



Spring 2011

# Firewise® Communities

## "The How-To Newsletter"

10 Years of Firewise Communities/USA®

*This quarterly provides articles and helpful hints on how to incorporate Firewise principles.*

### THE FIREWISE® COMMUNITY— LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

While just 25 years ago, there was no such thing as "Firewise®," today, the word has become a well-known term connoting wild-fire safety and practical practices for ensuring that safety. The word "Firewise" was coined in 1993 by a program task force of the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program, to describe the ideal attitude and behaviors being promoted to the public.

The efforts to create today's Firewise® Program actually date back further, to 1986, when the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program – a partnership among the USDA Forest Service and the US Department of the Interior, state forestry agencies, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), a national non-profit leader in life safety from fire and related hazards – began to explore how communities set in the wildland/urban interface could safely coexist with Mother Nature and her natural disaster known as wildfire.

In 1986, most people believed wildfire occurred only in California. When homes were destroyed, folks thought it was fate or bad luck that caused the disaster. Fortunately, that same year, the NFPA and its partners joined forces to start to dispel the myths surrounding wildfire and to help Americans become safer.

By 1996, a Firewise website was in place, providing global access to information about making homes and communities safer from wildfire. But it was in 1998 when groundbreaking research from the International Crown Fire Experiment in the Northwest Territories of Canada inspired new ways to reach community leaders and residents.

The 1998 findings were powerful. They showed that homeowners could take a series of simple steps to dramatically reduce the risk of home ignition and destruction. These steps – a combination of nonflammable roofing, attention to vulnerable areas such as windows, vents, and gutters, and selective removal of plants

and other flammable objects around the home within only about 100 feet – formed the basis of Firewise recommendations and teachings.

The Firewise® Communities Planning Workshops helped spread these new findings. Still popular today, these workshops were held in 30 locations between 1999 and 2003, and reached some 3,000 participants. Designed to spawn spinoffs, the workshops have reached at least ten times that number over subsequent years.

Workshop participants started to ask, "What do we do now?" They wanted a way to bring their newfound knowledge home and act on it. In response, NFPA and its partners developed a program called "Firewise Communities/USA®" and tested it from 2000-2002 in a dozen U.S. neighborhoods. This simple template combined physical fire science research and human behavior research to come up with a method that allowed residents to work with neighbors effectively to begin to reduce their wildfire risk.

In ten years' time, the program used fire science research to create a wide variety of informational materials to teach residents and firefighters how to be safer from wildfire. As a result, today, more than 650 communities in 41 states are now nationally recognized for using Firewise principles as participants in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. And many more people understand that brush, grass and forest fire can occur almost anywhere. They know that wildfire risk is a set of conditions that may exist in their own neighborhoods.

Best of all, nearly a million residents of Firewise communities are learning that there *IS* something they can do to keep their homes and surroundings safer. Read this issue of *How-To* to find out more about the newest Firewise information and the national program's plans for the future.



## THE FIREWISE® COMMUNITY — EXAMPLE

### GREATER EASTERN JEMEZ, NEW MEXICO

*The Greater Eastern Jemez Wildland/Urban Interface (GEJWUI) is located in the Jemez (pronounced HEM-ez) Mountains, in New Mexico. Comprised of six neighboring communities, the GEJWUI came together to address their shared concerns about the threat of wildfire to their small developments.*

In the year before the GEJWUI became one of the dozen pilot communities that helped launch the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program, the Cerro Grande Fire burned more than 300 homes in nearby Los Alamos to the ground. Many residents of the GEJWUI communities work in Los Alamos, at the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

“Los Alamos has a class 2 fire department; a fire department better trained and better equipped than any in all of New Mexico and probably better than any fire department in the central United States. You would have to go to New York or California to find a class 1 fire station,” noted Ann Cooke, one of the spark plugs who established the GEJWUI.

She added, “Those of us who lived in the forest of the Jemez knew that our property would burn when the next fire started southwest of our communities and homes, so we moved our keepsake possessions to the one place that was considered safe — Los Alamos. And Los Alamos had just burned, despite its world-class fire department and the National Laboratory. It had now been proven that safety from forest fire could not be found in Los Alamos.”



Each year, the U.S. Forest Service attempted to mitigate the explosive situation in the Santa Fe National Forest, imposing fire restrictions, restricting public use to campgrounds and, ultimately, closing the forest and locking it down. And each year, the more savvy residents looked around and concluded that they were in imminent danger of being burned to the ground by the next forest fire.

“When people in the Forest Service began talking about a new pilot program called Firewise® Communities, which proposed there was something that could be done at home where we lived in the forest, we took note,” said Cooke. “I don’t know that we all believed it could be done, but we knew we didn’t have anything to lose in trying.”

She continued, “At the time we formed as a Firewise Community, all the communities in the Eastern Jemez Corridor were very small and, in many cases, very loosely organized or not organized at all. I was approached as an active member of my community who was interested in these issues. I knew I couldn’t do it alone, but our homeowner’s association board had other important issues they were



*Community Example – Continued on page 3*



working on. Then it occurred to me that there must be people in neighboring communities who were interested, so I asked my friends in the Forest Service if they could identify who they were and, if they would give the program a try, then I would, too.”

