



National Fire Plan

Managing the Impact of Wildfires on Communities and the Environment

Minnesota- Andover Fuel Mitigation

■ The Challenge

The city of Andover has a significant number of 25 to 50 year old red pine plantations. Most of these highly flammable stands have never been thinned, and are now being developed for housing as the Twin Cities urban area expands.

A fire struck in one of these stands in 1999. Although the fire claimed no homes, sparks burned a shed in a neighborhood almost ¼ mile away.

These areas are also suffering from other problems such as bark beetles, which attack overly dense forests.

■ The Solution

The community-based Andover Fuel Mitigation Activity is part of the Minnesota Firewise Project. The project integrates planning, assessment, and education, in addition to hazardous fuels mitigation and risk reduction. Funded in part by grants from the USDA Forest Service under the National Fire Plan, the project's goal is to help Andover reduce its wildfire risk.

Beginning in January of 2002, the Minnesota Firewise Team began working with the local fire chief, city forester and engineer, residents, and a private logger to:

- Thin a 34-acre pine stand.
- Lower the risk of a serious fire by removing dead trees and underbrush.
- Improve forest health.

The community received a \$13,600 NFP grant, which was administered through MN-DNR. The grant funded fuels treatment on all 17 of the properties in the pine stand, including thinning of merchantable trees.



■ Resulting Benefits

- Firewise ratings in the neighborhood were reduced significantly, from a moderate risk of 40/100 to a low risk of 25/100.
- The slash and residuals were chipped by a Sentence to Service crew. Chips were used by residents for landscaping or sent to the St. Paul Energy facility for fuel.

■ Sharing Success

- The city is already planning more activities. The Fire Chief is pleased and neighboring communities are undertaking similar projects.
- The Minnesota Firewise Project is granting National Fire Plan funds to other communities for on-the-ground activities such as homeowner education, home site assessment, improving access, and dry hydrants. Projects will involve community groups including fire and emergency services, local schools, city staff such as foresters and planners, and local interest groups.



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