

WATER SYSTEM RESILIENCY IN THE FACE OF WILDFIRES 2017

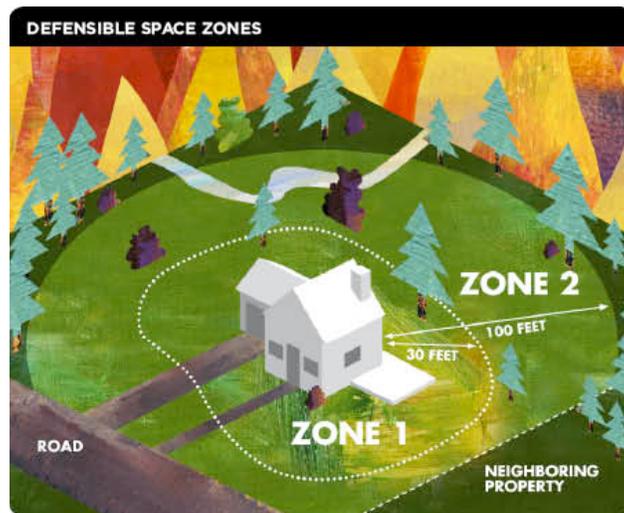
Background: With the significant precipitation in the last few months, vegetation has been growing abundantly. Toward summer with the increasing dry temperatures, vegetation will dry out and fuel increasing threats of wildland fires.

According to the May 1, 2017 [National Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook](#),

“In Northern California abundant precipitation will lead to a slower start to fire activity in June in the far east side zones. This will give way but a robust fire season in July and August in most southern portions of the Area thanks to abundant fine fuel crop development...

“Normal significant wildland fire potential is expected in most areas of southern California through August except in the Sierra Foothills where above normal significant wildland fire potential is expected to develop in June and the Sierra where below normal significant fire potential is expected through June”.

In light of the predicted robust fire season statewide, the SWRCB DDW offers the following recommendations and guidance to consider in the face of wildfires.



Defensible Space: It is important to create and maintain sufficient clearance around all vulnerable structures. Follow the local fire jurisdiction requirements (e.g., 30 feet at least, 200 feet at best).

Below are resources from Cal Fire and International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC):

<http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible_space

<https://www.wildlandfirersg.org/>



Generators: The movement of water for potable purposes and firefighting requires electrical energy, which may not be available in an emergency. Consider backup, alternate, and portable energy sources such as generators.

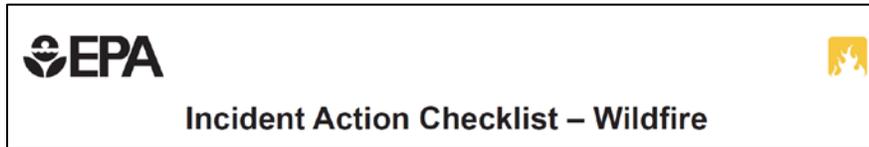
The Army Corp of Engineers has an effort called the Emergency Power Facility Assessment Tool (EPFAT). More information and how to prepare and facilitate can be found at: <http://epfat.swf.usace.army.mil/Welcome.aspx>. A 12 minute tutorial video can be found at this site: <https://vimeo.com/125044973>.



Mutual Aid: Coordinate with your neighboring water systems and form a network. Participate in the California Water/Wastewater Emergency Response Network (CalWARN): <http://www.calwarn.org/>. The strength in such a network is the ability to work together and obtain necessary resources. Learn and be familiar with emergency response protocols and how to request resources from the emergency services entities.

Wood Structures: Many water system facilities still consist of, or are housed in wood structures. SWRCB-DDW observed a water system whose only finished water reservoir had a wood roof that burned into the reservoir. The reservoir was rendered non-functional, and the water system was not in service for months. Consider replacement of wood structures with fireproof or resistant materials.

Plastics: PVC piping when burned releases chemicals. Consider protecting such materials from being burned or replacing such materials with those that would be less affected by heat or fire.



Policies/Procedures/Plans: Review and update Emergency Response Plans.

The USEPA has a helpful Incident Action Checklist for wildfires:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/wildfire.pdf>.



Addressing the above items will help increase your water system's resilience.

If there are any questions or to discuss the above information, please contact your local District Office. You can find our contact information on our webpage:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/drinking_water/programs/index.shtml

Thank you for your efforts in protecting your water system.

SWRCB DDW