When the communities throughout the GEJWUI began putting Firewise principles into practice, many homeowners wanted to do something about the fuels on their property. Initially unsure how to proceed, many raked pine needles or cut large swaths of trees close to their homes. In both instances, there was the problem of disposing of the material. Still, other residents chose not to start, because the task was too big, the work too demanding, and there was nowhere for the green waste to go. And there

Changing attitudes are the key to new behavior among community residents. Every homeowner who asks where they can bring their slash, or what they can do around their home, means one more person who supports land management agencies in their fuel reduction efforts in the larger forest. It also means improved safety from wildfire for that individual's property and those near them.



*Before and After*

were some who felt that the forest was as it should be and that they were being good stewards by keeping the thicket close to their homes.

“Over the years, being a Firewise Community, working with the Forest Service, state forestry, homeowner associations and interested individuals, we’ve been able to find solutions to disposing of slash from fuels reduction efforts,” noted Cooke. “We’ve been able to offer grants to help those ready to thin their property to state forestry standards and, each year, we’ve seen more people accept the fact that the forest is too thick.”

She added, “Best of all, through Firewise Communities, there has been a repository of information about what needs to be done to make our homes more secure from fire. People see that it’s not necessary to remove every tree on their property or to rake every pine needle. As a result, attitudes have been changing about the forest and our place in it.”

“I count the success one property and one homeowner at a time,” said Cooke. “I view it like vaccinations for the flu -- as more people clean up their own property, the less likely we all are to catching the infection of wildfire. The ultimate benefit will be that communities are not threatened by wildfire, ever. And the ultimate vindication will be, if the communities are threatened by fire, the fire burns through with negligible damage to structures and environment.”

Toward its ongoing goals to make its region safe from wildfire, this year, the GEJWUI aims to offer more workshops in different communities – providing information on chainsaw use, insect pests in our forest, and home assessments. “We are kind of excited about using the chainsaw workshop to provide firewood for some needy granny in our neighborhood,” said Cooke. “After all, Firewise Communities is a way to make things better in more than one way.”

**How-To** thanks Ann Cooke, president of the GEJWUI, for providing the information and photographs for this Community Example.

## How-To Chats with David Nuss



*In this issue of the How-To Newsletter, David Nuss, Wildland Fire Operations Division Manager, offers perspective on the next 10 years of Firewise®, including the three-year action plan for the NFPA's Wildland Fire Operations Division and what that means for Firewise® communities. Last spring, NFPA® brought together a group of professionals to serve on an advisory committee to help the newly created Wildland Fire Operations Division develop its action plan.*

**H-T:** *What are some of the activities NFPA will be doing that go beyond the traditional Firewise® program?*

**DN:** NFPA's Wildland Fire Operations Division's plan considers initiatives in three broad categories: codes and standards, advocacy and coalition building, and communication and information. These categories focus on the issues the advisory committee felt was important for the NFPA to look at, and aligned well with the association's current scope and capacity to make an impact. New activities include analyzing the scope and effectiveness of regulations, determining how to improve engagement with stakeholders who carry safety messages to homeowners and others, exploring possible international outreach and partnerships, and reviewing data and analysis around WUI fires.

**H-T:** *What are the activities that directly affect the Firewise® program?*

**DW:** Firewise has been, and will continue to be, the meat and potatoes of NFPA's wildland fire protection and education efforts. The Firewise program really makes up the bulk of the advocacy and coalition-building portion of the work plan, which assures continued focus and energy to move Firewise® forward over the next three years and beyond. Our focus will be on expanding the use and acceptance of the program, issuing targeted messaging to specific groups that can help make a difference, and developing an effective communications strategy that assures we are successful in reaching people with accurate, impactful, and timely information to assist them with their Firewise implementation efforts.

**H-T:** *As part of the three-year plan, NFPA aims to have 1,000 communities actively involved in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. What are some of the ways in which your staff will get more communities involved?*

**DW:** I first want to point out that reaching 1,000 communities is not only a part of our division work plan, it is an NFPA corporate goal. We have already done a few things toward reaching that goal and have some other exciting programs in the works for 2011. In mid-January we brought on Tova Thorpe, who will be assisting with direct contact of Firewise communities through the application and renewal processes. Tova also will assist with requests from community members and order and fulfillment

needs for Firewise materials. As we've upped the ante, we want to make sure we have the capacity to be responsive to the requests and needs of communities.

Second, mid-year, we plan to bring on six regional Firewise Advisors. Although I'd like to take the credit for this concept, I must confess that we borrowed it from NFPA's Public Education Division, which has been using this model very successfully for a few years now. The objective is to work collaboratively and cooperatively with our current state liaisons and to identify potential communities that might need additional assistance to get up and running as Firewise communities, or to take that next step to recognition. This will put people who are familiar with the process of getting communities engaged on the ground, ready to assist where needed. With the introduction of the Firewise Advisors, we are particularly excited about being able to provide our state liaisons with another pair of hands.

**H-T:** *What will Firewise® Advisors do to help increase community participation in the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program?*

**DW:** Working with our state liaisons and with communities already active in the program, we hope to identify more communities that might benefit from becoming Firewise, and assist with getting them familiar with the program and its implementation. We want to identify those communities that might be struggling with the organization of a program. And we want to assist with the process of renewal each year. This will build our capacity to provide more direct support when we get questions from existing or potential new communities. It provides us the ability to be out there in the communities more.

