

RESCUE 1

FOUNDATION

2016-21

**SCRAPBOOK
&
PHOTO ALBUM**

Foundation Support and Donations

- **Angie Sakalay Bequest (2020):** A longtime Moraga resident bequeathed **\$200,000**, the largest donation in Rescue One history. Funds were earmarked for advanced medical equipment and honoring her legacy.
 - Over the five years, **Rescue One raised over \$580,000** to support MOFD with:
 - **LUCAS devices**
 - **Defibrillators and cardiac monitors**
 - **Thermal imaging cameras**
 - **AEDs placed throughout Lamorinda**
 - **Scholarships and CPR training materials**
-

Fire & Emergency Response Highlights

- **October 2020 – Sanders Ranch Fire:** MOFD coordinated with Cal Fire and park services to suppress a 30-acre fire caused by late-season fuel reduction work.
 - **August Complex Fire (2020):** MOFD staff assisted on-site at California's largest wildfire, with responsibilities including safety oversight, emergency medical support, GIS mapping, and interagency liaison work.
-

Wildfire Preparedness & Prevention

- MOFD:
 - Enforced early deadlines for **defensible space and fuel mitigation**.
 - Released and updated its **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** to prioritize at-risk areas and strategies.
 - **Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs** launched **Prepared MOFD**, an interactive wildfire safety website, funded by a \$15,000 grant.
 - Emphasis on **community education**, neighborhood meetings, and public outreach campaigns.
-

Community Engagement

- **Essay Contest (2020):** Rescue One sponsored a \$500 scholarship competition for high school students to propose tech solutions for better emergency evacuation alerts.
 - **COVID-19 Response (2020–21):**
 - Firefighters prioritized for vaccination.
 - MOFD participated in regional vaccine clinics.
 - **Insurance Advocacy (2020):** MOFD passed a resolution opposing arbitrary property insurance cancellations based on unverified fire risk assessments.
-

Regulatory and Legal Actions

- **PG&E Lawsuit Settlement (2021):**
 - MOFD and PG&E settled a dispute over fire safety regulations.
 - Revised ordinance required PG&E to notify the district by 9 a.m. day-of for certain high-risk work and deployments.
-

Leadership and Personnel

- **Craig Jorgens** elected MOFD Board President in 2021.
- **Lucas Lambert** promoted to Battalion Chief, joining the executive team.
- MOFD emphasized internal promotions and operational stability during a time of regional wildfire stress.

2016

- **AED Saves Life:** A staff member at 24-Hour Fitness in Moraga uses an **AED** to revive a patron experiencing cardiac arrest. The device had been placed there thanks to Rescue One donations.
-

2017–2019 (Background context; specific events not detailed in this scrapbook)

2020

March 18

- **Wildfire Grant Awarded:** MOFD receives a **\$15,000 grant** from the California Fire Foundation to develop the **Prepared MOFD** wildfire education website.

March–April

- **Essay Contest Launch:** Rescue One sponsors a **\$500 scholarship essay contest** for local high school students to suggest innovative technologies for emergency evacuation notifications.

September 1

- **Angie Sakalay Passes Away:** Longtime Moraga resident and recurring donor to Rescue One bequeaths **\$200,000** in her trust to the foundation—the **largest single donation** in its history.

October 11

- **30-Acre Vegetation Fire:** The **Sanders Ranch fire** breaks out due to late-season mowing. Four agencies respond, and the fire is contained in 2 hours.

October–November

- **August Complex Fire Deployment:**
 - Four MOFD personnel, including Dennis Rein and Capt. Mike Marquardt, deploy to assist with the **largest wildfire in California history** (over 1 million acres).
 - MOFD provides field safety, GIS mapping, medical services, and agency liaison support.

October 14

- **New MOFD Fire Code Enacted:**

- Includes revised deadlines for abatement (May 31) and requires real estate sellers to file compliance reports.
- Supports MOFD's **Wildfire Prevention Strategic Plan**.

December 9

- **Insurance Code Enforcement:**
 - MOFD passes a resolution affirming it—not insurers—sets fire code standards.
 - Addresses complaints about **unwarranted property insurance cancellations**.
-

2021

January 6

- **CWPP Draft Released:**
 - MOFD publishes the **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** to guide local risk reduction efforts and qualify for federal funding.
 - Public workshops scheduled for Orinda, Canyon, and Moraga.

January 6–19

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout:**
 - MOFD firefighters and first responders receive the **first round of vaccines** at a county-run drive-in clinic in Concord.

January 22

- **PG&E Lawsuit Settlement:**
 - PG&E drops lawsuit against MOFD after both sides agree on a **revised ordinance**.
 - Updated rules require same-day SIPT notifications (by 9 a.m.) and ban **non-emergency electrical work** during Red Flag warnings.

