



# Firewise® Arrives on Whidbey Island



## Why is Wildfire of Concern on Whidbey Island?



Wildfire risk is closer than you might think. Fuels, prevailing winds, and topography are the key factors in determining a home's ignitability during a wildfire incident. On the west side of Whidbey, communities tucked within forested areas along the dry, bluff zones that receive prevailing west winds in summer are more at risk. Through Firewise, homeowners can take proactive steps to understand the science behind home ignitability, and techniques to create defensible space in their home ignition zones.

## Whidbey Island and Firewise® How Working Together Can Work

Wildfire conversations are often sparked during the dry summer season, when talk of burn bans and fire events unfold. But Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson said it perfectly – albeit in reference to football instead of fire – “*The separation is in the preparation.*” There is no better time than the present to learn about, prepare for, and protect homes and properties from the threat of wildfire.

Many of us have friends or family in eastern Washington that have been affected by wildfire. Last fall Karen Bishop, District Manager for Whidbey Island Conservation District (WICD), saw firsthand how areas serviced by the Okanogan Conservation District were affected by the 2015 fires, and listened to the stories of landowners. Amidst a charred landscape, Karen also saw apparent “oases” – farms and homes that still stood after the fires came through. But why? That’s where the **Firewise Communities® Program** comes in.

This fall, WICD is partnering with Central Whidbey Island Fire and Rescue District (CWIFR) and Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to pilot a Firewise program with funding from the WA State Conservation Commission (WSCC) to communities in central Whidbey, as well as offer home assessments to other whidbey residents. Since 2002, Firewise focuses on empowering residents to work collaboratively and take proactive steps to protect their homes from wildfire. Through presentations and support from local fire experts, residents learn how homes ignite based on physical properties, and what they can do to modify



West side communities in CWIFR are most at risk to wildfire due to fuel, wind, and topography.

and reduce their risk. Firewise is based on communities taking five steps. Of the over 1,200 recognized Firewise communities existing, Washington state has taken the lead in new communities joining in 2016.

## Are You an Interested Homeowner?



Schedule a presentation or home assessment to learn from local fire experts about the science behind fire and the steps to be more fire-wise.

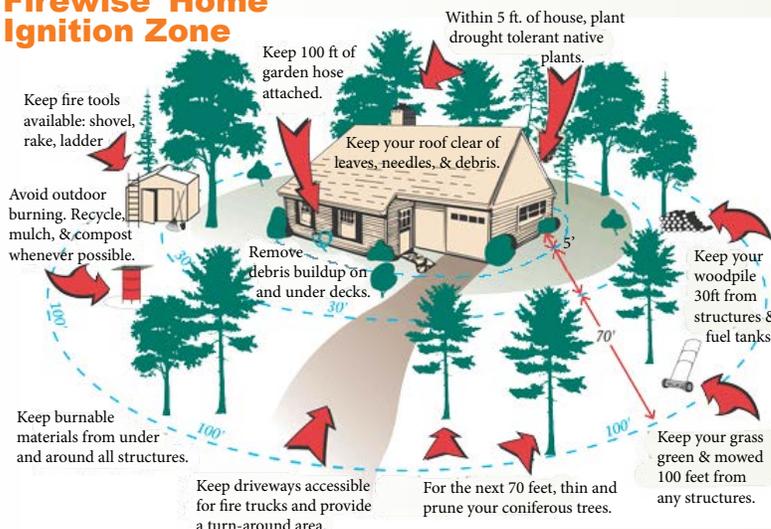


### 5-Steps to a Firewise® Community

1. Obtain a wildfire risk assessment.
2. Form a board or committee, and create an action plan based on the assessment.
3. Conduct a “Firewise Day” event.
4. Invest a minimum of \$2 per capital in local Firewise actions for the year.
5. Submit an application to your state Firewise liaison.

Contact Kelsi Franzen, WICD’s Marketing, Education, and Outreach Coordinator, at [kelsi@whidbeycd.org](mailto:kelsi@whidbeycd.org), or (360) 678-4708.

## Firewise® Home Ignition Zone



Check out: [www.whidbeycd.org/firewise/](http://www.whidbeycd.org/firewise/)

### Firewise® Tips and Tricks

- Prune low hanging limbs & clean roofs and gutters.
- Keep flammable plants & mulches 5 feet from your home.
- Use low-growing, well pruned, fire-resistive plants.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks.
- Sweep decks and porches clear of fallen leaves.
- Keep woodpiles at least 30 feet from any structure.
- Consult an arborist or forester about thinning out some trees.
- Consider including concrete or stone pathways.

Top Resources for Homeowners



Visit the WICD website at [www.whidbeycd.org](http://www.whidbeycd.org)

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