



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

## ISSUE #23 — SPRING 2017

### FIREWISE 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Within Washakie County, Firewise had several 2016 activities:

- ◆ Three issues of the “Bighorn Basin Firesmart” newsletter were distributed to almost 1,000 readers per issue.
- ◆ Three workshop educational events occurred; including two picnics for mountain cabin-owners.
- ◆ A five-acre fuelbreak was completed in Canyon Creek Country.
- ◆ An additional 1.5 acres of fuelbreak was finished on Bluff Canal.
- ◆ Two Firewise Communities received recertification.
- ◆ Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP) were prepared for three cabins.
- ◆ An Operating Group was energized for revising the Washakie County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). (See Page 5)

### FIREWISE 2017 PLANS

Funding has been obtained to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plans for both Washakie and Big Horn counties. These plans are being rewritten by Technical Forestry Services, LLC, with the assistance of Operating Groups within each county. This is anticipated to be complete by June of this year.

Page 8 announces the planned mountain cabin-owner’s picnic. Other Firewise activities, WMP preparation, and additional fuel treatments, will depend on County Firewise budgets and the success of forest fuels treatment grant requests that have been submitted.

Knowledgeable wildfire mitigation foresters will be conducting structure ignitability assessments in Washakie County throughout the summer. If you see them around your home or cabin, and would like more information about making your structure more defensible in the event of wildfire, feel free to ask them for more information.

This and all future Bighorn Basin Firesmart issues will go only to E-mail recipients. All issues will also be available on Facebook, at: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornbasin.firewise>

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) prediction is that they don’t expect any unusual wildfire activity during Wyoming’s 2017 fire season.

**SAD NEWS**—Paul Murdock, Greybull Fire Chief, died in February, soon after doing ice abatement work along the river in Greybull. He was 53.

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## THE BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE COORDINATORS ARE:

**Big Horn County:** The County Fire Warden is Brent Godfrey (307) 568-2324.

**Washakie County:** Chris Kocher, Fire Warden, [ckocher@worlandfire.org](mailto:ckocher@worlandfire.org), P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379. The Firewise Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, [cweydeveld@wytfs.com](mailto:cweydeveld@wytfs.com), Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604, or (307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile).

**Hot Springs County:** Contact Dion Robbins, County Fire Warden, at (307) 431-2767, or [hscdwarden@rtconnect.com](mailto:hscdwarden@rtconnect.com).

**Park County :** Bernie Spanogle, Firewise Coordinator, can be reached at [pcfirerwise@gmail.com](mailto:pcfirerwise@gmail.com). or at 307-250-9387. The County Fire Warden is Russ Wenke, [rwenke@parkcounty.us](mailto:rwenke@parkcounty.us), 1131 11th Street, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or (307) 527-8551.

**The basin Firewise website :** [parkcountyfirewise.com](http://parkcountyfirewise.com) When you get there, surf the MENU to see what articles, photos, and short video clips are there. Check it out.

If you have general or specific questions about Firewise, two good online sources of answers are: [www.firewisewyoming.com](http://www.firewisewyoming.com) and [www.livingwithfire.com](http://www.livingwithfire.com).

Do you have topics you would like included in future newsletters? Please submit your suggestions and comments to [firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:firewise@wytfs.com), or by mail to G. Wynn, 824 Country Club, Casper, Wyoming 82609.

Thanks for providing this newsletter go to the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the Washakie County Fire Warden, and the U.S. Forest Service. They provide the funding.

This newsletter is provided as a service of your county's Firewise Coordinator. If you choose not to receive future issues, please respond to [firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:firewise@wytfs.com), or to Big Horn/Washakie Firewise (6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604) by mail.



The **Ready, Set, Go!** Program is a tool firefighters use to teach those who live in high-risk areas how to best prepare themselves and their properties for wildfire.

The program emphasizes three tenets:

**Ready** - *Prepare your home and family for wildfire ahead of time.*

**Set** - *Stay aware of conditions, and know what's going on around you.*

**Go** - *Be prepared to evacuate early, if needed, or ordered by fire managers.*

This publication is one of many at [ReadyForWildfire.org](http://ReadyForWildfire.org)

## SPRING CLEANING FOR FIREWISE

This year when you are doing spring cleaning around your home, cabin, and outbuildings, look a little further than the Page 7 Firewise Checklist.

