



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESWISE COMMUNITIES

## ISSUE #21 — SUMMER 2016

### 2016 FIRE SEASON OUTLOOK

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) has predicted that Wyoming is going to generally be in a “Normal” season of fire occurrence for 2016. They have produced these two maps for the season.



JULY



AUGUST & SEPTEMBER



If this prediction works out, there will still be wildfires, and home and cabin owners need to do their usual Firewise chores and keep up with wildfires in their neighborhood.

See Page 7 for your annual fire season checklist and contact information for wildfire activity in Wyoming and the U.S.

If your Washakie County cabin, or Wildland Urban Interface rural home needs a WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN, contact, Washakie County Firewise, at (307) 333-1098, [Firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:Firewise@wytfs.com), or 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604.

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

**Big Horn County: The County Fire Warden is Brent Godfrey (307) 568-2324. No Firewise Coordinator is presently assigned.**

**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: Contact Dion Robbins, County Fire Warden, at (307) 431-2767, or [hscwarden@rtconnect.com](mailto:hscwarden@rtconnect.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.**

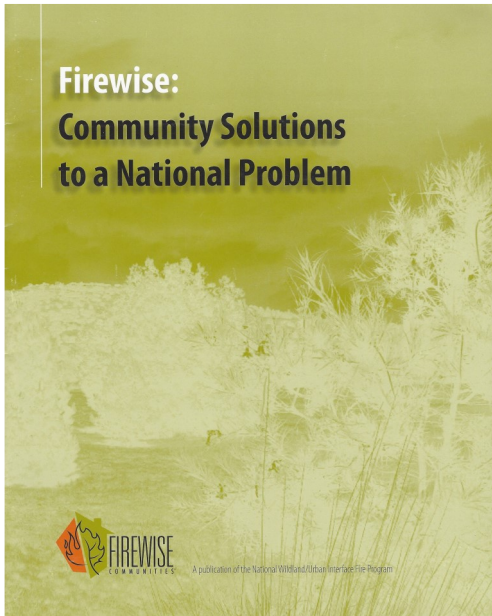
**The basin Firewise website : [Pcfirerwise.com](http://Pcfirerwise.com) - Contact Park County Firewise. When you get there, click on “Park County Firewise” to get the menu. Check it out.**

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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), or by mail to G. Wynn, 824 Country Club, Casper, Wyoming 82609.

Thanks for providing this newsletter go to the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the Washakie 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 [firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:firewise@wytfs.com), or to Big Horn/Washakie Firewise (6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604) by mail.



**This publication takes Firewise beyond just your individual home or cabin, and provides details on infrastructure and organizing neighborhoods and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) subdivisions into effective Firewise Communities for the wildfire safety of all residents. Topics include:**

- ⇒ Wildland/Urban Interface Fire in the U.S.**
- ⇒ Roles and Responsibilities in the Interface**
- ⇒ Community Solutions**
- ⇒ Details on the formation of officially recognized Firewise Communities.**
- ⇒ Resources and References**

**Copies can be obtained by contacting the Firewise Communities web site.**

## FIRESMART AND EAVE TROUGHS/GUTTERS

Embers falling in roof gutters are an ignition source that could result in burning your home. And gutters full of leaves, needles, and forest litter, can do this, whether the gutters are plastic or metal. Plastic gutters melt, and fire will drip down the sides of your structure. Metal gutters usually don't melt, but when full can trap fire under the edges of your roofing. The only real solution is keeping your gutters and downspouts clean.

Full gutters can also pull gutters away from the house, causing water damage to the roof and all house parts below the gutters. These gaps are also entry points for flying embers.

If installing new gutters, metal is recommended.

Follow these tips at least once a year before fire season:

- 1) Ladders that extend above the gutters are best. Someone steadying the ladder is a safety bonus.
- 2) Start by scooping out **all** of the flammable material with a trowel or small garden shovel, while wearing gloves to reduce hand damage from sharp gutter edges and pointed sticks.
- 3) Use a garden hose to flush the downspouts to clear them before and after hosing out the full length of each gutter.



While you are on the ladder, tap the anchoring nails to pull the gutter back flush with the roof, and make fixes to any annoying leaks discovered when flushing with the hose.

All of the above tips also apply to gutters with a cover screens. These do keep out some leaves and debris, but flammable materials often get trapped under them, so they should be removed during cleaning, and then reinstalled.



