A User Reference Guide to the

Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program

Table of Contents

Introduction and Purpose 1

About Firewise 2

What is Firewise Communities/USA? 3

Facts About Firewise Participation 6

Focus on the Home Ignition Zone 7

How the Pieces Fit Together 10

The Community Assessment 10
The Firewise Board 14
Community Action Plan 14
Firewise Event 14
— Choosing the Right Event 15
— Planning and Organizing 16
— Covering the Costs 16

Community Assessment Template 18

Application, Recognition and Renewal 22

Firewise Communities/USA Application Form 27
Maintaining Momentum: The Renewal Process 29
Firewise Communities/USA Renewal Application Form 31
Volunteer Sign Up Sheet 33
Volunteer Time Sheet 35
Volunteer/In-Kind Tracking Sheet 37
Matching Funds Form for Homeowners 39
Guidelines for Submitting Photos 41

Encouraging Firewise Participation 43

Firewise Project Achievement Award Application 45
Community Protection Achievement Certificate Application 49

Contacts, References and Resources 51

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Introduction and Purpose

This guide is provided as a general reference and resource for those interested or planning to become a recognized Firewise community. If you are a homeowner, community resident, community developer or planner, you will learn that wildfires can occur without disastrous loss of life, property and resources.

This guide was designed to give you a handy, portable reference for your work in supporting the growth and effectiveness of the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. While information and resource material on the program exist in many formats, this guide brings all of the important information together for your use.

In addition to providing the rationale and research behind the program, we have included tips and tools for you to use and information about the recognition and renewal processes. We hope this guide will also motivate you to communicate your successes, challenges, and good ideas back to national program staff. We want to hear from you about what will make the program most effective in helping residents of fire-prone areas take action toward greater wildfire safety and compatibility with wildfire environments.

The guide is divided into the following sections:

- *Program Criteria, Background and Basis*
- *Action Strategies for Assessment and Community Engagement*
- *Application and Renewal Process*
- *Contacts, References and Resources*

The guide includes a new template you can use for conducting community assessments, as well as examples of Firewise activities and projects that help communities meet the recognition criteria and their local fire risk needs.

Thank you for your commitment and your work toward making our nation safer from wildfire threats.

Michele Steinberg
Firewise Communities Program Manager

About Firewise

NFPA's Firewise Communities Program is intended to serve as a resource for agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments, communities and residents across the United States who are working toward a common goal: reduce the loss of lives, properties, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings.

The Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping and maintenance.

The Recognition Program was designed as a tool that forestry and fire service professionals can use to work with residents toward wildfire safety.

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program was designed as a tool that forestry and fire service professionals can use to work with residents to obtain voluntary compliance with existing wildfire safety rules, as well as to motivate community action toward wildfire safety in the absence of strict ordinances or laws. The Recognition Program encourages and acknowledges citizen involvement in reducing community wildfire risk.

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES™

What is Firewise Communities/USA?

With little or no preparation before a wildfire event, communities lose much.

With adequate planning and cooperation among varying interests, wildfires can occur without disastrous loss of life, property and resources. This is the vision of the Firewise Communities program and can be especially applied to its recognition process.

The Firewise Communities goal is to promote community–wide participation in the use of technology, policy and practices that minimize the loss of life and property to wildfire, independent of firefighting efforts. The Firewise Communities/USA program is seamlessly contained in this goal, as communities learn when they begin the recognition process.

With little or no preparation before a wildfire event, communities lose much. However, with an action plan and regular attention to community wildfire mitigation, wildfire can occur with little to no lasting effect on homeowners. This fact has been illustrated repeatedly around the United States. You can find updated information on Firewise "saves" on the Firewise website at www.firewise.org.

Homeowners learn about home ignitability so they can create their own, unique solutions to their wildfire mitigation challenges.

The fact is that wildfires will continue in the wildland/urban interface (the WUI) as an ecological phenomenon. And communities will continue to be affected by them. While wildfire management agencies would like to help homeowners avoid home loss, all are aware that most houses are located on private property. What happens around them occurs at the discretion of the homeowners affected. Landowners understandably prefer to make choices related to their surroundings. Often, they are under the impression that there is nothing they can do….or that wildfire mitigation is too difficult for them or prohibitively expensive.

Firewise Communities/USA provides up-to-date, take-action information to homeowners and communities that helps them change this situation. Residents who participate in the Firewise process create an action plan that commits them to a sustained program of wildfire mitigation that is generally both physically doable and cost-effective. The homeowners learn about home ignitability so they can create their own, unique solutions to their wildfire mitigation challenges.

When people understand there is something they can do, they are more apt to act. They search out more information to validate what they have already learned. One of the most important things Firewise Communities/USA participants learn is that neighbors can help neighbors—and that they are often inextricably linked together in their mitigation solutions.

One of the benefits of participating in the Firewise Communities/USA program is that communities receive continuing support because of the communication that occurs among the Firewise Board, the local fire department and state or federal wildfire agency representatives. The action plan created by each community is implemented via annual Firewise Day events (local mitigation activities) and, thus, wildfire readiness improves in the long term.

Firewise Standards

To qualify as a Firewise Communities/USA recognition site, a community must have met five standards:

1. *Complete a community assessment and create a plan*
2. *Form a Firewise Board*
3. *Hold a Firewise Day event*
4. *Invest a minimum of $2/capita in local wildfire mitigation projects. (Volunteer hours, equipment use, time contributed by agency fire staff, and grant funding can be included)*
5. *Submit an application*

How the Standards Are Met?

A Firewise representative schedules a site visit and performs a community assessment

- Successful Firewise Communities/USA candidates generally self-select, contacting the Firewise liaison either via telephone, e-mail, or in person. (See www.firewise.org/usa for a list of State Liaisons.)
- The state, tribal or federal Firewise representative schedules a site visit, often coordinating it with local fire officials.
- A community assessment is performed, either by the state liaison, his/her designee, or an accepted assessor such as a fire department or other partner.
- Community activists create a local Firewise board or committee. This is generally composed of a variety of homeowners. Fire staff participate as invited guests.
- The state, tribal or federal Firewise representative or his/her designee presents the community assessment to the Firewise board.
- The Firewise board uses the information in the assessment to create an agreed-upon, area-specific action plan for the community. The state, tribal or federal Firewise representative or designee approves the plan.
- The Firewise board works with the community to complete its first action item and holds a Firewise Day event (the action and the Firewise Day event can be simultaneous).

- The Firewise Communities/USA application is downloaded from www.firewise.org/usa, completed and submitted to the state, tribal or federal Firewise representative, along with supporting documentation.
- Firewise Communities/USA status is renewable annually upon completion of that year's action item/Firewise Day. Renewal forms are available at www.firewise.org/usa.

How Large Should a Recognition Site Be?

The recommended size for a community approximates that of a homeowners association

The size of a Firewise Communities/USA site is not governed by an arbitrary, fixed rule but rather by the limit of its effectiveness. The recommended size for a participating Firewise Communities/USA site approximates that of a homeowners association. Successful Firewise Communities/USA participation requires commitment from homeowners and residents. No two communities have the same social dynamics and, thus, no two communities have to be the same size for a successful program. However, communities beyond the traditional neighborhood size generally have difficulty meeting the effectiveness and individual engagement criteria required for a long-term commitment to wildfire mitigation. Cities and counties lose their neighborhood identity, and thus their homeowner activism across that size of community. Successful, long-term, participating communities are those where homeowners and residents are engaged in reducing their home ignition potential.

