



**ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**
2025 BRECKENRIDGE

Demystifying Colorado's Upcoming Wildfire Resiliency Code

Wildfire Resiliency Code Board

June 25, 2:15-3:15 pm



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Agenda

- **Welcome & Introductions**
 - Anne Miller, Colorado Resiliency Office Director, Dept. of Local Affairs
- **Wildfire Resiliency Code Overview**
 - Carolyn Larsen, Colorado WRCB Administrator, Dept. of Public Safety
- **Local Perspectives**
 - Brett Lacey, Fire Marshal, Colorado Springs (retired)
 - Crystal Lambert, Building & Environmental Health Official, Gunnison County
- **Implementation Resources**
- **Discussion/Q&A**
- **Next Steps**

What is your familiarity with WUI codes?

What best describes your jurisdiction's familiarity with wildfire/urban interface (WUI) codes?

- We are aware of wildfire risk and already implementing some WUI codes.
- We know about wildfire risk and have thought about WUI codes, but have not yet taken action.
- We don't know much about our wildfire risk and have not thought much about WUI codes.
- WUI what?

Administration



Who shall adopt the code?

Governing bodies with jurisdiction in the WUI that have the authority to adopt building or fire codes

- 1) City council, town council, board of trustees, or other governing body of a city, town, or a city and county
- 2) Board of directors of a FPD
- 3) Governing body of an improvement district providing fire protection services
- 4) Board of county commissioners with respect to the area within a county that is outside the corporate limits of a city or town and outside the boundaries of a fire protection district

Who shall enforce the code?

Code enforcement in accordance with rules and regulations of a governing body

Timeline



*The period to comply with an adopted code shall be in accordance with the rules and regulations of the governing body or within three months of the date the code is adopted by the governing body, whichever is sooner.

Scope



****This is NOT a retrofit code.****

2025 CWRC CH1

To what does the code apply?

When in the identified WUI, the permitting and Inspections of:

- New construction of structures and defensible space around structures - Residential and Commercial
- Significant alterations/additions/repairs
 - 500 sf+ increased footprint of a structure
 - 25%+ of an exterior of a structure affected

To what does the code NOT apply?

- Interior alterations of existing structures
- 35+ acre parcels with only 1 residential structure NOT abutting residential or commercial area
- Exterior painting, staining and similar routine maintenance work

Code Requirements



2025 CWRC CH4-5

Class 1:

- Roofing, gutters & downspouts, vents
- Retaining walls
- Fencing
- Signage & addressing
- SIZ 1 (0-5' from a structure)

Class 2:

- *All Class 1 Requirements -*
- Exterior walls, doors, & windows
- Decking
- Appendages & projections
- Detached accessory structures
- SIZ 2 (5-30' from a structure)
- SIZ 3 (30-100' from a structure)



Applicability



2025 CWRC CH3

Application

*This is a state *minimum* code, as such:

