

THE 2021-22 YAVAPAI HILLS FIREWISE PROGRAM

How did we get here?

Yavapai Hills has had a wildfire risk reduction program (most of us call it “Firewise”) since 2010. From that year until 2020, we used HOA budget money, supplemented with several generous grants, to treat all 240 acres of the common property owned by the Yavapai Hills HOA (YHHOA). The help we got from the grants enabled us to afford that work. However, those grants can be used only once, and we were faced with the prospect of having to repeat and continue Firewise work with HOA funds. It was very likely that HOA dues would have had to increase significantly.

We learned of a Federal program controlled by the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), that looked like it could help us. We looked into the program and decided in February 2020 to apply for assistance. In June, we were informed that we had been accepted into the “Environmental Quality Incentives Program”, or EQIP, which would cover 212 of our 240 acres over 2021 and 2022. Not only will we receive more than \$380,000 in financial help, but the services of a professional forester from beginning to end.

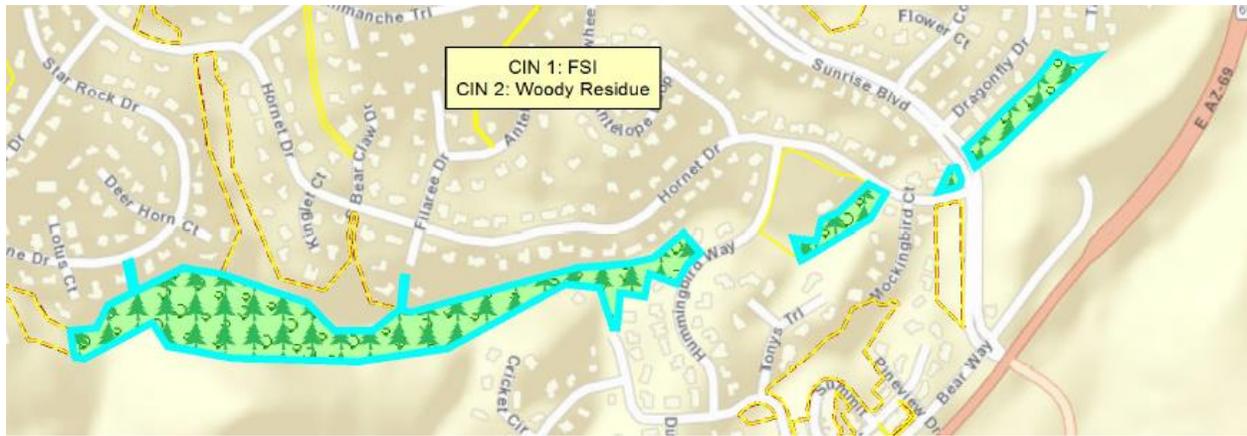
NRCS has divided our project into four separate areas, measuring 14.5, 73.7, 33.2, and 90.4 acres. The first area (or CIN) consists of 14.5 acres near the main entrance to Yavapai Hills, and will concentrate on forest health, where most of the physical work will involve trimming trees and large stands of shrubs, removing some of them where they are not healthy or might be non-native, and thinning those larger areas of shorter shrubs and chaparral to minimize wildfire risks. We also want to start to restore our landscape to the way it was before housing developments were placed here. That mostly means encouraging native plants to take back the land that has been invaded by foreign growth and weeds since pioneer days. All of this fits very well with our “Firewise” goals.

Because our program is so large, it has taken us several months to determine how we can manage our cash flow, and to find contractors to bid on the work. After a careful bid process, we found the contractor in January, and are scheduling the project with that firm.

When and where will work happen?

We expect our project to take 12 to 18 months to complete. Each CIN is described below, along with maps that include the names of some of the nearby streets. The boundaries of each CIN will be marked with red ribbons or flags tied to trees or larger shrubs.

CINs 1 and 2 (14.5 acres)



The first phase (CINs 1 and 2) is planned to occur in the second quarter of 2021, on the 14.5-acre area bounded generally by Sunrise, Hornet, Star Rock/Turnstone, and Shadow Mountain. The area is outlined in light blue in the map above.

The work will involve first trimming trees and large stands of shrubs, for esthetics, health, and wildfire risk reduction. We expect this will generate a lot of trimmings (slash) that will then be cut and/or chipped, and distributed on the ground to return nutrients to the soil and, where it would be helpful, to reduce erosion.

