



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



## BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #38 — SPRING 2021

### NATIONAL WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH – May



National Wildfire Awareness Month dedicates the entire month of May to prevention and preparedness.

While wildfires may not be prevalent in every state, the responsibility to be aware and alert belongs to all of us. The causes of wildfires can occur in every state, and as mobile as our lifestyles have become, we each need to be prepared.

According to the **National Interagency Fire Center**, humans cause an average of 68% of wildfires per year in the United States. Of those human-started fires, 2.8 million acres burn each year. In 2018, 13,700 square miles burned due to human-started and lightning strikes.

There are steps to take to both prevent wildfires and minimize the effects of them. From fire-resisting building materials to following the safety protocols for handling fire when camping, heating your home, or storing fuel, we can all take part in reducing wildfires.

#### HOW TO OBSERVE

Visit the **National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC)** website to learn more about what you can do to make your property better prepared for a wildfire. Learn more about fire safety and how to take shelter when a wildfire event occurs. Use **#NationalWildfireAwarenessMonth** to share on social media.

Firesmart information and all newsletter issues are available at:

[www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com](http://www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com)

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## THE BIG HORN BASIN FIREWISE/FIRESMART 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 Firesmart 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 :** The County Fire Warden is Jerry Parker, [JParker@ParkCounty.us](mailto:JParker@ParkCounty.us), 1125 11th Street, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or (307) 527-8551. The Park County Firewise Coordinator is Steffen Cornell, [steffen.cornell@conserveview.net](mailto:steffen.cornell@conserveview.net), or (307) 868-2484.

The Park County 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 for 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 [firesmart@wytfs.com](mailto:firesmart@wytfs.com), or by mail to G. Wynn, 824 Country Club, Casper, Wyoming 82609.

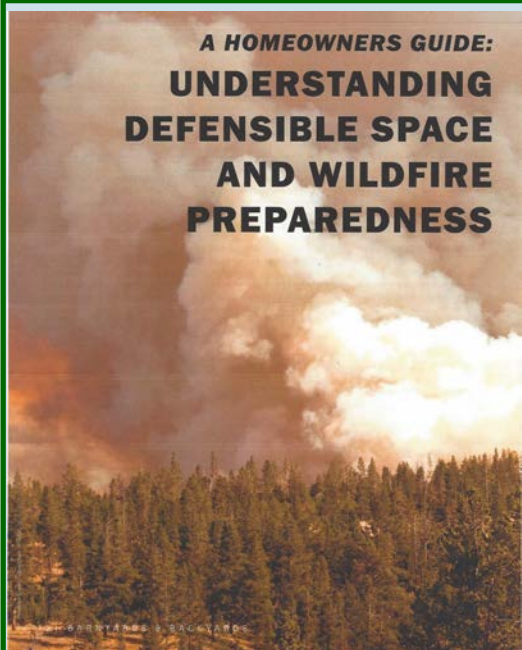
Thanks for providing this newsletter go to the Wyoming State Forestry Division, the Washakie County Fire Warden, and the U.S. Forest Service. They provide the funding.

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

You can now keep up on daily news and events with Bighorn Basin Firesmart at: <https://www.facebook.com/BighornBasinFiresmart>



**A HOMEOWNERS GUIDE:  
UNDERSTANDING  
DEFENSIBLE SPACE  
AND WILDFIRE  
PREPAREDNESS**



*This is a small publication from Barnyards & Backyards, a product of the University of Wyoming. It provides much of the Firesmart information in other publications, albeit in a slightly different format.*

*Highlights are:*

*DEFENSIBLE SPACE, with a diagram of Zone 1, Zone 2, and Zone 3 around your home or cabin, and detailed listings of what should be done in each zone to make your place Firesmart.*

*EMBER WASH, that explains the concept of embers spreading onto your property in advance of a wildfire.*

*The guide can be obtained at:*

<http://www.uwyo.edu/barnbackyard/>



## CHIMNEYS FOR HOME SAFETY AND FIRESMART

Your chimney isn't exactly the easiest to-do on your home and Firesmart maintenance list, but it is important not just because it allows smoke to exit from your home or cabin. Here are some chimney basics that everyone should know.

There are three main types of chimneys:

**Single, Double, or Triple-Walled Metal:** Metal chimneys of a thin metal pipe sticking up from the roof with a circular top. Newer building codes favor masonry, though double and triple-walled stove pipes are used for free-standing wood stoves.

**Masonry:** These are your standard brick chimneys currently viewed as the safest chimneys. They often come with a liner pre-installed to ensure proper venting. These are constructed of "firebricks" engineered to withstand much higher temperatures than standard bricks, often up to 3000 degrees F. Mortar used for chimneys is also designed for high temperatures.

**Pre-Fabricated Metal:** This type is also commonly referred to as "factory-built" and is mostly used for commercial structures.

