

Fully Involved
July 2010

Is Your Home Safe From Wild Land Fires?

Is summer here yet? Given the recent weather I think that it is safe to say that summer is coming. With the warmer weather and dryer surroundings it is important to talk about wild land and brush fire safety. When mentioning wild land fires we conjure up images of fires in large Eastern Washington and Southern California but each one of these fire started out very small. There are simple ways to help eliminate these fires from starting and stop the threat for you and your family. These ways include keeping your property fire safe, containing small camp fires and removing items that may be around your house.

The condition of your property can determine how a wild land fire grows and travels. Keeping your grass watered, green and short will decrease the start and spread of a fire. It is also important to limb up your trees as low hanging branches can allow fire to climb from ground level and into trees. The spread of fire into dry trees can exponentially increase the size and spread of any fire.

Most areas still allow camp fires. Uncontrolled or unattended camp fires are the leading cause for wild land fires. Use stone, concrete or metal around a fire pit to control the spread of fire. Keep the fire small. Fire pits should be designed to maintain a 3 X 3 foot fire. Making a wire mesh top for the fire pit will prevent embers from spreading. State Park Campgrounds are great examples of what a fire pit should look like. Always make sure that water is available to completely extinguish any fire and be sure that your fire is at least 25 feet away from structures, fences, and other combustible items.

Many of us use the areas around your house, under your deck, and out buildings for heavy storage. For instance, stacking wood next to your house is just asking for trouble in the event of an outside fire. Embers will seat themselves in the wood and eventually start a fire. Close packed wood can assist a fire that can cause major damage to your home. Other items that are stored around your home will have the same results. At the Fire District we ask that home owners create a "defensible space" around the outside of the home. This space includes large green lawns, gravel driveways, limited trees and shrubs, and areas next to the house free from debris. Maintaining these areas will greatly increase your homes survival odds and make you less likely to have any property loss in the event of a wild fire

We also ask that residents follow all outdoor burning regulations. We can all expect a burn ban each summer that is designed to help keep us safe from wildfires. For information on burning regulations and burn bans check our website.

A very happy and safe summer goes out to you and your family from us here at Mason County Fire District 2. More information on wild land safety can be located on our web

site at WWW.MCFD2.COM by clicking the “for residents” tab or by calling 360-275-6711. With summer now here plan ahead now for wild land prevention before it is too late.

Question of the month: How many wild land fires did the State of Washington have last year, and what was the biggest one? The first email or phone call that I receive with the correct answer will receive a gift from Starbucks Coffee.

Jeromy Hicks is currently Mason County Fire District 2’s community outreach coordinator. With ten plus years of firefighting service including being a paramedic, fire prevention is his passion. Jeromy currently provides assistance with inspections, investigations, and education though out Mason County. He can be reached at 360-275-6711 ext. 2.