

May is Wildfire Awareness Month. We've already been issued fire weather warnings, had burn permits suspended, and even seen multiple recent fires in the Mother Lode area.

So let's talk about defensible space and the home-outward approach. Defensible space is the buffer you create between a building on your property and the wildland area surrounding it.

Research from the deadly Camp Fire in Paradise shows that the key to whether your home survives a fire is what's going on within 100 feet of it. This key is to eliminate or minimize flammable fuels.

Did you know defensible space has zones? Where are they and what must be done in each? If you can't answer this question, please do your research and do the maintenance.

The home-outward approach is a modern take on wildfire defense that emphasizes all homes be made defensible from fires rather than expect that a wildfire itself can be put out.

Yes, defensible space is one more thing to do, but it can be an opportunity to really get to know every inch of your property, to build community by offering help to your elderly neighbor, and to get the kids involved with something meaningful outdoors. Perhaps assign each child to a zone and have them do inspections and maintenance!

It's up to all of us to make communities that can survive wildfires.

Visit the Calaveras Community Action Project website, www.calaverascap.com, and click CAP Climate to read about wildfire preparedness.

-Austen Thibault

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