

# FOOTHILLS OBSERVER

Volume 4, Issue 1 A forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation newsletter for the rural landowner, provided by Fremont County Firewise Spring 2005

## Fremont County Firewise: Truly a Cooperative Effort

With our fifth season involved in the Firewise Program around the corner, I'd like to take a look at what has been accomplished and what we are working towards in the future. Over the past four years we have made many in-roads and have had many successes; however we have also had some trying times, which we have had to overcome.

Without the support of our cooperators the program would not be what it is today. From the beginning, a cooperative spirit between all federal, state, county and fire district personnel has helped the program reach a greater constituency. Inspirational homeowners and homeowner groups have also taken stock in the program and

have moved the program to new heights.

The following is a list of the projects and programs which have been accomplished and/or are ongoing:

- Landowner Firewise hazard assessments and wildfire mitigation plans written - 101
- Assessed over 4288 acres in Fremont County
- Paid out \$29,503.06 so far in cost share monies to private landowners
- County Wildfire Protection Plan being devised for the entire county
- Union Pass Evacuation Plan completed
- Formation of the Union Pass Evacuation Plan Committee
- Union Pass designated as a Firewise Community in 2003 and 2004
- Water storage tank project at Union Pass Firehall
- Community slash pile on Union Pass provided by USFS
- USFS Warm Springs fuel reduction project adjacent to Union Pass subdivisions
- USFS Upper Wind River fuel reduction project

- Union Pass landowner Emergency Information questionnaire and comprehensive list
- Union Pass fire number project
- Extreme Gardening defensible space classes
- Foothills Observer newsletter
- Union Pass Firewise Day
- Union Pass Firewise demonstration site
- BLM fuels reduction project adjacent to Crooked Creek Subdivision
- Hat Butte State Land Section fuels reduction project
- Regional Firewise Workshop in Lander
- Homestead Park Community Firewise Plan
- Homestead Park Fuelbreak
- Homestead Park Evacuation Plan
- USFS Homestead Park fuel reduction project
- BLM fuel reduction project adjacent to Homestead Park
- Pass Creek Subdivision Community Firewise Plan
- Red Canyon Retreat Wildfire Community Assessment
- BLM fuel reduction project adjacent to Red Canyon Retreat
- Student Conservation Association assistance with Firewise projects
- Establishment of the Wind River Fire Prevention Council

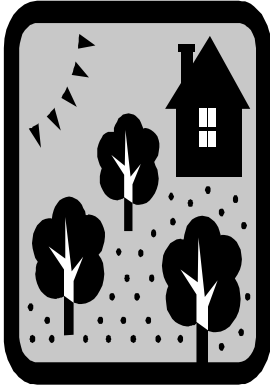
As you can see, Fremont County Firewise has evolved a great deal since its beginning four years ago, and it will continue to grow with the help of its many partners. If you have questions about any of the programs or projects listed above or would like to know how you can get involved or get your subdivision involved, please contact the Firewise office.

By Mark Ellison  
Wyoming State Forestry



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“With your help, we can make your property as fire resistant as possible.”



## New Firewise Coordinator Has Arrived

There has been a change at the Fremont County Firewise Coordinator position. As many of you may or may not know, Shad Cooper has departed. His successor is myself, Jeff Swanson, and I am extremely excited to be here and hope to meet and work with as many of you as possible. I feel confident that the Firewise program is going to continue to be successful, and along with many of the programs already in place, I plan to implement some new programs to help us achieve the Firewise goals.

I moved to Riverton a couple months ago along with my wife and 9 month old daughter because we love this area. We are planning on staying permanently and raising our family here. We feel that this is the type of environment, both natural and social, that is conducive to the family values that we hold.

My background is in natural resources and I recently graduated from Colorado State University with a bachelor's degree in forestry. Along with my forestry major, I had a concentration in fire science. I spent last summer at the Colorado State Forest near Walden, CO working with many different aspects of forest management. I have also been extremely active with a forest stewardship volunteer program through the Colorado State Forest Service as well as with the Colorado Tree Coalition and the Society of American Foresters.

