

■ A Homeowner's Guide

to Your Transition Area ■

Maintaining Your Transition Area

This brochure provides home owners with basic guidelines for managing the "Transition Areas" between their maintained landscape and their property line to reduce the risk of wildfire while keeping a natural looking, native habitat.

For homeowners who want to contract this work out, please contact the Hidden Springs Town Association (HSTA) for the specifications for Hidden Springs Staff and Contractors in Fire-wise Revegetation of Foothills Open Space as provided in the Hidden Springs Community Open Space Management Plan.

Maintaining the Transition Area is the responsibility of the property owner and will help protect your home from the threat of wildfire.

What is a Transition Area?

The Transition Area is the portion of your lot that is outside the building envelope and the landscaped part of your yard but is not common open space subject to the conservation easement. The Transition Areas are to remain in a natural state similar to the common open space in order to retain both the wildlife habitat and the natural aesthetic value of the community. At the same time, these areas need to provide a reasonable safety buffer from the potential of wildfire from the adjacent open space land. While it is impossible to make a home fireproof, a home owner can use proper maintenance techniques to conserve backyard habitat and reduce the threat of fire.

This brochure will help you understand how to:

Maintain your Transition Area- an important first step to reducing fire hazard.

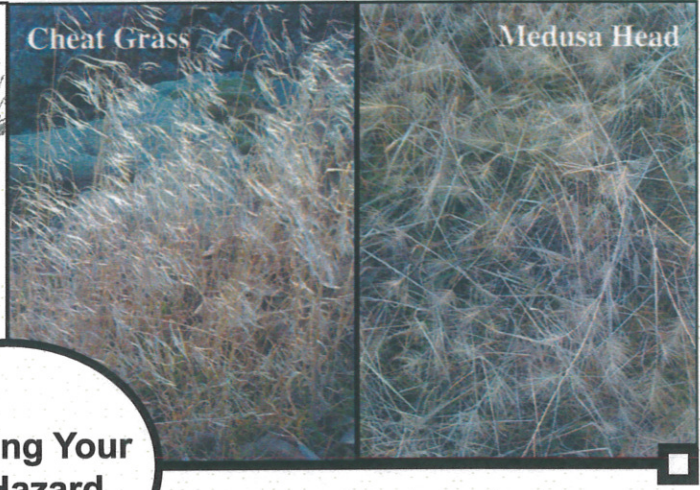
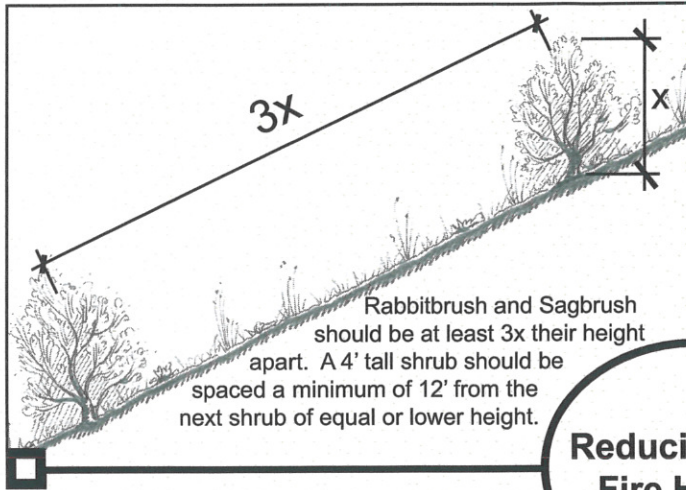
Restore your Transition Area- seed or plant plugs (seedlings) of native plants to enhance its wildlife habitat value and its natural aesthetics.



Sagebrush



Rabbitbrush



Reducing Your Fire Hazard

Three Steps to Reduce Fire Hazard

1) Thinning and Pruning Native Shrubs:

Rabbitbrush and Sagebrush are common and important habitat shrubs that grow naturally on the slopes and draws located throughout the Hidden Springs residential area. These shrubs can be exceedingly flammable during the hot, dry season when the risk of wildfire is at its highest. In some places, such as Schick's Draw, the shrubs in the Open Space and Transition Areas have grown very tall and dense, increasing fire hazard.

- Thin clumps of shrubs until one plant per clump remains. Remove the plants by cutting them at the base of the plant. Pulling them out of the ground is not recommended due to the disruption of the soil and increased risk of erosion. Allow plants to be spaced so that: Based on the height of the shrubs they are at least 3x their height apart. A 4' tall shrub should be spaced a minimum of 12' from the next shrub of equal or lower height. (See the sketch above.)

- Prune back excessively tall plants to maintain the shrubs at or below 4' tall. A hard pruning is recommended during the late fall and winter months, November through early March when the plant is dormant. To prune, remove side branches at the main stem. Additional light pruning may be necessary during the summer months as well.

- Remove dead branches and other dead or dry material from the plants as needed each year.

