

# Forest Lakes Firewise 5” Diameter and Less Tree Removal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Forest Lakes Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tree density is a major concern within Forest Lakes. Looking at a satellite image of the neighborhood and surrounding area, you’ll notice that the tree density within the neighborhood is 2 to 3 times denser than the healthy Sitgreaves National Forest that surround us.

Most of the trees within the neighborhood are ponderosas. To promote faster growth and larger trees, a spacing of 15 to 30 feet apart is recommended. This would result in an average of 27 trees per acre. To promote wildlife habitat, spacing of 10 to 20 feet between trees is often recommended. This allows for a diverse and resilient ecosystem to develop, and has an average of 61 trees per acre.

Inadequate spacing can lead to reduced growth, increased competition for resources, and a higher risk of disease and pest issues. The Department of Forestry and Fire Maintenance released the 2025 Forest Health Conditions Report. Forest Lakes is within Sitgreaves National Forest, and therefore, is part of the A2S Northeast District. Last year there was a 134% increase in bark beetle damage in the A2S region. There is also a Nantucket pine tip moth that is damaging pines from Overgaard to Show Low and spreading.

As part of the Firewise program, each of us can help to reduce the tree density with our neighborhood. It is not uncommon for those that use the tree thinning grant to have 80 to 100 trees removed, and their lots still look fully shaded and dense with trees.

This year we would like to start by having everyone remove all ponderosas that are less than 5 inches in diameter at chest height. These are trees that you can remove with a hand saw and don’t require power equipment. These very young ponderosas are dangerous because they pull water and nutrients from the soil and also will act as the fire ladder to allow ground fires to climb into the more mature tree canopies.

If you have more than 100 trees on your lot, you may not even notice they are gone once they have been removed. Once removed, turn in this completed form to the Community Center or the Fire Station for inspection. Once the inspection is completed to verify that all smaller trees have been removed, you’ll be entered into a giveaway at the monthly FLOA meeting.

Are all 5” or less ponderosa trees removed from the property? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of trees remaining on your property? \_\_\_\_\_

Phone or email contact to set up inspection: \_\_\_\_\_