



NORTHSTAR FIRE DEPARTMENT



Northstar's Existing Infrastructure and Efforts to Help Reduce Wildfire Risks

3rd Party Companies (Fireline, CoreLogic, Verisk, and several smaller companies) provide property-specific hazard scores. The wildfire risk *factors* used by these companies to determine a hazard score are based upon the following three: slope, road access and fuel type. It is Northstar Fire Department's belief that such companies are incorrectly determining the level of wildfire risk(s) associated with each of these factors to the detriment of our community's property owners. As such, some insurers are choosing to avoid underwriting based upon these erroneously provided hazard scores.

Northstar Fire Department has compiled a packet of information that we hope will offer greater insight into those systems in place or measures being taken by our jurisdiction that greatly help to reduce the wildfire risks to our community. This information is being offered as a rebuttal to the mistaken assessments made by the 3rd party companies and, in turn, their inaccurate hazard scores. We believe our wildfire risks are less severe than what is being reported and, thus, such prescribed hazard scores should reflect more favorably for our property owners.

With the information provided within this packet, it is our intention that an insurance provider may be able to ascertain their wildfire exposures more confidently regarding our community and, more significantly, to the benefit of our property owners.

1. Northstar Community's Fuels Reduction Program

- The Northstar fire department has an aggressive and efficient forest fuels reduction program. The primary goal of the program is to prevent the effects of a catastrophic wildfire in the Northstar community. This is accomplished through canopy spacing, forest understory thinning, brush thinning, tree limbing, and ground fuels reduction. Unlike most other communities, our program is managed by a State of California Registered Professional Forester. The Northstar fire department has spent more than 3 million dollars to treat and maintain over 1,500 acres of land since 2005. Please see attached before and after photos showing fuel reduction efforts and the map of past project areas ([See map](#)).
- Fuel reduction projects are prioritized using Northstar's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Priorities are based upon the greatest threats to our constituents and their properties. The level of fuels reduction work performed is based upon recognized standards for slope, aspect, vegetation, etc...

2. Northstar Community's Location:

- The community resides within a very large, easily accessible valley (aka Martis Valley) approx. 70 square miles wide. There is one highway and numerous roads located within this valley such that people or mutual aid EMERGENCY RESOURCES trying to access our community have multiple choices or directions of travel. As such, the size and abundance of travel routes within Martis Valley separates itself from other valleys

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within our region. For example, to access many other valleys (or, the communities located within those valleys), people have only 1 route of travel through a narrow canyon or corridor.

- There are 4 golf courses, a reservoir, creeks/streams and an airport within Martis Valley and in or around our community. Consequently, our community has perimeter protection.
- Although the community is developed on the north or east facing slopes of the Sierra Nevada, approximately ¼ of the development rests closely near the valley floor largely surrounded on one side by an 18-hole golf course.
- All existing development offering residential living extends no higher than 6,900 feet in elevation.
- The slope within our community is far less steep than other surrounding communities.

3. Northstar Community's Road Access:

- The community has 3 major routes of travel for ingress and egress (in and out) of our community. They are as follows: 1. Northstar Drive (eastern boundary) 2. Highlands View Road (eastern boundary) 3. Mill Site Road (western boundary). All 3 major routes are paved, two lanes wide and maintained year-round ([See map](#)). Annually, fuels reduction work is pursued along either side of each of the 3 major routes to create a 300' buffer zone. A 300' buffer zone on either side of a major route of travel allows for more safety in travel during evacuation and for the incoming mutual aid emergency resources. There are few jurisdictions (like Northstar) that are pursuing such extensive fuels mitigation work along their routes of travel to and from their communities.
- The community also has 3 secondary routes of travel for ingress and egress (in and out) of our community. Although these routes are unpaved, dirt roads, they are still maintained to allow for safe travel ([See map](#)).
- Although there appears to be dead-end streets within our community, there are streets that actually have two ways in and out. Such additional access is made possible by the offering of maintained, dirt roads on some of these streets. These maintained dirt roads are sometimes not recognized by the 3rd party consultants. Contrarily, we believe they should be.
- All major (3 paved) and secondary routes (3 unpaved) are maintained and allow for civilian evacuation or incoming mutual aid EMERGENCY response. Thus, civilians in their own personal vehicles can flee the District, while fire engines and other emergency response vehicles can access our District easily via 6 routes of travel.
- All of our various means of ingress/egress from our community allow for civilians or emergency response to choose to travel in a N, S and E direction.
- Our community has two very large parking lots and 1 golf course that can offer temporary areas of refuge during catastrophic emergencies.

