



Firewise West Virginia 2005

Program Offers Tips To Protect Forest Homes

Firewise West Virginia is a program designed to help reduce the chances of losing a home to wildland fire. The program targets individual homes and communities in high-risk wildland/urban interface areas and offers assistance in developing wildfire plans aimed at lessening loss of property.



This pilot program focuses on counties that have shown growth in population and/or an increase in homes built in the interface zone. Currently, the program exists in the Eastern Panhandle, Snowshoe Mountain and Canaan Valley areas. The program is being introduced in Berkeley, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, Pendleton, Pocahontas and Tucker counties.

The overall goal of the program is to encourage residents in higher wildfire risk areas to adopt Firewise concepts and promote overall fire safety in their communities.

The West Virginia Division of Forestry is working to accomplish this goal through...

- **Public Awareness**
The Firewise West Virginia public awareness campaign aims at informing residents how they can make their homes safer and more likely to survive a wildfire in their neighborhood. By adopting Firewise principles in landscaping, property maintenance and construction, a home's economic and aesthetic values may be increased.
- **Risk Assessment**
The Firewise West Virginia program provides wildfire risk assessments for individual homes or entire communities. This analysis looks at common risk factors and assigns a hazard rating based on wildfire threat. Recommendations are then made to reduce the risk.
- **Training**
Another aspect of the Firewise West Virginia program involves training of the resources that suppress wildfires. Training in risk assessment procedures, basic wildfire suppression and wildland/urban interface tactics will give firefighters an added 'edge' in the battle against wildfires in woodland communities.

This project was made possible with funding made available through the National Fire Plan – State Fire Assistance Program.

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