

US Fish and Wildlife Service • Bureau of Land Management • National Park Service • Bureau of Indian Affairs • USDA Forest Service

LIVING IN A NATURAL FIRE ENVIRONMENT

The Prairie Grassland Region is an area where fire has always played a prominent role in the natural environment. Long before towns and subdivisions were established across the Great Plains, fires were a natural result of the frequent summer thunderstorms that traveled across the mountains and plains. However, decades of fire suppression have resulted in a large accumulation of fuels that have the potential to create intense wildfires.

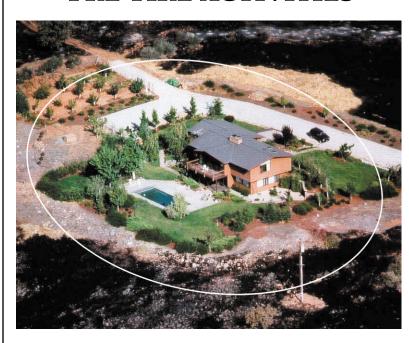
Within this natural fire environment, there are individual houses, subdivisions and entire communities. Many homes, however, would be unable to survive an intense wildfire. Since it is not a question of "if" wildfires will occur but "when" they will occur, the likelihood of human life and property loss is great and growing.

Our ability to live more safely in this fire environment greatly depends upon our use of "pre-fire activities." Pre-fire activities are actions taken before a wildfire occurs which improve the survivability of people and homes. They include proper vegetation management around the home or farm (known as survivable space), use of fire resistant building materials, appropriate subdivision design, and other measures. Research clearly demonstrates that pre-fire activities save lives and property.

The Great Plains fire prevention cooperators, which includes many federal, state and local fire management agencies, are using a program called "FIREWISE". FIREWISE was created to encourage the widespread use of pre-fire activities such as those listed in this and many other publications available to you.

For more information concerning the "FIREWISE" program or wildland fire safety information, contact local land management agencies, local fire departments or visit the websites listed on the back page of this publication.

"LIVING WITH FIRE" PRE-FIRE ACTIVITIES



The pre-fire activities implemented by this homeowner included a green and well maintained landscape, reduction of wildland vegetation around the perimeter of the property, a fire resistant roof, and a good access road with a turnaround area. The charred surroundings of the home show that these pre-fire activities effectively protected it when wildfire hit.

THE "WHY WE'RE WORRIED ABOUT WILDFIRE" EQUATION

Fire is a natural Many homes With more Today's part of our are built and people using wildfires can environment. maintained in our wildlands, burn intensely Our Great this fire there is a greater and be difficult Plains were chance of fire environment to control. burning long without regard starts. before there was to wildfire. a Bismarck, Great Bend, Scottsbluff. Aberdeen or Billings.

All this adds up to potential for:

- Greater loss of life
- Increased property losses
- More damage to natural resources
- More money spent on firefighting