

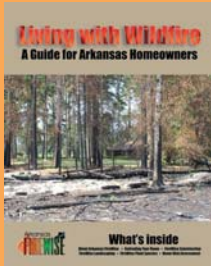
FireWise In Action

Volume 2, Issue 3

August 2008

Tabletop display, Homeowner Guides available

A trifold exhibit is available for use by communities working to obtain or renew Firewise



Communities/USA certification. The tabletop can be used during county and community fairs, or other outreach events.

The tabletop will be rotated throughout the state, so please reserve it at least two weeks in advance.

Copies of "Living with Wildfire: A Guide for Arkansas Homeowners" are also available for distribution during outreach events, or can be placed in businesses in the community. The guide includes landscaping and construction checklists homeowners can use to determine if their home is "Firewise."

To reserve the tabletop display or request homeowner guides, please call Natalie Canard, Information Officer, at 1-501-603-3545 or e-mail natalie.canard@arkansas.gov. To view a copy of "Living with Wildfire: A Guide for Arkansas Homeowners" visit www.arkansasfirewise.com/publications/livingwithfire.pdf.

New renewal options available for 2008

Applications for all grants must be received by Oct. 1

Although the heat of summer is in full swing, the leaves will soon begin to change as the air cools and daylight hours diminish. And with the change of weather comes the deadline for submission of Arkansas FireWise Community renewals. Time to renew is quickly approaching once again!

In 2007, Arkansas FireWise Communities became eligible for \$500 mitigation grants as an added incentive to reduce

community wildland fire risk. If recognized communities complete and submit an Arkansas FireWise renewal packet by Oct. 1, 2008, the community is eligible for a \$500 grant upon approval of their renewal project and packet information. The packet includes a Firewise Communities/USA renewal form; a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, also known as a CWPP, if your community does not already have one on file; a \$500 grant applica-

tion; a project documentation form; and volunteer tracking sheets to record time spent on projects. Before and after photos of your mitigation project must be submitted on disk or as prints with the project documentation form.

In 2008, Arkansas FireWise is providing two new opportunities for communities. If fire risk is reduced to five or more homes through a mitigation project, the community has the opportunity to receive

See **Renewal** on page 3

Unique facilities join FireWise team

State of Arkansas works hard for facilities and parks to become Arkansas FireWise Communities in 2008

Arkansas State Parks have worked hard in 2008 to become recognized by Arkansas FireWise for their mitigation. Now other agencies and facilities are also joining the effort to make their unique communities ready for the possible threat of wildfire.

The Ouachita Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center located west of Hot Springs on the Ouachita National

Forest is just one of these unique communities. It is quite possibly the first Job Corps Center to be recognized for its Firewise efforts.

United States Forest Service Fire Management Officers Jeff Organ, of Ouachita CCC, and Ben Rowland, of the Caddo-Womble Ranger District, worked with David Samuel, Arkansas FireWise Coordinator, to conduct a



wildfire hazard assessment and develop a Wildfire Protection Plan to address safety

See **Facilities** on page 2



David Samuel
Arkansas FireWise
Coordinator

Greetings from Arkansas FireWise

Greetings from the Arkansas FireWise Headquarters in Little Rock!

Did you know that fire protection is everyone's responsibility? Did you know that just one person can make a difference in their community?

The Arkansas FireWise Team is made up of many individuals who are providing leadership in making their community a safer place to live. We call these valuable members of our team, SPARKPLUGS!

They are fire chiefs, firefighters, mayors, city council members, and Property Owner Association members and directors. In addition, we have many SPARKPLUGS who serve in support of one or more communities. They are Arkansas Forestry Commission County Rangers, U. S. Forest Service Fire Management Officers, and

Arkansas State Park Rangers.

These team members serve on FireWise Boards and assist in the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), grant applications and mitigation projects.

Thanks to all of you for all you do in your community(s).

If you are not a member of the Arkansas FireWise Team but would like to know how you can contribute, please give me a call at 501-296-1872.

Keep up the good work and be FireWise, Arkansas!

David J. Samuel, CF, RF
FireWise Coordinator
Arkansas Forestry Commission

Facilities

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concerns for the center. The Urban Forestry trainees, the young women and men trained at the center, are currently implementing the planned projects to reduce the risk to the facilities.

"It serves a dual purpose," Rowland said. "It gives the trainees an introduction to the principles of Firewise and the job corps staff while making sure the center has defensible space against wildland fire."

Some of the planned mitigation projects include conducting vegetation and fuel mitigation at various points around the perimeter of Ouachita CCC; establishing adequate defensible space by removing flammable vegetation around homes and other center structures; and a fuel-reduction control burn along the south perimeter of the center in cooperation with the Caddo-Womble Ranger District.

"The Arkansas Forestry Commission will be recognizing the Ouachita CCC at the Arkansas FireWise Recognition Luncheon at Mt. Magazine State Park in October along with many other communities and state parks that are working to reduce risk from wildland fires to homes and structures. I have been very impressed with their enthusiasm in meeting the requirements for recognition,"

said Samuel.

Although the job corps is not a candidate for FireWise grants, Rowland and his staff find it imperative to rid the campus of wildfire risk and have fully embraced Firewise concepts.

Joining Ouachita CCC in mitigation efforts is the Glenhaven Youth Ranch located in Perry County down a dusty USFS gravel road south of Fourche Junction.

