

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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To: Brazos Fire Protection District landowners

From: Jose Carrillo, District Forester

Date: May 8, 2023

Re: Fire prevention information

As we prepare for our summer in northern New Mexico, we must keep in mind that with warming temperatures comes an increased risk of wildfires igniting within the Wildland Urban Interface, or WUI for short. Living in the WUI comes with its own set of challenges. But the threat of catastrophic wildfire due to overstocked forests can be reduced if we take action and are accountable for our own property.

Following Firewise standards for maintaining Defensible Space is one of many activities that homeowners can take to reduce hazardous conditions around their homes and structures. Brazos Community Firewise group is a collective that organized in 2016 to increase awareness and rally others into action. This year, many have seen a survey that has been circulated to gauge interest in Hazardous Fuel Reduction activities. This information will be important when grants and funding become available that will help in reducing the fuel loading in your area. Together with the Upper Chama Soil and Water Conservation District, the New Mexico Forestry Division is working to apply for cost share funds that will implement projects aimed at reducing hazardous fuels and improve defensible space in your neighborhood.

Our current conditions are in an unhealthy state, as is evidenced by the increase in insect and disease mortality, and a resulting forest that is beyond the historical fire interval seen on the landscape. Thinning our forests will only help strengthen the health and vigor of the residual stand and reduce the overall fire intensity when a fire occurs. Low intensity fires see less erosive activity in the post-fire period, and usually result in healthier conditions. However, when forests are too dense, they burn with high intensity which will cause destructive post-fire erosion that can damage property, fish and wildlife habitat, and community water systems for years to come.

Consider getting in touch with your local Firewise group and see how you can volunteer. Visit <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/fire-prevention-programs/> for more information.