



Why Go Firewise? For Steering Committees

 Birdo Photo.



Lynn Sestak, Firewise Coordinator
lynn.sestak@firesafesantacruzcounty.org

Some material Courtesy of
Santa Clara County
FireSafe Council



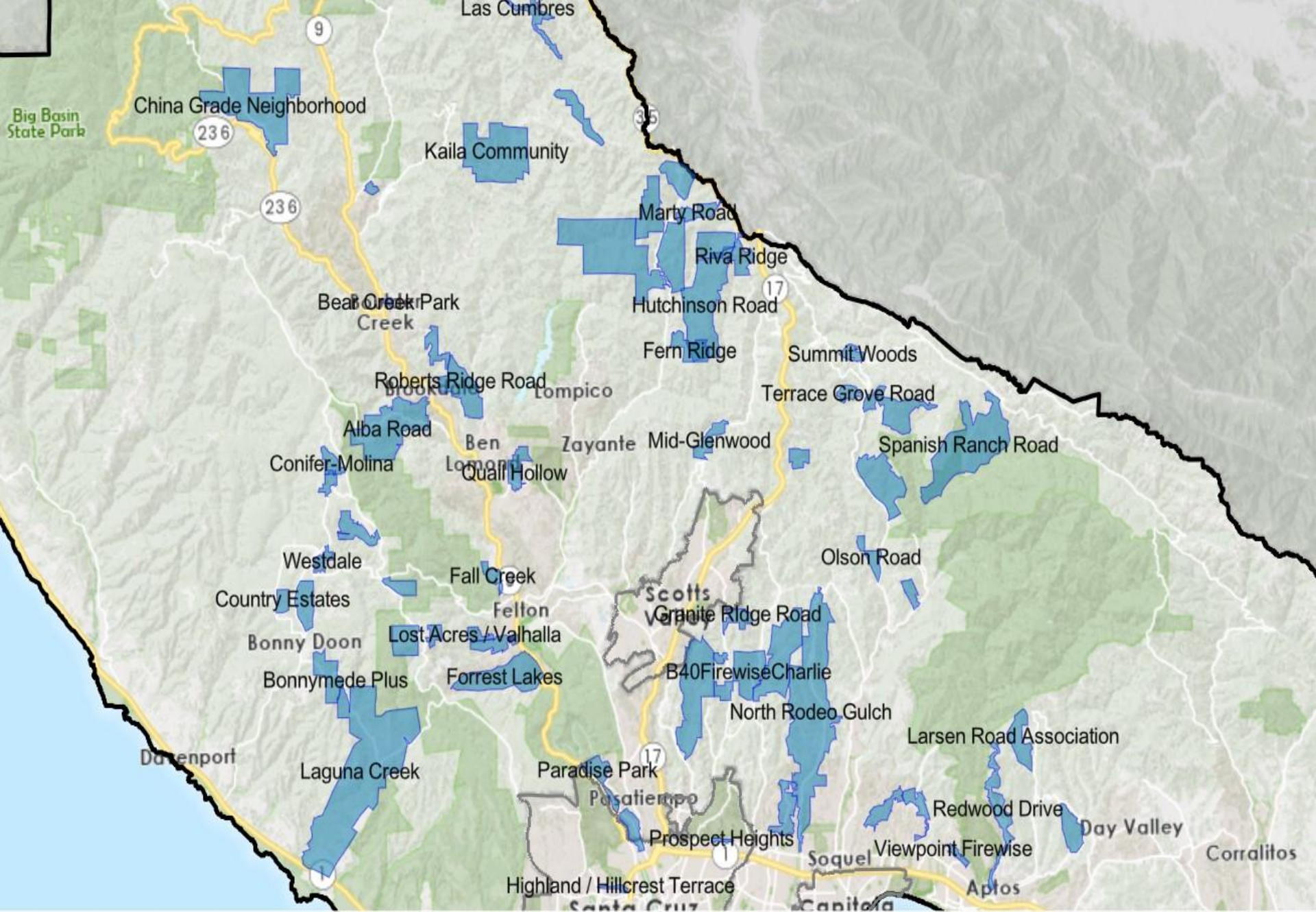


FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

- National Program with 2500+ sites
- 850 Sites in CA
- Goal: keep homes, lives & neighborhoods safer from wildfire



Santa Cruz county Firewise communities: [See https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/firewise-usa-recognition-program](https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/firewise-usa-recognition-program)



Everyone Doing Their Part



Investments for 2022:

- 43 communities, 3871 homes
- \$6.1 Million personal money
- 78,538 volunteer hours

Investments in 2023:

- 55 communities, 4532 homes
- \$11.2 Million personal money
- 112,466 volunteer hours





FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

- Framework with 6 step process for communities
- Neighbors collaborate
- 8 homes minimum
- Voluntary participation
- Decrease wildfire risk for residents and first responders
- Next step beyond individual home hardening is community collaboration





Neighbors
Working
Shoulder-
to-
Shoulder




Benefits – Why Participate?

