



Branching Out

A Forest Stewardship e-newsletter

Fall 2007

Brought to you by:



I willingly confess to so great a partiality for trees as tempts me to respect a man in exact proportion to his respect for them.
– James Russell Lowell

About Fire Ready

Fire Ready provides wildfire protection and forestry services. Our mission is to connect property owners and communities to their landscapes—by providing services that enhance a forest's aesthetics, health and safety.

To all our customers, and our friends in the industry, thank you for your support. You will find more information on these topics on our website. Visit www.fireready.com and click on Resources, then click on the Fall 2007 e-newsletter.

Fire Risk Doesn't Fall In Autumn

Mitigation Work Before Winter

There's still time to get around to those fire mitigation-related projects around your home, and there may be even more reason to do it in the fall. The days are cooler, but the trees are not yet dormant. And, with dry grasses and frequent winds, autumn can be a nasty part of the fire season. Taking action now can prevent small fires from flaring up into catastrophic, damaging events.

Finally, because bug activity is slowing down by now, doing thinning and clearing work during the fall also reduces the possibility of attracting beetles to certain species of stressed or cut trees.

If you have done wildfire mitigation or forest health restoration work on your forested property, keep up on it!

Defensible space requires annual maintenance:

- ⇒ Trees and shrubs are properly thinned and pruned in the defensible space. Slash is disposed of or chipped.
- ⇒ Roof and gutters are clear of debris.
- ⇒ Vegetation near home is pruned back.
- ⇒ Grass and weeds are mowed to low height.
- ⇒ Outdoor water supply is available, complete with a hose and nozzle that can reach all parts of the house.
- ⇒ Firewood is stacked uphill or on a contour away from the home.
- ⇒ Fire hydrants, cisterns, and propane tanks are clear of vegetation.
- ⇒ The driveway is wide enough. The clearance of trees and branches is adequate for fire and emergency equipment.
- ⇒ Road signs and name and house numbers are posted and easily visible.



Saving The Garden From The Gods

Forest Thinning Work At A Famous Colorado Park

People all over Colorado and all over the world are familiar with the fins of red sandstone that erupt from the pinyon-juniper and oak forest to pierce the Colorado sky in Colorado Springs. The City of Colorado Springs is now taking steps to protect the Garden of the Gods' unique environment from catastrophic wildfire.

Fire Ready has been selected by the City to take the lead role in thinning and removing dead oaks in this treasured park. Andrew Notbohm, owner of Fire Ready of Colorado Springs, recently spoke to the media there, saying, "Our long-term goal is to reduce the fire hazard and improve this landscape." The same is true of the many smaller, private properties that Fire Ready crews treat all season long.

Even if grant and matching funds have been spent for this year, fall is the time when many departments and districts are planning and seeking funds for next year. Be proactive when it comes to finding out what your department or district has planned. Fire Ready can help you, and in the long run your entire neighborhood or community could benefit.



Forest Stewardship

Taking Responsibility

Most of us who live in forested areas feel that it's a privilege to live there, and that privilege carries with it a responsibility to be good forest stewards. That means doing everything we can to ensure that our forest is healthy.

Forest thinning, spraying for beetles and other insects, and clearing brush can increase your forest's health, and decrease your risk from wildfire. Creating defensible space improves your home's chances of survival if a wildfire event does occur. By taking these actions, you'll be helping to preserve these beautiful forested areas for years and generations to come.

Pine Beetles and Fire Danger

Don't Be Distracted By Conflicting Opinions

Experts seem to agree that sometime in the next five to ten years, 80 percent to 90 percent of mature lodge pole pines in northern Colorado and southern Wyoming will be dead. There is less agreement about what the wildfire implications of that are, or if there's a solution at the state forest level.

In a recent media tour of devastated lodge pole forests in Summit County, however, Barry Smith, Eagle County emergency services director, offered a more practical view of the problem, in terms of human safety. He was quoted in an August 2 Rocky Mountain News article:

"Most people think I'm here to protect every house. But we can't put a fire truck in every driveway," Smith said. "It's up to homeowners to protect their property by creating defensible space."

At a stop in the Wildernest subdivision, Smith expressed concern about some of the homes in the area, pine beetles or not. "Most of these homes I would write off," said Smith, who spent decades as a fire fighting professional. "I wouldn't be willing to risk a firefighter's life here," he said.

Fire Ready believes that homeowners have a unique opportunity to be active forest stewards—to proactively promote forest health while reducing the risk of loss from wildfire. It's Fire Ready's mission to help homeowners do this—so let us know how we can help you.

Got Bugs?

A Quick Guide to Southwest Colorado Beetles

<u>Beetle</u>	<u>Common Host Trees</u>	<u>Gallery Description</u>
Western Pine Beetle	Ponderosa Pine	Spaghetti-like Horizontal winding Spaced apart
Spruce Beetle	Engelmann Spruce and Blue Spruce	Vertical egg gallery Horizontal larval gallery
Fir Engraver Beetle	White Fir and Subalpine Fir	Horizontal egg gallery Vertical larval galleries
Pinyon Ips	Pinyon Pine	Tuning fork-like X-shaped Dense pattern
Pine Engraver	Ponderosa Pine	Tuning fork-like X-shaped Dense pattern
Spruce Ips	Engelmann Spruce and Blue Spruce	Tuning fork-like X-shaped

To request a complete copy of Focus On Forests – Insects and Disease, send your mailing address to info@fireready.com. For more information on forest pests, visit <http://csfs.colostate.edu/> or <http://www.southwestcoloradofires.org/pinon.htm>

Neighbor to Neighbor

Ambassador Program in Southwest Colorado

The FireWise Council of Southwest Colorado has created an Ambassador program that trains volunteers who live in high-risk subdivisions to provide wildland fire and mitigation information to neighbors. Ambassadors set up presentations and Open Houses for fire departments and foresters in the neighborhood, coordinate with residents to develop an Evacuation Plan in case of wildfire, and conduct outreach on a neighbor-to-neighbor basis.

Coordinator Marsha Porter-Norton has overseen the program from development in 2004, to over 8,700 direct contacts by 57 trained volunteers. As she puts it, “we can evaluate the program’s effectiveness by increased mitigation work and more awareness... residents are proactively reducing wildfire risks.” For more information on the program, to attend trainings, or to find out how you can replicate in your area, email porternorton@animas.net or visit www.southwestcoloradofires.org.



The Firewise Council of Southwest Colorado seeks to keep homes, properties and lives from being damaged by wildfire. It does so through neighborhood-based, citizen-driven approaches including overseeing a Neighborhood Ambassador program, completing public education projects, encouraging and facilitating homeowners to undertake mitigation, and changing the public will so as to improve community safety.

The Firewise Council is grassroots and collaboratively involves a wide variety of partners such as homeowner associations, subdivisions, high risk roads and neighborhoods; government agencies, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions, private businesses, and additional networks.

For more information on what you can do to promote a healthy forest and reduce the risk of loss to wildfire, contact:

Fire Ready: www.fireready.com

Firewise: www.firewise.org

Colorado State Forest Service: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

Your local fire department

Business Opportunity

Fire Ready is expanding—and we're seeking hardworking, capable people with a background in natural resources and an entrepreneurial spirit to own and operate their own Fire Ready office location. For information on owning and operating a Fire Ready office in Colorado, or elsewhere in the West, visit www.fireready.com and click on Business Opportunities or email marketing@fireready.com.