

## BONFIRE

The Bonner County Bonfire program creates an opportunity for residents to have hazardous fuel treatment completed on their property, without upfront cost to the landowners. The Bonfire program helps property owners assess fire hazards and the need for defensible space, reducing the fuel load and providing clear, safe access for emergency responders.

The purpose of the Bonfire Program is to increase awareness of the risk of wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) of Bonner County, and assist the property owner in the removal of their hazards. Property owners receiving this type of assistance agree to maintain the improvements completed for ten years. Additionally, the program provides the property owner with the information necessary to enable them to independently develop defensible space, "harden" the exterior of their home and provide emergency access.

This is a grant funded program (federal and state dollars) managed and administered by Bonner County Emergency Management. Funding is limited and not always available. The goal is to create fuel breaks around communities and usually targets fuel treatment work to specific, priority areas. These areas are continuously updated as conditions change in the community. A committee consisting of Bonner County Emergency Management, local fire districts and protection agencies such as the Idaho Department of Lands and the US Forest Service determine priority areas throughout the community.

If you are interested, contact Bonner County Emergency Management (208-265-8867) and request to speak to someone regarding the Bonfire Program. You will then be directed to the project manager to schedule a property visit and help develop a fuel reduction work plan if qualified.

## CALL 9-1-1 FOR ALL EMERGENCIES

**For questions on Residential Fire Prevention and/or to arrange a property visit, contact your Fire District:**

Clark Fork Valley Fire District  
(208) 266-1337

Coolin-Cavanaugh Bay Fire District  
(208) 443-3118

Northside Fire District  
(208) 265-4114

North of the Narrows Fire District  
(208) 443-2979

Idaho Dept of Lands - Sandpoint  
(208) 263-5104

Idaho Dept of Lands - Priest Lake  
(208) 443-2516

Idaho State Fire Marshal  
(208) 769-1447

Selkirk Fire, Rescue & EMS  
(Sagle, Sandpoint, Westside)  
(208) 263-3502

Sam Owen Fire District  
(208) 264-5745

Schweitzer Fire District  
(208) 265-4741

Spirit Lake Fire District  
(208) 623-5800

Timberlake Fire District  
(208) 683-3333

US Forest Service — Priest Lake  
(208) 443-2512

US Forest Service — Sandpoint  
(208) 263-5111

West Pend Oreille Fire District  
(208) 448-2035

West Priest Lake Fire District  
(208) 443-2889



Bonner County Planning Dept.  
(208) 265-1458

Bonner County Emergency Management  
(208) 265-8867

## Bonner County Rural Development Fire Prevention & Resource Guide



This brochure was developed by the Bonner County Fire Chiefs and the Bonner County Planning Department. The goal of this project is to inform and assist rural home and accessory structure builders with their construction choices and site development decisions.

## WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

When rural development is located in areas that have risks for wildland fires, the built-up areas are often referred to as Wildland Urban Interface areas (WUI). WUI areas are at risk for large area wind and fuel driven fires.

The Bonner County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) considers almost the entire county a WUI area. Officials made this determination based on:

- Natural fuels and topography
- Area fire history
- Available fire resources
- Property Access
- Water supply
- Houses within wildland urban interface

The independent Fire Districts, Idaho Department of Lands and the US Forest Service provide the fire suppression staffing and equipment for Bonner County emergency responses. The staffing for fire suppression is made up of paid and volunteer firefighters.

Homebuilders and homeowners are encouraged to review the facts and recommendations included in this brochure when building in Bonner County. Once constructed, property owners are responsible for maintaining their buildings and property area.

## Property Access

Firefighters need adequate access to do their work. Access is a combination of the following:

- All weather roads with proper surface compaction and drainage.
- Roads with minimum surface width of 20 feet and vertical clearance of 14 feet, 6 inches.
- Driveway with minimum surface width of 12 feet and vertical clearance of 14 feet, 6 inches.
- Driveways longer than 150 feet require turnarounds; lengths more than 200 feet require additional turnouts.
- Roads and driveways require turning radius' of:
  - Inside radius — 30 feet
  - Outside radius — 45 feet
- Road and driveway slope should be no greater than 10 degrees.
- Address placard should be posted at driveway entrance with:
  - Reflective background
  - 4 inch numbers , 1/2 inch thick
- Gates need to open full width. If electrically powered, an emergency override is necessary.
- A Knox Box is advised for all gates (a Fire Department master key system).

**Home ignition and fire spread is most often a combination of flying embers igniting combustibles (next to a home) or embers lodging in unprotected areas of a building. Likely problem areas are unscreened openings, forest debris, collection points like gutters and roof valleys. Architectural nooks are problems too.**

**DEFENSIBLE SPACE** is the area that includes your home and its immediate surroundings, and is where you have made a concentrated effort to reduce the chance of an ignition by wildfire or flaming embers. Defensible space starts with your home and moves out into the landscape from there. In areas with homes that are close to each other, defensible spaces may overlap to provide added protection for the subdivision.

### Your Home

In the “No Zone” (0 to 3 feet) there is no storage of combustibles (firewood, etc.). Vegetation is kept trimmed, thinned and green.

