



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

## A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Lewis and Clark County, Montana: The Lewis and Clark County Commissioners recently passed a resolution that volunteer fire departments will **no longer take action to protect homes and other structures threatened by wildfires**. This puts wildfire protection for homes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) on the homeowners. The local fire departments will continue to respond to burning WUI structures not involving wildfires.

In doing this, the Commissioners cited the dangers to structure firefighters who are not normally trained in wildfire behavior.

The Commissioners expect and urge individual property owners to take the initiative and apply **Firewise** principles to make their homes and outbuildings safer from wildfire.

Other counties in Montana and Wyoming will be tracking this new development.

## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES UPDATE

Pages 4 and 5 are a continuation of the information on the Firewise Community Program.

Since the last newsletter, Canyon Creek Country has prepared an application to become the first Firewise Community in Washakie County. The application was approved by the Wyoming State Forestry Division, and submitted.

Three other Washakie County communities have requested information on the Firewise Community Program.

Wyoming's three recognized Firewise Communities are:

**Homestead Park, Lander Story, Union Pass, Dubois**

### In this issue:

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### Special points of interest:

- \* Firewise Communities in Wyoming.
- \* For all of the counties in the basin
- \* Car collections need to be Firewise
- \* Grants, funding, & project ideas
- \* Purpose and basic treatment
- \* Community Firewise Day
- \* June 28 cabin picnic announcement





## ***FIREWISE IS NOT JUST FOR YOUR HOUSE & OUTBUILDINGS***

When doing your annual Firewise preparation for fire season, take a look at your automotive treasures, farm & yard equipment, and other rolling stock. Below is somebody's "treasure" after the 2012 fire on Casper Mountain.



This may not have been as rare or valuable as some of the car collections fried in Colorado or California, but it was somebody's treasure, and may have been important to a family business.

Treat your machines as if they were just another building to be made and kept Firewise:

- ◇ Stow them 30 feet from flammable materials.
- ◇ Remove all flammable materials from under and on top of vehicles.
- ◇ Keep the grass mowed around them, and don't let shrubbery grow near them.
- ◇ For automobiles, close the hood and doors, and roll up the windows to keep out flying embers.
- ◇ Parking in a closed garage is also appropriate, if the garage is Firewise and the doors and windows are tight enough to keep out embers.

Under some fire conditions, autos and machinery may still become fuels, and burn, so should be parked **at least** 30 feet away from all of your buildings during fire season.



# [Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program—Part Two](#)

Continued from Firesmart #13



**Grants and Funding** - Although your county's Firewise program can directly provide limited financial assistance, other funding can be helpful in accomplishing many Firewise mitigation activities. This page highlights grants and funding opportunities for individuals, homeowners, community groups, and fire services seeking financial assistance to implement Firewise Community mitigation projects.

**Firewise mitigation activities**—The source and amount of financial assistance for Firewise mitigation activities will vary depending on the type of application and request. Examples of Firewise mitigation activities include:

- Thinning/pruning/tree removal/brush clearing on private property
- Retrofitting a house to replace roofing or siding with noncombustible materials
- Managing private forest lands
- Organizing a community slash pickup or chipping day
- Creating or improving roads for better access/egress
- Improving the water supply for firefighting
- Educating the public through sponsored activities or events throughout the community

**Types of available grants**—There are many types of grants and financial resources available on the federal, regional, state, and local level. In addition to public agency grant opportunities, private organizations may also sponsor or offer financial assistance for Firewise mitigation activities.

**Government** - Your county Firewise Coordinator has information about federal, state, regional, and local government grants and cost-share funds to reduce wildfire threats.

**Additional resources**—Get tips on the grant-writing process and other grant search engines.

**Don't forget ...** Many Firewise activities help homes and neighborhoods become safer from wildfire without requiring a significant financial investment. Community clean-up days, awareness events, and other cooperative activities can be successfully accomplished through partnerships among neighbors, local businesses, and local fire departments, at little or no cost. The [Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program](#) provides examples of these projects and programs.



**Project Ideas** - Projects that reduce wildfire risk and increase preparedness can be accomplished by a broad range of ages; and come in a variety of time commitments, with some as short as a few hours. You might be asking - what can I do in one day to be safer from wildfire? And the answer is a lot!

**To help get you started**, page 5 has a list of project ideas for individuals and groups. With the youngest participants in mind, most can be accomplished without power tools or monetary costs.

## A few ideas for community or neighborhood projects based on standard Firewise principles:

- ⇒ Distribute wildfire safety information to neighbors, or staff a table at a grocery or hardware store (other high-traffic locations work too) and distribute free Firewise and emergency preparedness materials that can be ordered from the Firewise catalog or from [READY.gov](http://READY.gov).
- ⇒ Visit the [Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association site](http://Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association site), and download free home inventory software. Work together as a family to videotape and take photos of your possessions – **that way you'll have the insurance documentation needed to replace belongings.**
- ⇒ Collect downed tree limbs and broken branches and take them to a disposal site, or join forces with neighbors and pool your resources to pay for a chipper service to remove slash.
- ⇒ Develop and practice neighborhood home evacuation plans.
- ⇒ Evaluate your address numbers, and build and implement a plan so they are visible from the street at night and under extreme weather conditions.
- ⇒ Contact your local Office of Emergency Management and ask if your jurisdiction requires individuals to register cell phones to receive emergency notifications on mobile devices.
- ⇒ Work with neighbors to develop a phone tree that can be used to alert everyone about a fire or evacuation. **A reverse 911** may need to be established!
- ⇒ Using social media or text messaging, pick a day and send hourly Firewise and Emergency Preparedness tips to your contacts and friends.
- ⇒ Do group working visits to help elderly neighbors make and keep their homes Firewise.
- ⇒ You can invest time, or organize a group to help a neighbor that needs assistance getting work **completed. Wildfire safety also means making others aware, and there's plenty of options for that too.**
- ⇒ Organize a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day in coordination with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). **See Page 7 for more information on this concept.**
- ⇒ Hold a garage sale or other fund-raiser, and donate the proceeds to the local fire department's wildland fire team.
- ⇒ Take a walk through your neighborhood gardens, and see which types of Firewise plants work best in your landscaping. [Get a list of Firewise plants.](#)
- ⇒ Before getting started, make sure everyone has reviewed the [safety gear and safety tips information.](#) in the Firewise Community website



