



Wildland Urban Interface Terminology

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Learning Objective: The student will be able to recognize and apply commonly used Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) terminology.

The terms within this series provide an introduction to the terminology used in the WUI arena.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan — a plan developed in the collaborative framework established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by state, tribal and local governments, local fire departments, other stakeholders, and federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the planning area. A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types of methods of treatment on federal and nonfederal land that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure. A CWPP also recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community. A CWPP may address issues, such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, or structural protection — or all of the above.

Defensible Space — the area around a structure where flammable vegetation and objects are managed to create a zone in which firefighters can operate safely in order to help protect a home during a wildfire. This space is wide enough to prevent direct flame impingement and reduce the amount of radiant heat reaching the structure. The defensible space for each structure varies, depending on the type of vegetation and topography.

Fire-Adapted Community — a human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire.

Hazard Reduction — any treatment on living and dead fuels that reduces the potential spread or consequences of fire. Also, often referred to as hazard mitigation.

Home Assessment — the evaluation of a dwelling and its immediate surrounding(s) to determine its potential to escape damage by an approaching wildland fire. It includes the fuels and vegetation in the yard and adjacent to the structure, roof environment, decking and siding materials, prevailing winds, topography, fire history, etc., with the intent of mitigating fire hazards and risks.

Preparedness — activities that lead to safe, efficient and cost-effective fire management programs in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination; mental readiness to recognize changes in fire danger and act promptly when action is appropriate; and the range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain and improve the capability to protect against, respond to and recover from domestic incidents.

Wildland Fire — any nonstructural fire that occurs in the wildland. Three distinct types of wildland fire have been defined, and they are wildfire, wildland fire use, and prescribed fire.

Wildland Urban Interface — the line, area or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

A more detailed collection of terms can be found in the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology at www.nwccg.gov. In addition, an applied research project submitted as part of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program titled "Risk Reduction: A Rural Communities' Introduction to the Concept of Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Prevention" can be found at www.usfa.fema.gov/pdf/efop/efo35212.pdf.

For archived downloads, go to:

www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/