



MONTHLY UPDATE

February 2022

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IN THIS ISSUE...

Carol Hallet, Program Manager, starts us off with some thoughts about February. We also learn more about Michelle Wagner, UAS Unit Leader, and hear about our deployment to the Bluebell Fire, for which we received a nice letter of thanks. Our Twain Harte Fire Department engines passed their annual pump inspection, Lise Lemonnier tells us more about shaded fuel breaks, and we hear from our UAS Unit regarding the inspection with which they assisted on the Twain Harte dam back in December.

John Buckingham provides with some Safety Tips for this month, we hear from the UAS and Firefighter Rehab units, and you'll learn the most important take-aways from the PG&E Safety class many of us attended. And, of course, we'll fill you in on some upcoming events that may be of interest to you.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue. Our goal is to provide information to the community, focusing on safety and health.

If you have a suggestion for future articles, please contact twainhartecert@gmail.com for consideration of the topic by the board.



Emergency pack from this month's training, article to follow next month

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NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM MANAGER

by Carol Hallett

I am cold, anyone else? February is mostly recognized for Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, flowers and, depending on where you are, being incredibly cold! Oddly enough, even though this is just another month, there's a lot of history behind this month of romance and love!

February is the second month of the year in the Julian and Gregorian calendar. It is the shortest month with only 28 days in common years and 29 days in leap years. The birthstone is Amethyst, which is purple quartz and is a beautiful blend of violet and red. I always think the reason for the birthstone being Amethyst is because when you are cold you can turn purple.



In the northern hemisphere usually February is considered the last month of winter. A fact that I think is unusual is that having only 28 days in common years, February is the only month of the year that can pass without a single full moon. Using Coordinated Universal Time (CUT) as the basis for determining the date and time of a full moon, this last happened in 2018 and will next happen in 2037.

I have enjoyed all things that February brought us especially the accomplishments of THA-CERT this month but I will be happy to turn the calendar to a new month and look forward to the warmer days coming to us.

MEMBER PROFILE: MICHELLE WAGNER

by Mary Schreiner, PIO, THA-CERT

I sat down with THA-CERT UAS Unit Leader, Michelle Wagner, a couple of weeks ago to hear about how she came to be involved with CERT and the UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) program.

Michelle grew up in the bay area, spending summers in Alaska with her dad. Her time in Alaska fostered a love for nature and the outdoors and led to a degree in Conservation Biology from San Jose State.

She spent 20 years working as a park ranger in places like the Pinnacles, Yosemite (fighting fires), and Palo Alto. After the birth of her son, Ben, Michelle worked part time



Michelle and son, Ben, on the Northern coast of Italy

MEMBER PROFILE: MICHELLE WAGNER, cont'd

so she and partner Randie (Revilla, subject of our Member Profile in the September 2021 issue) could share child care duties.

By the time Michelle was ready to return to work full-time, there were no full-time ranger jobs available so she took a 'side step' to the Sheriff's office. Michelle took the entrance exam



Michelle takes a break from fighting fire

for the Basic Police Academy in Santa Rosa and earned the highest score ever on the exam. This ensured that Michelle could attend the Police Academy without any delay.

During her 10 years working as a Deputy, she held collateral duties as a Hostage Negotiator, member of the Honor Guard, Range Master (including being 'Last Man Standing' in the range competition), Armorer, Field Training Officer, Background Investigator, and a member of the Peer Support and CISD Team.



Michelle working as a Marin County Sheriff's Deputy

Michelle and Randie bought a cabin in Twain Harte 4 years ago and Michelle is now semi-retired. She still teaches Firearms, Tactical Medicine, Basic First Aid, and Active Shooter Response at the Basic Police Academy.

Michelle's interest in UAVs started when her son, Ben, bought his first UAV, and developed further when the Marin Sheriff's department started a UAV program. She was asked to be the Unit Leader for our UAS Unit after seeing a meeting notice in Twain Harte and attending a meeting.



Michelle on foot patrol among the redwoods

Michelle wanted to join CERT to get more involved with her community. Although Michelle is one busy woman, she enjoys spending time with Ben, shooting, hiking, cooking, or "anything ending in 'ing' that doesn't start with 'work'". One of the things we all enjoy about Michelle, aside from her fabulous cooking, is her sense of humor.

