



# Firewise Communities®

## "The How-To Newsletter"



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

Winter 2009

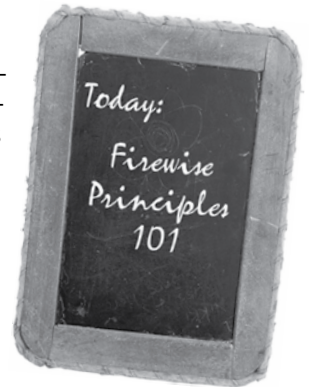


### THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY



#### EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

A big part of being a Firewise community involves education. This begins with the "spark plugs" and other members of your community who attend Firewise workshops and conferences that address important Firewise practices and applications, take advantage of online course offerings, and enlist state liaisons to learn how to do assessments.



But it doesn't end there. The next step involves taking the information back to your home community. Through peer-to-peer education, community members gain the knowledge and understanding they need to adopt Firewise practices that can protect their homes and surrounding property. Peer-to-peer education also affords Firewise communities the opportunity to introduce Firewise practices to neighboring areas and other individuals, thereby expanding the base of knowledge and inspiring other communities to become Firewise communities themselves.



#### Featured Articles

- ✿ **The Firewise Community** —  
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- ✿ **Q & A on Evacuating One's Pets**  
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#### Share a Helpful Hint!

*Do you have a helpful hint or article you would like to share with others? Send to Firewise Communities, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169*



*Volunteers from New Jersey and Colorado removing cedar shakes from a home on Big Lake.*

That's exactly what the members of Horseshoe Lake, Alaska did when they held an open house for the neighboring communities of Big Lake, Houston, Meadow Lakes, and Knik at their fire station. More than 400 individuals turned out for the event. The community also hosted 36 volunteers from Lifetree Adventures, who came from Colorado, Texas, North Carolina, and New Jersey to assist older members of the Alaskan Firewise community with hazard cleanup, limbing of trees, and roofing projects. These volunteers were then able to take the lessons they learned home to their respective communities. For Horseshoe Lake's efforts, Cathi Kramer recently

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# THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY —

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (CONTINUED)

accepted one of this year's Firewise Leadership Awards (See *Firewise Leadership Awards* article on page 10).

Another activity integral to educating community members is the assessment of individual properties, to make sure that each member of the community understands their specific risks and how they can go about addressing them. State liaisons play an important role in imparting how to do assessments. Their assistance ensures that community leaders have the resources they need to truly bring Firewise "home" to each house and property that is successfully assessed.

Supplementing these educational opportunities are various other avenues for learning, from the newest research information found at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) to the ideas and experiences exchanged among fellow Firewise community members at MyFirewise (<http://network.firewise.org>). Ad-

ditional web-based resources can be found through individual Firewise web pages and on relevant sites provided by stakeholders associated with addressing wildland fire mitigation. These include sites for Cooperative Extensions and Master Gardeners, insurance companies and developers, and Forest Service and land management agencies. It also includes individuals using various forms of social media, such as Twitter® and Facebook®.

Whether you are just beginning or are continuing your community's Firewise efforts, consider how each of these various educational opportunities can bolster the ways in which you reach members of your community and neighboring areas. Education can keep your program moving forward, as well as help to reach others who, in turn, can begin their efforts to become Firewise, too.



# THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY – EXAMPLE

## RIVER PLACE, TEXAS — TAKING LESSONS LEARNED TO THE COMMUNITY



Located in the hill country just 13 miles from Austin, the Texas state capital, River Place is a community of approximately 1,200 homes. In September 2008, several members of the Firewise committee, led by Millard McBurney – a member of the River Place Home Owners Association Board of Directors – took a Firewise course on the home ignition zone (HIZ). Following the two-day course, Mr. McBurney worked with fellow Firewise committee members Diane Couch, Basil Andrews, Gary Chapel, and JoAnne Hargraves to devise a plan for bringing Firewise to their community.

