



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #22 — FALL 2016

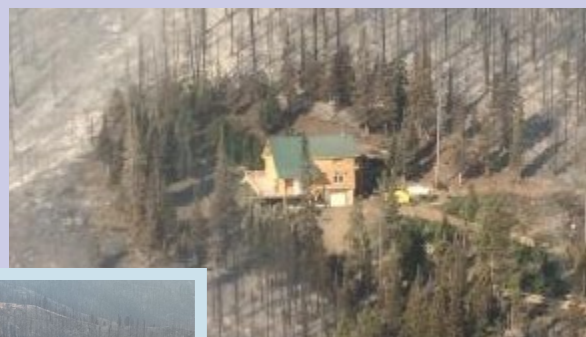
THE 2016 FIRE SEASON IN WYOMING

The fire season was a busy one in Wyoming, but not anything near “record” numbers of fires or acres burned.

Several fires occurred in the Big Horn Basin, but no homes or cabins were reported as burned. As you can see in the Hatchery Fire picture to the right, these were not all low-intensity grass fires.



This image from the Beaver Creek Fire that intruded into Wyoming from Colorado, is a good example of the results of being Firewise. Firefighters were able to aggressively protect this home only because the home-owner had applied Firewise principles.



← An image of Firewise success from the recent Lava Mountain Fire in Fremont County. Firewise conditions in the pictured complex allowed firefighters to safely work in this WUI community as the fire approached, and get

right back to work quickly once the fire had made its initial hot run toward the buildings. No buildings were lost.

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, 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, P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379. The Firewise Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, cweydeveld@wyffs.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.

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

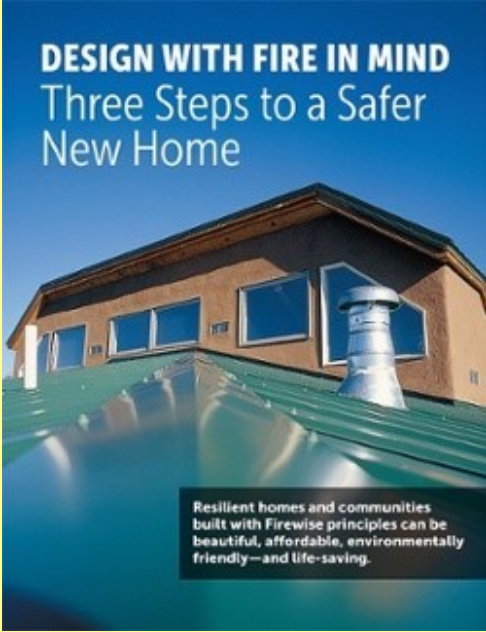
The basin Firewise website : Pcfirerwise.com - Contact Park County Firewise. When you get there, click on "Park County Firewise" to get the menu. Check it out.

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

Do you have topics you would like included in future newsletters? Please submit your suggestions and comments to firewise@wyffs.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@wyffs.com, or to Big Horn/Washakie Firewise (6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604) by mail.

DESIGN WITH FIRE IN MIND
Three Steps to a Safer New Home

Resilient homes and communities built with Firewise principles can be beautiful, affordable, environmentally friendly—and life-saving.

Design with wildfire in mind: NFPA and Green Builder® Media provide three steps to a safer new home in an e-book featuring Firewise principles.

This FREE "E-book" addresses site design principles, construction, and landscaping, as well as property maintenance and wildfire safety education of residents. It can be accessed at:

<http://www.greenbuildermedia.com/> as
"Design with Fire in Mind: Three Steps to a Safer New Home"

The three general principles covered are:

1. Creating a Firewise landscape around the home or cabin.
2. Considering the impact of flames, embers, and radiant heat when designing and building homes.
3. Understanding the role of home & property maintenance in reducing damage from wildfires.

PROPANE TANKS

Safety features on stationery propane tanks rarely allow them to “explode,” but they will vent a “geyser of flame” if overheated with an ignition source nearby. The guidelines below should make that unlikely.

In a residential situation, stationery propane tanks should be:

