



Branching Out

A Forest Stewardship e-newsletter

Spring 2007

Brought to you by:



Welcome

Fire Ready provides wildfire protection and forestry services. Our mission is connecting property owners and communities to their landscapes through services that enhance their forest's aesthetics, health and safety.

We would like to say THANK YOU to all of our customers, and our many valuable contacts in the industry. We could not be where we are today without your loyalty, your expertise and your business.

You will find more information on these topics on our website. Visit www.fireready.com, and click on Resources to find an expanded version of this Spring 2007 e-newsletter.

Frequently Asked Questions

About Defensible Space

What is defensible space?

Defensible space is the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce wildfire threat and provide for an area for firefighters to defend the house.

How does vegetation relate to wildfire risk?

Fire requires three components to burn - oxygen, fuel, and ignition. Vegetation is potential wildfire fuel. A wildfire can be slowed, the lengths of flames shortened, and the amount of heat reduced by reducing fuels.

The fire department will protect my house, so why bother with defensible space?

During a major wildfire event, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every house. In these instances, firefighters mark "do not save" homes by placing a black cone in the driveway. The most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner. It's the action taken by the owner before a wildfire occurs that is most critical.

Does defensible space require a lot of bare ground in my landscape?

No. While bare ground is certainly effective in reducing the wildfire threat, it is unnecessary and unacceptable due to appearance and soil erosion. Creating a wildfire resistant landscape around your home maintains visual integrity and privacy screening.

How big is an effective defensible space?

Defensible space varies by slope, vegetation, and construction materials of building.

Does defensible space make a difference?

Yes. Investigations indicate that homes with an effective defensible space are much more likely to survive a wildfire. Furthermore, homes with both an effective defensible space and a nonflammable roof (composition shingles, tile, metal, etc) are many times more likely to survive a wildfire than those without defensible space and flammable roofs (wood shakes or wood shingles).

Does having defensible space guarantee my house will survive a wildfire?

No. Under extreme conditions, almost any house can burn. But having a defensible space will significantly improve the odds of your home surviving a wildfire. (90%?)

Why don't all residents in the wildland urban interface create defensible space?

The specific reasons for not creating a defensible space are varied . . . including "it won't happen to me." Others think the costs of time, money, and effort outweighs the benefits. Some fail to implement defensible space practices simply because of lack of knowledge or misconceptions. I can buy fire insurance. Why bother? - danger to firefighters



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e-estimates

Virtual Estimates for Off-site Owners

Fire Ready has developed an “e-estimate” program to be able to offer work estimates to reduce wildfire hazards to property and home-owners that live out of the area. This virtual estimate tool includes photographs, work descriptions, and estimated costs. This tool is ideal for homeowner associations to get compliance with non-resident property owners, and a way for property managers to communicate hazards and solutions. Fire Ready will only conduct e-estimates with the prior approval of a property owner. For more information, or to schedule an e-estimate, contact your local Fire Ready office.

Grass Seed Mixes

Fire-Resistive Combinations

A number of seed mixes have been developed for the Colorado growing season—using native and nonnative species. During much of the year, grasses ignite easily and burn rapidly, tall grasses can carry fire to your house. The “firewise” grass seed mixes are lower growing, need less maintenance, the seed is readily available, and relatively inexpensive. For more information, review the Colorado State Forest Service publication no. 6.306., found online at www.ext.colostate.edu or at your local CSFS office.

- ⇒ Plant firewise grass species to reduce the risk of wildfire damage.
- ⇒ Firewise grass mixes may contain only native species or a combination of native and nonnative species.
- ⇒ Sow half the seed north to south and the other half east to west.
- ⇒ Rake the seed into the soil.
- ⇒ Mulch erosion-prone areas.
- ⇒ If possible, water often and lightly.
- ⇒ Maintain the area properly.



Opportunities to Learn

Springtime Fire Awareness Events throughout Colorado

Warm spring weather throughout the state of Colorado has prompted an increase in educational and outreach efforts, to get the word out to forested home- and property-owners with proactive steps to reduce wildfire hazards. The FireWise Council of Southwest Colorado is hosting “April is Wildfire Month” and has an online calendar posted at www.southwestcoloradofires.org More information on the Colorado Mitigation and Wildfire Conference can be found at www.wildfirecolorado.org Attend local Home and Garden shows, which showcase mitigation businesses. Find out more about the Pikes Peak Wildfire Prevention Partners at www.ppwpp.org

Fire Ready provides educational programs for neighborhoods and clubs. Contact your local office to schedule a presentation. To request complimentary copies of our education dvd, “Are You Fire Ready?”, please send an email to info@fireready.com



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Edwards Featured in National Magazine

NASE Runs Fire Ready Article

The January/February 2007 issue of National Association for the Self-Employed (NASE) featured Rich and Gloria Edwards, of the Fire Ready of Glenwood Springs office.

NASE: You're co-owners of the business, but who's really the boss?

Rich: To a great extent—the customer! We work with every client to provide a wildfire-safe landscape that retains natural beauty. This takes a lot of communication and respect for what the customer wants and needs.

NASE: What part of your work gives you the most personal satisfaction?

Rich: When a customer comes out at the end of the day and says we've been the most professional crew they've ever had and they love how their forest looks, it makes it all worth it. One woman said, "It looks like my very own enchanted forest!"

For more information on this organization, visit www.nase.org



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Fire Ready is electronically offering this e-newsletter four times a year, to provide complimentary forest stewardship information to our valuable clients and contacts. To subscribe, please send an email to info@fireready.com. To unsubscribe, please send an email with "unsubscribe" in the subject line to info@fireready.com

For more information, contact:

Fire Ready: www.fireready.com

Firewise: www.firewise.org

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

Your local fire department

Your local Fire Council