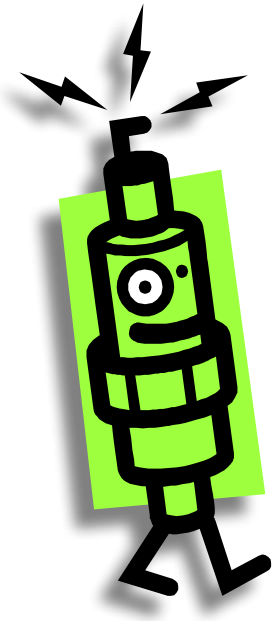
Successful communities are ones where residents are engaged in reducing home ignition potential

Keeping in mind that there is no "official" size for a Firewise Communities/USA site, the following tips can be used as guidelines in determining whether a community is of an appropriate size to maintain itself as a long-term, active Firewise Community/USA:

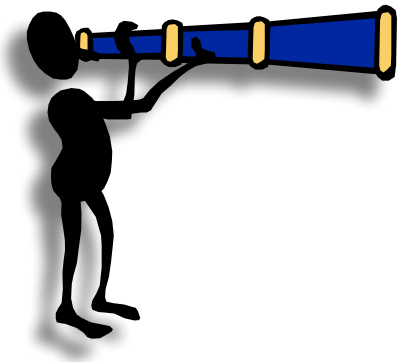
- *The community functions effectively as a unit*
- *Neighbors are able to work together on a wildfire mitigation project*
- *Most residents are willing to take part in a Firewise Communities action plan*
- *Neighbors can organize without depending on municipal or agency guidance.*

State, tribal and federal agencies can facilitate homeowner engagement before a wildfire. If a wildfire occurs, they can then effectively use the opportunities that neighbors' participation in Firewise Communities/USA creates.

Facts About Firewise Participation



A small percent of the population will be the spark plugs



Most residents will watch as the assessment is completed and the plan is written

The Firewise Communities/USA process benefits communities as well as WUI fire responders. Participants become problem solvers; communities develop improved, beneficial relationships with emergency responders. Firewise Board members, along with local fire staff, learn to work together to create a strategy. The process builds community spirit and resolve. And, most importantly, local wildfire readiness is improved.

It's important to know that the Firewise Communities/USA process develops in a predictable pattern in each new community, following a behavioral concept known as the diffusion process. This refers to the spread of a new idea from its introduction to its final general acceptance. Categories of the population follow:

Innovators – 3%

Early Adopters – 13%

Early Majority – 34%

Late Majority – 34%

Laggards – 16%

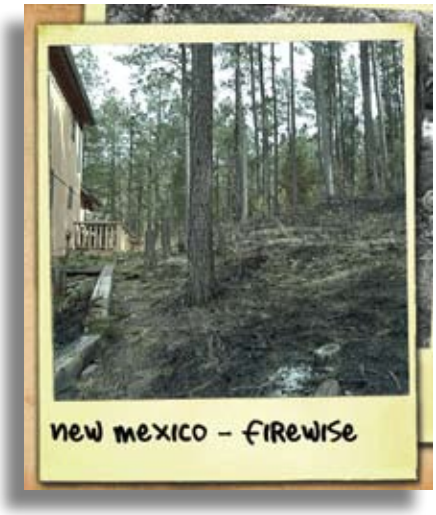
What this means with respect to participation with the Firewise Communities/USA process is that a very small percentage (approximately 3%) of the population will initially play an active role. They are the spark plugs. Most of the residents will watch as the assessment is completed and the plan is written. When the first event is staged, if 25% of the population participates, that is very acceptable. Most of the community will still be watching. When they see that action is being taken, and that it is for the good of the community, more will participate in the second event. Assuming the organizers have created a simple, doable plan, participation will increase each year thereafter.

Focus on the Home Ignition Zone

The Home Ignition Zone Affects the Neighborhood

- Wildfire is a natural part of our world's ecosystem. Wildfires will happen—exclusion is not a choice. The variables in a wildfire scenario are when the fire will occur, and where. The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program addresses the wildfire-related characteristics of communities. Participating sites learn about their collective exposure to wildfire as it relates to community—and individual—home ignition potential. Firewise Communities/USA does not focus on specific homes, but engages the community as a whole in finding workable, agreed–upon solutions to their specific wildfire issues.

The Home Ignition Zone includes the house and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 200 feet.



Fire burned very close to this home in New Mexico without igniting the wood walls.

- The home ignition zone principally determines the potential for home ignitions during a wildfire; it includes a house and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 200 feet. Community residents can reduce the risk of destruction during a wildfire by taking actions within their home ignition zones. The Firewise Communities/USA program teaches homeowners HOW home ignitions can occur under severe wildfire conditions and how these ignitions might be avoided within the home ignition zones of affected residents and affected communities.
- A house burns because of its interrelationship with everything in its surrounding home ignition zone—the house and its immediate surroundings. To avoid a home ignition, a homeowner must eliminate the wildfire's potential relationship with his/her house. This can be done by interrupting the natural path a fire takes. Changing a fire's path by clearing a home ignition zone is an easy-to-accomplish task that can result in avoiding home loss. To do this, flammable items such as dead vegetation must be removed from the area immediately around the structure to prevent flames from contacting it. Also, reducing the volume of live vegetation will reduce the intensity of the wildfire as it enters the home ignition zone.

Supporting Research

- Wildfire research supports the importance of a well-prepared home ignition zone. Two studies of home survival during California wildfires have provided us with the following information. Each study was conducted in an effort to discern why some homes survived wildfire and others did not. Assuming a house did not have a flammable roof:
  - In the 1961 Belair/Brentwood Fire, 95 percent of the structures that maintained 30 to 60 feet of clearance survived. (Stanford Research Institute)
  - In the 1990 Painted Cave Fire, 86 percent of structures survived if they maintained at least 30 feet of clearance. (University of California – Berkeley)
- During the 1998 International Crown Fire Modeling Experiment held in the Northwest Territories (Canada), researchers learned that a crown fire must be less than 100 feet from a structure to ignite a wood wall. At 33 feet, heavy char and a few ignitions occurred. At 66 feet, there was no char or scorch.

Importance of the Home Ignition Zone

- What this research shows us is that by modifying their home ignition zones, homeowners have the opportunity of keeping crown fire away from their structures by bringing it to the ground when it enters the area. Within the home ignition zone, an interior "fire-free" zone should be established that encircles the structure and all its attachments (including attached fences and decks), going out at least three feet. This reduces the opportunity for firebrands to collect in vulnerable places.

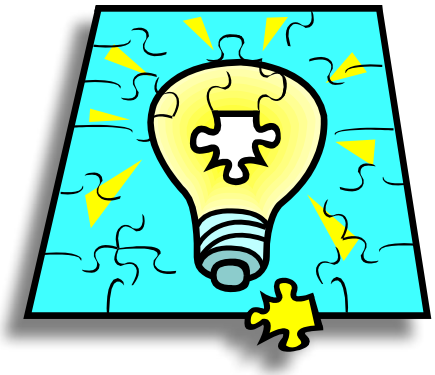
How the Home Ignition Zone is Integral to Community Survival during Wildfire

- Wildfire behavior is dominated by the residential characteristics of a community. The good news is that by addressing community vulnerabilities, residents can substantially reduce their exposure to loss. Relatively small investments of time and effort will reap great rewards in wildfire safety.
- By changing the character of the home ignition zone, *a homeowner can alter the path of a wildfire for his/her property*. By changing the character of the community's ignition zone, *residents have the opportunity to alter a wildfire's path for an entire community*. This is what Firewise Communities/USA is all about.

Flammable vegetation leading to deck

After mitigation work, deck is less likely to ignite

How the Pieces Fit Together



The components of the Firewise Communities/USA process fit together like a puzzle:

- **Community Assessment** – provides basic information to the community so the Firewise Board can create an action plan.
- **Firewise Board** – takes responsibility for ongoing design and execution of Firewise activities in the community.
- **Community Action Plan** – provides its residents with things they can do to lower their wildfire risk.
- **Firewise Day Event** – annual activity that carries out a portion of the community action plan and raises awareness throughout the broader community.
- **Recognition Status** – acknowledges and encourages ongoing community commitment.

In this way, all the pieces fit together so that recognition status can be achieved.

Community wildfire mitigation is a long-term commitment. Firewise Communities/USA recognizes program participants for their ongoing efforts to make their neighborhoods safe.

1. The Community Assessment

Having a the community assessment completed is the first step in the process of achieving Firewise Communities/USA recognition status. This important program component provides critical wildfire information to homeowners within the potential recognition site. A specific assessment format is not required, but the program recommends the following assessment style.

The community assessment is a document that paints a picture of the structures (their materials and design) in relation to the surrounding vegetation. The assessor also considers whether with respect to vegetation, as those factors determine a wildfire's intensity.

