



# NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## ***MOUNTAIN PROPERTY OWNERS AND RESIDENTS SURVEYED TO ASSESS FIRE PREVENTION AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE***

SAN BERNARDINO — San Bernardino County and the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) are conducting a survey in the San Bernardino County Mountains in late September and early October to assess awareness and knowledge about wildfire prevention.

“These surveys are critical components of our outreach effort because they tell us where we have been successful at educating the public about fire prevention measures like defensible space and thinning green-fuel and where we need to focus more effort going forward,” said San Bernardino County Fire Assistant Chief Peter Brierty. “Our goal is to reduce the potential for a catastrophic wildfire in our mountains.”

Nearly a decade of drought and the bark beetle infestation combined to kill millions of trees in southern California forests, resulting in an extreme fire hazard in the San Bernardino County mountains.

In a survey conducted last year, officials found that 89 percent of respondents had taken steps to protect their property in case of a wildfire. However, while public awareness about the importance of removing dead trees and measures to protect homes from fires was high, the survey also demonstrated low levels of action and awareness about thinning green fuel. For example, only 39 percent of respondents said they had thinned live trees on their land.

Due to years of fire suppression, the forest had become overstocked, with some 100 to 200 trees per acre, where a healthy forest has 40 to 60 trees per acre. Thinning live trees is a key component of MAST’s healthy forest initiative.

Like the first survey, this follow-up survey will be a random sampling of mountain property owners, including non-resident owners. Results are expected by mid-November.

### **ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN AREA SAFETY TASKFORCE**

MAST is a coalition of local, state and federal government agencies, private companies and volunteer organizations in San Bernardino County that are concerned with public safety in the mountain areas of their respective jurisdictions. For more information about MAST, visit [www.calmast.org](http://www.calmast.org).

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