



# Coffee Break Training-Community Risk Reduction

## A Communitywide Approach to Preparedness

No. CR-2014-4 April 9, 2014

**Learning Objective:** The student will be able to identify Fire-Adapted Community (FAC) components and explain the benefits of promoting community wildfire risk reduction.

Every year, thousands of wildfires burn millions of acres across the United States. Wildfires do not recognize property or jurisdictional lines — there are no boundaries. It's not if, but when, the next wildfire will threaten your Wildland Urban Interface community. More people live in places where wildfire is a risk, but communities are also getting smarter at how to better adapt homes, landscapes and other community assets to fire. Living in an FAC means you are prepared for the next wildfire. Is your community fire-adapted?



This graphic depicts common input/components that contribute to Fire-Adapted Communities. (Graphic/U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service)

### What Is a Fire-Adapted Community?

An FAC is a human community consisting of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely coexist with wildland fire and to reduce the wildfire threat. An FAC helps connect all those who have a role in wildfire education, planning and action with organizations and programs that provide comprehensive resources for their specific wildfire mitigation needs. The combination of efforts strengthens a community's resilience for the next wildfire threat. Actions address resident safety, homes, neighborhoods, businesses and infrastructure, forests, parks, open spaces, and other community assets. The more actions that a community takes, the more fire-adapted it becomes.

### Why Are Fire-Adapted Communities Important and Necessary?

The more effective way to reduce wildfire impact is through a collaborative approach with all community members and leaders. FACs are important because of:

- Increases in firefighter and public safety.
- Increases in community resilience and post-disaster economic recovery.
- Decreases of funds necessary to protect the community.
- Decreases in dependence on suppression and response.

Becoming an FAC is a process and includes characteristics, such as the following:

- It is in or near a fire-adapted ecosystem.
- It has adequate local fire suppression capacity to meet most community protection needs.
- Its landscaping and structures are designed, constructed, retrofitted and maintained in a manner that is ignition-resistant.
- It has local codes (building, planning, zoning and fire prevention codes) that require ignition-resistant home design and building materials.
- Fuels on land near and inside the community are treated and maintained for safety.
- It has and uses a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- It has built other safety features, such as buffers between fuels and the community; safe, designated evacuation routes; and safe zones in the community when evacuation is not advisable.

The FACs' website offers information and specific actions you can take to reduce your risk to the next wildfire. Get started today by using tools available at [www.fireadapted.org](http://www.fireadapted.org).

For additional information, visit [www.usfa.fema.gov/fireservice/prevention\\_education/strategies/wildland](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/fireservice/prevention_education/strategies/wildland).

For archived downloads, go to:

[www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/)