



# BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



## BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #46 — SPRING 2023

### WASHAKIE COUNTY FIRESMART UPDATE

Washakie County was unsuccessful this year in obtaining a CWSF/WUI (Firewise) grant, which is administered through the Council of Western State Foresters. The grant application submitted by Washakie County Firesmart asked for funding to complete the second phase of the 102-acre Winchester Fuels Project, allow the Bighorn Basin Firesmart public outreach program to continue for the next three years, and fund the Firesmart Coordinators position. Wyoming only submitted one CWSF/WUI grant application this year. Washakie County also submitted a Community Assistance for Adjacent Lands (CAFA) grant for 2023, and is waiting to hear if that application is successful.

The Winchester Fuels Reduction Project encompasses a 102-acre area of private land along the Bighorn River in the community of Winchester at the southern edge of Washakie County. The area has seen a dense buildup of Russian olive, tamarisk and other fuels including dead and down woody materials. All the invasive Russian olive and tamarisk is being removed, as well as the down and dead woody materials. Much of the removal occurs with the use of a mastication head on a skid steer which reduces the materials to a mulch layer. The funding is split between the USDA Forest Service CWSF/WUI 2018 Washakie County Firewise Grant, and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund. Collaborators include the Chatham Ranch, the Worland Fire Protection District, Washakie County Weed & Pest, and the Wyoming State Forestry Division. The contractor selected for the work is Coop's Forestry Spraying & Mulching out of Sundance. Page three has BEFORE and AFTER photos of the 25 acres of the Winchester Fuels Reduction Project completed to date.

Firesmart information and all newsletter issues are available at:  
[www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com](http://www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com)

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## THE WINCHESTER FUELS REDUCTION PROJECT

This treatment removes all the invasive Russian olive and tamarisk as well as the down and dead woody materials. Much of the removal occurs with the use of a mastication head on a skid-steer, which reduces the materials to a mulch layer. The skid-steer mastication head is picture in the lower right photo.

Below are before and after photo comparisons:

Before



Figure 1 WINCH2022-PhI project area looking north. TFS photo 4/29/2020

After



Figure 2 WINCH2022-PhI project area looking north. TFS photo 3/14/2023

Before



Figure 3 WINCH2022-PhI project area. TFS photo 4/29/2020

After



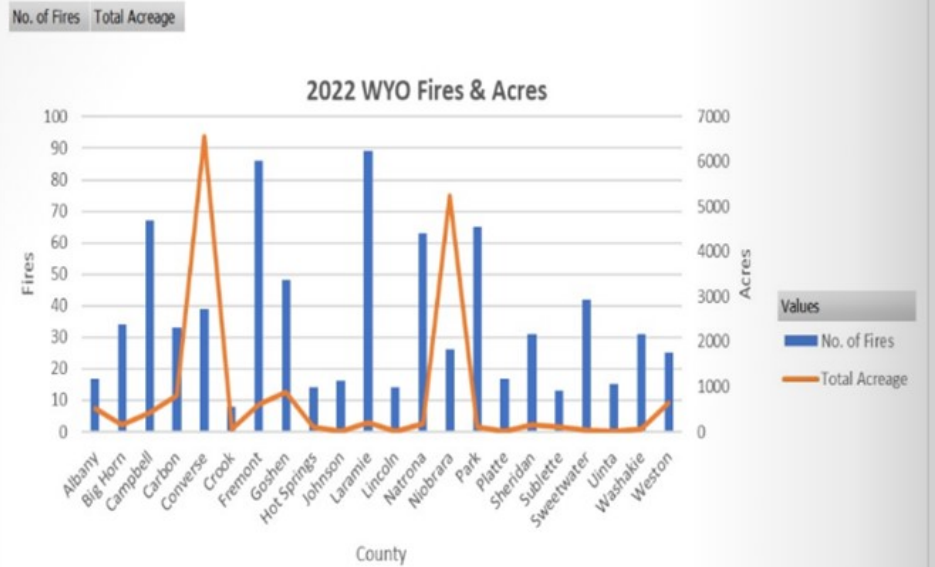
Figure 4 WINCH2022-PhI project area. TFS photo 3/14/2023



