



FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR WILDFIRE RISK - AN INTRODUCTION TO FIREWISE USA

Everyone in Our Community Has a Role
to Play in Reducing Wildfire Risk



TODAY'S DISCUSSION



Firewise USA Program Overview

Why Firewise USA was started, what it is and how it can benefit our community.



How to Become a Recognized Firewise Community

What steps homeowners need to take to become and remain a Firewise Community.

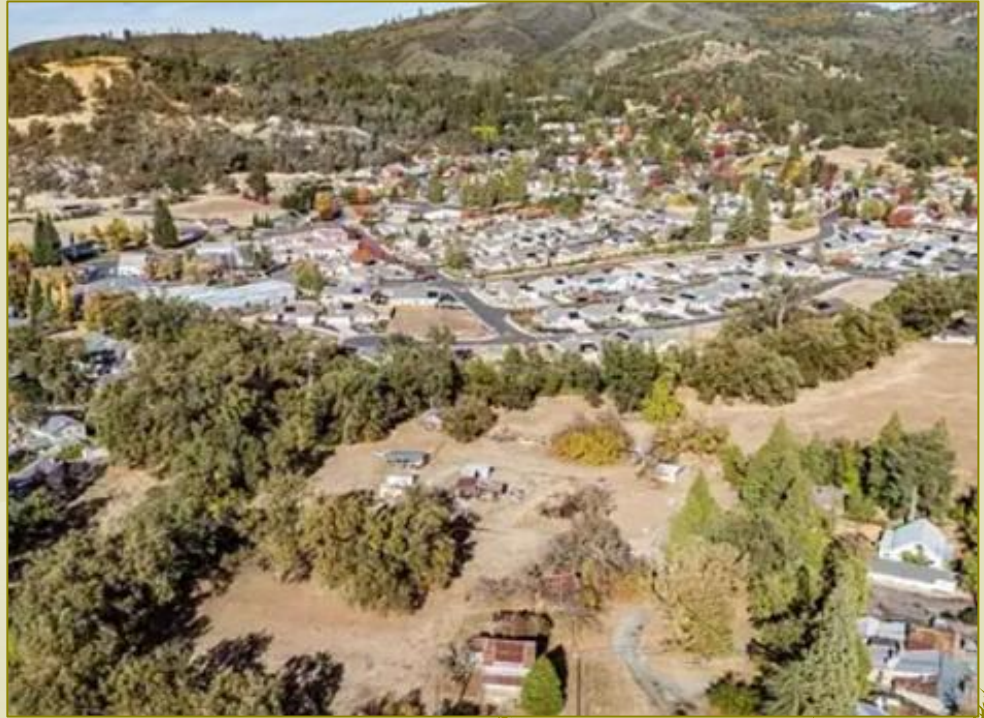


LIVING IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

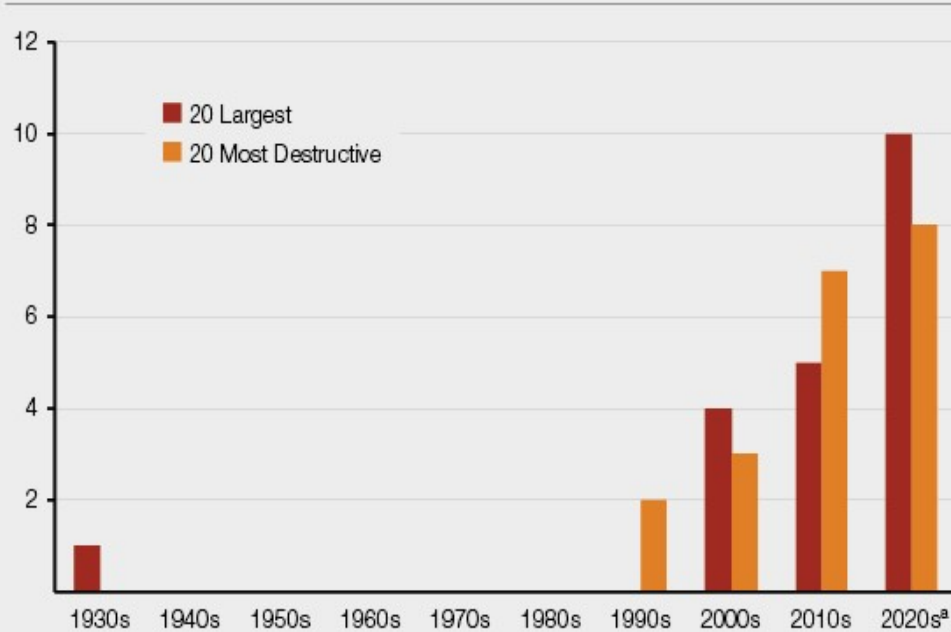
Amador county along with other surrounding counties (Calaveras, El Dorado, Tuolumne, etc.) all reside in the **Wildland Urban Interface** (WUI).

