



# Firewise Communities®

## “The How-To Newsletter”

*This quarterly provides articles and helpful hints on how to incorporate Firewise principles.*

Spring 2010



### THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY — Involving Youth

**W**e’ve often talked about the importance of education when starting a Firewise community or planning your annual events. In large part, the focus of that education has been the homeowners and other adult members of the community who have some stake in your community’s development and its safety. But, as with so many of life’s lessons, Firewise principles and practices are most effective when they are ingrained early on.



Involving youth in your Firewise efforts can prove very rewarding. You gain the benefit of youthful energy and enthusiasm, while establishing roots that can run deep, making the foundation of your Firewise community all the stronger.

Several Firewise communities have successfully involved their youngest members, from a community in Minnesota whose teens helped conduct home surveys, to a YMCA camp that helped Firewise to develop a fire camp curriculum, to a Girl Scouts’ badge that promotes learning Firewise practices, and a town in Texas where children took the lead in helping their community gain Firewise community status. Your community can also benefit from involving children and teens in your Firewise plans.

This issue will highlight some of the numerous ways in which you can engage youngsters, including how to set up a Firewise fire camp for middle graders and tips on Firewise activities that children can help with around their homes. By including children in your Firewise education and activities, you allow them to develop wildfire mitigation habits that will serve your community well for generations to come. And so, Firewise dedicates this issue to our youth.

To paraphrase the lyrics of a once popular song, “Believe that your children are the future of Firewise; teach them well and let them lead the way!”



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## THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY —

### HARNESSING YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASM FOR FIREWISE — ETOILE, TEXAS

During 2008, Nacogdoches County recently recorded a Firewise first when a group of students at the Etoile School, located in the tiny East Texas town of Etoile, established their school as the first in the nation to help its community receive Firewise Communities/USA recognition. The grade-schoolers accomplished this feat by leading the charge to help their community better prepare for wildfires.

It all began with Jan Amen, the Firewise coordinator for the community who came up with the idea to involve the students and proposed it to the school's principal/superintendent, Andy Trezell. "My sense was that the best way to reach parents is through the kids," explains Ms. Amen.

She continues, "We met with Mr. Trezell to get a feel for his level of enthusiasm for the project. He was receptive to the idea and very anxious to get started."

Mr. Trezell and two teacher advisors, Alicia Eberlan and Linda Tootle, suggested five students to take part in the Firewise Board that was established. The sixth, seventh, and eighth graders forming the board were: Shelby Abel, Chase Webb, Mackenzie Corbett, Madelyn Lowery and Gabrielle Newman. Ms. Newman was selected to serve as chair, and the students were joined by Etoile fire chief Andy Sanders, who

helped them to engage the entire community. "The students were excited about being the first in the nation to host their community," notes Ms. Amen.

To get started, the Firewise Board watched the Firewise DVD, which offered an overview of the program. Ms. Amen then led the students in a discussion where she allowed them to

determine the projects they wanted to do. They were then introduced to the school at a morning assembly where they handed out a checklist they had created for the students to take home.

Of the 110 checklists handed out, the group received 37 completed forms. "This meant that 37 families in the Etoile community did fuel mitigation around their homes to take part in the students' first project," says Ms. Amen. In addition, a Community Firewise education day was

held in conjunction with the Volunteer Fire Department's Auxiliary bake sale, with approximately 60 people taking part.

Ms. Newman wrote a short blurb about the successful project, which was sent to the national Firewise group for publication. That December, the Etoile School's Christmas Program included



Students and other participants show off their Firewise T-shirts.



A crew rakes lawn debris away from the 30-foot perimeter around a home.



The group had help from members of Keep Nacogoches Beautiful.

a Firewise dedication ceremony. For earning their community national recognition, Etoile School was awarded a plaque acknowledging its Firewise Communities/USA status, a framed print, Firewise signs, and a coffee table book. Approximately 100 people witnessed the historic event.

During the event, Ms. Newman showed her youthful enthusiasm, saying, "When we are done, we plan to make Etoile a safer community. As I graduate this year, I hope to take this program with me to Woden High School!"

The Board then met on January 8, 2009 and planned a spring cleaning project, coined the "Great Gator Rake," through which students, staff, and parents (along with Keep Nacogdoches

Beautiful and Texas Forest Service who brought employees from Nacogdoches and Lufkin to help with chainsaws and other manpower needs) volunteered a Saturday to rake, pile and mulch leaves at the homes of three elderly residents in the Etoile community. In conjunction with the event, the group was fed lunch at the Etoile volunteer fire department's fish fry, where they also had their photo taken with Smokey Bear.

"The Firewise program stresses the use of deliberate landscaping and creation of a defensible space around your home," explains Ms. Amen. Following those principles, the students raked leaves and moved woodpiles and other combustibles away from homes and structures.

