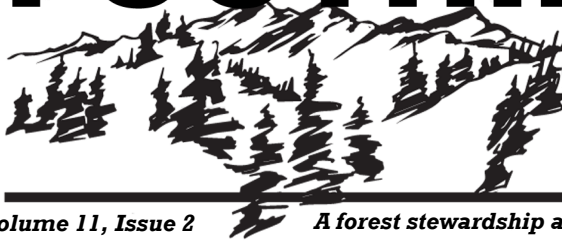


FOOTHILLS



OBSERVER

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

Summer/
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Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Emergency evacuation is the immediate and rapid movement of people away from a threat or actual occurrence of a hazard.

That is the definition from the dictionary. But the real meaning of evacuating a home means so much more.

On July 22 this summer, residents of the Homestead Park Subdivision were asked to evacuate the area as it was being threatened by wildfire. Now this is not the first time this has happened in Homestead Park, it seems every two years or so, fire threatens to burn into the subdivision.

But what happened this time was remarkable. Residents knew about

the fire almost as fast as the fire department, and already had begun evacuation before incident commanders called for it.

Maybe it is practice making perfect, but it was obvious people had a plan in place.

Fire personnel understand what it means to ask a resident to walk as from your property and home. It no doubt is one of the hardest decisions a person will ever have to make. Especially when there is no guarantee that it will not suffer damages from the ensuing fire.

In this case, what residents actions really attributed to was the fire fighting effort. You see, the fire depart-

ment has the public's safety at the fore front of any situation. If people remain in an area, then the entire operation changes as firefighters also try to protect the public. In Homestead Park, the public took rapid measures to secure property and then left for safety in Lander. Firefighters were able to focus specifically on safely controlling the fire, and not worrying about other issues.

The respect for all the local fire departments has been huge since there was no structural damage in the area as a result of the fire. Residents have been told however, that the respect here is a two way street. Residents evacuation actions have been noted by firefighters as well.

It is hoped that each and every resident of the area rehearses an e m e r g e n c y evacuation drill, and that each family member understands the plan.

A few ideas to work into your plan are:

- Meet with family members, and be a team during a crisis
- Discuss what to do , and where to go in times of crisis
- Make sure each member knows how to get in contact with each other
- Have an outside family contact person
- Identify escape routes and family meeting places
- Have good inventories of the property contents
- Have items consolidated for a rapid exit, medications or important papers

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Crown Spacing—A Look Up, and Down



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x

y



Value X is Crown Spacing
Value Y is Stem Spacing

The question seems to have come up frequently this summer as to what is crown spacing?

Crown spacing is a key concept to implementing any fuel treatment. Crown Spacing or separation is the measurement from the furthest branch of one tree, or bush, to the nearest branch on the next. This is shown in the figure to the left.

The actual distance for the value depends on the tree or brush species, and is dependent on terrain. On steep slopes, spacing is increased to allow for more space between crowns. Ladder fuels underneath these plants must always be removed, but pruning of the plant may not be necessary.

You will notice that I mention brush. Brush is a woody plant that needs to be looked at in the same context as trees. The simplified idea for spacing plants is to force fire back down to the ground. Fire removed from the tops of trees is much less intense, and fire removed from the tops of brush

is less again. What is to be done by managing the fuels around a home is to “Create Space”, and this space is the area where intense fire can not burn. Fire still can burn around a home with defensible space, but not real well, and it is usually a very easy fire to extinguish. There is no way to totally remove fire from this area unless every plant and inflammable object is removed.

Developing a proper crown spacing sometimes involves cutting green trees, and having a resource professional help with this is to your benefit. Nature is not perfect in tree arrangement obviously, and each fuel treatment is a little different in this way. Using dead and diseased trees (which may be green) is what most commonly is done to begin developing the area. Most often the forested area on a property can be made healthier, all while making it safer from the risk of fire.

**WE ALL HAVE
A ROLE!**

**Wildfire
Survival**

**It Takes a
Community**

Are You Prepared?

