Wildland Fire Management

Program Overview
Nov 2019

City of Flagstaff **211 W. Aspen** **Flagstaff AZ 86001** **928-213-2509** ***www.flagstaff.az.gov/wildlandfire***	**Summit Fire & Medical** **8905 N Koch Field Rd** **Flagstaff, AZ 8604** **928- 526-9537** ***https://summitfiredepartment.org/***

The Flagstaff Fire Dept (FFD) and Summit Fire & Medical Dept (SFMD) Wildland Fire Management Program operates as a single joint entity. Residents in either jurisdiction may contact either Dept for any related Wildland Fire Management needs. This includes, but is not limited to:

- ***Firewise Home & Property Assessments,***
- ***Hazard Tree identification and Evaluation,***
- ***Identification and Thinning/Removal of Hazardous Fuels, and***
- ***Prescribed fire assistance.***

Together, we are stronger and more efficient. We look forward to serving you as we work to Restore our forests, Protect our communities, and Provide safe, effective wildfire response

Our Commitment

Cooperation & Collaboration
Innovative Action
Adaptive Management

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Background: A sustainable, healthy forest is the very backdrop of our area, and the reason many call the Flagstaff area home. Our Wildland Fire Management (WFM) program is a unique joint-effort for both Municipal and District government to ensure the future of our greater community. It has been dubbed "a national model" for others who face similar challenges.

Destructive wildfire is the greatest natural threat facing us and it has the largest potential of virtually any hazard we face to inflict long-lasting damage to the community. It also is a recurring, annual threat that is identifiable, predictable, and solvable.

Our FOCUS:

- ***E*ducating** citizens and stakeholders to understand the issues and to make wise choices;
- ***E*ngineering** our built environment to withstand damage from destructive fire events;
- ***E*nforcing** applicable codes, Fire Adapted Community standards, and Firewise practices; and
- ***E*nvironmental** actions that restore and maintain natural processes to reduce the threat of, and impacts from, wildfire.

Following a damaging wildfire, post-fire impacts, notably uncontrolled flooding, is a real possibility. These events often continue for years after the fire, and are often more destructive than the fire. Once the ecosystem begins to unravel, it is very difficult to protect those impacted and even harder to restore.

To protect our community and promote healthy, sustainable forests, our WFM program, first initiated in 1997, acts throughout the Flagstaff Wildland/Urban Interface (WUI), an area that encompasses several jurisdictions and ownerships and can extend for miles outside our jurisdictions.

