

Lets Go Firewise Overview



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

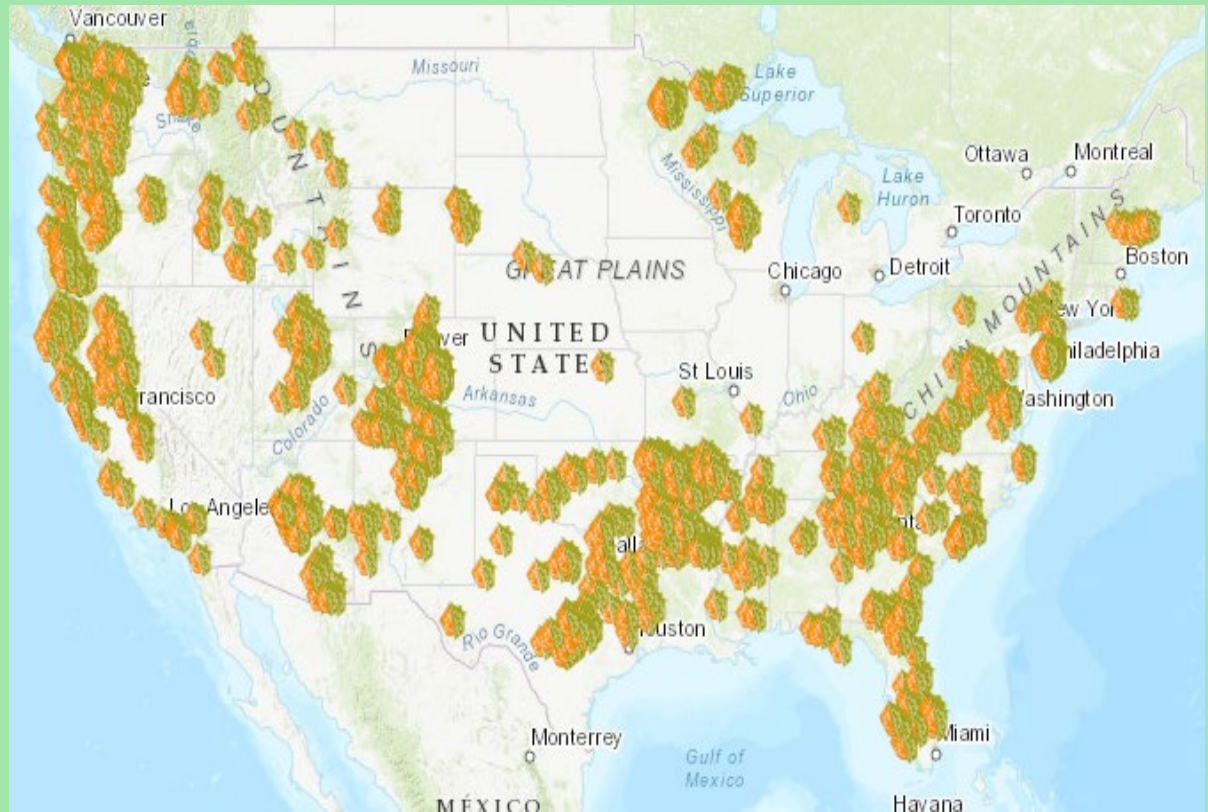
Some material Courtesy of
Santa Clara County
FireSafe Council



