



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

How to utilize the California Required 3-Year Action Plan

Template designed for PC and may have minor formatting issues on Mac

Thank you for doing your part in protecting your community against wildfire. When possible, please seek guidance from your local fire official or your Firewise USA Regional Coordinator when completing this document, this inclusion can provide you and your community with peace of mind that experienced recommendations are focusing your community's time and efforts. Goals for this plan **must** include the "Recommendations" located on page 9 for the Firewise USA Risk Assessment document.

Also, as part of the annual renewal process communities must host one outreach event per year and work with neighbors on addressing items within the action plan as required by Firewise USA.

Please note that defensible space is required at all times for all buildings or structures within California's State Responsibility Area under Public Resource Code 4291 and for Local Governments with designated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones under Government Code 51182. Consult your local fire authority for local defensible space requirements if your community is outside of the land classifications above.

1. Double click in the page 2 header area and enter the name of your Firewise Community and enter the 3-year span this action plan will apply to.
2. Community description. Enter a brief description of your community. An example has been provided for you, but please replace with your own community description.
3. In the Year banner, enter the year that will apply to the Year 1 efforts. Repeat this step for years 2 and 3, entering the consecutive years.
4. Utilizing the numbered points, enter the tasks that have been identified by your community. You can add additional numbered tasks you have identified for your community; however, the Program Topics must be utilized.
5. To add additional goals under each category, simply use the last, pre-identified numbered point, to add as necessary.
6. The document will auto format and expand as information is entered.
7. Once the document is completed it can be submitted through the Firewise Portal.

Helpful links for creating a three-year action plan.

NFPA Firewise USA, Time and Expense Investment Examples ([Here](#))

CAL FIRE Defensible Space ([Here](#))

Ready for Wildfire ([Here](#))

California Department of Insurance, Safer from Wildfire Information ([Here](#))

Mount Bache and Surrounding Roads: Community Wildfire Action Plan 2025-2027



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Please enter a brief description of your community and delete the example below (150-250 Word)

The Mt Bache and Surrounding Roads Firewise Community is in unincorporated Los Gatos, in the Mt Bache/ Highland Road/Loma Prieta Way area of the Santa Cruz Mountains. This Firewise community consists of approximately 67 homes and properties (including vineyards) that range from roughly 2000 to 3000 feet in elevation in Santa Cruz County. Mt Bache Road, Highland Way, and Loma Prieta Way are county-maintained roads, in fair to poor condition due to years of hard winters and uneven pavement. The offshoot private roads are in better condition with respect to paving. The community boundaries are within 3 miles of the CALFIRE Burrell Fire Station. All homes are on private water systems, typically with 5 – 10K (or more) gallons of water storage. Several homes have private fire hydrants accessible from the street. Several homes have pools as auxiliary water sources for emergencies. Many residents are highly aware of wildfire risk and have done significant home hardening and defensible space around their own property.

Year 1 – 2025

Education and Outreach Goals

1. Share link to our Firewise Community Assessment and Three-Year Action plan. Reach out to any new neighbors in the past year.
2. Distribute Prepared-Not-Scared Fliers and Evacuation Information door hangers
3. Share links to FireSafe Marin for practical home-hardening guidance and educational videos
4. Share Home Mitigations IBHS document, used by many insurance providers to inform coverage decisions
5. Encourage neighbors to sign up to Watch Duty and Pulse Point
6. Inform neighbors of the Santa Cruz County’s Chipping Program and recruit a point person to coordinate applications for our community.
7. Investigate conducting a Firewise Informational Presentation at Fire Department’s Barbecue in June

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Home Hardening Goals

1. Recommend neighbors take CalFire's home self-assessment, as a starting point for those who are unfamiliar with home hardening concepts: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening>
2. Encourage neighbors to request free Home Ignition Zone Assessments from FireSafe Santa Cruz at: <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/HIZ>
3. Send seasonal (spring and fall or following a wind event) reminders about cleaning roof and gutters and leaf blowing or clearing under and around home, decks, propane tanks, and water tanks
4. Encourage neighbors to replace combustible patio furniture or remove from decks and patios when away from home during fire season or during an evacuation
5. Encourage neighbors to implement simple home-hardening practices from CalFire's Low-Cost Retrofit List in **Additional Resources** section of <https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening>

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals

1. Share information with property owners regarding roadside and driveway vegetation management, e.g. cutting down low-lying shrubs and limbing up trees 6-8ft within 10ft of either side of roads and driveways to increase visibility and safety during wildfire.
2. Send reminder to weed whack and clear shrub growth and ladder fuels after spring rains have stopped. Include link to Santa Cruz County's Invasive Plant Removal Calendar: http://rcdsantacruz.org/images/brochures/pdf/InvasivePlantRemovalCalendar_022309.pdf
3. Investigate shaded fuel break along County Line to the north
4. Assess need for larger scale fuel reduction post-winter season

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Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness and Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness

1. Encourage neighbors to purchase reflective address signs at each driveway
2. Encourage neighbors to clear area around water tanks and propane tanks. Water tanks and fire hydrants can be marked with reflective blue dots and tape to increase visibility to first responders. Fire hydrants should be painted red for easy identification.
3. Remind neighbors to request a test of their fire hydrants annually, preferably during the rainy season, when firefighters have more availability.
4. Request CALFIRE rep to review evacuation routes and emergency vehicle turn-arounds. Once confirmed by fire personnel, evacuation route signage can be installed at intersections. Request contributions from property owners for 3-4 signs. Start creating a GIS map indicating buildings, water sources (including pools), evacuation routes, and emergency vehicle turn-arounds.
5. Share evacuation route information with neighbors. Encourage neighbors to drive evacuation routes during good weather.
6. Recruit Pod Leaders (one each for Haven Hill, Mt Bache, Mar Vista/Highland, Rancho Prieta, Loma Prieta) to facilitate communication during an emergency or evacuation
7. Encourage neighbors to have go-bags