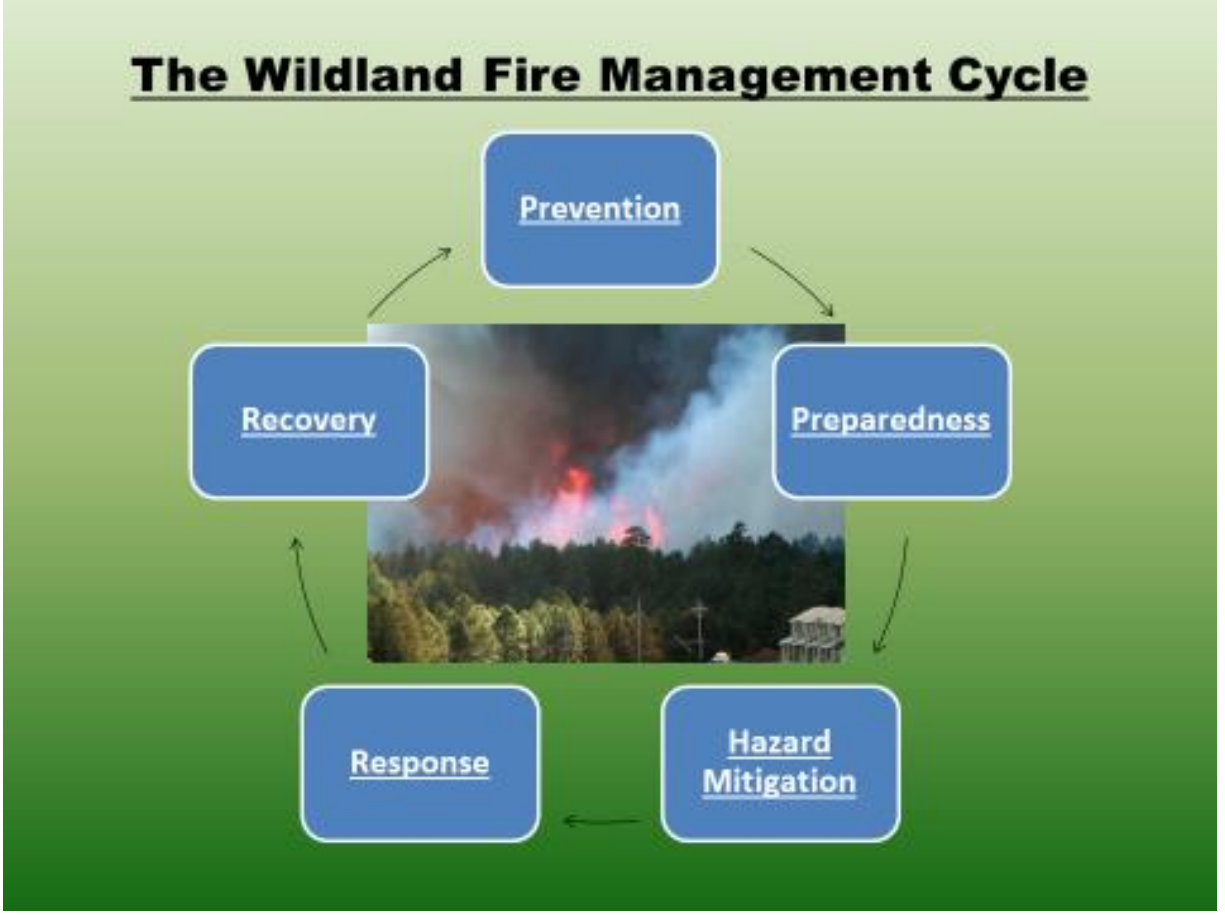
Goals: Using the *National Cohesive Strategy* as a guide, we have three over-arching goals

1. **Our forests are resilient** to disturbances in accordance with management objectives as identified in the City's Forest Stewardship Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), site-specific Vegetation Management plans, Rx-Fire plans, the City Land Development Code, the Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project, and other related planning documents.
   Outcome: Risk to resiliency of our forests is diminished: sustainability is enhanced

2. **Our community can withstand a wildland fire without loss of life and property** because we have assessed our level of risk via the CWPP and other assessment methodologies, and practice a shared responsibility for mitigating both the threat and the consequence via application of the Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface Code and other professional resource management standards, engagement of stakeholders, collaboration with partners, use of volunteers, and accountable grant management.
   Outcome: Risk to Flagstaff is diminished; community well-being in enhanced

3: **We make and implement safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildland fire decisions**. Risk Management is an on-going process in all we do.
   Outcome: Risk to the public and emergency personnel is diminished; response and recovery is efficient and effective.

To achieve our goals, we operate in five core-areas, each inter-related and necessary for success:



These five areas encompass the following:

Prevention	Actions to protect lives and property through avoidance and intervention that stop wildfires from occurring, or limiting damage that would otherwise occur (Ex: WUI Code enforcement, Firewise/ and/or Fire Adapted Communities standards)
Preparedness	A cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to reduce wildfire risk to the community (Ex: Training, certification, fire preparedness planning, Restrictions & Closure Plan)
Hazard Mitigation	Activities that directly affect fire behavior, thus reducing the loss of life and property from wildfire while creating a safer community (Ex: thinning, prescribed fire, debris disposal).
Response	Activities that address the short-term, direct impacts of a wildfire incident, including immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs (Ex: Emergency Operations Center leadership, fire response, Interagency cooperation)
Recovery	Actions taken to restore services, recover costs, and provide basic human needs following a wildfire, to include documenting Lessons Learned, and identifying items to minimize impact of future fires (Ex: After Action Reviews, Cost reimbursements)