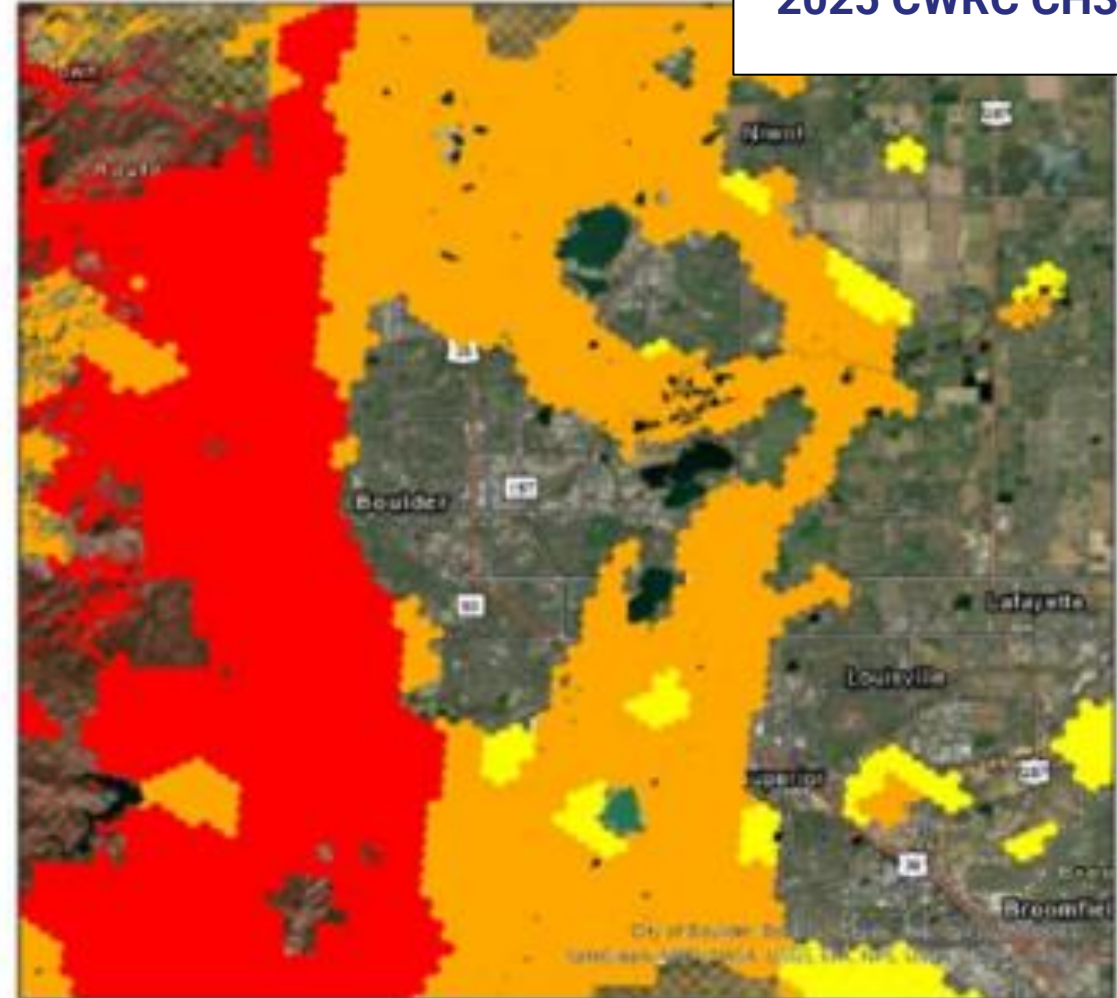
2 levels of code requirements

Application based upon illustrated fire hazard on map

Class 1 - applies to all areas identified with low fire intensity classification (yellow)

Class 2 - applies to areas identified with moderate to high fire intensity classification (orange and red)

Locally: Code Officials may make determinations based on ground-truthing as needed



Mapping



2025 CWRC CH3

Governing bodies shall either adopt the state map **or develop a local map**

- 1) **State map** developed to identify fire hazard throughout CO
 - Informed by data modeling that identifies:
 - Slope
 - >50 fuel types
 - 40yrs of critical fire weather
- 2) **Local map** must illustrate information based on actual conditions present that either meets or exceeds the intent of the code.

WRCB - Draft State Map



Local Perspectives - Colorado Springs



Background

- Public Education 1991
- Weak vegetation management ordinance 1993
- Neighborhood chipping program 2002
- Class A Roofing ordinance, April 2003
- Appendix K - Intensive vegetation and structural hardening 2013
- Appendix K - Significant changes: Decking, Siding, fences 2021
- Citizens voted \$20M to fire department
- Three neighborhood chipping crews, increased stipends
- Tribal consultations

Local Perspectives - Colorado Springs



Benefits & Challenges

- Public awareness
- Public debate
- Courageous Conversations
- Strong (very strong) public support
- Lack of political will
- Ignorance of issues
- Unrealistic expectations
- Reliance interpreted as independence

Local Perspectives - Colorado Springs



Tips

- Engage opponents early and **listen**
- Don't seek agreement (grudgingly pissed)
- Consistent messaging
- Do what you say
- Customer service (face to face)
- Transparency always
- Cross country marathon.. not a sprint

Local Perspectives - Gunnison County



Background

- 2022 adoption of the IWUIC, 2021 edition became effective in 2023 for all new building permits.
- November 2023 amendment to address additions and alterations and deletion of sprinklering.
- Existing Building & Planning Office staff administers the IWUIC while applying other building and land use codes.

Benefits & Challenges

- Existing staff for inspections and plan review.
- Public awareness improving existing development.
- Engagement with property owners and fire districts to improve water supplies in rural areas.

Tips

- Engage local building material suppliers early in the adoption process to identify approved materials that they can stock and also advise property owners and builders about options.
- Trained and knowledgeable staff can effectively educate on the requirements.

Implementation Resources



Resources and Support in Development:

- Adoption and Implementation Toolkit
 - Inspection checklists
 - Illustrations & diagrams
 - Exceeding the minimum standards - additional resources & programs for inspiration
 - FAQs
- Peer Exchange: Opportunities to learn from one another
- 2025 Code Commentary

Help us, help you: what tools or guidance platforms would be useful?

What resources would be helpful?



What resources or tools would be most helpful to your jurisdiction?

- Better understanding of our wildfire risk, or if we even have one
- Peer learning exchange with other local governments
- Code commentary and guidance
- Local mapping approaches
- Implementation (e.g., staffing, inspections)
- Structure hardening (e.g., approved material lists, example assemblies)
- Defensible space mitigation (e.g., home ignition zone, plantings)
- Communication and education

Discussion



Next Steps



- **July 1, 2025 - State Wildfire Resiliency Code Adoption**
- July 16, 2025 - Intro to the Peer Exchange: Live Webinar
- Sept. 12, 2025 - WRCB at the CACEO Quarterly Training
- **April 1, 2026 - Local Jurisdictions Adopt**
- **July 1, 2026 - Local Jurisdictions Implement Codes**

Stay tuned for more resources!



THANK YOU!

Wildfire Resiliency Code Board

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