

Building Local Firewise Communities

Join with neighbors to increase wildfire resistance by becoming a Firewise Community (with an official sign). Large fire load this year makes this an important opportunity.

We can join together to work with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). If we form groups of five to ten neighboring properties (sub-groups of SBNA Local Neighborhood Groups), a Forester will come walk our properties with us to help us understand what we can do to reduce fire danger. A group would then select a couple of the items from their list, form an action plan and hold an annual work day. Grants are available, as are other options such as sharing the use of a chipper for a weekend. And they will install a Firewise Community sign. ODF very much wants to help make our properties safer. Their familiarity with our properties is a good thing too.

Walking your property with the Forester is educational, interesting, and even fun. They will also give you brochures that help with clearing out some plants that support fire and others to help you plants that are more fire resistant.

Some examples of what the Forester will suggest:

- Thin vegetation around house and in yard, removing fuel ladder bushes and plants.
- Space trees for open forest. The Forester will show you how to select good trees to keep and which ones are a big fire danger.
- Reduce the places where embers could land. (Embers often get stuck in places where leaves collect; this is significant cause of houses burning.)
- Remove any vinyl fences. (Deck furniture is also flammable but can be tossed inside your house when fleeing a fire.)
- Ensure access for fire trucks. Pullouts in long driveway let you leave while fire trucks are getting in. Trucks need at least 15' high, 12' wide, with a turnaround.)

TO GET STARTED: Your SBNA Local Neighborhood Group Leader can help you start a group and put you in contact with the appropriate Forester. Local Group Leader contact information is on the SBNA website (www.SBNA.net). Sign in and follow the "Find your team leader" instructions. (Group Leader list is only available to SBNA website members who have signed in. If you are not a member of the website, but are a member of SBNA, select the Request Membership tab.)