



# Why Go Firewise? Overview



Birdo Photo.



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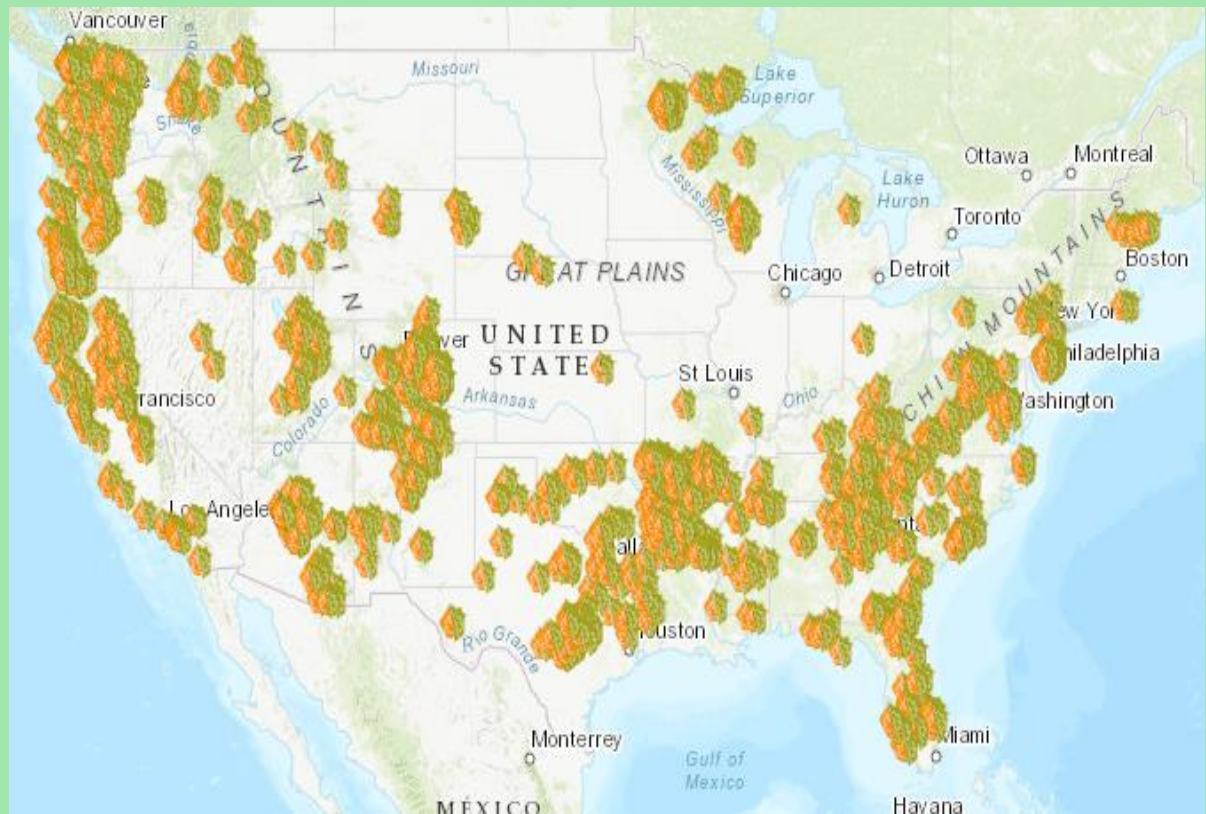
Some material Courtesy of  
Santa Clara County  
FireSafe Council





