



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #29 — FALL 2018

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE EXPANSION 1990-2010

From 1990 to 2010, the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) in the United States grew by more than ten million homes! In Wyoming, only Washakie and Goshen counties experienced no noticeable WUI growth during that time period, while the number of WUI homes in Teton, Lincoln, and Sublette counties increased by more than 75%! Other counties increased, but much less than 75%.

What this means to the impacted WUI counties is that each new seasonal or year-round residence in the fire district:

- *Is another source of potential ignition for a wildfire.*
- *Stretches wildland firefighting equipment and manpower to a wider part of the county.*
- *Adds more structures that need to be protected with the limited Fire District resources.*

Indications are that this trend will continue.

FIRESMART OFFERS HIZ TREE PRUNING WITHIN WASHAKIE COUNTY

Home- and cabin-owners in Washakie County with approved Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP) can get some assistance in doing the tree pruning recommended in their WMP. Weather permitting, Washakie Firesmart will prune the trees in your Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) within 100 feet of your home/cabin, as in your WMP. All you need to do is submit a request to Washakie County Firesmart at firesmart@wytfs.com, **6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604**, or **(307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile)**. Your request should include your name and the location/physical address of your home or cabin.

Removing the cut limbs will be the responsibility of the cabin- or home-owner.

Page three of this newsletter illustrates the results of the offered pruning assistance in a forested setting. Page 4 is the general guidelines for any pruning you plan for this fall, which is the best time to do pruning the non-conifer trees and shrubs around your home or cabin. Conifers can be pruned at any time of year.

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>

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

 <p>© Colorado State University Cooperative Extension. 5/99. www.ext.colostate.edu</p>	<p>Another source of online and paper publications on forestry and making your home or cabin site defensible is the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension—extension.colostate.edu</p> <p>Searching their website for Wildfire & Forestry gets to several topics related to wildfire and being Firesmart. Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Wildfire-Defense Zones • Firewise Plant Materials • Forest Home Fire Safety <p>The base website also has numerous packets of information on managing weeds, wildlife, and general forestry.</p>
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You can now keep up on daily news and events with Bighorn Basin Firewise. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornbasin.firesmart>



Before, during, and after photos of pruning to reduce the chance of wildfire transitioning from a surface fire to the crowns of trees.



Wildfire will often burn as a “surface fire” consuming ground fuels such as grass and forbs and down and dead woody materials. A surface fire can be beneficial to forest ecology by reducing fuel loading and returning valuable nutrients to the soil. A surface fire can transition into the tree canopy by burning into “ladder fuels”, such as shrubs, small trees, and low tree branches. Reducing these ladder fuels in the Home Ignition Zone, or area 100 to 200 feet in radius around a structure, reduces the chance of crown fire.



Pruning is the practice of removing branches from the bottom of the crown of a tree. Pruning can help prevent a ground fire from climbing into the tree canopy. Pruning cuts should be made so that only the branch is removed and main stem is not damaged. If only the branch is cut when pruning, the stem tissue of the tree is less likely to become decayed, and the wound will seal more effectively.



The trees in the foreground of this photo show limbs pruned up to approximately 14 feet, or no more than 25% of the total crown.

Conifers may be pruned any time of year, but pruning during the dormant season may minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches. Hardwood trees and shrubs should be pruned in the dormant season to easily visualize the structure of the tree and to maximize wound closure in the growing season after pruning. This helps reduce the chance of transmitting disease, and discourages excessive sap flow from wounds. Recent wounds and the chemical scents they emit can actually attract insects that spread tree disease.

TREE PRUNING GUIDELINES

How to Prune a Tree

Pruning is the practice of removing branches from the bottom of the crown of a tree. Pruning can help prevent a ground fire from climbing into the tree canopy. Pruning cuts should be made so that only the branch is removed and main stem is not damaged. If only the branch is cut when pruning, the stem tissue of the tree is less likely to become decayed, and the wound will seal more effectively.

To find the proper place to cut a branch, look for the branch collar that grows from the stem tissue at the underside of the base of the branch (Fig. 1A). On the upper surface, there is usually a branch bark ridge that runs (more or less) parallel to the branch angle, along the stem of the tree. A proper pruning cut does not damage either the branch bark ridge or the branch collar.

