WILDFIRE HISTORY FOR CHILDREN

A Coloring Book from the

Texas A&M Forest Service
Introduction

The threat of wildfire is dangerous for those of us who live in what’s called the Wildland Urban Interface. For short we call it WUI. The WUI is a special place where people build homes in the woods, the forests and in grasslands. When we do this, our homes become fuel for any wildfire that comes our way. The Texas A&M Forest Service has a special WUI Team that helps us learn what to do to protect our homes and families from wildfires. The team thought and thought and thought about what to do. Then the team planned and planned and planned about how to do it. One result of all this thinking and planning is the FireSmart Family Program.

For starters, here’s a *Wildfire History for Children* Coloring Book to show and tell you about the history of wildfire. It shows you what other people have done to protect their homes and property. You can learn to do the very same things. Then you’ll be a part of your family wildfire team and part of the Texas A&M Forest Service WUI Team.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to those who contributed the time and effort to see this project to completion.

*Cover Design, Story and Pictures:* Lynn Weiss (Texas A&M Forest Service)
*Logo Design:* April Phillips (Texas A&M Forest Service)
*Story Editing:* Kelly Bender (Texas Parks & Wildlife Department)
*Editing and Technical Support:* Lexi Maxwell (Texas A&M Forest Service)

*For additional copies, a pdf version is available for downloading and reprinting:*

[http://tfsarsondogs.tamu.edu](http://tfsarsondogs.tamu.edu)

The *Wildfire History For Children* Coloring Book is a part of the *FireSmart Family Program.*
All throughout time, natural fire regularly burned through the forests and grasslands. It was usually started by lightning.
Native peoples burned the prairies to grow fresh grass for the animals to eat.
Farmers often burned their crops at the end of the season to make the land more fertile for the next year.
As time went by more and more people moved into the woods, set up housekeeping on the prairies and shared homesteads with wild animals.
Soon lots and lots of people created towns and cities. Then the animals left and the wildlands didn’t look very wild anymore.
For a while people liked living in the cities. But they didn’t like wildfire burning around where they lived so they quickly put wildfire out and they sure didn’t try to start any.
But as the towns grew larger, people felt crowded and moved away from all the other people. They built new houses in the wildlands. They left lots of trees and bushes and grasses all around their houses.
They loved their land. They didn’t want any fire to burn down their trees or scorch their grass or shrubs. Everyone thought fire was bad, so anytime a fire started, it was put out as fast as possible.
On the prairies, the prairie grasses began to die because they needed fire to make more grass. The animals no longer had food so they ran away.
In the forests, all the big and little trees, bushes, leaves and pine needles created a lot of fuel. When a fire did start it grew very fast. And it grew to be giant-size.
One day the people realized that they had to do the job that fire once did: thin the trees, remove dead limbs, leaves and pine needles so plants could get sun and grow. Then there would be less fuel to make a giant wildfire.
Today whole families spend a day together helping their trees and grasses become healthy again. They trim and clip and saw and rake, doing the job that fire once did to keep the forests and grasslands healthy. This is what a FireSmart Family does.
The little plants and the big trees say, “thank you.” The animals say, “thank you.” Everyone in the family knows that if a wildfire starts, there is less chance that their woods, prairies and homes will feed the fire.
Being a FireSmart Family means people can live in the wildlands, enjoy nature and protect their homes and families.