

Indian Mountain Property Owners Association
Firewise Community Program
Forest Clearing Guidance
Updated May 13, 2015

Firebreaks along Park County Roads

1. The property owner (aided by contractors or volunteers as appropriate) shall clear all trees in the ditches along the roads in the Project Area. The ditches are about three-feet wide.
2. The property owner shall clear all trees in the remainder of about a ten-foot section along the county roads, *except aspens that shield a home from view on the road and isolated specimen conifers that do not interact with power lines or have close proximity to other conifers*. Limbs of specimen conifers in this area shall be removed only up to a height of about 5 feet from the ground.
3. For approximately another 50 feet from the roadway, depending upon forest conditions and topography, the property owner shall establish a “shaded fuel break” in accord with the criteria listed below.

Shaded Fuelbreaks

1. The property owner shall create shaded fuel breaks by removing dead and down trees and thinning and pruning live trees from below.
2. Trees to be retained will be primarily dominant conifers of good form (straight stems, live tops and large amounts of green needles). Trees to be removed will come primarily from the overtopped (growth retarded by taller trees) and dominant classes (Colorado blue spruce and Engelmann spruce). Co-dominant species, such as Douglas fir and ponderosa, bristlecone and limber pine, should be retained to the extent practicable because of their scarcity compared to the abundance of spruce trees in Indian Mountain. Most of the trees to be removed will be less than ten inches in diameter. Property owners, contractors and volunteers are to leave a sprinkling (clumping where possible) of well-formed young conifer regeneration (baby trees) in openings for aesthetics and to maintain age diversity.
3. The property owner shall use the following spacing guidelines within a fuel break to maintain an open canopy as trees mature.
 - No conifer regeneration shall be left in an opening that is growing within ten feet of larger conifers and is likely to become ladder fuel (i.e., combustible material that allows a fire on the ground to extend into a fire in the canopy) within ten years.
 - Conifer regeneration in openings shall be thinned to an average spacing of 10 to 20 feet between trunks of the regenerating trees.

- Remaining trees should be no closer together than 15 feet crown to crown and 30 feet stem to stem. Some clumps of three to five dominant or co-dominant conifers may be left on a closer spacing if the spacing between the crowns of the clump and the adjacent trees is not less than 20 feet. On slopes greater than 25%, this spacing shall increase to 30 feet.
 - *No live aspens shall be cut unless there are signs of fungal infection, their spacing is so dense as to retard growth to maturity or they lie within or near the drip line of a conifer where they compete for water and sun.*
 - All dead trees, aspen or conifer, within 60 feet of either side of the county roads shall be cut and removed. However, large dead trees on the ground that serve as effective erosion control on a slope may be left in place. The limbs of such trees shall be removed. In addition, at a property owner's choice, dead conifers that serve as a home site for cavity dwellers may be left in place at the rate of one per acre.
 - As far as practicable, wood removed from a fuel break shall be chipped by contractors. Any wood not amenable to chipping (e.g., large tree trunks and root structures) shall be taken to the Indian Mountain burn pit. Property owners and nearby residents will be encouraged to remove firewood from slash before chipping.
4. The property owner shall prune trees that remain within shaded fuelbreaks in accord with the following guidelines:
- Dead limbs on conifers shall be pruned to a height of ten feet above the ground.
 - On pine trees and Douglas firs in excess of thirty feet tall, live limbs shall be pruned to a height of five to ten feet above the ground, where deemed a fire threat.
 - On ponderosa pine and Douglas firs greater than six feet tall but less than thirty feet tall, live limbs shall be pruned so that a minimum of two thirds of the green branches remain on the tree or to a maximum of ten feet above the ground.
 - On spruce trees, only dead wood shall be pruned up to a maximum of ten feet above the ground. Live branches that touch the ground should also be removed.
 - Regeneration of any conifer less than six feet tall shall not be pruned.
 - *Healthy aspen shall not be pruned.*
5. All slash (pruned material and removed trees) shall be dragged by hand to the side of the county roads or other area accessible by truck for ease of chipping or transport. Property owners, contractors or volunteers shall chip the slash and disperse the products to less than 3 inches deep.
6. Wherever practicable, the property owner shall cut stumps to ground level. Where slope, rocks or other features prohibit cutting a stump to ground level, then a maximum of 4" on the uphill side will be acceptable.

Defensible Space

1. Trees and shrubs that are stressed, diseased, dead or dying should be removed so that they do not become a fuel source for potential fires.
2. Create defensible space at a minimum of 100 feet around a home or other flammable

structure. Increase this distance if the structure is located on a slope.

- Thin out tree and brush cover around structures. Remove flammable vegetation from within the initial 15 feet around structures, including mulch.
 - Beyond the initial 15-30 feet, thin trees to achieve 10 to 15-foot crown spacing. Clumps of two or three trees are acceptable for a more natural appearance if additional space surrounds them.
 - Mow grasses and weeds to six inches or less for 30 feet from all structures.
 - Prune tree branches up to a height of 10 feet above ground.
3. Dispose of all slash and debris left from thinning by chipping or hauling.
 4. Remove shrubs and small trees or other potential ladder fuels from beneath large trees. Left in place, these fuels can carry a ground fire into tree crowns.
 5. Trim any branches extending over roofs, and remove branches within 10 feet of chimneys.
 6. Stack woodpiles at least 30 feet from any structure. They should be uphill from or on the same level as structures. Clear flammable vegetation within 10 feet of woodpiles.
 7. Clear anything flammable from within 10 feet of all LPG or propane tanks.
 8. See the website of the Colorado State Forest Service (<http://csfs.colostate.edu/forest-management/>) for further ideas and assistance in managing the forest on your property, including more detailed guidance on Defensible Space.