December (late 2020–early 2021)

- **Leadership Transitions:**
 - **Craig Jorgens** elected MOFD Board President.
 - **Lucas Lambert** promoted to Battalion Chief, joining district leadership.



July 4, 2016
Mora 99





MOFD Drone
2016





Rescue one
poster contest



Rescue One Foundation



Rescue One Foundation is the first citizen-inspired foundation in California that is dedicated to the support of its local fire district and emergency medical service. It was established in 1977 to provide funds for equipment and supplies that may not have been available through the Fire District's regular budget.

**Rescue
ONE**
FOUNDATION
In support of
Moraga-Orinda Fire District
Emergency Medical Service
www.mofd.org/about/rescueone



Design by Jules Lewis



Grinda 2017
Open House









July 4, 2017
Moraaga





Moraga 2017
Open House









Morgan
7/4/18





Fall 2018
open house



the cooks





2020

Longtime Moraga resident bequeaths \$200K to Rescue One



Photo courtesy Tony Nuccio

Angie Sakalay passed away on Sept. 1, 2020.

By Jennifer Wake

As part of her lifelong commitment to give back to the community, over the past several years Moraga resident Angie

Sakalay made an annual donation to the Rescue One Foundation – a nonprofit that collects and administers funds to purchase medical equipment on behalf of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Sadly, Sakalay passed away on Sept. 1, 2020. In the fall, according to Rescue One Treasurer Gregory Reams, the nonprofit was notified by her brother and trustee, Tony Nuccio, that the nonprofit was named as a beneficiary in Sakalay's trust. Last month, Rescue One learned that Sakalay had bequeathed \$200,000 to the organization – the largest single donation the nonprofit has received since its inception in 1977.

"During any time, these truly significant donations enable us to grant funds to MOFD for items that may be more costly," said Rescue One presi-

dent Maridel Moulton. "Rescue One has always partnered with MOFD particularly to grant funds for the purchase of 'cutting edge' technologies and trainings. That reflects our founding intent when forward-thinking citizens of Moraga went door to door and raised funds to purchase a van and retrofit it to serve as our very first district ambulance while also sending two firefighters to Stanford to be trained as paramedics."

Over its 44-year history, Rescue One has purchased, with donated funds, over \$580,000 in advanced medical and safety equipment, supplies, and educational services for MOFD, said Reams. Some examples included multiple LUCAS devices at \$14,000 each, multiple thermal imaging cameras at \$10,000 each, multiple defibrillator/monitors,

ranging from \$8,000 to \$31,000 each, and multiple AEDs (automated external defibrillators) at \$2,000 each.

In 2016, at the Moraga 24-Hour Fitness, operations manager Kiley Yeaman used an AED to revive a client who had suffered a heart attack. She had learned how to use the device during a CPR certification class. Thanks to generous donations like Sakalay's, AEDs have been installed at multiple

locations throughout Lamorinda.

"The dual challenges of the pandemic and wildfires has prompted continued donations to maintain the very high quality of MOFD services so valued by our community residents," Moulton said. Rescue One is currently working with MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker "to identify the best way(s) to utilize these funds and to honor Angie."

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, March 17, 6 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
Tuesday, March 9, 1:00 p.m.
For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



