



**FIREWISE USA®**

**RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS**

*Jeroen Wright*

Director of Operations

*John Tawaststjerna*

Landscape Manager



**FIREWISE USA®**  
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

# AGENDA

- Introduction
- Primary Goals
- Five Steps to Earn Recognition
- Areas of Focus
- Summary



# INTRODUCTION

- What is Firewise USA?
  - Firewise is a grassroots , community-based wildfire preparedness program overseen and administered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
    - Co-sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters
  - National recognition program providing a collaborative framework to help neighbors in a geographic area get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance and reduce wildfire risks of their homes and community

# PRIMARY GOALS


- To complete the 5 basic steps to become a Firewise USA Site
- Educate Residents on How to Prepare for Wildfires and Reduce Wildfire Risks
- Enhance the Ability for Rossmoor to Receive Fire Insurance

# TO EARN RECOGNITION AS A FIREWISE SITE, WE MUST COMPLETE FIVE STEPS

- Create a board or committee of residents and other local stakeholders interested in wildfire protection;
- Obtain a written wildfire risk assessment from the state forestry agency or local fire department that identifies risky areas and recommendations for improvement;
- Create an action plan to be updated every 3 years that identifies community education and mitigation activities;
- Host an outreach and education event that addresses items from the action plan;
- Track the hours and financial investments from the community in wildfire mitigation.

## How to become a Firewise USA® site



 Select Language ▼

### How does the Firewise USA® program work?

#### Organize it

Create a board or committee of volunteers to represent your community, including residents and partners such as local forestry agencies or the fire department. Identify a resident leader who will be the program point of contact. The board or committee defines the boundaries of the site and determines the number of individual single family dwelling units.

Community size: Minimum of 8 dwelling units and a maximum of 2,500. Multiple Firewise USA sites can be located within a city/town or master-planned community/HOA.

#### Plan it

The board or committee will collaborate with their local wildfire expert to complete a **community wildfire risk assessment**. The assessment should be a community-wide view that identifies areas of successful wildfire risk reduction and areas where improvements could be made. Emphasis should be on the general conditions of homes and related home ignition zones. The assessment is a living document and **needs to be updated at a minimum every 5 years**.

- [Contact your state liaison](#) to learn more about the requirements and how to get started
- Some states use the [Firewise USA template](#). (PDF)
- Online training - [Community Wildfire Risk Assessment Tutorial](#)



The board/committee will use the risk assessment to create a **three-year action plan**, broken down by year, that identifies and prioritizes actions to reduce ignition risk to homes. These can include communitywide investments along with suggested homeowner actions and education activities that participants will strive to complete annually, or over a period of multiple years. This document is required to be updated at least every three years. As circumstances change (e.g., completing activities, experiencing a fire or a natural disaster, new construction in community, etc.), the action plan may need to be updated more frequently

#### Do it

Each year, neighbors complete educational and risk reduction actions identified in the plan. These go towards your site's annual reporting efforts.

- [Find examples](#) (PDF) of activities that count towards your investment.
- Use our [volunteer hourly worksheet](#) (PDF) to collect information from residents in your community



At a minimum, each site is required to annually invest the equivalent of one volunteer hour per dwelling unit in wildfire risk reduction actions. If your site has identified 100 homes within its boundary, than 100 hours of work or the monetary equivalent, based on the [independent sector value of volunteer time](#), need to be completed for that year.

#### Tell us about it

When the above criteria have been met, the Resident Leader applies for recognition through the Firewise® Portal ([portal.firewise.org](http://portal.firewise.org)), describing educational and mitigation work in the site. Each year, sites renew their status by reporting their activity.

**Please note:** Individual states can request additional application requirements.



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## ORGANIZE IT

- Create a board or committee of volunteers to represent our community
  - Mutual Presidents and or Committee Chairs
  - Identify a Mutual Leader-Point of Contact
    - Jeroen Wright
- Community size 8 to 2500 dwellings in a master-planned community
  - Rossmoor approx. 1310 dwellings

# AREAS OF FOCUS

## PLAN IT

- Board/Committee collaborates with Local Wildfire Expert to complete Community Wildfire Risk Assessment
  - Community wide view
  - Identifies area of success and areas of needed improvement
    - Emphasis on general building conditions and related home ignition zones
    - Living Document that needs to be revised every 5 years minimum
  - Board/Committee uses the risk assessment to create a 3-year action plan
    - Broken down by year
    - Identifies and prioritizes actions to reduce ignition risk to buildings
    - Includes:
      - Community-wide investments
      - Suggested resident actions and educational activities that participants strive to complete annually or over a multi-year period
      - Updated every 3 years at minimum



# AREAS OF FOCUS

## DO IT

- Each year residents complete educational and risk reduction activities that go towards Rossmoor's annual reporting efforts
- Each Firewise site is required to annually invest the equivalent of one hour of volunteer work per dwelling unit in wildfire reduction actions or the monetary equivalent of ????
- Areas of volunteer work completed:
  - Dwelling Unit/Home
    - Removing pine needles or debris from roof and gutters. Removing flammable items from under decks and porches. Ignition resistant exterior improvements such as screening of areas under decks so debris cannot accumulate or ensuring foundation vents are properly screened.
  - Landscaping (0-100 ft from base of dwelling unit)
    - Installation of hardscaping/replacing combustible mulches with stone/gravel/DG. Tree and shrub removal. Removal of landscape debris. Lawn and native grass maintenance/weed abatement
  - Common Area
    - Similar to Landscaping 0-100 ft from base of dwellings
  - Miscellaneous
    - Meetings, presentations, program administration, home site visits,

# AREAS OF FOCUS

## TELL US ABOUT IT

- When the Organize It, Plan It, and Do It criteria have been met, the Resident Leader applies for recognition through the Firewise Portal
  - [Portal.firewise.org](https://portal.firewise.org)
  - Describe educational and mitigation work in the site
  - Each year the site renews its status by reporting their activity

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- State liaisons will approve applications
- Final processing is completed by NFPA

“NFPA Firewise USA Residents Reducing Wildfire Risks”

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Become-a-Firewise-USA-site>

“How to Prepare Your Home for Wildfires”

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Fact-sheets/FirewiseHowToPrepareYourHomeForWildfires.pdf>

“Taking Control of Your Wildfire Risk”

<https://www.nfpa.org/~media/Files/Firewise/HIZ/FirewiseTakingControlofYourWildfireRisk%20pdf>

“Volunteer Hourly Work Sheet”

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Get-started/FirewiseVolunteerHourlyWorksheet.ashx>

“Time and Expense Investment Examples”

<https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Firewise/Get-started/FirewiseTimeExpenseInvestmentExamples.ashx>



**FIREWISE USA®**  
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

# SUMMARY

- More than 1900 communities across the country are currently taking steps to reduce their wildfire risk as Firewise sites.
- With the help of the residents and the organizational support of MOD, Rossmoor can become Firewise accredited
  - In 2018 the 416 Fire threatened Durango CO
  - The Firewise community of Falls Creek was used as the base staging area for firefighting the 416 Fire
  - The work of the Falls Creek Firewise community in Durango CO. was credited as the reason Durango survived the fire
- 4 ½ minute video
- <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Firewise-Sites-of-Excellence>



**FIREWISE USA<sup>®</sup>**  
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

## QUICK Q&A



# THANK YOU

John Tawaststjerna

Landscape Manager

[Jtawaststjerna@rossmoor.com](mailto:Jtawaststjerna@rossmoor.com)

Jeroen Wright

Director of Mutual Operations

[Jwright@Rossmoor.com](mailto:Jwright@Rossmoor.com)

925-988-7643