

Many homes in Valley County are constructed within fire dependent ecosystems without regard for the surrounding landscape or structure design.

Cascade Complex Fire at night near Warm Lake. Photo by USFS, provided courtesy of the Yellow Pine Times. Photographer unknown.

**BRING IT! DON'T BURN IT!**

The Woody Debris Collection Project began as a way to help citizens manage their own hazard fuels mitigation. Each Fire District houses a bin for clean debris during



this annual event that spans

Memorial Day weekend until the end of June. Sponsored by a coalition of supporters including the Fire Districts, Valley County and Idaho Firewise. The Transfer Station on Spink Lane also accepts clean loads of woody debris during this time.



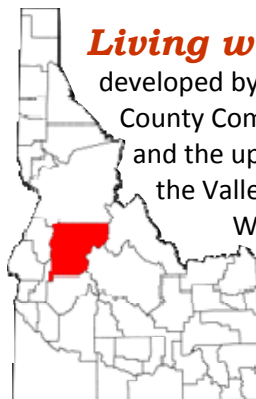
**THE HOME IGNITION ZONE (HIZ)**

The HIZ refers to the home itself and the immediate surrounding 30-200 feet. Create a survivable space around your structures by removing, reducing, relocating and replacing fuels and vegetation to slow the spread of wildfire. Survivable space involves developing a series of management zones in which different treatments are used.

**ZONE 1 - (within 30 feet)** Remove all combustible material & dead vegetation, plant 5 feet from structures, mow & irrigate grass, consider trees part of the structure - the fewer the better. Incorporate structure mitigation.

**ZONE 2 - (30-100 feet)** Thin trees and shrubs 10 feet apart, prune trees a minimum of ten feet up or 1/3 height, locate propane tanks and fire wood 30 feet away, remove flammable vegetation.

**ZONE 3 - (100-200 feet)** Thin trees and shrubs according to land management objectives.



**Living with Fire in Valley County** - A collaborative document developed by the Fire Working Group, which is chartered by the Valley County Board of County Commissioners. Information on the committee membership and the updated County Wildfire Protection Plan can be viewed on the Valley County website. Additional information relevant to Wildfire in Valley County is available as well as links to Idaho Firewise and other informative websites. The challenge is to bring local knowledge about Wildfire Risk to our communities, we hope you enjoy this publication.

[www.co.valley.id.us/community/wildfire-mitigation/](http://www.co.valley.id.us/community/wildfire-mitigation/)



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**Living with Fire in Valley County**

**It is not IF Wildfire will happen, but WHEN!**



## WILDFIRE IN VALLEY COUNTY

Some ecosystems depend on periodic fires to maintain the habitats which make up the ecosystem. In these fire adapted areas, fire promotes plant and wildlife diversity and burns away accumulations of live and dead plant material. Historically, fires have burned regularly, consuming vegetation, accumulation of insects and diseases, and triggering a rebirth of forests. Nearly every region in the country has some kind of fire dependent plant or tree.<sup>1</sup>

*Wildfire has always been here, wildfire will continue to be here, even though you and your home are now here.*

## FIRE STARTS IN VALLEY COUNTY



Each year approximately 100 wildfires start in Valley County! Many of these wildfires are started by people who live and recreate in

right here. Make certain before lighting a fire you are informed about the conditions that could cause your fire to become out of control. Work closely with your fire district when you plan to burn brush or light a campfire.



