

WILDFIRE

Prevention, Preparedness & Survival

The **ULTIMATE** Guide for Wildfire Mitigation and Survival in Grand County, CO



*East Troublesome Fire in Grand County
October 21, 2020
Photo by Philip Brinkmann*

Brought to you by:



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Read the electronic version of this guide at: www.bewildfireready.org
Read the complete Landowner/Rural Living Guide at: www.middleparkcd.com/ultimate-landowner-guide/



INTRODUCTION

Original Source Content

The content of this guide was initially compiled by the Middle Park Conservation District as a section of their ***High County Rural Living and Land Management Guide***. That complete 64-page guide touches on a plethora of topics regarding living in Grand and Summit Counties, including Need to Know Info; Homesite Preparation; Minimizing Conflict; Wildfire Mitigation; Water and Drought; Gardening; Wildlife; Agriculture; and more. <http://www.middleparkcd.com/ultimate-landowner-guide/>

Images

Some photos in this guide were obtained from the Internet search engine **Duck, Duck, Go**. We have not cited specific websites for each photo but have noted the Duck, Duck, Go reference number by placing an encircled “1” on these photos. Photos taken from other sources are cited with their appropriate encircled reference numbers. *Photos without any noted reference number were taken by staff and executive members of the Middle Park Conservation District.* Bibliographical references are included at the back of this guide. Hyperlinks included within the text are not noted on the reference pages.



PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THIS GUIDE

The East Troublesome Fire of 2020 burned almost 200,000 acres of our precious Grand County land. With more than 800,000 acres left unburned, we need to make the pledge to engage with wildfire prevention preparedness, mitigation, and survival. The Grand County Wildfire Council (GCWC) is the local agency working to create a more fire adapted Grand County, a community that consists of prepared and informed citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire. **We must create a fire culture that allows fire to play more of its natural role while protecting people and assets from the damage it can do.**

ABOUT GRAND COUNTY WILDFIRE COUNCIL (GCWC)

GCWC is a non-profit, community-based educational, outreach and action-based program for the residents and visitors of Grand County, Colorado. GCWC consists of members from local, state, and federal government agencies, all of our local fire departments, homeowner groups, local businesses, and concerned citizens. **GCWC’s mission is “Through collaboration, education and action, engage in wildfire prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and survival.”**

Services We Provide

- ♦ Community Chipping Days
- ♦ Hazardous Fuels Reduction Cost-Share Reimbursement Programs
- ♦ 9-1-1 Reflective Address Signs
- ♦ Education, outreach, and advocacy on wildfire prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and survival
- ♦ Homeowner risk assessment planning assistance

Contact GCWC about programs and services
www.bewildfireready.org | 970-627-7121
bewildfireready@gmail.com

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NEED TO KNOW INFO

County
Rd #

623

Find your official
address!

[Grand County Parcel Viewer](#)

House
#

25
4

Addressing

What is the name of the road you live on?

If you live in town, your road may have a common name like Grand Avenue or 4th Street. If you live outside of town, then you may have a County Road (GCR) number in addition to a common name. Grand County Road 5 is the proper name/number, but it often goes by its common name, the "4 Bar 4 Road." Google and other search engines are hit or miss on street names and numbers, so it is recommended you verify and memorize your **proper street name and/or number**. If you ever have to call 9-1-1, you will want to know the proper name or county road number because there can be many roads throughout the county with the same common name (such as Elk Drive or Chipmunk Lane). **County Road numbers are unique and not duplicated within the county.**

Is your address sign visible?

You may think your address sign is clear and obvious, but try driving around at night in a neighborhood where you are not familiar. Now, imagine that you are a first responder called out at 3 a.m. to help someone having a heart attack. **Quite simply, most address signs are NOT adequately visible.** Your house could be far off the road; there might be black numbers on a dark brown background; or the numbers might be too small. **Moreover, cute and decorative numbers on old tree stumps do NOT cut it.** For this reason, some neighborhoods and individuals have taken it upon themselves to add uniform metal signs at the beginning of their driveways with **GREEN BACKGROUNDS AND WHITE REFLECTIVE NUMBERS**.

REMINDER: When you mount your address sign, make sure it is in a location that will **NOT** be obscured by snow or snowplowing operations during the winter.

Grand County Wildfire Council sells 9-1-1 reflective address signs. Check out our website at www.bewildfireready.org.

Especially if you are a second-homeowner, consider getting a [Knox Rapid Access System/Padlock](#) for faster access to your driveway / home by first responders during emergencies and alarm calls.

[MAP - Grand County Evacuation Zones](#)

Emergency Notification and Assistance

Grand County uses the **CodeRED Emergency Notification System** to keep citizens informed about emergency situations. If you receive a CodeRED call, follow the instructions given to you by the recorded message. **Examples of CodeRED messages include: evacuation notices and routes, shelter locations for humans and animals, bio-terrorism alerts, boil water notices, severe weather reports, missing children reports, and more.** **To register your cell phone for these important notifications, visit:** www.gcemergency.com



Fire Departments & Important Phone Numbers

We all know that Fire Departments respond to various emergency calls, but they also do much more than just first responder response. Our local fire departments also perform various outreach and education services, including home ignition zone and Firewise community risk assessments. If you would like someone to assess your home for wildfire preparedness, contact your local fire department or the Grand County Wildfire Council (www.bewildfireready.org).



Grand Fire
970.887.3380
grandfire.org



Grand Lake Fire
970.627.8428
grandlakefire.org



Hot Sulphur Fire
970.725.3414
hotsulphurfire.com



East Grand Fire
970.726.5824
eastgrandfire.com



Kremmling Fire
970.724.3795
kremmlingfire.org

[FREE PRINTABLE EMERGENCY CONTACT PHONE LIST](#) ²²

511

ROAD CONDITIONS

811

UTILITY LOCATES

911

EMERGENCIES

988

SUICIDE HOTLINE

800-222-1222

POISON CONTROL

MAINTAINING HEALTHY FORESTS

Healthy forests have higher productivity, are more resilient in the face of environmental stressors, and make better wildlife habitats.

