

Wildfire Preparedness

April 18, 2024

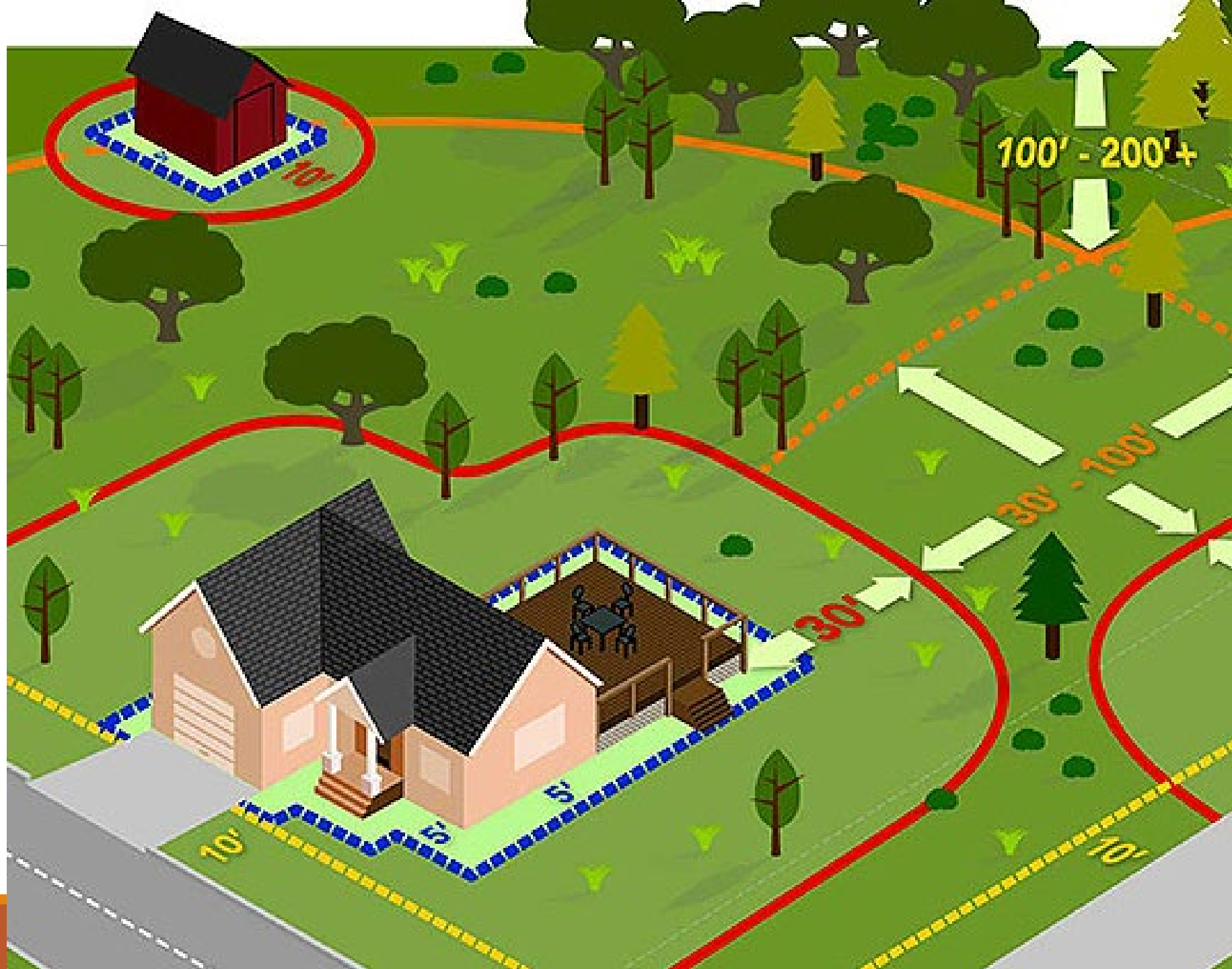
Melissa Steele

Bend Fire & Rescue

Deschutes County Rural Fire District #2

541-3385-6679

msteele@bendoregon.gov





Agenda

Fire Context in Central Oregon

WUI- what does it mean?

Home Hardening

Defensible Space- 0-5'

Evacuations

Questions?