**H-T:** *What kinds of audiences do you want to target when creating new initiatives?*

**DW:** The focus of this program is to find new ways to promote fire-safe behaviors among homeowners. It might be a new way of messaging, or providing a different messenger. It's still very conceptual at this point, but some potential groups we might focus on are homebuilders, realtors, home inspectors, and regulatory professionals such as planners and elected officials. We also want to beef up our focus on programs for children of varying ages. At NFPA, we know how effective that can be both in the short- and long-term.

*Continued on bottom of page 6*

## Around the Firewise® Home



### Spring Maintenance Time – Regional Approaches

*No matter where you live, springtime means it's time to take stock of what the winter has wrought. Did heavy snows bring down lots of limbs and foliage? Are trees and shrubs healthy? What needs cutting back and trimming up? And where did debris sneak into that could fuel an airborne ember or raging wildfire? Inspecting your property, particularly in and around its home ignition zone, and then doing the appropriate clean up can go a long way toward protecting your home and its surroundings. Mike Davis, of Georgia, and Ron Wempen, of Wyoming, offer tips that have proven helpful to community members in their respective regions.*

### A Southern Perspective

Warmer days are greeting the residents of northern Georgia and those warmer temperatures are ushering in the spring wildfire season. North Georgia's primary wildland fire season occurs between early February and early May, and the mix of hardwood leaf litter and pine needles contribute to volatile fuels that can produce fast-moving wildfires.

During this time of year, leaf litter has accumulated over the fall and winter months and often can be seen in deep piles around homes and other structures. In the mountains of Georgia, where elevations can reach over 4,000 feet, steep slopes combined with low relative humidity, and high winds occurring after frontal passages equate to the potential for extreme fire behavior. Over the years, even small fires have caused extensive damage in Georgia. A recent example occurred when sparks from a burn barrel ignited the invasive plant known as kudzu, with the resulting fire doing significant damage to a vehicle and a home.

So, what can a homeowner do to prepare for the spring fire season in Georgia? Following are several Firewise tips that should help with homeowners' fire-safe preparations;

- Starting from the roof down, clean the leaf litter debris away from the roof and gutters. This is a vulnerable area of the home in the event of an ember shower from a wildfire.
- Next, tackle the porches and deck both on the surface *AND* underneath, where winter winds likely have pushed leafy debris beneath the home. This is another area where embers ignite structures.
- Inspect how the first three feet out from your home looks and ask yourself: Is this fuel-free zone clear of leaf litter and dead vegetation, such as plants and shrubs left over from last summer? Can I replace pine needle mulch with another type of mulch that is less flammable, such as shredded bark? Or can I use the technique of hardscaping, for example using small river rock, to lessen the threat of ignitions near the perimeter of my home?
- Next, move farther out in the Home Ignition Zone and

take note of what you see. Are there large amounts of leaf litter? This is a common occurrence in developments with a large number of seasonal residents, who are not at home to keep yards cleared. When homes are located on steep slopes, the work conducted in this zone – within 150 feet of your home — is critical to the survivability of the home during a wildfire, because flame lengths are often much higher as a fire runs upslope. Also be on the alert for ladder fuels on trees, such as hemlocks, or shrubs such as mountain laurel and rhododendron. These plants can produce short bursts of intense heat and significant ember showers when ignited at this time of year.

- Be aware of the other type of flammable materials that are in the home ignition zone as well. Is your winter firewood pile close to the home? If it is less than 30 feet from your home, it should be moved farther away, to ensure that it does not become an additional fuel source for a wildfire. Similar attention should be paid to lawn furniture, gas grills, and fuel cans, since these items could also become a source of ignition if they are exposed to embers.

Finally, remember that the strength of the Firewise program is often found in its simplicity. When you take the time to be Firewise, it's the small, simple steps that can help avoid disastrous results when a wildfire is knocking at your door.

### A Western Vantage Point

The days are growing longer by the minutes and warmer weather is finally beginning to return to the foothills and basins of western Wyoming. As residents of such pristine country, our thoughts rapidly escape to all of the fun activities we left behind last fall.

At the beginning of February, the local National Weather Service forecasted a welcome runoff/stream flow prediction for the upcoming summer months, during which the streams and rivers of the Wind River Basin will potentially exhibit good inflows based on the 100% or above snow pack figures released at that time.

*Continued on Page 6*



## How-To Chat With Dave Nuss

(Continued from page 4)

### H-T: Who do you see as important partners for NFPA in these efforts?

**DW:** I think our plan requires us to continue to work with and cooperate with our existing partners. We've had a great relationship with the International Association of Fire Chiefs and their Ready, Set, Go! Program. We've also worked with, and will continue to work with, the federal agencies involved in the national Cohesive Strategy and the concept of Fire Adapted Communities. We continue to get tremendous assistance and support from the National Association of State Foresters and the Institute for Business & Home Safety, as well. However, the plan also requires us to look for new partners and new ways to work with those we have in the past. For example, one of our work plan initiatives is to find a way we can better support the work of volunteer fire departments in their efforts to promote Firewise and other programs. We also will be looking at potential international partners to share ideas and best practices. We recently signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" with the Partners in Protection program in Canada and will be working with them to share concepts and resources for both our nations' benefits. I have always been and will continue to be a firm believer in partnering and collaborating where we can to leverage the best each agency or association has to offer.

