

# **PRESCOTT AREA WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE COMMISSION**

## **Q2 2015 Report**

### **PAWUIC Presents the 2015 Wildfire Expo**

We joined up again with the Earth Day celebration on April 18. We closed off Cortez Street on the east side of the Courthouse and again hosted fire equipment, new and old, from Prescott Fire, Central Yavapai, Chino Valley, Groom Creek, Prescott National Forest and had a live drill run out of the incident command vehicle of the Yavapai Sheriff's Jeep Posse.

Children got to use the fire hoses and sit for pictures on the trucks. Smokey Bear, courtesy of the Prescott National Forest, "Truckee" from Central Yavapai Fire District and our own Disney character, Goofy, were available for photo opportunities.

More than a thousand individuals picked up educational materials on fire safety whether at home or in our wildlands. The full day was all about educating the public on living in the wildland urban interface.

We must thank the participating fire departments/districts, the Prescott National Forest, Animal Disaster Services, and the Yavapai County Medical Corp., Arizona State Forestry, along with Bob Lee & Sons for setting up displays and making their information available to the public.

### **Goals for 2015**

#### **New Firewise © Communities**

The Executive Board set a Commission goal of five new Firewise Communities by year's end. High Valley Ranch has submitted their certification paperwork to Arizona State Forestry Division (ASFD) and the National Fire Protection Association. They will be recognized at the August meeting of the Commission making them the 32<sup>nd</sup> community to be Firewise Community in the Prescott Basin and Crown King area. Carrie Dennett, Firewise State Liaison and Russ Shumate, ASFD will also award those communities that have re-certified as Firewise Communities for five and ten years.

#### **A New Face for PAWUIC**

In September 2015 PAWUIC will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of continuously helping to protect our community. We are planning to ask our local, state and national legislators to recognize this achievement. At the same time we unveil the new logo type giving PAWUIC a fresh new face on the internet as well as our printed materials.

The Commission's marketing committee, established this year, has been working since its inception on a strategy to re-brand PAWUIC on its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These efforts are based upon the Commission's observation that the general citizenry is widely unaware of the efforts that PAWUIC has brought to the Prescott Basin to reduce the risk of wildfire and the economic impact that would result were a wildfire to reach the city proper.

#### **Bureau of Land Management Returns to Projects in the Prescott Basin**

Bruce Olson, Fuels Specialist, reported that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management is active in a fuel break project near Yarnell as well as conducting slash pile burns near Aqua Fria. Hand thinning is being conducted near Costco complementing the fuels mitigation efforts of the Prescott National Forest along Walker Road.

### **Finance**

#### **Financial Recap**

Q2 Non Grant Income	\$ 658
Q2 Grant Reimbursements	\$76,996

Q2 Operational Expense       \$ 4,836  
Q2 Grant Mitigation Expenses \$74,497

***Win a Chance to Ride in a Fire Engine  
at the Annual Christmas Parade***



***TICKETS ONLY \$2 OR 3 FOR \$5  
Up to six passengers may ride***

### **Fundraising**

With the assistance of the Prescott Fire Department, PAWUIC launched an annual Christmas Parade Ride-Along in one of the department's fire trucks. The grand prize affords six people an opportunity to ride in the annual Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade. PAWUIC has traditionally organized our surrounding fire departments and districts to bring equipment to the parade. This fundraiser is targeted to provide \$10,000 in

revenue of which one third will be turned into scholarships for the 2016 Arizona Wildfire and Incident Management Academy.

Each Firewise Community has been asked to sell 150 tickets throughout their community. The purpose of using our Firewise Communities is two fold: first to raise money; but equally important to meet new people and to introduce them to the concept of the fire-adapted community and encourage them to volunteer to help us in our mission.

Raffle tickets can be purchased by phone through our PAWUIC office at (928)277-8032. Our office hours are Tuesday-Thursday from 10am-3pm or in person at 1700 N. Iron Springs Rd.

## New Firewise Signs



Forty-four new Firewise signs were installed across the City of Prescott and Yavapai County. Above pictured is the installation of the last sign on Haisley Road adjacent to Haisley Homestead. Present for the unveiling were Everett Warnock (in the beige hat) who orchestrated the sign purchase and placements and to his left Councilman Charlie Arnold. They are flanked by members of the Prescott Fire Department and the City of Prescott street maintenance department.

