



# Wildfire Hazard



## What Causes Wildfires?

### Hazard Description

Wildland fires are uncontrolled fires in forests, woodlands, brush or grasslands. Most are caused by human error. Wildland fires pose threats to people, pets, and livestock in areas where human development intermixes with, and is adjacent to wildland vegetation. This area is termed the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Washington State Department of Natural Resources customarily develops such a map for State community; however, no such map exists for Whitman County at present.

Wildland fires also destroy valuable resource lands, wildlife habitat, powerlines, pipelines, communication and transportation infrastructure. Impacts of a major fire can be amplified by subsequent effects of landslides and flooding during heavy rains.

Map 1 illustrates the historic wildfire locations occurring from 2008-2019. Table 1 identifies the Fire Regime Condition Classes which exist for certain fire return intervals. Map 2 illustrates the return interval periods for the County, based on the current condition class, which includes vegetation types. Map 3 identifies the current Vegetation Condition Class for Whitman County.

Map 1

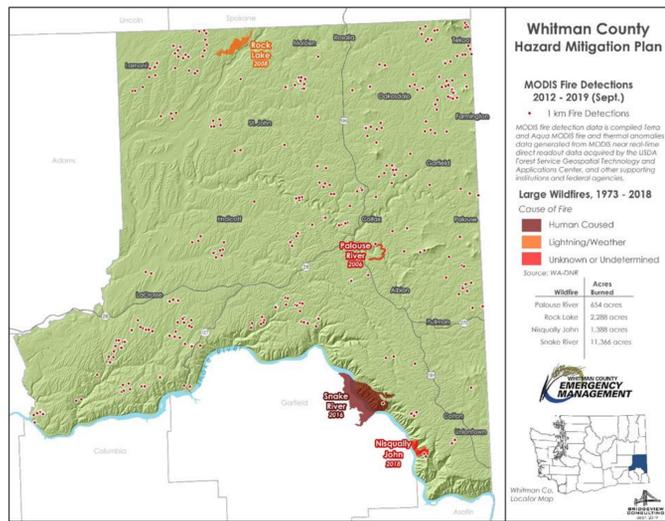
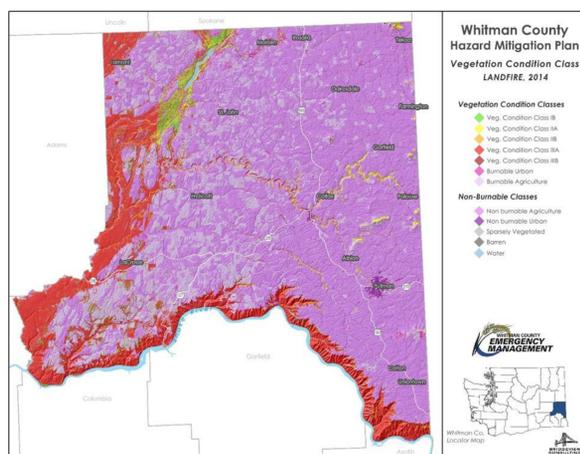
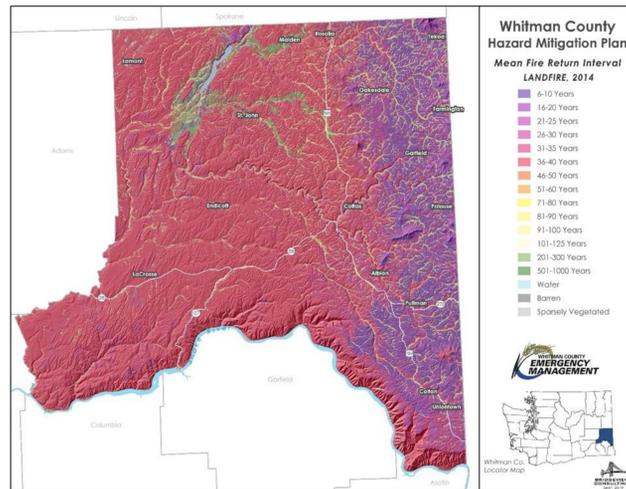