## Firewise® State of Mind

**How-To** would like to chronicle how or why Firewise® is making a difference in your community. In 50 words or less, describe ways in which Firewise practices have served your community well, what you like best about Firewise, or a tip you think could be helpful to other Firewise communities. Each issue, we will select up to two "Firewise State of Mind" items to share with **How-To** readers. Submit your entry to:

Michele Steinberg at [msteinberg@nfpa.org](mailto:msteinberg@nfpa.org), or via MyFirewise at <http://network.firewise.org>



## Regional Approaches – Western Vantage Point

(Continued from page 5)

After several years of drought across the region, this is most welcome news. However, we must remember that lasting effects from the drought are still present, requiring continued diligence in our Firewise practices. Among the critical factors to our fire prevention efforts are the pine beetle infestations stemming from the dry years and the stresses that drought has placed on our forests. Many trees are dying or dead, and dead needles litter the forest floors.

With this in mind, spring cleaning around our structures is perhaps more important than ever. Following are just a few reminders of actions we can take this spring and summer to protect our homes and communities, to have an enjoyable year:

- Clean all needles, twigs, and leaves from the roof, eaves, and gutters. Then clear debris away from the foundation of your home, as well.
- Move and restack the firewood pile from last winter. It might have crept a little closer to home than it should have, and most likely is full of needles as well.
- Clean all vegetation and other accumulated debris out from under or around the deck. Cleaning the deck now means you'll be ready for your summer barbecues!
- Trim up all branches that have grown over since last season, making sure none are overhanging where they shouldn't be.
- Rake out all the smaller shrubs and bushes, making sure to clear any ground covers that may have caught trash during winter winds.
- Double check the house address numbers to make sure they are still visible.
- Mow up any leftover unkempt grass from last summer.
- Begin the routine of watering plants to green up the neighborhood and maintain consistency to keep plants green all year.

Remember, it takes just one afternoon and 10 minutes a week to put forth a good effort on maintaining all the hard work you have already done to be *Firewise*®. The benefits? You'll be able to enjoy your summer and be safe!

**How-To** thanks Mike Davis, assistant fire management officer for the USDA Forest Service Chattahoochee-Oconee NF, and Ron Wempen, Fremont County Firewise Coordinator, for providing the information for this *Firewise*® Around the Home feature.



## THE 5-PLUS CLUB —

*Communities who have been recognized with Firewise® status for over 5 years!*

Ten years ago, a dozen pilot communities helped launch *Firewise Communities/USA*®. Since then, *Firewise*® has grown to more than 650 sites! Since the last issue of “*How-To*,” 32 new communities achieved *Firewise*® recognition status (see listing on page 9), and more than 90% of participating communities have renewed their status, bringing the total number of *Firewise* communities to 675.

Of our longstanding community participants, we are thrilled to count nine who have had *Firewise* status for all 10 years of the program and 223 more sites that have been active in *Firewise* for five years or more.

Whether your community is new or an “old-timer,” being *Firewise* means greater awareness and safety for your home and community. The more *Firewise* communities there are, the more of you there are who will be preparing to prevent fire from reaching your homes and property.

Congratulations to all of our *Firewise* communities for making awareness of wildfire and the safety of your communities a top priority!

We congratulate the following communities for achieving our *Firewise 5-Plus Club* status in 2011 – meaning they’ve received recognition as a *Firewise* community for five or more years. Soon, we will be providing a year-end report that will include a listing of all active communities.

### 10 YEARS

Timber Ridge, AZ  
Genesee Foundation, CO  
Perry Park Municipal District, CO  
Wedgfield, FL  
Wilderness Ranch, ID  
Greater Eastern Jemez WUI Corridor, NM  
Emigration Canyon, UT  
Sundance, UT  
River Bluff Ranch, WA

### 9 YEARS

Holiday Island, AR  
Joplin, AR  
Norman, AR  
Ozark Country Estates, AR  
Story, AR  
Lakewood, FL  
Verandah, FL  
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, MN  
River Run Plantation, NC  
Town of St. James, NC  
Village of Ruidoso, NM  
Bear Creek Lakes, PA  
Penn Forest Streams, PA  
Mountain Plains I & II, SD  
Cumberland Cove, TN  
Tierra Linda Ranch, TX  
Trails of Lake LBJ, TX  
Wildcatter Ranch and Resort, TX  
Chuckanut Ridge POA, WA  
Lummi Island Scenic Estates, WA  
Story, WY  
Union Pass, WY

### 8 YEARS

Danville, AR  
Dutch Creek, AR  
Hartman, AR  
Hunt, AR  
Inspiration Point, AR  
Norphlet, AR  
Ozark, AR  
Perry, AR  
Plainview, AR  
Strickler, AR  
Wedington, AR  
Forest Highlands, AZ  
Summerhaven, AZ  
Windcliff, CO  
Cypress Knoll, FL  
Pioneer Plantation, FL  
RiverCamps on Crooked Creek, FL  
Randall Creek Farms, GA  
Kohala By The Sea, HI  
Johnny Creek Subdivision, ID  
Hardwick Township, NJ  
Hickory Run Land & Homeowners Association, PA  
Roaring Creek Forest Preserve, PA  
Savannah Lakes Village, SC  
Lead, SD  
Eagle Landing, TX  
Eagle's Wings Retreat Center, TX  
Meadow Mountain, TX  
Saddleridge, TX  
Solana Ranch, TX  
Spanish Oaks, TX  
Castle Valley, UT  
Alaska Place, WA

Cattle Point Estates, WA  
Mitchell Point, WA  
Roche Harbor, WA  
Sudden Valley, WA  
Crystal Lake Club, WI  
Coolfont Mountainside Association, WV

