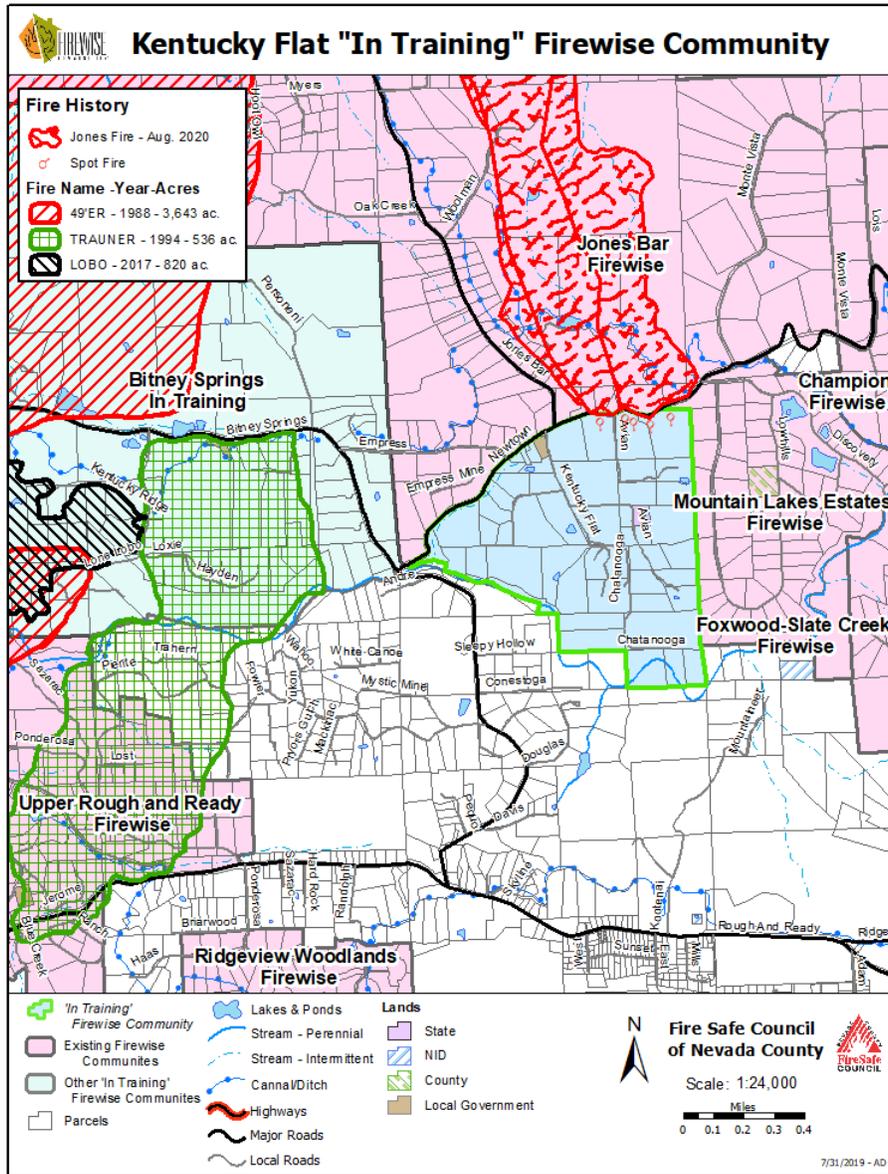


KENTUCKY FLAT FIREWISE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The Kentucky Flat Firewise Community is bounded on the north by Newtown Road, on the south roughly by Deer Creek and on the east by Mountain Lakes Estates Firewise Community. All parcels within the community have primary access onto Newtown Road, either directly or via Kentucky Flat Road or Avian Place.



Fire is no stranger to our community; since 1988 there have been four near misses. The excellent information provided in the [September 2020 Firewise Community Assessment](#) from the Fire Safe Council, provided a solid foundation for the work needed in our Kentucky Flat Firewise Community (KFFC).

This Action Plan is divided into four major areas—Household Preparedness, Evacuation Route Planning, Neighborhood Fire Hardening and Kentucky Flat School Protection. Tasks by year are noted within each area.

The KFFC structure has divided the neighborhood of 40+ parcels among 4 team captains who will coordinate directly with neighbors in their areas. The team captains and other community members will also take charge of upcoming projects and all members of the community are welcome to join in projects of interest.

