



FIREWISE RESOURCES

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	http://www.dec.state.ak.us/
Alaska Division of Forestry Fire Information	http://forestry.alaska.gov/
Alaska Interagency Coordination Center	http://fire.ak.blm.gov/
Bureau of Indian Affairs	http://www.doi.gov/bia/
Bureau of Land Management, Alaska Fire Service	http://fire.ak.blm.gov/afs/
Federal Emergency Management Agency	http://www.fema.gov/
Firewise	http://www.firewise.org/
Municipality of Anchorage Fire Department	http://www.muni.org/fire
Natural Resources Canada, Forest Fire	http://fire.cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/
National Association of State Foresters, Forestry Links	http://www.stateforesters.org/nasflinks.html
National Fire Protection Association	http://www.nfpa.org
National Interagency Fire Center	http://www.nifc.gov/
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	http://www.noaa.gov/
National Park Service, Alaska	http://www.nps.gov/akso/Fire/firehome.htm
National Wildfire Coordinating Group	http://www.nwccg.gov/
University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service	http://www.uaf.edu/ces/
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska	http://alaska.fws.gov/
U.S. Forest Service, Fire and Aviation Management	http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/



Mike McMillan www.spotfireimages.com

Alaska Division of Forestry

Field Offices

Anchorage / Mat-Su	907-761-6300
Delta	907-895-4225
Fairbanks	907-451-2600
Valdez / Copper River	907-822-5534
Tok	907-883-5134
McGrath	907-524-3010
Kenai / Kodiak	907-260-4200
Haines	907-766-2120
Ketchikan	907-225-3070

Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group

U.S. Department of the Interior

-  Bureau of Indian Affairs
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  National Park Service
-  US Fish and Wildlife Service

State of Alaska

-  Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
-  Department of Fish and Game
-  Department of Environmental Conservation

U.S. Department of Agriculture

-  US Forest Service

Native Organizations

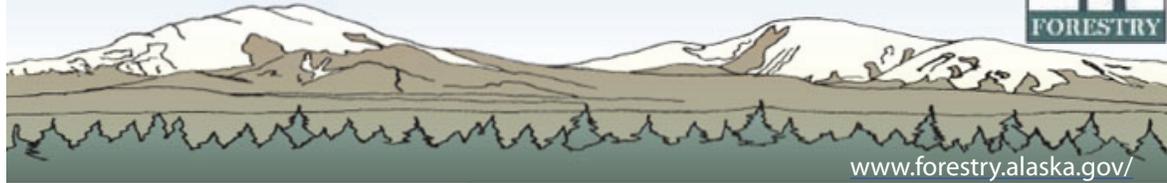
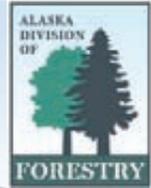
-  Association of Village Council Presidents
-  Chugachmiut
-  Tanana Chiefs Conference

Structure Fire Departments

-  Anchorage Fire Department



FIREWISE PRUNING



Many Alaskans live or have cabins in areas where wildfire is a threat. Proper pruning can help you create and maintain a safe space around your home.

Pruning trees to remove dead branches and other ladder fuels is just one way to make your landscape Firewise. This fact sheet explains proper pruning techniques that will help keep your trees healthy, attractive, and safe from wildfire. For more help in making your home and landscape Firewise, see the Firewise Alaska booklet: www.forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/06Firewise.pdf.

Proper pruning can improve the appearance and condition of a tree, however, keep in mind that every pruning cut is a wound and it can alter the growth of the tree. Trees do not heal as animals do; they grow over and compartmentalize wounds, which remain with the tree for the rest of its life. Making improper cuts can cause permanent damage.

Trees get their energy from food they make in their leaves through the process of photosynthesis. Every pruning cut that removes live foliage decreases the tree's ability to make food and energy to support itself and grow. It is important that no more than one quarter of the live foliage be removed in one growing season, so that the tree can produce enough energy to close pruning wounds, defend itself against insects and disease, and carry out life processes. If you have a smaller tree from which you want to remove lower branches to allow clearance or remove ladder fuels, it may take a few years and multiple prunings to achieve the desired final crown height.

