



MRPOA Newsletter

An occasional newsletter with updates from the MRPOA board, news, information and more

FIRE EDUCATION 101



The devastating September Alameda Fire is a grim reminder that we live in wildfire country. The loss is as incomprehensible as it is heartbreaking. How can one ever fully prepare for a fire like this — one that explodes so suddenly and races so fast, destroying two towns in its wake?

The answer: we cannot fully protect ourselves. But we can be *firewise*. Here we offer:

- **Firewise recommendations and resources** (on Saturday, Oct. 17, Doug Kay's hosted a Firewise "open house," joined by Katie Gibble from Ashland Fire and Rescue);
- **A collection of the four essays from local firefighter Campbell Kaye** — an eloquent look at what causes wildfires, wildfire behavior, and how to come to terms with this threat on our doorstep;
- **An article by Greensprings' writer and firefighter Julie Gable** about her firsthand experiences on the fire line in Phoenix and Talent.

Firewise at Mountain Ranch

Some history

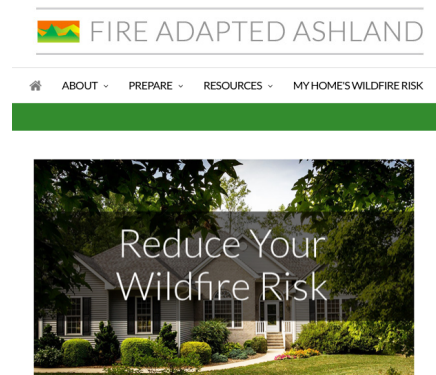
Thanks to the efforts of former MRPOA Board President, Doug Kay, in 2012 Mountain Ranch became the seventh Firewise community in Ashland. There are now 35 in the city.

As a Firewise community, Mountain Ranch took out all the juniper in the common areas and also about a dozen dead or dying trees. Roughly 40 percent of Mountain Ranch homeowners also received Firewise grant money to remove hazardous plant material around their house. (Alas, these grants are no longer available, but free Firewise home inspections are.)

Websites

The website fireadaptedashland.org offers Firewise tips and resources all in one place. Topics include: how to reduce your wildfire risk, assessing your own home's fire risk, a Firewise plant list, NIXLE community alerts, smoke information, and much more. You'll find here, too, a chilling video showing how an ember storm [simulated here] can engulf a home that is not Firewise.

Another excellent source for wildfire information is a website called livingwithfire.com. Since its inception in 1997, LWF has created materials for residents that have been shared and applied to fire-prone regions throughout the country. Here you will find information about everything from what to pack in a "go bag" or include in your evacuation plan to what to do after you've experienced loss in a wildfire event.



Fire Education from Camp Kaye

posted on NextDoor.com

Today will be a turning point.

Weather-Driven (September 11, 2020)

Hi everyone. Just some general information about how these fires work and why it can help to understand some things about them. My name is Camp Kaye and I've worked wildfires since 1987. First thing I learned is that fires are weather-driven. We cannot stop one until the weather cooperates no matter what resources we have to throw at it if the weather is creating conditions conducive to fire growth.

The past few days have been exactly that and then some, hence the crazy, out-of-control feelings we've all had. I'm writing this to give some perspective to what we're seeing now, last night and today. . . .

For full essay, click here: <https://bit.ly/2TfwtNl>

Fire Requires an Ignition Source (September 28, 2020)

Camp Kaye again. I returned off the South Obenchain Fire two days ago. This red flag warning and wind event we're experiencing now is causing concern for friends and neighbors, so I'd like to address that.

As a result of the fire events earlier this month and repercussions thereof many of us are reacting to the impact of a trauma. Though I didn't lose my home, when I drive I-5 and see the burned areas I simply can't process my reaction. It's overwhelming. . . . What can help at this point are clarity and facts as the PTSD tends to blur those.

Fact: Winds don't start fires. We've had wind events like these for years and seldom had fires ignite during those. There can be an occasional power line blown down, but not four power lines all through the valley and beyond in a day or two. It would take much stronger winds than what we've experienced to cause that.

Fact: Fires require an ignition source. There is no lightning in the forecast, the single largest cause of wildfires. Though human accident-caused fires happen they are not the norm. . . .

