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Firewise NEWS

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USDA Forest Service

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
US Fish & Wildlife Service
National Park Service

Federal Emergency
Management Agency

International Association of
Fire Chiefs

National Emergency
Management Association

National Fire
Protection Association

U.S. Fire Administration

State Forestry Organizations

FIREWISE SPECIALIST RON GARNER OF SAN JUAN ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY FOR EFFORTS TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

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QUINCY, Mass. – For several years, Local Firewise Specialist, Ron Garner has taken the lead to ensure local communities don't suffer the same losses as in southern California last week.

The recent fires in southern California are a painful reminder of the importance of wildfire preparedness. Residents who take simple "Firewise" steps around their homes to clear vegetation and create defensible space will reduce their vulnerability from the threat of wildfire.

Ron Garner has done just that. His hard work has earned him national recognition from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's (NWCG) Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Working Team with a Firewise Leadership Award. San Juan Island Fire Chief Steve Marler announced Garner as winner at a Firewise Communities dinner at the Mullis Street fire station.

"Garner has volunteered countless hours furthering the Firewise message throughout our area," Assistant Chief Brad Creesy of the San Juan Island Fire Department said.

Garner has been active in fire education since becoming a founding board member of the Alaska Place Firewise Community in 2004. Since then, he has worked to establish six other Firewise Communities on the San Juan Island.

"Some of the groundwork for three of these communities had been laid in 2004, but with department staff changes, were not pursued," Creesy said. "During the first half of 2007, Ron revitalized the process and recruited additional communities."

Local Firewise Specialist Ron Garner received a Firewise Leadership Award recognizing his outstanding efforts in promoting a cooperative approach to reducing the loss of lives, property, and resources in the wildland/urban interface.

(more)

In addition to member agencies and organizations, the National WUI Fire Program functions in cooperation with other NWCG Working Teams, the National Fire Plan, and related programs.

The Firewise Leadership Awards are designed to honor individuals and organizations conducting wildland fire mitigation activities in residential developments in the wildland/urban interface. Winners were selected based on their efforts on the local, state, and regional level. Garner has been recognized for his extensive efforts furthering Firewise programs and minimizing loss of life and property to wildland fire independent of firefighting efforts.

"I'm honored to receive this award and be recognized for my work." Said Ron, "I don't do this for awards. I'm working to keep our island and the firefighters safe from devastating fires."

"Leadership Award winners serve as a perfect example of how communities and homeowners can work together to prepare for the threat of wildfire and their work deserves recognition," said Alan Dozier, chair of the NWCG's Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Working Team. "What makes Firewise work are these individual "spark plugs" that are passionate about the Firewise mission and who are leading the way to getting the work done."

In addition to recognizing the winners, the Firewise Leadership Awards program helps program administrators capture success stories and share best practices across the country, between all types of interests – public, private, and tribal. This year, six individuals and organizations from across the country are being recognized for their outstanding efforts.

Communities and residents interested in learning more about the Firewise Communities program may visit www.firewise.org, or contact Ron Garner at 378-7722 or rggarner@interisland.net.

The national Firewise Communities program is an interagency program designed to encourage local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire. The Firewise Communities program is sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team, a consortium of wildland fire agencies that includes the USDA Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Emergency Management Association, the US Fire Administration, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, the National Fire Protection Association, and state forestry organizations. For more information, visit www.firewise.org.

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