



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
February 1, 2012

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Citizens Gather to Learn How to Prepare for Wildfires

A standing room only crowd gathered Monday night to hear from a panel of speakers discussing the drought, wildfire preparedness, and burning regulations. The Wildfire Preparedness Seminar was sponsored by the Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA), Texas AgriLife Extension Service, Kerr County, and Headwaters GCD. The approximately 170 attendees included firemen, ranchers, elected officials, government and local organization representatives, business owners, and many citizens concerned about the threat of wildfires and what can be done to prepare for them.

Ray Buck, UGRA General Manager, started the meeting by welcoming all of the participants and explaining the genesis of the seminar: "Late last year, UGRA directors met with our state legislators who shared issues that they deemed critical for our future. One of their concerns was the continuing drought and the lack of adequate preparation by the general populous to deal with wildfires. UGRA was specifically asked to coordinate with local Kerr County agencies to bring a wildfire educational forum to the area." Roy Walston, Kerr County Texas AgriLife Extension Agent, was the moderator for the evening and introduced meteorologist Cary Burgess, Headwaters GCD President Gordon Morgan, and UGRA staff Tara Bushnoe who described the current extent of the drought, forecast predictions, and the impact of the drought on groundwater and surface water levels. Next, the audience welcomed State Representative Harvey Hilderbran who shared legislative priorities and plans to provide for future water needs.

With the stage set to emphasize the continued threat of wildfires in Texas, Patrick Allen of the Texas Forest Service presented "Ready, Set, Go!" a wildfire action plan which includes a checklist and instructions on how to make your family and property wildfire-ready. Next, Ray Garcia, director of the Kerr County Environmental Health Department, shared information on state and local burning regulations and the evening concluded with a question and answer session with all the seminar presenters.

"This seminar is a testament to the great partnerships that exist in our community to work together for the benefit of our citizens. The audience included a very diverse group of individuals united by their concern for the safety of their families and livelihoods in the event of a wildfire," said Claudell Kercheville, UGRA Outreach and Education Committee Chair. Copies of the presentation and supplementary information are posted on the UGRA website at <http://www.ugra.org/infofaq.html>.



Rep. Harvey Hilderbran addresses the standing room only crowd during the Wildfire Preparedness Seminar on January 30, 2012.

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority is the respected, efficient, responsive, and forthright steward of the Upper Guadalupe River and its tributaries.

Let's Keep *Our* River Clean