



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #28 — SUMMER 2018

AN UPDATE FROM THE WASHAKIE COUNTY FIRESMART COORDINATOR

1. *Forest management activities have begun on the Tolman Ranch forest products project. Approximately 5 acres have been treated (photos below).*
2. *The 35 acre Annie Tolman Fuels Reduction Project was awarded to Mike Burrington (Contractor) and work will begin in July 2018.*
3. *Defensible Space projects are underway treating hazardous fuels in the home ignition zone around cabins and homes.*
4. *Washakie County Firesmart has been awarded another Western States WUI Grant for 2018.*
5. *This fall there will another North Bighorn River CWPP Operating Group meeting to discuss priority areas to focus fuels reduction treatments. OG Members will be contacted in later summer or early fall.*
6. *The Canyon Creek Country Annual Workday and Picnic will be Saturday, August 11 at the CCC subdivision Community Hall. Their Annual Meeting will be August 12.*
7. *The Firewise Communities of Canyon Creek Country and Canyon Creek Village need to start thinking about recertification for the coming year. Contact Chris or George at firesmart@wytfs.com*
8. *As always, please contact Firesmart if you want home inspection to assess wildfire hazard.*



A key item in this issue is a continuation of the Wildfire Evacuation Plan covered in Firesmart #27. It's **WHAT TO DO IF A WILDFIRE THREATENS**, and fills Page 5.

This and all future Bighorn Basin Firesmart issues will go only to E-mail recipients. All issues will also be available on Facebook, at: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornbasin.firesmart>

<u>In this issue</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Special points of interest</u>
Washakie County Firesmart Update	1	* Bighorn Basin Firesmart Facebook
Basin Firewise Coordinators	2	* U of W Extension Service
Be Ember Aware	3	* Homes surviving ember storms
Roof watering	4	* To do it or not
What to do when wildfire threatens	5	* Dovetails with your evacuation plan
Making your vehicles firesmart	6	* Something else to think about
Wyoming wildfires 2002 to 2016	7	* Number of wildfires and acres
More Little Things That Matter	8	* Tracking wildfire activity

THE BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE COORDINATORS ARE:

Big Horn County: The County Fire Warden is Brent Godfrey (307) 568-2324.

Washakie County: Chris Kocher, Fire Warden, ckocher@worlandfire.org, P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379. The County Firesmart Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, 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.

Park County : Bernie Spanogle, Firewise Coordinator, can be reached at pcfiriwise@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 : parkcountyfirewise.com When you get there, surf the MENU to see what articles, photos, and short video clips are there. Check it out.

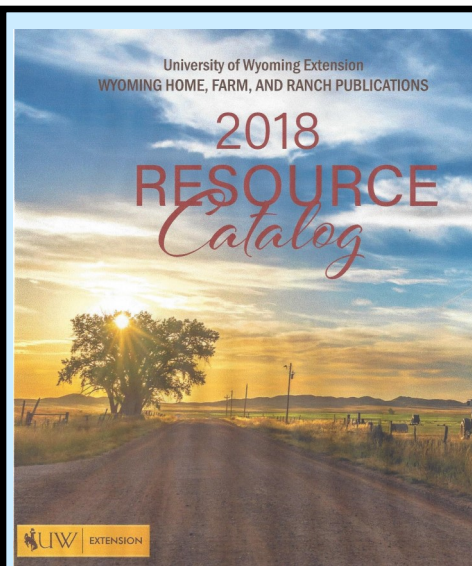
~ ~

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 firesmart@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 Firesmart Coordinator. If you choose not to receive future issues, please respond to firesmart@wytfs.com, or to Big Horn/Washakie Firesmart (6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604) by mail.



The University of Wyoming Extension has an extensive list of publications related to resources in Wyoming.

Publication topics cover most areas of interest to urban and rural residents. Publications on family finances, gardening, landscaping, nutrition, animal husbandry, crop production, small acreage management, forestry, wildlife management, renewable resources, and other topics are included.

The publications are free and available in PDFs or at their respective websites. Go to www.uwyo.edu/uwe and click the Publications link on the left-hand side. Enter the publication numbers to access each bulletin. Clicking on the title provides access to the PDF and website URLs.

Publications and related periodicals can also be accessed at the Extension offices found in all twenty-three of Wyoming's counties.