Local Fire Context

- Historic fires were low severity, patchy, varied on the landscape
- Suppression and exclusion mostly eliminated wildland fires
- Increased potential for large wildfires during extreme conditions
- Fire seasons are getting longer



Skeleton Fire, August 1996

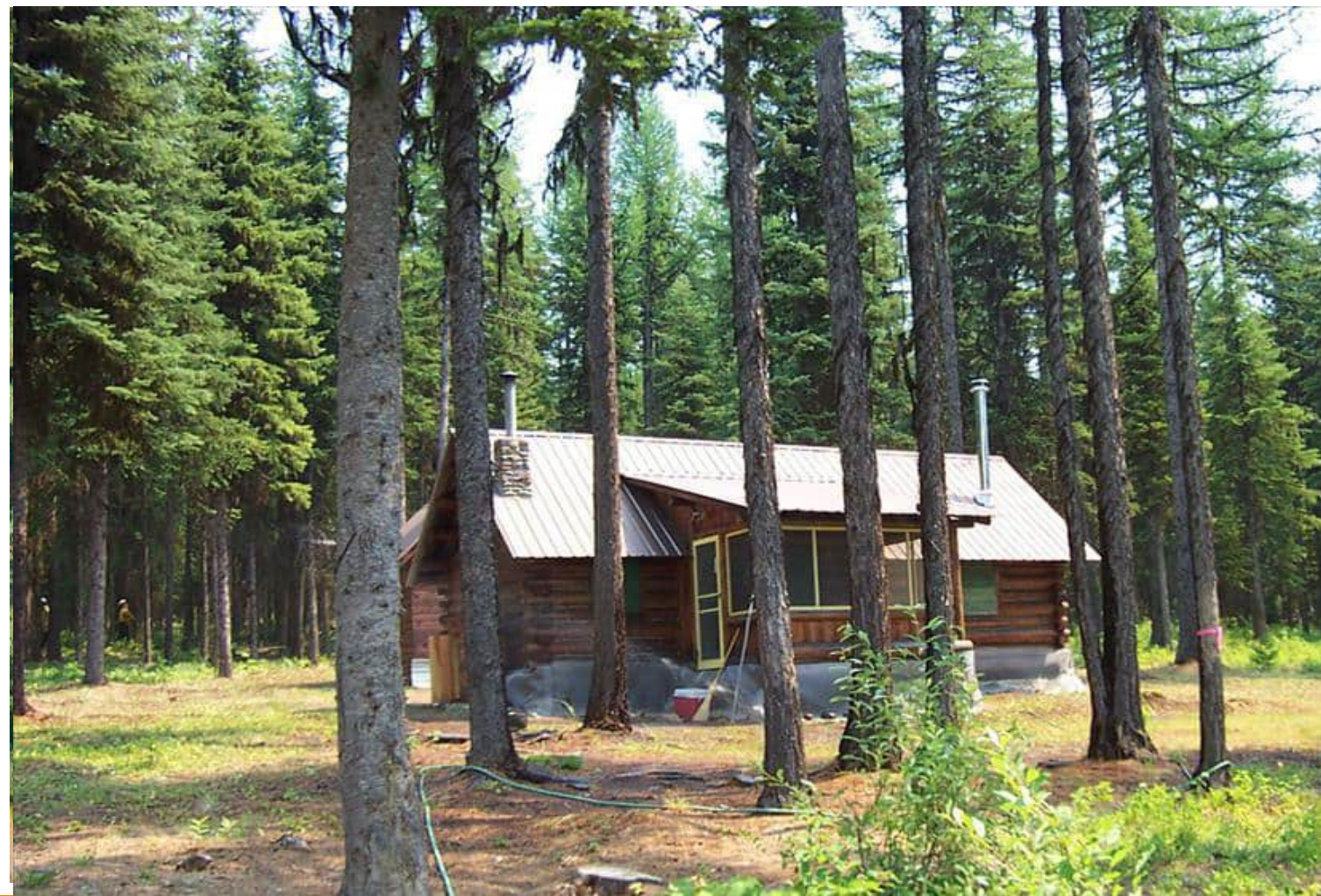
Local Context continued



ODF Definition:

Geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.

Any location where wildfire can spread from vegetation to structures.



Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Is it a specific location?

How does wildfire spread to homes?

