

For Immediate Release...

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## **West Slope Foundation Announces Another Program to Assist Survivors of the Caldor Fire...**

*West Slope Foundation, and multiple sponsors make it possible for survivors of the Caldor Fire on the West Slope to borrow tools to assist in the rebuild process.*

“It takes a Village !”

That’s the idea behind the Caldor Survivors’ Community Tool Shed in Somerset. The Tool Shed will be a library-like lending resource that will celebrate its grand opening Friday, August 19, 2022, one year after the Caldor Fire destroyed 406 primary residences, and burned a total of 221,000 acres from August 17<sup>th</sup> to late October 2021.

The tools and equipment that the West Slope Foundation has acquired through donations or direct purchase will be available at no charge to residents rebuilding homes in the wake of the devastating Caldor Fire. The brainchild of Scot Telfer and Jennifer McKim Hibbard, executives at West Slope Foundation and Valeri Mihanovich of CalOES, and is made possible with donations from multiple faith-based sponsors, and corporate entities.

For the purpose of the “Tool Shed” The building itself was lent to West Slope Foundation by the Pioneer Volunteer Firefighters Association. The “Tool Shed” is the old Willow School House, which was established in 1904, and was part of the Pioneer School District until it closed in 1965.

General contractor Steve Tyler has been giving the old one-room schoolhouse the facelift it deserves. He has been restoring the building by installing new windows and doors, removing and replacing the rotted siding, and going as far as adding a ramp up to the front porch, to ease the transport of heavier items. The new siding was donated by the James Hardie Company, and will be delivered and installed by Diamond Pacific.

When the WSF Advisory Committee first began this venture more than five months ago, they never believed that the partnerships they formed over the

last year would be so receptive to the idea, and step in with grants and sweat equity to help establish this important program.

“People just came to us and started to ask how they can help, once word got out what we were doing”, Telfer said, “We even had “ToolBank USA” from the East Coast partner with West Slope Foundation to develop a pilot program for all of Northern California Their tool lending program shipped out six pallets of tools to get the program started.

“With multiple faith-based organizations and other sponsors, we are so excited this program has become a reality, and survivors like myself will soon be able to begin building their lives and homes back up in this wonderful community,” said Mckim-Hibbard.

From there, it was full speed ahead on the project at 7960 Grizzly Flat Road

#### ABOUT THE CALDOR SURVIVOR’S COMMUNITY TOOL SHED

**Where:** 7960 Grizzly Flat Road, Somerset, CA 95684

**Grand opening:** Friday, August 19th

**Tool Request Processed: Fridays.**

**Tool Checkout: Saturday and Sunday**

**More information:** Visit <https://www.westslopefoundation.org/community-tool-shed>

“There has been a lot of community interest,” and we have tools such as shovels, rakes, chainsaws, log splitters, generators, power washers, and more. Having these items for these people to use for free helps them greatly.

The tools are available to survivors who have suffered 50% or more damage to their primary residence, and who have already been vetted by the West Slope Foundation. To find out if you qualify, please go to the West Slope Foundation’s website at <http://www.westslopefoundation.org>