

A Community and Interagency Fire Management Effort Brings Wildland Fire Awareness to Glennallen Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Alaska National Fire Plan – Community Assistance

In anticipation of the 2006 wildland fire season, DNR/DOF Fire Management Officer for the Copper River Valley, BLM, Glennallen High School, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, NPS Wildland Fire Management, Prince William Sound Community College and the Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment together educated the Copper River Valley communities at risk to fire about fire's role on the Alaskan landscape and Firewise. The team developed and provided classroom wildland fire education programs during March and April, spoke about Firewise in Alaska during a live KCHU (National Public Radio affiliate) Coffee Break show just prior to the culminating event, a Firewise workshop on April 27th at the Glennallen High School. Before and after the events, *The Copper River Record*, the local newspaper, carried comprehensive fire awareness articles.



Glennallen home where the home assessment portion of the Firewise workshop took place. Black spruce adjacent to homes is a common occurrence in the Copper River Valley. NPS Photo.

Education programs marked the start of the wildland fire awareness effort. Seventh and eighth graders learned about the fire triangle and participated in a Living with Fire poster contest. Posters were judged and presented at the community workshop. All participants received a prize but only the grand prize winner rode in a wildland fire engine along side the DNR/DOF Copper River Valley Fire Management Officer. Visit the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Visitor Center this summer to view the posters. They are on display along with various wildland fire and Firewise brochures.

Following the education programs, the team led an interactive Firewise workshop developed by the National Park Service specifically for communities adjacent to NPS lands. Seventeen adults and children learned about the fire history and management in the Copper River Valley, and how to implement Firewise principles. Participants met their local Firewise contacts then traveled to a nearby home and with DNR/DOF Fire Management Officer, assessed the home and determined how to create defensible space around it.

National Park Service Fire Management and Alaska wildland fire management interagency community strives to work together and partner with local communities on fire awareness matters in order to effectively educate all Alaskans about wildland fire. Fire awareness efforts at Glennallen are one example of how we achieved our goal.

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