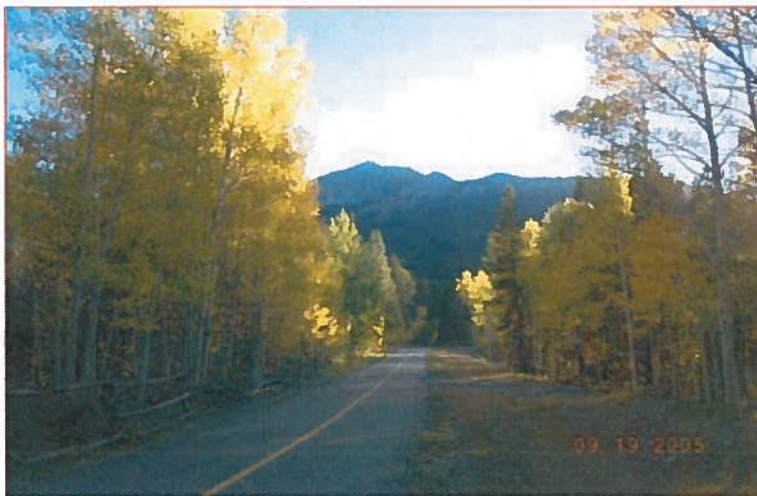




Wildfire Is Everyone's Fight



Summit County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

SUPPORTING AGENCIES

Summit County Government, Summit County Office of Emergency Management, Colorado State University Extension, Lake Dillon Fire Rescue, Red White and Blue Fire Protection District, Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan District, United States Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service, Town of Breckenridge, Town of Dillon, Town of Silverthorne, Town of Blue River, Town of Frisco, Town of Montezuma

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summit County's permanent resident population has more than doubled in the last several decades, with a corresponding increase in new development occurring in forested areas that have a high risk of wildfire. The community has a vested interest in minimizing the hazard of wildfire in these areas. The community, through various forums, has expressed a desire to maintain forests which not only have a reduced hazard of wildfire, but are also diverse and healthy.

Given that resources to address this concern are limited, officials from Summit County, local fire districts, state and federal forest agencies, towns and others joined forces to develop the community's first wildfire protection plan. This plan, known as the Summit County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), was adopted in 2006.

Early in the development of this first plan, participating entities agreed that it should be generally consistent with the national model for community wildfire protection planning, as set forth by the National Association of Counties and other organizations. This national model for wildfire protection planning is an extension of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) authorized by Congress in 2003.

The original CWPP was prospective in nature in that it established the Summit County Wildfire Council and set forth various objectives, actions and policies designed to reduce the risk and impact of wildfire. Since the plan's inception, the Wildfire Council and staff have continually reviewed and refined the CWPP to meet the community's changing needs concerning wildfire protection. While the 2006 plan envisioned cooperation between various agencies, one of the most important refinements that make this an extremely effective program is the close collaboration between the County, local fire-protection districts, the Colorado State Forest, the U.S. Forest Service and the towns.

Refinements to the plan have included the establishment of "focus areas," the creation of an annual grant program to encourage and financially support fuels reduction efforts and the creation of a long-term funding mechanism through the adoption of Referred Measure 1-A in 2008 to help pay for those efforts. Further refinements include new language regarding the use of the five models that form the Community Protection Assessment (Chapter X), the need for community preparedness and evacuation planning (Chapter VII), the addition of requirements to the grant program to minimize the proliferation of noxious weeds in fuels reduction projects (Chapter XII) and management recommendations for the reduction of fire hazards for each focus area (Appendix A).

II. AUTHORIZATION

The initial authorities for community wildfire planning came from the HFRA. Title I of HFRA outlined requirements for reducing hazardous fuels on federal lands. The Summit County plan was developed to be consistent with the requirements of the HFRA and to provide Summit County with a countywide baseline from which to begin community wildfire planning in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service. The Colorado Legislature has since created specific law guiding the community planning at a County government level. The statutes providing authorization for this planning are outlined below:

- C.R.S. 23-31-312 Community wildfire protection plans, County government, guidelines and criteria, legislative declaration, definitions

- C.R.S. 29-22.5-103 Wildland fires, general authority and responsibilities
- C.R.S. 30-10-512 Sheriff to act as fire warden
- C.R.S. 30-10-513 Sheriff in charge of forest or prairie fire
- C.R.S. 30-10-513.5 Authority of Sheriff relating to fire within unincorporated areas of the County
- C.R.S. 30-15-401.7 Determination of fire hazard area, community wildfire protection plans, adoption, legislative declaration, definition.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to identify areas where the hazard and potential community impact of wildfire is greatest and to guide and coordinate community efforts to reduce the risk of wildfire through public education, reduction of hazardous fuels and reduction of structural ignitability.