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

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

If you are interested in becoming part of a designated Firewise Community after you have read these two pages, and those in Firesmart #13, contact your county's Firewise Coordinator (Page Two) to help you get started.





Another page from Oregon State Firewise. It is slightly different than previous thinning mentions in the newsletter, but is definitely applicable to Wyoming.

# Thinning basics

The purpose of thinning trees and shrubs is to reduce the likelihood that fire will jump from plant to plant. Once a fire's ability to transfer to other plants is reduced, it will quickly and dramatically lose intensity.

When choosing which trees or shrubs to remove, choose the ones that have the poorest vigor. Signs of poor vigor include numerous bare or spindly branches, poor color in the leaves or needles, and evidence of parasites, such as insects or fungus.



Trees and brush growing tightly together can create a fire-friendly environment. Thinning trees and shrubs – and pruning potential ladder fuels – limits a fire's ability to jump from plant to plant, and from the ground to the trees' crowns.



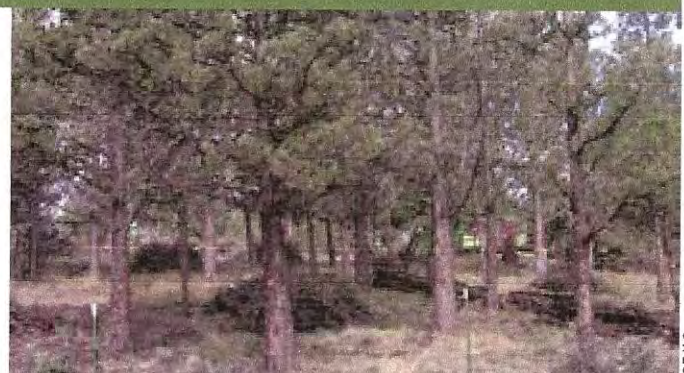
## No moonscaping

Thinning is good but don't overdo it. Healthy trees can shield a home from airborne firebrands. If you aren't sure what to cut, consult a forester or tree care professional before using the saw.



A dense stand of trees and brush can burn intensely. This stand becomes less of a fire-risk problem after lower tree limbs are pruned,

the brush is thinned, and suppressed trees are removed. The remaining trees will thrive – and likely survive a fire.





## ONE EXAMPLE OF A COMMUNITY FIREWISE ACTIVITY

The below is an example of what the National Fire Protection Association has proposed as a national one-day program for communities trying to be Firewise. **Participation by some of the Bighorn Basin Firewise programs is being considered; though nothing has been organized at this time.** There will be more in the next newsletter if something develops. **Individual communities can participate on their own. If you do, let your county Firewise coordinator know before the middle of March if you would like assistance with publicity.** Some specific project ideas are on Page 5.

### SAVETHE DATE! - May 3, 2014

**JOIN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE U.S. SATURDAY, MAY 3, 2014, AS NFPA LAUNCHES ITS FIRST NATIONAL WILDFIRE COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS DAY!**

Commit a couple of hours, or the entire day, and watch as your actions positively contribute to reducing your community's wildfire risk. Challenge your friends, your family, relatives, faith-based group or youth organization to develop a project and join others throughout the nation in making big changes. Your efforts will help raise wildfire awareness, promote collaboration and bring neighbors together to work on projects that can help protect homes, neighborhoods and entire communities from future wildfire risk or current post-fire impacts.



For project ideas that can be done around your home and across your neighborhood, check out our [project ideas list](#) (PDF, 26 KB). In some areas, organized group projects may be available for you to join – check our [Facebook page](#) in the future to see if there's one near you. You can also follow us on [@Firewise](#) and join the conversation at [#WildfirePrepDay](#).

With a few months to go before the big day, we'll have lots of new information to share including updated project sites, project ideas, safety tips, templates, flyers and more. **Visit this page regularly for the latest news and resources.**

Do something GREAT – be a local champion, and get started today!

For additional information, contact [Cathy Prudhomme](#) or NFPA's [Wildland Fire Operations Division](#).

[The [blue](#) references can be found at the [National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day—Wild Fire](#) website]



**EARLY NOTICE:** THE FIREWISE PICNIC FOR MOUNTAIN CABIN OWNERS IN WASHAKIE COUNTY AND THE SOUTHERN END OF BIG HORN COUNTY WILL BE **JUNE 28** AT THE WILLOW PARK GROUP SITE ON THE BIGHORN NATIONAL FOREST. LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED AT NOON. THE FIREWISE PROGRAM WILL START AT 1:00 PM. FIREWISE #15 WILL HAVE PICNIC DETAILS.

**TWO MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER**



Weathered lumber piled against a building.



Cured grass in contact with an outside wall

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