The assessment should provide community residents with an easy-to-understand document that familiarizes them with the way ignitions are likely to occur during a wildfire. It should explain and illustrate common strengths and vulnerabilities with respect to wildfire risk. The assessor must have knowledge of the community, including its likely severe-case wildfire characteristics, its geography, its vegetation, and any social considerations that would affect agreed-upon community solutions.

To conduct a community assessment, plan to spend one and a half days in the data-gathering phase. The assessor should let the community leaders

and local fire department know he/she is coming, and invite them to ride along, at their convenience. The assessor should be knowledgeable regarding historic wildfire activity in the area, either by reviewing agency data and/or by communicating with other jurisdictional fire staff. To conduct the assessment, a vehicle, a road map, pad and pencil, and a digital camera will be necessary.

Data gathering is divided into three segments—each corresponding to a drive-through of the community. Use the following structure as a guide:

Meet with interested homeowners and local fire staff to discuss the assessment process.

Morning, Day One. The purpose of the first segment is to get a general 'feel' for the community. Meet with interested homeowners and local fire staff, early morning at a spot within the site in order to discuss the assessment process and listen to residents concerns. If possible, get one of the residents or a fire department staff member to take the assessor to a high point within the community to get an overview of the area for a photographic record. If no overview exists, photograph several representative groupings of homes. When taking photographs, avoid including house numbers or street names in the pictures. Drive SLOWLY along as many roads as possible, stopping to photograph, as convenient.

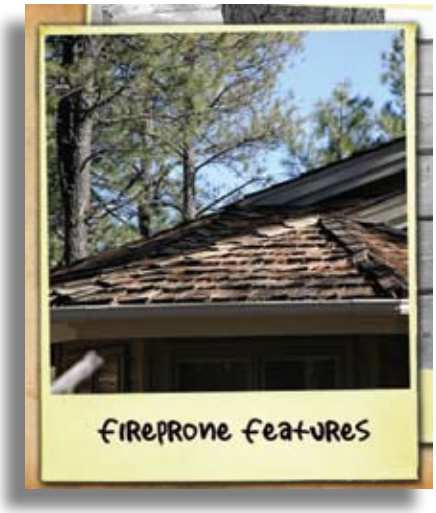
Afternoon, Day One. The purpose of the second data-gathering segment is to identify common vulnerabilities related to the community's ignition potential and to photograph representative examples of them to use in the written assessment document. For this, the assessor must return to the site. Again, drive as many roads as possible….slowly. If the community has a green belt or common area(s), include it in this phase of the data gathering. Look carefully at the homes within the community and their relationship to each other relative to wildfire. For example, are they sufficiently close to share home ignition zones?

Identify things residents are doing RIGHT with respect to wildfire mitigation. This provides homeowners with local Firewise models.

Morning, Day Two. The purpose of the third data-gathering segment is to identify things residents are doing RIGHT with respect to wildfire mitigation. This phase is important because it provides homeowners with local models as the Firewise Board develops its action plan. Spend several hours driving through the community again, with the intent of identifying and photographing good wildfire mitigation examples for use in the written assessment.

Preparing the community assessment can be accomplished by making use of the assessment template provided on page 18 of this guide. The sections below correspond to each of the sections of the template:

1) **Introduction.** Use the template provided, adding a second paragraph that names other individuals and agencies that participated during the data-gathering phase.



Use of flammable roofing materials

2) **Definition of the Home Ignition Zone.** Use the template. This information is provided as educational information for the Firewise Board that will read and study the assessment.

3) **Description of [Size and Nature of] the Severe Case Wildland Fire Characteristics that Could Threaten the Area.** Use the template. Add a description of the anticipated severe-case wildfire that could threaten the area. It is important that homeowners understand its characteristics, as this knowledge will assist them in creating an effective plan to modify its path.

4) **Site Description.** Include information about dominant vegetation types, topography, community size and age, bordering public lands, etc.

5) **Assessment Process.** A succinct paragraph providing the when's, where's, why's and how's of what happened during the data gathering.

6) **Important Considerations.** Use the template paragraph. Add information and photographs describing at least three common issues that are likely to affect ignitions during a wildfire.

7) **Observations and Recommendations.** General observations made during the data-gathering phase should be itemized. Support with explanatory text and digital photographs. Examples include (but are not limited to:

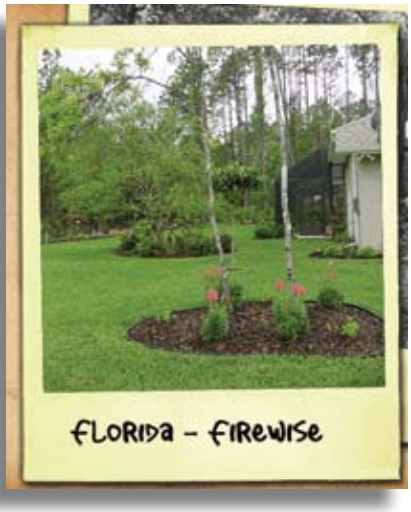
- Use of flammable roofing materials
- Overlapping home ignition zones
- Placement of homes with respect to topography (e.g., at the top of a bluff)
- Dense/unhealthy vegetation
- Locations of trees and heavy vegetation in relationship to homes
- Flammable vegetation in direct contact with houses

Attached wooden decks

Flammable vegetation in direct contact with house

- Leaf/needle build-up on roofs/gutters
- Attached wooden fences/decks (Remember that if it is attached to the house, it is part of the house….to a wildfire.)
- Flammable furniture/cushions on decks or porches
- Vinyl soffits

8) **Successful Firewise Modifications.** Use template paragraphs. Itemize the good examples within the community, using photographs and explanatory text. Examples include (but are not limited to):
   - Firewise landscaping
   - Use of fire-resistant native vegetation
   - Firewise construction materials
   - Fire-free space surrounding the structure
   - Use of stone and/or other non-flammable building components for walkways and driveways
   - Thinned vegetation
9) **Next Steps.** Use the template provided. This section provides the community with the procedure it needs to follow in order to continue with the Firewise Communities/USA recognition process.



Firewise landscaping

It is important to stress the benefits of removing dead vegetation from the home ignition zone and reducing the volume of live vegetation found there. Also important is relating the advisability of keeping concentrations of fuel (like firewood) at least 30 feet from the structure.

One of the goals of a successfully prepared assessment is to provide the community with information that makes it clear that their neighborhood can become the firebreak.

Every effort should be made to prepare the written assessment within a month of completing the data-gathering phase. The community's interest will be high then.

The assessor should present the assessment to the Firewise Board, providing them with three or four hard copies and an electronic file (such as PDF), if possible. This will give them the ability to copy it and distribute it widely within the community. During the assessment presentation, the Board members should understand the concept of home ignition zone modification and that the community has the power to modify its 'community ignition zone'. The assessor explains the assessment and its findings. It is the task of the Board to create solutions that will work for the community.

Contact your state Firewise liaison to initiate an assessment of your community. See the list at www.firewise.org/usa.

For more background on conducting community assessments, visit the *Firewise Learning Center* for a free online course at www.firewise.org.

2. The Firewise Board

Interested homeowners should dominate the membership of the Firewise Board. Fire staff is welcome, but its membership is 'honorary' because fire staff serves in an advisory capacity only.

Present the community assessment to the Firewise Board

The Firewise Board is the entity that receives the community assessment document. Using this document—and the fire staff as a resource, if necessary, the Board prepares an action plan that contains agreed-upon, area-specific solutions to their WUI fire issues. The Firewise Board generally welcomes the presence of fire staff at its meetings. However, it is critical that the group identify its own mitigation solutions to ensure follow-through.

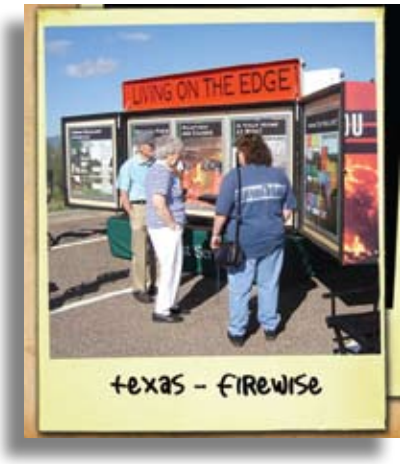
Once the plan is created, the Firewise Board is the entity that implements the action items. This is accomplished by completing a minimum of one action item per year, usually through its "Firewise Day" or other Firewise event. The Board is also responsible for submitting the annual renewal form upon completion of that year's action item. (To maintain Firewise Communities/USA status, annual renewals must be received by the national Firewise Communities program staff by December 31 each year.)

