



WEST BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

FIRESCAPING WORKSHOP

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA CLASS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST | 6:00 PM

westbasin.org/firescaping



WEST BASIN

Municipal Water District

Firescaping Workshop

Palos Verdes Peninsula

November 1, 2023

www.westbasin.org

Tonight's Agenda

Welcome & Introductions, 6PM

- Harold Williams, West Basin Div. I Director
- Scott Houston, West Basin Board President
- Ara Mihranian, RPV City Manager
- Tammie Myers, California Water Service Conservation Coordinator

Los Angeles County Fire Department Update, 6:30PM

- Battalion Chief Mike Lewis

Firescaping Workshop, 6:45PM

- Douglas Kent

Questions & Answers, 7:30PM



Outline

Firescaping: Protecting Your Home and Family

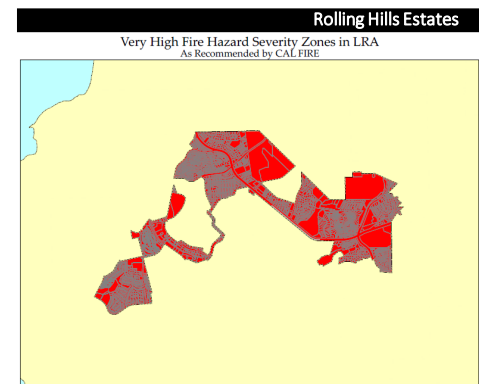
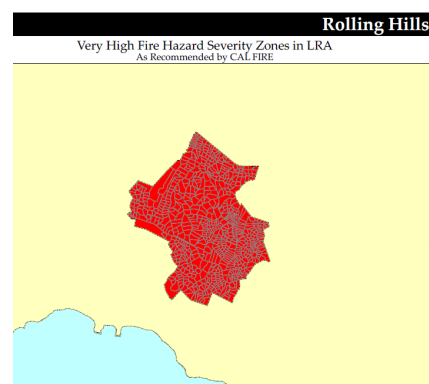
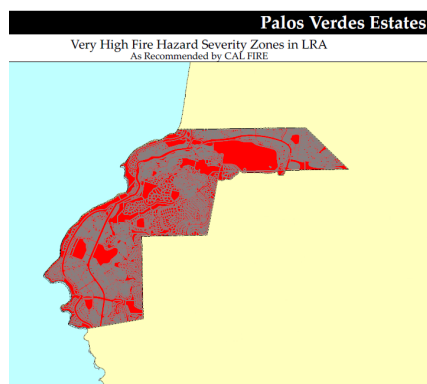
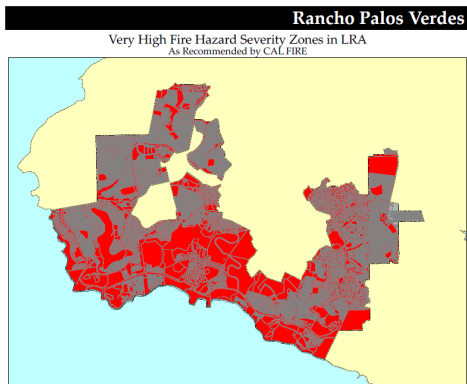
1. Structures
2. First 5 Feet
3. Defensible Space
4. Plants
5. Conclusion



Introduction

Fire is an Ever Present Danger

According to CalFire and the State Fire Marshal's web site, the Palos Verdes Peninsula is considered a High Fire Hazard Area.





Structures



Structures

Your 1st Priority!

Whether firebrands or direct flame contact, your structure must be maintained to withstand an assault of intense heat and flying burning embers.



