

# IAFC Wildland Fire Programs

**COMMUNITY WILDFIRE READINESS**  
*CREATING A COMMUNITY COALITION*  
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Formally introduced in 2015 as an outgrowth of the IAFC **Ready, Set, Go! (RSG)** fire adaptation efforts, the IAFC's **Community Wildfire Readiness (CWR)** program addresses a key component of the National Wildland Fire Cohesive Strategy. **CWR** is host to a broader audience than **RSG**, while still promoting like-messages and the shared goals of the Fire Adapted Communities Coalition. It provides fire and emergency services, local residents, builders, land managers and elected officials with the tools, resources, guidance and support to prepare for the threat of wildfire within their communities.

To establish the **CWR** program effectively in an area, all audiences must be actively engaged in the wildland fire solution. Part of this movement comes with an increased understanding of wildland fire. Wildland fires do not only occur where there is forest vegetation, but include rangelands, grasslands, prairielands, and agricultural land. An outdoor wildland fire may occur in your back yard and doesn't need to garner national news to put yourself, your family, your community, and first responders at risk.

Establishing a **Community Coalition** is a great way to ensure community unity and adequate outreach in optimizing the dissemination of the **CWR** message within each community. Such a coalition can also be very beneficial in creating and strengthening local partnerships and collaboration among stakeholders.

A community coalition should include representation from a wide variety of stakeholders from the appropriate sector of local, state, and federal- level leadership in addition to a cross-section of local groups. The input and support each community coalition representative provides strengthens the validity, community acceptance, and participation in fire-adapted programs. The purpose of the coalition is to take ownership of **CWR**, and similar wildland fire preparedness programs. Community members tend to listen to local leaders and their peers. The following example of establishing a fire-adapted community and development tips comes from a southeastern U.S. county that is a **Ready, Set, Go! (RSG)** Program member and boasts twelve Firewise Communities.



Towns County Fire Adapted Communities Citizens Coalition was formed in 2013 with a focus of developing the grassroots network and leadership to implement and grow wildland fire preparedness programs within the county. The coalition consists of 6 citizens and 3 agency representatives; all dedicated to wildland fire safety and education. The coalition also supports an ex-officio group that provides technical expertise, resources and funds as needed.

Tips to remember when establishing a CWR Community Coalition and implementing a successful wildland fire preparedness program:

- Understand the importance of ownership
- Reach out to and learn from members of a successful **CWR** Community Coalition
- Identify the trusted leaders within your community
- Identify and consider community land ownership; encourage owners to provide input
- Dedicated partners are the most important piece of a successful wildland fire education
- Consider approaching members of the local Chamber of Commerce as a starting point to develop new partnerships
- Think outside of the emergency services realm and consider leveraging other businesses or agencies (partner with the local utility company to disseminate information; touch every resident)
- Be sure that the ex-officio group includes a wide variety of expertise
- Utilize local media often to promote the importance of acknowledgement and action surrounding wildland fire preparedness
- **Don't give up! Successful efforts take determination and time.**
  - **“A program must have a spark and must be properly fueled, and once ignited, it will spread on its own by grassroots channels,” Frank M. Riley, Jr, Executive Director – Chestatee/Chattahoochee RC&D Council.**
- Take advantage of free resources available – visit [www.iafc.org/Wildland](http://www.iafc.org/Wildland) for information, resources, and helpful links



Use the **CWR** and **RSG** Program information and customizable tools to begin educating your community about wildland fire preparedness efforts. To learn more, visit [www.iafc.org/Wildland](http://www.iafc.org/Wildland) and join in the wildland fire solution today!

To learn more about fire-adapted communities visit [www.iafc.org/Wildland](http://www.iafc.org/Wildland)

***Be A Leader, Be A Champion***

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