

**HOLE-IN-THE-WALL**  
**Huerfano County**  
**La Veta, Colorado**

Firewise Action Plan 2021

This Firewise Action Plan addresses a spectrum of wildfire and emergency response hazards identified by Jared Fleming-Forester CSFS, Paul Branson-Huerfano Co All-Hazard Mitigation Coordinator, as well as the Hole in the Wall (HITW) Ranch Firewise Committee. The assessment work took place in the Spring of 2021. This Action Plan proposes specific measures to mitigate wildfire risks present within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) environment of the HITW community.

1. Ensure all lot owners are registered for the Huerfano Co. CodeRED system and are advised of the Huerfano County “Ready, Set, Go!” program. Emphasize this outreach to seasonal and short-term visitors to HITW.
2. Strongly recommend that all lot owners have a Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) assessment and the necessary guidance to ensure that all structures are ‘Hardened’ to resist embers and surface fires.
3. Encourage lot owners to establish and annually maintain a ‘Defensible Space’ around all structures within the HITW community. Utilize NFPA Firewise or CSFS guidelines for this process.
4. Require all residences to install standard reflective address signage to be located at the road and driveway intersection.
5. Encourage each lot owner to agree to permit access to any private water resources such as cisterns, tanks, etc. by fire fighters to attack structure fires. Collaborate with La Veta Fire Protection District (LVFPD) in this process. Establish an HITW emergency contact list that includes information on local available water sources and ensure that LVFPD and Huerfano County Emergency Dispatch receives a copy.
6. Ensure there is “No Outlet” and “Evacuation Route” signage on dead-end HITW Ranch and County Roads.
7. Prioritize hazardous fuels removal within all HITW access road right-of-ways.
8. Support and collaborate with Huerfano County actions to reduce fuel loading along CR 361.
9. Identify potential private roads and tracks for firefighter access off of the existing roads within the HITW community.

10. Organize at least one slash or fuelwood collection and Chip/Burn event within HITW Ranch every three years.
11. Encourage the development of Shaded Fuel Break features within the heavily vegetated portions of CR361 and adjacent to any State or Federal lands (see item 16). Endeavor to create a vegetative mosaic pattern between forests, forest types, and grasslands.
12. Distribute the HITW Wildfire Risk Assessment prepared by the Colorado State Forest Service and the subsequent HITW Ranch Wildfire Mitigation Action Plan to all lot owners by posting on the HITW POA web site and by mail or email.
13. Post current wildfire alerts, fire restrictions and bans on the HITW POA website. Post and distribute wildfire risk reduction services available in the area such as community education events, tree marking, slash dumping, consultations, treatment tips, etc.
14. Engage in critical wildfire pre-planning with County, State, and Federal partners to include water resources, staging areas, landing zones, safety zones, and areas that have been treated (private, county, or other) for wildfire risk.
15. Explore collaborative efforts to mitigate wildfire risks on the Federal and State land bordering the HITW Ranch. Promote wildfire fuels reduction on any densely forested adjacent private parcels.
16. Work with the San Isabel Electric Association to identify hazards such as trees for removal along the power line right of way (corridor).
17. Request all lot owners to take these important steps:
  - a. No burning of garbage or vegetation, ignition of fireworks, or use of old equipment that has the potential to generate sparks.
  - b. Remove pine needles and debris from roofs, gutters, decks, and vents.
  - c. Cover all openings, vents, pipes, and windows with 1/8 inch mesh metal screen.
  - d. Seal exterior siding cracks with caulking to resist ember intrusion into the structure or consider the installation of fire-resistant siding.
  - e. Remove firewood piled beside buildings and on porches.
  - f. Move propane tanks at least 30 feet from any building, with no flammable materials around them.
  - g. Remove all fine fuels such as pine needles, scrub oak, tree branches, and brush adjacent to structures. Follow Defensible Space guidelines for cleaning and thinning around all structures. Surround homes with a gravel band measuring a minimum of 6 feet wide. Keep grasses within 30 feet of the structure cut short and, ideally, green and healthy.
  - h. Remove or store flammable patio furniture (vacation homes).
  - i. Ensure that driveways are appropriately thinned and are accessible to emergency vehicles. For any new driveway construction, consider emergency vehicle access.

- j. Thin and prune trees to reduce fuel load and introduce appropriate canopy spacing among mature trees. Use the NFPA Firewise, “Ready, Set, Go!” or CSU CSFS guidelines. Ensure that any mitigation contractors do the same.
  - m. Ensure that barbeques are clean and in good working order. Maintain wood stove and fireplace chimneys. Install chimney caps with spark arrestor screening. Keep gas barbeques away from the house.
  - n. Mow dry grass or graze lots.
18. Hold an annual HITW Ranch outreach event to promote Firewise, work on our community’s list of wildfire risk reduction priorities, and educate.
19. Establish a tracking form for accounting for Firewise education and mitigation activity. Have landowners track their work and costs to enable the community to meet its Firewise obligations. Satisfy our annual minimum Firewise expenditure commitment.
20. Apply for Firewise certification in 2021 and renew on an annual basis.
21. Update Action Plan every three years (2024, 2027, 2030, ...)
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