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# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



**CONTACT:** Name: Scott McLean  
Title: Chief of Public  
Information  
Phone: 916-651-FIRE (3473)  
[@CALFIRE PIO](mailto:scott.mclean@calfire.ca.gov)

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### “Wildfire Awareness Week” Declared in California

CAL FIRE encourages wildfire preparedness despite wet winter

**Sacramento** – California’s wet winter fueled the growth of a significant grass crop. The abundant grass will soon dry into tinder. Now is the time to act to prevent wildfires. Today Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. declared May 7-13 “Wildfire Awareness Week” to urge homeowners to prepare now for the dry, flammable season ahead.

Already this year CAL FIRE has responded to more than 400 wildfires that have burned over 7,000 acres. This year’s thick crop of grass and brush contrasts with the meager growth of the drought years of 2012 through 2015. CAL FIRE urges residents to remove excess vegetation around homes and maintain 100 feet of defensible space to increase the odds that the structure will survive a wildfire.

Damage to the state’s forests from the extended drought also may exacerbate wildfire conditions this season. An estimated 102 million trees have died across the state as a result of drought and the effects of bark beetle infestation. These dead and dying trees make forests more susceptible to destructive wildfires and pose public safety risks from falling trees.

“No amount of rain will bring back 102 million dead trees and it will take several years of continued precipitation to undo the effects of our severe five-year drought,” said Chief Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE director, and California’s state forester. “We continue to see the effects of our changing climate on the landscape. Fire seasons are getting longer and hotter, and there has been a significant increase in the occurrence of large and damaging wildfires. We need all Californians to prepare for wildfires and this year, we have a new tool to help.”

Last month, CAL FIRE launched a new “Ready for Wildfire” app. This tool puts a library of step-by-step, ready-for-wildfire checklists in the palm of a user’s hand. The checklists help homeowners maintain defensible space, harden homes with ignition-resistant building materials, create a family evacuation plan and emergency supply kit, and plan for evacuation. The app also provides guidance on maintaining healthy trees and shrubs. The app features customizable alerts that will send a text or push notification to electronic devices when CAL FIRE responds to a wildfire of 10 acres or more in the vicinity.

To download the ready-for-wildfire app and to learn how to create defensible space around a home, visit [www.ReadyForWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org).

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**Media Notes:**  
[Wildfire Awareness Press Kit](#)