

CCME WILDFIRE MITIGATION NEWSLETTER



**Neighbors Helping Neighbors Mitigate for Wildfire Risk
When ONE of us mitigates, we ALL benefit!**

Welcome to 2026 from the CCME Wildfire Mitigation Action Team (WMAT)!

For those of you who don't know or remember, last year our team reinvented itself to better promote and support wildfire mitigation efforts in CCME. We came up with a new name that better reflected the "action" part of our mission, recruited new team members (and we are always looking for more), and developed robust plans for new wildfire mitigation programs for 2026 and beyond.

Since the record low snow has made our wildfire risk extremely high this year, it is VITAL that we ALL take actions to personally mitigate our fire risks. To help us prepare, this newsletter issue provides important wildfire mitigation info, including: when and where you can take your raked pine needles and leaves, this year's chipping dates, our new Wildfire Risk Home Assessment Initiative, how you can apply for help with mitigating your property if you are financially or physically unable to do it, and much more. One of the most important articles is on upcoming classes on wildfire mitigation, two by the WMAT team at the CCME Lodge and other public classes from around the county. Learning what you need to do is the first step to protecting your property. Let's keep CCME safe!

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Meet the Team!

The following CCME folks have generously volunteered their time and talents to serve on the WMAT team and lead the efforts to help everyone in CCME mitigate their properties to reduce their wildfire risk.

If you see them in public, please say hello, thank them for their work, and feel free to ask them for answers to your wildfire mitigation questions. When ONE of us mitigates, we ALL benefit!

Suzanne Adams – Team Co-Chair

Loren Gollhardt – Team Co-Chair

Emmett Skiles – Communications/Newsletter Co-Chair,
Firewood Exchange Coordinator

Rhonda Hoeckley – Communications/Newsletter Co-Chair

Phil Gilchrist - Home Wildfire Risk Assessment Coordinator

Erica Gilchrist - Member at large

Sharon Findlay - Member at large

Stephen Hoeckley - Member at large

Roger Klapp - Member at large

Naomi Mendoza - Member at large





An updated CCME WMAT website, and a WMAT Facebook page! You can also find wildfire fire mitigation info from the Four Mile Fire Protection District at <https://www.4milefire.com/>.

Get Ready for Upcoming Chipping and Pine Needle/Leaf Disposal Dates... Volunteers Needed!

We have chipping dates scheduled with the Four Mile Fire Protection District for the following Fridays/Saturdays:

May 8 – 9

June 19-20

July 17-18

August 14-15

September 18-19

If you need chipping done, please sign up at the CCME office. **IMPORTANT:** For info on how to prepare for chipping, please see the “Chipping Do’s and Don’ts” at <https://ccmepoa.com/wildfire-mitigation-info>.

We need volunteers to help with chipping those weekends, as well as to help with lunches. If you are available, please contact Loren Gollhardt at bigl0256@gmail.com.

For disposal of pine needles, pine cones, and leaves, each fire station in Teller County will have several roll-off dumpsters available onsite from May 20-23 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. In addition, WMAT will pay for one or more 30-yard roll-offs to be located behind the CCME clubhouse for our residents to use after May 23 on selected Saturdays (to be announced) from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.





Wildfire Risk Home Assessment Initiative Underway

As we announced in our fall newsletter, Fire Chief Chris Hawkins of the Four Mile Fire Protection District is training/certifying volunteers on our team to perform formal Home Wildfire Risk Assessments (the same assessments the Chief does on request). Once certified, our volunteers will do all CCME risk assessments (under the Chief's supervision). This initiative will enable more CCME owner properties to be assessed this year without being limited by the Chief's busy schedule keeping 19 different subdivisions fire safe.

These assessments will evaluate:

- Home Hardening: Modifying a structure to make it more resistant to ignition
- Home Ignition Zones: The zones around the structure where combustibles have been removed/altered to reduce wildfire risk

If you have insurance issues, Chief Hawkins will still be the one to contact your insurance company post-assessment on your behalf. We'll send out assessment sign-up details after our volunteers are certified.

