

Fire History of the Local Wildland-Urban Interface¹

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Fire activity in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties has been recorded in historical documents. In pre-European times the Native Americans in the hills above the eastern shore of San Francisco Bay used fire to remove unwanted underbrush to improve the wildlife habitat. This type of “prescribed” burning may have been the earliest fire

management in this region—the characteristic low levels of lightning activity in northern California resulted in few naturally occurring fires. In the 20th century, patterns of fire in this wildland and urban interface have caused much destruction. The history of fire in the area provides clues to these patterns.

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