



**FIREWISE USA<sup>®</sup>**  
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

## FireWise: 50 Ideas for ACTION

### Encourage Defensible Space Projects and Community Planning

- Widely advertise the fire mitigation contractor list
- Organize a slash and debris chipping and disposal day, week or month
- Consider exploring economies of scale projects in hiring the work to be done by professionals (e.g., 20 neighbors go into together to rent a chipper)
- Launch a subdivision work day to create defensible space in common areas or on high risk roads adjacent to forested lands
- Widely disburse information about appropriate slash and debris removal strategies:
- Publicize, in all ways possible, the Colorado State Forest Service defensible space fact sheet Number 06.302 (it is in your notebook for reference)
- Schedule a professional neighborhood consultation from the Colorado State Forest Service experts for a reasonable fee: (Kent Grant, CSFS at: [kent.grant@colostate.edu](mailto:kent.grant@colostate.edu)) or 247-5250 9) IMPORTANT: Inform your fire department of all controlled burns prior to burning
- Disburse information about your local landfill fees, policies and hours of operation, etc.
- Start the process of developing a detailed neighborhood or /subdivision-specific Community Wildfire Protection Plan with assistance from the Colorado State Forest Service, BLM/FS, FireWise and your local fire department
- Work with your HOA to educate and inform out-of-town property owners about wildfire risk
- Use the months of April and May to introduce yourself to your local fire chief and/or fire department personnel (the worst time to meet your local fire officials is during a wildfire)
- Team up with a service, youth or religious group(s) to help lower income, disabled or elderly residents create defensible space

- Hand out the FireWise Council five-part brochure series (pick up copies at the San Juan Public Lands Center – please call first). Also, they are on-line at:  
<http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org/FireWise/fireWiseBrochures.htm>

### **Link Your Neighbors to Experts**

- Invite firefighting professionals and/or county personnel to your neighborhood. Topics could be: fire season predictions, defensible space, wildfire preparedness, forest health, evacuation procedures, what to do with problematic properties, insects, tips for mitigation, low-water and fire-resistant plants, and more
- Ask your local fire district or department to host an open house.
- Host a kids' event with your fire department (this one gets the parents there!)
- Have a speaker from a local nursery discuss Xeriscape landscaping and fire-resistant plants
- Host an event at your own home providing information and showing videos on wildfire-related issues. Two recommend videos: After the Fire or First Line of Defense (free and available at the San Juan Public Lands Center or from your County Coordinator)
- If you live by United States Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management public lands, talk to USFS or BLM personnel about any controlled burns or fire mitigation projects that they might be doing, or encourage them to consider a mitigation project

### **General Awareness Raising**

- Put a public service announcement or article in your homeowner association's newsletter
- Advertise this trusted, credible, local web site: [www.southwestcoloradofires.org](http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org)
- Organize a tour of a defensible space property(ies)
- If your HOA budget allows, put up a banner during Fire Month in a visible location
- Hang a defensible space or fire-adapted community graphic and check list at your common mail box location (if covenants allow)
- Find a permanent and common place for the FireWise Council's five-part brochure series in your neighborhood (by mailboxes, a Club House or entry booth)
- Read your county's or community's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (or CWPP) at:  
<http://csfs.colostate.edu/pages/CommunityWildfireProtectionPlans.html>
- Prepare an evacuation plan working with your local fire district or department
- Talk to neighbors who might be elderly or disabled and discuss their evacuation plans and needs
- Handout copies of materials disbursed at FireWise Council meetings
- Invite a speaker to another group you belong to (e.g. service club, hobby group, religious gathering, etc.)

- Find a creative place and create a bulletin board of wildfire information
- Apply for a grant to do mitigation work in your neighborhood Evacuation and Response
- Work with the local American Red Cross to inform homeowners about disaster preparedness – widely disburse their information (e.g., evacuation kits). A great resource from the American Red Cross can be found at:  
[http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0\\_77\\_,00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_77_,00.html) 36)
- Do an inventory of your neighborhood street and home addressing signs. Encourage your neighbors to use reflective signs available (small fee) from the county. Find ways to make signs more visible to emergency responders
- Have fire department personnel visit your neighborhood to assess driveways, turnouts, turn-arounds, etc. for emergency access

