

NEW MEXICO FIREWISE COMMUNITIES



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During 2006-2007, SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) acted as a Firewise Community Liaison to assist the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) State Forestry Division in coordinating a grassroots outreach project to promote fire prevention and defensible space actions to protect of homes and neighborhoods against wildland fire. SWCA was also tasked with encouraging community leaders, state and local elected officials, and interagency partners in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas throughout New Mexico to participate in the Firewise Communities USA (Firewise) program.

In New Mexico, EMNRD and SWCA have successfully incorporated the Firewise program throughout the state. In total, 27 communities in New Mexico are recognized as or have expressed interest in becoming recognized Firewise communities. Mescalero Apache Tribe, Glorieta Estates, and the Village of Ruidoso are recognized independently as Firewise communities, 12 others are recognized within coalitions, and 12 more have shown interest and are in the application process.



TAOS PINES RANCH

Taos Pines Ranch, the first community to join Firewise in Northern New Mexico, helped establish the Colfax Community Firewise Coalition. Firewise practices have been shared with residents using demonstration plots and educational programs such as Forest Fairs and service group presentations; Firewise web pages have been established. Firewise practices were used to establish a fuel break along the Carson National Forest and Taos Pueblo boundaries.

SEVEN SPRINGS

As part of the Greater Eastern Jemez Wildland Urban Interface Corporation, Seven Springs has used Firewise to increase efforts to create defensible space surrounding residential homes and other community buildings. Currently, Seven Springs is in the process of completing a 7-acre project, adding to a 5-acre site completed in 2006.

MESCALERO APACHE TRIBE

Mescalero is a reservation community that has been working on Firewise efforts since 2004. During the Fourth of July parade, the community included a Firewise float and handed out information at a booth. The Ceremonial Grounds also serve as a Firewise awareness host during numerous events, and Firewise water bottles and pamphlets are distributed throughout the community. Reduction of fuel loading and logging alternatives are some of their major goals.

VILLAGE OF RUIDOSO

Ruidoso received official Firewise certification in 2003; Firewise practices continue to help the Village in a variety of ways. A Forest Debris Curbside Pickup program has been implemented and the Firewise program is presented at the Home and Garden Show each March. Firewise has helped the community of Ruidoso become compliant with fuel management standards by giving the Forestry Department legal fortitude. The Forestry Department is expecting to reach its goal of having the entire Village of Ruidoso 95% compliant within six years.

LA CUEVA

Now in its third year of Firewise recognition, La Cueva continues to be active in fuel reduction efforts. A chipping program is available for all residents, and homeowners are also encouraged to clear green waste from around their properties. Their goals for the coming year are to continue to raise awareness and promote forest thinning to create defensible spaces.

SANDIA KNOLLS

Sandia Knolls is an isolated community at risk of fire from Pinyon Bark Beetle die-off. Firewise practices directed efforts for property thinning and helped community members to become aware. Most residents receive electronic mail fliers regarding Firewise issues, and a web site has been established.

There are **eight steps** to becoming a recognized Firewise Community. Your local Firewise representative will walk you through each step. Visit www.firewise.org for more information.

- STEP 1. On-Line Request
- STEP 2. Site Visit
- STEP 3. Firewise Board of Committee
- STEP 4. Community Assessment
- STEP 5. Area-Specific Solutions
- STEP 6. Implementation
- STEP 7. Recognition Status
- STEP 8. Application Renewal



Source: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "How to Have a Firewise Home"