



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #31 — SPRING 2019

FIRESMART WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Firesmart Workshop Helps Bighorn Basin Landowners Prepare for Wildfire Season

Bighorn Basin Firesmart will host a workshop on wildfire mitigation for landowners and homeowners on **Monday, May 6, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Worland Community Center**. The program will begin at 7:00 and there will be handouts and refreshments.

This interactive workshop will feature information on reducing wildfire risk to property and buildings for those in the urban-wildland interface, as well as how to create a defensible space around homes and buildings that will protect property AND look good, wildfire behavior, hazardous fuels, resources for land owners, and much more.

Speakers include CJ Grimes, Wildlife Biologist with Canyon Wren Consulting in Ten Sleep, who will discuss wildlife conflicts with the Russian olive; Chris Kocher, Washakie County Fire Warden and Worland Fire Chief, on challenges with wildfire in Washakie County; Russ Linneman, Fuels Treatment Contractor, on what to expect when removing Russian olives from your property; Dr. Yvonne Warren Worland BLM, talking about Firewise Landscaping; and Chris Weydeveld, Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator, on available programs offered to private landowners through the Firesmart program.

In addition, participants can take home informational brochures and handouts from the State of Wyoming and other agencies and organizations.

This workshop is presented by Technical Forestry Services, LLC, which contracts with Washakie County to do education and wildfire mitigation for property owners. Chris Weydeveld is the owner and operator of Technical Forestry Services. He has served as Washakie County Firewise/Firesmart Coordinator since 2013. Chris is a 1987 graduate of the University of Montana with a BS Degree in Forest Resource Management and is a Certified Forester and a Certified Arborist.

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For web information about the workshop:

<http://wytfs.com/firesmart-workshop/>

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.firesmart>

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HARDENING YOUR HOME – SOME REMINDERS

Flying embers can destroy homes up to a mile from a wildfire. **Here are some things you can do to harden your home and make it more fire resistant.**

Roof: The roof is the most vulnerable part of your home. Build your roof or re-roof with materials such as composition, metal or tile. Block any spaces between roof decking and covering to prevent embers from catching.

Vents: Vents on homes create openings for flying embers. Cover all vent openings with 1/8-inch to 1/4-inch **metal** mesh. It won't melt and burn. Protect vents in eaves or cornices with baffles to block embers (mesh is not enough).

Eaves and Soffits: Eaves and soffits should be protected with ignition-resistant* or non-combustible materials.

Windows: Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break, allowing burning embers inside the house even before the home ignites. Large windows are the most vulnerable. Install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage in a fire.

- Consider limiting the size and number of windows that face areas of vegetation.

Walls: Wood products, such as boards, panels or shingles, are common siding materials. However, they are combustible and not good choices for fire-prone areas.

- Build or remodel your walls with ignition resistant* building materials, such as stucco, fiber cement, wall siding, fire retardant, treated wood, or other approved materials.
- Be sure to extend materials from the foundation to the roof.

Decks: Surfaces within 10 feet of the building should be built with ignition-resistant*, non-combustible, or other approved materials.

- Ensure that all combustible items are removed from underneath your deck.

Rain Gutters: Screen or enclose rain gutters to prevent accumulation of plant debris.

Patio Cove: Use the same ignition-resistant* materials for patio coverings as a roof.

Chimney: Cover your chimney and stovepipe outlets with a non-combustible screen. Use metal screen material with openings no smaller than 3/8-inch and no larger than 1/2-inch to prevent embers from escaping and igniting a fire.

Garage: Have fire extinguisher, shovel, rake, and bucket available for fire emergencies. Weather strip around and under the garage door to prevent embers from blowing in. Store all combustible and flammable liquids away from ignition sources.

Fences: Consider using ignition-resistant* or non-combustible fence materials to protect your home during a wildfire.

Driveways and Access Roads: Driveways should be built and maintained in to allow fire and emergency vehicles to reach your home. Consider maintaining access roads with a minimum of 10 feet of clearance on either side, allowing for two-way traffic.