All three types of chimneys need periodic inspection and cleaning to remove build-up of creosote, a product of incomplete combustion. If chimneys aren't cleaned periodically they can restrict smoke removal, and result in carbon monoxide buildup inside your home or cabin. Uncleaned chimneys can also result in chimney fires that can endanger a home and its' occupants. While many consider these periodic events as just nuisances, over time they can degrade even a masonry chimney, and allow embers to get inside a home or cabin.

In chimneys with constant wintertime use, annual cleaning is recommended. For those fireplaces used only occasionally, frequency can be less than that. While homeowners can carefully clean lightly used chimneys with available purpose-built tools, hiring a qualified knowledgeable chimney sweep is recommended for chimneys with heavy creosote buildup. Professional chimney sweeps also perform an inspection as they work. While not mandatory, **CSIA Certified Chimney Sweeps** have passed a set of training and experience requirements.

Homeowners with masonry chimneys need to watch out for crumbling in their bricks and mortar. What is visible is usually an indication of what is going on in the parts of the chimney inside the building where they can't be seen. Leakage of smoke and embers inside a structure can be fatal to inhabitants, and/or destroy the structure.

Chimney caps are recommended. These are a vented, metal piece that sits inside the top of your chimney and prevents unwanted materials, rain, and animals from coming inside your fireplace, while still letting the smoke escape.

Chimney spark arrestor screens are also recommended to keep fireplace embers from escaping the chimney and igniting nearby flammable material. See the sidebar block for options.

Other than caps and spark arrestors, nothing should be attached to a chimney.

**To be Firesmart, vegetation around all chimneys should be cleared to give at least ten feet of space around the chimney horizontally and vertically. Fifteen feet is even better.**

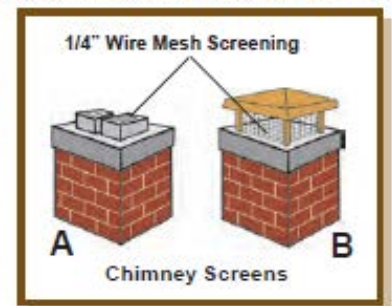


### FIREPLACE CHIMNEYS

Windblown embers can access the structure through the fireplace's chimney flue. Once inside, the firebrands can collect on flammable objects greatly increasing the chance of combustion. The situation can also be reversed: embers from the fireplace

fire could fly out the chimney and start a fire on the structure roof or adjacent to the structure. To avoid this situation,

install a spark arrestor on the chimney or flue opening, made from welded wire or woven wire mesh with openings less than 1/4" wide. Installation B is better than A, because the horizontal screen mesh in A will burn-out and disintegrate from the fireplace heat after time, and must be inspected and replaced periodically.





## FIRESMART FUEL TREATMENT FOREST PRODUCTS

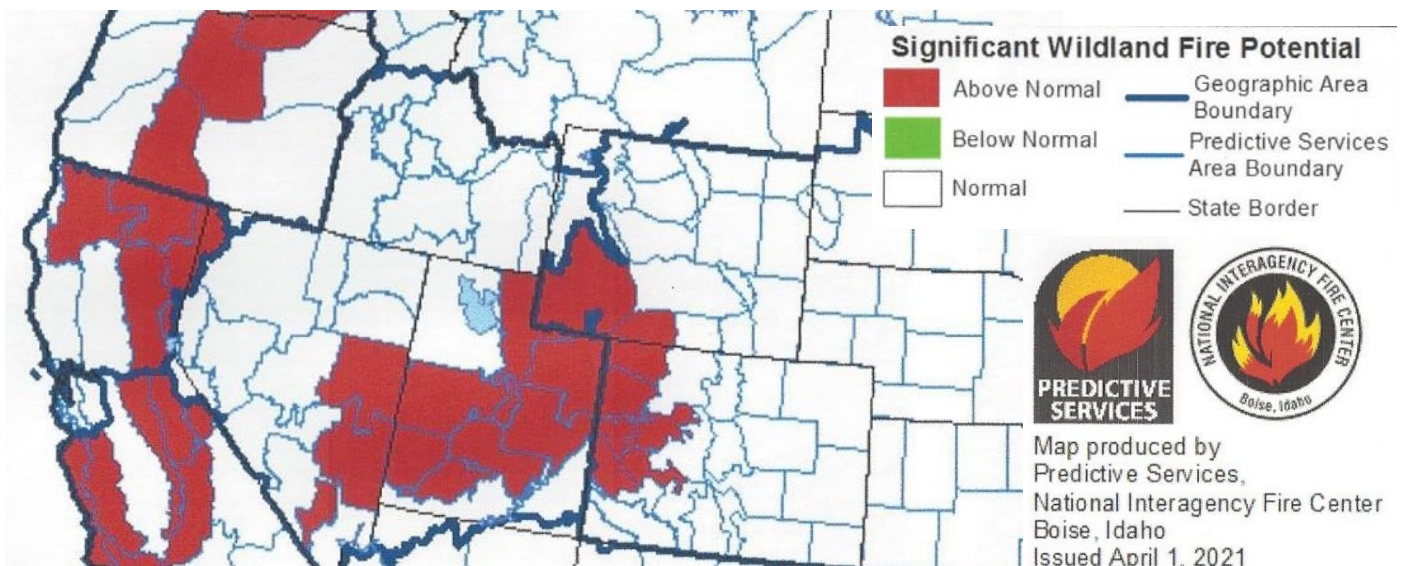
Recent Washakie County Firesmart forestry fuels treatments have resulted in some forest products, (shown below) as milled by Great Divide Forestry in Worland. In addition to spruce, fir, and pine dimension lumber, posts, poles and fuelwood, a local contractor is using Russian olive for building materials.



Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator Chris Weydeveld's brother Tim with a 3" thick by 24" wide seven foot Russian olive plank. Other slabs have been used as stair steps in a lodge in Ten Sleep.



## Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook for the Early 2021 Fire Season



Spring precipitation was not evenly distributed across Wyoming and the Western U.S., and drought conditions exist to some degree at most locations. "Normal" wildfire activity is predicted for all of Wyoming until the mapped Above Normal potential in the southwest corner of the state starting in July. The good news is that snowpack in the Bighorn Mountains was boosted to near-normal levels by March snow. The National Interagency Fire Center did not predict past July.

## **PREPARE YOUR FAMILY - How to Prepare to Evacuate from a Wildfire**

Evacuation plans for families with young children should include helping toddlers understand how to quickly respond in case of fire, and how adults can escape with babies. Prepare ahead of time by practicing your family's fire escape plan, and what to do to be safe when there is a wildfire nearby.

It is important to talk to toddlers and small children at a level that they understand and that does not frighten. Here are a few resources that offer guides and tips for families with young children about fire safety and preparing for a disaster:

**A Parent's Guide to Fire Safety for Babies and Toddlers**: The U.S. Fire Administration's information site for parents and caregivers to help prevent fire death of young children.

**Let's Get Ready! Planning Together for Emergencies**: Sesame Workshop campaign with tips, activities, and other easy tools to help the whole family prepare for emergencies. <https://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits/ready>

**Ready.gov Kids**: FEMA's site for older kids to prepare and plan for a disaster. Includes safety steps, tips, and games to help children learn about and be ready for an emergency.

<https://www.smokeybear.com/en/smokey-for-kids> The U.S. Forest Service's interactive Smokey Bear site with games, information, and how to prevent forest fires.

### **Preparing Seniors and Disabled Family Members:**

Seniors and people with disabilities also need special consideration when preparing for a disaster. Below are several resources that help individuals and families with special needs plan and prepare for an event such as a wildfire.

**Special Populations Fire-Safe Checklist**: U.S. Fire Administration's fire safety guide for individuals with special needs to help them protect themselves and their home from fire.

**Disaster Preparedness for Senior by Seniors**: The American Red Cross booklet designed by and for older adults to prepare them for a sudden emergency.

**Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities**: American Red Cross Disaster Services booklet with information and resources to help people with physical, visual, auditory, or cognitive disabilities design a personal disaster plan.

**Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Populations**: Inclusive Preparedness Center website with information and resources for emergency planning.

### **LOCATIONS FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON WILDFIRES IN WYOMING**

The Cody Dispatch Center Website and Wyoming wildfire information:

[https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch\\_centers/r2cdc/information/fire\\_information.htm](https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2cdc/information/fire_information.htm)

The Wyoming State Forestry Division: <https://wsfd.wyo.gov/fire-management>



**A FEW LITTLE THINGS AROUND YOUR HOMESTEAD THAT MATTER.  
ALL NEED TO BE FIXED TO BE FIRESMART**



**SHRUBS IN CONTACT WITH A BUILDING WALL**



**OLD DRY WOOD WITHIN 10 FEET OF BUILDINGS**



**TREE LIMBS IN CONTACT WITH A BUILDING ROOF**



**WEEDS SURROUNDING A FARM STRUCTURE**



This old logging slash pile isn't near a homestead, but it is still a Firesmart issue. In the event of a wildfire it will contribute to flying embers, and be unsafe for firefighters building fireline near it. Needs to be burned some snow-covered winter day.

