



# *Wildfire* REFERENCE GUIDE



A Guide For Realtors® To Assist Home Sellers & Buyers With Understanding Wildfire  
Vail Board of Realtors® • [www.REALFire.net](http://www.REALFire.net) • 970.766.1028



## Realtors® Unique Role in Wildfire Awareness

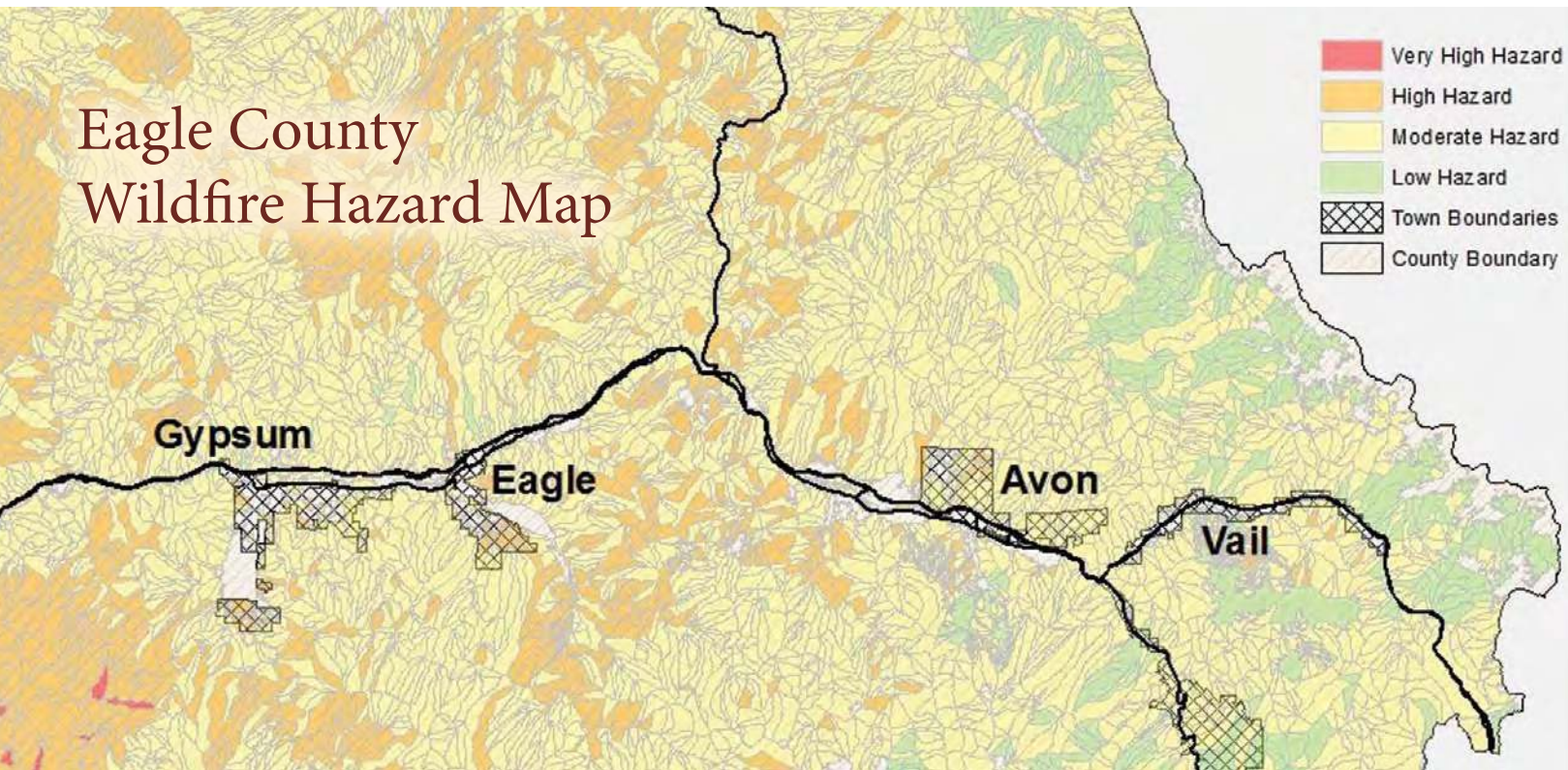
Realtors® have a unique opportunity to engage home buyers and sellers by offering resources about local wildfire hazards. Providing accurate information helps all parties make informed decisions, and empowers current and future homeowners to take action to protect their property. To assist Realtors® in understanding and sharing wildfire information, the Vail Board of Realtors®, in collaboration with local stakeholders, developed this wildfire reference guide as part of the REALFire® program.

