

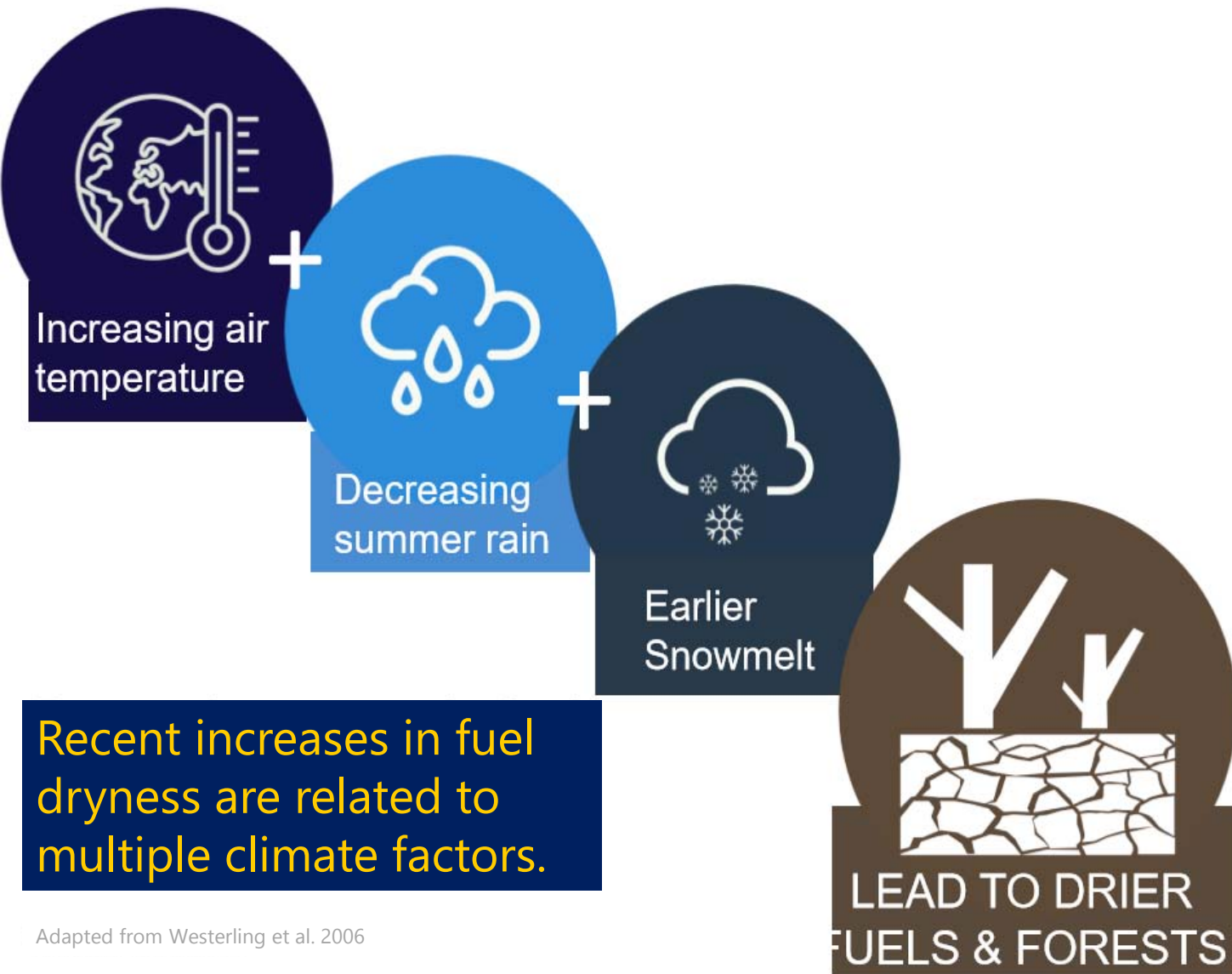
Enhancing the Wildfire Resilience of Your Property in a Habitat Friendly Way

April 2020



“Habitat friendly” means that practices suggested within this presentation are intended to improve the wildfire safety of your property and enhance the health of the ecosystem you live within.





Recent increases in fuel dryness are related to multiple climate factors.

Adapted from Westerling et al. 2006

Climate change is creating conditions that are more conducive to wildfire.