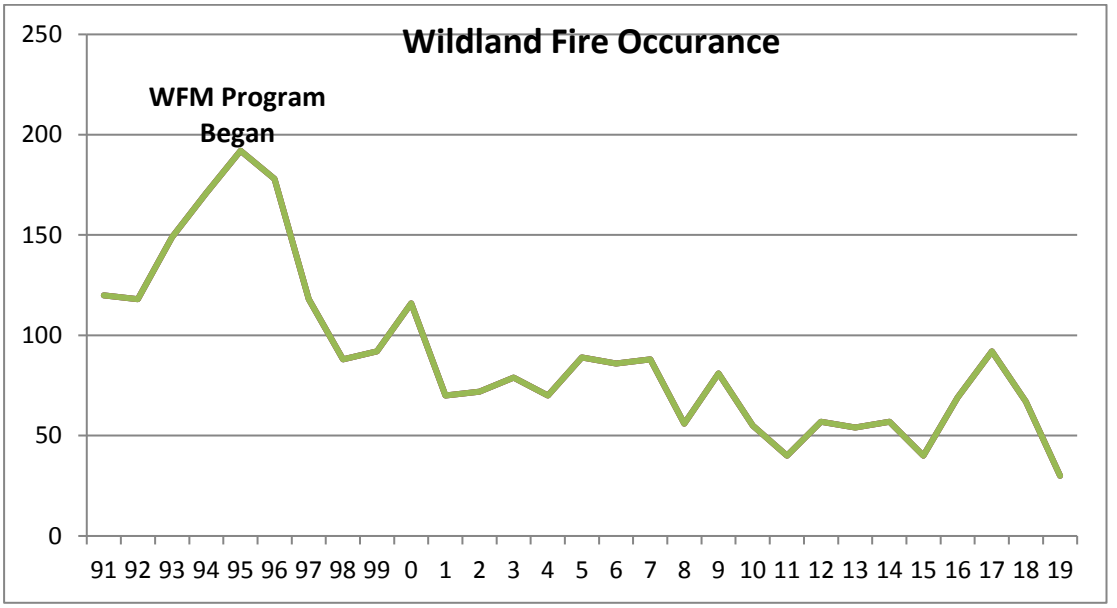
Accomplishments:

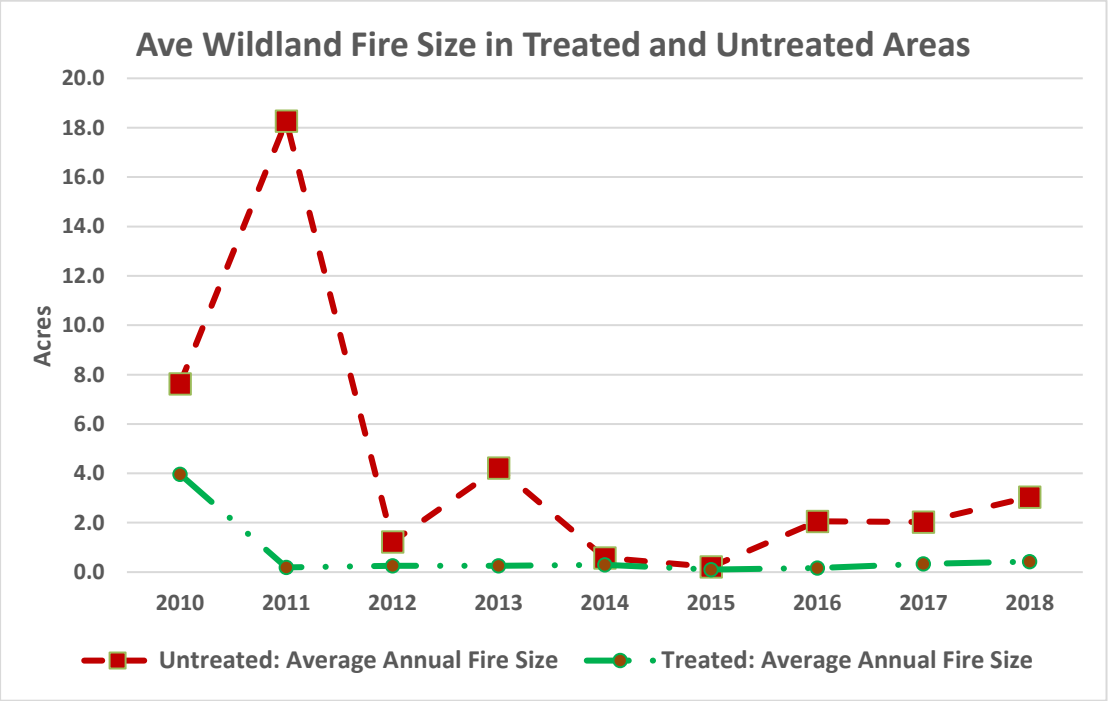
Since 1999, we have completed:	
Plans • *General Forest Stewardship, Vegetation Management, Prescribed Burns*) • *Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project*	 18,653 acres 12,000 acres
Marked	8,285 acres
Thinned – *hand and/or mechanical*	16,209 acres
Burned – *pile (Debris-disposal) or broadcast (ecosystem health)*	14,140 acres
Chipped	1,835 acres
Hazard Trees (*removed*)	2,692 trees
Designated Firewise neighborhoods (national)	13
Since 2001, Volunteers have	
Contributed **49,248 hours** of service (primarily in Outreach and Hazard Mitigation efforts) . . . , Valued at **$738,720**	

