

BLM and NDF perform home assessments in Unionville during Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month

On May 10th representatives of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Winnemucca District, held a Home Assessment Day in the small community of Unionville, Nevada as part of their participation in Nevada Wildfire Awareness Month (NWAM). The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) cooperated with the BLM on the project by assisting in performing the assessments of the homes and properties. Out of the 16 residential properties in Unionville, 14 were part of the assessments, making for a very successful event.

Unionville, Nevada was established in 1861 as a mining town. The community sits nestled in a one-way canyon about an hour southwest of Winnemucca. Besides being known for its beautiful landscape and scenery, its historical and cultural value makes it one of the more special places in Nevada. It once held the county seat of Pershing County, was home to Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain), and was reported to have a very prosperous mining boom in the 1860's. More recently, it was labeled a "Community at Risk" in the Federal Register, drawing the attention of the employees of the Winnemucca District's fuels program.

In March, a community meeting was held to gain interest in a Home Assessment Day in Unionville. The community members who were in attendance were eager to have this service done, remembering the close calls they experienced in 1999 when the Dun Glen complex and the Peru Canyon Fire in 2001 burned right down into their backyards, threatening their homes and livelihoods. Soon, word spread, and residents were calling the District Office asking to be added to the list for the May 10th event.

The event went off without a hitch. The BLM and NDF assessors walked from property to property, inspecting the built environment, the 30-foot zone, and beyond, filling out a generalized score sheet to give to the respective homeowner. Midway through the day a potluck BBQ lunch was provided which gave homeowners and agency representatives a chance to relax and get to know each other. At the end of each inspection, the assessors met with the homeowner and gave them recommendations on ways to improve their home and property to make it more fire safe. Despite the outcome of some homeowner's score sheets, at the end of the

day, they were pleased to at least have the knowledge of what they could do to prepare their home for wildfire.



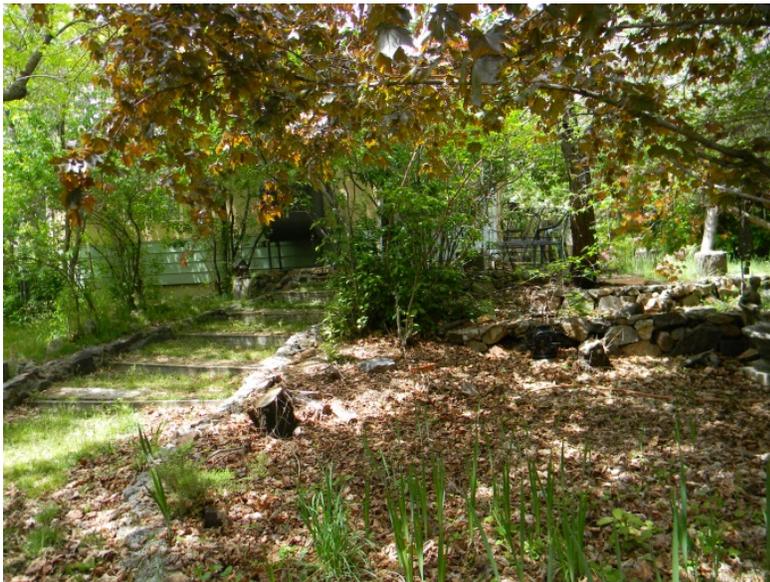
Employees with the BLM and NDF meet with Unionville homeowners at the beginning of the Home Assessment Day. Although 12 homeowners had signed up for assessments, 2 others saw what was going on and joined the list by the end of the day.



This was the first property in Unionville the group assessed. Despite being in a very lush, green setting, the homeowner was advised to clear some of the brush on the edges of his property and fix some of the ember traps that were noticed on his structures.



BLM and NDF employees do a defensible space assessment on a structure in Unionville. Many of the properties in the community have several structures on them besides the main home.



This home was surrounded by dead leaf litter, tall grass growing right up to the home, low hanging tree branches, and over-grown brush. The property owners bought this house a couple of years ago and since then have been overwhelmed with the amount of work it would take to make their property fire-safe.