For full essay, click here: <https://bit.ly/2TfwtnU>

Woven Into the Forest (October 14, 2020)

Camp Kaye again. I had someone ask me about dead trees, blackberries and how fire moves uphill, if it's better living near a creek. Bottom line was she wanted to know how to protect her neighborhood and home. I thought a lot about my answer.

First, perspective. We've moved into and live in the midst of nature. It might seem in Ashland, Talent, Phoenix, Central Point we're "in towns". I pulled up Google Earth. It's obvious how the natural landscape carpets our whole area, apparent the houses we've built merely exist within the native habitat.

When asked the above questions I realized there are no towns. There are houses, barns, churches, markets, schools and all manner of what we call "improvements" (when something is constructed on otherwise bare real estate) tucked into and scattered across the land. We didn't change anything from day one. The airport was put on a flat with enough margin for take-offs and landings. The hillside homes climbed the slopes for views. The towns grew, as custom immemorial, along the waterways. We weren't thinking about fires. . . .

For full essay, click here: <https://bit.ly/2TfwtnU>

Turning Fuel to Flame (October 17, 2020)

Another aspect of perspective around our fire situation involves grasping the environmental change from one resistant to ignition in fall, winter and spring to one in which fire is almost the missing element as the air warms and humidities drop with the coming of summer. . . .

We have done little to help our condition.

Fires require fuel, oxygen and heat. A critical element needed for ignition is something known as preheating. Pass a match quickly under the edge of a tissue and it may not flame. Slow your movement and it'll catch. All materials must reach a temperature specific to each substance to respond to ignition ~ the flash point. In 100-degree temps, fuels are preheated and need only slight escalation to turn fuel to flame.

Add to this our accomplishment of sending over 50% of our city rain and snow to storm drains (from roofs, driveways and roads), in the process depriving our soils of cooling moisture, raising neighborhood microclimate temps and drying landscapes attempting to survive on drip irrigation (which doesn't begin to compensate for the moisture loss) and the conclusion we've done little to help our condition becomes tougher to argue. . . .

For full essay, click here: <https://bit.ly/2TfwtnU>

Letter from the Oregon Inferno

Written by volunteer firefighter and author Juliet Grable, who lives in the mountains above Ashland and joined the fire lines in Talent and Phoenix., this amazing article appeared in the September edition of the Sierra Club Monthly. Grable chronicles what she encountered: "The fire leaves rows of concrete slabs in its wake—the gravestones of people's homes, stone chimneys like mausoleums." She also decries Oregon's divisive politics, which have led some to blame the Antifa, "Dems," and environmentalists for the fires consuming the state.



Link to article: <https://bit.ly/3dMV4tM>

Other MRPOA News

As you have no doubt noticed, the park (meadow) has taken a serious beating this summer. The combination of drought, heat, and smoke has taken a big toll. With luck, winter rains will bring the grass back to life.

The deer, always a friendly presence in the meadow, have become especially hard-pressed, too. Rarely has their search for food been so intense. If you're a gardener, you may have noticed that they've taken to nibbling on plants they never touched before.

PLEASE REMEMBER that our neighborhood deer are *not* aggressive (there's never been a deer attack to our knowledge) and don't deserve to be chased away or the target of frisbees. The best advice is to keep your distance and keep dogs on a leash.

On the real estate front, three houses have sold in the past two months. Here are the details:

- 2275 Sam Evans Pl, \$575,412 — 3 bed, 2 bath, 1,804 sqft, 0.27 acres lot (sold, Sept. 22)
- 2280 Sam Evans Pl, \$549,900 — 3 bed, 2.5 bath, 1,936 sqft, 0.25 acres lot (sold, Aug. 14)
- 1880 Green Meadows Way, \$549,000 — 3 bed, 2 bath, 1,776 sqft, 0.25 acres lot (sold, Aug. 5)

And thank you, again, to Doug Kay for organizing the October 17 Firewise Open House and to all those (25!) who were able to attend. Keeping Mountain Ranch as safe as can be in the face of wildfire danger takes all of us!

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Comments or questions? Please email us: mrpoa.ashland@gmail.com