Wildfire Partners: When Lester Karpus moved to the mountains near Nederland, Colorado, he knew it was a matter of “when” not “if” his house would burn in the path of a wildfire. That day arrived in July 2016 when the Cold Springs Fire forced 1,900 residents to flee “100-foot” flames on a moment’s notice. While eight neighboring homes burned, Karpus’ home and seven others in the path of the fire survived — all participating in Wildfire Partners, Boulder County’s community wildfire mitigation program that provides homeowners with a comprehensive on-site property risk assessment that includes step-by-step mitigation needs, resources, a consumer-help line and follow-up inspections. The result – a coveted “Wildfire Partners Certified” yard sign and reduced wildfire risk. Many insurance companies accept Wildfire Partners assessment to meet their underwriting requirements. Karpus says homeowners buying in wildfire-prone areas need to ask themselves: “Are we willing to be caretakers of the land?” If the answer is yes, they must understand the inevitable risk of living in such areas. Karpus believes homeowners throughout WUI communities would benefit by taking advantage of the voluntary opportunities to become more educated on wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities reduce risk. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) have partnered together to implement the Firewise USA® program in Colorado. The CSFS manages the program and partners with others to provide information and expertise to residents in their local communities.

Wildfire Preparedness Guide

- **REALFire®**: After living in his Beaver Creek condominium for two decades, Michael Benge purchased a house on the mountain and knew it was a “no brainer” to evaluate necessary fire mitigation work — both in terms of creating defensible space around his new home, as well as fire-resistant materials in new construction. Benge was thrilled to learn from his HOA that he could receive a free, on-site wildfire risk assessment through the REALFire® program, thanks to support from Eagle County, the Vail Board of REALTORS®, and other local partners.

Benefits of the REALFire® program include:

- Residents engage directly with local mitigation professionals to learn about local wildfire risk.
- Residents can earn a REALFire® certificate of recognition, which they can use to enhance real estate transactions or share with local insurance providers.
- Qualifying residents may be eligible for an income tax subtraction for mitigation work performed on their property.
- Assessments identify specific actions proven to reduce wildfire risk on a property.

Benge believes homeowners throughout WUI communities would benefit by taking advantage of the voluntary opportunities to become more educated on wildfire risk, and the available mitigation resources to enhance the beauty of their property and invest in the safety and value of their home. Resources: REALFire.net

**REALFire®**

**REALFire®**

- **REALFire® Mitigation Resource Center**: Additional resources and information for homeowners can be found through these stakeholder organizations:
- **Firewise USA®**: Program provides instructional resources to inform communities about how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action to reduce their wildfire risk. The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) have partnered together to implement the Firewise USA® program in Colorado. The CSFS provides professional forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities reduce risk. CSFS.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/colorado-firewise-communities/
- **The Colorado State Forest Service**: Provides professional forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities reduce risk. CSFS.colostate.edu/wildfire-mitigation/
- **Ready, Set, Go! Program** managed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, designed to develop and improve the dialogue between fire department and the residents they serve.
- **Colorado REALTORS®**: Working in partnership with other like-minded fire prevention organizations across our state to bring education and awareness, as well as resources and information to residents in their local communities. ColoradoRealtors.com/ProjectWildfire
- **The Fire Adapted Communities Coalition** is committed to helping people and communities in the wildland-urban interface adapt to living with wildfire and reduce their risk for damage. The coalition provides information and expertise on related to fire adapted communities. FireAdapted.org
- **Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS)**: An independent, nonprofit, scientific research and communications organization dedicated to improving home safety. IBHS’ building safety research leads to real-world solutions for home and business owners, helping to create more resilient communities. IBHS.safetynet.org/wildfire/