IV. GOALS

The main goals of the HFRA are to enhance life-safety for residents and responders and to mitigate undesirable fire outcomes to property, infrastructure, the environment and quality of life. This CWPP addresses these goals and guides the Summit County community in implementation. The goals of this plan are to:

1. Identify and mitigate areas that are at particular risk from wildfire loss, especially those areas that are “at risk” as identified in Title I of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. See <http://summitcountyco.gov/909/Community-Wildfire-Protection-Plan> for at risk areas.
2. Develop and/or inform plans to reduce potential loss of property, critical infrastructure and valued ecological resources while protecting the safety of the public and firefighters.
3. Implement, manage or fund projects identified in this plan.
4. Improve the public’s understanding of our existing community fire protection infrastructure and limitations.
5. Inform members of the public of the benefits of reducing wildfire hazard and their responsibilities to do so.
6. Provide a meaningful structure to update plans and strategies in the future.
7. Engage interested members of the public and affected governmental agencies to shape and effectively implement this plan.
8. Inform and support future land use decisions.
9. Integrate wildfire risk reduction and planning efforts with other County environmental and sustainability planning goals and activities.

V. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN STANDARDS

CWPPs are a direct extension of the HFRA authorized by Congress in 2003. In an effort to promote these plans and to encourage consistency in the development of these plans, a model handbook was prepared by the Communities Committee, National Association of Counties, National Association of State Foresters, Society of American Foresters and the Western Governors’ Association. The Summit County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Towns, Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit, the Colorado State Forest Service and fire chiefs for Lake Dillon, Red White and Blue, and Copper Mountain Consolidated Metropolitan Districts agreed that the development of the

CWPP should be generally consistent with this national model. CWPP minimum standards are:

- Collaboration
- Prioritized fuel reduction
- Treatment of structural ignitability.

A. COMMUNITY AND AGENCY ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

The HFRA calls for collaboration among affected agencies and interested members of the public with an emphasis on the involvement of federal agencies. The Summit County Wildfire Council (SCWC) is the collaborative body for Summit County. The SCWC meets regularly to discuss and direct the implementation of the CWPP.

VI. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. 2006 SUMMIT COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

In March of 2005, the local fire protection districts/departments, the USFS, Upper Colorado River Interagency Fire Management Unit, the Colorado State Forest Service, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments and the BOCC agreed to create a Countywide CWPP based on the national model promulgated by the National Association of Counties and others. There was agreement that the multi-jurisdictional effort in the Upper Blue basin, spearheaded by the Town of Breckenridge and facilitated by Gary Severson with the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, would be a component of this Countywide plan and would serve as a model as to how the Countywide program should be structured. After approval of the draft plan, the Summit County Wildfire Council was formed and formally adopted the first Summit County Wildfire Protection Plan in September of 2006.

B. FORMATION OF THE SUMMIT COUNTY WILDFIRE COUNCIL

Consistent with the direction given in the joint March 2005 meeting referenced above, the outline of this report and general strategy for reducing the risk of wildfire were developed jointly by the staffs of the Lake Dillon Fire Protection District, the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments and Summit County on April 15, 2005 and subsequently presented to both the federal and state forest services for their endorsement. An important mechanism established in this April outline was the creation of the Summit County Wildfire Council (SCWC). Direction of the SCWC includes:

- **Direct** the formation of mutually agreed upon objectives for the CWPP and determine the level of financial and human support needed to accomplish the priorities identified in the plan.
- **Review** staff-produced documents from the perspective of whether the product or process being proposed will aid locally elected officials and federal land management agency managers in making better, cooperative decisions.
- **Guide** revisions and plan updates in order to improve their quality as decision making tools and guide the implementation of these plans.
- **Evaluate** the plans and the process used to produce them.
- **Recommend** follow-up actions for the participating jurisdictions' actions to improve the process.

- **Communicate** actions and proposed actions regarding wildfire mitigation and forest-health activities to the public and other governmental jurisdictions.
- **Adopt and Revise** the CWPP as determined necessary.

The SCWC oversees staff recommendations on fuels reduction projects, allocation of grant funding and strategic policymaking on critical issues.

