



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

Firewise Community Action Plan for Sunrise Village HOA, Bend, Oregon

April 2021

The Firewise Communities/USA program seeks to create a sustainable balance that will allow communities to live safely while maintaining environmental harmony in a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) setting. Sunrise Village (SRV) is located on the Westside of Bend, Oregon, on the road to Mt. Bachelor. It is located directly East of Forest Service and BLM lands, and is the direct, immediate path of any Westward-moving wildfire event. In light of massive wildfire events both here in Oregon and elsewhere in the West Coast, Sunrise Village residents have overwhelmingly expressed concern for fire preparedness in our neighborhood, and interest in adopting an aggressive neighborhood and home-specific fire prevention plan.

It is the SRV Fire Committee's opinion that the SRV HOA implement a swift, aggressive, comprehensive, and mandatory fire prevention plan, and begin implementing it in Winter / Spring 2021.

The SRV fire prevention committee is basing efforts directly on guidelines and suggestions made by 1.) Firewise Community Assessment (issued January 15, 2021), and 2.) by the Greater Bend Community Wildfire Protection Plan (published February 2016). Highlights of both are included below.

FIREWISE ASSESSMENT:

A community assessment of wildfire protection was made of the Sunrise Village neighborhood on November 5th, 2020. Boone Zimmerlee, Stewardship Forester for the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) performed the assessment, accompanied by Chase Duncan of Oregon Department of Forestry, and three SRV homeowner representatives: Ray Page, Jim Prehoda, and Bart Mitchell. The assessment addressed the wildfire-related characteristics of the community as a whole, individual homes, and its exposure to wildfire and its ignition potential.

The assessment included a walk through of the neighborhood, looking at common areas and example individual homes. It also involved on-going dialogue with owner representatives regarding pro-active fire mitigation practices. Concerns were pointed out, with particular attention paid to defensible space around homes and how fire risk could be mitigated.

During the assessment, many aspects of the community and its fire risks were observed.

Highlights of the risk assessment & hazard reduction priorities are as follows...

-A house burns because of its interrelationship with everything in its surrounding home ignition zone---the house and its immediate surroundings. To avoid a home ignition, a homeowner must eliminate the wildfire's potential relationship with his/her house. This can be accomplished by interrupting the natural path a fire takes. Changing a fire's path by clearing a home ignition zone is an easy-to-accomplish task that can result in avoiding home loss. To accomplish this, flammable items such as dead vegetation must be removed from the area immediately around the structure to prevent flames from contacting it. Also, reducing the volume of live vegetation will affect the intensity of the wildfire as it enters the home ignition zone.