Firefighters crush 30-acre Moraga vegetation fire

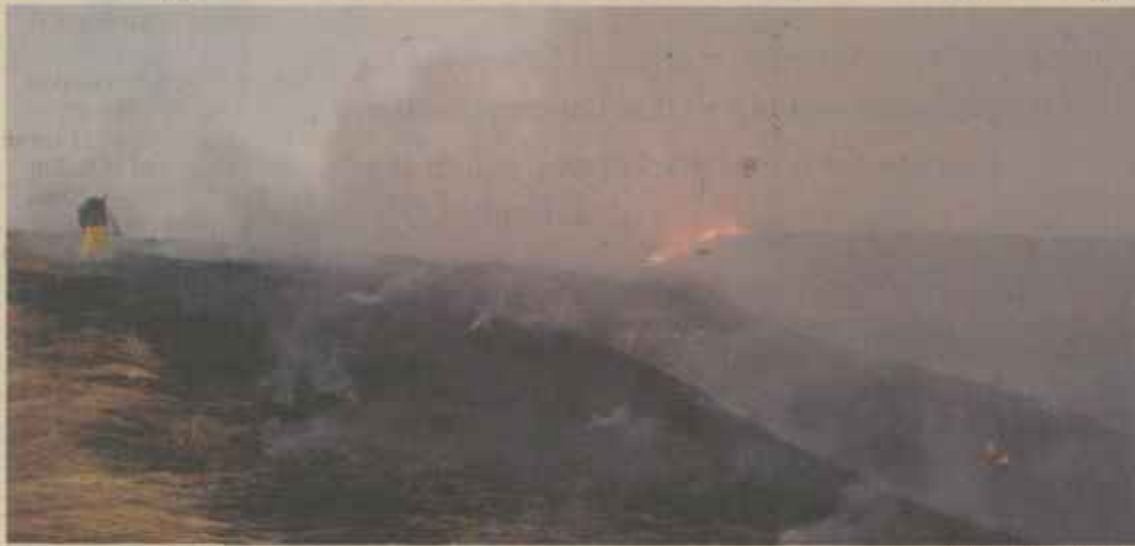


Photo courtesy MOFD

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga vegetation fire the evening of Oct. 11 was a powerful reminder for residents to complete their exterior abatement projects by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District deadline

of June 1.

The Irvine Fire, a one-alarm grass fire first reported before 6 p.m., required a response from four fire agencies, including MOFD, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the East Bay Regional Park District. The

Sanders Ranch blaze occurred in a Mutual Threat Zone, meaning that it started in the MOFD local responsibility area but had a high probability of spreading into the state responsibility area. Hence, the response from Cal Fire and the park district.

According to MOFD, the fire was caused by a resident who was mowing tall grass behind a house.

"In short, it is too late to complete fuel reduction work for this year, and we ask that residents use the winter to plan their late spring work to protect their homes during

next year's fire season," MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker said. "In my time with the district, three of the four significant vegetation fires have been caused by residents carrying out late season fuel mitigation work and it has been only thanks to the timely response and aggressive attack by our firefighters that the loss of homes has been avoided."

The Sanders Ranch fire burned 30 acres and took two hours to contain. No structures were threatened, as the fire burned away from houses, unaided by wind or severe weather.

"The biggest challenge was the hilly topography," said MOFD's Steve Gehling, the on-scene battalion chief. The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and the park district provided aerial suppression support, preventing the

fire's forward progress into areas inaccessible to the firefighters.

Winnacker again stressed the need to complete exterior abatement by June 1 of next year. He reminded residents to cut annual grasses and weeds to less than 3 inches; to limb up trees to create at least a 6-foot air gap between the ground, ground fuels or roofs; and to maintain roadside vegetation to create a 3-foot horizontal and 15-foot vertical clearance.

MOFD has the authority to issue citations for violations of the fire code and health and safety code, and also has the authority to seek cost recovery for fires within their jurisdiction. "The fire district is not seeking cost recovery nor have we issued a citation," said Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs of the Irvine Fire.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 6 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



MOFD official renders split decision in PG&E-San Ramon Valley Fire hearing

By Nick Marnell

At an October hearing over the justification of two fines issued by the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, hearing officer Jeff Isaacs sided with the district on one citation and with the utility on the other.

It was the first time Isaacs, fire marshal of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, presided over such a hearing. "My role as the hearing officer was to protect the process, and insure that there was fair process and that each side was provided the opportunity to present their side and submit evidence," he said. "I then reviewed all testimony and evidence and issued a decision."

At issue was San Ramon Valley Fire Ordinance No. 35, which prohibits PG&E and any other electric utility from performing non-emergency electrical work — or any electrical work during periods of high fire danger — within district

boundaries without 48 hours' prior notice to the district.

The ordinance also prohibits PG&E from deploying a safety and infrastructure protection team without notice, and it allows the district to fine the utility and recover costs for overseeing the company's electrical utility work after each violation.

In May, San Ramon Valley Fire responded to the explosion of a power transformer that occurred while PG&E maintenance crews performed work on-site, with two company safety and infrastructure protection teams on standby alert. Per its ordinance, the district fined the company \$1,000 for failing to provide advance notice of the two deployments and billed the utility for costs incurred.

Isaacs found that one of the safety and infrastructure protection teams on site was merely passing through the fire district, and technically not deployed to the incident. He dismissed that citation.

But because the second SIPT was specifically assigned work within the fire district, and PG&E gave no notice to the fire district as required by its ordinance, Isaacs upheld the district's \$500 fine against the utility.

"We are very happy that our ordinance, intended to hold PG&E accountable for their actions, is exposing PG&E for their lack of concern for our citizens' safety," San Ramon Valley Fire Chief Paige Meyers said. "I want the citizens to know we offered to waive the fine in its entirety if PG&E would agree to just follow our ordinance in the future. Not only did they not take me up on the offer, they never even responded."

According to PG&E spokesman Matt Nauman, the company is evaluating the decision and deciding how to proceed.