**MAKE NOTE OF THIS**— The Consumer Product Safety Commission says that **90,000** people go to emergency rooms each year with ladder-related injuries!

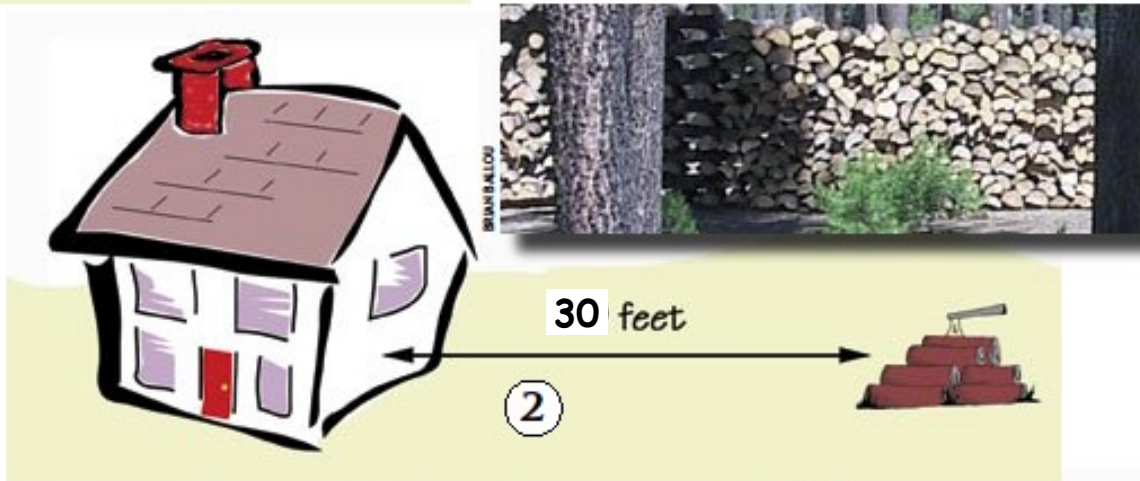
If you are not comfortable on ladders, find a volunteer who is, or consider hiring this work done.



## Firewood pile location

**F**irewood stacked next to a house (illustration 1) is a ready source of ignition and can become a source of intense, sustained heat if it should catch fire. This could ignite the house's siding or eaves, and cause the windows to break, allowing fire to enter the house.

To eliminate this problem, either move the firewood 20 feet from the house (2) during fire season, or build an enclosure around the firewood (3).



### **A bit more distance, please.**

A flaming firewood pile that's too close to a home (left) could catch the wood siding on fire and blow out windows — giving fire access to the home's interior. **Thirty feet** of open space between the firewood pile and the house will greatly help the home outlive the firewood pile.

The above illustration was provided by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Their Firewise program has created several illustrations that are appropriate for the Firewise program in our area, and has given permission to use them for Bighorn Basin Firesmart.

# CHARCOAL AND GAS GRILLING SAFETY

## 1 CHECK THE GAS LINES.

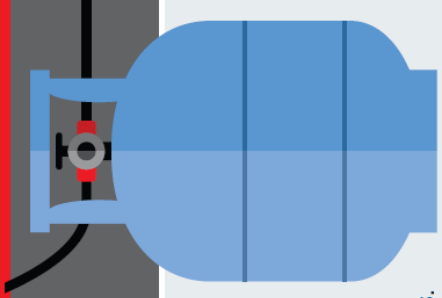
The leading cause of gas grill fires is a **FUEL LINE LEAK OR BREAK.**<sup>2</sup>



**Inspect the lines** for cracking, sharp bends and brittleness.



**Rub soapy water** on the line and look for bubbling to test for leaks.



## 2 GRILL IN WELL-VENTILATED AREAS.

Charcoal grills caused **8 CARBON MONOXIDE-RELATED FATALITIES** in 2011.<sup>1</sup>



Never grill inside a **HOME, TENT, VEHICLE** or **CAMPER**.

