



# Wildfire Preparedness for Home and Forest



# Wildfire in Western Washington

- While wildfires are historically uncommon events in Western Washington, hotter, drier temperatures are starting earlier in the year and lasting longer, increasing the likelihood of fire events
- Fall of 2022 was one of the driest and warmest in Washington in recent history
- Around 30-40% of fires in WA now occur west of the Cascades

High-resolution satellite imagery across Western Washington in mid-October of 2022





# McEwan Prairie 2023



# Kamilche Pt. 2023







# California RD 2019



# Capitol Forest Fire 2021



# Maple Fire 2018





Union Bank  
2019





# Fire in Our Forests

Goals for fire management in the landscape include:

- Reduce the **intensity of fires**.
- Make it easier for firefighters to suppress fires.
- Increase the odds of forest and home survival.



# Increasing the Odds of Forest Survival

- Reducing ladder fuels keeps fires low and prevents them from becoming devastating crown fires
- Maintaining fuel breaks and buffers
- Over time, manage for older, larger diameter trees



**Ladder fuels** allow fire to “climb” nearby trees. Limb branches of live trees up to 10 feet.  
Diagram from: Oregon State University Land Steward Program



# Wildfires and Communities

- Communities in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) have become more at-risk as wildfires have become more common
- Although initiated by wildfire, many communities burned with fire spreading within the community independent of the wildfire itself
- Ember showers and spot fires are most common exposures that lead to home burning down





High Intensity Survival vs. Low Intensity Destruction



# Wildfire Threats to Homes

- The largest threat to homes during a wildfire is not the fire front, but the ember showers and small spot fires
- Homes can be protected by controlling the local conditions that start fires in the first place
- If homes don't ignite, homes don't burn!



Ember storm in Wenatchee, WA during the 2015 Sleepy Hollow Fire. Photo: Don Seabrook/AP

# Wildfire Ready Neighbor's

- DNR's Wildfire Ready Neighbor's Program provides a free Wildfire Ready Plan to help you prioritize wildfire ready actions on your property and connects you with local wildfire experts in your area.
- DNR's Wildfire Ready Neighbors program Is brought to you by a coalition of partners including, the DNR, Conservation Districts(CD's) and Fire Districts (FD's).
- CD foresters, DNR foresters, and FD Personnel will be providing Wildfire Ready Home Assessments to County residents.

## ARE YOU WILDFIRE READY?

### GET YOUR FREE WILDFIRE READY PLAN TODAY!

Wildfire is a fact of life. But when we come together as neighbors, we can reduce the risk wildfire poses to our properties, homes, and community.

By working together, everyone benefits. Sign up today to get your free Wildfire Ready Plan and schedule a consultation from our local wildfire experts.