## 2022 WYOMING WILDFIRE ACTIVITY ON NON-FEDERAL LANDS

### Fire Management: 2022 Fire Season

- Below average fire season
- 2022 Fire Season: 768 fires for 16,354 acres statewide on non-federal lands. (Some duplication on numbers between federal and non-federal lands)
- 6-year average; 919 fires & 122,448 acres



### State Fire Assistance (SFA)

- Consolidate Payment Grant: \$2,791,516
- State Fire Capacity: \$1,954,308
- Volunteer Fire Assistance: \$340,105
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (BIL): \$382,772
- Cooperative Fire Assistance: \$50,172
- State Fire Assistance: \$ 286,260
- Volunteer Fire Assistance: \$46,340

Class	# of Fires	Acres	% of Fires
Class A 0.25 acre or less	314	28.31	40.9
Class B 0.26-9 acres	382	736.56	49.7
Class C 10 -99 acres	55	1,462.38	7.2
Class D 100-299 acres	7	967.11	0.9
Class E 300-999 acres	5	1,961.00	0.7
Class F 1000-4999 acres	3	6,190.00	0.4
Class G 5000+ acres	2	5,009.10	0.3
	<b>768</b>	<b>16,354.46</b>	

### A REMINDER PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE FOOTHILLS OBSERVER OF FREMONT COUNTY FIREWISE

## Don't Start a Fire with Your Vehicle

Many only think of lightning strikes or un-doused campfires as sources for wildland fires.

These are causes of wildland fire, and here lately, the left behind campfire is a big one. But we also know that human caused fires from other sources are significant causes.

It has been almost one year ago when the Sheepherder Hill Fire on Casper Mountain is suspected to have been started by ATV traffic in the area.

Hunting season here is just getting started, and the season brings with it two

things that make fire risk higher: Dry grass and more folks using the private and public lands.

Vegetation in August, September, and October are at perfect condition to create very fast moving wildfire.

So take the time to use good judgment and common sense this fall. Try not to drive in tall dry vegetation, and never park in vegetation which could touch any of the under side of the vehicle.

Remember, new vehicles all are designed to burn fuel cleaner. But in doing so, they need to clean the particles out of the exhaust system



and when they unannounced do so, the particles can be blown out into dry vegetation at a bad time.

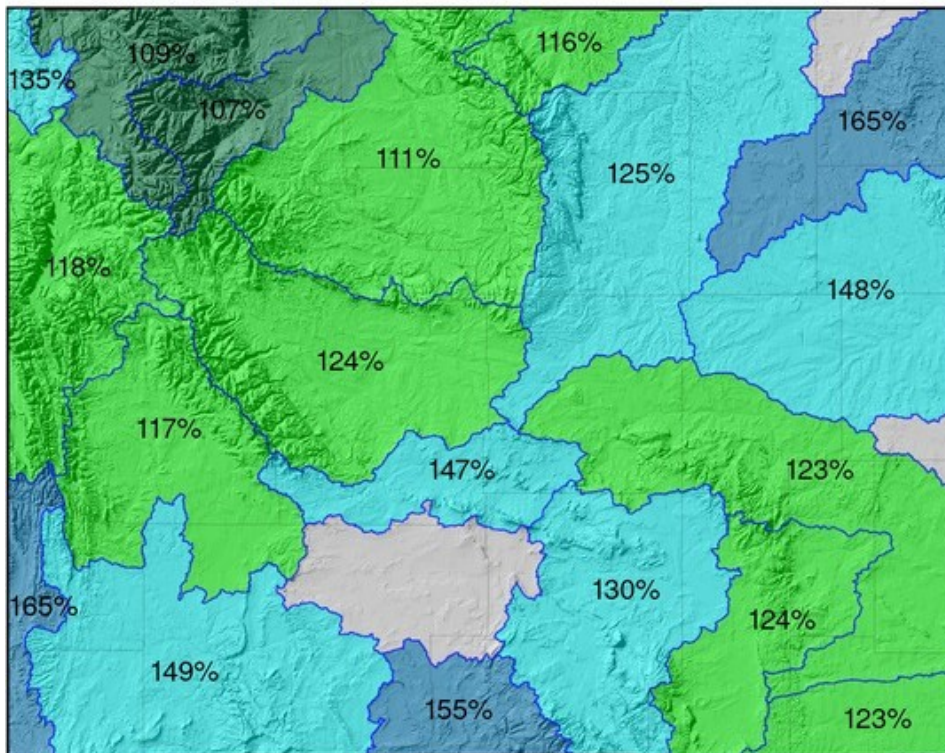
People usually don't intend on starting 99% of all human caused wildland fire. Take time to think about your actions, and be sure they meet your intentions.

