

# Extension Connection

May 15, 2020

Gilpin County CSU Extension's  
Virtual Education

Vol. 9



## *GILPIN COUNTY UPDATES*

BY CLAIRE SKEEN

As of May 15, 2020, there is still only one confirmed case of COVID-19 in Gilpin County. Please continue to monitor the Gilpin County Sheriff's Facebook page and website for any new information.

Have you taken the survey for the Gilpin County Comprehensive Plan yet? You can submit your thoughts and Ideas for Gilpin's future until June 1st:

[http://www.gilpincounty.org/departments/community\\_development](http://www.gilpincounty.org/departments/community_development)

Don't forget to take the 2020 Census! For more information, or to respond visit <https://2020census.gov/>

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# *WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS*

BY JENNIFER COOK

I recently moved to Gilpin County, and I will admit, while the plentiful forests are what have drawn me here, they also present a huge potential for wildfire. Wildfires are a natural part of Colorado's varied ecosystems, but fire seasons are becoming longer, more intense, and more damaging over the last few decades in Colorado. Governor Polis recently declared May as Wildfire Awareness Month, to encourage all citizens and communities to be better prepared for wildfires. Living in Gilpin County requires self-reliance. Fire departments can easily get overwhelmed during an escalating wildfire. Planning ahead and taking actions to reduce fire hazards near your home will help protect your property and home. How prepared are you and your family? With all the things to consider, it can be a bit overwhelming – home owner's or renter's insurance, protecting the home structures with defensible space, thinking about how a fire truck could navigate the rocky road to get to your home, etc. Firefighters always do their best to protect residents, **but ultimately, it's YOUR responsibility to protect your life, family, animals, and property from wildfire.**





# *TOP 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR A WILDFIRE*

1. Sign up with [Hyper-Reach](#), to receive community emergency alerts, such as evacuation notices, from Gilpin County.
2. Install a [reflective address sign](#) along the road so fire fighters can find your home in the dark.
3. Be aware of high fire danger days (i.e. red flag warning). Currently [Gilpin County is in a fire ban](#) – restricting open fires and discharging fire arms without a hunting permit.
4. Learn multiple egress routes in and out of your neighborhood, and the county, in case your usual path is blocked because of a wildfire.
5. Make a “go bag” and have it ready to grab if you have to evacuate in 10 minutes! This really does happen! Think about key things you would want to have – medication, photos, important documents, favorite clothes, etc. Keep them all in one spot, ready to grab.
6. Update home insurance policy to reflect the cost of replacing valuables and rebuilding your home.
7. Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, lawn furniture) within 30 feet of your home’s foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don’t let it touch your house, deck or porch.
8. Keep leaves and needles cleaned from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
9. Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
10. Create [defensible space](#) around your home and other structures. Defensible space is the area that have been modified to protect your home from catching fire, either from direct flames contact or radiant heat. Start with zone 1, the area 0-30 feet from your home.

# *JOIN US FOR A WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS WEBINAR*

**May 26, 2020**

**12-1 pm**

Dan Schroder, Summit County Extension Director and Natural Resources Specialist, will discuss why we need to prepare for wildfires, what are the risks? He will explain and give examples of Important wildfire preparedness strategies that homeowners in Gilpin, Jefferson, and Clear Creek Counties can do around their home and property to prepare for a wildfire. This webinar will be recorded and made available on Gilpin County Extension website.

This webinar is free, but you must register in advance:

[https://extension.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqf-msrjstHNBDI9uXE4TZQa41\\_SjJuFzz](https://extension.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYqf-msrjstHNBDI9uXE4TZQa41_SjJuFzz)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about how to join the webinar.





# DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Defensible space is the natural and landscaped area around a home or other structure that has been modified to reduce fire hazard. Divide your property into zones as pictured. Creating defensible space can be a multi-year project if you have a lot of trees and/or land. Don't feel overwhelmed, start with zone 1, the most critical area surrounding your home. The goal is to remove anything that is flammable around the home, and protect the structure from flying embers entering your home.