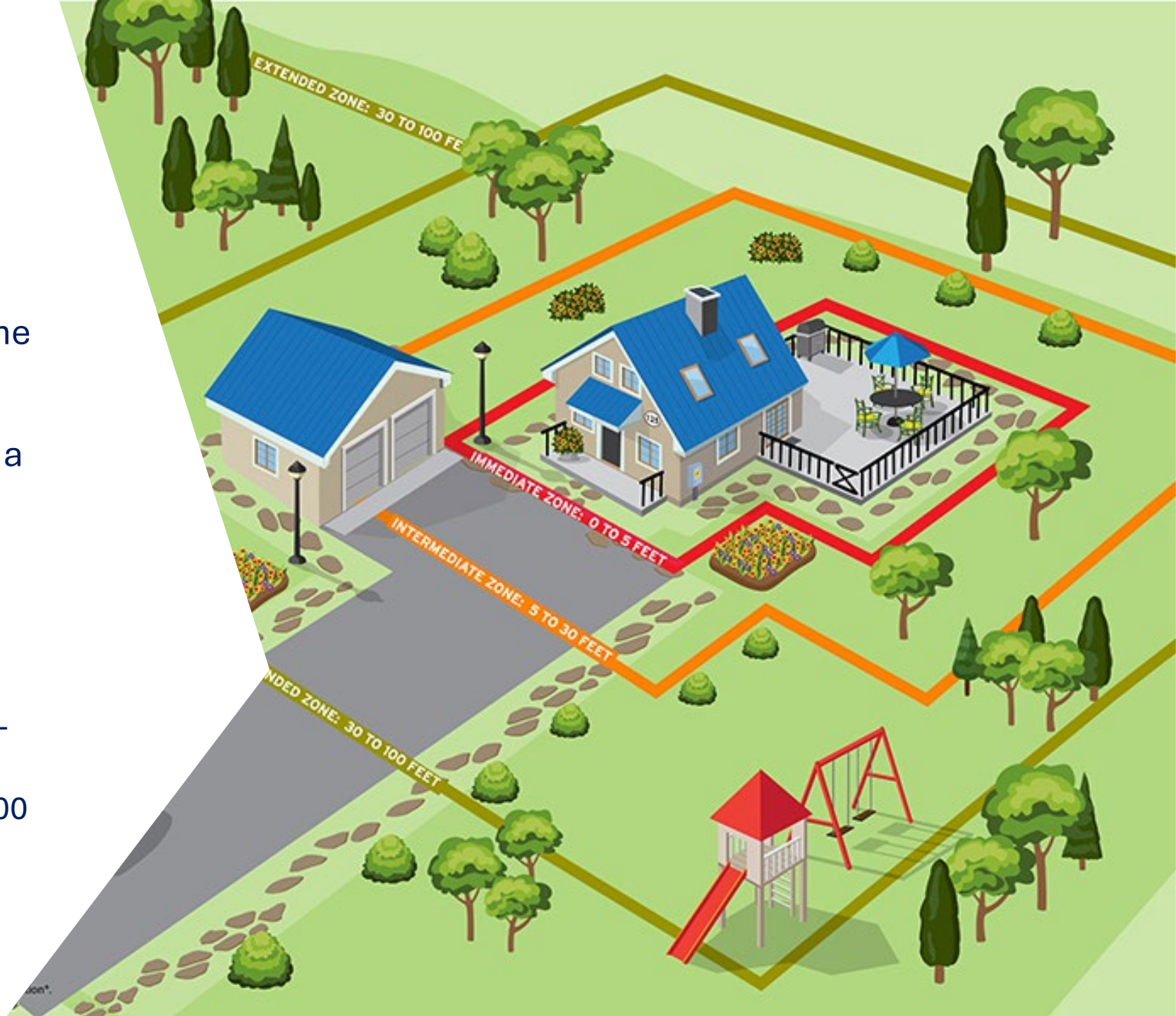
**SIGN UP**





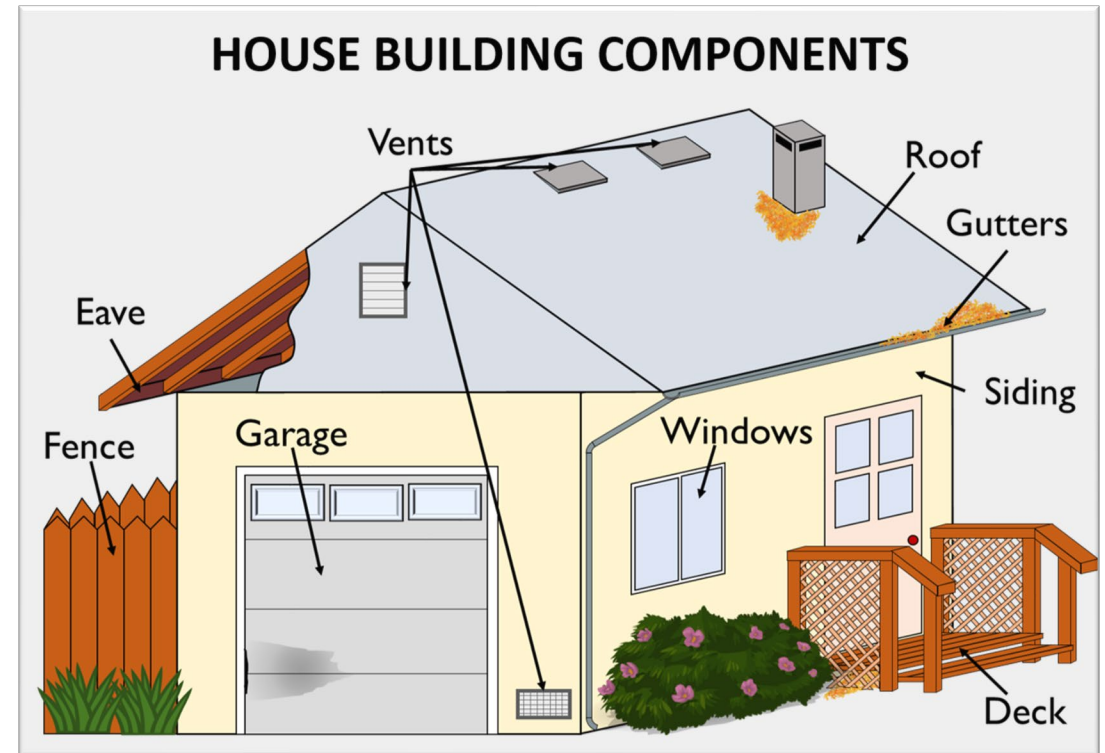
# Reducing Wildfire Risk: The Home Ignition Zone

- The best available science supports that actions within the first 100 ft of the home drastically improve the likelihood of a home surviving a wildfire
- This 100 ft is split into three distinct zones:
  - The Immediate Zone (0-5 ft)
  - The Intermediate Zone (5-30 ft)
  - The Extended Zone (30-100 ft)



# The Immediate Zone (0-5 ft)

- Includes the home and foundation to 5 ft
- The most important zone to take immediate action on, and the most vulnerable to ember ignitions
- Goal: Elimination of combustible materials
- **If the home doesn't ignite, it doesn't burn!**