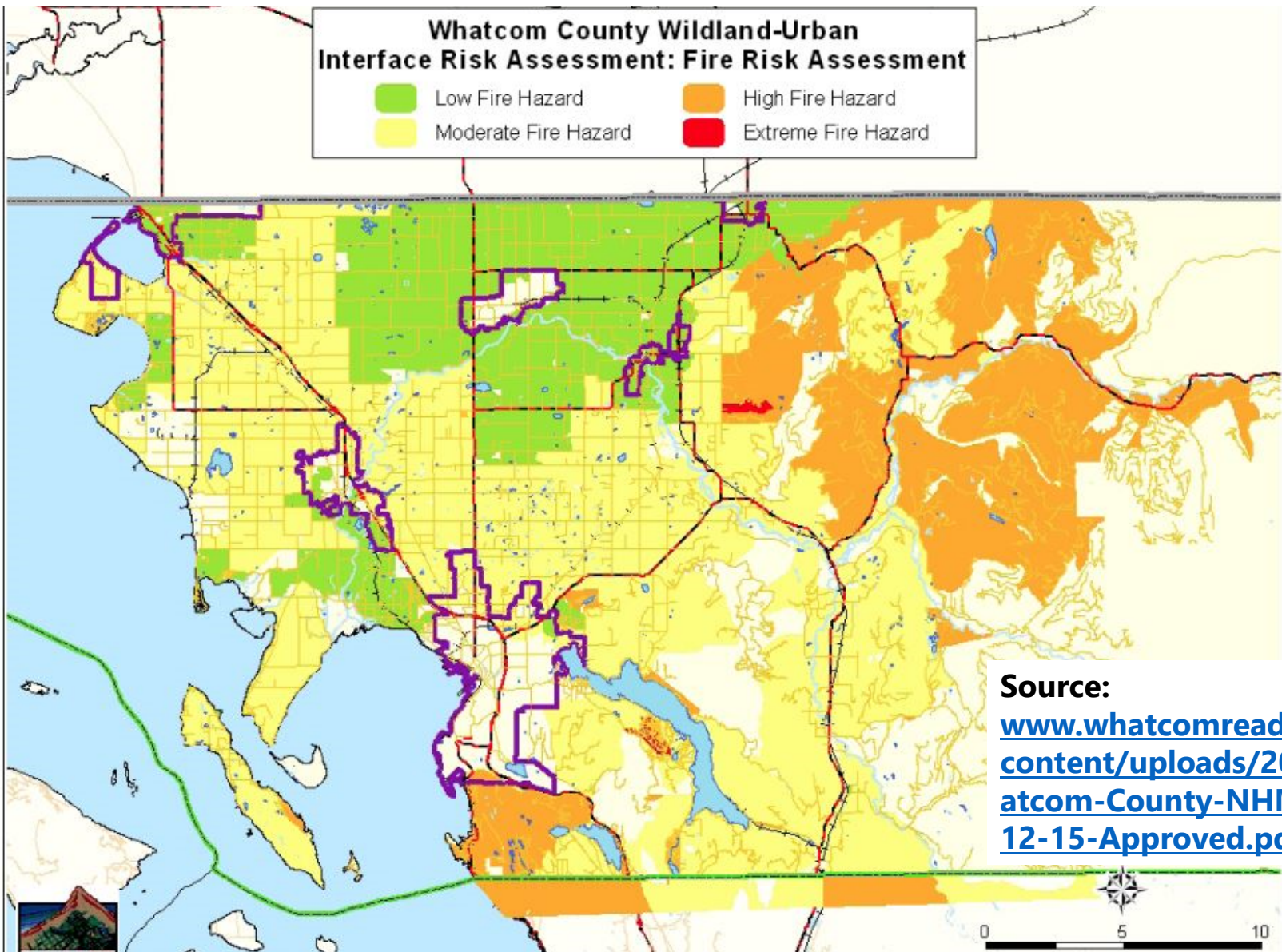


Dying from the top down

Effects of multiple drought years are shown in stressed & dying red cedars and other iconic PNW conifers