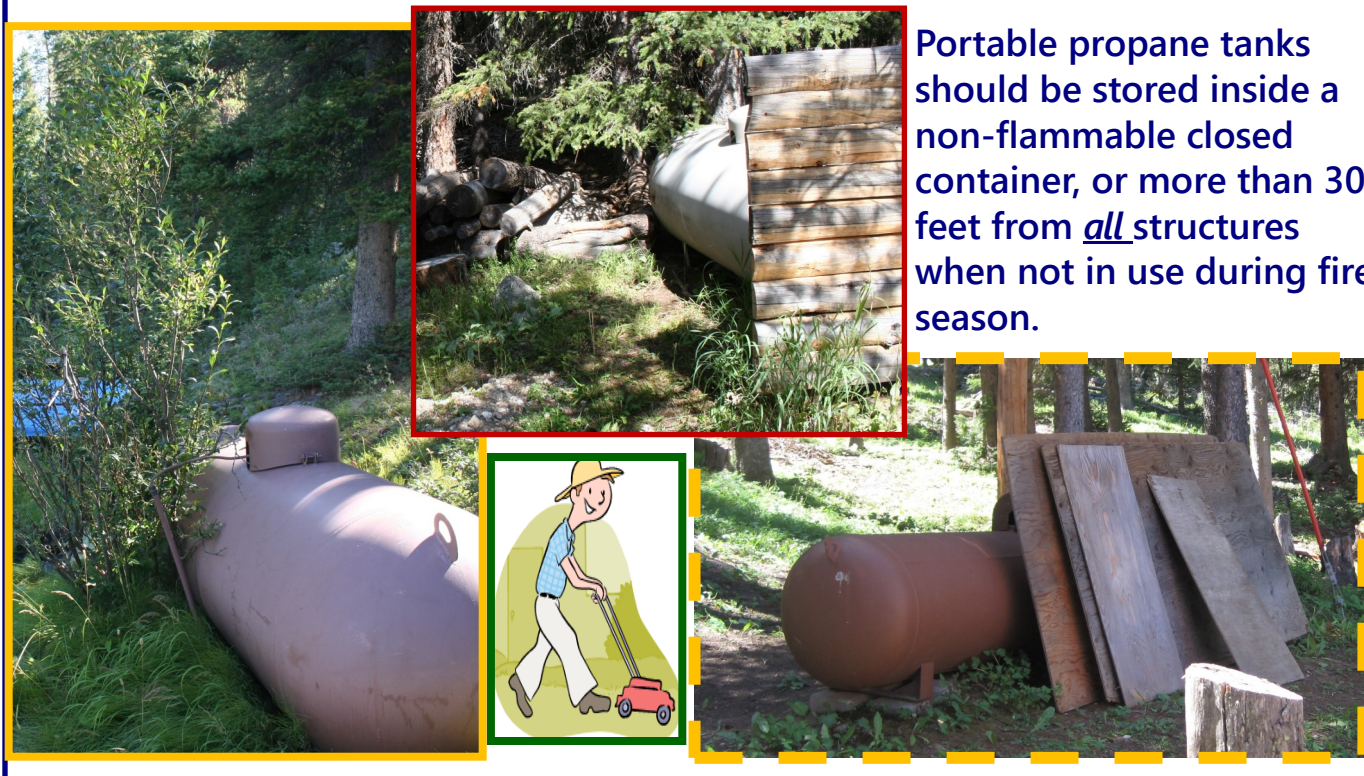
- ◆ More than 10 feet from buildings or any brush, shrubbery, and other flammable materials.
- ◆ Stable and level, with tight fittings on all lines.
- ◆ A three foot perimeter of pavement, gravel, or cinders is preferred.
- ◆ If over grass, the surrounding ten feet should be kept mowed.

In a forested Firewise application, stationery propane tanks should be:

- ◆ Outside the 30 foot Home Ignition Zone from all buildings.
- ◆ Stable and level, with tight fittings on the line to the cabin.
- ◆ Surrounded by at least three feet of bare soil, cinders, or gravel.
- ◆ In an area cleared of brush and shrubbery for more than 10 feet in all directions.
- ◆ At least 20 feet from fuelwood and construction lumber piles.
- ◆ If in a grassy area, the surrounding ten feet should be kept mowed short.

In both situations, propane tanks can also be buried, if done by knowledgeable professionals. Even buried tanks need the safety guidelines on the above lists.

Here are a few examples of tanks that are not *Firewise* when compared to the above lists. And the fixes are pretty simple: *move the lumber, mow the grass, cut the bush, and trim the trees to remove flammables from near the tank.*



Ladder fuels

To keep fire out of tree crowns, it is necessary to disrupt a fire's pathway to branches, needles and leaves. The strategic removal of lower tree limbs — which act like rungs of a ladder that a fire can climb — can make the difference between a scorched trunk and a tree stripped of all foliage. 🌲



