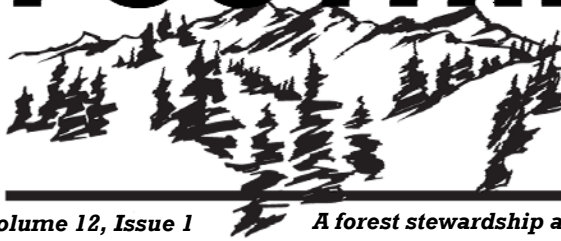


# FOOTHILLS



# OBSERVER

Volume 12, Issue 1

A forest stewardship and wildfire mitigation newsletter for the rural landowner, provided by Fremont County Firewise

Winter  
2014



## Defensible Space

The defensible space theory of architect and city planner Oscar Newman encompasses ideas about crime prevention and neighborhood safety. The theory developed in the early 1970s, and he wrote his first book on the topic, *Defensible Space* in 1972.

As defined in Newman's book *Design Guidelines for Creating Defensible Space*, defensible space is "a residential environment whose physical characteristics—building layout and site plan—function to allow inhabitants themselves to become key agents in ensuring their security." He goes on to explain that a housing development is only defensible if residents intend to adopt this role, which is defined by good design: "Defensible space therefore is a sociophysical phenomenon," says Newman. Both society and physical elements are parts of a successful defensible space.

The theory argues that an area is safer when people feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for that piece of a community. Newman asserts that "the criminal is isolated because his turf is removed" when each space in an area is owned and cared for by a responsible party. If an intruder can sense a watchful community, he feels less secure committing his crime. The idea is that crime and delinquency can be controlled and mitigated through environmental design.

What???? Criminal???

Okay, I will have to confess that I have re-printed part of a Wikipedia file on defensible space theory. This topic on Wikipedia talks about criminal activity in residential neighborhoods, and was coined way before the wildland-urban interface was even thought much about.

But what catches your attention is the fact that criminal can be replaced with the word wildfire, and the entire theory still remains. Now I know that wildfire can not sense a watchful community, but I do know first hand that communities who have preparation and planning in place will have much better outcomes against wildfire.

So, what we really want for our communities here in Fremont County are Neighborhood Watch Programs for wildfire, right? And, how does one defensible space make a neighborhood? Well, yes we do want a neighbor program, and one defensible space alone does not constitute a neighborhood. Accomplishing this security against our enemy really means working towards a Firewise Community, and further towards a Fire Adapted Community.

Fremont County has two Firewise Communities who have become organized, and continue to work at strengthening the neighborhood security. I would ask that each of you participate with these groups through out the summer as activities are planned. If you don't live in either of these areas, come together with your neighbors and form your own group. Contact Fremont County Firewise and I will help you organize things as far as you are willing to go.

We are faced with a mounting crime wave, here in Wyoming. Someday it will be us on the nightly news reports, and what the story will be is up to you.

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## **New Cost Share Money for Summer 2014**

Most all of you have been to the meeting where I have explained the upcoming changes in the grant application process , and possibilities of funding not being available in coming years.

The grant application for 2014 was written and submitted in July of 2013 for review and scoring in the late fall. What happened was not totally unexpected, but none the less disappointing. Fremont County did not receive annual funding for the Firewise program this year. Fact is, not a single county in Wyoming will see Firewise funding from the 2014 grant process.

The grant process for 2013 had 108 applications from 17 of the states in the western United States. Of these 108 applications, 44 will be funded this year. The Fremont County application is ranked 46 in the field. It almost feels like loosing a basketball game by one goal.

This does not mean that the Firewise program is going away, but the program will not be able to fund new projects this year. Assistance and plans for defensible space creation and fuels treatments will be available as always. Projects initiated in the last couple of years will still be on track for cost share payments since that money has already been allocated. But with that said, it is going to be very important to finish these projects this year since extensions will not be available to extend out the completion dates. The projects do have completion deadlines that will be important this year. It has never been an issue to grant an extension for a project, but future funding was always available to allocate in doing so.

Early summer 2014, the 2015 grant will once again be written and submitted. Work has already started in this process with hopes of having a stronger application this year. Changes are being made in regards to questions the grant committee had with all the Wyoming 2014 applications.

Assuming that Fremont County is successful this time, the money still will not be available until summer 2015 at the soonest.

**WE ALL HAVE  
A ROLE!**

**Wildfire  
Survival**

**It Takes a  
Community**

## **Treatments in Homestead Park**

There will be one large project happening this upcoming summer south of Lander. The community of Homestead Park will finally get some help with defensible space and fuel treatment across approximately 110 acres of their subdivision. A contract was advertised last fall and awarded to a Wyoming contractor to conduct the specified treatment activities. This project was set to begin last summer, but a couple of set backs, including the Fairfield Wildfire, prevented the contract award from happening until fall.