Their effort, which was initially sparked by an initiative to develop a CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan), led to a highly successful collaboration among the Travis County ESD No. 6/ Lake Travis Fire Rescue — Fire Prevention Division, the City of Austin Water Utility, Wildland Conservation Division–Reicher Ranch, Texas Forest Service, and the River Place Homeowners Association.

In implementing their plan, the group initially performed five assessments of River Place properties. (They have since done a dozen more.) In doing so, they worked closely with Firewise state liaison officer P.J. Pearson, who offered guidance and assistance as they completed the work and the application for recognition status.

“The River Place experience was a joy from start to finish due to the leadership of the project,” says Jim Linardos, fire chief for Lake Travis Fire Rescue, referencing Mr. McBurney. “The project was relatively easy for us because the community had a champion that saw it through.”

He added, “Most communities don’t see the benefit of a Firewise community unless they have a catastrophic fire or have a major fire strike nearby. Mac saw the need for implementing Firewise practices even though we haven’t had a wildfire that has threatened homes. He recognizes that the serious drought is threat enough.”

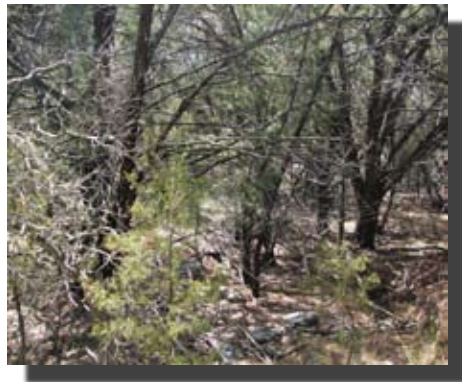
Mr. McBurney reiterated the point, noting, “Our drought conditions have gone from severe to extreme over a two-year period. The kindling in the area is ready to go. We’ve just been lucky there hasn’t been an ignition.”

In addition to offering assessments, which help homeowners identify the things they can do around their property to better protect their home and property against the threat of wildfire, members of the River Place Firewise committee have held meetings and feature a transportable display focused on the home ignition zone in the annual Fourth of July parade. They also write articles for a bimonthly newsletter and have devised a checklist “that helps us be in time and in tune, from rooftop to ground, in assessing properties.”

“Our assessors use a 100-foot tape measure so they can help homeowners clearly determine the 30-foot, 60-foot, and 100-foot segments of their home ignition zones,” says Mr. McBurney. “They also note the various tasks that can be done, such as limbing up trees, clearing leaves and debris from gutters and under porches, and making sure that wooden fences are not attached directly to structures, we point out natural fire breaks that may exist on the property. When people can see that something as simple as mowing the lawn or pruning the flowers can help protect them, or that having a concrete or asphalt walkway can stop a fire in its tracks, they realize there are things they can do fairly easily to make their homes and property safer.”

Notes Chief Linardos, “More fire trucks and more firefighters are a necessary part of the wildland urban interface problem. What is more effective, though, is a community ‘fully involved’ in preventing and minimizing the threat so it never happens. A Firewise community is the ‘master key’ of success. And it’s projects like the River Place Firewise that assure all of us a strong level of protection before the fire.”

Most recently, a pilot fuel reduction/mitigation project was conducted in a portion of the City of Austin Wildland Preserve



*Pre-treatment view of Balconies Preserve lands adjacent to River Place homeowner property.*



*Post-treatment view of Balconies Preserve lands adjacent to River Place homeowner property.*

# THE FIREWISE COMMUNITY — EXAMPLE

## RIVER PLACE, TEXAS (CONTINUED)

area that abuts the River Place community. The project was spearheaded by the City of Austin Water Utility and Wildland Conservation Division-Reicher Ranch, utilizing the Texas Forest Service 10-member fuel mitigation crew, and was supported by Travis County ESD No. 6/Lake Travis Fire Rescue-Fire Prevention Division.

“It was truly wonderful,” says Mr. McBurney. “They cleared the land that was a potential threat to those who lived adjacent to it and they chipped the cleared trees into mulch. It was completed in less than a week and really helped those members of the community with the most precarious lots in protecting their land.”