**REALFire® Mitigation Resource Center**

- **The 2017 wildfire season cost the United States more than $12 billion in damages. That year, 21,700 wildfires consumed 50 million acres of land, destroying 12,000 homes, evacuating 200,000 people and claiming 88 lives. By comparison, 2016 saw 6.4 million acres burned.**
- **Most Costly Colorado Wildfires**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fire Location</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>East Troublesome, Grand County</td>
<td>$1.6 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Waldo Canyon, Colorado Springs</td>
<td>$236.6 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Black Forest, near Colorado Springs</td>
<td>$18.6 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Hayman, Southwest of Denver</td>
<td>$560 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>High Park Fire, Colorado</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Waldo Canyon, Colorado Springs</td>
<td>$50 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visit our resource center at: coloradoprojectwildfire.com

**Partners and Resources**

Visit our resource center at: coloradoprojectwildfire.com

**Most Costly Colorado Wildfires**

- **2016 – East Troublesome, Grand County**
- **2012 – Waldo Canyon, Colorado Springs**
- **2013 – Black Forest, near Colorado Springs**
- **2012 – High Park Fire, Colorado**
- **2010 – Waldo Canyon, Colorado Springs**
- **2011 – Waldo Canyon, Colorado Springs**
- **2011 – High Park Fire, Colorado**
- **2011 – Black Forest, Colorado**

**Most Costly Colorado Wildfires**

- **2017 – Cold Springs Fire, Nederland, Colorado**
- **2013 – Black Forest Fire, Colorado**
- **2013 – Pikes Peak Backcountry Fire, Colorado**
- **2012 – Waldo Canyon Fire, Colorado Springs**
- **2011 – High Park Fire, Colorado**
- **2011 – Black Forest Fire, Colorado**
- **2011 – Pikes Peak Backcountry Fire, Colorado**
- **2010 – Waldo Canyon Fire, Colorado Springs**
- **2002 – Hayman Fire, Southwest of Denver**

**Most Costly Colorado Wildfires**

- **Source: RMIIA**


**Wildfire Preparation**

Develop your fire evacuation plan and practice family fire drills. Ensure that all family members are aware of two or more escape routes outside the neighborhood, meeting points and other emergency details.

- Contact your county sheriff’s office and ensure that your home telephone number and other important phone numbers appear in the county’s emergency notifications database.
- Prepare a “grab and go” disaster supply kit that will last at least three days, containing your family’s and pets’ necessary items, such as cash, water, clothing, first aid and prescription medicines.
- Ensure that an outdoor water supply is available. If it is safe to do so, make a hose and nozzle available for responding firefighters. The hose should be long enough to reach all parts of the house.
- Complete a checklist of fire safety needs inside your home (these should be available at your local fire department). Examples include having an evacuation plan and maintaining smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.

**Wildfires and Insurance**

Homeowners insurance typically covers property losses caused by wildfire and coverage continues to be available in most wildfire prone areas.* However, with overall increasing risk for devastating wildfires, residents should be aware of some important factors. Many insurance companies require customers to share the wildfire risk to their home and keep it insurable.

**Defensible Space Zones**

Defensible space is the area around a home or other structure that has been modified to reduce fire hazard. In this area, natural and man-made fuels are treated, cleared or reduced to spread the speed of wildfire. Creating defensible space reduces the risk of a fire spreading to your home, and reduces the chance of a structure fire spreading to neighboring homes or the surrounding forest.

**Creating Defensible Space**

Each home and property is located in a dynamic environment that is continually changing. Trees, grasses and shrubs grow, die or are damaged, and their location and density can affect the movement of fire. Defensible space must be maintained and requires regular, ongoing maintenance to be effective. Here are some basic checklists to help you protect your home and property, as well as neighbors in your community.

The following checklists can help you establish and maintain your defensible space (lists are not all-inclusive).

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*Source: Colorado State Forest Service
data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAowAAAAHgCAYAAADf3u56AAAAAXN0b3J5ลอweenAAABDklEQvQAAAAABlBMVEX///8AAAC3BMUhJAAAAABJRU5ErkJggg==

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