Browning boughs and needles, defoliation



Potential Ignition Sources

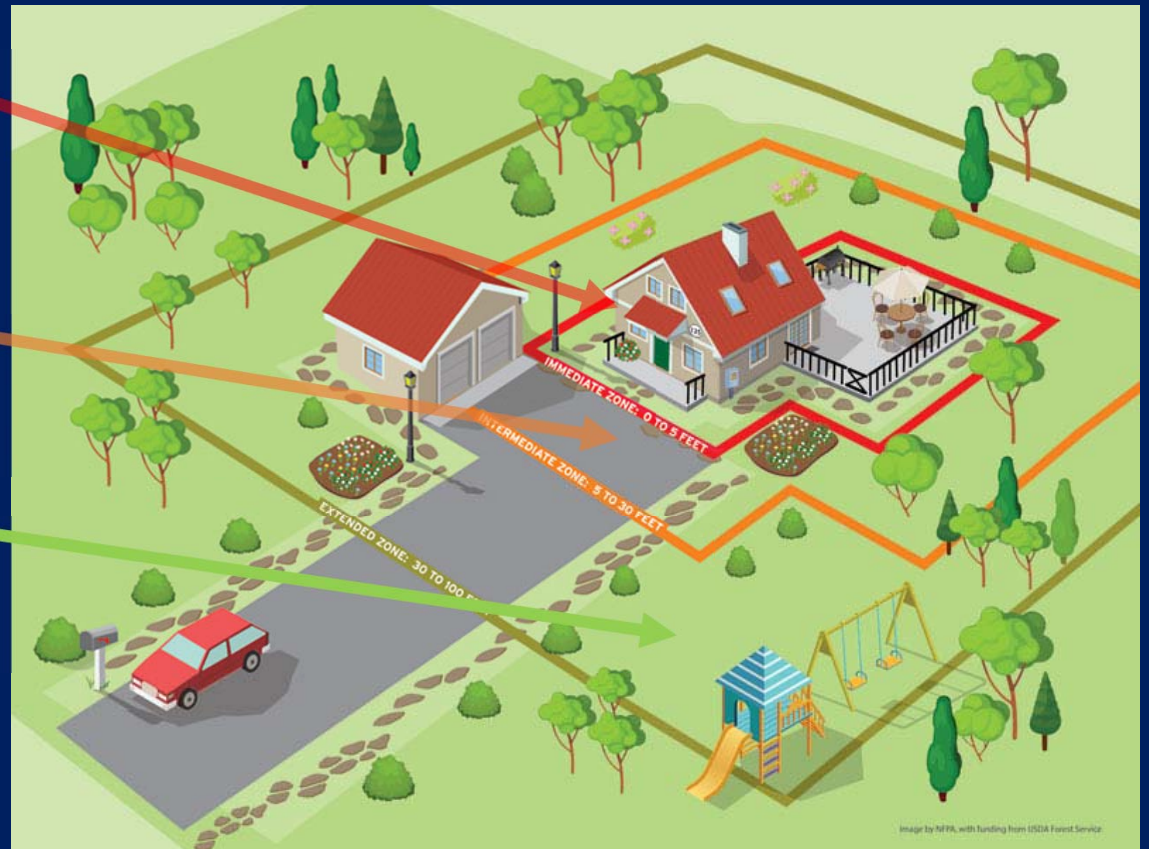




RESEARCH SHOWS THAT HOMES IGNITE DUE TO THE
CONDITION OF THE HOME AND EVERYTHING AROUND IT,
UP TO 200' FROM THE FOUNDATION. THIS IS CALLED
THE HOME IGNITION ZONE

Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)

- IMMEDIATE
ZONE – 0 to 5'
- INTERMEDIATE
ZONE – 5' to 30'
- EXTENDED ZONE
– 30' to 100'/200'



Create Defensible Space

Areas where construction and vegetation modifications have been made that reduce wildfire risk



THE ROOF



Metal

Class A-rated roofs have the highest resistance to fire. This includes metal, fiberglass asphalt composition shingle, concrete or clay tile.



Composition shingles



**Untreated
shakes**

Untreated wood shake roofs are extremely flammable.

THE ROOF

Roof ratings can change depending on the treatments and materials used in making the product and assembling them.



For example, chemical and pressure treated wood shake and shingle roofs can be Class-A if they have a fire-resistant underlayment when installed.

For more information on roof ratings and fire-resistance, visit the link below.

