

Firewise Meeting Minutes  
July 2, 2025

In attendance: Gary Thorpe, Ed Hallyburton, Ruth Robertson

Gary reviewed with Ed the details of the meeting we had with Devan Cardin, PM Events Coordinator, on March 14, 2025 in preparation for the Firewise Annual Event that was held at the Pavilion on Saturday, May 3. Devan did a wonderful job of advertising this event and her committee prepared a brunch for all in attendance. The turnout was disappointing considering that there was ample advance information given to our Board of Directors and to PM members. Firewise hosted four guests for this event from SMFR, Burke County Forest Service, South Mountains State Park, and Carolina Land and Lakes. These guests each gave a brief presentation on how to be proactive in our personal residences to improve our home ignition zones. Pamphlets and Firewise Time Sheets were distributed to those present.

Gary discussed that the current members handbook for PM residents is very outdated and needs to be brought current to include evacuation information for wildfires. As Ed is our Firewise BOD representative, he was asked to advise the Board that Firewise will be happy to provide emergency guidance for the members handbook once the current handbook is brought up-to-date. Maintaining current emergency information for members via a members handbook is a Board responsibility.

Additionally, Firewise equipment that was purchased with grant funds awarded to PM Firewise needs to be available to allow residents to sign out for their use. We believe this equipment is being housed in the maintenance shed but there are no maintenance employees to coordinate members usage of this equipment. Ed will discuss this with the Board.

The creation/maintenance of ATV trails/fire breaks by those who have been working on the trails should be reminded that the wider the trail, the better. Trails and fire breaks need to be easily accessible to first responders in the event of a wildfire event on PM.

Gary will talk with Chief Kelly at SMFR about Pine Mountain designating locations for water points to support our firefighters. White Oak Creek at the bridge near PM entrance and the upper pond with White Oak creek water supply are possibilities.

Firewise is recommending that the location on the old golf course that has been used for a PM burn pile makes the most sense for this at the present time. The location on 2<sup>nd</sup> Tee Drive is not recommended due to the high fire risk of that location. However, Firewise does not recommend use of the burn pile as a community social event. Burn permits are required and designated personnel must remain with these fires until they are out. So

starting a burn pile fire in the evening as a social event does not provide sufficient time for a burn pile of any size to burn down to a level where it does not have to be monitored.

Ed informed us that the PM chipper is currently out of service and under repair. Once it is back in operation, then a schedule for debris chipping needs to be created for chipping to occur on a monthly/quarterly/or bi-annual basis. Again, having no maintenance employees is a big drawback to providing this service to PM residents. Users of the chipper need to be up to date on training for use of the chipper and insurance requirements may limit the use of volunteers to run the chipper.

Burke County Debris cleanup from Hurricane Helene is ongoing through mid-July. However, the only remaining pickups will be for those posing a hazard or blocking roads/waterways. Contact info for Burke County Debris pickup is:

Contact: Chris White, Burke County Public Information Officer

Phone: 828-764-9388

Email: [pio@burkenc.org](mailto:pio@burkenc.org)

Gary discussed providing guidance to residents of the Firewise recommendation that hardscape be used around homes to reduce the risk of fire ignition. Firewise pamphlets that provide information on how to best protect the home ignition zone discusses using hardscape vs mulch, grass, vegetation, etc. Existing homeowners will likely be resistant to replacing their current landscaping with hardscape, but should still be encouraged to do so when and where possible. Recommendations for hardscape should be given for new building plans and incorporated into the PM Environmental Committee checklist.

Next meeting is scheduled for September 8 at 7:00 pm at Ruth's house.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.