The event proved a great success, laying the groundwork for future events organized by the student leaders. "Involving the children of a community is a win-win situation. They are wonderful cooperators," says Ms. Amen. "The students learn to be wise about fire and spread the word to their parents."

*How-To Newsletter* thanks Jan Amen, Firewise Coordinator in Etoile, Texas for the information and photographs provided for this Community Example.



Participants in the "Great Gator Rake" work on amassing a pile of leaves.



The 2010 Etoile Firewise Board includes the following. Front Row: Hannah Gilbert, Jill Quisenberry, Samantha Lowery, Madeline Lowery. Back Row: Shelby Able (Chairperson), Linda Tootle (Advisor), Caleb Cannon, Chase Webb, Jan Amen (Texas Firewise representative).

They have large plans for the Spring of 2010, including a cleanup day, a festival at the school and helping with a Firewise booth at the Lufkin Zoo.

## Q & A Chat with Melissa Mason and Heidi Wagner



In this issue of *How-To Newsletter*, two experts who work with youth in their communities offer insights on how to harness the energy and enthusiasm of your younger residents. Melissa Mason has been director of the Outdoor Program for the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc. for six years. She holds a degree in park management and helped establish the Firewise badge that Girls Scouts nationwide can attempt to earn. (Read about the Girl Scouts' Firewise Badge in "Around the Firewise Home.")



Heidi Wagner has served as Manager of Sam's Point Preserve for over twelve years and is employed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). During a TNC Fire Learning Network Conference out west, she learned about the Firewise program. At that time she was a volunteer firefighter in Cragsmoor, NY, a community located on the Shawangunk Ridge in the wildland/urban interface of Sam's Point, a 5,000-acre preserve with a fire-adapted ecosystem. A wildfire had not occurred in this area in fifty years and a serious drought was causing great concern among the residents. With the support of TNC, she began to discuss the Firewise program with homeowners. In 2006, Cragsmoor became New York's first Firewise community.

### **H-T:** What are the benefits of involving youth in Firewise practices?

**MM:** Youth see the importance of the Firewise program here in Southwest Florida, as we have frequent forest fires. Youth not only learn a lot; they take the information back to their parents and share it with them. The program also gives teen girls a leadership opportunity as they take the information and talk about it with younger girl troops, so the message spreads quickly.

**HW:** One of the obstacles we face at The Nature Conservancy and on the grounds at Sam's Point Preserve is the notion that wildfire is a devastating occurrence and must be stopped at all costs. Children are extremely receptive to new ideas. I grew up during the 1950s-60s, and believed well into adulthood, "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!" Why? Because of a highly successful campaign by the Federal government - an adorable Smokey Bear told me so! Every school child learned the motto, and also surmised that wildfire was something to fear. Since then, ecologists have discovered that fire has actually played a major role in shaping the ecology of our forests.

My favorite question to ask children as we hike along the Shawangunk Ridge is: "Who thinks wildfire is bad?" Of course, all hands go up. I then proceed to tell them about the dwarf pitch pine barrens, a globally rare ecosystem on our preserve. I explain that these tough, ridge-top trees need fire to open their pinecones and to help re-nourish the thin soil in which they grow. I continue to explain, even the understory of huckleberries and blueberries are adapted to fire, and produce bigger and better fruit when they withstand a wildfire. At this point, I begin to talk about how we need to learn to live with wildfire safely, especially if our home is near a fire-prone, natural area. I think it is important to help children to understand wildfire is a natural process and necessary for maintaining forest health and that we can safely co-exist with wildfire, if we take preventative steps to protect ourselves and our homes.

### **H-T:** What's a good age to start involving kids? Are there different approaches for involving different age groups?

**MM:** We primarily work with our teens (sixth grade and up) on the Firewise program. They have helped with trail clearing at both camps and have learned about the Firewise program and gone back out and taught it to adults and other, younger girls. We also had a group of middle school girls create a fire-danger

level sign with Smokey Bear at both camps. These signs keep visitors informed of potential wildfire danger or any campfire bans. Girls younger than sixth grade learn about Firewise through the older girls — however, at this time we do not involve them in projects other than perhaps helping to rake vegetation away from buildings while at camp.



*The girls pictured above/below earned their Girl Scout Silver Award (second highest award in Girl Scouts) by creating the Smokey Bear sign/Fire Danger Warning as a corresponding educational piece. The program through which they developed the signs was used at camp last summer and teaches other girls what they can do around their own homes to make their houses and communities more "Firewise."*

