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## ■ Fire Escape

*NASE Members Rich and Gloria Edwards own Fire Ready of Glenwood Springs, a wildfire-mitigation business in Colorado. Their Web site is [www.fireready.com](http://www.fireready.com).*

### Tell us about your business.

**Gloria:** Fire Ready is a network of offices providing wildfire protection and forestry services for public and private properties in Colorado and other western states. We work with each client to design and create a wildfire-resistant landscape. We specialize in low-impact forestry and thinning techniques to reduce fuel hazards around homes in the wildland-urban interface, places where larger machinery is difficult to use.

Fire Ready is a unique franchise. Each office contributes a portion of proceeds for research in wildfire mitigation and forestry issues. We met the founders of Fire Ready and began working with them in 2002. We enjoyed the team and concept, and saw it as a great opportunity to use our natural resource and forestry backgrounds to help with crucial forest issues in the state. We began our own branch office of Fire Ready in Glenwood Springs in May 2004.



### What's the coolest thing about your work?

**Rich:** Getting to apply what we've learned in the woods in a way that teaches people about healthy forests and wildfire safety. We get to work in a variety of places and meet a lot of interesting people. Each property presents new opportunities to strategize and apply our techniques as well as new educational opportunities.

### What's your favorite work tool?

**Rich:** Our new Koller K300 yarder. A yarder is a machine that uses a system of cables and winches to pull logs and branches uphill in areas that are too steep for crews to haul the logs by hand. It also works well in environmentally-sensitive or riparian areas.

### You're co-owners of the business, but who's really the boss?

**Rich:** To a great extent – the customer! We work with every client to provide a wildfire-safe landscape that retains natural beauty. This takes a lot of communication and respect for what the customer wants and needs.

### What's the toughest business challenge for you right now?

**Rich:** As with many businesses, we're experiencing a labor crunch. We have some great people working with us, but we still compete with oil, gas and construction industries for some of the same labor.

**Gloria:** We're working on ways to attract forestry students, ski workers and people interested in tree care to apprentice with us. There's definitely room for training and advancement with Fire Ready.

### What part of your work gives you the most personal satisfaction?

**Rich:** When a customer comes out at the end of the day and says we've been the most professional crew they've ever had and they love how their forest looks, it makes it all worth it. One woman said, "It looks like my very own enchanted forest!"