Congressman LaMalfa visits fire safe projects

Congressman Doug LaMalfa discussed various matters with the Lassen County Fire Safe Council, local agencies and county staff following a tour of two projects on Diamond Mountain. Tuesday, Aug. 20.

During his stop in Lassen County Tuesday, Aug. 20, Congressman Doug LaMalfa, representative for the first congressional district, visited two local Lassen County Fire Safe Council projects on Diamond Mountain and met with local council members and county staff to learn about local needs.

“I want to get fires out before they have a name and a T-shirt,” LaMalfa said, following the excursion on the local mountain roads showing various watershed and restoration efforts and fuel reduction projects.

The theme throughout the visit was the importance of continuing projects on local roads to open the tree stands and restore watersheds and forests, and in turn, limit the risk posed by wildfires.

Power lines exist, forests exist, lightning exists. When you have that level of fuel out there, something is going to light it on fire,” LaMalfa said. LaMalfa’s projects have helped in areas where fuel loads have been reduced.

On the tour Lassen County Fire Safe Council Managing Director Tom Esgate, Lassen County Fire Safe Council Chair Lloyd Kiefer, Lassen National Forest Supervisor Deb Bumpus, Eagle Lake Ranger District Fuels Officer Chuck Lewis, Cal Fire Lassen Unit Chief Scott Packwood, County Administrative Officer Richard Egan, District 1 Supervisor Chris Gallagher, Sierra Nevada Conservancy representative Krissy Hoffman and WM. Beauty management Inc. representative Ryan Hildreth and Jason Lindgren and his associate representative to the two land project sites on Diamond Mountain.

First, the congressman and tour attendees stopped at the Sierra Nevada Conservancy funded Diamond Mountain project on WM. Beauty managed land, where “Tuftless” tree pieces are chipping material and Evans Right of way Clearing is conducting fuel reduction operations to improve the watershed and reduce fuels.

There, LaMalfa was able to learn about the projects from Evans Right of Way Clearing owner Mike Evans and Tuftless Enterprises, Inc. owner Doug Lindgren.

The tour focused on the timber sale preparation and hand crews operations on Lassen National Forest land. Hearing from fuels officer Lewis, for the Eagle Lake Ranger District, tour attendees learned about the discussions to reduce the canopy cover due to wildlife limitations to reducing fuels and restoring ladders for the fire to climb rather than keeping it on the ground.

Moreover, LaMalfa and others were able to see the High Sierra Fire Fire Owner Jerry Vice.

Following the tour on mountain roads, the group convened for a discussion on how to expand the fire safe council’s efforts.

Moreover, LaMalfa was outlining about a bill he was working on to allow for a wider swath of work along roadways, noting how more clearance could be potentially helped prevent the Carr Fire, which started when a trailer’s tire blew out and caused a spark last year.

LaMalfa also discussed the destructive Camp Fire, which ravaged the towns of Paradise in November, saying that wildlife has set the tone on how to prepare.

Moreover, there was some discussion regarding state versus federal responses to wildfires and the importance of groups like the fire safe council to act as a facilitator for varying organizations, including Cal Fire, private land owners and the U.S. Forest Service and others to work together.

According to Esgate, LaMalfa has shown keen interest in assisting the county and the local fire safe council with the efforts to restore watersheds and forests, as well as protect communities from wildfires and the tour was conducted to show the congressman the fruits of the collective effort’s labor.