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## KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

1. **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)** is often referred to as a geographic area that contains a mix of development and vegetation, but any location can be considered the “WUI” based on conditions that contribute to the vulnerability of structure ignition, such as vegetation types and density, building construction and materials, development patterns, and topographical features.
2. **Wildland-Urban Interface Hazard** refers to the “fuel complex” (type, volume and arrangement of flammable materials including vegetation and the built environment) in a given location that determines the degree of ease of ignition and resistance to control.
3. **Wildland-Urban Interface Risk** is the probability and consequence of a wildfire burning in an area based on the wildfire hazard, potential losses, and weather conditions. Eagle County is generally thought of as a “high wildfire hazard, low wildfire risk” community, meaning that the hazard is high but the probability of a wildfire occurrence and its resulting damage is generally low.
4. **Home Ignition Zone (HIZ)** refers to the home itself and everything around it up to 200 feet or beyond, depending on topographical features. The home ignition zone is an important area of focus to reduce the likelihood of home loss during a wildfire event.
5. **Defensible Space** is another term that refers to the natural and landscaped area around a home or other structure that has been treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire (unlike the term “Home Ignition Zone,” defensible space refers to the specific action of hazard reduction around the structure, but does not include the structure itself).
6. **Property Assessments** evaluate the wildfire hazard of the home ignition zone by assessing features of the home, other structures, and surrounding vegetation such as: the construction and combustibility of roofing and siding materials, windows, vents, decks; landscaping features (e.g., type and location of trees, bushes and other vegetation); other accessory structures, propane tanks, and storage of firewood.
7. **Wildfire Mitigation** refers to the strategies that can be implemented to reduce the potential impacts of a wildfire. Strategies may include, for example, modifying a landscape by removing or trimming trees or shrubs, removing combustible material and using fire-resistant building materials.
8. **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)** is a local plan developed by stakeholders that focuses on wildfire hazard identification and actions that will reduce risk. Local CWPPs include the Eagle County CWPP, Cordillera CWPP, and Eagle River Fire Protection District CWPP.
9. **Firewise Communities/USA** (commonly referred to as “Firewise”) is a national recognition program administered by the National Fire Protection Association that provides guidance and steps for homeowners and neighbors to voluntarily engage in wildfire risk reduction activities at a local scale.
10. **REALFire®** is a voluntary wildfire mitigation program that offers in-depth, property assessments conducted by experienced local fire professionals. The program helps home owners identify specific actions they can take to measurably reduce wildfire hazards on their property.
10. **Fire Adapted Communities** is a national initiative to help all audiences—including Realtors®, planners, developers, elected officials, land managers, emergency responders, and residents—better understand their role and take responsibility in creating communities more resilient to wildfire.