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




BE EMBER AWARE! A REMINDER

During a wildfire, thousands of embers can rain down on your roof, and pelt the side of your home like hail during a storm. If these embers become lodged in something easily ignited on or near your house, it will be in jeopardy of burning.

Embers coming in contact with flammable material is the major reason homes are destroyed during a wildfire.

Common materials that become embers during a wildfire include pine cones, branches, tree bark, and wooden shingles.

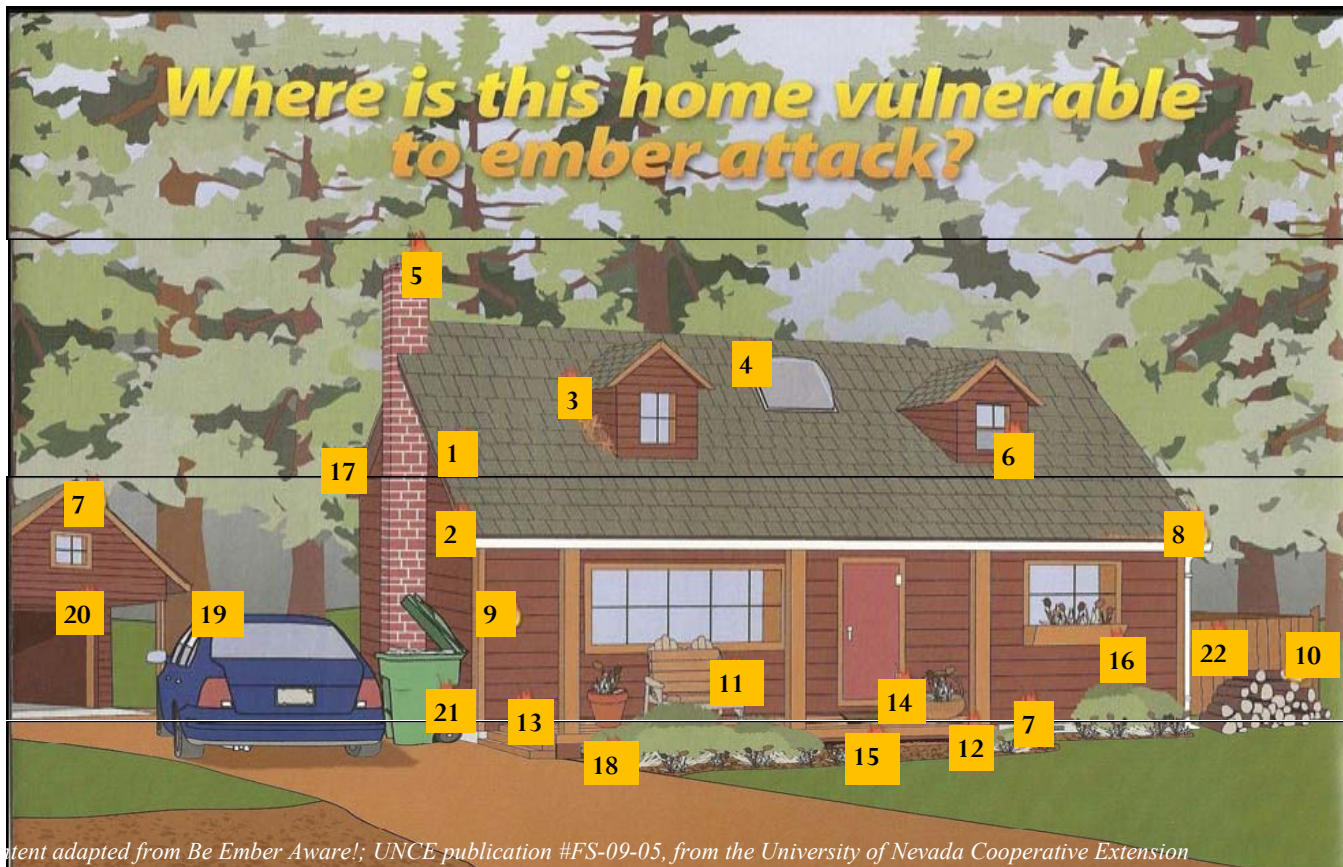
Depending on fire intensity, wind speed, and the size of materials that are burning, **embers can be carried more than a mile ahead of the fire.** Consequently, even homes or neighborhoods located blocks or miles away from the actual flame front are vulnerable to ignition and complete destruction.

By being aware and **taking action ahead of time**, a homeowner can substantially reduce the ember threat by addressing the 22 items on this list and illustrated below. 

