

COLORADO WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE – HOME BUILDING IN THE WUI

Colorado Association of Home Builders

WUI Is A Popular Place To Live

- Roughly half of the state's population lives in areas at risk of wildfire, and 2.9 million in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)
- This includes forested areas, but also grassy areas of the state

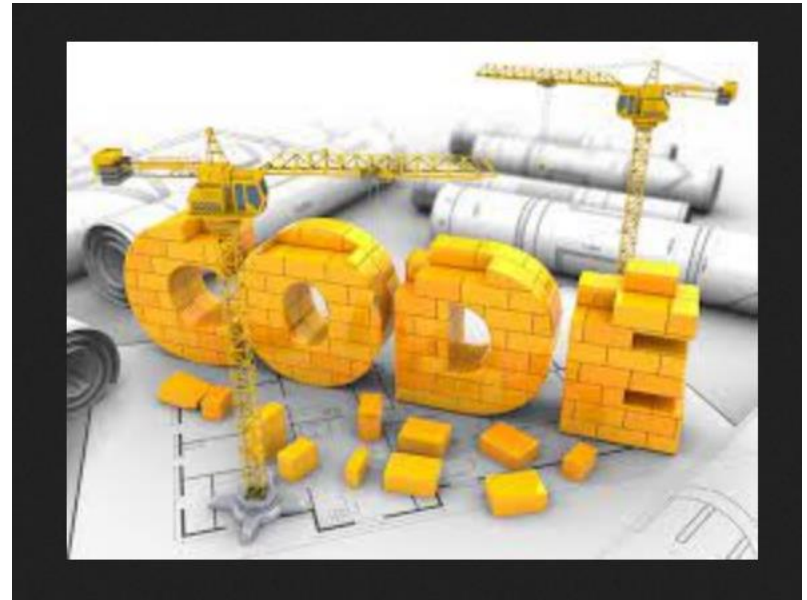


Building in the WUI

- Various factors influence building
 - ▣ Local building codes/zoning
 - ▣ Homeowner decisions
- Two main strategies builders, remodelers and home owners use for preventing damage:
 - Defensible space
 - Selecting building envelope materials and using construction techniques that can make it harder for homes to catch fire.

Local Building Codes

- ❑ Developed and enforced at the state and local level.
- ❑ Local governments best positioned to make code determinations.
- ❑ Colorado is a diverse geography.
- ❑ Property and casualty insurance influences.

