



# The Ranch at Prescott

# FIREWISE NEWS

October 2016

After a relatively wet Monsoon, and as we settle into the non-fire season the fire threat in Prescott has diminished somewhat. California had it really bad this year, but we fared a lot better; however, this is the time to prepare for next year when we may not be so lucky.

## When Should I Firewise My Property? Now!

One of the many questions the Firewise Committee commonly receives asks “when is it best to “Firewise” my property?” Our answer, of course, is almost always “anytime”, but the fall offers a particularly opportune time to treat your lot. Why? Not only are the leaves falling and the grasses drying out, the contractors are less busy. Many of the contractors’ employees are seasonal firefighters, and with fire season winding down their services are more available (and price quotes more competitive). So if you’ve been delaying taking care of your lot, you now have no excuse!

## What Does “Firewising” My Property Entail?

The obvious answer: the purposes of “Firewising” your property includes creating defensible space around any structures and reducing the risk of propagating a wildfire through our neighborhood. A recent visit to the Ranch by a representative of the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management confirmed that we are at severe risk from wildfire due to extreme overgrown vegetation. Does this mean we must “moonscape” our properties to protect from this threat?

The photos show a good example of Firewise treatment principles. The untreated property has dense brush and considerable ladder fuels reaching up into the lower tree branches. After treatment, the brush has been significantly reduced and trees pruned, leaving a still natural landscape but with considerably less risk of wildfire propagation.

Three of the Ranch at Prescott Firewise Committee members have been trained by Arizona Forestry as

assessors, and more are in the works. We encourage you to contact us for a no-cost assessment of your property. The Committee, the HOA Board, and your neighbors will all thank you for



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



The same property after treatment: still natural but with considerably less wildfire risk

## Grant Programs

We are still awaiting the 2016 grant program to be approved by the forestry service and when it does we should get an additional 30 acres of grant money. We are also trying to get additional 2015 grant money. Currently we have a number of people on our grant waiting list, so if you are interested sign up by contacting Ann Zdanonski at HOAMCO (928.776.4479).

## HOA Fire Safety Improvements

As Stated in last months' newsletter the HOA board has adopted an additional set of rules for fire safety in the Ranch. These rules are below and on the HOA website under the Firewise button.

### Zone 1 (0 to 30ft from building) Non Combustible Area

- Remove all dead materials
- Remove native brush from under trees
- Trim all trees to where the lowest branches or canopy are above the roofline
- Tree canopies shall be a minimum of 10 feet apart
- Trim or prune shrubs/vegetation to a maximum height of 2 feet and provide a clear space around each plant of a least 4 feet. Shrubs that normally grow taller than 2 feet shall be removed rather than being improperly pruned. Exception: cultivated ground cover does not require clear space.
- Remove all combustible materials and vegetation from under decks
- Remove native brush and grass within 10 feet of buildings, structures and decks.
- Prune trees 6 to 10 feet above the ground
- No fire fuels stored in area
- Low volume well irrigated vegetation only
- Space conifers 30 feet between crowns
- Plants should be carefully spaced and low growing - free of oils
- Irrigate plants and trees regularly

### Zone 2 (30ft to 100ft from building) Non-Sustainable Fire Area

- Remove all dead material
- Remove all ladder fuels by trimming, pruning or removing vegetation from under trees. Distance to the lowest tree branches shall be a minimum of 3 times the shrub height

- Tree limbs a minimum of 6 feet from the ground
- Tree canopies shall be a minimum of 10 feet apart and no closer than 10 feet to any structure, unless trimmed above the roofline
- Reduce the continuity of fuels by removing dead material and removing/thinning shrubs so that a person can walk between them. Creating islands of shrubs/vegetation for wildlife habitat is recommended
- Cut grasses to a maximum of 4 inches above ground level
- Where vegetation is greater than 4 feet in height, create a clear space around each plant (or group of plants), twice the height of the plant in width
- On slopes greater than 20% gradient, vegetation treatment shall be extended an additional 30 feet to a total of 130 feet from the structure, or to the property line.
- Remove the most recent layer of under composed (light color) pin needle or leaf droppings. The underlying darker, decomposing material should remain undisturbed.
- Prune trees 6 to 10 feet above ground
- Leave 20 feet between trees and 30 feet between clusters of 2-3 trees
- Create fuel breaks

### Zone 3 (100ft to Property Boundary) Reduced Fuel Zone Area and UNDEVELOPED PROPERTIES

- Remove all dead material
- Remove all ladder fuels under trees
- Distance to lowest tree branches minimum 3 times the brush height
- Reduce tree canopies so they are not touching
- Remove small conifers between big trees
- Reduce the continuity of fuels by removing dead material and removing/thinning brush.

Note: Zones 1-3 are required for home based properties. Only Zone 3 is required for undeveloped properties. [Also please note that most undeveloped properties in the Ranch are far from meeting the Zone 3 requirements. We will initially respond to home owners that identify undeveloped hazardous neighboring properties. Please let Ann \(HOAMCO\) know if you have a hazardous property next door. We will then perform a Firewise assessment on that property.](#)