

## For Immediate Release

For more information contact:

Matthew Nelson (719) 488-2693 x 4

Dave Root (719) 440-9371

### **TOWN HALL MEETING TO ADDRESS HOW TO PREVENT A MARSHALL FIRE EVENT IN N. EI PASO COUNTY**

As the Marshall fire burned entire communities, the phone at the Woodmoor Improvement Association started ringing. “Worried residents wanted to know if the same thing could happen here”, Woodmoor Forestry Director Matthew Nelson says. Even though Woodmoor has been working to reduce its wildfire hazard for over 20 years, the size and intensity of the Marshall frightened residents. “We began getting requests for a of Town Hall meeting to address the wildfire hazard, and as the idea took shape we realized a regional meeting would be better than just a one for Woodmoor residents”

So the town hall style event is set for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday Jan. 19 at Tri-Lakes United Methodist Church. Wildfire experts from the Colorado State Forest Service, The Northern El Paso Coalition of Community Organizations, Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Tri Lakes United Methodist Church Emergency Preparedness Group and El Paso County Office of Emergency Management will talk about the vulnerability of area communities and address how we might prevent a similar tragedy in El Paso County.

“I think that our homeowners understand that wildfire is a regional threat and that frightens them”, Nelson says. He talked with the Tri Lakes Fire Marshall and the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), and all agreed that a Town Hall should happen quickly before the teachable moment passed.

Are there homes and whole communities in El Paso County that appear invulnerable but are really at risk? The answer from area wildfire experts is yes. “I’ve been doing wildfire mitigation for more than 20 years”, says Dave Root CSFS Forester. “The hardest people to reach are those who live outside the trees. It doesn’t occur to them that they are vulnerable or to ask for help.”

Topics at the workshop include:

Wildfire hazards that aren’t obvious, and how communities are vulnerable.

How we can work together to make ourselves safer.

Firewise landscaping.

Shared Stewardship--cooperative efforts by private, State, County and Federal landowners.

Evacuation.

Neighborhood Ambassadors and organizing wildfire mitigation on a regional scale.