The threat of wildfire is a fact of life in the wildland/urban interface, but you are not helpless against it. Not if you take action, starting now. Here are a few items to consider and answer the question “Are You Prepared”?

- Do you have an emergency plan?
- Is your roof and siding fire resistant?
- Have you had a fuels specialist help you determine if you have enough defensible space around your home?
- Have you kept up on regular landscape trimming, pruning, weeding, and dead plant removal?
- Are your homes gutters and roof clean, and does the chimney have an approved spark arrestor?

Tid Bit— Something to Ponder

Aspen trees are valued by landowners and fuel treatment professionals for their beauty and fire resistance. The moist green leaves and twigs provide a lush vegetation that does not support fire.

But I had an experience last month at the Fairfield Fire that warrants mentioning. An area of the fire had been burned in a previous fire, and had been cleaned up to standards that were acceptable to everyone. Until now.

The area had new growing aspen, 2-6' tall. The ground under them had dispersed twigs and limbs from the previous trees, and not usually thought of as a problem. What happened though was a huge problem since the area supported fire very well. It took over 2 days to completely extinguish the fire burning these dead fuels in this new aspen stand. It was a fire that continued to threaten area homes, and killed the new aspen trees.

My message now is "Lean, Green, and Cleaner Than Ever". If we want to use aspen for fire protection, and we do, make sure they are cleaned out.



Grass Seed for the Wilds of Wyoming

Often after completing a fuel treatment project, a landowner will want to re-seed the area with native grasses. This often confusing since area retail stores sell lawn mixtures, or agricultural pasture mixes.

Here is a list of seed to use on non irrigated wildland. It is for application of 19# of mix per acre, but can be adjusted according to specific wants.

Mountain Brome grass 8# per acre, Idaho Fescue 2# acre, Green Needlegrass 4# acre, Slender Wheatgrass 3# acre, and Rocky Mountain Penstemon 2# acre.

You might have to order some seeds, and others can be bought off the shelf.



Junipers

Junipers are very often thought of as a very desired plant for ornamental landscaping.

In the fire world, they are referred to as "little green gas cans". This is because it is extremely easy to ignite the plant due to the accumulation of fine dead needles under the plant

canopy. Once ignited, the plant itself burns very vigorously, and generates a very intense fire with lots of heat and tall flames. It really does not matter if it is a bush or tree, except that the bigger the plant, the bigger the fire.

Junipers should never be located within 30 feet of a

structure, and should be thinned out to at least a 30 foot crown spacing.

It is recommended that juniper bushes be removed from all fuel treatment areas since they cause fires to ladder easily into other trees and brushes.



FREMONT COUNTY FIREWISE

Wildfire Safety Through Prevention & Education

Fremont County Firewise
305 South Smith Road
Riverton, WY 82501

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Don't Start a Fire with Your Vehicle

Many only think of lightning strikes or un-doused campfires as sources for wildland fires.

These are causes of wildland fire, and here lately, the left behind campfire is a big one. But we also know that human caused fires from other sources are significant causes.

It has been almost one year ago when the Sheepherder Hill Fire on Casper Mountain is suspected to have been started by ATV traffic in the area.

Hunting season here is just getting started, and the season brings with it two

things that make fire risk higher: Dry grass and more folks using the private and public lands.

Vegetation in August, September, and October are at perfect condition to create very fast moving wildfire.

So take the time to use good judgment and common sense this fall. Try not to drive in tall dry vegetation, and never park in vegetation which could touch any of the under side of the vehicle.

Remember, new vehicles all are designed to burn fuel cleaner. But in doing so, they need to clean the particles out of the exhaust system



and when they unannounced do so, the particles can be blown out into dry vegetation at a bad time.

People usually don't intend on starting 99% of all human caused wildland fire. Take time to think about your actions, and be sure they meet your intentions.

Avoid unintentional wildfire!