

June 11th, 2014

Thanks Ken and Good evening to the NET, this is Vic, KG7BOE and I am one of the co-organizers of the Northern Nevada Preppers Group.

As spring turns into summer, we also start a new fire season. It seemed to me we should take a few minutes and talk about Wildfires and what we can do to prevent, live through and recover from them. As preppers, we pride ourselves on being ready for what comes down the path, but a wildfire requires some unique preparations and response. I would like to cover some of these key points and give you some additional resources to use for your families.

Here in Nevada, it goes without saying that wildfire is not just a possibility, but a probability, it's just a matter of when and where. If you look at recent history we have had major fires every year. The largest fire in recent history is the Bison Fire, July 2013, just last year folks! That fire covered 43 square miles, lasted 9 days and cost 7 million dollars to fight. Last year had many fires; the closest to this prepper was the Chariot Fire off Red Rock Rd, burning over 100 acres and just a few miles away. Almost all of these fires had the same sinister pyromaniac, lightning. The fact is that no matter how ready we are, Mother Nature still has the upper hand.

So let's talk about 3 aspects of surviving a wildfire, Defensible Space, Preparation and Evacuation.

[BREAK]

We start with protecting our home and property by creating Defensible Space.

There are 5 key steps that when combined enhance each other and create this space.

- **Step 1.** Size does matter when it comes to what we call "a clear field of fire". It's that space where nothing can continue as before. This distance depends on terrain and fuel source present. Distances can be dry grass at 30' on gentle slopes to forest pines on 40 degree slopes at 200 feet.
- **Step 2.** Removal of fuel in those distances determined. Get rid of the dead and dying trees, branches, leaves, needles and twigs. Just clear all fuel on the ground that the fire can use.
- **Step 3.** Within the Defensible Space, native, fire prone Junipers, Sagebrush and Pines should be thinned. Large dense stands in particular, should be smaller and spaced out to create open areas between the stands of twice the height in distance apart.
- **Step 4.** Eliminate Ladder Fuels. Lower plants that burn and create a path to taller plants are considered ladder fuels. Removing lower tree and shrub branches that make up the taller fuel to about 10' above ground will increase the distance the fire must jump.
- **Step 5.** Now that we have created that "Lean, Clean and Green" space, we can add to it by using concrete, rock areas and/or adding non-flammable plants that hold the fire line.

[BREAK]

Now the second aspect is preparation, and that's where we shine. Since the basics of most any event is our EDC, 72hr bag, get home bag along with other tools and toys we have the basics covered. These are the basics to getting through an emergency, and when it comes to fire, it's no different. Now a wildfire is a local short term event. Outside the fires boundaries, life does go on as normally as it did before, just with a new heightened awareness.

So bugging out in this scenario probably means landing with family, friends or Motel 6 for a few days. One of the differences here is that you will take all of the animals you can, some family keepsakes and hope your home is there for you to return to. This is not zombies coming or that group of bikers to ravage your supply cabinet. It's Mother Nature at her worst.

Let's review a few preps that are specific to a fire;

[Break]

Some of the same preps should be reviewed with an eye on how fire may affect them, things like;

- Evacuation routes. Where might a fire come from and affect your general bug out plan?
- List of family keepsakes you want to take
- Prepare an "Evacuated" sign for you house. This sign will have information for firefighters such as; do you have a pool, hot tub or other water source. You may mark the sign with "Water Source Here".
- Do I have a good PET GO-BAG. We use a large storage container that has food, water, medications and blankets for all pets. This kit must be able to take care of all of your animals completely.
- Designate a contact person out of the area. One that keeps track of you and the family and can aid you when needed.
- Subscribe to smartphone apps that have a warning such as; CODE RED – ALERT ID - etc.

Things that you will want to do as an additional prep during fire season;

- Park cars facing out and near staging locations
- Keep fuel at least $\frac{3}{4}$ full
- Pre-position personal go bags, pet go bags and equipment containers in one area to save time
- Pet carriers need to be readily at hand and prepped for each pet
- Look at making a "Quick load and roll list" and practice it
- Be on guard, your awareness level should be at least yellow when the weather is right
- MGRS/FRS radio in each vehicle

These are just a few things we can do in addition to what we have in place right now. Now you need to take a look and see what fits you and your family. Everyone will do this a little different but at least we have a plan, the skills and the gear to take care of ourselves.

[BREAK]

So now we come to the third part, EVACUATION.

The most important thing from this point forward is to remain calm. The Navy Seals have a saying that we should follow; Slow is smooth and smooth is quick! No wasted emotion or motion, just keep moving forward. So here are some general items to do next.

- Get the pets into carriers! Animals sense trouble before we do. Getting them into a safe environment will allow them to calm down and you not to have them as distractions.
- Change into Cotton Clothes. Long sleeve shirts, pants and hat at a minimum. Why cotton? It does not melt like polyester will and the damage from that to the skin is unbelievable.
- Secure the house (see PRIDE list)
- Load pre-positioned equipment and bags
- Secure the exterior of the house (see PRIDE list)
- Finalize your route, meet location and connect with your contact person with the details
- Follow your exit plan

As you follow your exit plan, you may find traffic controls that make that difficult. Be ready to make changes on the fly, and then relay that updated info to your contact person.

[BREAK]

I have several websites with more information along with the PRIDE/Sierra Fire evacuation checklist. These will be published on the Meetup site on the "Files" page. One website I have started using is amazing, the address is: inciweb.nwcg.gov. This site contains information from fires through the Incident Command System. It has lots of good information, so check it out. With that, I am interested in what everyone has to add and maybe I can pick up some tips.

If you have any questions or comments, please email me at KG7BOE@gmail.com
This is KG7BOE, thanks for listening tonight and with that I'm going to turn it back over to K7KBJ, Ken "Ball o Fire" Juenke, our net control.

Additional Resources

<http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>

A complete site from Cal Fire to help you be ready for fire.

<http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/nr/2011/sp1101.pdf>

This site from UNR gives great information on all aspects of wildfire

<http://www.livingwithfire.info/>

A Nevada site for all things wildfire

<http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/>

Western US States Incident Information System

For information in this area on radio, tune to: KKOH 780AM – KOWL 1490AM – KUNR 88.9FM – KRLT 93.9 and KTKE 101.5FM