

# Sun Mountain Ranch Club Firewise Committee



Dec. 2022

Dear neighbors,

Your SMRC Firewise committee is already thinking ahead to 2023 and what activities we can provide to help make our community more resilient to the dangers of wildfire.

**Our committee is of the strong opinion that the primary cause of fire to SMRC will come from within the development.** We have recently had 2 fires in our community. We have been very fortunate to date but as the saying goes, better safe than sorry, and there is much we can do to make our homes safer. One thing to keep in mind - any money spent to safeguard your home is less expensive than having to rebuild after a fire.

If you haven't already given thought to what you can do to help safeguard your home, the easiest place to start is with a free home evaluation. Both the DNR and Okanogan Conservation District provide free assessments. Our suggestion is to contact either of these agencies and ask to have an evaluation performed this coming spring. The DNR website to sign up for an assessment is <https://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov/> . You can reach the Okanogan Conservation District at (509) 422-0855 or their website is <https://www.okanogancd.org/> . You can also get additional information from the national Firewise website by visiting <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA> .

As you may remember from early 2022, we worked with the Washington State DNR to offer a 50/50 program. This program allowed participating landowners to have their properties professionally thinned of small diameter trees and brush and to have the DNR pay 50% of the estimated cost. So far, 28 properties opted into this excellent program and 20 properties have been treated this year with the remaining properties to be completed in the spring of 2023. This is an outstanding way to help safeguard all our properties while at the same time improving the overall health of the remaining trees. Attached is a map showing which properties have opted into this excellent program.

Also this year, the Okanogan Conservation District applied for a \$9.995 million grant from the federal government which, if awarded, they will use to firewise communities across the county, including SMRC. We have asked to have our common areas thinned and to have brush mitigation performed along our roadsides. They are also hoping to be able to offer a shared cost program to homeowners to have their properties thinned.

For 2023, SMRC hopes to again be providing dumpsters, at no cost to you, for you to dump your yard waste instead of burning it on your property. **No matter how many years experience you have burning yard waste, these kinds of fires can quickly get out of control and drastically spread.** We strongly encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to safely dispose of yard waste for free! We will provide you with the dates as early in the spring as we can.

We are also planning to thin small diameter trees and limb up large ones along 2 main roads in SMRC - Twin Lakes Drive and Larkspur. We plan to use Firewise funds to hire a chipping service to dispose of the limbs and small trees. This work will only be performed 30 ft out from the center of the roads on each side which is common area property.

Those are the activities we have thought to take on in 2023. Now we would like to give you the opportunity to let us know what YOU think we should be tackling in the coming year. Please call your Firewise chairperson, Karen Mulcahy at (503) 522-5017 or the Firewise secretary, Patti Nordby at (509) 996-3546 with your thoughts. Or you may send your ideas to us at [smrcfirewise@gmail.com](mailto:smrcfirewise@gmail.com) .

And just as a reminder, anyone can join the Firewise committee. We hold our meetings by Zoom and we would love to have more participation - we can accommodate up to 100 people. We are always looking for interested neighbors who have a desire to help keep our community fire safe. All are welcome!

Yellow properties below have opted into the DNR 50/50 thinning program.