The MOFD board unanimously passed a similar ordinance Oct. 21.

MOFD awarded wildfire preparedness grant

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs announced another boost to his fire prevention efforts with the award of a \$15,000 grant from the California Fire Foundation. Isaacs plans to use the funds to develop an interactive fire prevention website, Prepared MOFD, which will feature educational material covering wildfire safety and commu-

nity preparedness unique to the residents of the district.

"The end goal for all of our wildfire preparedness efforts is to prevent death and injuries," Isaacs said. "In concert with nearly a dozen active community risk reduction projects, the proposed website is intended to act as both a primary and secondary vehicle to deliver information targeted to all residents of the fire district, with emphasis placed on our higher risk populations."

Isaacs envisions the website as an interactive multimedia platform providing wildfire safety, community preparedness and fire prevention information via educational videos and interactive courses, plus serving as a hub for district forms and documents related to fire prevention, fuels mitigation and fire safety.

Prepared MOFD will feature an FAQ section, dealing with questions like, What is a ladder fuel? (A fuel that al-

lows fire to travel from the ground into the tree canopy.) Or, how do I remove leaf litter from my gutter? Also envisioned are links to photos of members of the fire prevention staff, providing the ability for the public to ask questions related to their specific prevention issues.

Isaacs said he will hire a website consultant to design and create the new site, but he and the fire prevention staff will develop the content. The fire marshal plans a

strong marketing and educational campaign, featuring videos presented at community and neighborhood events and flyers distributed throughout the district.

The MOFD board voted unanimously Feb. 19 to accept the \$15,000 award.

The district continues to seek grant funding for its fire prevention efforts, such as through programs sponsored by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Rescue One Foundation reaches out to local high school students



bigstock image

By Nick Marnell

The Rescue One Foundation, an adjunct nonprofit organization to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, is sponsoring an essay contest on innovative

uses of technology to increase the effectiveness of emergency evacuation notifications within the district's jurisdiction. The contest, aimed at local area high school students, features a \$500 college schol-

arship prize and runs through April 30.

According to Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, most district evacuation scenarios involve a partial evacuation due to limited street capacity, with the concern that a mass evacuation notice would create major traffic delays and put residents at increased risk. Thus, limited evacuations are prioritized and time-phased in order to first contact those nearest the threat before streets become congested.

"The purpose of this essay contest is to identify new and innovative ways to contact residents in the event of an evacuation," Winnacker said. Current evacuation notifications include phone calls to a

landline, or phone calls, texts and emails to residents who have registered with the Community Warning System. The district conducted wildfire evacuation drills in Moraga in 2018 and in Orinda last year.

"Who knows more about technology than our young people?" said Gordon Nathan, Rescue One president. "Maybe they saw something during our evacuation drills and were hesitant to bring it up, or didn't know where to bring it up."

Rescue One officials have contacted the Acalanes Union High School District with contest details, and the school district plans to schedule wildfire evacuation presentations by the fire chief to the students at

Campolindo and Miramonte high schools.

The essay contest is open to those who attend either an Orinda or Moraga high school, local residents who attend a high school out of the area or district home-schooled high school students. The winning submission will be judged on ease of implementation and effectiveness of the evacuation proposal. An application and contest details are available at the Rescue One website.

"Evacuation is a real concern to our public, and picking the brains of our students for evacuation ideas that could give us better drills that can save lives will put us on a clear path to fire safety," Nathan said.

Firefighters at top of list to receive COVID-19 vaccine

By Nick Marnell

Firefighters will be among the first to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, according to county health officials.

The first batch of the vaccine arrived in Contra Costa County Dec. 15. Healthcare workers were the first to be vaccinated, and according to Contra Costa Health Services, firefighter-paramedics and other emergency medical service providers are prioritized in Phase 1A of the federal and state vaccination allocation guidelines, so the vaccine should be available to them soon. However, no specific distribution plan has

been announced.

Once the details are confirmed, Lamorinda fire agencies plan to follow county guidelines regarding vaccine distribution to their employees, with the firefighters union saying it will be up to the rank and file whether they choose to be vaccinated.

"We haven't taken a position on the vaccine other than the fact that the first rounds that are available should be available for first responders, including firefighters, once the vaccine is released. And that is only for those who chose to take it," said Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 of the International Association

of Firefighters.

Speaking for the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein said that the district will follow in line with the county priorities regarding vaccination procedures and distribution.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District remains upbeat regarding the effectiveness of the vaccine. "While there is no COVID-19 vaccination mandate we are aware of for anyone, the benefits are obvious and the published side effects limited," said district spokesman Steve Hill. "We are sharing this information with our

employees and encouraging them to carefully consider it when making personal decisions about the vaccines."

