



Anchorage Fire Department • Wildfire Mitigation Office

PO Box 196650 • Anchorage, AK • 99519

Phone 907.267.4980 • Fax 907.243.1654

www.muni.org/fire



2001 – 2003 Anchorage Wildfire Program Survey Results

In the late summer of 2003, approximately 1500 Anchorage, Eagle River, and Girdwood residents were mailed a survey to rate services offered by the Anchorage Fire Department Wildfire Mitigation Office (AFD-WMO). The survey was designed to evaluate multiple aspects of AFD-WMO programs from the public standpoint such as advertising methods, effectiveness of education, services utilized, opportunity for resident input and public satisfaction. The residents polled used one or more services in 2002 or 2003 including: Roadside Brush Pick-Up, Municipal Woodlots (Anchorage and Eagle River), Firewise Home Assessment and Cost-Share Tree Removal Program.

- The AFD-WMO received 216 completed surveys (209 by mail, 7 by fax), for an approximately 14.4% return rate.
- 84% of residents who completed surveys live in Anchorage and 16% are Eagle River residents. No surveys were returned from the Girdwood/Turnagain Arm area.
- 85.9% of residents stated that they are satisfied with the level of service provided by AFD-WMO.
- Approximately 1/3 of residents polled requested more information on AFD-WMO services, and included their address for further correspondence.
- 51.39% of completed surveys contained written comments, which are noted below.

Woodlots

- Usage of woodlots increased with subsequent years
- 87% of residents would like to see the woodlot open on or near the weekends (Thursday – Monday)
- 61% of residents would be willing to pay for the woodlot service, with 76% willing to pay no more than \$5, the lowest dollar choice in the survey. One comment explained, *"Paying anything is a disincentive for taking care of public safety issues."*⁵⁰

Home Evaluation & Cost Share Tree Removal Program

- 79% of residents who received a home evaluation state they created the recommended defensible space
- For those who did not create the defensible space, over 50% contribute it equally to decreased aesthetic value and physical demands of work involved
- 95% of residents would recommend a home evaluation to a friend
- 33% would pay for an evaluation in the future; and 50% would pay no more than \$15
- 79% of respondents state they are not familiar with the cost share tree removal program

Burn Permits and Regulations

- 46% of respondents would be willing to pay for a permit, while 54% would not. For those willing to pay, the majority, (46%), would not pay more than \$5. One commented, *"Yes – more types of burning: like the old spring/all open burn to get rid of organic material."*⁹⁰
- 89% find burn guidelines easy to follow
- Most residents who utilize burn permits (82%) are aware they are required to check the burn hotline daily before proceeding with burning.
- 83% believe that residents who burn during a burn ban period should be levied a fine

General Questions

- 57% of respondents state they have an evacuation plan for their family
- The most effective means of advertising of Wildfire Mitigation Services was through news media such as newspaper or television. Many residents also were referred by friends or relatives.
- 86% of residents stated they are satisfied with the level of service provided by AFD's wildfire mitigation program. The 14% who are not satisfied are most concerned with the number of dead trees and brush present in the wildland/urban interface. *"Beetle killed spruce not being removed fast enough in MOA."*
- Several respondents commented they would like to see more home brush removal/chipper services,

*"Chipper service is needed for those w/o transportation service. I would pay a small fee for this but not to drop at woodlot."*⁵⁰ *"Better roadside brush pick up."*¹² *"Wood chipper or home pickup of wood."*⁴⁰

Additional Comments

- *"The (AFD Wildfire Mitigation) program is presently under funded & compliance with recommendations still leaves an unacceptable level of risk within Anchorage city limits."*⁴¹
- *"I am happy with the efforts. However (I am) very concerned over nearby undeveloped land that has high fire hazard."*⁴⁸
- *"Assembly should pass a law to force landowners to remove beetle killed trees."*
- *"The border of our neighborhood was cleared of dead wood last year – Thank You!"*
- *"Enforcement of Fireworks ban. Control fireworks advertising in Anchorage where banned. Fines for property owners who fail to remove dead trees endangering property of those who clean up dead."*
- *"I think the city is doing a good job with the resources they have."*