



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #39 — SUMMER 2021

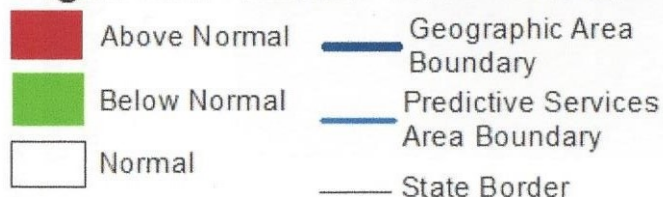
JULY & AUGUST WILDFIRE POTENTIAL

The wildfire season for most of the Bighorn Basin is predicted to be "Normal" for July, but heating up to "Above Normal" for August.



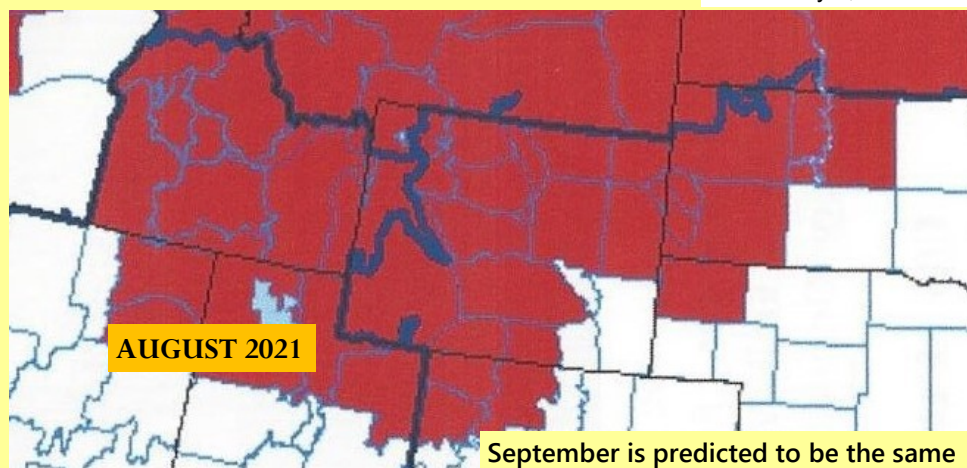
JULY 2021

Significant Wildland Fire Potential



Map produced by
Predictive Services,
National Interagency Fire Center
Boise, Idaho

Issued July 1, 2021



AUGUST 2021

September is predicted to be the same

Firesmart information and all newsletter issues are available at:
www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com

<u>In this issue</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Special points of interest</u>
2021 Fire Season Predictions	1	* Predictions for July & August
Firewise/Firesmart Coordinators	2	* Two Weeks Ready
Prescribed burning	3	* Why and how of Rx burning
Managing debris for burned homes	4-5	* Safety tips and requirements
July 25 Work Day & June 25 Field Day	6	* Current Wyoming wildfire websites
Your Home Ignition Zone	7	* Diagrams to remind you
A few Little Things That Matter	8	* Around your home or cabin

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, P.O. Box 504, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or (307) 347-6379. The Firesmart 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).

Hot Springs County: Contact Dion Robbins, County Fire Warden, at (307) 431-2767, or hscwarden@rtconnect.com.

Park County : The County Fire Warden is Jerry Parker, JParker@ParkCounty.us, 1125 11th Street, Cody, Wyoming 82414, or (307) 527-8551. The Park County Firewise Coordinator is Steffen Cornell, steffen.cornell@conserveviewy.net, or (307) 868-2484.

The Park County Firewise website: 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 and www.livingwithfire.com.

Do you have topics you would like included in future newsletters? Please submit your suggestions and comments to 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, 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>



BE TWO WEEKS READY

A program prepared by the Office of Homeland Security, adopted by the State of Wyoming, and promoted by our Governor. It details family and individual preparedness for wildfire, earthquakes, and tornado disasters, plus other disruptive events not generally occurring in Wyoming. In other locations this is advocated for folks living where tsunamis and hurricanes are possible.