At least one Lamorinda firefighter will need no encouragement to be vaccinated. "I am excited to be re-

ceiving the vaccine soon. It will give me and my family another strong layer of protection as I work alongside other first responders and healthcare workers fighting this pandemic," said MOFD firefighter Mark DeWeese.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 6 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan., 19, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



How MOFD personnel helped dispatch the largest wildfire in California history

By Nick Marnell



From left, MOFD engineer Dave Mazaika, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, engineer Steve Rogness, Capt. Mike Marquardt

Photo provided

On Nov. 13, four members of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District returned from their 14-day assignments at the North Zone of the August Lightning Complex, a wildfire caused by a series of lightning strikes Aug. 17. The August Complex fire destroyed more than 1 million acres, the largest wildfire in recorded California history.

MOFD personnel on site included Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, Capt. Mike Marquardt and engineers Steve Rogness and Dave Mazaika. The men shared their experiences as members of the South Central Sierra Interagency Incident Management Team, based in Hayfork, about 45 miles west of Redding in heavily forested Trinity County.

Interagency incident management teams are called together when fires grow too large or complex for local agencies to handle. The teams comprise people who are called up from their regular jobs when an incident re-

quires their specialized services.

The August North Complex fire was managed by the U.S. Forest Service, which put together an incident management team in Hayfork in the middle of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Base camp peaked at 500 personnel, with half of the group firefighters, half of the group the incident support system.

"We built a small city within a 48-hour period," Mazaika said.

A typical day began with a 7 a.m. briefing, with most activity wrapped up by 10 p.m.

Marquardt, the Line Safety Officer, worked out in the field as the eyes and ears for incident safety. He verified escape routes. Are firefighters wearing the proper equipment? How are the road conditions? He confirmed weather reports. Weather extremes ranged from the possibility of heatstroke in August to frostbite in November; one morning, the temperature dropped to 12 degrees.

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New MOFD fire code on the books

By Nick Marnell

When the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors ratified the new Moraga-Orinda Fire District fire code Sept. 22, a nine-month process that included negotiations with district municipalities, and beset with COVID-19 delays, finally came to fruition.

As a result, MOFD enacted its Ordinance 20-10, a document that outlines the elements of a new fire code which as of Oct. 1 became the new law of the district.

"By adopting the new fire code, the district will be enforcing a code which is consistent with state regulations,"

Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs said.

A highlight of the new code is the revised deadline for exterior hazard abatement, pushed up from June 15 to May 31. Moraga, Orinda and Lafayette now share the same compliance date for abatement requirements.

One of the most controversial features of the new code is the stipulation of an exterior fire hazard inspection as part of a real property transfer.

"Compliance with exterior abatement regulations has always been a requirement for a real property transfer," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said. "It's only the reporting that's new." For ease of compliance with the

inspection requirement, the district set up an online portal for sellers to self-report, and for agents to check the status of a property.

The ordinance needed the ratification of not only the fire district, the town of Moraga and the city of Orinda but also the Board of Supervisors, under whose jurisdiction lie unincorporated areas within the district. The new fire code is a product of significant coordination among the above agencies to ensure all individual concerns were addressed.

"The new fire code being very progressive helps us protect our citizens and their property from fire," Isaacs said. "We want our fire code

to focus on all aspects of fire safety."

Isaacs noted that the new code supports the MOFD Wildfire Prevention Strategic Plan, a document that outlines district efforts to reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire. The plan covers internal and external fuels mitigation programs, wildfire

preplanning and evacuation planning, early detection and notification systems, fire code updates, and community outreach and education.

The entire fire code can be reviewed at the district website. Under the Our District tab, click on Ordinances & Resolutions.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 7 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



MOFD calls out insurance companies for cancellations over fire code violations

By Nick Marnell

According to the California Department of Insurance, property insurance is becoming harder to find for residents in high-risk wildfire areas. As portions of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District lie in these high-risk areas, the district passed a resolution in November reminding insurance companies that they may not make arbitrary decisions regarding fire safety in order to either cancel or fail to renew insurance policies for district property owners.

Fire Marshal Jeff Isaacs gave a recent example of insurance industry

overreach.

An Orinda resident called the district and said that she was required to remove three oak trees on her property because her insurance company claimed the trees were a fire hazard. If she did not comply, the company would not renew her property insurance. The homeowner asked the district to come to her house and take a look, as she could not believe that the trees were a fire hazard.

After an inspection, MOFD found that her property complied with the fire code.

"The district simply wants to call attention to this issue,

and make everyone aware of it," Isaacs said.

The gist of the resolution is that MOFD is the sole and exclusive provider of fire protection, prevention and suppression services within its jurisdictional area, and the fire code compliance that the district has promulgated is the standard by which properties will be judged.