### 7 YEARS

Cherokee Village, AR  
Eureka Springs, AR  
Groom Creek, AZ  
Highland Pines, AZ  
Oracle, AZ  
Auburn Lake Trails, CA  
Beverly Hills, CA  
Forest Meadows, CA  
Talmadge, CA  
Cordillera, CO  
Caloosa, FL  
Muse, FL  
Placid Lakes, FL  
Kinderlou Forest Golf Club, GA  
Cave Bay, ID  
Poplar Springs, KY  
Bigfork, MT  
Elkhorn, MT  
Em Kayan Village, MT  
Carolina Lakes Property Owners Association, NC  
Taos Pines Ranch, NM  
Silver Star Subdivision 1&2, SD  
McDonald Observatory, TX  
Summer Mountain Ranch, TX  
River Ridge on the Shenandoah, VA  
Skyline Lakes, VA  
Mt. Dallas, WA

*Continued on page 8*

## 5-Plus Club *(Continued from page 7)*

Hartstene, WA  
Orcas Highlands, WA  
Shelter Bay, WA  
Tolt Triangle Fire Council, WA  
Homestead Park, WY

### 6 YEARS

Cohoe, AK  
Horseshoe Lake, AK  
Canterbury Estates, AL  
Appleton, AR  
Bald Knob, AR  
Diamondhead, AR  
Grassy Knob, AR  
Holley Mountain Airpark, AR  
Oak Grove, AR  
Unity-Frost Prairie, AR  
ARR-Babo Ranches, AZ  
Banning Creek Canyon, AZ  
East Verde Park, AZ  
Elk Ridge, AZ  
Flagstaff Ranch Golf Club, AZ  
Forest Trails, AZ  
Kohl's Tonto Creek Subdivision, Inc.  
Homeowners Association, AZ  
Patagonia, AZ  
Portal IV, AZ  
The Rim Golf Club Community, AZ  
Santa Fe Trail Ranch, CO  
Country Place of Martin County, FL  
Indian Hammock, FL  
The Resort on Carefree Boulevard, FL  
Woodland Estates, FL  
Wildcat Community, Inc., GA  
Conkling Park, ID  
University Park, KS  
Hickory Drive-Laurel Trace, KY  
Cathedral Mountain Ranch, MT  
Chain of Lakes, MT  
Montana City Fire District, MT  
North Fork Flathead, MT  
Bay Tree Lakes, NC  
Rich Mountain Acres, NC  
Lake Plymouth Community  
Association, NJ  
Hidden Lake, NM  
Ute Park, NM  
Cragmoor, NY  
Hemlock Farms, PA  
Keowee Key, SC

Cumberland Lakes in Cumberland  
County, TN  
Brooks Lake Area, TX  
Windsor Hills, TX  
Apple Mountain Lake, VA  
Apple Mountain Lake-South, VA  
High Knob, VA  
Lost Valley, VA  
Shenandoah Farms, VA  
Shenandoah Forest, VA  
Shenandoah Retreat, VA  
Shenandoah River Estates, VA  
Shenandoah Shores, VA  
Brown Island, WA  
Lake Cushman, WA  
Mullen Hill Terrace Mobile  
Home Park, WA  
Three Meadows, WA

### 5 YEARS

Antoine, AR  
Caddo Valley, AR  
Camp Albert Pike, AR  
Cottonwood, AR  
Hot Springs Village, AR  
Langley, AR  
Manning, AR  
Meeks Settlement, AR  
Mt. Holly, AR  
Newhope, AR  
Paris, AR  
Pleasant Plains, AR  
Chaparral Pines, AZ  
Continental, AZ  
Hidden Valley Ranch, AZ  
Lockett Ranches, AZ  
Starlight Pines Homeowners  
Association, AZ  
Big Bear Lake, CA  
Grizzly Flats, CA  
Volcanoville, CA  
Deer Creek Valley Ranchos, CO  
Roxborough Park, CO  
Woodmoor, CO  
Canterbury Lakes, FL  
Harbor Isles Manufactured Homes, FL  
Indian River Estates, FL  
Lazy River Mobile Home Village, FL  
Savanna Club of St. Lucie, FL  
South Gulf Cove, FL

SummerCamp, FL  
The Tree Tops at Ranger Point, FL  
The Village at Riverwalk, FL  
Avimor, ID  
Belfry, KY  
Exie, KY  
Grab, KY  
Greensburg, KY  
Haldeman Heights, KY  
Harlan, KY  
Hilltop Estates, KY  
Lake Lewman, KY  
Route 504 Fire Protection District, KY  
Turkey Hill Community, MA  
Potomac Vistas, MD  
Snow Lake Shores, MS  
Pisgah Forest Farms/Estates, NC  
The Currituck Club, NC  
Chocorua Ski & Beach Club  
Association, NH  
Shawnee Country Open Space  
Association, NJ  
Fox Hills, Sandia Park, NM  
Caldera Springs, OR  
Wild River Estates, OR  
Wynward Pointe, SC  
Buffalo Gap, TX  
Powelltown, TX  
The Horizon, TX  
Whitewater Springs, TX  
Aspen Hill Farms Section II, VA  
Benny's Beach, VA  
Blue Mountain, VA  
Bull Run Mountain Estate, VA  
Massanutten Forest, VA  
Mosby Mountain Estate, VA  
Twin Run Estates, VA  
Woodhaven Shores, VA  
Cape San Juan Commission, WA  
Colony Surf Club Inc., WA  
Hillview Terrace II, WA  
Hillview Terrace III, WA  
Misty Isle, WA  
Skagitwilde, WA  
South Cady Mountain, WA  
The North Forty, WA  
Westside Story, WA

Do you know of a community that is working towards Firewise Communities/USA® recognition status or would like to? Additional information on the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program, is available at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org). And remember, you can contact your state Firewise liaison for assistance; he or she is an excellent resource for guidance in formulating your plan and offering activities that can energize your community to take part. The Firewise web site includes this contact information as well.

