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Drop off vegetation to create fire buffer

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Virginia Foothills and Shadow Hills residents can begin dumping their leaves, pine needles, weeds and other vegetation-based debris starting today at a depository set up on the top of Kenneth Drive.

Vegetation collected will be turned into mulch.

This is the second year the Virginia Foothills chapter of the Nevada Fire Safe Council is offering such a site.

"Last year, we sponsored a huge vegetation debris dump site on the Geiger Grade, and it was hugely popular," member Pamela Galloway said.

The site will be marked with signage through June 15 to save residents from having to haul debris to dumps farther away, Galloway said.

The Nevada Fire Safe Council is an independent membership organization focused on reducing fire risks and increasing survivability of at-risk communities. It also serves as a bridge between fire services, public agencies and communities threatened by wildfires. The council has 86 chapters statewide and about 4,000 members.

Creating defensible space around homes and other buildings is among things the council stresses and the nearby dump is an opportunity for residents to do that.

Defensible spaces are areas around a structure that have been cleared of vegetation, such as brush or cheat grass, which fuel fires. Clearing property is more likely to save a building; it helps to slow the spread of a wildfire because the extra space allows firefighters to get closer to the fire and have more room to work.

"We also sponsored a program in which Sierra Fire Protection District received our grant funds to clean out numerous easements, hauling out literally tons and tons of overgrown weeds and bushes," Galloway said. "They also cut tree limbs away from power lines."

Galloway said the chapter is considering a "greenstripping" project that would remove additional fuels but isn't sure yet how much grant money would be available.