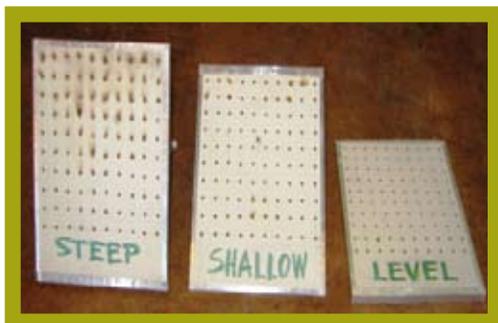


**HW:** I believe even elementary school children could learn about the benefits of fire to our forests. I think an emphasis could be placed on how animals instinctively know how to avoid harm in a wildfire. This information could lead to how we, as humans, can protect ourselves and our homes from wildfire. I have presented a program at Sam's Point for children, ages 7-11, which has helped them to better understand wildfire. This program was adapted from a presentation I learned about while attending the 2008 *Backyard and Beyond Firewise Conference* in Florida. The program, "Kids Get Fired Up!" begins with a series of questions about fire. What do you need for fire to occur? Responses often include: "You need two rocks to rub together" or "You need gasoline and a match." Other questions asked typically include: What conditions in our forests help wildfires to ignite? Does fire help or hurt forest ecology?



We then discuss the fire triangle, with members of our Student Conservation Association fire crew, dressed in Nomex® with helmet and backpack pumps, demonstrating how they control wildfire. Then we divide the children into several groups.

Each group receives a fuel recipe. Members of each group are asked to select materials from several containers of different fuel types, which include small diameter sticks, large diameter branches, dried leaves and grass, charcoal and burned brush, and green leaves and pine needles. These materials are assembled in aluminum pie plates. Each group is given 6 matches (yes, they do light the matches under close adult supervision!) and attempt to burn their assembled fuels. After each group attempt to burn their fuel ingredients, we re-assemble to discuss our observations. Each group is then asked to formulate their own fire recipe, that they are certain will ignite. Most of the groups succeed in producing impressive, flammable results. (What kid wouldn't love this activity!)



The next portion of the program demonstrates how wildfire spreads. The question is asked: Do you think fire spreads more quickly on level ground, a slight incline or an extreme incline? Our fire crew then conducts the children outside on the sidewalk to observe three matchstick forests angled to the three topographical specifications. With fuses, the fire crew proceeds to light each matchstick forest. Of course, the extreme

incline produces the most dramatic results. The program ends with the same set of questions previously asked at the outset, to determine lessons learned by the children. Following this demonstration, we hold a bonfire to burn brush collected from local homeowners during our Firewise Day, complete with hot chocolate, s'mores and grilled hot dogs.

**H-T:** How can fire camps be helpful in engaging youth to teach them Firewise principles and practices? How can my community go about setting up a fire camp for our youth? Are there resources available that can be helpful? What activities/demonstrations are most popular with the children?

**MM:** We have never run a fire camp, but are very interested in learning more about this program!

**HW:** We have held a summer day camp at Sam's Point Preserve for the last two years, during which I have presented a fire component. I am, however, intrigued by the idea of a fire camp, especially if it is held in areas with a history of wildfire. I would think high school students would be an appropriate age for this camp. Fighting wildfires (including equipment used, creating fire breaks, weather, and topography), learning about the use of prescribed burns to ensure forest health, and Firewise principles (such as survivable space, how to do home assessments, landscaping, and construction) could be presented. The camp could end with their own Firewise Day, during which they could help their community in a Firewise project.

**H-T:** What activities has your community/organization used to involve youth in Firewise efforts? How receptive have the children/teens been to taking part? What kind of impact, if any, has your community/organization seen from having youth involved in Firewise efforts?

**MM:** We recently implemented Firewise best practices (in partnership with the Florida Division of Forestry, Caloosahatchee District) at our Girl Scout camp in Ft. Myers, including grading fire trails around the perimeter of camp as well as throughout the camp itself. Shortly thereafter we had a wildfire. The fire trails clearly prevented the fire from spreading and demonstrated to the girls and adults the importance of implementing the Firewise plan. The damage would have been huge without these preventative fire trails! We now are able to use this as a regular demonstration area of what could have happened and that has a pretty big impact on the girls.

Both Districts of the Florida Division of Forestry (DOF) that we partner with (Myakka River and Caloosahatchee) are fabulous in helping us educate girls and adults about wildfire danger and the Firewise program. In addition to the technical consulting and grading of fire trails, they bring Smokey Bear and some of the big forestry machinery to all of our community events. The girls and adults love this and it gives the DOF the opportunity to do some education.

**HW:** We have involved high school students in several of our Firewise projects. All students in our area must accrue several community service hours before they graduate. Two years ago, I contacted the high school guidance counselor and set up a meeting with interested students to explain Firewise concepts and invited them to participate in our Cragmoor Firewise Day. Several students coordinated distribution of over 200 packets of Firewise materials, which included a list of suitable Firewise landscaping for our community. They distributed the packets to all of the homes in Cragmoor. The next day they assisted our

SCA Fire crew in brush removal and raking leaves on the properties of several elderly homeowners. The students were engaged in the project and extremely pleasant to work with.

