

WILDLAND FIRE REALITIES

KNOW YOUR RISK AND PREPARE

The hourglass burn scar on the west side of the Tarryall Range dates back to the 20s or 30s. Fire has occurred in this area for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Knowing this is important - it is not IF, but WHEN, the next fire will occur.



BEING PREPARED WHEN THE FIRE STRIKES IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Fire is inevitable in our region. Because of this, it is essential that you are prepared.

Have an Escape Plan

Plan different ways to get out of the wildland fire area. It is hard to predict which way a fire will travel, at what speed and intensity and how thick the smoke may be. Write your plan down and put it in multiple vehicles, by the door and on your electronic devices. A good plan will include:

- A designated emergency meeting location outside the fire or hazard area. This is critical to determine who has safely evacuated from the affected area.
- Several different escape routes from your home and community. Practice these often so everyone in your family is familiar in case of emergency.
- An evacuation plan for pets and large animals such as horses and other livestock.
- A communications plan that designates an out-of-area friend or relative as a point of contact to act as a single source of communication among family members in case of separation. (It is easier to call or message one person and let them contact others than to try and call everyone when phone, cell, and internet systems can be overloaded or limited during a disaster.)
- Assemble an emergency supply kit for each person, as recommended by the American Red Cross - learn more at www.ready.gov.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your phone and in your emergency supply kit.
- If you must leave a pet or livestock behind, make sure they are not locked in. Ensure they have identification: microchip, tags, brands, etc.

What to expect when you are evacuated

- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood. Use your Escape Plan to decide these locations before a disaster.
- If you have a car, keep a full tank of gas in it if an evacuation seems likely. Keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case of an unexpected need to evacuate. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.
- Become familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency.
- Leave early.
- Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.
- Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads or bridges and downed power lines. Do not drive into flooded areas.
- If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. Make arrangements with family, friends or your local government.
- Take your emergency supply kit unless you have reason to believe it has been contaminated.
- Follow local evacuation instructions.
- Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. [Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.](#)
- Find the evacuation center, even if you have another place to spend the night - often this center will have information and updates available.

Websites to know - www.parkco.us

Sign up for the Park County Emergency Notification System @ <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/F9FB36CB1C0D>

AFTER THE FIRE



Flooding and Debris Flows

2002 Hayman Fire

Examples of the force of water and flooding after the fire. All of the pictures on this page are the result of flood events after the 2002 Hayman Fire.

Wildland fire denudes the surface of the forest, often times increasing the potential for flooding and debris flows. **Know the Risk and be Prepared!**

Did you know that just a few inches of water from a flood can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage, flash floods often bring walls of water 10 to 15 feet high, or that a car can easily be carried away by just two feet of rushing water? Flooding and debris flows after a fire are very common. Please follow these guidelines to prepare. For more information, visit www.ready.gov.

- Listen to the radio or television for information.
- Be aware that flash flooding can occur. If there is any possibility of a flash flood, move immediately to higher ground. Do not wait!
- Be aware of streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. Many small drainages that have never seen a drop of water pre-fire can turn into torrents after.

If you must prepare to evacuate, you should do the following:

- Secure your home. Move essential items to an upper floor.
- Turn off utilities at the main switches or valves if instructed to do so. Disconnect electrical appliances. Do not touch electrical equipment if you are wet or standing in water.

If you have to leave your home, remember these evacuation tips:

- Do not walk through moving water. Six inches of moving water can make you fall. If you have to walk in water, walk where the water is not moving. Use a stick to check the firmness of the ground in front of you.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If floodwaters rise around your car, abandon the car and move to higher ground where water is not moving or not more than a few inches deep. You and the vehicle can be swept away quickly. If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water, stay in the vehicle. If the water is rising inside the vehicle, seek refuge on the roof.
- Do not camp or park your vehicle along streams, rivers or creeks, particularly during threatening conditions. If you are located in a flood-prone area, you may even consider parking away from your home.



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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TODAY!



Home protection starts with you!

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANNING UPDATE

The original Park County CWPP was created in 2007. The plan identified areas at risk and areas where work was needed. In 2015 the CWPP was updated. This handbook was created from this process, with you in mind.

It is very easy to convince yourself that you, your property and your home are not at risk to burn in a wildland fire. But if you live in the Wildland Urban Interface: You Are! Consider that this area is prone to, and has seen, frequent high intensity fires over the past century. Let's be very clear: live trees, grasses, flowers and shrubs burn in fires. Sheds, barns and garages burn in fires. Houses burn in fires. The homes that burned in the Waldo Canyon fire were in areas considered

to be at moderate risk for fire. Over 346 homes burned. 509 homes burned in the 2013 Black Forest Fire. In each of these fires, the homes that did burn were often not in the highest risk categories. Rather, many were in the low to moderate risk areas. Recent fires have taught us that even when we think we are safe, we are not!

A draft version of the plan is available @ www.parkco.us.



A home is fully engulfed during a fire in 2014. This house was not destroyed due to direct flame contact, but by the incursion of embers.

TAKE ACTION!



