

# *Valley-Hi Ranch Estates*

## VALLEY-HI FIREWISE USA® PROGRAM LINGO

February 7, 2023

Much of the forested lands in Colorado are in a fire-adapted ecosystem, meaning that before any settlement took place, naturally reoccurring wildfires shaped the vegetation that we see today. These fires occurred often enough to keep dead woody material cleaned up, and the fires burned with relatively low intensity. Once the area became settled, wildfires were considered destructive and extinguished as quickly as possible before they could burn up the timber or threaten homes and ranches in the area. Once this natural reoccurring cycle of fires was interrupted, vegetation began to build up to unusual levels.

Fast-forward 100 years, with so much land that has not had a fire in it for over a century, vegetation is so dense that some fires that get started in the timber have a very high resistance to control. When a fire does get started on dry windy days, there is so much accumulation of dead vegetation, that controlling the fires is rarely successful. Couple this with so many communities built in this ecosystem, we have created a situation where our homes, and our livelihood, are at a constant threat to destructive fire. We have seen the results of these fires on our local news, with so many homes being lost every year to wildland fire. Some insurance companies won't insure homes in our area due to the higher risk of loss due to wildfires. Occasionally we can smell smoke in the air during the summer months from large fires several hundred miles away. Because there are so many homes, businesses, and utility infrastructure in this area, it is too risky to re-introduce controlled fire in a large enough area for it to have any impact.

Reducing your homes wildfire risk begins with the individual homeowner. Homeowners have the ultimate responsibility to prepare their property for wildfire. By creating and maintaining a defensible space around your home, residents can reduce the chances of their home being lost to a wildfire, while still maintaining your property's value.

In 2013, Valley-Hi Estates adopted the Firewise USA® program thru the National Fire Protection Association, to raise awareness of the fire threat to our neighborhood and make progress to mitigate that threat through manual removal of dead slash and timber around our homes. Firewise® is more than just removal of dead vegetation. It is the intentional construction of homes that make them more resilient to fire. It is using fire resistant materials for our roofs, siding, decks, and fences. It is the landscaping techniques and materials that keep fire away from a structure. It is storing combustible materials, like lumber, firewood, and fuel, away from homes. It is

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a conscience effort to reduce the threat of wildfire consuming our homes, and creating a safe environment so firefighters have a greater chance of being successful at saving our homes. It is more than just one property owner that puts the effort into being Firewise®; it is all properties that make up individual pieces of the whole subdivision.

There are several forestry and fire mitigation businesses in this area. Business ads can be found in the local Canyon Courier. Valley Hi Estates does not endorse or recommend any one business over another.

To maintain status with the Firewise® program, we must meet several criteria each year:

- Maintain a current [Neighborhood Wildfire Protection Plan](#)
- Host a “workday” in the neighborhood. This typically takes place in early June.
- Perform a minimum level of work hours and dollars spent in reducing fire threat, based on the number of residents living in this subdivision.
- Provide residents with information on local slash collection options, locations, and dates.

In October of each year, Valley Hi HOA will ask residents for the number of non-paid hours of labor worked and any money that a homeowner spends on anything related to fire mitigation. No receipts are needed, just an honest dollar figure. We report this to the National Fire Protection Association to maintain our status as a Firewise® neighborhood.

Other sources of information:

Colorado State Forest Service: Protect your home and property from wildfire.

<https://csfs.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/protect-your-home-property-from-wildfire/>

National Fire Protection Association: Preparing homes for wildfire.

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire>

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