



**DC Ranch Association  
Board Report 8-2-2021 #1**

**Subject Matter: Common Area Fire Fuel Management  
Firewise Program**

**Background:** Through the years at DC Ranch, only a minimal amount of work has been done to provide defensible space in naturally growing common areas that are adjacent to residential lots. And this type of work has generally been done after a resident voiced concern. For the most part, throughout the community, these areas have remained untouched. After surveying the community, the common areas of most concern are those that border neighborhood homes in Desert Parks, Desert Camp, Country Club, and Windgate/Horseshoe (Parks). In these areas of the community, natural open space areas (i.e., common area) have been left to grow right up to, and in some cases over the walls and/or view fences of the residential lots.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) writes “The Firewise Research around home destruction vs. home survival in wildfires point to embers and small flames as the main way that a majority of homes ignite in wildfires. Embers are burning pieces of airborne wood and/or vegetation that can be carried more than a mile through the wind can cause spot fires and ignite homes, debris, and other objects. There are methods for homeowners to prepare their homes to withstand ember attacks and minimize the likelihood of flames or surface fire touching the home or any attachments. Experiments, models, and post-fire studies have shown homes ignite due to the condition of the home and everything around it, up to 200 feet from the foundation. This is called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ).”

This effort’s intention is to address areas of concern, highlighted on the attached map, by minimizing the vegetation five feet from the wall and/or view fence, then the next 15 feet is cleaned to remove dead and dying landscape and ladder fuels. The Scottsdale Fire Marshall recommends this approach to achieve “defensible space” between common areas and residential homes. This work would also provide accessibility to the fire department vehicles and emergency personnel when needed.

Other than flood, fire is the predominate safety concern for the community. Over the last few years, a storm water management plan was developed and implemented to address concerns regarding the proper functionality of the community's washes, drainage channels, and culverts. Much time and effort, as well as dollars, were expended to address this risk management concern. Now that the plan is in place, the timing is right to put our focus on the next risk management concern: fire fuel management.

In 2019 we met with representatives from Scottsdale Fire and the Fire Marshall to develop a scope of work to model an area of the community, with the intention of quantifying the amount of work and expense required to convert areas of concern to fire-safe areas. We then used a section of the Estates (Desert Parks) as a model for the work. The pictures below show the model area and completed work.



2019 Before



2019 After



One Year Later



The modelling program allowed us to formulate project budgets for neighborhoods that need the required work. Those costs are as follows:

Planning Unit	Linear Feet	Price Per Foot	Total Estimate
Pu 1	20,756.00	4.02	\$83,437.00
Pu 2	49,972.00	4.02	\$200,887.00
Arcadia	8,431.00	4.02	\$33,892.00
T4B	1,207.00	4.02	\$4,852.00
5.9	4,835.00	4.02	\$19,436.00
Horseshoe	8,889.00	4.02	\$35,733.00
Windgate	838.00	4.02	\$3,368.00
Country Club	5,936.00	4.02	\$23,862.00
	100,864.00		\$405,467.00

The proposed plan is to schedule fire fuel management work starting later this year (2021) and to continue that work over a three-year period, addressing concerns for neighborhoods where this type of work is recommended by Scottsdale Fire. After the initial three years of work, upkeep efforts would take place on a three-year rotation, at about half the cost of the initial work. Project funding was approved by the Board along with the 2021 operating budget and reserve plan. The table below shows the project’s funding schedule over the first three-year period.

Parcel/Neighborhood	2021	2022	2023
Country Club		\$23,862	
Horseshoe	\$55,169		
Windgate		\$3,368	
T.4B			\$4,852
T.7	\$33,892		
1.11			\$30,608
1.13		\$14,882	
1.14		\$15,026	
1.17		\$14,721	
1.18		\$8,200	
2.3			\$13,862
2.9			\$20,441
2.10		\$23,256	
2.13/2.14	\$78,221		
2.15			\$13,016
2.17/.2.18/2.19			\$52,091
Total	\$167,282	\$103,315	\$134,870

At the Board’s October 12, 2020 board meeting, an internal report regarding the aforementioned concern was formally presented to the Board; the Board was asked to consider approving the Firewise program. The matter was tabled, and the Board asked that there be more discussion, voicing concern that the community should be sufficiently informed. In January 2021, an article regarding DC Ranch and Firewise was published in DC Ranch News.

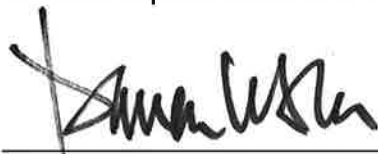
Scottsdale Fire Marshall Mark Zimmerman then presented the Firewise program to the Board at its January 12, 2021 board meeting, which was followed by a March 31 community presentation on Firewise. The Board then entertained another presentation from Scottsdale Fire at a June 23, 2021 special meeting for the Board and NVMs. Following that meeting, all NVMs were asked to reach out to their voting blocks to garner an opinion on the level of support for Firewise. That effort culminated in an NVM-wide survey, where 27 of the 41 NVMs responded unanimously in favor of adopting a fire fuel management program.

Earlier this year, the State of Arizona promoted a grant program for fire fuel work, and Ranch Association applied. Our request was denied (no basis was provided).