The WUI is the zone where private and public property structures or other development meet and/or intermingle with wildland.

Wildfire mitigation actions within the WUI can prevent damage or loss from wildfire.



Most of the Largest and Most Destructive Wildfires Have Occurred in Recent Decades



^a Includes wildfires that occurred from January 2020 through January 2025.

LAOA

MEGAFIRES ON THE RISE IN CALIFORNIA

- **Megafires** are fast-moving, high intensity forest fires that burn a large area, typically 100,000 acres or more. As shown in this figure, most of California's largest and most destructive wildfires have occurred in recent decades.
- Continued development in the WUI means that more people and property are located in areas prone to wildfires.
- Between 1990 and 2020, the number of housing units in California's WUI grew from 3.6 million to 5.1 million

WHAT IS THE FIREWISE USA PROGRAM?

“It’s an established framework to empower residents to get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of homes and the community.” - NFPA





FIREWISE USA®
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS



**Voluntary
community-lead
program**



**Created in 2002
by National Fire
Protection Association
(NFPA) with support
from USDA Forest
service & State Forestry
Organizations**



**Addresses
wildfire risk
on private
property**

FIREWISE USA PROGRAM

GOALS



Wildfire education



**Reducing wildfire risks
to homeowners**



**Foster individual
homeowner
responsibility**



**Encouraging neighbors
helping neighbors**



FIREWISE USA PROGRAM BENEFITS



Builds on community relationships, neighbors get to know one another



Neighbors collaborate on wildfire risk reduction projects which can help firefighting efforts



Findings from the Community Wildfire Risk Assessment help improve awareness & guide planning of wildfire risk reduction projects



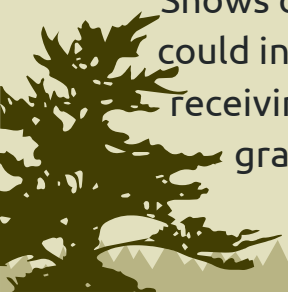
Shows community is proactive & could increase the probability of receiving wildfire risk reduction grants from local fire safety focused organizations



