

Firewise Leaders Names:	Assessment Date
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Firewise community name	Community size
Mt Bache Plus Firewise Community	67 Homes, empty parcels+ Vineyards, covering many acres

Summary (for your Community Risk Assessment page 8):

1. The Mt Bache Plus Firewise Community is in unincorporated Los Gatos, in the Mt Bache/Highland Road area of the Santa Cruz Mountains. This Firewise community consists of homes and properties (including vineyards) that range from roughly 2000 to 3000 feet in elevation.
2. Near the top portion of this community are several large open meadows which could serve as both fire breaks and potential temporary refuge areas in an emergency.
3. Mt Bache Road and Highland 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.
4. This community is located approximately 5 miles from the CALFIRE Burrell Fire Station.
5. Some of the private roads have 5-10 feet vegetation cut back on either side of the road. Other roads could use better roadside vegetation management for wildfire safety and visibility.
6. 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.
7. At least two alternate evacuation routes are available in this community for emergency use.
8. Several fire breaks have been created and maintained on private properties to help slow wildfire.
9. Many residents are highly aware of wildfire risk and have done significant home hardening and defensible space around their own property.

Recommendations Summary (for your Community Risk Assessment page 9):

1. Roadside vegetation management: where possible, consider cutting down low laying shrubs and limbing up trees 6-8ft within 10 feet of either side of roads, to increase safety during wildfire. Emergency vehicles typically require 15 feet up and 15 feet wide for safe access along roads and driveways.
2. Consider thinning/removing trees around densely wooded road sections to increase line-of-sight around corners.
3. Non-reflective residential address number signage should be upgraded to be highly visible, reflective, mounted at headlight height, and visible from both directions of traffic. This will assist first responders in finding homes quickly in an emergency.
4. Non-reflective private road signs should be replaced with reflective high-visibility versions to assist first responders.
5. Private fire hydrants should be made more visible for emergency use (painted red, use of blue reflective pavement markers).
6. Other water sources such as pools could be advertised in a GIS map provided to CALFIRE, along with community hydrant locations.
7. For emergency evacuation: consider mapping and sharing the existing alternate evacuation routes to inform all residents of their availability for emergencies.
8. Residential propane tanks should be kept clear of flammable materials 10' feet on all sides and above.
9. Residents with poly 5K water tanks should clear flammable materials within 5-10' on all sides and above where practical, to reduce risk of water tank failure in intense heat during wildfire.

Key Recommendations Detail

The following section is NOT meant for inclusion in the Firewise Community Risk Assessment document. Instead, these details are meant for steering committee members to consider for inclusion in future planning and community education. Some actions might be included in the Firewise Three Year Plan document.

Note: Many of the recommendations below are made with this scenario in mind: When it is dark and smoky, how will first responders (who may be from out of town) safely and quickly navigate your roads, find your homes and water sources?

Signage

1. Most homes would benefit from reflective **address number signs**. CALFIRE's current recommendation is green background with reflective white numbers 4" high. Other color schemes are acceptable as long as the colors are contrasting. The sign should be visible for emergency vehicles approaching **from either direction**. Address number signs should be placed waist high or higher, so drivers in tall emergency vehicles can see those signs. Sample places for ordering signs:
 - a. <https://www.safetysign.com/products/8348/horizontal-911-address-sign>
 - b. from Zayante Fire here: <https://zayantefire.com/reflective-sign-program/>
2. Some of your private **road signs** are not very visible. Specifically, Haven Hill and Rancho Prieta. The Mar Vista sign is on the cusp. Consider keeping vegetation trimmed around signs and upgrading to reflective signs.
3. Water sources are of great interest to Firefighters. Consider advertising water sources with signs where practical. For example, a sign could state "Water: 20K gal pool + 10K gal in tanks".
4. Emergency vehicle turnaround locations are also of great interest. For long driveways where it is not obvious from the street, a sign could be added stating "Emergency vehicle turnaround available" or something like that. Separately I will forward an example of a unique sign created by a resident in the Marty Road Firewise community.
5. Some sources for custom signs
 - a. <https://www.buildasign.com/>
 - b. <https://www.roadtrafficsigns.com/>
 - c. <https://www.safetysign.com/products/8348/horizontal-911-address-sign>
 - d. <https://www.wildfiresign.com/sales-page-34529484>

