



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

## ISSUE #32 — SUMMER 2019

Tolman Sheep Company Ranch Thinning & Fuels Reduction  
Chris Weydevel, Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator, reports completion of this 61-acre project on the Bighorn Mountains. He says that the work looks real good, and was completed in only a few days. Here are before and after photos of the completed work, with slash hand-piled for later burning.



BEFORE TREATMENT



AFTER TREATMENT



There are several similar Firesmart projects active in the Bighorns, funded by a variety of sources. Some are listed on Page 7, with more photos of ongoing and completed projects.

Firesmart information and all newsletter issues are available at:

<http://wytfs.com/bighorn-basin-firesmart>

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### Special points of interest

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## A FEW ONLINE RESOURCES RELATED TO FIRESMART

For those of you with access to online information, here are a few more websites. A few of these are fixtures on Page 2 of these newsletter. Some are fresh:

Living with Wildfire in Wyoming

[http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/\\_files/documents/resources/wildfire2013/wildfire\\_web.pdf](http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/_files/documents/resources/wildfire2013/wildfire_web.pdf)

UW Barnyards & Backyards Wildfire page with links and information, including videos

<http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/resources/wildfire.html>

Cooperative Extension System Wildfire page (research-based information from America's land grant universities)

[https://articles.extension.org/surviving\\_wildfire](https://articles.extension.org/surviving_wildfire)

Firewise Communities page (national)

<http://www.firewise.org>

Firewise Wyoming

<http://www.firewisewyoming.com/>

Wyoming State Forestry Division, Fire Management Page

<https://wsfd.wyo.gov/fire-management>

Forestry Division, Fuels Mitigation Page

<https://wsfd.wyo.gov/fire-management/fuels-mitigation>

FEMA Guide on How to Prepare for Wildfire

[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1409003859391-0e8ad1ed42c129f11fbc23d008d1ee85/how\\_to\\_prepare\\_wildfire\\_033014\\_508.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1409003859391-0e8ad1ed42c129f11fbc23d008d1ee85/how_to_prepare_wildfire_033014_508.pdf)

Living with Fire, from the University of Nevada

<http://www.livingwithfire.info/learning-center>

National Weather Service Riverton, WY - 800-211-1448

[nws.riverton@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.riverton@noaa.gov)



## **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)**

NOTE: Obtaining fire details from these sources is not always immediate during intense fire activity.



## SOME GENERAL FIRESMART QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Q - WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRESMART PROGRAM IN THE BIGHORN BASIN?*

*A - TO MAKE RURAL HOMES, CABINS, AND PROPERTY DEFENSIBLE IN A WILDFIRE.*

*Q - WHAT IS FIRESMART?*

*A - A PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES THAT WILL MAKE YOUR HOME/CABIN BETTER ABLE TO SURVIVE WILDFIRES. “DEFENSIBLE SPACE” RIGHT AROUND THE STRUCTURE IS A KEY.*

*Q - WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE PROGRAM?*

*A - “WILDLAND” HOMES, CABINS, AND PROPERTY IN A WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) IDENTIFIED IN YOUR COUNTY’S WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN (CWPP).*

*Q - WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF THE PROGRAM?*

*A - THREE THINGS:*

- 1. A MITIGATION PLAN PREPARED BY THE COUNTY FIRESMART COORDINATOR.*
- 2. MITIGATION FUEL TREATMENTS AROUND YOUR HOME/CABIN AND ROAD ACCESS.*
- 3. HOMEOWNER CORRECTION OF STRUCTURAL AND HOUSEKEEPING ISSUES THAT ARE PART OF THE WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN, BUT NOT RELATED TO SURROUNDING FUELS.*

*Q - WHO PAYS FOR THE MITIGATION PLAN?*

*A - THE STATE OF WYOMING, WITH NATIONAL FIRE PLAN DOLLARS, REGARDLESS OF LAND OWNERSHIP.*

*Q - WHO PAYS FOR THE FIRESMART FUEL TREATMENTS?*

*A - 50% IS THE HOMEOWNER SHARE, WITH A 50% STATE REIMBURSEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL FIRE PLAN.*

*Q - DO ALL MOUNTAIN CABINS QUALIFY FOR FUELS TREATMENT REIMBURSEMENT?*

*A - CABINS ON PRIVATE LAND DO QUALIFY FOR FUELS TREATMENT REIMBURSEMENT, IF THEY HAVE AN APPROVED WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN. CABINS ON FEDERAL LAND LEASES DO NOT QUALIFY FOR FUELS TREATMENT FUNDING, BUT ARE ELIGIBLE FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLANS.*

*Q - IS THE COST-SHARE PROGRAM JUST FOR FUELS TREATMENTS?*

*A - YES, INCLUDING SLASH TREATMENT FROM FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS.*