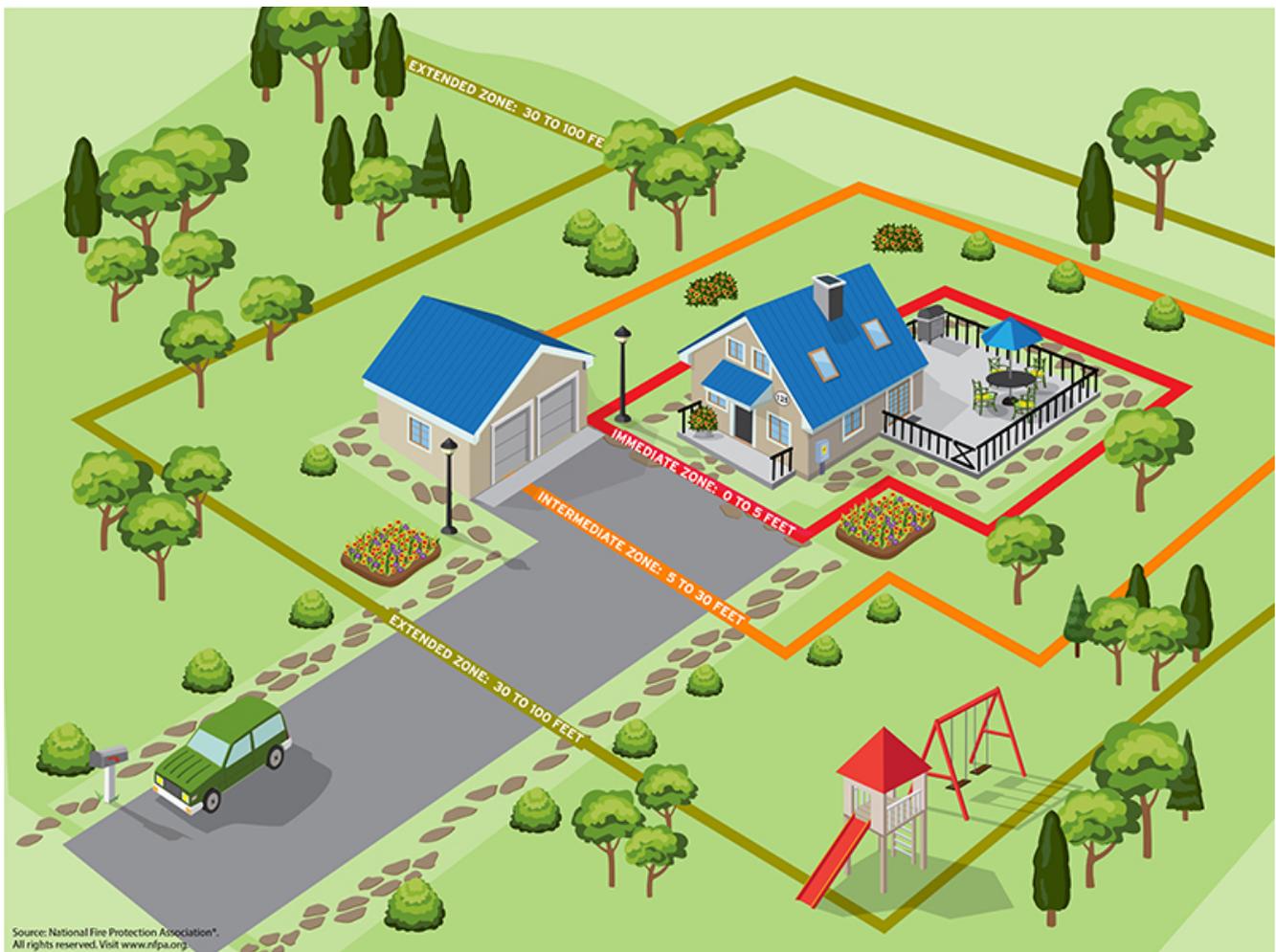
-Sunrise Village residents can reduce their risk of destruction during a wildfire by taking actions within their home ignition zones. This zone principally determines the potential for home ignitions during a wildland fire; it includes a house and its immediate surroundings within 100 to 150 feet.

-The anticipated fire event would likely be similar to the Awbrey Hall fire event that impacted the community in the past. Fire characteristics included torching of single and groups of trees would be common where ladder fuels exist, and rapid advancing flame fronts in continuous fuels would also be expected. Portions of the forward advance of the fire would be driven from embers created from torching trees being deposited ahead of the flaming front and burning together. This kind of behavior would be expected in areas where fuel mitigation has not taken place in the recent past.

-The largest concern of the group as we walked the community was the amount of highly flammable vegetation in the immediate zone around homes. The immediate zone is the first 5' from the structures edge. Highly flammable vegetation growing immediately against houses or under the eaves. If these plants were to ignite they would create intense flames that could either ignite the siding of the house or enter into the attics and ignite the roof.

-The second most common theme was the accumulation of fuels in the intermediate zone. The intermediate zone is 5'-30' from the edge of the house. Continuous vegetation was observed and often connected to vegetation within the immediate zone around homes.

-The final theme we discussed during the assessment walk was the existence of heavy fuel loading along roadsides. Heavy fuels along roads could create intense fire behavior that may prohibit travel. A major concern in the event of a fire is evacuation which could be inhibited by heavy fuels.



Source: National Fire Protection Association*. All rights reserved. Visit www.nfpa.org

GREATER BEND COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN:

The City of Bend, in conjunction with Project Wildfire, Oregon Department of Forestry, Bend Fire & Rescue, and multiple neighborhoods similar to SRV, prepared and released in February 2016 a comprehensive wildfire protection plan for the City of Bend neighborhoods and surrounding lands. This plan included a comprehensive risk assessment and outlined specific hazard reduction measures and priorities for 8 specific areas and neighborhoods in the Bend Area. Sunrise Village falls into the 'West' region.

Highlights of the 'West' region risk assessment & hazard reduction priorities are as follows...