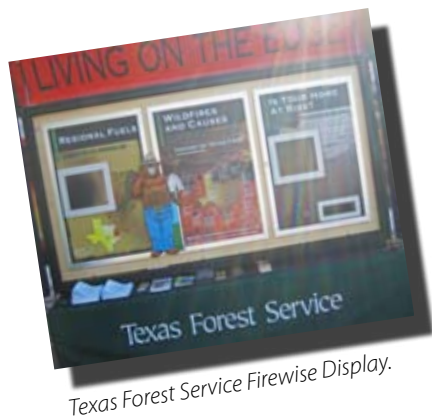
In addition to increasing the number of individuals in River Place who are taking Firewise action, the team has been invited to Long Canyon, a community about five miles away, to share their Firewise knowledge. “Long Canyon heard about our success and, with help from Glen Gillman at Aus-

tin Wildlands and Jan Fulkerson from the Texas Forest Service, we will be reaching out to our neighbors so that they can benefit from Firewise, too,” says Mr. McBurney.

The River Place team, led by assistant fire chief John Durham (who is leader of the fire department’s fire prevention division), also has worked with the Steiner Ranch Homeowners Association in another neighboring community to help them get their Firewise program started.

The outgrowth of the program is music of a sort to Chief Linardos’ ears. He notes, “As a fire chief, I love the sound of chain saws in the morning. It sounds like a victory against fire!”

*How-To Newsletter* thanks Millard “Mac” McBurney, Fire Chief Jim Linardos and Assistant Fire Chief John Dunham for the information and photographs provided for this **Community Example**.



Texas Forest Service Firewise Display.



Getting ready for Firewise dedication ceremony May 21, 2009. From left: Millard McBurney, HOA Board Member and Chair of Firewise Committee; Wick Tobias, HOA Board President; and P.J. Pearson, Texas Forest Service State Liaison.



Smokey visiting River Place during their community parade event.

## Q & A Chat with Jeffrey Sabatini



*While there are many forums for furthering your Firewise education, MyFirewise offers a unique approach to peer-to-peer learning. It is in his MyFirewise space that Jeffrey Sabatini posts blogs, including one on how to prepare one's pets for evacuation – which inspired this issue's Q&A. In this issue of How-To Newsletter, Jeffrey Sabatini offers helpful tips for safely evacuating pets when the threat of an advancing wildfire requires leaving your home. Jeffrey, who lives in Redlands, California, has received three Presidential awards for his volunteer service of over 18 years with the Redlands Police and Fire Departments. He presently holds the position of Valley Section Lieutenant with the San Bernardino County Fire Department / O.E.S. Emergency Communications Service. He and his wife, Sharon, co-own a dog boarding kennel, Sunset Hills Kennels ([www.sunsethillskennels.com](http://www.sunsethillskennels.com)). As a former sideline, Jeffrey bred and trained Labrador retrievers as gentleman's hunting companions, and was a licensed judge with the North American Hunting Retriever Association. This led to his being hired to train and handle dogs and cats for the water work in the Disney film "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey". (He and Sharon were married on the movie's farm location). He later trained wolves and wolf hybrids for "White Fang 2: Myth of the White Wolf". His Labs and pups also have appeared in various films, videos, commercials.*

### **H-T: If you live in a high-fire danger area, how can you best devise a plan that includes your animals and protects them in the event of a wildfire?**

**JS:** Above all, make sure your animals all have some form of identification that leads back to you. Begin with a well-fitted collar that includes a tag stating the pet's first & family name (e.g., Spot Smith) and a local phone number. An out of area phone contact should also be considered, and some folks are now including an e-mail address as well. This is a great idea because even if a family is evacuated out of their area, sooner or later they will be able to access their e-mail from a remote computer or mobile device. I know of one family who set up an e-mail address for their dog (spot.smith@...) so it would stand out from all the rest of the family's e-mail.

