



TOWN OF PARADISE  
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September 10, 2019

F Superior Court of California F  
I County of Butte I  
L SEP 16 2019 L  
E D Kimberly Flener, Clerk D  
By Deputy

The Honorable Tamara L. Mosbarger  
Superior Court of California, County of Butte  
One Court Street  
Oroville, CA 95965

RE: Response to the FY 2018-19 Grand Jury Report

Dear Honorable Judge Tamara L. Mosbarger,

On behalf of the entire Paradise Town Council and the citizens of the Town of Paradise, I would like to thank each of the 2018-19 Grand Jury members for their service to our community. The Town Council has reviewed the conclusion, findings, and recommendations as written in the 2018-19 Grand Jury Final Report. Based upon Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the Town Council is pleased to have the opportunity to provide the following responses, as requested by the Grand Jury Report.

#### FINDINGS

- F1. The 2008-2009 Grand Jury Recommendation to widen the shoulders and turnouts along existing evacuation roads has not been funded.
- F2. The Butte County General Plan 2030 addresses plans to study potential improvement projects to upgrade existing evacuation roads; nine years after adoption these studies have not been completed.
- F3. Allocated funds for studies to identify additional evacuation routes and improvements to existing roads have not been used.
- F4. Following the 2008 Humboldt Fire, vegetation removal along the Skyway and Clark Road allowed those evacuation routes to remain passable during the Camp Fire.
- F5. During the Camp Fire, burning vegetation along some evacuation routes slowed and endangered traffic, causing some to be closed.
- F6. Because there is only a single roadway in and out of communities such as Cohasset, Concow, Berry Creek and other, it is critical to have evacuation routes free of roadside vegetation.
- F7. There is presently no regulation for roadside vegetation clearance in Butte County.
- F8. The Butte County Sheriff's Office "Sheriff's Work Alternative Program" (SWAP) is an effective use of funding for vegetation reduction on evacuation routes.



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- F9. There are not enough designated temporary refuge/assembly/greenbelt areas within the high-risk communities to accommodate trapped evacuees.
- F10. The existing assembly point signs, and icons on evacuation plans are not understood by some of the general public and emergency personnel.
- F11. During evacuation the flow of outbound traffic was slowed when surrounding communities were unprepared for the large influx of evacuating vehicles.
- F12. Disaster planning challenges, as specified in the 2013 Butte County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, are not being addressed.
- F13. The 2013 Butte County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is outdated.
- F14. CodeRED is inadequate as a stand-alone emergency notification system due to vulnerable telephone and cellular service.
- F15. Butte County Sheriff's Office deputies lack fire-resistant outerwear.
- F16. Aerial infrared cameras can be an effective tool to assist emergency personnel in crisis.
- F17. Butte County may not be maximizing the use of grants available for fire prevention and management.
- F18. Promotion of community programs for citizens requiring additional assistance to alert and aid them in evacuation is not adequate.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS (Town of Paradise only)

- R1. The Public Works Departments of Butte County and the Town of Paradise should widen the shoulders along ridge and foothill community evacuation routes to aid in evacuation flow, prior to July 1, 2020.
- R2. The Public Works Departments of Butte County and the Town of Paradise should clear and maintain all flammable vegetation in fire-prone areas adjacent to evacuation roadways, prior to April 1, 2020.
- R3. The Butte County Department of Development Services should increase enforcement of current laws related to fuel reduction and defensible space, prior to January 1, 2020.

#### Town of Paradise Response

Grand Jury Recommendation R1: The Public Works Departments of Butte County and the Town of Paradise should widen the shoulders along ridge and foothill community evacuation routes to aid in evacuation flow, prior to July 1, 2020.

The Town of Paradise agrees evacuation routes are of utmost importance, and anything that can be done to improve them is a priority. After the Camp Fire, the Town of Paradise underwent an extensive public outreach effort; and with community input drafted a Long-Term Recovery Plan. One of the recovery projects identified in the Plan is improving evacuation routes. The Town is currently applying for disaster funding through Cal OES and FEMA for our identified recovery projects, including that of



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improving our evacuation routes. Once that funding has been confirmed, the Town will issue a request for proposals for a firm to study our roads and propose treatments to improve them. Once those projects have been identified, the Town will begin the process of implementing the proposed treatments to improve the roads and make future evacuations safer for our residents.

Grand Jury Recommendation R2: The Public Works Departments of Butte County and the Town of Paradise should clear and maintain all flammable vegetation in fire-prone areas adjacent to evacuation roadways, prior to April 1, 2020.

The Town of Paradise agrees that property vegetation management is vital in the safety of our community, especially along evacuation routes. This month (August 2019), the Town received support from Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) to enhance our public works crew with AFWD workers. These new workers are set to begin work removing vegetation along public rights of way in Town, including evacuation routes.

Grand Jury Recommendation R3: The Butte County Department of Development Services should increase enforcement of current laws related to fuel reduction and defensible space, prior to January 1, 2020.

While this recommendation does not specifically list the Town of Paradise, the Town agrees the enforcement of our current ordinances on fuel reduction is important. The Town has already issued letters to properties that have been identified as needing fuel reduction work and will follow the Code Enforcement process to gain compliance. The Town has hired an additional part-time Code Enforcement Officer, and will look at hiring additional Code Enforcement Officers in the near future to keep up with the workload. The Town will also continue to work with the Fire Safe Council to support their efforts to create and maintain fuel breaks in strategic locations.

This concludes the Town's responses to the 2018-19 Grand Jury Report. On behalf of the Town Council and the Town Staff, I would like to again thank the Butte County Grand Jury for thoroughly and thoughtfully examining issues that affect our community.

Sincerely,

Jody Jones,  
Mayor, Town of Paradise