4. Northstar Community's Defensible Space Program

- The Northstar Fire Department enforces defensible space compliance within its community. Each year, 1/3rd or more of the community's residential properties are inspected. Additionally, all commercial properties are inspected annually. We give all property owners typically 30 days to

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mitigate any violations. We have the most stringent requirements of all of the surrounding communities. Our local statutes requirement our property owners to do more than what is required by the state or county. Compliance certificates are awarded to residential properties that complete all defensible space requirements. Community members are provided resources and guidance to make their homes defensible in case of a wildfire (See brochure "Your Northstar Fire Department").

5. Northstar Community's Water

- Northstar is a rural community. However, its domestic water system rivals that of most large cities. There is a total of 232 fire hydrants that are spaced within 300 feet or less of each residential and commercial structure throughout the entire District. The hydrants are supplied by several gravity fed water tanks with a combined capacity of 3.625 million gallons of water (See brochure "Your Northstar Fire Department").

6. Northstar Community's Fire Department

- The Northstar community is protected by two fire stations. Both stations are staffed with permanent employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. All firefighters are paid and fully certified for both wildfire and structural firefighting. We do not have volunteer firefighters. We have more stations and personnel than some communities of our size (See brochure "Your Northstar Fire Department").

7. Northstar Community's Fire Department's Insurance Rating

- The Northstar fire department has an Insurance Service Organization (ISO) Public Protection Classification rating of 2 which is an exemplary rating. Fire department ISO ratings are on a scale of 1 through 10. 1 being the best possible protection and 10 being no protection (See brochure "Your Northstar Fire Department").

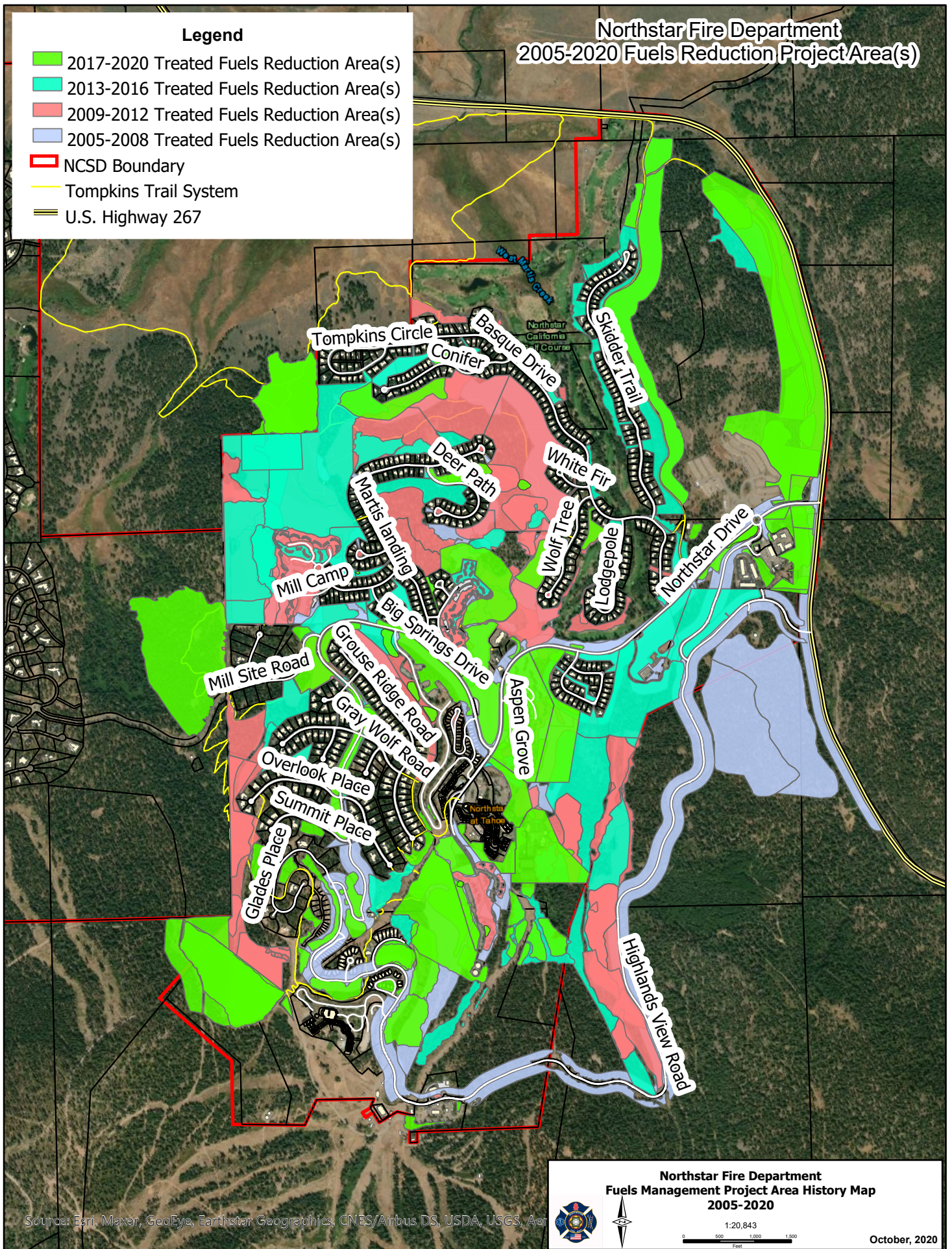
8. Northstar Community Recognized as a Firewise Community