## Eagle County Wildfire Hazard Map





# COMMON WILDFIRE VULNERABILITIES ON PROPERTIES



Conifer trees near house



Wood fencing  
connected directly  
to house



Wood-shake roof



Junipers, sage, and  
other shrubs in Zone 1



Overgrown grasses in  
Zone 1



Decks above  
steep slopes



Firewood stacked next to  
house or under deck



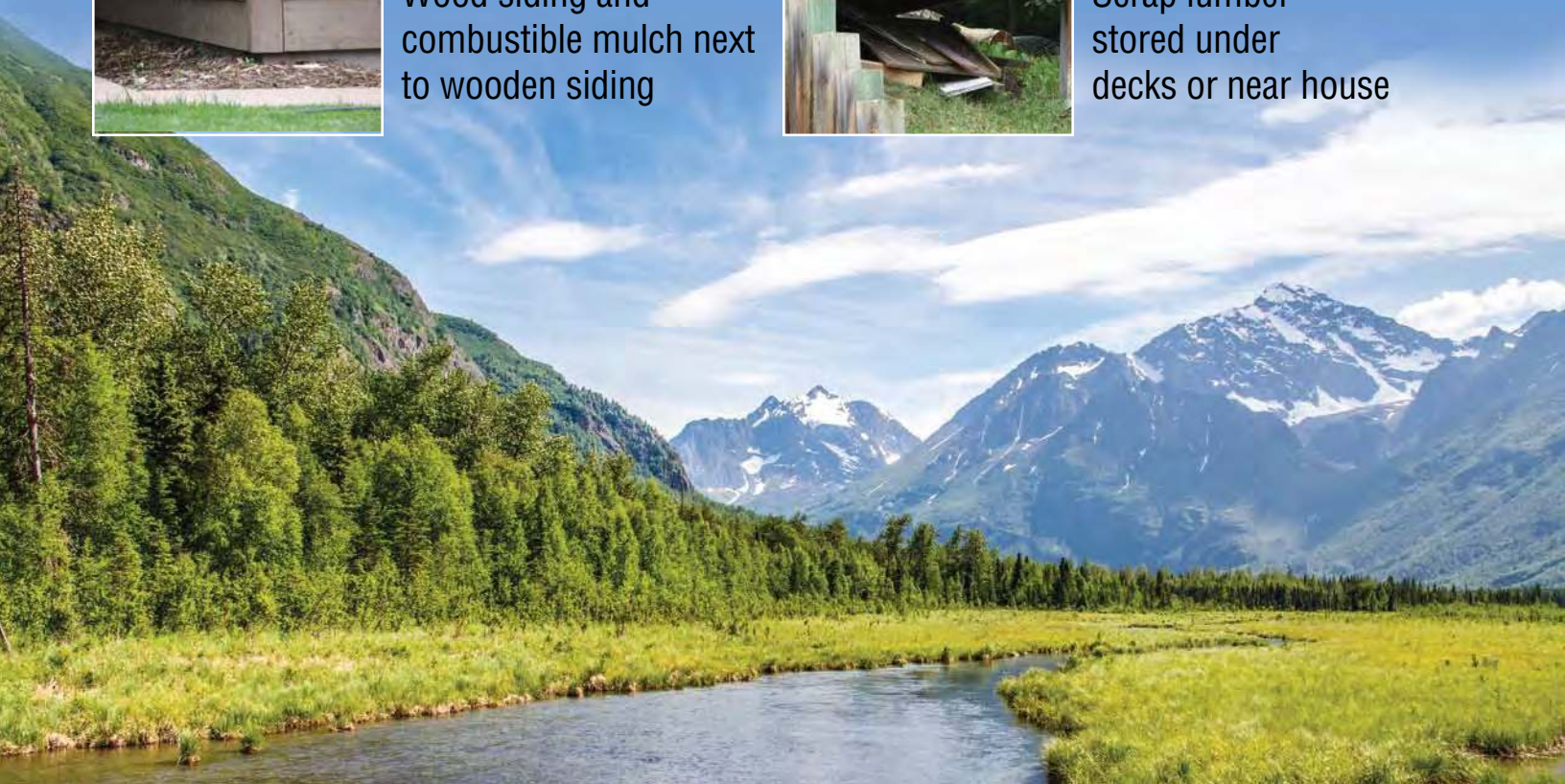
Single-paned  
windows



Wood siding and  
combustible mulch next  
to wooden siding



Scrap lumber  
