



**THURSDAY, MARCH 2  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15  
FIREWISE  
WORKSHOP**

**Protect Your Home from Wildfire**  
Learn the basics of creating defensible space around your home. Firewise specialist **Guy Gifford** (Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources) will cover the Home Ignition Zone, and the concept of proper landscaping including the use of fire resistant plants.

Sponsors:




Ferry/Okanogan Fire Protection District #13

**Don't Lose your Home in the Next Wildfire!**

Workshop Attendees Can Purchase Discounted Address Signs!

Sign up for Free Firewise Home Assessments and Forest Fuel Reduction Cost-Share Program

Chance to Win a Door Prize!

**REPUBLIC FIRE HALL**  
Keller St  
Republic, WA 99166  
Thursday, March 2  
7:00 PM- 8:15 PM

**OLD CURLEW FIRE HALL**  
River St  
Curlew, WA 99118  
Wednesday, March 15  
7:00 PM – 8:15 PM

(Appeared in the *Ferry County View Extra*, Feb, 2017)

## Ferry Conservation District to Offer Free Firewise Workshops March 2 and 15, April 22

Eastern Washington has experienced many large wildfires over the last three years, including several which destroyed numerous homes and one which took 3 firefighters' lives. With snow still on the ground and ice remaining on lakes and ponds, the hot, dry fire weather of July and August seems far away. However, it is never too early to begin thinking about and preparing for the next fire. And, there is much to think about.

In the event of a wildfire, the primary objective is to prevent injury and/or loss of life to our loved ones, ourselves, and, if possible, our pets and livestock. Understanding the evacuation categories and doing the necessary pre-planning are the best ways to avoid panic in the event of a fire and to ensure a safe outcome. With proper preparation, you will be able to act decisively and swiftly, if need be.

When the fire season approaches, it would be advantageous to have a discussion with family members about the steps to be taken. Talk about the three evacuation levels. When the Level 3 evacuation notice comes, the procedure will be second nature. Know what supplies and valuables you plan to take so you don't waste precious time gathering them at the last minute

(better yet, have everything together near the door so it can be grabbed fast). Have a plan for animals. Will you grab cats and dogs? Will you open up pens of larger animals?

Have a designated meeting place a safe distance from your house. Make sure you have car keys handy and backup sets stashed somewhere outside. Prepare two access routes to and from your property, to assure another way out in the event one is blocked. Have a backup meeting place away from your house and a backup phone contact, in case family members get separated.

The secondary objective in the event of a wildfire is to protect property. Most measures needed to protect homes must be implemented well before the threat of fire is close at hand. The most effective time to make a home defensible is before and during its construction. Siting is critical. A house built in the middle of a forest or at the top of a steep hill is particularly vulnerable. Using non-flammable building materials is important. Stucco, brick or block are good choices for siding. Metal and composite roofing will shed sparks and embers. On the other hand, wood surfaced decks and porches are easily ignited by hot embers.

Even if you don't have the luxury of planning a new home, you can still help firefighters by creating a defensible space around your existing home. Keep trees away from the house, if possible. Trim overhanging limbs and prune trees near the house to reduce ladder fuels (flames from grass and other ground fuels will ignite the low branches of trees). Cut lawns short and keep them green and irrigated. Make sure that flammable materials are not stored near the house (firewood should be stacked away from the house.) Keep water tanks as full as possible. Make sure you have proper, visible signage to alert emergency vehicles as to your location.

To help county residents better gain a better understanding of what measures can be taken to prepare for wildfire, The Ferry Conservation District will present three workshops during the months of March and April. Participants will learn Firewise principles, including how to create the defensible space around the home to help prevent ignition from an ember storm or a flame front during a wildfire.

The free workshops are scheduled for Thursday, March 2 at 7 PM at the Republic Fire Hall on Keller St. and on Wednesday, March 15 at 7 PM at the former fire hall on River St. in Curlew. In addition, a workshop will be offered at the Spring Conservation Fair at the Ferry County Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 22.

Workshop participants may sign up for free on-site home assessments (to determine measures needed to make homes more defensible) and can find out if they are eligible for cost-share projects to reduce forest fuels on their property (thinning and pruning).

In addition, participants may purchase emergency address signage for a reduced cost. (Identifying address numbers to help emergency vehicles are required by county ordinance.)

The workshops, presented by Guy Gifford of the Washington State Dept. of Natural Resources, are co-sponsored by the Ferry Conservation District and the Ferry/Okanogan Fire Protection Districts #13 and #14, with support from the Washington State Conservation Commission. The

Firewise Program has been developed by the National Fire Protection Association to educate homeowners on methods to protect their homes from wildfire.

Conservation District staff will also offer Firewise information at upcoming community events, including the Ferry County Fair, the Spring Conservation Fair, Prospector's Day and Friday Market.

District staff recently attended a two-day Firewise training in Alger, WA, presented by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, the Skagit Conservation District and the Washington State Conservation Commission.

*Ferry Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency. Our services are available to all without discrimination.*