Bond Fire, 2020



Woolsey Fire, 2018

Structures: Of Concern to the Peninsula

Topics

Fire-Hardened Structures

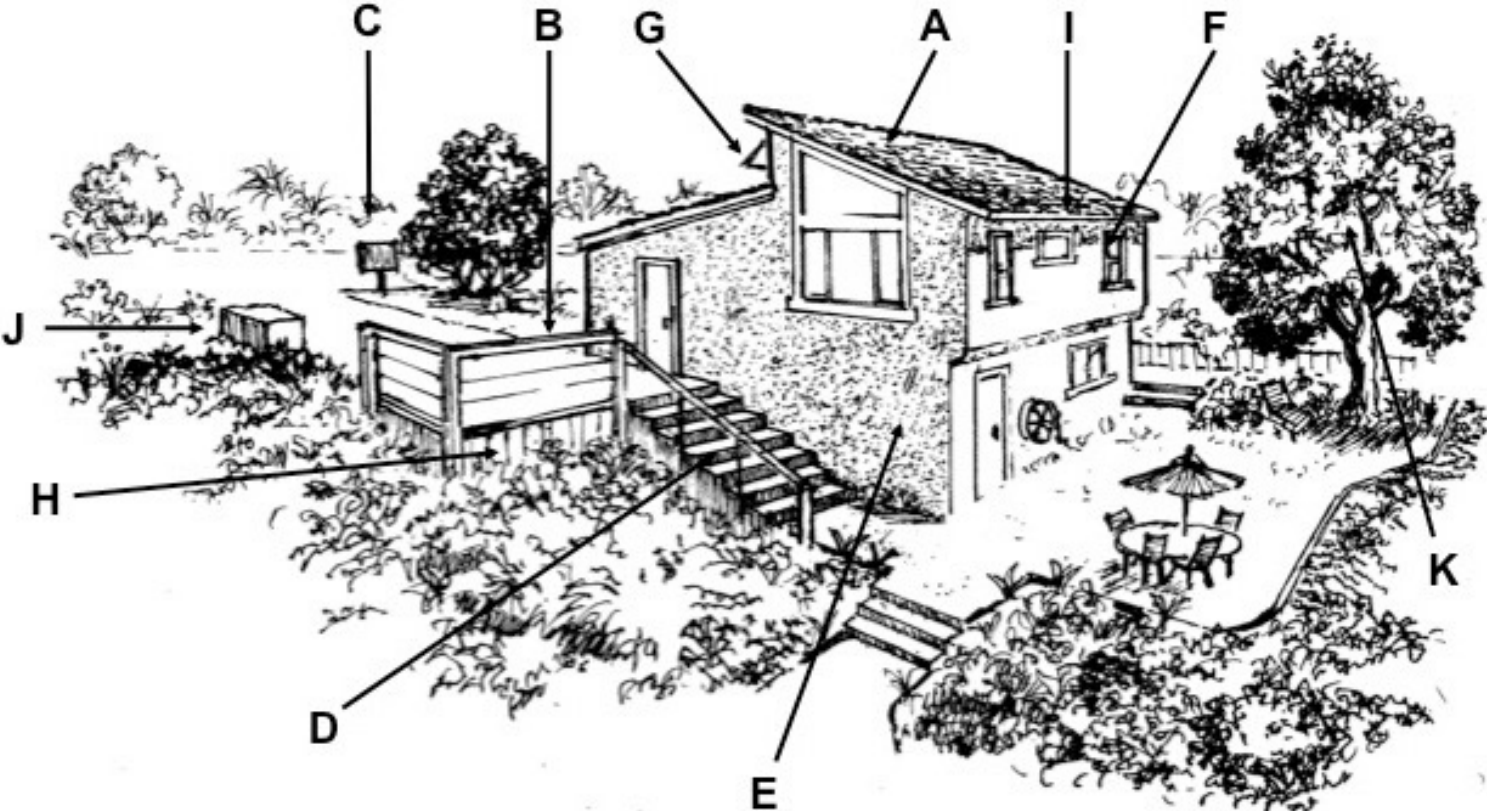
Ridgetop Living

Outbuildings

Small Lots



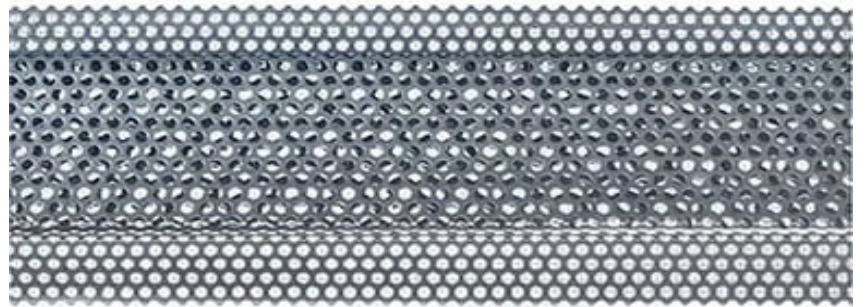
Structures: Characteristics of a Fire-Hardened House



Structures: Ridgetop Living

Problems

- Elongated flames
- Intense heat
- Firebrands propelled by convection



Vulcan Vent: Fire and ember safe

Solutions

- Screens
- Eaves
- Trim
- Siding



Structures: Outbuildings *Needs Attention*

- Basic maintenance
- Weatherization
- Check screens



Firebrands can ignite these two outbuildings. The overflowing rain gutters (left) and the big gaps in the door (top) create opportunities and fuel for firebrands.