Roadside clearance and tree maintenance

1. Hats off to the proactive residents who have already invested many hours and/or dollars in roadside vegetation management to help ensure the road is passable, which benefits community members on those private roads. Remember to record those volunteer hours or costs for fuel reduction for your Firewise application.
2. For county roads, the county may not be responsive for roadside vegetation clearing. Encouraging property owners with road-front acreage to do some preventative trimming at roadside would be helpful.
3. In general, reducing "ladder fuels" within 5-10 feet on either side of the road helps reduce the risk of ground fire spreading to crowns of trees. This means cutting down low laying shrubs and limbing up trees where feasible. Clearing the first 5-10 feet on either side of the road also increases visibility and reduces risk of roadside wildfire preventing evacuation

Marking Water sources, Trees in the Roadway and Ditches

1. Adding blue reflective "dots" to the pavement adjacent to fire hydrants will help fire professionals know there is water nearby. An example from Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Reflectors-Sidewalks-Pedestrian-Crossings-Industrial/dp/B08D8FH7R4/ref=sr_1_4_sspa?crid=3RV6LP8TX62SS&keywords=blue+reflectors+for+driveway&qid=1660323476&srefix=blue+reflect%2Caps%2C171&sr=8-4-spons&psc=1
2. To draw more attention to the location of a hydrant or water source, add a blue reflective "lollipop" close by. This is also a good option if there is no pavement near your hydrant. Another Amazon example (they are also sold at the local Rural Ace store) https://www.amazon.com/dp/B09M8LWFVW/ref=redir_mobile_desktop?encoding=UTF8&aaxitk=73ea885dd4c5e7e99a060e9657f11c20&content-id=amzn1.sym.53aae2ac-0129-49a5-9c09-6530a9e11786%3Aamzn1.sym.53aae2ac-0129-49a5-9c09-6530a9e11786&hsa_cr_id=6024411770401&pd_rd_plhdr=t&pd_rd_r=93675718-05c9-4cb4-a948-39f4212948ab&pd_rd_w=OZYBq&pd_rd_wg=noqdj&qid=1660323535&ref=sbx_be_s_sparkle_mcd_asin_2_title&sr=1-3-a094db1c-5033-42c6-82a2-587d01f975e8
3. Adding a row of blue reflective tape to fire hydrants (near the top) may also help first responders see that hydrant at night. Example: https://www.amazon.com/3M-Micro-Prismatic-Sheeting-Reflective/dp/B075V3B6BB/ref=sr_1_4?crid=1DQP2TNIVKYGP&keywords=blue+reflective+tape&qid=1657216907&srefix=blue+reflec%2Caps%2C205&sr=8-4
4. Private hydrants should be painted safety red. This was recently confirmed by Alex Lehman, head of LPVFD. Example regulations from County Fire Chiefs: https://bdfd.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/fpo_017_fire_hydrant_markings.pdf.
5. To prevent vehicles from accidentally running into deep drainage areas along the road consider adding **red** reflective "lollipop" markers in those areas. It looks like this has already been done on some areas, but more might be helpful.

Evacuation Readiness

1. Consider advocating some Evacuation Readiness education to your community members, for preparing Go Bags and signing up for emergency alerts from CruzAware. Spanish Ranch Road Firewise did an excellent presentation for their community on this topic last year that you may be able to leverage.
 - a. FireSafe Marin has some excellent information on Evacuation Preparedness here: <https://firesafemarin.org/prepare-yourself/evacuation-guide/>
 - b. The FireSafe Council of Santa Cruz County offers a zoom Wildfire Evacuation Preparedness workshop.
 - c. CALFIRE's Ready, Set, Go documentation is also useful: <https://readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/>
2. Your alternate evacuation routes are a blessing to have. Consider ways to educate your community members regarding these locations and any protocols for gate openings, vehicle limitations and more.
3. If you have elderly or mobility-challenged residents, consider a buddy system to use during evacuations.

Miscellaneous

1. Poll neighbors to see how many large animals (horses, cows) might need to be evacuated during an emergency. If those neighbors are not aware of Equine Evacuation emergency services, it would be good to raise awareness.
2. The area around 5k gallon poly water tanks should be cleared 5+ feet in all directions, where feasible. During the CZU Lightning Complex fire, several tanks melted when overhanging tree limbs or wood piles stacked close by ignited, causing 5K gallons of water to release quickly.
3. Adding mirrors near blind corners along private roads can be quite helpful for seeing oncoming traffic around corners. If applicable, consider adding a few in strategic locations.
4. Residents interested in home hardening information can take CALFIRE's home self-assessment as a place to start: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/home-hardening>
5. The FireSafe Council of Santa Cruz County offers free Home Ignition Zone assessments also: <https://www.firesafesantacruz.org/HIZ>

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