*Q - WHAT IS COVERED UNDER THE DESCRIPTION OF “FUELS TREATMENT?”*

*A - TREE THINNING AND PRUNING, BRUSH REMOVAL, SLASH PILING, AND SLASH REMOVAL.*

*Q - HOW MANY ACRES OF FUEL TREATMENT IS COVERED FOR EACH HOME?*

*A - ALL ACREAGE WITHIN 100 FEET OF ANY STRUCTURES. THE COUNTY FIRESMART COORDINATOR MAY INCREASE THAT IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS STEEP SLOPES OR OTHER FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO EXTREME WILDFIRE THREAT.*

## **MORE GENERAL FIRESMART QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Q - *WHAT IF THERE ARE NO STRUCTURES ON MY PROPERTY?***

**A - A PLAN CAN BE PREPARED FOR ANY PROPERTY NEEDING FUELS REDUCTION, AND FUNDING MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR FUELS TREATMENT ON THESE AREAS .**

**Q - *WHAT IF FUELS TREATMENTS CREATE MARKETABLE PRODUCTS?***

**A - THE VALUE IS SUBTRACTED FROM THE REIMBURSED AMOUNT.**

**Q - *WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SLASH AND BRUSH DEBRIS?***

**A - IT BELONGS TO THE OWNER. *TIMELY* DISPOSAL IS FUNDED BY THE PROGRAM.**

**Q - *HOW MUCH IS AUTHORIZED?***

**A - UP TO \$4,100 (INCLUDING MATCHING FUNDS) FOR EACH HOMESITE. THERE IS NO SPECIFIED LIMIT FOR LARGER SITES, THOUGH UP TO \$1,800/ACRE FOR FUEL BREAK TREATMENTS, AND UP TO \$1,600/ACRE FOR FUELS TREATMENT ARE TYPICAL COSTS.**

**Q - *HOW IS THE PAYMENT MADE?***

**A - THE HOMEOWNER HIRES AND PAYS A CONTRACTOR, AND SUBMITS A DETAILED INVOICE (WITH RECEIPTS) TO THE COUNTY FIRESMART COORDINATOR, CHRIS WEYDEVELD (TECHNICAL FORESTRY SERVICES, LLC), WHEN THE WORK IS DONE.**

**Q - *WHAT IF THE PROPERTY OWNER CAN DO SOME OF THE WORK THEMSELVES?***

**A - IN-KIND WORK CAN BE DONE AS PART OF THE HOMEOWNER'S SHARE. A "LAND-OWNER TRACKING FORM, " AVAILABLE FROM THE FIRESMART COORDINATOR, CAN BE USED TO TRACK TIME AND EXPENSES.**

**Q - *CAN THE WHOLE JOB BE DONE BY THE HOMEOWNER, WITH REIMBURSEMENT?***

**A - YES, THE LANDOWNER CAN DO THE WORK AS IN-KIND. LANDOWNER WILL RECEIVE A CASH REIMBURSEMENT FOR ONE-HALF OF THE TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT.**

**Q - *HOW IS IN-KIND TALLIED BY THE PROPERTY OWNER?***

**A - RATES ARE SET BY THE PROGRAM, AND HOURS ARE REPORTED ON THE PROJECT INVOICE. (THE COUNTY FIRESMART COORDINATOR CAN PROVIDE THE CURRENT RATE SHEET UPON REQUEST)**

**Q - *WHO CAN DO THE CONTRACT WORK? ARE THERE SPECIFIC PERMITTED CONTRACTORS?***

**A - ANY CONTRACTOR WHO MEETS LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.**

**Q - *HOW LONG WILL REIMBURSEMENT TAKE?***

**A - SIX WEEKS TO TWO MONTHS (AN ESTIMATE).**

**Q - *WHO MAINTAINS AND PAYS FOR KEEPING THE FUELS FIRESMART ON MY LAND?***

**A - MAINTAINING FUEL CONDITIONS IS THE PROPERTY OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY.**

**Q - *WHEN CAN MY EVALUATION AND PLAN DONE GET DONE?***

**A - USUALLY WITHIN TWO WEEKS, IF REQUESTED DURING THE FIELD SEASON.**

**Q - *DOES THE PROPERTY OWNER NEED TO BE PRESENT FOR THE EVALUATION?***

**A. - NO. BUT IT CAN BE VERY BENEFICIAL.**



## LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER



A NICELY-DONE FIRESMART MULCH JOB—**BUT** OPEN WINDOW WELLS COLLECT FLAMMABLE DETRITUS THAT IS EASILY IGNITED BY EMBERS. THE SOLUTION IS KEEPING THE WELLS CLEAN AND COVERED. COVERS ARE A CHEAP FIX.



AN OLD UTILITY SHED WITH TWO PROBLEMS:

- #1 = FLAMMABLE ITEMS STORED AGAINST AND UNDER THE WOODEN WALL. ALL SHOULD BE REMOVED.
- #2 = WEATHERED WOOD SIDING. THE WALL NEEDS TO BE CRACK-SEALED AND COATED WITH PAINT OR SEALER TO COVER EMBER TRAPS AND RAW WOOD.