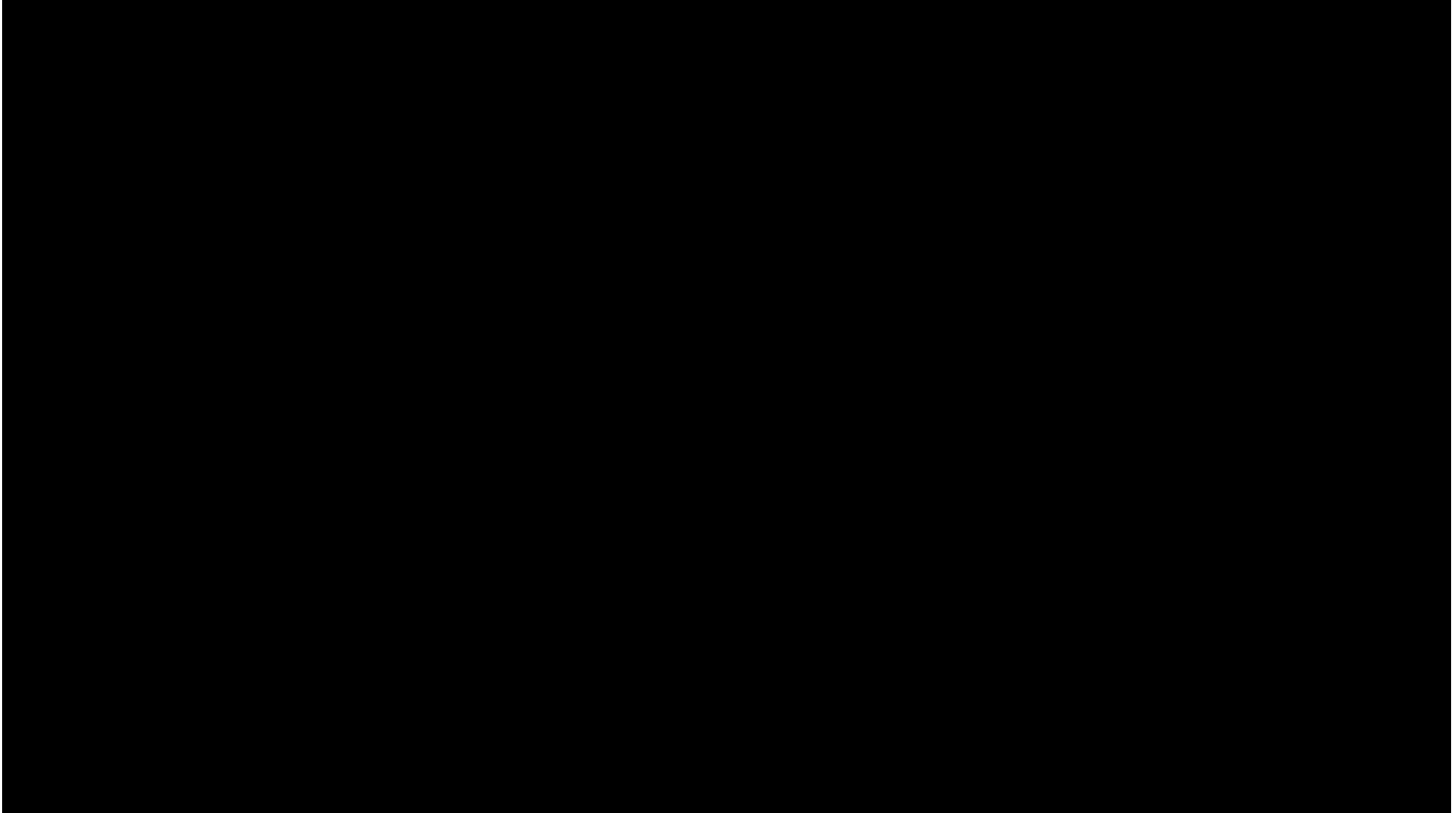
By direct contact/ flame

By floating embers from initial fire



It's estimated that 90% of homes are destroyed indirectly by wind-borne embers that are carried ahead of the fire perimeter. *Frontline Wildfire Defense Systems 2024*

Structural Ignition





Home Hardening- construction materials, condition, and maintenance



Home Hardening Priorities



Identify Vulnerabilities & Recommendations



Wooden Fences

- Metal instead of wood
- Add a metal gate near structure
- Rake away and flammable vegetation



Gutters

- Remove dead needles/leaves twice a year
- Metal instead of vinyl



Vents/Screening

- 1/8th inch metal mesh screen
- Consider covers
- Applies to foundation and attic



