



BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART



BIGHORN BASIN FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

ISSUE #47 — FALL 2023

WELCOME TO THE LAST BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART

The Firesmart project funding for the Bighorn Basin has expired, and Technical Forestry Services (TFS) participation with it. After this 47th edition, Bighorn Basin Firesmart will go extinct after thirteen years. All issues will be available on the www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com website until December 31st.

Starting in 2005, the program has been active in the Bighorn Basin. A listing of the accomplishments can be found in www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com until that closes December 31.

All of this was the result of cooperative efforts of the Bighorn National Forest, Wyoming State Division of Forestry, all of the county Fire Wardens, the Bureau of Land Management, local forest treatment contractors, and the Operating Groups who assisted in the creation and periodic revision of the County Community Wildfire Protection Plans for each county.

Most of the funding for the program came from federal sources through the Wyoming State Division of Forestry, with some assistance from the individual counties and cities.

Contact the Wyoming State Forestry Division in Riverton, or your County Fire Warden for future Firesmart assistance.

A listing of newsletters #1 through #47 topics and articles can be viewed at the Firesmart website until that closes Dec. 31st.

It has been a pleasure providing you with Firesmart tips and information to make your home and cabin survivable in a wildfire, plus updates on fuels treatments and other projects funded by this program.

George W. Wynn Newsletter Editor

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

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<u><i>Page 8 is the cover for the report on the nineteen years of Bighorn Basin Firesmart/Firewise activity. The full report is available in the website mentioned above.</i></u>		

FROM THE AUGUST 2023 WILDFIRES ON MAUI

During the recent wildfire on the Hawaiian Island of Maui, severe drought and hurricane-related winds created a fire that burned through the little town of Lahaina, destroying an estimated 2,200 buildings in that town of about 10,000 residents. Contributing factors included only ten engine companies of firefighter (less than seventy firefighters) on the entire island, and dried dense introduced grasses around the town. Any online search shows the devastation and the house mentioned below.

One large wooden house in the part of town hit hardest by the fire was documented as surviving the fire. Credit for that survival was given to:

- A metal roof clear of debris. It was reported that the intense ember storm from burning buildings had set fire to asphalt roofing on some surrounding buildings.
- All vegetation around the home had been removed and replaced with paving stones, so there were no fuels near the house.
- The exterior walls were well-maintained.

Nothing in the various reports indicates that the homeowners had done any of this with the intent of making the structure "fireproof" or survivable in the event of a wildfire. All had just been done as their renovation of this 100-year-old home.

HOMEOWNERS INSURANCE CARRIERS UPDATE

Several things are happening with home insurance companies around the country. Some carriers are leaving certain states, or not selling new home insurance policies in those states, citing "soaring construction costs," and/or increased wildfire risk, as two reasons. Others are just raising rates to levels far above what others around the country are paying. And it isn't just in areas with anticipated wildfires. Portions of states where hurricane and other natural disasters have raised insured losses are also included in rising costs and company pull-outs.

In some locations, companies have stopped insuring older manufactured homes against total fire loss. Since lenders require carrying total loss insurance on homes, this has caused problems for home-buyers and owners of existing manufactured homes.

While Wyoming has few tornados, and no hurricanes, the effects of the above cost and loss increases can be anticipated.

The good news is that some carriers in some locations can provide insurance at lower rates if the home has (and maintains) the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) in a Firewise/Firesmart condition that would increase the wildfire survivability of that home or cabin. Page Seven includes diagrams of Firesmart HIZ.

<u>HOLIDAY GATHERINGS</u>	<u># OF HOME COOKING FIRES</u>	<u>% ABOVE AVE. FIRES/DAY</u>
Thanksgiving	1,630	250%
Christmas Day	740	59%
Day Before Thanksgiving	740	59%
Easter	670	43%
Christmas Eve	650	40%

Source: National Fire Protection Association, based on fires reported to U.S. fire departments in 2018

WINCHESTER PROJECT BEFORE PHOTOS—THE NEXT PAGE HAS AFTER PHOTOS



Before photo of the WINCH2022 Fuels Reduction Project. A dense concentration of Russian olive and tamarisk can be seen in the background of photo. November 8, 2022. TFS Photo.



Before photo of the WINCH2022 Fuels Reduction Project. A dense concentration of Russian olive and tamarisk can be seen in the background of photo. November 8, 2022. TFS Photo.



Before photo of the WINCH2022 Fuels Reduction Project. A dense concentration of Russian olive and tamarisk can be seen in the understory of the cottonwood in the background. November 8, 2022. TFS Photo.

Many issues of Bighorn Basin Firesmart have reports and similar photo sets for the numerous other fuels reduction projects completed during the nineteen years of project work funded in the counties, mostly with monies from a variety of sources. The individual projects are listed in the **Bighorn Basin Firesmart 19 Year Summary –2005 to 2023** (See Page 8) document in the website

www.bighornbasinfiresmart.com

WINCHESTER PROJECT AFTER PHOTOS—THE PREVIOUS PAGE HAS BEFORE PHOTOS



After photo following fuels treatment during which Russian olive and tamarisk was removed by contractor with funding and technical support from the USDA Forest Service, Washakie County Fire, Washakie County Weed & Pest, Wyoming State Forestry Division and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund. May 25, 2023. TFS Photo.



