

# FOOTHILLS OBSERVER

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

## Firewise Area Gets Expanded

Fremont County Firewise is a cooperative program between the Fremont County Fire Protection District and the Wyoming State Forestry Division. It is funded through a national grant that falls under the National Fire Plan.

Recently there have been some changes to the wording of the grant which will enable Fremont County Firewise to help more people in Fremont County. In years past, the grant limited funding to those areas that contained coniferous

forests. These coniferous forests (pines, spruces, firs, etc.) are what make up the traditional Wildland/Urban Interface. Recent years have shown that fires in Wyoming often occur in fuel types other than coniferous forests. The latest grant now includes areas that have a high fire risk but are not located in the coniferous forests. Areas such as river bottoms and sage brush are now open for grant funds.

Fremont County Firewise receives these grant funds and then administers them in many different ways. One major expense is the landowner cost/share program. This is a program that offers a 65% reimbursement for all approved costs associated with doing fuel reduction and fuel modification on private lands. This program is designed to provide an incen-

tive for private landowners and is not designed to be the sole motivating factor. The motivation behind protecting property from wildfires should come from the landowners own beliefs on responsibility. Fremont County Firewise has already paid out over \$69,000 to landowners in Fremont County who have responsibly taken steps to protect their properties.

Other grant funds are spent on community projects such as the water tank project on Union Pass, the community staging area in Homestead Park, and the fuel reduction project that is being planned for downtown Lander. Educational projects, administrative costs, and fuel hazard assessment costs round out the budget.

Fremont County Firewise can help landowners with technical expertise,

on the ground clarification, and in certain instances physical labor to complete different projects. With the newly acquired freedom to focus on other fuel types, Fremont County Firewise is currently looking for different projects that previously could not have been addressed. If your property is located in an area that you feel is threatened by a wildfire, regardless of the fuel type, feel free to contact Fremont County Firewise at 307-857-3030 or [fremont-countyfirewise@wyoming.com](mailto:fremont-countyfirewise@wyoming.com) to set up an official assessment.



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**USFS NEWS**

**Forest Service Chief Selects Top Interior Official To Lead State And Private Forestry**

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15, 2005 -- U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth today announced the selection of Jim Hubbard as deputy chief for state and private forestry.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Jim Hubbard join our agency with his extensive experience and knowledge of state and private forestry issues as well as his direct involvement in the implementation of the National Fire Plan at both the state and federal levels," said Bosworth. "He has been a leader for the National Association of State Foresters serving as president, on the legislative committee and was the primary liaison on behalf of all state foresters to the Western Governors' Association during the development of the implementation strategy for the National Fire Plan."

As the Forest Service's deputy chief of state and private forestry, Hubbard will be responsible for fire and aviation management, the implementation of the National Fire Plan, cooperative forestry, forest health protection, conservation education, urban and community forestry, and tribal relations.

"It is an honor to be selected as deputy chief of state and private forestry for the Forest Service," said Hubbard. "I look forward to continuing collaborative efforts that reach out to conservation partners and working closely with my former state forester colleagues throughout the nation as well as American Indian tribal leaders."

Hubbard is currently the director of the Office of Wildland Fire Coordination with the Department of the Interior where he oversees

the implementation of the National Fire Plan and activities of the department's five land managing bureaus for forest fire prevention, mitigation and partnerships with communities, tribes, and stakeholders.

Prior to his position with DOI, Hubbard served for more than 34 years with the Colorado State Forest Service, including holding the state forester position from 1984 to 2004. He was also a key advisor for the Governor and chaired commissions on forest health, wildland fire and natural resource partnerships.

Hubbard holds a bachelor's in forest management from Colorado State University and is an Honor Alum of the College of Natural Resources.



**"Hubbard will be responsible for implementation of the National Fire Plan"**

**Esperance selected as Washakie District Ranger**

**October 27-** Ruth Esperance will become the new district ranger for the Washakie District headquartered in Lander, Wyoming, according to Shoshone National Forest Supervisor Becky Aus.

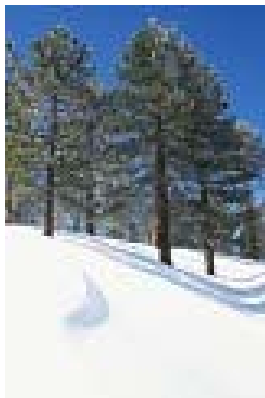
Esperance, who currently serves as the acting district ranger of the Wilderness District on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico, is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin where she earned a degree in forest

administration with a minor in forest recreation. The Wisconsin native has served on forests in Oregon, Wyoming and New Mexico where she worked as a silviculturist, staff officer and in other capacities in the fire, timber, range, recreation, wilderness and planning programs since 1989.