Small Properties

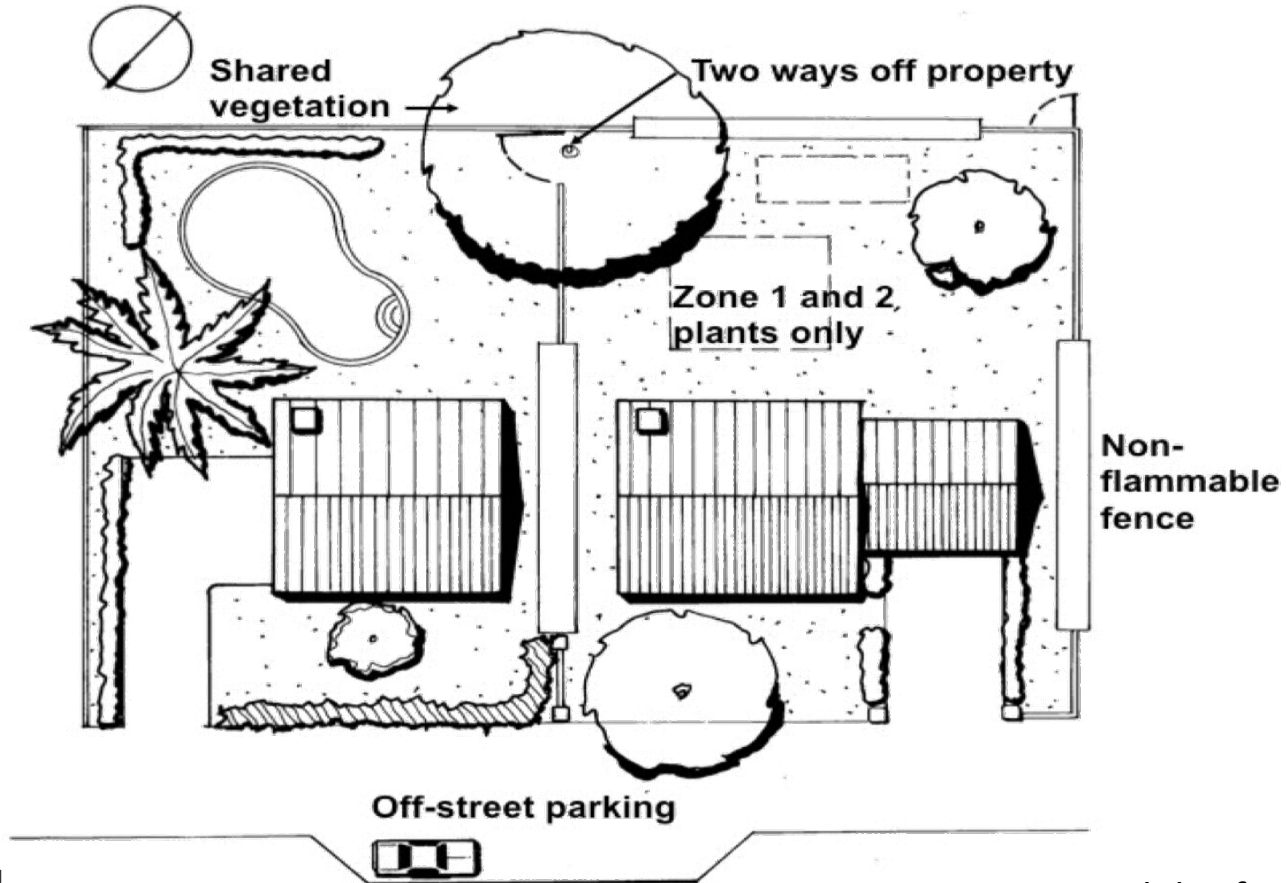
As illustrated by the state's deadliest and most destructive wildfires, small lot neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to loss. The reason is because there is not enough distance between the homes to buffer the intense heat and a domino effect is created. Homes burn at about 1,110 degrees F.



