THE IMPACT OF WILDFIRE ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES DURING 2017 TUBBS FIRE

The Tubbs fire started October 8, 2017 and consumed 36,807 acres, destroyed 5643 structures causing 22 fatalities. This was one of the most serious Northern California fires that occurred during the 2017 fire season and seemingly continued into recent fire seasons. California continues to be at risk for wildfires. Some of California's most beautiful country remains most at risk. Such was the case of the Tubbs Northern California fire.

But with a catastrophe comes recovery. Recovery includes the human recovery, property rehabilitation, reconstruction of infrastructure, lost housing and commercial facilities located throughout the burn range.

Many of the properties destroyed in the Tubbs fire were located in a higher-end residential area atop the coast mountains just east of Santa Rosa, a beautiful, essentially a suburb within the Bay Area. Home values, ranging from $300,000 to upwards of $1 million were totally destroyed in the calamity.

As people look to the future and opportunity for rebuilding many fire damage victims either had to sell their burned-out parcels or work with insurance companies to rebuild all that was lost, which included all the compliance associated with policies. This meant replacement of housing as it stood before the fire, with no improvements allowed.

This particular research project follows land values before and after the fire ruined many residential properties.

A research issue is the value of land. Land values are particularly difficult to ascertain a systematic value since data recorded for land sales is highly scattered when plotted by value making the determination of trend challenging.

Difficulties in valuation is due to expected parcel use often due to amenities associated with the parcel. Access also influences the notions of price/value as evidenced by relationships to streets and other transportation routes/modalities

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Given the discussion above the following paper will attempt to ascertain the value of fire damage land to be re-purposed as residential housing. Any value or prediction of newly constructed residential housing is not included in the data. The data offers some indication of amenity for the 614 properties included in the sample.

Data was collected from the multiple listing service of the Bay Area Real Estate Information services portal used by realtors and other real estate professionals in the transaction of land sales and other real estate assets. Consequently, purchases that did not go through the MLS will not be included in our analysis of land price trends. In order to standardize non-standard land offerings/products the research analysis used price per acre as a means of standardizing very non-standard acreages, some of which were small i.e. 30,000 feet up to many acres of land, not all buildable.

A principle of land value analysis is that at sale larger parcels of land yield a lesser price per acre or price per foot than similar smaller parcels of land which report higher price per acre or foot. This, of course, is easily observed and makes sense when considering the scale of improvements to land.

Using regression analysis techniques and dummy variables for the variety land characteristics associated on the multiple listing service for land sales, researchers were able to measure some level of cost and appreciation per parcels.

Site visits to the burn area over the past two years documented the extent of rebuilding currently occurring within the TUBBS FIRE perimeter yielding some notion/belief that the Fountaingrove and related communities will eventually regain their status as one of the premier communities in Sonoma County region featuring outstanding views of the Coast Mountains, and Santa Rosa Community.

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