

Low-Cost Chipper Program Available to County Residents

Area residents have low-cost, curb-side assistance for reducing brush from their property which not only lowers fire danger but helps create defensible space as well. With the fire season here, Placer County wants to remind residents of a multi-agency, low-cost chipping program that is available to reduce fire danger by turning flammable brush into piles of wood chips. The program is coordinated through the Placer County Board of Supervisors, Resource Conservation District, Office of Emergency Services, Air Pollution Control District and the Sheriff's Office.



Forestland after brush has been cleared and chipped.

The program is now grant funded, which is a tenuous source of funding. To ensure its continuation, the chipping service will switch to a cost-sharing format on August 2, 2010.

Under direction from the Board of Supervisors, the County worked with the Resource Conservation District to establish a reasonable and sustainable cost-share rate structure to keep the program running.

The full cost of the chipper service is \$80 per hour. The cost-share for the chipping service will be \$40 for each hour of service. The minimum service time will be a half hour. Most jobs take 30 minutes or less. Grants secured the funding needed to purchase four chippers that are used in the program. The Placer County Sheriff's Office provides inmate labor for the work. The Conservation District secured grant funding to help pay for Chipper Program operations as well as administrative and supervisory staff.

The low-cost chipping service is available for all of Placer County. Brush is often burned and chipping the brush improves air quality by reducing the pollutants that burning puts into the air. State law requires that property owners maintain 30 feet of "clean and green" space immediately around their homes. In addition, state law also requires a total of 100 feet of defensible space clearing around qualifying residences.

A homeowner's clearing responsibility is limited to 100 feet away from their buildings or to the property line, whichever is less, and limited to their land.

Since it began, the Chipper Program has created about 100,000 tons of chipped material. So crews can easily access the brush, it needs to be stacked with the butt ends facing the road. The crews will chip the brush and blow the chips into a pile back onto the property. Maximum diameter of brush that can be chipped is 12 inches. The crews will not chip poison oak or berry vines, nor will they chip dozer or tractor piles.

To schedule chipper service, please call the chipper program management center at 530-889-0111 and select option 3. Callers should leave their names, site addresses, mailing addresses (if different from the site address), phone numbers and the locations of the chip piles.

Contact the Chipper Program at the Placer County RCD for questions on cost waiver eligibility at 530-885-3046, or visit the District's [Website](#) for more information. To see the flier about the chipper program, click here:

[Chipper](#)

To view the Placer County Wildfire Prevention guide, click: [Wildfire Prevention](#)