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Fact-sheets/FirewiseFactSheetsRoofingMaterials.ashx>

Maintenance is Key

Clear flammable debris
from roof & gutters



Inspect shingles & roof
tiles; repair and replace
loose or missing



Pay special attention to
heat trap areas like this

SIDING & WINDOWS



Fiber-cement, brick, stucco siding are more ignition-resistant than wood or vinyl

Dual-pane, tempered glass windows withstand more heat



Plastic skylights can melt.
Maintain casing around skylights.

VENTS

Clear back flammable materials and
install 1/8" metal screening on all vents



ELEVATED DECKS, PORCHES, FENCING



Never store flammable material underneath decks or porches.



Put gravel under raised decks, keep grass short.



A wood fence attached to the house can carry fire to the house.

For more information on fire-resistant decking, visit the link below.

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Fact-sheets/FirewiseFactSheetsDecks.ashx>

Adjacent to the Home

Keep the first 3-5 feet around your home a non-flammable area

3-5 feet

Rake dead leaves and pine needles back from house



YAY! MULCH!

- Helps maintain soil moisture
- Moderates soil temperatures
- Discourages weeds
- Prevents erosion & compaction
- Looks pretty

BUT...

DO NOT PUT
ORGANIC MULCH
WITHIN 5' OF A
STRUCTURE

MULCHES TO AVOID

- Shredded rubber
- Shredded western red cedar
- Pine needles or sawdust-type mulches



MULCHING TIPS

- Water mulch when watering plants (damp mulch is less likely to smolder)
- Recommended maximum mulch thickness = 4"
- Use non-flammable material against house & put organic mulch outside of that



Fire-Resistant Landscaping

**Your landscape
doesn't have to
look like the
surface of the
moon**

WWW.NEWS.CN

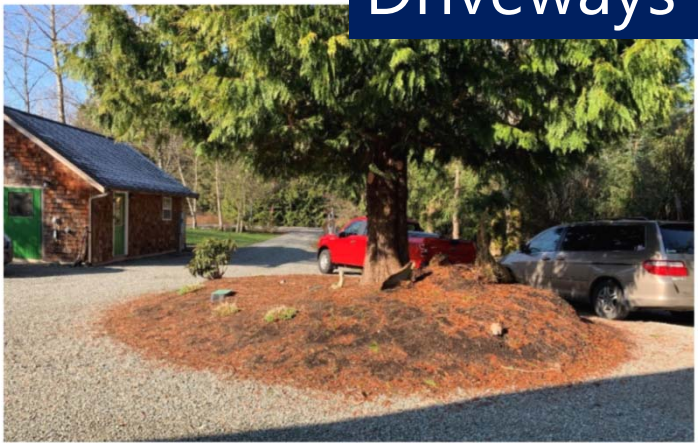
**It can look like
this!**



USE FUEL BREAKS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

This helps keep surface fire from spreading to your structures through continuous paths of landscaping.

Driveways



Rock features



Short grass



Cluster Plantings



Landscaping areas should
be broken up into clusters



Keep lawn and native grasses
mowed to 4" height

CREATE VERTICAL SPACE BETWEEN PLANTS

Continuous vegetation from the ground up to large trees creates a path for to burn from the ground up into the tops of trees where it becomes much more dangerous and difficult to put out.



To reduce the chance of fire climbing a tree, remove the lower tree limbs 6-15ft from the ground (or the lower 1/3 of branches on smaller trees).



