

IMPACT

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Extension

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Rural property owners adopt measures to reduce wildfire risk

AT A GLANCE

One hundred percent of surveyed participants who attended a workshop on reducing wildfire risk to rural property reported taking measures to protect their property from wildfire.

The Situation

Wildland fires have increased dramatically in recent years due to a variety of factors including declining forest health, changing tree species composition of forest stands, climate change, and other factors. For example, more forest acres were burned by wildfire in 2012 in the eleven western states than at any time on record. Wildland fire increasingly puts rural property owners at risk, at the same time that more people are moving into wildfire prone areas.

Our Response

Given the importance of the threat, we wanted to see if attendees at two workshops held in 2013 on reducing wildfire threat actually implemented the knowledge and techniques covered at the workshops. Six months after the workshops were held attendees were surveyed by telephone to see how many adopted learned practices to reduce wildfire threat to their property.

Program Outcomes

Fifty-seven percent of attendees responded to our survey. Of those, 100% took measures to reduce wildfire risk around their home, including 100% who said they reduced fuel sources within the home ignition zone. Thirty-one percent reported making changes to structures to make them more fire resistant, and 23% made their home easier for firefighters to identify and access. Fifty-four percent spent money to make



these improvements (thirty-one percent reported spending “a lot” of money), and 84% engaged in labor to make these changes.

Many changes were listed by respondents, including clearing brush, logging, trimming shrubs and trees, moving wood piles away from home, and replacing flammable plants.

These outcomes indicate that Extension programming can make a significant difference in attendee’s behaviors, which in this case improves human safety and reduces the threat of property loss.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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36-14bwarren-wildfire.pub
11/14