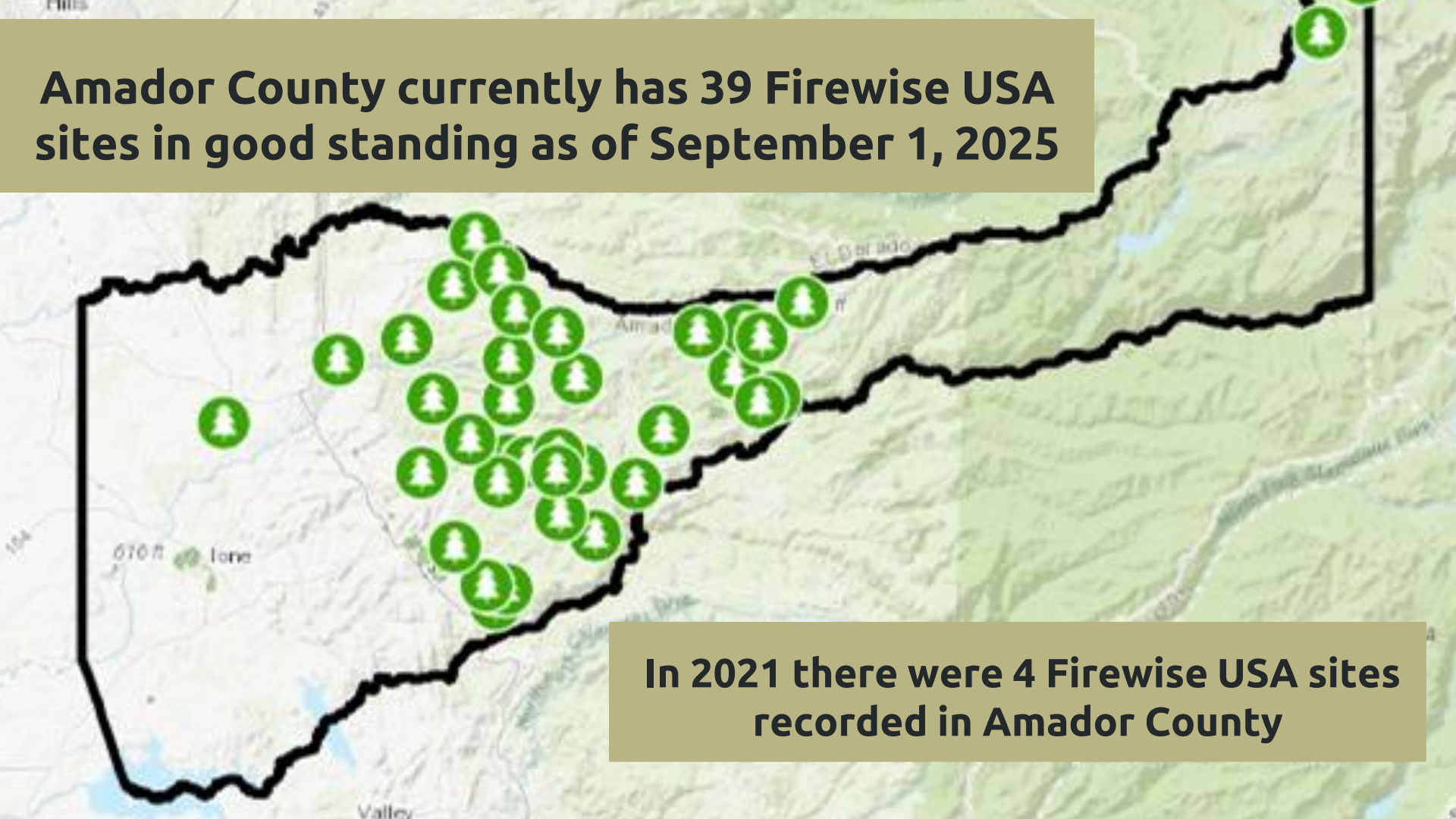
Public education is encouraged & emphasized



Demonstrates commitment to insurance carriers & could help obtain/retain insurance with insurance premium discount



Amador County currently has 39 Firewise USA sites in good standing as of September 1, 2025



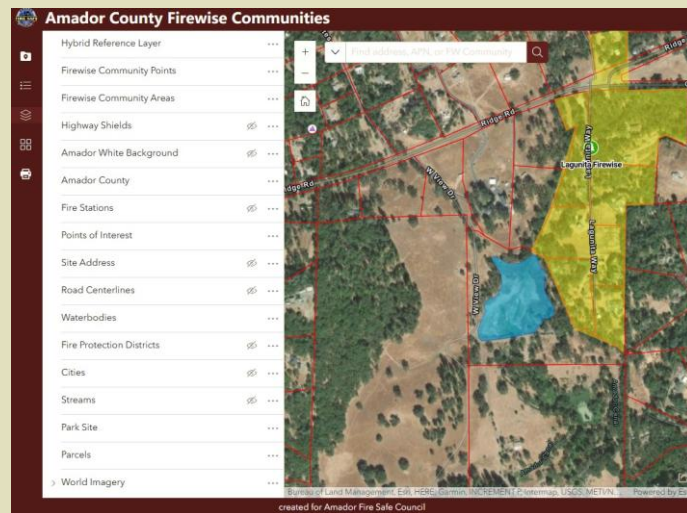
In 2021 there were 4 Firewise USA sites recorded in Amador County