## Interagency Support

### Arizona State Forestry Division

We had our first meeting with the State Forester, Jeff Whitney who was appointed by Governor Doug Ducey. PAWUIC was offered an opportunity to work with his office on a new program being run by Jim Downey. We were encouraged to continue our work with the Firewise Communities in Yavapai County. And we were asked to look for new ways in which we could work closer with the agency on a new project. Russ Shumate continues on our Executive Board as well as doing double duty with his ASFD duties both in Prescott and Phoenix.



Agreement was reached between County Supervisor Chairman, Craig Brown and State Forester Whitney to conduct some additional fuels mitigation efforts along some State Forest boundaries backing up to residential properties.

### **Legislative Issues**

#### **State:**

We will continue to follow the developments resulting from Governor Ducey's signing of House Bill 2343 intended to reduce vegetation on state trust lands by January 1, 2016.

#### **Federal:**

H.R. 167 amends the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to require specified adjustments to discretionary spending limits in FY2015-2022 to accommodate appropriations for wildfire suppression operations in the Wildland Fire Management accounts at the USDA or Department of the Interior. Sponsor Rep. Michael Simpson (R-ID) in subcommittee on Federal Lands.

S..235 Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2015 contains similar language as H.R. 167 but covers FY2016-2025 and includes provisions for the President's budget to include the average cost for wildfire suppression over the previous ten years. Sponsor Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) referred to the Committee on the Budget. This bill and H.R. 167 are intended to eliminate "fire borrowing" where suppression cost overruns are stolen from other forest service programs.

S. 508 Sen. McCain and Sen. Flake have a similar bill called the FLAME Act Amendments of 2015 (reintroduced from the preceding session). It calls for full funding of wildland firefighting budgets with an increase in resources for forest restoration programs. This bill provides land managers the tools needed to invest in hazardous fuels reduction and disease treatment. Sponsor Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) referred to the committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

### **Grant Activity**

The following grants have been awarded to PAWUIC through the Arizona State Forestry Division with funds from the USDA Forest Service.

#### **Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuels Grant Program 2014 – Q1 2015 Progress**

This grant program administered through PAWUIC is from the USDA Forest Service and the Arizona State Forestry Division. This grant targets remediation and fuels mitigation in: Ponderosa Park; Prescott Summit; and Walker; with a reserve of acreage for new communities in the beginning stages of Firewise certification.

#### **TOTALS TO DATE:**

Acres:	36.36 Treated with 88.64 remaining	29.1%
Federal Funds Used:	\$58,758.22	32.8%
In Kind Match:	664 Hrs = \$11,952.54	185.7%
Volunteer Hours:	700.02 Hrs = \$12,600.36	
Total Trees Removed:	442	

#### **State Fire Assistance Grants – Western States WUI 2014 – Applications in Review**

Neither of two applications were approved for PAWUIC. Only one SFA grant was awarded in Arizona for work on the Coconino Forest

#### **WFHF 2015 Application – Application in Review**

A grant request for \$197,655 is still in review to provide fuels mitigation assistance for: Yavapai Hills; Iron Springs; Prescott Skyline; Lynx Mountain Estates; Dewey-Humboldt; Blue Hills; Williamson Valley Corridor; and Granite Oaks.

### **FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE COMMISSION'S OFFICERS**

We are very excited about the new marketing campaign surrounding the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of PAWUIC in

September. It should give the organization the media boost necessary to raise public awareness of our mission and our visibility to grant-making organizations and local business owners. The future of PAWUIC is dependent upon raising funds to support our mission outside of the governmental agencies where money becomes tighter year after year.

Our mission statement from inception: *"To help maintain the quality of the environment and of living in the Prescott area by providing leadership and continuity in the management of wildland urban interface issues."*

As a post note, it has still taken too long to publish the quarterly report. We are committed to more timely reporting in the next quarter.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Betts, Chairman

Shirley Howell, Treasurer

Author(s): Jesse Roman. Published on March 2, 2015.

'LIVING ON THE EDGE' has a couple meanings to the residents of Prescott, Arizona, a picturesque city of 40,000 about 100 miles north of Phoenix. It means living at the edge of Arizona's stunning and rugged wildlands, and it also means living on the edge of wildfire danger.

