



The Ranch at Prescott

# FIREWISE NEWS

Wildfire Community Preparedness Month

May 2016

## Fort McMurray Canada May 2016 – Devastating Wildfire!



**What can happen if you don't take Firewise precautions seriously.**

## Living with Wildfire – A homeowners' Firewise guide for Arizona

It is recommended that everyone read this electronic booklet that is available in the Firewise section of the HOA website, or this link [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5339207.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5339207.pdf) It explains Fire behavior, maintaining survivable space and the 3 zones around your home; it also contains a lot of other valuable data. It will help you understand and direct the contractor you chose for mitigation. We will be using this document as the basis of our assessments, together with additional information learned at the assessor training class. As an assessment may be unfamiliar to many the following paragraphs will hopefully describe the intention and process we will follow.

First and foremost, Firewise wildland fire prevention practices do not include clear cutting private property. A Firewise assessment is a set of recommendations and suggestions that will minimize catastrophic fire damage to both life and property in the Ranch wildland interface. The assessment process is to inform land and home owners regarding the wildfire risk severity associated with their property. This gives them the knowledge and understanding to advise a Firewise contractor on what they would like seen mitigated and what they would like to see maintained. There are 3 mitigation zones defined by Firewise, and all three come into play with developed lots, but for undeveloped lots just a zone 3 equivalent is required. As this zone is the least intrusive the time and cost to mitigate should be less; however, it will depend on density, slope and vegetation type.

An assessment is only required if you are applying for a wildland fire grant; one is not required if you intend to pay for the work yourself, although the knowledge is

invaluable. It is important to note that you may only apply for a grant once for a particular property, after that you are on your own. Even though your property is Firewise compliant at that point in time plants and trees will still regrow if not maintained, and 3 to 5 years later it could look the same as if you had never mitigated.

The assessor process starts with an Assessor certified person, whether that being someone from the Ranch Firewise assessor team, the Prescott Fire service or Arizona state forestry, they will assess your property making suggestions on how to reduce your fire risk. The assessment must be in writing for a grant. You will also need before and after work photographs, both must be submitted to PAWUIC for grant verification and reimbursement. The assessment can include your homes exterior construction and your vegetation layout; however, the Ranch team will focus on vegetation unless asked by the homeowner to review their homes exterior.

The Firewise team will be pleased to assist absent owners with the grant process. Please let us know if you require such assistance, but note we will not be liable for any errors, damages, injuries, or other claims introduced by any parties involved during the process.

If you have requested a mitigation grant through HOAMCO please check out the website grant tracker <http://firewise.ranchatprescotthoa.org/assets/fw-tracker.pdf> we hope to have it updated regularly.

Once the Ranch assessors have completed assessments on those lots approved for grants and those who have requested preliminary assessments we will start providing informational assessments for all our homeowners. This may take a while, but when complete we will then provide informational assessments to the vacant lot owners who surround homeowner properties. By doing this we will essentially provide a fire break around the homes. Following this we will move outward to the more remote lots. We will of course prioritize those owners approved for grants, or wish to mitigate themselves. Just for information we have 962 lots in the ranch and 400 homes so this gigantic program will take some time to complete.

**Take Note:** When you are obtaining quotations emphasize to the contractor how much mitigation you would like; if you say nothing the contractor will trim close to 100% of your shrubs and brush, essentially

leaving just your trees. If you want some brush and shrubs left, then state you want mitigation of 70% or 80%. The contractor should know how to do this and still be Firewise compliant.

**The US forestry service** have done a great job of mitigating a 150-yard fire break between the Prescott National Forest and the Ranch. This is the first line of defense against a forest fire. We now have to do our part in the Ranch!

### **Grant Program**

Our first Firewise grant program has been a complete success. We had 23 applications for the designated grant money, 16 of which were granted and are progressing through the process. We have applied for further grant money and are waiting to hear if more will be available this year. If not, we will look for more money during the next cycle. We will **email** people if new money becomes available. We are also looking into other avenues for grant money and lowering the cost of mitigation.

### **Firewise Day 2016**

As a Firewise community we are expected to hold a Firewise day each year for membership compliance. We are pleased to announce that we will be holding our Firewise Day on June the 26<sup>th</sup> in combination with the Social club picnic. Unfortunately only social club members may attend.

### **Operational Note:**

**We intend to produce the Firewise News on a monthly basis; however, after the first few editions sent by regular mail, it will only be circulated to those on the Ranches electronic email directory and on the HOA website, so if you are not on the electronic email list please let Ann Zdanowski of HOAMCO have your email address if you would like to be included. Not receiving the Newsletter may mean not receiving the latest information on grant availability or fire safety and community actions and progress.**

### **Did you know?**

A **red flag day** is one that is dry, windy and hot creating a very high fire risk potential.

**Fire Mitigation** is land management that reduces the fire risk to residential and commercial properties.