

MOUNTAIN VALLEYS & FORESTS

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Fire Prevention Week
October 4-10, 2020

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www.mountainvalleysrcd.org/forest

WNC Wildfire Season

Unlike the west coast, NC's fire season starts in mid-October and lasts until mid-May. In this issue, find out what to expect and how you can prepare your community.



Photo credit: Adam Warwick

WNC Wildfire Season

Photo credit: Adam Warwick

Fire season in WNC typically occurs during fall and spring. Our fire seasons occur during and after the leaves fall, when sunlight is directly impacting the forest floor. The increase in light, along with prolonged periods of no precipitation, dries out forest fuels. Fires in WNC are typically driven by topography. Weather fronts that cause high winds and low relative humidity (RH), along with heavy fuel loading, create a dynamic environment for wildfire potential

- NC Forest Service McDowell County Staff

"October is when most leaf fall occurs in the mountains. Without rain or snow to pack the leaves, they are not only drier, but physically more receptive to ignition sources."

- Cabe Speary, NC Fire Environment Forester



Learn more about what your community can do to prepare for wildfire (pg 03)

Remembering 2016 Fires

It's been 4 years since wildfire in Western North Carolina ravaged the landscape. More than 62,000 acres burned during those fires, which is more acreage burned than over the last 50 years combined.

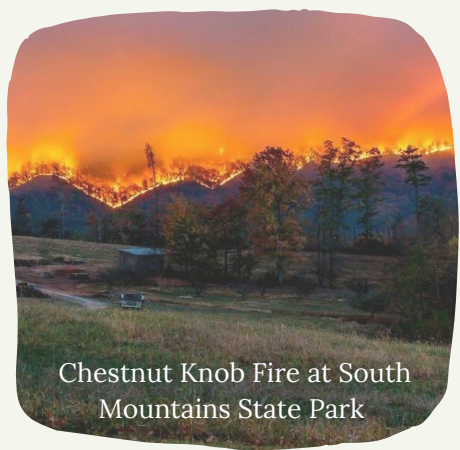
North Carolina has more WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) designation than any of the 48 contiguous states according to research conducted by the USDA Forest Service and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Recurrent severe droughts have wildfire managers, community leaders, and residents concerned that significant wildfire risk will grow more prevalent for the Appalachian Mountains and the people who live there.



Party Rock Fire at Lake Lure

Photo credit Cathy Anderson



Chestnut Knob Fire at South Mountains State Park

Photo credit Shelby Star

Community Wildfire Mitigation

Residents can build wildfire resiliency by doing simple tasks around their property to create defensible space and protect their home in the event a wildfire threatens the area.

Mountain Valleys RC&D assists homeowners and communities to become more wildfire resilient by helping identify their wildfire risk and taking action to mitigate their risk.

Mitigation actions include: reducing hazardous fuels around homes, creating defensible space, education and emergency planning. We work with interested communities and the NC Forest Service to develop site-specific community assessments, action plans, and best practices for forest management.

Contact us today to get involved and build wildfire resiliency in your community!

Do you live in McDowell County?



**McDowell Community
Wildfire Network**

We would like to partner with your community to increase and track wildfire mitigation activities in McDowell County.

Find out more here.

Steps to Build Wildfire Resilience

Identify Your Wildfire Risk



You can either perform a homeowner self-assessment or request assistance from our staff.

Mitigate Your Risk



Most wildfire risk can be reduced by performing simple tasks around your property, some examples here:
Action Items for Mitigation



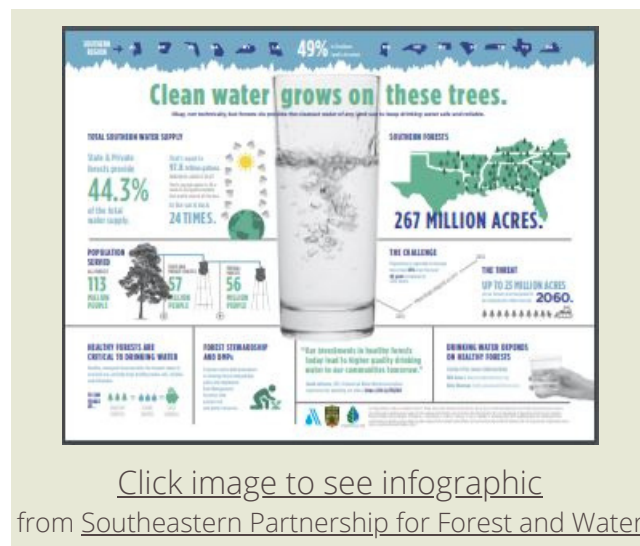
**Click the flyer for 3
tips to keep your
house fire-safe this
season.**

Forests and Water

by Mariah Hughes

According to the Southeastern Partnership for Forests & Water, “Healthy, managed forests provide the cleanest water of any land use, and help keep drinking water safe, reliable, and affordable.” Generally, the more forested cover in a watershed, the cheaper it is to treat drinking water.

“Healthy Forests = Clean Water”



Click image to see infographic from [Southeastern Partnership for Forest and Water](#)

Forests and riparian buffers along streams ensure clean water by:

1. Providing shade to keep stream temperatures cool for certain aquatic organisms.
2. Stabilizing soils to prevent erosion.
3. Acting as a filter for contaminants before they enter the stream.
4. Soaking up stormwater gradually to provide a steady supply of water downstream.

Our forests, covering 75% of the French Broad River Basin, face threats from unprecedented population growth and lack of sustainable management. We've seen a decline in wildlife populations and an increase of invasive species, wildfires, landslides, and sedimentation. Municipalities scramble to secure future water capacity amid development pressures as our area is continuously featured as a “top destination.”

Mountain Valleys RC&D works directly with drinking water utilities and public agencies to secure clean water through providing landowners with cost-share funding for riparian buffers and other Best Management Practices, and educating school groups and communities about the importance of land use and clean water.



Learn more about our Ivy River Partners program [here](#)

Announcements



If you have a concern about a logging operation in your area, please contact the NC Forest Service office within the county where the logging is occurring.



The Fire in the Pines Festival, typically held annually in Wilmington, NC, will be held virtually October 2-10. The virtual festival will include a scavenger hunt using the iNaturalist app, a video series, music, prizes, and live talks from field professionals. Fun for all ages!

Other Forest Reads

The Wisdom of Trees from Our State

The Southern Forest Futures Project
from USFS Southern Research Station

Benefits of State and Private Forest
Lands for the South from USFS

NC Climate Science Report

Wildfire Resources

Resist Wildfire NC

Fire-Resistant Landscaping in NC

Online Burn Permit System

Wildfire Risk to Communities

Firewise USA

Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 1974 to develop, improve, and conserve natural resources and to provide employment and other economic opportunities to the people of an eight-county area in Western North Carolina.

**Madison | Buncombe | Henderson | Transylvania
McDowell | Rutherford | Polk | Cleveland**



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828-206-6159 | contact@mountainvalleysrcd.org