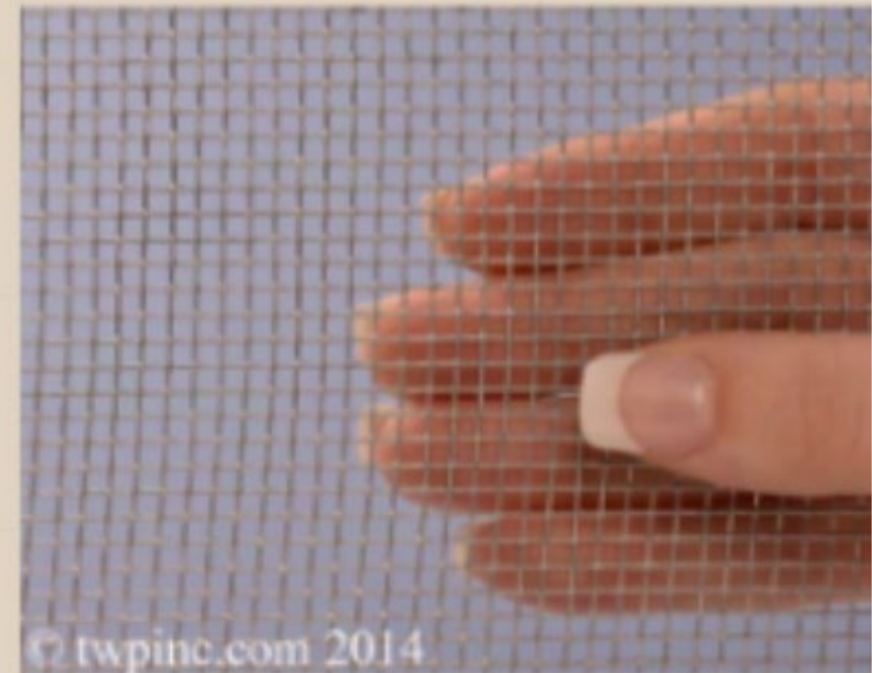
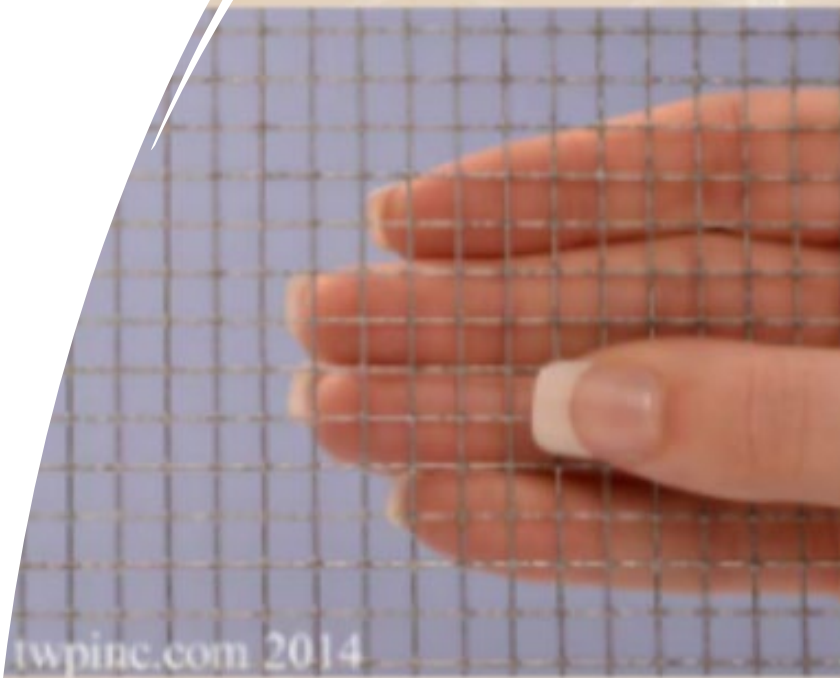
Windows

- Is there a heat source near/below?
- Tempered Glass

Structural Ignition

Vent Screening

- Old recommendation was for external vents to have at least ¼-inch mesh screen.
- Testing has shown that 1/8-inch corrosion-resistant metal mesh drastically reduces the chance of ember intrusion into the attic or under the home.