Your home CAN survive when the embers arrive.

Awareness Checklist:

1. Wood Roof?
2. Roof Openings?
3. Roof Debris- Leaves, Branches?
4. Skylights Open?
5. Spark arrestor screen in place?
6. Windows broken or open?
7. Vents screened?
8. Rain gutters clean?
9. Siding intact?
10. Woodpiles 30' from bldg?
11. Patio Furniture combustible?
12. Deck Boards sound and intact?
13. Deck debris - ignitables on deck?
14. Porch and accessories - combustibles?
15. Under deck enclosed? woody debris?
16. Flower boxes- dried plant material?
17. Eaves- accumulated leaves, needles?
18. Flowerbeds- combustible mulch?
19. Vehicles- windows closed?
20. Garage door- Closed?
21. Garbage cans covered?
22. Wooden Fences-sound, detached?



Content adapted from *Be Ember Aware!*; UNCE publication #FS-09-05, from the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension

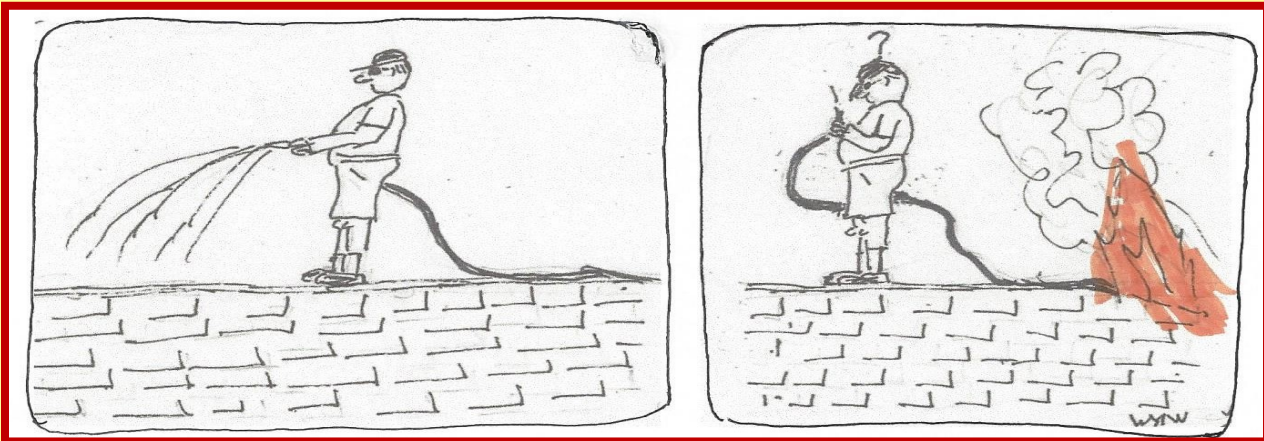
??? WATERING YOUR ROOF ???

We've all seen TV clips of homeowners on their roofs with a garden hose spraying water on the roof of their home or cabin as a wildfire approaches. **Is this a good idea to copy?**

Unless your structure has an untreated wood shake roof, that is the last place you should be hosing down, and even wetting down a shake roof is of zero value if your home/cabin is not Firesmart. Any hosing should be on exposed flammable surfaces, and even that has serious safety concerns, as it would delay your safe evacuation, and probably not have any effect on saving your property.

If you are having thoughts of hosing anything when a wildfire approaches, ask yourself these questions, **in order**:

- 1) Have you been ordered or advised to evacuate? If **YES**, leave your hose rolled up, and follow your pre-fire evacuation plan – the one you and your family prepared in the spring.
- 2) Do you have designated **safe** escape routes not potentially threatened by the fire? If **NO**, skip the rest of this list, and evacuate.
- 3) Do you have an unlimited water supply for your hose? If **NO** is your answer, take the steps needed to be ready to evacuate if advised or directed.
- 4) Could a wildfire interrupt or shut down the water to your hose? This would include loss of electrical power, or reduction of municipal water pressure caused by firefighting water demands. If **YES** is the answer, locate your evacuation plan, and be ready to execute it.
- 5) Can you turn on outside sprinklers with enough capacity to effectively wet down your flammable walls and Home Ignition Zone around you home/cabin? A **YES** answer tells you to energize the system, regardless of the answer to 4 above, **and** make preparations to evacuate.