After photo following fuels treatment during which Russian olive and tamarisk was removed by contractor with funding and technical support from the USDA Forest Service, Washakie County Fire, Washakie County Weed & Pest, Wyoming State Forestry Division and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund. May 25, 2023. TFS Photo.



After photo following fuels treatment during which Russian olive and tamarisk was removed by contractor with funding and technical support from the USDA Forest Service, Washakie County Fire, Washakie County Weed & Pest, Wyoming State Forestry Division and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund. Ranch buildings are seen in the background in the center and the right in the photo. May 25, 2023. TFS Photo.



A CLOSE-UP OF WINCHESTER FUELS BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS



Before photo of the WINCH2022 Fuels Reduction Project. A dense concentration of Russian olive and tamarisk can be seen in the background of photo. November 8, 2022. TFS Photo.

Another Firesmart project completed recently was the Tolman Ranch Sagebrush Fuels Reduction. Here are Before and After photos.



After photo following fuels treatment during which Russian olive and tamarisk was removed by contractor with funding and technical support from the USDA Forest Service, Washakie County Fire, Washakie County Weed & Pest, Wyoming State Forestry Division and the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund. The Bighorn River is seen in the far background. May 25, 2023. TFS Photo.



BEFORE sagebrush fuels reduction.

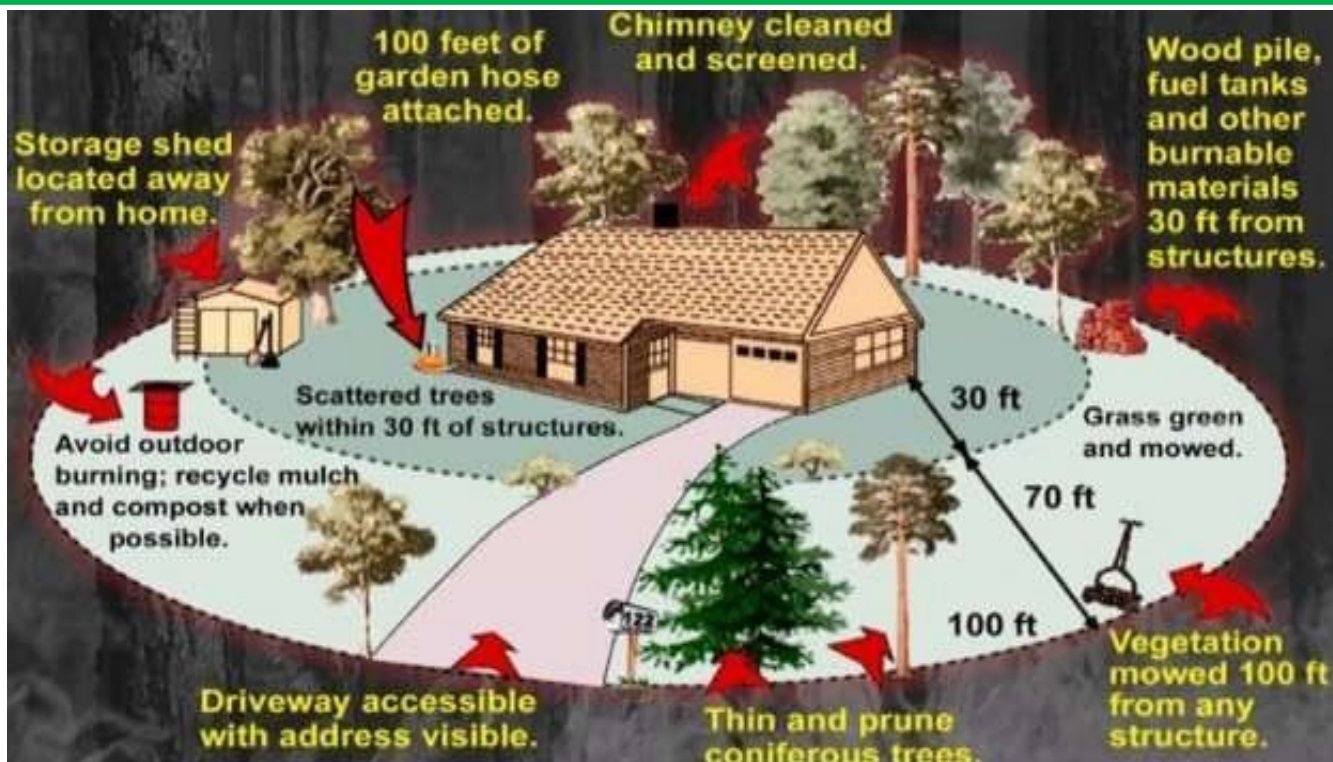


AFTER sagebrush fuels reduction. This *reduced* sagebrush, not eradicated it.

This is shared by Chris Weydevel, retiring Washakie County Firesmart Coordinator.

YOUR HOME IGNITION ZONE (HIZ)

THIS PAGE IS A REMINDER OF THE BASIC PARTS OF MAKING AND KEEPING YOUR HOME OR CABIN FIRESMART DURING FUTURE WILDFIRE SEASONS. THIS HAS THE LAST THINGS YOU NEED TO BE REMEMBERING AS BIGHORN BASIN FIRESMART IS RETIRED WITH THIS ISSUE. YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THESE PICTURES 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.

Bighorn Basin Firesmart - Program Highlights 2005 to 2023

Bighorn Basin Firesmart

19 Year Summary

2005 to 2023



This report developed by Washakie County Firesmart in cooperation with:

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