

Volunteers Making a Difference Newsletter

One person, one home, one community, one city, one county at a time

November 2008

STATE NEWS



ELGIN, Texas--Down Home Ranch received the recognition of becoming the 19th Texas Firewise Community on Saturday, Oct. 18, in Elgin, Texas. "Firewise Communities/USA recognition helps raise awareness of our programs and facilities, which helps bring additional community support and volunteerism to Down Home Ranch that we wouldn't otherwise get," said Jerry Horton, founder of Down Home Ranch.

Rich Gray, Urban Wildland Interface Coordinator for Texas Forest Service said, "One of the first steps is identifying that wildland fires are a threat to the community and taking a proactive approach in becoming a Firewise Community, thus mitigating some of these wildfire threats."

Jim Smalley, manager of the Firewise Communities program said "Down Home Ranch has done an outstanding job of creating a local Firewise Task Force and implementing Firewise principles. Down Home Ranch has dramatically increased the chance that homes and structures will be protected when a wildfire occurs."

Excerpt from article written by Lexi Maxwell, Texas Forest Service, UWI Specialist

BASTROP, Texas--More than 600 firefighters from across the nation attended the 11th Annual Capital Area Interagency Wildfire Academy Oct. 21-Nov. 3. Local fire departments, as well as state and federal agencies learned and practiced basic wildland firefighting techniques during the nation's second largest wildfire academy.

Courses included helicopter operations, wildland power saws, dozer operations, ignition operations, emergency vehicle operations, fire investigation, incident command system, fire prevention education, and tactical decision making in wildfire and basic wildland firefighting.

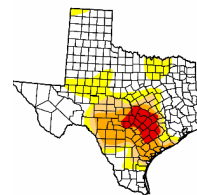
The popularity of the wildfire academy is largely due to the knowledge base in the instructors. "Our success can be easily tracked," said Les Rogers, Incident Commander for the academy. "By looking at the number of students who came here as novices and are now instructors."

Excerpt from article written by Jan Amen, Texas Forest Service, Public Information Officer

Read original article at the TFS Newsroom <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/main/popup.aspx?id=5796>

COLLEGE STATION, Texas – Houston County is on its way to a safer future, thanks to the adoption of the Houston County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP.) Texas Forest Service created the CWPP program to customize wildfire plans for counties and communities at risk. The plans outline fire prevention methods specific to the needs of the area, define what resources are available, and create a plan for safe, efficient response from the local fire departments. These plans aim to protect residents and landowners from wildfires, something Houston County Emergency Management Coordinator David Lamb believes to be "the biggest threat that this county faces day-to-day."

The map at right, issued Oct. 30 by the US Drought Monitor indicates a persistent area of extreme drought in south Central Texas. Another week of dry and windy, albeit cool, weather further deteriorated moisture conditions in the southern Great Plains, especially in south central Oklahoma, northern and south-central Texas. October is normally the second wettest month of the year in much of Texas. Decent rains have fallen on the Panhandle and eastern sections, but have largely missed many areas in-between, particularly south-central sections. During the past 90- and 180-days, deficiencies of 4 to 8 and 8 to 16 inches, respectively, have accumulated between Austin and Corpus Christi. Since the start of the year, Austin/Bergstrom, San Antonio, and Victoria have deficits of 13.31, 14.54, and 14.37 inches, respectively, or around half of normal precipitation.



For further information go to <http://www.drought.unl.edu/dm/monitor.html>



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Urban Wildland
Interface Program



State Wildfire Statistics

Time Period	Fires	Acres	Structures Lost	Structures Saved
1/1/08-10/31/08	14,953	1.555 million	1,086	19,083
1/1/07-12/31/07	5,499	121,964	158	4,098
1/5/05-9/16/06*	29,141	2.26 million	2,054	34,756

*2005/2006 winter fire season (Jan. 1, 2005 to Sept. 18, 2006)

(Texas Forest Service-including all reporting agencies www.tamu.edu/ticc/predictive_services/tx_sitreport.pdf)

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NATIONAL NEWS



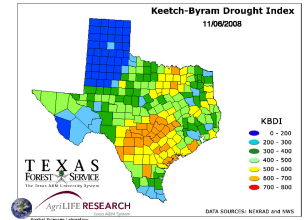
National Wildfire Statistics

Time Period	Fires	Acres
1/1/08 to 10/31/08	73,960	5.052 million
1/1/07 to 10/31/07	77,108	9.191 million
10 Yr Avg. ('99-'08)	72,182	6.556 million

National Interagency Fire Agency www.nifc.gov/fire_info/nfn.htm

IN THE KNOW

Pursuant to the persistent drought across most of Central Texas, many KBDI readings are listed in the 600-700 range. According to the latest prediction, it will be necessary for citizens to remain vigilant for wildfires in the upcoming months. Take steps now to help prevent wildfires and protect your home and community.



HAPPENINGS



Margaret Baker's hard work has paid off. Her neighborhood, River Mountain Ranch is aggressively pursuing their Firewise Community status.



Priscilla Stanley's presentation on "Wildfire Preparedness: Creating Defensible Space" to the Hill Country Texas Master Naturalist Class of 2008 had 40 in attendance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New CWES Graduates

Congratulations and welcome to the newest CWES graduates. Nine residents from Bexar County completed the Firewise certification course held at Gray's Forest in northwest Bexar County. We look forward to hearing from you in upcoming newsletters.

Volunteer Hours

The end of the year is near; therefore, please submit time you spent on Firewise activities. This would include time spent on presentations, Firewise projects in your community, CWES class hours, etc. Please email hours along with the month and task performed to: texasuwi@tfs.tamu.edu.



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Urban Wildland Interface Program



QUOTABLE QUOTE

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow. ~ Melody Beattie