3. Community Action Plan

The community plan is generally a simple action plan, comprised of at least three agreed-upon, doable action items that will improve the site's wildfire readiness. It is created from information contained in the community assessment. Some communities create extremely elaborate plans and some good plans are very unsophisticated. All are acceptable. What is necessary within the plan is the identification of doable action items by the Firewise Board. The action plan can be modified with the passage of time.

4. Firewise Event

Firewise events are a required step in the Firewise Communities/USA process. They are the implementation of the action items contained within the plan created by the local Firewise Board, and are an excellent opportunity for neighborhood/fire agency collaboration. They learn to work together to create a strategy and can develop beneficial relationships with emergency responders. The process helps them to build community spirit and resolve, and – most importantly – to improve their wildfire readiness. Holding a "Firewise Day" or conducting projects that address issues in the community's action plan helps residents put the program concepts into action.



Staging an effective education day

The events facilitate the social change required in order to make neighborhoods safer with respect to WUI fire.

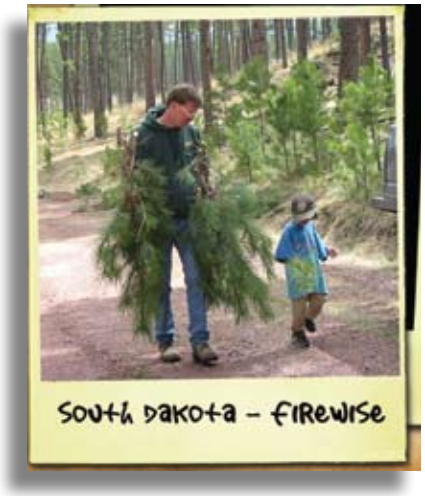
Firewise events are intended to be fun. Projects are community-oriented, and of a scale that they can be accomplished by neighbors working together. Eating, laughing and getting to know each other is a subsidiary benefit of becoming Firewise. These events have proven themselves to build community spirit and pride. While participation in Firewise events is not mandatory, it's generally true that the percentage of homeowners becoming involved with the mitigation projects increases each year.

— Choosing the Right Event

What kind of events work? Who can help with them? What sort of resources and/or funding are needed? Can residents apply for grants or other funding?

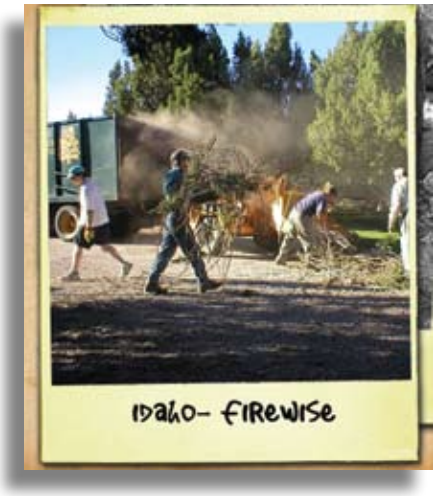
The Firewise Board determines the most suitable events for its community. Each event is based (1) on the Board's understanding of the community relationship and (2) its relationship with local fire staff. Events respond to the needs of the community and its locale. Example events include:

- **Chipping Days.** For these events, homeowners provide the vegetation to be chipped, either by delivering it to a common site or by placing it along the roadside. The Firewise Board contracts for a chipper and crew or works with a local agency to provide one. Chipping days require a budget of approximately $300 if a chipper and operator is to be secured for a day.
- **Fairs/Education Days.** To stage an effective education day, the Firewise Board will need to acquire such things as printed handout materials, demonstration equipment, Firewise landscaping examples and other visual or tangible materials that can help convey Firewise concepts to participants. Some Boards work with local merchants and/or the fire department to provide 'extras'. One good source of handout materials is the Firewise electronic catalog (www.firewise.org/catalog), which requires only a small shipping and handling fee.
- **Common Area Clean-up.** Events focusing on common open space in the community or edges of roadways may require chain saws or heavy equipment if a fuel break is being created. Volunteer labor is often sufficient, depending on the scope of the event. Organizers should think about how to remove vegetation that is cleared.



Everyone can take part in Firewise activities

Firewise Communities/USA events need not be costly. Local volunteers organize them. Food is either brought by community residents or donated by local merchants. Any contribution of time,



Chipping day

Eating and getting to know one another are benefits of Firewise

equipment, or grant dollars is greatly appreciated—and builds a lasting relationship with the affected homeowners.

— Planning and Organizing

While Firewise events are planned and organized by community volunteers, they appreciate help from local merchants, fire staff, or other agency staff. Fire and forestry agencies can provide "sweat equity" loan equipment, or in some cases assist with covering the cost of such things as a chipper rental. Depending on the type of event, planning will involve organizing volunteers to do the work, creating or obtaining handout materials, securing donations of materials, equipment, labor or funds, publicizing the event, and feeding the volunteers. It may also involve some contracting or paperwork (for example, securing a contract to hire a chipper operator).

— Covering the Costs

Much of the work for most kinds of events relies on residents to organize, offer volunteer labor and provide food and refreshments. A chipping day might cost about $300 to secure a chipper and licensed operator. For fairs or education days, residents can work with local merchants to provide exhibit materials or demonstration. Nurseries, Cooperative Extension Services or home improvement stores might donate material or staff to demonstrate Firewise landscaping techniques or how to select low-flammability plants. The local fire department can demonstrate fire equipment. Educational materials and hand-outs can be obtained for the cost of shipping from the Firewise electronic catalog (www.firewise.org).

Events can be coordinated and conducted with minimal funds, depending on the type of event and the involvement of volunteers. There will be cases where communities are seeking grants, not only for Firewise events but to accomplish larger projects in their action plan. Since a recognized community will have completed a community assessment, a community plan, and some kind of event that supports their commitment to wildfire mitigation, they are in a good position to secure funding if needed. The Firewise Communities/USA home page (www.firewise.org/usa) provides more information on how to go about obtaining grants and other resources. State and tribal liaisons can be invaluable in making the community aware of funding sources in their state or region.

Unexpected Community Benefits

Firewise Communities/USA participants generally find themselves facing unexpected benefits. When they have completed the community assessment, organized their Firewise Board, developed a community action plan, and held their first Firewise event, they are ready to download the Firewise Communities/USA Application form at www.firewise.org/usa and apply for recognition status.

When the homeowners contemplate what they have accomplished, they find that their Firewise homes and landscapes are attractive and welcoming; they have gained a sense of increased safety; they have become acquainted with their neighbors; and they have learned to enjoy and respect their local fire staff.

Firewise fun! Children meet Smokey Bear at Firewise expo

Cleaning up edges of roadways may require equipment and volunteer labor.

Community Assessment Template

This following text is prepared for the use of individuals conducting community assessments as a part of the Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program. It is meant for insertion in those sections of the assessment document.

1) Introduction

The Firewise Communities/USA program is designed to provide an effective management approach for preserving wildland living aesthetics. The program can be tailored for adoption by any community and/or neighborhood association that is committed to ensuring its citizens maximum protection from wildland fire. The following community assessment is intended as a resource to be used by the [name of site] residents for creating a wildfire safety action plan. The plan developed from the information in this assessment should be implemented in a collaborative manner, and updated and modified as needed.

Add a second paragraph, naming participants who assisted with the data-gathering.

2) Definition of the Home Ignition Zone — Use this entire section

[name of site] is located in a wildfire environment. Wildfires will happen—exclusion is not a choice. The variables in a fire scenario are when the fire will occur, and where. This assessment addresses the wildfire-related characteristics of [name of site]. It examines the area's exposure to wildfire as it relates to ignition potential. The assessment does not focus on specific homes, but examines the community as a whole.