The ***Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP)*** is truly the "first-of-its kind". Passed in Nov 2012 with 74% approval, the $10M bond is designed to treat city, state, and federal lands, much of it located outside the City boundaries, to prevent catastrophic wildfire and post-fire flooding. It is the only known voter-approved bond funded forest-treatment project in the country. Since Jan 2013, much has been accomplished: much remains to be done. For more info, visit:

www.flagstaffwatershedprotection.org

Two other key metrics of success are to look at trends for both # of wildfires burning within the City and the average size of those fires when they occur in untreated areas vs treated areas:





Our efforts have demonstrated success:

- Woody Fire – 2005: Evacuated 1,000+ residents, closed W. Hwy 66 & westbound I-40. All evacuees allowed home and freeway re-opened within four hours. Due to treatments in-place, City not responsible for non-city related suppression costs (est $250K).
- Hardy Fire – 2010: Evacuated 1,000+ residents, closed area businesses and E. butler Ave. All evacuees allowed home, and businesses and E. Butler Ave re-opened that evening. Took a week to fully control, but due to treatments in-place, City not responsible for non-city related suppression costs ($750K).

Key Program Highlights include:

1996	*First demonstration project*
1997	*Staff hired*
1999	*Be Prepared Public Education campaign initiated*
2001	*Volunteer Program launched*
2004	*Simple Steps to Protect Your Property from Wildfire CD developed* *Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) completed*
2005	*Needle project with Charter school and Juvenile Court system begun* *Movie promotions at local theaters released* *City-wide Neighborhood Risk Assessment completed* *Greater Flagstaff Area Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) adopted*
2006	*First Firewise Neighborhood designated*
2007	*Recipient – National FireWise Leadership Award*
2008	*Wildland Urban Interface Fire Code adopted* *City Well-field project*
2009	*Vegetation Permit & Fee policy begun*
2010	*City Airport project* *Slash recovery/utilization effort with City Public Works initiated*
2011	*Social Media program developed and launched* *Auxiliary Staffing program initiated*
2012	*$10M Flagstaff Watershed Protection Project (FWPP) bond passed (74% approval)*
2013	*FWPP: kick-off, with emphasis on public outreach and agreement development*
2014	*FWPP: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Cost Avoidance Study* *Hazard Tree removal program initiated*
2015	*Recipient - First National Wildfire Innovation Mitigation Award* *People's Choice Award – Innovation for Disaster Preparation*
2016	*Initiated new partnership with American Conversation Experience (ACE)* *Pioneered use of Tablet Technology in harvesting operations* *Initiated partnership relationship with Santa Fe (NM) Fire Dept's wildland fire program*
2017	*FWPP 5-Year Anniversary* *Established cross-state Type 2 IA (Initial Attack) fire crew with Santa Fe (NM) Fire Department*
2018	*Initiated partnership with Team Rubicon: 1st deployment*
2019	*Integration of effort between City of Flagstaff and Summit Fire & Medical District*
SINCE 1999	In addition to on-going City funding and reimbursable fire/emergency incidents, we have benefitted from a number of grants, contracts, and donations, totaling in excess of $4,600,000