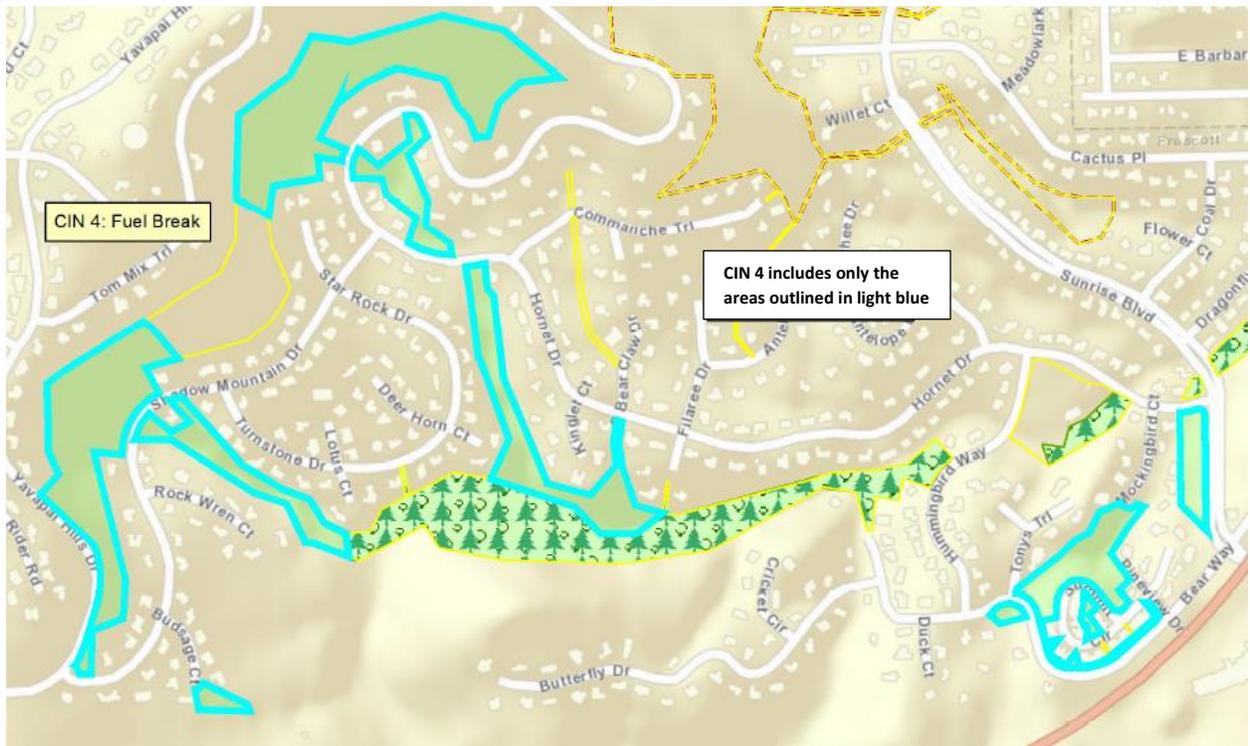
Before work starts, our forester will mark trees that will be retained, with red paint near the base of the tree. We expect some unhealthy trees to be cut completely; those will not be labeled.

CIN 3 (73.7 acres)



Work on this phase is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2021, on this large area surrounded by Sunrise, Hornet, and Rough Diamond. It includes all three trailheads of the Teapot Trail (the blue stars on the map above), and a lot of low chaparral that will be trimmed and separated to create new and improved fire breaks. Slash will be cut and/or chipped as needed, and distributed on the ground.

CIN 4 (33.2 acres)



Work on this phase is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of 2021, on this area surrounded by Yavapai Hills Drive, Shadow Mountain, Tom Mix, and Hornet. This hilly area contains low chaparral with scattered small trees that will be trimmed and separated to create new and improved fire breaks. Slash will be cut and/or chipped as needed, and distributed on the ground.

This CIN includes only the areas outlined in light blue in the map above.

CIN 5 (90.4 acres)



Work on this phase is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2022, on the many separated parcels shown on the map above. It includes the largest single piece of common area northwest of Yavapai Hills Drive that extends all the way to the west boundary of Yavapai Hills. The remainder is split into many small plots in the bowl on the north end.

This map does not show the extensions of Sunrise Blvd and Sharp Shooter Way in Unit 9 Phase 5A.

Slash will be cut and/or chipped as needed, and distributed on the ground.

How will you know what's going on?

Before we start work on each CIN, we intend to have a virtual meeting to inform residents nearest that CIN with details about the upcoming work. We also plan to send e-blasts when appropriate, so please make sure your profile and e-mail contact information is up to date on yavapaihillshoa.com.

Of course, this schedule is approximate and it can be affected by weather and the usual restrictions that happen every wildfire season. If we have another severe wildfire season as we did in 2020, our contractor might be called away during the summer and fall. If we experience no delays, all work is expected to be completed by mid-2022.