-(the lack of) highly effective wildland fire suppression has significantly altered the ponderosa pine forest type. Natural, open park-like forests have been replaced with unnaturally dense forests, and has greatly increased the number and density of trees, creating ladder fuels and putting the stands at risk of attack from insects and disease. These factors have contributed to more intense, uncontrollable fires in ponderosa pine forests in recent years. Fire in lodgepole pine stands can be low, moderate, or severe over time and often result in full stand replacement.

-The result of the fuel hazards and forest types in the greater Bend area is an overgrowth of trees and forest floor fuels with an abundance of dead or dying vegetation that contribute to a substantially elevated risk of wildland fires that are difficult to control. These overly dense conditions lead to fire behavior that produces flame lengths over eight feet with crowning and torching that can result in stand replacement severity fires.

-The current condition of the vegetation on the federal and private lands adjacent to and within the Greater Bend WUI poses an extreme risk of catastrophic loss from wildland fire. Bend is also threatened by the likely possibility of a crown fire sweeping into the community, or by embers falling on the community from an adjacent wildland fire.

-The West community is categorized as a "community at risk", which includes a significant threat to human life or property as a result of a wildland fire.

-A wildland fire could start within the communities or in any of the forested areas adjacent to or surrounding the communities. With a fire of any significance, it could be difficult to assemble the resources necessary to adequately address all of the fire and life safety issues that could arise in the early stages of emergency operations. The potential exists for a high intensity wildland fire for any number of reasons, during a significant portion of each year.

-The standard of the Greater Bend CWPP is to decrease the risk of uncharacteristic and high intensity wildland fire behavior by reducing fuel loads to that which can produce flame lengths of less than four feet. This enables safe and effective initial attack.

-In general, the dominant strategy in all areas should be thinning from below, in an effort to restore large trees, open, ponderosa pine dominated forests.

-West: There is a significant amount of vegetation present; all stakeholders in the Southwest Community at Risk are urged to mitigate their fuels to create a fire resilient and healthy landscape. Given the historical and recent fire occurrence the crown fire potential is high. The West Community at Risk typically has longer response times by emergency personnel. Ensuring the access and evacuation routes are clear of vegetation and passable by large vehicles will prevent the response times extending in times of large wildfires or other emergency incidents.

ACTION ITEMS:

1) Removal of FLAMMABLE VEGETATION & FUELS in the IMMEDIATE ZONE (Zone 1) (0 to 5 feet from the home and on the home itself)

Decorative bark mulches up against a home foundation and overgrown vegetation near a home can increase the severity of a fire, increasing radiant heat on the structure. It also increases the likelihood of a home fire spreading to neighboring properties. Putting decorative rock around a home foundation, as well as removing shrubs (*particularly non-fire-resistant shrubs*) and limbing-up trees will help reduce the chance of fire traveling up into the canopy of the tree and subsequently igniting a home. Homes that have significant pine needle accumulation in gutters & roof valleys are significantly more likely to ignite from a flying ember.

Risk:

Many homes in SRV have bark mulch, flammable shrubs, and trees too close to the house. Many have row(s) of extremely flammable shrubs & hedges leading directly to / from the home structure from other zones. Pine needles in roof valleys & gutters.

Suggested Action:

1. Removal of all flammable shrubs, decorative, grasses, trees, etc. within 5' of house.
2. Removal of all decorative bark within 5' of house.
3. Removal / limbing of all tree branches that extend to within 5' of house, or are touching house / roof.
4. Cleaning gutters & eaves of pine needles and leaves

The SRV fire committee will create a 2-3 page Home Assessment Document, and will evaluate & document each homesite in SRV as it meets/does not meet Firewise criteria. It will also include a required and suggestion action plan for that home. This document will be shared with each homeowner.

Deadline for Fire Committee Property Assessment to Owners: April 30th, 2021

2) Reduction of LADDER FUELS & TREE DENSITY in the INTERMEDIATE ZONE (Zone 2) (5-30 feet from the home)

Ladder fuels enable fire to jump into taller structures such as trees, which in turn, can generate dangerous burning cinders which can travel miles by wind. Reduction of ladder fuels within the Intermediate Zone will reduce the risk of a high intensity fire. Examples of ladder fuels can be, but are not limited to, wood piles, high grasses, non-native juniper trees, flammable vegetation and shrubs (particularly bitterbrush & arborvitae) and trees with limbs drooping to within 10' of the ground. Creating a defensible zone around a home is a critical part of mitigating wildfire risk.