**OVERGROWN CINDER MULCH.** THERE ARE AT LEAST FOUR SOLUTIONS TO MAKING THIS FIRESMART:

- #1 APPLY CHEMICALS THAT PREVENT VEGETATION GROWTH.
- #2 REPLACE THE FABRIC UNDERLAY, AND RE-COVER WITH CINDERS OR OTHER NON-FLAMMABLE MULCH.
- #3 PLANT AND WATER TO MAKE A GREEN LAWN.
- #4 PAVE IT WITH CONCRETE, PAVING STONES, OR BRICKS.



**DRY LEAVES & TINDER UNDER FIREWOOD**



**WOOD PILE AFTER LEAF REMOVAL**



### OTHER FIRESMART PROJECTS IN THE BIGHORN BASIN

- Lewis-Benson Forest thinning in Big Horn County, approximately 40 acres funded by a Forestry Co-op Grant.
- An additional 20 acres from last year's fuels reduction on the Annie Tolman project in Washakie County is being completed this summer. This project is funded by a Community Assistance Grant (CAFA) for treating private forestlands adjacent to the Bighorn National Forest. Photos are below.
- A Firesmart-funded 22-acre hardwood fuels reduction along the Bighorn River inside the city of Worland.
- Defensible space around the Tolman mountain shop in the Bighorn Mountains. A one-acre Firesmart project in Washakie County.
- Washakie County Firesmart-funded thinning and fuels reduction adjacent to Canyon Creek Country homesite lots.



Before thinning



After thinning & mechanical fuel treatment

### THE JUNE 15TH FIRESMART PICNIC IN THE BIGHORNS

This event, sponsored by the West Tensleep Cabin Owner's Association, and Washakie County Firesmart, was well-attended, and well-fed by Chubby Cheeks BBQ. Speakers included Chris Kocher, Washakie County Fire Warden; Chris Weydeveld, Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator; and Traci Weaver, Powder River District Ranger. Besides sharing information related to their current operations, each fielded questions about Forest Service activities and Firesmart.



Traci Weaver addressing the group



Chris Kocher talks to the crowd

## Prevent wildfires on public lands with these tips

(Information provided in BLM press releases)

Did you know that nearly 85 percent of wildland fires in the United States are caused by humans? Campfires left unattended, the burning of debris, equipment use and malfunctions, negligently discarded cigarettes, and intentional acts of arson are the main culprits. Here are a few things you can do to prevent causing a wildfire on public lands or any other wildland.

### Campfire safety - if campfires are permitted by the current local campfire regulations.

Preparing the campfire spot:

- Use existing fire rings and pits where available.
- Find a level spot away from overhanging branches, brush, or dry grass.
- Keep away from the base of a hill.
- Clear a circle 10 feet wide down to bare dirt.
- Hollow out a fire pit 6 inches deep and 2 feet across at the center of the cleared circle, piling the dirt around the pit.



**Never leave your campfire unattended** even for a few minutes, or if you take a nap.

Keep fires small. Hot dogs, marshmallows and ghost stories all go better with a small manageable fire.

Putting out your campfire:

- Drown your campfire with water 30 minutes before you break camp, and before you go to bed each night. Never allow your fire to burn down on its own. Use your shovel to separate the burning pieces of wood in the pit, and make sure they are soaked with water.
- Stir and mix water with the ashes until the fire is out.
- Feeling the ashes with your bare hand is one technique to make sure it is out
- Before you leave the campsite, carefully check the area within 50 feet of the fire pit for sparks or embers that may have escaped you fire.

### Vehicle safety – on all your vehicles and trailers

- Be sure chains and other metal parts aren't dragging from your vehicle – they can throw sparks.
- Check your tire air pressure. Driving on an exposed wheel can cause sparks.
- Avoid driving through dry grass or brush. Hot exhaust pipes can start the grass on fire, and grass may become packed around your hot catalytic convertor. You may not even notice the fire until it is too late. **Never park in dry grass.**
- Never let your brake pads wear too thin: metal on metal makes sparks.

### Debris burning

- Landscape debris piles should be no bigger than 4 feet by 4 feet, but tall enough and packed tight to burn clean. Do not build piles under overhanging tree limbs.
- Clear all flammable material and vegetation within 10 feet of the outer edge of the pile.
- Keep a water supply and shovel close to the burning site until the fire is completely out.
- Ensure weather conditions are such that burning is safe – particularly the wind.

### Two closing items:

1. And always make sure you know and follow local burning regulations, the Industrial Fire Precaution (IFPL), and public use restrictions.
2. Remember, you can be held liable for the cost of firefighting and damages caused by wildfire that starts through negligence on your part.