Additionally, healthy forests are better at protecting watersheds by helping sustain water quantity and quality and improve soil stabilization. Studies also show that overcrowded forests face increased competition for resources that weakens trees. Weakened trees have reduced tree vigor, do not reach their fullest growth potential and are more susceptible to insects and diseases.

By creating a patchwork mosaic of disturbance through mechanical means, you more closely mimic the patchwork of disturbance that would naturally occur through historic fire regimes. This can help improve forest health now and into the future.

Other Forest Management Links & Info:
www.middleparkcd.com/forestry-resources/
csfs.colostate.edu/csfspublications/#wm

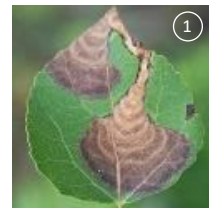
Steps to create and maintain healthy forests may include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ **Ensure a mix of old and young trees.** Insects and diseases often attack a specific age-class of trees. By having a mix of ages, you increase your forest's resistance to insects and diseases.
- ◆ **Help forests regenerate** after wildfire or other catastrophic events. You may consider planting tree seedlings to help stabilize soil, renew wildlife habitat, and add nutrients back into the soil.
- ◆ **Strive for diverse tree species** to provide more resilient forests in uncertain circumstances (applies to both wildland and urban settings).
- ◆ **Reduce tree densities by thinning** to increase tree health and vigor and reduce wildfire risk.
- ◆ **Remove heavy accumulations of downed timber** (often known as jackstraw timber) to reduce the risk of high intensity ground fires.
- ◆ **Prepare for longer fire seasons** and potentially more intense fire behavior when planning vegetation reduction and wildfire mitigation actions in or near communities.
- ◆ **Avoid season-long grazing** that can compact soils and cause tree damage from browsing and rubbing.
- ◆ **Control noxious weeds** to maintain a more native species assemblage.

Insects and Diseases

Some insects and diseases common to Grand County include:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ◆ Mountain Pine Beetle | ◆ Dwarf Mistletoe |
| ◆ Spruce Beetle | ◆ Pine Needle Scale |
| ◆ Douglas-Fir Beetle | ◆ Twig Beetle |
| ◆ Western Spruce Budworm | ◆ Aspen issues defoliators, leaf blights, cankers and |
| ◆ Western Balsam Bark Beetle | fungus |



Looking to replant your forest with seedlings? Contact MPCD
www.middleparkcd.com
middleparkcd@gmail.com

If you see any of the following or have questions on forest management, contact the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) Office in Granby (970-887-3121).

- ◆ Yellowing crowns
- ◆ Candle wax-like sap
- ◆ Fading crowns
- ◆ Browning and reddening of needles
- ◆ Frass (insect debris/excrement that looks like sawdust)
- ◆ Pale green, dense deformed twigs and foliage forming a birds nest-like growths called "witches brooms"
- ◆ Small white flecks on the underside of needles



Fire Adapted Communities

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group defines a fire adapted community as **“A human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire.”** Fire adapted communities are knowledgeable, engaged communities where the actions of residents and agencies creates a fire culture that allows fire to play more of its natural role while protecting people and assets from the damage it can do.

We must create a fire culture that allows fire to play more of its natural role while protecting people and assets from the damage it can do.



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Firefighters are available to come to your home or property and perform a FREE defensible space site assessment, make recommendations, and help you prioritize your list of fire mitigation measures.

Benefits of being “Fire Adapted”

- Peace of mind knowing that your home is better prepared to survive a wildfire
- Defensible space reduces fire from advancing and endangering lives and homes
- Property values improve while reducing risk of loss
- Greater sense of human connection, community interaction and pride
- Better neighbor relations
- Possible insurance rate reduction or benefit

REDUCING YOUR HOME’S WILDFIRE RISK BEGINS WITH YOU!

Phrases to Know

HOME IGNITION ZONE (HIZ) is the home and the area around the home (or structure). The HIZ takes into account both the potential of the structure to ignite and the quality of defensible space surrounding it.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE is the area around a home (or structure) that has been modified to reduce fire hazard by creating space between potential fuel sources.

WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) is a set of conditions under which a wildland fire reaches beyond trees, brush, and other natural fuels to ignite homes and their immediate surroundings. **Nearly all homes and properties in Grand County are within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).**

FIREWISE is a special distinction given to communities that are recognized under the [Firewise USA™ Program](#) as having followed a systematic approach to organizing and implementing a Firewise mitigation plan in their neighborhood. The Firewise Communities/USA® Recognition Program provides a series of steps to prepare homes and neighborhoods in advance of a wildfire. There are over 700 recognized communities in nearly all of the 50 states. Colorado is ranked #3 for the number of recognized Firewise USA® sites with more than 180 earning the designation.

While “Firewise communities” occur at the neighborhood level, a Firewise community alone does NOT make a “fire adapted community.” **Multiple Firewise communities working together with civic leaders, business owners and developers, first responders, land managers, and others contributes to a “fire adapted community.”**



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FIREWISE USA™
Residents reducing wildfire risks

MITIGATING FOR WILDFIRE

Fire Restrictions

Fire restrictions can originate from many places. Federal agencies can impose restrictions on the public lands they manage; states can impose restrictions on state-managed land; and counties and cities may impose bans on the private lands within their borders.

Before starting a fire or lighting smoking materials:

- ♦ **Check your area's current fire danger/restriction status to make sure conditions are safe and allow for an open flame.**
- ♦ Never burn in high winds or leave a fire unattended.
- ♦ Do not make excessively large fires because they can quickly get out of control.
- ♦ Recreational fires/campfires should be no more than three feet in diameter and two feet in height.
- ♦ Campfires should be surrounded by a metal ring and be located ten feet away from any potential combustibles.
- ♦ Only burn firewood and nothing else.
- ♦ Keep a shovel, extinguisher, and water nearby to quickly subdue a fire should it get out of control.
- ♦ Completely extinguish your fire by sufficiently dousing and covering with dirt before leaving the campsite. It should be COLD!
- ♦ Always dispose of smoking materials where they cannot be a source of ignition.
- ♦ Never discard a cigarette or other smoking material on the ground or throw it out a car window.



