



# Residents Moving Mitigation Forward in Southwest Colorado

FireWise of Southwest Colorado



# National Wildfire Mitigation Award Winners

**2017**

Rebecca Samulski  
Asst. Director  
FireWise of SW CO

Jim Tencza  
Timberdale Ranch  
La Plata County

**2016**

Peggy Beach  
Loma Linda  
Archuleta County

Les Kole  
Deer Valley Estates  
La Plata County

East Canyon Ambassadors  
Montezuma County

**2015**

Pam Wilson  
Director  
FireWise of SW CO

Judy Winzell  
Falls Creek Ranch  
La Plata County

Three of 12 awards came to Neighborhood  
Ambassadors in SW Colorado in 2016



# Planning Efforts

FW Communities, Community Assessments and  
CWPPs, Social Science Research

# Firewise Communities USA Recognition



ARCHULETA COUNTY:  
Timber Ridge Ranch – Aug.

MONTEZUMA COUNTY:  
Wingspread – Dec.  
Cedar Mesa Ranches – Dec.

Southwest Colorado now  
supports 15 Firewise  
Communities

# Community Assessments

Durango Ridge Ranch

Foxfire Ranch

Shenandoah Highlands

Shenandoah Estates

Wingspread (MZ)

Alpine Lakes Ranch (AC)



# Community Wildfire Protection Plans

**Almost in Draft:**

Lake Purgatory

Greater Lemon Area,  
including Aspen Trails



# Living with Wildfire

## **Archuleta County**

700 Assessments / Surveys

## **La Plata County**

850 Assessments / Surveys

## **Montezuma County**

450 Assessments / Surveys

## **No Surprise**

- Residents rated their fire risk lower than assessors
- Homeowners expect fire service to save their home
- Most don't understand insurance

# Living with Wildfire

## Archuleta County

700 Assessments / Surveys

## La Plata County

850 Assessments / Surveys

## Montezuma County

450 Assessments / Surveys

## Surprises

- People support the use of managed fire
- The number of people that said they had done some mitigation
- Lots of people not opted into Rev. 911
- Most comfortable with 50% cost share
- Lack of awareness of tax subtraction for mitigation



# Dolores Watershed and Resilient Forest Collaborative

Monthly meetings w/good participation

Good progress on Wildfire Risk Assessment for Dolores Watershed

HRVA modeling

Two Field Trips

Secured a \$250K CAFA grant for work around Joe Moore Reservoir





# Slash Removal Programs

Chipping and Burning

# Chipper Rebate Program

76 rebates -- **\$16,320**

Chipping Expenses:  
**\$49,698**

Mitigation Expenses:  
**\$47,161**

**327** Acres Treated

**2635** Volunteer Hrs **Value**  
**= \$68,405**



# Archuleta Slash Depots

Still running three  
depots 1) Archuleta  
Landfill

2) Pagosa Lakes POA

3) Arboles

2016

- 15,500 cu. yds. of material
- 6,600 vol. hrs.
- 500 ac. treated



# Burning Slash



**Cedar Mesa Ranches  
and Vallecito**



# Community Mitigation

Montezuma County

# Wingspread



It started with a community assessment by Becca, followed by some individual property assessments...

Admiring the fire tool cache that's available for all residents to access



# Wingspread



Then came the mitigation work:

- Mowing adjacent to roadways
- Cutting brush and hauling slash
- Chipping slash

Firewise Communities Recognition  
– Dec. 2016 --



# Cedar Mesa Ranches

## First Community Slash Weekend

- Collected slash for three weekends, then brought in air curtain burner
- 240 volunteer hours

Firewise Communities Recognition  
-- Dec. 2016 --



# Cedar Mesa Ranches

## Tamarisk Removal Project

- Surveyed all 139 properties from road, 10 miles of road
- Treated 30 properties
- Over six weeks, methodically cut all tamarisk and simultaneously sprayed the stumps with a Garlon/diesel mix
- Over two weeks, burned slash piles



11 volunteers -- 140 hours



# Community Mitigation

La Plata County

# 'Tween Lakes

Since 2013, 'Tween Lakes residents have been work steadily on road ROW mitigation.



# 'Tween Lakes



The HOA purchased a pole saw so volunteers can trim lower branches of the ponderosa

2016 – A Very Good Year:

- 3.6 acres treated
- 23 volunteers
- 425 hours

Community potluck to thank volunteers

# Timberline View Estates

Couldn't see the  
houses through the  
trees!

Treated about four  
acres on three parcels  
of common space,  
directly impacting 21  
homes

Held two community  
chipping events



# Sailing Hawks



- Created a 100-foot wide fuel break on the SE side of the subdivision
- Cleared shrubs around two community water tanks
  - Continued with d-space work

# Timberdale Ranch

Treated approximately  
107 acres using three  
different grants





# Timberdale Ranch



Hosted a VIP tour  
in September



La Plata BOCC, DFPC,  
CSFS, and Sen. Bennett's  
office

# Falls Creek Ranch

Bought Equipments and Organized their  
Slash Disposal Site



Purchased an air curtain burner as well as additional equipment this year – flatbed trailer, etc. to help with slash hauling

Hired day laborers to help maintain slash site and burn accumulated piles of slash from 2015



# Falls Creek Ranch



Drop-off site for compostable bags of pine needles (for eventual burning)

Established a “firewood” pile and started building a shed to house their air curtain burner



# Rockwood Community

## Shaded fuel Break Along CR 200



15.7 acres treated on both sides of county road

100-foot deep multi species shaded fuel break on south side

Used two contractors and Southwest Conservation Corps

Supported by:

- 2 businesses
- 3 HOAs
- 3 private individuals

# Rockwood Estates



# Rockwood Estates



# Rockwood Estates



Project resulted in:

- 22 cords of primo firewood to Daybreak Rotary Club
- Six 10-ton dump truck loads of wood
- Rotary estimates an additional 10-15 homes will receive wood this year

# CSFS WUI Grant

## Vallecito

7 projects

18.4 ac.

\$34,770

## Archuleta County

27 projects

69.7 ac.

\$71,435





# Working Better Together

Hosted two workshops for regional partners – May and November

- May: Insurance, Timber Supply Study, Biomass Updates
- Nov: Celebrated the Year of Good Fire in SW CO



# Ponderosa Pine Connection