- The Northstar community has been a nationally recognized Firewise Community since 2010 (11 years straight and still running) (See Northstar's current Firewise Certificate).

Northstar Fire Department 2005-2020 Fuels Reduction Project Area(s)

Legend

- 2017-2020 Treated Fuels Reduction Area(s)
- 2013-2016 Treated Fuels Reduction Area(s)
- 2009-2012 Treated Fuels Reduction Area(s)
- 2005-2008 Treated Fuels Reduction Area(s)
- ▬ NCS D Boundary
- ▬ Tompkins Trail System
- ▬ U.S. Highway 267

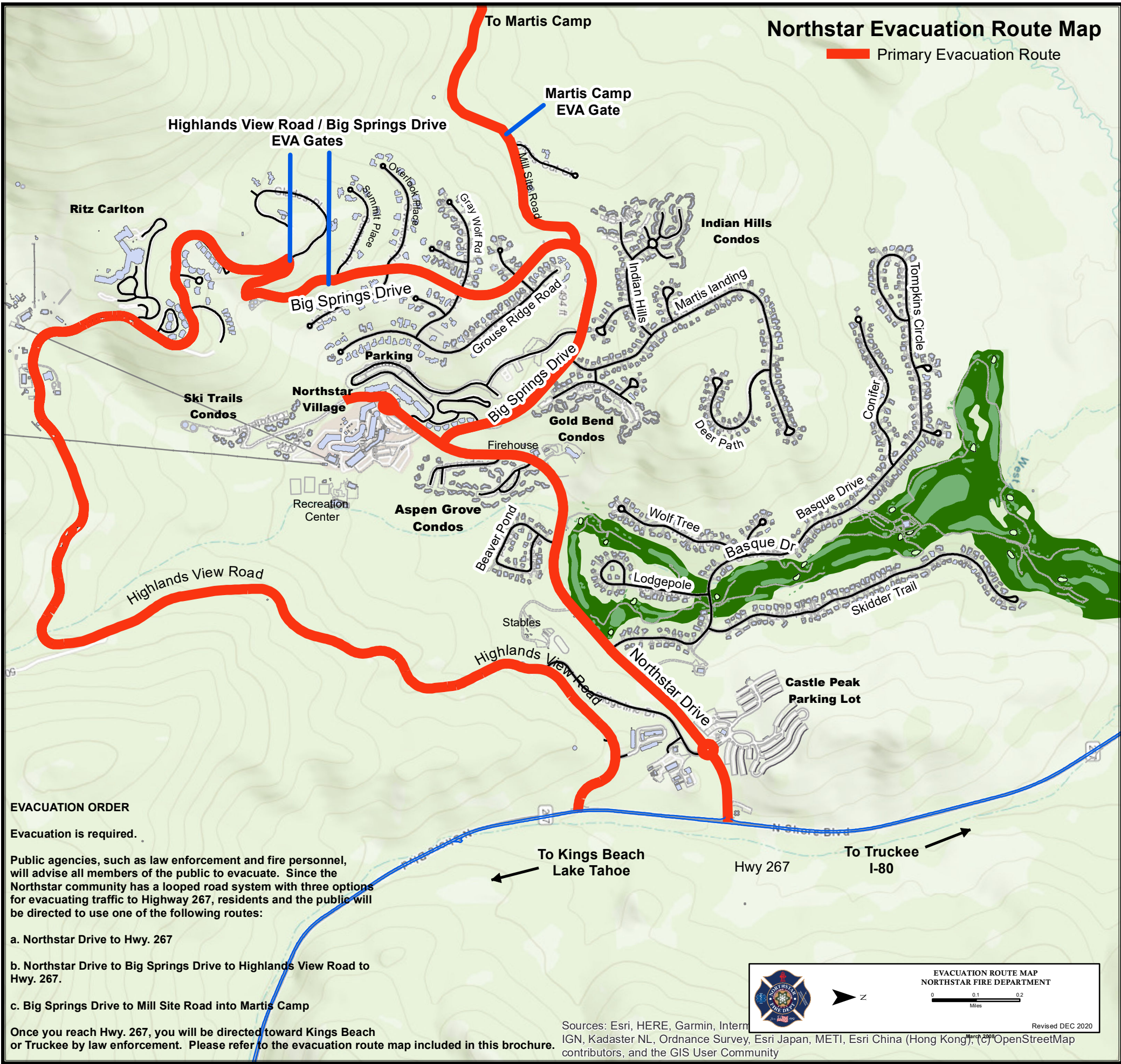


Northstar Fire Department Fuels Management Project Area History Map 2005-2020



1:20,843
0 500 1,000 1,500
Feet

October, 2020



IF YOU ARE TEMPORARILY STAYING OR VACATIONING HERE AT NORTHSTAR, YOU SHOULD KNOW THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

For Emergencies:

- ❖ Contact 911
- ❖ It is extremely important to share with the Dispatcher the address of the residence, which is:
(A sticker will be placed in this location when issued to the STR manager or owner.)

For Evacuation:

- ❖ Text/email messaging is the main way the District and the County alerts its citizens of a mandatory evacuation and provides instructions to follow. (See the flier “Know Your Alerts”.)
To sign up for Nixle to receive text messages from the Northstar Fire Department simply text “Northstar” to 888777. You will be sent back a confirmation message advising that you are registered. In order to sign up for e-mail messages go to <http://www.northstarcsd.org/departments/fire/nixle-connect> and follow the instructions to sign up as a user.

To sign up for Placer Alert text/messaging so that you may receive alerts from Placer County go to: www.placer-alert.org. Follow the instructions per the website.
