Firewise Landscaping

Presented by
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Wildland fire emergency ... Why Now? Why Texas?

Population

Climate - Weather cycle

Changes in land use - Fuels
Wildfire is a Rural AND Urban issue

- 85% < 2 miles from a community
- 70% caused by individuals

- Land use
- Climate
- Population
- Fire management
Total Homes Lost: 2,947

Counties Affected: 136
Wildfire Risk exists throughout Travis County.
What's at Stake

You live in a downtown Austin high-rise: you have a stake in the fight against wildfire if you enjoy our area parks.

You live next to a suburban greenbelt you have a stake in the fight against wildfire to protect your home and the landscape.

You live on rural acreage in Travis County: you have a stake in the fighting wild to preserve your land and our Texas heritage.
Wildfire is everyone's fight

so Know your role

It’s not a matter of if the next wildfire will occur...but when.

Wildfire will happen
Fire Adapted Ecosystem =

- Fire-adapted community: “A community of informed and prepared citizens that collaboratively take action to safely co-exist with wildland fire”
Firewise Principles and Environmental BMPs

Working Together

Firewise Principles

A Resilient, Healthy Landscape

Environmental Stewardship
Engineer for Survivability
Harden the structure

Fuel Mitigation

Modify Behavior (Individual and Community)
Why Homes Burn

- Ember
- Combustible attachments
- Windows
- Structure to Structure
- Landscape elements
Stranger than Fiction
Myth # 1

It takes a big fire to cause major losses.
Pinnacle Fire

- Acres Burned 100
- Homes Lost 10
- Homes Damaged 12
Steiner Ranch

Acres Burned: 125
23 homes lost
Moonglow Fire

Acres Burned: 84
Homes Lost: 16
SMALL FIRES = BIG LOSS

Fact #1
Myth #2
My trees are out to get me.
Steiner Ranch
Fact #2

Homes burn trees too
Fact-Residential Trees need protection from wildfire too.
Myth #3

The Wolf can’t blow my house down; I built it with brick.
Fact #3

Embers are a wolf in sheep's clothing
Wildfires driven by high winds sent a profuse amount of embers ahead of the main fire.
Combustible attachments to homes act as a fuse.
Wicking Fences
Windows not designed to withstand heat fractured, creating an opportunity for flames and embers to penetrate homes.
Fires often spread to surrounding homes from vehicles, outbuildings, firewood and other combustible items that already had caught fire and were generating a tremendous amount of heat.
Myth #4

Fire is an all consuming “Wall of Fire”
Fact # 4

Fires can only burn what is combustible and in their path
Backing fire ignited this home
Myth #5

Homes with Moonscaping are guaranteed to survive
Fact #5

Fire will find the weak link and follow that link until the chain of combustion is broken.
Bastrop Fire

Acres Burned: 34,068
Homes Lost: 1645
Fatalities: 2

Over 600 homes were destroyed within the first 2 1\2 hours
1000 burned the first day
Of the 2,853 total structures within the Bastrop fire perimeter, 1,157 survived, many without the aid of suppression.
Effective Defensible Space

Earlier this year

After the fire
Common Denominators of Home Ignition

1. Embers are the main reason homes ignite!

2. Direct flame impingement and radiation to combustible attachments.

3. Windows - non tempered, single pane, wooden or vinyl panes.

4. Landscape to Structure - minimal fuels, low intensity, backing fires.

5. Secondary Fuel Sources - firewood, door mats, patio furniture.

6. Structure to Structure - (auto exposure) inadequate setbacks expose homes to high heat and ember production.
National Fire Danger System

• First County in Texas to adopt the National Fire Danger Rating System (NFDRS
2011 Texas Wildfires
Common Denominators of Home Destruction
Development of Environmental BMPs
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