Glade Ranch Mitigation Assessment
June 8, 2010

This assessment of the Glade Ranch in Dolores County was prepared by Craig Goodell (BLM/FS), Kent Grant (CSFS), and Pam Wilson (Firewise). Todd Gardiner (Dolores Public Lands) was along for part of the day. Our escorts for the day were homeowners Tom Jones and John Fontenot.

This 3,000-acre subdivision contains 81 lots in three development phases (all sold); 15 of which contain homes. The San Juan National Forest borders the subdivision to the west, north, and east and the new Lone Mesa State Park borders the subdivision to the south. Vegetation in the area is primarily Gambel oak with some ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir at higher elevations. Numerous shrubs like serviceberry, chokecherry, and hawthorn are found throughout the area. There are some meadows of open grass and sage.

We began the day looking at homes in Phase 3 of the subdivision and worked our way back through Phase 2 and then Phase 1. All properties with structures and unlocked gates were evaluated.

Summary of Findings
Most of the homes we looked at had propanel roofs and many had hardy plank siding. There was good clearing around many of the homes – at least on three sides. Due to the narrow, dusty roads and heavy vegetation along both sides of the roads, evacuation may be impossible in the event of a large, fast-moving wildfire so Glade Ranch residents should be prepared to “Shelter in Place.” This means they should continue to use fire-resistant building materials to the extent possible and make sure they have good defensible space around their homes – in most cases out at least 100 feet or more from the home. Sheltering in place is an alternative to evacuation that needs to be considered for areas where notification of occupants is time consuming and fire spread rates are high.

There were several items that were common to many of the homes that are fairly easily remedied and include:

1) Keep grass and brush cut back near home and especially adjacent to wooden steps and decks.
2) Make a 24-48” wide swath of rock or gravel or other non-flammable material next to base of house to keep weeds/grass at bay and provide a non-flammable surface that would stop a creeping fire and catch flying embers.
3) Clean up construction materials around homes, garages, and sheds.
4) Put metal wire mesh (<1/8” diameter) below decks and between stair risers to keep out flying embers. A decorative fascia or rocks may be put in front of the metal wire mesh if desired. This same mesh can be used to cover exterior attic, soffit, and underfloor vents.
5) Continue to work at breaking up continuous fuels, especially on the southwest and western sides of the homes (prevailing wind direction).

In addition to what individual homeowners should do, there are several items that the HOA Board should consider to improve safety for both residents and emergency responders. All homes should be marked with reflective address numbers. Check with Dolores County to see what their protocol is. Road names should also be marked with reflective signage. Emergency responders can’t help you if they can’t find you!

The Board should also check on what distance the road easement covers and consider removing brush and shrubs for at least 30 feet on either side of the road. This mitigation work would improve sight distance, lower fire intensity next to the road, and provide a wider fuel break that could slow an approaching fire. Thinning and removing vegetation along roadways would also assist in safer evacuation of residents and safer entry/exit of fire protection equipment and personnel.

There were several seasonal ponds throughout the subdivision that could potentially be used as water resources during an early-season wildfire. Installation of dry hydrants would further facilitate this use. These ponds should be noted on a map and shared with the Sheriff, emergency manager, fire departments, and land management agencies. Combinations and/or keys to locked gates should also be shared with the entities listed above.

There were several locations throughout the subdivision that were open and relatively flat that could be used as helispots during emergencies. The HOA should visit with emergency personnel to see what work, if any, needs to be done to improve these sites, and map them (share with Sheriff, emergency manager, fire department, and land management agencies).

And ultimately, the Board should start discussions on developing some pullouts along the road to improve safety for both residents and emergency responders in the event of an emergency evacuation and/or the need to bring in large fire apparatus. Other emergency ingress/egress routes should also be identified and measures taken to facilitate such use.

These suggested actions can be inserted into the Community Wildfire Protection Plan and prioritized by the homeowners for future actions. Other actions may also need to be included.
Individual Home Assessments

Lots #26 and 27, Tom Jones

**Home Construction:** Log with metal roof  
**Defensible Space:** Center island well mitigated. Some thinning done along driveway.

**Recommendations:** Mow in canyons below house to south, west, and north. Cut brush below driveway. Remove grass around deck and keep clear or add nonflammable material (rock). Lot #27 contains a possible location for a helispot.