stored under  
decks or near house



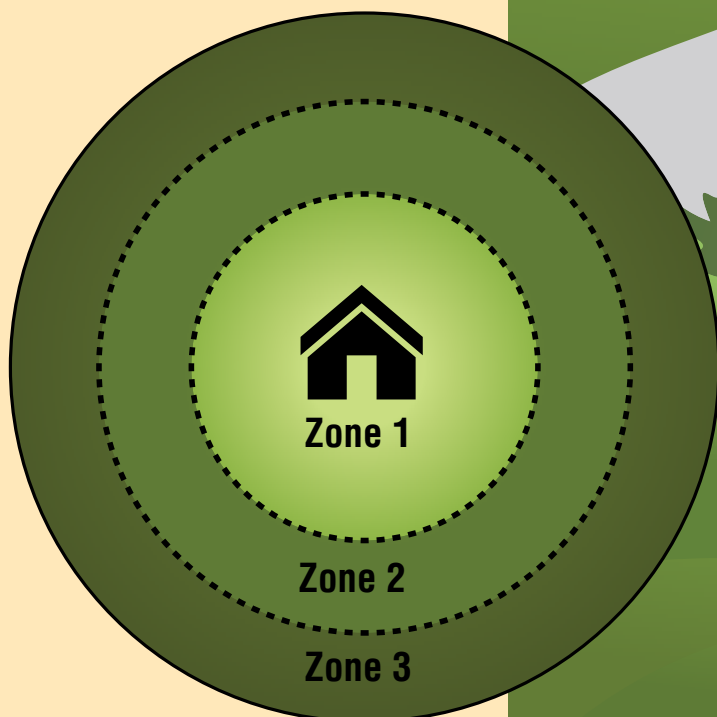
## Structure & Attachments:

Fire-resistant materials and maintenance are key.

What to look for in a structure:

- Fire-resistant materials for roof, siding, and attachments provide the best protection. Examples: Class A fire-rated roof covering (such as asphalt shingles) and stucco siding.
- Properly-screened vents
- Clean roof and gutters; free from needles and other debris
- Double-pane windows