**H-T: Are there any other resources you've found helpful in planning activities for children/teens?**

**MM:** I have been in the position of the director of Outdoor Program for the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc. for six years and have found my degree in park management to be very useful when delivering the Firewise program. We initially got involved in Firewise when we learned that our camps were in the "high risk" category for wildfires at the time we completed our Firewise plan. Since that time, we have worked in partnership with both the Caloosahatchee and Myakka River Districts to make our camps safer for our Girl Scouts as well as the surrounding communities.

Because we found the Firewise program to be an important educational component, we worked with the Florida Division of Forestry to create an educational "Patch" curriculum for Girl Scouts. Our Firewise patch program educates participants on the importance of wildfire prevention as well as information on the Firewise program. This program is available to anyone and the patches can be purchased through our Girl Scout shop for girls who complete the program. Patches are a Girl Scouts tradition and reward Girl Scouts who complete the project. Girl Scouts complete this program on their own or as a troop. In addition, we have created totes with items that will help them complete the program. Totes can be checked out and include the following information and items:

- Living with Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface
- Target Arson
- Arson Alert hotline
- Living on the Edge in Florida – Teacher Guide
- Living on the Edge in Florida, Instructor Guide
- Patch Requirements
- Taking a stand: Pros and Cons of Forest Fires
- Fire wars
- Wildfires
- The Ecology of Fires
- Fire in Florida Ecosystem
- Wildfire: Are you prepared?
- Firewise newsletters

**HW:** The Nature Conservancy has for several years received funding for Firewise and other fire-related activities through the National Fire Plan grant. In 2009, we created a Firewise demonstration garden around the Cragmoor Post Office. Since most members of our community have post office boxes and must retrieve their mail on a daily basis, the post office was the perfect location for this garden. This Firewise project was another idea I brought back from the 2008 Backyard and Beyond Firewise Conference and would be ideal for involving children and teens.

## Girls Scouts Offer Firewise Patch Program

Thanks to the efforts of the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida and the Division of Forestry, a Firewise Patch Program is available to cadettes, seniors, and ambassadors of the Girl Scouts, nationwide, who wish to learn about wildfire mitigation.



In completing the program, girls learn about the wildland/urban interface, how wildfire behaves and can ignite homes, as well as three actions that people can take to protect their houses from wildfire. The program guides the girls to resources they can use to develop a five-minute presentation about the wildland/urban interface and a five-minute presentation about how people can make their homes safer from wildfire. The girls also are directed to visit a local firefighter or state forestry firefighter to learn more specifically about what a wildfire cycle is and what the cycle is for their community.

In gathering this information, the girls learn important differences between wildfires and house fires, how weather affects fire, and ways they can help their neighborhoods to be better prepared in the event of a wildfire. Then, using what they've learned, the girls perform a risk assessment of their own home and five others in their home community. They also develop ideas on how to reduce or eliminate the risks they discovered while also making a presentation of their findings and conclusions.

Finally, the girls complete a community service project at one of the Girl Scouts camps or at a local park or natural area, such as helping maintain fire trails, talking with the public about Firewise, or helping homeowners to clean up their properties. This also includes a community awareness component through which the girls promote Firewise in their communities and can include developing a flyer about Firewise to distribute in the community; working with camp or park officials to stage a Firewise demonstration; or working with school officials to have a Firewise day at school or distributing information to classmates.

For additional information about the Firewise Patch Program, visit [www.gsgcf.org](http://www.gsgcf.org), where you also can download forms connected to obtaining a patch.

*How-To thanks Melissa Mason, director of the Outdoor Program for the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida, Inc., for providing the information about the Girl Scouts Firewise Patch Program.*

## Around the Firewise Home

### Home Risk Assessment & Mitigation for Kids

While the exercise below is geared toward children who may be helping with the assessment of a home's wildfire risk, the concepts emphasized offer helpful reminders to anyone conducting an assessment. Called "Look up, Look down, Look all around," the exercise reinforces the actions one should take and what specifically they should look for while making their assessment. First, look up. Is the roof flammable? Are branches hanging over or touching the roof? Are gutters free of leaf litter and needles? Next, look down. Are there needles and leaves (vegetative buildup) along the base of the structure? Is the grass cut short? Finally, look all around. Is there a fuel-free area of three feet on all sides? Where is the woodpile?

Based on the assessment, you must then determine what needs to be done to reduce the risk of wildfire to the home. This can include trimming branches that hang over the roof and cleaning out gutters, raking vegetation away from the structure and mowing the grass, and trimming shrubs and moving any woodpiles 30 feet from the structure.