(Left) Michelle, Ben, and Randie sailing in the San Juan Islands



FIREFIGHTER REHAB UNIT DEPLOYED

by Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

We had just concluded a CERT meeting at my house when I received a phone call from Chief Gamez. He asked if we could get a crew from firefighter rehab to respond to a structural fire. I said hang on, and turned to the room to say, “who can deploy to a fire with me”? Mike Mandell and Margaret Lawrence volunteered. I told the Chief I have a crew. The Chief told me the location and asked me to let him know when we were ready to go.



Heading out to the fire

How prepared is the CERT team? I grabbed my backpack on my way out the door and Mike grabbed his from his car. Margaret is a new member so we gave her a CERT shirt to wear; Mike and I were already wearing ours. We all jumped into my car and headed over to Vantage Point.

Lise Lemonnier (who was also at the meeting) said that she would go over to help load things up. We had some logistical things to do

Within minutes we were ready to head out. Mike was in charge of communications, Margaret took on navigation and I was the driver and off we went. Lise stayed behind as back up.

As we were driving to the incident Mike called San Andreas dispatch to let them know we were on our way, we also informed the Chief. From the time we received the request to arrival on scene was 35 minutes.

My first task was to locate the Incident Commander (IC) and let him know we were there and determine where he would like us to set up. The location was figured out and again our team worked like a well-oiled machine unloading all the items needed and ensuring a good flow for the firefighters. At first the firefighters, who are not used to having someone on site to help take care of them looked at us and said, “no worries, we have water”. We had more to offer than just water. We had Gatorade, water flavoring and snack bars...”oh, you got snacks...oh, ok!” and the firefighters started to visit us. The word spread that we had more than just water and more firefighters came by. We also offered them “Hero’s Wipes” which are used to wipe off the carcinogens.



THA-CERT Firefighter Rehabilitation at the Bluebell Fire

As time went on we realized that this fire started around the noon hour and some of these guys may not have had lunch. We also knew that the fire was going to go on for a long time. I as the leader went over to the IC and asked if he would like me to get sandwiches there for the guys. He looked at me and asked, “could you do that?” I said, “of course! How many?” He answered, “30”. I responded, “copy” and off I went.

FIREFIGHTER REHAB UNIT DEPLOYED, cont'd

Within 1 hour, the sandwiches and chips were onsite. I let the IC know and he sent the firefighters over. They were stunned that someone did this for them. Some of the guys were just getting relieved by the mop up crew and thought maybe they should not take a sandwich, I told them we have enough for them and all the others. They were pleased because they were hungry.



House fully engulfed

The home was engulfed with flame when we first got there and as the day went on we saw more of the structure burn all except for one room. When you looked in the window of the room (which I did from a distance) you could see on one wall a bookcase full of books, a picture on the wall, possibly a desk with a lamp on it but the most important thing I saw was that the door was closed. I have heard many times that closing doors can save lives and slow the fire. Here I was able to see it first hand. It was an amazing part of what we learned that day.

We were there for 4-5 hours. We learned a lot of lessons; how we can be more efficient, whom we need to communicate with, and that it felt great to be able to do something to support the firefighters as they worked diligently and effortlessly to fight this fire, each very dedicated to the work.

THA-CERT will be doing a fundraiser so that we can support our firefighters going forward with energy bars, liquid IV, Gatorade and when needed have funds so that we can buy them food. If you would like to donate in the form of gift cards, monetary donations etc. please send to: THCSO/CERT. You can drop it off at the office, send to the THCSO office or contact me at twainhartecert@gmail.com and I will pick it up. This is one way we can all support and thank our firefighters!



(Above) The closed door, which you can see through the window, spared this room from severe damage



(Left) Unfortunately, the entire house was destroyed, except for the one room that had the door closed

RECEIVING THANKS

by Mary Schreiner, PIO, THA-CERT

While it's not unusual for us to hear people say "thank you" while we are out on deployments, we never take it for granted. Every single time someone expresses their appreciation, it makes us smile. We do what we do to help our community. The thanks we receive is just icing on the cake.