### **H-T: Should additional contacts be considered? If so, what's recommended?**

**JS:** I always emphasize the need for every family to establish a viable out-of-area contact and have everyone commit it to memory. A phone number for a home that has been evacuated or no longer exists is worthless. As we have seen with major incidents like last year's fires, it could take weeks or even months before services can be restored. We also know that local services can be overloaded, but long distance lines are less affected and/or become available much sooner. Thus, a call to Uncle Fred or Nana (or both) is more likely to get through. Even if cell voice services become overloaded, a text message will often still go through. Families with young children can help make sure everyone knows the alternative contacts by making them into a song and singing it together at least once a week. Additionally, if you already have an established relationship with a boarding facility or vet's office, ask if you can list them as a contact as well.

### **H-T: What is the best way to ensure pets can be identified properly and returned if they get separated from their owners?**

**JS:** While most of us rely on collars and tags for identifying our pets, these forms of ID can pose a problem, since they can come off at the worst times. I recommend considering a permanent ID, such as a tattoo (most often done with horses), or having your pet(s) micro-chipped. With either the tattoo or chip, be sure to list an out-of-area contact, such as a relative

in another county or state, when you fill out the registration. Also be sure to keep all your vital information up to date with the registration entity. All too often people move, change phone numbers, or experience other life changes that can turn into a brick wall when trying to contact an owner. Again, if you already have an established relationship with a boarding facility or vet's office, ask if you can add them as a chip or tattoo contact as well.

### **H-T: What other preparations should be considered in advance of a possible wildfire?**

**JS:** The time when you prepare your property to protect it against potential wildfire is also the best time of year to get your pets their annual check ups and vaccinations. Many kennels, catteries and stables have steadfast rules and regulations about the minimum vaccinations required to board. Getting everything up to date and on record ahead of time is imperative. If there is any chance your pet might be evacuated to a makeshift shelter, having a well-vetted pet could save you from huge vet bills later. If you give your own vaccines, it's best to keep the receipt of purchase and tape the bottle's labels to a 3x5 card. Place both in a clearly marked envelope and keep it with your other ready-to-go records.

### **H-T: What do you recommend to owners of more exotic pets, beyond the usual dog, cat, or horse?**

**JS:** If you have alternative pets like a pot bellied pig, ferret, giant reticulated python, or the like, knowing ahead which facilities can accept and properly care for your exotic pet — especially on short notice — is a no brainer! You might also think about making an ID kit for your animals just like those for children. The kit should contain several good color photos, all vet & vaccination records, your pet's local tag number, city or county Rabies tag number, their microchip or tattoo ID number(s), and registry contact information.

Additionally, ALL pet owners should keep in mind that, when disasters such as a wildfire occur, pet boarding and stable facilities always ramp up for the rush but can quickly fill to capacity. For this reason it's best to establish a relationship with several boarding facilities farther out. And let's face it, finding and touring a boarding facility is much easier when your home

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isn't in imminent danger of burning down! Keep in mind that, when contacting such a facility, you should tell them up front that you live in a high-fire area and may need to board for an undetermined period at a moment's notice. It costs you nothing to pre-qualify the facility, establish a contract for service, pre-clear vaccinations, and/or agree to any other requirements (on both sides). Include naming friends or relatives who are authorized to drop off or pick up your animal(s) and whether the facility can or will accept credit card payments over the phone or by Internet. Under such exigent circumstances, the facility may require a deposit or partial payment, so it helps to have an idea of how much ahead of time!

**H-T: Any other considerations pet owners should be aware of?**

**JS:** This may seem off-topic, but one nice thing about living in the mountains is your animals rarely get fleas. But that also means they don't get the preventative treatments that lowland pets regularly do. In the event they are rescued or evacuated to a shelter, your pets will therefore be defenseless against any collateral infestation. So when the winds start to blow, you should consider treating your pets for external parasites, just in case.

When treating your pets, bear in mind that topical flea and tick treatments, like Frontline, work the best, are safe, provide a full month's protection, and can't fall off like flea collars. Cat owners also should be aware that some flea collars and liquid topicals have active ingredients that have proved to be poisonous, even fatal, to cats! So regardless of its use, be very careful to only use products specifically made for each pet. All owners should know that the biggest problem with flea/tick collars is the hotter they get, the more fumes they give off that can overwhelm your pet. And if they get hot enough, they could even melt!

