

Colorado Project Wildfire – Success Stories

In the face of long-term, ongoing wildfire risks, the Colorado Association of REALTORS® (CAR) launched *Project Wildfire*, an education program designed to help reduce and/or prevent the destruction of land and property, injuries, and loss of life by raising awareness of and access to wildfire mitigation resources. With 25,000-plus REALTOR® members spread across the state, CAR and its members are working in partnership with other like-minded fire prevention organizations in Colorado to bring education and awareness, as well as access to local resources, directly to residents.

Over the course of the coming months, we will be sharing just a few examples of the tremendous work that is being done through localized programs in communities across our state.

If you have a wildfire program success story you would like to share with CAR members and our wildfire partners across the State, we'd love to feature your work. Please call or email us at: marty@schechterpr.com or 303-987-8163.

Here are a few examples of the case studies that members have shared with us:

Wildfire Partners Success: When Lester Karplus moved to the mountains near Nederland, Colo. he knew it was a matter of “when not if” his log home would be in the path of a wildfire. That day arrived in July 2016 when the Cold Springs Fire forced 1,900 residents to flee “100-foot” flames on a moment’s notice. Karplus’ home and nine others in the path of the fire survived, while eight neighboring homes burned—all certified by Wildfire Partners, Boulder County’s community wildfire mitigation program that provides homeowners with a comprehensive on-site property risk assessment that includes step-by-step mitigation needs, resources, a consumer-help line and follow-up inspections. The result – a coveted “Wildfire Partners Certified” yard sign and reduced wildfire risk. Many insurance companies accept Wildfire Partners assessment to meet their mitigation requirements. While that doesn’t guarantee insurability, it does help improve the chances. Karplus says homeowners buying in wildfire-prone areas need to ask themselves: “Are we willing to be caretakers of the land?” If the answer is yes, they must understand the inevitable risk of living with wildfire and the long-term commitment needed to protect their property. For more information: ColoradoProjectWildfire.com and wildfirepartners.org

RealFire

After living in his Beaver Creek condominium for two decades, Michael Bengé purchased a home on the mountain and knew it was a “no brainer” to evaluate necessary fire mitigation work — both in terms of creating defensible space around his new home, as well as fire-resistive materials in new construction. Bengé was thrilled to learn from his HOA that Eagle County provides free, on-site wildfire risk property assessments through its REALFire® community mitigation program.

Benefits of the REALFire® program include:

- Residents engage directly with trusted fire professionals from their district to learn about local wildfire risk.

- Residents can earn a REALFire® certificate of recognition, which can enhance real estate transactions or be shared with local insurance providers.
- Qualifying residents may be eligible for an income tax subtraction for mitigation work performed on their property.
- Assessments identify specific actions proven to reduce wildfire risk on a property.

Benge believes homeowners throughout WUI communities would benefit by taking advantage of the voluntary opportunities to become more educated on wildfire risk and available mitigation resources to enhance the beauty of their property and invest in the safety and value of their home. **Download Resources:** RealFire.net

About Colorado Project Wildfire:

Since its 2015 launch, Colorado Project Wildfire has helped plan and host numerous wildfire education events in communities across the state, sharing information and access to resources with thousands of homeowners. In addition, the program has worked to educate the association's REALTOR® members working in Colorado's growing WUI communities as an additional way to help educate Colorado residents and link them to existing local resources while helping to ensure their safety and well being. For more information: <http://www.coloradorealtors.com/projectwildfire/>