C. HISTORICAL SUPPORT FOR WILDFIRE PROTECTION

Summit County has been a leader in proactive wildfire mitigation issues for the past two decades. After the Black Tiger Fire in July of 1989 destroyed 44 structures in Boulder County, the Summit County Board of Commissioners, along with stakeholders in the fire protection community, formed a task force to examine wildfire issues. This diverse task force made several strategic recommendations to the community. After analysis of these strategic recommendations, a two-tiered approach was initiated. One strategic goal was to enhance the public education efforts on wildfire prevention and mitigation issues to the community. The second broad strategic goal was to establish criteria in local building and/or fire codes to reduce structural ignitibility and improve defensible space around new construction.

In 1992 a chapter was added in the Uniform Building Code that contained specific criteria on defensible space, non-combustible roofing materials and key provisions for reducing structural ignitibility. A part-time employee was added to the staff of the Summit County Building Department to enforce the new provisions in the Building Code and educate the public on the new provisions. The Summit County fire districts provided enhanced education efforts on the strategic and tactical issues involved with wildfire mitigation. This part-time position was expanded to a full-time position in 2001, with the Summit Fire Authority funding one half of the position and Summit County Government funding the other half.

Since the infancy of the wildfire program, Summit County has received numerous grants from various sources at the state and federal levels. Summit County received its first grant in 2002 to fund fuels reduction efforts and to create a comprehensive countywide plan. Community support for wildfire protection efforts was clearly demonstrated in 2008 with the approval of Referred Measure 1-A, a twelve year property tax levy to support wildfire prevention efforts as well as other County-wide initiatives. The Board of County Commissioners has voiced their intent to devote funds from this tax levy annually toward wildfire mitigation efforts and to build a cash reserve to fund fire suppression costs.

Pre-disaster mitigation is critical to minimizing loss during a wildfire. Colorado has had its share of devastating wildfires in the past decade. The trend emerging is that fires are becoming less numerous but more destructive. Between 2010 and 2013 Colorado had the four most destructive wildfires in state history in terms of homes lost. The Four Mile Canyon (162 homes), High Park (259 homes), Waldo Canyon (346 homes) and Black Forest (511 homes) fires destroyed a combined 1,278 homes and cost hundreds of millions of dollars to fight. While these types of fires are rare, they are described as low frequency but high risk.

G. NEED FOR CITIZEN PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION PLANNING

Individual preparedness is paramount when it comes to wildfire planning. Action taken by homeowners in advance of a wildfire is one of the simplest things that can be done to prevent the loss of life and property. Summit County's Ready, Set, Go! program instructs homeowners to create defensible space around structures, prepare an evacuation kit and develop a family communication plan, and to be willing and prepared to evacuate when the order to do so is given. Each individual is ultimately responsible for his or her own safety and the safety of family members. [Ready, Set, Go!](#) Steps are outlined below.



Ready: Creating defensible space around structures includes the removal of most flammable vegetation from the side of each structure to 30' away from the structure (zone 1). From 30' – 100' (zone 2), flammable vegetation should be thinned. Clusters of trees and shrubs should be well spaced. By modifying the vegetation, the desired outcome is to create a naturalized buffer from the structure out and away from the structure.

Set: Preparing an evacuation kit is an easy and economical way to ensure you know what to take when an evacuation order is issued. Include three days worth of supplies for each family member and pets. Cash, water, clothing, food, first aid and prescription medicines are just the basics. Create an inventory of household possessions by taking digital pictures or video and store important papers digitally or physically away from the structure. Contact your insurance agent to verify replacement value coverage in the event of wildfire loss.

Go: Evacuate when ordered to do so. The public is strongly encouraged by the Summit County Wildfire Council to be prepared to immediately respond to directions from public safety officials regarding wildfire emergencies. The public must prepare for the possibility of being evacuated from their home, or for not being allowed to return to their home if an evacuation order and security perimeter have been issued. The public should develop and practice home emergency plans to include all family members and pets. Abundant sources of preparedness information are available in Summit County. The section titled "Public Education" outlines more details on our efforts.

Due to the diverse nature of Summit County's residents and guests, notifications regarding fire conditions and evacuations must be communicated to the public through a number of redundant methods. The communication methods available in Summit County are:

- Reverse telephone dialing (commonly referred to as Reverse-911™)
- Cellular device text messaging
- Emergency Alert System (EAS) supported by the National Weather Service broadcast
- Radio and television announcements and scroll
- Public address systems and announcement from public safety vehicles
- Door-to-door notification.