For info on the program and to get on the assessment schedule, please contact Phil Gilchrist, our WMAT Home Wildfire Risk Assessment Coordinator, at: eriphil.2019@gmail.com.

Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program for CCME Homeowners Taking Applications

Our new Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program is ready for applications! This new WMAT program is designed to help CCME homeowners who cannot do mitigation work themselves (due to age or physical disability) and cannot afford to hire a professional.



For those who qualify (and based on availability of our resources), our team of trained volunteers can help remove trees, trim/limb up branches, remove vegetation, rake and remove pine needles, remove stumps/debris, and stack slash. The goal will be to create home defensible spaces in Home Ignition Zones 1 & 2 (0-30 feet).

To see if you qualify, please contact Suzanne Adams (303)588-2016, or Suzanne.Adams@ucdenver.edu). The number of owners helped will be dependent on time and resources. Please apply as soon as possible to be considered.

Firewood Exchange Program News

Our WMAT Firewood Exchange Program has a new coordinator! Emmett Skiles is now leading the program and working closely with the Four Mile Fire Protection District to execute it.

To be eligible for WMAT assistance in delivering firewood, CCME residents must:

- Use a fireplace or wood stove for their primary means of heating their home
- Be physically unable to cut and stack firewood themselves and unable to pay for firewood
- Agree to a quick home visit from Emmett to establish need. Home assessment and/or entry onto the wildfire mitigation request list can be offered at this time.

WMAT will establish dates upon which CCME residents may come to collect wood. WMAT team members and/or Four Mile Fire volunteers will distribute firewood when necessary. Please contact Emmett at emmettskiles@gmail.com to get on the request list, donate firewood, or ask questions.





Learn How to Protect Your Family and Property from Wildfire with These Classes

The first step to mitigating your wildfire risk is knowing *what* to do and *why* it is so important to do it. There are some very helpful wildfire mitigation-related classes coming up locally that can help, including two by our WMAT team. Please consider attending one or more of these classes to help make CCME a safer place to live for all of us!

CCME Wildfire Mitigation Information Session 1 – Saturday, June 6, 10 a.m. - noon, CCME Lodge Meeting Room, facilitated by Suzanne Adams, Co-Chair CCME Wildfire Mitigation Action Team, free. Topics include:

- **Wildfire Risk in Teller County and CCME**
- **Wildfire Mitigation Goal**
- **How Wildfires Start**
- **Wildfire Behavior**
- **Home Hardening:** Modifying your home to make it more resistant to embers that may fall on or near your home
- **Home Ignition Zones:** Specific strategies designed to: eliminate combustible materials and vegetation near the house that could ignite from flying embers; reduce fire intensity so there is not enough heat generated to ignite the home; keeping fire on the ground and to get a fire that may be active in tree crowns (crown fire) to move to the ground (surface fire) where it will be less intense; improve forest health.
- **Ways the CCME Wildfire Mitigation Team Can Assist Homeowners:** Wildfire Risk Home Assessment; Wildfire Mitigation Assistance; Firewood Exchange Program

CCME Wildfire Mitigation Information Session 2 – Saturday, July 25 10 a.m. - noon, CCME Lodge Meeting Room, facilitated by Suzanne Adams, Co-Chair CCME Wildfire Mitigation Action Team, free. Topics include:

- **Ready, Set, Go!:** A program that teaches homeowners a three-step process to create their own action plan of preparedness, have situational awareness, and



leave early in the event of a fire. The overall goal is to increase the safety of residents and firefighters. Briefly stated, the three-step process is:

- **Ready** – Take personal responsibility and prepare long before the threat of a wildland fire so your home is ready in case of a fire. Create defensible space by clearing brush away from your home. Use fire-resistant landscaping and harden your home with fire-safe construction measures. Assemble emergency supplies and belongings in a safe spot. Plan escape routes. Make sure all those residing within the home know the plan of action.
- **Set** – Act immediately. Pack your vehicle with your emergency items. Stay aware of the latest news and information on the fire from local media and your local fire department.
- **Go!** – Leave early! Follow your personal action plan. Doing so will not only support your safety, but will allow firefighters to best maneuver resources to combat the fire.