### **Other Ideas**

- Use the spring months to make sure your own home is defensible
- Help recruit more Neighborhood Ambassadors
- Announce Wildfire Month activities at a meeting you attend
- Encourage your HOA and friends and neighbors to sign up for the FireWise Council email list and/or the [www.southwestcoloradofires.org](http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org) e-mail list
- Inform neighbors and your HOA about your subdivision's wildfire risk
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper touting the importance of wildfire protection and preparation
- Talk to your local elected officials about the importance of land use policies that promote wildfire safety and preparation
- Put up plastic signs on homes or in common areas: Wording choices are: 1) Do You Have Defensible Space? 2) Fire Prevention Begins at Home or 3) Be Fire Safe (note: e-mail Coordinator if you want to order a sign – it may take awhile to arrive)
- Host an event with emergency responders and managers to inform residents how to safely evacuate
- Make sure every new resident in your neighborhood who is building a house has FireWise booklets on fire-safe building materials and practices (available at the CSFS Web Site)
- Bring up the topic of wildfire at every HOA meeting and take literature to give out (“keep up the drum beat” theory)
- Support FireWise through our “Friends of FireWise” sponsorship program. Sponsorship levels available for individuals, families, HOAs and businesses.
- CELEBRATE small and big wins alike – neighbors like to see success and to be recognized!

[http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org/firessw/assets/File/50\\_IdeasforAction.pdf](http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org/firessw/assets/File/50_IdeasforAction.pdf)

- Rake and remove pine needles and dry leaves within a minimum of 3 to 5 feet of a home's foundation. As time permits – continue up to a 30-foot distance around the home. Dispose of collected debris in appropriate trash receptacles.
- Get out your measuring tape and see how close wood piles are located to the home. If closer than 30 feet, they need to be relocated and moved at least 30' away from structures.
- Sweep porches and decks clearing them of leaves and pine needles. Rake under decks, porches, sheds and play structures. Make sure you dispose of debris.
- Mow grasses to a height of four inches or less.
- On mature trees, use hand pruners and loppers to remove low-hanging tree branches up to a height of 4 feet from the ground (specific height depends on the type and size of tree).
- Collect downed tree limbs and broken branches and take them to a disposal site.
- Remove items stored under decks and porches and relocate it to a storage shed, garage, or basement. Gasoline cans and portable propane tanks should never be stored indoors and should be located away from the home.
- Distribute wildfire safety information to neighbors, or staff a table at a grocery or hardware store (other high-traffic locations work too) and distribute free Firewise and emergency preparedness materials that can be ordered from the catalog or from READY.gov.
- Join forces with neighbors and pool your resources to pay for a chipper service to remove slash.
- Visit the Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association site, and download free home inventory software. Work together as a family to videotape and take photos of your possessions – that way you'll have the insurance documentation needed to replace belongings.
- Develop and practice a home evacuation plan.
- Create a Family Communication Plan (available in both English and Spanish).
- Build or update a 72-hour kit.

- Contact your local Office of Emergency Management and ask if your jurisdiction requires individuals to register cell phones to receive emergency notifications on mobile devices.
- Can you see your home's address number from the street? If not, trim overgrown vegetation covering or blocking the numbers.
- Using social media or text messaging, pick a day and send hourly Firewise and Emergency Preparedness tips to your contacts and friends.
- Help an elderly relative or neighbor enter emergency numbers and the names of close relatives into their cell phones; and in large font post their phone number and street address above their landline so it can easily be seen when providing information to an emergency dispatcher.
- As a family – locate two alternate routes out of your neighborhood (besides the one normally used); and plan and practice an evacuation drill using those secondary routes.
- Teens that babysit outside the home need to schedule a conversation with the parents of the kids they're responsible for and learn their emergency plan and what they should do if a wildfire starts, or an evacuation issued, while in that leadership role.
- Work with neighbors to develop a phone tree that can be used to alert everyone about a fire or evacuation.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire screening no larger than 1/8" mesh to help keep embers out during a fire.
- During an evacuation pets have special needs too – build an emergency kit for your animals.
- Hold a garage sale and donate the proceeds to your local fire department's wildland fire team.

[http://www.snowymtndev.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=53:news-test-6&catid=8&Itemid=144](http://www.snowymtndev.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53:news-test-6&catid=8&Itemid=144)