

KERA News

Volume I, Issue II

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Special points of interest:

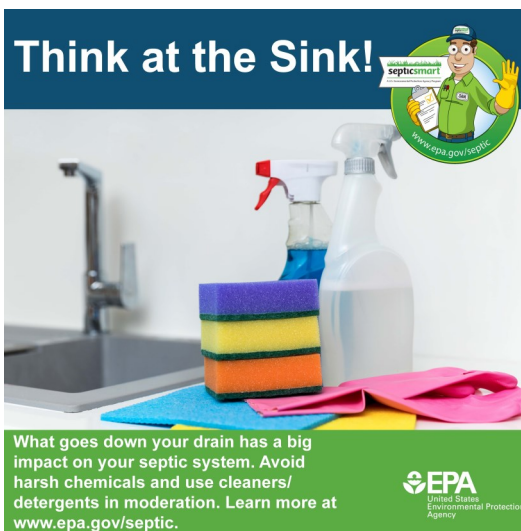
- Preparation for Power Outages
- Heating your Home in Winter
- California Wildfires and Air Quality Conditions

Inside this issue:

- Preparation for Power Outages 2
- Heating your Home in Winter 2
- Indoor Air Quality 2
- California Wildfires and Air Quality 3
- New Environmental Tech Hire 4
- Holiday Cooking Safety Tips 4

Being Septic Smart

In order to keep pollutants out of nearby groundwater, it is important for a septic system to be properly maintained and operated. Failing septic systems can cause environmental damage as well as health hazards, due to contributing pathogens or excess nutrients to groundwater.



Have the system inspected and pumped every 3-5 years, and limit the use of a garbage disposal if you have one. Instead of washing grease down your sink, put it in a container and throw it away. Try to limit any solid material going down your sink drain, and dispose of trash items in a trash can. If you have multiple water-generating appliances in your home, such as dishwashers or washing machines, try to stagger their use instead of using them all at the same time.

DON'T wait until your septic system has a problem before addressing it. Try to avoid pouring or flushing household chemicals, grease, or oil down the sink, and do not park or drive on your leach field.

For more information and recommendations on septic systems, check the Environmental Protection Agency website at epa.gov/septic.

If you need your system pumped, make sure to reach out to a septic system professional.

Upcoming PG&E Pole Replacements

Based on updates from PGE's Cultural Resource specialists, there will soon be several more pole replacements on various parts of the Rancheria. It appears to be about 7-9 poles, with either replacement, removal, or anchor installation. The tentative start date is not until February 2024, however, the specialist warned that work

dates tend to change based on other schedule factors. The first pole to be replaced is located on the west side of Manzanita Road, north of the intersection with Quail Drive. To request updates on scheduling, please contact KERA at 530-419-5090.



Preparation for Power Outages

During periods of extreme weather and storms, it is possible for communities to experience power outages due to downed power lines. During these times, PGE suggests the following tips to prepare your household for periods of extended power loss:

- Unplug electrical appliances or equipment, like TVs and computers, which may spark or surge when power returns
- Download or print documents you may need
- Charge cell phones and backup chargers in advance
- Stock up on batteries for items you rely on
- Ensure you have adequate nonperishable food

items that are easy to prepare without power

- Before the outage begins, set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings until power is restored
- During the outage, limit opening refrigerator and freezer doors

For more information on preparing for an outage, check the page at: pge.com/outages-and-safety.html. You can also set up to receive outage alerts and updates via text, email, or phone.

Heating your Home in Winter

As the weather cools down, it's important to keep safety in mind when heating your house.

If using a fireplace, be sure to have your chimney inspected once a year before use. Always use seasoned wood, and be sure to use a screen protector in front of your fireplace to prevent stray embers reaching flammable material such as carpeting. Keep a fire extinguisher within your home and be sure to check it regularly.

If using a furnace, have it serviced by a heating technician every year before winter, and make sure you have a carbon monoxide detector in your home. Make sure the detector is working properly and the batteries are in good condition.

To reduce energy and electricity waste, set your thermostat so your heater does not run during the day when you are not home.

When using electric heaters, keep any flammable objects at least three feet away. The heater can cause burns or electric shock, so keep children and pets away from the heater. When plugging in the heater, do not use multiple plugs or extension cords, as this can cause a power failure or fire.

Indoor Air Quality

We often think of air quality as an outdoors problem, but air pollutants can be a concern even when indoors. Sources of indoor pollutants include consumer products, gas appliances, building materials, smoking, and even furniture. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recommends the following measures to reduce your exposure to indoor air pollution:

- Use formaldehyde-free products such as solid wood, stainless steel, bricks, and tile whenever possible
- Restrict cigarette smoking to outdoor areas

-Minimize the use of air fresheners and other strongly scented products

-Use a medium- or high-efficiency filter in your central forced air system to help remove airborne particles

-Use products such as paint, glue, or caulk outdoors whenever possible

Remember, the most effective way to protect yourself from indoor air pollution is to minimize the release of pollutants in the first place!

California Wildfires and Air Quality Conditions

According to Calfire, more than 6,000 wildfires have occurred in the year 2023 alone, burning more than 300,000 acres. In previous, drought-stricken years, these figures can be far higher; During 2020, more than 4 million acres burned, destroying 11,000 structures and causing 33 deaths.