Included are checklists a little larger than what is in your evacuation plan for wildfires.

Download the Two Weeks Ready [Brochure](#) and [Checklist](#) at <https://hls.wyo.gov/being-prepared/two-weeks-ready>.

For printed versions to use for your neighborhood, group or family call 307-777-4900.

PREScribed BURNING

Prescribed burning is the intentional firing of forest and grassland by resource managers to accomplish some resource management objective or objectives. This is increasingly being used in Wyoming and the rest of the western U.S. There are several reasons for doing prescribed fire.

THE BENEFITS OF PRESCRIBED BURNING

- ◆ Returning the landscape to the healthier natural conditions present before a century of wildfire suppression changed the vegetation species, tree density, and fuel loading.
- ◆ Thinning trees and reducing forest floor dead woody fuels to make for less intense wildfires that do less resource damage, and are easier and safer to control. This is the intent of “controlled” fire in the protective fuelbreaks constructed around and inside rural and mountain communities, and along primary wildland access roads.
- ◆ Encourage the growth and establishment of plant species important to wildlife as cover, nesting habitat, and forage, or as needed for continuation of cultural plant gathering.
- ◆ Encourage the growth and expansion of plant species important as livestock forage.
- ◆ Removal/reduction of plant species considered to be “noxious weeds,” or crowding out desirable plants for human purposes.
- ◆ Create “natural” openings in forests and shrublands to provide diversity for native animals.
- ◆ Prepare seedbeds for seeding or planting to desired plant species. Examples include burning certain “weeds” to kill-off seed sources, followed by seeding to native plants.
- ◆ Releasing soil nutrients tied up in dead and decadent vegetation.

PREScribed BURNING CRITERIA

Prescribed burns need site-specific objectives, with planning and preparation aimed at meeting those objectives. On a burn proposed for federal lands, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements must be followed to provide an analysis of the project intent, procedures, and potential impacts/effects. This may take several years for complex or controversial burning, with public input and review all part of the process.

The individual plan for each proposed burn includes:

- ◆ Desired weather conditions for ignition and predicted for the fire duration:
 - Windspeed and direction
 - Temperature
 - Fuel moisture of dead fuels in several sizes
- ◆ The specific burn area designated and prepared with control firelines or natural breaks.
- ◆ An ignition firing plan to minimize fire escape chances, and maximize burn effectiveness.
- ◆ The required manpower and equipment on site during the burn.
- ◆ Contingency plans in the event of fire escaping from the planned burn area.
- ◆ A Smoke Management Plan approved by the Air Quality Division of the Wyoming DEQ, to minimize the impacts of the smoke on surrounding human populations.



Costs for planning and conducting a prescribed burn are influenced by the above items; with a rule of thumb that the larger the acreage to be burned, the lower the cost per acre.

NOTE: Most prescribed burning typically occurs before spring green-up, or after the first fall frost.

After a Fire: How to Safely Manage Ash and Debris from Burned Buildings *[Guidelines from the Oregon DEQ, adapted for Wyoming]*

If your home was burned by a wildfire

Losing a home to fire can be extremely traumatic, both physically and emotionally. There is sometimes physical injury and loss of human life in some fires, or the loss of pets. Then there is the loss of property, and items of financial or sentimental value.

With all these things to deal with, the last thing many people think about after a crisis is the hazardous nature of ash and fire debris on their property. But there are some basic things you should understand about ash to fully protect yourself, your family and in some cases, your neighbors.



Some property owners may return to the site in the immediate aftermath of the fire, if only to assess the damage. The first thing to understand before doing this is that ash and debris from burned houses, sheds and other structures can be hazardous, particularly when particles are inhaled. This ash and partially burned debris may contain asbestos, mercury, lead, cadmium, chromium and a variety of other dangerous chemicals.