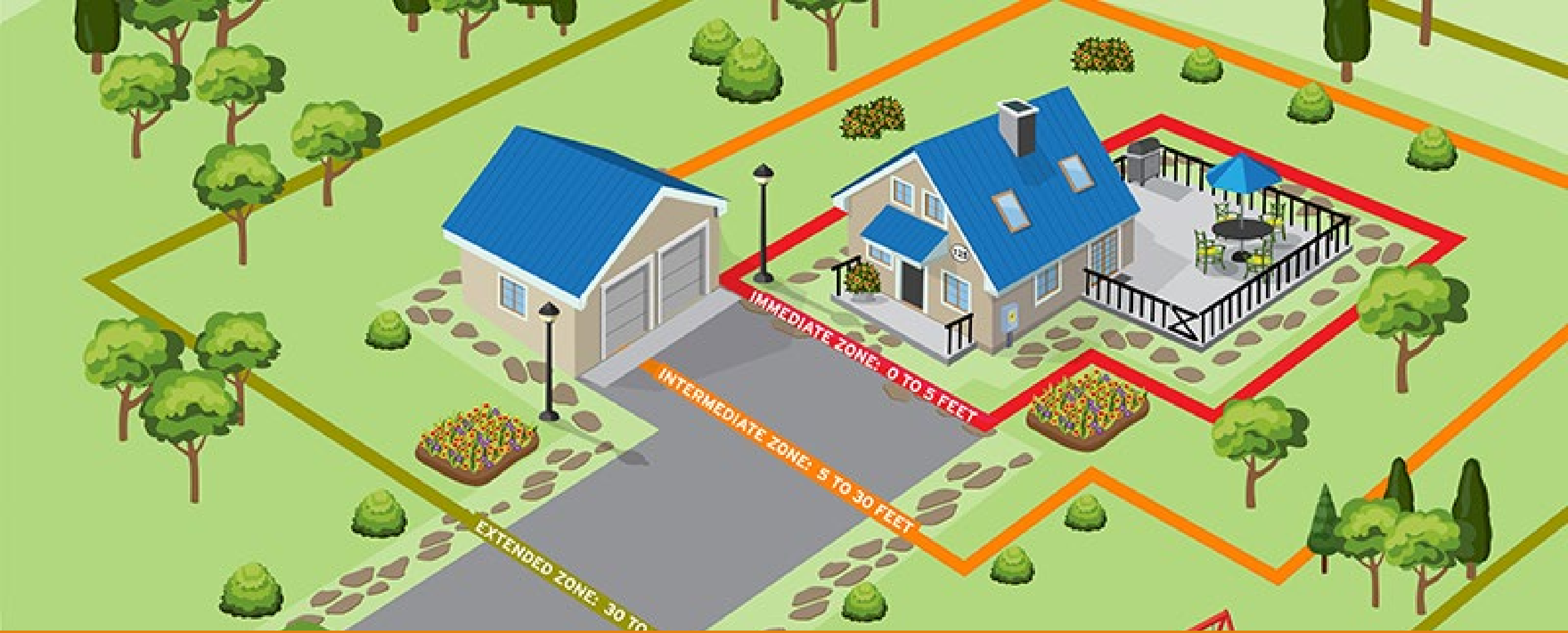




Decks

- What combustible materials are under your deck?
- Can embers get through the deck slats?
- Consider access for cleaning

Questions about Home Hardening?



Defensible Space

ZONE 1

Immediate

Zone 0'-5'

- First five feet around structure
- Maintenance is critical
- Non-combustible surfaces such as rock, pavers, bare dirt
- Branches from nearby trees should not overhang the structure
- Remove flammable plants





ZONE 2

Intermediate

Zone 5'-30'

- Goal is to eliminate fire spread
- Plants should be pruned, maintained and irrigated
- Choose fire resistant plants with low resin and high moisture content



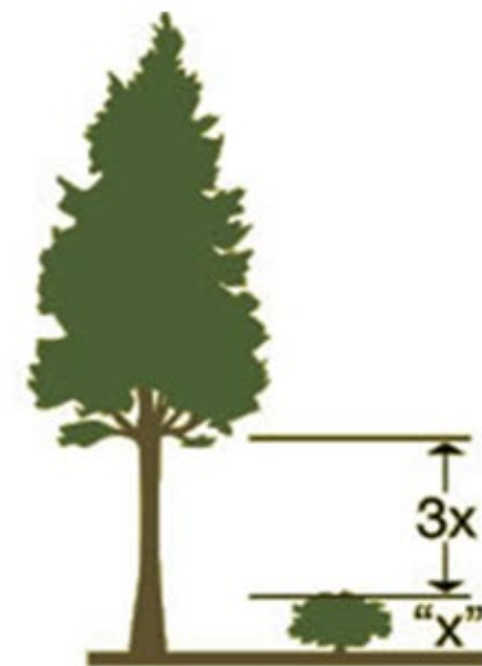
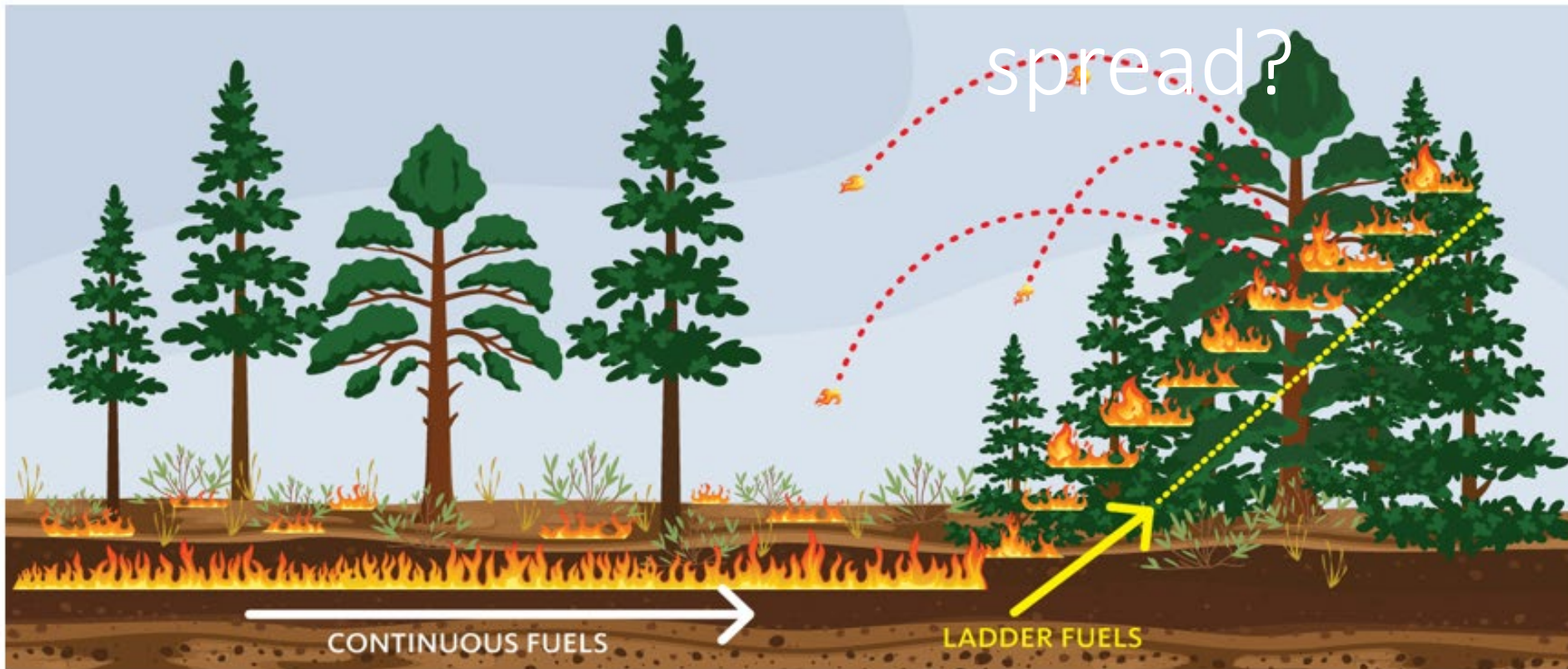
ZONE 3

