



FIREWISE FireWise Recognition Programme

The Firewise Communities Program is intended to serve as a resource for agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments, communities and residents across South Africa who are working toward a common goal: reduce the loss of lives, properties, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings. The Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping and maintenance.

The Firewise Communities Recognition Program was designed as a tool that forestry and fire service professionals can use to work with residents to obtain voluntary compliance with existing wildfire safety rules, as well as to motivate community action toward wildfire safety in the absence of strict ordinances or laws. The Recognition Program encourages and acknowledges citizen involvement in reducing community wildfire risk.

The Recognition Programme builds on the current FireWise Concept, putting guidelines in place for registration and recognition to lend structure and add more credibility to the voluntary side of the programme.

Since inception in 2008, the FireWise concept escalated across South Africa within both affluent and poorer communities. These communities living on the Wildland Urban Interface embraced the need to get involved with the protection of their livelihoods from wild fire. The problem is, that in the wake of the programme's success, it became difficult to keep track and up to date with what was happening across the country in the FireWise Communities. The need arose for a monitoring and evaluation system that would apply to all communities across South Africa. With this process communities would receive validation for their voluntary work and the programme would have a tracking tool of progress made. The threat of communities losing their momentum would be avoided with a system that would require communities to work throughout the year and receive an annual updated recognition plaque.

The Recognition Programme have communities work through a set of 4 criteria to ensure they're eligible to become recognised Firewise Communities.

Communities are ready to apply for recognition when they have met the following criteria:

1. Formed a FireWise Committee
2. Accepted an assessment from a WUI specialist (WoF, Cape Nature, SANPARKS etc.)
3. and used it to create a fire management plan
4. Held a FireWise Day or event

The Committee should have the following key positions in place:

Chairperson

This is the person who presides over a committee. It is his/her responsibility to exercise authority over or control during a meeting. The chairperson is the head of the committee; he/she is the representative of the committee to the outside world, and the spokesperson.

Secretary

The person who handles correspondence, keeps records or minutes of meetings and does general clerical work for a committee. This person is responsible for keeping any data, contact lists and communication files in a safe place.

Vice-Chairperson

The person who assists the chairperson deputises for the chairperson and serves in their place during the absence or indisposition.

Treasurer

The person is appointed to look after the funds of a committee. The treasurer also fills the role of fundraiser in the absence of funds at the start of the project. This person will also be required to keep the books of the committee.

The Annual Report:

Committees are required to submit an annual report to the FireWise program documenting the community's activity. It must show the following information:

- o The name of the community and the province where it is located
- o The year in which FireWise work was completed
- o Who is on the local FireWise Committee
- o Who is the head or chair of the FireWise Committee
- o The amount invested in local FireWise projects
- o The number of residents in the community
- o The completion date of the community assessment and who conducted it
- o The date the community plan was completed
- o The date of the FireWise Day or event
- o Contact information for the FireWise board Chair
- o Contact information for the local fire department
- o Contact information for the local Working on Fire Base.

The FireWise Officer will receive the application form from the community. The community must also provide the liaison with the following additional information:

- o A copy of the assessment that was performed (unless you already have this on file)
- o A copy of the plan that was created
- o Copies of FireWise Day descriptions, publicity, photos, etc.

The application form includes one page for all of the community information and one page for the FireWise officer's official signature. Once the community provides the completed first page of the application form and accompanying materials to the liaison, the liaison can then forward the application and the signature page to the Firewise program office. Recognition will apply for the year in which work was completed in the community. Applications must be provided to the Firewise

program office by December 31 of the year in which work was completed in order for community work to be recognized.

Calculated Investment

The formula for determining whether the community has met their R2 per capita investment criteria is simple: divide the total rands invested by the number of residents in the community. Investment can include cash, equipment costs, in-kind services, rental costs, and volunteer hours. If a partner or municipal department contributes cash, personnel time or equipment to a local project, ensure that the investment is calculated for the applicant community only. For instance, a R50,000 grant for an entire District should not be applied towards the per capita investment if the applicant community only received R5,000 worth of services or support. Several forms are available to help communities track their volunteer efforts and in-kind investments. Sample forms are attached herewith.

- o Volunteer Sign Up Sheet
- o Volunteer Time Sheet
- o Volunteer/In-Kind Tracking Sheet

Sample calculation in determining volunteer hours and costs incurred for the R2 per capita FireWise investment. (Based on a community size of 1,000 people this example community would need to invest R2,000 (R2.00 x 1000 people) in volunteer hours or equipment to reach their goal. This example exceeded its goal. The total amount of R4,475 should be reported.)

of Volunteers 20 X # of hours 10 each volunteer = <u>200 hours</u>
<u>200 hours</u> X hourly rate (R20.25 (2008)) Cost = R4,050

Other Costs Incurred:

Item: Chipper for day Cost	=	R 350
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Item: Chain saw for day Cost	=	R 75
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Total Monies Expended on Project:		<u>R4,475</u>
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(to be reported on FireWise application and renewal)

Application Form Submission

If the community can complete the form by typewriter or by hand, we encourage legible type/printing. FireWise program staff will follow up by phone if the information is illegible, but this slows down the process. Make sure the Chair of the local FireWise committee is clearly indicated. This person will be receiving correspondence from the national program on behalf of the community. On page two of the application, indicate who should receive the recognition materials. This person will later present the signs, plaque and other materials to community residents at a ceremony or formal gathering.

The two-page application, once completed, may be mailed to:

Chandra Fick
FFA NPC
FireWise Community Recognition Programme
Winter House
Private Bag X7
Claremont
7735

Electronic versions may also be accepted, as long as the signature on page two can be verified. Email to Chandra.fick@wofire.co.za – tel. 021 797 5787 or 073 012 7939

Materials and Correspondence

Program staff will notify the Chairman of the Committee that they have received the application. Then they will provide a plaque to the community:

A welcome letter is sent to the community, with a copy to the designated representative. A plaque is ordered for the community with the year of recognition. Turn-around time from request to delivery is about one month.

- o A plaque is sent to the local FFA NPC office or other designee for later presentation to the community.

Community Stories:

Shortly after the community receives the plaque, they will be asked to provide some text and photos so that FireWise staff can post their community story on the website. Staff will follow up with community leaders to obtain this information. Partners and communities can also provide photos for use on the FireWise website

Recognition Ceremony

A formal recognition ceremony is a wonderful way to acknowledge and celebrate the community's FireWise activities. Different communities like to do different kinds of ceremonies. The ceremony can be as large or as small as the community wishes. Typically, the WoF/FireWise Liaison and the community committee arrange for the time, place and format of the ceremony so the plaque can be presented. It can also be used to create invitations and publicize the successes of the community. Getting the word out ahead of time can also help get wider recognition. In addition, FireWise staff can notify Municipalities, Fire Brigades and Key Representatives about the recognition of communities in their jurisdictions. The actual recognition of a community creates area-wide awareness of their actions and the local wildfire risk, and can generate a "me-too" attitude in surrounding areas. Overall eligibility for grants and other resources may also improve as the community has shown the ability to organize and invest in its own safety.