

People Working Together

Relying on physical and social science research

Residents learn how their homes ignite based on physical principles, and thus how to modify their surroundings to reduce ignition risks. Social science principles help



program leaders and advocates use effective risk communication and behavior change techniques to ensure that individuals and organizations in a diverse society can receive important safety messages and act upon them.



The Home Ignition Zone

Decades of physical fire science research show that homes burn during wildfires due to the condition of the home and its surroundings within 100 to 200 feet. This "home ignition zone" can be modified by the resident to be ignition resistant. Each home ignition zone will be site specific.



People Working Together

Adopting Firewise Communities/USA



Helpful websites

NFPA: www.nfpa.org

Firewise Communities: www.firewise.org

Firewise Communities/USA: www.firewise.org/usa

Copyright © 2009 NFPA
Printed in the USA
FWC-100-09-PH

*Firewise is a program of the National Fire Protection Association.
This publication was produced in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.*

About the Program

NFPA's Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program encourages and acknowledges citizen action to reduce community wildfire risk. The program capitalizes on a community's spirit, its resolve, and its willingness to take responsibility for its wildfire ignition potential.

The program provides a flexible template for residents of homeowners associations or small towns to improve their wildfire readiness, and works as an organizing mechanism for initiating wildfire mitigation actions. Participation in Firewise Communities/USA is an ongoing process of community commitment to wildfire safety.

Participants in the program meet these criteria:

- Complete a community assessment
- Form a Firewise board or committee in order to accept the assessment, create an action plan, and monitor activity
- Hold a Firewise Day event
- Invest at least \$2/capita annually in community mitigation activities
- Complete and submit a program application



Firewise Success

During the pilot phase of the Firewise Communities/USA program, the Timber Ridge community substantially reduced the dangerous fuels within the subdivision. During a major wildfire that burned through the Prescott National Forest right up to the border of Timber Ridge, the subdivision was evacuated for three days. The city fire chief told the residents that theirs was the only subdivision threatened by the wildfire that he could protect, and it was because of the work they had done preparing for a wildfire event.

Behavior Change at the Community Level

Behavioral science research shows that once people understand there is something they can do to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire, they are more apt to act. Communities become engaged over time, as innovators and early adopters test and accept Firewise principles.

"For the past couple of decades, national programs like the ... Firewise Communities/USA, as well as state programs like California's Fire Safe Councils have helped counties, cities, and smaller entities like homeowners' associations develop plans to protect themselves from wildfire. Many communities across the country have taken advantage of the technical and organizational resources and networking opportunities these programs offer." (Source: Community Wildfire Protection Plans: Reducing Wildfire Hazards in the Wildland Urban Interface, Fire Science Digest, July 2009.)

Residents Can Find and Share Information

- Network of 47 state and tribal liaisons
- Firewise website includes
 - General information
 - Community Message Boards
 - Online Learning Center
- Workshops and training sessions available periodically
- Print publications and audiovisual material

What Residents Say about NFPA's Firewise Communities/USA®

Benefits of participation include:

- Formal process for mitigation
- Working with neighbors
- Information resources from Firewise
- Increased sense of community and safety

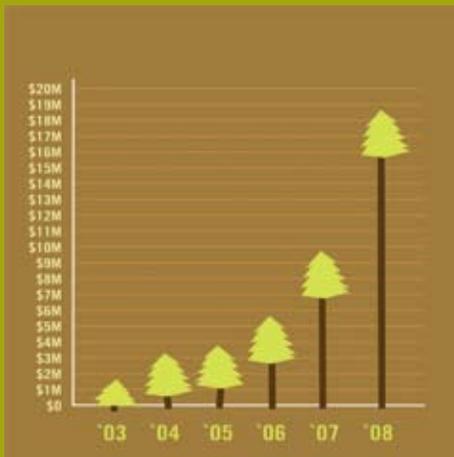
Motivating factors for continuing are:

- Advice from fire/forestry staff
- Prediction of potential fire risk
- Recent fire in the area

Funding Resources

Communities eligible for funds under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (<http://www.fs.fed.us/srs/Title-III-FAQs.shtml>) may use these resources for Firewise activities. Recognized Firewise Communities/USA sites may also be eligible for FEMA pre- and post-disaster hazard mitigation grants (<http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/pdm/>).

Community Investment Grows Every Year



Since 2002, the program has spread from 12 pilot sites to 38 states and 3 tribal reservations with more than 475 communities. Local investment in Firewise activity now exceeds \$42 million since 2003.