Extended Zone 30'-100'

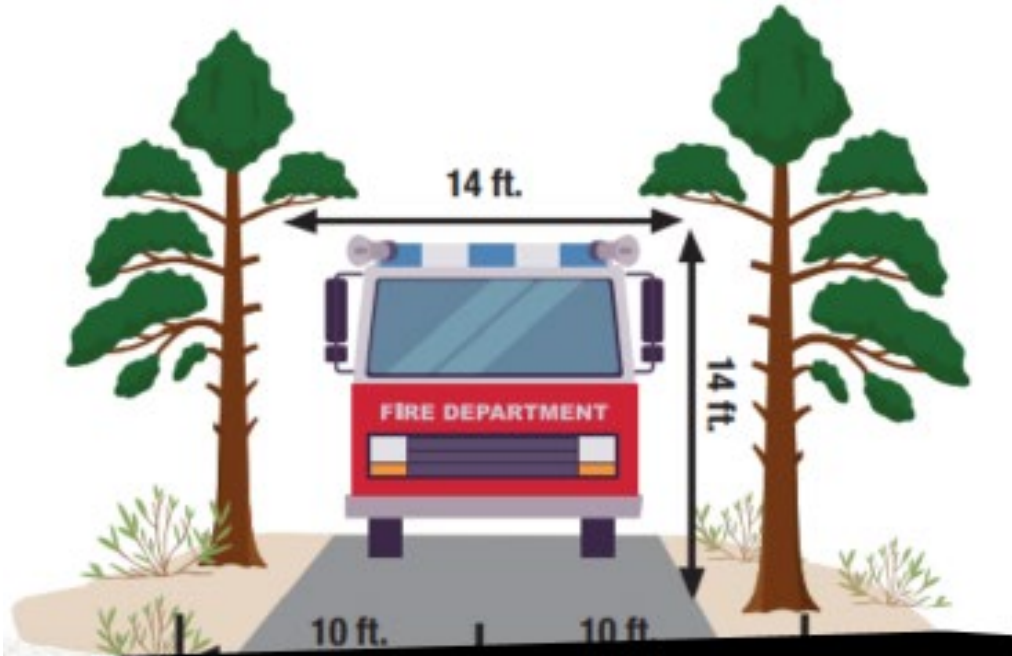


- Store firewood at least 30' away from structures
- Create fuel breaks
- Spread out bushes, to decrease fire intensity
- Minimize ladder fuels

Ladder Fuels



Ladder fuels are low-hanging branches, leaves, needles, and other combustible plant matter that may allow wildfire to spread from low-growing plants to high-growing plants.



Beyond the Zones

Access to the home is important to the fire department. Make some quick notes about the address markings and driveway

