

COMMUNITIES

FIRESWISE

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BIGHOR

ISSUE #9—FALL 2012

THE 2012 WILDFIRE SEASON TO DATE

A few items culled from the wildfire websites, and the national media:

- A rough estimate is that more than a thousand homes have already been destroyed by wildfire in the western U.S.
- ♦ A contiguous million acres (1,700 square miles) of Southeastern Oregon has been blackened by fire. As a reference, the state of Rhode Island is only 1,100 square miles!
- Entire neighborhoods in Colorado are now smoking ashes (See below).
- Communities from New Mexico to Montana, including the outskirts of Upton, Worland, and Casper, Wyoming, have been evacuated as fires came close.

And 2012 isn't even a "record" fire season!

The good news is that most of the Bighorn Basin hasn't made the news for these activities.

A NORTHERN COLORADO NEIGHBORHOOD

└Before

After ↓





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THE BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE COORDINATORS ARE:

Big Horn County: The County Fire Warden is Brent Godfrey (307) 568-2324. The Firewise Coordinator is Chris Weydeveld, cweydeveld@wytfs.com, Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604, or (307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile).

Washakie County: Chris Kocher, Fire Warden, <u>ckocher@worlandfire.org</u>, P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379.

Hot Springs County: No Firewise Coordinator has yet been selected. Contact Jay Duvall, County Fire Warden, at (307) 921-1485, or hscdwarden@gmail.com

Park County: Bernie Spanogle, Firewise Coordinator, can be reached at pcfirewise@gmail.com. or at 307-250 -9387. The County Fire Warden is Russ Wenke, rwenke@parkcounty.us, 1131 11th Street, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or (307) 527-8551.- http://codyconservationdistrict.com/firewise.php

If you have general or specific questions about Firewise, two good online sources of answers are: www.firewisewyoming.com and <a href="https://www.fir

Do you have topics you would like included in future newsletters? Please submit your suggestions and comments to gwynn@wytfs.com, cweydeveld@wytfs.com, to Chris at any of the above phone numbers, or by mail to G. Wynn, 824 Country Club Road, Casper, Wyoming 82609.

Thanks for providing this newsletter go to the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the Big Horn 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 the E-mail address that delivered it, or to G. Wynn by mail.

The last two Bighorn Mountain Cabin owners Picnics were well attended

The highlight of both picnics was doing walk-around Firewise evaluations of cabins near



the picnic sites. Participants reported that they had learned a lot about what they could and should do to protect their cabins when wildfire comes to the Bighorn Mountains the next time.

"Problem" fires, nationwide, can be tracked on:

www.inciweb.org

Big Horn County Firewise – Volunteer Work Day

Volunteers are needed for a Work-Day along the Bighorn River in Greybull September 27, 2012; from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Work will consist of the cutting of Russian olive and tamarisk re-sprouts and the herbicide application to stumps. Other tasks may include the piling of brush and other fuels mitigation tasks. Volunteers should meet at the Outdoor Classroom by the Highway 14 Bridge east of Lisa's Restaurant.

This work-day is a follow-up to the Greybull Wildfire Mitigation Project completed last fall with the goal of reducing the hazardous fuels danger along the river.

Big Horn County Weed & Pest District will give a demonstration on the proper mixing and application of herbicide for the treatment of Russian olive and tamarisk.

Mama Z's Pizza and Big Horn County Firewise will provide free pizza from noon to 1:00 pm at Boat Ramp Park.

For more information contact Chris at (307) 272-9533 or send an email message to:

Firewise@wytfs.com



Please bring sturdy boots, work clothes, leather gloves, safety glasses and water.

ONE MORE LITTLETHING THAT COUNTS





WRONG RIGHT

Hedges and shrubbery should be kept trimmed to at least <u>three</u> <u>feet</u> below windows, and at least <u>three feet</u> away from the sides of all buildings. Homeowners thould also take care to keep dead leaves and twigs from building up under all hedges near buildings.



Cabin owner surveys from the 2012 cabin owners picnics indicate that the only reliable communications in many areas of the Bighorns are face to face between residents. Cell phone and computer links are sporadic and intermittent. Cabin owners are encouraged to investigate the radios mentioned below, as a means of finding out about weather and wildfire activity in their mountain neighborhood.

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Many of the cabin owners in the West Tensleep Cabin Group, in the Southern Bighorns, have obtained these radios to make up for spotty coverage by other electronic communication methods. Radios were purchased with a mixture of money from the cabin owners association, and the individual cabin owners. Some mountainous corners of the basin do not have reception for these radios, so you should check with John Hyde, Big Horn County Emergency Management coordinator (307-548-2516) before purchasing these radios. Coverage is improving.

FIREWISE PROPANE TANKS

Safety features on stationery propane tanks rarely allow them to "explode," but they will vent a "geyser of flame" if overheated with an ignition source nearby. The guidelines below should make that unlikely.

In a residential situation, stationery propane tanks should be:

- More than 10 feet from buildings or any brush, shrubbery, and other flammable materials
- Stable and level on a solid base.
- If over grass, the surrounding ten feet should be kept mowed.

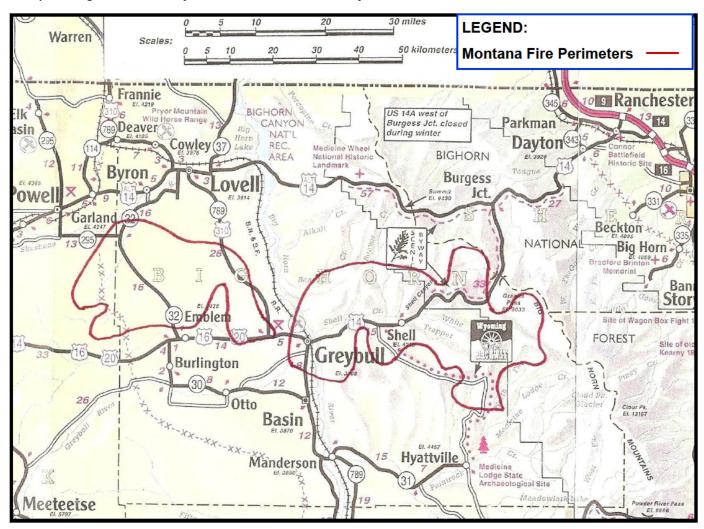
In a forested Firewise application, stationery propane tanks should be:

- Outside the 30 foot Home Ignition Zone from <u>all</u> buildings.
- Stable and level on a solid base.
- Surrounded by at least three feet of bare soil, cinders, or gravel.
- In an area cleared of brush and shrubbery for more than 10 feet in all directions.
- At least 20 feet from fuelwood and construction lumber piles.
- If in a grassy area, the surrounding ten feet should be kept mowed.

In both situations, propane tanks can also be buried, if done by knowledgeable professionals. Even buried tanks need the safety guidelines on the above lists.



Just in case you don't think your home or cabin is ever going to be anywhere near a wildfire see the map below. The red lines overlay the perimeters of two adjacent 2012 wildfires on a map of Big Horn County. These two fires were just across the border in Montana.



And here is a photo from the Fontenelle Fire that's not too far away in Lincoln and Sublette counties in Wyoming. This one burned more than 64,000 acres.

This photo shows the hot fire behavior that would occur when a fire burns on the western slopes of the Bighorn Mountains.

Note the cabins nestled in the forest.