**Over the winter, did your vehicle fleet migrate to near and under your structures?** And that includes the thirty-year-old family heirloom Skidoo that hasn't turned a crank since the President's name was Clinton. If you "need" to keep it, drag it to a corner outside of the 30-foot zone from all buildings.

**Did you get tired of trudging through the snow to the firewood pile, and move it to the porch or carport?** Putting it all back outside the 30-foot zone from buildings before fire season is good.

**Are you a hoarder?** Many of us have stashes of "things" we have saved because we "might need them someday." While this is not quite the same as the folks you have heard about who have filled their homes from floor to ceiling with newspapers, cardboard boxes of trash, or anything else, it is a form of hoarding. Look at your various collections of used tires, auto parts, and building materials, and think about whether they fill a realistic future need. If they do, take steps to remove at least the flammable items to outside the 30-foot zone of all buildings, or inside of a closed Firewise structure.

**Are your outbuildings still weather-tight?** Broken windows and gaps around the doors are all potential ember traps during fire season.

**Do you have trees that need pruning to meet Firewise recommendations?** Pruning live limbs shouldn't be done until fall, but this is a good time to evaluate your situation. Removal of dead limbs can be done anytime, and when you are energized for spring is a good time.

**Do you have a need for a burn pile this year?** The next page has some tips and reminders about piling and burning.

And this is just a short list. The Bighorn Basin Firesmart newsletters always have **"LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER"** that you should be looking for when wandering your homesite with a rake and wheelbarrow getting ready for summer.

Planning to use pesticides as part of your spring cleanup? Take note of this picture. A hat or head bandana, should also be worn, and a breathing mask would be nice. And, ALL of your clothing goes in the washing machine immediately after you are done, untouched by anyone else.



## ***Tips for Effective Piling For Burning***

For communities without a yard debris pick-up, or designated drop-off location for limbs and yard debris, a simple and cost effective method of disposing of woody debris in rural areas is piling and burning. A key to efficient burning lies in how well the piles are constructed. Following are some suggestions on how to pile slash to assure a good hot fire that makes burning easy, quick, and with less smoke

**When to burn:** The best time to burn piles is during winter when there is a snow cover that is highly likely to stay on the ground for an extended period. So locate piles so they can be found easily in the snow. **Since you are probably not going to ignite your piles until fall, covering piles, or placement of cardboard sheets within the pile, can keep that corner drier to aid in ignition.**

**Location:** Provide plenty of space between piles and structures and/or trees that you do not want damaged. This includes vertical spacing. In open areas piles can be constructed to much larger dimensions where trees or structures will not be threatened.

**Pile Construction:** This is essential for efficient burning, ease of lighting, and production of significantly less smoke than piles that burn slow. Assure a good burn by following these suggestions:

- ◇ **Make your piles compact.** Compact piles shed moisture and provide the ability for heat to build up to assure the whole pile is likely to be consumed. Loosely stacked piles allow snow and moisture to penetrate the pile, and will not hold sufficient heat for ignition and sustained fuel consumption.
- ◇ **Stack piles high.** Three feet is a minimum.—five is better. It is better to combine piles to make them five to six feet in diameter, and four to five feet high, rather than to have a lot of small 2 to 3' piles.
- ◇ **Trim long stems and limbs** that protrude from the pile, adding the material to the top of the pile.

**Compactness remains the key characteristic for effectiveness.**

**Pile contents:** Burn piles should only include woody yard debris and other burnables. Piles **should not include** domestic garbage that could include hazardous materials or dangerous items such as aerosol cans.

### **WASHAKIE COUNTY BURNING GUIDELINES**

**Provided by Chris Kocher, Washakie County Fire Warden**

- 1) **TIME OF BURNING: 8:00 AM TO 6:00 PM ONLY, NO FIRE SHALL BE BURNING PRIOR TO 8:00 AM OR AFTER 6:00 PM.**
- 2) **WIND SPEED AND DIRECTIONS: NO FIRE SHALL BE STARTED IF THE WIND IS OVER 20 MPH, AND WIND SHOULD BE BLOWING AWAY FROM POPULATED AREAS WHEN BURN BEGINS.**
- 3) **NOTIFY THE COUNTY DISPATCH CENTER (347-2242) BEFORE YOU START BURNING.**
- 4) **SOMEONE SHALL WATCH THE FIRE AT ALL TIMES TO MAKE SURE IT IS UNDER CONTROL.**
- 5) **HAVE A VEHICLE WITH WATER AND SPRAYER CAPABILITY AT THE FIRE.**
- 6) **DISK AROUND DANGER AREAS WHERE FIRE MAY SPREAD SUCH AS FUEL TANKS, HAYSTACKS, ETC., PRIOR TO BURNING.**

