



MEDIA RELEASE

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Arizona State Forestry Division Recognizes New Firewise Community in Southern Arizona

Homeowners Can Take Action Now to Protect Their Lives and Homes

Ramsey Canyon/Sierra Vista, AZ—Residents are not helpless when it comes to protecting their homes and lives from disastrous wildfire events. Arizona State Forestry Division would like to recognize the community of Ramsey Canyon for its outstanding efforts to reduce fire risk by organizing and completing work in the community to become nationally recognized as a Firewise Communities/USA® site. The plans developed and implemented included evaluating fire risks around homes and exploring ways the community can collaborate with the local fire jurisdictions and agency partners to reduce the wildfire risks in the canyon. Fry Fire Department, in cooperation with Ramsey Canyon, received a fuels thinning grant to help alleviate the thick vegetation growing in the canyon; this project will be implemented in 2014-2015. This newly-recognized community adds to the ever-growing number of recognized Firewise Communities® in Arizona; since 2002, 60 communities have been recognized and continue to participate in the Firewise Communities® program.

The media is invited to the Ramsey Canyon Firewise Community recognition ceremony, to be held at the University of Arizona Folklore Preserve in Ramsey Canyon on October 24, 2014 at 5:30pm. Please RSVP to Carolyn Eaton at 520-458-8278.

Arizona residents can make some very simple low cost modifications to their homes and landscapes before a wildfire event. Wildfire doesn't have to burn everything in its path. In fact, cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping are important first steps. Below are additional actions residents can take to reduce the risk of homes and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Create a "fire-free" area within five feet of the home, using non-flammable landscaping materials such as rocks, pavers and/or high-moisture content annuals and perennials.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages, decks and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- When planting, choose slow-growing, high moisture, low resin, carefully placed shrubs and trees so the area can be more easily maintained.
- Landscape with less flammable plants or consider low-water options such as xeriscaping. The Arizona State Forestry Division's Firewise Coordinator or county extension office can provide plant information. A Firewise Landscaping List is also available on the Firewise website.

For more information about how you can protect your property, visit the Firewise website at www.firewise.org and the Arizona State Forestry Division website at www.azsf.gov. The Firewise Communities® Program encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. Firewise is one element of the Fire Adapted Communities initiative – a national effort that engages homeowners, firefighters, civic leaders and land managers to reduce wildfire risk in communities throughout the United States.

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