"Insurance companies cannot apply an arbitrary standard that is different from the fire code," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker said.

Representatives from State Farm, the state's largest property insurer, had no comment but directed inquiries to the Insurance

Information Institute. "Those insurance companies are going to need to look at and understand their use of the language in their fire code reference," said Janet Ruiz, strategic communications director of the institute.

The resolution has

nothing to do with insuring, or not insuring, a property. MOFD cannot force an insurance company to renew a homeowner's policy, and an insurance carrier can drop a policy holder for just about any reason it chooses.

Except for a "fire code

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan., 19, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org

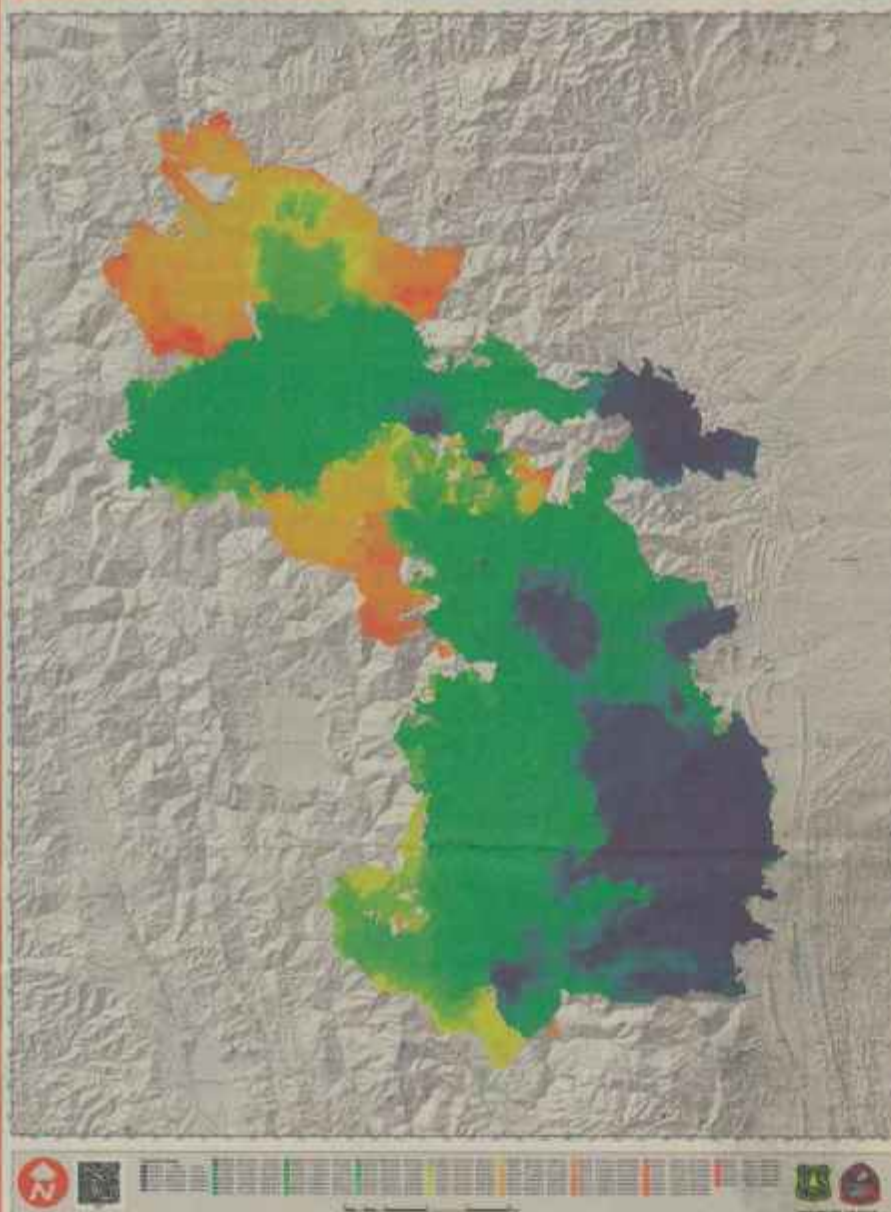


How MOFD personnel helped dispatch the largest wildfire in California history

PROGRESSION

AUGUST COMPLEX

CA-MNF-000753



Courtesy Steve Rogness

Color-coded map of the wildfire progression, from August (blue) to September (green-yellow) to October (orange)

When an accident did happen, Mazaika, the medical unit leader, took over. His responsibilities included the supervision of emergency medical technicians, who themselves took care of the firefighters, and the administering of medical care needed by any member of the interagency team.