# A Well - HOME IGNITION



## 3 ZONES

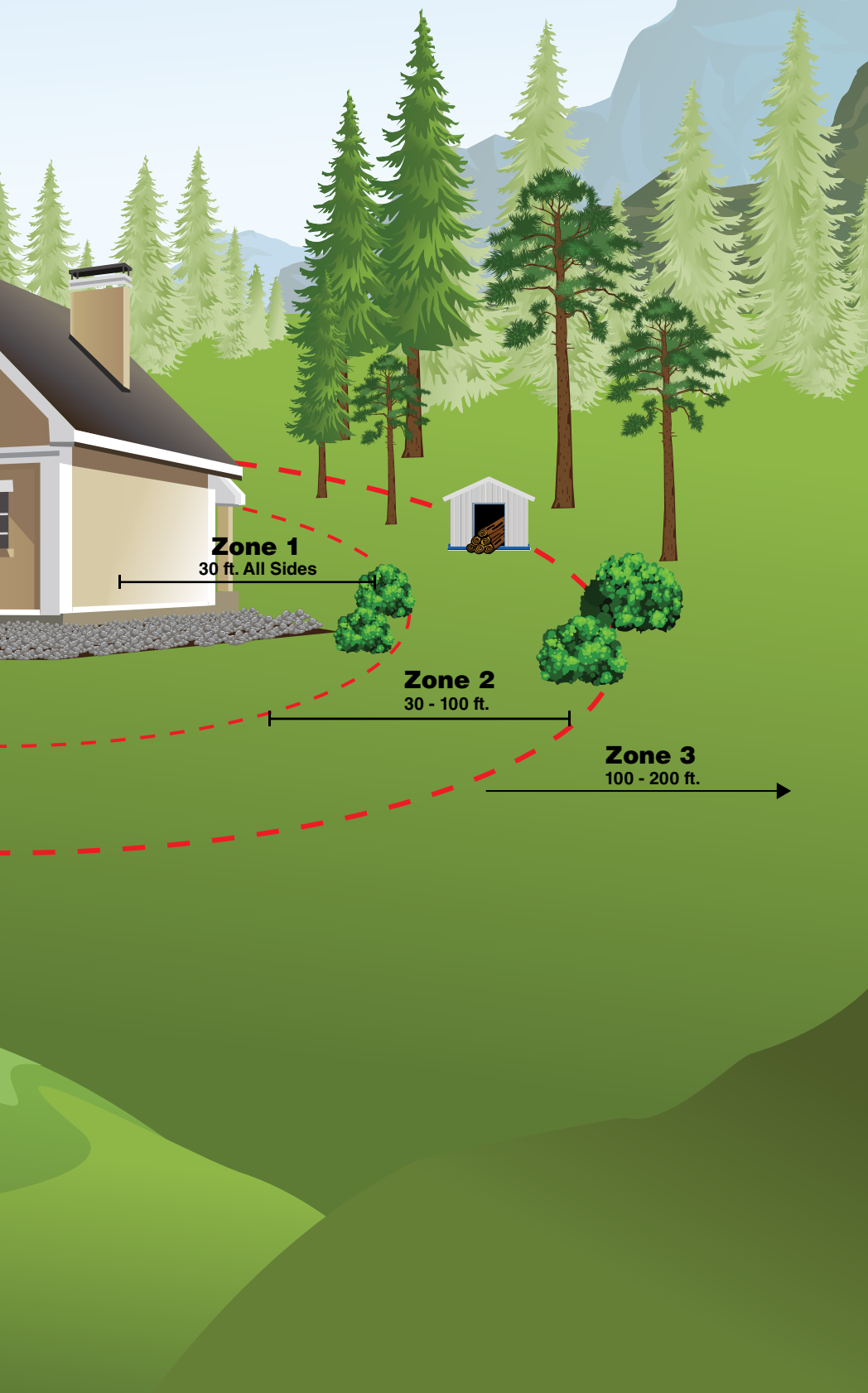
**Zone 1:** encircles the structure and its attachments, extends 30 feet on all sides

**Zone 2:** 30 - 100 feet

**Zone 3:** 100 - 200+ feet



# Prepared TION ZONE



## Zone 1:

**Very limited and well-trimmed vegetation; properly mitigated attachments and accessory structures.**

- A noncombustible 5 ft. border surrounding the structure
- No conifer or juniper trees
- Very limited number of sage, shrubs or tall grasses
- Trimmed grasses and/or xeriscaped lawn
- Wooden attachments such as fences are not directly connected to the house
- Outbuildings mitigated to the main structure standards

## Zone 2:

### Healthy Landscaping

- Firewood stored at least 30 ft away from structure (outside Zone 1)
- Pruned and thinned or clustered trees
- No sign of shrubs or other vegetation underneath taller trees

## Zone 3:

**Significant landscaping features**, such as steep slopes and adjacent forests, play a role in wildfire risk. If present, property owner should work with a qualified wildfire and forestry professional.





# Wildfire FAQs For Potential Home Sellers And Buyers

## 1. Where and how can wildfires occur in Eagle County?

Wildfires can occur anywhere throughout Eagle County, including the White River National Forest and other public lands under the management of the USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Wildfires are a result of both lightning starts and human activity. Residents should be aware that wildfires are unpredictable and can occur throughout many seasons depending on weather conditions, and residents should also understand their responsibility in preventing wildfire ignitions.

## 2. How do I determine the wildfire hazard of a property?

Eagle County maintains a wildfire hazard rating map that ranks wildfire hazard into low, moderate, high and extreme categories. Hazard ratings are based on a site's topography and fuel. The best way to understand a property's wildfire hazard, however, is to request a property assessment. Property assessments are available free of charge by Eagle County, Vail Fire and Emergency Services, and several local fire protection districts (see contact table below). A property assessment will assess the Home Ignition Zone, including features such as: the construction and combustibility of roofing and siding materials, windows, vents, decks; landscaping features (e.g., type and location of trees, bushes and other vegetation); location of other accessory structures, propane tanks, and storage of firewood.