The best time to prune trees is during the dormant season, or in the middle of summer. Avoid pruning during the spring when the trees are beginning to leaf out, and the fall when they are dropping leaves. Spruce beetle adults are searching for new trees to lay eggs in during mid May through mid August, so do not prune spruce during that time.

When removing long branches that are greater than two inches in diameter or those that you cannot easily support by hand it is best to remove the weight of the branch before making the final cut. This prevents the branch from splitting and the bark tearing causing injury to the branch collar and trunk.

Make the first cut on the underside and a third of the way through the branch eight to ten inches out from where the branch attaches to the trunk or another branch. Make the second cut on the top of the branch, an inch or two further out from the first cut so that the branch snaps off leaving a stub. The third and final cut is made just outside the branch collar, the swelling at the base of a branch where it enters the trunk or a larger branch. The branch collar is the tree's defense zone against decay and should always be preserved in any pruning cut. When a proper cut is made, the collar will grow over the wound creating a circle of callous tissue and eventually seal the wound.

To reduce the length of a branch creating more space between trees and shrubs, shorten the limb back to another branch that is approximately the same size as the branch being removed. To make this cut properly you may need to remove the weight of the branch first. The final cut will be on an angle, almost parallel to the branch bark ridge (the ridge of bark in the crotch between the branch and stem). If it is necessary to remove more than half of the foliage on one branch, it is best to remove the entire branch.

Pruning can generate a lot of debris that should be disposed of properly so that it will not become fuel for a fire. It can be chipped and used for mulch or used as firewood and kindling. If you choose to pile and burn the material, consult your local fire department or Division of Forestry office for regulations, restrictions, and permits required before burning.

ZONES OF DEFENSE

Effective defensible space includes three zones of protection. For details about each zone, look to Firewise Alaska www.forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/06Firewise.pdf and other publications on this topic. Below are important concepts for each zone.

ZONE 1: WITHIN 30 FEET OF STRUCTURE

Maintain deciduous trees and shrubs so that crowns are at least 10 feet apart to avoid the spread of fire from one to the other. Within this zone remove tree limbs within eight feet of the ground to prevent a ground fire from climbing into the canopy. Remove trees that are within 10 feet of your house and keep branches from at least 10 feet from the roof, chimney, or deck. All shrubs and groundcovers near buildings should be kept less than 18 inches tall. Remove all dead or broken branches and all dead or dying trees. Remove highly flammable plant material from this zone.