Old Fire, 2003



Structures: Small Lot Design Strategies



Structures: Small Lot Design Strategies

The Roof: Installing and maintaining a fire-retarding roof is possibly the most important aspect to protecting a house on a small lot.



Off-Street Parking: Gridlock is common in high-density neighborhoods, but more so during wildfires. Off-street parking and pullouts will greatly speed travel times.

Escape Routes: Dense neighborhoods need as many escape routes as possible.

Fences: The pursuit of privacy adds an incredible amount of fuel to any property, but it is compounded on small lots. Separate structures with a concrete wall.

Plant Selection: Fire retardant and fire-resistant plants only on small lots.

Shared Vegetation: Not every property needs a tree. Oftentimes a homeowner can simply let their neighbor's tree grow over and onto their property.

Pools and Spas: Design your pool or spa so that you or fire fighters have easy access to the water and drain outlets.

Structures: To Do

- Ensure all openings are screened.
- Clean **roof** and gutters.
- Manage **seams** and fill gaps.
- Paint, if not sand, all peeling **paint**.
- Make your **address** visible.





First Five Feet





First Five Feet: Video

[West Basin's First 5 Feet](#)

First Five Feet: Shade Structures

Problems

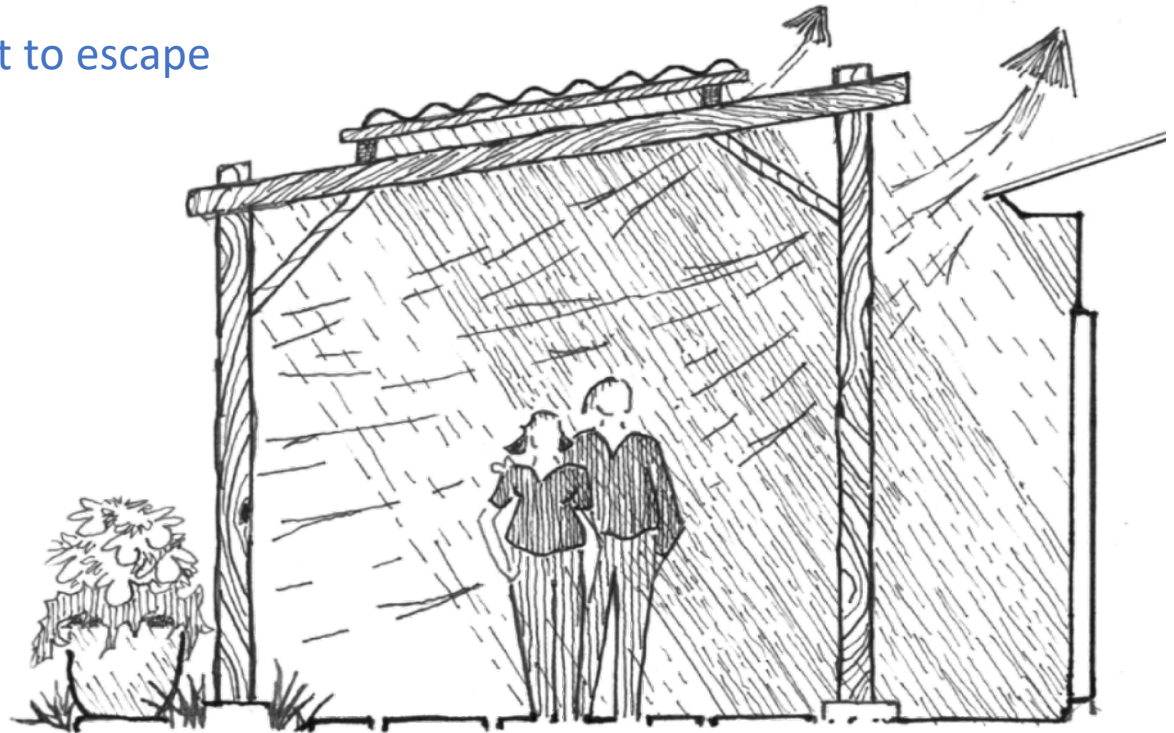
- Poorly maintained
- Attached to structures



First Five Feet: Shade Structures

Solutions

- Detach from structure
- Slant to allow heat to escape
- Care for the wood



First Five Feet: Do you see it?