GETTING STARTED

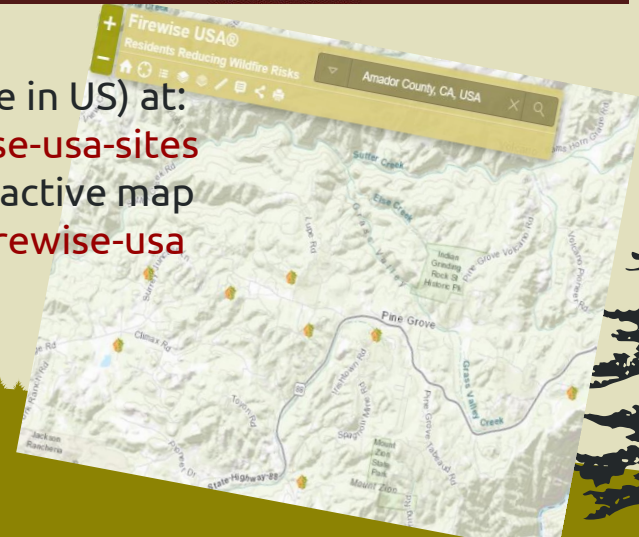
Step One:

**Check and see if your residence is
already in or near an existing
Firewise Community**

(If it is, you may be able to join - contact the Firewise Community resident leader or your local Fire Safe Council)



Go to NFPA's Firewise USA Sites interactive map (for anywhere in US) at: nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa/firewise-usa-sites
Or go to Amador Fire Safe Council's Firewise Community interactive map (shows community map boundaries) at: amadorfiresafe.org/firewise-usa



GETTING STARTED

Step Two

Organize It:

- Determine neighboring property on parcel Map (*Dwelling Requirements - min. 8 and max. 2500 units; parcels must share a common border or be touching*)
- Establish your community boundary and create a map
- Form a board/committee comprised of residents and other wildfire stakeholders (*AFPD, AFSC, etc.*)
- Use the Firewise program portal to create an account & register at:

portal.firewise.org/user/login



GETTING STARTED

Step Three

Plan It:

- Complete your Wildfire Risk Assessment with Amador Fire Protection District, *(different than the AB38 Home Sale Inspection, AFPD does not perform these)*
- Create your three-year action plan that identifies community education and risk reduction actions
(Free Wildfire Risk Assessment & Three-year Action Plan forms/templates are provided by NFPA with your firewise portal account)



GETTING STARTED

Step Four

Do It:

- Host a community wildfire risk reduction educational outreach event and work with neighbors on addressing items in the action plan
- Collectively commit to 1 hour volunteer time per residence in wildfire risk reduction actions & document the hours/investment (e.g. 8 parcels in firewise community = min. 8 hours volunteer time per year)



Thinning the Forest & Clearing Defensible Space



Firewise USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

Name: _____
Community Name: _____
Preferred Method of Contact: _____ Date: _____

Volunteer Hourly Work _____

Worksheet

Dwelling Unit/Home
Examples include: Removing pine needles and leaf litter from roof and gutters, replaced vinyl gutters with metal gutters, ignition-resistant exterior improvements, installing screening on vents, flammable items removed from under decks and porches, inspect roof and replace missing shingles, etc.

Landscaping (0-100 ft from base of dwelling unit)
Examples include: Installation of hardscaping, replacing combustible mulches with stone/gravel, remove trees, tree and shrub removal, cabling and removal of pine needles, leaves, ground litter/debris, tree pruning/limbing, moving firewood, lawn and native grass maintenance, etc.

Other Area
or other homeowner jointly owned property within the site boundary Activities include: Tree removal, mastication and brush removal, grass maintenance, fire break construction, etc.