### The 30-foot Game

A fun way for kids (or anyone) to get a sense of how far 30 feet really is involves playing the 30-foot game. Why 30 feet? Because that is the size of the safety buffer you need on all sides of your house and any other structure (like a deck or a fence) that is attached to it. To play, gather your group together to figure out how many individuals can lay head to toe to make a human chain that is 30 feet long. (Remember: 30 feet is 360 inches.) The game should be played on a lawn or other comfortable surface and will likely require five or six of you. The people at each end of the human chain should stand up and stay in position at their end of the chain; these individuals are the "markers." Next, each of the other players should count the number of steps it takes to pace between your 30-foot human "markers." Then, remember how many paces it takes so you can use this knowledge to pace off a 30-foot mitigation zone on all sides of your house!

### Firewise Incentive Is a Westside Story

In Washington State, the San Juan Island Fire District 3 recently announced the offer of a free half-day of chipper time to new Firewise communities. The only requirement is that communities demonstrate that they have begun the process of joining the Firewise program by February 12, 2010. Beginning March 1, San Juan Island Fire Department and the Department of Natural Resources will then bring a chipper and staff to operate it, for chipping woody debris collected by the residents and placed along the common roads in their community. The free service is available to existing Firewise Communities, as well.



*Editor's Note: We applaud the on-going efforts of Ron Garner, Washington State Firewise Liaison for his commitment to encouraging communities to become Firewise. There are more Firewise communities in San Juan County (most on San Juan Island) than the rest of the entire state of Washington! Along with the chipper, the DNR is planning to have a few of their more senior fire prevention people come to San Juan Island in March to see for themselves the great work that Ron and his band of Firewise volunteers have accomplished here and on other islands.*



### File Under "Power of Suggestion"

The El Dorado County Fire Safe Council has created a unique way to remind residents about where to bring their green waste. Check out the street address of its waste disposal site — [http://www.edcfiresafe.org/request\\_for\\_green\\_waste\\_voucher.htm](http://www.edcfiresafe.org/request_for_green_waste_voucher.htm) — to see for yourself. There is nothing like the power of suggestion, after all!

Does your community have an interesting way of inspiring action? Send Firewise the information so we can share it with others!



## THE 5 PLUS CLUB —

*Communities who have been recognized with Firewise status for 5 to 8 years.*

Entering its ninth year, Firewise USA Communities continues to expand into new territory. There are Firewise communities in 38 states. During the end of 2009, 143 new communities received recognition status, for a total of 534 communities with Firewise status. Thirty-eight states throughout the U.S. have a Firewise Community/USA recognition sign along its roadways. Special recognition goes to the **Firewise Five-Plus Club** — those communities that earned Firewise status between 2005 and 2002, the year of Firewise's inception. These include:

### **8 YEARS**

Timber Ridge, AZ  
Genesee Foundation, CO  
Perry Park Municipal District, CO  
Wedgfield, FL  
Wilderness Ranch, ID  
Greater Eastern Jemez WUI Corridor, NM  
Emigration Canyon, UT  
Sundance, UT  
River Bluff Ranch, WA

### **7 YEARS**

Holiday Island, AR  
Joplin, AR  
Norman, AR  
Story, AR  
Lakewood, FL  
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior  
Chippewa, MN  
River Run Plantation, NC  
Town of St. James, NC  
Village of Ruidoso, NM  
Bear Creek Lakes, PA  
Penn Forest Streams, PA  
Mountain Plains I & II, SD  
Cumberland Cove, TN  
Tierra Linda Ranch, TX  
Trails of Lake LBJ, TX  
Wildcatter Ranch and Resort, TX  
Chuckanut Ridge POA, WA  
Lummi Island Scenic Estates, WA  
Story, WY  
Union Pass, WY

### **6 YEARS**

Danville, AR  
Dutch Creek, AR  
Hartman, AR  
Hunt, AR  
Inspiration Point, AR  
Nimrod, AR  
Norphlet, AR  
Ozark, AR  
Plainview, AR  
Strickler, AR  
Forest Highlands, AZ  
Summerhaven, AZ  
Windcliff, CO  
Cypress Knoll, FL  
RiverCamps on Crooked Creek, FL  
Kohala By The Sea, HI  
Johnny Creek Subdivision, ID  
Hardwick Township, NJ  
Hickory Run Land & Homeowners, PA  
Roaring Creek Forest Preserve, PA  
Savannah Lakes Village, SC  
Lead, SD  
Eagle Landing, TX  
Eagle's Wings Retreat Center, TX  
Meadow Mountain, TX  
Saddleridge, TX  
Solana Ranch, TX  
Castle Valley, UT  
Alaska Place, WA  
Cattle Point Estates, WA  
Mitchell Point, WA  
Roche Harbor, WA  
Sudden Valley, WA  
Crystal Lake Club, WI  
Coolfont Mountainside Association, WV

