

Zion Ridge HOA – Fire Abatement Policy and Plan (rev: 26 March 2021)



Goal: The goals of this effort are to

1. Educate members of our community on the hazards of wildfire and the need for fire abatement.
2. Provide procedures for assessment and fire abatement within our community to include:
 - a. Private lots
 - b. Areas adjoining lots
 - c. Common areas

To do this, we have the following objectives:

1. Educate community on fire hazards and why preparation and abatement is critical
 - a. Provide background on wildfire danger. There are two levels:
 - i. Private lots
 - ii. Common areas including those adjoining private lots
 - b. Fire Chief Brad Freeman feels that wildfire is not an “if”; it is a “when”
2. Identify resources for compliance.
 - i. Checklist to assess property
 1. Completed by homeowners/contractors
 - ii. Training
 - iii. Links to local companies/individuals for hire
 - iv. Plan for ongoing assessments by fire chief, community and HOA

- v. HOA renting chippers/equipment for general use.
3. Ongoing, consistent compliance verification and validation
 - a. Common areas
 - b. Lots
4. In the event of a wildfire
 - a. Evacuation routes
 - b. Communications
 - c. Safe zone(s)?

This document will be distributed to all owners, and posted to HOA Website. Note that Appendices I and II provide a single page checklist and resource list.

Timeframe:

Phase I – Initiation: Setup and Education (finish by April 2021)

- Develop policy and plans for implementation
- Educate homeowners on needs
- Provide training on
 - Assessment
 - How to clear property

Phase II – Implementation

- Homeowners do assessments (ongoing)
- Fire Department assess common areas (Summer 2021)
 - Develop plan of action for clearing common areas/setting fire breaks

Phase III – Review and Maintenance (ongoing)

Discussion:

The threat from wildfire is real and must be addressed immediately. As of early 2021, the community has had a very dry year. There is a substantial amount of combustible material throughout the community. Federal, State and County efforts are ongoing. The primary function of our abatement program is to reduce the risk of fire within our community by pro-actively establishing defensible space and reduction/removal of flammable materials on properties. Note that homeowners may be liable for costs incurred for a fire started on their property.

Fire pits are the most likely source for a wildfire. Highly recommend only propane fire pits. Existing wood fire pits must be evaluated and approved by the fire chief.

Homeowners are responsible for their properties, but we still have large common areas. We need to consider abatement as a community-wide responsibility. A wildfire from the common areas is just as deadly as one initiated on a private lot.

Action Priorities:

1. Immediate area surrounding structure
2. Remainder of lot
3. Boundary area adjacent to lot
4. All other common area

Appendix I – Fire Abatement Checklist (rev: 26 March 2021)

Watch this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL_syp1ZScM

Review this site: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire>

Structures

- Nothing flammable touching or overhanging structure (e.g. needles, leaves, anything flammable)
- Vents (add fine screening (less than ¼”) to prevent embers from entering)
- Roof, look for needles underlying structures (like gables) or abutting wood siding.
- Deck, flammable material, furniture
- Within 30 feet of structure
 - No flammable material (check for branches overhanging)
 - Prune all dead material from bushes.
 - No wood fire pit
- At least one exterior freeze proof water tap far enough from the dwelling to permit hose protection to all sides and roof of dwelling. Note this *may* require SSD approval.
- Spark arrestors on chimneys for wood burning fireplaces
- Reminder that smoke alarms are vital inside houses.
 - Can buy 10 year sealed detectors in large quantity from Costco, Amazon, etc.

Property (outside of 30 feet structure boundary)

- No downed deadwood (trees, shrubs)
 - Chip or remove deadwood/fuel
 - Chips on ground are a good barrier to prevent fire spreading.
- No more than 2 inch layer of pine needles or dried grasses and wildflowers
 - Chipped wood is ok, hard to burn and slow burning
- Ladder fuels. Bushes or small trees adjacent to/beneath other trees
 - Clear underbrush, especially scrub oak
 - Lower branches trimmed to height of 4-6 feet
- Best to clear 30 foot “breaks” around trees/bushes
- E.g. consider “islands” of vegetation with breaks in between to prevent fire spreading

Fire pits

- Recommend only propane fire pits
 - Fuels removed to a minimum of 15 feet from fire pit (includes above e.g. branches)
 - Preferably concrete or bare dirt
 - Size limited to 3’ diameter and 2’ height
 - Cover to prevent disbursing embers.
- Water source nearby in the event of fire
- Never leave unattended
- Important to let renters know and follow rules

Property Boundary with Common Areas

- Common area abatement is a community responsibility, but anything you can do to forge a break will help everyone

Debris

- Remove from property. Contractors can remove or can be dumped at slash pile inside Little Ponderosa.