Team Captains and Areas

Location	Area	Team Captain
East	1	Tara Crim
West	2	Woody Woodard
South	3	Rob Powers
North	4	Debbie Gibbs

John Powers and Debbie Gibbs will provide newsletter updates to convey news from the Firewise Coalition meetings and other items of interest.

HOUSEHOLD PREPAREDNESS

KFFC has developed a system to notify all community members within 12 hours if a wildfire is an immediate threat, or a potential threat. Each area has a team captain that who will contact neighbors in his or her area to ensure they are alerted.

A fire within 10 miles presents a danger, and residents should be prepared for an evacuation. Each resident can decide exactly when to evacuate. Knowing that evacuation is a possibility well in advance of a CodeRED notification is very advantageous.

The Kentucky Flat Firewise Community (KFFC) has an excellent video ,“Be Ember Prepared”, which was shown at a 2019 community meeting. It can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAuhNDb963Y&t=9s>.

2020

Team captains will contact households in their area to survey readiness. Contact will be done using email, phone, or dropping off information with a note that someone will call soon to see if the residents have questions.

Team captains will report the information they collected, and a compilation will be done which evaluates the readiness of our neighbors and possible areas of concern. The information in the survey includes:

- Prepare Go Bags

- Register for CodeRed
- Become familiar with the dashboard at www.readynevadacounty.org
- Plan and practice the evacuation route
- Get a reflective address sign
- Request a free Fire Safe Defensible Space Advisory Visit

2021

Team captains will reassess each neighbor’s readiness and update the readiness survey.

EVACUATION ROUTE PLANNING

Currently Kentucky Flat Road is the main exit from the neighborhood to Newtown Road; Avian Place provides access to Newtown Road for a limited number of residents. The signage in the community is very confusing, and roads planned long ago were never completed. It may be possible to use access points on some parcels for emergency exits if Kentucky Flat or Newtown Rd are impassable.

The Nevada County Hazardous Vegetation Abatement Ordinance and California Public Resource Code 4290 both require a minimum of 10 feet of horizontal clearance of dry grass, shrubs, small trees, and branches up to 15 feet above the ground along both sides of all roads and driveways – public or privately owned. However, flame length can be 3 times the height of the burning vegetation, and will be pushed horizontally much further with wind. It is ideal to achieve at least 30 feet of horizontal clearance on each side of all roads and driveways

2020

Newtown Road is a crucial evacuation route for all parcels in KFFC as well as Jones Bar and other communities in the Newtown corridor. Newtown Road between Empress Road and Bitney Springs Road along Hart Creek is especially dangerous with no cleared shoulders. The section east from Kentucky Flat Road towards Nevada City could more easily be cleared of vegetation.

The Newtown Road team captain will contact Nevada County to request they clear the vegetation along Newtown Road. This is particularly sensitive as this is also a riparian area.

2021

Team captains will evaluate their areas for possible emergency exit routes and discuss the possibility with owners of the property. Once owner approval is provided, neighbors that could benefit from that exit access would be informed.

The assessment identified parcels with dense vegetation along the road and dead-ends that make it dangerous for first responders as well as residents attempting to evacuate. Team captains will contact owners of applicable parcels to discuss ways to improve safety through vegetation removal or other means.

A KFFC team member will contact the county to explore how Kentucky Flat can rename or better label its roads. A plan for street signs and other directional attributes will be executed.

At the least, install signs at intersections of the private roads to make navigation easier during darkness and smoky conditions. Upgrade road signs to 4-inch high letters on reflective signs and place signs close to intersections where headlights are likely to reflect from the signs.

NEIGHBORHOOD FIRE HARDENING

The community should strive to treat fuels on 2/3 of the entire community to effectively alter fire behavior. Grazed and irrigated pastures provide the best treatment for slowing wildfires, while thinning forests and reducing shrub cover can allow more successful containment by fire fighters.

Many parcels are well maintained, but some are a problem. Often absentee owners are unaware their property is overgrown and presents a hazard. Major concerns are whether fire trucks would or could venture into the interior of KFFC and if there are water sources that the fire fighters could use to put out a fire. All neighbors have a stake in hardening their properties to save everyone's properties. Individual parcels play a varied role.