**H-T: Any last thoughts?**

**JS:** Just a reiteration of the first point: Have a plan! If you are already getting evacuation alerts, getting your pets out of the danger area ahead of time gives you one less thing to worry about, and one less reason to risk your own life, the life of a family member, or the safety of responders. Having a plan for your pets in advance of a wildfire could help save their lives and your own.

## AROUND THE FIREWISE HOME

### Planning for Your Pets and Livestock

*In the event of a wildfire, you will want to make sure you've planned for all members of your family – including your pets or livestock. If you are a horse or livestock owner you need to take action to protect your animals and reduce the risk of spreading or causing wildfires. Following the steps below can help ensure the safety of your animals in the event of a wildfire.*

- Have a "fire plan" in place. Wildfires often happen suddenly and you won't have much time to get animals taken care of in the heat of an approaching fire. To be appropriately prepared, you need to make decisions in advance about how you will handle all aspects of a wildfire. It's also helpful to have a few practice runs so when you implement your plan, you'll already have an idea of how all aspects of it should work.
- Ask yourself, "If a wildfire occurs what will our priorities be?" Then identify the priorities and set them. Some things you'll need to consider regarding animals include which animals first, as well as how you will need to handle buildings, equipment, feed, associate with the animals. What will you want saved first?
- Get organized for the emergency in advance of one occurring. This means having keys to all barns, gates, outbuildings, and equipment available and accessible; posting emergency numbers on posters – in large print – for quick and easy access; making sure that functioning fire extinguishers are located in all buildings; and installing and maintaining smoke detectors in buildings.
- Prevent fire hazards by storing feed, fuels, chemicals, and other fuel sources away from barns and buildings. Make sure that all flammable materials, such as trash, lumber, empty feed sacks, and hay, are stored properly. Incorporate firebreaks and green zones, if



*Continued on bottom of page 7*

## AROUND THE FIREWISE HOME

### **Protect Your Pet from Wildfire Smoke Inhalation**

Even if you've never been in close proximity to a wildfire, you may have experienced one of its more serious effects – smoke. In 2002, smoke from the fires raging in Southern California traveled as far east as the Grand Canyon, affecting the air quality and clouding the magnificent views. Even at a distance, wildfire can pose a risk to your health due to the massive amounts of smoke in the air. But, did you know that smoke inhalation as a result of wildfires also represents a health risk for pets?



The two most common health concerns linked to smoke inhalation by pets are ocular inflammation and respiratory inflammation. It also can cause fainting, disorientation or confusion, sleepiness, seizures, and coma. So, how can you protect Fido or Fluffy when smoke from wildfire becomes a factor?

For starters, if you notice the heavy smoke smell produced by wildfire and are experiencing stinging or burning of your eyes or throat, chances are your pet is, too. Watch for symptoms. With ocular inflammation, these can include squinting, red coloring to the white of the eye, a discharge coming from the eye, conjunctivitis, and/or scratching or pawing at the eyes or rubbing the face on carpet or furniture. Indicators of possible respiratory inflammation include greater effort breathing, an increased respiratory rate, abnormal extension of the neck, sneezing, wheezing, nasal discharge, and/or coughing.

Regardless of whether you see these symptoms in your pet, if you are feeling the effects of smoke, be sure to check the local air quality index and, if it is at an unhealthy level, consider keeping your pet indoors, keeping the windows closed, and using the air conditioner. If you have an active dog that is accustomed to exercising, consider having a treadmill available so that you can give him what he needs from the safety of your home.

If you will be leaving your home for a less affected area, even if it's just to go to work, consider taking your pet with you or identifying a safe place where you can leave your pet during that time frame. This is particularly important if there is the chance that your neighborhood could be evacuated. Once any roads are closed, it's not likely you'll be permitted to return to retrieve your pet.