Every once in a while, someone takes the time and effort to write a nice note about what we did. This month, CalFire Battalion Chief William Barteau, who served as Incident Commander for the Bluebell Fire, sent the letter below to our "big boss", THFD Chief Neil Gamez. Thank you, Chief Barteau, it was a pleasure working with you and we appreciate being called to assist with this incident.



Cooperative Fire Protection Services

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January 9, 2022

Fire Chief Neil Gamez
Twain Harte Community Services District, Fire Department
18781 Cedar Drive
Twain Harte, CA 95383

Chief Gamez:

Yesterday resources from the Tuolumne County Fire Department, CAL FIRE, Tuolumne Fire District, Sonora Fire Department, and Twain Harte Fire District operated at a residential structure fire on Blue Bell Road. The operation went on for approximately nine hours.

Very early in the incident I requested that the Duty Officer of Twain Harte CSD Fire Department be contacted about the use of Twain Harte's CERT for firefighter rehab. You immediately answered on the command frequency that the request was approved.

Within about thirty minutes, four members of Twain Harte CERT arrived ready to work. They set up a shade tent near the incident. Tables and chairs were also set up. Medical monitoring in compliance with NPPA standards, hydration, and nourishment in the form of energy bars were provided. Close to the five o'clock hour I was asked if sandwiches were needed. The CERT team arranged for and picked up about thirty sandwiches for working members.

Having Twain Harte CERT at this incident was crucial to firefighter safety and well-being. With the shortage of firefighters in the County, having the few that we have properly cared for is a tremendous service to the County.

Thank you to you, General Manager Tom Trott, and all members of your amazing CERT for the selfless service that they provide to all members of the Tuolumne County Fire Service.

Respectfully,

William R. Barteau
Incident Commander

FIRE ENGINE PUMP INSPECTION

by Carol Hallett, Program Manager, THA-CERT

It was time for the annual pump inspection for our fire trucks in Twain Harte and Strawberry. It was a bright cool morning but the work was already in progress when I arrived.

Two Twain Harte Fire Department trucks were there and one truck from Strawberry. The driver for Strawberry was THA-CERT member Rich Combs. He alerted me that this inspection was happening and as always it was a pleasure to meet up with him. Why was Rich there? He is the driver and pump operator for Strawberry Fire Department.

Burton's Fire, Inc owned, and operated by Ken and his brother John Burton, was doing the job. The brothers established Burton's Fire, Inc in 1991. Prior to opening the business, they gained experience in fire truck manufacture and repair during their years of working at Van Pelt Fire Trucks, which was later purchased by FMC. Burton's Fire specializes in chassis changeovers, refurbishes, wreck repairs, pump overhauls, electrical (new and troubleshooting), as well as new build-ups. They have a complete fabrication shop, with a design engineer on staff.



THFDs fire engine undergoes inspection

Utilizing all that background and expertise, Ken Burton was onsite that day to test the pumps for pressure, checked the gauges, and ran water through the system. They do the annual check for all the fire stations in Tuolumne County.

As I mentioned this is a yearly inspection and our rigs passed with flying colors.

WHERE DOES THE TIME GO?

by Lise Lemonnier, Planning Section Chief, THA-CERT

The hours worked by THA-CERT volunteers in the month of February are as follows:

Administration = 209.5
Training = 109
Deployment = 19
Total February = 337.5

FIFTH SEASON

by Lise Lemonnier, Planning Section Chief, THA-CERT

I have lived in Tuolumne County for over 40 years. In no way do I have a green thumb, and yet, everything around me grew without me noticing. That little skinny tree suddenly became huge. The underbrush thickened in the blink of an eye.



Lise's cleared property, also known as a shaded fuel break

Like everyone else, I have come to realize that we have, not four seasons, but actually a fifth season: Fire Season! And, it's just around the corner. To prepare for this fifth season, and to get some insurance against disaster, I had Ron Yates masticate my 4+ acres, shredding all the underbrush into park-like ground cover. I want to report that it looks wonderful. I can see the trees rather than the forest; I feel safer knowing I have three sides of my house cleared of brush.