Partners: Our success is largely due to the incredible partnerships we have forged over the years. These include:

- Over 1,000 individual property owners, and counting
- Private business
- Flagstaff Unified School District (FUSD)
- Coconino County
- Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council (PFAC)
- Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP)

- Northern AZ University:
  - School of Forestry
  - Ecological Restoration Institute
  - Rural Policy Institute
  - School of Communication
- State of AZ:
  - State Dept of Forestry & Fire Management (DFFM)
  - Dept of Corrections (ADOC)
  - Division of Emergency Management (ADEM): Camp Navajo Army Depot
  - Game & Fish Dept (F&G)
- American Conservation Experience (ACE)
- AZ Conservation Corps (AZCC)
- Willow Bend Environmental Education Center
- Navajo Nation
- Friends of the Rio
- Flagstaff Arboretum
- Team Rubicon
- Museum of Northern AZ
- Four Forests Restoration Initiative (4FRI)
- Federal:
  - US Forest Service (USFS)
  - US Naval Observatory (NOFS)
  - Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP)
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS)

We have:

- Seen a community and area-wide paradigm shift regarding our forests and needed actions
- Assisted many other at-risk communities – locally, nationally, and internationally
- Been recognized as a "national model"
- Hosted: Regional *Fuel Management/Forest Stewardship* symposiums
  National Academy of Public Administration wildfire workshop
- Provided testimony to: *US House of Representatives* regarding National Fire Plan
  AZ State Legislature regarding pending forest legislation
- Presented at: *AZ Forest Economic & Resiliency* workshop
  Western Communities Water Sustainability conference
  Firewise Backyards & Beyond national conference
  American Planning Association national conference
  American Waterworks Association national conference
  National Wildfire Leadership Council
  ASU School of Law – Will AZ Learn or Burn conference
  International Association of Fire Chiefs national conference
  National Fire Protection Association national conference
- Published: *Flagstaff Interface Treatment Prescription: Success in the Wildland/Urban Interface* (Fire Management Today)
  Wildland/Urban Interface: What's Really At Risk (Fire Management Today)
  Community Protection & Well-Being (American Planning Association)
  Testing for Deck Material Flammability (Fire Management Today)
  Interface Code Adoption (Fire Chief Magazine)
  *The Flagstaff Experience (*AZ State Law Journal)

- Conducted ad-hoc testing of various composite deck materials
- Helped found the Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership (GFFP) - www.gffp.org
- Led and/or participated in: *State Forest Health Council*
  Four Forests Restoration Initiative
  NAU Centennial Forest
  AZ Firewise Communities Committee
  Ponderosa Fire Advisory Council
  AZ Prescribed Fire Council
- Hosted research and monitoring projects:
  Insect and Bird Populations in a Treated Area – FUSD
  The Effects of Pile Burning on Forest Soil Ecology – NAU-SoF
  The Effects of Burning or Chipping on Herbaceous Plants – Flagstaff Arboretum
  Vegetative Response on Treated Sites – NAU-ERI
  Recovery of Disturbed Sites Using Myco-Filtration – Practical Mycology
  Distribution of Seeds by Rodents in Burned Areas – NAU-ERI
  Squirrel Response to Thinning – AZ G&F
  Bat Use of Harvested Areas – NAU-ERI
  Wood Properties of Harvested Material – NAU-ERI
  Slash Drying and Insect Populations – NAU-ERI
- Developed and manage the FWPP Monitoring Plan, to include
  Mexican Spotted Owl Habitat
  Steep Slope Ground-Based Equipment Operation
  Lake Mary & Dry Lake Hills monitoring gauge stations

Experience, Studies, and Reports demonstrate the impact of destructive fires, nationally, regionally, and locally:

