



**Napa Communities Firewise Foundation
-NCF-
BUSINESS PLAN**

Reviewed & Updated: January, 2010

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I - Executive Summary

The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation developed a long-term strategic plan in 2006. The Board conducts a planning meeting in the first quarter of each year to review the Foundation objectives and the strategies which are intended to be used to achieve those goals. As the times change, objectives may change and the plan is then updated. This is the business plan from the first quarter 2010.

Napa Firewise is a community-based fire awareness program designed by city and county fire professionals to provide the residents of Napa County with:

- Information on the dangers that wildland fire poses to them and their community.
- A better understand of fire ecology in their community in ways that predict the risk while respecting and considering the natural evolution of fire in wildland settings.
- The program also provides specific steps each person can take to protect themselves, their family and their neighbors in the event a wildland fire occurs.

It is a program based on empowering individuals to act.

Napa Firewise currently operates under the guidance of a management board of trained fire prevention and education professionals. 2010 marks the program's fifth consecutive year of operation.

As in the rest of California and most of the US, fire suppression and control have been a priority in Napa County for many years. Due to these programs, nature has not been allowed to take its normal course, and as a result a considerable buildup of vegetation in high-risk areas such as the east, west and northern boundaries of the county has occurred. In addition, population growth has caused communities to merge with higher-risk wildlands. Neighborhoods like Browns Valley, Montecito Heights, Berryessa Highlands, Deer Park and Angwin are prime examples of the migration outward of our urban centers into what we call wildland urban interface areas or WUI. As a result, wildland fire now has a path into the very heart of our communities.

For the Program to succeed in the future, the program must be sustainable, and several changes must occur:

- New sources of funding must be identified and tapped.
- Implement a strong relationship with the California Fire Alliance and the California Fire Safe Council Clearinghouse for grant applications, funding and management.
- The Business and Agricultural communities must become involved.
- Napa Firewise is currently funded through local government and federal grant sources. Long-term funding will also have to come from the private sector. Napa Firewise has acquired 501(c)(3)-non-profit status. This provides tax exempt status which should encourage private contributors.
- A transition from an agency-led to a new citizen-led, management structure.

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- It must change the way the community thinks and acts about wildland fire, with the role of fire prevention and protection being viewed as a shared responsibility and an essential community priority.

A broader history of the program is given in Appendix A.

Our Vision:

As a mature program in the future, Napa Firewise will be a self funded, community action program built around sustainable Firewise practices where personal safety and property survival are automatically factored into construction practices, landscape choices, and everyday living.

It will be a time when fire can be inserted back into the environmental equation and considered part of the natural landscape

Napa will have the distinction of being the first County in California to be 100% Firewise, with a safer community overall and potentially lower insurance rates.

Our Mission:

To empower the residents and businesses of Napa County with the information, knowledge, and support they need to survive a wildland fire.

Goals and Objectives:

- **Raise Awareness** - Make people aware of their environment and the natural and manmade risks that wildland fire poses to them, their family, their property, and/or their business.
- **Create Action** - Provide the citizens of Napa County with specific steps they can take to protect their families, property, and/or business in the event of a wildland fire. Educate citizens on the key aspects of fire behavior and how “fire-hardened” homes and buildings can survive, through defensible space planning and proper mitigation techniques.
- **Sustain Action** - Encourage defensible space practices as part of an ongoing fire prevention program. Include annual chipping program as an important community collaboration activity.

Our Philosophy: To create an atmosphere of sustained, shared responsibility helping the community help itself.

NCFF has divided Napa County into 16 “communities”. It is our objective to enable 4 communities per year, until the entire County has been enabled.

II - Management and Organization

The Program is transitioning from its current, agency-based model to a more citizen-led Board of Directors. The model is still evolving, but representatives from the following disciplines have been identified and will be sought:

- Citizens with Fire Safe Council Experience
- Forestry and Arborist Expertise
- The California Fire Alliance and the California Fire Safe Council Clearinghouse for grant applications, funding and management.
- The Fire Protection Services
- The Insurance Industry
- The Napa Agriculture Industry
- The Napa Hospitality Industry
- Napa Realtors
- Conservation and Watershed Expertise
- ...and possibly others

The Current Board of Directors:

President:	Darren Drake, Napa City Fire Marshal
Vice President, Treasurer	Stephen Gort, Citizen
Secretary:	Alicia Amaro, Napa County Fire
Director	Mike Wilson, Napa County Fire
Director	Brooke Dunton, Citizen
Director	Pete Munoa, Napa County Fire Marshal

Professional Advisors:

Roger Archey	Communications & Marketing
Don Gasser	FireSmart Defensible Space

Community Advisory Board:

- Stephen Gort Circle Oaks Homes Association
- John Hallman Berryessa Estates

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- Dee Cuney Berryessa Highlands
- Pat Howard Gordon Valley
- Stan Brody Tucker Acres

Insurance Agent: MALLOY, IMRIE & VASCONI INSURANCE SERVICES LLC
Insurance Carrier: Chubb & Son
CPA Sandra Madison Reinhardt, CPA

III - General Description of the Organization.