- All gates should open inward and be wide enough to for emergency equipment.
- Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

Address: Make sure your address is clearly visible from the road or street.

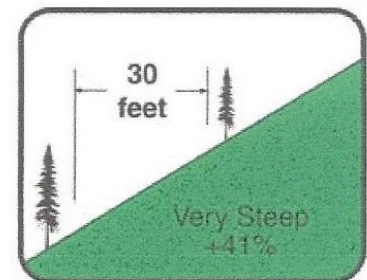
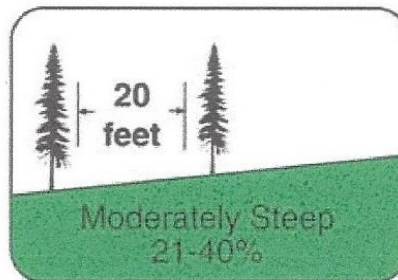
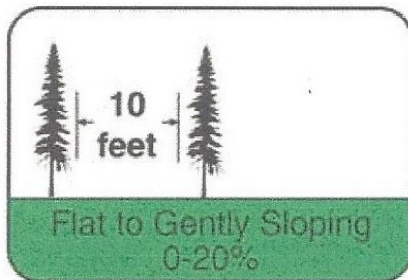
Water Supply: Consider having multiple garden hoses long enough to reach all of your home and other structures. If you have a pool or well, consider getting a pump.

HERE'S A PAGE FROM MONTANA FireSafe ABOUT BEING FIRESMART

Break Up Continuous Vegetation

Sometimes vegetation occurs in a continuous layer of fuel. The possibility of wildfire increases as the vegetation becomes more continuous and dense. To reduce fire intensity, adequate spacing needs to be created in the vegetation. The recommended practice is to remove and "break up" vegetation to provide separation between plants. Whether you have grass, shrubs or trees around your home, you need to consider the influence of slope. Regardless of vegetation type (grass, shrubs or trees), slope is an important influence.

For example, in a forested area, consider the following examples as a reference:



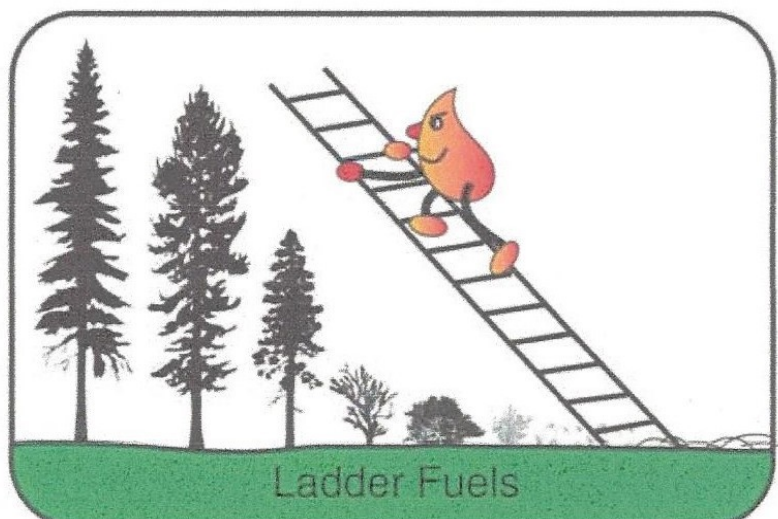
NOTE: Spacing distances are measured between canopies (outermost branches of a plant), not between trunks or stems.

Not only do steep slopes affect fire behavior, they are more vulnerable to erosion. When removing shrubs and trees from steep slopes, try to keep soil disturbance to a minimum. To reduce soil erosion, it may also be necessary to replace the vegetation you remove with fire-resistant plants.

Ladder Fuels

Vegetation is often present at varying heights, similar to the rungs of a ladder. Under these conditions, flames from fuels burning at the ground level, such as a thick layer of pine needles, can be carried to shrubs that can ignite branches and trees above. Vegetation that allows a fire to move from lower plants to taller ones is referred to as "ladder fuel." The ladder fuel problem can be corrected by creating a separation between the vegetation layers.