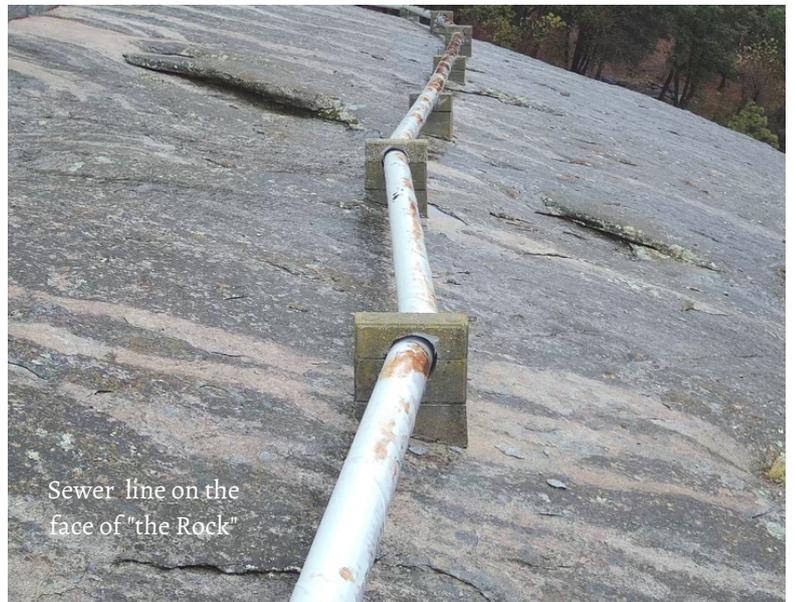
Are you ready for this fire season?

DAM, DAM, DAM

by Michelle Wagner, UAS Unit Leader, THA-CERT

There was a lot happening toward the end of December with major storms and power outages. So much that I was unable to get an article out regarding our UAS Unit deployment. And although some time has passed, I felt it was important to highlight another useful service provided by THA-CERT.

On 12/23/21, while most of Tuolumne County was making last minute preparations for their holiday celebrations, Randie Revilla and I were standing in the rain with folks from Twain Harte CSD, Twain Harte Fire



Sewer line on the face of "the Rock"

Department, and representatives from several other state and county agencies waiting for a break in the weather so we could launch our UAV to get photos and video footage of the face of Twain Harte Lake Dam, as well as the sewer line that runs across the back side of the Rock.

We were notified earlier in the day that there was some concern about a potential breach in the dam and because of the potential danger of sending people out to inspect

DAM, DAM, DAM, cont'd



the area, we were asked to fly the area to gather digital data to aid officials in their inspection.

We got a very short break in the weather, which allowed us to grab some good video and pics, which were later provided to the Fire Department and THCS. As luck would have it, we got hit with weather as we were finishing up, but thankfully Curtis Doty was there and provided us a place in his truck to dry out our aircraft. Thank you, Curtis!

All in all, a very productive day of hurry up and wait, followed by a mad scramble to get out and back before the sky opened up again.

Then...maybe...a sampling of the spiked egg nog. Purely for medicinal purposes.

SAFETY TIPS

by John Buckingham, Safety Officer, THA-CERT

Although there are efforts being made to get rid of Daylight Saving Time for good, it's happening again this year in much of the U.S the rest of the world. Here is your Spring Checklist for the Change to Daylight Saving, Sunday, March 13:

