



PRESS RELEASE

Tahoe Fire & Fuels Team

For Immediate Release

A Message from a Fire Adapted Community Leader

LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev., April 30, 2025 – “Fire Adapted Communities.” “Firewise USA.” These buzzwords are making the rounds in Tahoe and residents are taking notice. Even more important, they’re taking action.

If you’ve lived in Tahoe for more than a few years, you have felt the fear and anxiety from recent incidents - starting with the Angora Fire in 2007. Residents watched as that blaze destroyed more than 242 homes, 67 commercial structures, and 3,100 acres of forest. Fast forward to 2021 when the Caldor Fire destroyed almost 1,000 structures and scorched more than 221,000 acres.

Is it right to be worried? Are fires increasing in intensity? Will it happen again? Absolutely.

So... What can Property Owners DO?

Maintaining defensible space (managing your landscape to prevent or slow fire spread) and home hardening (structural changes to make your home resistant to wildfire) are critically important. However, your property will be significantly more resilient if your neighbors follow suit. In fact, research shows you’re six times more likely to return to your home after a major wildfire if your neighborhood complies with fire prevention regulations.

Fortunately, there’s Firewise USA and the Tahoe Network of Fire Adapted Communities – community-based risk reduction programs designed to help neighborhoods minimize the chance of losing homes during wildfires.

Here in Tahoe, all fire agencies participate in these programs and offer free defensible space and home hardening inspections through funding provided by the Fire Adapted Communities Network. Firewise USA and Fire Adapted Communities are also supported by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District (Tahoe RCD), the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (U.S. Forest Service), Tahoe Living With Fire, and the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, to name a few.

How Does Firewise USA Work?

The Firewise USA program empowers residents to define their neighborhood boundaries, identify what needs to be done, communicate with neighbors, create a three-year action plan, develop a community workday (which can be a lot of fun), and report their efforts back to the program.

Worried it might be too much work or that your neighbors won't be interested? Fear not — there are plenty of resources to support you.

Tahoe RCD's Fire Adapted Communities Program staff will guide you through the process. Your local fire agency will assist with inspections, neighborhood events, and help you get familiar with the Lake Tahoe Basin Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Those who are already recognized as Firewise or Fire Adapted are here to help by providing one-on-one assistance with workshops, neighborhood leader meetings, and materials to get you started. Over time, friendly peer pressure can help bring hesitant property owners on board.

What's The Difference Between the Fire Adapted Communities Program and Firewise USA?

The Fire Adapted Communities Program is a comprehensive local network that offers resources and guidance for wildfire preparedness. Firewise USA is a national program under this umbrella, providing recognition for communities that meet certain wildfire prevention standards.

Will This Really Make a Difference for My Neighborhood?

Absolutely. There are nearly 90 Fire Adapted Communities in the Tahoe basin, 61 of which are recognized as Firewise USA. Neighborhood leaders will tell you that it was worth the effort. Here are a few reasons:

- Improved safety through defensible space and home hardening
- Better-looking, healthier neighborhood with vegetation management
- Potential fire insurance benefits
- Improved evacuation preparedness
- More educated and informed community regarding fire, fire prevention, evacuation, local services and more
- Stronger neighborhood connections — knowing your neighbors builds resilience and sense of community

Agencies in the Tahoe Basin are working together to reduce risk and promote stewardship endeavors through the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, a partnership that includes federal, tribal, state, and local conservation, land management, and fire agencies. This includes the work by the California Tahoe Conservancy crews, who are providing forest thinning and vegetation treatments on urban lots. It also includes the Waš́·šiw (Washoe) Tribe, whose fuels reduction and prescribed fire work is reconnecting their community to cultural practices.

Why does that matter? Because now it's time for property owners to do their part.

How to Get Started

Contact the Fire Adapted Communities Program at Tahoe RCD:

- 530-543-1501 ext. 114
- fire@tahoercd.org

Or visit tahoelivingwithfire.com/get-involved for more information.

Also: Prepare for Wildfires by Preparing for Evacuation

Prepare for wildfires by signing up for evacuation [alerts](#) and creating go bags for yourself and your family members using CAL FIRE's [Ready, Set, Go](#) model.