No Fire Suppression

Ordinary Construction/ non-home hardened

Embers cause bark mulch to ignite

Bark mulch cause deck to ignite

Combustible siding ignites

Direct radiant heat to windows



Home Hardened side

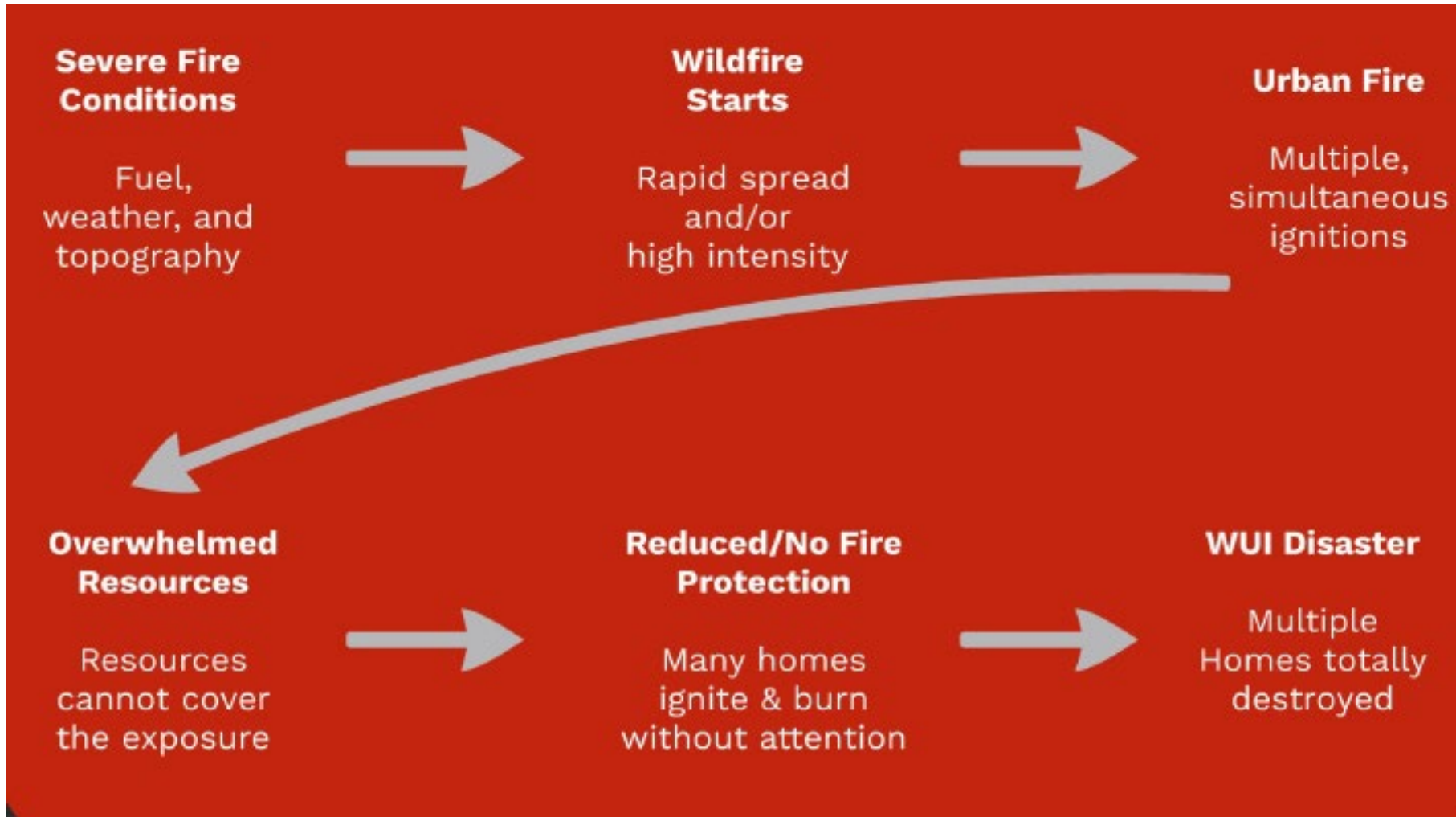
No ignition in rock mulch

Deck does not have enough Heat to ignite

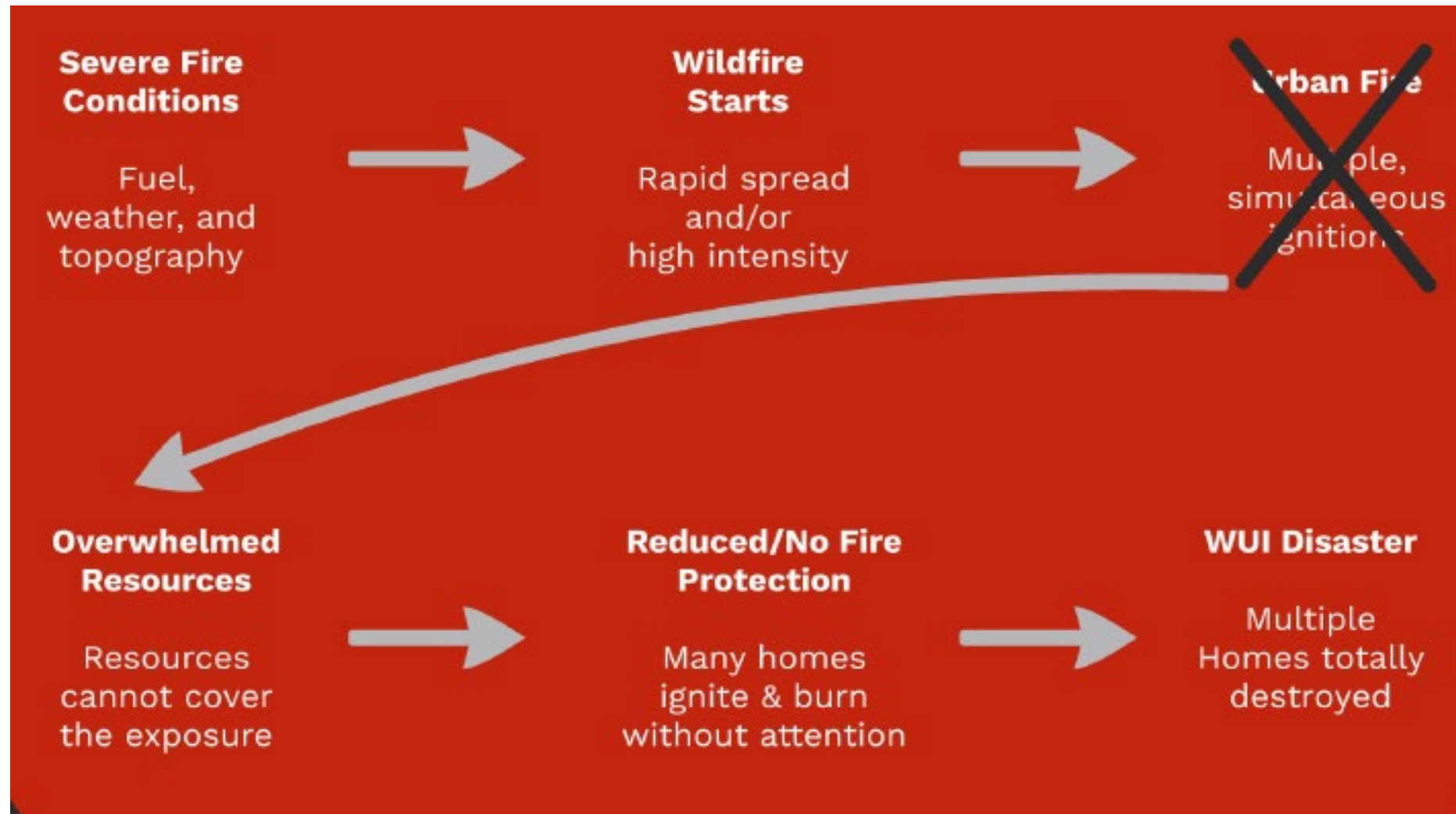
Fire-Resistive Siding/ Fiber cement

No radiant heat/ much cooler

How can MY neighborhood be impacted by wildfire??



Which Step can homeowners eliminate??



A night scene of a road with cars and trees, overlaid with a semi-transparent orange rectangle containing white text. The text reads "Evacuation Safety- Are you prepared?".

Evacuation Safety-
Are you prepared?



DeschutesAlerts.org

DESCHUTES ALERTS



powered
by





BE READY. BE SET. GO!

Know evacuation levels and follow advice of emergency officials. Make the best decision for your safety. Don't wait to evacuate if you feel unsafe!

LEVEL 1 BE READY

Prepare to evacuate.

- Stay informed.
- Have your plan and go-kit ready.
- Begin moving people with special needs.

LEVEL 2 BE SET

Be set to evacuate at a moment's notice.

- High danger in your area.
- Follow your evacuation plan.
- Relocate to a safe place.

LEVEL 3 GO NOW!

LEAVE IMMEDIATELY!

- Imminent danger in your area.
- Leave without delay.
- It is unsafe to stay.

GO BAG (DISASTER SUPPLIES KIT)

Remember the 6 P's

People

Pets

Papers

Photographs

Plastic/Cash

Pills



What are the most important steps *I can do* to protect my home?

1. Prepare ahead of time!!

[Deschutesalerts.org](https://www.deschutesalerts.org)



