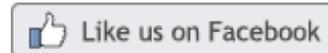


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FireWise "News You Can Use" January 2017



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Jan. 17: Fire Council meeting, San Juan Public Lands Center, Durango, 4:30 - 7:00PM

Feb. 15: New Ambassador Orientation, San Juan Public Lands Center, 15 Burneet Court, Durango, 5:30 - 7:30 PM

April 19-21: Colorado Wildland Fire Conference: Creating Fire Adapted Communities - Moving from Messaging to Mitigation, Pueblo, CO

FireWise Welcomes New La Plata County Coordinator

Charlie Landsman started work as the new La Plata County Chapter Coordinator in early January. Originally from the Seattle area, Charlie has been living along the Front Range since 2010, first in Colorado Springs and then Denver. He is excited to explore a the four corner region by getting outside as much as possible skiing, mountain biking, and hiking.

While attending Colorado College, Charlie worked with fire professionals on an international level, traveling to Australia to learn mitigation best practices and study how different policies affect the likelihood of structure survival during a wildfire. After graduating from college with a degree in Environmental Policy, Charlie began to look for work that combined his interests in environmental protection and helping people coexist with the natural world around them.

Since he focused the majority of his undergraduate studies looking internationally at the role residents play in protecting homes from wildfires, working with people who live in the wildland-urban interface was a natural role for him to step into.



Charlie is quickly settling into his new home in Durango and is passionate about sharing his knowledge of fire issues with others so feel free to contact him by email at laplatafirewise@gmail.com or by phone at (206)697-2613.

Congratulations to Chris Barth on his new job!

Please join us in congratulating Chris Barth on his new job as the lead Mitigation and Education Specialist for the BLM in Montana and the Dakotas. Chris will assume his new job in early March.

Not all of you had a chance to get to know Chris well as he is based out of Montrose and didn't get down here as much as we would have liked but Chris was a great resource for FireWise. He always nudged us to try something new and push the envelope a little further. He helped get us engaged with the social science research project, Fire Adapted Colorado and the Colorado

Wildland Fire Conference. He was outstanding at finding money and helping our program achieve state and national recognition.

We're going to miss you immensely Chris! Southwest Colorado's loss is definitely Montana's gain!!



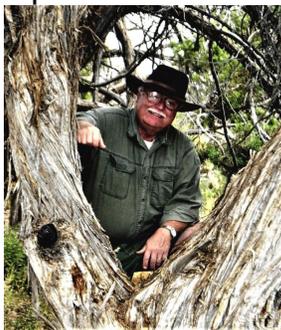
Thanks to Barb Kennedy!

We'd like to thank Barbara Kennedy from Timber Ridge Ranch in Pagosa for the 4½ years she served on the Steering Committee. During her tenure, Barb also served on the selection panel for several of our county coordinator positions. She and her husband Wayne will continue to serve as Ambassadors for Timber Ridge, which attained Firewise Communities USA recognition this past summer.



FireWise Welcomes Al Myatt to the Steering Committee

Loma Linda resident Al Myatt, a retired forester from OK, will take over Barb Kennedy's position on the Steering Committee as our Archuleta County representative.



Al has been attending the Steering Committee meetings for several months to become acquainted with our organization and has quickly distinguished himself as our resident photographer - if you haven't met him yet, you're bound to see him at one of our workshops or other events. Find his full bio on our website.

SW Colorado Scores with National Wildfire Mitigation Awards

FireWise of Southwest Colorado is proud to announce that our Assistant Director Becca Samulski and Timberdale Ranch Neighborhood Ambassador Jim

Tencza are both recipients of this year's National Wildfire Mitigation Awards. WooHoo! Established in 2014, the awards are the highest commendation for innovation and leadership displayed by individuals and organizations committed to wildfire preparedness and mitigation.