A house burns because of its interrelationship with everything in its surrounding home ignition zone—the house and its immediate surroundings. To avoid a home ignition, a homeowner must eliminate the wildfire's potential relationship with his/her house. This can be accomplished by interrupting the natural path a fire takes. Changing a fire's path by clearing a home ignition zone is an easy-to-accomplish task that can result in avoiding home loss. To accomplish this, flammable items such as dead vegetation must be removed from the area immediately around the structure to prevent flames from contacting it. Also, reducing the volume of live vegetation will affect the intensity of the wildfire as it enters the home ignition zone.

Included in this assessment are observations made while visiting [name of site]. The assessment addresses the ease with which home ignitions can occur under severe wildfire conditions and how these ignitions might be avoided within the home ignition zones of affected residents. [name of site] residents can reduce their risk of destruction during a wildfire by taking actions within their home ignition zones. This zone principally determines the potential for home ignitions during a wildland fire; it includes a house and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 150 feet.

The result of the assessment is that wildfire behavior will be dominated by the residential characteristics of this area. The good news is that by addressing community vulnerabilities, residents will be able to substantially reduce their exposure to loss. Relatively small investments of time and effort will reap great rewards in wildfire safety.

3) Description of [Size and Nature of] the Severe Case Wildland Fire Characteristics that Could Threaten the Area

Fire intensity and spread rate depend on the fuel type and condition (live/dead), the weather conditions prior and during ignition, and the topography. Generally the following relationships hold between the fire behavior and the fuel, weather and topography.

- Fine fuels ignite more easily and spread faster with higher intensities than coarser fuels. For a given fuel, the more there is and the more continuous it is, the faster the fire spreads and the higher the intensities. Fine fuels take a shorter time to burn out than coarser fuels.

- The weather conditions affect the moisture content of the dead and live vegetative fuels. Dead fine fuel moisture content is highly dependent on the relative humidity and the degree of sun exposure. The lower the relative humidity and the greater the sun exposure, the lower will be the fuel moisture content. Lower fuel moistures produce higher spread rates and fire intensities.

- Wind speed significantly influences the rate of fire spread and fire intensity. The higher the wind speed, the greater the spread rate and intensity.

- Topography influences fire behavior principally by the steepness of the slope. However, the configuration of the terrain such as narrow draws, saddles and so forth can influence fire spread and intensity. In general, the steeper the slope, the higher the uphill fire spread and intensity.

Add description of anticipated local wildfire event.

4) Site Description

No boilerplate. Include community size and age, bordering public lands (if any), vegetation types and condition, topography and any other pertinent information.

5) Assessment Process

No boilerplate. Describe what occurred in the data-gathering phase in one short paragraph.

6) Important Considerations

The Firewise Communities/USA program seeks to create a sustainable balance that will allow communities to live safely while maintaining environmental harmony in a WUI setting. Homeowners already balance their decisions about fire protection measures against their desire for certain flammable components on their properties. It is important for them to understand the implications of the choices they are making. These choices directly relate to the ignitability of their home ignition zones during a wildfire.

Add information on at least three issues observed in the community. Support with photographs.

7) Observations and Recommendations

No boilerplate. Itemize observations made during data-gathering phase. Explain and support with photographs.

8) Successful Firewise Modifications

When adequately prepared, a house can likely withstand a wildfire without the intervention of the fire service. Further, a house and its surrounding community can be both Firewise and compatible with the area's ecosystem. The Firewise Communities/USA program is designed to enable communities to achieve a high level of protection against WUI fire loss even as a sustainable ecosystem balance is maintained.

A homeowner/community must focus attention on the home ignition zone and eliminate the fire's potential relationship with the house. This can be accomplished by disconnecting the house from high and/or low-intensity fire that could occur around it. The following photographs were taken in [name of site] and are examples of good Firewise practices.

Document with good examples that are explained and supported with photographs.

9) Next Steps

Necessary text

After reviewing the contents of this assessment and its recommendations, the [name of site] Firewise Board in cooperation with the [name of local fire department] will determine whether or not it wishes to continue seeking Firewise Communities/USA recognition. The Firewise Communities/USA representative will contact the Firewise Board representative by [date] to receive its decision.

If the site assessment and recommendations are accepted and recognition will be sought, the [name of site] Firewise Board will create agreed-upon, area-specific solutions to the Firewise recommendations and create an action plan in cooperation with the [name of local fire department].

Assuming the assessment area seeks to achieve national Firewise Communities/USA recognition status, it will integrate the following standards into its plan of action:

- Sponsor a local Firewise board, task force, committee, commission or department that maintains the Firewise Community program and status.

- Enlist a WUI specialist to complete an assessment and create a plan from which it identifies agreed-upon, achievable local solutions.

- Invest a minimum of $2.00 annually per capita in its local Firewise activities. (Work done by municipal employees or volunteers, using municipal or other equipment, can be included, as can state/federal grants dedicated to that purpose.)
- Observe a Firewise Communities/USA Day each year that is dedicated to a local Firewise project.
- Submit an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA. This report documents continuing participation in the program.

Street signs and fire hydrants do not keep a house from igniting. Homeowners should identify the things that will ignite their homes and address those.

Optional text. Use as applicable.

[name of site] residents are reminded to be conscious of keeping high-intensity fire more than 100 feet from their homes. It is important for them to avoid fire contact with their structures. This includes firebrands. The assessment team recommends the establishment of a 'fire free zone', allowing no fire to burn within ten feet of a house by removing fuels located there. It is a bad idea for fire to touch a house during a wildfire. Remember that, while wildfire cannot be eliminated from a property, it can be reduced in intensity.

Homeowners are reminded that street signs, addresses, road widths and fire hydrants do not keep a house from igniting. Proper attention to their home ignition zones does. They should identify the things that will ignite their homes and address those.

Weather is, of course, of great concern during wildfire season. When fire weather is severe, homeowners should remember not to leave flammable items outside. This includes rattan doormats, flammable patio furniture, firewood stacked next to the house, or other flammables.

Application, Recognition and Renewal

Applying for Firewise Communities/USA Recognition – the Fifth Criteria

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA APPLICATION

Communities are ready to apply for recognition when they have met four criteria:

1. Formed a Firewise Board or Committee
2. Accepted an assessment from a WUI specialist and used it to create a plan
3. Held a Firewise Day or event
4. Invested at least $2 per capita in Firewise projects

The fifth criteria is:

5. Submit an annual report to the Firewise program documenting the community's activity

The application form serves as this Annual Report. It must show the following information:

- The name of the community and the state where it is located
- The year in which Firewise work was completed
- Who is on the local Firewise Board/Committee
- Who is the head or chair of the Firewise Board
- The amount invested in local Firewise projects
- The number of residents in the community
- The completion date of the community assessment and who conducted it
- The date the community plan was completed
- The date of the Firewise Day or event
- Contact information for the Firewise board Chair
- Contact information for the local fire department
- Contact information for the local forestry staff

The Firewise state or tribal liaison will receive the application form from the community. The community must also provide the liaison with the following additional information:

- A copy of the assessment that was performed (unless you already have this on file)
- A copy of the plan that was created
- Copies of Firewise Day descriptions, publicity, photos, etc.

Need help with the assessment or application process?

Contact your State Firewise Liaison. Find yours on the list at www.firewise.org/usa.

The application form includes one page for all of the community information and one page for the state forestry agency's official signature. (See the form on page 27).

Once the community provides the completed first page of the application form and accompanying materials to the liaison, the liaison can then forward the application and the signature page to the Firewise program office.

Recognition will apply for the year in which work was completed in the community. Applications must be provided to the Firewise program office by December 31 of the year in which work was completed in order for community work to be recognized.

Calculating Investment

The formula for determining whether the community has met their $2 per capita investment criteria is simple: divide the total dollars invested by the number of residents in the community.

Investment can include cash, equipment costs, in-kind services, rental costs, and volunteer hours.

If a state or federal agency or municipal department contributes cash, personnel time or equipment to a local project, ensure that the investment is calculated for the applicant community only. For instance, a $50,000 grant for an entire county should not be applied towards the per capita investment if the applicant community only received $5,000 worth of services or support.

Divide the total dollars invested in local Firewise projects by the number of residents in the community to get the amount invested per capita.

