



Firewise Principles

First of all, **we have had two fires on our mountain in 2009** – fortunately small but both were avoidable... The first could be avoided by soaking fireplace or wood stove ashes for 24 hours in a steel bucket (such as item # 291653 from Lowes) before dumping them outdoors. The other by not leaving a debris fire burning unattended – as a contractor did recently. Little River VFD and NCDNR rangers responded promptly to both fires.

In order to effectively protect your home from loss during a forest fire (wildfire) you need to understand two main concepts: one is the 'Home Ignition Zone' and the other is 'Defensible Space'. The home ignition zone extends out 100 to 200 feet from your home (depending on degree of slope) and is actually composed of three zones.

Zone 1 extends out 5 feet from your home, deck and out buildings and is the most critical – in this zone anything flammable should be removed. This would include leaves, pine straw, pine bark, mulch, firewood, volatile shrubs, trees, etc. It would also include removing leaves and pine straw from your roof and gutters. The reason that this is so important is that a fire brand (burning ember) can travel a mile or more from the fire. If it lands in this 'fuel' it will likely start a fire that could spread to your home. This would be true as well if a fire reaches your property but more homes are lost due to flaming embers than actual contact with the wildfire.

Zone 2 extends 10 feet out and can contain a well kept lawn, widely spaced trees and very low volatile shrubs.

Zone 3 extends 30-100 feet but the first 30 feet are the most important here – no leaves or twigs on the ground, no firewood stored, 10 feet between trees and no limbs below 10 feet from the ground (these are called 'ladder fuel').

If you have done all of this you have created a Defensible Space where firefighters can work to save your home.

- Please contact Norton Carey with questions or concerns.