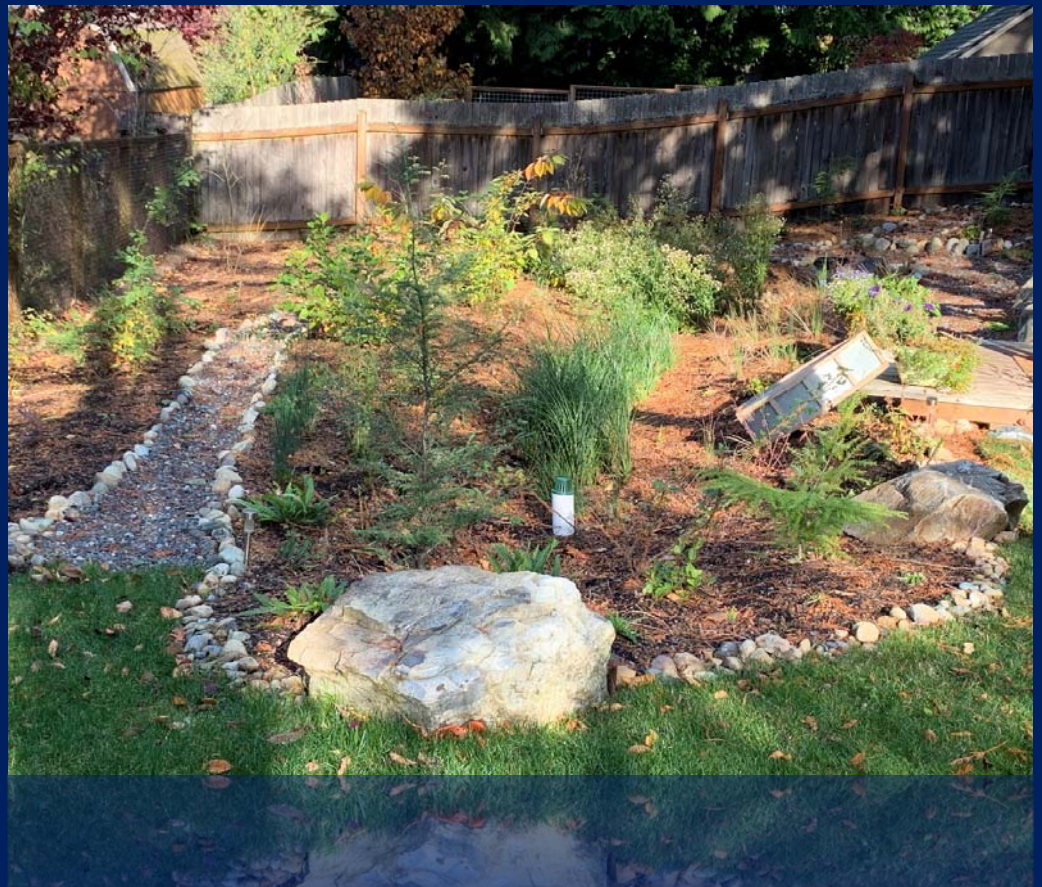
USE NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

Native plants thrive in our conditions. A plant that is thriving also tends to be less flammable.



USE NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

**Native plants help
improve water quality
by filtering pollutants
from runoff.**



Fire –Resistant Native Plants

- have higher moisture content in their leaves
- have little build-up of dead vegetation
- are more resistant to drought
- low-compact growth form

Plant Types	
Succulents	More Fire Resistant
Ground Covers	
Turf	
Vines	
Annuals	
Perennials	
Deciduous Trees	
Shrubs	
Grasses	
Conifers	Less Fire Resistant

www.idahofirewise.org

Plants: Flammable plants

- are water-stressed
- accumulate dry, dead material
- are evergreen
- have loose or papery bark
- have stiff leathery, small, or fine lacy leaves
- high oil or resin content