- ❖ If you receive a Nixle or Placer Alert message stating to “Evacuate Now”, do not wait. Go!
- ❖ Listen for the sirens. Various emergency vehicles will be driving throughout the District sounding their Hi-Lo sirens (European sounding – different than the normal sounding sirens in the U.S.) announcing evacuation.
- ❖ There are 3 routes that can be traveled to exit the District: Highlands View Drive, Northstar Drive and Mill Site Road. The evacuation map depicts these 3 routes. The Nixle message will provide you with instructions on the safest routes to travel.
- ❖ When trying to exit the District, follow the instructions that may be advertised on various posted road/electronic signs as well as the authorities that may be helping to direct traffic.

Key Terms to Understand:

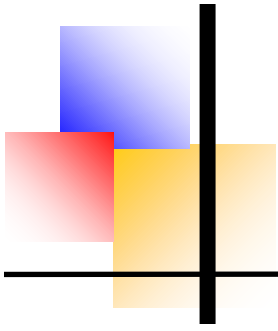
Red Flag Warning – is issued for weather events which may result in extreme fire behavior that will occur within 24 hours. Northstar Fire Department urges its citizens to be extremely cautious, especially during periods of high fire danger. It's important all residents and visitors take steps to prevent wildfires.

Particularly Dangerous Situation (Red Flag Warning) – is issued for weather events which may result in fire behavior that is explosive in growth, burn very intensely and be uncontrollable that will occur within 24 hours. Northstar Fire Department urges its citizens to be extremely cautious, especially during periods of high fire danger. It's important all residents and visitors take steps to prevent wildfires. When this warning is issued, be judicious by reviewing our evacuation routes and being prepared to act quickly if a fire breaks out.

