

## Office of the State Fire Marshal

### Caylor Fire – Fire Plan Success Story

The Caylor Fire was caused by an equipment spark on July 14, 1999 near the town of Soulsbyville in Tuolumne County. The blaze began just after 11 a.m. in wildland that borders the Willow Springs subdivision. Driven by wind and high temperatures, the blaze spread rapidly. As fire crews responded, the fire was actively making its way toward the subdivision.

Fortunately, CAL FIRE was aware the neighborhood was a high-risk area for wildland fire. In 1998, the subdivision was inspected and a plan implemented which encouraged homeowners to create a "defensible space" between their land and the wildland that borders it by clearing flammable vegetation around their property. In the spring of 1999, the subdivision was re-inspected and the homes were found to have complied with the program.

The homeowner's hard work providing clearance for their property paid off and the fire did not burn into their neighborhood. Knowing the homeowners had taken precautionary measures to protect their property, firefighters were able to concentrate their attack on the head of the fire. This allowed firefighters to contain the fire quickly and with fewer resources.

While the Caylor Fire did burn 105 acres, no damage occurred to the 14 homes in the area. The "defensible space" program saved approximately \$2.4 million in total value of homes and taxpayers benefited as firefighters did not have to resort to the use of countless hours of expensive air and ground attack resources.