## Zone 1 (the area 0-30 feet around home or other structures you want to protect)

- Remove trees or shrubs growing within 10 feet of the structure.
- Keep trees trimmed at least 10 feet from chimneys and remove dead branches hanging over structure.
- Rake pine needles and dead leaves within 10 feet of the structure.
- Remove build-up of needles and debris from roof and gutters.
- Stack firewood 30 feet away, and uphill if possible, from your home.
- Remove dead and dying plants. Regular maintenance (pruning) is necessary to maintain fire resistance of your landscape.
- Break up the continuity of the vegetation (fuel) with decorative rock, gravel and stepping stone pathways. This will help modify fire behavior and slow its spread across your property.



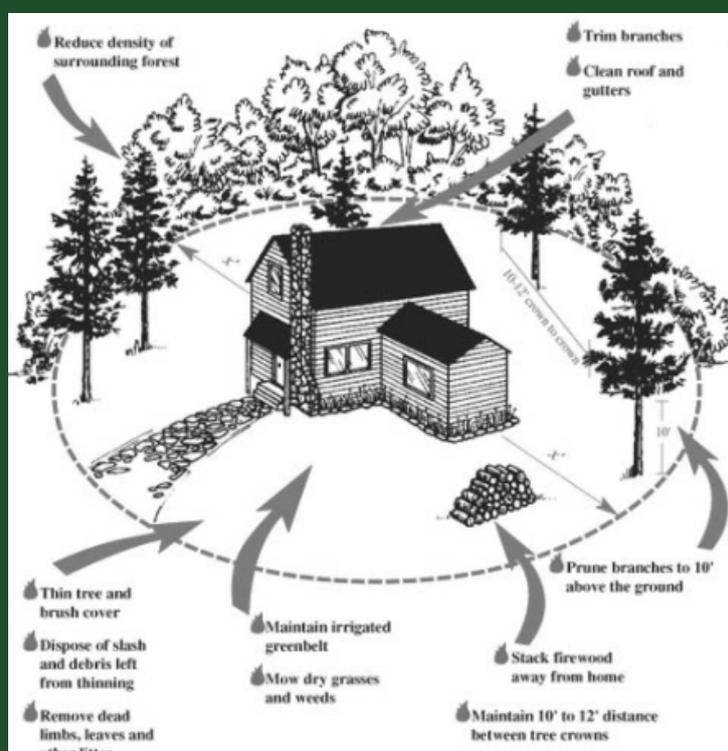
# FIRE RESISTANT LANDSCAPING

BY KIRSTEN S

Fire resistant plants are low growing, open structured, and less resinous. Many native plants are fire resistant. Here are some characteristics of fire-resistant plants:

- High moisture content in leaves (example: succulents)
- Little or no seasonal accumulation of dead vegetation (example: aspen)
- Open branching habits and fewer total branches and leaves (example: currant and mountain mahogany)
- Slow growing, so less pruning required
- Low sap or resin content (many deciduous species)
- Short and grow close to the ground (native wildflowers and groundcovers)
- Increase spacing between plants. Plants nearest your home should be more widely spaced and smaller than those farther away. Plant in small, irregular clusters and islands, not in large masses.

[Learn more about zones 1, 2, and 3 and create your defensible space this summer!](#)





# ONLINE RESOURCES

## **Take an online class!**

Emergency Preparedness course is self-paced. \$50

Managing for disasters is complex and can be frightening to think about. But making a plan and being prepared can safeguard you and your family in an emergency. In this course, you will develop a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan for your family, house, pets, livestock, and property. You will determine the risks for your property and surrounding areas and decide what needs to be addressed in your plan. You will be guided through all the considerations to being fully prepared when disaster strikes. This course was created by CSU Extension.