Three very important things to remember:















1. **Would you feel safe on a wet steep roof, when a fire is coming your way?**
2. **If your home/cabin is not Firesmart, a garden hose is not likely to save your home/cabin, at the risk of your body, or your loved one's bodies!**
3. **People who die in wildfires are not all trained firefighters. Many are homeowners who were not aware of or prepared for the dangers of fast-moving or high-intensity wildfires.**

If this page makes you nervous, review, update, and share with your family your emergency evacuation plan NOW, and take steps to make your home/cabin Firesmart, and your designated escape routes safe for an escape. If your home/cabin does not have a Wildfire Mitigation Plan, it's not too late to contact your county's Firesmart Coordinator to get one started.



This list assumes that you have taken all the steps to make your home or cabin defensible in the event of a wildfire, and you have an evacuation plan. The Page 7 checklist in issue #27 is your 2018 reminder of what these steps are.

 ... **WHEN A WILDFIRE THREATENS** ... 

Here are some important tasks you SHOULD do when a wildfire is imminent:

-  *Collect up your pets, and confine them for transport. **DO THIS FIRST!***
-  *Do a quick review of your evacuation plan (Firesmart #27).*
-  *Make sure that all family members know the evacuation routes, and where to meet up if separated during the evacuation. The location needs to be well-away from the fire.*
-  *Collect up all of your valuable papers, memorabilia, and the evacuation kit that you have previously placed in a location for quick access and removal. You should already have a list and be ready.*
-  *Be sure gutters, roof and valleys are clear of leaves and dead branches.*
-  *Remove combustible materials, lawn furniture, doormats, garden accessories, and tarps, etc. from decks and around the house and other buildings.*
-  *Close attic, basement, outside & pet doors, vents, and windows.*
-  *Remove flammable drapes from windows, and close shutters and blinds.*
-  *Leave doors and windows unlocked, and disconnect garage door openers for firefighter access.*
-  *If you are leaving any motor vehicles behind, move them to locations well away from structures, and close all of the vehicle doors and windows.*
-  *Open gates in all wooden and plastic fences, and unlock all access gates.*
-  *Shut off natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.*
-  *Obey Evacuation Orders, and evacuate early with your valuable papers.*
-  *On your way out, make sure that your home or cabin address sign is clearly visible.*

Only if you have adequate time, and the above jobs are done, consider:

-  *Connecting garden hose and filling large containers with water inside and outside.*
-  *Wetting down vegetation within 30 feet of home, or turning on sprinklers, if water supply is adequate.*

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS ONCE ALLOWED BACK BY FIRE OVERHEAD.

