

# FIRE READY

*Wildfire Protection and Forestry Professionals*

## Introductory Packet



*Explore the Possibilities*



# Welcome

Thank you for your interest in a Fire Ready branch office. Our backgrounds in wildland firefighting, forestry and natural resource education, along with a straightforward, carefully-crafted business plan and numerous business advisors, have helped create an industry-leading brand with a reputation for quality and professionalism. As we have seen during recent wildfire seasons, Fire Ready's core services are of immense value to individuals and communities in the Western United States.

Fire Ready's techniques proved successful when put to the test. During the 2002 wildfire season, over 75 Fire Ready clients evacuated their homes to escape advancing wildfires. Not a single Fire Ready home was lost. Sadly, many neighboring homes that did not have defensible space burned. At locations where Fire Ready provided wildfire mitigation services, the fires burned over at a low intensity, leaving trees healthy and green and allowing homes to be saved.

*"[The fire marshal] told me that if I had not had Fire Ready create a defensible space around our home, it would have surely been lost in the fire. I want to take the opportunity to thank the firefighters and Fire Ready for the great work they did on our property. It not only saved our home, but the fire mitigation work completed by Fire Ready also made the firefighters' work safer as well."*

Alan Cook, Cortez, Colorado (2006)

The role of a Fire Ready business owner is varied, from field work to business management to marketing and sales outreach. The work is challenging, time-intensive, and rewarding — personally, financially, and ecologically. Fire Ready, Inc. is looking for capable, intelligent, and honest people, who believe that success comes from hard work and integrity.

Sincerely,  
Ryan and Kristine Borchers  
Fire Ready, Inc.



P.O. Box 398  
Lake City, CO 81235  
(970) 749-7267  
info@fireready.com  
www.fireready.com



# Wildfire Mitigation & Forestry Services



Demand for wildfire mitigation and professional forestry services is increasing in response to a dramatic change in conditions in the Wildland Urban Interface, or areas where housing is near or intermingled with areas of vegetation, including forest, shrub, and grassland.

In the past, frequent, low-intensity fires cleared many forest types of brush, sparing larger trees and leaving healthy, low-density forests. Because of fire suppression and logging practices over the past century, many Western forests are overcrowded from the vast growth of undesirable vegetation. This increased competition causes weakened forests to succumb easier to drought, insect outbreaks, and wildfire.



Prolonged cycles of drought have further weakened forests, and beetle epidemics are now taking advantage of these conditions, causing widespread tree mortality. To compound the problem, there has been an explosion of home-building in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). These conditions have resulted in unhealthy forests, and more homes at risk from wildfire than ever before.

Wildfire mitigation, defensible space and wildfire resistant landscaping are the answer. Municipalities throughout the West have recognized this and are developing and implementing code for new construction and development in the WUI. Insurance companies are also beginning to require some policy holders to thin vegetation on their property. The demand for wildfire mitigation and professional forestry services will likely continue to increase as a result of these long-term trends.



History shows that once service providers emerge to address a threat to personal or property safety, the service will continue to be in demand as long as that risk continues. The threat of wildfire is not going away: climatologists predict long-term drought and wildfire-prone conditions in the West for the next fifteen to twenty-five years. Even without the threat of wildfire, increasing numbers of home and property owners are looking to restore their forest's health and natural beauty with forestry services such as thinning and brush clearing.



With Fire Ready, individual property and homeowners have a ready-made solution, offered by professionals committed to their work and to their customers.

The Fire Ready network has developed a reputation for quality as a result of our expertise, strong work ethic and commitment to providing unmatched customer service. With an established brand and network of offices, Fire Ready is ideally positioned to lead the wildfire mitigation industry as it enters a period of substantial growth.

*One advantage of being part of this network is the on-going education and research. Fire Ready owners share industry trends and techniques. We can utilize the experience and expertise of other owners, and better understand geographically what is happening.*

Gloria Edwards, Fire Ready of Glenwood Springs



# A Solid Business Opportunity



Many Western forests are unhealthy and fire-prone as a result of prolonged cycles of drought, and a century of fire suppression. At the same time, home-building in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) continues to grow rapidly. In the Rocky Mountain Region alone, the WUI grew more than 30% between 1990 and 2000, to an estimated 2,438,290 acres. At the same time, the number of housing units within that area **increased more than 67%**, to an estimated 2,269,751 homes.<sup>1</sup> These statistics tell us that not only is there rapid growth in the number of areas in which homes are at risk of wildfire, but the density of homes within those areas has **doubled** in a ten-year period. One Fire Ready crew can create defensible space for approximately fifty homes a season, suggesting incredible potential for growth in the industry.



This growth will only continue as baby-boomers, the nation's largest buying group, reach retirement age and begin to move away from large cities. Many will relocate to areas that are in the Wildland Urban Interface, compounding wildfire risk. The baby-boomers have long been motivated by environmental values, yet the majority of these homeowners will not have the equipment or experience to restore their forest's health and natural beauty—or address their risk from wildfire.



A decline in forest health along with a rise in housing density points to greater risk from wildfire than ever before in the Wildland Urban Interface. Unfortunately, that risk has already been demonstrated. Using California as an example, in the 80-year period between 1923 and 2003 major wildfires resulting in the loss of 13,600 homes. Of these losses, **73% occurred between 1990 and 2003.**<sup>2</sup> In another example, Colorado's 2002 Hayman Fire, at 137,000 acres, was five times larger than the previous largest in the state's modern history. In that same year, two other Western states—Arizona and Oregon—also saw their largest fires of the last one hundred years.



