

It's Time to Get Firewise!



Wildfire.

It's a fact of life in Okanogan County. Our forests are adapted to it, but what about our homes and communities? The Okanogan Conservation District can help you be better prepared for fire season. Because it's not a matter of if...it's a matter of when.

This summer, we will be hosting a series of Firewise workshops in partnership with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and Okanogan County. These two hour workshops will introduce you to proven, practical ways to reduce the chance that you will lose your home to a wildfire. Learn how to create defensible space around your home, use fire-resistant plants in your landscaping, and prevent embers from igniting your buildings. It's a smart thing to do, and our local fire fighters, many of whom are volunteers, will appreciate the effort. Locations and directions to the workshops are available on our website at www.okanogand.org, or give us a call at 509-422-0855 x. 100.

Okanogan Conservation District
WSU Okanogan County Extension

Resource Quarterly

FIREWISE

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

All workshops are from 10am to 12pm with an optional 2-hour field trip after the class.

July 13	Twisp
July 27	Tonasket
August 24	Oroville
Sept. 28	Winthrop

OKANOGAN

Can't make it to a workshop? Then consider signing up for a free risk assessment of your property. This site visit takes about an hour, and includes resources that can help you make your own Firewise plan. Contact us today to schedule a visit!

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Your Home Doesn't Have to Burn

Information from the Firewise Toolkit at Firewise.org

Firewise Checklist for Homeowners

Wildfire doesn't have to burn everything in its path. In fact, cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping are important first steps in minimizing damage and loss.

The work you do today can make a difference. Follow these simple action steps now and throughout the year to prepare and help reduce risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear leaves, needles, and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches, and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- Remove anything stored under decks or porches.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with 1/8" wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating, and to prevent embers from blowing under decks.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) 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.**
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are **6 to 10 feet from the ground. If it's a small tree, prune no more than 50% of the canopy.**
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grasses and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Landscape with native and less-flammable plants. The Okanogan Conservation District and the WSU Okanogan County Extension office can provide plant information.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.**
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent embers from penetrating the roof.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

Learn more about how to keep your family safe and reduce your **home's risk for wildfire damage** at www.firewise.org.



What to Do When a Wildfire is Near You

Information from Firewise.org and the Okanogan County Sheriff's Department

Ready, Set, Go

Ready: Be Firewise! Take personal responsibility and prepare long before the threat of a wildfire so your home is ready in case of a fire. Create defensible space around your home. Use fire-resistant landscaping and harden your home with fire-safe construction. Assemble emergency supplies and belongings in a safe spot. Make sure everyone is on the same page and knows planned escape routes.

Set: Get your family and home prepared at the onset of fire in your area. Gather family pets and have them prepared to evacuate. Pack your vehicle with your emergency items including medication and personal identification. Stay aware of the latest news from local media and your local fire department for updated information on the fire. Be prepared to evacuate your home if called to do so.

Go: Do not linger once evacuation orders have been given. Leave early and stay away until your area has been cleared for return by local officials. Promptly leaving your home and neighborhood clears roads for firefighters to get equipment in place to best suppress or fight the wildfire and ensures you and your **family's safety**.

Explanation of Evacuation Levels

LEVEL ONE

Current or projected threats from approaching fire(s) are severe. This is the time to prepare for potential evacuation and the precautionary movement of people with special needs and pets and livestock. If you will be absent from your home for more than a short period, leave a note with name and contact phone number in a visible location.

Level One notification is one flag placed at your driveway entrance.

LEVEL TWO

Conditions indicate a good probability that the approaching fire(s) will severely limit emergency **responders' ability to provide emergency service protection. Dangerous conditions exist that may threaten your residence or business. At this time, you must be prepared to leave at a moment's notice.** This may be the only evacuation notice that you receive.

Level Two notification is two flags placed at your driveway entrance.

