



Firewise Ohio Hazard Mitigation Grants 2006

In 2003, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry implemented the Firewise Ohio Program statewide. The Firewise Ohio Program is a multi-organizational initiative designed to include fire safety professionals, homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in localized efforts to decrease the risk of wildland-urban interface (WUI) fires. The ultimate goal of Firewise Ohio is to reduce the susceptibility of homes, communities, and structures to wildfire through cooperative education and mitigation techniques.

One of the ways to accomplish that goal is to assist rural volunteer fire departments in reaching out to their communities in wildland-urban interface areas. Actions such as mitigating fuel loading in neighborhoods, educating homeowners about defensible space, and developing rural water supplies are often critical to the suppression efforts in rural interface communities.

To assist volunteer fire departments in enhancing WUI wildfire prevention and preparedness within their communities and protection districts, the Ohio DNR Division of Forestry has implemented a grant program for these activities. Using National Fire Plan funds, the Ohio Division of Forestry offers 50/50 matching grants to support eligible projects in higher-risk areas across the state. Acceptable uses of grant funds include these: purchase or rental of support equipment or hiring crews for fuels reduction projects; funding for community wildfire awareness or educational events; funding for wildland firefighter training; installation of dry hydrants; and other prevention and preparedness projects.

To date, the Ohio DNR Division of Forestry has provided Firewise Hazard Mitigation grants to nine fire departments in high fire risk areas of the state. These projects have totaled nearly \$20,000 in value, and have benefited both local fire departments and citizens by increasing awareness to the local fire problem and providing equipment to the community to create defensible space around homes. All of the grant projects have involved a holistic approach, combining wildfire awareness, education, planning, and hazard mitigation steps.



Wildland fire in the vicinity of Mentor, OH subdivision. Photo courtesy Ohio DNR

For more information contact:

Billy Terry, Asst. Director
USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry
Newtown Square, PA 19073
(610)557-4145 (-4154 FAX)

bterry@fs.fed.us