

National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day: Project Ideas from FAC Net

National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day ("Prep Day") provides an opportunity to engage individuals, families, neighborhoods and communities with wildfire resilience knowledge and activities on the first Saturday in May. Prep Day is coordinated by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), with generous support from State Farm.

This "menu" of Prep Day projects is designed to help you choose a project that will meet the needs of your community. It is a sampler-style menu of projects that other communities have hosted; it is not an exhaustive list. The examples are based on events hosted by members of the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) and may vary when replicated. Visit bit.ly/Wildfire_Prep_Day for more information about how you can make a difference, put your project on NFPA's map, and/or see other projects planned across the country.

Please note: Price tags listed below are for event supplies and do not include staff time.



W.U.I. Checkpoints

Overview: Work with a local fire department to conduct a "W.U.I." checkpoint at a community/subdivision entrance. This activity is modeled after D.U.I. checkpoints, with a play on words (W.U.I. stands for the wildland-urban interface). Give vehicles information about fire preparedness as you stop them.

Price tag: \$0–\$100 | **Cumulative planning time:** 4 hours

Key considerations: Requires fire department participation. Past events involved three fire department staff, one fire truck (to attract attention), and a handful of volunteers.

Tips: *Getting people to stop and listen is the biggest challenge. Positioning the checkpoint at a stop sign and intercepting cars returning to the neighborhood has been successful. Try picking a community with only one entrance. Past events lasted four hours and occurred during the return-commute time.*



Residential Fuels Removal

Overview: Offer residents assistance to incentivize the removal of flammable debris removal.

Price tags and cumulative planning time:
\$201–\$500, 5–8 hours (one neighborhood)
\$500+, 5–8 hours (multiple neighborhoods)

Key considerations: The specific assistance you offer residents impacts the investment that this type of project will require. Past projects have ranged from providing free curb-side chipping and/or removing debris to waiving fees at a green waste site. Potlucks afterward are popular.

Residential Fuels Removal (continued)



Tips: Consider providing wheelbarrows, work gloves, rakes, etc. You'll also need dumpsters (the 30-foot size has worked for some efforts) or trailers, if providing pickup services. Traffic control equipment and personal protective equipment may be required. Tailor your services to your specific community. For example, if you're targeting a retirement community, on-site assistance moving/loading vegetation may be necessary. Some groups do this at the multi-county scale, but that takes seven or more weeks to organize. If you've never hosted a fuels removal project, start small. Have a plan and partnerships in place for disposing of the material as well as gathering it. Offering similar services year-to-year helps build momentum and public buy-in.

Home Vulnerability Assessments



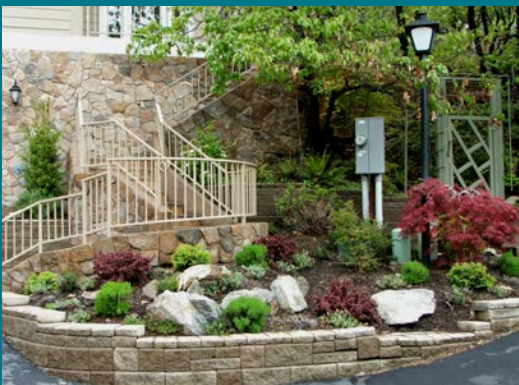
Overview: Prep Day fuels removal projects are sometimes paired with free wildfire risk home assessments. Other times, participation in an event is awarded with a free assessment. Whether it's the centerpiece of your Prep Day event, the door prize, or the call to action, consider how to integrate this helpful service.

Price tag: \$0–\$100 | **Cumulative planning time:** 5–8 hours

Key considerations: This project requires qualified inspectors who can communicate needed actions to residents. Assessments range from curbside overviews to in-depth, 60-minute visits.

Tips: If possible, partner with an organization like your fire department that has an existing assessment program, rather than creating one from scratch. If no program exists in your area, consider participating in NFPA's Home Ignition Zone Training; visit [nfpa.org/Training-and-Events/By-topic/Home-Ignition-Zone](https://www.nfpa.org/Training-and-Events/By-topic/Home-Ignition-Zone) for current training opportunities.

The Landscaping of Wildfire



Overview: Invite a master gardener to showcase fire-resistant landscaping (including plant selection and placement) through a series of home/yard tours. Ask the presenters to make sure that participants leave with enough knowledge to take action in their own yards following the event.

Price tag: \$0–\$100 | **Cumulative planning time:** 5–8 hours

Key considerations: Garden-centric businesses and clubs are key marketing partners.

Tips: Try securing donated, fire-adapted plant starts from a local nursery as prizes. Ask the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary or other community clubs to promote your event.

