



Andover Fuel Mitigation Activity

Minnesota Firewise Project Briefing

March 2003

The Andover Fuel Mitigation Activity is a community-based action that is part of the Minnesota Firewise Project. This is an integrated project involving planning, assessment, and education in addition to hazardous fuels mitigation and risk reduction to help communities reduce their fire risks. It is funded, in part, by grants from the US Forest Service under the National Fire Plan.

The city of Andover has a significant number of red pine plantations 25 – 50 years of age. Most of these stands have not been thinned and are now being developed as housing tracts as the urban area of the Twin Cities expands. The city was the victim of a fire in one of these stands in 1999. Although this fire claimed no homes, its sparks burned a shed in a neighborhood almost ¼ mile away. These areas are also suffering other interface issues as bark beetles attack the over dense trees. The overall project goal is to help the community reduce their fire risk.



Beginning in January, 2002, the Minnesota Firewise Team began working with the local fire chief, city forester and engineer, residents, and a private logger. The objectives were to thin a 34 acre pine stand, reduce the fire hazard, mitigate the risk of a serious fire by removal of dead trees and ladder fuels, and improve the health of the forest. The community was granted a NFP grant administered through MN-DNR for \$13,600 which will also provide other benefits to the community.

The activity treated fuels on all 17 of the properties in the pine stand. The thinning activity was “commercial” with the trees being sent to a regional pulp mill.

The proceeds from the sale were used as the cash match to pay for the logging operation. Homeowners significantly reduced their fire risk, the health of their interface forest, and got some free firewood to boot.



The slash and residuals were chipped by a Sentence to Service crew. Chips were used by residents for landscaping or sent to the St. Paul Energy facility for fuel.

Firewise ratings in the neighborhood were reduced significantly, from a moderate risk of 40/100 to a low risk of 25/100.

The city is already planning additional similar activities. The Fire Chief is pleased and neighboring communities are undertaking similar projects.

The Minnesota Firewise Project is working with other communities in passing federal Fire Plan funds through to local communities as grants for other “on-the-ground” activities including home owner mitigation education, home site assessment, access improvement, and dry hydrants. It involves community groups including fire and emergency services, local schools, city staff (ie. foresters, planners), and local interest groups.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry, Fire Management Section
Wildland Urban Interface Project

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