Stages of Fire Restrictions

Stage 1

The first stage of restrictions occurs when there is an increasing fire danger and/or an increasing preparedness level, and the risks of keeping the forest open to all activities begins to be outweighed by the risks inherent in doing so. **Stage 1 imposes relatively minor restrictions aimed at preventing the start of wildfires based on human activities that are known to be high risk, specifically smoking and campfires.**

Stage 2

As the risks increase, officials may choose to move to Stage 2. **This stage intensifies the restrictions from Stage 1 by focusing on activities that, although normally managed under permit or contract, have a relatively high risk of causing a fire start.** Restrictions under Stage 2 will affect forest users and will have economic impacts to contractors, permittees, and others. Therefore, the decision to move to Stage 2 will involve a risk/benefit assessment, as well as consideration of economic and social impacts.

Stage 3

Stage 3 is a closure. This stage is selected when there are very high risks and the ability to manage those risks using Stage 1 or 2 restrictions is no longer viable. The social, economic, and political impacts of implementing a closure at this point are outweighed by the benefits associated with virtually eliminating the potential for human caused fire starts.

In addition to not burning during active Fire Restrictions, care should be taken on days with "**Red Flag Warnings**". **Red Flag Warnings** occur when weather and fuel conditions could result in extreme fire behavior. Outdoor fires should be avoided on these days. Check for **Red Flag Warnings** here: <https://www.weather.gov/bou/> (updated daily by the National Weather Service)

FIRE RESTRICTIONS 101

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions can be in effect during periods of high to extreme fire danger. They include:

- No outdoor fires EXCEPT in developed campgrounds or picnic areas with permanently constructed fire grates and/or charcoal grills
- No use of open flame torches or explosives
- No operation of any internal or external combustion engine without a spark arresting device, properly installed, maintained and in effective working order
- Smoking is only permitted in an enclosed vehicle or building, or while stopped in an area at least 3' in diameter that is clear of all flammable materials

Exceptions:

- Petroleum-fueled stoves, grills, lanterns and heating devices are permitted only if they have an on/off switch and meet fire underwriter's safety specifications
- Owners/leasees of residences may have fires on their private property in permanently constructed fire rings/pits and charcoal grills
- Persons with a special permit specifically authorizing their activity

Stage 2 Fire Restrictions can be in effect during periods of high to extreme fire danger. They include:

- **No outdoor fires or campfires of any kind**
- No use of open flame torches or explosives
- No operation of any internal or external combustion engine without a spark arresting device, properly installed, maintained and in effective working order
- Smoking is only permitted in an enclosed vehicle or building

Exceptions:

- Petroleum-fueled stoves, grills, lanterns and heating devices are permitted only if they have an on/off switch and meet fire underwriter's safety specifications
- Owners/leasees of residences may have fires within the home
- Persons with a special permit specifically authorizing their activity



View Current Fire Restrictions & Stage-Specific Infographics: bewildfireready.org/fire-restrictions/

Slash pile burning can be an effective way to remove woody debris and mitigate for future wildfires if done properly, performed during the correct time of year, and executed under the purview of an approved permit.



For health and safety reasons, slash pile burning is subject to open burning regulations and REQUIRES that a burn permit be obtained prior to burning activities.

In Grand County, Grand County Natural Resources (GCNR) regulates the burning of slash piles larger than campfire-size (3 feet in diameter by 2 feet high) on private lands. GCNR does not permit burning of any other materials besides slash piles. Individuals looking for Demolition permits should contact the Planning & Zoning Department. The burn season opens in Grand County when there is sufficient, season-long snow on the ground and generally runs until April 1, depending on snowpack. Burning is not guaranteed on any given day during the burn season. Burn permit holders **MUST** call GCNR on day of the proposed burn to see if weather and air quality conditions allow for burning. You can also see where burning is occurring on a daily basis by going to co.grand.co.us/142/open-burning and clicking on the “Daily Burn List.”

Grand County Natural Resources (GCNR): 970-887-0745
<https://www.co.grand.co.us/131/Natural-Resources>

Exemptions to Obtaining Open Burning Permits

Per the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission Regulation 9, III(B), certain burning activities are exemption from requirements to

obtain an open burning permit. Nothing in this regulation, however, it to be construed as relieving any person conducting open burning from meeting the requirements of any applicable federal, state or local requirements concerning disposal of waste materials. Furthermore, all necessary safeguards shall be utilized during such “exempt” open burning to minimize any public health or welfare impacts. The owner or operator shall also take steps to ensure that all neighboring residents and businesses are notified prior to beginning the open burn.

Agricultural Burning: Land zoned as “agriculture” does NOT automatically provide exemption from the open burn permitting process. **Agricultural burning** is defined as “the burning of cover vegetation for the purpose of preparing the soil for crop production, weed control as part of a larger agricultural purpose, maintenance of water conveyance structures related to agricultural operations, and other agricultural cultivation purposes.” *If a rancher or farmer wishes to burn something not specified for exemption in the “agricultural burning” definition, he/she must apply for an Open Burn Permit.* Courtesy calls to your local Fire District, County Dispatch Center (970-725-3311), and neighboring landowners on the day of an agricultural burn are strongly recommended. **Even though agricultural burns may be “legal” on any given day, except when local Fire Restrictions are in effect, caution should be taken when conditions are dry. Seemingly small and controlled “ditch” burns may become uncontrollable grass fires in a short period of time.**

Outdoor Recreational Fires (if fire restrictions are not in effect):

Attended recreational fires are exempted if they are:

- ◆ Within liquid or gas fueled stoves
- ◆ Located in self-contained charcoal grills (off the ground)
- ◆ Outdoor fires, not in excess of 3 feet in diameter and 2 feet in height, contained in an outdoor fireplace, barbeque grill, barbeque pit, fire pit or grate located on private land or in developed picnic grounds/campgrounds with adequate fire suppression equipment present.



Materials for which Burning is **NEVER** Allowed

- ◆ Burning of food waste, plastic, coated or treated wood products, rubber, insulation, tires, cars, insulated wire, motor oil, aerosol cans, hazardous or toxic materials, or other materials that will produce substantial amounts of smoke/particulates.
- ◆ Burning of wood residue, which includes bark, sawdust, slabs, chips, shavings, mill trim, and other wood products derived from wood processing.
- ◆ Burning of construction debris (includes both clean and treated wood).
- ◆ Burning of buildings or structures for demolition purposes.
- ◆ Burning of material for which a practical alternative method of disposal exists.
- ◆ **BURN BARRELS:** It is against the law to use burn barrels because they are considered incinerators that require construction permits and are subject to federal and state testing and regulations.