### **5 YEARS**

Cherokee Village, AR  
Eureka Springs, AR  
Groom Creek, AZ  
Highland Pines, AZ  
Oracle, AZ  
Auburn Lake Trails, CA  
Beverly Hills, CA  
Forest Meadows, CA  
Talmadge, CA  
Cordillera, CO  
Caloosa, FL  
Muse, FL  
Placid Lakes, FL  
Kinderlou Forest Golf Club, GA  
Cave Bay, ID  
Cunningham, KY  
Poplar Springs, KY  
Bigfork, MT  
Elkhorn, MT  
Carolina Lakes Property Owners  
Association, NC  
Hopatcong, NJ  
Taos Pines Ranch, NM  
Silver Star Subdivision 1 & 2, SD  
McDonald Observatory, TX  
Summer Mountain Ranch, TX  
River Ridge on the Shenandoah, VA  
Skyline Lakes, VA  
Hartstene Pointe, WA  
Mt. Dallas, WA  
Orcas Highlands, WA  
Shelter Bay, WA  
Tolt Triangle Fire Council, WA  
Homestead Park, WY

Think your community should try for Firewise Communities/USA status? For additional information on the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program, please visit [www.Firewise.org/usa](http://www.Firewise.org/usa). And remember, you can contact your state forest service liaison for assistance; he or she is an excellent resource for guidance in formulating your plan and offering activities that can energize your community to take part. The Firewise web site includes this contact information as well.

# FIREWISE BY THE NUMBERS

*How-To Newsletter* is pleased to welcome the most recent communities to earn Firewise Communities/USA status.

Arkansas — Alexander; Perla; Woodland Hills  
California — Lake of the Pines  
Colorado — Castle Rock-Woodlands/Escavera  
Florida — Blue Jordan Forest  
Kentucky — Shoopman Road

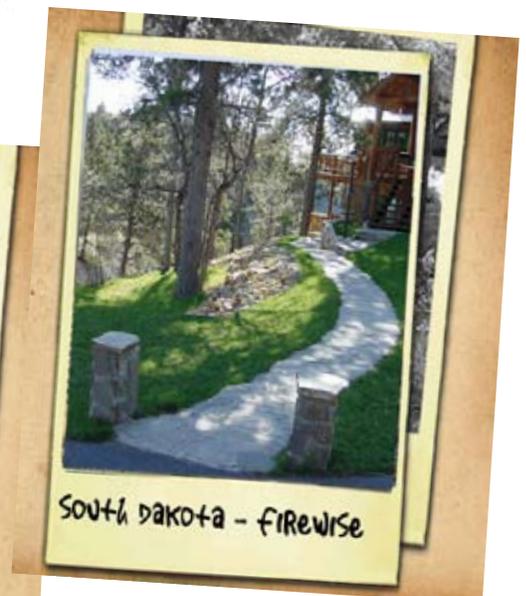
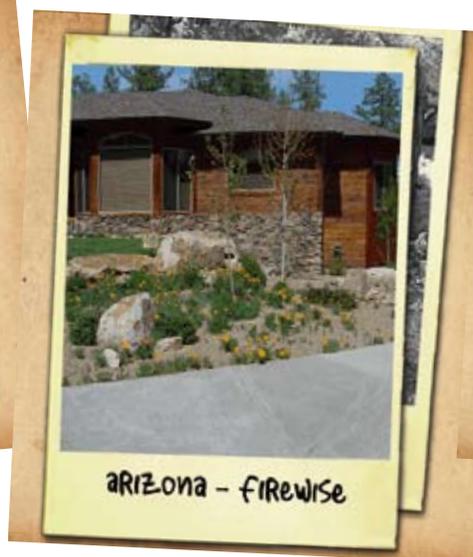
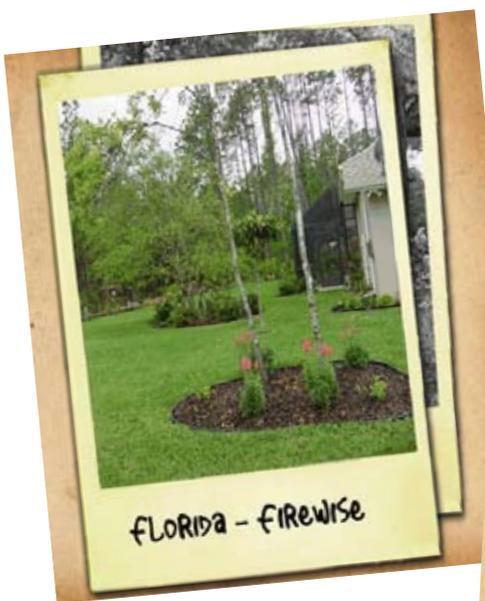
Maine — Indian Point  
North Carolina — Villages at Ocean Hill  
Oklahoma — Bentley  
Virginia — Slatemont  
Washington — Chumstick; Stellerwood

For additional information about NFPA's Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program, please visit [www.firewise.org/usa](http://www.firewise.org/usa). Remember you can contact your state forest service liaison for assistance. He or she is an excellent resource for guidance in formulating your plan and offering activities that can energize your community to take part. The Firewise website provides this contact information as well.

