



NFH 2020 VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Fire Resilience

Presented by Kevin Orth, NFH Director, Washington

2020 NFH Conference: Virtual Event Etiquette

- Conference packet online and linked in email.
 - View options in Gallery or Speaker mode.
 - (Only) Presenters will be able to speak and be heard.
 - Attendees:
 - Please use Q&A feature to ask questions.
 - Selection of Q's will be shared.
 - **Polling** will be used to ask audience questions
 - requires your browser to allow popup windows
- ✓ This session will be recorded.
- ✓ We will send an email post-conference with questions and answers including those we don't answer live. Plus, NFH members can find pdf's of the presentations and later, video recordings of the webinars on our website: www.nationaforesthomeowners.org





My Cabin and Interests



Fire Resilience Agenda

Before the Fire

- Fire-adapted communities
- Planning
- Fire resilience – hardening of cabins
- Insurance

During the Fire

- Evacuation levels
- Monitoring
- Fire-fighting principles, practices

After the Fire

- BAER
- Costs and cleaning up
- Access and closures



Before the Fire



- **Prepare**

- Develop relationships with USFS, county, fire districts
- Identify & implement areas of cooperation
- Work to enhance existing emergency plans
- Develop accurate maps of your tracts
- Rural addressing – GPS coordinates – both
- **Make your plan**

- **Know More**

- *Know and understand evacuation levels I, II, III*

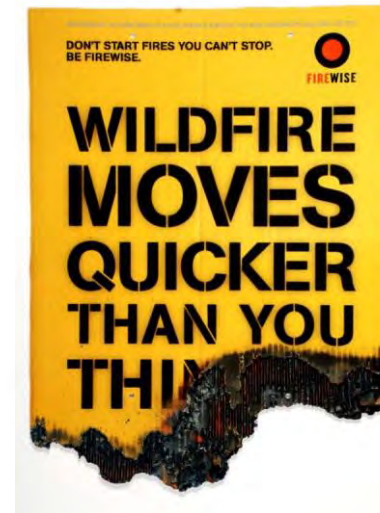
- **Communication Plan**

- *Plan how information should flow, to cabin owners, resorts, camps etc.*
- *Understand fire terminology – in advance*
- *Be prepared to turnover all contact information to fire management teams*



How to be Fire-Resilient

- Fire is a sure thing. Learning to live with it.
- Implement Firewise principles* (*as able*)
- Where will it go?
 - Topography is a major factor
 - Reduce ladder fuels & small branches
 - Harden exterior (vent screens, metal roofing)
 - Install dynamic fire protection features



**Be Resilient
Be Prepared
Be Firewise**

*** Prepare in advance**

- Identify safe zones
- Go bag
- Local emergency and community contacts

*** Predict**

- Where will the fire go?

