



NEWS. USA/COMMUNITIES. EVENTS

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FIREWISE Newsletter

MAKING SENSIBLE CHOICES IN THE INTERFACE

2009

TWO NEW RECOGNITION PROGRAM AWARDS FOR PROJECTS AND COMMUNITIES

Firewise Project Achievement Award


Throughout the year, Firewise staff hear about wonderful Firewise activities all over the U.S., whether they are demonstration projects at public sites, a Firewise Home of the Month, or an effort to conduct home-by-home risk assessments. Many of these projects are in places where the community has not yet been recognized as a Firewise Communities/USA site, or are undertaken by entities such as state parks or stand-alone facilities that simply aren't eligible for the recognition because they don't meet the criteria as a residential community. What if there were a way to capture all of that great information, tell more people about it, and encourage those folks doing the work to engage their colleagues and neighbors?

Well, now there is a way. The Firewise program is now issuing awards for all kinds of projects that use Firewise principles. We'll provide a sign indicating a Firewise Project and a letter with more information

See Project Award cont. on Page 2

Firewise Community Protection Certificate

Along with the great projects we hear about, Firewise staff also know that many jurisdictions are doing a tremendous job of addressing home safety through their Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). These plans are a requirement under the federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act legislation for communities adjacent to public land, and help prioritize funding for wildfire fuel reductions projects. They include a requirement to address structural ignitability, and many have chosen to use the Firewise model to help residents make their homes less vulnerable.

This fall, the Firewise program is providing a new Firewise Community Protection Certificate to the CWPP proponents who include Firewise principles in their plans and who document neighborhoods that achieve Firewise Communities/USA recognition. Look for more information about nominating a CWPPs for this special award by the end of 2009. 



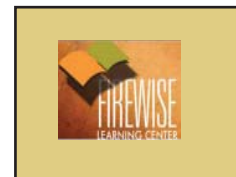
"Safer From The Start"
Guide to Firewise-Friendly
Development

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Firewise Communities/
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New Online Course:
Conducting Community
Assessments in the WUI

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HOME IGNITION ZONE TRAINING- TWO DAY WORKSHOPS OFFERED

Building upon previous Firewise Communities Planning Workshops, the NFPA is offering on site, two-day workshops on Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone.

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GUIDE FOR FIREWISE DEVELOPMENTS IS NOW AVAILABLE

“SAFER FROM THE START” ADDRESSES

DEVELOPMENT IN WILDFIRE-PRONE AREAS OF THE U.S.

Wildfires that damage homes and businesses are increasing in severity throughout the country, as growth patterns put more homes and neighborhoods in areas naturally prone to fire. While the NFPA’s Firewise Communities® program has long advocated action in existing communities to minimize fire hazards to homes, its new publication, ***Safer from the Start: A Guide to Firewise-Friendly Developments***, seeks to help create Firewise communities from the ground up.

The guide, now available from the Firewise Publications Catalog and downloadable from the “Resources for the Homeowner” page at www.firewise.org, provides developers of new

communities and residents of existing community associations a tool they can use to integrate Firewise concepts into design and development, as well as their covenants, conditions and restrictions and architectural rules.

According to Michele Steinberg with the Firewise program, the idea for the guide came about for two main reasons. “We were hearing from private developers wanting to know more about how to build Firewise communities and subdivisions - how to design new communities with wildfire in mind,” Steinberg said. “At the same time, some existing communities governed by associations were discovering that their master deeds or covenants were restricting the ability of residents to make important Firewise changes to their homes. In some fire-prone communities, residents are prohibited from changing a roof from flammable to nonflammable material, or from removing any vegetation, living or

dead, from around their properties.”

Numerous state, federal and private forestry and fire professionals, planners and researchers provided assistance in developing and reviewing the document, which draws on examples of good Firewise practices from around the country. The Community Associations Institute (CAI), a national membership organization, provided valuable information and guidance regarding community association governance.

“Building Firewise concepts into the community itself means that from day one, there are rules and expectations set on how to address fire safety issues within the

community,” said Andrew Fortin, CAI’s vice president of government and public affairs. “Benefits to this approach include a common understanding of wildfire

issues incorporated into the community structure, creation of a common framework of community behavior, and the ability to enforce safety standards.”

The guide, which references [National Fire Protection Association](http://www.nfpa.org) (NFPA) standards for fire protection infrastructure and fire-resistant construction and landscaping, is expected to be a useful tool for community associations throughout the U.S.

The guide is available from the [Firewise Catalog](http://www.firewise.org), click *Builders, Landscapers, Planner* and choose **Safer-From-the-Start!** Check out the many other Firewise items available throughout the catalog for the homeowner, community, fire fighter, and builder at www.firewise.org.