LEVEL THREE

Current conditions present specific and immediate threat(s) to the life and safety of persons within this area. You are advised to evacuate IMMEDIATELY. If you choose to ignore this advisement, you must understand that emergency services may not be available. Volunteers will not be allowed to enter the area to provide assistance.

Level Three notification is three flags placed at your driveway entrance.

Photo Contest

By Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District

For the past two years, we've had a blast putting together our calendar edition of the newsletter. This year, we're once again looking for photos from you! Photos should incorporate one or more of the following themes and represent what is unique about Okanogan County:



Agriculture

Forests

History/Tradition

Natural Wonders

Recreation

Water/Wetlands

Wildflowers

Wildlife

We will accept photos from June through October. Digital photos should be in .JPG format and in the largest resolution possible to ensure quality printing. If your photos are selected, you will receive three copies of the calendar edition to share with family and friends.

To submit an entry, email kirstenc@okanogancd.org with the subject line "photo contest". You can also send prints to:

Kirsten Cook
Okanogan Conservation District
1251 S. 2nd Ave, Room 102
Okanogan WA, 98840



Please include a mailing address with your entry.

All submissions will become the property of the Okanogan Conservation District. By submitting your photo, you are releasing it to us to use and reproduce as we see fit.

Plant Sale: We Want Your Input!

It's almost time to pre-order plants for the 2014 sale! We sold out of surplus plants in less than an hour this year, so doing a pre-order is crucial to guarantee that you get the plants you want most. Before we begin taking those orders in September, we'd like to know what other species of native trees and shrubs you'd like us to offer. To see last year's plant list, go to www.okanogancd.org/plant-sale. Give us a call at 509-422-0855 x. 100 or send us an email at ocd@okanogancd.org and tell us what kind of native plants you'd like to see added to the list!

Supervisor Spotlight

A big welcome to our new Board Supervisor! Steve Colvin officially joined the board in April 2013.

Steve's background is a combination of both farming and teaching. In 1977, he began farming in the Spokane/Lincoln County area. Over the next 16 years, the farm grew to include wheat, barley, hay, and cattle. In 1993, he left farming to pursue a Masters Degree in Chemistry.

Steve and his wife Linda both teach science and math in the Oroville School District. They also own the Esther Bricques Winery on Swanson Mill Road between Oroville and Tonasket. The vineyard began in 2000 and the winery in 2005; it now includes 9 acres of vineyard and 18 acres of hay.

Steve's letter of intent sums up his interest in serving the Okanogan Conservation District as a volunteer board member:

“Preserving and conserving our natural resources has been a focus even before I began farming. The combination of my experiences in farming and teaching give me a unique perspective on the needs of the local land manager. Benefits to our entire community can be seen when our natural resources are conserved and enhanced. When educational and technical assistance is provided, conservation practices are easily followed and landowners can learn and see the benefits of **conserving our natural resources.**”

Please join us in appreciating Steve and his service! Remember, all board meetings are open to the public and we welcome input from those who attend our meetings. Meetings take place at the Okanogan Conservation District office, 1251 South 2nd Ave, Room 102, in Okanogan.

Here is the schedule of our upcoming board meetings:

July 2 @ 6 pm

August 1 @ 6 pm

September 5 @ 6 pm

October 3 @ 6 pm

November 7 @ 4 pm

December 5 @ 4 pm

Interested in sharing your thoughts on natural resource conservation in Okanogan County? We are always looking for Associate Supervisors to join our board. Contact us for more information about this volunteer opportunity at 509-422-0855 ext. 5.