2. Apply home hardening/defensible space steps in your zones and work with neighbors!



Important steps continued...

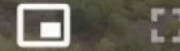
3. **Please evacuate!** Let emergency responders work.



Wildfire - Durango Success Story

Durango, Colorado
June 1, 2018

▶ ⏏ 🔊 🔍 0:01 / 4:28



Firewise® Success Story:

CREDIT: NFPA



Dixie Fire, Plumas County, CA July 2021



Thank you for doing your part, so we can do ours!

QUESTIONS??

- **Wildlife friendly fuels reduction suggestions useful for common areas:** https://woodlandfishandwildlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Wildlife-Friendly-Fuels-Reduction-in-Dry-Forests-of-the-Pacific-Northwest_reduced.pdf
- **Fire Effects Information on plants:** <https://www.feis-crs.org/feis/>
- **Sign up for emergency alerts:** <https://oralert.gov/>
- **Examples of how to motivate and build capacity within a community:**
 - <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/enhancing-fire-adaptation-through-active-volunteers-the-neighborhood-ambassador-approach/>
 - <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/resources/fac-assessment-tool/>
 - <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/community-based-asset-mapping-fire-adaptation/>
- <https://www.projectwildfire.org/>
- <https://www.centraloregonfire.org/>
- **Great resource for webinars and handouts:** <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program>
- **Oregon State Fire Marshal: Web search “Fire adapted Oregon”**
- **New edition out soon!** <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw590>
- <https://wildfireprepared.org/>
- <http://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>