Plant types are generally native or broad leaf type. Take steps to decrease or eliminate the ignition potential of the structure. Pay particular attention to:

non-flammable roofing, enclosing soffits and overhangs to keep blowing embers out. Remove the debris from roofs and gutters. Keep tree limbs 10 feet from roofs and fireplaces. Keep tree canopies 10 to 20 feet from each other. Identify flammable items like patio furniture, flower boxes and combustible tool storage for removal during dangerous fire periods.

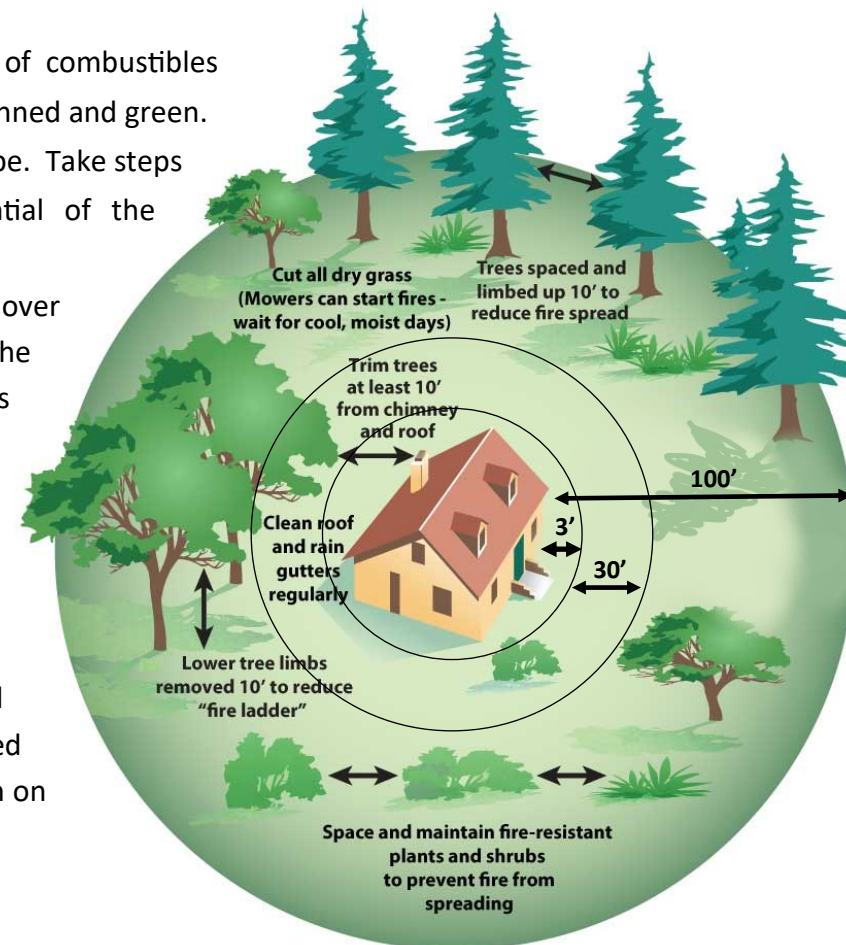
Zone 1 (3 to 30 feet) is the place for well mowed, watered lawns, limbed up and spaced trees and thinned bushes. For more information on how to make your home and property more fire resistant, go to the Idaho Firewise website.

### Your Landscape

In Zone 2 (30 to 100 feet from home), the home is surrounded by a greenbelt of well watered and maintained plant materials. Perennials, ground-covers, and annuals are planted in groups with individual trees and shrubs. These islands of vegetation are surrounded by rock or brick retaining walls and well-watered turf. Firewood and propane tanks are placed on gravel or concrete pads, at least 30 feet from structures. This zone requires yearly removal of overgrowth and dry debris on the ground, as well as pruning trees.

### Beyond 100 feet

Zone 3 is composed of native vegetation that has been thinned. If possible, highly flammable species of trees and shrubs are removed and replaced with less-fire-prone species. Mature trees should be 10 to 20 feet apart.



## Defend Your Home

Defending a home from an approaching wildfire is a daunting task with limited firefighting resources and scarce water supplies.

WUI fires can spread rapidly and are often driven by:

- Natural fuels & fuel density
- Combustible structures
- Topography (combination of slope & a south or west exposure)
- Wind
- Fuel moisture

The best defense for all structures in WUI areas is a combination of:

- Building design
- Building location
- Defensible space
- Construction materials
- Fire Department access
- Emergency water supply

Building design can limit the areas burning embers can gather and ignite fires.

Building location choices can reduce a structures exposure to wind and blowing embers.

Non-combustible construction materials reduce the amount of fuel for a fire and limit the chances burning embers have of igniting a structure.

Defensible space is the 100 to 200 foot radius around a structure that reduces the fuel load (radiated heat) the burning embers (ignition source) and the flame length (direct flame) to structure contact.

### Recommendations

- ◆ Install smoke detectors in all bedrooms and living areas.
- ◆ Install a residential sprinkler system
- ◆ Consider building materials that resist combustion.
- ◆ Install spark arrestors on chimneys
- ◆ Provide egress windows that allow access and escape year-round.
- ◆ Install a fire escape folding ladder for two floor exiting.
- ◆ Have a water supply nearby for Fire Department use (2,500 to 3,000 gallons).