NIFC



OSU EXTENSION

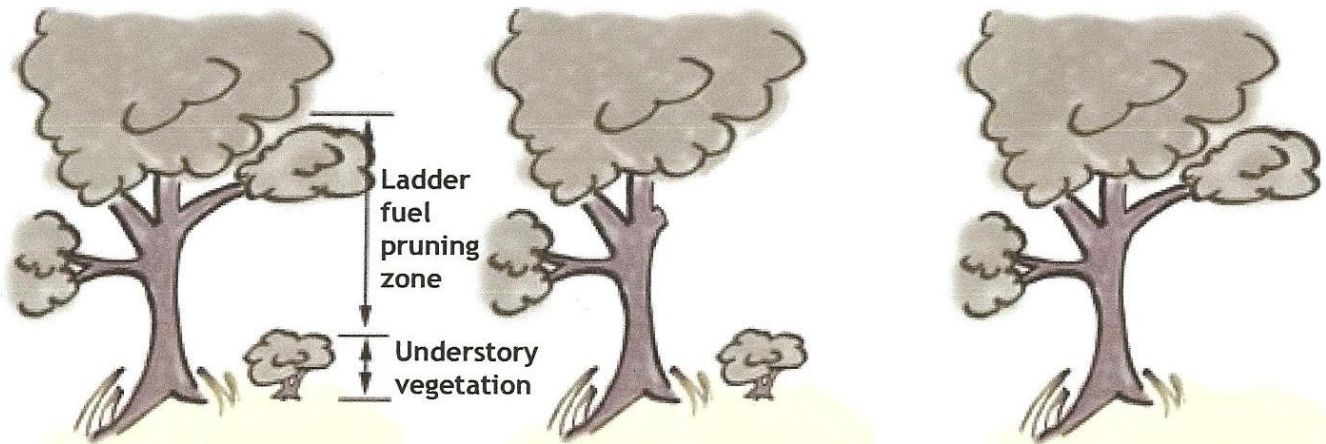
Most wildfires start on the ground in the smallest fuels — needles, leaves and dry grass. Fire will continue to spread upward — up a hill, up a tree — unless pathways to fresh fuel are interrupted (left). Removing ladder fuels helps to keep fire on the ground, where it is manageable, rather than in the tree crowns, where fire is difficult to control.

How high can flames fly?

About three times taller than the height of the understory plant that is burning.

Understory vegetation height	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Ladder fuel pruning zone distance	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27

All measurements in feet



Ladder fuel pruning zone = Understory veg. height X 3

Option 1: Remove tree limbs within the pruning zone

Option 2: Remove the understory vegetation

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.

THE CANYON CREEK COUNTRY FUELBREAK

A five-acre fuelbreak immediately adjacent to several cabins in Canyon Creek Country is nearing completion by a contractor, with some volunteer assistance. The project was funded by Washakie County with federal Firewise funding.



A pair of photos of the timbered "jungle" before tree thinning and slash disposal

The tree thinning separated tree crowns to minimize fire spread through the tree crowns, and the project cleaned up dead woody ground fuels, as well as removing or piling for burning the slash from the thinning. Some of the larger material was hauled away as fuelwood and other forest products.



Two views of the fuelbreak after thinning, and just before final slash cleanup



Cut tree stems removed as forest products

PROPERTY INSURANCE FOR HOMES IN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

Several western states have recognized the nationwide *Firewise Communities* program, and have directed insurance companies to reduce rates to home-owners within those communities. A 5% reduction doesn't sound like much, but it does place another positive incentive for community members in those communities, and other communities considering applying for Firewise Community status. Some California counties have proposed reductions up to 15%.

Presently, Wyoming is not one of the states giving recognition to the **eight** officially designated Firewise Communities within the state. Leaders in a few of these Firewise Communities are presently investigating and advocating for Wyoming to join with the other states.

FIREWISE COMMUNITY RECAP FOR THOSE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAM

This has been covered in detail in the Fall 2013 Bighorn Basin Firesmart, but here is a brief repeat. For more, visit: [//www.firewise.org/communities.aspx](http://www.firewise.org/communities.aspx)

