FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CON FIRE ANNOUNCES RETURN OF EXPANDED SEASONAL WILDFIRE RESPONSES; REMINDS ABOUT WEED ABATEMENT DEADLINE

Early Vegetation Fires Signal Beginning of Wildfire Threat; Con Fire Urges Residents to Take Steps Through Fall to Protect Family, Homes, Neighbors

CONCORD, CALIF., June 7, 2023 – Contra Costa County Fire Protection District today announced return to full fire responses for all grass, vegetation, and wildland fires across the district because of the arrival of seasonal fire weather. Full responses include a minimum of five firefighting apparatus and crews. Since November 16, 2022, such responses had been limited to a single engine based on the reduced threat during winter months.

Con Fire also reminds of the now passed June 4 deadline for completion of all weed abatement and urges residents to protect their families, homes and neighbors by doing this important work if not already completed. These are the single most important things owners can do to ensure firefighters have the time and ability to better defend their properties from wildfires. If not already done, now is the time to ensure properties meet or exceed — and continue to meet or exceed throughout seasonal fire danger weather — all weed abatement and defensible space requirements.

Fire prevention inspectors this week are conducting compliance inspections across the district, and issuing citations if necessary for non-compliant properties that put owners and their neighbors in danger. After a brief notification process, properties in continued violation will be abated by the district at considerable owner expense that will appear as a tax lien on their property.

“Seasonal fire danger is once again upon us, later than in recent years, but potentially more dangerous with what will clearly be an abundant crop of dried fuels resulting from winter rains,” said Fire Chief Lewis Broschard, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. “I urge all residents to prepare for wildfires now by practicing weed abatement and defensible space creation and reviewing plans for evacuation, including learning your new evacuation zone.”

“Experience shows the resident who abates weeds, creates defensible space, and hardens structures to resist wind blown embers today can make a difference. Owner preparation of properties is the single most effective thing that can be done to save homes and businesses from wildfire threats,” said Assistant Chief and Fire Marshal Chris Bachman, Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. “Investment in fire safe preparation today can buy the time tomorrow for firefighters to arrive and protect homes and businesses from wildfire loss.”

This year’s return to full vegetation fire responses comes a few weeks later than the previous year owing to extended rainy spring weather. Though a delayed start, spring rains, preceded by winter rains are resulting in an exceptional crop of vegetation across the county and the threat of a challenging wildfire season.
In addition to increasing response levels for all grass, vegetation and wildland fires, Con Fire is adjusting staffing levels, adding two Crew 12, 16-person hand crew teams for seven-day-per-week availability. Heavy equipment crews are also being upstaffed to provide early-season fire trail maintenance as well as vegetation fire responses.

Residents are encouraged to learn and note their zone for reference in an emergency by visiting cwsalerts.com/know-your-zone/.

Detailed information on protecting homes and businesses from wildfire dangers, including weed abatement deadlines and preparing now for the possibility of evacuation can be found on the district’s website at https://www.cccfpd.org/wildfire-prep/ or by scanning the following QR code:

About Contra Costa County Fire Protection District – With implementation of a contract for service with the City of Pinole in March, 2023 and annexation of the former East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD) in July, 2022, Contra Costa Fire now provides fire and emergency medical services to more than 770,000 residents in 12 cities and 11 unincorporated areas across our expanded 557 square-mile jurisdiction. The district now comprises 34 fire stations and more than 600 employees. Through our unique ambulance “Alliance,” the district delivers EMS and ambulance transport services to much of Contra Costa County. In 2022, the district responded to nearly 100,000 incidents of all types, including 67,000 fire medical emergencies, and dispatched some 100,000 ambulances, conducting more than 75,000 ambulance transports. Contra Costa Fire remains dedicated to preserving life, property, and the environment.

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For incident-related media queries 24/7, please call our On-Call PIO Line at 925-660-PIO1 (7461).
CONTRÁ COSTA COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

PHOTO RELEASE

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An early season wildfire in Pittsburg, April 29, 2021, visually demonstrates the combined benefits of weed abatement and defensible space creation, and the importance of rapid and overwhelming responses by firefighters. In the fire pictured below, two of the homeowners had only just completed their weed abatement in recent days, well ahead of the deadline and with visible results.

In the above aerial photo from an early season, April 29, 2021, grass fire in south Pittsburg, the benefits of proper weed abatement and defensible space creation are clearly demonstrated in homes three and six, untouched by fire. Houses one, two, four and five all sustained damage to either accessory structures or outbuildings. The interdependence of neighbors on each other’s weed abatement is shown by the fire that burned from the partially unabated house four into neighboring house five. The rapid response of Con Fire firefighters stopped the fire burning into house five by mere feet and protected all seven houses from damage or destruction. Had house five burned, it is likely the well-abated houses six and seven may also have been lost. (Photo courtesy Con Fire’s Fire Investigation Unit)

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