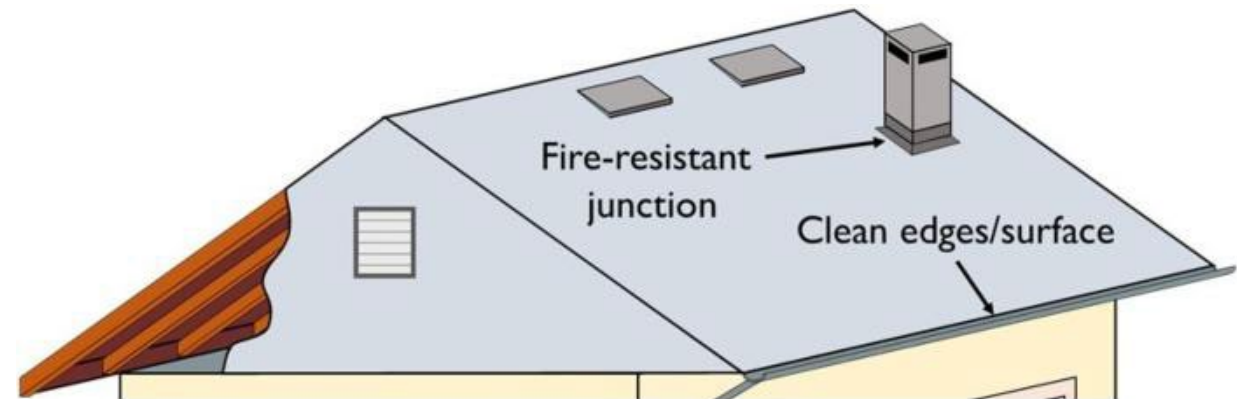




Roof



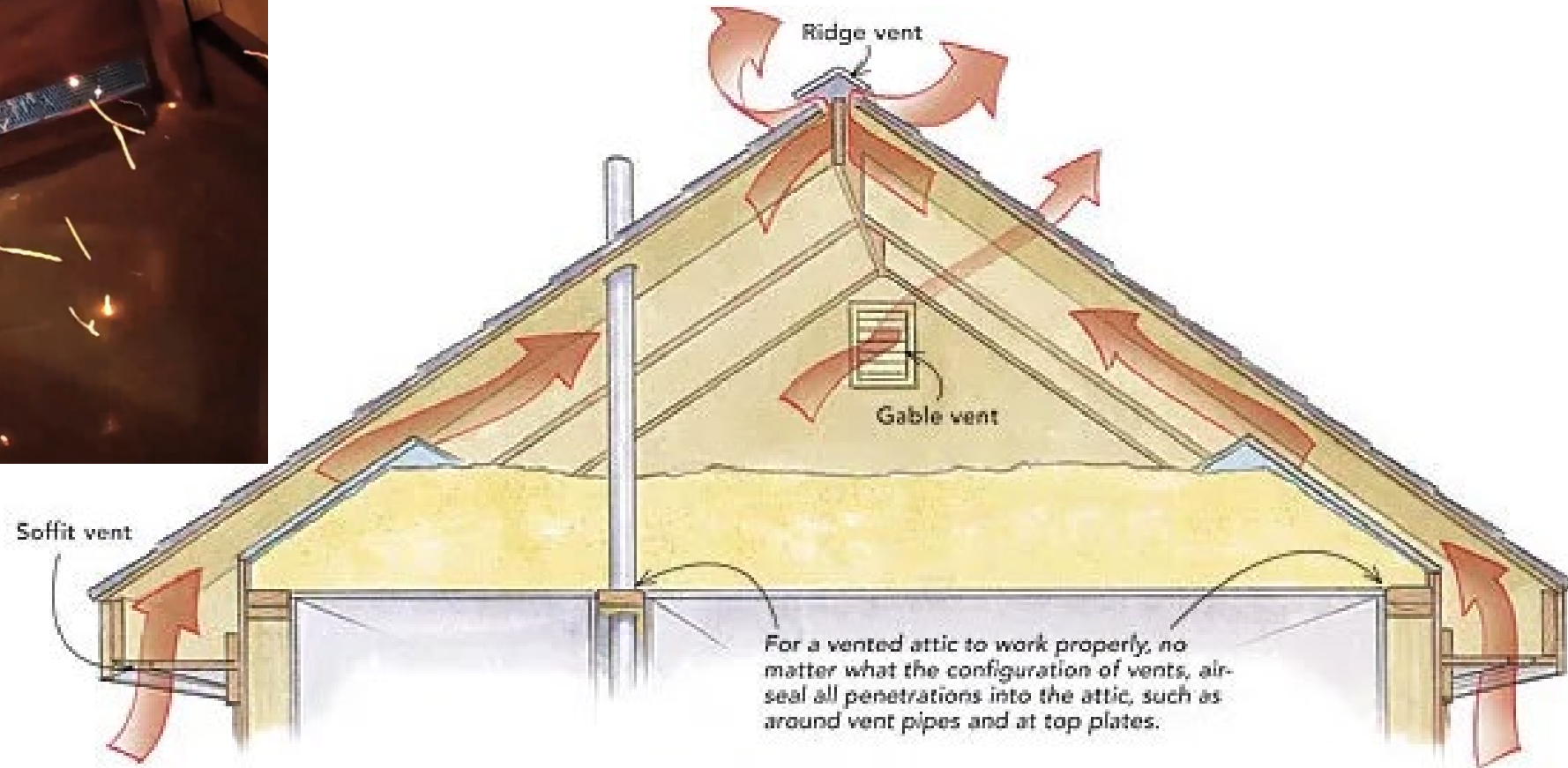
# Gutters, Skylights, & Chimney



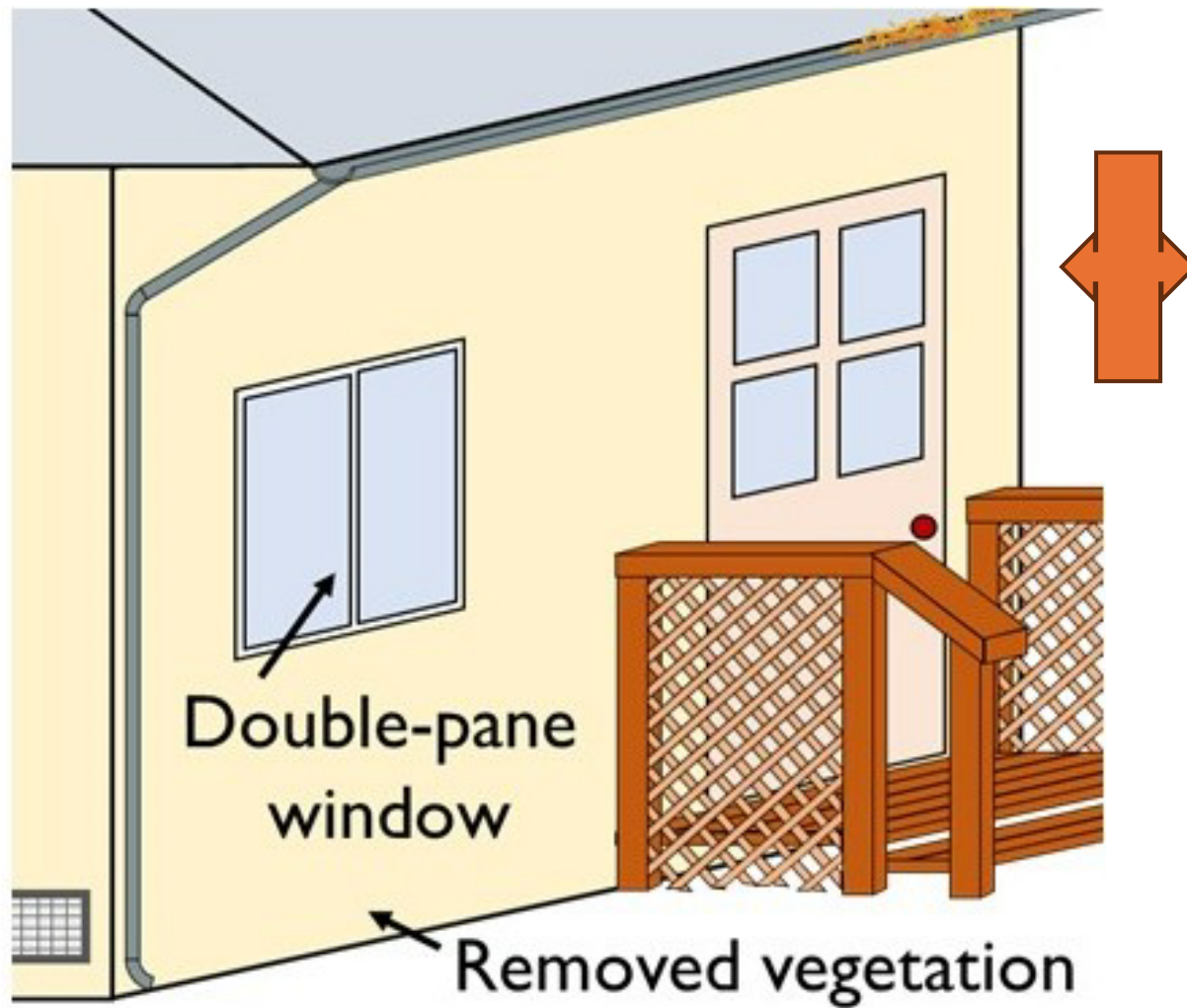
# Vents & Eaves

IBHS

Open Eave  
Vent in Blocking  
1/4 Inch Mesh

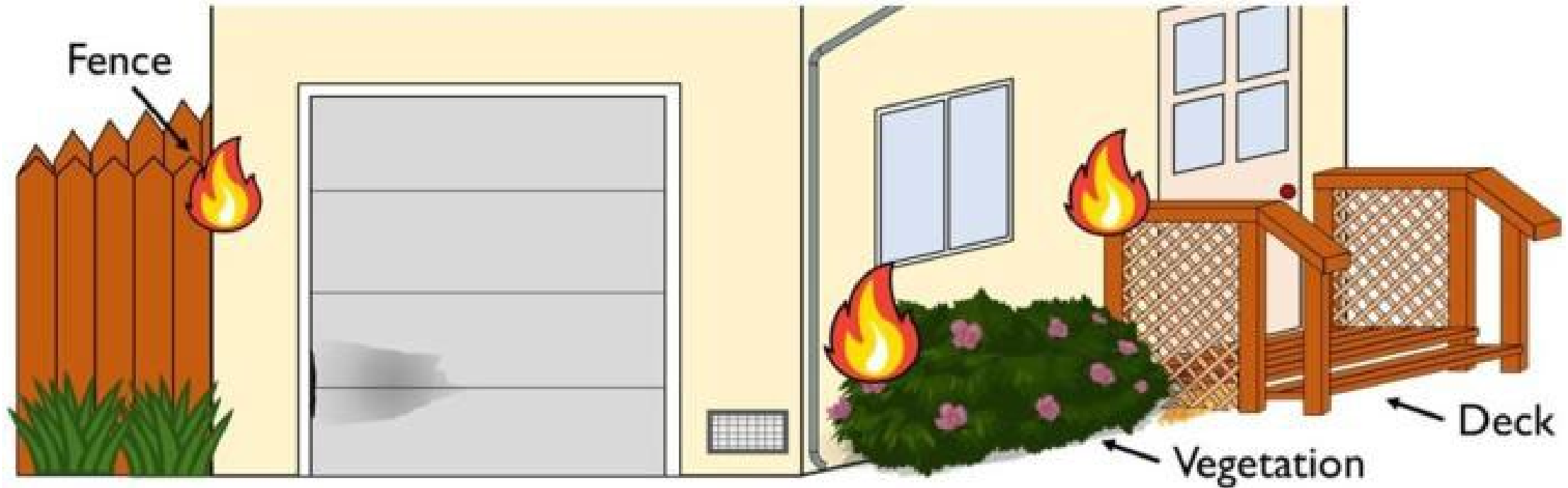


# Windows





# Siding





Deck/Patio





Fencing



# Additional Structures



# Intermediate Zone (5-30ft)

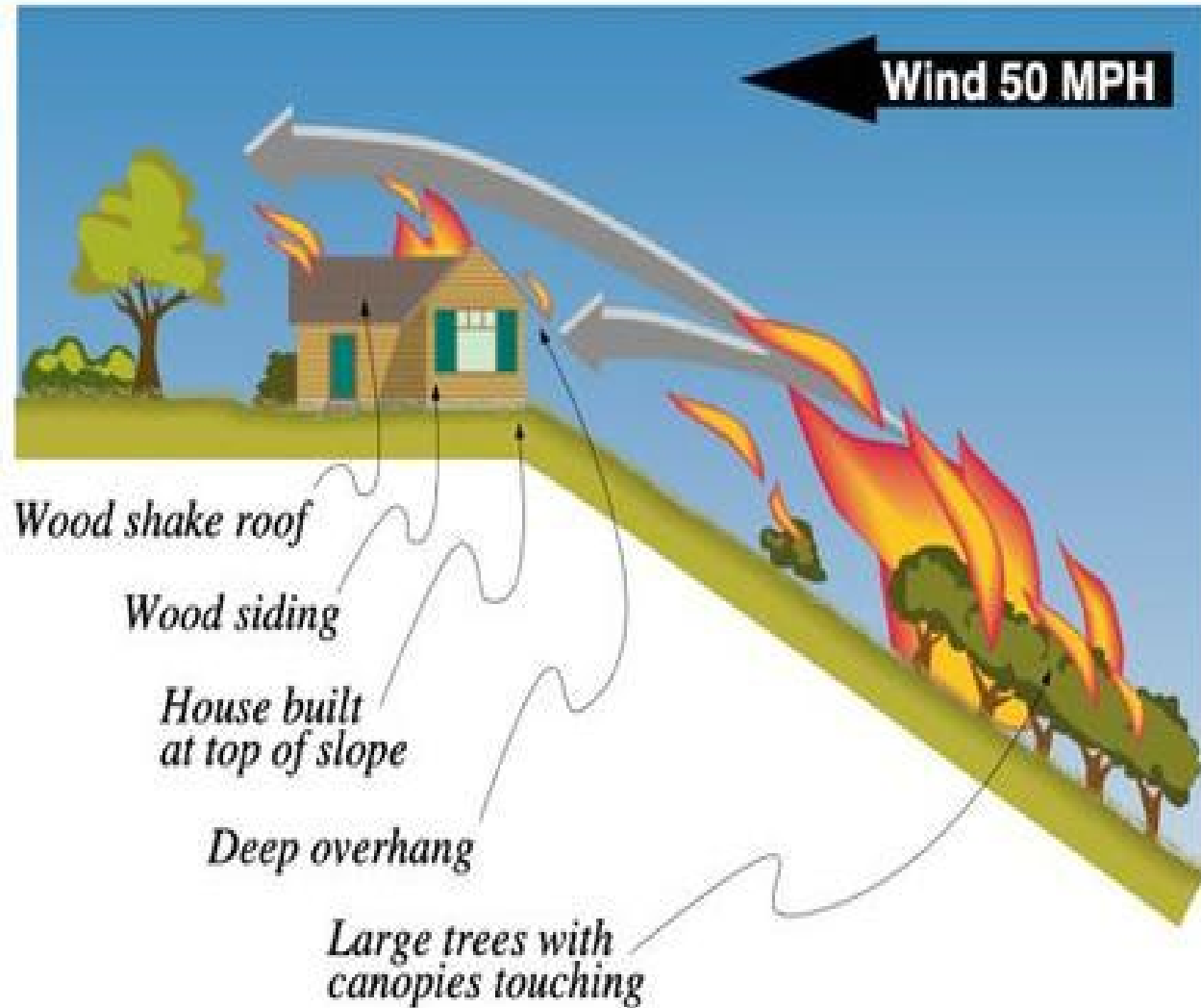
- Employing careful landscaping or creating breaks in the 5-30 ft buffer around a home can stop fire from spreading to the home