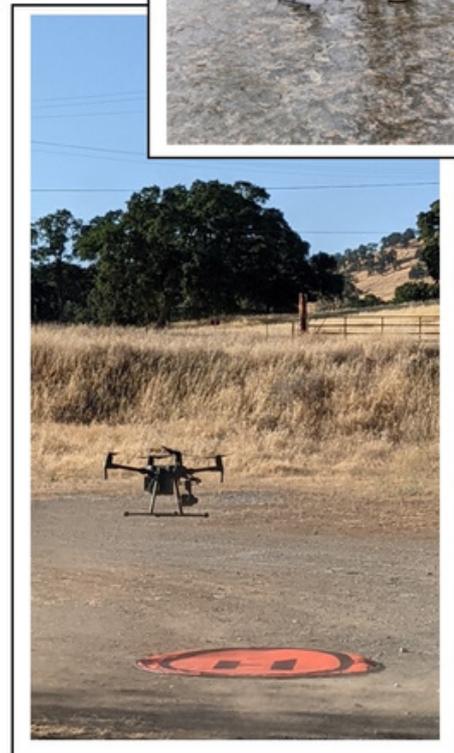
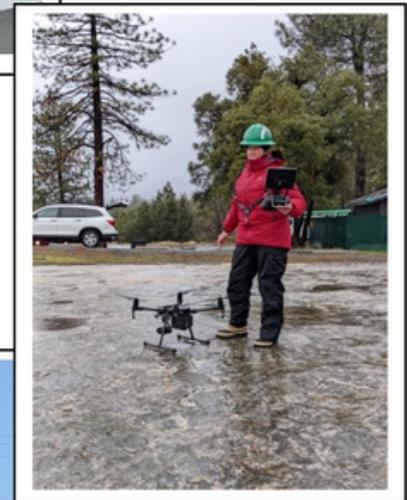
- 1) On the second Sunday in March, the 13th, set your clocks forward one hour. Remember "Spring forward, Fall back" if you can't remember which way to set your clocks. Don't forget to change clocks on appliances, in your car, etc. Mobile phones automatically update to the new time.
- 2) Consequences of fatigue are common and can be serious so plan ahead and be aware of others actions. If you are driving, pull over somewhere safe where you can rest, if need be. There is still time to begin to acclimate yourself and your family before the time change.
- 3) Time to check smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors. Change batteries and check working conditions. Don't have working smoke alarms and CO detectors? Now is the time to buy one; smoke alarms and CO detectors save lives!
- 4) Time to get rid of unwanted medicines at a Prescription Drop Box located at most pharmacies near you. Medications flushed down the toilet get into the water supply and endanger fish and animals.

Be safe!!

UAS UNIT RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

by Michelle Wagner, UAS Unit Leader, THA-CERT

Editor's note: If you've been reading the articles written about the UAS Unit and are looking for a way to help out in the community, why not give the UAS Unit a try. You'll be working with and learning with a great group of really nice people who have a lot of varied and interesting life experiences.



CERT
UAS UNIT

WE ARE RECRUITING!

If you have an interest in giving to your community by flying UAVs or helping out as ground support, please contact us at

twainhartecert@gmail.com!

No prior experience required.

FIRE FIGHTER REHABILITATION UPDATE

by **Randie Revilla, Fire Fighter Rehab Unit Leader, THA-CERT**

In addition to a great Fire Fighter Rehab training at the end of January, we had a great kickoff meeting for FF Rehab last week.

We are making a few changes in how we function to allow things to provide the best rehab possible to our firefighters with as little impact on the longevity of our rehab crews. To that end, we have created a list of rotating crews and have scheduled them through the end of the year.

As far as training goes, in addition to regularly scheduled Unit training, we will be focusing on driver training and are planning on running scenarios for each and every crew. This will, hopefully, highlight any training deficiencies we need to focus on this year, as well as strengthen crew cohesiveness.

There is still time to become part of this active and vital unit. No previous experience required. All you need to do is contact us at twainhartecert@gmail.com.

It was really great to see everyone out there. Looking forward to a successful and fulfilling year!



CERT members practice taking vitals and recording them during Firefighter Rehab training in January

PG&E GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY CLASS

by **Mary Schreiner, PIO, THA-CERT**



Pam Purdue from PG&E presents the class

Earlier this month, a group of THA-CERT members, THCSO workers, and Twain Harte FD firefighters attended a class on safety around gas and electrical lines.

This was a free class put on by PG&E and if you ever get an opportunity to take it, I strongly suggest you do. The class was presented by Pamela Perdue at the THCSO offices. There was a lot of material presented, much more than I can provide here, but here are a few important takeaways from the class:

- Always call 811 before you dig, even if you're absolutely positive that it is safe. Call a couple of days before you plan to dig with any kind of machinery.
- Any electrical exposure requires medical attention, even if you feel ok.

PG&E GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY CLASS, cont'd

- Stay at least 30' away from downed power lines, even if they aren't arcing or sparking.
- Treat every down power line as a live line, until you are told it is safe by utility company personnel.
- If you spot a downed power line call the utility company (PG&E in Tuolumne County) and 911 to inform first responders of the hazard.
- If a power line falls on your car, stay in your car, even if the line isn't arcing or sparking. If you must evacuate your car, do not touch the outside of your vehicle. Jump away with ankles together, or take small shuffling steps, until you are a safe distance away.



