



Branching Out

A Forest Stewardship e-newsletter

Summer 2007

Brought to you by:



Welcome

Fire Ready provides wildfire protection and forestry services. Our mission is connecting property owners and communities to their landscapes through services that enhance their forest's aesthetics, health and safety.

We would like to say THANK YOU to all of our customers, and our many valuable contacts in the industry. We could not be where we are today without your loyalty, your expertise and your business.

www.fireready.com

The Neighborly Thing to Do

Wildfire Knows No Property Boundaries

While the path of wildfire can be unpredictable, we do know that it follows fuel (the vegetation surrounding your home!).

- ⇒ Talk to your neighbors about fire mitigation, and about your experience with Fire Ready
- ⇒ Conduct neighborhood meetings about wildfire hazards—invite the Colorado State Forest Service or Fire Department to speak or evaluate the neighborhood
- ⇒ Set up an ambassador program in your community to share Fire Ready landscaping principles

Forested subdivisions are at increased risk to wildfire—as we've seen recently with the California wildfires—because of the density of homes and limited accessibility. Often, there is only one road in and one road out for a subdivision. Fire-fighting resources are stretched thin during a wildfire event. There are not enough firefighters to defend every home. Homes can be identified as “undefendable” if no fuels mitigation work has been done. Don't wait until a wildfire is burning to do the work. Proactively prepare for wildfire season.

Tips for a Subdivision Fire Prevention Committee

- ⇒ Form a fire prevention committee for the subdivision. Invite the Colorado State Forest Service or Fire Ready to assess the wildfire danger on individual lots and in areas of common space.
- ⇒ Launch an awareness campaign for subdivision residents about the wildfire risks and how to mitigate the hazards
- ⇒ Develop a wildfire evacuation plan for the subdivision and distribute to residents, including identifying residents that might need assistance evacuating.
- ⇒ Install and maintain all street signs for easy identification by emergency vehicles. Encourage residents to install clearly visible house numbers.
- ⇒ Evaluate subdivision roads for evacuation and emergency vehicle access.
- ⇒ Clear a three-foot area around hydrants for Fire Protection District access.
- ⇒ Install a fire danger sign at the entrance and update the risk (low, medium, high, and extreme).
- ⇒ Reduce fuel under utility lines and around base of poles; install strategic fuel breaks; reduce fuel in common areas
- ⇒ Hold an annual “Defensible Space Maintenance” day. Find out what maintenance is required every year.
- ⇒ Continue education efforts year-round, before the crisis of fire season arrives.

The Colorado State Forest Service has just announced the Colorado Forest Restoration grant program. Contact your local office for more information.



Living with Mountain Lions

Forest Thinning May Reduce the Risk of Human-Wildlife Encounters

As rural growth continues in the west, more and more houses are being built into the forest. This building is encroaching on wildlife habitat, and human-wildlife encounters have become more frequent. The majority of these wildlife encounters pose no significant threat to human life. You can take some steps to reduce encounters with mountain lions, around your forested home. The Colorado Division of Wildlife lists the number one prevention tip to “Clear shrubs and brush back from houses and around play areas.” Reducing the vegetation removes some of the cover a mountain lion would use to get close to your home. If you encounter a mountain lion, don’t run and make yourself look bigger.

- ⇒ Clear shrubs and brush back from a house.
- ⇒ Take household pets in at night or put them in a covered cage outside.
- ⇒ Don't count on a dog to scare away a mountain lion. An aggressive dog can tree a mountain lion, but the cats have killed dogs.
- ⇒ Mountain lions don't run from people. Like a house cat they may sidle away, but they don't bolt.
- ⇒ If confronted with a mountain lion, don't run. The lion may not be hungry, but a fleeing figure may trigger the cat's predatory response. It's like dragging a ball of string before a house cat.

Colorado Division of Wildlife

Helpful Links—

December 2006 **Durango Herald article** about Living with Lions and how to reduce encounters

http://www.durangoherald.com/asp-bin/article_generation.asp?article_type=earth&article_path=/earth/earth061214_2.htm

Colorado Division of Wildlife

Living with Wildlife—<http://wildlife.state.co.us/Education/LivingWithWildlife/>

Living with Wildlife in Lion Country—<http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/LivingWithWildlife/Mammals/LionCountry1.htm>

Curb Appeal

Tips to Sell Your Forested Property

- Open up the view while leaving privacy screening intact.
- Remove dead or dying trees, especially along driveways and entrance ways.
- Preventatively spray remaining trees to protect from beetle-kill.
- Neatly stack firewood away from the house.
- Improve accessibility of the forest by clearing out underbrush.
- Chip or clean-up any unsightly brush piles or yard debris.
- Remove any hazard trees—such as leaners, large hanging branches, or branches touching the house.
- In real-estate outreach, advertise that the home or property has defensible space or is “fire ready.”

Not only will these tips help you sell your home or property faster, you will be helping out the fire department in the event of a fire! We have developed an educational dvd called “Are you Fire Ready?” as a visual way to describe wildfire hazards and our attractive forestry and mitigation work.

Get in the Zone and Keep it Up

Additional Zones and Maintenance

A primary defensible space is a good start to wildfire mitigation. If your home is surrounded by unmitigated forest land, consider adding secondary and tertiary zones around the primary defensible space. Vegetation removal should be the most aggressive within the defensible space, and move out in concentric circles for the next several zones.

Defensible space requires annual maintenance. Prune back the new growth. Remove debris, shrubs, and vegetation that has accumulated since last year.

For more information—visit the Colorado State Forest Service <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

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A Quarterly Forest Stewardship e-newsletter

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For more information, contact:

Fire Ready: www.fireready.com

Firewise: www.firewise.org

Colorado State Forest Service: <http://csfs.colostate.edu/>

Your local fire department

Your local Fire Council