



PRESCOTT AREA WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE COMMISSION

Q1 2015 Report

Prescott Area Wildland Urban Interface Commission Recognized

Again, PAWUIC was recognized by the National Fire Protection Association in its March 2015 journal as a unique and highly results-oriented, "...robust public/private partnership covering 31 area neighborhoods." Those thirty one communities represent 12,090 properties. Please see the entire article included at the end of this report.

In September 2015 PAWUIC will celebrate its 25th anniversary of continuous giving to our communities.

Goals for 2015

New Firewise © Communities

At the January Executive Board meeting it was decided that we would set a Commission goal of five new Firewise Communities by year's end. Some of the communities that we are actively working with are Cliff Rose, Prescott Lakes, Granite Oaks, and High Valley Ranch.

We also recognize that the most serious wildfire threats to our basin are from the the southwest. The areas from Wilhoit to the south side of Prescott need organization and fuels mitigation. We have also identified the area extending up the Williamson Valley corridor as a key area for our efforts. These areas of concern have been discussed with Yavapai County Emergency Management, Prescott National Forest, Arizona Game and Fish and the fire department/districts. Attention to these areas is limited by our financial (grant) and volunteer resources along with those of our agency members.

Financial

The most pressing item on the Executive Board agenda was PAWUIC's dependency on grant money from federal, state and local sources. At any given time operating cash hovers around \$10,000, thus a far cry from being self-sustaining. This is compounded with the continuing decline in the availability of governmental grants.

The Commission will have to make plans to raise funds from the general public, businesses and corporate giving in order to survive.

With the assistance of the Prescott Fire Department, PAWUIC will launch 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 headed up by our longstanding member, Tony Sciacca.

Guest Speaker

In an effort to make our monthly meetings even more informative, we began including a guest speaker. Our first guest speaker was Sarah Tomskey, the new Bradshaw District Ranger discussing the cross boundary project which through grants would allow the Forest Service to increase its fuels management projects bordering the Prescott Basin wildland urban interface including 5,270 acres of Mexican Spotted Owl habitat.

The guest speaker was the direct result of our first survey of your membership. Other recommended changes to PAWUIC's operations will be implemented over the next few quarters. Improvements to accoustics, visual aids, seating arrangements, and meeting times were highlighted in the survey. We will continue to survery our members and agencies as an ongoing practice to measure the Commission's effectiveness in meeting our mission.



New Firewise Signs

Forty-four new Firewise signs were acquired through contributions in Gary Roysdon's memory. Gary was a long time PAWUIC supporter and an unflagging advocate for Firewise Communities. The City of Prescott, the Prescott Fire Department, County of Yavapai and the Central Yavapai Fire District are donating the installation of these new signs and posts. Installations should be completed in the second quarter.

Interagency Support

At the request of our partners from the Central Yavapai Fire District and the Prescott Fire Department, the Commission supported their opposition to the Arizona legislature's SB-1335. The bill included language that would minimize local authority over important fire fighting apparatus ingress and egress access within a defined community. A letter from the Commission was sent to Governor Ducey's office underscoring our support of our fire districts in opposition to the proposed legislation.

Grant Activity

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

State Fire Assistance Grant – Closed Q4 2014

The primary goal of SFA 11-101 grant project was to continue to reduce the threat of wildfire through on-the-ground operations involving the assessment and treatment of high risk, high priority properties within the Prescott Basin Interface.

Communities included in this grant were: The Foothills; Hassayampa; Santa Fe Springs; Kingswood; Rancho Vista Hills; Manzanita Village; Haisley Homestead; Yavapai Hills; Mountain Club; and Forest Hylands. The overall acreage treated was 201.4 acres through grant monies and an additional 21.37 acres completed by volunteers. 2329 trees were removed.

PAWUIC volunteers and the Prescott Fire Department worked to educate communities on the Healthy Forest Initiative to validate the need for clearing of ladder fuels. The Prescott Fire Department provided free slash chipper service for homeowners creating their own defensible space around their homes.

State Fire Assistance Grant – Closed Q4 2014

SFA 12-102 requested \$299,990 in grant funds with a match to total \$599,980 for fuels mitigation and education of our communities in the Prescott basin. Prescott Fire Department treated 609.17 acres, Central Yavapai Fire District treated 46.1 acres, and PAWUIC treated 41.19 acres for a total of 696.46 acres over the two-year life of this grant.

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:

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| Acres: | 23.6 Treated with 101.4 remaining | 18.9% |
| Federal Funds Used: | \$37,324.22 | 20.89% |
| In Kind Match: | 268.43 Hrs @ \$4,831.74 | 75% |
| Volunteer Hours: | 317.3 Hrs. @ \$5710.5 | |
| Total Trees Removed: | 386 | |

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

Two grant applications covering hazardous fuels reduction and Firewise education covering Chino Valley, Walker, Yavapai Hills, Prescott Fire Department and PAWUIC for some 900 acres of treatment.

WFHF 2015 Application – Application in Review

A grant request for \$197,655 was submitted to the State Forestry Division 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

This has been the Commission's first quarterly report in some time. We hope that you have found this informative and that subsequent editions will be completed within thirty days of the close of the quarter. Please pass along any suggestions that you might have to make this report better.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Betts, Chairman

Shirley Howell, Treasurer

More Case Studies on Resiliency

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 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

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Boston's snow-induced public transportation woes offer a textbook example of the need for infrastructure resilience.

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.