Parking

- No parking on side of roads or in fields. Catalytic converters will start a fire.

Appendix II - Resources

Subject Matter Experts/Stakeholders:

- Brad Freeman, Fire Chief zionfirebgfreeman@gmail.com (801) 420-0283 (M)
- Larry Sanders, Board member, trained firefighter sanderslarry1950@gmail.com
- Steve Schmidt, member of board SteveZionHOA@gmail.com (858) 826-6217 (W) (Leave voicemail)
- HOA Website: <https://zionhoa.com/>

East Zion Fire Department

- Brad Freeman and trained volunteers
 - Help with assessment
 - Provide services, at cost, to homeowners for work on lots
 - Considering having HOA rent equipment, chippers, etc., for a “Fire Abatement Week”, but we need to resolve safety/liability issues before moving forward.

Local contractors:

Identify and train some local contractors to do this. Perhaps get a discount by having them do several lots at once.

Websites:

Has links to help show why wildfire is dangerous and how to mitigate.

Look at Firewise: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>

How to become a Firewise USA® site: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Become-a-Firewise-USA-site>

Brad suggested film by Ron Howard on the Paradise Fire: [Rebuilding Paradise](#)

Forest Service site on [defensible space](#). Includes ideas for plants

Appendix III – References in CC&Rs

The August 2016 CC&Rs contain the following articles regarding fire abatement/prevention:

No Hazardous Activity (9.14): Open fires in approved fire pits only. May be restricted at certain times.

Fire Suppression (9.36). According to the Kane County wildfire mitigation plan, anyone who owns a home or property in forested areas should consider the hazard presented to their property by wildfire and should attempt to mitigate its effect. To this end these CC&Rs have adopted an acceptable wildfire mitigation plan in which maintaining defensible space will be a requirement of all property owners. Defensible space refers to that area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house. The effectiveness of defensible space increases when multiple property owners work together. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in fines equivalent to the cost of the work to be performed and a lien placed on the properties in question. To accomplish this, the following will be required:

- a. As a minimum, every structure shall have a defensible space of no less than 30 feet around all sides of the structure, including detached garages.
- b. All down dead tress within the defensible space area shall be removed if not embedded in soil. If the down dead tree is embedded in the soil, remove all exposed branches.
- c. Remove all dead shrubs from within the defensible space and reduce thick layers of pine needles to a depth of two inches.
- d. Once grasses and wildflowers have dried out, cut down to a two inch minimum.
- e. Remove all ladder fuels within the defensible space. Ladder fuels are defined as vegetation that allows a fire to move from lower growing plants to taller ones. Within the defensible space area, a vertical separation of three times the height of the lower fuel layer is required. For example if a shrub growing adjacent to a large pine tree is three feet tall, the recommended separation distance would be 9 feet, (3 foot shrub height X 3 = 9 feet). This could be accomplished by removing the lower tree branches, reducing the height of the shrub, or both. The shrub could also be removed.
- f. All fuels shall be removed to a minimum of 15 feet around all chimneys, stove pipes and outdoor fireplaces.
- g. All vegetation that is removed or trimmed will be disposed of by chipping or removal.
- h. Property owners shall remove dead trees and dead branches so as to help mitigate risks to other lots.
- i. One exterior freeze proof water tap far enough from the dwelling to permit hose protection to all sides and roof of dwelling shall be provided at each Lot.

Repairs by Association (12.2): In the event that an Owner permits his Lot or Improvements to fall into a state of disrepair that is dangerous, unsafe, unsanitary or unsightly condition or fails to comply with any other covenant or restriction in violation of this Declaration, the Association may give written notice to the Owner describing the condition complained of and demand that the Owner correct the condition within 30 days. If the Owner fails to take corrective action, the Association shall have the right, but not the obligation, to enter upon the offending Owner's Lot and take corrective action to abate the condition. All costs of abatement shall be charged to the Owner, who agrees to promptly pay the reasonable costs of any work performed under this provision. In addition, each Owner hereby grants to the Association a lien on the Lot and any improvements to secure repayment of any sums advanced pursuant to this section, which lien may be foreclosed at any time by the Association in the manner prescribed in Utah for the foreclosure of mortgages. Alternatively, without requiring foreclosure, the Association may seek collection of sums advanced directly from the Owner of the Lot in question. Unpaid amounts will bear interest from the date advanced at the lawful judgment rate under applicable state law.

Appendix IV – Common Area Map