FIREWISE PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



about other Firewise resources. Those commended projects will be featured periodically in our How-To-Newsletter and on the Firewise website. We have a number of projects we know about that will begin receiving this award, and we want to hear from you about likely nominees. Look for information soon on the Firewise Home Page to nominate your favorite Firewise Project for this special award. Nominations will be accepted year-round and materials issued monthly.



FIREWISE BY THE NUMBERS

Firewise Communities/USA are spreading like, well, wildfire. The only difference is we don’t want to contain you. We want to sustain you and help you spread the neighboring communities, so in the event of a wildfire, more of you are prepared to prevent fire from reaching you, your homes, and property.

Since this summer we have 18 new communities who have received recognition status, for a total of 488 communities earning and renewing their Firewise status. Thirty-eight states throughout the U.S. now have Firewise Communities/USA recognition signs along their roadways.

Think your community should try for Firewise Communities/USA status? For additional information on the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program, visit www.firewise.org/usa. And remember, you can contact your state forest service 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.





NEW ONLINE COURSE: CONDUCTING COMMUNITY ASSESSMENTS IN THE WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE: BEGINNING THE FIREWISE PROCESS

Visit the [Firewise Learning Center](#) to enroll in the newest course from NFPA's Firewise Communities. *Conducting Community Assessments in the Wildland/Urban Interface: Beginning the Firewise Process* is targeted for fire departments and forestry professionals, but certainly homeowners in areas of risk can also learn what they can do to become safer from wildfire, using a tested community assessment methodology. The course, offered at no charge, is organized into eight lessons and covers the following topics:

1. Introduction to the WUI Fire Problem
2. Fire Basics
3. The Home Ignition Zone
4. Reducing Home Ignition Risks
5. Community Assessment Basics
6. Preparing the Assessment
7. Community Engagement and Firewise
8. Summary

The course has audio narration and includes video clips from other Firewise training modules. Learners can download the course

script to more easily follow along or review when away from the computer. Additional resources include the recommended community assessment template, making it easy for those conducting assessments to produce a report to provide to residents. Links to case studies, articles, and relevant Firewise products and modules are also part of the course.



"The course is well-designed and thought out" says Victor Hill, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist for the Caloosahatchee Forestry Center in Fort Myers, FL. Hill goes on to say, "It's presented in an easy-to-follow format with enough repetition of key concepts to make absorbing the material quite simple.

The added videos and scenarios really bring home the points and illustrate the dangers of fires in the wildland-urban interface." "This course should be required training for anyone who conducts wildfire mitigation on behalf of a Forestry agency or fire department."

[Firewise Learning Center](#) courses cover a range of wildfire safety topics for audiences including homeowners, forestry professionals, and firefighters. Course design and length varies, but all courses are structured to allow you to learn at your own pace. Once you have enrolled in a course, you can return to the Firewise Learning Center at any time to continue a course you have started or take a new course. In addition to the Conducting a Community Assessment in the Wildland Urban Interface, you can also learn about Firewise Landscaping, and Firefighter Safety. 

Comments from folks who have taken the new online course "Conducting Community Assessments in the Wildland/Urban Interface: Beginning the Firewise Process" from the Firewise Learning Center available at www.firewise.org

- ***"I just completed the Conducting Community Assessment in the Wildland/Urban Interface online course. (As) an experienced wildland/WUI fire manager I found the course very useful, with good background, which could be particularly useful to firefighters with WUI as a non-primary mission but also to interested homeowners. (The course) had a great balance of just enough depth to be educational without losing a motivated non-practitioner. Great work as always by Jack Cohen as well."* (Texas)**
- ***"I thought the course was an excellent introduction for those just beginning the assessment process. We Mitigation types down in our state have been using a risk assessment checklist for several years using a point system to arrive at a final risk rating. I encourage members of local Firewise communities who are commencing the certification process, to take your course as a vehicle to improve communications and understanding when asked to review their risk assessment for their community with them. I believe this is one of your best courses with regards to a more comprehensive understanding of wildfire risks to the home."* (Florida)**
- ***"I have forwarded the information about this class to all of my local Fire Safe Councils. Very good material! I like the template and all the resources gathered into one spot. Good review, nice and simple but gets to the point and has nice visuals that help give ideas for how to photo document assessments. I have a better idea of how the assessment process can fit in with our community wildfire protection planning (CWPP) process."* (California)**
- ***"Very well done course (with) good content presented at a reasonable pace. This is a good solid explanation of the Firewise Program. Even without a fire background it is readily understandable and not overwhelming."* (New York)**

Join the others who have trained with this new program and tell us what you think! Comments are always welcome at <http://www.firewise.org/contact.htm>.

