



Homestead Newsletter Insert / September 2016 Eagle County, Vail Board of REALTORS®

New wildfire program offers incentives and advice for homeowners

The REALFire® program offers seasonal mitigation advice, free assessments, and insurance coverage tips for local property owners

Fall is the time of year when kids return to school, holiday planning begins, football kicks off, and many of us start dusting off our ski gear. As the air turns crisp and the leaves dry out, it's hard to keep wildfire threat front and center. However, it's exactly this time of year when fall weather conditions can prompt new wildfires across the state.

Homestead residents have the opportunity to take action on preparing their homes. This summer, Eagle County and the Vail Board of REALTORS® co-launched REALFire®—a voluntary wildfire mitigation program that offers in-depth, property assessments conducted by experienced local fire professionals. The program helps homeowners identify actions they can take to measurably reduce wildfire hazards on their property. All residential properties, including single family, duplex and condo/townhome, are eligible to apply.

Many “fall cleaning” activities already fit well into home wildfire maintenance, such as raking leaves and cleaning out gutters. However, homeowners should also be aware of additional risks they may incur if not well-planned.

“We all want to move our firewood piles next to the house this time of year, but this creates a big fire risk for homeowners, especially areas in the dry part of the valley,” cautions Eric Lovgren, REALFire® Program Coordinator and wildfire mitigation specialist for Eagle County. Instead, Lovgren and other local fire professionals recommend that homeowners store a smaller pile near the home in an easy-to-transport device, such as a wheelbarrow or wagon. The main woodpile should be located 30 feet away from the house—what fire professionals refer to as “Zone 1”.

Keeping grasses mowed to less than six inches in Zone 1 is also important. “This time of year it's easy for a wind-driven fire to move quickly across our community, and keeping those fine fuels around the house maintained is really important to reduce your individual property risk,” adds Lovgren.

Another incentive that the REALFire® program offers is promoting insurance coverage. Owners that successfully complete their required mitigation actions receive a certificate that can be

shared with insurance providers or would-be home buyers. REALFire® is modeled after the success of Boulder County's Wildfire Partners Program, where program certificates are already being accepted by many local insurance providers to ensure continued coverage.

"We're thrilled to see this program in place. Residents can be empowered to take action to reduce their own risk and even benefit their neighbors," said Mark Bergman, Association Executive for the Vail Board of REALTORS®.

Mike Budd, VAIL BOARD OF REALTORS® Government Affairs Committee Chair, also adds that the REALFire® program benefits the local economy. "A local voluntary mitigation program, as opposed to a mandated state program, puts our homeowners in a positive position with insurance companies, an advantage in selling their property, and gives home buyers peace of mind when purchasing a property."

More information about the program, including the application, mitigation tips and advice for home buyers and sellers, is available at: www.REALFire.net.

A Well - Prepared HOME IGNITION ZONE

Structure & Attachments:
Fire-resistant materials and maintenance are key.
What to look for in a structure:

- Fire-resistant materials for roof, siding, and attachments provide the best protection. Examples: Class A fire-rated roof covering and stucco siding
- Properly-screened vents
- Clean roof and gutters, free from needles and other debris
- Double-paned windows

Zone 1:
Very limited and well-trimmed vegetation; properly mitigated attachments and accessory structures.

- A noncombustible 5 ft. border surrounding the structure
- No conifer or juniper trees
- Very limited number of sage, shrubs or tall grasses
- Trimmed grasses and/or xeriscaped lawn
- Wooden attachments such as fences are not directly connected to the house
- Outbuildings mitigated to the main structure standards

Zone 2:
Healthy Landscaping

- Firewood stored at least 30 ft away from structure (outside Zone 1)
- Pruned and thinned or clustered trees
- No sign of shrubs or other vegetation underneath taller trees

Zone 3:
Significant landscaping features, such as steep slopes and adjacent forests, play a role in wildfire risk. If present, property owner should work with a qualified wildfire and forestry professional.

3 ZONES
Zone 1: encircles the structure and its attachments, extends 30 feet on all sides
Zone 2: 30 - 100 feet
Zone 3: 100 - 200+ feet

REAL FIRE
REALTORS® PROMOTING COMMUNITY WILDFIRE AWARENESS