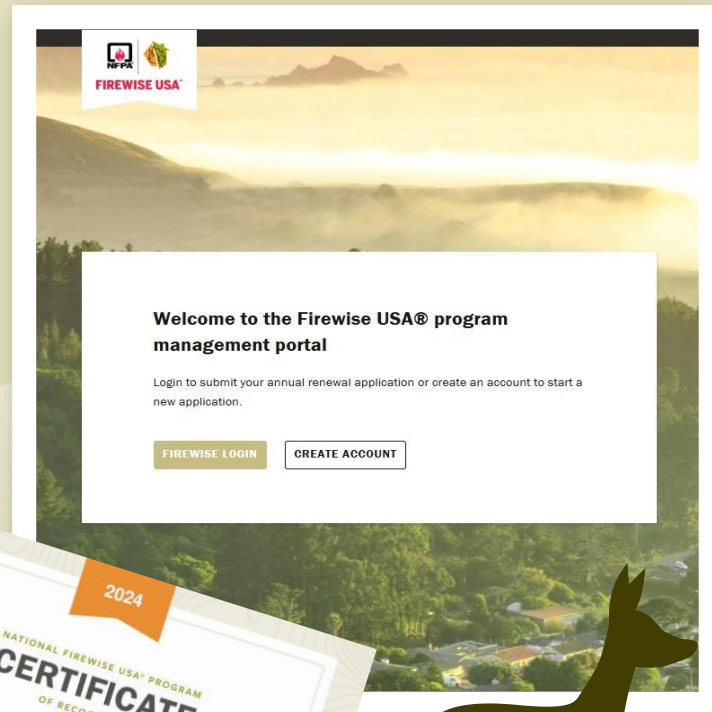
Investment Costs: Purchase/rental, fuel & oil, disposal fees, etc.
Equipment Costs: Chainsaw purchase/rental, power equipment purchase/rental, etc.
Other Costs: Arborists, landscapers, professional maintenance, etc.
Investment Costs: Roofs, debris, etc.

GETTING STARTED

Last Step

Apply It!

- Submit your Firewise application through the Firewise portal to attain “In Good Standing Status” and become a recognized Firewise USA® site.



FIREWISE USA REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN “IN GOOD STANDING” STATUS

- **Annually invest a minimum of the equivalent of one volunteer hour per dwelling unit in wildfire risk reduction and education**
- **Maintain a current three-year action plan for wildfire risk reduction (updated every three years) & actively be working on community goals**
- **Complete community Wildfire Risk Assessment with AFD & keep updated (done every 5 years)**
- **Recertify every year by November deadline**





FIREWISE USA
RESIDENTS REDUCING WILDFIRE RISKS

VOLUNTEER TIME & EXPENSE INVESTMENT EXAMPLES

Improvements/ maintenance within Home Ignition Zones	Education/training Events & Meetings for Residents	Neighborhood Focused Community Projects	Collaboration with Forestry, Fire & Related Experts	Expense Examples
Raking & removal of pine needles,leaves, & ground debris	Attendance at home hardening & defensible space trainings	Debris removal & maintenance of common areas	Consultation time with forestry/fire professionals on areas at risk	Chipper/power equipment purchase/ repair costs
Removal of lower tree branches	Fire-resistant plant species workshop	Door-to-door Firewise canvassing	Community fire risk assessment	Tree removal or thinning costs
Cleaning out leaves, pine needles & debris from gutters	Attendance at evacuation/ preparedness trainings	Vegetation removal along ingress & egress roads	Regional coord. time mentoring residents	Costs for community-wide clean up days

CLOSING REMARKS

- The average time & process to become a recognized Firewise USA community can take anywhere from 6-9 months
- Firewise USA is meant to foster community engagement and for homeowners to be proactive when it comes to preparing for a wildfire, **not as a compliance measure**.
- Most insurance companies require the Firewise USA certificate & boundary map to recognize the property as part of a Firewise community.
- Realtors have a great opportunity to share important local emergency preparedness information, Firewise USA info & contacts for wildfire related experts, organizations and/or programs such as Amador Fire Protection District, Amador Fire Safe Council & NFPA's Firewise USA program with new or current home/property owners.



FIREWISE USA RESOURCES



AMADOR FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Firewise Coordinator: Kayla Dale

