

Introduction

The purpose of the Living with Wildfire in Arizona project is to synthesize the most recent scientific and technically known information available on the fire ecology for the vegetation communities in Arizona and provide information for homeowners regarding fire mitigation practices. The goal of this publication is to present this information in a way that is easy to understand and useful for homeowners living in the wildland-urban interface so that responsible decisions can be made regarding community wildland fire management and community safety.

The information contained in this publication includes the natural role of fire in each vegetation community, how and why fire behavior has changed over time and the role that humans play in affecting that change and in protecting themselves and their property. Words in blue throughout the text can be found in the Glossary (Appendix D). The vegetation communities described in this publication (see map of Vegetation Communities in Arizona on next page) have been altered over time. Changes in vegetation structure and composition, along with historical fire suppression by humans, have had a considerable impact on the role of fire.

These impacts and alterations were created over the long-term; therefore restoration of the natural wildfire process must also happen over the long-term. There is no quick fix, but the tools exist to begin and maintain this process while increasing human and property safety in the event of a wildland fire.