Alternatives to Open Burning

- ◆ Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle packaging and unwanted items
- ◆ Compost kitchen scraps and yard debris
- ◆ Dispose of items at a landfill (see page 10 for trash disposal)
- ◆ Chipping of trees / limbs

MITIGATING FOR WILDFIRE

Fire District Boundaries

Did you know that NOT all private lands in Grand County are included within the bounds of a fire district? Though the majority of privately-owned lands are included in a fire district, there are a few subdivisions and homes that are not. In case of a fire emergency, these non-fire district homeowners will likely get a response from a neighboring fire district. However, those homeowners may be charged a fee for that response.



If your property is not located within a fire district, you still have a chance to be included in one. You may submit a "Petition for Inclusion" to a neighboring fire district and to ask if they will redraw their boundaries to include your property. Most fire districts will strongly consider these petitions because their ultimate mission is to protect life and property from fire. **Keep in mind, though, that you will start to get an annual tax bill from the fire district once the inclusion is official.** Contact info for all Grand Fire Districts is on page 3.

Wildfire and Insurance

Contact your insurance agent today to see what steps you may take to enhance your coverage, reduce your risk, lower your premium, and prevent potential cancellation.

Did you know? Homes in Grand County sometimes face higher insurance premiums (and even cancellation).

It is critical to stress how important the issue of insurance and wildfire mitigation is for homeowners whose properties are affected by the WUI. **Local fire professionals seek homeowner cooperation and participation in the mitigation process, and insurance companies are demanding it.**

If you are trying to sell a property that has NOT been mitigated, insurance companies may refuse to insure the new buyer's purchase. Being proactive and spending money up front for mitigation could save you thousands of dollars thereafter.



Defensible Space and the Home Ignition Zone

Each year, wildfires consume hundreds of homes in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) despite firefighters' best efforts. **Studies show that as many as 80 percent of homes lost to wildland fires could have been saved if their owners had followed simple fire-safe practices. In addition, wildfire-related deaths often occur because people wait too long to leave their homes.**

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) is the area where human-made structures and developments meet and intermingle with undeveloped lands and vegetative fuels. The exact boundaries of the WUI depend on the topography, vegetative fuel types, local weather conditions, and prevailing winds. Nevertheless, if your home is within one mile of a natural area, it is likely within the **Ember Zone** (the zone where wind-driven embers, or firebrands, can threaten your home). You must prepare your home well before a wildland fire occurs. **Ember fires can destroy homes and neighborhoods far from the actual flame front. Firebrands can also cause ignitions well after the fire has passed through a community.**



It is not a question of if, but when, the next major wildland fire will occur. The tips on the following pages are designed to increase awareness and create a safer environment for you, your family, and the responding firefighters.

Grand County Wildfire Council is here to help landowners mitigate for wildfire.
Grand County Wildfire Council
www.bewildfireready.org

**JUNK THE
JUNIPER BUSHES!**

MITIGATING FOR WILDFIRE

Zones of Defensible Space



Zone 1— 1st Priority

0 to 5' out from the structure

GOAL: This zone is designed to prevent flames from coming in direct contact with the structure. Use nonflammable, hard surface materials in this zone, such as rock, gravel, sand, cement, bare earth or stone/concrete pavers.

- **Remove all flammable vegetation**, including shrubs, slash, mulch and other woody debris (including common juniper).
- **Do not store firewood or other combustible materials** inside this zone.
- **Prune tree branches** hanging over the roof and remove all fuels within ten feet of the chimney.
- **Regularly remove all pine needles and other debris** from the roof, deck and gutters.
- **Rake and dispose** of pine needles, dead leaves, mulch and other organic debris within five feet of all decks and structures. Farther than five feet from structures, raking material will not significantly reduce the likelihood of ignition and can negatively affect other trees.
- **Do not use space under decks** for storage.

Zone 2

5 to 30' out from the structure (or to property line)

GOAL: This zone is designed to give an approaching fire less fuel, which will help reduce its intensity as it gets nearer to your home or any structures.

- **Mow grasses** to four inches tall or less.
- **Avoid large accumulations of surface fuels** such as logs, branches, slash and mulch.
- **Remove enough trees** to create at least 10 feet* of space between crowns. Measure from the outermost branch of one tree to the nearest branch on the next tree.
- Small groups of two or three trees may be left in some areas of Zone 2. Spacing of 30 feet* should be maintained between remaining tree groups to ensure fire doesn't jump from one group to another.
- **Remove ladder fuels (lower limbs/tall grasses)** under remaining trees.
- **Prune tree branches** to a height of 6-10 feet from the ground or a third of the total height of the tree, whichever is less.
- **Remove stressed, diseased, dead or dying** trees and shrubs.
- **Get rid of common junipers** because they are highly flammable and tend to hold a layer of flammable material beneath them.
- You can keep isolated shrubs in Zone 2, as long as they are not growing under trees. Keep shrubs at least 10 feet* away from the edge of tree branches.
- **Periodically prune and maintain shrubs** to prevent excessive growth. Remove dead stems annually.
- Spacing between clumps of shrubs should be at least 2 1/2 times* their mature height. Each clump should have a diameter no more than twice the mature height of the vegetation. Example: For shrubs that grow 6 feet tall, space clumps 15 feet apart or more (measured from the edge of the crowns of vegetation clumps). Each clump of these shrubs should not exceed 12 feet in diameter.

* Horizontal spacing recommendations are minimums and can be increased to reduce potential fire behavior, particularly on slopes. Consult a forestry, fire or natural resource professional for guidance with spacing on slopes.

Zone 3

30-100' out from the structure (or to property line)

GOAL: This zone focuses on mitigation that keeps fire on the ground (which is easier to fight), but it's also a space to make choices that can improve forest health. Healthy forests include trees of multiple ages, sizes and species, where adequate growing room is maintained over time.

