

Anderson Valley Wildfire Preparedness

In January of 2019, Anderson Valley Village began exploring the possibility of promoting community wide attention on the need for disaster preparedness. While this grew out of reports of the impact of the Paradise fire on that community's senior citizens, it was clear that this project had the potential to be helpful to everyone in our Valley, regardless of age.

AVV Board Member, Philip Thomas met first with representatives of Anderson Valley Fire Department to discuss their program and plans. When it became clear that AVFD welcomed AVV's interest and efforts, Donna Pierson-Pugh and Lauren Keating organized a community meeting. The meeting, which took place on March 30th at AVFD was attended by a variety of community members including representatives of the fire department and Valley neighborhoods from Yorkville to Navarro. Numerous county and state disaster preparedness resources were identified and discussed. Links to these resources were subsequently incorporated under the Resources tab on AVV's website. There was discussion of "road-sheds" – a term derived from watershed that identifies a group of people living on or near the same road(s) – and Fire Safe Councils as ways of organizing our Valley's residents to prepare for and respond to wildfires.

AVV's second community meeting took place at AVFD on April 28th. It focused on how to promote the development of road-sheds throughout the Valley and a valley-wide Fire Safe Council. There was discussion of the value of both. The road-sheds provide attention to the specific needs of a neighborhood and an AV Fire Safe Council could provide ways to share neighborhood experience as well as facilitate communication with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council and grant funding agencies. Members of several road-sheds described their progress and others announced plans for meetings. There was general consensus that our Valley needed to establish a Fire Safe Council.

AVV's third community meeting is scheduled for 4pm on May 19th at the AVFD. Future progress will be added here when it is available.

What began as a concern about the broader concept of disaster preparedness has become focused on fire risk reduction. Given the recent increase in devastating wildfires in northern California, this is clearly needed. More work remains in both of these areas. With regard to disaster preparedness, our community needs to become better informed about how to prepare for "fire weather" power outages planned by P.G.& E and the disruptions created by earth quakes. While AVV is eager to help, all of these issues ultimately require the experience, knowledge, and leadership of other organizations and individuals.

More information regarding disaster preparedness will be posted on our website when it is available.