



NATIONAL WILDLAND/URBAN INTERFACE FIRE PROGRAM

NWCG Wildland/Urban
Interface Working Team

USDA Forest Service

*U.S. Department of the
Interior*

*Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
US Fish & Wildlife Service
National Park Service*

*Federal Emergency
Management Agency*

*International Association of
Fire Chiefs*

*National Association of State
Fire Marshals*

*National Emergency
Management Association*

*National Fire Protection
Association*

US Fire Administration

State Forestry Organizations

In addition to member agencies and organizations, the National WUI Fire Program functions in cooperation with other NWCG Working Teams, the National Fire Plan and related programs.



Strategic Approach: 2005 – 2009

Overview

Agencies and organizations responsible for wildland fire management agree: We can reduce loss of lives, property, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings. However, moving toward this goal requires a multi-level outreach effort that may take generations of behavioral change to fully realize its potential. To that end, the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program is a long-term commitment to a simple vision and mission:

VISION: Wildland fires can occur in areas of residential development without the occurrence of disastrous loss.

MISSION: To promote community-wide responsibility in the use of technology, policy, and practices that minimize the loss of life and property to wildland fire independent of fire fighting efforts.

The National WUI Fire Program, directed by the Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT), has seen a great deal of success through its Firewise Communities and related programs over the past several years. Firewise planning and guidelines are being shared among residents, businesses, and community leaders. Site-specific assessment and analysis methods are being shared among land managers and firefighters. Firefighters have access to new programs to help them safely fight interface fires.

To continue delivering the Firewise mission, the National WUI Fire Program developed a five-year strategic approach that will direct the program's activities through 2009. This approach is focused on three goals:

- Promote community solutions to prevent or reduce the impact of wildland/urban interface fires.
- Develop and promote effective practices on the part of agencies and homeowners during WUI events.
- Provide leadership and coordination among agencies, organizations, and partners for implementing WUI strategies.

There are five inter-related and interdependent core programs that address these three goals, which program member agencies and organizations agree will help to sustain change and encourage activities to reduce losses. These program areas include:

- National Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program
- Firewise Web site
- National Communications Strategy and Plan
- Development and dissemination of WUI Information Resources
- WUI Program Support and Development

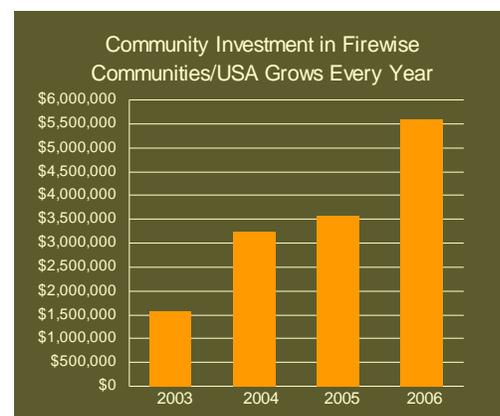
Tactical direction for each of these program areas is outlined on the following pages. Each year, the National WUI Fire Program develops a work plan that outlines specific activities for the year.

Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program

The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program recognizes communities for taking action to protect people and property from the risk of fire in the WUI. Cooperating state foresters manage the assessments of local communities and assist in formulating community wildfire protection plans. National program staff guide the overall program and provide technical guidance, materials, and publicity. Activities supporting the program through 2009 include:

- Provide **technical assistance** to communities and state liaisons.
- Identify and encourage residential developments to participate in the program, in cooperation with state liaisons and federal partners.
- Maintain the **Firewise Communities/USA Web pages** as the primary resource for interested individuals and groups.
- Develop **informational materials and recognition items** specifically in support of the program.
- Make **presentations** to diverse audiences about the program.
- Implement **virtual and live training modules** for communities and state liaisons.
- Promote and report on **successful community actions**.

As of April 2007, more than 235 communities in 34 states have earned Firewise Communities/USA recognition



Firewise Web Site

The Firewise Web site is the primary delivery mechanism for information to WUI community residents and firefighters. The site provides specific information about the WUI fire problem and the steps that property owners can take to reduce the likelihood of home ignition during a WUI fire event. It also provides numerous learning tools, networking opportunities for individuals and communities, and links to important resources and information. Activities to sustain and enhance this core program through 2009 include:

- Regular **Web site maintenance** to ensure information is current – including news, reports, appropriate new links – and to preserve the user-friendly quality of the site.
- **Expansion** where appropriate to use new technologies for outreach, networking and information dissemination, as well as to highlight new program elements.
- **Development of content** that addresses the overall goals of the National WUI Fire Program, including self-study courses and interactive modules.

New in 2007:

In spring 2007, the Firewise Learning Center will feature a new course, "Conducting a Community Assessment in the Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI)."

A new photo gallery will be created to provide users with hundreds of downloadable images, focusing on examples of Firewise homes and practices.

National Communications Strategy and Plan

A strong communications program is essential to delivering on the WUI Fire Program mission by ensuring individuals and communities are aware of resources that are available and how to access them. A strong communications program also can build and enhance the WUI Fire Program's relationship with other groups and organizations who share similar goals. A comprehensive communication program will leverage existing wildfire experts and Firewise advocates and expands the base of support through focused outreach to key audiences, grassroots outreach, government relations, and media relations. Primary elements of the communication program through 2009 will include:

- Continued outreach to enhance relationships with existing **stakeholders**, as well as identify and engage new stakeholders.
- **Community support** through consultation and communication materials.
- **Media relations** activity such as news monitoring, announcement of new products and services, and regular communication of Firewise concepts.
- **Support WUIWT members** with preparation for media opportunities, agency meetings, and WUIWT activities.
- **Government relations** support through informational and educational materials and activities.