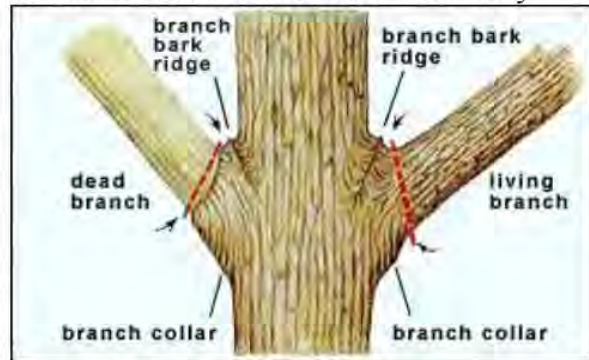


Figure 1A. Targeting the cut

A proper cut begins just outside the branch bark ridge and angles down away from the stem of the tree, avoiding injury to the branch collar (Fig. 2A). Make the cut as close as possible to the intersection of the stem and branch, but outside the branch bark ridge, so that stem tissue is not injured and the wound can seal in the shortest time possible. If the cut is too far from the stem, leaving a branch stub, the branch tissue usually dies and woundwood forms from the stem tissue. Wound closure is delayed because the woundwood must seal over the stub that was left.

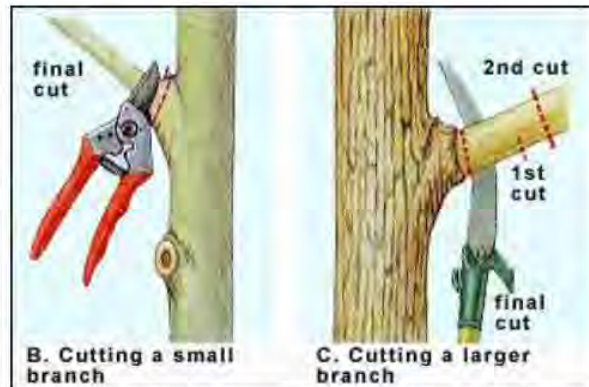
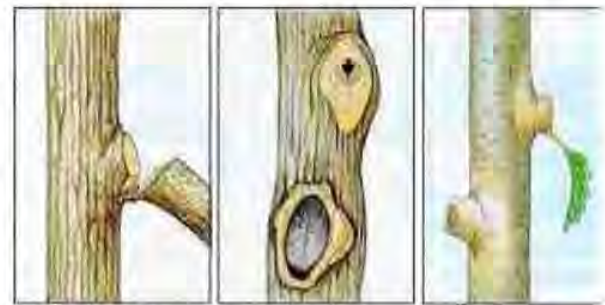


Figure 2A.

Figure 2B.

Improper pruning cuts cause unnecessary injury and bark ripping (Fig. 3A). Flush cuts injure stem tissues and can result in decay (Fig. 3B). Stub cuts delay wound closure and can provide entry to canker fungi that kill the cambium, delaying or preventing woundwood formation (Fig. 3C).



3A. Bark Ripping 3B. Flush Cut 3C. Stub Cut

When To Prune

Conifers may be pruned any time of year, but pruning during the dormant season may minimize sap and resin flow from cut branches. Hardwood trees and shrubs should be pruned in the dormant season to easily visualize the structure of the tree and to maximize wound closure in the growing season after pruning. This helps reduce the chance of transmitting disease, and discourages excessive sap flow from wounds. Recent wounds and the chemical scents they emit can actually attract insects that spread tree disease.

TREE PRUNING SAFETY TIPS: Wear standard personal safety clothing; hardhat, eye protection, gloves and long sleeves (and chaps if using a chain saw). If using a pole saw, keep it at least ten feet from powerlines, in all directions. Always keep children 50 feet away.

ARE YOU FINANCIALLY PREPARED FOR A WILDFIRE?

When recent wildfires wiped out entire neighborhoods in California (and probably other places) many homeowners found that when they started rebuilding their homes, that their insurance payments DID NOT COVER REPLACING THEIR HOMES! In many instances this shortage was in the *hundreds of thousand dollars!* This was primarily due to undervaluing their homes for insurance coverage that didn't reflect major increases in housing prices in their parts of California. A secondary cause was increases in the cost of building materials, and the number of available contractors being stretched by the number of homes burned. Here are recommendations for wildfire preparedness that needs to be done BEFORE a wildfire, flood, or other home-damaging event.



Tip 1: Conduct Annual Insurance Check Ups with your insurance company. Discuss your policy limits and coverage, and make sure your policy reflects the correct square footage and features in your home.

Tip 2: Know What Your Policy Covers. Understand if you have a Replacement Cost Policy that pays to replace all your items at current market price, or an Actual Cash Value policy that takes depreciation into account and pays less for aged items.