This may be accomplished by removing lower tree branches, reducing shrub height, or both. Shrubs may also be removed. A common rule of thumb is a vertical separation of three times the height of the lower fuels.



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS OF FIRESMARTWORK



BEFORE



AFTER

At a mountain cabin, trees were pruned, an ember trap shed and firewood were moved, and trees were thinned. The results are that the cabin is now much more defensible than in the **BEFORE** picture.



This hedge was getting a little overgrown before trimming brought it back to a Firesmart condition



MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER
 “Natural” wood decks and shake siding are nice, but need to be coated with a fire-resistant coating, and kept maintained that way.

This weathered wood deck and siding were easily ignited by embers from a nearby wildfire, and only quick action by firefighters saved the home.

Bighorn Basin Firesmart Picnic

June 15, 2019, at the Willow Park Group Area



Research shows properly designed and implemented defensible space treatments around cabins reduces ignitability during wildfire.

WHAT: Annual Bighorn Basin Firesmart Picnic

DATE: June 15, 2019.

TIME: 11:00 am to 2:00 pm (See agenda below)

PLACE: Willow Park Group Area, Bighorn National Forest

AGENDA:

11:00-12:00 am—West Tensleep Cabin Owner's Association meeting (Contact WTCCOA President Greg Lungren (307) 480-0150 or email greg87r@rtconnect.net.)

12:00 noon to 1:00 pm—BBQ lunch (Prepared by Chubby Cheeks BBQ, and provided by the West Tensleep Cabin Owner's Association and Bighorn Basin Firesmart).

1:00 pm to 2:00 pm—Discussions with Agency Personnel and the Firesmart Coordinator regarding wildfire preparedness and living with fire in the Bighorn Mountains and lowlands.



For more information contact the Bighorn Basin Firesmart Coordinator at: (307) 272-9533 or (307) 333-2887 Email: firesmart@wytfs.com

THIS PAGE IS ONE YOU HAVE SEEN BEFORE, BUT GETS REPEATED EACH SPRING

ANNUAL PRE-FIRE-SEASON FIREWISE WALK-AROUND CHECKLIST

Once a home or cabin has been made Firesmart, the owner can't sit back and enjoy it. Vegetation will continue to grow, and human activities will keep changing the situation.

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
- _____ Check walls and foundation for fresh bird and animal holes, and patch appropriately
- _____ Move your conveniently-placed winter woodpile to more than 30 feet from all structures
- _____ Check/replace the batteries in your emergency alert radio
- _____ Carefully remove tree branches within four feet in all directions of your powerline
- _____ Check window screens for a tight fit, and patch any holes
- _____ Remove leaf and needles between the boards of decks, and under any decks /porches.
- _____ 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
- _____ Check your designated escape routes, and make sure they are clear for vehicle travel
- _____ Move snowmobiles and other unused fire season vehicles outside of the 30-foot zone
- _____ To keep current on wildfire nationwide or in your corner of Wyoming, get familiar with the websites mentioned below, and add 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