- Goal: "**Lean, clean, and green**"
- **Intermediate Zone Preparations**



# Intermediate Zone Considerations

- Steep slopes & topography
- Outbuildings
- Propane Tanks
- Electrical lines

## *Dangerous materials and conditions for sloped sites*



# Extended Zone (30-100+ ft)

- Goal: Interrupt the fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground
  - Guidelines recommend:
    - Trees 30-60' should be spaced at least 12 ft
    - Trees 60-100' should be spaced at least 6ft
    - Removing ladder fuels / Prune lower branches





# Working with Neighbors

- When homes are closely spaced together, the Home Ignition Zones of each can often overlap
- Working collaboratively with neighbors can maximize the benefits of wildfire preparations



# Takeaways

- **Homes don't burn if they don't ignite!**
- Keep a non-flammable perimeter within 5 feet of your home's edges
  - Keep bark chips/garden beds away from your siding
  - Prune plants below windows & eaves
  - Keep porches swept, above & below
- Keep landscaping plants lean, clean, and green



# What Next?

- Sign up at **WildfireReady.com** or by phone at **1-877-WA-READY**
- Interested in learning more about CD's and DNR's forestry work? Contact us at:

## Margaret Kreder

Stewardship Forester  
(360) 427-9436 Ext. 102  
mkreder@masoncd.org

## Alex Chacon

Stewardship Forester  
564-669-8498  
achacon@thurstoncd.org

## Emily Fales

Service Forester  
(360) 810-1010  
emily.fales@dnr.wa.gov

## Jesse Duvall

Community Wildfire  
Resilience Coordinator  
(360) 972-4135  
jesse.duvall@dnr.wa.gov