Tip 3: Update Your Policy to Cover Home Improvements. If you make home improvements, be sure to call your agent or company to update your coverage.

Tip 4: Maintain Insurance. If your home is paid off, be sure to maintain homeowner insurance. Without insurance, do you have the money to rebuild your home?

Tip 5: Get Renters Insurance if you are not a homeowner. Renters can lose everything in a fire and be left to start over.

Tip 6: Keep your home inventory updated. Recovery is easier if you have an accurate home inventory. Document the contents of your home before a fire or other emergency occurs. Here are some general ideas for your inventory.

A. Videotape or photograph each room of your home. Remember to document drawers and closets, and don't forget the garage and any detached storage buildings.

B. Describe your home's contents on videotape or photographs. Mention the price you paid, plus where and when you bought the item.

C. Note important or expensive items. Videotape or photograph all of your electronics, appliances, sports equipment, TVs, computers, tablets, etc.

D. Save receipts for major purchases. Store key documents in the cloud or a fireproof case.

E. Keep your inventory & photos outside your home, or in the cloud.

F. Some insurance agents have handy home inventory record books for doing a home inventory. Ask when you do your next annual insurance review.

G. If you do your inventory on your smart phone, be sure to make a copy of that information in a separate electronic storage device not in your home.



LEWIS TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT AND FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

The Lewis Project in lodgepole pine on the west slope of the Bighorns is a 26 acre fuels reduction and tree thinning project that uses a tractor-mounted “masticator” that results in a thinned tree stand, and turns the cut trees into scattered tree stems and a coarse mulch that nature will recycle. The process is relatively expensive, but eliminates the costs of piling and burning slash. This project is funded by a Bark Beetle Mitigation Grant from the State of Wyoming.



CANYON CREEK COUNTRY WORK DAY

The August 11 community work day at Canyon Creek Country was a busy one.

- ◇ Community residents started tree thinning and fuels reduction in one corner of the subdivision, with a group of folks cutting trees and hauling the cut trees to a pile for winter burning.
- ◇ Chris Kocher, Washakie Fire Warden, conducted a fire truck refresher training, and put interested community members through a fire shelter class.
- ◇ Washakie Firesmart was onsite preparing a Wildfire Mitigation Plan to implement fuelbreaks for the forest between the homesites, monitoring Firesmart work done to date, and evaluating nearby timbered acreage for future tree thinning and fuels reduction work.

Some of the residents have made good steps to implement the WMP for their homes, and the results are pictured on Page 7.



Fire shelter training



Community members thinning trees to make a fuelbreak around cabins, and hauling cut trees to a community burn pile.

WEST TENSLEEP & CANYON CREEK COUNTRY FIREWISE COMMUNITY SIGNAGE



Here are the Firewise Community signs recently installed on Forest Service Road 27 just north of Deer Haven for the West Tensleep Community, and on the main road into Canyon Creek Country.

Both communities are meeting the requirements for renewing their status as officially designated Firewise Communities.

All Firewise Communities are reminded that renewal applications are due by November 16.



WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION IN WASHAKIE COUNTY

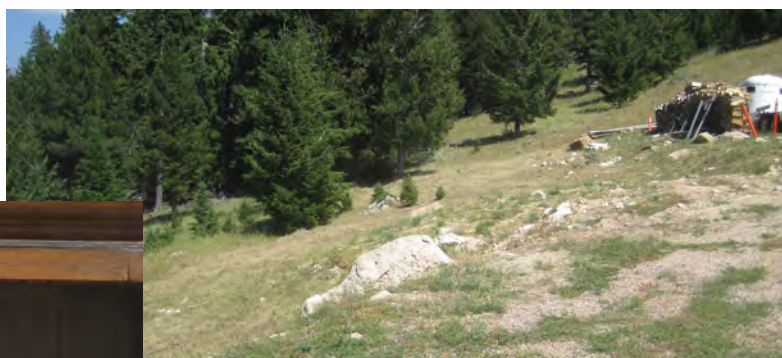
Progress has been made in application of the Firesmart program. Here are a few examples.



Lockable flame-resistant metal cabinet for storing flammables under the deck of a home or cabin. This is a handy and safe alternative to keeping these items inside the home, or outside where they could be ignited by wildfire embers.



Firewood and equipment moved outside of the Home Ignition Zone



Area within 100 feet of the home/cabin cleared of flammable material, and mowed during fire season.



An under-deck area kept free of flammable materials, and surfaced with gravel to protect the foundation from fire.