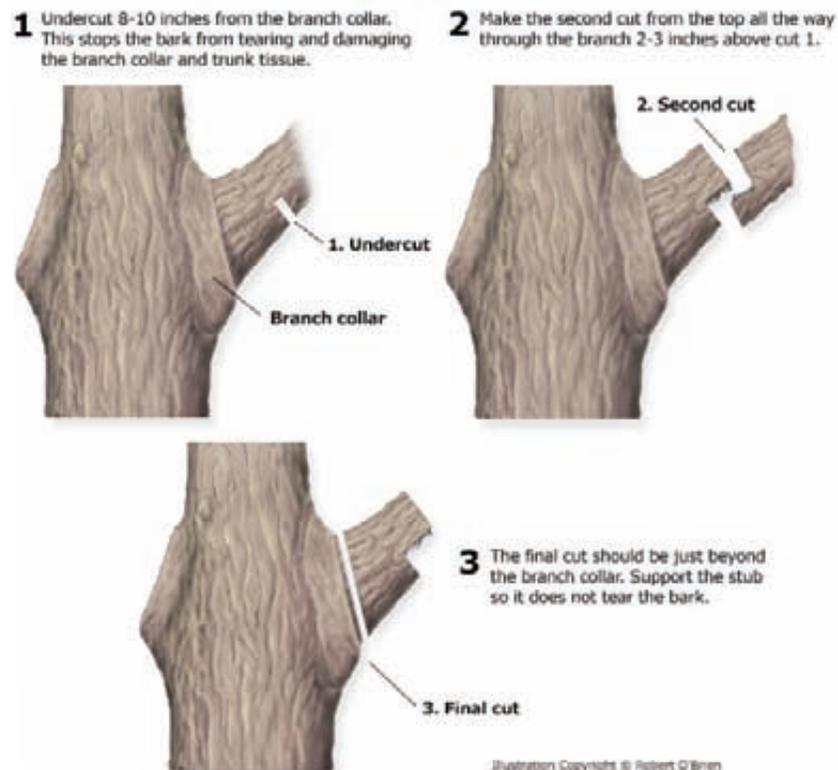
ZONE 2: 30~100 FEET FROM STRUCTURE

In Zone 2, maintain spacing of at least 10 feet between crowns. Limb trees up to 8 feet to help prevent a ground fire from tuning into a crown fire. Keep grasses short and space shrubs two to three times their mature height apart to break up the continuity of the fuels. They may cause a fire to burn at a lower intensity. Remove dead, dying, or unhealthy trees. Prune dead, rubbing, and broken branches from remaining trees. Limit the number of dead trees left as habitat snags in this area, as wildlife need only one or two per acre. Stack firewood away from trees and shrubs, and at least 30 feet from any structure.

ZONE 3: BEYOND 100 FEET FROM HOME

This is a transition zone between your defensible space and the surrounding area and extends to your property line. Pruning may not be necessary within this zone but you may wish to thin dense stands

Pruning a Large Limb



of trees, especially evergreens, and remove lower branches that are dead or could act as ladder fuels.

It is important that your access road and driveway be maintained to provide safe access for firefighters and their equipment. Clear vegetation from around street signs so that they are visible. Thin the number of trees along the driveway to maintain ten feet between crowns and remove dead or dying trees. Prune trees along the driveway and remove or shorten lower branches that could prevent fire fighting equipment from entering your property. Remember that they will need more room than the average sized vehicle.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about how to be Firewise visit the Division of Forestry's website at www.forestry.alaska.gov/ or <http://www.firewise.org/> or call your local fire department.

For information about tree pruning and care visit the Alaska Community Forestry Program website at www.forestry.alaska.gov/community/ or see www.treesaregood.com/.

December 2007

PLANTING AND MAINTAINING FIREWISE VEGETATION IS AN IMPORTANT

GROUND COVERS AND SHRUBS



Alder



Blueberry



Columbine



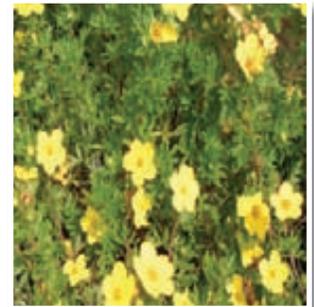
Dogwood / Bu



High Bush Cranberry



Lupine



Potentilla

TREES



Alaska Paper Birch



Black Cottonwood



Mountain Ash



Quaking Aspen

TANT STEP WHEN PROTECTING YOUR HOME FROM WILDLAND FIRES.



/ Bunchberry



Ferns



Fireweed



Forget-Me-Not



Prickly Rose



Red Currant



Red Raspberry

FIREWISE PLANTS

All plants will burn under hot, dry conditions. Some are more resistant to fire due to their moisture content, chemical composition and total volume. While using fire resistive plants instead of highly flammable plants is important, the spacing and arrangement of plants in your yard is even more critical. Islands of vegetation with 10 feet or more of separation provides for an attractive Firewise yard.

Fire resistant plants

As described in Element 2, good Firewise plant choices have supple, moist leaves. They tend to retain their branches and stay green throughout the summer season. There are many decorative flowers, herbs and shrubs that fit this description. Local greenhouses have a variety of native and ornamental plants to make your Firewise landscape beautiful this summer.

Take care in your plant choices

Examples of highly flammable plants include juniper, Mugo pine and ornamental spruce.

Move plants with the following characteristics outside of your home's 30 foot perimeter.

- Needles or leaves that have volatile waxes, terpenes or oils.
- Plants that accumulate fine, dry twigs, needles and leaves.
- Needles or leaves that emit a strong odor when crushed.
- Sap is gummy, resinous, and has a strong odor.
- Bark is loose or stringy.