The Science of Wildfire (for Adults)



Overview: Plan an afternoon outside with a local wildfire ecologist to educate your community about the presence of wildfire and the conditions that drive its severity.

Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 1–4 hours

Tips: Consider visiting both private and public lands. Providing transportation will increase costs and complexity. Have a rain plan and consider integrating a call to action (such as participating in a brush removal day). Find speakers from your local extension office or university, or visit firescience.gov to contact your regional Fire Science Exchange.

The Science of Wildfire (for Children)



Price tag: \$201–\$500

Cumulative planning time:
40+ hours

Overview: Educate 6th-grade students about fire adapted communities concepts. Below is a sample schedule.

- Day 1 and 2: Complete a wildfire risk assessment of the school building(s) and the surrounding landscape. Students identify mitigation strategies for their own homes and share them with the class.
- Day 3: Specialists teach students about the effects of weather on fire behavior. Students share lessons learned between groups, and teachers may follow up with classroom science activities.
- Day 4: Discuss wildfire evacuation, preparedness kits and family communication plans. Talk through the process of identifying networks of family and friends who could help during and after a disaster.

Key considerations: Printing will likely consume the majority of your project budget. Past projects partnered with their school district, the USDA Forest Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, teachers, local emergency management offices, fire districts, and the American Red Cross.

Tips: Send each student home with local fire adaptation information (including translated materials) that includes how-to's, that focus on topics like requesting a home assessment, talking to your children about wildfire, signing up for the local emergency alert system or the local special-needs registry, creating a family evacuation plan and requesting a fire alarm. The call to action should be pitched as doing at least one of the activities described in the folder. Check out nfpa.org/Public-Education/Campaigns/TakeAction for additional youth programming materials.

The Business of Wildfire



Overview: Organize an evening with community business owners to hear about their experiences during past wildfires, how they recovered, and how they do business differently today. If they haven't experienced a wildfire, focus on helping them plan for a wildfire.

Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 5–8 hours, over seven or more weeks

Tips: Find a business to co-sponsor the event and have that person perform outreach to target attendees. Host the event at a local business. Integrate a call to action, such as preparing a business continuity plan. Visit disastersafety.org/ibhs-business-protection/ to access the Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety's resources regarding how businesses can prepare for natural disasters.

The People of Wildfire



Overview: Host an evening with fire personnel at a local brewery. Treat them to a discount and invite community members to meet them and have their wildfire questions answered.

Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 1–4 hours

Tips: A low cost assumes that breweries donate the discount. Have reflective address signs for sale and/or information on go-kits so that there is a clear call to action.

Harvesting Methods Open House



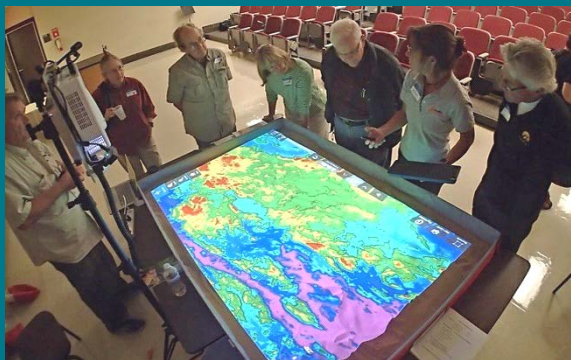
Overview: Foresters, fire managers, biologists and other specialists staff an open house to inform community members about forest health, wildfire issues, forest restoration and ways residents can take action. Specialists from a variety of disciplines answer questions and display their equipment (this could range from drip torches to feller bunchers).

Price tag: \$100–\$500

Cumulative planning time: 21–40 hours, over seven or more weeks

Tips: Recruit participating specialists as early as possible. Offer a "Kids' Corner" with fire and forestry-related activities. Have a call to action that builds on local opportunities.

Community Wildfire Mitigation Fair



Overview: Participants visit several different stations to learn how to safely and effectively mitigate wildfire risk on their property.

Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 21–40 hours

Tips: Consider having a wildfire simulation as one of the stations. This will require specialized personnel and equipment. Designing seven stations for 31–100 expected participants has worked well. Consider displaying fire/forestry equipment at relevant stations. Include a call to action at every station, and allow seven or more weeks for planning.

Demonstration Landscaping

Before



After



Overview: Mobilize volunteers to retrofit and landscape a community building.

Price tag: \$500+

Cumulative planning time: 40+ hours

Key considerations: Upfront buy-in from the building occupants/operators is key. This project can be a great way to engage new partners such as master gardeners, Habitat for Humanity, builders, hardware stores, landscapers, plant nurseries, and/or youth organizations. Past projects took seven or more weeks to plan.