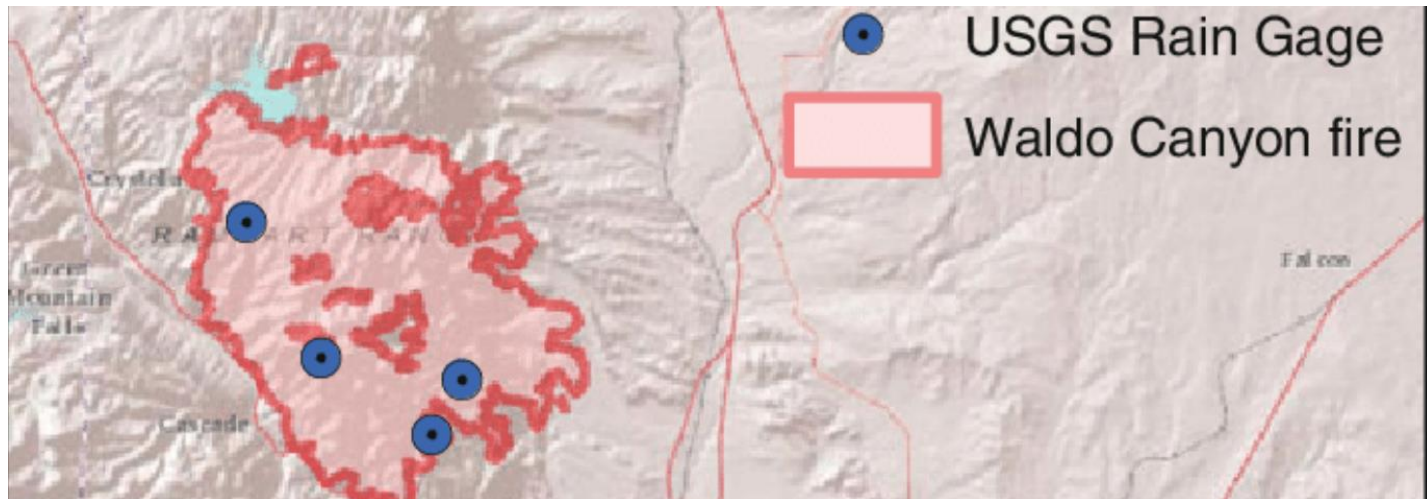


Homeowner Behavior

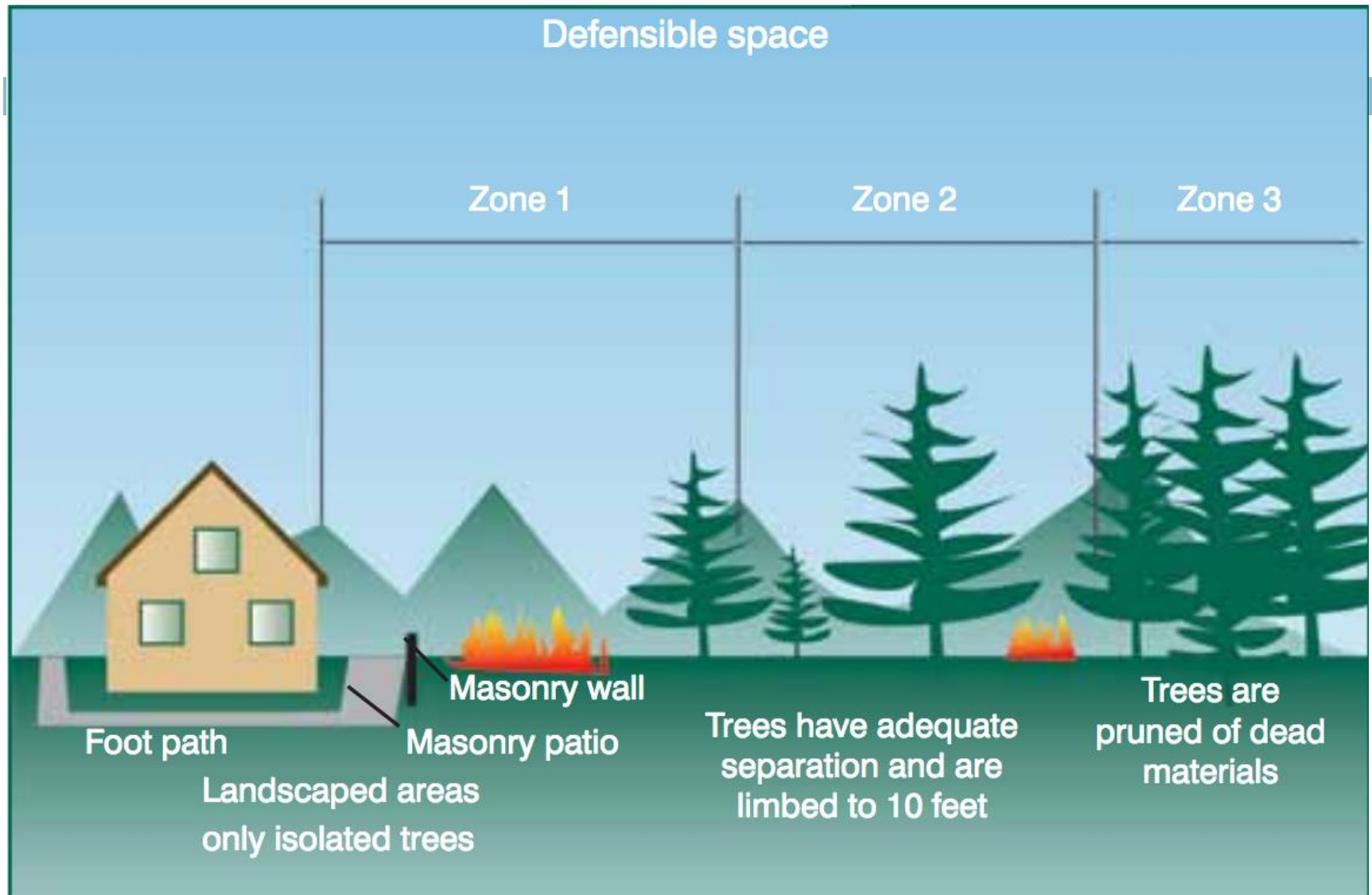
- Homeowners make material decisions and create defensible space.
- What works best?
 - ▣ Informal social networks were more important than institutional arrangements
 - ▣ Preferred information from local volunteer fire dept., county wildfire specialists, and neighbors
 - ▣ Experience with major wildfire
 - ▣ WUI residents tend to underestimate their levels of wildfire risk.