The wood, containers and tools provide opportunities for ignition and unnecessarily add risk to an otherwise fire-hardened property.



Defensible Space





Defensible Space: Video

[West Basin's Defensible Space](#)

Defensible Space: First 30 Feet

Additional Topics

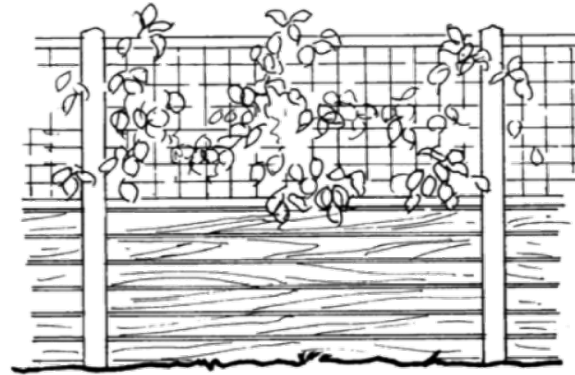
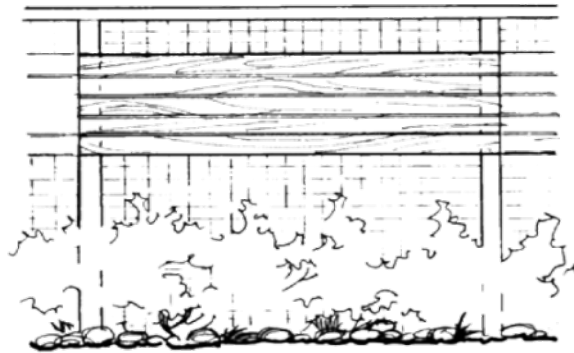
- Shade Structures
- Fencing
- Decks



Defensible Space: Fencing



Defensible Space: Fencing



Defensible Space: Landscape Features

Needs Attention

- Basic maintenance
- Clean and preserve wood
- Remove flammable items from around landscape feature



Defensible Space: To Do

- Remove all flammable items within the first 5 feet!
- Remove dead, **dying** and diseased vegetation.
- Maintain landscape features, such as fences and tree houses.