- 2003 –
  - *Bureau of Land Management* – Flagstaff rated #1 threatened community in AZ;
  - *City Report* – Projected $60M 1st year tourism-generated economic loss to Flagstaff economy.
- 2005 – *City Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*: $897M "collective community-wide wildfire exposure".
- 2010 –
  - *Wildland Fires in Municipal Jurisdictions*: Annual repeating pattern affecting monthly workload and service delivery, and 8% chance of injury/death to citizens/responders per incident;
  - *Flagstaff:* $850K one-week suppression cost of Hardy Fire.
- 2013 –
  - *Schultz Fire Full-Cost Accounting Report*, NAU: $10M in suppression costs + $135M in recovery costs;
  - *FWPP Cost Avoidance Study*, NAU: $550M-$1.2B projected community impact.
- 2014 – *Sedona Chamber of Commerce*: $100M loss in first three months following Slide Fire in Oak Creek Canyon.
- 2015 –
  - *Core Logic*: 8,000 homes at Very High risk in AZ, with 4,000 of those in Flagstaff, and Flagstaff is in top 10 of all statistical areas identified in 13 western states;
  - *Verisk Insurance Solutions*: 27% of all Coconino County homes at High-Extreme risk.

The Flagstaff community has shown remarkable understanding and support for the WFM program over the past 20 years:

- 2001 – *Community Survey (NAU Social Research Lab)*
  - 87% - support for forest treatments;
  - 91% - forest treatments have positive impact on area forests;
  - 81% - forest treatments effective in reducing fire risk.
- 2005 – *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* adopted by Council without opposition or negative comment.
- 2006 – *Community Survey (NAU Social Research Lab)*
  - 91% - forest treatments have positive impact on area forests;
  - 81% - forest treatments effective in reducing fire risk.
- 2008 – *Flagstaff Wildland Urban Interface Code* adopted by Council without opposition or negative comment.
- 2009 - *City of Flagstaff Community Survey*
  - 92% - support use of prescribed fire to maintain healthy forests;
  - 90% - support requirements that property owners meet requirements to protect community.
- 2010 – *Southern Fire Exchange*: Nationally, Flagstaff is an "upper-tier" community in terms of acceptance of/support for prevention and preparedness efforts.
- 2012 –
  - *Willingness to Pay community Survey (NAU Ecological Restoration Institute)*
    - ✓ 4.52 (out of 5) – wildfire prevention as a high priority;
    - ✓ 3.97 (out of 5) – importance of watershed health;
    - ✓ $4.76/month – average $ to fund forest treatments;
  - *Q405* (FWPP)
    - ✓ Approved by 74% of Flagstaff voters,
    - ✓ Exit poll surveys revealed those who voted YES believed their individual tax bill would increase by $128/year.
- 2013 – *City of Flagstaff Community Survey*
  - Quality of overall natural environment received highest rating, higher than given to peer communities across the country;
  - 92% - support use of prescribed fire to maintain healthy forests;
  - 90% - support requirements that property owners meet requirements to protect community;
  - Rating of Fire Dept was higher than national benchmark.

Our Success:

. . . is built on **Council and Public support**, **Leadership** and **Action:**

- Recognition of issue and solutions;
- Development of community consciousness;
- Cultivation and promotion of relationships and partnerships;
- Innovative approaches;
- Focused goal; and
- Timely, professional, sensitive practices

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Mission

To promote, create and maintain a sustainable healthy forest ecosystem and a FireWise community, thereby protecting and enhancing public safety and well-being.

ADD VERSION

UNPUBLISH ALL VERSIONS

Overview

We recognize the community well-being is linked to the environment. To address their dire state, we have become environmental stewards. In support of our mission to protect values-at-risk and by the professional resource managers of our Wildland Fire Management Program, our effort is concentrated in five core areas:

- **Prevention:** A cycle of planning, organizing, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating, and taking corrective action in an effort to ensure effective coordination to reduce wildfire risk to the community. (Wildland fire training and certification, Wildland fire preparedness planning)
- **Preparedness:** Actions to protect lives and property through avoidance and intervention to stop wildfires from occurring. (Wildland Urban Interface Code enforcement, FireWise Communities)
- **Mitigation:** Activities providing a critical foundation in the effort to reduce the loss of life and property from wildfire while creating a safer community. (Selective thinning, broadcast burning, Debris disposal)
- **Response:** Activities that address the short-term, direct impacts of a wildfire incident including immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. (Emergency Operations Center participation, Wildland fire response)
- **Recovery:** Actions taken to restore impacts of a wildfire, evaluate incidents to identify lessons learned, and the development of initiatives to minimize the impacts of future incidents. (Wildland fire After Action Reviews, Cost recovery / reimbursements)

