

Rich Casale's TOP TEN LIST

What Property Owners Should Consider if Wildfire has Caused Damage to their Property

- #10 **Get help from NRCS or other professionals** that are certified, registered and/or licensed before selecting and installing treatment measures.
- #9 **Respect the laws of nature.** Natural recovery can be quicker with longer term benefits when you design with nature. Remember, when you control water (runoff) you control nature which can have disastrous consequences.
- #8 **One size does not fit all.** Every property has unique features and circumstances requiring a site specific evaluation and corresponding treatment. One more reason not to do what your neighbor is doing, besides they might not know what they are doing.
- #7 **Minimize soil/slope disturbances.** Ash, leaf drop, down trees and remnant burned vegetation all play a role in protecting the soil and slopes following wildfire.
- #6 **Look beyond your property lines and work with thy neighbor.** Runoff, erosion & debris flows have no respect for property boundaries.
- #5 **Prevent access roads from going to ruin.** Roads will require more maintenance in the first few winters following wildfire. Many road drainage facilities may need to be replaced, re-located, and/or re-sized depending on the nature of fire damage to the surrounding landscape and watershed. Culvert inlet and outlet controls will be critical.
- #4 **Emergency/temporary measures typically have a high risk of failure.** They can cause more serious problems if and when they fail and often provide a false sense of security.
- #3 **Remember the M&Ms.** All existing and any planned treatment measures require regular and perhaps constant monitoring and maintenance especially throughout the first two winters following wildfire.
- #2 **Say "No" to Yes. Sometimes doing nothing or doing less is best.** Give nature a chance to do her job.
- #1 **There is NO silver bullet.** When it's not safe, it's not safe. Have an emergency plan and get out of your home and leave your property when it's not safe.

Rich Casale is a natural resource specialist and a Certified Professional Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist (#3). He has assisted many communities and hundreds of property owners throughout California with post-fire restoration needs and information throughout his 43-year career with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.