



FEMA

Wildfire Suppression Project to Protect Mountain Community

Pima County, AZ - In total, approximately 85,000 acres burned in the Aspen Fire. Total damage amounts to public facilities, including electric lines, phone lines, streets and sewers, and water facilities were \$4.1 million. In addition, firefighting costs were about \$17 million and restoration work by the Burned Area Emergency Recovery (BAER) teams cost \$2.7 million.

More than half of the 600 homes in the Summerhaven area were destroyed by the fire. Electrical power to the area was out for six to eight weeks and residents were unable to return to their homes until July 17, a full month after the Aspen Fire evacuation. Those whose homes did not burn still had the monumental task of clean up, including discarding spoiled food from home refrigerators and freezers.

Within the perimeters of these fires in Summerhaven there is an area of unburned trees and homes which were spared by fire-fighting efforts, deviation of the winds driving the flames, or just by luck. One still-green hillside is the target of a Hazard Mitigation Grant Project.

Following the fire, many changes have come to Summerhaven, both for public works and for private property. Summerhaven has connected a new six-inch water line, 2,000 feet long, to the 283,000 gallon Loma Linda water tank on the mountainside high above town, allowing fire hydrants on the line at every street intersection to provide protection to homes and trees in an area that was spared from the Aspen and Bullock Fires.

The community has improved building codes so that new homes in Summerhaven are being built with fire safety in mind, with fire-resistant building and landscaping materials and with landscaping techniques called, "defensible space."

Besides the fire suppression work, the Summerhaven community has also prepared for erosion and flooding which typically occur following wildfires. It is expected that most of the structural erosion control treatments will remain functional until natural recovery occurs.

As a result of their work on the restoration of the community, the Mount Lemmon Domestic Water Improvement District was selected as a 2006 Common Ground Award finalist by the Metropolitan Pima Alliance, an organization that advocates responsible development in the Tucson area through education, public policy formation and member networking.



Pima County, Arizona



Quick Facts

- Year: **2003**
- Sector: **Public**
- Cost: **\$109,688.00 (Estimated)**
- Primary Activity/Project: **Retrofitting, Structural**
- Primary Funding: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**