to Berkeley residences and roadways.

## City of Oakland Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau



CITY OF OAKLAND

staffs a Vegetation Management Unit specifically for the wildland urban interface (WUI) areas of the city. This unit consists of four Inspectors and one Supervisor. The unit is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the records of over 21,000 residential inspections and 4,000 vacant lot parcels within the WUI area. They also manage over 1,300 acres of park lands and open space. This area comprises 10,590 acres, approximately 16.5 square miles with over 300 miles of interior roadways.

## East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD)



manages vegetation to reduce fuel loading on 20 acres along the Oakland/Berkeley watershed interface. Combined management tactics, including herded goats, mechanical mowing and hand labor, were used to reduce fuel loading and enhance native plant populations. A volunteer group continues to assist with removing and reducing noxious weeds to enhance the growth of diverse and abundant native plant species throughout the fuel treatment area. With support from CAL FIRE conservation crews, EBMUD Rangers removed 265 aged Monterey Pine trees and burned 324 brush piles on the east side of San Pablo Reservoir. EBMUD and PG&E completed

a collaborative two-year vegetation reduction project under and around their transmission towers and lines on EBMUD watershed lands. Trees and brush were pruned, removed, and all the overgrown vegetation from previous years of maintenance was chipped and scattered.

## Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL)



has completed all of the recommendations in its previous 10-year Wildland Fire Plan. The Lab is expanding their fire protection program. A new fire management plan was completed to comply with federal requirements. LBNL continues to maintain their property using goat herds and hand-labor to reduce annual fuel loads.

## Moraga Orinda Fire Protection District



and the Town of Moraga, in partnership with CAL FIRE and Diablo Fire Safe Council, utilized a conservation crew for a project on Mulholland Ridge in Moraga. The crew removed brush, cut dead trees and limbed up branches of aged Monterey Pine trees along the old ridge top roadway.

## University of California, Berkeley (UCB)



continues to work with its Fire Mitigation Committee to plan and implement fire hazard reduction projects in the Hill Campus. UCB has focused on defensible space and maintenance while planning the implementation of future projects. UCB also has managed, extended and improved its 8-mile trail network, cleared roadsides, turnouts and neighborhood interface zones with contract crews. In 2017 and 2018, 200 volunteers from the UC Berkeley Forestry Club planted approximately 100 pine and oaks to reforest "tightwad hill" located above the stadium. Aged trees had been removed in the prior year for fire prevention.



Photo: MOFD

Fire briefing by HEF member agencies



Photo: C. Godley

Cutting brush to reduce fire fuels



Photo: K. Leonard

Briones Regional Park prescribed burn