



# STAYING FIRE WISE & EMBER AWARE TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISKS IN OUR COMMUNITY

*Posted on February 27, 2021 by Mayor Greg Mengarelli*



Even though winter only recently decided to make an appearance, it is always important to remember in our area fire season is still just around the corner as we approach late spring and early summer. While it is the ultimate goal of the Prescott Fire Department and other agency partners to continually focus on preparedness, it's still imperative that we not let our guard down. In fact, Prescott Fire Chief Dennis Light points out that, historically, some of the biggest campaign fires that have occurred in Arizona come immediately following a wet winter season, and given the dry nature of 2020 staff is working particularly hard this spring and summer to protect our community. To that end, we are fortunate to have a number of important resources available to us to prevent and fight wildland fires, and to protect your property or business.

In an effort to mitigate, prevent and suppress wildfires, the City of Prescott and the Prescott Fire Department partner with Central Arizona Fire and Medical Authority, Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management, the Bureau of Land Management and Prescott National Forest. When the need arises, we call upon all our local partners, and when necessary those from around the southwest to provide suppression of fires in our wildland urban interface and other forested areas. Regional partnerships and interagency cooperation are truly the key to maintaining positive stewardship of our wildland interface. We are fortunate to have so many valuable partners in the community.

Another key to managing wildfire suppression is the Prescott National Forest who manages the public lands surrounding our city. In addition to the Bradshaw Ranger District fire personnel, the Prescott National Forest has the Henry H. Kim Fire Center at the Prescott Regional Airport. This facility holds a large cache of supplies and an expert staff which are primarily responsible for all of Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of west Texas. At peak season, the Fire Center can have as many as 60-70 professionals specializing as pilots, communications specialists, supply management teams, logistics experts, and fire fighters including the Prescott Interagency Hotshot Crew, established in 1973. The Fire Center is capable of hosting a number of aircraft of various sizes, from helicopters to the large air tankers. This is a well-equipped facility that hosts local, regional, and national suppression resources serving as part of a large network of fire suppression resources that can be mobilized in response to significant fire events.

Beyond our interagency partnerships, citizens can also do their part in affording our local firefighters a winning chance to save lives and property while maintaining forest health by ensuring "defensible space" in and around their property. It is critically important to clean roof and gutters of leaf litter, pine needles, and other debris regularly. Interested citizens may submit an application for a Fuel's Mitigation

Grant to assist in covering costs for protecting their property, for additional details visit

<https://www.prescott-az.gov/services-safety/fire/programs-services/fire-mitigation-grant/> Trees should be trimmed in such a way that the ladder fuels (those lower hanging branches) are cut away and that no limb overhangs a residence or is placed any closer than 10'. In order to aid residents with this type of clean-up, every Saturday during the month of June the City offers free brush drop off. Outside storage of firewood piles, propane tanks, and other combustible materials should be provided adequate separation from any and all residences, sheds, and workspaces. When considering landscaping community members are encouraged to select, space and maintain fire-resistant plants and shrubs in order to minimize fire spread.

Allowing firefighters clear operating spaces around a residence equal to 100' will allow them the chance to engage the fire directly or indirectly while enhancing their ability to save property without added risk or compromise of firefighter safety. Prescott Area Wildland Interface Commission (PAWUIC) is a great educational resource to help citizens manage the risk of fire damage to their property. To learn more, visit [yavapaifirewise.org](http://yavapaifirewise.org). We should all be confident in our community's capacity to reduce risk and keep each other safe. Every agency and individual involved in the protection of our community is simply the best.