Examples of fire-resistant native plants

Great for attracting pollinators & birds

Oregon White Oak



Quaking Aspen



Golden Currant



Sea Pink/Thrift



Beargrass



Pacific Rhododendron





Red-osier Dogwood

Courtesy of nwplants.com

Mock Orange



Source: Emily Hirsch, WCD

Nookta rose



Source: Emily Hirsch, WCD

Pacific Crabapple



Courtesy of Keir Morse



Red Flowering Currant

Courtesy of nwplants.com

Evergreen Huckleberry



Courtesy of nwplants.com

Propane Tanks

Remove vegetation from underneath and around propane tanks

Ensure that they are maintained properly so the venting feature works



Other Considerations



Dispose of heavy accumulation of dead plant material – slash or blowdown



Manage/reduce invasive species

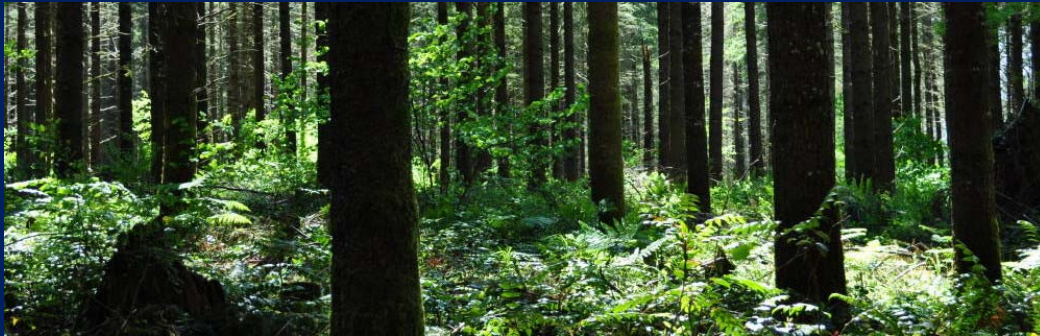


Thin unhealthy understory trees to reduce competition during drought



Consider timing and caution of activities that could affect bird nesting. March to August is prime nesting time.

Other Considerations



Keep canopy cover to provide shade, reduced soil temperatures and retain soil moisture



Incorporate paths that can be used by firefighters for access and to lay hose

Whatcom Conservation District Resources

- FREE wildfire risk assessments
- Firewise USA® guidance
- Presentations & outreach events
- Assistance with neighborhood-level risk assessments



www.whatcomcd.org/wildfire

Forestry Resources

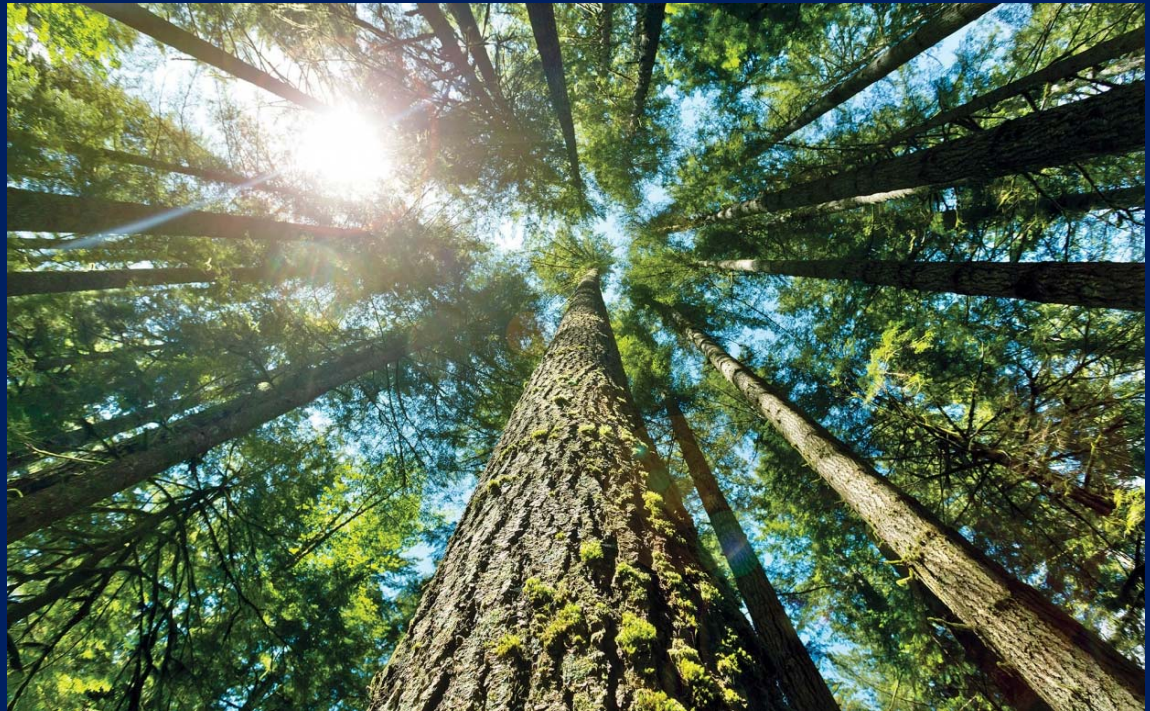
Forest Stewardship Program - DNR

Matt Provencher
Western WA Stewardship Forester

360-902-1494

360-819-7143

www.dnr.wa.gov



WSU Extension Forestry

www.forestry.wsu.edu

THANK YOU!

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Whatcomcd.org/wildfire

