



COLFAX
COUNTY
COALITION OF
FIREWISE
COMMUNITIES

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NEWS Release

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Hidden Lake Development Enthusiastically Celebrates 5th Anniversary of Participation in National Fire Protection Association's Firewise Program

[Angel Fire New Mexico]— Hidden Lake Development is celebrating its 5th year of participation in the National Fire Protection Association's Firewise Communities/USA program, a voluntary initiative to protect local residents, their property and natural resources from wildfires. Since **Hidden Lake** earned the distinction as an official Firewise community, local leaders and individual homeowners have come together to make significant advances in making the community safer from wildfire.

Hidden Lake became a Firewise community in 2006. The community developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Forest Management plan, and executed a variety of activities to help mitigate the progression of wildfire in the community

"Because wildfires are burning hotter and faster than ever before, it's more important than ever to take safety steps now," said Joe Stehling, President of the Colfax County Coalition of Firewise Communities. "Wildfires will happen, and we want to be as ready as possible to prevent damage to our community's buildings, resources and of course, our residents."

Some of the Firewise activities undertaken by the Coalition - Cimarron, Elk Ridge, Taos Pines, Ute Park, and Vermejo Park in addition to Hidden Lake - over the years include:

- Conducting a workshop on identifying hazards in the home ignition zone. The Coalition offers free surveys of homes and properties to identify activities that can be done to improve wildfire safety.
- Field trips to visit areas that have experienced wildfire to determine the lessons learned, rejuvenation progress, and what actions to take to mitigate against future wildfire events.
- Conducting chipper days each year. In 2009 Hidden Lake Community volunteers spent 68 man-hours conducting two chipper days where 140 cubic yards of slash was processed from several lots at Hidden Lake. To date at 19 lots have been completely thinned and cleaned up while at least six lot owners are working on thinning and clean up of dead and down material. In addition, in 2010, an additional

135 acres on 14 lots on Hidden Lake will be thinned and cleaned up using a \$300,000 Hazardous Fuels Mitigation grant. An additional 200 acres will be treated on Elk Ridge, Taos Pines, and Ute Park under the grant.

- Providing educational information at the Colfax County Fair, Chili Challenge, 4th of July festivities in Eagle Nest, Agricultural day in Taos, and at the Angel Fire Resort annual property owners meeting.
- Leasing property for a new fire substation, developing construction plans for the station, and raising funds for construction. The second annual fund raising Fire Trunk Sale (Flea Market) will be held on 28 August, 2010.

“We are particularly proud when a community reaches an anniversary milestone like Hidden Lake said Michele Steinberg, manager of the NFPA Firewise Communities program. “Your dedicated fire and safety professionals and motivated residents have truly helped minimize wildfire risk factors, and their hard work surely has paid off.”

In order to become part of NFPA’s Firewise program, the community engaged in the following activities:

- Enlisted a wildland/urban interface specialist to complete a community assessment and create a plan that identifies agreed-upon achievable solutions to be implemented by the community.
- Sponsored a local Firewise Task Force Committee, Commission or Department which maintains the Firewise Communities/USA program and tracks its progress.
- Observed a Firewise Communities/USA Day each year that is dedicated to a local Firewise project.
- Invested a minimum of \$2.00 per capita annually in local Firewise projects.
- Submitted an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA that documents continuing compliance with the program.

Visit the Firewise Communities/USA website (www.firewise.org/usa) to find out more about how your community can begin the assessment process.

About Firewise

The National Fire Protection Association’s Firewise Communities program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire. The program is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service, the US Department of the Interior, and the National Association of State Foresters. For more information, visit www.firewise.org.