

# Fire Safety in WL

Madison County Emergency Management and Fire Marshal

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## WLRMS covenants regarding outdoor fires:

6. 10. A. Fires. Fires are a great hazard to all Owners in Wolf Laurel, which if not properly controlled can have catastrophic results. Outdoor fires shall be controlled and are the responsibility of the Owner of the Lot where the fire is located. Permission must be obtained from the appropriate governmental authority, fire authorities and the Association or its designee prior to igniting any outdoor fire, other than a fire contained within an approved fireplace, fire pit, or similar structure. No outdoor fire may be left unattended. Obtaining burning permits is the responsibility of the Owner.

6. 10. B Fireworks. Due to the danger of a forest fire, the possession, ignition, or displays of fireworks are not permitted in Wolf Laurel Resort unless under the supervision of a licensed operator and approved by the applicable fire control authorities and upon the written application to and approval by the board.

## Firepit Guidelines:

1. Call the WL security gate (828-689-2111) to inquire about fire restrictions
2. Never build a fire in dry or windy conditions
3. Do not use flammable fluids (gasoline, lighter fluid, etc.) to light or relight a fire
4. Keep the area free of flammable objects and debris
5. **Never leave a fire unattended - a Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance & Security requirement**
6. **Maintain a fire suppression method, e.g., fire extinguisher or hose attached to water source**
7. **Make sure embers are wet and cold before abandoning**

# Wildfire Mitigation Cost-share Program

We recently received notification of important changes to the wildfire mitigation cost-share program available to Wolf Laurel homeowners:

The non-profit organization, Mountain Valleys RC&D, will now offer 50% reimbursement to Wolf Laurel primary residents in both Madison and Yancey County who hire a contractor or rent equipment to reduce their home's risk of ignition by wildfire. Qualifying projects must be within 100 feet of the home or 10 feet from the driveway. Reimbursements are capped at \$2000.

The Cost-Share Process:

1. Wildfire Risk Home Assessment (free) \*
2. Application
3. Reimbursement agreement
4. Proof of payment to contractor
5. Reimbursement

Visit [www.mountainvalleysrcd.org/mitigationcostshare](http://www.mountainvalleysrcd.org/mitigationcostshare) for more information.

\*The Wildfire Risk Home Assessment is available to all Wolf Laurel owners and is highly recommended. To schedule a home assessment:

- Madison Co. - contact Jen Haas of Mountain Valleys [jen.haas@mountainvalleysrcd.org](mailto:jen.haas@mountainvalleysrcd.org) (828) 206-6159 <https://www.mountainvalleysrcd.org>
- Yancey Co. - contact Jonathan Hartsell of Blue Ridge RC&D [hartselljonathan@gmail.com](mailto:hartselljonathan@gmail.com) (828) 284-9818 <http://www.blueridgercd.com>

Please note: Most projects covered by the cost-share program will not require removal of mature trees beyond the 30-ft home perimeter. Always contact the WLRMS business office to speak with the ARB Administrator, Jered Silver, as you plan your project for assistance in determining if a permit is needed.

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### Wolf Laurel RMS Mission Statement

*The Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance and Security Homeowner's Association is responsible for safeguarding and improving the roads, security, safety, infrastructure, neighborhood architectural standards, natural resources and quality of life of its property owners. WLRMS Officers, Board and Committee Members, and Staff, accept this responsibility, and pledge to continue to discharge their duties for the Wolf Laurel community with a robust and renewed commitment to integrity, fiscal responsibility and transparency.*

Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance & Security Homeowners Association Inc.  
63 Village Lane, Mars Hill, NC 28754 (828) 680-9162  
[WolfLaurelRoadsandSecurity.com](http://WolfLaurelRoadsandSecurity.com)

## Exactly What Is a Fire Pit?

Many residents have inquired about exactly what qualifies as “an approved fireplace, fire pit, or similar structure” referenced in the Wolf Laurel Covenants. Section 6.10A of the Covenants requires owners to obtain proper permission prior to burning outdoors *other than* in an approved fireplace, fire pit or similar structures. Outdoor fire structures vary in our community from simple portable fireplaces purchased at a big box store, to elaborate stone fireplaces with pizza ovens as part of an outdoor living area. Following January’s presentation by the NCFS Madison County Ranger on wildfire concerns specific to our community, the Wolf Laurel ARB devoted attention to developing uniform criteria and specifications for all outdoor fire structures in Wolf Laurel. The ARB presented its research and recommendations for discussion at the February public work session. After additional discussion and revisions, the ARB presented revisions to the ARB Guidelines for board approval on February 18, 2022, and the WLRMS Board of Directors approved the amendment.

Below is a summary of the highlights of the specifications for approval of all fire places, fire pits and other similar structures (both permanent structures and temporary or portable units) by the Wolf Laurel ARB. The criteria are grounded in safety concerns, and borrow heavily from recommendations of the Forest Service and other fire safety organizations. In addition, the criteria set tangible criteria to fairly evaluate all owners’ structures in a consistent, uniform manner. For the complete text of the standards or your specific questions, please contact the Wolf Laurel ARB.

- 👉 Owners are responsible their guests and invitees and will take appropriate action to stop unsafe use.
- 👉 For pre-fabricated structures, Owners must follow manufacturer’s instructions and conditions.
- 👉 A metal ashcan with a tight fitting lid is required for ash disposal and must be located on the ground away from combustible materials.
- 👉 Owners may not leave any fire unattended and must have proper safety tools in the immediate area.
- 👉 The fuel area must not be larger than 40 inches in diameter.
- 👉 Covers are required to prevent flying embers or accumulation of leaves when not in use.
- 👉 A proper distance must be maintained from structures, propane tanks, vegetation, over hanging limbs, and combustible materials. (see standards for specific clearance distance).
- 👉 Only approved fuels are to be burned, not leaves, building materials or other prohibited materials (see standards for list of prohibited materials).
- 👉 New construction of permanent fire structures, even a DIY project, requires ARB approval (see standards for a description of the process).
- 👉 Existing structures should apply for ARB inspection and may be approved as grandfathered structures provided that the ARB finds sufficient safety measures are present in its reasonable discretion.



# Fire Pit Safety



Keep fire pits at least 10 feet away from any structure or combustible surface.



Clear the area of leaves, grass and other debris that may catch on fire.



Use crumpled paper or a store-bought fire starter covered with small sticks for burning. (Never start a fire with gasoline or lighter fluid.)



Avoid using pine or cedar as they can pop and throw sparks.



Keep water nearby or be sure to have quick, easy access to a hose in case the fire gets out of hand.



Do not light fires on windy days or nights and do obey any local burn bans.



Keep children away from fire pits and never leave them unattended even after the flames are out as there is still a chance of a child getting burned.



Never allow hotdog or marshmallow roasting without adult supervision and be sure there is plenty of space between roasters.