*** Plan**

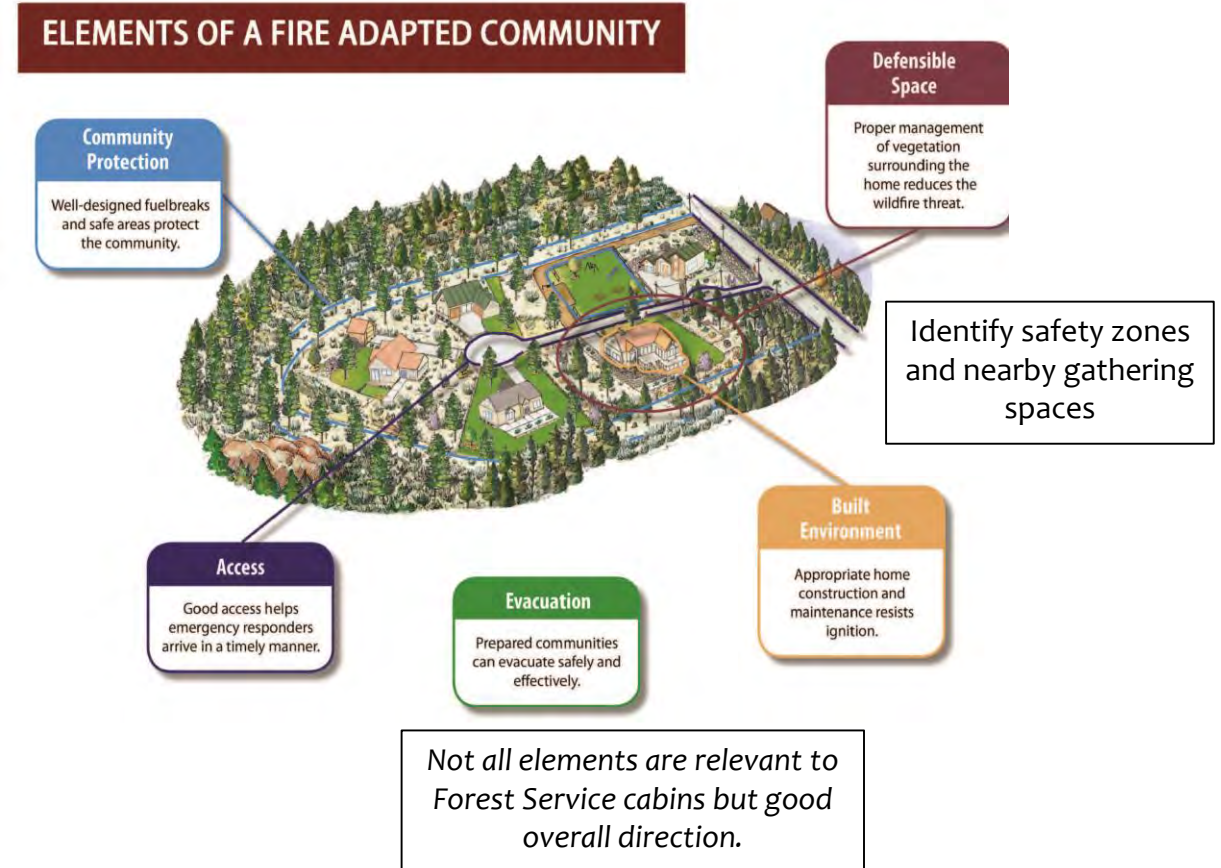
- Have an escape route planned
- Clear branches up to 30 feet
- Harden the cabin

Work on Community Preparation

Fire Wise

Become a *Fire Adapted Community*.

“A Fire Adapted Community is one that through its own actions has mitigated and prepared for and can live with a wildland fire without extensive suppression resources and with a lower level of risk to life or property.”



Review Insurance Coverage

- **Examine Your Insurance Policy**
 - Document cabin and assets with photos!
 - Most will rebuild “what it was, where it was”
 - Partial destruction coverage
 - Expect flooding afterward!
 - Remediation of former site
 - USFS may not allow rebuild in same location

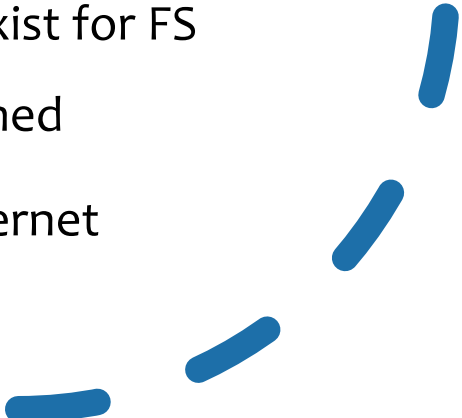


Insurance fire protection contractor



During
The Fire

What makes cabins different?

- Out of town; remote locations
 - Part time use (may be away)
 - Typically lack fire suppression systems
 - May be lack of water
 - Lot maintenance – not Firewise compliant
 - The forest and Forest Service - restrictions
 - Local fire district coverage may not exist for FS structures, or they may be overwhelmed
 - Communication issues – no cell or internet
- 

What Can You Do – Initially



Before Evacuation Stage:

- Get valuable items
 - Easy to remove
 - Keep a list
 - Set up sprinklers
- Wrap cabin or other systems of protection

Monitor Fire and Weather Conditions

- Fires are dynamic! Conditions and behaviors can change rapidly.
- Base **all decisions** on current and **expected** conditions, and **fire behaviors**.
- Fuel conditions **change daily**.
- **Weather forecasts – check frequently.** Do not believe a holiday forecast or weather forecast delivered over the weekend.
- Fires move fast under “red flag” conditions: low humidity, high temps, strong winds, low fuel moisture.
- Firefighting decisions are made with the safety of the public and firefighters as top priority.



A “plume dominated” fire burns hot and fast (Carr Fire)



A typical “ground” fire burns more slowly (Norse Peak Fire)

Evacuation

Ready, Set, Go

- **Evacuation Orders**

- Stage I (one) - Get ready & prioritize
- Stage II (two) - Load car & get go-bag
Don't block access; park your car facing out
- **Stage III (three) - Get out now!**
If you're not at your cabin, don't go there!
- Evacuation orders must be obeyed by law!
- Account for your people – safely out?
- Rumors are plenty - use reputable sources!