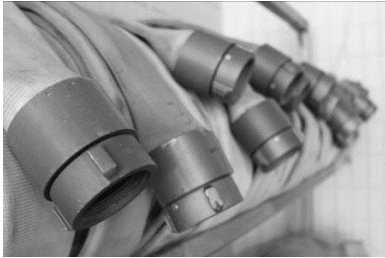
Shelter-in-Place – means finding a location indoors and staying there until you are given an “all clear”. You may receive a Nixle message informing you to “shelter-in-place” as opposed to evacuating.

Scan the below QR code on a mobile device for a mobile version of this map





Your Northstar Fire Department



Northstar Fire Department Mission Statement: To provide our services to the Northstar Community in a high quality, safe, efficient, professional, and courteous manner.



Inside:

Fire Department Overview
Forestry Management and Defensible Space
Firewise Community
Insurance Services Organization (ISO)
Northstar's Water Systems
Mutual Aid



FIRE DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Northstar Fire Department has been serving the Northstar Community since 1972. Our boundaries cover approximately 4.8 miles with a sphere of influence of approximately 18 square miles. The Northstar Fire Department operates as an independent Special District under the Northstar Community Services District. The Community Services District is managed by a General Manager. A five person elected Board of Directors governs the District. The fire department is managed by the Fire Chief.

The community of Northstar is home to one of Lake Tahoe's finest ski resorts. During peak seasons, the population at Northstar can grow to more than 15,000 people. As an all risk fire department, we seek to accomplish our mission by providing fire prevention and suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services. In addition to these services, the Northstar Fire Department provides public education such as First Aid/CPR classes and fire extinguisher training.

The district is protected by two stations. Station 31 is located at 910 Northstar Drive. Our District's newest station, Station 32, opened on November 21, 2009. Station 32 is located at 9100 Highlands View Road. The firefighters at Station 31 staff three types of fire apparatus. Engine 31 responds to structure fires, rescues, vehicle accidents, and medical aids. The engine has a full compliment of firefighting equipment, rescue equipment, vehicle extrication equipment, and advanced life support equipment. The advanced life support equipment includes a heart monitor that has the ability to defibrillate, medications, IV access supplies, and intubation equipment. Truck 31 responds primarily to structure fires and rescue emergencies. The truck is equipped for firefighting and rescue providing such tools as a compliment of ladders and a one hundred foot aerial ladder. Brush 31 is designed to respond to vegetation fires. Brush 31 is smaller than the other apparatus and, thus, allowing it to be more mobile off road. Brush 31 offers four wheel drive and carries a full compliment of wildland firefighting equipment.

Station 32 personnel respond with several pieces of equipment as well. Engine 32 and Brush 32 are set up much the same as the Station 31 respective apparatus. Rescue 32 is designed mainly to respond to medical aids that are not accessible by paved roads. It is also equipped with advanced life support equipment. Most of the incidents that Rescue 32 responds to are biking and hiking accidents in and around the Northstar area. Station 32 also houses two snowmobiles for our "over the snow" responses.

The Northstar Fire Department is staffed with well trained, dedicated, caring personnel 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. All personnel are professional firefighters with extensive medical training. Each shift consists of two captains, two engineers, and one firefighter divided between Station 31 and Station 32. In addition to the shift personnel, the department is staffed with a full-time Fire Prevention Officer, Forestry Supervisor, and a full-time Fire Chief that work weekdays from 8:00am to 5:00pm. All fire personnel with the exception of the Forestry Supervisor are paramedics.



FORESTRY MANAGEMENT AND DEFENSIBLE SPACE

The Northstar community is located in a fire-dependent ecosystem. Forest fires over thousands of years in the Sierra Nevada have shaped the local forest in its structure and composition. Natural fires caused by lightning and fires set deliberately by Native Americans for travel, food, and supplies have molded the forest in this region before the settlement era started. These fires that were frequent and light-in-intensity occurred generally less than every twenty years and, yet removed the fuel which had accumulated on the ground since the last fire. Early accounts from the first settlers spoke about a forest that was predominately an open-growth pine forest with large trees and little or no understory. The general absence of forest fires due to suppression efforts, infrequency of controlled burning, and changes in forest management has led the forest to evolve into an unnatural state. We now live in a forest that is overstocked with a larger species of white and red fir and a dense under story of seedlings, brush, and downed woody material. We live in a forest which has the capability of burning in catastrophic wildfire proportions.