Residents, organized by their homeowners' association and established Firewise Community, have already invested a large sum of their money and labor towards this work. Come spring, more work is planned by the residents in conjunction with the contract start.

The area has been impacted by the beetle epidemic the last few years, and suffers from numerous other diseases in both conifer and aspen stands. The Wyoming State Forestry Division has assisted owners and Firewise to determine the best treatment practices to accomplish protection from wildfire, and enhance forest health.

Overall, the project will help to provide protection from destructive wildfire in the home ignition zones through out the neighborhood.



## Tid Bit— Something to Ponder

The Fairfield Fire is now mostly in the past. Or is it? Truth is, the Fairfield Fire will not really be over for years as the area recovers. The expense to the post fire effort will continue as well.

The actual firefighting expense to the fire was well over 3 million dollars, and fortunately the U.S. Forest Service paid for nearly 80% of that tab. But what most people don't realize is that the fire recovery still has expenses associated with it.

For example, last fall the burned area of the fire looked pretty green after fall rains. But that green was not really a good thing since those green plants were mostly noxious weeds. The cheat grasses and the leafy spurge flourished in the area that was devoid of other vegetation. To combat this expansion, the BLM and State of Wyoming contracted a company to spray the noxious weeds, and spent money to reseed the burned areas with native grasses and forbs with hope they will take root this spring. The State of Wyoming has more plans to plant new shrubs and install water bars around the State Park to help return the area to its original environment.



## New Slash Pile Location at Atlantic City

For the last several years, slash has been continually dumped along the old railroad right-of-way near the Atlantic City solid waste transfer station. Last fall an effort by the Bureau of Land Management piled the accumulated debris into large piles where it was burned.

Now with the area cleaned up, the local Bureau of Land Management folks in Lander have worked with Fremont County Firewise to establish a piling location which will be maintained every year. This site is on BLM lands right above the solid waste transfer station at Atlantic City. The new area will have signs installed early in the spring of 2014 to mark the correct location. This new pile area will be available for all area residents to haul fuel treatment wood to. As a reminder, construction materials, old lumber, and metal products are not allowed in these piles.



## COMANDRA BLISTER RUST (*Cronartium comandrae*)

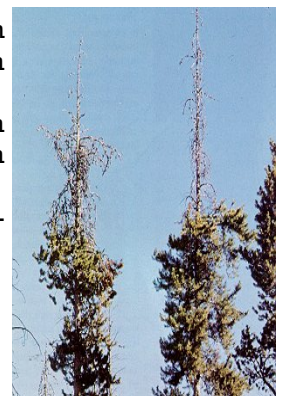
Comandra blister rust is a disease of hard pines that is caused by a fungus growing in the inner bark. The fungus has a complex life cycle. It infects hard pines but needs an alternate host, an unrelated plant, to spread from one pine to another.

On hard pines, the fungus causes growth reduction, stem deformity, and mortality. In addition, pines with stem cankers produce significantly fewer cones and seeds than healthy trees.

Comandra blister rust is most prevalent in the West, where its principal hosts are lodgepole pine and ponderosa pine.

The fungus is a parasite that develops only on living hosts and needs two types of hosts to survive. It grows perennially in the inner bark of hard pines and develops annually on the stems and leaves. Like white pine blister rust, Comandra blister rust cannot spread directly from pine to pine.

Spores from infected trees are released from midsummer to early fall. Carried by the wind, these spores infect pine needles and shoots of hard pines. The fungus then spreads into the inner bark. One to three years later, the first evidence of the disease appears: small drops of thick, sticky, reddish-orange liquid on the diseased bark.



# 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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## Community Action-Come Together-Make A Difference

### Community Action.

This is a topic that is stressed as being one of the most important items in helping to solve the Wildland/Urban Interface problem. Communities that can come together and work on risks that threaten them are far more effective than any other means of trying to reduce the risks.

Community members are the ones who have the most to gain from any mitigation efforts; they also have the most to lose should nothing get done. Here in Fremont County, there are no building codes and most proposed subdivisions get passed without any thought to wildfire danger. This lack of government regulation leaves the problem squarely on the shoulders of the residents of these subdivisions.

It is strongly recommended that any subdivision that does not have a Homeowners Association, form some sort of committee or board that can take a look at the fire potential. This committee or existing Homeowners Association should then contact a local fire department, forestry office, or Firewise personnel. Projects should be lined out that can be implemented to help the subdivision or community to survive a wildfire event.

In Fremont County, the Firewise program was formed to help the entire county with the Wildland/Urban Interface problem, but the active communities that can come up with projects on their own are the communities that benefit the most. Communities or subdivisions that can come together and take some initiative are the communities that move to the top of the funding list. More so than ever, communities that are involved and showing improvement, are demonstrating a key component of the grant application process.

Become involved—Make A Difference.