



OVERLOOK ESTATES

Wildfire Risk Assessment

Fall 2011

Conducted by:

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The Firewise Communities/USA program is designed to provide an effective management approach for preserving wildland living aesthetics. The program can be tailored for adoption by any community and/or neighborhood association that is committed to ensuring its citizens maximum protection from wildland fire incidents. The following community assessment is intended as a resource to be used by the Overlook Estate Subdivision's residents for creating a wildfire safety action plan. The plan developed from the information in this assessment should be implemented in a collaborative manner, and updated and/or modified as needed.

Access/Egress

- Overlook Estates has one main entrance to the road, but it is not gated.
- The roads are paved and sufficiently wide enough to fire apparatus and residential vehicles to pass each other, if needed.

Recommendations:

- Establish alternative points off emergency egress, if possible.
- Establish a safety zone within the community for residents to gather if evacuation is not possible.
- Consider establishing a helicopter landing zone for bucket deployment which can also serve as landing zone for medical and law enforcement helicopters.

Construction

- All residences are of slab construction, masonry siding, and fire-resistant roofing.
- Some residences have wooden attachments (i.e. decks, patios, steps, etc.) that would serve as potential "Achilles' Heels" to their structures.
- Some homes have gutters that may collect vegetative debris.

Recommendations:

- All homes should be advised to inspect their attic vents for adequate screening to minimize fire brands/embers from entering the attics, crawl spaces, etc. Metal or aluminum window screening is recommended to provide maximum protection.
- Wooden attachments should have all flammable materials removed from underneath (i.e. grass clippings, leaf litter, etc.) and enclosed with fire-resistant materials.
- Wooden arbors within 30' of structures should be treated as if they are part of the structure to minimize any ignition. Landscaping around these arbors needs to be extremely Firewise.
- Wooden trellises near structures should be removed or relocated further away from any structures.
- Gutters should be screened against local vegetation types to prevent litter accumulation. They should be checked and cleared regularly, especially in the autumn during leaf shed, and under wildfire conditions.

Landscaping

- Most of the lots have been developed; however, there are still a few undeveloped lots mixed amongst them.
- The undeveloped lots still have wildland vegetation present.
- The developed lots have some diversity in landscaping styles, but most have landscaping plants and features that could make the homes more susceptible to ignition.
- There is a natural watershed drainage feature that runs through the subdivision. It is heavily wooded with junipers and mixed hardwoods.

Recommendations:

- Homeowners should be encouraged to conduct risk assessments on their properties.
- Firewise landscaping principles and practices should be strongly encouraged and supported throughout the community.
- The overgrowth of junipers in the watershed/greenbelt should be thinned.
- All dead wood and vegetative debris in both yards and in the watershed/greenbelts should be removed.
- Gravel/rock spacers of one to two feet in width should be adjacent to foundations so that the mulch and foundation landscaping is positioned further from the house and not adjacent to the foundation.

Next Steps

- Submit the application for recognition as a Firewise Community
- Continue to educate those community members not participating in the program. Two educational events are set currently set for September and October 2011.
- Investigate alternative emergency evacuation routes.
- Continue to work on creating a home defensible and survivable space.
- Continue to hold at least one yearly Overlook Estates Firewise Community Day.
- Consider including neighbors sharing the same wildland fire issues, adjacent to the community but not within the Overlook Estates Subdivision.