Becca's outstanding efforts include the formation of the Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest (DWARF) Collaborative in 2015, but also her four years as the Montezuma County FireWise Coordinator. Becca has created several innovative programs that FireWise uses today and was instrumental in bringing together many "self-defined neighborhoods" and getting them engaged in wildfire preparedness.

Jim Tencza has gone after grant money every year since he became an Ambassador in 2012, typically mitigating 5-10 properties annually. Timberdale was one of the first communities to create a line item in their budget for fire mitigation thanks to Jim. But perhaps his greatest accomplishment was in 2015, when Jim convinced the HOA to create a 2900 X 200-foot shaded fuel break along the community's southwest boundary -- the first time a community paid for mitigation on a neighboring property.

There's lots more we could say about both of these fine folks but we would run out of space. If you know them, you know their passion for wildfire preparedness and mitigation knows no bounds.

Both Becca and Jim plan to attend the IAFC WUI Conference in Reno in March to accept their awards. We'll share photos and do a presentation of our own when they return.

New Firewise Communities!

Two Montezuma County neighborhoods -- Cedar Mesa Ranches and Wingspread -- have received Firewise Communities/USA recognition for their efforts to become more fire adapted. Southwest Colorado now has 15 recognized Firewise Communities. Congratulations Cedar Mesa Ranches and Wingspread!

The Firewise Communities /USA Recognition Program is a national effort that has helped inspire and motivate neighbors to work together to reduce their wildfire risk. For more information about the program, contact your County Coordinator or visit the national Firewise website at:



<http://www.firewise.org/usa-recognition-program.aspx?sso=0>.

Community Wildfire Preparedness Day Grant

Saturday, May 6 is this year's date for this national wildfire awareness and action day. Information including resources such as news release and social media templates and the 2017 logo are available on the [NFPA site](#). Apply now to compete for a \$500 community action grant. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until March 3rd.

Become a Neighborhood Ambassador Today!

-- Orientation Scheduled for February --

The first session of our new Ambassador Orientation has been scheduled for February 15, 2017 at 5:30pm at the San Juan Public Lands Center in Durango. Unlike past orientations, the first session will introduce Ambassadors to District Forester Kent Grant of the Colorado State Forest Service and Fire Mitigation Specialist Chris Barth of the Bureau of Land Management. A few weeks later we will hold the second two-hour session which will introduce new Ambassadors to FireWise and their role as an Ambassador and share how FireWise can provide support for your neighborhood to complete mitigation projects.

Chris and Kent will be presenting important information on fire behavior and ecology, which is key for Ambassadors to accurately understand fire risk within their communities to effectively complete mitigation projects. Ambassadors are required to complete both sessions and attend three Fire Council meetings annually. FireWise Ambassadors act as a key link between their neighborhoods and FireWise. Ambassador help to educate and mobilize their neighbors to understand and decrease their fire risk. Please feel free to contact your county coordinator (contact info below) if you have questions or would like to get more information on becoming a FireWise Neighborhood Ambassador.

Articles of Interest

Development throughout the United States is putting more people in the WUI.

Fire seasons are longer and more intense than previous years. What can we do to protect our homes? Find out more here:

<https://www.revealnews.org/article/when-spark-meets-sprawl-building-in-wildlands-increases-fire-risk/>

Firetopia: How Headwaters Economics is helping create fire resistant communities around the U.S. Learn more about their work here:

<https://www.newsdeeply.com/water/articles/2016/12/15/new-strategies-for-communities-in-the-wildfire-prone-west>

Those beautiful clear days we are used to in Southwest Colorado are becoming more rare. Read about why here:

<http://www.denverpost.com/2017/01/08/drought-forest-fires-visibility-western-wilderness/>



Working Together to Reduce Wildfire Risk

[Pam Wilson](#), Executive Director

[Rebecca Samulski](#), Assistant Director

[Amanda Brenner](#), Montezuma County Coordinator

[Charlie Landsman](#), La Plata Coordinator

[Bill Trimarco](#), Archuleta County Coordinator

[Jen Stark](#), CWPP Coordinator

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