Over the past decade, a combination of dry conditions, millions of acres of forest, and a seemingly endless supply of chaparral and brush have led to thousands of wildfires in the Prescott Basin, the area immediately south and west of Prescott that includes a

### More Case Studies on Resiliency

- [First Moments: The 2013 Boston Marathon bombings.](#)
- ['More than just rebuilding': Fortifying the New York City subway system after Hurricane Sandy.](#)
- [Continuity is King: Goodyear's plan to identify and manage potential business disruptions.](#)
- [ONLINE ONLY](#)
- [Ahead of the Surge: The rush to Protect Boston's seaport and airport against rising seawater.](#)
- [From In a Flash](#)
- [Boston's snow-induced public transportation woes offer a textbook example of the need for infrastructure resilience.](#)

mix of developed and undeveloped land referred to as the "wildland/urban interface." Most of the fires were small and were put out quickly; two caused evacuations and burned a handful of houses. But no one here takes fire for granted, especially after the nearby 2013 Yarnell Hill Fire, which killed 19 Granite Mountain Hotshot firefighters and destroyed more than 100 structures just 40 miles southwest of Prescott.

Prescott and its suburbs have avoided a major fire calamity since the 1990 Dude Fire, where six firefighters were killed and 63 structures burned. But residents say it's not luck that keeps the fire at bay. Shortly after the Dude Fire, resident volunteers, along with local government and fire officials, created the Prescott Area Urban Wildland Interface Commission (PAUWIC). In the years since, PAUWIC has joined with the NFPA-sponsored [Firewise Communities® program](#) and developed into a robust public/private partnership covering 31 area neighborhoods. It's a grassroots effort that works to educate thousands of homeowners about defensible space and other Firewise principles, while doing millions of dollars in wildland fuel mitigation work.

The results have been astounding. Since 2000, the Prescott Basin has had more than 2,000 fire starts—where a fire is reported and assets are deployed—and only two of those have become large wildfires, said Denny Foulk, the emergency management coordinator for Yavapai County, where Prescott is located. Those two fires, the Indian Fire in 2002 and the Doce Fire in 2013, burned a total of eight structures, but there were no deaths.

Each of the 31 Firewise communities in the Prescott area has its own local board, which organizes myriad mitigation events in each neighborhood. The larger PAUWIC group meets monthly and includes representatives from the U.S. Forest Service; state, county, and city officials; members of local fire departments; and Firewise citizen volunteers.

"Most of the discussion centers around sharing ideas and what we are doing in communities so we don't have to reinvent the wheel," said Jerry Borgelt, a member of the PAUWIC executive board and a resident of the Highland Pines neighborhood.

Highland Pines holds four "chipper days" throughout the year, where people bring brush from their property to be chipped, enough material to fill a 40-yard dumpster. "It becomes a big party—we come and work together and have a lot of neighborly discussion," Borgelt said.

Groom Creek, ~~the first Firewise neighborhood in Prescott~~, has been holding chipper events for 12 years, and usually gets about 300 tons of debris, said local fire chief Todd Bentley. In Groom Creek, 90 percent of the community has participated in a program to clear 30 feet of defensible space around homes. The community also holds annual pancake breakfasts to talk about mitigation efforts and services available. The neighborhood's Firewise committee assesses every property each year, then mails out individualized postcards containing information on steps homeowners can take to make their homes and property more resistant to wildfire.

All of Prescott's 30 additional Firewise communities hold similar events, and are bolstered by the estimated \$6 million in state and federal grant money that PAUWIC has secured since its formation for mitigation efforts. Much of the planning and site work happens in the communities, while the overall direction and funding tying it all together comes from PAUWIC.

But even the best efforts can't stop every fire. Shirley Howell, PAUWIC's treasurer, said that, if a large wildfire were to strike Prescott, Firewise and PAUWIC have also prepared the community to recovery swiftly. "In event we have a tragedy, we would stand together and help

our neighbors in any way we could, because we have such a firm connection from working so close together,” Howell said. “That is part of our resiliency.”

JESSE ROMAN is staff writer for NFPA Journal.

***Erratum: Timber Ridge was the first Firewise Community both in Prescott and the U.S.***