Nearly every forested county in the Western United States has implemented or is in the process of implementing defensible space requirements for new construction and development in the WUI. Insurance companies are making fire risk assessments for homeowners in the WUI, and are pressing homeowners to reduce vegetative fuels. Homeowners, planners, developers, insurance agents and others are already looking to Fire Ready for help as this process evolves.



The dramatic expansion and changing forest conditions of the Wildland Urban Interface has already created increased demand for Fire Ready's core services: fuels reduction, forest thinning and creating defensible space. The environmental and social climate is ideal for wildfire mitigation companies to experience growth, and Fire Ready is establishing itself as the market leader in providing these critical services to individual property and home owners.

<sup>1</sup> Radeloff, Hammer, Stewart, Fried, Holcomb, and McKeefry. 2005. *The Wildland Urban Interface in the United States*. *Ecological Applications* 15:799-805.

<sup>2</sup> East Bay Regional Parks District. "The East Bay Hills Wildfire Problem Statement." 2001. Hills Wildfire Working Group. Sept 15, 2006. <[http://www.ebparks.org/plan\\_stew/wildfire\\_prob\\_statement.htm](http://www.ebparks.org/plan_stew/wildfire_prob_statement.htm)>.

# The Fire Ready Network



Fire Ready is the leader in wildfire prevention—offering wildfire resistant landscaping, wildfire risk consulting, and related forestry services. Fire Ready plays an integral role in fire awareness education and planning for wildfire in our local communities.

## *Wildfire Resistant Landscaping*

Branch offices of Fire Ready focus on wildfire resistant landscaping—defensible space creation, tree thinning and limbing, hazard tree removal, brush removal, large-capacity chipping, and forest health restoration. Fire Ready offers home-site clearing and general forest clean-up for aesthetics. Most offices also provide arbor-care, including pruning, tree climbing, and certified preventative spraying for beetles. Our low-impact forest landscaping techniques reduce wildfire risk and restore forest health, while maintaining privacy screening and increasing overall property values.



## *Wildfire Risk Consulting*

Municipalities, subdivisions, and communities throughout the West are planning for wildfire risk reduction. Fire Ready provides consulting services for the pre-planning of large mitigation or new development projects, including community wildfire plans. Landscape-wide projects can be more effective in reducing overall fire risk.



## *Constant Improvement*

We are using a cooperative-business approach to leverage time and resources for all branch offices. In fact, 37.5 percent of royalties are set aside for marketing and research and development for all offices. We have developed a culture within the Fire Ready network that promotes personal and professional success for individual branch offices. We are legally recognized as a franchise operation in order to ensure adherence to Fire Ready's high quality standards. Our operational processes are constantly improving as each branch office owner plays a role in the evolution of the Fire Ready system. We are utilizing technology such as the Fire Ready Intranet to share valuable information within the network, and leveraging our buying power when purchasing equipment and marketing materials. As the wildfire mitigation industry continues to develop and grow, we are positioning the Fire Ready brand as the market leader, with a reputation for quality work, expertise and professionalism, and a commitment to provide unmatched customer service.



*I appreciate having neighboring offices—for extra equipment, labor, and support. It is nice to be able to pick up the phone, and bounce ideas off half a dozen other owners,*



*You can't talk freely with competitors, but with other Fire Ready owners, I know we are working together, and can share our successes and challenges.*

Angie Jenson, Fire Ready of Salida

# Benefits of a Franchise



- **Improve your chances of success. Franchise startups have a higher success rate than other startup businesses.**
- **The Fire Ready brand comes with name recognition and reputation, both of which take years to create.**
- **Like most franchisors, Fire Ready provides tested marketing strategies and tools.**
- **A franchisor provides comprehensive training for business operation and management. This gives business owners an opportunity to problem-solve prior to opening, allowing operations to start more smoothly and profitably.**
- **With a franchise, you own your business and make day-to-day decisions, while being guided by the experience and knowledge that Fire Ready has already developed.**
- **You can save time and money through centralized purchasing of equipment and supplies**
- **Franchise territories are protected by the franchisor.**
- **The Fire Ready package comes with equipment, marketing supplies, extensive training and continued business assistance for everything from marketing and sales to hiring practices. This means your operation can be up and running much faster than an independent company, giving you time to focus on operations and sales.**
- **Fire Ready is already the market leader in an industry that is positioned for explosive growth. We have established brand recognition that will continue to grow as we expand.**

## The Fire Ready Process

1. Review Introductory Packet and download Business Application
2. Telephone conversation and interview with Fire Ready
3. Return application to Fire Ready, PO Box 398, Lake City, CO 81235
4. Face-to-face meeting and interview with Fire Ready, Inc.
5. Sign non-compete and non-disclosure documents
6. Research the experiences of our existing branch offices
7. Fire Ready may make a formal offer of a franchise. If so, you will receive a Uniform Franchise Offering Circular and copy of the Franchise Agreement, which discloses relationship details including financial information and obligations of both parties.
8. No less than ten days later ... signing of agreements
9. Attend Fire Ready training
10. Complete pre-opening checklist
11. Officially open your Fire Ready office for business

*My office is at least three years ahead of where I would be, had I started my own business rather than joining the Fire Ready network. Abe Fischer, Fire Ready of Crested Butte*