If the distance of 100 feet to the edge of Zone 3 stretches beyond your property lines, it's encouraged to work with adjoining property owners to complete an appropriate defensible space. If your house is on a steep slope or has certain topographic considerations, this zone may be larger.

- Mowing grasses is not necessary in Zone 3.
- **Watch for hazards associated with ladder fuels.** The chance of a surface fire climbing into the trees is reduced in a forest where surface fuels are widely separated and low tree branches are removed.
- **Tree crown spacing of 6-10 feet** is suggested. Consider creating openings or meadows between small clumps of trees so fire must transition to the ground to keep moving.
- Any approved method of **slash treatment** is acceptable in this zone, including removal, piling and burning, lop and scatter, or mulching. Lop-and-scatter or mulching treatments should be minimized in favor of treatments that reduce the amount of woody material in the zone. The farther this material is from the home, the better.

Firewise Landscaping Tips:

www.middleparkcd.com/forestry-resources/

NEW—Home Ignition Zone & Defensible Space

SELF-ASSESSMENT: <https://forms.gle/1UhsvojEPjHTpRpL6>

References: 8, 15

Make Home Ignition Zone Maintenance a Priority

HOME IGNITION ZONE CHECKLIST PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR WILDFIRE WITH THESE STEPS

TOP PRIORITIES

- ☐ **CLEAR** roof, deck and gutters of pine needles and other debris.*
- ☐ **MOW** grass and weeds to a height of 4 inches or less.*
- ☐ **RAKE AND REMOVE** all pine needles and other flammable debris from 5 feet around the foundation of your home and deck.*
- ☐ **TREAT** or mow shrubs that re-sprout aggressively (such as Gambel oak) every 3-5 years or more depending on growth rates.
- ☐ **REMOVE** branches that hang over the roof and chimney.
- ☐ **DISPOSE** of slash from thinning trees and shrubs by chipping, hauling to a disposal site or piling in open areas for burning later. *Any accumulation of slash that's chipped or otherwise should be 30 feet or more from the home.**
- ☐ **AVOID** creating continuous areas of wood chips on the ground when chipping logs and/or slash. Break up the layer of wood chips by adding nonflammable material, or allow for wide gaps of at least 3 feet between chip accumulations.

* Address as needed, more than once a year.

FIREWOOD

- ☐ Keep firewood stacked uphill from (or at the same elevation as) any structures, and keep the woodpile at least 30 feet away from the home.
- ☐ Do not stack firewood between remaining trees, underneath the deck or on the deck.
- ☐ Remove flammable vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles.

PROPANE TANKS

- ☐ Keep aboveground tanks at least 30 feet from the home, preferably on the same elevation as the house.
- ☐ Remove flammable vegetation within 10 feet of all propane tanks and gas meters.

DRIVEWAYS

- ☐ Maintain at least 10 feet between tree crowns, thinning them a minimum of 30 feet back from each side of the driveway from the house to the main access road.
- ☐ Remove ladder fuels beneath trees after thinning.
- ☐ Remove any shrubs that are within 10 feet of the outer edge of tree crowns.
- ☐ Space shrubs apart at least 2 ½ times their mature height, as measured from the edge of the shrubs.
- ☐ Post signs at the end of the driveway with your house number that are noncombustible, reflective and easily visible to emergency responders.
- ☐ Trim trees and shrubs overhanging the road to a minimum of 14 feet to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

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SOLUTIONS FOR MANAGING SLASH

Grand County Wildfire Council has free Chipping Days each summer. Check out <https://bewildfireready.org/community-chipping-days/>

- 1** Spread slash and wood chips over a large area to avoid heavy accumulations and large piles. Being close to the ground will help speed decomposition.
- 2** Burn slash piles, but before doing so, always contact your county sheriff's office or local fire department for current information or possible restrictions.
- 3** Lop and scatter slash by cutting it into small pieces (less than 24 inches long) and spreading it over a wide area, to a depth not exceeding 18 inches. Don't scatter material over 4 inches in diameter.

WINDOWS

- Install metal screens
- Use multiple panes windows with one pane being tempered
- Limit the size and number of windows in your home that face large areas of vegetation

VENTS

- Metal mesh screens that are 1/8-inch or less is recommended to prevent ember entry and ignition from the inside out

EXTERIOR WALLS

- Fiber cement board, brick, stucco or other fire resistant materials are recommended

DECKS/FENCES

- Use noncombustible fencing and decking materials if possible
- Remove all combustible materials from underneath the deck

NEW—Home Ignition Zone & Defensible Space

SELF-ASSESSMENT: <https://forms.gle/1UhsvojEPjHTpRpL6>

Wildfire Home Assessment Checklist
bewildfireready.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/wildfire-checklist_IBHS.pdf

FEMA Fire Resistant Construction Materials
emilms.fema.gov/IS320/WM0103020text.htm

FEMA Home Builders Guide to Construction—Wildfires
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/2020-08/fema_p_737_0.pdf

Hardening Your Home Checklists & Assessments
www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/get-ready/hardening-your-home/

ROOF & ROOF EXTENSION

- Avoid wood and shake-shingle roofs
- Use "Class A" roofing materials: metal sheets, concrete or shingles made from asphalt, tile, clay, stone or metal
- Keep the roof and gutters clear of flammable debris.
- Roof eaves are particularly prone to ignition, so [minimize overhang and build soffits with fire-resistant materials](#).

GARAGE

- Install weather stripping around & under vehicle access doors
- If the garage is attached to the home, install a solid door with self-closing hinges between living areas and garage.
- Do not store combustibles or flammable liquids near combustion equipment (e.g. a hot water heater)

CHIMNEY

- Cover chimney and stovepipe outlets with a noncombustible screen of 1/4-inch wire mesh to reduce size/energy of embers leaving the chimney.