No serious accidents, and no COVID outbreaks, occurred during Mazaika's assignment. "Just a couple of minor incidents," he said.

GIS specialist Rogness toiled much of the time in a trailer, creating maps. Operational maps. Aviation maps. Scale maps. Progress maps for media and public officials. More than 20 types of maps.

"Every day, crews would come back with new information and Steve would enter that information into his maps," Marquardt said. Rogness shared a fascinating progression map of the wildfire, showing the fire's origin in August through its peak in late October. (see photo)

Base camp included numerous staff and management personnel. Finance managers kept time sheets, paid suppliers, managed cash flow. The Logistics division obtained food, executed contracts for laundry, cleaning services, portable trailers and toilets. Contractors erected a medical tent and a communications center, and organized accommodations for the 500 personnel. The communications office kept local residents and public officials up to speed.

And that was where Rein, the liaison officer, stepped in. His job was to relay complete, accurate information from the incident command post to outside stakeholders: national forest personnel, the state fire agency, Fish and Game, local police, townspeople and public officials.

Rein recalled a briefing he presented to the Trinity County Board of Supervisors.

"Why did you close Route 36?" the

board demanded, as that road is one of the primary thoroughfares through the county.

"It wasn't us," Rein told the board. "It was Caltrans, not the fire organizations." He convinced the supervisors that the closure was ordered for public safety.

Agricultural cannabis is a growth industry in Trinity County, and Rein said the team had no issue with the residents over the product. "But you could tell that the local folks knew exactly where you were," he said.

Once the firefighters contained the August Complex fire, the cleanup phase began.

"It became fire suppression repair," Rein said.

The crews spent days doing erosion control along the bulldozer lines. They knocked down berms. Added water bars. Removed dead trees along Route 36. Along that same highway, more than 7,000 damaged guardrails were replaced.

The goals were to protect the area from mudslides and harsh weather events, and to have the region return to as natural a look as possible.

"Return" was a word that Marquardt could rarely identify with over the summer and fall. He served on four incident teams beginning Aug. 1, from Orange County to the Diablo Range to Trinity County. "Eighty-five days out of the district, home for only nine," Marquardt said.

But not one of the participants even implied that the time spent on the outside teams was not worthwhile.

"Working with the incident management team provides MOFD personnel the opportunity to see large fire operations first hand, as well as share their MOFD expertise with other agencies," Rein said.

The expenses related to the firefighters' work on the incident management team are reimbursed to the district by the federal government.

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"Firefighters are fighting fires. They aren't looking out for these things," Marquardt said.

MOFD releases draft of Community Wildfire Protection Plan

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District presented a draft of its Community Wildfire Protection Plan, a guide to help district residents develop an understanding of wildfire and wildfire management. The plan identifies and prioritizes areas within the district for fuel mitigation efforts, and recommends ways to reduce the fire risk in those high-risk communities.

At the Dec. 16 district

meeting, Fire Chief Dave Winnacker explained that the problem of accumulated fuels in the district has taken a long time to develop – more than 100 years in the making. Building homes in areas that had been grazed or allowed to burn, and then surrounding those homes with non-native vegetation, exacerbated the problem.

"It's going to take years to address this," Winnacker said. "The work required places a demand on resources

that will outstrip availability."

The chief said the mitigation efforts will be prioritized starting with the most serious areas and where the community as a whole will achieve the greatest return on investment. "The Community Wildfire Protection Plan will guide that work," Winnacker said.

The 65-page document covers the wildfire risk in the district, strategies for reducing that risk, district priorities and the district action plan to

tackle those priorities. "The purpose of the Moraga-Orinda Community Wildfire Protection Plan is to protect human life and reduce the loss of property, critical infrastructure, and natural resources due to wildfire," states the introduction to the document.

In order to address the subtleties and complexities of each district community, MOFD will hold three public workshops to go over the plan details and take public feed-

back. The first meeting is scheduled for Orinda Jan. 21, followed by Canyon Jan. 28 and Moraga Feb. 4. Meetings will be held at 6 p.m. as on-line teleconferences.

Having a Community Wildfire Protection Plan also qualifies the district for priority funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects carried out under the Healthy Forests Initiative, a federal initiative established in 2003 to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fires.

Changes in the MOFD executive and management ranks



Craig Jorgens Photo provided

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District reshuffled its executive team in December and also announced the elevation of a fire captain to battalion chief.

After serving an unprecedented two consecutive years as district president, Stephen Danziger stepped aside for Craig Jorgens, who was elected to the post for the first time. The board of directors chose Jorgens by a 4-1 margin, with director Greg Baitx casting the lone vote against. Baitx declined to comment on the reason for his negative vote, though the two directors have sparred at previous meetings over full-time staffing of the Fire Station 45 ambulance, which Baitx favored and Jorgens opposed.