Any community planning to enter into the recognition process, may want to consider ordering a copy of the new, "A User Reference Guide to the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program".

The reference guide is provided as a general reference and resource for those interested or planning to become a recognized Firewise community. If you are a homeowner, community resident, community developer or planner, you will learn that wildfires can occur without disastrous loss of life, property and resources.

The guide, 3-hole punched and ready for a binder, was designed to provide the user with a handy, portable reference as you work through the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition process. While information and resource material on the program exist in many formats, this guide brings all of the important information together for your use. Look for the Guide in the Firewise Online Catalog at: [www.firewise.org/catalog](http://www.firewise.org/catalog).



# THE FIREWISE LEADER

## Planning Activities with Youth in Mind

As you plan your activity for the coming year, consider how you might involve the younger members of your community. Middle school-age children and teens often have experience with many of the skills used in wildfire mitigation, and they relish the challenge of demonstrating that they can contribute in meaningful ways. From a physical standpoint, even younger children are often capable of handling a rake or piling limbs and other green waste. And older children can operate machinery such as clippers and lawn mowers. Plus, children are typically quick studies and have terrific ideas about how to tackle a problem, if they are engaged and empowered to do so.

The students at the Etoile School, in Etoile, Texas are a unique and shining example of how children can even take the lead in organizing a community's Firewise efforts. The school's Firewise Board was composed of students, and it was the sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who provided the energy that led to successful Firewise activities in the town.

Engaging girl scouts, who may be motivated by earning a Firewise patch, or high school students, who must fulfill community service requirements, can also allow you to harness the power of youthful enthusiasm and creativity. In the case of Girl Scouts, the Firewise Patch Program offers specific examples of activities the girls can undertake.

Following are possible activities that children and teens can help with in your community's wildfire mitigation projects. Most of the activities can be helpful in reducing fire intensity near structures and can be done with a minimum of instruction or supervision, depending on the age of the children and the tools they will use to complete the task. Consider making a checklist that includes:



- Removing vegetation
- Pruning trees away from ground
- Pruning limbs from over rooftops
- Pruning for height clearance over driveways
- Raking leaves/pine needles away from structures
- Cleaning gutters
- Mulching leaves/limbs
- Moving woodpiles
- Keeping grass short around structures
- Cleaning up dead debris from gardens
- Adding gravel border along structures
- Making sure your address is clearly visible to arriving 9-1-1 vehicles from the road
- Keeping yard well watered
- Considering the use of Firewise landscaping

Other possibilities include having the children help with projects, such as: putting up a Smokey Bear fire danger rating sign in the community; acquiring forest service display and brochures for use at a public events; hosting a community cleanup day where homeowners are encouraged to clear their gutters, rake leaves, and clear out dead vegetation from landscaping surrounding their homes; hosting a community "public space" cleanup day where citizens do Firewise work around shared spaces; or focusing your fire mitigation efforts on homes in the community whose owners can't do the work, due to a handicap, illness or old age.

To help in tackling these tasks, be sure to have the proper tools on hand. These include gloves, clippers, small saws, pole pruners, rakes, and large trash bags. Additionally, children should be instructed to wear the following attire to assure their safety and comfort: sturdy shoes, long sleeves and pants (no shorts!), safety glasses, and bug spray.

Finally, once you have established a project, following are some tips that can help assure its success:

- Advertise to get volunteers.
- Using environmentally safe spray paint, mark the trees/vegetation to be removed. (Orange shows up best.) Remember that you can always take more out later, and that identifying specific sections allows you to see and track your progress.
- Have the community (church or auxiliary) provide water and food for the volunteers.
- Request that volunteers sign in and out so you can accurately capture the volunteer hours.
- Contact local media and invite them to your workday to get the Firewise word out.

*How-To Newsletter* thanks Jan Amen, Firewise Coordinator in Etoile, Texas, for providing the suggested wildfire mitigation activities that youth can take part in. Children at the Etoile School spearheaded the Firewise program in their community, leading Etoile to earn Firewise Communities/USA recognition status.

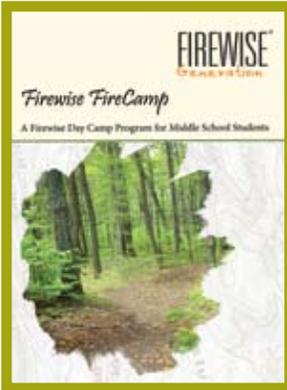
**Editor's Note:** If you have a story to tell about your community's efforts or think you have a unique activity that could benefit other Firewise communities, please share the information with "How-To Newsletter" by submitting a description of your activity with a few photos and how it has helped with wildfire mitigation in your community to Michele Steinberg at [msteinberg@nfpa.org](mailto:msteinberg@nfpa.org).

Visit page 11 for additional resources for our youth.