***THESE BURNING GUIDELINES ARE APPROPRIATE FOR ANY BURNING IN THE BIGHORN BASIN. ANYONE CONSIDERING BURNING SHOULD NOTIFY THEIR INDIVIDUAL COUNTY FIRE WARDEN. PHONE NUMBERS FOR ALL FIRE WARDENS ARE ON PAGE TWO .***

## *What is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)?*

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a planning document developed by a community in an area at-risk from wildfire. The Community Wildfire Protection Planning process is the collaboration between communities and government agencies interested in reducing wildfire risk to people, firefighters, homes, and infrastructure.

A valid CWPP has three minimum requirements:

**First**, the plan must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.

**Second**, the plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, as well as recommending methods of treatments that will protect at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.

**Third**, the plan must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 requires that three decision-makers mutually agree to the final contents of the CWPP. The three are 1) the applicable local government (i.e. counties or cities), 2) the local fire department and fire district(s), and 3) the State entity responsible for forest management (Wyoming State Forestry Division). These three are directed to consult with and involve local representatives of the federal land managers such as the US Forest Service and BLM, and other interested parties or persons in the development of the CWPP.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act decrees that communities, which have a CWPP in place, will be a priority for receiving hazardous fuels reduction funding administered by the US Forest Service and BLM. In Wyoming, most counties have developed CWPPs to cover the entire county area. Many of these documents were developed in 2004 to 2008, while some are more recent. Several county governments and local fire agencies are currently completing revisions and updates to their original county-wide CWPPs in Wyoming. Revisions are not a requirement, but is a proactive approach to long term wildland fire management planning. CWPPs are “living” documents and updated for a number reasons that include:

1. Significant changes to the wildland urban interface situation in a county or community, such as a major wildfire, changes to zoning and planning regulations, priority areas have changed, or a new or growing development in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) has been identified.
2. Each CWPP addresses priority areas and specific potential hazardous fuels reduction projects, usually on private lands. Once a significant amount of those projects have been completed, it is a good practice to document the completed actions in a CWPP revision or update. Also, to meet the requirements for federal hazardous fuels reduction projects, a CWPP should be updated to address new project areas before seeking additional funding.
3. As time goes on, specific goals and objectives in the original CWPP are often either completed or change without documentation. Revisions and updates give cooperators a chance to address new and changing or outdated goals and objects. Also continual updates then allow CWPPs to be more specific on strategies and tactics to implement prevention, awareness, and preparedness programs in a specific County.

Wyoming State Forestry Division (WSFD) district and state-wide staff help each entity working towards completing new CWPPs and revisions as necessary. WSFD provides assistance in contributing and evaluating WUI priority areas and projects, mapping/spatial analysis, and approval of plan minimum requirements and contents.

If you have any questions or concerns on Community Wildfire Protection Plans, or the WSFD Hazardous Fuels Mitigation Program, please contact [cweydeveld@wytfs.com](mailto:cweydeveld@wytfs.com), (307) 333-1098, or Washakie County Firewise, 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604.

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS (SAF) IS COMING TO CASPER IN MAY



## 2017 CO/WY SAF Annual Meeting

*“So, what do we do now, that we have huge amounts of bug kill, more acres of stand replacement fire and a new Federal administration”*

**Please Join Us – May 11-13**

**Parkway Plaza**

**Casper, Wyoming**

**RegOnline is now open and has agendas and details:**

<https://www.regonline.com/cowysaf2017>

**Lodging:** Reservations are being accepted at the Parkway Plaza in Casper: **Group Code: forest17 Colorado/Wyoming Society of American Foresters**” of \$89 per night plus tax. **Deadline for discount room price is Wednesday April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

Parkway Plaza Casper (307) 235-1777 or 1-800-270-7829  
1 Parkway Plaza Drive  
Casper, WY 82601

<https://bookings.ihotelier.com/Parkway-Plaza-Hotel/bookings.jsp?hotelId=3534>

**General Information:** Please join us on the evening of May 11<sup>th</sup> as we kick off the meeting with a social at the Parkway Plaza following either the Wyoming Timber Industry meeting or SAF Executive Committee Meeting. Our main program on May 12<sup>th</sup> will help answer, what tools and help does the forester need to manage the land? The conference will feature notable professionals presenting on current issues, research, ecology and economy. The conference will close out with a field trip to Casper Mountain on Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup>.