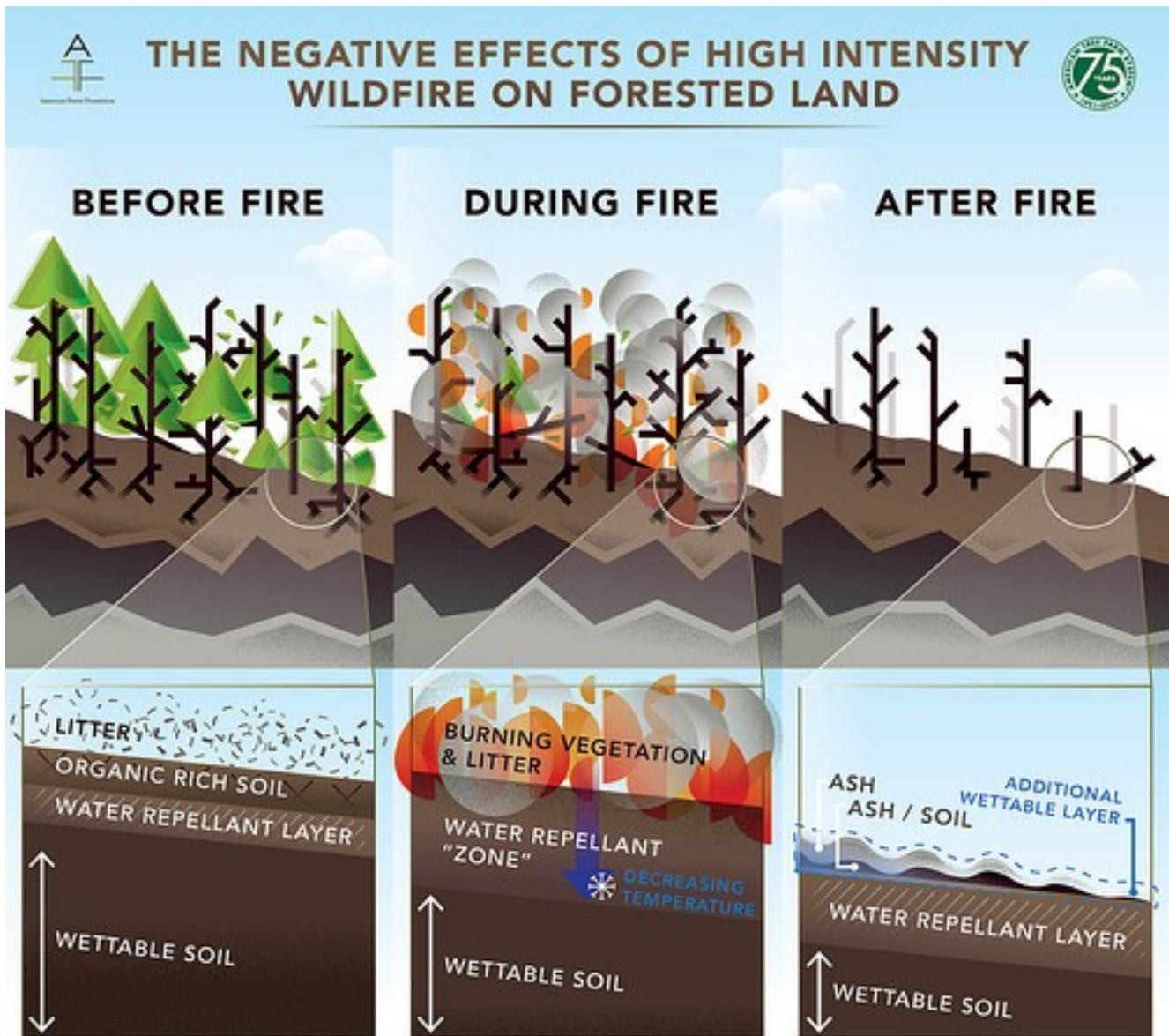
The six steps to Firewise Community recognition:

- 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. If your county has no Firewise Coordinator, contact the County Fire Warden.
 - 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 or County Fire Warden.
- To maintain the recognition status over time, communities must continue to conduct annual Firewise Day events, and document these and their local investments.



The Top Seven Firewise Community Program Benefits -

- 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.
- 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.
- 3. Peace of Mind** - Working with experts to learn about wildfire and steps to reduce the risk of damage from fire, helps people to feel safer in their environment and in their homes.
- 4. Community-Building** - As neighbors get together to do Firewise work, they build a stronger bond with each other, benefiting residents in ways helpful during any emergency.
- 5. Citizen Pride** - While Firewise work can be fun, it isn't always easy. Neighbors work hard, and are rightly proud when they achieve national and local recognition for their efforts.
- 6. Publicity** - The national *Firewise Communities* program provides participating communities with signs and other materials for public recognition as a Firewise Communities/USA site. News media find this to be a great story to cover.
- 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.



LITTER (needles, leaves, dead grass, bark, etc) | WETTABLE SOIL (receives, filters and stores moisture)

WATER REPELLANT LAYER (decomposition of waxy material that comes from plant residues - these materials can coat soil, preventing water from filtering through)

A WEED KILLING SOLUTION FROM KEN MOON

MIX THESE COMMON ITEMS:

One gallon of white vinegar

A pound of table salt

A dozen drops of dishwashing liquid

While not being generally toxic to humans or pets, this will sterilize the soil where it is used, for "some time," So use sparingly, and NOT near desirable plants.

If kept in a tightly sealed container, this should store well.



Weeds providing tinder for an old dry wood fence

Mowing is probably more appropriate for this example of a **Little Thing That Matters**, but not all situations.

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



MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER



The fine litter/tinder you can't see under your juniper hedge. One more ember trap around your home.



Bird's nests and tree needle concentrations in the limbs of shrubbery and small trees around your cabin or home. Another ember trap.

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