PG&E Emergency Response Vehicle

At the end of the class, we went out where we could see the PG&E Emergency Response Vehicle, which is equipped to handle pretty much any electrical emergency (PG&E does not currently have any gas infrastructure in Tuolumne County).

WHAT'S NEXT?

Here are a few events to look forward to in March:

Free Mattress and Automobile Recycling

Saturday, March 5th

8 am - 12 pm

Greater Valley Conservation Corps satellite offices located at 14993 Camage Avenue
Sponsored by Green Vally Disposal, the Mattress Recycling Council, and the County of Tuolumne, Department of Public Works

For more information, please see the flier on the next page.

St. Patrick's Day

Thursday, March 17th

How about doing something "green" on St. Paddy's day? Plant a tree or pick up trash along your neighborhood roads.

THA-CERT Monthly Training

Saturday, March 26th

9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Location: TBD (please check our Facebook page for any updates on the location, or contact us at twainhartecert@gmail.com)

The topic for the March training is Medical

We are excited to announce that Eric Marvel (Badge #002), one of our founding members, is coming to town to be our instructor. He is the most energetic, knowledgeable, and caring instructors. He is one of the reasons Twain Harte CERT is what it is today. Mark your calendar, you do not want to miss this training class.

MATTRESS AND TIRE COLLECTION

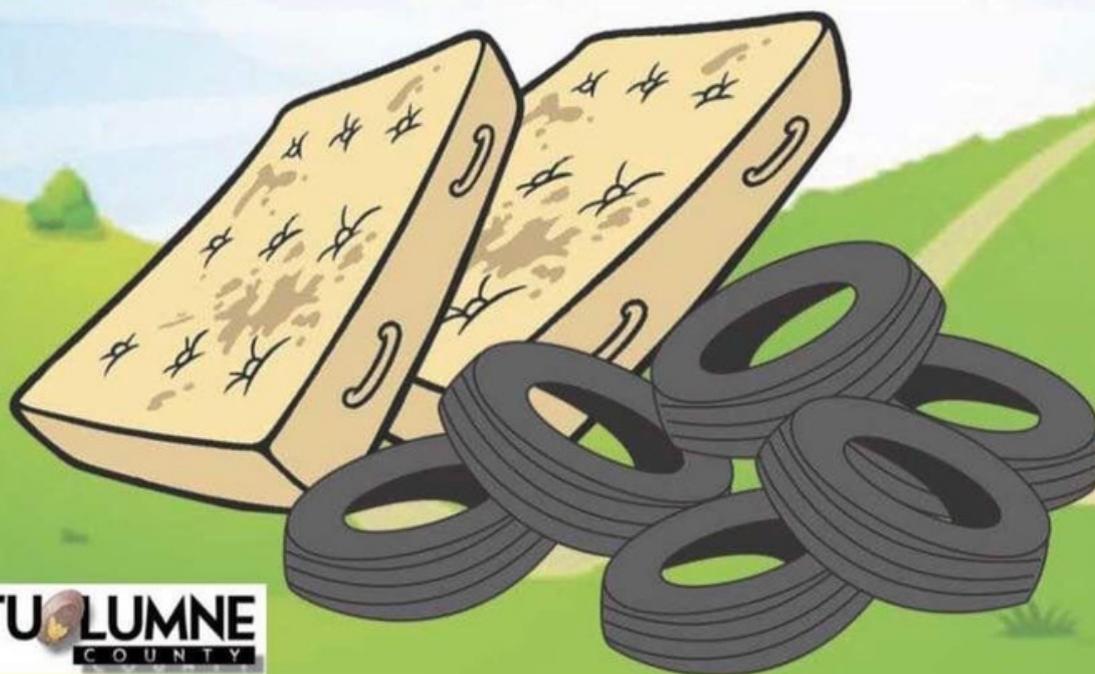
Saturday, March 5th • 8am - 12pm

RECYCLE YOUR OLD MATTRESSES AND UP TO 9 CAR/PASSENGER TRUCK TIRES (No rims)

If dropping off more than 8 mattresses, please call (209) 588-8992

Location: **GREATER VALLEY
CONSERVATION CORPS**

14993 Camage Ave, Sonora



Mattress
Recycling
Council