FIRESMART IS NOT JUST FOR YOUR HOUSE & OUTBUILDINGS

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

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

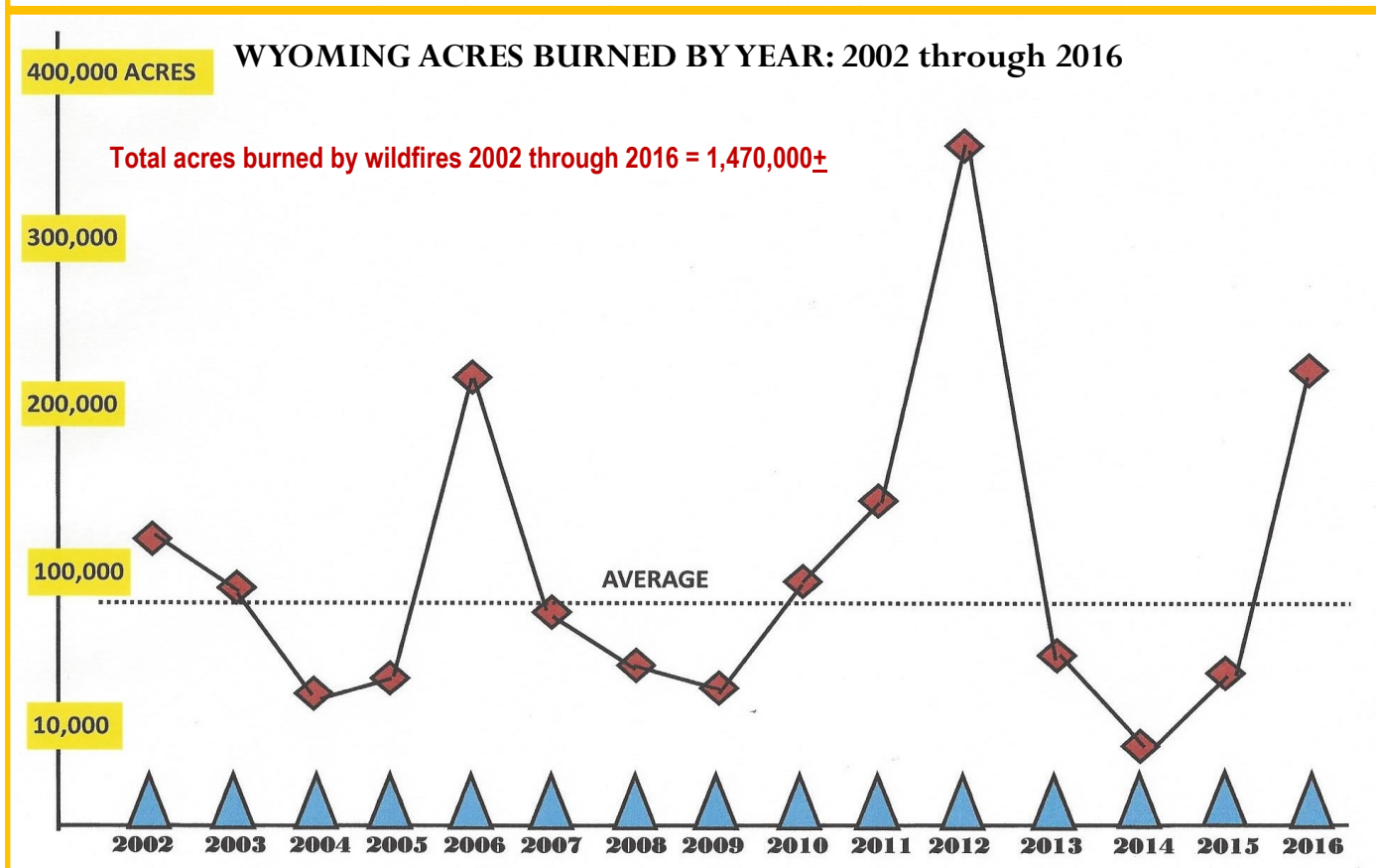
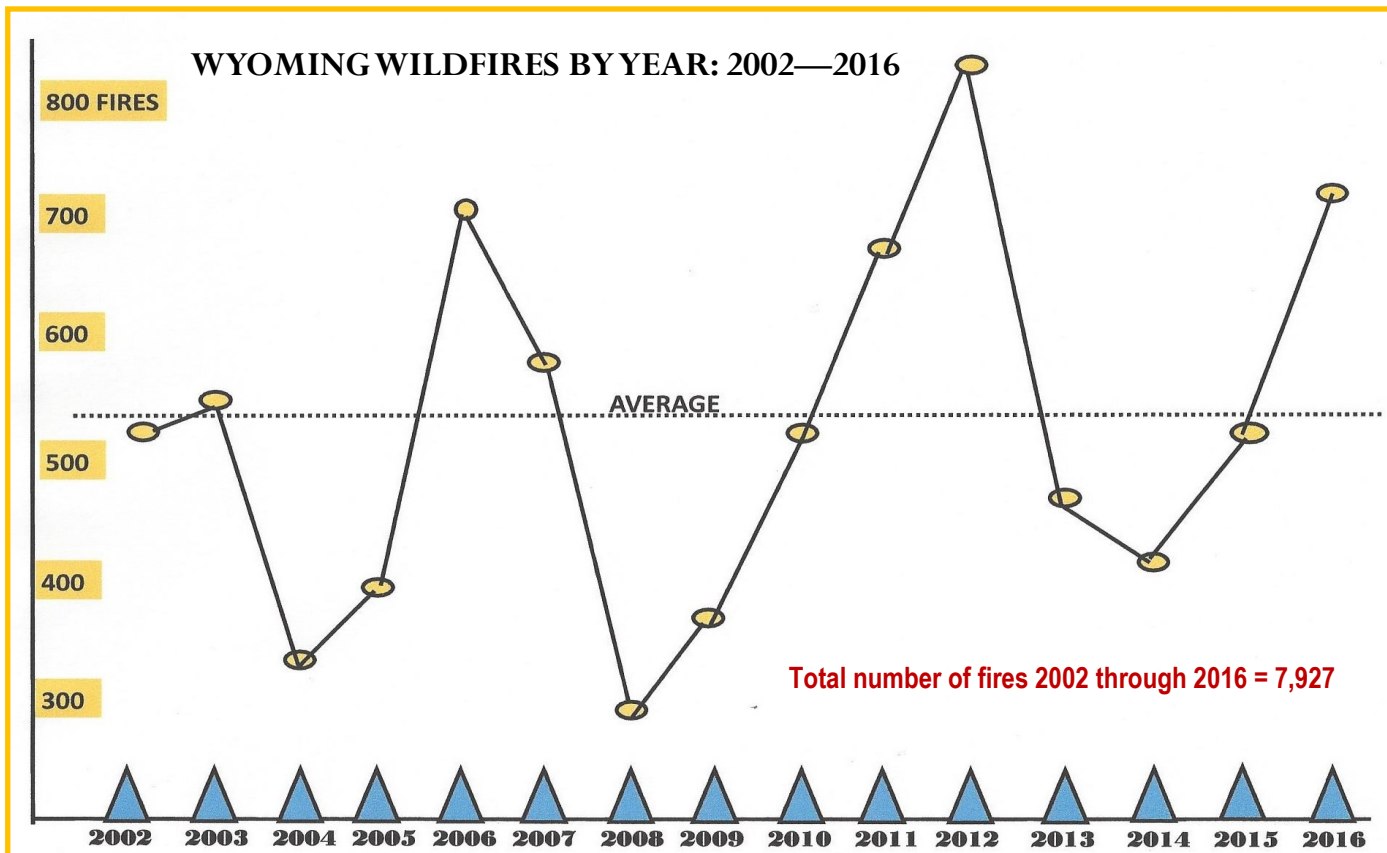