Currently I am trying to get up to speed with the many ongoing projects throughout the county. I plan to finish the projects that are currently in progress in a timely and thorough manner and I am excited to gain new projects and see them from their infancy. I am eager to see all of the hard work that has been put into the different areas so far.

As you are probably well aware, wildfires are a natural component of the forest ecosystem in which you live. The beautiful mosaics which cover the mountains are mostly due to the past fires in the area. With this in mind, it is not my goal to eliminate fires from the forests. It is, however, my goal to prevent these fires from destroying your valuable property and homes. With your help, we can make your property as fire resistant as possible.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 857-3030 or via e-mail at [fremont-firewise@wyoming.com](mailto:fremont-firewise@wyoming.com). Again, I am excited to be here and I look forward to working with you in the future.

*By Jeff Swanson  
Firewise Coordinator*

### Jeff's Bio

Born 10-10-1973

Greeley, CO

### Education:

Graduated from Battle Mountain High School in Avon, Colorado—1992

### Attended:

The University of Montana in Missoula

University of Wyoming in Laramie

Colorado State University in Ft. Collins

Graduated in December 2004 from CSU with a B.S. in Forestry

### Other interesting facts:

Has ran 2—26.2 mile marathons with a personal best of 4 hours and 21 minutes.

Enjoys trap and target shooting, Rock Climbing and Hiking.

## Wildland Fire 2005 Conference

The International Fire Chiefs Association, BLM, USFS, and the National Association of State Foresters recently held the annual Wildland Fire conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The conference was titled *Partnering to Protect Our Communities* and covered a wide array of different issues related to wildfire. The conference brought together fire service leaders from across the country and across local, state, and federal levels. Wyoming was well represented with professionals from Wyoming State Forestry, county fire protection districts, and state Firewise personnel.

The conference was broken down into different categories or "tracks". These tracks included: Community Actions, Emergency Response, Planning for Community and Firefighter Safety, Protecting Communities, and Healthy Landscapes and Risk Reduction. Each track contained several sessions.

These sessions were conducted by local, state, or federal agencies and some by non-governmental organizations. It was a chance for the presenters to recall their accounts of community planning, completed and on-going projects, and personal

experiences related to wildfire.

Topics included; Los Alamos community planning, cultural awareness on tribal lands, sixteen ways to reduce firefighter fatalities, geospatial tools for community wildfire protection planning, and many more.

The 2006 Wildfire conference will be held in Phoenix, Arizona March 8-10.

By Jeff Swanson

Firewise Coordinator



## "Bugs and Crud"

**A closer look at insects and diseases that may affect your trees**

**Poplar Twiggall Fly** *Hexomyza schineri*

**Hosts:** Primarily aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), but other poplars may also be attacked

**Damage and Diagnosis:** The poplar twiggall fly produces a spherical gall on the new twigs. This gall remains in place and continues to grow and enlarge as the plant develops, giving the plant a gnarled and knobby appearance. Galls do not appear to significantly weaken plants. Occasionally *Cytospora* canker may develop around a gall.

The galls are in the form of smooth swellings on the current season twigs. Obscured by leaves, these original galls are rarely noticed until autumn leaf fall. However, what attracts attention and particular concern is that galled tissues continue to grow and swell. Ultimately galls appear as large knots on trunks and larger branches, giving the plants a gnarled, bonsai-like appearance. Serious galling has been limited to aspen. However it has been visible on other *Populus* species.

Areas galled by the poplar twiggall fly usually continue to grow although growth of buds adjacent to the gall is inhibited. During subsequent seasons the galled area becomes incorporated into the growing twigs and branches, ultimately appearing as large swollen bands on trunks and branches. Although these old injuries produce a permanent disfigurement of the trunks, they do not appear to threaten tree health.

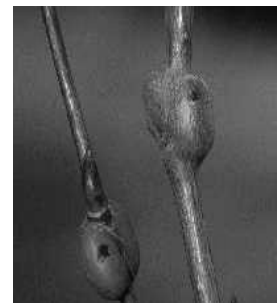
**Management:** Problems with poplar twiggall fly are most severe in succulently growing stands of aspen. It is likely that managing aspen so that growth is more moderate will result in retarded rates of gall production.