Several forms are available at www.firewise.org/usa to help communities track their volunteer efforts and in-kind investments. Sample forms may be found on the following pages of this book.

- Volunteer Sign Up Sheet (page 33)
- Volunteer Time Sheet (page 35)
- Volunteer/In-Kind Tracking Sheet (page 37)
- Matching Funds Form for Homeowners (page 39)
- Use the calculator at the Independent Sector website www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html to determine the value of volunteer hours. The hourly rate is updated each year.

Sample calculation in determining volunteer hours and costs incurred for the $2 per capita Firewise investment dollars. (Based on a community size of 1,000 people this example community would need to invest $2,000 dollars ($2.00 x 1000 people) in volunteer hours or equipment to reach their goal. This example exceeded its goal. The total amount of $4,475 should be reported.)

# of Volunteers 20 X # of hours 10 each volunteer = 200 hours

200 hours X hourly rate ($20.25 (2008)) Cost = $4,050

Other Costs Incurred:

Item: Chipper for day	Cost = $ 350
Item: Chain saw for day	Cost = $ 75

Total Monies Expended on Project: **$4,475**

(to be reported on Firewise application and renewal)

Filling Out the Application

Firewise likes to encourage communities to use the electronic application form on the website at www.firewise.org/usa. They can download this blank form and type directly into the blank spaces. Then they can print it out and send it to the state liaison with their accompanying documentation.

If the community would rather fill in the form by typewriter or by hand, we encourage legible type/printing. Firewise program staff will follow up by phone if the information is illegible, but this slows down the process.

Make sure the Chair of the local Firewise board or committee is clearly indicated. This person will be receiving correspondence from the national program on behalf of the community.

On page two of the application, indicate who should receive the recognition materials. Usually this is either the state liaison or a district forester – someone who will later present the signs, plaque and other materials to community residents at a ceremony or formal gathering.

The two-page application, once completed, may be mailed to:

Firewise Communities/USA, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169. Alternately, you may fax it to the attention of Firewise Communities/USA at 617-984-7056. Electronic versions may also be accepted, as long as the signature on page two can be verified.

Now that the application has been sent for a new Firewise Communities/USA site to the national program, what's next?

Materials and Correspondence

Program staff will notify the state liaison that they have received the application. Then they will provide a number of materials to the state liaison and the community:

Metal sign posted at community entrance

A community plaque includes its name and recognition year.

- A welcome letter is sent to the community, with a copy to the state forester or designated representative. Decals to be posted on the signs indicating the year of recognition is sent along with a Media Tool Kit with templates for press releases, fact sheets, and tips for working with the media in print format and on CD-ROM.
- A plaque is ordered for the community with its name and the month and year of recognition. Turn-around time from request to delivery is about three weeks.
- A kit containing metal signs, lapel pins, magnets and other items is shipped out. Usually, this kit and the plaque are sent to the state forester or other designee for later presentation to the community.
- A letter providing a user name and password for the recognized community website area is sent to the community's Board president. This allows them access to special materials and to the area of the online catalog where they can order additional Firewise Communities/USA materials, including extra signs and pins.

Community Stories

Shortly after the community receives all of this material, they will be asked to provide some text and photos so that Firewise staff can post their community story on the website. Staff will follow up with community leaders to obtain this information. Communities can also choose to have a "mailbox" on the website for readers to use in asking them questions about the community's Firewise activities. States and communities can also provide photos for use on the Firewise website Photo Gallery or for print publications. See page 41 for guidance on how to submit photos.

Recognition Ceremonies

A formal recognition ceremony is a wonderful way to acknowledge and celebrate the community's Firewise activities. Different communities like to do different kinds of ceremonies. Some have been held in town halls or the Governor's office. Others have taken place at a seasonal fair or commemorative event. The ceremony can be as large or as small as the community wishes.

Typically, the State Liaison and the community board arrange for the time, place and format of the ceremony so the plaque and materials can be presented. The Media Tool Kit has some suggestions on whom to invite to this kind of event, including the press. It can also be used to

create invitations and publicize the successes of the community. Getting the word out ahead of time can also help get wider recognition – some communities have obtained Governor's or legislators' proclamations for their efforts. In addition, Firewise staff periodically notify governors, US Senators and Representatives, and state legislators about the recognition of communities in their states and jurisdictions.

The actual recognition of a community creates area-wide awareness of their actions and the local wildfire risk, and can generate a "me-too" attitude in surrounding areas. Once a community is recognized, they gain improved rankings in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Planning and Project Grants system. Overall eligibility for grants and other resources may also improve as the community has shown the ability to organize and invest in its own safety.

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA APPLICATION

Complete this form and submit it to your Firewise State Liaison no later than December 31. The Firewise State Liaison must receive copies of the assessment, the community plan and event documentation in order for Firewise processing to occur. Firewise Communities/USA participants are given credit for work completed during the calendar year. If your state has no Firewise State Liaison, contact firewise@nfpa.org for mailing instructions.

The community of _____, in _____County in the state of _____, hereby applies to be officially recognized and designated as a qualified participant in the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program for the year. Members of the community have adopted the following Firewise Communities/USA recognition program standards:

❑ FORMED A FIREWISE BOARD

List Board members and fire agency representative(s), date board was established, meeting dates, and the address, phone number and e-mail of Board President.

Date Established: _____ Address: _____

Meeting Dates: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Board Members: _____ Phone #: _____

Board President: _____ Email: _____

INVESTED AT LEAST $2/CAPITA IN FIREWISE PROJECTS

Total Firewise expenditures, including equipment and volunteer hours: ..... $_____

Number of residents in community: ..... _____

COMPLETED A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Date of assessment: ..... _____

Name and agency/company conducting assessment: ..... _____

Provided a hard copy of assessment to state Firewise representative ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

CREATED A PLAN

Date plan completed: ..... _____

Provided a hard copy of the plan to state Firewise representative ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

HELD A FIREWISE DAY

Date of Firewise Day: ..... _____

Describe the activity including date, time, number of people attending and location: ..... _____

Provided hard copies of any publicity, programs, news coverage and/or other supporting information to the state Firewise representative ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Submitted by:_____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Please provide the following contact information:

District Forestry Contact: _____ Local Fire Chief Contact: _____

Name: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Agency: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Telephone: _____

Fax: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA APPLICATION, CONTINUED

TO BE COMPLETED BY FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA STATE LIAISON OR REPRESENTATIVE:

Complete this form and mail it along with the community's application form (COVER SHEET ONLY) to:

Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program
One Batterymarch Park
Quincy, MA 02169

or fax to (617) 984-7056.

To notify program staff of the pending application or to discuss the application with staff, please send an email to firewise@nfpa.org or call (617) 984-7487.

CERTIFICATION

(To be completed by State Forester or designated representative)

The state forestry office or appropriate official has reviewed the application of the above-named community and determined it has met the five Firewise standards of achievement in wildfire mitigation. Therefore, this applicant should be designated as a Firewise Communities/USA participant for the current calendar year.

Submitted by: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Person who should receive recognition materials:

Name: _____

Agency/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM: RENEWING FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA STATUS

Rationale for Renewal

The renewal each year of a community's commitment to Firewise activity is a key element in the national Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program. By requiring communities to document continued activity, the program serves to reinforce behavior change with respect to wildfire safety. Firewise concepts become ingrained and "normal" because community members are using them on a regular basis. Ongoing, sustained community action is critical to maintain an acceptable level of fire safety because of the nature of the hazard – vegetation grows back, leaves and needles accumulate, and housing ages. A single season of Firewise activity has little to no long-term impact on a community's ignition resistance. Therefore a "one-off" recognition without sustained action would fail to help community residents truly embrace Firewise changes in their neighborhood.

The Renewal Process

Communities can renew their status any time during the year, once they have completed and documented their Firewise event and activity.

Communities can renew their Firewise Communities/USA recognition status whenever they have completed and documented their Firewise event and activity. However, they must submit a renewal form no later than December 31 to be recognized for the year.

The renewal form itself can be completed on-line by recognized communities. This form goes automatically to program staff, who then notify the state liaison of the renewal and process the necessary paperwork.

