



Promoting Wildfire Safety Through Education and Action

July 1, 2021

Dear Friend of the Council-

The Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council wants to thank you for your support of the Council and its activities.

The Fire Safe Council is a certified non-profit organization formed in the wake of the 1990 Painted Cave Fire. Our goal is to unify public and private organizations to educate, motivate and coordinate communities to better prepare and mitigate the impacts of future wildfires within Santa Barbara County.

This past year brought an array of challenges. The 2020 fire season was a reminder of the importance of our preparation efforts as California burned more than double its historical number of acres – an extraordinary 4.2 million. Locally, Santa Barbara County had a relatively mild fire season with 128 separate ignitions totaling 2,553 acres. The largest fire being the 1,105-acre Scorpion Fire on Santa Cruz Island.

Despite the challenges, 2020 was an exciting year for the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council. With your generous support and funds received from the Santa Barbara Foundation and Pacific Gas & Electric, we were able to:

- Create an educational video on property wildfire preparedness: [Separating Your Home From Wildfire - The Zones of Defensible Space](#).
- Co-sponsor the multi-media wildfire educational experience: [Walk Into Wildfire](#).
- Create a [guest speaker series with presentations from experts](#) in fire meteorology, fire ecology, fire science and post-fire vegetation recovery.
- Update [our website](#) showcasing our projects and programs and providing resources to help property owners become more prepared for wildfire.



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Your Board of Directors is excited about the opportunities that 2021 provides.

Our plans for this year include:

- Sponsoring the creation of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for the Gaviota Coast using funds received through the California Climate Investments Fire Prevention Grant Program.
- Partnering in the formation of the Regional Wildfire Preparedness Program, which will include the Fire Safe Council bringing on paid staff to manage the Community Lead portion of the program, sponsoring additional Walk Into Wildfire exhibits, and getting our communities certified in the nationally recognized FireWise program.
- Continuing the guest speaker series to further educate our members on wildfire preparedness, response and recovery.

We recently held our annual Board of Directors election and are excited to bring in the diverse experience of four new directors: Victoria Cooper, Renee O'Neill, Scott Coffman, and Dan Fawcett. We sincerely appreciate Rolf Larsen and Chris Smith's contributions to the Board as they step down from their director positions. Paul Van Leer will replace John Ahlman as the fourth Chairman since the creation of the Fire Safe Council in 1995. We invite you to read more about the history of the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council and to meet all our directors on [our webpage](#).

We are currently accepting membership/renewals in the Fire Safe Council. You may sign up for updates, pay for membership, and/or contribute a [donation online](#).

We invite you to become familiar with our new website as it has a host of resources to help you in your wildfire preparation efforts. The site is often updated as new information becomes available including information regarding future meetings.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support and hope you can join us at our meetings this year.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Van Leer".

Paul Van Leer, President
Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Council