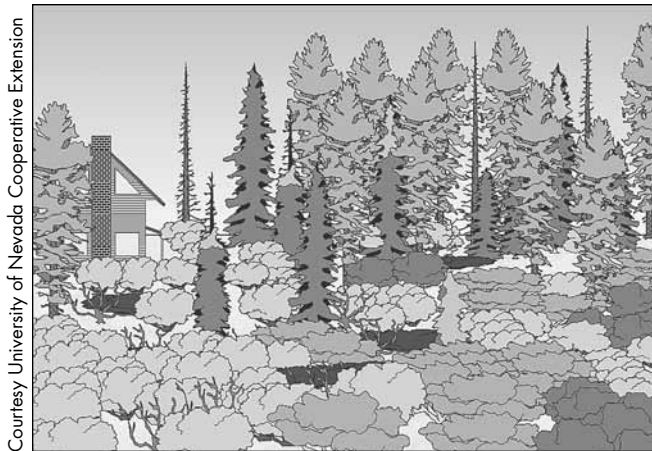


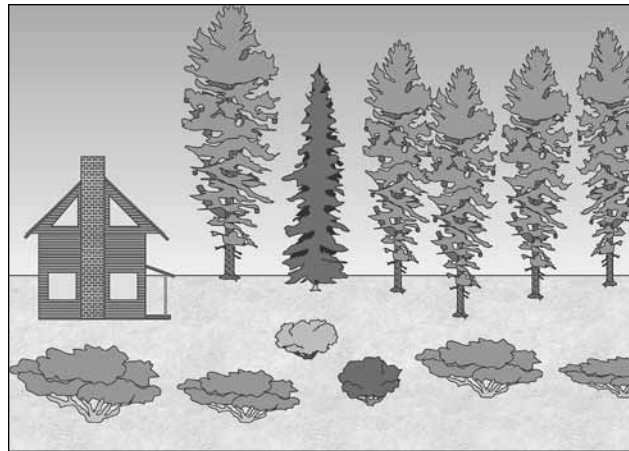
CHAPTER 12 / Defensible Space

Defensible space is the area around a structure that has been landscaped to reduce fire danger. This space reduces the risk that fire will spread to the structure and also provides firefighters a relatively safe area in which to work while protecting the structure.

Look at the images, and then answer the following questions.



a.



b.

- (1) Compare the two pictures above. Describe some “before” and “after” aspects of the illustrations.
- (2) Which house would be easier to save during a forest fire?
- (3) List some of the actions that individual homeowners can do to create defensible space around their home.

Critical Thinking

At a news conference in July 2007, Governor Brian Schweitzer urged homeowners to create defensible space around their homes. The following information was shared: “Almost a million acres burned in Montana in 2006 with the State incurring a cost of \$60 million. Half of the fires were in *wildland urban interface areas* [where the city and wilderness meet] and those fires cost 50% more to fight due to structure protection. And as this year’s fire danger has rapidly increased—three weeks ahead of normal schedule—homeowners now play a vital role.” (from <http://governor.mt.gov/news/pr.asp?ID=468>)

What do you think are some of the private and public responsibilities for helping fight wildland fires? Should homeowners living in the wildland urban interface be required to create defensible space around their homes? Why or why not?