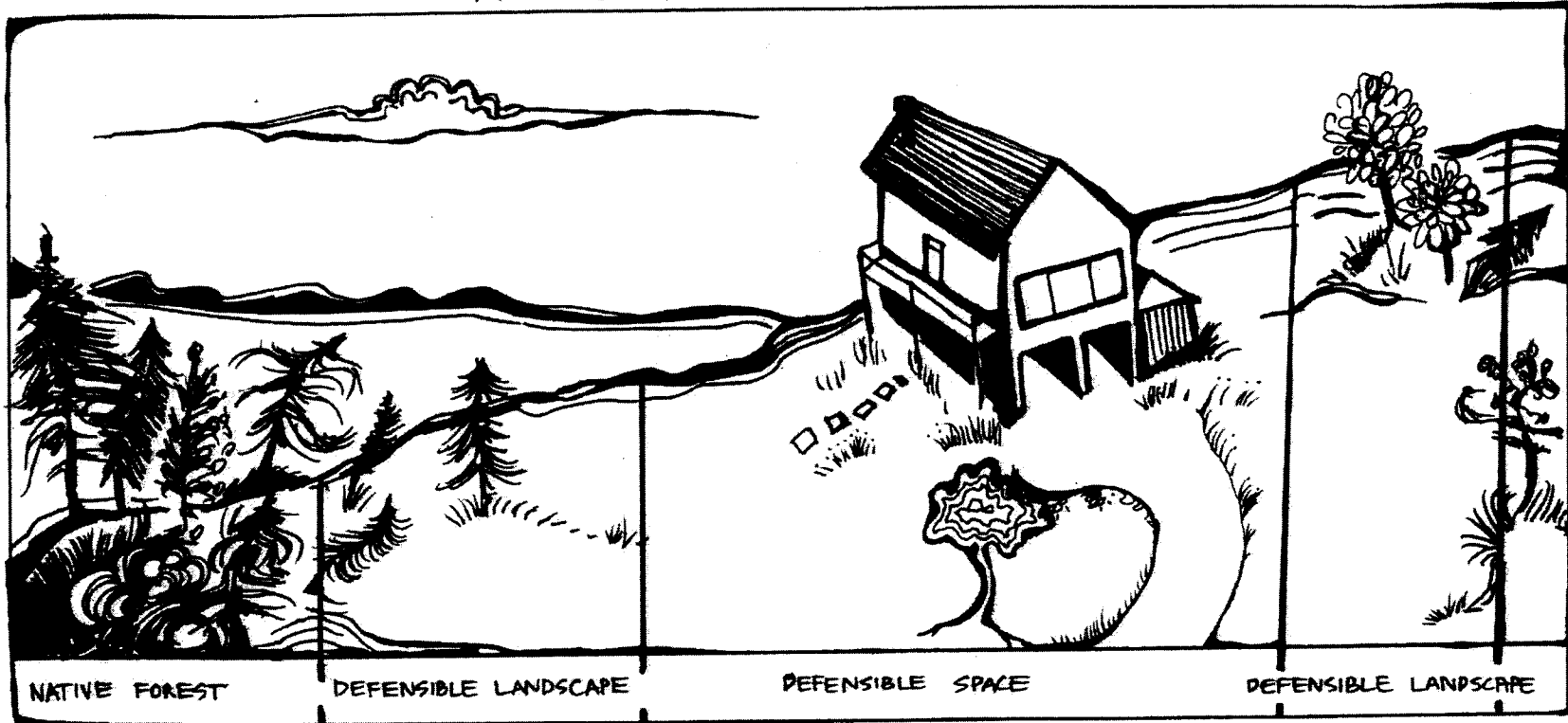


A FIREWISE LANDSCAPE



DRAWING BY MALIA MULDER

Key to keeping firesafe is creating defensible space

By **Kate Kirsh**
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Defensible Space is the area within a minimum of 30 feet from a house. The distance should be greater if the house is on or near a slope since fires move rapidly upslope.

Typically, the defensible space is the most

intensively managed and utilized area of the yard. It is really an extension of the indoor living space. Most trees and native understory plants are removed or significantly reduced. Replace turf, ornamental plantings with low fuel potential, hardscape, etc. Design of this area addresses the fuel management objectives as

well as property owners' desired uses, aesthetics, budget, site conditions, availability of water, and maintenance resources.

Defensible Landscape refers to the area beyond the defensible space that is managed for fuel load reduction and other compatible values such as wildlife and human uses.

Undergrowth is

reduced, trees are thinned, dead branches and windfall removed, ladder fuels removed. Understory may be replaced with species having low fuel load potential and cultivation requirements compatible with those of the remaining native trees. This area provides habitat opportunities, buffers sound and views from

adjacent roads or neighbors' homes, and can be an extension of the family's outdoor living space. Maintenance is typically less frequent than in the defensible space, but may be more labor intensive when it is required.

Native Forest is the area that is beyond the homeowners' maintenance ability, resources

and/or ownership. Because it is denser and has a more developed understory, it offers habitat values that are different from those provided by the more open character of the forest in the defensible landscape. The native forest buffers creeks to prevent sedimentation and erosion and is perhaps managed for timber or other uses.