The Northstar Fire Department (NFD) is actively working to create a healthy forest for us all to live in. NFD employs a full-time Forestry Supervisor to manage a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and a Fuels Reduction Program. Both programs ultimately aim to eliminate the loss of life, property, and resources caused by a wildfire in the Northstar community.

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The (CWPP) was designed to reflect the community's values, needs, environmental concerns and opportunities within the plan's boundaries by focusing on its priorities. The Forestry Supervisor ensures that the priorities established within the CWPP are reviewed and evaluated and reported on a bi-annual basis. The Forestry Supervisor plans and executes fuels management/forest health projects with the emphasis on reducing excess fuels, combating insect and disease infestations, and restoring the forest back to historical standards in common and boundary areas within the Northstar community.

The Forestry Supervisor is available to the community for forest health evaluations on your property, Defensible Space issues and any other natural resources related questions or issues.

More information on these programs can be found on our website www.northstarcsd.org under the subsection 'Forestry'.

Despite our efforts to keep our forests healthy, we can not do the job alone. Quality defensible space is the most important factor in limiting the spread of an existing wildfire in the Northstar community. Defensible space can be beneficial in many ways. It can prevent fire from advancing and endangering homes and lives. It improves property value while reducing the risk of loss. It provides a healthier environment for your trees and shrubs by minimizing the impacts of competition, insects, and disease. Lastly, it allows firefighters to safely and effectively defend your home from an oncoming fire.

To ensure Northstar homeowners are dedicated to the goal of making our community a healthier and safer environment, NFD enforces numerous local and state ordinances regarding defensible space regulations. NFD, in cooperation with CalFire, reminds all homeowners to maintain their property in compliance with Public Resource Code 4291, California Code of Regulations 1299, and local ordinance 26-09.

To assist homeowners in their efforts to be compliant with defensible space requirements, a Green Waste Recycling Program is available. The program allows homeowners and their contractors to dispose of their green waste by either leaving it on the curb at the front of their property for District personnel to collect or by taking the material directly to the recycling center themselves.

Once the material is placed at the recycling center, it will be "grinded" into woodchips where it will be utilized for erosion control measures on the local ski runs or utilized to produce electricity at a biomass co-generation facility in Loyalton, California. Approximately several thousand yards of material is collected annually and utilized from the green waste recycling center.

Specific guidelines outlining these regulations and the Green Waste Recycling program can be found on our website www.northstarcsd.org under the subsection 'Defensible Space'.

Firewise Community

The Northstar Fire Department (NFD) continues to work with many community leaders to annually secure the distinction of a Firewise Community. The Firewise Program is a Nationally Recognized Program and draws on community spirit, determination, and a willingness to take responsibility for reducing wildfire threat. The Northstar Fire Department and Northstar Property Owners Association (NPOA), in conjunction with Condominium Association Management Company (CAMCO), Vail Resorts, and Mountainside Partners, are providing resources toward the reduction of fuels. This creates better defensible space within the Northstar area. Citizen and community involvement is the cornerstone of sustaining recognition as a Firewise Community. There are many benefits to being a recognized Firewise Community. We gain an edge in securing grants and federal funding for defensible space projects. Additionally, insurance providers identify Northstar as a proactive fire prevention community and, therefore not insurance risk for coverage.

For more information about becoming a Firewise Community, visit the website www.firewise.org.



INSURANCE SERVICES ORGANIZATION

What is an “ISO Rating”?

The Northstar Fire Department is proud to advise its homeowners, business owners, and those that will potentially come in the future, that we were recently awarded an ISO rating of Class 2. The ISO rating of a community has a direct effect on the insurance premiums that individuals pay on their homes and commercial buildings (The lower the ISO ratings on a scale of 1 to 10, typically the better the insurance rates.) Class 1 represents exemplary fire protection, and Class 10 indicates that the area's fire suppression program does not meet ISO's minimum criteria.

Virtually all U.S. insurers of homes and business property use ISO's Public Protection Classification (PPC) in calculating premiums. In general, the price of fire insurance in a community with a good PPC is substantially lower than in a community with a poor PPC, assuming all other factors are equal. A Community's PPC depends on:

- **Fire alarm and communications systems**, 10% of the overall rating: Telephone systems, telephone lines, staffing, and dispatching systems.
 - **The Fire Department**, 50% of the overall rating: Pumping capabilities, aerial ladder capabilities, hours of training provided and attended by members, response by members per call, commercial fire pre-planning, number of fire stations in the community, boundary served, hose, and pump testing.
 - **The water supply system**, 40% of the overall rating: The amount of available water compared with the amount needed to suppress fires, and the distribution, condition, and maintenance of hydrants.
- We are proud to have achieved the Class 2 rating for our home owners and businesses. Class 2 is an exemplary ISO rating for a fire department of our size. This rating is a confirmation that the Northstar Fire Department has kept pace with the demands of the community we protect. Everyone who lives and works in Northstar can be confident knowing that their Fire Department is proficient having earned this highly endorsed rating.