Cost To Harden Homes

- Many fire resistant materials cost more than standard materials
 - ▣ i.e. Metal roofs cost more than asphalt shingles
 - ▣ i.e. Composite decking costs more than wooden decking
- Case Study: Colorado Springs

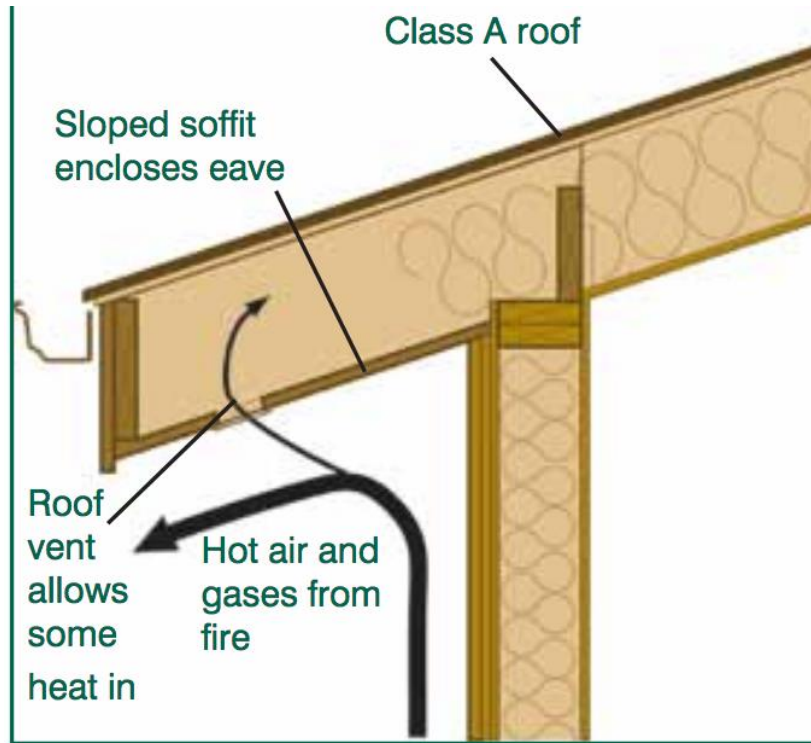


Examples of Hardening Homes

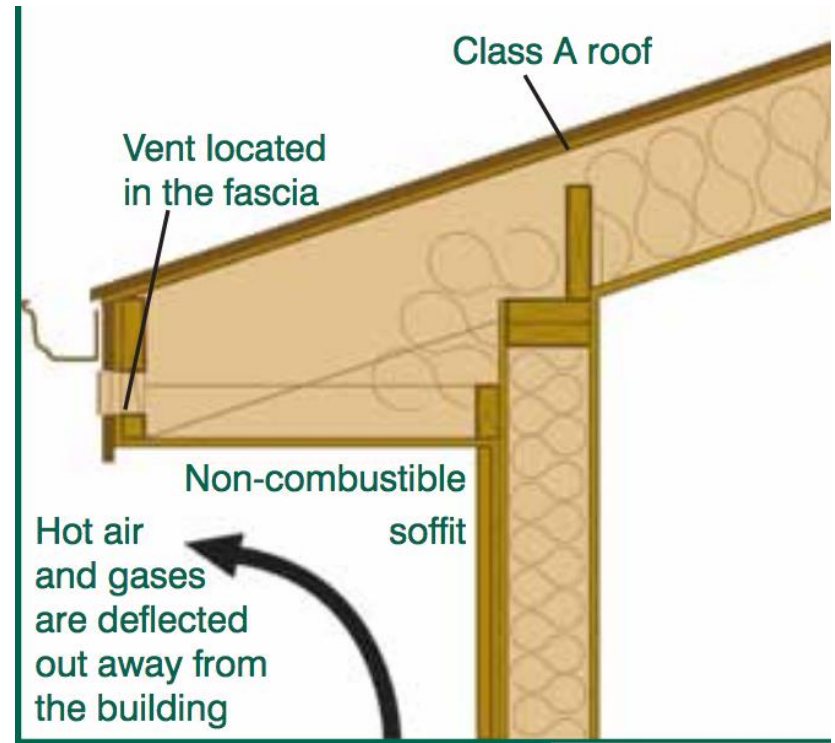


Examples of Hardening Homes

Open eave with soffit

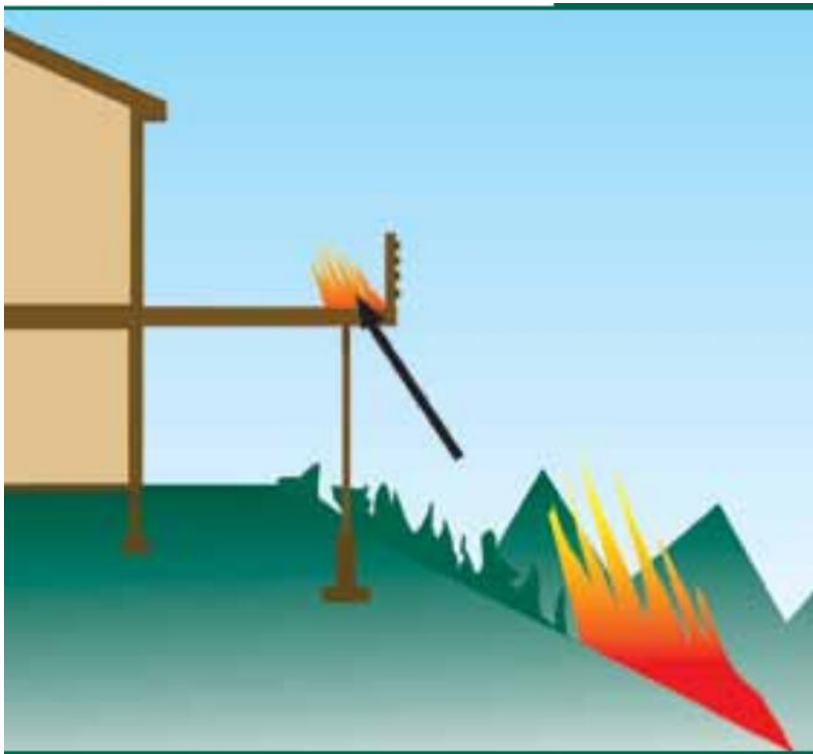


Fully enclosed soffit with isolated vent

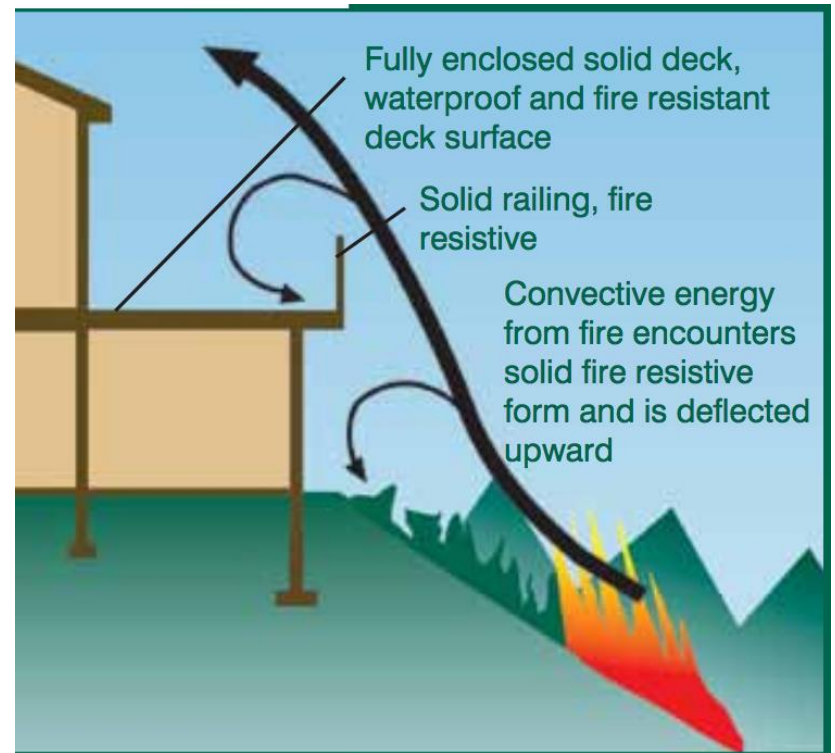


Examples of Hardening Homes

Conventional deck



Fully enclosed solid deck



Examples of Hardening Homes

Wood siding



Concrete synthetic stone



Barriers to Hardening Homes

- ❑ Cost
- ❑ Availability of materials
- ❑ Lack of homeowner knowledge and follow up
- ❑ False sense of security

Best Practices For Hardening Homes



- ❑ Local jurisdictions know their needs best
- ❑ Tax incentives for fire resistant upgrades?
- ❑ Wildfire mitigation grants
- ❑ Mitigation by the local jurisdictions or state government

Questions?

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