



## Striving for Solutions at Yosemite West Yosemite National Park, California National Fire Plan – Community Assistance

Yosemite West is a small community just outside of Yosemite National Park, California. It has only one road into it and multiple absentee residents (or those who only come for summer vacation). It is also at extreme risk of a catastrophic fire: a densely forested area with fuel accumulations due to fire suppression and at the top of a ridge in an area that has lightning strikes. In 1990, the Steamboat Fire narrowly missed the community,) while the A-Rock Fire simultaneously burning, devastated the nearby community of Foresta.



*Conditions around Yosemite West include down and dead trees that could fuel an unwanted wildland fire.*

The emphasis placed by the National Fire Plan on the protection of wildland-urban interface communities brought new attention on the risk wildland fire poses to Yosemite West. Thanks to concerned residents and a partnership with Yosemite National Park, Mariposa County, the Sierra National Forest, and Wildland Fire Associates, steps are being taken that will help Yosemite West residents reduce the risk of wildland fire in their community.

Residents are working to become a FireSafe community including following fire clearance guidelines around their homes. Yosemite National Park has started mechanical thinning and prescribed burning projects on their boundary with Yosemite West to create a shaded fuel break and to reduce woody debris that would contribute to a wildland fire. Wildland Fire Associates has devised a fuel management strategy for Yosemite West to significantly decrease the risk of wildland fire. Community members are in the process of writing grants to get federal monies to begin fuel reduction in the town.



*These piles will be burned when there are favorable conditions and eliminate an additional fuel source.*

There are still obstacles to be overcome. Many absentee landowners have not followed fire clearance guidelines. There is no fire station in Yosemite West, which means that the response time for structure and wildland fire reduces their options for grant monies. Agreements with federal agencies to work on or near private lands need to be drafted.

However, the partnership to protect Yosemite West from wildland fire has shown the benefits that occur when parties involved recognize the need and work together to find solutions.

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