*How-To* referenced [NextDayPets.com](http://NextDayPets.com) to compile information for this item.

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### **Planning for Your Pets and Livestock** *(Continued from page 6)*

possible, in areas surrounding structures and be proactive, rather than reactive to fire dangers wherever possible.

- When it comes to moving your livestock, be sure to have the right equipment and handlers available. In the best-case scenario, hopefully you will have time to properly evacuate your animals. However, bear in mind that animals often will refuse to leave and will even run back into burning buildings, so it's critical to have experienced handlers. Remember to close gates to areas that could become dangerous and understand that, in some cases, it may prove more appropriate to release your animals and recapture them later.

*How-To* referenced "How to Protect Horses and Livestock from Wildfires," posted by member "westernmom" at [http://www.ehow.com/how\\_5351836\\_protect-horses-livestock-wildfires.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_5351836_protect-horses-livestock-wildfires.html), in compiling this article.



## The 5 Plus Club —

Communities who have been recognized with Firewise status for 5 or more years.

Now in its eighth year, Firewise Communities/USA® continues to grow and reach new states. Since our Fall issue of the *How To Newsletter*, 90 new communities received recognition status, for a total of 588 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  
Briargate, FL  
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  
Pine Ridge, AR  
Story, AR  
Lakewood, FL  
Verandah, 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  
Upper Bluff Mountain, 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  
Lutherville-Holman, AR  
Nimrod, AR  
Norphlet, AR  
Ozark, AR  
Perry, AR  
Plainview, AR  
Strickler, AR  
Forest Highlands, AZ  
Summerhaven, AZ  
Windcliff, CO  
Cypress Knoll, FL  
Pioneer Plantation, FL  
RiverCamps on Crooked Creek, FL  
Randall Creek Farms, GA  
Kohala By The Sea, HI  
Johnny Creek Subdivision, ID  
Hardwick Township, NJ  
Fall River Estates, OR  
Black Forest Village, PA  
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

Beaver, AR  
Cherokee Village, AR  
Eureka Springs, AR  
Groom Creek, AZ  
Highland Pines, AZ  
Oracle, AZ  
Palominas, 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  
Bardwell, KY  
Cunningham, KY  
Poplar Springs, KY  
Bigfork, MT  
Elkhorn, MT  
Em Kayan Village, MT  
Alpine Mountain HOA, Inc., NC  
Carolina Lakes Property Owners  
Association, NC  
Hopatcong, NJ  
Liberty Township, NJ  
Taos Pines Ranch, NM  
Silver Star Subdivision 1 & 2, SD  
McDonald Observatory, TX  
Summer Mountain Ranch, TX  
Fort Valley, VA  
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



## Firewise By The Numbers

In addition, Firewise Communities/USA® is pleased to welcome the following new communities:

**Alabama** – Historic Blakeley; Terry Cove Harbor

**Arizona** – Crown King Moss Torpedo Subdivision; Flowing Springs; Hassayampa; The Portals

**Arkansas** – Antioch; Bismarck; Black Springs; Caney; Compton; Delight; Fox; Hopkinsville; Huff; Hutchinson Mountain; Lamartine; Lambert-Marcus; Low Gap; McHue; Mozart; Mt. Sherman; Mt. Willow; Murfreesboro; Oak Bower; Oak Grove; Pangburn; Parthenon; Rockport; Rosie; Rushing; Saginaw; Salado; Shiloh; Social Hill; Southside; St. James; Waldo

**California** – Carbon Canyon; Fountaingrove II; Logtown; The Sea Ranch

**Colorado** – Broken Arrow; Greencrest Homeowners Association; Highlands Park Property Owners Association; Park Forest Estates; Shock Hill Association; Summit Estates; The Pines at Four O’Clock Subdivision; White Wolf