Avoid unintentional wildfire!



## 2023 WYOMING WILDFIRE PREDICTIONS AS OF THE END OF MARCH

Snow Water Equivalent Percent of Median (1991-2020) 10 Apr 2023



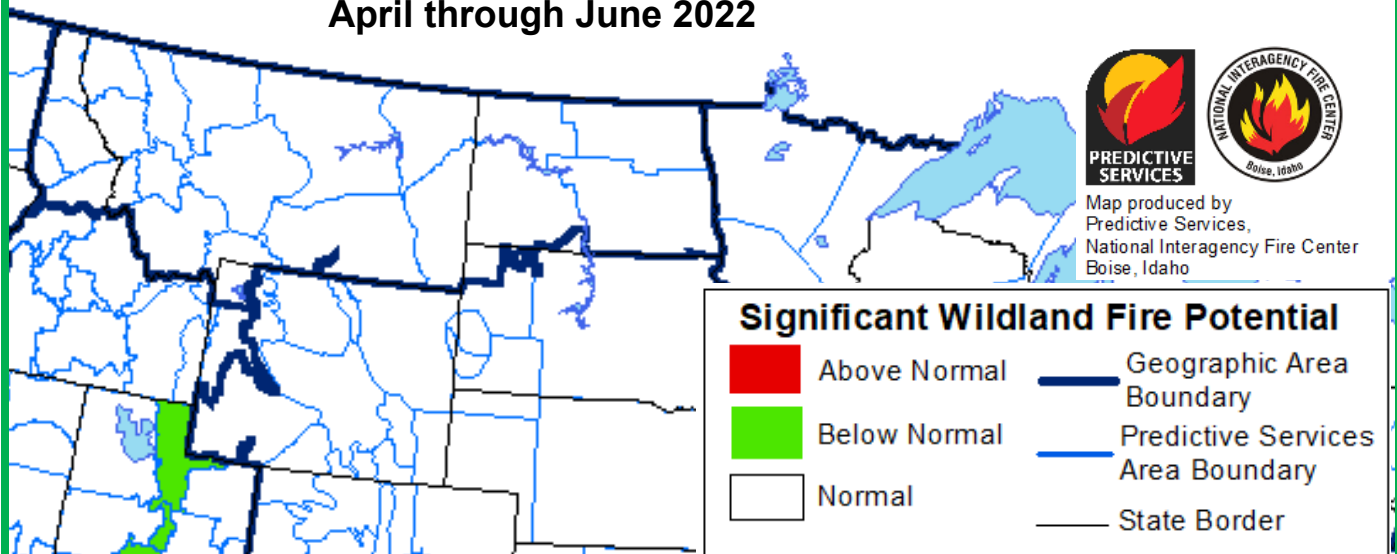
A wet winter and spring boosted snowpack to above-average levels in the state. This has removed the Drought Monitor readings for the Bighorn Basin, at least temporarily, to "None."

This contributed strongly to the Wildland Fire Potential prediction for April through June to a "Normal" level as shown on the map below.

You still need to do your annual (See Page 7) pre-season Firesmart checklist!

## Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook

April through June 2022



### Junipers

More information from Fremont County's [Foothill Observer](#)

Junipers are very often thought of as a very desired plant for ornamental landscaping.

In the fire world, they are referred to as "little green gas cans". This is because it is extremely easy to ignite the plant due to the accumulation of fine dead needles under the plant

canopy. Once ignited, the plant itself burns very vigorously, and generates a very intense fire with lots of heat and tall flames. It really does not matter if it is a bush or tree, except that the bigger the plant, the bigger the fire.

Junipers should never be located within 30 feet of a

structure, and should be thinned out to at least a 30 foot crown spacing.

It is recommended that juniper bushes be removed from all fuel treatment areas since they cause fires to ladder easily into other trees and brushes.



Fremontcountyfirewise.com



Fuels treatments between Canyon Creek Country cabin lots, as accomplished during the 2022 Annual Workday.



The above is an example of the Firesmart tree thinning and fuels treatment work done during the annual Canyon Creek Community Work Day that has been a late summer activity for several years. A full day of residents, kids to grandparents, typically participate. Besides a community lunch, the Washakie County fire folks do refresher training on the fire trucks stationed at that community.

#### FROM WYOMING WEED AND PEST

##### 6 WAYS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

1. CLEAN FOOTWEAR, CLOTHES, PACKS, AND PETS BEFORE AND AFTER EXPLORING OR HUNTING.
2. CLEAN HORSES' HOOVES AND FEED THEM WEED-FREE CERTIFIED HAY BEFORE YOUR ADVENTURE.
3. CLEAN, DRAIN, AND DRY YOUR WATERCRAFT, AND ANGLING GEAR.
4. CLEAN TRAILERS AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLES TO REMOVE MUD, PLANTS, AND HIDDEN PESTS BEFORE TRAVELING.
5. BUY CERTIFIED HEAT-TREATED FIREWOOD WHERE YOU PLAN TO BURN IT OR GATHER IT ON SITE WHEN PERMITTED.
6. LEARN ABOUT INVASIVE SPECIES IN YOUR AREA AND REPORT THEM IF FOUND.



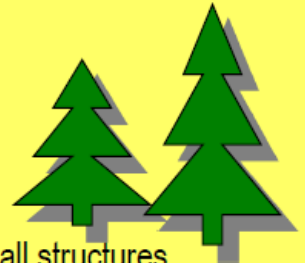
Pro tip: *Stay on designated trails to prevent introducing more invasives to common areas.*

## ANNUAL PRE-FIRE-SEASON FIREWISE WALK-AROUND CHECKLIST

*Once a home or cabin has been made Firewise, the owner can't sit back and enjoy it. Vegetation will continue to grow, and human activities will change the situation on an irregular basis.*

### 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
- \_\_\_\_\_ Move your conveniently-placed winter woodpile to more than 30 feet from all structures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check/replace the batteries in your emergency alert radio
- \_\_\_\_\_ Inspect your powerline for branches within four feet in all directions
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check window screens for a tight fit, and patch any holes
- \_\_\_\_\_ Remove leaf and needles between the boards of decks, and under any decks and porches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check walls and foundation for fresh bird and animal holes, and patch appropriately
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 and guests
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you are interested in keeping current on wildfire activity in Wyoming or the country, check out the websites mentioned below, and move 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



**EVERYTHING ON THIS PAGE IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO BE REPEATED EVERY YEAR.**

## 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](http://www.inciweb.org)**



## A FEW LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER



Even if your window wells are covered, they still tend to collect leaves, bird nests, and other trash. A periodic cleaning is recommended to remove flammable materials.



Use glass skylights; plastic will melt and allow embers into the home.



And it's not just what is outside your buildings. The *photo to the left* shows windblown leaves in the corner of a garage or shed. If the door is open, doesn't fit tight with the walls or floor, or has wide cracks, this is a good spot for embers to catch the building on fire. Sweeping and a workshop vacuum cleaner can do a good job removing this hazard.



Weathered lumber piled against a building.



Cured grass in contact with an outside wall