



MORE FIREWISE NEWS FROM THE 2012 FIRE SEASON

Contacts with Firewise coordinators outside the Bighorn Basin have revealed these tidbits from the 2012 fire season:

- ◆ Converse County's Squirrel Creek Fire burned several cabins and other structures. NONE of those burned were those that had been given a Firewise treatment.
- ◆ The Casper Mountain Sheepherder Hill Fire destroyed 37 residences, and at least that many outbuildings. Only three of the homes that burned had an implemented Firewise plan. Another eight Firewise homes survived the flames.



WHAT'S NEW IN BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE

Technical Forestry Services, LLC, was recently contracted by Washakie County to be the Firewise Coordinator for that county during at least the next two years. Note that county's logo in the heading to the lower left.

Washakie County rural home, cabin, and property owners will now be eligible for no-cost Firewise evaluations, and any Firewise cost-share dollars that are available.

*Counties with designated and funded Firewise Coordinators have resources to provide Firewise evaluations and plans at no cost to that county's property owners. All it takes is a request to the County Firewise Coordinator listed on the next page.*

Page 7 of this newsletter is a form to request a Firewise evaluation and mitigation plan for Washakie or Big Horn County.

BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



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Special points of interest:

- \* Washakie County Firewise.
- \* Summer 2013 Firewise picnics
- \* A list of what can save your home
- \* Good and bad Firewise examples
- \* Criteria and Benefits
- \* Application for a Firewise Plan
- \* Thursday October 3, 2013

**THE BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE COORDINATORS ARE:**

**Big Horn County:** The County Fire Warden is Brent Godfrey (307) 568-2324. The Firewise Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, [cweydeveld@wytfs.com](mailto:cweydeveld@wytfs.com), Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604, or (307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile).

**Washakie County:** Chris Kocher, Fire Warden, [ckocher@worlandfire.org](mailto:ckocher@worlandfire.org), P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379. The Firewise Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, [cweydeveld@wytfs.com](mailto:cweydeveld@wytfs.com), Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604, or (307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile).

**Hot Springs County:** No Firewise Coordinator has yet been selected. Contact Jay Duvall, County Fire Warden, at (307) 921-1485, or [hscdwarden@gmail.com](mailto:hscdwarden@gmail.com)

**Park County :** Bernie Spanogle, Firewise Coordinator, can be reached at [pcfirerwise@gmail.com](mailto:pcfirerwise@gmail.com). or at 307-250-9387. The County Fire Warden is Russ Wenke, [rwenke@parkcounty.us](mailto:rwenke@parkcounty.us), 1131 11th Street, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or (307) 527-8551.

The basin Firewise program is at <http://codyconservationdistrict.com/firewise.php>

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If you have general or specific questions about Firewise, two good online sources of answers are: [www.firewisewyoming.com](http://www.firewisewyoming.com) and [www.livingwithfire.com](http://www.livingwithfire.com).

Do you have topics you would like included in future newsletters? Please submit your suggestions and comments to [firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:firewise@wytfs.com), to Chris Weydeveld at any of the above phone numbers, or by mail to G. Wynn, 824 Country Club Road, Casper, Wyoming 82609.

Thanks for providing this newsletter go to the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the Big Horn County Fire Warden, and the U.S. Forest Service. They provide the funding.

This newsletter is provided as a service of your county's Firewise Coordinator. If you choose not to receive future issues, please respond to the E-mail address that delivered it, or to Big Horn County Firewise (6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604) by mail.

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**The 2013 mountain cabin Firewise picnics were a big success, thanks to the caterers who provided tasty food, and the Bighorn National Forest specialists who shared information about the fuels treatment program, and answered cabin owner's questions about the summer home program. Almost eighty mountain cabin owners filled their plates, and listened to presentations by the Big Horn County Firewise Coordinator, and Forest Service personnel. Participants expressed their wish that the picnics be continued.**



As extracted from recent wildfires in the West, several items are key to the survival of your community, mountain cabin, or rural home. They are:

- Establishment of defensible space around all structures on your homesite. This is the basic Firewise housekeeping, tree thinning, pruning, and removal of dead standing and downed trees within 100 feet.
- Firewise structural modifications and maintenance on all structures so they meet Firewise principles and intent.
- Fuel treatments near, but outside, the 100-foot home defensible space. This includes adjacent hardwood river bottoms, and forests surrounding mountain cabins. The 2012 Fontenelle Fire (Firesmart #11 & #12) is one good example.
- Creation and maintenance of good access for firefighting equipment, from the paved highway right to your home or cabin. Some fire trucks are huge, and need 12-14 feet of cleared horizontal and vertical space to get through a forest to your cabin.
- Clearly visible address markers for all homes and cabins. This tells firefighters that there is something down that lane to protect.

