

Benbow, California

Community Wildfire Action Plan 2022-2024



FIREWISE USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

The town of Benbow, California (approximately 202 households) is located within the wildland urban interface and intermix in Southern Humboldt. This proposed Firewise USA™ Site Community Wildfire Action Plan was developed through input received during the 2022 Firewise Risk Assessment process that included two site visits in March and April. The goal of the Plan is to develop a strategy to incrementally outreach, educate, and implement efforts to make the neighborhoods in Benbow more fire resilient.

Timeline	Program	Description/Mitigation
Year 1 2022	Education & Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Host a Firewise community wildfire preparedness event in April with educational materials that communicate defensible space, home hardening, water resources, and evacuation planning. Develop a non-combustible Immediate Zone (Zone 0) Benbow recognition program with the goal to recognize 5 homes a year that have successfully treated their 0’ – 5’ area. Host annual “coffee cart” outreach event.
	Home Hardening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Fire-resistant building materials list with local suppliers, costs, and examples. This would be integrated into the educational outreach. Identify individual skirting projects that would benefit from bulk material ordering. Document the newly installed non-combustible skirting of 4 buildings in the Benbow Firewise area. (Encourage action through “Skirt My House” campaign.) Plan potential fire hardened soffit projects in a similar fashion as the skirting program.
	Fuel Reduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Help to organize the prioritization of private fuel reduction projects through outreach. Establish the focus on working from the Immediate Zone to the Extended Zone, then connecting to the driveway. Organize and document the volunteer and expense investments to satisfy the Firewise “good standing” recognition. Research and plan a community wide, grant funded fuel reduction project, potentially addressing the ingress/egress fuel loads. Work with the County and/or CAL FIRE to organize a Chipper Day to dispose of materials generated by residents maintaining their own defensible space.
	Evacuation Planning & Wildfire Preparedness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to meet as the Benbow Fire Safe community and the Firewise Committee to organize the community scale projects that address evacuation and wildfire preparedness. Promote the inclusion of the CERT certification amongst members of the Benbow Community. Develop a Benbow NEST program with the first-year goal to identify the sub-unit neighborhoods, and a neighborhood liaison. Support the Neighborhood liaisons in a set of achievable first year goals. Promote the installation of dedicated fire suppression water tanks and fire standpipes. Document the residential systems that have these resources (establish a “Blue Dot” program). Create an address signage program that receives donations in return for address signs. Confirm accurate addresses, work with the county to update and correct information. Support the proposal to expand the Garberville Fire Protection District to include the community of Benbow.

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Timeline	Program	Description/Mitigation
Year 2 2023	Education & Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host the annual Firewise community wildfire preparedness event with educational materials that communicate defensible space, home hardening, water resources, and evacuation planning. Use the event as an opportunity to update Firewise community members on Action Plan implementation progress and achievements – celebrate success. 2. Continue the non-combustible Immediate Zone (Zone 0) Benbow recognition program with the goal to recognize 5 homes a year that have successfully treated their 0’ – 5’ area. Develop the Intermediate Zone (Zone 1) version, each one having a separate recognition. 3. Develop, locate, or secure Fire-Resilient Landscaping educational materials. 4. Host a Fire-Resilient Landscaping workshop.
	Home Hardening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the Fire-resistant building materials list with local suppliers, costs, and examples. This would be integrated into the educational outreach. 2. Identify individual soffit projects that would benefit from bulk material ordering. 3. Document the newly installed non-combustible skirting of 4 buildings in the Benbow Firewise area. (Encourage action through “Skirt My House” campaign.) 4. Plan potential fire hardened deck projects in a similar fashion as the skirting and soffit program. 5. Partner with UC Cooperative Extension to host home hardening demonstration day/tour.
	Fuel Reduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue the prioritization of private fuel reduction projects through outreach. Establish the focus on working from the Immediate Zone to the Extended Zone, then connecting to the driveway. 2. Organize and document the volunteer and expense investments to satisfy the Firewise “good standing” recognition. 3. Continue to plan the community wide, grant funded fuel reduction project. Develop and write the grant application.
	Evacuation Planning & Wildfire Preparedness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to meet as the Benbow Fire Safe community and the Firewise Committee to organize the community scale projects that address evacuation and wildfire preparedness. 2. Work strategically with the Garberville Fire Protection District to establish a Benbow fire station and build local fire service capacity. 3. Continue to develop the Benbow NEST program. Support the Neighborhood liaisons in a set of achievable second year goals. 4. Continue to promote the installation of dedicated fire suppression water tanks and fire standpipes. Document the residential systems that have these resources (Maintain the “Blue Dot” program). 5. Continue the address signage program. Confirm accurate addresses, work with the county to update and correct information.

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Timeline	Program	Description/Mitigation
Year 3 2024	Education & Outreach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host the annual Firewise community wildfire preparedness event with educational materials that communicate defensible space, home hardening, water resources, and evacuation planning. Use the event as an opportunity to update Firewise community members on Action Plan implementation progress and achievements – celebrate success. 2. Continue the non-combustible Immediate Zone (Zone 0) Benbow recognition program and the Intermediate Zone (Zone 1) version. Develop the Extended Zone (Zone 2) version. Give awards to those who have achieved the “Hat Trick” of all three. 3. Host an end of the three-year period event that highlights the successful work and reviews the process. Use this event to collaboratively plan the next three-year action plan.
	Home Hardening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the Fire-resistant building materials list with local suppliers, costs, and examples. This would be integrated into the educational outreach. 2. Identify individual deck projects that would benefit from bulk material ordering. 3. Successfully fire-harden the decks of 4 buildings in the Benbow Firewise area. Photo document the success. 4. Plan potential fire hardened siding projects in a similar fashion as the skirting, soffit, and deck program.
	Fuel Reduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue the prioritization of private fuel reduction projects through outreach. Establish the focus on working from the Immediate Zone to the Extended Zone, then connecting to the driveway. 2. Organize and document the volunteer and expense investments to satisfy the Firewise “good standing” recognition. 3. Implement the community wide, grant funded fuel reduction project. Photo document the success.
	Evacuation Planning & Wildfire Preparedness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to meet as the Benbow Fire Safe community and the Firewise Committee to organize the community scale projects that address evacuation and wildfire preparedness. 2. Continue to work strategically with the Garberville Fire Protection District to establish/maintain a Benbow fire station and build local fire service capacity. 3. Continue to develop the Benbow NEST program. Support the Neighborhood liaisons in updating and confirming local contact information. 4. Continue to promote the installation of dedicated fire suppression water tanks and fire standpipes. Document the residential systems that have these resources (Maintain the “Blue Dot” program). 5. Continue the address signage program. Confirm accurate addresses, work with the county to update and correct information.

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