*Accepting fire as a natural part of healthy ecosystem functioning, while at the same time protecting people and property presents a major challenge. The challenge can be eased if we work with nature rather than against it.<sup>2</sup>*

## NO ONE CAN PREVENT ALL WILDFIRES

Nine-tenths of all forest fires in the United States are man-caused.<sup>3</sup> These fires are the direct result of carelessness or ignorance. They start when motorists toss burning cigarettes out of windows, when untended campfires are left in the woods, when ATV's are ridden through dry grass, or when your neighbor sets fire to weeds and brush and lets the flames spread to nearby timber. **WILDFIRE IS NOT REDUCED BY THE PRESENCE OF HOMES AND PEOPLE, RATHER IT IS INCREASED.**

## NO ONE CAN STOP ALL WILDFIRES

Many people assume that when a wildfire starts, it will be quickly controlled and extinguished. For most wildfires, firefighters have the ability, equipment, and technology for effective fire suppression. However, some of the time, wildfires burn so intensely that there is little firefighters can do. The key to prevent a house from burning is to reduce fire intensity as wildfire nears and employ fire resistant building materials and design.

## IS YOUR PROPERTY AT RISK?

- Do you live in or border a fire dependant area? ~ Is the vegetation around your home "lean and clean?"
- Do you have a wood pile, wood deck or fuel tank in close proximity to your home?
- Is your home's exterior flammable? ~ Are your eaves, soffits, and fascias unenclosed?
- Does your home's balcony or deck overhang a slope?

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

## SURVIVABLE SPACE = FUELS MITIGATION + STRUCTURE MITIGATION

### SURVIVABLE SPACE

You and your home do not need to leave survival to chance. Survivable space is the modification of landscape design, fuels and building materials within the Home Ignition Zone (see diagram on reverse side) to make an ignition caused by wildfire unlikely even without direct firefighter intervention. The likelihood of you and your home surviving a wildfire therefore are highly dependent on two variables within your immediate control:

### FUELS MITIGATION

- REMOVAL OF DEAD AND DOWN MATERIAL
- REDUCTION OF LADDER FUELS & PLANT DENSITIES
- REPLACEMENT WITH FIRE RESISTANT LANDSCAPE
- RELOCATION OF FLAMMABLE MATERIALS

*plus*

### STRUCTURE MITIGATION

- LOCATE STRUCTURES ON GENTLE TERRAIN WHERE POSSIBLE
- CONSTRUCT STRUCTURES WITH NON-COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS
- EVALUATE FIRE ACCESS: REDUCE GRADE, IMPROVE SURFACE AND INCREASE WIDTH
- SOFFITS, EAVES, FASCIAS AND VENTS SHOULD BE ENCLOSED



help you change the way your neighbors and friends understand the risk of living in a fire adapted community.

## BE THE LEADER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Leaders and Communities come in all shapes and sizes. One individual or an organization can set the tone for reduction in wildfire risk in your neighborhood. **BE THE LEADER IN YOUR COMMUNITY.** There are resources to

## LANDOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES



### PREVENTION

### EDUCATION

### MITIGATION

**Prevention**—activities directed at reducing unwanted human caused and catastrophic wildfire.

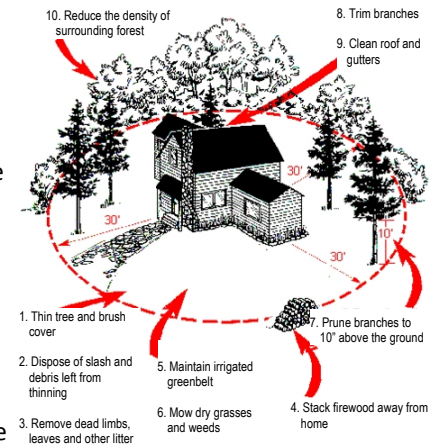
**Education**—continual learning by the public and fire management community.

**Mitigation**—identifying Wildland fire hazards and taking action to reduce risk.

## COST, TIME & EFFORT

Landowners can reduce their fire risk without great cost if they are willing to do some of the work themselves.

Routine landscaping chores that clear combustible materials from around the house, make a big impact without breaking the bank.



<sup>1</sup> www.smokeybear.com/natural-hickory.asp

<sup>2</sup> Our Changing Planet, Upper Midwest Aerospace Consortium

<sup>3</sup> www.idahofirewise.org/safety-prevention/history-of-keep-idaho-green/

<sup>4</sup> Living With Fire: Homeowners' Firewise Guide...