Okanogan Conservation District Supervisor Steve Colvin, with his wife Linda, at the Quincy Balloon Festival, 2010

Success Summit Coming to Okanogan

By The Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS)

The Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) plans to showcase success stories when it teams up with partners to convene the 5th annual NCW Community Success Summit in Okanogan on November 20, 2013. The event is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Okanogan Middle School, 244 Fifth Ave. N in Okanogan. **“We’re thrilled to work with the City of Okanogan to host the Summit this year,” said Nancy Warner, IRIS Coordinator. “We want to showcase and pass on a collection of success stories that can help the next generation thrive”.**



To build on last year’s summit in Entiat, Warner said IRIS is working again this year with the local school district in Okanogan to engage a team of faculty and students in all aspects of the summit. The Okanogan Middle School students will join others in presenting brief videos about the successes in their communities. They will also participate in the presentations and discussions about successes from Okanogan and the greater region.

IRIS is also working with an advisory committee to plan other elements of the summit that will include a lunch of locally-produced foods sponsored by Slow Food Okanogan, special outreach events and the announcement of the host community for the 2014 summit to be held in Douglas County. Event planners anticipate that more than 150 people from Okanogan and across the region will participate in the summit this year. An annual celebration of success, the summit also serves as a fundraising event that will enable IRIS to continue the cycle of highlighting success over the next decade.

IRIS is proud to acknowledge the following “early bird” sponsors for this year’s event including the City of Okanogan, Okanogan School District, Okanogan Conservation District, Okanogan Land Trust, The Wenatchee World, North Cascades Broadcasting, Omak Chronicle, Okanogan Economic Alliance, NCW Business Loan Fund, and Slow Food Okanogan.

For more information about sponsoring and how to get involved in the 2013 NCW Community Success Summit contact Nancy Warner, IRIS Coordinator at 509-881-1812, nwarner@applecapital.net. An agenda and registration information will be posted on the IRIS website later this summer.

The Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) fosters sustainable rural communities in North Central Washington by gathering and sharing success stories that enhance a sense of belonging, inspire action, and build community. We believe that thriving communities in a healthy environment create success. *On the web at www.irisncw.org.*

Education and Outreach Update

By Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District

We had an incredibly busy and rewarding Spring working with young people all across Okanogan County! In April and May, we provided programs to nearly 900 students in 7 different school districts. These programs are provided free of charge to schools so that students will have a better understanding of conservation issues and solutions in our area. One of our strategic goals is that residents of and visitors to Okanogan County have the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about natural resources.

Our education programs are made possible by a number of grants from both public and private entities, including the Washington State Conservation Commission, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Verle Kaiser Conservation Endowment Fund, and Kinross Gold Corporation.



Okanogan High School Advanced Biology students prepare to collect data during the Oden Road Fire Study on May 15, 2013.

Manager's Note...

By Craig Nelson

While Alice Cooper's famous "School's Out" rock song may be playing in the minds of area youth, I am reminded that school is never really out. We may take a break from active learning for periods in our lives but we are always learning. For example, I recently earned my certification as a Conservation Planner. It was a goal of mine and one that was necessary as our program evolves and we need to have the highest trained and capable staff possible to deliver projects. Recently, I began learning how to identify specific species of grass and shrubs so I can assist district staff with a project to inventory these species on Washington Department of Natural Resources lands.

The long and short of this is that we all are trying to learn new ideas; new ways of completing tasks, or just gaining greater understanding. Our cooperators are no different in their quest to gain insights and knowledge nuggets. Many of the folks we work with are interested in learning new ways of managing livestock, how to conserve water or fertilizer, or what plants are best for a north facing slope that will stabilize the soils but not need irrigation.

We often work with folks who just want to know what they need to know, and what to look for as they manage their land. Sometimes we enjoy the learning journey with the landowner, sometimes we are the teacher, and sometimes we are the student.

Okanogan Conservation
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Visit us online!

Okanogan Conservation District	www.okanogancd.org
WSU Okanogan County Extension	www.okanogan.wsu.edu

Okanogan Conservation District

Providing local leadership through educational, technical, and financial assistance to landowners to help them voluntarily conserve and enhance natural resources for over 70 years.

1251 South 2nd Ave. Room 102
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WSU Okanogan County Extension

Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations, and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being, and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

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