Before you return to your property

After contacting your insurance company, property owners should develop a plan before returning to the area that was burned. [Check tips from the CDC on how to stay safe after a wildfire.](#)

Use caution around debris:

Be aware of all electrical hazards – including those from downed power lines or other electrical sources - as well as hazards from unstable walking surfaces and sharp objects buried in the ash. Use extreme caution at all times when near the debris.

Wear sturdy footwear, eye goggles, a properly fitted N95 or KN95 respirator and heavy duty work gloves. If possible, wear disposable coveralls and dispose of them after use. If you do not wear disposable coveralls, make sure to have a clean set of clothes to change into after working or rummaging in debris and ashes.

Cloth face coverings, paper masks or bandanas are not effective at filtering out fine airborne ash, dust or asbestos fibers. N95 and KN95 respirators, if properly fit tested and worn, can offer some protection from airborne particles. See more about masks in next section.

Don't use a leaf blower to clean up ash. It will create more airborne particles. Ash must be adequately wetted to control dust that can become airborne. Water may not always be available, but it is one of the most important means to control ash and asbestos. When cleaning with water, please ensure water containing ash is not washed into the stormwater system or into surface waters. Water containing ash can cause water quality issues.

Children should not be involved in cleanup activities. Do not let children near the debris or in an area where they might breathe airborne particles left from the fire.

Wash any recovered personal items with water or wipe with a damp cloth to remove potentially toxic dust ensuring water containing ash is not washed into the stormwater system or into surface waters. Water containing ash can cause water quality issues.

Before cleaning up ash and other debris, get the material tested to determine if it contains asbestos. Many homes and buildings have materials with asbestos. Asbestos use has decreased significantly over the years, but asbestos still exists in some building materials produced today. If it contains asbestos, hire a licensed asbestos abatement contractor.

Clean recyclable materials such as metals and concrete with water prior to transport, if possible. This is to reduce the spread of asbestos or other contaminants in the ash. When cleaning with water, please ensure water containing ash is not washed into the stormwater system or into surface waters. Water containing ash can cause water quality issues.



Household chemicals may be dangerous to handle, so take care before handling paints, bleaches, oils or other household hazardous wastes that may be partially burned.

Call your local garbage hauler or transfer station with questions about waste disposal.

Masks and respirators:

Cloth face coverings, paper masks or bandanas are not very effective at filtering out fine airborne ash, dust or asbestos fibers. This is because they typically do not have a tight fit around the face. However, they are good for minimizing the release of droplets that help spread COVID-19.



N95 respirators, if properly fit tested and worn, can offer some protection from airborne particles. Otherwise they may create a false sense of security. N95 respirators, are currently in short supply and being reserved for health care workers due to COVID-19.

KN95s are similar to N95s. Some are NIOSH approved, but do not meet health care standards. Like N95s, KN95s need to fit well enough to form a seal and be properly worn. Some individuals may have more difficulty getting them to fit properly and seal as well as an N95. Learn how to get a proper fit. If you use a KN95 respirator, then it needs to be on the FDA-approved list. To check the list, visit [FDA's Personal Protective Equipment EUAs page](#), and scroll to "Appendix A: Authorized Imported, Non-NIOSH Approved Respirators Manufactured in China."

If N95 and KN95 respirators are not available, and you must go to a place with ash and debris, use a face covering that covers the nose and mouth and fits snugly against the sides of the face. Face coverings made of two to three layers are better than those made of one. With any respirator or face covering, make sure that you can breathe comfortably and take breaks away from debris and ash as needed.

Before you rebuild or begin demolition

State rules govern various aspects of managing and removing asbestos, and these rules are in place to protect public health. Refer to guidance from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, **prior to starting any demolition activities**. They can be reached at the asbestos.notice@wyo.gov address.

Generally, ash and debris can be presumed to contain asbestos and must be abated properly. Depending on the situation results, DEQ can help you determine the appropriate next steps.

Any fire damaged asbestos containing material is considered friable and must be removed by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor.