Plants



Plants: Less Flammable

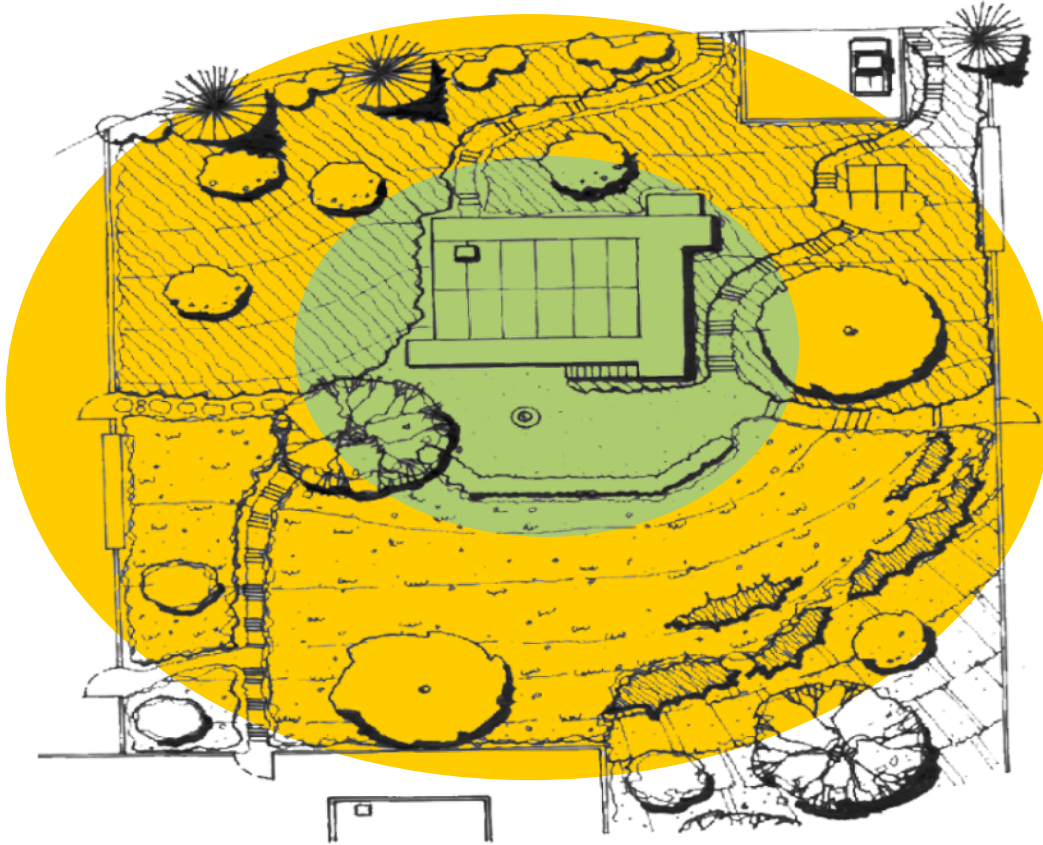


Coral bells (*Heuchera*) and *Carex pansa* have many ideal attributes.

Knowing Traits is More Important than Lists

- Broadleaf plants
- Moist and easily bent leaves
- Thick leaves
- Low amount of litter
- Sap that looks more like water
- Plants without fragrance
- Plants with silver or gray leaves
- Plant leaves without hair

Plants: Less Flammable



**FIRE
RESISTANT**



**FIRE
RETARDANT**

Plants: Less Flammable



Fire Retardant

Agapanthus	Grape
Cercis – Redbud	Liquidambar
Crape Myrtle	Philodendron
Fescue	Photinia
Flax	Succulents
Gazania	



Fire Resistant

Artemisia ‘Silver King’
Ceanothus
Cistus – Rockrose
Coast Live Oak
Cotoneaster
Lemonade Berry
Mallow
Native Verbena
Toyon
Yarrow
Yucca

Plants: Less Flammable - Lists



Citrus is notoriously good at resisting the effects of fire and intense heat.

Fire Resistant

- **Bird**
- **Food**
- **Lawn Alternatives**
- **Medicine**
- **Native**
 - Chaparral
 - Desert
 - Woodland Understory
- **Succulents**
- **Temperate**
- **Tropical**

Plants: The Problem with Lists



- Too Old
- Diseased
- Injured
- Pest Infested
- Not Healthy

Maintenance is the Fulcrum of Fire Safety

Plants: To Do

- ➔ Remove dead, **dying** and diseased vegetation.
- ➔ **Replace** vegetation before it becomes an economic liability and fire risk.
- ➔ Do not let your plants **dry** out.



Resources for the Palos Verdes Peninsula

State Approved Air Vents for Fire Protection

- Brandguard Vents, San Clemente, CA
<https://www.brandguardvents.com/>
- Embers Out LLC, Yorba Linda, CA
<https://www.embersout.com/>
- Vulcan Technologies, San Rafael, CA
<http://www.vulcantechnologies.com/>

Flame Retardant Paints

All the companies below provide Class A paints, the most fire retarding and state approved.

- BanFire
- FireTech
- FlameOFF
- INSL-X
- Krylon
- Master Flame
- Zero Flame

Nursery Centers with Experience in Fire Protection

- Armstrong Nurseries, Torrance
- Elwood Nursery, Rolling Hills Estates
- South Coast Botanic Gardens, Palo Verdes Estates

Qualified Landscape Contractors

California Landscape Contractors Association, “Find a Contractor”

<https://member-clca.org/max/4DCGI/directory/contractor/index.html>





RPV Emergency Preparedness Resources



RPV Emergency Preparedness Division

- Find resources at rpvca.gov/emergency
- Request a presentation from the Emergency Preparedness Committee



Alert SouthBay

- Get emergency alerts via text or email
- Text "alertsrb" to 888-777 or go to alertsouthbay.com



Know Your Zone

- Find your zone at PVPready.gov
- Check the zone map in an emergency

Contacts

West Basin Municipal Water District

www.westbasin.org

City of Rancho Palos Verdes

www.rpvca.gov

California Water Service Company

www.calwater.com

County of Los Angeles –

Fire Department

www.fire.lacounty.gov

Douglas Kent MS, MLA

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www.anfractus.com

Thank You!



The West Basin mission is to provide a **safe** and **reliable** supply of **high-quality water** to the communities we serve.