Do you know of a state, region or community whose efforts deserve special recognition? Write Michele Steinberg at [msteinberg@nfpa.org](mailto:msteinberg@nfpa.org) and share your story.



## FIREWISE® BY THE NUMBERS

**How-To Newsletter** is pleased to welcome the following communities that have achieved 2010 Firewise Communities/USA® recognition since our last issue:

**Arkansas** – 94 East, Bella Vista, Harmon, Mammoth Spring, Manning, Pleasure Heights  
**California** – Cascadel Woods, Clear Creek, Lake Almanor West, Lake Forest, Northstar, Portola Valley Ranch, Tahoe Donner Association, Willow Creek  
**Colorado** – Ute Pass  
**Florida** – DeBary Golf & Country Club, Fiddlers Creek, Indianwalk, Veronawalk, Walden Woods  
**Idaho** – Central Foothills Neighborhood Association  
**Michigan** – Ausable River Estates (Michigan's FIRST Firewise Community!)  
**New Jersey** – Four Seasons at Mirage, Horizon Woods  
**North Carolina** – Pine Island, Rambling Ridge, Stonebridge  
**Oklahoma** – Davis  
**South Carolina** – Briarcliffe Acres  
**Utah** – Fruitland  
**Virginia** – Lower Valley  
**Washington** – Sallal Meadows, Three Rivers, Ponderosa Park – Klickitat County  
**Wisconsin** – Lake Camelot: Lower Northeast, Lower Northwest, Lower Southeast, Lower Southwest, Upper North, Upper South, Walden



### Keeping Up with Firewise® — Three Simple Steps to Renewing Your Recognition Status



Part of being a recognized Firewise Communities/USA® site is the ongoing work you and your Firewise Board do each year to reduce local fire risks and address the issues in your community wildfire hazard assessment. Each year, as you conduct these activities, the Firewise program staff wants to hear from you about your efforts. This keeps your recognition status active and helps us share your successes with others.

In working to make the yearly status renewal process as easy as possible, this February, we mailed 2011 renewal material to all active communities. To maintain your Firewise Communities/USA® recognition status, here's all you have to do:

- 1) Conduct your Firewise Day event anytime during 2011. This can be a community clean up day, a fair, or any public get-together where you take Firewise action or promote your local programs.
- 2) Document your time and effort in Firewise for 2011. Each year, your Firewise Board must demonstrate a level of effort equal to at least \$2 per capita in the community. You can track volunteer hours (worth \$20.85 as of March 2011), count grants you've received, or the value of in-kind services, hired help, or loaned equipment. If it's Firewise work, it counts.

- 3) Tell us about it! Fill out the Renewal Form we mailed to you (or use the Web Renewal or online forms) to tell us about your Firewise Day and your 2011 investments. You can update your contact information at the same time.

*Remember: Don't wait to renew your status.* If your event and activities are happening this spring or summer, make sure to jot down the details and send them in. While we'll accept renewals through the end of the year, you'll find that it's easier to avoid the rush and send in your updates when they happen.

If you need help figuring out your investment or planning your event, visit the Firewise website to see what others are doing, download sample tracking forms, and get help calculating volunteer hours. Or call your state liaison (see [www.firewise.org/usa](http://www.firewise.org/usa) for a contact list) or the Firewise office for assistance.

## THE FIREWISE® LEADER

### Visit to Michigan Offers Perspective on Mitigation Efforts

**I**n September, Firewise® staff members Michele Steinberg and Molly Mowery paid a visit to the communities of Lansing, Grayling and Tustin, in Michigan's Cadillac County. During their visit, Steinberg and Mowery met with Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) staff to learn how MSUE is delivering the Firewise message. They found that MSUE has made use of varied outreach approaches, including public service announcements at sporting events, local radio interviews, and publication of an updated wildfire-resistant landscape plant list for Michigan, as well as other media and education efforts.

Mowery also participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Kettunen Center, in Tustin that also was attended by local media. The ceremony unveiled a new Firewise demonstration garden at the center aimed at educating the public about Firewise landscaping concepts. The garden was designed and planted by MSUE staff and students.

During the trip, DNRE staff noted the challenge of educating homeowners who spend limited time at their cottages and cabins and don't realize the wildfire risks. Suggestions were discussed on how and where to do outreach for these groups, including increasing PSAs or similar messaging to reach southern urban regions of the state.

Staff also discussed how future growth and development in areas with high wildfire risk may continue to strain wildland firefighting resources. Since many lots are adjacent to



Steinberg and Mowery also met with representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE), MSUE, USFS, and South Branch township officials to tour and discuss the Meridian Fire that occurred near Grayling in late April, 2010. This included a visit to a home that had survived the fire where the group discussed mitigation approaches with the couple that owned the home. Following the tour, the group convened at the local township meeting center and discussed ways in which future wildfire home losses could be avoided.