Table 1

FIRE REGIME CONDITION CLASS DEFINITIONS	
Description	Potential Risks
<b>Fire Regime Condition Class 1</b> Within the historical range of variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire behavior, effects and other associated disturbances are similar to those that occurred prior to fire exclusion (suppression) and other types of management that do not mimic the natural fire regime and associated vegetation and fuel characteristics.</li> <li>Composition and structure of vegetation and fuels are similar to the natural (historical) regime.</li> <li>Risk of loss of key ecosystem components (e.g. native species, large trees and soil) is low.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Regime Condition Class 2</b> Moderate departure from the historical regime of variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire behavior, effects, and other associated disturbances are moderately departed (more or less severe).</li> <li>Composition and structure of vegetation and fuel are moderately altered.</li> <li>Uncharacteristic conditions range from low to moderate.</li> <li>Risk of loss of key ecosystem components is moderate.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire Regime Condition Class 3</b> High departure from the historical regime of variability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire behavior, effects, and other associated disturbances are highly departed (more or less severe).</li> <li>Composition and structure of vegetation and fuel are highly altered.</li> <li>Uncharacteristic conditions range from moderate to high.</li> <li>Risk of loss of key ecosystem components is high.</li> </ul>

Map 2



Map 3

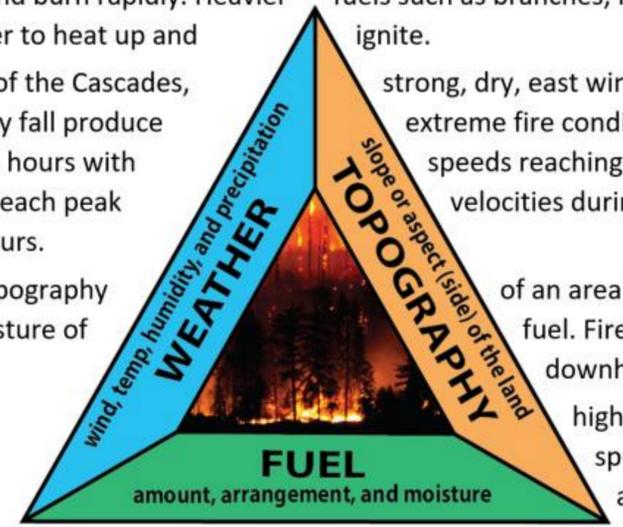
### Factors Contributing to Wildfires

**Fuel:** Lighter fuels such as grass, leaves, and needles (sometimes called litter) quickly expel moisture and burn rapidly. Heavier fuels such as branches, logs, and tree trunks take longer to heat up and ignite.

**Weather:** West of the Cascades, strong, dry, east winds in the late summer and early fall produce extreme fire conditions. East winds can last 48 hours with speeds reaching 60 mph; these winds generally reach peak velocities during the night and early morning hours.

**Topography:** Topography of an area influences the amount and moisture of fuel. Fires spread more easily uphill than downhill.

Barriers, such as highways and lakes, can affect the spread of fire. Limited road access to open spaces increases risk for larger wildland fires. Fewer roads delay response times for firefighters to make contact with the fire. In densely wooded areas, fires can burn for days without anyone knowing the fire exists.



ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES

### What can you do to reduce wildfire risk around your property?



**Action Items to Improve Your Home's Survivability:**

- REMOVE** leaves, pine needles, and other flammable material from the roof, gutters, and on and under the deck to help prevent embers from igniting your home.
- SCREEN** areas below decks and porches with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent material from accumulating underneath.
- COVER** exterior attic and soffit vents with 1/8" wire mesh to help prevent sparks from entering your home.
- ENCLOSE** eaves to help prevent ember entry.
- INSPECT** shingles or roof tiles. **REPLACE** missing shingles or tiles. **COVER** ends of tiles with bird stops or cement to help prevent ember penetration during a wildfire.

**Tips for Landscaping Around Your Home**

- REMOVE** dead vegetation and other flammable materials, especially within the first 5 feet of the home.
- KEEP** your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to help reduce fire intensity.
- PRUNE** tree limbs so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet above the ground to help reduce the chance of fire getting into the crowns of the trees.
- MOVE** construction material, trash, and woodpiles at least 30 feet away from the home and other outbuildings.
- DISPOSE** of branches, weeds, leaves, pine needles, and grass clippings that you have cut to reduce fuel for fire.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

Increase your wildfire safety. Make simple low-cost changes to your home and landscape starting today.



Visit [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) for more information.

Your Logo

IT'S A BIG WORLD. LET'S PROTECT IT TOGETHER!

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