Wildland Fires in Arizona:

How You Can Protect Yourself and Your Family

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Role of Fire: Historically

- Fire has played a role in the earth's ecosystems for over 4.5 billion years.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

- The area where structures and other human development intermingles with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

- From a wildfire perspective, the zone where combustible vegetation meets combustible structures.

- Set of conditions that exist in <u>any</u> community.

Firewise Program

- The Arizona Firewise Communities program was initiated in 2000, and provides a means for community action and involvement.

Supporters and Cooperators:

➢ Arizona State Land Department

  ➢ Bureau of Indian Affairs

   ➢ Bureau of Land Management

    ➢ National Park Service

     ➢ Univ. of AZ – Cooperative Extension

      ➢ USDA Forest Service

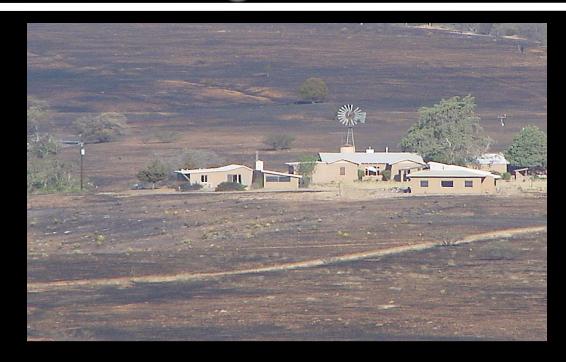   ➢ US Fish and Wildlife Service

Firewise Program Goal:
Proactive Management

Homes should be designed, built, and maintained to withstand a wildfire _WITHOUT_ the intervention of the fire department.

Firewise Principles

1. You live in a fire-prone environment and your home and property is at risk.
2. The risk of wildfire in your neighborhood is real.
3. Protecting your home from wildfires is YOUR responsibility.
4. Defensible or survivable space around your home is the first defense against wildfire damage, but is no guarantee.
5. Properly protecting your home will protect Arizona's forests and landscapes.

Firewise Suggestions

✓Select fire-resistant plants for your yard.

✓Maintain yard vegetation
- Remove excess dead material
- Rake pine needles
- Mow grass regularly

✓Trim woody vegetation near structures to a height of 10-feet, especially near chimneys.

✓Build your home with fire-resistant materials.

Firewise Suggestions

✓Use inorganic materials to build patios and decks and as mulch.

✓Clean debris from your yard, roof, and gutter to eliminate an ignition source for embers.

✓Move propane tanks away from your home and other structures, and trim nearby vegetation.

✓Ensure the road signs and addresses are clearly visible on fire-resistant materials.

Firewise Suggestions

- ✓ Develop a fire escape plan (include pets!), and practice it with your family.
- ✓ Know what personal items you need and how you will pack when evacuation becomes necessary.
  - Papers
  - Prescriptions
  - Personal Items (minimum 2-5 days worth)

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

✓Enables a community to plan how it will reduce the risk of wildfire.

✓The plan identifies strategic sites and methods for fuel reduction projects

✓Benefits
- National Fire Plan funding priority for projects identified in a CWPP.
- USFS and BLM can expedite the implementation of fuel treatments, identified in a CWPP, through alternative environmental compliance

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

✓ You need to know what vegetation exists and how it burns

✓ Prioritized fuel reduction
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments
- Recommend types and methods of treatment

✓ Treatment of structural ignitability
- Reduce ignitability of structures

Role play Exercise

The USFS has called a meeting!

Proposed Action

- Update and <u>expand</u> current fire management program

- Restore fire across the Catalina and Rincon mountains

- Treatments would include large-scale prescribed burns, mechanical thinning and wildland fire use (where appropriate)

Role play Exercise

Three groups

- US Forest Service (USFS)

- Summerhaven residents

- Environmental group

Issues and Concerns

Homeowners

- Smoke
- Risk of fires getting away
- Cost to become Firewise
- Potential loss of "wilderness" feeling

NEWS

- Watershed health
- Logging/grazing

USFS

- WUI
- Uncertain budgets
- Mission mandates
- Litigation