



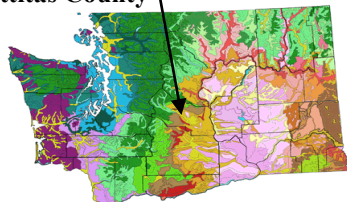
FEMA

Best practices

Disaster Mitigation Working in Washington 4188-DR-WA

Firewise Participation Protects Communities

Kittitas County



Kittitas County, WA – The Washington State wildfires of 2014 broke a record that was set in 1902, and brought a new level of risk awareness to people who own property in wildland urban interface areas. In Kittitas County, the recent fires revived memories of the last two fire seasons, when four major wildfires destroyed over 115 structures in the county. These fires caused costly damage to infrastructure, along with enormous costs for fire suppression.

Many residents are now eager to take actions that can reduce future damage. The Kittitas County Conservation District's Fuels Reduction Coordinator Suzanne Wade, along with Fire Marshal Brenda Larsen, have worked closely with state and federal agencies, and with local citizens, to fund, manage, and complete hundreds of Firewise property improvement projects. Their efforts have helped reduce excess forest fuels and create defensible space around many of the most vulnerable homes in the county.

Approval for a \$365,000 Federal Emergency Management Agency Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant for wildfire mitigation is expected in



Kittitas County Firewise landscape

early 2015. The funding will be used to reduce wildfire risk in the Pineloch Sun, Hidden Valley and Sky Meadows neighborhoods northwest of Ellensburg. Ladder fuels and other biomass will be removed by means of chainsaws, chippers, brush mowers, and masticators. The FEMA funds will be administered by the Washington Military Department's Emergency Management Division.

PDM grant applications compete for funding with proposals from throughout the United States. The Kittitas County proposal was successful, in part, because it employed geographic information system (GIS) technology to target homes located in extreme risk areas. These are often characterized by dense forest, rough roads and steep slopes. The GIS tools also helped produce a plan that would avoid environmental or historical

sensitive areas, and produce significant additional risk reduction in adjoining neighborhoods and forest areas.

More information:

Kittitas Conservation District:
www.kccd.net/

www.firewise.org

Ready, Set, Go:
www.wildlandfirersg.org/

www.fireadapted.org

<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/RecreationEducation/FirePreventionAssistance/Pages/Home.aspx>

www.fema.gov/library
Publication # 468 At Home in the Woods—Lessons Learned in the Wildland / Urban Interface



Firewise project saved this home