## 3 USE COMBUSTIBLES CAUTIOUSLY.

**18%**

of grill fires result from a grill being **TOO CLOSE TO COMBUSTIBLES.**<sup>3</sup>

## 4 CLEAN YOUR GRILL.

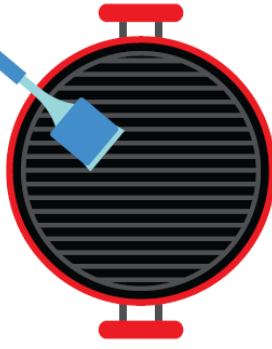
Stuck-on char can increase your **RISK OF CANCER** if consumed.<sup>4</sup>



**Clean grates** and grease pans to prevent flare-ups.



**Wait 48 hours** before disposing of charcoal ashes.



## 5 CREATE A SAFE ZONE.

**CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 5** accounted for **37%** of emergency room visits for contact burns in 2012.<sup>5</sup>



Keep children, pets and play areas away from grills.



Grill at least 10 feet away from buildings.<sup>6</sup>



Never leave a grill unattended.



Keep lighter fluids capped and a **SAFE DISTANCE AWAY** from the grill.



**NEVER ADD LIGHTER FLUID** to hot coals.



**NEVER USE GASOLINE OR KEROSENE** as a starter fluid.

## 2016 FIREWISE PICNIC

The June 18th Firewise picnic was a big success, with 50 mountain cabin owners signing the attendance roster, and interacting with presentations by the Bighorn National Forest, County Fire Wardens, the Wyoming State Forestry Division, and the County Firewise Coordinator.

A highlight of the event was the official recognition of the West Tensleep Cabin-Owners Association, and Canyon Creek Village as Firewise Communities under that nationwide program.



Pictured L—>R for that ceremony are Mike Robinson (Canyon Creek Village), Chris Kocher (Washakie County Fire Warden), CJ Grimes (Canyon Creek Village), Reed Oldenburg (Wyoming State Forestry Division), Cheryl and Tom Schultz (West Tensleep Cabin-Owners Association Secretary/Treasurer), and Brent Godfrey (Bighorn County Fire Warden).

**Washakie County had a half-dozen wildfires just a few days before the picnic. This photo shows some of the hot and dangerous fire behavior during one of those fires.**



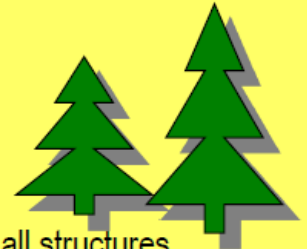
© James Yule

## ANNUAL PRE-FIRE-SEASON FIREWISE WALK-AROUND CHECKLIST

*Once a home or cabin has been made Firewise, the owner can't sit back and enjoy it. Vegetation will continue to grow, and human activities will change the situation on an irregular basis.*

### BEFORE FIRE SEASON:

- \_\_\_ Remove leaves and forest litter from gutters, roofs, and within 3 feet of all structures
- \_\_\_ Clean chimney screens
- \_\_\_ Cut new small trees and shrubs within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Remove dead trees within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Check your address placard or sign for clear visibility
- \_\_\_ Move your conveniently-placed winter woodpile to more than 30 feet from all structures
- \_\_\_ Check/replace the batteries in your emergency alert radio
- \_\_\_ Inspect your powerline for branches within four feet in all directions
- \_\_\_ Check window screens for a tight fit, and patch any holes
- \_\_\_ Remove leaf and needles between the boards of decks, and under any decks and porches.
- \_\_\_ Check walls and foundation for fresh bird and animal holes, and patch appropriately
- \_\_\_ Pick up winter-broken limbs within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Remove flammable materials from decks and porches, except when actually in use
- \_\_\_ Review your evacuation plan, and share it with the family and guests
- \_\_\_ If you are interested in keeping current on wildfire activity in Wyoming or the country, check out the websites mentioned below, and move them to your computer's "Favorites" list.



### BEFORE GRASS CURES IN MID-SUMMER:

- \_\_\_ Mow grassy areas around all structures
- \_\_\_ Mow grass within and adjacent to driveways



**EVERYTHING ON THIS PAGE IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE REPEATED EVERY YEAR.**

## **WEBSITES FOR TRACKING WILDFIRE ACTIVITY**

**FOR FIRES IN WYOMING:**

**<http://lands.state.wy.us>**

**Then click on - Forestry : Wildland Fire Management and then Fire Information**

**FIRE ACTIVITY FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY:**

**[www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org)**

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



**MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER**



**DRY LEAVES AGAINST WEATHERED WOODEN LATTICE**



Use glass skylights; plastic will melt and allow embers into the home.

You can now keep up on daily news and events with Bighorn Basin Firewise. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornbasin.firewise>