2) Controlling Invasive and Weedy Grasses:

Two very flammable, invasive grasses that occur on slopes throughout Hidden Springs are commonly known as Cheat Grass and Medusa Head. For more descriptions and photos of these weedy grasses go to www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/weeds_intro.htm. Invasive annual grasses are difficult to control. They seed readily and the seed can be viable for many years af-

ter being shed. As in any landscaped area, eradicating weeds completely is nearly impossible, however, it is possible to reduce the quantity of invasive grasses with careful and continued removal on a seasonal basis. Consistent removal combined with planting desirable and less flammable grasses will eventually help to crowd out the weeds and restore the area to a more fire-wise and desirable habitat.

Tips for removing weedy grasses:

- Hand pull (or cut with a weed eater / mower). Both Cheat grass and Medusa Head are easy grasses to pull by hand. The grasses should be removed from May to July prior to going to seed.
- Rake, bag and remove the weeds as they are being cut or pulled, to reduce the risk of spreading seed and to clear the soil for replanting.
- Mow or pull the weeds around desirable grasses, shrubs and forbs (broadleaf perennial plants) with care.

3) Controlling Broadleaf Weeds:

Broadleaf weeds typically found in and around Hidden Springs include: thistle, white top, rush skeleton weed, prickly lettuce, creeping spurge, tumble mustard, goat head (puncture vine), and others. For descriptions and photos of these weeds please go to <http://weedid.aces.uiuc.edu>. Most of these weeds are less of a concern for fire control but detract from the habitat and aesthetics of your Transition Area.

Tips for controlling Broadleaf weeds:

- Pulling broadleaf weeds can be very effective especially if done each year.
- Pull weeds in spring when soil is moist making removal easier.
- Some spurses are very toxic. Use caution or consult the Town Association staff.
- Inquire with the Town Association staff prior to using chemicals.

Restoring your Transition Area by seeding native plants will enhance its wildlife habitat value and its natural aesthetics.

For information on how to obtain seed, contact the HSTA office.

Planting Seeds

- Timing for planting seed - The seed recommended for Transition Area planting should be planted from November 1 thru Dec. 31. Natural seasonal precipitation will give the seed a chance to get started with little need for additional watering.

- Preparation of Seed Bed – Once the majority of weedy plants have been removed from the site, rake the soil lightly to make sure the seed will make contact with the soil surface. Heavy raking of the soil may result in causing unnecessary erosion, which is to be avoided as much as possible.

• Quantity of Seed to Use – Measure the square footage of the area to be seeded, select the seed types from the recommended seed list, then you can calculate how much seed you need. The seed types are listed in approximate volume per 100 sq. feet. (typically seed is sold by weight - pounds per acre, we have translated that to approximate volume for ease of measuring)

• Seeding - Once you have obtained the seed and are ready to proceed, you may want to divide your area into 100 sq. foot plots and measure the appropriate amount of seed needed for each plot to ensure even distribution. Mix the seed types together and blend with an equal amount of slightly moist sand. The moist sand helps give the seed more volume and keeps the seed from blowing away as you spread it. Scatter the seed/sand blend evenly over the area. Once the seed/sand is spread, rake the area again lightly.

• Mulching and/or Fertilizing – Chemical fertilizers are not recommended for this type of seeding but a composted organic mulch spread thinly over the seeded area could be helpful both for holding in moisture and adding nutrients to the soil.

• Supplemental Irrigation – When seeded in the fall, watering should not be necessary, however, if possible, some irrigation during the dry, hot periods in the spring and summer may help the plants establish more fully. At the most, water weekly during the hottest weather. After a growing season (1 year) the seeded plants should be established enough to grow without additional watering.

Recommended Seed for Restoration Planting:

Each of the following plants are valuable species for the Hidden Springs open space areas. By picking 2-3 of the following grass seed types, and 2-5 of the following types of wildflowers, you can create a mix that will add beauty, diversity and habitat value to your Transition Area. Typically seed is measured by weight, pounds per acre, we have translated this to an approximate volume for each seed type for ease of measuring. For assistance, contact the HSTA office.

Grasses

“Secar” Bluebunch Wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron spicatum</i>)	1 cup per 100sq.ft.
“Tegmar” Intermediate Wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron intermedium</i>)	1 cup per 100sq.ft.
Needle and Thread grass (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>)	1 cup per 100sq.ft.
“Sherman” Big Bluegrass (<i>Poa ampla</i>)	1 cup per 100sq.ft.
“Covar” Sheep Fescue (<i>Festuca ovina</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.

Wildflowers

Arrowleaf Balsamroot (<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
“Appar” Lewis Flax (<i>Linum perenne lewisii</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.
Common Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Louisiana Sage (<i>Artemesia ludoviciana</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.
“Delar” Small Burnett (<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.
Sulfur cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla recta</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Gland cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla glandulosa</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Wild strawberry (<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Carolina geranium (<i>Geranium carolinianum</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Showy phlox (<i>Phlox speciosa</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Penstemon (<i>Penstemon spp.</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.
Buckwheat (<i>Eriogonium umbellatum</i>)	1/4 cup per 100sq.ft.