California is particularly vulnerable to wildfires thanks to a combination of factors. Prolonged dry conditions lead to high temperatures and less rain, drying out fuels and contributing to an increase in dead trees. Bark beetle infestations can also cause mass die offs, further increasing the fuel load. According to the US Forest Service, the total number of trees that have died due to drought and bark beetles is 129 million. Dead trees burn much faster and easier than living ones, and so high numbers of dead trees near occupied areas can pose significant threat to communities in the event of a wildfire.

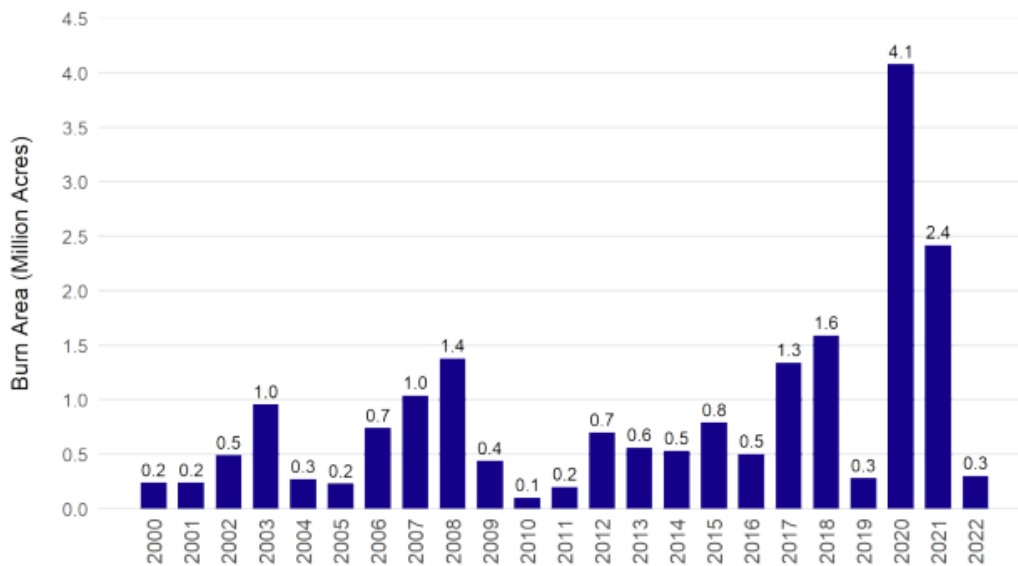
Wildfire smoke contributes metric tons of pollution to California air every year, and can cause or worsen a whole host of health problems, especially to the respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Smoke is composed of ‘Particulate Matter’ or PM, fine dust particles smaller in diameter than a human hair. These microscopic particles, when inhaled, can get deep into your lungs, causing illnesses such as bronchitis, and can aggravate chronic heart and lung diseases like asthma. The particles can also

cause health problems such as burning eyes and runny nose.

Wildfire smoke also releases multiple other air pollutants, all of which can be harmful to human health or the environment: greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. In 2022, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) estimated that 8.9 million metric tons of carbon dioxide were emitted by California wildfires. 2020 was significantly worse, with an estimate of 106.7 million metric tons.

For more information on wildfires and your health visit: <https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/fires-and-your-health>.

Figure 1. Acreage of Burned Wildland Vegetation Area*



* These acreages do not include areas where wildland vegetation data for model inputs are not available, e.g., developed areas and croplands.

Source: California ARB

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OF WINTUN INDIANS**

**KLETSEL
ENVIRONMENTAL
REGULATORY
AUTHORITY**

P.O. Box 1630
Williams, CA 95987-1630

Phone: 530-419-5090

E-mail:

kelly.baucom@kletseldehe.org
sarah.lucchesi@kletseldehe.org
douglas.ralat@kletseldehe.org

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KERA news

New Environmental Tech Hire

KERA is very pleased to announce the recent hire of a new environmental technician, Douglas Ralat. Douglas is a recent graduate from Chico State, majoring in Environmental Science, Hydrology Option. While there, he served as president of the Association of Geological and Environmental Students. He has significant field experience in wetland delineation, fuel research, and soil sample collection, and has worked for the USDA Forest Service as a hydrologic technician on stream buffering and road surveying.

We are very happy to welcome Douglas to our program, and cannot wait to get started!



Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

Here's a few tips for keeping your holiday season safe:

-Clean your oven and stove to reduce the potential for grease fires

-Use turkey fryers outdoors and place them on a sturdy, level surface away from flammable items

-Keep an eye on the food you're cooking and never leave it unattended!

-Clear your cooking area of possible combustibles, such as oven mitts, towels, and food wrappers

-Never store items in your oven; they can catch fire when preheating

-Avoid letting children near the kitchen when cooking or utilizing electrical appliances

-Have working smoke detectors. Make sure you test them to ensure the batteries are working

-Keep a fire extinguisher within your home, and make sure you know how to use it. Ensure the extinguisher is of the appropriate grade:

- A: Trash or wood fires
- B: Liquid and grease fires
- C: Electrical fires

Extinguishers are designated according to what type of fire they can extinguish. For

instance, ABC extinguishers can put out all three classes of fires.

Enjoy your holiday season!