- Community-building collaboration
- Neighborhood focus:
 - *Vegetation management, evacuation readiness, emergency communication*
- Builds goodwill with local fire professionals
- Access to professional help (FireSafe Councils, OR3, Resource Conservation District)
- Potential grant funds
- Potential home insurance discounts (USAA, State Farm, others)
 - *Link to discounts on last slide*



Sunset Ridge work party

Email Forum: Connecting Firewise Community Leaders

 Your Groups **1** Find or Create a Group  Help  Lynn Sestak

Home **Owner**

Subscription

Admin **1**

Pending **1**

Members

Invite

Integrations

Settings

Promote

Subgroups

Activity

+ Upgrade

Messages

Hashtags

//groups.io

SouthBay-Firewise-Partners@groups.io / Topics

Search

Topics # Hashtags Filter

Date 1 - 20 of 448

PG&E contact for undergrounding lines?

Hi Firewise people! I'm guessing it's a pipe dream, but a bunch of my neighbors want to write PG&E to propose our neighborhood as a pilot for undergrounding the power lines. T...

By Laurel Brandt · 10:04am

Fw: [ccpba] Pile burn workshop Jan. 28th **4**

FYI, The Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, with the Resource Conservation District, is hosting a pile burn workshop. Great skills to learn! See details below. ----- Forwa...

By Lynn Sestak · Jan 11

Emergency Neighborhood Prep - "Map Your Neighborhood"

Hi all, If our roads in and out of the Santa Cruz Mountains close down during the storms, we will need to rely on each other to get through these storms as safely as possible. . "...

By LizAnne Jensen · Jan 3

FYI: Major NorCal storm Wed; potentially high impact storm/flood pattern to continue for 10+ days

Many thanks to LizAnne Jensen for introducing me to Danial Swain's Weather West blog. For those of you who have not seen his latest post today, its worth reading and is includ...

By Lynn Sestak · Jan 2

Final thoughts --> [SouthBay-Firewise-Partners] 2022: Firewise USA recognized community statistics **2**

Hello, Many thanks to everyone who offered me kind words for the volunteer work I do. I really appreciate your thoughts. The key point in my original message though, was to pr...

By Lynn Sestak · 12/31/22

2022: Firewise USA recognized community statistics for Santa Cruz County **14**

Hello, I'm proud to share our latest year-end statistics for Firewise communities in Santa Cruz County. The growth in the number of Firewise communities is impressive, as is the ...

By Lynn Sestak · 12/30/22

FYI: Santa Clara County - CWPP Update Newsletter

6 Steps to Achieving Firewise USA Recognition

1. Form a board/ steering committee comprised of neighborhood residents and other wildfire stakeholders, to organize and drive the process
2. Complete a wildfire risk assessment. Ideally including input from the Fire Department with your jurisdiction, if resources are available.
3. Host a minimum of one wildfire risk reduction educational event, or related activity per year.
Example: Wildfire Evacuation workshop

Steps to Achieving Firewise USA Recognition

4. Develop a Three-year action plan based on the site's risk assessment and priorities
5. Meet the minimum wildfire risk reduction investment- 1 hour (or ~\$27.20) per residence per year. Ex: home defensible space, road work parties for brush clearing
6. Create a Firewise USA® Portal account and submit an application to your state Firewise USA liaison

More details: <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/firewise-usa-recognition-program>

Community Risk Assessment

- This is a key document in the Firewise USA process
 - It's a 14 page PDF form. Always download the latest version from the NFPA web site here: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Get-started/FirewiseCommAssess.ashx>
 - Your Steering Committee will provide roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the data
 - The Fire professional (or substitute) who performs your community Risk Assessment walk through will provide data for pages 8 and 9.
 - Observations from the Risk Assessment feed into your Multi Year Plan.
 - NFPA tutorial: <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Publications-and-media/Blogs-Landing-Page/Fire-Break/Blog-Posts/2021/01/25/New-online-tutorial-helps-you-deliver-a-community-wildfire-risk-assessment>
- Data collection for the first portion of the form
 - You will need to poll neighbors to help answer the risk assessment questions concerning combustible roofs, double pane windows, etc
 - Collected data is then aggregated to come up with the %'s reported in the Risk Assessment
 - Method for polling each household: Some committees use Survey Monkey, others use Google Forms, simple email or printed hard copy.
 - Your Survey is a good place to ask each household for their wildfire related priorities, contact information, willingness to volunteer, etc

Three Year Plan

- The Three-Year Plan is based on community priorities and Fire professional input from your Community Risk Assessment
- Please use the latest CAL FIRE PDF template here: https://www.fire.ca.gov/media/zu4j3emt/california_3_year_action_plan.pdf or WORD doc template: <https://www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/firewise-communities/>
- Example plan data:
 - **Year 1 (2024)**
 - Education and Outreach
 - Host an education event on Evacuation preparedness
 - Distribute printed home hardening flyers to neighbors
 - Home-Hardening
 - Encourage neighbors to replace exterior foundation vents with 1/8" venting
 - Encourage gutter maintenance and use of gutter guards
 - Fuel Reduction
 - Encourage replacing/removing wood mulch within first five feet of home
 - Organize neighborhood work parties for roadside vegetation management
 - Evacuation Planning and Wildfire Preparedness
 - Set up emergency communications agreement

