

National Fire Plan Firewise Communities Florida 2001



Through a cooperative effort with the National Fire Plan, the Florida Division of Forestry has held 14 one-day Firewise Community workshops attended by more than 700 participants. The Florida workshops have been located throughout the state; however, the majority has been in the vicinity of major metropolitan areas and near major wildland urban interface fire problem areas.

Leaders in the Firewise Communities program have worked diligently to invite city, county and state planners to their workshops and worked to educate them about Firewise Communities. This effort has included speaking at conferences and hosting a special workshop for planners titled “Wildland Fire for Planners.”

The result has been a steady increase in opportunities to talk with planners about how to plan for communities that are safer from wildland fire. Planners with Alachua County in 2000 worked closely with the District Manager and the County Fire Chief (who has been an active Firewise Communities supporter) to incorporate Firewise Communities provisions into an amendment to the Conservation and Open Space Element of their Comprehensive Plan. The Florida Department of Community Affairs has since approved the amendment. The county’s next step will be the development of Land Development Regulations for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan policy.

The National Fire Plan has helped provide the funding needed to develop a successful Firewise program in Florida. The future of Firewise in Florida, with support from the National Fire Plan, will be to take the program to the community level and reach large numbers of homeowners, planners and community leaders in the wildland urban interface.