Year 2 - 2026

Education and Outreach Goals

1. Onboard new neighbors
2. Host Firewise Community gathering with an educational video. Share notes and links afterwards. Invite CALFIRE representative to give a presentation to attendees regarding highest fire risk situations around private homes.
3. Request informational booth at Firefighters Barbecue in June. Invite home-hardening vendors to advertise at this or other dedicated booth.

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Home Hardening Goals

1. Send seasonal (spring and fall or following a wind event) reminders about cleaning roof and gutters and leaf blowing or clearing under and around home, decks, propane tanks, and water tanks
2. Encourage neighbors who have not already done so to sign up for a free Fire Safe Santa Cruz County HIZ assessment.
3. Encourage neighbors to implement simple home-hardening practices from CalFire's LowCost Retrofits List in **Additional Resources** section of <https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening>
4. Hold an online or in-person event to educate neighbors on ember behavior and the effectiveness of these low-cost retrofits. Encourage neighbors to share what they've done to their homes.

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals

1. Send reminder to weed whack and clear shrub growth and ladder fuels after spring rains have stopped. Include link to Santa Cruz County's Invasive Plant Removal Calendar: http://rcdsantacruz.org/images/brochures/pdf/InvasivePlantRemovalCalendar_022309.pdf
2. Scope work to make defensible space along county roads. Request assistance from Santa Cruz County Roads Department to maintain roadside clearance/overhanging branches along public roads.
3. Coordinate an informational neighborhood barbecue to discuss roadside defensible space maintenance and assess need for larger scale fuel reduction post-winter season.

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Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness and Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness

1. Clearly display addresses on private roads at the county road turn-off in reflective signage
2. Remind property owners to check signage and water/fire hydrant markings for clear, intact markings. Water sources can be marked with blue dots. Fire hydrants should be painted red.
3. Remind neighbors to request a test of their fire hydrants annually, preferably during the rainy season, when firefighters have more availability.
4. Ask property owners with properties adjacent to county roads whether they can maintain or would allow a neighborhood Firewise team to maintain defensible space 10ft from road for evacuation/emergency vehicle access. Recommend utilizing Santa Cruz County Chipping program for debris removal.
5. Host work party to clear roadside vegetation and limb trees 6-8ft up, 10ft out from roads
6. Install signs indicating emergency vehicle turnarounds
7. Update/review GIS map to include buildings, water sources (including pools), evacuation routes, and emergency vehicle turnarounds and share with fire department
8. Host Pod Leader meeting to update contact lists and solicit suggestions for continuing property owner involvement with preparedness efforts and information flow.

Year 3 - 2027

Education and Outreach Goals

1. Onboard new neighbors
2. Hold an end-of-the-year neighborhood road walk event to see progress and identify priorities for the following year.
3. Encourage Firewise participants and Pod Leaders to help with neighborhood-level and individual outreach to assess new interest and/or extending our area.
4. Send out a neighborhood survey to gain insights for the next three year plan.
5. Watch for community events from local organizations (Marin County Fire Stomp, Boulder Creek Fire Prevention Week, etc) and inform Firewise neighbors of such events for attendance.

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Home Hardening Goals

1. Send seasonal (spring and fall or following a wind event) reminders about cleaning roof and gutters and leaf blowing or clearing under and around home, decks, propane tanks, and water tanks
2. Get remaining neighbors to sign up for a free Fire Safe Santa Cruz County HIZ assessment.
3. Educate neighbors on better building material selections and construction practices (vents, soffits, siding, roofing, decks).
4. Hold a home hardening workshop/workday:
 - presentation by an HIZ assessor
 - group assessment and recommendations
 - implementation

Defensible Space / Fuel Reduction Goals

1. Send reminder to weed whack and clear shrub growth and ladder fuels after spring rains have stopped. Include link to Santa Cruz County's Invasive Plant Removal Calendar: http://rcdsantacruz.org/images/brochures/pdf/InvasivePlantRemovalCalendar_022309.pdf
2. Assess need for larger scale fuel reduction post-winter season
3. Aim to get commitment from 5-8 properties to participate in Santa Cruz County Fall Chipping Program. If a point person is not already identified, recruit leader to coordinate chipping participation.
4. Send neighbors links to Firewise USA and other local fire prevention organizations using web reminders for improving defensible space

Evacuation Planning (Ex. Preparedness and Routing) and Wildfire Preparedness

1. Host work party to clear roadside vegetation and limb trees 6-8ft up, 10ft out from roads
2. Assess if more turnarounds or water access points are needed
3. Install signage to highlight evacuation routes
4. Remind neighbors to request a test of their fire hydrants annually, preferably during the rainy season, when firefighters have more availability.
5. Update/review GIS map to include buildings, water sources (including pools), evacuation routes, and emergency vehicle turnarounds and share with fire department
6. Host Pod Leader meeting to update contact lists and solicit suggestions for continuing property owner involvement with preparedness efforts and information flow.