All of these have been covered in previous issues of this newsletter, and aspects of each will be repeated in future newsletters.

Complicating the above are the increasing size and severity of wildfires, and the decreasing federal budgets for firefighting. This puts more and more of the wildfire protection responsibility for your property right on you, in the form of making your property Firewise **BEFORE** there is a wildfire.

Something recent, that will likely be increasing: The size of wildfire-related homeowner losses has caused some insurers to start refusing to insure residences in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), or require an implemented Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) before issuing or renewing a policy.

George W. Wynn, Bighorn Basin Firesmart Editor

## A FEW IMAGES FROM THE 2012 FIRE SEASON AROUND THE U.S.



The attached wooden fence almost got this house burned down. Firefighters opened the gate to keep the fence fire away from the house.



Patio furniture on fire. This house did not survive.



The green lawn, gravel walkway, and paved driveway allowed firefighters to work close, and save this home.



This house was ignited by burning pine needles.



No caption needed

## **Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program**

**By working together**, residents can make their own property – and their neighborhood – much safer from wildfire. The **Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program** provides a number of resources and action steps homeowners can utilize to reduce their community’s risk of wildfire damage tomorrow.



If you are interested in becoming part of a designated Firewise Community after you have read these two pages, contact your county’s Firewise Coordinator to help you get started.

**Program Criteria** - You’ve discovered you live in an area that may be at risk from brush, grass, or forest fires. Do you want to get started on action that can make a real difference in the survival of your home during a fire? Check out our simple steps to greater safety.

**The six steps to Firewise Community recognition:**

- 1- **Obtain a written wildfire risk assessment** from your state forestry agency or fire department. **All counties in the Bighorn Basin already have one of these.**
- 2- **Contact your county Firewise Coordinator** to assist in designating the community boundary. It need not be an entire municipality. Rural “neighborhoods” and mountain cabin areas may qualify.
- 3- Form a board or committee, and **create an action plan** based on the assessment.
- 4- **Conduct a “Firewise Day” event.**
- 5- **Invest** a minimum of \$2 per capita in local Firewise actions for the year.
- 6- **Submit an application** through your County Firewise Coordinator.

To maintain the recognition status over time, communities must continue to conduct annual Firewise Day events and document their local investments.

**Program Benefits** - Every community benefits in different ways from being recognized as a Firewise Communities/USA site. Summarized below are the **Top Seven Benefits to Becoming a Firewise Community:**

- 1. Framework for Action** - Meeting the criteria for becoming a Firewise Communities/USA site helps communities get organized and find direction for their wildfire safety efforts. Like the first rungs on a ladder, the criteria help get a community started toward annual, systematic action to reduce their risks from brush, grass and forest fires.
- 2. Learning About Wildfire** - As people go through the Firewise process, they learn about wildfire risks in the community and the simple things they can do to reduce them. They connect with experts (local fire fighters, state forestry professionals, and national researchers) to continue to learn about fire and find resources to accomplish Firewise actions.
- 3. Peace of Mind** - People who work with experts to learn about wildfire, and take action, start to see results quickly. Knowing that they are using the best information available and actually taking steps to reduce the risk of damage from fire helps people start to feel safer in their environment and in their homes. Having a plan for what to do in the event of a fire helps people become calmer and more prepared to act quickly.

**4. Community-Building** - As neighbors get together to do Firewise work, often meeting one another for the first time, they build a stronger bond with each other. This strengthens community ties, benefiting residents in many ways, that are helpful during an emergency.

**5. Citizen Pride** - While Firewise work can be fun, it isn't always easy. Neighbors work hard in Firewise communities to remove brush and debris, clean up common areas, and dispose of green waste. They are rightly proud when they achieve national recognition for their efforts.

**6. Publicity** - The national Firewise program provides communities with metal signs, a plaque and other materials that can be presented publicly to honor their status as a Firewise Communities/USA recognition site. News media find this to be a great story to cover, and the national program features community stories regularly on the website and in its publications. All this publicity results not only in satisfaction for the residents involved, but also provides one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about wildfire safety.