The Firewise staff visited a rest area stop near Grayling, as well, where they saw a recently planted Firewise garden. Awareness of wildfire risk in the area was raised when a wildfire that occurred near the rest area last year jumped the I-75 highway. The garden surrounds the entire rest stop facility and includes signage that identifies Firewise plants and explains their significance. In the future, additional signage will be posted that further discusses wildfire mitigation in the area.



*Meridian fire structure loss (left) and discussion with a homeowner whose property survived (right).*

public forests, they could benefit from early intervention that locates development further away from flammable fuels. Suggestions were discussed on how to provide educational materials to building and planning departments.

Steinberg and Mowery also learned that preserving Kirtland Warbler habitat will continue to require that some areas remain inherently more wildfire-prone. Such instances include the "bird of fire" only nests located in jack pines less than six feet in height and the prescribed burns that are often used to clear future habitat.

*Continued on Page 12*

## THE FIREWISE® LEADER

### NFPA Announces 2010 Firewise Leadership Award Winners

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA®) Firewise Communities/USA® Program recently announced the 2010 Firewise Leadership Award winners, recognizing the most significant local, regional and state efforts in safeguarding people and communities from the threat of wildfire.

#### Join Firewise® in congratulating —

##### Local Awards

- Seth Sommers, volunteer firefighter, Hector Volunteer Fire Department and the Diamondhead Community, Arkansas
- Melissa Yunas of the Florida Division of Forestry

##### Regional Awards

- Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, California

##### State Awards

- David Yegge, fire fuels program coordinator of the Big Bear Lake Fire Protection District, California
- Florida Division of Forestry Mitigation Specialists
- Texas Forest Service Prevention and Mitigation Department

These recipients were selected based on the impact of their actions, with winners' achievements including an Arkansas college student organizing six Firewise Communities, local coalitions working across county lines to share wildfire best practices, a community that has made Firewise a way of life, and state agencies working to reduce wildfire risk with Firewise principles.

"Firewise congratulates and thanks the Leadership Award winners for their commitment to wildfire safety," said Michele Steinberg, manager of the NFPA Firewise Communities program. "Our seven honorees are excellent examples of the countless individuals and groups working to do their part to help save lives and reduce their communities' risk of wildfire damage."



### Arkansas Forestry Commission Recognizes Matt Simpson — Program Manager of the Year

**Matt Simpson**, Arkansas Firewise® Coordinator, was presented in December, 2010 with the Arkansas Forestry Commission's *Manager of the Year Award*. This yearly award recognizes employees who have made significant contributions to the AFC and communities. The Arkansas Firewise program continues to lead the nation in certified communities, finishing 2010 with 135 active (44 new and 91 renewals) communities.

Matt does an outstanding job in educating, motivating and encouraging homeowners and fire departments on wildfire safety statewide. Community wildfire plans are now present in 188 departments and agencies and three different national Firewise Leadership Awards have been earned during his tenure.



Matt presenting Firewise Communities/USA® signs to firefighter, Mayette Holland, Leola, Arkansas.



AFC Commissioner, Allen Beadel on left presenting award to Matt.



## THE FIREWISE® LEADER

### Be Resourceful When Planning Your Firewise® Day

With the arrival of spring each year, Firewise communities throughout the nation plan activities for bringing their community members together to learn about Firewise practices and promoting action that translates to Firewise efforts within your community. Whether hosting a fair at the local fire department, holding a neighborhood clean up or chipping day, or working with members of the state forestry or a local agency to provide services that support Firewise endeavors, there is another thing you should be mindful of when making your annual plans: Firewise has FREE materials that you can use to complement your activities!

For example, since 2001, the Firewise video “Wildfire! Preventing Home Ignitions,” has been providing helpful information to residents in communities that are putting Firewise principles into practice. A decade later, the video is still widely used. And the program has produced additional videos with helpful insights on implementing Firewise practices. To get a free DVD copy, visit the Firewise area of the NFPA online catalog at [www.nfpa.org/catalog](http://www.nfpa.org/catalog). NFPA also has a YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/nf-padotorg](http://www.youtube.com/nf-padotorg)) where you can view many wildfire safety videos online.

You can order checklists, books, and brochures from the catalog as well, with no charge and free domestic ground shipping in the U.S. These helpful materials can supplement any information you plan to provide to your community members about wildfire safety.

Using these resources can bolster your own efforts and activities, while saving time and energy where research and creating materials from scratch is concerned. Reviewing these materials may even help spark new ideas for the Firewise Day you’re planning for 2011.

As you make your plans, or move toward implementing them, ask yourself whether any of these resources could be useful to include. And ask any partners you may work with to put on your Firewise activity whether they have any resources that also might be helpful or informative to the success of your event.

*Editor’s Note: If you have a story you would like to share about your community’s efforts or have a unique activity that would benefit other Firewise communities, please submit a description of your activity to Michele Steinberg at [msteinberg@nfpa.org](mailto:msteinberg@nfpa.org).*

#### Michigan Visit (Continued from page 10)

Firewise staff were pleased to accept the first application from a Michigan community for Firewise Communities/USA recognition shortly after the visit. Ausable Estates has been working hard for several years on wildfire safety. Michigan now joins 40 other states with active communities in the program.



