

DFFM Firewise Gathering Notes

Central Zone Prevention Contact:

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Thank you to all our attendees and participants. Thank you for taking the time to join us and share your journeys. You all have unique experiences.

Below are questions and topics from the chat.

Q: What attempts have been made to work with Phoenix Fire Department?

A: Phoenix Fire Department is actively engaging communities within their service area. In fact, they have a great plan developed to engage communities in the wildland urban interface (WUI). We support their efforts where they need us.

Q: Could you give the dates for Wildfire Awareness Week?

A: March 23rd to March 28th.

Q: Are there case studies from Firewise Communities that have experienced wildfires?

A: Michele Steinberg (NFPA's Wildfire Division) wrote: "I wrote a column for *NFPA Journal* last spring highlighting three cases where firefighters testified that Firewise efforts helped protect communities. One example is the 2011 Wallow Fire in Arizona. The column is available here:

https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/nfpa/journal_2025spring/index.php#/p/50

The U.S. Forest Service's full report on the Wallow Fire, which attributes successful community protection to fuel treatments and home preparedness". (Attachment A)

We have additional case studies: Marshall Fire, Lahaina Conflagration, Los Angeles Conflagration, Waldo Canyon.

Q: Are there opportunities for grants to support wash cleanup, etc?

A: Yes, our Forestry Grant Dept has HFI, Invasive, and hazardous fuels grants available. Anyone interested, please email myself or Kyle and we can forward your information on to them.

Q: Are new developers being required to be Firewise compliant?

A: Unless there is a specific WUI or building code requiring building material to be a certain type then no. Home owners are welcome to choose ignition resistant material for their new builds. There are options for retrofits but that can be costly.

Q: Does stucco have comparable results to concrete?

A: Stucco as an exterior material does provide a layer of protection because it is noncombustible in comparison to treated wood. However, the stucco must be in good shape. Behind the stucco is wood framing and Styrofoam material that is highly flammable. If there is any noticeable damage to the stucco then it may provide a pathway for embers or radiant heat to ignite the material behind the stucco. In addition, at the base of the exterior stucco wall is a moisture gap. This is designed to allow any moisture that develops behind it to properly drain. This could be a pathway for embers to penetrate the home.

Q: Any information on solar panels, are they more inflammable? Act as a fire break? Not relevant?

A: Solar panels in wildfire areas pose risks from ash accumulation reducing power, potential fire spread if panels ignite (rare, often from installation faults), and firefighter hazards (electrocution, blocked access), but proper installation with rapid shutdown, good maintenance, and fire-resistant materials significantly minimizes these risks, making systems generally safe and resilient.

Q: What are your thoughts on building materials called "barn wood"?

A: While aesthetically popular, it presents significant fire safety risks due to age, dryness, and accumulation of dust. Firewise recommends treated, non-combustible siding. Typically, the 'barn wood' look means very old, untreated, and

rough. Adding some sort of treatment to it may ruin the look or appeal. Our recommendation is keep the barn style wood interior and not exposed to the elements on the exterior.

Q: Another problem we encounter has to do with different municipalities that have different regulations with respect to washes and NAOs zone.

A: Yes, there may be other jurisdictions within your community. If this is present, then you will need to coordinate efforts and conversation with the appropriate owner. We are happy to be present to listen. Firewise USA and AZ State (DFFM) do not have any authority or ability to disregard laws, codes, or ordinances imposed by the other jurisdiction. Nor does Firewise USA offer recommendations specifically for Section 404 washes, NAOS, Hillside Easement or any other protected landscape. The recommendations for these areas would depend upon which ignition zone the land lies in. With possible restrictions, it is more paramount that community and resident focus shifts back onto the structure and within the Home Ignition Zones.

Q: Is artificial turf near a home ok to use?

A: There is not a lot of research regarding artificial turf. The limited material shares it is more likely to melt from the rubber component. Be sure to maintain your turf and keep it clean of debris such as leaves or needles.

Q: Is epoxy coating on decking an ignitable material?

A: Fully cured epoxy material on a deck is generally not highly ignitable and is considered resistant to high temperatures, though it can melt or burn if exposed to direct, intense flames.

Majority of Community Needs/Asks:

- Collaborate with DFFM to support fuels projects with Prevention staff and/or State crews
- Attending/supporting community events
- Resident engagement ideas

Additional information:

<https://www.nfpa.org/news-blogs-and-articles/nfpa-journal/2025/11/11/using-ai-to-assess-wildland-urban-interface-structure-protection>

https://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/nfpa/journal_2025spring/index.php#/p/50

IBHS Ember Shower:

<https://youtu.be/IvbNOPSyys?si=SKoHvBc2cNIJTfV0>

Your home can survive a wildfire:

https://youtu.be/vL_syp1ZScM?si=sWjoGHg-HmphLpvr

Prevention Home Ignition Pt 2:

https://youtu.be/_eyl87I3wqk?si=Bs35j5h5e3v0WnfK

NFPA Reimagining an End to Disasters:

<https://www.nfpa.org/videos/wildfire-resilience-2025-panel-discussion>

PBS: Firewise-Neighbors helping Neighbors

<https://www.pbs.org/video/firewise-neighbors-helping-neighbors-q3d1u5/>

PBS: Weathered-After the LA Firestorm

<https://www.pbs.org/video/weathered-after-the-la-firestorm-elfmgu/>

Apache County's 1st Firewise Community-Hidden Meadow Ranch shared their journey with DFFM's Tiffany Davila & Aaron Casem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5o5LP6TV7k&feature=youtu.be>