## 3. Are any areas in the County required to perform wildfire mitigation?

In 2003, Eagle County adopted wildfire regulations that apply to all new development, new construction, and all additions to existing construction. This includes applications for a Special Use Permit, Planned Unit Development, and Subdivision. Further information on the Eagle County Land Use Regulations and new construction guidelines pertaining to wildfire are available through the Eagle County Building Department website: [www.eaglecounty.us/Building/Wildfire/Overview](http://www.eaglecounty.us/Building/Wildfire/Overview).

## 4. Will a homeowner's insurance change if Eagle County or the local fire district conducts a property assessment?

Property assessments conducted by professional assessors are not shared with insurance companies. Insurance companies typically collect their own wildfire hazard and risk information on individual properties through proprietary data gathering sources and/or field staff. Individual insurance companies vary in their wildfire mitigation requirements that

may be associated with coverage. Examples from other areas in Colorado and the West, however, have set a positive precedent that property owners who have performed mitigation may be able to receive financial incentives and/or guaranteed coverage.

## 5. Is there anything that can be done to reduce wildfire risk or is it all left to chance?

Most properties within Eagle County will have some level of wildfire risk, regardless of their location in a wildland-urban interface zone. Embers from a wildfire can travel over a mile and ignite structures, increasing the vulnerability of many properties throughout the County. Mitigation techniques, however, such as modifications to landscaping and installation of fire-resistant materials, have been shown to reduce home losses during a wildfire event and increase firefighter safety during response. Although there are no guarantees, science and success stories provide excellent support for risk reduction.

## 6. Does Eagle County provide any type of wildfire recognition or certificate?

Property owners who participate in the REALFire® program, are eligible to receive a program certificate upon successful completion of their required mitigation work as a recognition of their achievements. Neighborhoods throughout the county have also been recognized as "Firewise Communities," including Cordillera, EagleVail, and Bachelor Gulch Association (see below).

## 7. What does it mean if a neighborhood is recognized as "Firewise"?

Firewise Communities/USA is a national program administered by the National Fire Protection Association. Firewise is an easy way for many homeowners and neighbors to begin understanding community concepts to help reduce wildfire risk. To become a Firewise Community, a neighborhood must show it has engaged in a certain level of activity and has committed to future activities. These activities typically range from sponsoring a wildfire awareness event to a volunteer brush-clearing day. Firewise does not quantify and track the effects of mitigation efforts on the wildfire hazard faced by neighborhoods, nor does it track or indicate that individual properties are mitigated. To ensure an individual property is well prepared for wildfire, request a property assessment from the local fire district or County.