What's in the Renewal Form

The renewal form helps to verify that the community is continuing its work. It can show if there was any update or changes to the community plan, and it provides an opportunity for communities to tell program staff about increased activity at the local level. The form documents the $2/capita investment for the renewal year, and allows communities to submit any changes to point-of-contact information. A copy of the renewal form appears on page 31.

Timing and Notification

Firewise staff begin reminding State Liaisons and current communities about mid-year that they need to think about renewal, and more frequent reminders occur as the year goes on. Liaisons are encouraged to work with their communities to submit renewal forms on a timely basis. To avoid a year-end rush, we recommend renewing as early as possible. Without the information that communities have renewed, staff will not be able to count them in the roster for the year in the program's yearly report.

Completing and Sending the Renewal Form

Communities can use the online form at www.firewise.org/usa for the easiest format. You'll receive an email with notice of this renewal from program staff.

Alternately, communities can fill out the form (sample on the next page) by downloading it from the Firewise website and mailing it or faxing it to:

Firewise Communities/USA
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, MA 02169
Fax: 617-984-7056

Renewal Facts

- 9 of 12 pilot communities have renewed status since 2002
- 85% of all communities ever entering the program continue to renew their annual status
- Local investment is ongoing and significant: more than $9 million was invested by renewing communities in 2009

Recognizing Renewals

A congratulatory letter is issued to the community upon renewal. There are often press releases issued highlighting the continuity of efforts and new projects in the community. Periodically, special materials are provided to renewing communities.

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA RENEWAL FORM

Complete and submit this form to your Firewise State Liaison no later than December 31. The Firewise State Liaison must receive event documentation and plan revisions in order for Firewise processing to occur. Firewise Communities/USA participants are given credit for work completed during the calendar year. If your state has no Firewise State Liaison, contact firewise@nfpa.org for mailing instructions.

The community of _____, in _____County in the state of _____, hereby applies to renew its participation in the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program for the year _____. The community has maintained the five Firewise Communities/USA recognition program standards.

MAINTAINED A FIREWISE BOARD

List Board members and fire agency representative(s), date board was established, meeting dates, and the address, phone number and e-mail of Board President.

Date Established: _____ Address: _____

Meeting Dates: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Board Members: _____ Phone #: _____

Board President: _____ Email: _____

INVESTED AT LEAST $2/CAPITA IN FIREWISE PROJECTS

Total Firewise expenditures, including equipment and volunteer hours: ..... $_____

Number of residents in community: ..... _____

CREATED A FIREWISE PLAN

Check one:

The community plan remains unchanged and is still in effect: ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

The plan has been changed. A copy of the revised plan has been submitted to the state forestry representative: ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

HELD A FIREWISE DAY

Date of Firewise Day: ..... _____

Describe the activity including date, time, number of people attending and location: ..... _____

Provided hard copies of any publicity, programs, news coverage and/or other supporting information to the state Firewise representative ..... ❑ Yes ❑ No

Submitted by: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Please provide the following contact information:

District Forestry Contact: _____ Local Fire Chief: _____

Name: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Agency: _____ Phone #: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Telephone: _____

Fax: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Email: _____

Remember, renewals can now be processed online at: www.firewise.org/usa and *can be processed at any time during the year* once you have completed your activities. Renewal packages will be sent immediately to renewing communities.

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA RENEWAL FORM, CONTINUED

Submittal Instructions

Firewise Communities/USA renewal forms are to be submitted to the national program office each year by Close Of Business, December 31. Send them to:

Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program
One Batterymarch Park
Quincy, MA 02169-7471
Fax Number: (617) 984-7056

Documentation and back-up materials need not accompany the renewal form. Retain this material for your records.

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA

VOLUNTEER SIGN-UP SHEET

1	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
2	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
3	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
4	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
5	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
6	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
7	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL
8	NAME	TELEPHONE
	ADDRESS	E-MAIL

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date: _____ Location: _____

Volunteers: _____ Hours: _____

Time: _____ Staff Present: _____

Signature:_____

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA

VOLUNTEER TIME SHEET

	DATE	
	NAME OF PERSON/GROUP	
	NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS	
	CONTACT PERSON	
	TELEPHONE	
	ADDRESS	
	E-MAIL	
	NO. OF HOURS WORKED	
	TYPE OF PROJECT	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA

VOLUNTEER/IN-KIND TRACKING SHEET

PROJECT DATE	
PROJECT LOCATION	
TYPE OF PROJECT	
CONTACT PERSON	
TELEPHONE	
ADDRESS	
E-MAIL	
FIRE STAFF PRESENT	
COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS	

VOLUNTEERS: # Vol._____ X # Hours_____ X hourly rate posted at **www.independentsector.org** = $_____

TECHNICAL SUPPORT: # Hours_____ X hourly rate = $_____

COSTS INCURRED (Attach supporting documentation.):

Item _____ Cost $_____

Item _____ Cost $_____

Item _____ Cost $_____

TOTAL MONIES EXPENDED ON PROJECT $_____

COMMENTS:

FIREWISE ACTIVITIES MATCHING FUNDS RECORDING SHEET

Can be used to record activities for matching funds and other Firewise Communities/USA purposes

What qualifies for matching funds for Firewise grants? Any time or money you spend on your home and/or surrounding property for the purpose of reducing the probability of wildfire loss. Examples of activities that will qualify related to homes and outbuildings are:

- Removing trees, brush, grass from around your structures
- Cleaning gutters of pine needles and other debris. Cleaning the roof and clearing anything flammable from within three feet of the base of the structure
- Removing tree limbs less than six-ten feet from the ground around structures
- Replacing a shake-shingle roof with a non-flammable alternative

The following volunteer activities will also qualify for Firewise matching funds. Volunteer time is recorded at the rate posted at **www.independentsector.org**. *(Note, this rate changes each year.)*

- Firewise Board meetings
- Firewise community events
- Family preparation for wildfire

To record your time, fill in the following:

Activity	Date Performed	Amount of Time

To record your costs, fill in the following:

Activity	Date Performed	Attach Invoices

I affirm that the information I have provided on this form is accurate.

Print Name _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Phone/E-mail _____

Return this form to your Firewise Board contact:

Name_____ E-Mail _____

Address _____ Telephone Number _____

Guidelines for Submitting Photographs to Firewise Communities

Firewise Communities welcomes your photographs! There are two ways to make your submittals.

For the firewise.org photo gallery use, submit them to webmaster@firewise.org. Photo resolution should be no less than 72 ppi.

Photos embedded into a word document, although easy to send, are typically too small to use in printed materials and not recommended.

If you would like your photos to appear in Firewise Communities newsletters, brochures or other publications, please use the following guidelines:

1) Photo Format - For print, submit uncompressed TIFFs or JPEGs either the highest quality jpeg but no less than medium quality. If you have the capability to shoot camera RAW, please feel free to do so.
To avoid problems when transferring photos across platforms, (Mac vs PC) name files with only letters and numbers. Avoid using punctuation and accent marks and special characters other than the hyphen and underscore.

2) Resolution - The resolution of your photograph should be at least 6" x 4" at 300 ppi. Please do not apply Sharpening to the file(s) you are submitting. Depending on your camera, set the Image Quality to JPEG Fine or NEF (raw). Pixel Dimensions: use the highest or next to the highest pixel dimension possible. (Note: RAW files are very large and should be submitted on CD or DVD as they as often too large for email.)

3) Delivery - Digital photographs may be delivered on either a CD-R or DVD- R. If you choose to deliver images on a DVD-R, be sure Firewise staff is able to read the format; there are multiple standards. For security of materials when sending CDs or DVDs, use USPS Express Mail, Fed Ex, UPS, etc. Please send to: Firewise, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169.

You may email the photo if both the recipient and sender's internet service providers permit large attachments. You may also compress the images using RLE compression software such as WinZip or Stuffit. Email to: cblake@nfpa.org.

4) Image Names and "What Is it?"– When sending images it is helpful to name them and also to provide a caption for use in publishing. Be sure to provide the name of the person who took the photograph so appropriate credit can be given.

Encouraging Firewise Action

In 2009, Firewise began a new initiative to commend and award projects using Firewise principles as well as for CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plans) where the plan's language uses Firewise principles and/or the Firewise Communities/USA process to address the issue of structural ignitability. Read below for a description of each award and how you can submit an application to nominate a community or project you feel worthy of recognition.