For more information about ISO ratings, visit the website www.northstarcsd.org/fireISO.html or www.isomitigation.com.

ISO
Rating
2



NORTHSTAR'S WATER SYSTEM

Northstar CSD provides a water system of exceptional capacity and capability. The Northstar Utility Department is responsible for the operations and maintenance of our water systems. Over the years, the Northstar and Truckee-Tahoe areas have grown considerably. Along with this growth, water system technology has continued to improve. The rapidly changing community, improved technology, and a progressive district-board attitude have combined to maintain the excellent water system that exists today.

Northstar's water comes from mountain springs located throughout the ski hill and a well-system located on the north border of the golf course. Water supplies collected at the Big Springs and Sawmill Flat spring systems and are filtered/treated at the Northstar Water Treatment Plant. Groundwater is treated at the District's TH-1 and TH-2 wells.

The District operates and maintains a 180 acre-foot reservoir, 16.2 miles of water line, 13 pressure reducing stations for 14 pressure zones, seven water tanks with a capacity for 3.625 million gallons of water, and approximately 900 water service accounts. One third of this water capacity, or 1.2 million gallons, is dedicated solely to fire suppression. In addition to the combined reservoir and tank storage, Northstar sits over one of California's largest aquifers: the Martis Valley Aquifer. The well system includes two wells (TH-1 and TH-2) and is capable of pumping 1,600 gallons per minute (gpm) of treated water from this substantial supply. The reliable yield of the mountain springs and the wells combined is approximately 1900gpm.

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All fire hydrants in our district are tested to 500psi and are suitable for working pressures of 250psi. The District has a total of 232 hydrants where 95% of those hydrants are within 300 feet of each other. At our disposal, we have hydrants (97.4%) capable of supplying over 1000gpm as well as hydrants (83.6%) capable of supplying over 1500gpm.

The combination of ample water storage, water pressure control, and the commitment of our utilities department provides Northstar with an exceptional fire suppression water system.

*The Northstar Water Ordinance can be found in it's entirety on our website
<http://www.northstarcsd.org/watersystem.html>*



MUTUAL AID

In emergency services, mutual aid is an agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries. This may occur due to an emergency response that exceeds local resources, such as a wildland fire or natural disaster. The Northstar Fire Department has entered into mutual aid agreements with local, state, and federal fire service providers. Some of these providers include the Truckee Fire Protection District, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Squaw Valley Fire Department, Cal Fire, and the U.S. Forest Service. The Northstar Fire Department has a close working relationship with each of its neighboring agencies.

The California mutual aid system is based upon an incremental and progressive system of mobilization of fire and rescue resources. No community has resources sufficient to cope with any and all emergencies for which the potential exists. The California Fire Assistance Agreement is a statewide system of mutual aid in which each jurisdiction relies first upon its own resources. In the event of a large scale fire or natural disaster, we are not limited to just our local resources. The California Mutual Aid Plan, when activated, provides for systematic mobilization, organization and operation of necessary fire and rescue resources of the entire state. Mutual aid allows services to be given as well as received. The Northstar Fire Department makes its resources available to the fire departments that help us. We regularly respond to incidents in the areas surrounding Northstar. We offer our assistance, when requested, to help our neighbors augment their emergency response. It is an effective system that protects our District and the neighboring districts and ensures that the region is well protected.

Want More Information? Check out these websites for additional information on topics discussed in this newsletter:

☒ www.northstarcsd.org

☒ www.firewise.org

☒ www.isomitigation.com

2020

NATIONAL FIREWISE USA® PROGRAM
CERTIFICATE
OF RECOGNITION

The National Fire Protection Association acknowledges that

Northstar

located in _____, _____
Truckee CA

has successfully completed the Firewise USA® program's annual requirements for 2020
and is a participating site in good standing throughout the 2021 calendar year.



James T. Pauley, President, NFPA



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

October 30, 2020

Date Issued