Some of the homes have adequate 100 feet defensible space zones, while others need to extend the zone of clearance to achieve the required 100 feet. Some of the developed lots have heavy ground and ladder fuels beyond the 100 feet zone, which can lead to torching or crown fires. The average lot size is 6.66 acres, which leaves a sizable percentage of each lot beyond the defensible space zone. If only the 100 feet defensible space zone is treated on a 10-acre lot, that still leaves at least 80% of the area untreated and exposed to the risk of crown fire.

Several projects are planned.

Vegetation Thinning. The community did a vegetation clearing event in 2019 at the mouth of Kentucky Flat Road that significantly cleared dangerous brush. Along with the PGE clearing of trees, the road opening is much safer. Additional work needs to be done so both sides of the entry way to Kentucky Flat Road meet Firewise standards.

2021

Individual parcels that need to clear vegetation can do so during the rainy season when the use of chain saws and other powers tools is less risky. Fire Safe Advisory Visits can help identify the best strategies and highest priority. If the owner can stack brush in a location accessible by a chipping crew, Fire Safe can come in and chip all but the stumps, blackberries, Scotch Broom and poison oak (these items are trash and need to go to the landfill or be burned as a last resort. (Don't burn Scotch Broom as the seeds disperse and grow.)

The KFFC will hold a neighborhood vegetation management event for residents who have difficulty chipping brush on their parcels.

2022

Not many residents have bins for green waste. Location of a KFFC "green dumpster" from Waste Management will be explored. Fire Safe can encourage this, or funds can be found to support a green waste pick up in neighborhoods to reduce traffic, expense and pollution from residents hauling green waste to the Transfer Station (or burning.)

Absentee Owner Parcels. There are 11 undeveloped parcels within the Kentucky Flat Firewise Community. Most contain dense chaparral or overgrown forest. Most of these lots are located near Deer Creek, and their overgrown condition could lead crown fires into the center of the community. Some of these properties need vegetation thinning.

Each KFFC team captain will contact the owners of such properties with a request to have the vegetation removed. A photograph of the property, and perhaps a photo of the fire damaged property from the Jones Fire can be included, along with the current ordinances on property fire safe maintenance that outline what is needed for proper compliance.

Water Storage. KFFC needs to compensate for the lack of fire hydrants in the community. Our current main water resource is the pond on the Powers property that helicopters fighting the Jones Fire used to retrieve water. The pond on the DeMartini property, at the corner of Jones Bar and Newtown Road, was also used. The lakes at Mountain Lakes Estates are also water sources.

2022

Team Captains will inventory any parcels with private water storage tanks of up to 5,000 gallons. Where possible, the owners of these tanks need to install proper plumbing to allow rapid use by fire personnel. Vegetation around the water tank needs to be cleared for at least 30 feet and posted with reflective signs to make them easy to find in smoke and darkness. The Penn Valley Fire Department would be advised of the location of these tanks.

2023

KFFC will investigate the cost of installing a 10,000-gallon water storage tank in coordination with the fire department. This could be an underground tank; the location should be approved by the fire department and parcel owner.

Alternatively, it may be possible to create a gravity-fed line from privately owned NID water stands on 3 parcels on Kentucky Flat Road. Or, tanks could be installed along the road and filled at the beginning of the season for use during fire season. Prior approval and specifications from the Penn Valley Fire Department is needed to be sure it will be useful to firefighters.

KENTUCKY FLAT SCHOOL HOUSE PROTECTION

The Schoolhouse is owned by the Grass Valley School District and maintained by the Kentucky Flat Community Association. The KFFC mail boxes are located on its property. The assessment report pointed out that an adjacent parcel was quite vulnerable and could expose the Schoolhouse to danger. A fire ignited next to the Schoolhouse a few years back and caused damage to the structure.

2020

The KFFC will encourage the Kentucky Flat Community Association to schedule a Defensible Space Advisory Visit (DSAV) in 2021 to insure the survivability of this historic structure. When

scheduling the DSAV , one of the more experienced advisors knowledgeable in the latest construction materials and design for structure hardening will be requested.

2021

If needed, the KCFC could do a community fire hardening event at the school and adjacent properties to do the hardening and vegetation thinning recommended in the visit.

FINANCING

Most of the tasks in the Action Plan can be done with volunteers or paid by parcel owners that directly benefit. However, some tasks will require some monies (e.g. street signs, water tanks) and a community contribution by members may be needed. Community fund raising events such as yard sales, internet fund-raising, etc. can also be considered. The KFFC will create estimates for the consideration of the community at large as was been done for road improvements.