



# The Ranch at Prescott

## FIREWISE NEWS

January 2018

### Wildfire - A Year-Round Event

2017 has been a tough fire season according to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). The US experienced more than 54,858 wildfires burning 9,152 million acres. A staggering amount of land burned. Fires started in the Southern states of Georgia and Florida, and continued to migrate westward as the seasons changed through the year. The California Wildfires were a series of 8,602 wildfires that burned over 1,089,971 acres, according to the California Department of Forestry. Devastating wildfires also ripped through Northern California destroying at least 8,900 structures. The fires have continued into December creating devastation in many communities. The governor stated that it was the worst California fire season on record. They are now suffering catastrophic mud slides. There were also a number of Arizona wildfires. The Coronado National Forest was a particular hot spot with more than 83,000 acres burned. Communities on Mount Lemmon, the Boundary Fire in the Kaibab National Forest, the Hilltop and Gimme fires, and the Goodwin Fire in Yavapai County, which at 28,336 acres threatened Mayer, Dewey and even our community.



Complacency Kills

### A NEW \$475-Group Mitigation Program

The Firewise Committee has been sensitive to the plight of our unoccupied lot owners. We know that a number of lots are underwater and we have seen the mitigation costs rise as more communities in the area adopt Firewise, and the limited fire experienced landscaper resources have raised prices to offset demand. In order to improve this situation and remove the cost resistance, the Firewise Committee approached the Arizona State Forestry fire fighting resources to provide help. The program we have developed is called the 475-group program. Everyone is eligible to participate, and everyone can mitigate their properties for an out of pocket expense of \$475.00. The only condition is that you have to be part of the Wildfire Grant program. The group term means that we have to mitigate 5 lots in one grouping and they need to be proximity clustered. This will take a concerted effort and cooperation between our lot owners, the Firewise Committee and the HOA council. We will also work with Forestry to select the best strategy and sequence for mitigation in order to maintain maximum fire prevention and safety for residents. This will take a lot of corporation and team work from all parties. A major advantage of this program is that the Lot owner has no involvement selecting a landscaper, no responsibility with the quoting process and no responsibility meeting standards. The Fire Service will provide consistent quality and follow the Firewise and Ranch standards for mitigation. As an alternative example of cost: To hire a Landscaper who supplies two people for the day at \$25.00 an hour each would cost \$400.00. For \$75.00 more your whole lot can be mitigated. **What a deal!** **Logistics:** Interested parties should contact Ann (HOAMCO 928.776.4479) and sign up for the 475-grant program. The Firewise Committee will group (5) applicants together trying to fill the non-participant gaps. Once a group has been formed

members will be asked to pay the \$475.00. Once the money is collected for the group, the job will be scheduled. Each member of the group will be informed as to the work date and when the work is completed. All the other activities will be handled by the Firewise Committee and HOAMCO. As this process will be handled by email, email addresses must be available.

**Limitations:** Limitations will be the amount of grant money we can obtain in any one year, and the Forestry resource availability. The forestry resources priority is to fight fires, and based on the number of fires in the southwest that could be many. There are also 34 Firewise communities in the Prescott area, so we have a lot of competition for Forestry's time.

**Existing Program:** The existing Firewise single user program is still available. That is using a regular landscaper for individual mitigation. You will still be eligible for grant money, and this will be a fast-track alternative.

**Maintenance programs are essential.** Ranch brush grows back fast if not treated. Based on experience it needs to be trimmed back bi-annually. As it is new growth, it can be removed easily and in a short time. If left it will grow back to its original dense position in 5-7 years. The best time to do maintenance is during the winter season when the brush is dormant. Once the **475-program is up and running** the Firewise committee will start looking into an equivalent lower-cost group maintenance program.

**Reducing wildfire Risk.** Maintaining a fire safety property in the Ranch is the responsible thing to do for everyone. The fire service is attempting to isolate the forest from the Ranch and visa-versa, but how is the Ranch protected against itself – it's not. The homeowners who have mitigated their properties have a good chance of survival, but according to the fire service, the limited unoccupied lot mitigation is so sparse it will not prevent the wind driven highspeed movement of wildfire. If we continue to do nothing, we will be susceptible to those out of control fires in California, where thousands have lost their homes, and a moonscape environment awaits them on their return. Homeowners are responsible for their own wildfire safety; if you do nothing, your home, belongings and environment are at stake. The unoccupied lot owners

also have a responsibility to protect the Ranch from wildfire fire destruction. A number of residents have had their **home insurance denied**; not based on their property, but because the unoccupied surrounding properties are the fire risk. Based on the Goodwin fire residents are scared, they have evacuation plans in place and lists on what to take with them in case of an emergency evacuation. Empty lot owners do not. It is recognized by many that a well maintained and presented lot helps the sales process for both the lot owner and the community. And with the new low-cost 475 program and new building regulations proposed by the ARC, sales should be in everyone's best interest. As a community we should see these programs as a new lease on life when improving our image with local realtors and builders. To quote an example, from the recently mitigated Skyline Community in Prescott that has used a similar program; "our community looked like a dense brush jungle before mitigation by the fire service, and now it looks like a park. Everyone is so happy". I would remind everyone we had a similar experience when we had the Lee Boulevard common land mitigated last year. The Firewise Committee can do just so much, after that it's up to you. **You need to let the HOA council know your position and go to the council meetings and have your voices heard.**

**Grants:** We have heard from a number of people who don't know what to do regarding the grant program. Please ask before doing any work on your property. The grant program has specific requirements that need to be followed. All the information is on our website, or ask Ann at HOAMCO, or Paul Scrivens (408.891.2945).

We have just received confirmation from PAWUIC that we have been granted **50 acres of grant money** for 2017, plus we still have a few acres left from 2016.

**Finally: Take action and make the 475 program a success and the Ranch a recognized fire safe community!**

- **Show your support by either signing-up for mitigation or by sending a "I support" email to Ann at HOAMCO (azdanowski@hoamco.com)**

**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.