**Florida** – Buckhead Ridge; Grand Haven; Lakeport; Ortona; Vanderbilt Country Club; Washington Park

**Georgia** – Trahyta Estates

**Idaho** – Hidden Springs; Whitewater Wilderness Ranch

**Mississippi** – Gloster; Lake Hillsdale

**North Carolina** – Point Harbor Beach; The Springs at High Rock Lake

**Oklahoma** – Bluff; Kemp

**South Carolina** – Waterford Pointe

**Tennessee** – FenceRail Gap

**Texas** – Borger; Canyon Springs Ranch; Sun City Texas Community Association

**Virginia** – Mountain Falls Park/WAPOA

**Washington** – Beacon Rock; Boyce Road; Greater Stevenson; Greater Wind River; Hoxie Lane; Johns Island; Mill A; North Star Lane; Riverview Drive E; Sky Meadows Ranch; Spruce Street; Sunday Drive; Swift; Underwood; University Heights; West End; Wilkeson Creek Tracts

**Wisconsin** – Brookhaven Estates; Par Addition of Lake Arrowhead

Think your community or know of a community that should try for Firewise Communities/USA status? For Additional information on the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program, 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 a plan and offering activities that can energize communities to take part. The Firewise web site includes this contact information as well.

## THE FIREWISE LEADER

### *It Can't Be Said Enough: Renew! (And Plan for the Coming Year)*



While anytime of year can be good for assessing whether to submit your renewal information, time is waning for making your submission for 2009 – the official deadline is December 31st. If you haven't gotten around to it yet, the Firewise staff will give you a little more time to get it done. Don't let it slide, please renew by

January 16! To facilitate the process, [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) offers a web-based form.

The renewal form helps to verify that your community is continuing its work and can show if there has been any update or changes to your community plan. It also allows you to report on increased activity beyond your annual event and activity, as well as to document volunteer hours and the \$2 per capita investment for the renewal year, and to provide any updates concerning contacts. Be sure to indicate all activities and events, to indicate all pertinent details for "valuing your volunteers" and the hours they put in, and

to provide any documentation needed to complete the process.

**It bears repeating:** renewal forms must be submitted by January 16, 2010 to keep your community in good standing with the Firewise program for the 2009 year. You can access the web-based form at [http://www.firewise.org/usa/app\\_renewal.htm](http://www.firewise.org/usa/app_renewal.htm). Or, it may be downloaded, printed, and faxed to the Firewise program. The form goes automatically to program staff members, who then notify the state liaison of the renewal and process necessary paperwork. You will receive an e-mail with notice of renewal from program staff.

Once you've completed renewal, set your sights on planning your events for 2010. Consider how you might reach more members of your community as well as how you might educate other communities that could benefit from adopting Firewise practices. Then make your plans and put them into action.

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

### *Firewise Leadership Awards*

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recently announced the 2009 Firewise Leadership Award winners for outstanding efforts to reduce the loss of lives, property, and resources from wildfires. The awards recognize the most significant local efforts in forwarding the mission of NFPA's National Firewise Communities Program, which encourages a collective approach to creating communities resistant to wildfire damage and destruction in wildland/urban interfaces, areas where homes are built close to or within forested areas.



The following recipients of NFPA's Firewise Leadership Awards were selected based on their impact at local, state-wide, and regional levels. Among the winners' achievements include efforts to encouraging homeowners Firewise their property, research to better predict fire size and spread, educating children about wildfire safety and enhanced emergency response coordination.

Join **How-To** in congratulating —

#### **Local Award Recipients**

- Cathi Kramer, Horseshoe Lake Alaska Firewise Community
- Robert Low, San Juan County Washington Fire Marshal
- Michael Hardison, North Carolina Division of Forest Resources

#### **Regional Awards**

- Idaho State Fire Plan Working Group
- William Swope, NW Regional Resource Conservation & Development, Montana

