



**SOUTHWEST
FIRE SCIENCE
CONSORTIUM**



Southwestern Wildland Urban Interface Summits: Helping Communities Prepare for Wildfire

THE SOUTHWEST FIRE SCIENCE CONSORTIUM (SWFSC) IS HELPING COMMUNITIES PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE BY SUPPORTING THE ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) SUMMITS.

- » Over 900 communities across Arizona and New Mexico are at moderate to high risk of being impacted by wildfire.
- » The Arizona and New Mexico WUI Summits connect communities at risk with resources and tools to help them prepare for the threat of wildfire.
- » The SWFSC provides support for the summits in the form of travel grants, which allows community members to attend these critical events.
- » Recipients of travel grants are sharing what they learn at the summits in their communities and making lasting impacts to reduce the threat of wildfire.

The goal of the SWFSC is to accelerate the awareness, understanding, adoption, and implementation of readily available wildland fire science throughout the southwestern U.S. by providing a forum for managers, scientists, policy makers, and the public to interact and share science. The SWFSC is part of the Joint Fire Science Program Fire Science Exchange Network, a national collaboration of 15 regional fire science exchanges.

“The travel grants provided by the Consortium have been instrumental in getting people to the WUI Summits who need the information the most.”

– Carrie Dennett, *BLM Arizona State Fuels Specialist*

Read the story...



Fifteen regional Fire Science Exchanges are funded by the Joint Fire Science Program.



“I made great contacts at the Summit, including people in other Firewise communities and extension agents. I was able to take what I learned back to my community and we’ve since made great progress in reducing our risk.”

—Sally Crum, *Mount Lemmon Fire District, Firewise Coordinator*

Over 900 communities in Arizona and New Mexico are at moderate to high risk of being impacted by wildfire. Many national educational and outreach programs, such as Firewise USA, Ready Set Go!, and Fire Adapted Communities, are designed to help communities plan and prepare for the threat of wildfire. Yet, many residents in communities threatened by wildfire remain unaware of such programs and do not know how to best mobilize a community to take action to reduce wildfire risk.

The Arizona and New Mexico WUI Summits are designed to connect these communities with the resources needed to effectively reduce the threat of wildfire. These annual 2-day events convene all the resources a community member would need to become better adapted to wildfire under one roof. This includes for example, representatives of the insurance industry, city, county, state, and federal government officials, local fire departments, and representatives from national outreach programs, such as Firewise USA and Fire Adapted Communities. At these events, individuals can learn about what they and their communities can do to reduce the threat of wildfire.

For these Summits to be successful, it is of course vital to have participants from fire threatened communities. The biggest barrier for community members to attend is the cost of getting there, which requires covering costly gas, hotel, and food bills. Since 2016, the SWFSC has offered travel grants to 45 people from 29 communities to attend these events. This support is crucial for getting people to the summits, particularly from rural areas who would otherwise have no means to attend.

Getting community members to the summits is having critical impacts on the ground. One example comes from the community of Summerhaven, Arizona, one of the southwestern communities at high risk of being impacted by wildfire. The Firewise coordinator in that community received a travel grant to attend the 2018 WUI Summit in Pinetop, AZ. Relatively new to the volunteer position, she was eager to learn more about how to better prepare the community for wildfire. At the summit she learned of many resources, including available state grants, and was connected to many experts, some of whom helped her prepare grant applications. One grant, which was successfully awarded in 2018, is supporting needed fuel treatment work on private lands in Summerhaven where overgrown shrubs and tree saplings are contributing to the wildfire threat.

The Arizona and New Mexico WUI Summits are popular events that successfully connect communities to resources necessary to reduce the threat of wildfire and the SWFSC is helping by assuring community members are able to attend these events. 🌱