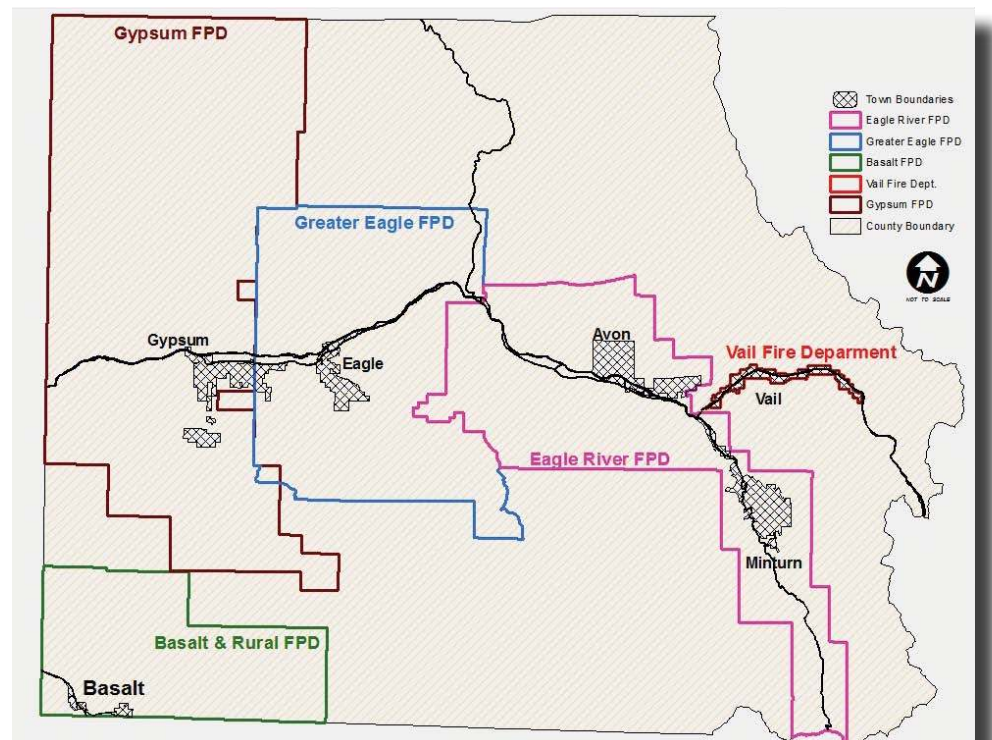


# Local Fire District Information

Services related to wildfire mitigation, prevention, response, outreach and property assessments may vary significantly by district and department due to different staffing levels and resources. The following table provides general contact information. Residents are encouraged to contact their local district to find out more about mitigation services or to request a property assessment (if available). If these resources are not available through their district, contact Eagle County.

NAME	STAFFING	STATIONS	CONTACT
Basalt and Rural Fire Protection District	Combination paid and volunteer	4	(p) 970-704-0675 (e) <a href="mailto:info@basaltfire.org">info@basaltfire.org</a> <a href="http://www.basaltfire.org">www.basaltfire.org</a>
Eagle River Fire Protection District	Full-time professional	5	(p) 970-748-9665 (e) <a href="mailto:eagleriverfireco@gmail.com">eagleriverfireco@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.eagleriverfire.org">www.eagleriverfire.org</a>
Gypsum Fire Protection District	Combination paid and volunteer	3	(p) 970-524-7101 (e) <a href="mailto:inbox@gypsumfd.com">inbox@gypsumfd.com</a> <a href="http://www.gypsumfd.com">www.gypsumfd.com</a>
Greater Eagle Fire Protection District	Combination paid and volunteer	1	(p) 970-328-7244 (e) <a href="mailto:rcohan@gefpd.org">rcohan@gefpd.org</a> <a href="http://gefpd.org/contact-us/">http://gefpd.org/contact-us/</a>
Rock Creek Volunteer Fire Department	Volunteer	1	(Contact Eagle County) <a href="http://www.rockcreekvfd.org">www.rockcreekvfd.org</a>
Vail Fire and Emergency Services	Full-time professional	3	(p) 970-477-3509 (e) <a href="mailto:wildfire@vailgov.com">wildfire@vailgov.com</a> <a href="http://www.vailgov.com/fire">http://www.vailgov.com/fire</a>

## Eagle County Fire District Map:







## The REALFire® Program

**REALFire®** is a voluntary property assessment program being piloted in Eagle County. The REALFire® program helps residents identify specific actions they can take on their property to reduce wildfire hazards. The program was inspired by Realtors® engaging with residents on wildfire safety and education.

**REALFire® property assessments provide residents with many benefits:**

- An in-depth, on-site assessment conducted by experienced fire professionals.
- An opportunity for property owners to identify mitigation actions unique to their property.
- A detailed follow up report with customized mitigation actions designed to measurably reduce the wildfire risk to their property.
- An opportunity to earn a REALFire® certificate, acknowledging mitigation achievements. This type of recognition can be used to enhance real estate transactions, and can be shared with local insurance providers.

**To learn more about the REALFire® program,  
or to apply for a free property assessment, visit [www.REALFire.net](http://www.REALFire.net)**

**Questions? Contact us!**

**Email: [contact@realfire.net](mailto:contact@realfire.net) | Phone: 970.328.8742**