Please bring your cash or checks for the Forester’s Fund Raffle.

Questions, contact us:

Paul Morency, 307-851-9052

Bill Yemma, 720-484-3202

## STEVE SCHAROSCH HONORED BY “PROJECT LEARNING TREE”

Steve Scharosch, a forester who does the complex computer modeling and programs for Bighorn Basin Firewise projects, was recently presented with a national Outstanding Educator award by Project Learning Tree. He was one of only five recognized for “volunteering countless hours to lead workshops to teach others how to incorporate environmental education into their curriculum and programming.”



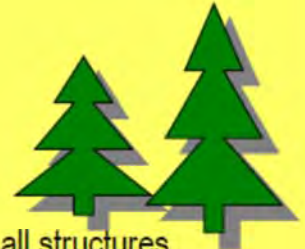
Project Learning Tree is a national program of the American Forest Foundation, that uses trees and forests as windows on the world to increase K-12 students understanding of the environment and actions they can take to conserve it.

## ANNUAL PRE-FIRE-SEASON FIREWISE WALK-AROUND CHECKLIST

*Once a home or cabin has been made Firewise, the owner can't sit back and enjoy it. Vegetation will continue to grow, and human activities will change the situation on an irregular basis.*

### BEFORE FIRE SEASON:

- \_\_\_ Remove leaves and forest litter from gutters, roofs, and within 3 feet of all structures
- \_\_\_ Clean chimney screens
- \_\_\_ Cut new small trees and shrubs within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Remove dead trees within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Check your address placard or sign for clear visibility
- \_\_\_ Move your conveniently-placed winter woodpile to more than 30 feet from all structures
- \_\_\_ Check/replace the batteries in your emergency alert radio
- \_\_\_ Inspect your powerline for branches within four feet in all directions
- \_\_\_ Check window screens for a tight fit, and patch any holes
- \_\_\_ Remove leaf and needles between the boards of decks, and under any decks and porches.
- \_\_\_ Check walls and foundation for fresh bird and animal holes, and patch appropriately
- \_\_\_ Pick up winter-broken limbs within the 100-foot zone
- \_\_\_ Remove flammable materials from decks and porches, except when actually in use
- \_\_\_ Review your evacuation plan, and share it with the family and guests
- \_\_\_ If you are interested in keeping current on wildfire activity in Wyoming or the country, check out the websites mentioned below, and move them to your computer's "Favorites" list.



### BEFORE GRASS CURES IN MID-SUMMER:

- \_\_\_ Mow grassy areas around all structures
- \_\_\_ Mow grass within and adjacent to driveways



**EVERYTHING ON THIS PAGE IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE REPEATED EVERY YEAR.**

## WEBSITES FOR TRACKING WILDFIRE ACTIVITY

**FOR FIRES IN WYOMING:**

**<http://lands.state.wy.us>**

**Then click on - Forestry : Wildland Fire Management and then Fire Information**

**FIRE ACTIVITY FOR THE ENTIRE COUNTRY:**

**[www.inciweb.org](http://www.inciweb.org)**



If your Washakie County cabin, or Wildland Urban Interface rural home needs a WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN, contact Washakie County Firewise, at (307) 333-1098, [Firewise@wytfs.com](mailto:Firewise@wytfs.com), or 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604. Requests will be kept on file, if funding as not available for this task in 2017.



**The South Bighorn Mountain Cabin Firewise Picnic is June 17th, 2017, at the Willow Park Group Area mapped below. Activities start at 11 A.M. To get the head count right for the caterer, please RSVP [tcrt@bresnan.net](mailto:tcrt@bresnan.net) , or phone 307-587-6122, if you plan on attending.**



## MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER



Weathered unsealed siding with cracks and crevices that will trap embers, and allow entry of flames.

You can now keep up on daily news and events with Bighorn Basin Firewise. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/bighornbasin.firewise>

