

## *National Fire Plan*

### *Fire Threat Zones*

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Wildland fire occurrence is producing increasing threats to loss of key ecosystem components and natural resource values as well as increasing damage to private property and social values. It may be helpful to consider three separate landscape elements (zones) associated with managing fire risks and associated damage.

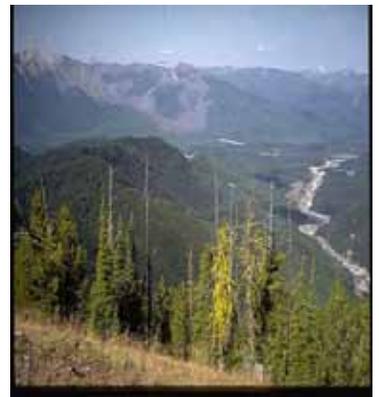
The **defense zone** is defined as the populated urban interface or intermix areas containing primary private property values. In these highly sensitive areas, defense of social values are paramount. The FIREWISE program, successfully implemented, can produce the greatest protection of homes and property values associated with this zone.



The **threat zone** consists of areas that are immediately adjacent to the defense zones. This zone needs specific and intense management and treatments. Planned treatments will reduce the spread and intensity of fire developing or moving through these areas which poses a direct threat to our ability to successfully defend interface perimeters. Physical removal of biomass coupled with prescribed fire applications are key management actions required to reduce risks in the **threat zone**.



Recent wildland fires in the western states have caused substantial damage to natural resource values, structural losses and social infrastructure components and services. These fires started from well within general forest areas and produced losses many miles away. Notable among these are the recent Rodeo-Chediski fire in Arizona, the Biscuit fire in Oregon, the Cerro Grande fire in New Mexico and the Hayman fire in Colorado. Any number of the current fires are in position to cause a similar level of damage to Missoula and/or surrounding communities. Treatment through the use of all management options is required to minimize large fire development in these **wildlands** or **general forest zone**.



In order to live in a fire-adapted ecosystem, it is important to understand and manage the ecosystem and homes within its boundaries. A fuel treatment strategy needs to be based on treating all 3 zones; defense, threat, and general forest. If any of these components is not fully implemented, the effectiveness of the overall strategy is compromised.

# DEFENSE ZONE



# THREAT ZONE



## DEFENSE ZONE

**AREA:** Where wildlands and residential areas meet

**GOAL:** Improve home's chances of survival

**HOW:** Use Firewise design, landscaping and maintenance.



Home not using Firewise landscaping and maintenance.



Home utilizing Firewise landscaping and maintenance.

## THREAT ZONE

**AREA:** Buffer zone between wildlands and residential areas.

**GOAL:** Reduce spread and intensity of fire

**HOW:** Thinning, trimming low hanging limbs, slash/pile and burn and prescribed fire



Before: Area that needs forest fuel reduced within the Threat Zone.



After: Area that was treated by thinning, trimming low hanging limbs, slash/pile and burn.

## WILDLAND ZONE

**AREA:** Wildlands, general forest area

**GOAL:** Reduce damage to natural resources, structures and services.

**HOW:** Treatment through use of all management options including managed natural fire



Vast untreated forest of Western Montana.



Fire being managed for fuel reduction and restoration of natural ecosystems.