WEBSITES FOR TRACKING WILDFIRE ACTIVITY

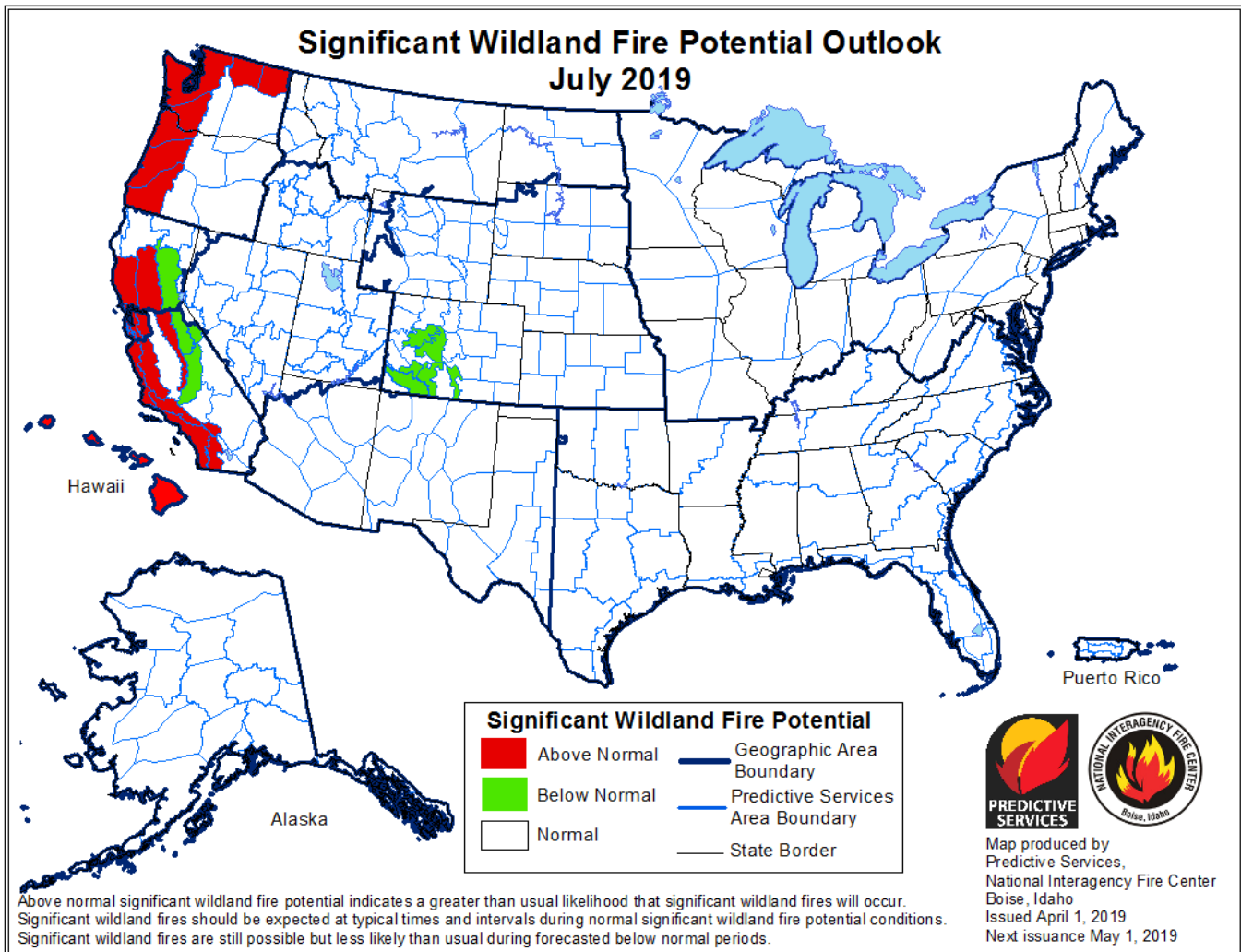
FOR FIRES IN WYOMING:

[http//lands.state.wy.us](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



The above is the July 2019 example of the Wildland Fire Potential report prepared monthly by the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho. These are based on a complex set of criteria that includes present and predicted drought conditions; snowpack levels and snowmelt rates; the previous winter's temperature patterns; an outlook of anticipated weather; and decades of wildfire history. These are released monthly for the next four-month period, and can be found at:

https://www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/outlooks/monthly_seasonal_outlook.pdf

FIRESMART OFFERS HIZ TREE PRUNING WITHIN WASHAKIE COUNTY

Home- and cabin-owners in Washakie County with approved Wildfire Mitigation Plans (WMP) can get some assistance in doing the tree pruning recommended in their WMP. Weather permitting, Washakie Firesmart will prune the trees in your Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) **within 30 feet** of your home/cabin, as in your WMP. All you need to do is submit a request to Washakie County Firesmart at firesmart@wytfs.com, 6628 W. Riverside Dr. Casper, Wyoming 82604, or (307) 333-1098 (office), (307) 272-9533 (mobile). Your request should include your name and the location/physical address of your home or cabin.

Removing the cut limbs will be the responsibility of the cabin- or home-owner.