Email: kdale@amadorcounty.gov

Phone: (209) 223-6391

amadorfire.org/residents-reducing-wildfire-risks



AMADOR FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

amadorfiresafe.org/firewise-usa



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa



CAL FIRE - READY FOR WILDFIRE

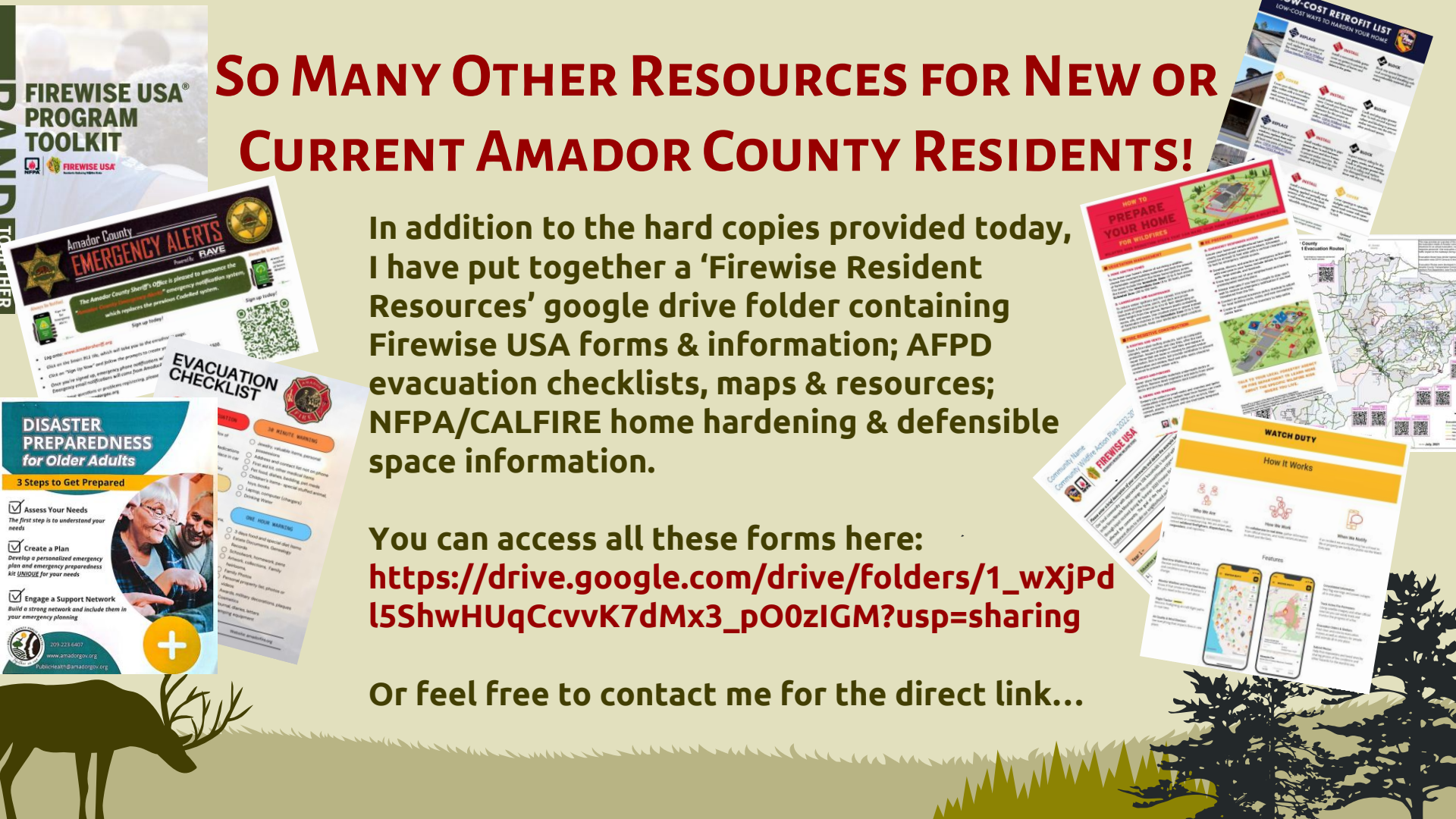
readyforwildfire.org/

So MANY OTHER RESOURCES FOR NEW OR CURRENT AMADOR COUNTY RESIDENTS!

In addition to the hard copies provided today, I have put together a 'Firewise Resident Resources' google drive folder containing Firewise USA forms & information; AFDPD evacuation checklists, maps & resources; NFPA/CALFIRE home hardening & defensible space information.

You can access all these forms here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_wXjPd15ShwHUqCcvvK7dMx3_pO0zIGM?usp=sharing

Or feel free to contact me for the direct link...



THANKS TO SERENA HANGS FOR SHARING THIS PRESENTATION

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), and includes icons by [Flaticon](#), and infographics & images by [Freepik](#)

