



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Irvine Ranch Conservancy & Orange County Fire Authority Host Fire Watch Training for Community Volunteers

Working together to prevent future wildfires on the Natural Landmark

(Irvine, CA)—In an effort to help prevent future fires, the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, in partnership with the Orange County Fire Authority and the InterCanyon League and Greater Laguna Fire Safe Councils, is implementing a community Fire Watch Program. To kick things off, IRC and OCFA will be hosting an official Fire Watch training on Tuesday, July 22nd from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. The training will take place at OCFA's Regional Fire Operations and Training Facility, located at 1 Fire Authority Road (Jamboree and Tustin Ranch Road) in Irvine. The curriculum is tailored for residents who want to volunteer and assist during fire season, which is lasting longer each year.

Too-frequent fire is perhaps the greatest long-term threat to the rare and globally-endangered ecosystems on the historic Irvine Ranch. Fire is also a huge hazard for the many human communities built close to nature. In an effort to prevent future wildfires on the National Landmark, the IRC and OCFA hope to get the community involved, and become familiar with the land as well as understanding fire and how it works. .

“The newly formed partnership between OCFA and the IRC will address all aspects of wildland fires including fire prevention and public education,” says OCFA Fire Chief, Chip Prather. “Working together with partners and residents is among our best prevention tools. Through the Fire Watch Program, we hope to identify suspicious circumstances or careless activities; detect and report fires earlier; educate the public about the risks and consequences of wildfires; and reduce the frequency of human-caused wildfires.

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“After several significant wildfires over the past few years it has become obvious that the community can be our eyes and ears in preventing human-caused wildfires,” says Dave Raetz, Director of Public Programs, IRC. “We hope these community Fire Watches will provide a high level of visibility and deterrent during Santa Ana winds and Red Flag Warning days.”

To participate in the training on July 22nd and become a certified Fire Watch volunteer, contact Dave Raetz at 714-508-4763.

Nearly 40,000 acres of open space on the historic Irvine Ranch have been designated a Natural Landmark by both the State of California and the U.S. Department of Interior in recognition of their importance to California and the nation. Irvine Ranch Conservancy is a 501(c)3 non-profit, non-advocacy organization created to protect the wildlands and parks on the historic Irvine Ranch and enhance the public’s connection to them, while helping partners and landowners with all aspects of stewardship. It offers a variety of free, guided outdoor programs for all nature enthusiasts including hiking, mountain biking, horse-back riding and much more. For more information, go to www.irvineranchwildlands.org or call 714.508.4757.

OCFA is a regional fire service agency that serves 22 cities in Orange County and all unincorporated areas. OCFA protects over 1.3 million residents from its 61 fire stations located throughout Orange County. For more information, visit www.ocfa.org.

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