BEFORE & DURING THE FIRE (READY, SET, GO)

Creating a Wildland Fire Action Plan

When a fire sparks, your adrenaline gets pumping, reasonable thought processes get frazzled, and everything gets a bit frantic. **In order to avoid some initial confusion spurred by the news of an approaching fire, you and the members of your household SHOULD be prepared well in advance.**

Use these checklists to help devise your own unique [Wildland Fire Action Plan](#). Each family's plan will be different. *Once your plan is complete, rehearse it regularly, and keep it in a safe and accessible place for quick implementation.*

Ready – Get Your Property & Family Ready

- ☐ Sign up for [CodeRED](#) to receive emergency alerts (*Need to Know* section).
- ☐ Install a [9-1-1 Reflective Address Sign](#) at the end of your driveway or on your house if your house is on the main thoroughfare (see page 9).
- ☐ Have tools, such as a shovel, rake, bucket, and hoe, available for fire emergencies.
- ☐ Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, inside and outside of all bedrooms. Test them monthly and change the batteries twice a year. Train your family how to use them.
- ☐ Ensure that your family knows where your gas, electric, and water main shut-off controls are and how to use them.
- ☐ Plan several different evacuation routes.
- ☐ Designate an emergency meeting location outside the fire hazard area.
- ☐ Assemble an emergency supply kit for you and your pets.
- ☐ Appoint an out-of-area friend/relative as a point of contact so you can communicate with family members who relocate.
- ☐ Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers posted near your door and in your emergency supply kit.
- ☐ Keep an extra emergency supply kit in your car in case you can't get to your home because of fire.
- ☐ Make sure you account for the evacuation of large animals, such as horses or cattle, in your Wildland Fire Action Plan.
- ☐ Especially if a second-homeowner, consider getting a [Knox Rapid Access System/Padlock](#) for faster access to your driveway / home by first responders.

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EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS	NÚMEROS DE CONTACTO DE EMERGENCIA
911 IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL 911	911 EN CASO DE UNA EMERGENCIA MARQUE EL 911
★ POLICE DEPARTMENT	★ PARA COMUNICARSE CON EL DEPARTAMENTO DE POLICIA
P FIRE DEPARTMENT	P CENTRO DE CONTROL DE INCENDIOS
H HOSPITAL	H HOSPITAL
1 FIRE DEPARTMENT	1 FIRE DEPARTMENT
2 FIRE DEPARTMENT	2 FIRE DEPARTMENT

Set – Situational Awareness When a Fire Starts

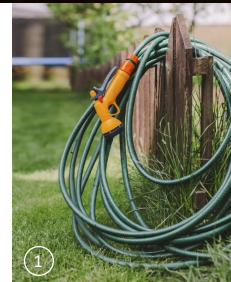
- ☐ Evacuate as soon as you are set! Don't wait!
- ☐ Alert family and neighbors so they know you have left your home. Leave a note on the door for firefighters if possible.
- ☐ Dress in appropriate clothing (i.e., clothing made from natural fibers, such as cotton, and work boots). Have goggles and a dry bandana or particle mask handy.
- ☐ Ensure that you have your emergency supply kit on hand. It should include all necessary items, a battery-powered radio, spare batteries, emergency contact numbers, and ample drinking water (**see Emergency Supply Kit on next page**).
- ☐ Stay tuned to your TV or local radio stations for updates.
- ☐ If you are not ready to leave, remain close to your house, drink plenty of water, and keep an eye on your family and pets.

INSIDE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Shut all windows and doors, but leave them UNLOCKED.
- ☐ Shut off gas at the meter. Turn off pilot lights.
- ☐ Leave interior lights on so firefighters can see your house under smoky conditions.

OUTSIDE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Gather up flammable items from the exterior and move them inside/away from home.
- ☐ Turn off propane tanks.
- ☐ Do NOT leave sprinklers on or water running - it can waste critical water pressure.
- ☐ Leave exterior lights on.
- ☐ Back your car into the driveway, shut the doors, and roll up the windows.
- ☐ Have a ladder and garden hoses available for firefighters.
- ☐ Seal attic and ground vents with precut plywood or commercial seals (*only if time permits*).
- ☐ Patrol your property and extinguish all small fires until you leave.



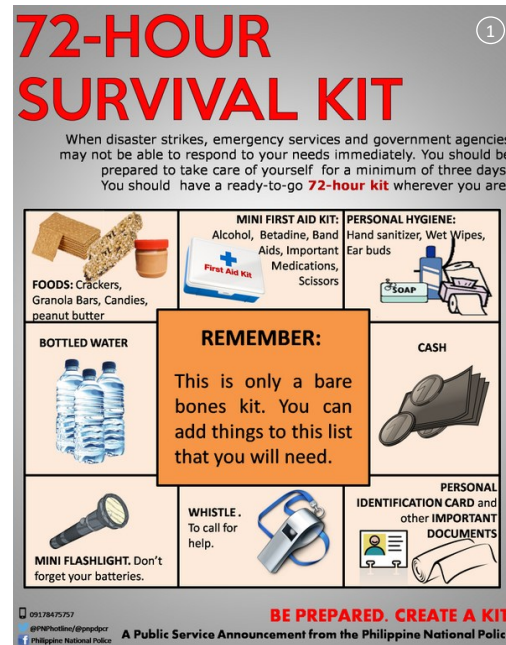
BEFORE & DURING THE FIRE (READY, SET, GO)

Creating a Wildland Fire Action Plan

Set Continued – Situational Awareness When a Fire Starts

IF YOU ARE TRAPPED: SURVIVAL TIPS

- Shelter away from outside walls.
- Bring garden hoses inside the house so embers don't destroy them.
- Patrol inside your home for spot fires and extinguish them.
- Wear long sleeves and long pants made of natural fibers, such as cotton.
- Stay hydrated.
- Ensure you can exit the home if it catches fire (REMEMBER... if it is hot inside your home, it is 4-5 times hotter outside).
- Fill sinks and tubs for an emergency water supply.
- Place wet towels under doors to keep smoke and embers out.
- After the fire has passed, check your roof and extinguish any fires, sparks, and embers.
- Check inside the attic for hidden embers.
- Patrol your property and extinguish small fires.
- If there are fires that you cannot extinguish with a small amount of water or in a short period of time, call 9-1-1.



Go! – Act Early

By leaving early, you give your family the best chance of surviving a wildfire. You also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling them to move more freely and do their job in a safer environment.

When to Leave

Leave early enough to avoid being caught in fire, smoke, or road congestion. Do NOT wait to be told by authorities to leave. In an intense wildfire, authorities may not have time to knock on every door. If you are advised to leave, do NOT hesitate! If you receive an emergency notification call, LISTEN carefully to the message and follow the directions given.