ASSESSING WILDFIRE HAZARDS IN THE HOME IGNITION ZONE - TWO DAY WORKSHOP OFFERED

Since 1896, NFPA has been the world's foremost authority on fire safety standards, education, and training. As developer and publisher of more than 320 consensus codes, standards, guides, and recommend practices (including NFPA 1142 *Standards for Water Supplies for Suburban and Rural Fire Fighting* and 1144 *Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire*). As a leader in public fire safety education and firefighter safety, NFPA is uniquely qualified to conduct the *Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone* workshop for members of your organization.

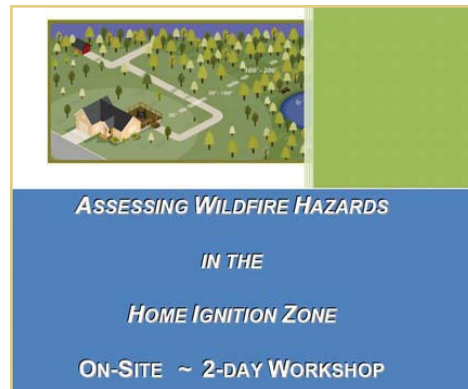
NFPA's Firewise Communities program has involved federal, state, and local fire agencies to reach homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in an effort to protect people, property and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire — before it starts. The program serves a resource for agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments, homeowners, residents, and communities working toward a common goal: to reduce loss of lives, property, and resources to wildfire by building and maintaining homes and communities in a manner compatible with the natural surroundings.

To stimulate an initial understanding of the issues of the wildland/urban interface, NFPA created the *Firewise Communities Planning Workshop*. Over four-year period, over 30 workshops nationwide attracted more than 3,500 participants and an estimated 5,000 others through state and locally sponsored workshops using the national materials and following national recommendations. Participants came from over 2,000 communities in 47 states and territories, Canada, and Australia.

Managed by the NFPA, the *Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone* workshops continue to focus on high risk hazards and situations in interface areas. The workshops offered in cooperation with sponsoring organizations like state forestry offices and the IAFC provide a systematic approach in property assessment and mitigation.

About the Home Ignition Zone Workshop

Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone was developed 1) to provide basic knowledge of wildland fire behavior, 2) to increase understanding and competency in the wildland/urban interface fire mitigation, 3) to assist wildfire mitigation and prevention professionals regardless of organizational affiliation, in assessing risks to individual homes in wildland, forested, or grassland areas, and 4) to encourage and prepare residents and homeowner associations to reduce ignition hazard through further participation in the Firewise



Communities/USA® Recognition Program.

It is the intent of the course that, once completed, participants may be able to confidently assess hazards and recommend appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the hazards on a house-by-house approach within an interface neighborhood, subdivision, or residential development. Individuals who learn the basic information about individual Home Ignition Zone assessment will be better prepared to conduct community assessments.

Learn from the experts

Much of the technical content of this course is based directly on wildfire home ignition research conducted by Jack Cohen, Research Scientist from the USDA Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station in Missoula, Montana. His research on the causes and context of Wildland/Urban Interface fire disasters has created a body of knowledge for application by others. His conception of the Home Ignition Zone and its application has guided the Firewise Communities efforts nationally, regionally, and

locally. Every On-Site Workshop is taught by two wildland fire specialists or nationally recognized experts. Many of them have been engaged in conducting assessments, helped write the course materials, been an integral part of the Firewise program or encouraged residents to take part in the Firewise Communities/USA program.

You can train more people for less

On-Site Workshops are an effective way to bring your group up to speed on home ignition zone assessments and prepare them to conduct community assessments. And, they are cost effective too. Firewise will train 25 people for a base fee and an additional per person cost up to a total of 50 people. Price includes all materials and instruction. Just think of the travel and lodging costs you will save!

Scheduling an On-Site Workshop

Our On-Site Workshops offer you the flexibility to choose the time and place that's most convenient for you — at your facility or at a nearby hotel or conference center. It's up to you.

Arranging an On-Site Workshop

Just one call will begin the process of holding a Home Ignition Zone Workshop for your group, at your convenience, at your location. The Firewise program will provide the expert instructors, student materials and the electronic workshop presentation. Firewise staff will help you plan your program and provide logistical support prior to the workshop. You furnish the location, schedule the workshop room, provide an LCD projector, AV screen, provide support to check in students, take daily attendance, distribute student materials,* and make arrangements for coffee break and or lunch service if you plan to provide for your group.

*If you wish Firewise to provide a workshop administrator to assist with on-site seminar logistics, there will be an additional charge. (*Please inquire about charge.*)

To start the process call either Cheryl Blake, Firewise Publications Manager @ 617-984-7444; email: cblake@nfpa.org; fax: 617-984-7056 or call Linda Coyle, Firewise Administrator @ 617-984-7486; email: lcoyle@nfpa.org. 