

What is a Fire Adapted Community?

“A fire adapted community is one where the people have joined together to adequately prepare themselves and their homes for the inevitable occurrence of wildfire.” Elwood Miller

With winter moisture well below normal and no end to the drought in sight, federal, state, and local fire services are preparing for a long fire season and working together to safeguard the people, homes, and natural resources entrusted to their protection. “We can’t do this alone,” said Fire Chief Michael Schwartz of the North Tahoe Fire Protection District. “Motivated residents who work with their neighbors and local fire department to prepare their communities for fire is the key to a successful outcome when wildfire strikes.”

Unlike other natural disasters, the intensity and destructive force of wildfire can be reduced by removing highly ignitable, hazardous fuels from around homes and making dwellings more resistant to ignition from flying embers. A fire adapted community is also buffered by fuel breaks where flammable vegetation has been modified to slow the spread of flames and provide space where firefighters can aggressively but safely fight a fire. The adapted community is one where the common perception and culture of the inhabitants includes the reality of wildfire, and the high probability of serious loss. It is a routine way of viewing and characterizing the community. As a result behaviors change and measures to mitigate the threat are implemented. When wildfire inevitably comes, Fire Adapted Communities reduce the potential for loss of human life and injury, minimize damage to homes and infrastructure, and reduce firefighting costs. For more valuable information visit the Living With Fire website at <http://www.livingwithfire.info/fire-adapted-communities>.