Completely surrounded by the Ouachita National Forest, Glenhaven Youth Ranch was built over two decades ago on two tracts of land totaling 188.5 acres. Threatened by fire 10 years ago, the ranch is aware of the possible risk of damage from wildfire. With several homes currently nestled too close to the forest to have adequate defensible space, the ranch is looking toward

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Renewal

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a \$1,000 grant. Projects must be completed and the required paperwork submitted by Oct. 1, 2008. Communities must have a CWPP on file to qualify. Paperwork includes a description of the project or projects, photos, and copies of before and after risk assessment forms. Another added bonus for communities is the opportunity for another \$2,500 grant from Arkansas FireWise after the completion of five renewal years. Communities that have renewed for five years or more are eligible for an additional grant to purchase new equipment. Grant applications should be submitted when the community is renewing for the sixth year.

When selecting a project, try to select an area visible to a number of residents. Promoting

the event in your local newspaper or on a local radio station can also produce results. Media coverage is a wonderful opportunity to gain positive publicity for your fire department and community. Additional community members may also see the publicized event and take the initiative to volunteer time or become more involved in future Firewise activities. Added coverage may also help add interest and appeal to the Firewise effort, not only in your community, but in surrounding areas.

Some communities choose to host a Firewise Day as well, providing an opportunity hand out literature and discuss Firewise concepts with homeowners they were not able to reach when assessments were

being completed. The distribution of literature isn't limited to a Firewise Day, and several departments have decided to also distribute literature during annual fundraiser dinners and events.

It is vital to record your time spent during FireWise board meetings. This can be used along with your volunteer hours spent on mitigation projects and Firewise educational events to meet the \$2 per/capita (number of residents) total required to renew. Each volunteer hour is currently valued at \$19.51.

For more information, please call Arkansas FireWise at 1-501-603-3545, e-mail firewise@arkansas.gov, or visit us on the internet at www.arkansasfirewise.com.

Facilities

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prevention methods, like those offered by the basic Firewise principles, to help reduce the high risk of these homes. Thirteen staff homes and three large residential homes are located on the property, and the closest fire station is nearly 10 miles away.

Proposed mitigation projects for Glenhaven include placing a dry hydrant on the existing pond, placing fire breaks along designated homes on the ranch, and conducting a fuel-reduction controlled burn on the ranch and around some of the surrounding property. A proposed hiking trail would also provide a firebreak for the ranch. Mitigation projects could possibly be performed by students, much like the mitigation tackled at Ouachita CCC.

Almost a city unto itself, the Booneville Human Development Center is perhaps the most unique community pursuing certification.

BHDC, like several state-owned human development centers in the state, is home to the developmentally disabled and is a community of 41 homes with around 140 residents. The grounds have excellent landscaping and lots of defensible space. The 580 acres is heavily forested, and

BHDC is self-supporting with its own water and sewer system, as well as its own fire department.

The center also has a special opportunity for national recognition. Jim Smalley, manager of the Firewise Communities program, said the program would consider the center upon its meeting certain national requirements. In order to be recognized by Firewise Communities/USA, BHDC will have to provide residents with the opportunity to help in mitigation efforts. With innovative ideas and helping hands, the Booneville Human Development Center could possibly be the first of its kind to be recognized nationally for its efforts to reduce wildfire risk.

Several Arkansas State Parks will be recognized at Arkansas FireWise on the Mountain II in October. Prairie Grove Battlefield, Withrow Springs, Lake Dardanelle, Woolly Hollow, Cosatot River, Hobbs, DeGray Lake Resort, Crater of Diamonds and Historic Washington will all be honored at the ceremony. Several parks are still hard at work on Wildfire Protection Plans. The Arkansas FireWise team appreciates all the hard work and dedication exhibited by the state's parks and hopes to recognize more state parks in the near future.

Benefits

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"It's pretty neat to be able to see the location of the houses with respect to the surrounding forest, having this kind of perspective allows us to really see where our high risk areas are," Chief Simpson went on to say. "It also helps us to think about how we would attack fires that get started in different areas."

The department will also be presented with a database of Firewise assessments for the entire community.

"With this, we can see exactly which addresses are at greatest risk and directly reach out to these homeowners," said Simpson.

He anticipates using the map as the foundation to better help the department with future planning activities and grant funding.

"This helps us in more ways than one and we really appreciate Arkansas FireWise and the Arkansas Forestry Commission for it."

For information on the Firewise program call 501-603-3545, e-mail www.firewise@arkansas.gov, or visit www.arkansasfirewise.com.



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Firewise offers unexpected benefits for the Lake Hamilton Fire District

By Dr. Kelly Hurt
Arkansas FireWise Consultant

A Firewise community project currently underway at the Lake Hamilton Fire District has produced some unexpected benefits for the local fire department.

The project has resulted in the production of a high-quality map of the fire district that not only includes roads, but also an aerial photo showing the homes and terrain. Until now, the fire department has only had line drawings showing the roads in the district.

"This is a great perk for us!" said Chief Matt Simpson, "We've never had a map of this quality that allows us to see where the houses are in the district."

Funding was provided through a Community FireWise Grant awarded to the district. The map was created in ArcInfo software that will allow the department to update the map as their address list grows. An electronic version of the district map will be given to the department so that they can view the distribution of overall risk and different risk parameters throughout the community.

