



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SANTA'S VILLAGE NEARLY CLEAR OF LOGS**

Lake Arrowhead -- Mountain residents traveling along Hwy. 18 may have noticed the view of the area in and around Santa's Village has improved of late. Over the past several years, abatement projects resulted in the mountainous pile of logs stored on either side of the highway. These projects are nearing completion as those logs are removed from the mountain.

During last decade's bark beetle infestation crisis, Assistant Chief Peter Brierty (now retired) directed the San Bernardino County Fire Dept. and the Mountain Area Safety Task Force in a massive tree-thinning operation across the mountaintop. Contractors were allowed to stack those logs at the Santa's Village site on a "temporary" basis. However, as years went by it became apparent that this massive log-clog created a serious fire hazard and a hindrance along one of the main mountain evacuation routes. The County directed the owner of the property to clear the hazardous trees in lieu of a pending "notice of emergency abatement". Over the past year the owners, contracting with CST Organic Recycling of Redlands, have been busy clearing logs from the area. CST has estimated 60 truckloads of material still remain on site and continue to remove the remaining logs and mulch.

"By getting these log piles removed, we're taking yet another step towards making the mountain communities fire-safe," said interim Fire Marshal Mike Horton. "Removing a major source of dead fuel which lay along both sides of our main mountain evacuation route was a high priority. The cooperation we've received from the property owners and the fire agencies affected by the issue has been helpful."

Property owners and multiple agencies, including County Fire, USFS and Calfire, met and discussed the environmental impact of any remaining materials after the logs are removed. It was determined that the current process of chipping and spreading those materials around the site sufficiently mitigates any concerns.

There has been no cost to county taxpayers for the log removal project. The abatement of the fire hazard was the sole responsibility of the property owners.

"Firefighters train hard and make countless preparations to be ready for a wildfire. Residents need to do the same." stated Division Chief Jim Johnstone. "Successfully preparing for a wildfire requires residents to take personal responsibility for protecting themselves, their family, and their property."

County Fire relies on Fire Safe Councils. They are a great resource in not only getting information out to the community, but in developing and implementing fire safety programs. Visit the Inland Empire Fire Safe Alliance web site at [www.fireinformation.com](http://www.fireinformation.com) and learn how you can get involved. For more information on wildfire safety and preparation, including the READY! SET! GO! Program, visit our web site at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org).

"Before" photos showing the log pile in the early stages of clearance, along with "after" photos showing the current site, can be located at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org) under latest news. Our media partners are encouraged to contact us if they have any further questions or wish to photograph the progress.