

Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association

Firewise Communities Plan

2003-2005

Goals & Objectives

1. We want to minimize loss of our homes to wildfire.
2. In concert with the Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association's (CRPOA) Declaration of Covenants, Restrictions, Easements and Road Maintenance Agreement (CC&R's), we want to protect property owners' health, safety, and right to full enjoyment of their properties and we want to enhance and protect property values, desirability, and attractiveness of the community.
3. We want to work in partnership with our fire prevention/protection agencies, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Skagit County, and Fire District #5, to our mutual benefit.
4. We want to serve as an example of how a community of homes directly interfacing a mountain forest can prevent/reduce loss due to wildfire.
5. We want to become a certified Firewise Community.

2003

February – Site visit and hazard assessment by representatives of Washington DNR and Skagit County Fire Warden.

March – planning

March through December - implementation

Objectives:

1. Increase education and awareness about fire prevention and fire protection of homes and forest land.
2. Create alternate exit (and emergency personnel entry) to supplement the community's current single access road.
3. Create firebreak along the common border between Chuckanut Ridge and Washington State DNR properties.
4. Encourage homeowners to have individual home assessments and adopt Firewise defensible space around homes.
5. Encourage homeowners and property owners to reduce ladder fuels in their forest land.
6. Have at least one Board member attend Firewise Communities training.

2003 Accomplishments:

1. In April, with cooperation and help from Washington DNR, a gate was purchased by CRPOA and installed by a DNR work crew at the border of one CRPOA property owner's land and DNR land. This gate allows people on Chuckanut Ridge to exit the mountain through Larabee State Park (DNR land) in times of dire emergency when the main, and only, road is blocked. A DNR lock was provided for the gate. An easement for, and access to, the gate was provided to each CRPOA property owner by the owner of the property where the gate is located.
2. During March through May DNR work crews did extensive brush removal and tree pruning along the border of CRPOA and DNR property to create a firebreak.
3. During March through June DNR, and with loan of the Skagit County Fire Warden's or a DNR rented brush chipper, work crews assisted several CRPOA residents with disposal of underbrush and ladder fuels.
4. On May 7th and 8th, Roger Mitchell, CRPOA President and CRPOA Firewise Board Chairman, attended Firewise Communities Advanced Training at Hood River, Oregon
5. On 15 June, a two-page article discussing CRPOA and DNR fire prevention activities appeared in the *Skagit Valley Herald*. John Hubner and Roger Mitchell, Chuckanut Ridge residents, and Marc Titus of the Washington DNR were interviewed for the article.
6. In June, Seattle television station KOMO, Channel 4 news, broadcast interviews with Roger Mitchell, Chuckanut Ridge resident, and Marc Titus, Washington DNR, on the evening news.
7. In November, at the CRPOA annual meeting, a vote passed unanimously for continued fire prevention/protection activities and for doing what is necessary to obtain certified Firewise Community status.
8. Individual property owners continued creation of defensible space around existing homes and removal of underbrush and ladder fuels on their properties.

2004

Objectives:

1. Continue community education and awareness about fire prevention, fire protection, and Firewise practices.
2. Publish detailed map of community with houses, fire hydrants, ponds, emergency staging areas, and other key features designated with GPS latitude/longitude for use by local, county, and DNR fire protection organizations.
3. Continue individual homeowner/property owner defensible space enhancement and ladder fuels reduction activities.
4. Reduce ladder fuels, thin trees, and generally make the common road more Firewise.
5. Meet with new members of the community to make them aware of Firewise practices and our participation in Firewise Communities.
6. Schedule and coordinate with local fire district a static test of each home's fire hydrant.

2004 Accomplishments:

1. Overall, Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners continued to meet and exceed our Firewise Plan objectives.
2. As we have in past years, all day on 10 and 28 March, resident and non-resident property owners combined for concentrated removal of trees alongside our common road. The removed trees were all chipped in an industrial brush chipper and the chips blown back into the forest. This created a wider margin on the roadside, increased the potential of the road acting as a firebreak, and increased the ability to effectively mow the annual crop of blackberry, salmonberry, and other roadside brush. Up to 12 people were working at any one time.
3. On 11 May, a ceremony was held at the Skagit County Administration Building at which Don Munks, County Commissioner, gave a speech on the virtues of all the hard work Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association had done, and was continuing to do, in reducing wildfire potential. Four Chuckanut Ridge property owners were present to receive the plaque. Among others attending were Smokey Bear, Fred Wefer, Skagit County Fire Warden and Marc Titus, Washington State Department of Natural Resources Fire Prevention Coordinator for the Northwest Region. Fred and Marc are both on the Chuckanut Ridge Firewise Board.
4. After additional coordination with our State Forestry Contact, Marc Titus at Washington State Department of Natural Resources, we arranged to again get assistance with our aggressive brushing and ladder fuels removal project. The DNR supervises wildfire fighter-trained work crews from the Monroe Correctional Center. We had an 11-man DNR-Monroe work crew on 7,8,9, and 10 June who worked along with up to six Chuckanut Ridge property owners each day. On 12 June, 2,3, and 4 July Chuckanut Ridge property owners continued the effort by chipping the brush and blowing the chips back into the forest. After an \$8,000 replacement of the brush chipper engine, chipping continued on 25 July.
5. In September Chuckanut Ridge was fortunate to again have the DNR-Monroe Correctional Center work crew on 27, 28, 29, and 30 and again on 5, 7, and 8 October. As always, up to six Chuckanut Ridge property owners worked with the DNR-Monroe crew each day. As a bonus, on 28, 29, and 30 September we had three DNR engine crew working on brush removal.
6. With all of the above work, totaling 1115 hours, we removed literally tons of trees, brush, and ladder fuels from strategically important areas.
7. Our one remaining objective for 2004, to test each property owner's fire hydrant, something that has never before been done, is scheduled for 18 and 20 December. Fire District #5 will conduct the testing with their pump engine. Fire District #5 Chief, Assistant Chief, and engine crew; Skagit County Fire Marshall and Assistant Fire Marshall; and Chuckanut Ridge Firewise Board president will all attend the testing.
8. On November 3-6, Chuckanut Ridge Property Owners Association president and Firewise Board president, Roger Mitchell, attended Backyards and Beyond, the national Firewise conference in Denver. Firewise Communities USA paid all expenses for Roger to attend. Following the conference Roger created a display of Firewise-related materials and made an educational presentation to the Association membership at the Annual Meeting of CRPOA. The CRPOA quarterly newsletter always has an article about Firewise as well.
9. Two new Chuckanut Ridge property owners that are beginning planning and construction of new houses were given Firewise information brochures and information.
10. A detailed map of Chuckanut Ridge has been produced and we will now coordinate with fire fighting agencies to finalize the map in a form most useful to them.

2005

Objectives:

1. Continue community education and awareness about fire prevention, fire protection, and Firewise practices.
2. Continue individual homeowner/property owner defensible space enhancement and ladder fuels reduction activities
3. Meet with new members of the community to make them aware of Firewise practices and our participation in Firewise Communities.
4. Coordinate with Washington State DNR Fire protection personnel to use Chuckanut Ridge for a fire fighting training exercise in a wildland/homes interface scenario.