



Vegetation Management and Defensible Space Help Keep Wildfire from Spreading

Late Tuesday evening on January 14, a vegetation fire was reported on the Riviera along Las Tunas Road. The fire started when property owners dumped, what they thought to be, cold ashes from a fireplace into a large compost pile earlier that evening. Hours later, engine crews arrived to find a 400 square foot fire burning through the compost, a neighboring wood pile and surrounding debris. Crews were able to quickly extinguish the fire and stop it from spreading.

In addition to the quick action of the firefighters and calm winds, the surrounding vegetation was void of ladder fuels and dead material. This combination proved successful in preventing what could have been another devastating wildfire.

The specific area where the fire occurred was treated 2 years prior as part of a large vegetation management project supported by the Wildland Fire Suppression Assessment District and jointly funded by the Santa Barbara 2010 Community Fuels Hazard Reduction Project grant supplied by the California Fire Safe Council.

Vegetation management projects focus on the area outside of a homeowners required defensible space. Through these projects, the Fire Department works with individual property owners and neighborhoods to accomplish education, assist with fuel hazard reductions projects, protect natural resources unique to the area, and help outline maintenance programs.

The property owner where the fire occurred maintained both their own defensible space and the work that was completed through the project. What could have turned devastating proved to be a great example of how defensible space can help to reduce our threat from wildfire.