## RESOURCES FOR OUR YOUTH

Because of continued interest and inquiries in programs and activities for our young, we have repeated information about two Firewise programs, *Firewise FireCamp* and *Firewise Generation*, offered on our website as well as the "LEAF" program from Wisconsin.

### Firewise Fire Camp



In response to feedback from a variety of sources, Firewise Communities teamed with YMCA Camp Orkila and Washington State University Master Gardeners to create and sponsor a curriculum focused on teaching Firewise principles and practices to day campers of middle-school age. The goal of the camp curriculum is to increase the understanding of wildfire among young adults and empower them to implement Firewise practices around their homes and in their communities. You

can download this curriculum on the Firewise website, where you can learn what you'll need to prepare and conduct a one- or two-week day camp that will lead your campers on a path to discovery of the many facets of wildfire. *Simply visit:*

[www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/learningcenter/fire-camp.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/learningcenter/fire-camp.htm).

### Firewise Generation

If you know of a young adult that is interested in knowing what the wildland/urban interface is and would like to understand more about how wildfire works, then they will enjoy the interactive "*Firewise Generation*."

The user may start and stop the program at anytime and there is no charge. What a better way to educate the next generation of Firewise Communities homeowners. *Click here to visit:*

<http://www.firewise.org/fw-generation>.



### Fire Guide Aids Teachers in the Badger State



In Wisconsin, the "LEAF Wisconsin K-12 Wildland Fire Guide" provides age-appropriate lesson guides aimed at increasing the forest literacy of Wisconsin's citizens. These include a Forestry Lesson Guide, a Wildland

Fire Lesson Guide, and an Urban Forest Lesson Guide, with each presenting educators with complete interdisciplinary units for discussing forests and forestry in Wisconsin; the role humans play in causing many fires and how such useless fires can be prevented, as well as the benefits of prescribed fires; and the role urban forests play as a resource in Wisconsin, respectively.

The curriculum is divided into six grade-specific units: K-1, 2-3, 4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12.

To learn more visit:

[http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/educators/lg\\_wildland.aspx](http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/leaf/educators/lg_wildland.aspx).

Note: (Teachers may use these materials within the scope of copyright protections.)

*How-To* thanks Kelly Mortenson, communications and networking coordinator of the LEAF Program (of the Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point), for providing this information. She notes, "While the developers of the guide did not incorporate any specific Firewise lessons, they did use Firewise lesson ideas during the development of the conceptual framework, and a conceptual framework helps direct the development of each LEAF Lesson Guide."



Following are some websites that include a focus on youth involvement. We recommend checking them out. If you know of other helpful websites and would like to share with others, please send them to: [cblake@nfpa.org](mailto:cblake@nfpa.org). We will include them in our summer *How-To* issue.

Firewise Fire Camp – [http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/learningcenter/fire-camp.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/learningcenter/fire-camp.htm)

Firewise Generation – <http://www.firewise.org/fw-generation/>

Girl Scouts Firewise Patch – [www.gsgcf.org](http://www.gsgcf.org)

# FIREWISE WEB RESOURCES



## Share Your Firewise Perspective



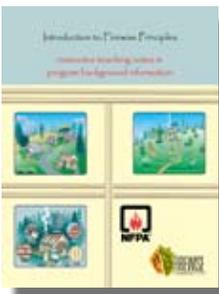
Since its launch, *MyFirewise* – <http://network.firewise.org/> – has offered a platform for members of Firewise Communities/USA to share their stories. From difficult issues and ongoing challenges to successful activities and innovative solutions, *MyFirewise* lets you tell your story, share feedback with others, and build a broader network for communicating. Take a moment to visit the website and check it out.

## The Firewise Learning Center – Something for Every Stakeholder in the WUI



The Firewise Learning Center offers courses covering a range of wildfire safety topics for audiences including homeowners, forestry professionals, and firefighters. Course design and length varies, but all courses are structured to allow you to learn at your own pace. Once you have enrolled in a course, you can return to the Firewise Learning Center at any time to continue a course you have started or take a new course. Visit: [http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/learningcenter/index.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/learningcenter/index.htm).

## Introduction to Firewise Principles



This program offers a special Firewise Communities presentation package for use by volunteer firefighters, rangers, firefighting professionals, fire managers, and other persons. The program, Introduction to Firewise Principles, is suitable for educating residents, homeowner associations, and others in communities where wildfires might threaten homes. It is also appropriate for community groups having interest in fire prevention or community service. Visit: <http://www.firewise.org/resources/index.htm>. The package may be downloaded from “Latest Additions”.

## Reading Up



Think you’ve missed an important Firewise article? Fear not!

Simply visit the Firewise Article Archive at [www.Firewise.org/library/index.php](http://www.Firewise.org/library/index.php). You’ll have access to countless Firewise articles at the click of your mouse!

If you are new to the *How-To Newsletter* and would like copies of previous editions go to: [http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/index.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/index.htm).