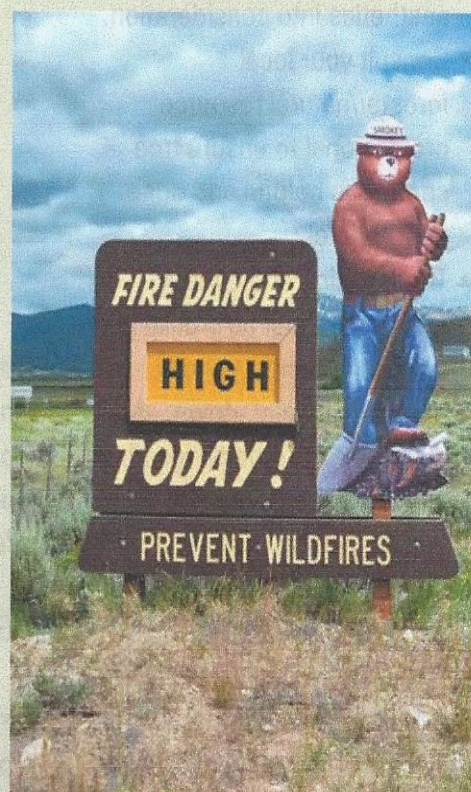


**Here's a slightly different Spring Firesmart Checklist than the one in recent newsletters. This one comes from Barnyards & Backyards, and has the actions you need to do to get your home or cabin ready for the 2021 fire season.**

## Spring checklist

Completing the following spring checklist is recommended to ensure you and your family are prepared for the wildfire season. Completing this checklist will get you more involved and focused on being firewise and fire safe.

- ☐ Clean fireplace chimney and install summer screen in front of the fireplace or make sure doors are closed.
- ☐ Clean gutters and downspouts.
- ☐ Clean roofs, including eaves and valleys, of all flammable materials.
- ☐ Move firewood away from any structures at least 100 feet and uphill, if possible.
- ☐ Clean deck surfaces between deck joints and underneath.
- ☐ Make sure address/street signs are clean and visible.
- ☐ Check roof/house vents have proper screening.
- ☐ Complete maintenance on Zone 1 of your defensible space.
- ☐ Remove flammable materials from under decks/houses for the summer.
- ☐ Conduct annual neighborhood spring cleanup days with community members.
- ☐ Inspect spark arresters on ATVs, lawnmowers, chainsaws, and other gas-powered tools.
- ☐ Go over an evacuation plan with family members and neighbors/community.
- ☐ Make sure any fire tools are easily accessible in case of a fire.
- ☐ Remove dead plant materials from 0-5 feet directly around a structure.
- ☐ Remove dead plant materials and dead trees completely from Zone 1 and if possible from Zone 2 and 3.
- ☐ Prune branches below 6 feet on yard trees.
- ☐ Prune branches overhanging roofs, away from the windows.
- ☐ Prune branches 12 feet or wider and 15 feet or higher from the driveway.
- ☐ Mow the lawn regularly.
- ☐ Maintain/service irrigation systems and have them fire ready.
- ☐ Make sure flammable liquids, fuel containers, propane cylinders, etc., are properly stored, preferably outside of Zone 1.





If your Washakie County cabin, or Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) rural home needs a WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN, contact your County Firewise/Firesmart Coordinator at [Firesmart@wytfs.com](mailto:Firesmart@wytfs.com), (307) 333-1098, (307) 272-9533, or 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604. Requests will be kept on file if funding is not available in 2021. Below is a plan request form for Washakie county. You can also download a Wildfire Mitigation Plan form electronically at:

<http://bighornbasinfiresmart.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Firesmart-WMP-application-fillable.pdf>

## **BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART MITIGATION PLAN APPLICATION**

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN PHYSICAL LOCATION/ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY/CABIN OWNER E-MAIL ADDRESS (OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_

PROPERTY PRIMARY USE – CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

- \_\_\_\_ YEAR-ROUND RESIDENCE/RENTAL  
 \_\_\_\_ SEASONAL OCCUPANCY RESIDENCE  
 \_\_\_\_ COMMERCIAL OR BUSINESS  
 \_\_\_\_ AGRICULTURE

NUMBER AND KIND OF STRUCTURES ON THE PROPERTY: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK THOSE WHICH APPLY:

\_\_\_\_ PLEASE CONTACT ME TO ARRANGE A MITIGATION PLAN FOR MY PROPERTY

\_\_\_\_ I WANT MORE INFORMATION ON THE FIREWISE/FIRESMART PROGRAM

\_\_\_\_ OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

If your property is included in the Firesmart program, would you allow Technical Forestry Services to use photos of it in future Bighorn Basin Firesmart newsletter, and promotional programs? Photos would not be identified with addresses or homeowner's names. Please check the one that applies.

\_\_\_\_ YES. You may use photos of my property/cabin

\_\_\_\_ NO. Do not use photos of my property/cabin

LANDOWNER/CABINOWNER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

LANDOWNER/CABINOWNER PRINTED NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit directly to Technical Forestry Services, LLC, 6628 W. Riverside Drive, Casper, Wyoming 82604