Risk:

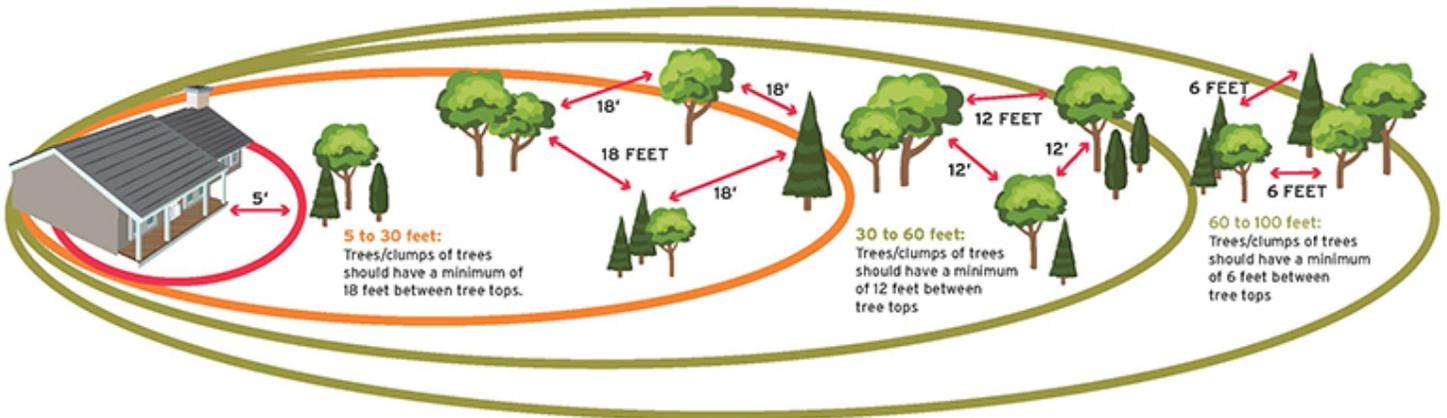
Many homes in SRV were observed to have significant ladder fuels in this zone, as well as a significantly more dense spacing of trees than is natural for our area. Natural ponderosa pine forests should have dominantly large diameter trees, be spaced widely such that branches are a minimum 4' from any neighboring tree branches, and be limbed up so that no branches droop below 10'. There should be a long line of sight through the forest. This 'natural' condition does not currently exist in SRV, and has resulted in a severely fire-prone condition. This density has also caused significant amount of unhealthy trees that are producing excessive pine cones... a stress-reaction to having to compete for water/sunlight. Those trees are holding a great deal of flammable 'deadwood' branches, and highly flammable 'witches broom' clumps of branches & needles. It was also noted that beetle infestations have begun in multiple areas, due to this unnatural density limiting airflow through the timberstand. Also observed were sporadic juniper trees in properties West of Mammoth Drive, which are highly flammable, and not native to that immediate location.

Suggested Action:

Removal of all of the following within 30' of the home:

- a) All flammable ladder fuel shrubs & vegetation: specifically bitter brush & arborvitae
- b) 90% of small trees less than 6" diameter, and 100% of small trees less than 6" diameter that are within 18' of a large established tree.
- c) Densely spaced trees (<4' between branches); 18' spacing between ponderosa/pine tree crowns (includes trunk and branches) in this zone.
- d) Limb up branches of all trees so branches do not droop below 10'
- e) All 'witches broom' clumps of branches.
- f) Wood piles
- g) Juniper trees (West of Mammoth)

TREE SPACING



The SRV fire committee will create a 2-3 page Home Assessment Document, and will evaluate & document each homesite in SRV as it meets/does not meet Firewise criteria. It will also include a required and suggestion action plan for that home. This document will be shared with each homeowner.