Where to Go

Leave to a predetermined location (it should be a low-risk area, such as a well-prepared friend or relative's house, a Red Cross shelter or evacuation center, hotel, etc.). If an Evacuation Center has been stood up, go there to let them know you are safe.

How To Get There

Know **MULTIPLE** travel routes out of your community in case one route is blocked by wildfire or emergency vehicles. Choose the safest route away from the fire.

What to Take

Take your **EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT** containing your family's and pet's necessary items. **The American Red Cross recommends every family have an Emergency Supply Kit assembled long before a wildland fire or other emergency occurs.** Use the list below to help assemble your kit. You can also check out www.redcross.org.

Emergency Supply Kit

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day)♦ Three-day supply of non-perishable food for all family members and pets♦ First aid kit and sanitation supplies♦ Flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries♦ An extra set of car keys, credit cards, and cash♦ Extra eyeglasses, contact lenses, prescriptions, and medications | <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Map marked with evacuation routes♦ Important family documents and contact numbers♦ Easily carried valuables, family photos, heirlooms, and other irreplaceable items♦ Personal electronic devices♦ Chargers for electronic devices (cellphones, laptops, iPads, etc...)♦ A pair of old shoes and a flashlight in a handy spot in case of sudden evacuation at night |
|--|--|

BEFORE & DURING THE FIRE (READY, SET, GO)

Ranchers & Livestock Owners

Livestock operations are at high risk from wildfires because of their more remote locations and the generally lighter fuels (vegetation) on grazing land that can carry an advancing wildfire very quickly. It is often impossible for many ranchers to evacuate their livestock due to the number of animals they have or their location on the property. Because of these things, **ranchers must work diligently to prepare their property and make evacuation and contingency plans for both people and livestock.**

In the case of livestock operations, it is often not feasible to evacuate large numbers of livestock. As a result, operators should consider establishing relatively safe havens for their animals. One way this can be accomplished is through rotational grazing. Intensive-managed grazing near ranch houses, barns or equipment areas can provide defensible space for those assets and create an area where livestock can be held away from the main body of the fire.



Remaining vegetation in well-grazed areas will not usually carry a fire and spot fires can be easily controlled. ***By using grazed pastures as defensible space during high fire season, livestock operators can then open gates should a fire occur to allow livestock to transition from pastures where they are feeding to the grazed area where they can be better protected.***

Prepare in Advance

- ❑ **Know the fire history and typical fire behavior for the area.** Concentrate preparations on areas of the ranch where a fire is most-likely to approach.
- ❑ **Establish and maintain firebreaks** around pastures.
- ❑ **Create defensible space** around all structures, including barns and hay sheds.
- ❑ **Reinforce fences** with metal posts, if necessary.
- ❑ Create a safe zone clear of all vegetation for ranch equipment.
- ❑ **Clear vegetation** around fuel tanks.
- ❑ **Create a Livestock Evacuation Plan**
- ❑ **Ensure proper branding** and registration of livestock.
- ❑ **Establish a contingency plan for feeding livestock** if grazing land is destroyed by fire.
- ❑ **Have spare gate keys, combinations and property maps** available for firefighters, or leave gates unlocked.
- ❑ **Clearly mark water tanks, ponds and other water supplies** available for fire department use.
- ❑ **Reinforce bridges** to make them capable of supporting the weight of a fire engine or bulldozer and clearly mark weight limits or unsafe bridges. Mark alternate paths around the bridges if they are incapable of supporting heavy equipment.



MOVING FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION
MESSAGING TO MITIGATION,
AND WORDS TO WORK

Photo quote by Pam Leschak, USFS (retired)

What to do when wildfire is approaching

- ❑ **Open and/or unlock gates so livestock can escape flames and firefighters have easier access.** If time allows, relocate livestock to ranch areas with lighter fuels or with well-maintained firebreaks or other defensive measures.
- ❑ **Hook up and load stock trailer** to evacuate particularly valuable animals (saddle horses, breeding stock, etc.) when necessary.
- ❑ **Move equipment** into a safe, non-vegetated area.
- ❑ **Close all doors and windows** and turn ON lights in barns and other structures.
- ❑ **Shut off propane tanks.**
- ❑ **Ensure all water source connections/locations** are identified and operational.
- ❑ **Evacuate** family members, pets, valuables and other personal possessions to a safe area as soon as possible.
- ❑ **Monitor property** for small fires started by embers.
- ❑ **Monitor manure piles and hay storage.**
- ❑ **Leave if the fire threatens your own life and safety.**



DURING & AFTER THE FIRE

Initial Actions

For a map and info on current wildfires, visit inciweb.nwcg.gov/

For a map and info on smoke and air quality, visit fire.airnow.gov/

After the initial pre-evacuation or evacuation of your property, your endorphins will be running on high and you may be in some state of shock, panic, confusion, and distress. Consequently, you may not think of all the things you should do after the fire.

- Call, text, or use social media to let friends and family know you are okay.
- Check the jurisdiction's website and social media accounts to determine if they have set up an Evacuation Center or Disaster Assistance Center (DAC). If you were evacuated, it may be imperative that you check in with the Evac Center to let them know you have evacuated and how you can be reached. They may also have resources on shelters.

[MAP - Grand County Evacuation Zones](#)

Grand County Emergency: www.gcemergency.com/

- Sign up for **CodeRED Notifications** if you have not already done so.
Grand County: www.gcemergency.com
- Limit wildfire smoke exposure and keep an eye out for air quality advisories.
- Pay attention to any community meetings that may be held.
- **DO NOT GO AROUND, MOVE, OR OTHERWISE BYPASS BARRICADES AND CLOSURES. They are there for your safety.**

Next Steps

- **Contact your insurance agent and mortgage company** to let them know what happened, where you are, and how you can be reached.
- **Keep ALL receipts.** Out-of-pocket expenses during a mandatory evacuation are reimbursable under most standard homeowner policies.
- **Prepare a detailed inventory** of everything in your house so that you can verify upon reentry whether it was damaged or not. Make two copies; one for yourself and one for the insurance adjuster. Your list should be as complete as possible, including a description of the items, dates of purchase or approximate age, cost at time of purchase and estimated replacement cost.
- **Determine what important documents were lost** and begin replacing them (passport, ID, credit cards, birth certificate, will and living will, the itinerary and plane tickets for your next vacation).