The assessment of wildfire behavior will be a factor in the decision of the sheriff, fire or police chief to order an evacuation. The evacuation route will be identified by the incident commander and will be communicated to the public by the methods identified above. The Summit County GIS Department has prepared a wildfire evacuation map book, which creates uniquely identified zones, population numbers and road miles for all developed areas of Summit County. Municipal government evacuation planning has been done in coordination with the Summit County map book.

The decision to order an evacuation because of a wildfire entails a series of steps that are contingent upon the personal preparedness of the members of the public and their ability to evacuate their property immediately and then follow the instructions being provided. More information about evacuations can be located in the [Summit County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan](#).

Each wildfire incident and situation will be influenced by the current fire behavior, current weather conditions and available fuels. Therefore, it has been the decision of the Office of Emergency Management not to pre-identify and establish evacuation routes for wildfire.

All wildfire evacuations will contain these consistencies: the incident commander will identify major thoroughfare roads as evacuation routes, the sheriff's office or police department will isolate the impacted area with a large-area perimeter and restrict access, the incident commander will use the notification methods identified above to announce and give directions regarding the evacuation, and the Office of Emergency Management will establish a place for those evacuated to report and continue to receive incident-specific information.

H. REDUCTION OF STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY

Recent research has clearly demonstrated that ember production from a wildfire can act as a significant source of ignition in structural ignitions. The reduction of structural ignitability via building modifications can have a significant impact on a structure's ability to withstand a wildland fire. Items such as Class "A" rated roof materials, non-flammable material on the side of building, metal gutters (as opposed to vinyl), recycled compounds for decking materials, the protection of openings in soffits and gables and double pane windows can make a difference.

In 1992 Summit County added a chapter to the former Uniform Building Code that contained specific criteria for defensible space and for more fire resistive construction. Chapter 45 was added to the 2012 International Residential Code, which has been adopted in Summit County. Chapter 45 has specific criteria on the reduction of structural ignitability. Compliance with Chapter 45 is required on all new construction and most remodels to single family dwellings. Minimizing the chances of structural ignition via minor building modifications combined with defensible space results in a positive synergistic effect on a structure's ability to withstand a wildfire.

Recent post-analysis of catastrophic fires has shown the positive impact that defensible space around homes has had on reducing structural ignitability. Summit County implemented a very

successful chipping program in 2014, 2015 and 2016 to encourage homeowners to remove fuel from areas around their homes.

I. DEFENSIBLE SPACE/ FUELS REDUCTION

Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire towards the structure. Defensible space also reduces the chance of a structure fire moving from the building to the surrounding forest and creates a safe zone for firefighters to carry out their work.

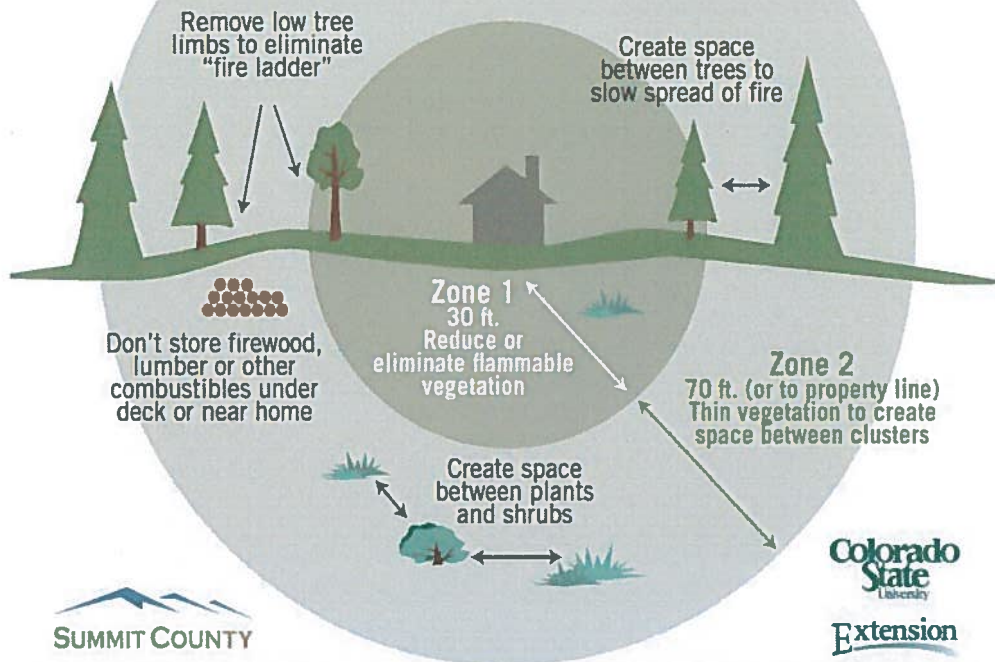
It is recommended that every home, business and structure in Summit County have defensible space.