Need advice on how to properly dispose of household hazardous wastes such as bleaches, cleaners, paints or oils? The Solid & Hazardous Waste Division (SHWD) of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (WDEQ) is at 307-777-7937.

If you need assistance with the inspection or replacement of septic systems, contact **WDEQ Water Quality Division**. Replacing a damaged septic system requires a [Small Wastewater Facility General Permit](#), from them.

Meadowlark Work Day
Sunday, July 25
8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Meadowlark Ski Resort above Tensleep

The Meadowlark Work Day, Sunday, July 25, from 8 to 2, at the Meadowlark Ski Resort above Ten Sleep on Hwy 16 is a community event where volunteers will do fuel reduction work around at-risk structures and infrastructure at the resort.

Participants should wear working clothes, including long pants and sturdy shoes (work boots are best), and bring gloves, sunglasses, and sunscreen. We will be moving branches and other forest debris into piles that will be burned during the winter. People can take firewood from the day's efforts; however, they will have to have a valid Forest Service firewood permit.

This Work Day is a cooperative effort by Bighorn Basin Firesmart, Meadowlark Ski Lodge, Bighorn Ski Patrol, Technical Forestry Services, Tensleep Nowood Trailbreakers, and Wild Moon Services.

For more information on this event, visit the event page on our website at:

<http://bighornbasinfiresmart.com/event/meadowlark-work-day>

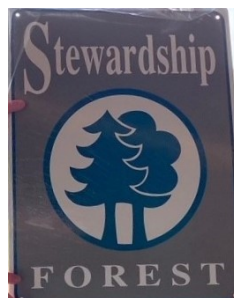
THE 6/25/2021 LANDOWNER FIELD DAY

Report submitted by Kelly Norris, Wyoming State Forestry District 5 District Forester.

June 25th Wyoming State Forestry District 5 hosted their annual Landowner Field Day. True to form for the Bighorns, the late June day was cold and wet; but the weather didn't deter this dedicated group of private forest landowners and resource professionals!

Topics covered at the event included improving communication during emergencies to private landowners, project updates from local resource agencies, and welcoming of new stewardship and certified family forests! Thank you to all those who were able to make this event. State Forestry looks forward to another safe and productive year working with private forest landowners on their forest management goals.

Certification by the American Forest Foundation Tree Farmers program was awarded to Charles and Lynne Newcomer, and Pete Suhit property (Brian Fees). And these folks were rewarded by the Wyoming State Forestry Division for their efforts as Stewardship Landowners: Jack Marton; Sharon and Jerry Shane; Bob and Kay Fritzler; Shirley Rodgers/Michelena Family; Ed and Nancy Myers; and Jeffrey Ware.



The 54 landowners and resource professionals who attended.

LOCATIONS FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON WILDFIRES IN WYOMING

The Cody Dispatch Center Website and Wyoming wildfire information:

