

Why Wilderness Ranch is a Firewise Community

In 2002, Wilderness Ranch gained recognition as a Firewise Community. The national Firewise Communities program is a multi-agency effort designed to involve homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire - before a fire starts. The Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping, and maintenance.

The national Firewise Communities program is intended to serve as a resource for agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments, and communities across the U.S. who are working toward a common goal: reduce loss of lives, property, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings.

The primary benefit of being a Firewise Community is that it will ultimately help the Wilderness Ranch Fire Protection District (WRFPD) do a better job of protecting WR residents and their property. Those who participate in the project develop a greater awareness of the threat of wildfire on the Ranch. That awareness leads to the recognition of needs for specific protective measures. To date, numerous homeowners have taken action to reduce the risk of wildfire causing damage to their property. We have designated a deposit site where property owners can get rid of woody debris from their hazardous fuel reduction projects. In cooperation with the Common Area Committee, we have limbed trees and thinned brush along Ranch Roads to improve access and egress and are in the midst of a multi-phase fire mitigation and forest management plan for the common area. Numerous homes have been evaluated for their ability to survive a wildfire, and grant money has been provided to homeowners to complete hazardous fuel reduction projects. As additional needs are identified, they will be prioritized and implemented as funding allows.

We're also optimistic that the Firewise Communities program motivates residents to take steps to reduce the risk of wildfire on their property, which will greatly increase the number of homes that WRFPD will be able to protect in the event of a wildfire on the Ranch.

For more information about Firewise Communities, including a wide range of videos and literature you can download (and way too many photos of your Firewise coordinator), visit www.Firewise.org.