Firewise UPDATE

By Amy Luebke, Wildland-Urban Interface Specialist, West-Central Region

Town of Monroe Storm Clean-Up

On April 10, 2011, a wind event (tornado/straight line winds) passed through Central Wisconsin and resulted in downed trees throughout the Town of Monroe with the worst damage occurring in the Petenwell Pines subdivision. To reduce the amount of hazardous fuel, two projects were completed. First the Town opened up their transfer site for two weeks to receive trees and brush. A contractor was then hired to chip the very large pile of brush. Secondly, curbside chipping was offered in the hard-hit subdivision of Petenwell Pines to assist homeowners in their clean-up efforts. The Petenwell Pines Homeowner's Association promoted the curbside chipping project via their community information board, email and word of mouth and invited the Wisconsin DNR to give a Firewise presentation at their annual meeting.

Above: Curbside chipping in Petenwell Pines

Left: Consolidating hazardous fuels resulting from a severe storm.

Working together to make their community Firewise

Snug Harbor Completes First Firewise Project

Snug Harbor is a heavily wooded subdivision located in the Town of Quincy in Adams County, an area at high risk to wildfires. The Association Board formed a Firewise Committee which began raising awareness of the wildfire issue with the creation of a Firewise newsletter, adding information to their website, and providing driveway and home ignition zone assessments. In addition, Snug Harbor recently completed a fuels reduction project in the Pine Forest, a 5-acre commonly-owned property which abuts several residences and is in the middle of the subdivision. The Pine Forest is a very densely planted red pine plantation which was recently thinned. Sixteen loads of harvest slash were removed from the forest floor to improve the fire break provided by the road. This project will make Snug Harbor eligible to become a recognized Firewise Community/USA.

Harvest slash being removed.

The Point of Origin
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

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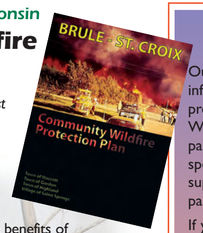
Towns in Southern Douglas County, Wisconsin

Adopt a Community Wildfire Protection Program

By Marty Kasinskas – Northern Region WUI Specialist



Last December the Towns of Wascott, Gordon, Highland and the Village of Solons Springs met on common ground to discuss a common problem, **wildfire.**

The team started the process researching the needs of their communities matching them with the benefits of the **Community Wildfire Protection Program,** and how it would benefit each community. After their thoughts and visions were clear they set their eyes on a goal that not only would better their community but **protect each member of each community** from wildfire. The team worked diligently gathering and researching all the information needed to formulate a plan to educate their citizens and reduce the risk of wildfire in their communities.

Their next goal will be to put their plan in action over the winter, seeking funding through grants and using educational tools learned through this process. If you would like to view this plan in its entirety go to www.nwrpc.com and click on Department-Current Planning Projects- Brule-St. Croix C.W.P.P.

From the Editors...

Our purpose is to provide you with information about the services, products, and direction of the Wisconsin DNR and the various partners in protection, referring specifically to wildfire prevention, suppression, and outreach. Building partnerships is the key to success!

If you have any comments, questions, or ideas for the newsletter, contact:

WDNR-Forestry
Point of Origin
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
608-267-7677
DNRFRPointofOrigin@wisconsin.gov

Wildland fire training is being offered free of charge by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Currently, there are DNR fire service instructors presenting fire departments this wildland fire training in the Cooperative (Co-op) areas of the state (see map). This wildland fire training will assist fire departments prepare for next spring's wildfire season.

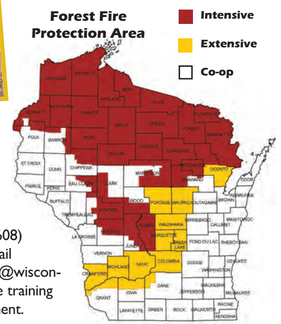
Several training options are available. A comprehensive 8-hour "Introduction to Wildland Fire Suppression for Wisconsin Fire Departments" course is the first option. This is the Wisconsin standard course for wildland fire training. This entire course can be taught in two training nights or one day long session.

This course was developed with eight one-hour modules. These modules include: wildland fire terminology, tactics and safety. Any of these training components will allow firefighters to make progress towards meeting the standards set in NFPA 1051 – Wildland Firefighter Professional Qualifications.

Another wildland training course that has been developed for Wisconsin Fire Departments is "Structural Protection Basics for WI Fire Departments." This course outlines tactics and techniques for protecting buildings threatened during wildland fires. Virtually every wildland fire occurring in Wisconsin threatens homes and out buildings. This course gives firefighters the tools to make good decisions and stay safe during these activities. This course is designed to be offered in 3 hours or one training night.

