

Good Evening:

Multiple Counties in our region are declaring States of Emergencies and enacting evacuations due to wildfires tonight. This is a good time to review some Wintergreen protocols.

First, the risk code for our community is currently "yellow" and therefore any outdoor fires (even in approved devices) are prohibited. If you use a Chimenea for a wine party tonight, the Wintergreen Fire Department will show up uninvited to dampen more than the festive mood. Please don't put us in that position.

Second, during wind events, it's important that you pay close attention to messages from "Alert Wintergreen". If Wintergreen Fire becomes aware of a substantial wildfire within 10 miles of Wintergreen, we will notify you. This should act as your cue to get your "go-bag" ready. Gather your medications, important papers, etc. and be prepared to evacuate. We will notify you if we feel that an evacuation order is possible within 24 hours. Please understand that "possible" does not mean "probable" and due to changing conditions, an evacuation order could come much earlier than 24 hours. It is our recommendation that upon receiving the "24-hour" notice, you should voluntarily evacuate. The cost of a night's lodging in Waynesboro pales by comparison to the stress of an emergency evacuation.

Third, if given the order to evacuate, please follow the directions explicitly. For example, if you're told to turn downhill when exiting Wintergreen, please don't ignore advice by crossing the Blue Ridge Parkway. If we know the fire will approach from the West, we will tell you to turn East. There currently is not a road connecting Wintergreen to the Blue Ridge Parkway. We remain hopeful that we can announce progress on this issue soon.

If an evacuation is ordered, this means Wintergreen Fire Department is no longer trying to suppress wildfire and instead has focused entirely on evacuation efforts.

No plan would be complete without a "worst-case" scenario. In the highly unlikely event that we need to evacuate the mountain, however can't, you will be directed to the Skyline Pavilion. Skyline Pavilion houses Ski Patrol, the Edge Restaurant, and a large conference space. This is the largest building on the mountain which is protected by sprinklers. Additionally, the Pavilion is surrounded by large parking lots and the ski slope, making it a highly defensible structure. Our staff will deploy the ladder truck as well as high-flow ground nozzle devices to create a "water curtain" around the structure.

Our plan is not perfect, but this is our plan.

Living in a ridge top community doesn't come without risk, however it shouldn't be coupled with fear. Wintergreen is a "Fire-Wise Community" which invests heavily in emergency preparedness.

The strongest advice on wildfires comes from the leading expert, Smokey The Bear....."only you can prevent wildfires".

You can monitor Virginia Wildfires at: <https://virginiapro.firesponse.com/public/>