

## WESTERN SLOPE

# WRWC partners with Colorado Realtors

PLAINDEALER STAFF REPORT  
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On Wednesday the West Region Wildfire Council announced its partnership with Colorado Association of REALTORS® to provide educational programming for property owners in Colorado's southwest counties. The announcement was made at the Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department, where wildfire mitigation experts provided an informational session and tour of both mitigated properties and those in need of mitigation.

The announcement is the next step in the expansion of CAR's Colorado Project Wildfire.

"We are very excited to partner with the West Region Wildfire Council on this

event," Colorado Project Wildfire Chair, Bonnie Smith said. "Their experience in bringing together residents, fire districts, agency representatives and other partners in educating, promoting risk reduction and providing resources to help homeowners and communities reduce risk will be invaluable to our members."

CAR launched the wildfire project initiative last year as an educational program designed to help reduce and prevent destruction of land and property, injuries and loss of life by raising awareness of and access to wildfire mitigation resources.

Joining representatives from CAR and West Region Wildfire Council on Wednesday were representatives from Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department, Ouray County commissioners, Colorado State

Forest Service, Firewise of Southwest Colorado, Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, and the Office of Emergency Management.

"Our highest priority is the safety of our residents and firefighters," said Tom Austin, Log Hill assistant fire chief. "By collaborating with the West Region Wildfire Council, we have enabled our homeowners to take concrete steps to protect their homes and therefore reduce the danger to them and our firefighters."

According to the Colorado State Forest Service, more than two million Coloradans live in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), an area where man-made improvements are built close to, or within, natural terrain and flammable vegetation, and where high potential for wildland fire exists. With con-

tinued development throughout the state's WUI areas estimated to grow by 300 percent in the next 15 years, the wildfire threat is real and it is not going away.

"As a regional organization that works to reduce wildfire risk and promote fire adapted communities, we're excited to collaborate with CAR," said Lilia Falk, director of the West Region Wildfire Council. "We have a collective responsibility to prepare our homes, properties and communities for the possibility of wildfire. Colorado Project Wildfire helps promote this message while connecting residents with local resources, like the West Region Wildfire Council, that are available to assist with wildfire education, mitigation and preparedness efforts."

Wednesday's announcement and tour provided an opportunity for property owners to become more aware of the fire situation in western Colorado.

"Safety is of the utmost importance to our members," said Smith. "We act out that concern with each of our clients through careful selection of safe properties, the use of professional inspections and providing access to resources homeowners can use themselves to enhance the safety of their properties."

For more information, visit CAR's project website, [coloradoprojectwildfire.com](http://coloradoprojectwildfire.com).

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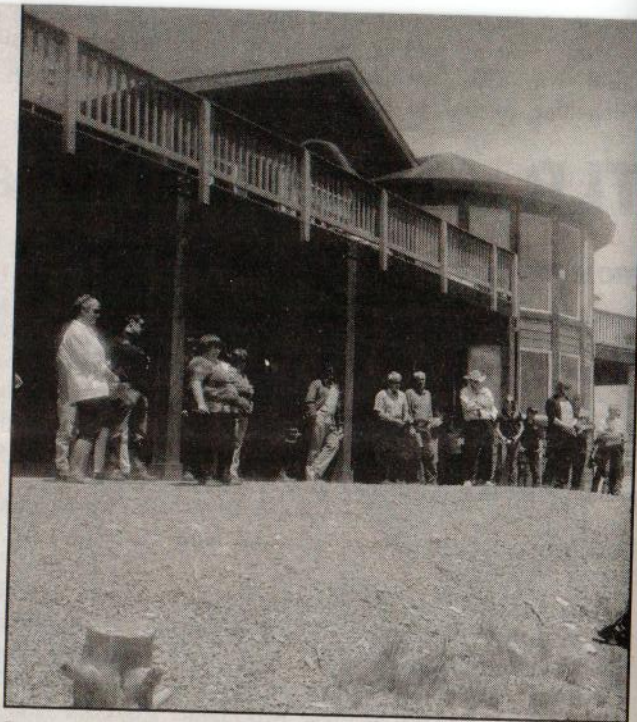
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Property owners tour a fire mitigated property on Log Hill Wednesday morning. The event was hosted by the West Region Wildfire Council and Colorado Association of Realtors.

Courtesy photo