The final wildland fire training course is "Wildland Fire Simulator for WI Fire Departments." This course serves as a final wildland fire course utilizing all of the topics taught in the first two courses while adding an Incident Commander. This course allows role playing a wildland fire scenario from the time of page to the completion of fire suppression efforts. A variety of wildland fire scenarios are available to train with including wildland fires in grass, brush or trees, wildland fires with access, marsh or topography issues. The scenarios are based on aerial photos with a wildland fire that changes over time as the class role-plays the fire suppression activities. Students will utilize the Incident Command System, objective setting, radio communications, wildland fire tactics, techniques and safety in this class. This course is designed for 3 hours or a single fire department training night.

Act now to secure this free wildland fire training for your fire department. Evening training schedules are rapidly filling up. Please give Chris Klahn, Cooperative Fire Management Specialist, a call (608) 297-2214 or e-mail christopher.klahn@wisconsin.gov to arrange training for your department.



Firewise Communities USA

Eight years ago, the Wisconsin DNR began working with its first homeowner association to launch the Firewise Communities USA recognition program in the state. Crystal Lake Club, in Marquette County, worked the steps towards recognition and became the first Firewise Community in Wisconsin in 2004. Since then, Firewise Communities in Wisconsin has grown to 16 sites! The more Firewise Communities there are, the more of you there are who will be preparing to prevent fire from reaching your homes and property.

Congratulations to all of our Firewise Communities for making awareness of wildfire and the safety of your communities a top priority: Crystal Lake Club, Brookhaven Estates, Arrowhead North Coalition, Arrowhead Pinehurst Coalition, Arrowhead Pines Course Coalition, Arrowhead South Coalition, Camelot Upper South, Camelot Lower Southwest, Camelot Upper North, Camelot Lower Northeast, Camelot Lower Southwest, Camelot Lower Northwest, Camelot Walden, Arrowhead Augusta, Lake Sherwood, and Potawatomi Estates.

Do you know of a community that would be like to work towards Firewise Communities USA recognition status? Additional information on the Firewise program, is available at www.firewise.org. Or you can contact your state Firewise liaison for assistance:

Jolene Ackerman
WDNR-Forestry
101 S. Webster Street
Madison, WI 53703
Jolene.ackerman@wisconsin.gov
608-267-7677

FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

NFPA

Storm Damage Recovery

Many communities in Wisconsin experienced damage to homes, businesses, property, and natural resources this year as numerous tornadoes and wind events occurred. The DNR activated "Incident Management Teams" after storms raced through Adams, Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Marathon, Marinette, Monroe, Polk, and Washburn Counties during spring and summer. Counties in northwest Wisconsin were hit especially hard on July 1, as winds estimated to reach over 100 mph caused damaged to more than 130,000 acres of land. These storms have left people wondering what to do with all the debris left on their property. To DNR fire control staff, this accumulation of dead and down trees and branches is a great concern, especially when it comes to the potential for wildfires.

Homeowners who live in or near storm-damaged areas are urged to act now to protect their homes from wildland fires. Homeowners who spend the time and energy to make their property Firewise will not only reduce the risk of a wildfire destroying their home or their neighbor's home, it will also make it easier and safer for firefighters to protect homes in the event of a blaze. An assessment of your property and fire hazard considerations includes the area 100 to 200 feet around buildings, an area called the "Home Ignition Zone."

When beginning the Firewise process, start with the buildings on your property. Clear debris off roofs and out of rain gutters. Prune all tree limbs, especially conifers, within 10 feet of roof edges. Don't forget to keep decks swept off and clean out areas under them that have built up debris. Accumulated dead vegetation supplies the fuel for a flying ember to smolder and ignite a fire.

Next, remove all flammable materials 3 to5 feet around building foundations. This means removing annuals and cutting back perennials as they die off in the fall. Remove excessive amounts of mulch and anything flammable that may be stored next to your siding.

Clear fallen leaves, brush, and dried grass 30 feet around buildings. Remove dead and dying trees and broken off limbs. Prune conifer branches to a height of 6 feet. Keep this 30-foot area maintained throughout next spring's fire season. Store firewood and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from the house and other buildings and clear a space at least 10 feet around them.

Next, look at the vegetation in the zone that extends 30 to 100 feet beyond buildings. Remove as many fallen branches and trees as you can this fall. Start with the pines as they are considered to be the most flammable tree type in our state. Move this material to a local brush collection site or have it chipped on your property. Burning should be your last option. If you decide to burn, start piling the material now and wait to burn it when the ground is completely snow covered. Keep piles small and burn early in the winter rather than late winter to minimize the chance that embers could still be smoldering and flare up when the snow melts. Finally, clear fallen trees, shrubs, and limbs along your driveway. Keep tree limbs pruned 15 feet above your driveway to accommodate emergency vehicles, should one need to access your property. Remember - a firefighter cannot help save your home if they cannot get to it.

These are just a few things to consider as a way to prepare your home and property. By taking action now, you are lowering the chance of losing your property to wildfire. Talk to your neighbors about the importance of preparing your properties now, before spring fire season. If you would like a Home Ignition Zone Assessment packet mailed to you, contact Jolene Ackerman one of three ways: by calling 608-267-7677, emailing jolene.ackerman@wisconsin.gov, or writing to her at 101 S. Webster Street, Madison, WI 53703.