Norse Peak Fire coming over the ridge and approaching Crystal Mountain cabins



Carr Fire evacuation order came late and resulted in clogged roads



Firefighting Support

1. **First to arrive** – Local fire departments and it is important to have a Fire Protection Contract in place!
2. **Next to arrive** -- **Insurance** contractor firefighters are typically second to arrive.
3. **Last to arrive** -- **Forest Service** crews, often coming from other fires, if there are crews left in a busy fire season. They are typically not familiar with the area – important to provide them with cabin tract maps !

Firefighting Support

- Active suppression, if possible.
- Protection of structures and preparation of the area as the fire advances.
- If there is a water source nearby, pumps and hose and sprinklers to protect structures and create firebreaks.
- Firefighters will also create firebreaks by clearing underbrush and small trees around structures and on fire lines.





TOP PRIORITIES:

- Protect life (including firefighters)
- Protect structures

APPROACH:

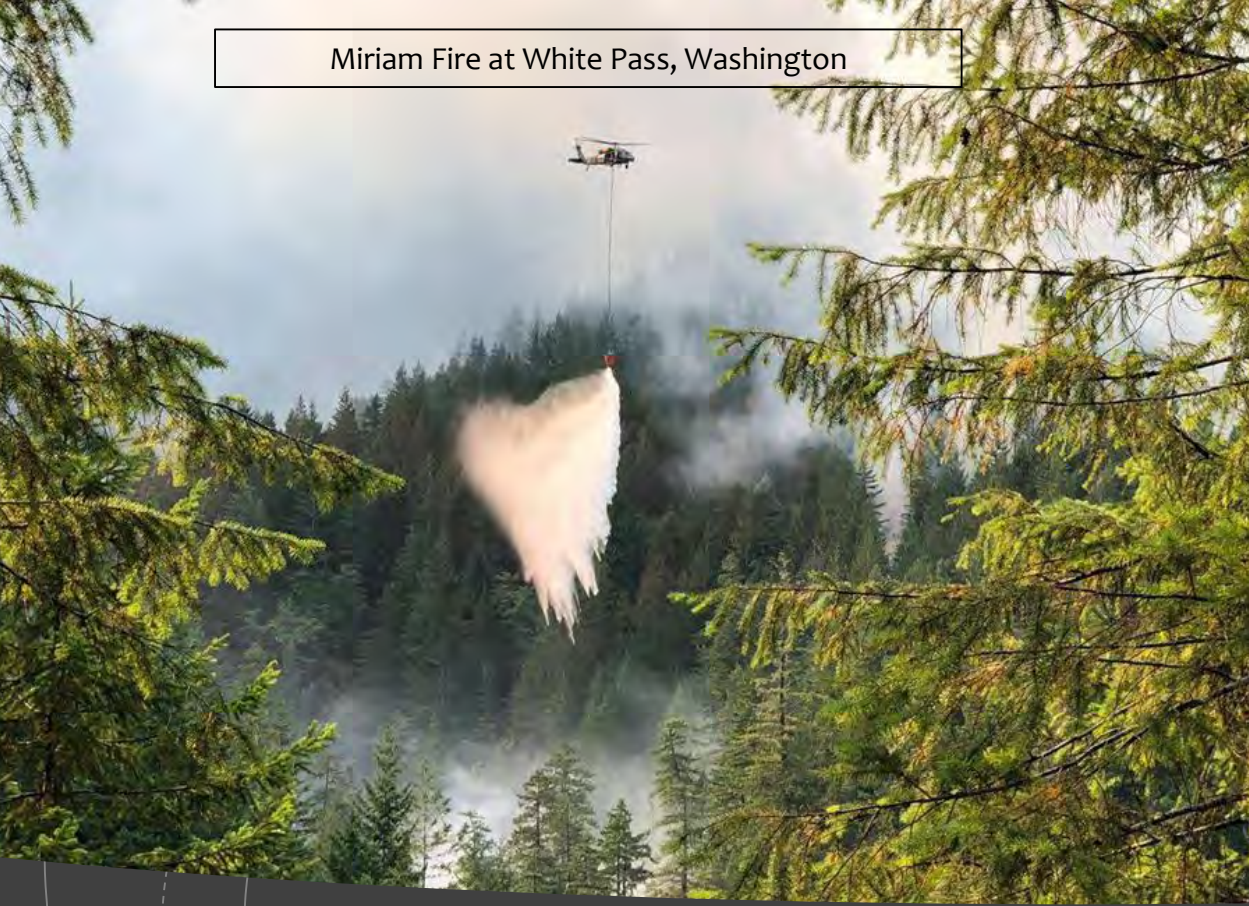
- To “put the fire in a box” using natural and man-made fire breaks (cuts, roads, rivers) to contain the fire.