Lots #69 and 70, Paul Majors

**Home Construction:** Hardy plank siding with metal roof  
**Defensible Space:** Good meadows to north and east

**Recommendations:** Need metal wire mesh (1/8”) around deck and steps. Might need metal wire mesh in soffits. Clean up construction materials around house and shed. Can keep clumps of oak, but should cut down brush underneath oak. Cut out dead oak behind house and shed.

Lot #66, John and Lisa Fontenot

**Home Construction:** Wood with metal roof  
**Defensible Space:** Good clearing around home around front and sides of home. Large meadow to east. Back side of house has good rock barrier along house foundation.

**Recommendations:** Should remove about 80% of brush behind house, leaving large clumps of healthy oak or other shrubs. This may need to be hand work but might be able to use a Skidsteer with fecon head. Keep grass in front of deck mowed. Put screen (1/8”) behind rock fascia under deck to keep flying embers out. Cut back oak along type of driveway.

Lot #75 – Doug and Leslie Beery

**Home Construction:** Steel siding, metal roof, rock foundation, wood fascia and soffits  
**Defensible Space:** Good clearing on front and sides of house.

---

*Figure 1. Back side of house. Thin brush in a mosaic pattern, removing dead oak.*
Recommendations: Remove wood (and wood chips) from under deck. Thin vegetation out front; clump trees. Thin oak on uphill slope behind house in a mosaic pattern. There is a small drainage to NW of house where machine could access hillside.

Lots of dead oak on back side of shed and also on south side of home that needs to be cut. Put metal wire mesh under shed and keep grass cut back or add rock around base.

Lot #39 – Hoyt


Recommendations: The steep, narrow driveway would be accessible only by brush trucks so it is imperative that homeowner maintain their defensible space. Because the siding is vinyl it will be very important to keep “heat” as far from the house as possible. Brush should be mowed back at least 100 feet on back side of house to toe of slope (can leave small clumps of oak). Add 1/8” metal wire mesh around deck. Gravel, rock or other non-flammable material should be placed around base of house (24-48” wide) to keep vegetation down. Keep grass and weeds cut back.

Lot #24 – Bollinger

Construction: Hardy plank with metal roof. Weathered decks both front entrance and back. Defensible Space: Needs work to west and north of home.
**Recommendations:** Replace decks with fire-resistant decking. Screen underneath decks. Clean up construction materials around shed. Thin vegetation between house and shed and consider removing juniper (highly flammable). Thin vegetation on west side of house away from the deck and 50-100 feet downhill.

Figure 5. *Oak brush needs to be cut away from deck and for 50-100 feet downhill.*

Figure 6. *Weathered decking provides many nooks and crannies for flying embers to land in.*

**Lot #23 – Jim Adams**

**Construction:** Hardy plank, metal roof. Fire-resistant decking. Rock fascia at base of house. **Defensible Space:** Needs work.

**Recommendations:** Think out vegetation in center island. Leave clumps but remove brush from below clumps and prune up lower limbs on trees. Need metal wire mesh below porches. Remove cheat grass and other flammable vegetation from below porches and stairs. Store firewood away from home or enclose it so flying embers could not land on it and ignite. Remove fire ring from under overhanging deck. Consider mowing vegetation in drainage to the north in a mosaic pattern. Drainage leads up to Tom Johnson’s house and would benefit both residences.

Figure 7. *Highly flammable cheatgrass would cause this porch and stairs to ignite quickly.*

Figure 8. *Vegetation in center island should be thinned.*
Lot #45 – Steele

**Construction:** Log with composite roof.
**Defensible Space:** Excellent. Mitigated within 100 feet of home on all sides.

**Recommendations:** Need clearing behind small detached shed.

![Figure 9. Thin oak and shrubs behind shed.](image)

Lot #10 – Glen Humusun

**Construction:** Log home with metal roof.
**Defensible Space:** Generally good on front and sides of home.

**Recommendations:** Place 1/8” screen under deck and steps. Keep grass cut near house and deck. Clean up leftover building materials in back. Nice grove of oak in back. Keep smaller brush beneath that oak pruned back. Consider cutting a couple oak closest to the house and also behind the oak stand to the west to create a “buffer” that would help protect that stand of oak and the house from an approaching wildfire. Consider gravel or other non-flammable material (24-48” wide) around base of house to keep vegetation down.

![Figure 10. Leftover building material should be cleaned up and screen should be inserted behinds stairs.](image)