

Nevadans Receive Recognition at Conference



A coalition of prominent organizations involved in protecting lives, homes, and natural resources from the destructive force of wildfire has announced the recipients of this year's National Wildfire Mitigation Awards. The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's Living With Fire Program under the leadership of Ed Smith and Sonya Sistare, and Ann Grant, an exceptional and effective Nevada community leader have both received well deserved national recognition by being selected for these awards. The Wildfire Mitigation Awards are the highest national honor one can receive for outstanding work and significant impact in wildfire preparedness and mitigation. The 20 awards announced were jointly sponsored by the heavy-hitters in the field, including the National Association of State Foresters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Protection Association and the USDA Forest Service.

Ann, an advisory board member of the Nevada Network of Fire Adapted Communities, received the Community Wildfire Preparedness Pioneer Award for her leadership success in bringing 85% of the residences in her community of Skyland at Lake Tahoe into compliance with defensible space requirements. Her influence spreads well beyond her community however, as she stimulates and mentors leaders in threatened communities all across Nevada to take the actions necessary to mitigate the destructive force of wildfire. "Ann is without a doubt our most valuable asset," Sistare said. "Her tireless energy and devotion is inspiring. She helps residents in her own community, as well as others throughout Nevada, to learn and take action to reduce their wildfire threat."

The Living With Fire Program received the National Wildfire Mitigation Award for its leadership role in promoting the establishment of fire adapted communities. Since 1997, the Living With Fire Program has been teaching homeowners how to live more safely with the wildfire threat. The collaborative program has received numerous national awards, and been credited with spurring actions that have saved many homes. "Living With Fire has been way ahead of the curve," said Mike Brown, Fire Chief for North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District and President of the Northern Nevada Fire Chiefs Association. "The

program really helped set the stage for fire adapted communities becoming a national goal. They have been very generous in allowing what they've done to be used nationally, and it's been a great success." Living With Fire partners include the Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Division of Forestry, Sierra Front Wildfire Cooperators, U.S. Forest Service, Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association, Nevada State Fire Marshal Division and more than 130 program collaborators statewide.

The awards are to be presented at the International Wildland Urban Interface Conference held in Reno, Nevada