Education Event Ideas for 2024

- **Intention:** community education, done either in person as a group or virtually. Examples:
 - Wildfire Evacuation Workshop zoom presentation
 - Request from FSCSCC here: info@firesafesantacruzcounty.org
 - Home Hardening Workshop recording (from FireSafe Santa Cruz)
 - <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/workshops>
 - FireSafe Marin Webinars: <https://firesafemarin.org/programs/living-with-fire>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/FIRESafeMARIN>
 - NFPA WildFire Preparedness Elearning:
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Online-learning-opportunities/Online-courses>
 - NFPA Fact Sheets
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Firewise-USA-Resources/Research-Fact-Sheet-Series>
 - Tune into local/state/NFPA wildfire prevention webinar online
- Other examples:
 - Field trip to walk your evacuation route
 - Practice using home fire extinguishers
 - MURS Radio drills

Collect Investment Data

- Identify Steering committee member for data collection
- Poll neighbors to collect a rough estimate of
 - Hours spent
 - Dollars spent
 - On wildfire risk reduction activities for the year
- See 5 categories from NFPA application and template
- Ex: road work parties, brush removal, home hardening, paid tree service
- Sum totals are used in your Firewise USA application

[illegible]

Potential Neighborhood activities (for investment hours)

- Chipping, Brush clearing & Chain saw days
- Fire hydrants – clear surroundings, **blue reflective dots** in street, wrap in blue tape
- Road and driveway clearance for fire engines (14 x 14)
- Mark turn around locations for emergency vehicles
- Create GIS map (houses and water sources)
- Emergency Communication plan
- Evacuation drills



More Ideas

- Create a neighborhood contact list spreadsheet and email distribution list; use Groups.io
- Create an emergency communications agreement. Ex: WhatsApp, Signal or Discord emergency group.
- Identify neighbors with special skills (medical, fire professional, tractor/chipper owners, etc)
- Consider subdividing neighborhood into smaller units (the “PODS” concept created by Chemeketa Park), where larger communities divide into sections of 10-12 co-located homes for the purposes of contact list, neighborhood coverage, prioritizing work projects



Recognize and Celebrate



Communities in Action

Sunset Ridge: neighborhood work parties with chippers, mower and good lunches



Steering Committee Checklist

1. Complete a Community Risk Assessment (PDF Form)
 1. Poll and collect neighborhood data including wildfire risk reduction investments
 2. Provide a map illustrating boundaries of your community
 3. Schedule a community walk-through with a fire professional to supply observations/recommendations for pages 8 and 9
2. Prepare a Multi-Year Plan, using observations from the Community Risk Assessment and your neighborhood priorities. The following areas need to be addressed in your plan for each of the next 3 years:
 1. Education Event
 2. Home Hardening
 3. Fuel Reduction
 4. Emergency Evacuation
3. Complete one community education event related to wildfire risk reduction
4. Meet the wildfire risk reduction investment criteria (minimum 1 hour or \$27.20 per household for the year)
 1. Poll neighbors for hours and \$ invested in the last year (individually or community work parties)
 2. Encourage bragging rights: go well beyond the "low bar" required minimum
 3. Summarize data into categories requested by the NFPA online application (see sample template)
5. Create a Firewise USA portal account
 1. Upload your Community Risk Assessment document and Multi Year Plan
 2. Document your Educational Event(s)
 3. Add your Wildfire risk reduction investment date
 4. Add two Regional Coordinators
 1. Lynn Sestak *Lynn.sestak@yahoo.com*
 2. Shane Vargas *Shane.Vargas@fire.ca.gov*
 5. Ask one of your Firewise coaches for a review
 6. Submit your application

See <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/becoming-a-firewise-usa-community>

NFPA and Firewise Local Resources

- NFPA: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>
- Many local FireSafe Council websites contain Firewise information and resources
 - Fire Safe Council of Santa Cruz County
 - <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/> - education resources
 - Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
 - <https://sccfiresafe.org/learn/what-is-firewise-usa/>
 - FireSafe Marin: <https://firesafemarin.org/firewise>
 - FireSafe Monterey:
<https://www.firesafemonterey.org/>

CA Insurance companies offering discounts:

<http://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/105-type/95-guides/03-res/Insurers-Currently-Offering-Discounts.cfm>

Steering committee: What's next?

- Set your next committee meeting
- Define your community boundaries
- Select a community name
- Select roles & responsibilities
 - Neighborhood Outreach & communication
 - Record keeping
 - Manage NFPA portal account
 - Event planning