The Napa Firewise program is patterned after the national Firewise Communities Program that has its roots in a national fire prevention effort begun in the early '90s by the National Fire Protection Association. Additional information on the National Firewise program is available in Appendix B.

What makes Napa Firewise exceptional is the fact that every city, and many of the unincorporated areas in the county are participating. Other unique program features are:

- The use of GIS/satellite-based computer modeling for training and risk assessment.
- Risk maps will be posted on the Firewise website for residents to assess their risk area and take appropriate action.
- A pilot program is being developed to train fire inspectors from the private sector to augment the limited number of city and county fire personnel.
- The program is also providing a free chipping service for residents of high-risk areas to remove unwanted brush.
- Napa Firewise is testing the use of goat herds as part of a weed abatement program in steep or otherwise inaccessible terrain, and is studying the feasibility of energy co-generation resulting from the program's chipping and biomass fuels management processes.

Napa Firewise Current Core Strengths:

Napa Firewise is endorsed by:

- Napa County Board of Supervisors
- Napa County Fire Chief
- Napa City Fire Chief
- Local area Fire Chiefs
- State Fire Marshal
- The National Firewise Communities Program
- Members of the insurance industry
- Homeowner and neighborhood associations throughout the county

In addition, Napa Firewise is administered by a team of fire prevention, emergency services, private citizens and communications professionals.

IV - Description of Services to be Provided:

Napa Firewise provides the following services to the residents of Napa County:

- **Public outreach:** The program encourages public awareness and education on the dangers of wildland fire in the wildland urban interface. Information is provided through:

Activity	Planned per Year
Technical seminars	4-5
Building codes seminar	1
Develop fire risk aerial maps	Full County
Foundation monthly board meetings	12
Sponsors orientation & information meetings	3
Quarterly community leaders meetings	4
Participation at local community events such as Home and Garden shows, Earth Day events, etc.	2
Community/trade conferences with fire demonstrations	2
Web site updates and management	Ongoing
Foundation Newsletters	6-8

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Safety brochures	Ongoing
Advertisements & notices in newspapers	6
Community recognition awards & events	2

- **Chipping Program:** Napa Firewise provides residents in throughout the county with a free chipping program designed to augment ongoing vegetation management efforts.

Communities to Assist per year:	All - 16
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In 2007, thanks to a grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and Fireman’s Fund Insurance, the program purchased a new chipper for the exclusive use of Napa Firewise. This grant, combined with a new labor agreement with the County of Napa Corrections Department to provide free inmate labor, will allow future chipping programs to be self sufficient and provide expanded service to the entire community.

- **Neighborhood Action:** In addition to providing education, Napa Firewise will provide individual communities in Napa County with the assistance they need to obtain grant funding for local projects and consulting and management assistance for the creation and operation of their own Firewise Community Organization.

Fire Safe Councils (Communities) to get started per year:	4
Fire Safe Councils (Communities) who become independent per year:	2

Resources:

The resources necessary for the sustainability of the Napa Firewise program will come from a combination of paid services and volunteer participation.

Paid Services:

- Communications: Public Relations and Marketing (including print and electronic design, and advertising)
- Printing of collateral materials
- Event fees
- Accounting-Year end CPA review
- Insurance

Volunteer Participation:

- Program Administrator
- Executive Board
- Community Fire Safe Council Leaders & their Volunteers
- Committee Chairs
- Project Committees

V - Focus Items for the 2010 year:

The operational elements that will keep Napa Firewise focused, include the following activities:

- **Fire Safe Council Development:** We will focus our efforts on creating Fire Safe Councils (Communities) under the Napa Firewise brand. The goal is to provide the incentive for smaller groups to build their own community base of support with our help, especially the more remote areas that have high risk.
- **Pursue Napa Business:** Develop a campaign to encourage Napa Businesses to participate in the program. This should include both emphasis on making their businesses and facilities firesafe; and to solicit contributions from them to help fund the program.
- **Recognize Success:** A key to advancing the Firewise Program will be individual and community recognition. Build “best practice” examples of :
 - Successful Firewise awareness and mitigation efforts.
 - Establishment of FireSafe Councils who create defensible space landscaping, and who improve home safety with fire resistant building methods and materials

