

Nevada Youth Wildfire Preparedness Challenge Guide



Living with fire in Nevada does not happen by accident.

For thousands of years, people living in the area where Nevada is located have taken care of this land to better live with wildfire. One example of this is how the Washoe people take care of pinyon pine forests when gathering pine nuts. As part of collecting pinecones during pine nut harvesting, Washoe people traditionally remove low dead branches and pull dead material such as pine needles and sticks away from a tree's trunk. This dead plant material is often burned in a safe place away from the tree. By creating space without flammable material around these old and important trees, these trees are more likely to survive if there is a wildfire in that area. All of us have a role to play in helping where we live be better prepared for wildfire.

This challenge provides Nevada youth an opportunity to help us all better live with wildfire. The following 5 step guide will help your team complete the Nevada Youth Wildfire Preparedness Challenge Presented by the NV Energy Foundation. If you have any questions, contact Spencer Eusden at seusden@unr.edu.

Step 1: Create a team

Teams can range from a few youths to an entire class. The judges will weigh the number of people on a team. A team of 20 will be expected to accomplish more than a team of three.

Your team should have at least one adult leader. The job of this leader is to ensure that any activities are done safely with correct permission and to support the team where needed.

Step 2: Learn about wildfire preparedness

The following four main areas of wildfire preparedness are a great place to start:

1. Defensible Space (Space around a building where flammable materials have been reduced)
 - a. [Learn about defensible space here.](#)
2. Home Hardening (Making a building more fire resistant)
 - a. [Learn more about home hardening here.](#)
3. Evacuation Planning (Being prepared and knowing what to do if an evacuation is ordered)
 - a. [Learn about wildfire evacuation here.](#)

4. Community Preparedness (What can be done in your neighborhood to help everyone be prepared for wildfire)
 - a. [Learn more about community wildfire preparedness here.](#)

This competition is not limited to the information listed above. For example, projects that incorporate traditional ecological practices or other creative and effective solutions are welcome.

High school students can read these materials independently, while elementary school students will need help from the adult leader to learn about this information.

Step 3: Identify the wildfire preparedness needs in your community

Teams can use this worksheet ([Community Wildfire Preparedness Assessment Worksheet](#)) to help identify potential wildfire preparedness needs in their community. While the adult leader can help facilitate this activity, youth should be the ones identifying what they see as the wildfire needs in their community.

This is a great opportunity to try to connect with your local fire district. If they are not busy fighting fires, they can be a great source of local knowledge and offer some valuable suggestions for project options. Find your local fire district here.

<https://www.livingwithfire.com/get-informed/find-your-fire-district/>

Take some brief notes or audio recordings of your decisions here. When you submit your project, you will need to share some information about the needs you are addressing in your community.

Tip: Strong projects will consider the types of wildfire problems relevant to an area and the community's characteristics. Matching the unique needs of your community with your actions done in your project and ensuring that no-one gets left out is a great way to score highly.

Step 4: Complete your wildfire preparedness project

As a team, work together to do something that helps increase the wildfire preparedness in the community of your choice. The adult leader should supervise all the activities in this segment to ensure participant safety and help with permission.

Tip: Take many before and after photos of your project if you are changing the defensible space or home hardening of an area. Before and after photos taken from the same location are great photos to submit with your project.

Step 5: Submit your project

Use this form (<https://www.livingwithfire.com/nevada-youth-wildfire-preparedness-challenge-submission-form/>) to submit your team's project by July 15th. In this form, we will ask you to share your team information, describe the community's wildfire preparedness needs, describe what you did and how it helped meet those needs, and include photos of the project.

Judging and awards

During the week of July 15th, a panel of judges will review entries based on the following criteria.

- How well a team identified a need relevant to their community
- How well the action(s) taken reflect that need
- How effective is the project
- How original, creative, and inclusive is the project

Awards will be presented at an awards ceremony the week of July 22nd. Participants are welcome to attend the awards ceremony in person at the Washoe County Extension Office or virtually. Teams do not need to be present to win and will be notified if they will be receiving an award in advance.