

Treeways

August 2012

Many folks are expending a huge effort to get their buckthorn and honeysuckle under control. When a dense thicket of brush is cut away you always end up with a huge pile of debris. Some grind up the debris and recycle it into the woods, some get a burning permit and burn it, some make piles that may be attractive to wildlife, and others cut it into small pieces and let it decay where it was cut. All are reasonable ways to deal with the mass of debris and usually a combination works out best.

Wildfires have been in the news this summer just like last year and the year before that. Woody debris that is in contact with the soil will decay quite quickly however a big pile of branches only touches the ground at the bottom and therefore decays much slower and will be tinder dry most of the year. In Sunfish Lake we live in a forest and we need to be aware of the possible dangers that wildfires pose to us. Piles of dead, dry brush near houses or outbuildings are a fire hazard.

That stack of firewood up against the house or garage is convenient during the winter but the rest of the year it is a fire hazard that is highly combustible in a wildfire situation. Tree branches arching over houses or evergreens with substantial deadwood near buildings can guide a fire right to your home.

The Minnesota DNR recommends a wildfire defensible area out to about 30' from a building. This wildfire defensible area may need to extend out to 100' or more depending upon the types and numbers of trees and shrubs that you have growing in the landscape around your home. A green lawn is a good start plus a reasonable amount of pruning in mature trees can make a huge difference to keeping your home "firewise".

There is a free Firewise homeowner information packet available just for asking from the MN DNR. Much more information is available by googling "Firewise MN". Look at such topics as:

- Firewise in Minnesota...Defensible Space
- 50 Things You Can Do to Protect Your Home
- Wildfire-Proof Your Home
- 25 Tips to Make Your Home Firewise

Let's be careful out there ... an out of control brush fire or recreational fire is not a good way to meet your neighbor.

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