- **Maintain and Increase High Visibility:** Keep the program in the public eye, with the support it needs to succeed by:
 - Maintaining the support of local politicians and fire service management, the media and private business on an ongoing basis.
 - Making a major effort to extend visibility and attention to the Business Community, especially Agriculture, Insurance and Hospitality.
 - Involving elected officials regularly in community recognition awards and special events
 - Pitching success stories to local media and trade press
 - Inviting media to all community events, including training, drills and workshops
 - Being prepared for media inquiries with fact sheets and press releases.
 - Maintaining and improving the Firewise Web site.
- **Plan Future Funding:** Obtained 501(C)(3) status in order to give sponsors and donors tax relief for their contributions. Undertake a major planning effort to define sources of future income and programs to secure it. Implement a strong relationship with the California Fire Alliance and the California Fire Safe Council Clearinghouse for grant applications, funding and management.

VII - Investing in Napa Firewise:

Who Should Invest ?

- Napa County Residents, Time & energy
- The Fire Services, Expertise
- Napa Businesses, Time and money

Why Contribute ?

- It needs to be done
- No one else will do it.
- State and Government Funding are limited and shrinking.

What Are the Benefits of Investing ?

- A County Community safe from the ravages of wildland fires.
- Possibly lower property insurance
- Preserving the beauty, desirability and sustainability of “The Napa Valley” image and community - for residents and tourists.

X - Summary

Napa Firewise is a fire prevention and education program that has been gaining momentum during its early existence. Beyond the 2010 fire season, will be a critical test of the program’s sustainability. While funding for 2010 is in place, the long-term future of the program is uncharted at this time. It is for this reason that the management team of Napa Firewise has developed this business plan to make Napa Firewise a sustainable, non-profit, community controlled enterprise.

Appendix A: A short history of Napa Firewise.

To date, funding has come from Federal and State grants for wildland fire education and prevention. In the past, the program was also funded in part by a grant from the Federal Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) program as well as private grants from Fireman's Fund Insurance and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Given the unpredictability of sustained, single-source government grant funding, the Napa Firewise management team is developing a long-term funding concept based on a 501(c)(3) non-profit model. The long-term goal of Napa Firewise is to be highly regarded by the community as an essential fire prevention program, and paid for by the community through a combination of dues, non-profit sponsorships and private grant contributions. The long-term management of Napa Firewise should reside in the capable hands of a community non-profit.

During the first two years of operation (2004 to 2006), Napa Firewise became a vital part of the county's wildland fire education and prevention program. Accomplishments include:

- Needs assessments accomplished and action plans have been implemented.
- Multiple direct mail promotions to all county residents on wildland fire awareness and mitigation
- Presented Napa Firewise educational messages at community events such as Earth Day and at the Napa Solano Home & Garden Show.
- Development and maintenance of a Napa Firewise Web site: www.napafirewise.org.
- Weed abatement program in Deer Park and Angwin using goats for hire.
- Hosted trade and community workshops on wildland fire awareness and mitigation techniques such as defensible space landscaping.
- Conducting 2 defensible space training programs for professional firefighters and the buildings and landscape trade.
- Certified [number] private vendors as Defensible Space Contractors.
- Conducted free defensible space inspections in the county's high fire risk communities.
- Provided free countywide chipping services to reduce fuel loads and promote defensible space planning. Over 40 tons of fuels removed to date.
- Developed online GIS risk map for county residents to assess their personal fire risk by parcel location, fuel type, topography and response time.
- Authored bi-weekly Firewise fire prevention columns for the Napa Register, St. Helena Star and Weekly Calistogan.
- Developed information brochures and Firewise give-a-ways to promote the Napa Firewise brand.
- Placed a series of Public Service radio announcements on local radio stations.

Recognized individuals within the community who exemplified the Napa Firewise community spirit. These individuals received cash awards and gift certificates for their work in creating defensible space around their properties.

APPENDIX B: The National Firewise Program.

The National Firewise Communities program (www.firewise.org) is a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire before a fire starts. The Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community, as well as effective emergency response and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping, and maintenance.

The National Firewise Communities program is intended to serve as a resource for agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments, and communities across the US who are working toward a common goal: to reduce loss of lives, property, and resources to wildland fire by building and maintaining communities in a way that is compatible with our natural surroundings.

National Firewise Member Agencies:

The Firewise Communities Program is part of the National Wildland/Urban Interface Fire Program, which is directed by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team (WUIWT), a consortium of wildland fire organizations and Federal agencies responsible for wildland fire management in the United States. The WUIWT includes:

- USDA Forest Service
- USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs
- USDI Bureau of Land Management
- USDI Fish & Wildlife Service
- USDI National Park Service
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- US Fire Administration
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- National Association of State Fire Marshals
- National Association of State Foresters
- National Emergency Management Association
- National Fire Protection Association