

The Fire Adapted Community (FAC) – the next step in wildfire preparedness

A FAC is a human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire. Supported by local, state and federal agencies, the FAC uses tools to prepare its homes, neighborhoods, businesses, infrastructure, natural areas and surrounding landscape for wildfire. See www.fireadapted.org

At a minimum, the Bradford County's FAC actions should include the following plans and programs:

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A collaborative plan created by the fire department, state and local forestry staff, land managers, community leaders, and the public. The planning process maps values at risk, including neighborhoods, businesses, infrastructure, and natural areas. Proposed actions to mitigate their vulnerabilities to wildfire hazards and reduce risk, include prescribed burning, the application of Firewise principles or other measures that adapt a community to fire. See <http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/communities/cwpp.shtml>

Firewise Communities/USA. As is the case with Lakewood Firewise Community, this program educates homeowners regarding the proactive steps which can be taken to create defensible space to reduce wildfire threat to their homes and neighborhoods. Selecting from the list of WUI Community Protection Zones above, the county fire agency and the FFS should perform risk assessments in communities to determine areas most-in-need of Firewise activities. Once the neighborhood has met specific criteria, they can apply for national Firewise recognition. See www.firewise.org

Ready, Set, Go! The program educates both the public and emergency services agencies in preparing a community for wildfire. It engages local fire departments who deliver the Fire Adapted Communities message using Firewise principles, wildfire situational awareness, and with assistance from law enforcement, safe evacuation planning and execution. See www.wildlandfirersg.org and **Attachment A** for map of Bradford County Evacuation Routes.

Notes: 1. ISOs, in their Community Rating System (CRS), are considering the existence of Fire Prevention activities such as FAC, CWPPs, Firewise and Ready Set Go as mitigating factors worthy of credits in their reviews. 2. The U.S. Fire Administration recommends everyone should have a comprehensive home fire protection plan that includes smoke alarms, fire sprinklers, and practicing a fire escape plan.

Community Development in the Wildland Urban Interface

As populations increase and development continues to push into the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), it will be necessary to take active steps to reduce the wildfire risk to Bradford County residents. In identified Community Protection Zones (CPZ), wildfire hazard mitigation through land development regulations, vegetative fuel reduction, and on-going public education programs, serve to greatly reduce the potential for loss of human life and property from wildfire. Inclusive would be WUI buffers of 1.5 miles around actual places where people live, significant infrastructure as well as, utility corridors and major evacuation routes.