People who own property in Polk, Burnett, Washburn, Douglas and Bayfield counties can find storm recovery information on a special web site: **http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/stormReovery/**

Dry Hydrant Maintenance - Aquatic Invasive Species Considerations

Dry hydrant maintenance is on the autumn to do list of fire departments across the state. With that task ahead, fire departments must include stopping the threat of spreading aquatic invasive species (AIS) in Wisconsin's natural water bodies. Administrative code NR 329 (Miscellaneous Structures in Navigable Waterways) was enacted to help protect lakes, rivers and streams from spreading a variety of harmful exotic plants and animals. These AIS considerations apply to everyone using natural waterways including fire departments operating dry hydrants for maintenance purposes.

Below are dry hydrant maintenance procedures that meet the requirements of NR 329. The procedures are divided as to the source of the fire truck water, well/municipal or natural. Water from wells or municipal water supplies are free of AIS and pose no threats to natural water. Fire trucks performing dry hydrant maintenance with natural source water must not release that water into another natural water body.

When using municipal or well water in truck tank:

1. Back flush the dry hydrant as per the FD procedures
2. Draft natural water to test functionality of the dry hydrant
3. Cycle natural water through pump and discharge that natural water back into the water source, do not refill tank
4. When the draft testing is complete, drain all water from the suction hose, pump, discharge hose and nozzle (NR 329.04 (5a))
5. Remove all plant and animal materials from suction hose, pump screen, discharge hose and nozzle (NR 329.04 (5b))
6. Dispose of plant and animal materials in trash (NR329.04 (5c))
7. The tank water does NOT need to be drained if the water is discharged in upland areas through suppression or dumping (NR329.04 (5b note)
8. Refill truck tank with municipal or well water
9. Allow all utilized equipment (suction and discharge hose, nozzle) and pump to dry for 5 days OR steam clean all equipment OR wash equipment with soap and water and rinse with power washer at 2000 psi OR disinfect all equipment with 200 ppm chlorine bleach water (NR329.04 5d,e,f,g)

Only ONE of the above disinfecting measures is needed.

10. Fire departments must allow the disinfecting by one of the above methods BEFORE testing another dry hydrant on a different natural water body. Testing dry hydrants on the same natural water body is allowed without any disinfecting between tests.

Mecan Dry Hydrant

Germania Dry Hydrant

When using natural water in truck tank

1. Drain all the water from truck tank, equipment and pump on an upland area.
2. Utilize a portable pump and refill tank from natural water body containing the dry hydrant to be maintained.
3. Back flush the dry hydrant as per the FD procedures
4. Draft natural water to test functionality of the dry hydrant
5. Refill truck tank
6. When test is complete, drain water from suction hose, pump, discharge hose and nozzle from both the portable pump system and the truck pump system (NR 329.04 (5a))
7. Remove all plant and animal materials from suction hose, pump screen , discharge hose and nozzle from both the portable pump system and the truck pump system (NR 329.04 (5b))
8. Dispose of plant and animal materials in trash (NR329.04 (5c))
9. The tank water does NOT need to be drained if the water is discharged in upland areas through suppression or dumping (NR329.04 (5b note)
10. Allow all equipment and pump to dry for 5 days OR steam clean all equipment OR wash equipment with soap and water and rinse with power washer at 200 psi OR disinfect all equipment with 200 ppm chlorine bleach water (NR329.04 5d,e,f,g)

Only ONE of the above measures is needed.

11. Must allow the disinfecting by one of the above methods BEFORE testing another dry hydrant on a different natural water body. Testing dry hydrants on the same natural water body is allowed without any disinfecting between tests.

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species is the right thing to do. Nobody wants to contaminate the natural beauty and health of Wisconsin's waterways. By following these procedures, Wisconsin Fire Departments can share that responsibility and help assure the cleanliness of our lakes, streams and rivers.

For more information or questions; contact
Chris Klahn, Cooperative Fire Management Specialist, (608) 297-2214 or christopher.klahn@wisconsin.gov

New Video Tells a Wisconsin Firewise Story

A new video has just been released that gives a Wisconsin perspective on protecting homes in the Wildland-Urban Interface. "Wildfire in Wisconsin: Would Your Home Survive?" tells the story of George Voyles, whose home stood undamaged though his property scored a direct hit by the 3400-acre Cottonville Fire of 2005 in Adams County. George had taken steps to make his property safer from the threat of wildfire, and his efforts worked. His captivating story is a motivation for other rural landowners to take action to protect their own homes.

Find a link to the video on the Firewise home page of the DNR web site http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/fire/prevention/firewise/ Click on graphic link on right hand side of page. A DVD version is also available for distribution to homeowners, homeowner associations, and other interested WUI parties. Send an email to DNRFRPointofOrigin@Wisconsin.gov to have a copy of the DVD mailed to you.