Equipment/supplies needed: Volunteer waivers, food, fire-resistant plants, irrigation supplies, non-flammable mulch (stones, pavers, bricks, gravel), replacement construction materials (such as window or vent screens), garden and construction tools, small earth-moving equipment.

Tips: If major vegetation thinning is needed, consider doing a heavy equipment pre-workday; it can be challenging for a chipper to stay ahead of a large hand crew. Make sure utilities are marked so that they're avoided. Pick a host site that is highly visible and committed to its long-term maintenance. Create signage so that people can learn what steps are necessary to reduce their own home's risk. Have hydration/snack stations, and provide porta-potties if other bathrooms are not available.

Wildfire-Awareness Trail Run and Scavenger Hunt



Overview: Organize a trail run combined with a wildfire-awareness scavenger hunt. Participants complete their scavenger hunt card by visiting various displays or activities, which could include fire engines, wildfire prevention tables, etc. Completed cards are turned in for a related prize.

Price tag: \$\$\$

Cumulative planning time: 40+ hours; starting 6–9 months out.

Key considerations: Race management (including staff and equipment) is expensive, so start your search for affordable options months ahead of time. Inexpensive versions of items like medals and T-shirts can still cost \$5/item, so try securing donations for whatever possible, or build that into the registration fee. Other groups have secured additional, non-NFPA funding to host this event.

Tips: *If you don't have access to a suitable racecourse, consider organizing this as a lap-based event, where runners complete as many laps and stations as possible during a set time frame. Past events had a 1:1 ratio of runners and supporters, so plan to accommodate more people than those who register to run. Secure donations for food and (wildfire-related) goodie bags.*

Wildfire-Inspired Art

Overview: Work with a local art gallery to curate an exhibit based on local artists' responses to wildfires. Showcase the exhibit at a local studio or tasting room.

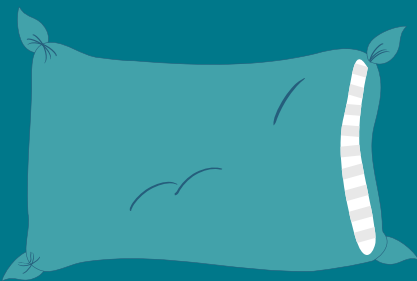
Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 9–20 hours



Tips: *Ask each contributor to write an artist's statement. Past statements have taken the form of poems, essays, or other narrative describing the work's inspiration. If space allows, host an activity area where patrons can create their own wildfire-inspired artwork. Consider charging an entry fee, and giving the proceeds to community wildfire recovery efforts. If the wildfire was recent, consider having a mental health professional facilitate a discussion, or just being present to provide support.*

Pillowcase Project for Youth



Overview: Host an American Red Cross Pillowcase Project. This is an interactive preparedness program designed for youth, ages 8–11, that increases awareness and understanding of natural hazards and teaches safety, emotional coping skills, and personal preparedness. Provide supplies for students to fill their pillowcases and send them home with preparedness materials to share with their parents.

Price tag: \$0–\$100

Cumulative planning time: 9–20 hours, over seven or more weeks

Tips: *Invite parent volunteers. Best for 5th-grade students.*

Want to talk to someone who knows the drill?

This menu was compiled by Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network (FAC Net) members, drawing on their past Prep Day project experience. The following FAC Net members agreed to act as points of contact should you have questions about hosting an event described in this guide:



**FIRE ADAPTED
COMMUNITIES**
LEARNING NETWORK

- W.U.I. Checkpoints and Demonstration Landscaping:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/rebecca-samulski/
- Residential Fuels Removal:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/ed-keith/
- The Landscaping/Science/Business/People of Wildfire, Wildfire-Inspired Art, and the Pillowcase Project:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/hilary-lundgren/
- Harvesting Methods Open House:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/anne-mottek/
- Community Wildfire Mitigation Fair:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/charlie-landsman/
- Wildfire Awareness Trail Run:
fireadaptednetwork.org/member/sonya-a-sistare/

Photo credits:

Listed in order of appearance:

- Al Myatt, FireWise of Southwest Colorado
- Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization
- Dinah O'Farrell
- City of Ashland
- Ed Keith, Deschutes County
- Forest Stewards Guild (2)
- Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce
- Porfirio Chavarria, Santa Fe Fire Department
- National Park Service, shared via Flickr Creative Commons
- Keith Vandervort, Timberjay News
- Michelle Connelly, Coalition for the Upper South Platte
- *Open source image*
- Middletown Art Center (2)
- *Open source image*

*Being #fireadapted
doesn't stop after one
day of action. Explore
fireadaptednetwork.org
and nfpa.org for more
information and
resources.*