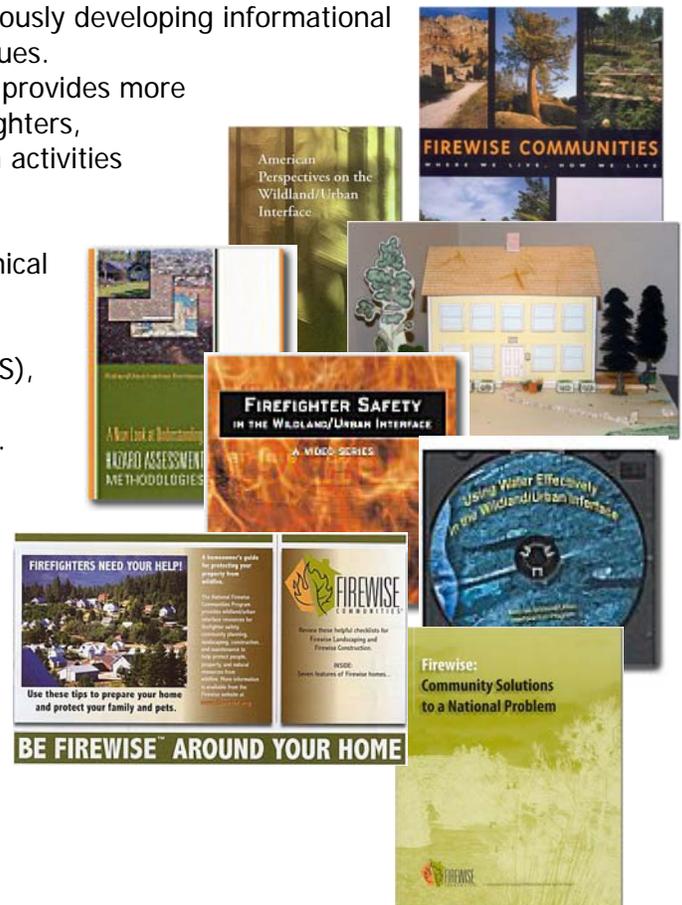
New in 2007:

Firewise Springboard 2007 will explore methods for motivating communities to stay active with Firewise Communities and to enlist those who have not yet become involved.

WUI Information Resources

The National Firewise Communities Program is continuously developing informational materials that address wildland/urban interface fire issues. The online catalog for Firewise Communities materials provides more than 30 audiovisual and print items for agencies, firefighters, homeowners, and others free of charge. Core program activities through 2009 will include:

- Continuing supply of general information and technical content **publications for distribution** via the established distribution channels (i.e., the Firewise Web catalog, Publication Management System (PMS), and public displays and events).
- **Development** of new Firewise and WUI materials.



WUI Fire Program Support and Development

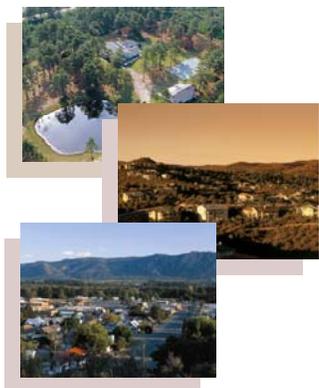
This core program area encompasses a variety of elements ranging from internal support for WUIWT activities to direct technical assistance to communities wishing to become firewise and to fire agencies and firefighters who respond to interface fires. Much of the activity is interwoven with the other core program areas, and focuses on developing program and product content as well as active delivery of relevant content to target audiences, stakeholders, and partners. The main elements within this core program through 2009 include:

- Provide **support and planning** for the WUIWT, NWCG, Working Team organizations and other associated groups.
- Develop and maintain relationships with **partners** relevant to meeting the National WUI Fire Program's goals, in coordination with the National Communications Plan.
- Provide **technical support and assistance** to communities seeking to become Firewise and firefighters and fire agencies wishing to improve tactical and strategic approaches to the interface, both in fire response and infrastructure design and community planning.
- Deliver **training and education** through a biennial national conference, Backyards & Beyond; support of local workshops; community level technology for hazard identification, risk assessment, and planning; development of future national conference; development of training courses; and specific programs and projects that will address fire suppression and structure protection strategies and tactics.
- **Monitor and evaluate** the impact and influence of the core program activities and project elements. Lessons learned reports, status updates, and other mechanisms will be used to maintain an ongoing program evaluation process over the five-year agreement period.



New in 2007:

Assessing Wildfire Hazards in the Home Ignition Zone training workshop: This 2-day workshop covers the myths of wildland/urban interface fire, the history and context of W/UI fire disasters, sequential elements of a W/UI fire disaster, research and case studies, risk factors in the home ignition zone, information needed to conduct an assessment, the general health of the ecosystem, inspecting the home ignition zone, accessibility in case of a wildfire emergency, documenting an assessment, and much more. For more information about the course and to register online, please visit www.firewise.org/hizworkshop.



A Look Toward the Future

As work continues in support of its mission, the National WUI Fire Program will continue to challenge traditional approaches and drive dialogue and action toward community responsibility and firefighter safety. The program will expand its existing resources and continue support for thousands of communities still at risk. In addition, the program is exploring ways to address social issues, provide additional research and training in hazard assessment, and establish alliances with public and private organizations that share similar interests. Together, we can reduce the loss of lives, property, and resources to fire in the wildland/urban interface.

The complete Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program strategic plan is available on the NWCG Web site: http://www.nwcg.gov/teams/wuiwt/wuiwtadm/StratPlan_2005-2009.pdf.