Nominations for both awards will be accepted year-round, with the commendation letters, awards, or certificates issued monthly.

Firewise Project Award

There are many Firewise projects and activities that take place all over the United States. They may include demonstration projects at public sites, a Firewise Home of the Month, or an effort to conduct home-by-home risk assessments. Many of these projects are in places where the community has not yet been recognized as a Firewise Communities/USA site, or are undertaken by entities such as state parks or stand-alone facilities that simply aren't eligible for the recognition because they don't meet the Firewise criteria as a residential community. Firewise wants to recognize all of these great projects, tell people about them, and encourage those doing the work to engage their colleagues and neighbors. And you can help identify these special projects by submitting the application found on page 45.

Mail the completed application to:

Cheryl Blake, Firewise Project, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169 or fax to: 617-984-7056.

Our Favorite Firewise Project!

Please tell us about your favorite Firewise Project.
Fill out and submit this form by email to: cblake@nfpa.org, subject line Firewise Project; Fax to: 617-984-7056; or Mail to: Firewise Project, c/o Cheryl Blake, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169.

**Our project was led by:*

Group Name(s): _____

Individual Name(s): _____

Our project took place in:

Site Name: _____

Community Name: _____

*County Name: _____

*State Name: _____

**Our project involved the following (check as many as apply):*

- ❑ **Brush clearance**
- ❑ **Tree thinning**
- ❑ **Green waste collection or mulching program**
- ❑ **Home retrofits (changing out roofs, screening, windows, or other maintenance/repairs)**
- ❑ **Public education activities**
- ❑ **Risk assessments of individual homes**
- ❑ **Firewise demonstration projects**
- ❑ **Youth involvement or community service activities**

Our project involved some unique features (describe):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*Our project started on_____and ended on _____. (If project is still ongoing, indicate expected end date).

**Please be sure to fill out this line to be eligible for a Firewise award for your project.*

Thank you for telling us about your favorite Firewise project! Where should we send your Firewise Award?

Name: _____ Mailing address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Firewise Community Protection Achievement Certificate

Along with the great projects we hear about, Firewise staff also know that many jurisdictions are doing a tremendous job of addressing home safety through their Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). These plans are a requirement under the federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act legislation for communities adjacent to public land and help prioritize funding for wildfire fuel reduction projects. They include a requirement to address structural ignitability and many have chosen to use the Firewise model to help residents make their homes less vulnerable. The Firewise program wants to recognize these undertaking with a new Firewise Community Protection Achievement Certificate to the CWPP proponents who include Firewise principles in their plans and who document neighborhoods that achieve Firewise Communities/USA recognition.

If you know of a community that deserves recognition, complete the application found on page 49 and mail to: Cheryl Blake, Firewise Project, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169. The form may also be faxed to 617-984-7056 c/o Firewise Project.

Nomination for Community Protection Achievement Certificate

Please tell us about your favorite Firewise Project.
Fill out and submit this form by email to: cblake@nfpa.org, subject line Firewise Project; Fax to: 617-984-7056; or Mail to: Firewise Project, c/o Cheryl Blake, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169.

**Our project was led by:*

Group Name(s): _____

Individual Name(s): _____

Our project took place in:

Site Name: _____

Community Name: _____

*County Name: _____

*State Name: _____

**Our CWPP is for the following (check as many as apply):*

❑ **County**
❑ **Municipal (city, town, village)**
❑ **Other Region (across county lines)**

Our project involved some unique features (describe):

_____

_____

_____

_____

*Our project started on_____and ended on _____. (If project is still ongoing, indicate expected end date).

**Please be sure to fill out this line to be eligible for a Firewise certificate for your project.*

Thank you for telling us about your CWPP project! Where should we send your Certificate of Community Protection Achievement?

Name: _____ Mailing address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email address: _____

Contacts, References and Resources

Support for Firewise Representatives

NFPA's Firewise Communities Program provides a variety of materials, tools and other support to Firewise liaisons and communities undertaking Firewise efforts. We've categorized them here as "training, tools, templates and tchotchkes (another word for give-aways or trinkets).

Training

There are numerous venues for Firewise training education, beginning with online courses and materials at www.firewise.org. Courses now include "Conducting Community Assessments in the Wildland/Urban Interface," designed specifically to assist liaisons, fire departments, and other specialists with wildfire hazard assessment tasks. Other courses include firefighter safety and Firewise landscaping. In 2007, the program launched a seminar series on "Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone," an in-depth instructor-led course that delves into fire science research, home construction and design, and more. Firewise Communities Planning Workshops are still provided by many states, and the materials to conduct them are available at www.firewise.org.

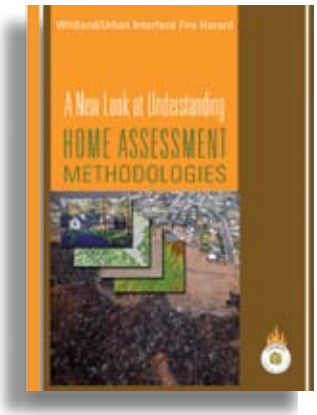
Tools

The Firewise website has many tools for states and communities.

The Firewise website has many tools for Firewise liaisons and communities, including the Community Stories at www.firewise.org/usa, which allow users to learn from actual community experience. Each community has the opportunity to post their story and include an email link if they wish.

Both the liaisons and communities can use their respective password-protected areas of the www.firewise.org/usa site to access more information, including areas of the Firewise catalog to order recognition materials and other items. The site also features the application forms, online renewal form, and practical Firewise information, including Firewise plant lists for a number of states and electronic versions of the "Firewise How-To Newsletter" that is emailed quarterly to liaisons and recognized communities and others. Past issues of the newsletter are available on the website for those who may have missed an issue.

The main Firewise catalog also includes dozens of audiovisual and print materials useful for Firewise liaisons and community residents. A few of these include the newly revised version of the Wildfire Hazard Assessment



Methodology Guide booklet, a short brochure on "Becoming a Firewise Community/USA", and an overview booklet, *Firewise: Community Solutions to a National Problem*.

The Newsroom on www.firewise.org contains a wealth of information, including a Communications Guide that can be downloaded in parts or in its entirety. The contact information area includes a list of key contacts for the program as shown below.

Wildland Fire Operations Staff

David Nuss
Wildland Fire Operations Division Manager
(303) 663-5550(w)
(303) 748-7888(c)
dnuss@nfpa.org

Michele Steinberg
Firewise Program Manager
(617) 984-7487
msteinberg@nfpa.org

Cheryl Blake
Firewise Publications Manager
(617) 984-7444
cblake@nfpa.org

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide Staff

Danielle Mackey
Office: (202) 729-4133
E-mail: Danielle.Mackey@ogilvypr.com

Templates

This "User Guide to the Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program" provides some templates for the recognition program, including a suggested process for conducting community assessments and a "boilerplate" for writing up the assessment findings. Another guide. *Safer from the Start, A Guide to Firewise-Friendly Developments* includes models for subdivision regulations (also known as covenants, conditions and restrictions or CC&Rs) and suggested plan elements that communities can include in their Firewise action plan.

Other materials that can be used as templates include the Wildfire Hazard Assessment Methodology Guide (shown on page 52) as well as the National Fire Protection Association's NFPA 1144, *Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildfire*, 2008 edition (available for purchase or read-only at www.nfpa.org).

Tchotchkes

These items – trinkets, give-aways, swag – whatever you want to call them – have been created with the Firewise "brand name" in mind. Community residents who have worked hard to make Firewise a reality in their neighborhoods are usually very pleased to receive the metal road signs, personalized plaques, and lapel pins marking their achievement.

The Recognition materials bear the Firewise Communities/USA logo and are used exclusively to promote community action in the program.

While some states and agencies prefer to create their own localized items, others enjoy the opportunity to use items created by the national program to help boost Firewise awareness among their constituents. The national program staff are interested to learn more about what items are popular and what additional items might be of interest to liaisons and communities.

Recognition materials can be ordered for the cost of shipping and handling on the password-protected catalog area accessible via www.firewise.org/usa.

Item No: FWC10710