*Molley Mowery, in red, participates in ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Kettunen Center in Tustin, Michigan.*

*Plantings in Grayling, Michigan rest area.*

## FIREWISE® RESOURCES



### Firewise® Welcomes New Staff

NFPA's Wildland Fire Operations Division and Public Affairs Division have hired new staff who will spend most of their time on Firewise® activities.

**Tova Thorpe** joins the group as an Administrative Assistant. She'll be working on a variety of Division and Firewise activities including database management and customer service for the growing Firewise Communities/USA® national recognition program.

**LisaMarie Sinatra** serves as Associate Project Manager of Communications. She'll be involved in developing and

implementing a communications strategy for programs, activities and messages related to wildland fire. Some of LisaMarie's duties will include writing news releases and developing content for Firewise's website, newsletters, blog and other social media outlets.

Additionally, six new regional **Firewise Advisors** will soon begin to work collaboratively and cooperatively with our current state liaisons and to identify potential communities that might need additional assistance to get up and running as Firewise communities, or to take that next step to recognition. Look for more information about these contracted part-time positions soon.

### Coming Soon!

Developing a Firewise® community in an area that is prone to wildfire and making it safer can be done cost effectively with great benefits.

In May, look for our new DVD, "*Safer from the Start: Developing a Firewise® Community*." This DVD documents the journey of one developer that incorporated Firewise principles when he developed a new subdivision. It covers the agencies he worked with, changes he made to his original plan, types of construction and landscaping materials he used that ultimately created a safer environment for the potential homeowners, yet still offers homeowners great amenities at minimal cost. The DVD will be available for free from the NFPA



Firewise online catalog at [www.nfpa.org/catalog](http://www.nfpa.org/catalog).

### Engaging Fellow Firewise® Friends

As you make your own efforts and engage with other like-minded communities, you will find there are many ways to go about pursuing and renewing Firewise® status.



A useful way to share your successes and learn from those of others is to join **MyFirewise** – the social networking site for communities living in the wildland/urban interface.

If you're already on **Facebook**, check the Firewise fan page at [www.facebook.com/firewise](http://www.facebook.com/firewise) for more news & interaction. Microbloggers can follow Michele's and Molly's Firewise tweets at <http://twitter.com/firewise>, where you can keep abreast of all kinds of Firewise-related news and information.



Don't Miss the: **2011 Backyards & Beyond Wildland Fire Education Conference**

Sponsored by NFPA's Wildland Fire Operations Division

Join us in Denver, Colorado at NFPA's 2011 *Backyards & Beyond Wildland Fire Conference* October 27-29. *Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone* pre-conference workshop October 25-26.

It's the only conference that brings homeowners and residents together with fire officials, civic leaders, planners, community developers, insurance professionals and others to explore community safety from wildfire threats.

Don't miss this opportunity to renew contacts, share experiences or learn about Firewise®, a national program you can use to achieve sustainable planning outcomes in areas at risk from brush, grass and forest fires.

For more information go to: [www.nfpa.org/backyardsandbeyond](http://www.nfpa.org/backyardsandbeyond). See Page 14 for the Call for Presentation information.

*Save the Date!*

## FIREWISE® RESOURCES

### NFPA Announces Fall 2011 Home Ignition Zone Workshop Schedule



Wildfires are a problem in virtually every part of the US and there are many steps that can be taken to reduce losses. This 2-day seminar will help you to identify hazards and reduce risks in the home ignition zone before a wildfire starts. Research has lead to a greater understanding of how wildland fires ignite homes. By applying new knowledge of how wildland/urban interface fires occur and by using new approaches, future wildland/urban interface fire disasters can be significantly reduced.

This revised seminar incorporates NFPA 1141: *Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Suburban and Rural Areas* and NFPA 1144: *Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire*, as the basis for assessing hazards and recommending appropriate mitigation measures to reduce wildfire risks to homes, developments, communities, and subdivisions and to increase awareness

among residents and communities. To register or for more information go to <http://www.nfpa.org/Catalog/product.asp?pid=HIZ2> or call 1-800-344-3555 to speak to an NFPA Customer Service Representative.

#### Location

Ann Arbor, MI  
Hasbrouck, NJ  
Las Vegas, NV

#### Date

September 19 - 20  
October 10 - 11  
November 14 - 15

#### On-Site Workshops

Unable to attend one of our Open Registration work-shops? This course can be taught at your facility.

For more information call Linda Coyle at 617-984-7486; email [lcoyle@nfpa.org](mailto:lcoyle@nfpa.org).



### Backyards & Beyond Wildland Fire Conference Call for Presentations

NFPA's Wildland Fire Operations Division is sponsoring Backyards & Beyond, its wildland fire conference, this fall in Denver, Colorado. At this time, the conference

is accepting submissions for presentations. The deadline for these submissions is April 18, 2011.

Visit [www.nfpa.org/backyardsandbeyond](http://www.nfpa.org/backyardsandbeyond) to download the Call for Presentations form.

Consider attending this one-of-a-kind event to learn what other communities have done to be successful in adopting Firewise practices and to network with community members and leaders, as well as wildfire safety experts.

ence is accepting submissions for presentations. The deadline for these submissions is April 18, 2011.

If you feel your community has a compelling story to share, or you have data demonstrating the benefits of Firewise practices that could be useful to other communities, submit your presentation for consideration.

Editor: Karen Gardner  
Design: Cheryl Blake

Firewise Advisor:  
Michele Steinberg