The Summit County Chipping Program gives homeowners the opportunity to reduce fuels around their homes and have it removed at no personal cost.

There are several different specific standards for defensible space within Summit County, including those outlined in the Colorado State Forest Service publication “Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones”, Summit County Residential Building Code Chapter 45, the Breckenridge Defensible Space Ordinance and others. Each standard varies slightly, but all agree in general principal. Specifics of each of these standards or general information about defensible space can be obtained from the agencies listed above or the local fire protection district.

Create DEFENSIBLE SPACE around your home



SummitCountyCO.gov/wildfiremitigation

J. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Community outreach and education are key activities which have contributed to the continued success of the SCWC. From the beginning, the SCWC recognized community outreach and education as the cornerstone of a successful wildfire mitigation program. The SCWC recognizes five specific programmatic target areas: defensible space, fuels reduction, reducing structural ignitability, preparedness and family planning for evacuation, and general forest health and continued vegetation maintenance. Each of these has been described in this section. To make these target areas easy for the public to internalize the SCWC has adopted the International Association of Fire Chiefs *Ready, Set, Go!* campaign: www.wildlandFireRSG.org

To improve wildfire protection efforts in the community, numerous community outreach and education efforts have been implemented. Additionally, ongoing outreach and education strategies around the five programmatic target areas have been developed and are being disseminated. Examples include:

- Presentations to professional organizations
- Community presentations
- Field trips for elected officials and the public
- Farmer's Markets and wildfire mitigation fairs
- On-site one-on-one landowner/homeowner meetings.

Additionally, marketing efforts aimed at increasing citizen awareness of the importance of wildfire prevention include:

- Mobile billboards on the sides of county buses
- Floating ads at the movie theater
- Radio and television spots as well as newspaper ads.

The overarching goal of this effort is to increase public awareness of the inherent hazards associated with living in a forested area, while providing residents and visitors tools to protect themselves, their property and vital infrastructure.



Public education in Summit County is the responsibility of many agencies. To provide a coordinated public information message, the SCWC directed staff to form the Education Subcommittee of the Wildfire Council to address this issue. This subcommittee is tasked with organizing educational information to be disseminated to all Summit County agencies that maintain public outreach. Ultimately, this coordinated information is made available to residents and guests so they are prepared in the event of a wildfire. SCWC outreach messaging has disseminated thousands of items to reinforce the *Ready, Set, Go!* message. Over the years items such as informational flyers, stickers, magnets, and cloth shopping bags have been given away.

In addition to educating the residents of Summit County, the SCWC recognized the need to educate the large number of guests who visit the county each year. The SCWC is currently working on addressing this large and ever-changing group. One project that has been implemented to address this group was the interpretive sign project. Six permanent sets and one mobile set of interpretive signs are placed throughout Summit County to answer visitors' questions about forest health and wildfire.



One of six interpretive signs around the county

Summit County Government

Posted on: May 30, 2018

Wildfire Prevention Patrols Begin in Summit County

Local governments and U.S. Forest Service partner to prevent wildland fires

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SUMMIT COUNTY – A freshly trained team of U.S. Forest Service patrollers set out on the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest this week, beginning a summer-long project to prevent wildfires and protect natural resources. The new four-person crew, which will be on the job through mid-September, is part of a collaborative partnership among the Dillon Ranger District; Summit County; Summit County Sheriff's Office; Summit Fire & EMS; Red, White & Blue Fire; and the towns of Blue River, Breckenridge, Dillon, Frisco and Silverthorne.

The crew will conduct campsite monitoring, visitor contacts and fire-prevention messaging throughout the Dillon Ranger District, which is located entirely within Summit County. Visitor education will be a top priority, as crew members provide information about U.S. Forest Service and Summit County regulations that protect the natural environment, especially those related to natural resource protection and fire prevention. Contact with people in undeveloped, dispersed campsites will be the top priority.

“A four-person dispersed recreation crew to monitor, patrol, ranger and educate

Tools

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