Scottsdale's Fire Marshall reports that there are currently 10 Certified Firewise communities in Scottsdale, three in the process, and 15 that have requested formal presentations.

This proposed work addresses safety concerns related to fires in common areas that could impact residential homes.

**Recommendation:** Formally approve the proposed fire fuel management work and proceed with the implementation of the Firewise Program as proposed.



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Darren Shaw, Executive Director



**Fire Department**

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May 12, 2021

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management  
Healthy Forest Initiative Grant Program  
John Richardson  
Assistant State Forester (Forestry Programs)

This letter is to convey the support that the City of Scottsdale and Scottsdale Fire Department has for the DC Ranch Community's efforts to become a Certified Firewise Community.

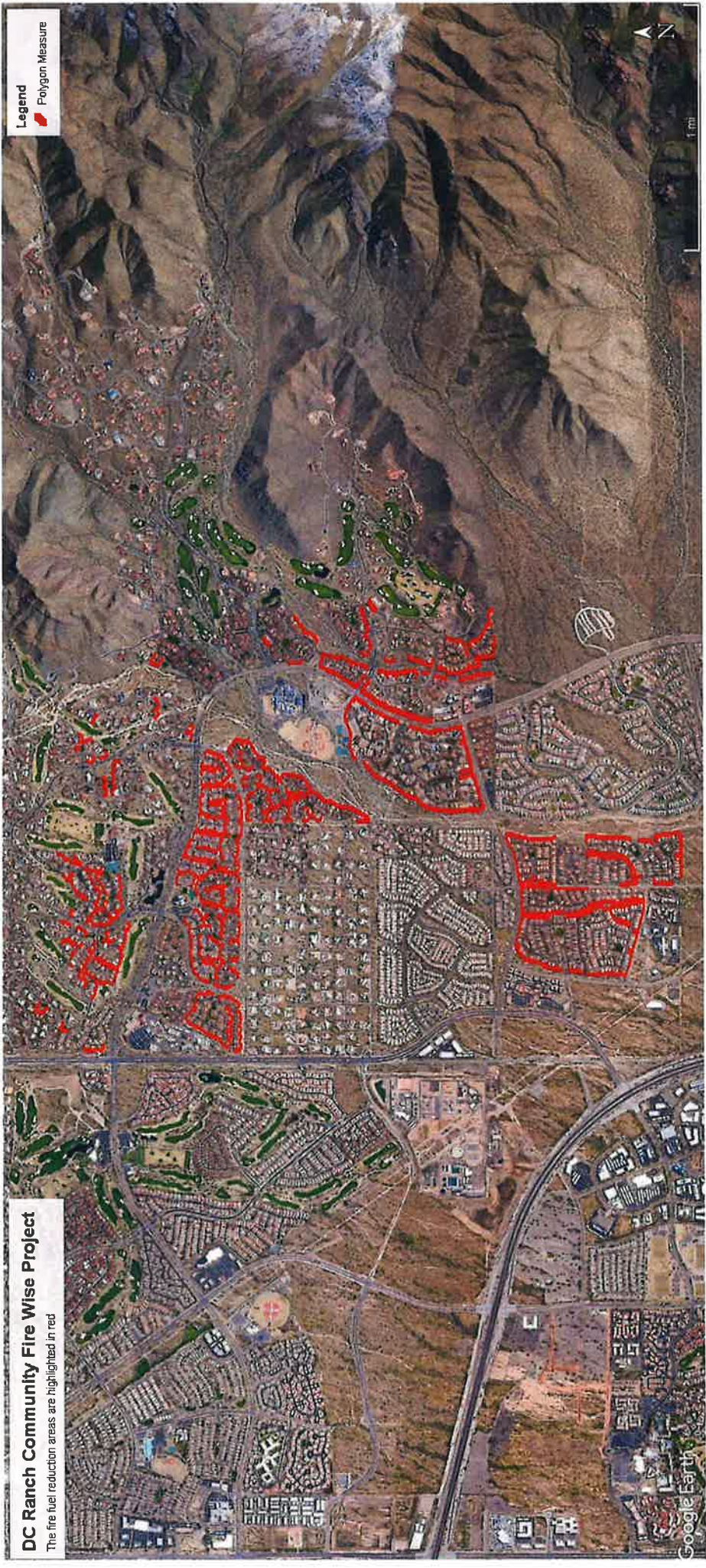
The City of Scottsdale is embarking on a large-scale program to create defensible space between the communities that border the Scottsdale Preserve and the Preserve. DC Ranch's entire east border abuts the Preserve land area. The Firewise program for this community will create a defensible space that will minimize the chance of fire moving east from the community into the Preserve while slowing a fire coming west from the Preserve towards the DC Ranch Community. Scottsdale has tailored the National Firewise Defensible Space guidelines to provide an effective defensible space in the Sonoran Desert fuel model while still staying within the City Zoning Ordinances regarding Natural Area Open Space designated land.

Scottsdale currently has 10 certified Firewise Communities with three more in the final stages of certification and approval. There are also 15 other communities that have either requested a formal presentation or information on how to become a Certified Firewise Community.

Sincerely,

Tom Shannon  
Fire Chief





**DC Ranch Community Fire Wise Project**  
The fire fuel reduction areas are highlighted in red.

**Legend**  
Polygon Measure