**7. Access to Funding and Assistance** - Preference is often given to Firewise Communities/USA sites over other candidates when allocations of grant money are made for wildfire safety or fuel mitigation. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a recognized Firewise Communities/USA site.

**Talking to Your Neighbors About Firewise** - Behavioral science research shows that once people understand there is something they can do to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire, they are more apt to act. NFPA's Firewise Communities/USA® program is an important step to teaching homeowners how to adapt to living with wildfire.

**Neighbors helping neighbors** - The program goal is to reduce the loss of lives, properties, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings. One of the most important things Firewise Communities/USA participants learn is neighbors can help neighbors, and they are often inextricably linked together in their wildfire safety solutions.

Landowners understandably prefer to make their own choices related to their surroundings. But we often believe there's nothing we can do, that wildfire mitigation is too difficult or prohibitively expensive. Firewise Communities/USA provides up-to-date information for homeowners and communities to help change this situation. Residents who participate in the Firewise process create an action plan that commits them to a sustained program of wildfire mitigation, which is generally both physically doable and cost-effective. Ultimately, by creating your own plan, you'll be able to develop unique solutions to your wildfire mitigation challenges.

**Resources** - Firewise provides a discussion template to assist you in starting a dialogue with neighbors about the benefits of adopting the Firewise program in your area. The [User Reference Guide to the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program](#) (PDF, 1.5 MB) provides additional facts about Firewise participation and community benefits. It also provides applications, references and resources you need to begin the process. This and other brochures and materials can be found in our online catalog. In addition, the Firewise Communities Program publishes a quarterly, informative newsletter called Firewise Communities: The How To Newsletter and plant lists are filled with great tips and tools to help generate landscaping ideas for around your home.



The primary website for the Firewise Community program can be accessed at

<http://www.firewise.org/communities.aspx>

**THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL ADDRESS GRANTS, FUNDING, & FIREWISE PROJECT IDEAS.**

**BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE MITIGATION PLAN APPLICATION**

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN PHYSICAL LOCATION/ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER E-MAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY PRIMARY USE – CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

\_\_\_\_ YEAR-ROUND RESIDENCE/RENTAL

\_\_\_\_ SEASONAL OCCUPANCY RESIDENCE

\_\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL OR BUSINESS

\_\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

NUMBER AND KIND OF STRUCTURES ON THE PROPERTY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHECK THOSE WHICH APPLY:

\_\_\_\_ PLEASE CONTACT ME TO ARRANGE A MITIGATION PLAN FOR MY PROPERTY

\_\_\_\_ I WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THE FIREWISE PROGRAM

\_\_\_\_ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If your property is included in the Firewise program, would you allow Technical Forestry Services to use photos of it in future Bighorn Basin Firesmart newsletter, and promotional programs? Photos would not be identified with addresses or homeowner's names. Please check the one that applies.

\_\_\_\_ YES. You may use photos of my property/cabin

\_\_\_\_ NO. Do not use photos of my property/cabin

LANDOWNER/CABINOWNER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER/CABINOWNER PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit directly to Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604

Big Horn County Firewise – Volunteer Work Day

Volunteers are needed for a Work-Day along the Bighorn River in Greybull, Thursday October 3, 2013; from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Work will consist of cutting Russian olive and tamarisk resprouts, and herbicide application to stumps. Big Horn County Weed & Pest will demonstrate proper mixing and application of herbicide to treat Russian olive and tamarisk. Other tasks may include piling of brush ,and other fuels mitigation tasks.

*Lunch will be provided by Big Horn County Firewise.*

Volunteers should meet at the Greybull City Park at 9:00 AM, with sturdy work boots, leather gloves, work clothes, safety glasses, and drinking water.

For more information, contact Chris Weydeveld at (307) 272-9533, or [Firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:Firewise@wytfs.com).

**IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN (WMP) FOR YOUR RURAL HOME, CABIN, OR PROPERTY, KEEP UP WITH YOUR FIREWISE WORK. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PLAN, AND WOULD LIKE ONE, FILL IN THE BLANKS ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE, AND SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS BELOW.**

*Big Horn/Washakie Firewise  
6628 W. Riverside Drive  
Casper, Wyoming 82604*