Treat all of your machines as if they were another building to be made and kept Firewise:

- ◇ Stow them 30 feet from flammable materials, buildings, and propane tanks.
- ◇ Remove all flammable materials from under and on top of vehicles.
- ◇ Mow the grass 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 Firesmart 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 hot, so should be parked **at least** 30 feet away from all of your buildings during fire season.*





So, what does this all mean? It points out that the annual number of fires and acreage burned varies widely over (in this case) any fifteen year span. Both are tied closely to the “drought cycle,” with a few large fires influencing the annual totals for some years; 2006 and 2012 being examples of this.



If your Washakie County cabin, or Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) rural home needs a WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN (WMP), contact your County Fire warden, or your Firesmart Coordinator, at firesmart@wytfs.com, (307) 333-1098, or 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604. The last page of Firesmart #27 has all of the information needed when requesting a WMP. Requests will be kept on file if funding and manpower is not available to complete your WMP in 2018.

2018 Bighorn Basin Firesmart Picnic

The June 16 Firesmart picnic at the Willow Park Group Area on the Bighorn National Forest was attended by approximately 50 people, mostly from the surrounding mountain cabins. Washakie County Fire Warden Chris Kocher spoke to the group about the current wildfire risk on the mountain and in the basin. Personnel from the Bighorn National Forest were in attendance, and answered cabin leaseholder questions. The USFS gave the OK to place the Firewise Communities sign on the West Tensleep Road just north of the bridge crossing Tensleep Creek near Deerhaven Lodge.

A FEW LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER AROUND YOUR HOME



Keep your alley weeds mowed. Besides cutting down letters from town government, it can protect your fence and buildings from fire.

Is the cinder or mulch strip around your foundation clear of vegetation?



Carried through September, the National Interagency Fire Center prediction is still that Wyoming is going to have a "normal" fire season, while some surrounding states are going to have above normal fire starts and intensity. Indications are that this will continue until fall.

WEBSITES FOR TRACKING WILDFIRE ACTIVITY

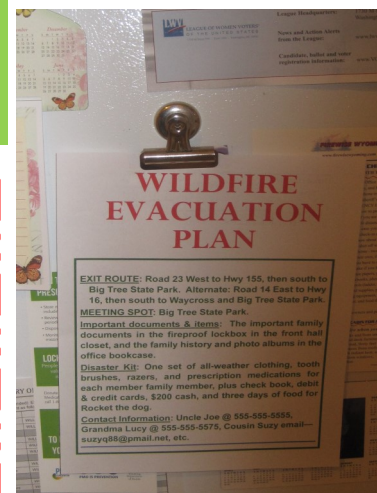
FOR FIRES IN WYOMING:

<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



Your Wildfire Evacuation Plan hanging on your refrigerator.