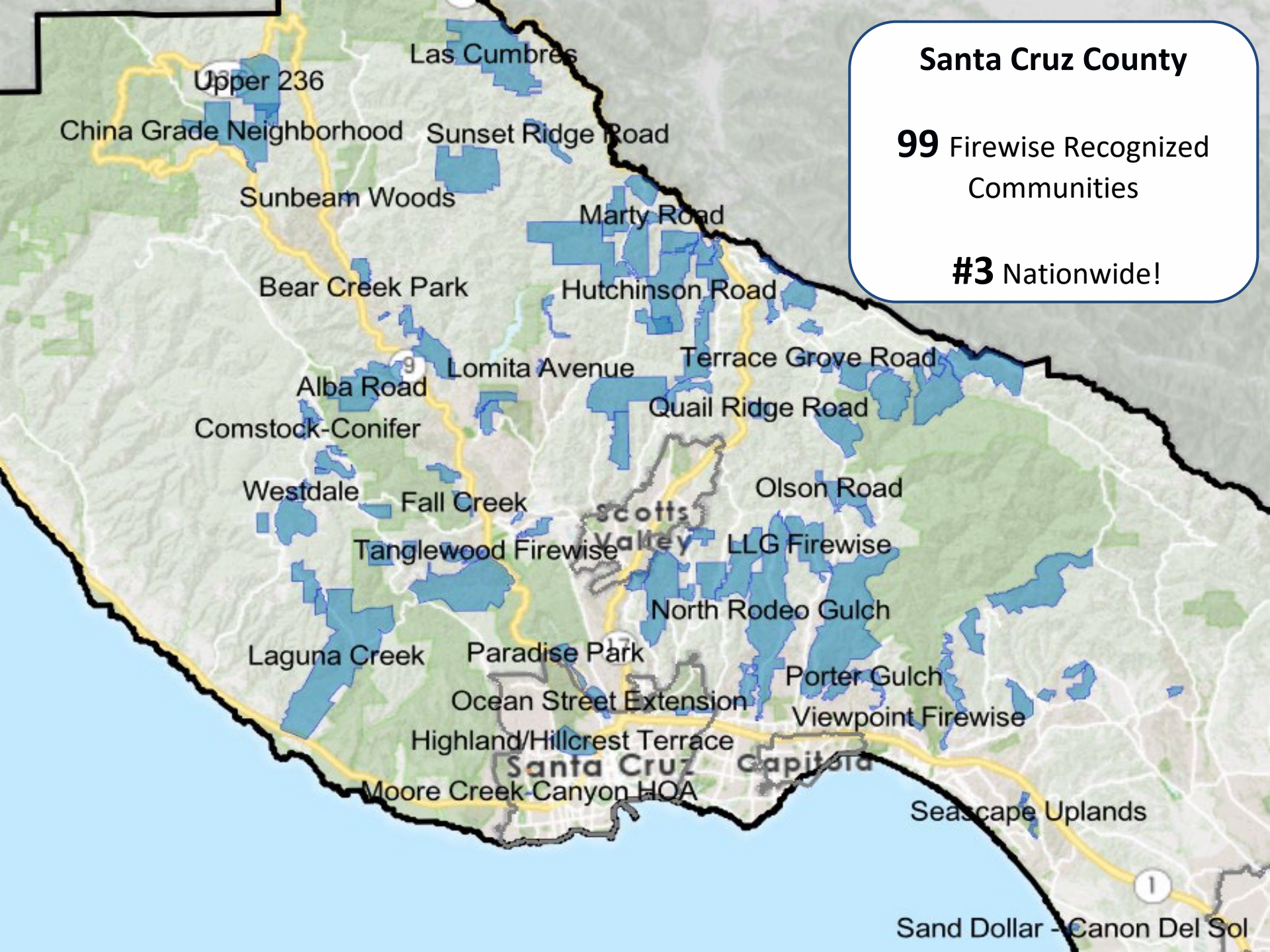


FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

- National Program with 2900+ sites
- ~1260 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)



Santa Cruz County

99 Firewise Recognized Communities

#3 Nationwide!

Upper 236
China Grade Neighborhood
Sunbeam Woods
Bear Creek Park
Alba Road
Comstock-Conifer
Westdale
Fall Creek
Tanglewood Firewise
Laguna Creek
Paradise Park
Ocean Street Extension
Highland/Hillcrest Terrace
Moore Creek-Canyon HOA
Las Cumbres
Sunset Ridge Road
Marty Road
Hutchinson Road
Terrace Grove Road
Quail Ridge Road
Olson Road
LLG Firewise
North Rodeo Gulch
Porter Gulch
Viewpoint Firewise
Seascape Uplands
Sand Dollar - Canon Del Sol

The Power of Firewise Collaboration



Investments in 2024:

- 81 communities, 6549 homes
- \$18.4 Million personal money
- 183K volunteer hours

Sends a powerful message to
Our Board of Supervisors, Fire Chiefs
and County





FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

- **Framework** with 6 step process for communities
- Neighbors collaborate
- **8 homes minimum**
- Voluntary participation
- **Education:** home hardening, defensible space
- **Decreases risk** for residents, first responders
- Together we are stronger
- Not “One and Done”; recognition earned yearly via **annual renewal**





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 **home insurance** discounts (USAA, State Farm, FAIR Plan, others)



6 Steps to Achieving Firewise USA Recognition

- 1. Form a steering committee** comprised of neighborhood residents, to organize and drive the process
- 2. Complete a wildfire risk assessment.** Including input from the Fire Department within your jurisdiction, if resources are available.
- 3. Host/attend** a minimum of one wildfire risk reduction **educational event**, or related activity per year. Example: Home Hardening 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 ~\$33.49) per residence per year. Ex: home defensible space, road work parties for brush clearing
6. **Create a Firewise USA® Portal online account**, add your data and submit your application

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

Potential Neighborhood activities (for investment hours)

- **Brush clearing**, chipping & chain saw days
- **Fire hydrants** – clear surroundings, **blue reflective dots** in street, wrap in blue tape
- **Road and driveway clearance** for fire engines (15 x 15)
- **Mark turn around locations** for emergency vehicles
- Create **GIS map** (houses and water sources)
- **Emergency** Communication plan
- Evacuation drills



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 or 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*
 - South Skyline FireSafe Council
 - <https://www.SouthskylineFiresafe.org>
 - FireSafe Marin: <https://firesafemarin.org/firewise>
 - FireSafe Monterey:
<https://www.firesafemonterey.org/>