Deadline for Fire Committee Property Assessment to Owners: April 30th, 2021

3) Reduction of LADDER FUELS & TREE DENSITY in EXTENDED ZONE (zone 3) (30 -100 feet from the home, or to the property line)

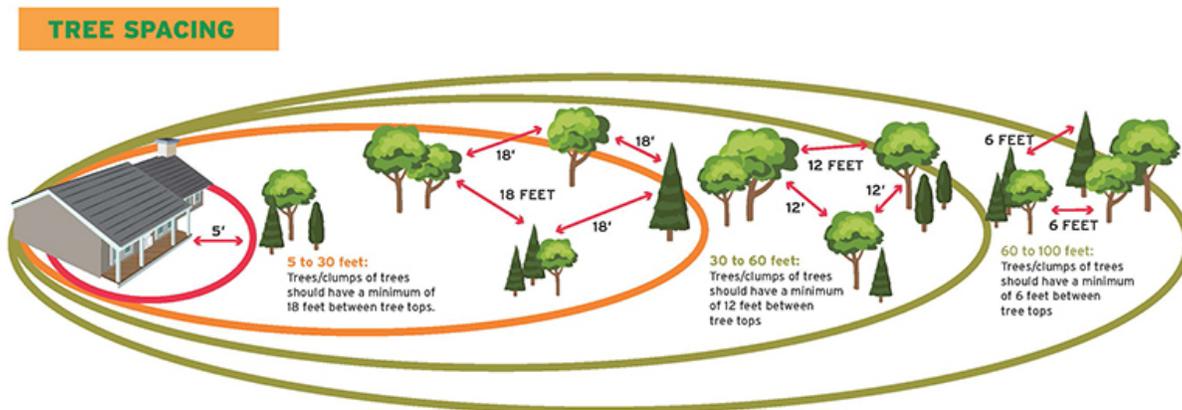
Risk:

Same as Zone 2. It was observed that significant ladder fuels and excessive tree density exists in Zone 3. Trees and vegetation in this zone, on nearly all properties and common areas has become overgrown / too dense, and is completely 'unnatural. It poses a significant fire & insect risk. While the Firewise program does not typically prioritize this zone, the Greater Bend Community Wildfire Prevention Program assessment places top priority on this zone.

Suggested Action:

Removal of all of the following 30' to 100' from the home (or to the property line)

- a) All flammable ladder fuel shrubs & vegetation: specifically bitter brush & arborvitae
- b) 90% of small trees less than 6" diameter, and 100% of small trees less than 6" diameter that are within 12' of a large established tree crown.
- c) Tree Density:
 - a) 30' - 60' from house: minimum 12' between tree crowns (includes trunk and branches);
 - b) 60' - 100' from house: minimum 6' between tree crowns (includes trunk and branches);
 - c) Sloped lots & common space should increase spacing proportionately.
 - d) Emphasis on keeping large diameter trees over 12" diameter.
- d) Limb up branches of all trees so branches do not droop below 10'
- e) All 'witches broom' clumps of branches.
- f) Juniper trees (West of Mammoth)



The SRV fire committee will create a 2-3 page Home Assessment Document, and will evaluate & document each homesite in SRV as it meets/does not meet Firewise criteria. It will also include a required and suggestion action plan for that home. This document will be shared with each homeowner.

Deadline for Fire Committee Property Assessment to Owners:

April 30th, 2021

4) Common Roadways

SRV roadways have a significant amount of flammable and other vegetation. Firewise noted that in the event of a wildfire, firefighters arriving onsite will NOT park their equipment along roadways that have flammable vegetation. This means responding firefighters may not be able to park close enough to properly fight a fire.

Suggested Action:

HOA should engage a tree service company to clear the shoulders of all SRV roadways, to a minimum 5' from the edge of asphalt (8' is preferred). It will be up to the HOA/Fieldstone Management to determine the depth of each property line from the edge of the asphalt, or if they can thin past that line.

5) Amend existing SRV ARC & HOA guidelines

A.) Amend the ARC guidelines plant list to no longer allow any highly flammable species: i.e. arborvitae, bitterbrush, juniper, etc. to be planted.

B.) Amend the ARC guidelines to reference tree spacing requirements / standards shown in this assessment, and ensure that ARC guidelines and FireWise requirements match.

C.) Amend the ARC /HOA guidelines to allow removal of trees under 24" diameter that violate the 12' & 18' spacing, without prior approval by the ARC.

6) Continue Education and Outreach to all SRV Residents

SRV's establishment of a Firewise USA program provides the groundwork for an ongoing communication and outreach opportunity with owners about defensible space, home ignition zones, and fire fuel reduction measures. Consistent and concise communications will help residents understand the reason(s) for this initiative and support the project going forward.