Removal of galls is commonly considered by homeowners. However, this has limited potential for control. Pruning would often require substantial branch destruction. Furthermore, it may be counterproductive if done after flies have emerged in late winter. In that case, pruning will primarily remove only those galls containing the chalcid wasp, which parasitizes the poplar twiggall fly, thus decreasing the effectiveness of natural controls.

Attempts to control the poplar twiggall fly on aspen with insecticides have shown little success. Abamectin has been successful in some trials, but control is erratic and applications must be carefully timed to coincide with adult activity periods.

(Taken from *Insects and Diseases of Woody Plants of the Central Rockies* CSU Cooperative Extension)

"Bugs and Crud" is aimed at informing you of harmful and not-so-harmful insects and diseases that may affect your trees.



Galls formed by the Poplar Twiggall Fly.

# FREMONT COUNTY FIREWISE

Wildfire Safety Through Prevention & Education

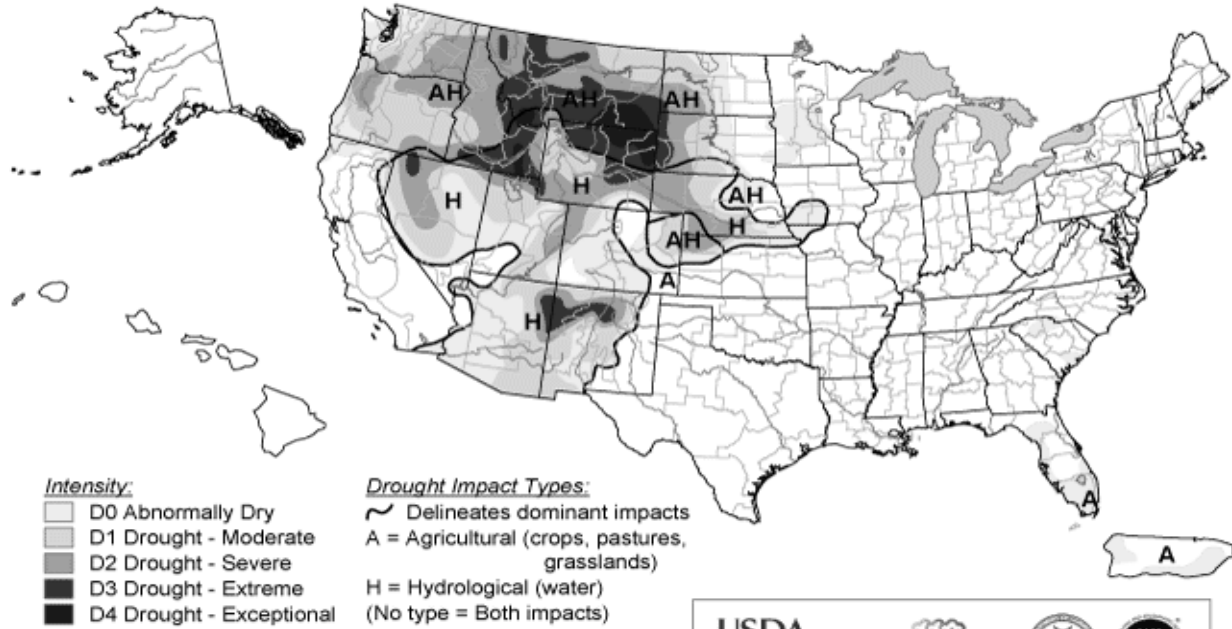
Fremont County Firewise  
305 South Smith Road  
Riverton, WY 82501

WERE ON THE WEB!

WWW.FREMONTCOUNTYFIREWISE.COM

## U.S. Drought Monitor

February 22, 2005  
Valid 7 a.m. EST



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

<http://drought.unl.edu/dm>



Released Thursday, February 24, 2005

Authors: Richard Heim/Candace Tankersley, NOAA/NESDIS/NCDC