Shrubs

Antelope Bitterbrush (<i>Purshia tridentata</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.
Wood’s Rose (<i>Rosa woodsii</i>)	1/2 cup per 100sq.ft.

Restoring your Transition Area by planting plugs of native plants will enhance its wildlife habitat value and its natural aesthetics.

For information on how to obtain plugs, contact the HSTA office.

Planting Plugs

Some native plants are difficult to grow from seed. For more control over quantity and placement of specific plants, planting plugs (small plant starts) may be more desirable than seeding.

- Timing for Planting Plugs - Depending on the plant, many plugs can be planted in the fall to take advantage of natural precipitation. Some plants however will do better if planted in early spring. Check with the plant supplier for that information.
- Siting and Preparing the soil for Plugs – Each plug should be spaced far enough apart to allow it to grow to its full size (approximately 10 plants per 100 sq. ft.). A 3 foot diameter area should be cleared thoroughly for each plug site.
- Planting Plugs – Dig a hole for each plug that is at least as deep as the root system is long. The crown of the plant (the base of the plant below the leaves and above the root system) should be at the same level as the surrounding soil. Press soil firmly around root system to base of plant. A slight dish made 6” to 1 foot around the plant can be helpful for collecting moisture. Note: many drought tolerant plants will rot at the crown if left moist for too long a period.
- Mulching and/or Fertilizing – Chemical fertilizers are not recommended for this type of planting but a small amount of composted organic mulch mixed into the soil prior to planting could be helpful both for holding in moisture and adding nutrients to the soil.
- How to Irrigate – A temporary drip irrigation line can be useful to water new plant starts for up to two years after planting. After one to two years the new plants recommended here should be established and not need supplemental watering. If plugs are planted over a several year period, maintaining a flexible temporary drip system to the area can be helpful. Spray irrigation is not allowed in the Transition Areas.
- When to Irrigate - The plugs will need supplemental watering through dry periods in the spring and into the summer. When plants start to wilt slightly, it is time to water. Once per week should suffice unless it is extremely hot and dry.

Recommended Plugs for Restoration Planting:

Each of the following plants are valuable species for the Hidden Springs open space areas. By picking 2-3 of the following grass types, and 2-5 of the following types of wildflowers, you can create a combination of plants that will add beauty, diversity and habitat value to your Transition Area. Substitutions of other genus and species are not recommended.

Grasses

“Secar” Bluebunch Wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron spicatum</i>)	3’ min. spacing
“Tegmar” Intermediate Wheatgrass (<i>Agropyron intermedium</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Needle and Thread grass (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>)	3’ min. spacing
“Sherman” Big Bluegrass (<i>Poa ampla</i>)	3’ min. spacing
“Covar” Sheep Fescue (<i>Festuca ovina</i>)	3’ min. spacing

Wildflowers

Arrowleaf Balsamroot (<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>)	3’ min. spacing
“Appar” Lewis Flax (<i>Linum perenne lewisii</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Common Yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Louisiana Sage (<i>Artemesia ludoviciana</i>)	3’ min. spacing
“Delar” Small Burnett (<i>Sanguisorba minor</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Sulfur cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla recta</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Gland cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla glandulosa</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Wild strawberry (<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Carolina geranium (<i>Geranium carolinianum</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Showy phlox (<i>Phlox speciosa</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Penstemon (<i>Penstemon spp.</i>)	3’ min. spacing
Buckwheat (<i>Eriogonium umbellatum</i>)	3’ min. spacing

Shrubs

Antelope Bitterbrush (<i>Purshia tridentata</i>)	6’ min. spacing
Wood’s Rose (<i>Rosa woodsii</i>)	6’ min. spacing



**References
&
Resources**

Additional Publications for Firewise Landscaping:

Landscaping with Native Plants of the Intermountain Region – Technical Reference 1730-3, BLM, INPS, BSU Horticulture

Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes – A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication – PNW 590 - OSU, WSU, Uof I

Living With Fire – A Guide for the Homeowner, Great Basin Fire Prevention

Forest Service Brochure No 6.305 of the Natural Resource Series, Phil Hoefer – accessed online at <http://www.co.pueblo.co.us/fire/plants.pdf>

Informative Websites for Fire Prevention:

Bureau of Land Management, Nevada:
<http://www.nv.blm.gov/wgbcc>

Bureau of Land Management, Idaho:
<http://www.id.blm.gov/iso/fire/index.htm>

Bureau of Land Management, Utah:
<http://www.blm.gov/utah/fire/utfire.html>

U.S. Forest Service Intermountain Region:
<http://fsweb.r4.fs.fed.us>

Firewise: <http://firewise.org>

Fire Safe Council: <http://www.firesafecouncil.org>

FEMA: <http://www.fema.gov>

National Interagency Fire Center: <http://www.nifc.gov>

Smokey Bear: <http://smokeybear.com>



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