## **CSU Extension Fact Sheets**

Fire-Resistant Landscaping

Forest Home Fire Safety – checklists for annual maintenance and fire safety

FireWise Plant Materials – plant lists

## **Recorded webinars from 2015:**

FireWise Landscaping: Defensible space is not moonscape

Fire Resistant Plants



# *KID'S CORNER: LIVING WITH FIRE*

BY KIRSTEN SPRINGER

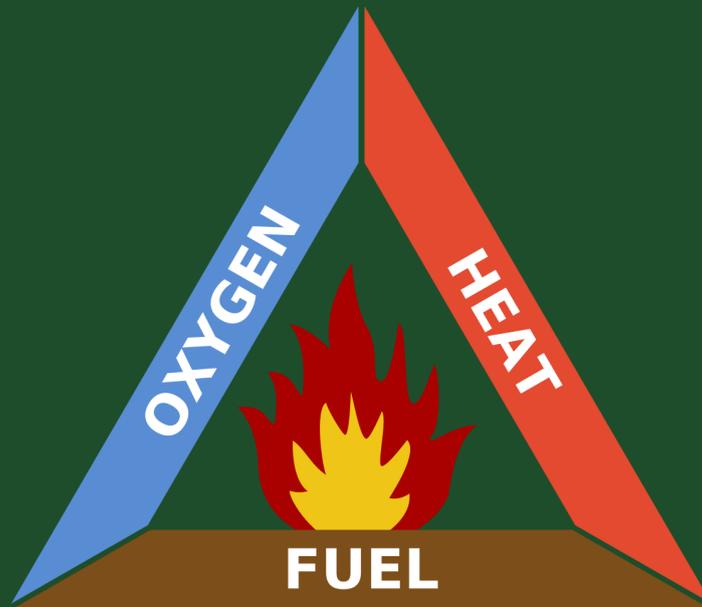
The activity ideas below will help youth explore the BIG difference between a wildfire – an unplanned event which often results in landscape devastation – and a prescribed fire – one that is ignited with the purpose of reducing the risk of wildfire while improving forest health and wildlife habitat. Students will learn how fire can be beneficial to a forest landscape when it is planned and managed.

Getting Started: Provide youth the opportunity to learn about the differences between a wildfire and a prescribed fire by [watching this short video](#).

Essential Question: What can you do to increase the safety of you and your family in case of wildfire near where you live?

Task: [Review statistics published by the Insurance Information Institute](#) to estimate the probability of wildfire in your area. Evaluate the area around your home or school and identify ways to protect these places from wildfire.

## EXTENSION CONNECTION



### Science

A fire requires three things to burn: heat, oxygen, and fuel. These three components are also known as the Fire Triangle. If one of the sides of the fire triangle is removed, a fire will not start, and a fire that is already burning will go out. Fire-fighting relies on this principle. The fire will go out when the fuel runs out, but it is often unsafe to leave a fire that long. Different types of fires need to be tackled in different ways. Review the chart below and complete the final column, which defines the fire triangle element eliminated by the firefighting action.

<u>Type of Fire</u>	<u>Firefighting Action</u>	<u>Fire Triangle Element</u>
1. Kitchen stove fire	Cover the pan with a damp cloth	_____
2. Wildfire	Make a fire break (cut down a line of trees)	_____
3. House fire	Douse with water	_____

Answers: 1. Oxygen 2. Fuel 3. Heat

### **Technology**

Design a home & landscape plan that reduces the amount of flammable vegetation and materials around your school or home. Using standard graph paper, first sketch your home's floorplan and surrounding areas. Map out the fastest route from inside your home to a safe meeting place that your entire family knows about. Insert any landscape modifications that will support or enhance your escape plan.

### **Engineering**

Read the "What is a Prescribed Fire?" article, published by the National Park Foundation, to learn about the Plastic Sphere Dispenser (PSD) and its role in prescribed fires. Mimicking the PSD's approach and accuracy (but without the real fire!), challenge students to make plans for their own ping pong ball launching devices using basic materials. For inspiration and plans for a working model, view Khan Academy's Projectile Launcher prototype. Even without building your own, consider updates and modifications to be made to this existing ping pong ball launcher after watching the video.

### **Math**

Try testing out this basic forest fire simulation to learn about probability and prediction. This activity allows users to see the results of a fire if a forest is densely planted in a rectangular grid when directional probabilities are set. Try running the simulation in small groups of 2-4, challenging students to use and evaluate this forest fire probability model. Exploration questions for the instructor are also provided.

#### Credits:

Activities published by: PLT STEM

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Dr. Irwin is a Senior Public Service Associate faculty member at the Daniel B. Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, The University of Georgia. Kris has a diversity of experience in environmental education, outreach, and instructional design. He is Co-Coordinator for the Georgia PLT program and was recognized as a National Project Learning Tree Outstanding Educator in 2002.