**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*



# 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>

# Potential Neighborhood activities (for investment hours)

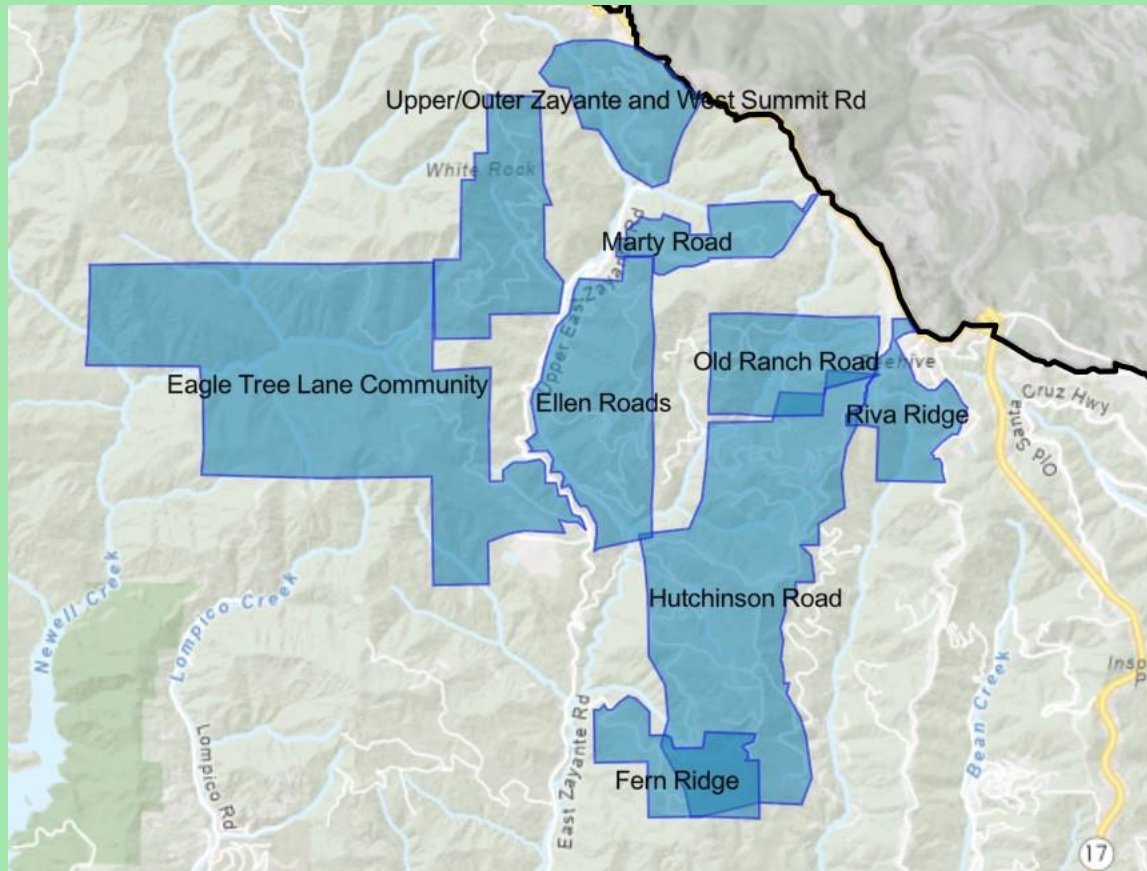
- Chipping, Brush clearing & Chain saw days
- Fire hydrants – clear surroundings, blue reflective dots in street, wrap in blue tape
- Road and driveway clearance for fire engines (14 x 14)
- Mark turn around locations for emergency vehicles
- Create GIS map (houses and water sources)
- Emergency Communication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





# Communities in Action

Riva Ridge has helped encourage neighboring communities to become Firewise USA Recognized, increasing safety for that entire area.



# Communities in Action

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





# Recognize and Celebrate



# What's next?

- Assess community interest in pursuing Firewise USA recognition
- Identify a steering committee for your community (typically 3-5 people)
- Define your community boundaries (map) and select a community name
- Ask for a follow up presentation with more details for your steering committee to get started
  - Contact [info@firesafesantacruzcounty.org](mailto:info@firesafesantacruzcounty.org) or [lynn.sestak@firesafesantacruzcounty.org](mailto:lynn.sestak@firesafesantacruzcounty.org)



# Firewise Local Resources

- 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>