ACTIONS YOU CAN AND SHOULD TAKE NEAR YOUR HOUSE

ACTION 1 - APPLY D-SPACE PRINCIPLES TO YOUR HOUSE.

Defensible space gives firefighters room to work around your house. That is, if the fire is on the ground when it gets to your house. Start first nearest the house, then build the area of treatment and reduced fuels out - for more information please visit <http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/home-and-landscape/defensible-space.aspx?sso=0>

ACTION 2 - REPLACE AGING DECKS WITH NONCOMBUSTIBLE PATIOS.

Decks spell death to a house. The lumber spontaneously ignites - much faster than a live tree. There is a lot of discussion around the country about banning decks on all new construction in favor of noncombustible patios. During the Hayman fire homeowners were extremely lucky that the fire crews had chainsaws. They saved homes by cutting the inflamed decks off. During wildland fires, decks often fall more frequently than trees.

ACTION 3- CLEAN YOUR HOME'S VENTS WEEKLY.

Soffit vents, eave vents and dryer vents allow fire to enter a home - a fact we did not know 10 years ago. Now we know the dry duff around a vent ignites quickly, from one hot ember, and follows the vent inside. You don't want

to come home to a burned house with all the trees and landscaping intact.

ACTION 4 - REVIEW YOUR FENCES AND REPLACE WITH NONCOMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS.

Wooden fences are another source of home ignition in areas where homes are close together. When the fence connects to a wood deck, the risk increases. Consider installing noncombustible fencing nearest your home.

ACTION 5 - LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT YOUR RISK AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MINIMIZE IT.

Please visit the following websites to learn more:

Colorado State Forest Service - <http://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/>

Fire Adapted Communities - <http://www.fireadapted.org>

Cal Fire - A great resources for defensible space information - http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible_space/

Ember Aware - Often home ignitions occur from flying hot embers, not direct flame contact - <http://www.livingwithfire.info/be-ember-aware>

Park County Emergency Notification System - <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/F9FB36CB1C0D>

ACTIONS TO TAKE ON YOUR PROPERTY

ACTION 1 - MANAGE YOUR FOREST LIKE YOU WOULD MOW YOUR LAWN. Forests are living, breathing entities. They provide shelter from the wind and sun. They provide for the numerous animals and birds that we enjoy viewing. Forests purify the water and hold the soil, but they also provide fuel to the fire. A properly managed forested tract can be beautiful, productive and safe for you and your community. Here are some quick ideas of where to start.

ACTION 2 - CUT NON-ASPEN TREES OUT OF YOUR ASPEN GROVES. Aspen stands (groves) are naturally fire resistant. Live aspens hold so much water that they can drastically alter fire behavior and intensity.

Aspen are relatively short-lived; they live for approximately 80 - 100 years. Because aspen have been on the decline in the West for several years due to disease and insects, cutting out all conifers not only helps to reduce your fire risk, but also can help to regenerate new shoots. Aspen depends upon disturbance (such as fire or cutting) to regenerate and thrive. You should consider your desires for your property when planning for any type of forest management, such as, wildlife habitat, unique topographical influences, aesthetics, living privacy barriers, etc.

For a very detailed analysis of aspen and management ideas please

visit http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_rm/rm_gtr119.pdf

ACTION 3 - REMOVE LADDER FUELS.

Young coniferous trees can act as a ladder fuel, carrying a relatively low intensity surface fire into the trees. By removing these trees from your forest, you are limiting the chance a fire will climb into the crowns. Small diameter trees are only a problem if they create a ladder to the larger trees. Often, small trees can be maintained when they are in open areas or away from other trees or structures.

ACTION 4 - REMOVE "JACKPOTS."

Remove accumulated woody materials, or jackpots, such as piles of tree branches and logs from your property.

ACTION 5 - CREATE FUEL-FREE ZONES.

Consider the installation of driveways, lawns and other low combustible design elements into your property. Fire has a hard time traveling through a gravel road!

ACTION 6 - CREATE SPACE BETWEEN SINGLE AND GROUPS OF TREES.

Allow room for trees to grow and space them out. Consider that flame length is often estimated at 1.5 - 2.5 times the height of a tree. If a tree or group is 100' tall, the ideal spacing would be approximately 150' - 250' between groups or single trees. Please be aware that topography and weather may dictate larger spacing.

TAKE ACTION!



Protect your home, then the land

After you have hardened your structure and followed D-space principles within Zone 1 (out 30' from your house), begin to modify fuels in Zone 2 & 3 (30-100' for Zone 2 and 100-200' for Zone 3)

For more
information
visit
firewise.org

When planning any forest management activity, consider discussing the options with your local Colorado State Forest Service office - <http://csfs.colostate.edu>

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS

Colorado has seen its share of wildfires. They have destroyed homes, devastated communities and disrupted the way of life that we have come to love about this place. Please take the time to review this document, prepare and protect what we all have come to call home.

Special thanks to the following entities that were involved in the Park County Community Wildfire Protection Plan update and this Homeowners' Guide.



WILDFIRE REALITIES

A PUBLICATION OF THE PARK COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE
PROTECTION PLANNING COMMITTEE

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