"Ruth is known for having great communication skills and as a creative problem solver," Aus said. "She also

has a reputation for working well with employees and the public to accomplish a complex program of work. We are very pleased to have her skills and experience on the forest."

Esperance and her husband, Jay, like living in small towns. Ruth enjoys fly fishing and working with stained glass. Jay is an avid hunter and fisherman.



# Fremont County Dodges Bullet

As the fire season comes to a close we can start to compare this year with years past. Here in Wyoming, we had a somewhat mild fire season. Of course there were a few small fires here and there, but especially in Fremont County, we dodged another bullet!

As of mid-October, there have been 57,933 fires across the country. This is well below the 10 year average of 73,554 fires/year. These 57,933 fires have, however, burned over 8.3 million acres compared to the ten year average of 5.5 million. That makes the average fire this season

143.6 acres while the ten year average is only 74.6 acres per fire.

More than half the acreage burned this season burned in Alaska where 4.4 million acres were blackened compared to 1.4 million acres on average. The Great Basin also saw higher than normal fire activity. Is this a warning that the fires are becoming increasingly large or is this just a coincidence? How can anyone really know for sure?

It may be that the weather was just right for large fires to occur or it may be that insect epidemics have

killed and stressed trees to the point that they were easily ignited and burned. In any case, Wyoming was lucky.

Will this luck continue into next fire season? Obviously nobody knows, but maybe, just maybe, the hard work that people are doing to remove and manipulate the fuels is reducing the fire starts, and we aren't just getting lucky. Either way, we should keep up the hard work and try to keep luck on our side.

### Wildfire Statistics

Year	Fires	Acres
2005	57,933	8,318,527
2004	63,412	8,057,053
2003	57,130	3,842,616
2002	70,140	6,734,211
2001	73,158	3,230,692
2000	89,730	7,189,885
10 year	73,554	5,488,906

Information from [www.nifc.gov](http://www.nifc.gov)

## “Bugs and Crud”

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

**Winter Sunscald Damage:** Sunscald tends to occur late in the winter especially if there is snow on the ground. Damage is on the south or southwest side of thin barked trees that are not shaded. Intense late winter sun, direct and reflected, encourages plant cells under thin bark to become deacclimated to the cold and vulnerable to damage by freezing. This outermost tissue dies and the bark becomes pinkish or reddish and the surface slowly roughens as it dries and cracks. The damaged area eventually falls away, exposing dead sapwood. When young, many tree species are vulnerable to this type of injury, as they have yet to formed a thick layer of protective dead bark. Trees with thin, smooth bark such as maple, pear, willow, mountain ash, green and white ash, recently planted trees, and many fruit trees are most susceptible to this type of injury.

**Management:** Sunscald injury may predispose a plant to attack by opportunistic pathogens. Injury that kills cambium, sapwood, or newly formed tissue creates wounds, which are entry points for disease. When possible, care should be taken to prevent these types of wounds. Protect vulnerable tree trunks in late winter by shading, wrapping with insulated wrap, or painting a light reflective color. These practices that keep the trunk cooler will discourage sunscald injury.

Use of crepe paper to insulate the trunk is the best method. This tree wrap, available at local garden centers and nurseries, keeps trunk temperatures cool. Start wrapping at the base of the tree, overlapping one-third with each turn. This ensures the wrap will shed water. Wrap up to just above the second branch and secure with stretchable tape. Do this in November and remove wrap around Easter. You'll need to wrap the trees for the first two or three winters.



Young tree with blackening occurring where the trunk was scalded.

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

# FREMONT COUNTY FIREWISE

Wildfire Safety Through Prevention & Education

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WERE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.FREMONTCOUNTYFIREWISE.COM](http://WWW.FREMONTCOUNTYFIREWISE.COM)

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## Winters Here, What Do I Do Now?



With winter comes cold temperatures and snow, sometimes lots of it. This snow and cold often make working on your property difficult, if not impossible. So what can you do on those cold winter days to continue with the Firewise message and principles?

Winter is a great time for planning; use this time to help formulate ideas that could make your property and community less susceptible to fire. Make contact with your neighbors and ask them how their fuel reduction projects are coming along. Brainstorm some

ideas that, in a perfect world, could make your home and community safe, you never know when these ideas will become a reality.

Winter is also a time to check your communication links. Change the batteries in your smoke alarms and NOAA weather radios, these steps may save your life. Make contact with your homeowners association or local emergency organization and ensure that your address and contact information are current. This keeps emergency responders and dispatchers from searching for updated information during an incident

and may make the difference between saving your property and having your investment destroyed.

Just because the snow is falling and the temperatures are dropping does not mean that everything should stop. Even if you are located thousands of miles away you should not forget about the fire danger that your Wyoming property is in. This is time that can be utilized. Take some notes, jot some ideas down, contact your neighbors, and update your information, these are easy to do and can be done anywhere, anytime.