Returning Home

- **Do not return to your home until it is declared safe** by local authorities. Injury is very common after a disaster when returning home because of debris, sharp objects, and unstable structures. Protect yourself by wearing eye protection, a mask, sturdy boots, long sleeves, long pants and gloves when returning home and cleaning up.
- **Heed warnings from officials** about boil water orders, food safety, debris and hazardous material disposal, health concerns (mental health, tetanus shots, wound care, and respiratory issues).
- **Inspect electrical, heating, septic, and water systems for damage BEFORE first use.**
- **Make whatever temporary repairs you can.** Cover broken windows, damaged roofs and walls to prevent further destruction. Save receipts for supplies and materials you purchase.
- **Take photos of all damaged areas and items.**

Insight from a Wildfire Survivor

Schelly Olson is a wildfire survivor and first responder whose home was lost in the East Troublesome Fire of 2020.

It is unbelievably devastating to find out that your home was damaged or destroyed by wildfire. You may have difficulty making decisions and feel as if your head is in a fog. You may experience post traumatic stress symptoms such as agitation, irritability, depression, anxiety, fear, hypervigilance, insomnia, nightmares, or flashbacks. If this happens to you, you are not alone. Please reach out and ask for help in facing and processing your trauma.

When your family, friends, community, and even strangers offer to help you—accept the help, however large or small. You may think you don't need it, but you do and you will. It helps you and it makes the giver feel useful in a seemingly hopeless situation. Accept graciously and pay it forward if you can.

***"If you're going through hell, keep going."**
— Winston Churchill*

Post-Fire Recovery Resources

After the East Troublesome Fire devastated over 193,000 acres of land in Grand County in October 2020, the Middle Park Conservation District developed a webpage full of Post-Fire Recovery resources and websites. Check it out at:
middleparkcd.com/east-troublesome-fire/

Post-Fire Threats: Flood & Mud



Debris flows (commonly called mud slides, mud flows or debris avalanches) are shallow landslides that travel rapidly downslope as muddy slurries after being saturated with water. The flowing mud carries rocks, trees, and other debris as it pours down the slopes.

Sudden debris flows gushing down rain-sodden slopes and gullies are widely recognized as a hazard to human life and property. Most debris flows are localized in small gullies, threatening only those buildings in their direct path. **Bare slopes left denuded by wildfires are especially susceptible to more catastrophic debris flows during and immediately after rainstorms.**

Mudslides and debris flows can also be exacerbated by the fact that high intensity fires burn with such heat that the organic matter in the soil sometimes melts and forms a waxy coating on the soil that prevents infiltration of rain water. This now “hydrophobic” soil has a reduced capacity to absorb and retain

moisture. **Debris flows often occur**

WITHOUT WARNING in areas where they have never been seen before.

Anyone living downslope of a burned area should be aware of this potential hazard. Following a fire and for at least 5-10 years thereafter, burned areas are far more susceptible to debris flows.

Known to start on slopes as low as 15 degrees, more dangerous and faster moving debris flows are increasingly likely to develop the steeper the slopes. **About two-thirds of all debris flows start in hollows or troughs at the heads of small drainages.**

Commonly, a debris flow will coalesce on a hillside and flow quickly downslope, inundating everything in its path. Topography controls a debris flow path just like moving water, so **flows generally follow stream courses and spread out onto flatter depositional areas like alluvial fans where streams exit steep areas.**

If you live in a mudslide prone area, the two most important actions taken on rainy nights are:

- 1) Heed flood warnings.
- 2) Do NOT sleep in lower-floor bedrooms on the sides of houses that face steep slopes or drainages.

Other Important Actions

- Check out Grand County's [FLOOD READY](#) guide
- Check out Colorado's [Flood Threat Bulletin](#) (updated daily)
- Sign up for **CodeRED Emergency Alerts**
- Read the Red Cross Info on Preparing for Landslides: [redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/landslide.html](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/landslide.html)
- Consider getting [Flood Insurance](#) if your house is threatened.

Tips and Clues That May Save Your Life

-  Before and during rains, watch for cracks in snow, ice, soil, or rock; bulges at the base of slopes; the appearance of holes or bare spots on hillsides; tilting trees; or the increased muddiness of streams. Any sudden increase in runoff or debris should be cause for concern.
-  Listen for unusual rumbling sounds or noises that may indicate shifting soil, rock or breaking vegetation or structures.
-  Remain informed as to local rainfall levels during intense rainstorms. Check frequently for early flood warnings.
-  Debris flows can be triggered when rainfall exceeds ¼-inch per hour, especially when soil may be water-logged.
-  It takes time for bare slopes to recover from a wildfire. In the meantime, be prepared for rapid evacuation should it become necessary.

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Prepare Now: There are many ways to take action and prepare before a disaster occurs: creating a plan, putting together an emergency kit, and getting your home ready.



Know how you will be warned



Prepare an emergency kit



Make a plan, know evacuation routes



Leave before flooding starts



Protect your property

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Survive During: Take an active role in your safety by knowing key protective actions and what to avoid.



Disconnect electricity and gas



Don't walk or drive in flood water



Get to higher ground or the roof



Follow evacuation orders



Lead livestock to a safer location

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My Personal Wildland Fire Action Plan

Write up your Wildland Fire Action Plan and post it in a location where every member of your household can see it. Rehearse it with your family.

During Extreme/High Fire Danger days in your area, monitor the local media for information and be ready to implement your plan. Hot, dry and windy conditions create the “perfect storm” for a wildland fire to occur. Please BE SAFE!

Important Phone Numbers:

Out-of-Area Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Work: _____

School: _____

Other: _____

Evacuation Routes: _____

Where to Go: _____

Location of Emergency Supply Kit: _____



Grand Fire

970.887.3380

grandfire.org



Grand Lake Fire

970.627.8428

grandlakefire.org



Hot Sulphur Fire

970.725.3414

hotsulphurfire.com



East Grand Fire

970.726.5824

eastgrandfire.com



Kremmling Fire

970.724.3795

kremmlingfire.org