Photo Series, Point #2 -- Airport Project - March 2010/Before

Approach

This Division has changed the standard "Three E" approach of the traditional prevention-oriented program, to the "Four E" approach. It was developed to adapt to the growing and changing natural environment and consists of:

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement
- Ecosystem

Organization

The Wildland Fire Management division is directed by the Wildland Fire Management Officer. Other key staff positions include:

- Fire Crew Supervisor
- Fire Crew Squad Boss
- Forest Health Supervisor
- Firwise Specialist

Additional Personnel:

- Seasonal Crew
- Volunteers
- Student Interns
- Auxillary staff

Program Information

Publication: Protecting Community Values at Risk. Staff, Background, Statement of Findings, Highlights, Accomplishments, Successes, Finance and Partners.

Protect Yourself from Wildfire Smoke

Dry conditions in parts of Arizona and the western United States increase the potential for wildfires. It is important to stay alert for wildfire warnings and take action to protect yourself and your family from wildfire smoke.

Wildfire smoke is a mixture of gases and fine particles from burning trees and other plant materials that can hurt your eyes, irritate your respiratory system and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the following groups are at greatest risk from wildfire smoke:

- **People who have heart or lung diseases**, like heart disease, chest pain, lung disease or asthma, are at higher risk from wildfire smoke.
- **Older adults are more likely to be affected by smoke.** This may be due to their increased risk of heart and lung diseases.
- **Children are more likely to be affected by health threats from smoke.** Children's airways are still developing and they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. Also, children often spend more time outdoors engaged in activity and play.

The Coconino County Public Health Services District (CCPHSD) encourages individuals to take steps to decrease the risks from wildfire smoke.

- **Check local air quality reports**. Listen and watch for news or health warnings about smoke and public health messages about safety measures.
- **Keep indoor air as clean as possible.** If you are advised to, stay indoors. Keep windows and doors closed. Run an air conditioner, but keep the fresh-air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent outdoor smoke from getting inside. If you do not have an air conditioner and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed, seek shelter in a designated evacuation center or away from the affected area.
- **Avoid activities that increase indoor pollution**. Burning candles, fireplaces, or gas stoves can increase indoor pollution. Vacuuming stirs up particles already inside your home, contributing to indoor pollution. Smoking also puts even more pollution into the air.
- **Prevent wildfires from starting**. Prepare, build, maintain and extinguish campfires safely.
- **Follow the advice of your doctor or other healthcare providers** about medicines and your respiratory management plan if you have asthma or another lung disease. Consider evacuating if you are having trouble breathing. Call your doctor for advice if your symptoms worsen.
- **Do not rely on dust masks for protection**. Paper "comfort" or "dust" masks commonly found at hardware stores are designed to trap large particles, such as sawdust. These masks will *not* protect your lungs from the small particles found in wildfire smoke.
- **Evacuate from the path of wildfires.** Listen to the news to learn about current evacuation orders. Follow the instructions of local officials about when and where to evacuate. Take only essential items with you. Follow designated evacuation routes–others may be blocked–and plan for heavy traffic.
- **Sign up for warnings and alerts from Coconino County's emergency notification system**. Visit http://www.coconino.az.gov/207/Emergency-Management to sign up for notifications in the event of emergency situations or critical community alerts.

▸▸▸ Visit Coconino County Emergency Management at http://www.coconino.az.gov/207/Emergency-Management for more information about how to prepare for wildfires and other emergencies.

Our Wildland Fire Management Program is a joint-effort between the City of Flagstaff Fire Department and the Summit Fire & Medical District. Initiated in 2017, and integrated in 2019, we are stronger and more efficient working together. Residents of the City or District my contact either organization for any Wildland Fire Management related needs, to include:

* Firewise Home & Property Assessments;
* Hazard Tree Identification & Evaluation; and
* Hazard Fuel Mitigation - Selective tree thinning, debris disposal, and prescribed fire.

We look forward to serving you!

Flagstaff Fire: 928.213.2500
Summit Fire: 928.526.9537

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Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Phone: 928-213-2000
Email Us

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