#### **State Awards**

- Arkansas Forestry Commission
- Karen Ridenour, Texas Forest Service

## FIREWISE LEARNING CENTER

### *IAFC and NFPA's Firewise Program Offer "Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone Workshop"*

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and NFPA's Firewise program are making an important training program available prior to the 2010 Wildland Urban Interface Conference. The popular "Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone" workshop will be offered March 28 to 29 at the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino in Reno, Nevada. This two-day workshop covers the myths of wildland/urban interface fire, the history and context of W/UI fire disasters, sequential elements of a W/UI fire disaster, research and case studies, risk factors in the home ignition zone, information needed to conduct an assessment, the general health of the ecosystem, inspecting the home ignition zone, accessibility in case of a wildfire emergency, documenting an assessment, and much more. This workshop includes Q & A, class discussion, and three classroom exercises where participants will perform home ignition zone evaluations, practicing the information they have learned. Participants will receive a Student Workbook, Student Handout with printed slide presentation, and a Certificate of Attendance with 1.6 CEUs. Registration is now open at [www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)

### *Visit the Firewise Learning Center – Something for Everyone in the WUI*

Firewise Learning Center courses cover 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. For a sampling of offerings, see below.

#### *The Online Community Assessment Course*

The all-new "Conducting a Community Assessment in the Wildland/Urban Interface: Beginning the Firewise Process" is now available at the Learning Center. This course addresses fire and forestry professionals and others who want to help residents of areas at risk from wildfire to make their homes safer. Taking this course provides you with a thorough understanding of how homes ignite during wildfires, how simple actions can greatly reduce home ignitions, and how community behavior change can create Firewise homes and communities. This course is broken into 8 lessons and each take between 30 and 45 minutes to complete. The user may complete the course at his/her own pace.

Want to see for yourself? The free, online course walks users through a tested methodology for conducting community wildfire hazard assessments. It provides learners with a thorough understanding of how homes ignite during wildfires, how simple actions can greatly reduce home ignitions, and how community behavior change can create Firewise homes and communities. Be sure to visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) to check it out! Just click on "[Learning Center](#)" in the top menu bar.

#### *Landscaping Course Offers Useful Information for Around Your Home*

Firewise Landscaping is designed for people living in wildland areas who make decisions about landscaping their homes. The course considers the issues of appropriate landscape designs, specific planting and pruning alternatives, and appropriate planting materials for interface/intermix fire environments. It has three parts: an [Overview](#); [Design/Installation](#); and [Maintenance](#). It also includes a virtual Firewise landscaping model you can use to visualize design alternatives. The course takes approximately three hours to complete.

#### *Introduction to Firewise Principles*

This program offers a special Firewise Communities presentation package for use by volunteer firefighters, rangers, fire-fighting 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. The components of this program may be downloaded from [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE INFORMATION



### Web Sources

Following are some web sites offering further educational value. We recommend checking them out.

For information about preparing your home, visit these sites...

[http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/vrhome/index.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/vrhome/index.htm) (offers a video tour of a Firewise property)

[http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/preparing/index.htm](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/preparing/index.htm) (offers an interactive exercise on Preparing a Home for Wildland Fire Season)

[http://www.firewise.org/fw\\_youcanuse/preparing/fire\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.firewise.org/fw_youcanuse/preparing/fire_checklist.pdf) (offers a checklist for Preparing a House for Wildland Fire Season)

[http://www.firewise.org/usa/fw\\_plantlists.htm](http://www.firewise.org/usa/fw_plantlists.htm) (offers information on plants appropriate to your specific region, to assist you in planning your own Firewise landscape)

<http://www.idahofireplan.org/images/Homeowner.pdf> (provides a checklist used by homeowners in Idaho, who seek to make their homes and property Firewise)

See this source for information about pets...

<http://www.nextdaypets.com/>

and these sources for posts about lost and found animals...

(as provided by California Wildfire Pet and Animal Evacuation Information)

<http://www.illyria.com/shelter/foundpetlist.htm>

- [www.Pets911.com](http://www.Pets911.com) (If you post here first, you can post a picture of your pet, then reference the link in the sites listed below which do not accept photos.)

- [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com) (No photos; check the found pet listings)

- [www.dogdetective.com](http://www.dogdetective.com) (Can post photo; includes fee-based notifications to member shelters, animal control facilities)

### Share Your Firewise Perspective

Since its launch earlier this year, 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. Visit the website and check it out for yourself.