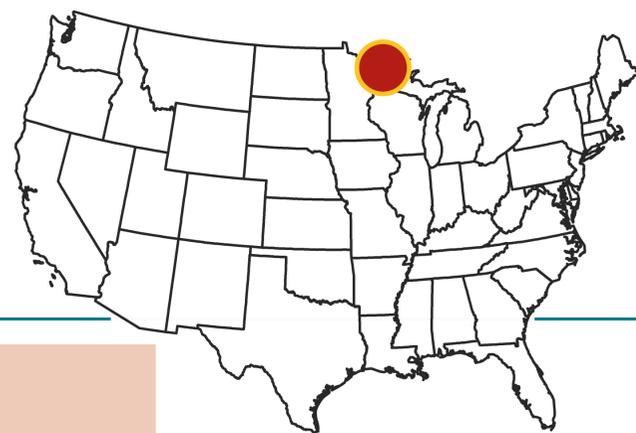


Dovetail Partners

Kathryn Fernholz
katie@dovetailinc.org
(612) 333-0430



Ely, Minnesota is a community within hiking distance of the Canadian border and about a 4-hour drive north of the Twin Cities. Ely also provides a gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, drawing residents and visitors from all over the world. With a population of about 3,400, Ely is in the middle of a complex landscape. Forests in this region have regrown from the heyday of railroad logging and Paul Bunyan more than 100 years ago.

Ely is on the frontlines of wildfire risk for many reasons. The area has beautiful forests, but the forests are thick with balsam fir which burns like paper when green and is almost as bad as a box of matches when it is dead and dry. The balsam fir and other understory growth in the forests around Ely can act as ladder fuel and increases the risk from fires, such as the May 2012 Highway 1 Fire.

In the summer of 2014, local Ely FAC partners came together to implement a chipper day fuels reduction project. This event has sparked the interest of more neighborhoods, residents and lake associations. Additional chipper days are being planned, and local leadership and capacity are developing.

Partners have discussed the possibility of developing an Ely Area Fire Safe Council. The goal of the Council would be to engage and encourage community partnerships to identify and establish a wildfire resilient landscape for Ely and the surrounding wildland-urban interface. The main objectives are to provide education and demonstrations of Firewise best practices, and continue to identify and implement fuels reduction projects using the county as a baseline.

We will continue to explore how to collaborate with the Ely Emergency Preparedness Committee to establish evacuation strategies for Ely residents. County Emergency managers are also part of identifying much-needed evacuation plans and routes in the surrounding wildland-urban interface.

For Ely, being fire adapted requires balancing recreation needs, resource utilization and public safety. That's not always an easy balance to strike, but we are making progress.



Key Partners

Eagles Nest Township
Ely Emergency Preparedness Committee
Firewise—Northeast Regional Specialist
Lake County
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Morse/Fall Lake Fire Department
USDA Forest Service
Vermilion Community College



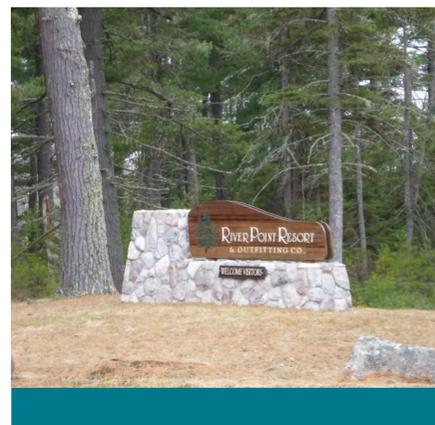
FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES
LEARNING NETWORK

<http://FACNetwork.org>

COMMUNITY
working in **Ely, Minnesota**

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL VISION

To engage and encourage community partnerships to establish a wildfire resilient landscape for Ely and the surrounding wildland-urban interface.



Work in Ely has **benefitted from the FAC Network** in so many ways – it has been like getting a **jump start!** Seeing what other groups have done has helped the work in Ely by providing everything from **helpful advice and examples** to actual templates for the flyers and postcards used to raise awareness of chipper day opportunities. FAC Network friends and **colleagues are an irreplaceable resource** for helping understand what has worked (or not worked!) in other places and making **informed decisions** about what we want to do here.

Above, left: A FAC and Firewise presentation held at the Morse/Fall Lake Fire Department was aimed at raising awareness about the need for homeowners in the Ely region to create defensible space. *Photo: Gloria Erickson*

Above, right: The owners of this lake resort have worked with the Firewise program in Lake County and the Forest Service to mitigate wildfire risk on their property. *Photo: Lake County*

Below: Ely's first annual Chipper Day was sponsored by local FAC partners in the summer of 2014. *Photo: Gloria Erickson*



The Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network is supported by Promoting Ecosystem Resilience and Fire Adapted Communities Together (PERFACT), a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, the USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Nick Goulette (nickg@hayfork.net).



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