- ***Creating a “Go Bag”***
- ***How to Make a Home Fire Escape Plan***
- ***Preparing Your Home/Property for Emergency Vehicle Access***
- ***Emergency Notification Procedures***

Here are some other useful upcoming classes open to the public from the local wildfire group, NoFloCo:

All the following classes are offered at no charge; however, NoFloCo will “pass the hat” to collect a cash donation to our public libraries to thank them for the use of the room.

Tools for Fire Mitigation on Private Property – Sunday, April 19, 2 p.m., Florissant Public Library, Large Meeting Room. Topics include:

- **How to get started on the big job of improving forested private property—without wasting money on unnecessary gear – and what tools are truly worth investing in.** Class will cover a simple plan for tackling mitigation step-by-step, plus live tool demos ranging from gloves and loppers to handsaws, battery-powered saws, and the best chainsaws for common mountain-property tasks. This class is useful for newcomers as well as experienced mitigators. You’ll leave with practical tips and time-saving techniques you can use immediately.



Harden Your Home Against Wildland Fire – Two dates: Monday, April 6, 2026, 6 p.m. and Saturday, May 9, 2 p.m., both at Woodland Park Public Library, Large Meeting Room. Topics include:

- **Practical tips from trusted sources (Colorado State Forest Service and the National Fire Protection Association) on steps you can take now to improve the chances your home survives a wildfire – especially ember-driven ignition.** Class will cover windows, vent screens, decks, flower boxes, roof and siding vulnerabilities, and other high-impact improvements.

Organize Your Subdivision to Be Fire Ready – Thursday, April 30, 2026 — 6:00 PM Florissant Public Library, Large Meeting Room. Topics include:

- At a recent Fire Ready discussion hosted by Braver Angels, Teller County Commissioner Erik Stone and Fire Chief Lambert stated that Teller County, local fire districts, and the Teller County Office of Emergency Management rely on **HOAs/POAs and subdivisions** to plan evacuation routes, identify alternate exits, and keep rights-of-way clear. Let's plan now – before a crisis – with best practices to reduce congestion, establish safety zones, and identify alternative routes and exits. A little planning during times of calm can avoid deadly panic.

Mountain Pine Beetles are Back, and We Need to Save Our Trees

The dry and warm winter has not only increased our wildfire risk, but it has also made the mountain pine beetle infestation problem worse. Mountain pine beetles, which are native to Colorado, have recently exploded in numbers in the Front Range after a decade of relatively low populations. According to the University of Colorado, the mild winter temperatures have allowed more beetle larvae to survive, while the lack of water has weakened pine trees' natural defenses against the bugs.

Dying trees create more wildfire fuel, increasing our wildfire risk even more. Since the mountain pine beetle larvae hatch in June, NOW is the time to check your trees and take action if required!

Like with wildfire risk mitigation, information is power. This newsletter is too small a space to adequately tackle this topic, but what we can do is direct you to information you need to know to save your trees.



Here are two Colorado State Forestry Service publications which are very useful:

Bark Beetles – They’re Back! Are Your Trees at Risk?

<https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/Bark-Beetles-Brochure.pdf>

This publication not only explains everything about the beetle, but also takes you through a 4-step process to identify and attack the problem.

Product Use to Prevent Mountain Pine Beetle

https://static.colostate.edu/client-files/csfs/pdfs/Web_Revision_June6_MPB_Prev_Products_QG.pdf

This publication explains the known ways to treat your trees for the mountain pine beetle, including chemical and natural/organic methods.

Here is an upcoming class by NoFloCo which will also provide you with good information:

What You Can Do Now to Save Your Trees from Mountain Pine Beetle – Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m., Woodland Park Public Library, Large Meeting Room. Topics include:

Learn the beetle lifecycle, when to take action, and when beetles are actively seeking trees. The class will discuss what to do with standing dead trees, how to handle active infestations, and how to keep healthy trees healthy. Mountain Pine Beetle cycles are natural, but warmer, drier conditions are causing heavier impacts right now. These cycles tend to peak roughly every 20 years – acting early can save the trees closest to your home.