BE AWARE:

- Embers can travel a long distance, particularly in high wind conditions and cross over fire breaks travelling many miles.

Firefighting Principles

Miriam Fire at White Pass, Washington



Norse Peak Fire at Crystal Mountain, WA



Air Support

- If resources, weather, terrain, and fire type allow, you may be fortunate enough to get air support.
- If there is too much wind or smoke, it will not be possible to fly.
- A single drone sighting will ground all aircraft – make sure to keep drones out of the area.

After The Fire

BAER Assessment



- Burned Area Emergency Response. A team and a process.
- Is fire out? Stabilization
- Assessment of impacts
- May include local county and fire officials, if the Forest requests
- Soil, water, trees, weather

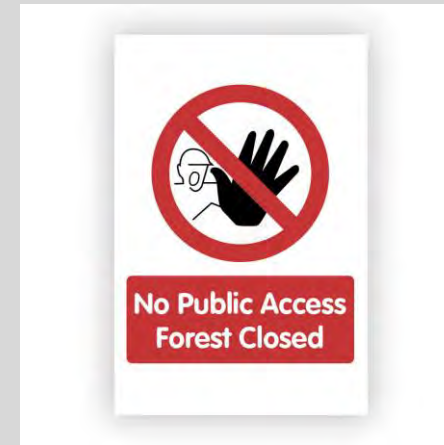
Cabin Impacts

- Costs of clean-up on permit holder
 - Check with your insurance carrier now, before a loss occurs
 - Hazardous waste removal can be costly, plus testing
 - Work with counties, emergency services like waste transport
- Clean-up plan
 - Certified contractor
 - Approval of plan by FS
 - Seek group rates if more than one affected
 - Collect documentation (cabin photos) for insurance claims



Access and Closures

- Forest closures – why?
 - Public safety and fire investigation
 - Mud slides, debris flows and flooding
 - **Up to a year or more closed to typical use**
- How long before limited access?
 - Post-incident tasks (sometimes ongoing incident)
 - Clean-up and priorities
 - **Short access to assess cabins and retrieve valuables**
- How long before regular use?
 - Stabilization and assessment
 - Hazardous waste removal
 - Road work
 - **Typically several years**





Road Closures, Flooding Concerns

- Expect road closures after a fire, until the fire affected areas have stabilized.
- Roads, bridges, and culverts may also be removed to preemptively prevent flooding, due to erosion from fire-affected hillsides above.
- If flooding does occur, it can be catastrophic!



Trail Closures, Safety Concerns

- Recreation in the area can also be impacted, for years to come.
- If the trails are reopened, damage to trees, bridges, and trails themselves can be significant, and recreation can therefore be dangerous.

Role of the Forest Service



What the Forest Service is Doing

- A national awareness campaign with the Ad Council
- Support for initiatives and programs that further FAC concepts: the Ready, Set, Go Program, Firewise, Wildland Fuels Reduction
- Partnering with insurance companies on the national and local levels
- Supporting tools to help communities adapt to fire
- Developing best practices; Collecting and sharing success stories
- Bringing more partners to the table
- Exploring effective, efficient, viable ways to measure success

Questions?

Hopefully, we can all learn from each fire,
and work together to minimize impacts
of future fires.

Learn more at:
www.nationalforesthomeowners.org



Announcing: NFH Fire Relief Fund



- **Donate online** at NFH website to the Fire Relief Fund – a new and reserved fund through end of 2020.
- All donations to this fund from now through end of 2020 will go to cabin tracts impacted by fires.
- **GOAL:** To encourage and facilitate rebuilding of cabins lost to wildfires.

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Evaluation

We want to hear from you!

Check your conference packet or go online to www.nationalforesthomeowners.org and visit the 2020 NFH Virtual Event page to find the evaluation link and more.

Please fill out an evaluation for the whole event, including those sessions you attended. Rate each session only once, but if you decide to come back to the conference for more, feel free to fill out another evaluation for the additional sessions you attend.

If you like this educational cabin community experience, let us know. If we can improve, here's your chance to tell us.





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THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!