

# Collaboration lessens threat of fire

By Michael Kay, Union Democrat

There was a time when the forests of northeastern Calaveras County fed communities. Now they threaten to destroy them.

Decades without thinning and wrongheaded national anti-fire policies have left a tinderbox of thickly grown trees and heavy brush, according to many experts.

It is so bad in some areas that fire officials say if a fire started within the forest it would be too dangerous to leave the road to fight it.

“Our forests, once our friends, have become the most scary thing out here,” said Calaveras County Supervisor Steve Wilensky, who represents the area in question.

The situation has spurred a massive coalition of public, private and nonprofit groups to form a partnership several fire industry veterans call “unique” and “unprecedented.” The goal is to make the forests safe again.

So far, crews have cleared some 70 acres in the West Point area.

Fire breaks – areas where fire will be at least delayed, if not stopped – are in place for the first time in decades.

**Read the whole story**