



The Ranch at Prescott

FIREWISE NEWS

February 2017

Good Time

Between now and April is the best time to clean up and mitigate your property. The advantages during the winter season include reduced foliage density and lower cost mitigation services (don't forget to ask for winter rates or the winter discount).

Your feedback is requested

Fellow Ranch property owners, keeping our community fire safe is a collective effort and your contribution is respectfully requested. The Firewise committee would like to know that the Ranch HOA membership is in favor of the fire safety program! Our main focus is safe guarding homes. By focusing this way, the homes in the ranch will be protected from fire, and the vegetation coverage elsewhere will be broken up slowing fire movement and creating fire barriers. A number of you have told us that you have surrounding properties endangering yours, and that something should have been done long ago. We are now calling on you to actively support the program by registering fire safety violations with HOAMCO. As described in the October Newsletter we will initially respond to home owners that identify adjacent occupied or unoccupied fire hazard properties. The violation registration program in the Ranch has been in place for many years. You will need to complete a violation complaint form from HOAMCO and return it to Ann Zdanowski. We will do the rest. We can also help identify lot numbers. Without the form, we cannot action a request at this time.

Per Arizona law (A.R.S. 33-1242 and ARS 33-1803) any complaint lodged with the Association will NOT remain anonymous. The person complaining of the alleged violation must state their first and last name and this information will be sent to the party who is accused of the violation.

"Nature of violation" form question. "The property listed is in violation of both the general HOA lot maintenance rules and regulations, and the adopted 2016 fire safety rules. The dense vegetation poses a major fire safety hazard to my home and property and I respectfully request it be corrected".

Although The Ranch has not actively enforced lot maintenance in past years, it has started enforcement due to the density of the current vegetation, the impact on resident safety, and advice from the wildland fire authority. All of these items suggest that we need to take action and reduce the fire potential. For more information call Paul Scrivens (408.891.2945) or email at (paulfscrivens@yahoo.com)

Firewise rules shown in the October newsletter may have looked complex; however, qualified contractors know how to meet these rules and the assessment sheets include them. The following summarizes the prime requirements.

1. Removal of all dead or decadent trees, brush and shrubs.
2. Removal of all natural ladder fuels beneath trees.
3. Optimized tree pruning and canopy spacing between individual and tree clusters.
4. Minimize dense chaparral, and provide spacing between individual and clusters of brush and shrubs.
5. Removal of all overgrown grasses and weeds, including all excess dead ground material.
6. Provide fuel breaks in lots and around homes.

How Can I Cost-Effectively Firewise My Property?

Firewise treatment needs to be considered as an investment – similar to other regular maintenance activities. Managing the cost of this investment can be done in several ways, including:

1. Perform a no-cost Firewise assessment to determine what is required.
2. Consider a grant.
3. Obtain bids from multiple qualified contractors.
4. Bid and conduct the work during the off-season.
5. Perform bi-annual maintenance during the off-season.

Ownership Responsibility: Reducing the wildfire Risk

Fire safety mitigation is the responsible thing to do.

Property ownership brings with it many obligations, but none benefit the community more than taking responsibility for managing wildfire risk, and providing safety to your neighbors lives and property.

There are a number of lots for sale in the Ranch, and have been for some time. One issue is the condition of the lot to a prospective buyer. An overgrown lot looks like a jungle and as such may not be seen as a good proposition. Most old brush that looks alive is in fact 50% dead. This dead material feeds a fire. After mitigation any new brush growth is far more resistant to fire. A fire safe lot shows the lot topography and a site not cluttered and requiring clearing; two important visible sales advantages.



Before treatment: thick brush and ladder fuels common throughout the Ranch



The same property after treatment: Visible topography and clean looking with healthy vegetation.

On-going cost of fire safety

There are statements circulating that even if a property is mitigated, in 4 to 5 years' it will need to be re-done at another large cost. This is untrue, if your property needs \$3000 to mitigate the first time, certain contractors can provide a maintenance program that would provide a bi-annual winter clean-up for approximately 10% to 15% of the original cost. Make sure the contractor you choose offers this service.

Grant Programs

We have received the 2016 grant program from the forestry service, so we have an additional 30 acres of grant money. Unfortunately, we have already used 22 acres eliminating our current backlog, so if you are interested sign up by contacting Ann Zdanowski at HOAMCO (928.776.4479). We have already applied for more acres from the 2017 grant program.

Returned Grants

We have a few property grant recipients obtaining quotations for clean-up work on their lot and then declining to do the work and wanting to return the grant. The issue is that regardless of a grant or not the work will still need to be done to meet fire safety requirements within the Ranch; and a grant provides a large discount (\$500-\$600). Grants are not guaranteed, so if you have one you should take advantage of it. A later replacement grant will not be available through the Firewise committee. It will be necessary for you to apply directly to PAWUIC, or the National Forest Service for a personal grant.

Information Resources

To find out more, the Firewise tab on The Ranch at Prescott HOA website is a great place to start. Please visit us at <http://www.ranchatprescotthoa.org/>, or contact any of the Firewise Committee members.

Sincerely

The Firewise Committee