Jorgens takes over one of the most high-profile independent special districts in Contra Costa County. Accord-

ing to the county auditor-controller, MOFD is apportioned 21.22% of a district resident's taxpayer dollars, and the district's \$29.8 million budget for this fiscal year is larger than the operating budgets of Moraga and Orinda combined.

"As the MOFD board president this term, I'm looking forward to working with our community, firefighters, and fire prevention personnel to allocate this money to support the fire suppression, fire prevention, and the emergency services that keep our community safe," Jorgens said.

In district operations, Fire Chief Dave Winnacker promoted 11-year MOFD vet-

eran Lucas Lambert from captain to battalion chief.

"Lucas is a tremendously talented member whose engagement on a number of internal and external projects and programs stands out amidst an organization full of hard working high achievers. We look forward to seeing

this same enthusiasm and capability applied on a larger scale in his new position," Winnacker said.

Lambert will supervise the district operations division. Battalion chiefs Steve Gehling and Jerry Lee, along with Lambert, report directly to the fire chief.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 6 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan., 19, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



MOFD and PG&E avoid litigation, settle company lawsuit



Photo Nick Marnell

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company avoided litigation by settling a lawsuit brought by the company over safety restrictions placed upon PG&E by a 2020 fire district ordinance.

In October, MOFD enacted an ordinance requiring electric utilities to notify the district at least 48 hours in advance of deploying a safety and infrastructure protection team within MOFD jurisdiction, and banning scheduled, high risk non-emergency

work in high fire areas when the National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for the work area. The ordinance authorized fines of up to \$1,300 for each violation.

"The work could lead to an ignition and cause a wildfire to start," Fire Chief Dave Winnacker told his board in October. "If PG&E determines that this work merits deployment of an SIPT, the district believes it should be informed of that fact."

PG&E sued the fire district, seeking to invalidate the ordinance as the company

believed the district exceeded its authority by attempting to regulate matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the California Public Utilities Commission.

"These requirements interfere with PG&E's ability to respond flexibly to changing conditions in order to protect public safety," the company stated in its complaint, filed Dec. 18. The company also maintains that its SIPTs are not first responders but utility workers whose primary role is to support PG&E work activities and support fire prevention at PG&E worksites.

Neither the fire district nor the company had the appetite for litigation, and the parties negotiated acceptable modifications to the ordinance. A revised district ordinance was passed unanimously by the MOFD board and enacted Jan. 22.

The negotiated revisions include changing the requirement of a 48-hour notice for SIPT deployment to no later

than 9 a.m. on the day of deployment. The revised ordinance also changes the definition of an SIPT so that the ordinance does not apply to a company's normal utility crews, and bans only scheduled, non-emergency electrical work within the district during Red Flag warnings.

"PG&E appreciates that districts responsible for local fire response are concerned about the challenges of fire prevention and seek up-to-date information. PG&E would like to cooperate with those districts as we all have the desire and responsibility to mitigate fires," said Matt Nauman, PG&E spokesman.

"However, PG&E also has CPUC-jurisdictional obligations to maintain the electrical grid. PG&E needs to maintain flexibility in deploying electrical crews in order to effectively and efficiently keep the power flowing across Northern and Central California. PG&E and Moraga-Orinda were able to reach agreement on notification procedures that address the fire district's desire for information while limiting restrictions on PG&E's ability to deploy electrical crews."

PG&E filed a request with Superior Court the last week of January to dismiss its lawsuit against the fire district.

Fire District Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 6 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 1:00 p.m.

For meeting times and agendas, visit www.cccfpd.org



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Jonathon Flinn, ConFire



Photos Nick Marnell Kim Jackson, AMR



Mark DeWeese, MOFD



Jerry Lee, MOFD



Athan Koutsoubinas, ConFire, gets his shot.

Photo provided

First responders receive first round of COVID-19 vaccine

By Nick Marnell

More than 350 first responders received the first round of the COVID-19 vaccine Dec. 28 at a drive-in event hosted in Concord by the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. The clinic is one of four

staged by Contra Costa Health Services, which plans to inoculate fire service employees and other patient contact employees in the county by Jan. 7 as part of its Tier 1A distribution phase.

Patients who were given the vaccine were ordered to remain in their cars for 15 minutes before departing the premises. "We did not anticipate any

adverse reactions, and we have received no reports of any," district spokesman Steve Hill said.

The health department says there is a minimum 28-day waiting period before patients can receive the second and final round of the vaccine. "At this point, we are not sure when that shot will be available," Hill said.