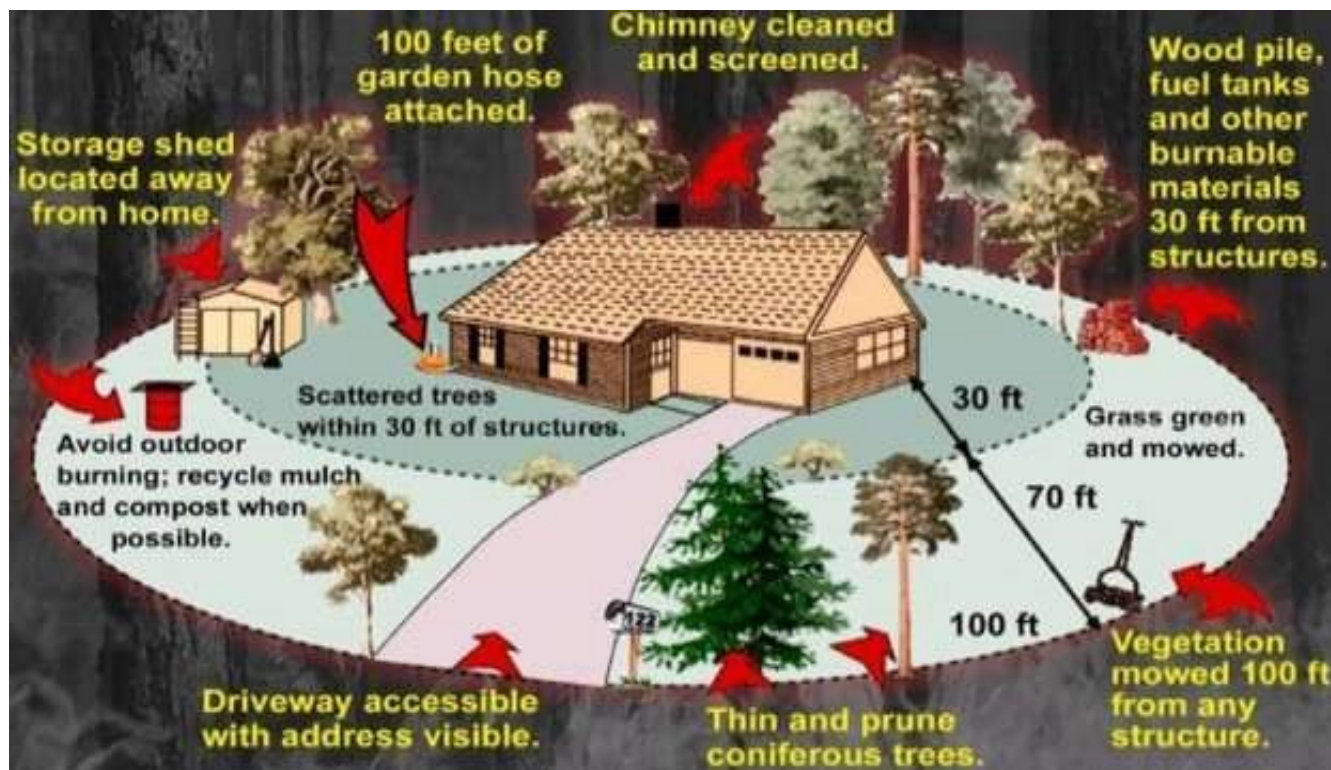
https://gacc.nifc.gov/rmcc/dispatch_centers/r2cdc/information/fire_information.htm

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

Bighorn Basin Firesmart: <http://bighornbasinfiresmart.com/wheres-the-fire>

YOUR HOME IGNITION ZONE (HIZ)

THIS PAGE IS A REMINDER OF THE BASIC PARTS OF MAKING YOUR HOME OR CABIN FIRESMART DURING THIS AND OTHER WILDFIRE SEASONS. YOU HAVE ALL SEEN SIMILAR DIAGRAMS IN FIRESMART NEWSLETTERS AND OTHER FIREWISE PUBLICATIONS, BUT THE 2021 FIRE SEASON IS PREDICTED TO BE A HOT ONE, SO YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THIS PICTURE WHILE YOU TOUR THE HIZ OF OUR CABIN OR HOME.



Reducing fuels in the Defensible Space has three parts:

Remove or reduce the tinder—fine materials (leaves, needles, grass) that can be ignited with a match.

Remove the kindling—small and medium sized woody material.

Isolate or reduce the heavy fuel—thin concentrations of trees, and remove dead plant material, including lumber and other wooden construction material.

This reminder is shared with you by Chris Weydeveld, Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator.

A FEW MORE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER



Leaves around a heat pump and against house wall. If ignited, this ember trap would cause damage to the heat pump and electrical connections, or even blow fire into the house.



Fire around this window well cover could/would melt the plastic cover, and put flames in the well right by a wooden window.

Bird nest by weathered wood eaves.



Juniper (or any other shrub or tree) against the house wall. While this is a brick-sided house, the eaves are flammable wood which would quickly put fire in the attic if ignited.



← Flammable items on the wooden porch or deck adjacent to a wooden building wall.

