

Forester's Report 1-30-2013

Five burning permits were issued since the last Forester's Report.

Activity at 6 Acorn Drive was researched and a report prepared in association with the Police Chief. Firewood harvesting was occurring with the consent of the property owner. Only dead or damaged trees were removed along with a substantial amount of buckthorn.

I recommend that a Council representative attend the Emerald Ash Symposium with me on February 12. The Symposium will be held from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Hopkins Center for the Arts and there is a \$25.00 registration fee. I will have a couple of brochures to share at the Council meeting.

My research into wildfire issues relative to Sunfish Lake have garnered excellent information published by the Minnesota DNR, some of which I will have available on the 4th. I have also attached a couple of the general documents and an item that might be a good article for the Quarterly. Perhaps developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan is something that should be discussed within the Environmental Action Committee.

I have contacted a Boy Scout Scoutmaster who may have an Eagle Scout candidate with an interest in service project such as reforestation in a city park.

No branches or trees were down on city streets following the recent freezing rain.

Jim Naves
City Forester

Firewise in Minnesota

How can Firewise work in your community

The process

Initial Contact - **Firewise specialist** meets with at least one community member and discusses community hazards, how Firewise can help mitigate hazards, and who should be involved in the process. Community receives packet of information. Powerpoint presentation to more than one community member.

Assessment - At second meeting, Firewise specialist explains the assessment options and assists with a grant request.

Level 1 Assessment - Digital Aerial Photo interpretation locating all homes in the community and rating homes 1-5 based on proximity to trees. Software & digital photos provided to community free. Can be done by:

Fire Department Personnel

Other community staff

High School Students

Eagle Scout project

Contractor

Other

Level 2 Assessment - House by house assessment of 24 factors from access to structure design to site characteristics. Done on high risk areas identified in level 1 or by local knowledge. Entire community may be done if resources allow. This information used to determine mitigation strategies needed. (E.g. access improvements, structure modification, site modification).

Grant request for 50:50 cost-share funding for assessment & planning, education & mitigation activities. Initial grant request may be for a small amount (\$15,000) until Firewise Action Plan is developed. A second grant to implement more of the plan would then be submitted.

Stakeholder Meetings - A meeting of key stakeholders in the community is held either before, or shortly after the assessment is completed. This group would become the Community Firewise Committee. It could be made up of:

- the community emergency manager (fire chief), planner, development coordinator & forester;
 - a key developer or builder;
 - a resource manager from any park or other managed open space in the community
 - a local legislator
 - a representative from a local civic organization (lions, rotary?)
 - others as deemed necessary by the community
- Meetings of Community Firewise Committee to develop plan (see IV)
- Meetings with affected homeowners to inform and gain their input

Plan Development - completed by the Community Firewise Committee with input from other stakeholders as needed.

- Review assessment information to determine risk areas for mitigation
- Decide which actions the community will undertake (i.e.: road improvements, zoning revisions)
- Decide which actions homeowners need to undertake (i.e.: thinning pine)
- Decide what educational activities need to be done (i.e.: newsletter article)
- Submit an additional grant request as needed

Implementation - getting the work done!

Community actions - some suggested actions by the community:

- Improving access to developments (road width to 20 feet, emergency secondary access, improving road signage, e911 signage)
- Improving water resources (installing dry hydrants or cistern systems for fire protection)
- Developing community firebreaks adjacent to wildland areas prone to fire
- Adopting firewise building and zoning regulations & fire

restrictions

Educating citizens through newspaper & newsletter articles, open houses, personal contacts and other methods.

Homeowner actions

Fuel reduction such as thinning & pruning conifers and planting deciduous to break up fuel continuity.

Access improvements such as widening & pruning up driveway and improving visibility of address signage

Seasonal maintenance such as mowing & watering lawn, removing leaves from gutters and foundation plantings, and moving firewood pile away from house.

Building improvements such as enclosing foundations, decks & soffits and using fire-resistant materials when re-roofing and residing.

Reporting - submitting invoices and reports for grant compliance

All assessment information to be shared with DNR for statewide analysis and planning

Invoices to be submitted as quarterly or annual grant funding reimbursement to the community (the community will pay all bills to contractors, etc. directly). Community may receive an up-front payment.

Community required to track in-kind and dollar match

Simple report of accomplishments required annually.



You could lose your home to a wildfire. Prepare your home, family and community for survival.

FOR USE IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, SHOPPERS OR ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTERS. ACTUAL ARTWORK FILES ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Beware and prepare to reduce the threat of wildfire to your home. This checklist will help you identify ways to reduce home and property wildfire hazards and to prepare your family and neighbors for the event of wildfire.

Create a 30- to 100-foot defensible space around your home. Within this area take steps to reduce potential exposure to flames and falling embers. Homes built in pine forests should have a minimum defensible space of 100 feet.

- ☐ Rake all leaves, dead limbs and twigs. Clear all flammable vegetation.
- ☐ Thin a 15-foot space between pine and spruce tree crowns and prune up lower limbs within 6' to 10' of the ground - eliminate the fire ladder!
- ☐ Remove wild brush and tall grass within 30 feet of structures.
- ☐ Ask the power company to clear branches from powerlines.
- ☐ Remove vines from the walls of the home.
- ☐ Mow and water grass regularly.
- ☐ Manage the pine-spruce forest around your home through regular thinning harvests.
- ☐ Clear a 10-foot space around propane tanks.
- ☐ Do not dispose ashes until they are 'cold out'.
- ☐ Stack firewood at least 30 feet from any structure.
- ☐ Store gasoline, oily rags and other flammable materials in approved safety cans.
- ☐ Regularly clean roof and gutters of leaves and needles.
- ☐ Inspect your chimney at least twice a year.
- ☐ Screen-in or skirt openings under decks and mobile homes.
- ☐ Use fire resistant building and roofing materials.
- ☐ Be sure your driveway is at least 14 feet wide. Trim overhanging branches. Create a turnout.
- ☐ Can an ambulance get in your driveway and to your home?
- ☐ Be sure your house number is clearly visible from the road.
- ☐ Do you have smoke detectors and are they working?

For more information:
Contact your local DNR Forestry office or call 1-888-MINNDNR and visit the Firewise website at www.firewise.org.