Communication tools for fire mitigation education can include: HOA website, emails, door hangars, HOA Newsletter, quarterly statement stuffer, annual HOA meeting, etc.

SRV will host a training / informational meeting specifically addressing the property assessments on April 20th, 2021. We expect this to be at least an annual event.

NEXT STEPS TOWARDS BECOMING FIREWISE CERTIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD:

In addition to the action items above, the Sunrise Village HOA commits to taking the four following steps towards the Firewise certification:

- A. Authorizing and supporting a committee of 3 residents that maintains the Firewise USA program and status. Term for each member shall be 2 years, and will be voluntary.
- B. Investing a minimum of \$24.14 annually per dwelling in our Firewise USA program
- C. Coordinating an SRV Neighborhood Cleanup Day each spring.
- D. Submitting an annual report to Firewise USA to document and receive recognition for its ongoing participation and commitment to the program.

This plan can be reviewed and revised by the Sunrise Village Firewise Committee and/or HOA Board annually or as needed. The members on the committee are volunteers.

PLAN OF ACTION / TIMELINE:

The Fire Committee suggests the following deadlines for Board approval:

Approval & adoption of this Firewise Action Plan by the SRV Board:	April 9, 2021
Individual Property Assessments:	immediately
Submittal of Property Assessments to homeowners:	April 30th, 2021
Deadlines for owners to bring zones 1 & 2 into compliance:	July 1st, 2021
Deadline for owners to bring zone 3 into compliance:	strongly suggested by Sept. 2021

ENFORCEMENT:

The Fire Committee suggests the SRV Board adopt an aggressive & swift approach to implementing this program and measures. The SRV ARC guidelines and ‘Plan’ provide clear, documented basis for enforcement.

The SRV ARC guidelines state...

5.1 “Maintenance of Units: Each unit and it’s improvements shall be maintained in a clean and attractive condition, in good repair, and in such fashion as to not create a fire hazard”,

5.11 “Fire Hazard. In the event a unit owner allows the condition of his unit to be such as to constitute a fire hazard, the Manager may invoke the provisions of Section 11.2 of the Plan allowing for entry and change by the Manager at the owner’s expense. In this case notice and waiting requirements are reduced to seven (7) days. The Manager, after consulting with the SRV Association Board of Directors, shall determine what constitutes a fire hazard”

The “Plan of Sunrise Village” states...

11.2 “.... in the event that a unit owner maintains or permits any improvement, condition or thing on this unit contrary to the provisions of a Sunrise Village declaration, the Manager may no sooner than 60 days after delivery to such unit owner of written notice of the violation enter upon the offending unit and remove the cause of such violation, or alter, repair or change the items which is in violation of such declaration in such a manner as to make it conform thereto. The manager may charge such unit owner for the entire cost of the work done by it pursuant to this section. Such amounts shall become payable upon delivery by the Manager to the unit owner of notice of the amount due, and shall be paid into the maintenance fund to the extent that the costs being reimbursed were paid out of the maintenance fund. “

11.3 “Default in payment of maintenance assessments and charges. Each maintenance assessment or change levied or imposed pursuant to the Plan or any Sunrise Village Declaration, together with interest thereon, shall be a separate, distinct and personal debt and obligation of the unit owner or resident of Sunrise Village against whom the maintenance assessment, or charge is levied or imposed or from whom the amount is due. If they unit owner fails to pay any such assessment or change or any installment thereof when due the unit owner shall be in default and the assessment or change not paid together with interest, costs and attorney’s fees as elsewhere provided for herein shall become a lien upon the unit or units owned by the person from whom the assessment or charge is due upon filing by the Manager in teh records of mortgages of Deschutes County. The Manager may commence proceedings to foreclose any such lien in the same manner as real property mortgages at any time within 3 years following the date of such filing. “

**** While it’s not the Fire Committee’s belief that the HOA board or Committee should be heavy-handed in initially using such measures or threats, we believe we should be upfront and clear that this enforcement option exists. We believe that while we want to be swift and aggressive with this plan, we have to be realistic and sympathetic to homeowner’s abilities to pay for or execute such measures, as well as contractor availability to do the work.*

Submitted by Sunrise Village HOA Firewise Committee:
Ray Page, Jim Prehoda, and Bart Mitchell

April 9th, 2021