Conifer trees

Coniferous trees, such as white spruce or hemlock, can contribute to a firewise landscape when properly maintained.

- Conifers should be more than 15 feet from structures.
- Remove lower limbs on mature trees 6-8 feet from the ground.
- Trees should be spaced 15 feet between branches.
- Trim grass around trees.



HOW TO BECOME AN ALASKAN FIREWISE COMMUNITY

The Firewise Alaska guide specifies how residents can improve their home's ability to withstand a wildland fire without the intervention of the fire service. Expanding the range of these practices increases the safety of the entire neighborhood.

The Firewise Communities/USA program enables Alaska residents to coordinate their efforts within the community. By connecting Firewise homes and partnering with adjacent land owners, the community strengthens its ability to withstand a wildland fire too. Firewise Communities/USA is sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.



1. Determine if the community is at risk

Becoming recognized as a Firewise Community/USA begins with the community itself. A community representative can either complete an on-line form on the Firewise Communities/USA web site, <http://www.firewise.org/usa> or contact the Firewise Communities Liaison at the Alaska Division of Forestry <http://forestry.alaska.gov/fire/firewise.htm>

2. Organize a Firewise Board

If it is determined the community has homes in the wildland/urban interface that are considered at risk, community representatives will create a multi-discipline Firewise Board or Commission that should include homeowners, fire professionals and members of other interest groups such as planners, land managers, and foresters.

3. Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The community needs to enlist a wildland/urban interface (WUI) specialist to complete a community assessment and assist in creating a plan (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) that identifies agreed-upon achievable solutions to be implemented by the community. The visit is coordinated with local fire officials. You can contact you're nearest Alaska Division of Forestry office (<http://forestry.alaska.gov/divdir.htm>), borough or municipal fire service office to arrange for a specialist to conduct the assessment.

Many communities and boroughs throughout Alaska have already completed an area-wide community fire plan. Check the status of your area's plan at the Division of Forestry office. You may only need to develop a localized site assessment of wildfire hazards within the community to continue the process of becoming a Firewise Community.



Upon completion of the site assessment and evaluation of the community's readiness to withstand a WUI fire, the WUI specialist schedules a meeting with the local Firewise board. The assessment and evaluation are presented for review and acceptance. If the site assessment and evaluation are acceptable, the Firewise board will use them as a basis for developing a local wildfire plan. Depending on the scope of the community's needs, this may be the basis for the full Community Wildfire Protection Plan, or a subset of that plan for one neighborhood. In either case, it is important to designate specific solutions addressing wildfire issues. Board members should be informed that developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) can be a six month process.



4. Sponsor an event

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan contains specific action items that can be implemented by homeowners with assistance from fire staff or other sources. When they are executed, they are called "Firewise Days." A Firewise Day must be held each year in order to maintain recognition status. Firewise Days can include chipping days, public awareness events, brush cleanup or other neighborhood events.

5. Invest a minimum of \$2/capital

Firewise Communities show their commitment to preparedness by investing \$2 per person in Firewise projects each year. This means that in a community of 200 residents, \$400 will be invested in projects named in the plan prepared by the Firewise board. Volunteer hours, use of equipment, and time spent by agency fire staff can be included in this figure, as can state or federal grant dollars.

6. Certification as a Firewise Community / USA

Firewise Communities/USA recognition status is achieved when the community has completed and signed Community Wildfire Protection Plan and after the community has completed one Firewise project. At that time, a Board member can submit the Firewise Communities/USA application to the Alaska Firewise Communities Liaison. Upon certification by the Alaska State Forester, the Firewise Communities Liaison forwards the completed application to the national Firewise program office. A special ceremony will be held in the community after certification as a Firewise Community/USA with all agencies and organizations involved in the process.

7. Continued Certification

A permanent Firewise board is created that will maintain the program into the future. A Firewise Day or mitigation project (reduction of risks to homes) must be completed during the year for recertification. Recognition renewal must be completed by December 31 each year. Recognized communities submit documentation indicating continued community participation to the Firewise Communities Liaison. Renewal forms can be downloaded from <http://www.firewise.org/usa>.

