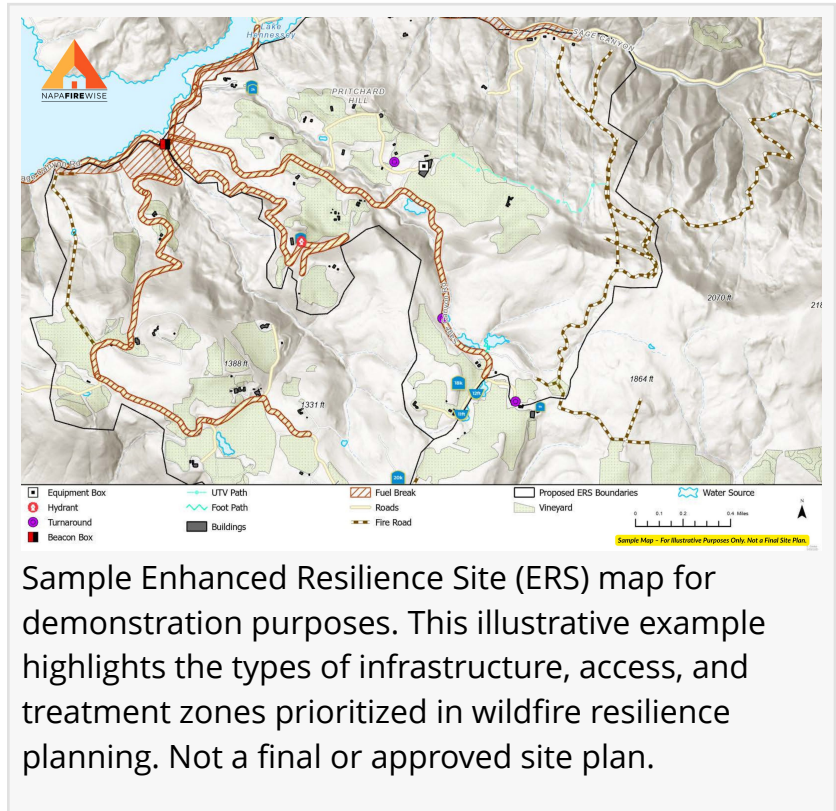


Napa Firewise Launches \$50M Valley Stewards Initiative with \$2.5M in Founding Support

Founding donors champion groundbreaking wildfire resilience strategy in Napa County

NAPA, CA, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Napa Firewise](#) has officially launched the [Valley Stewards Initiative](#), a visionary wildfire resilience program created in partnership with CAL FIRE and supported by more than \$2.5 million in founding contributions. With its sights set on long-term forest health and rapid-fire containment, this first-of-its-kind initiative is redefining how communities confront wildfire risk through bold leadership, private investment, integrated landowner coalitions, and strategies grounded in fire science and proven mitigation practices.



Sample Enhanced Resilience Site (ERS) map for demonstration purposes. This illustrative example highlights the types of infrastructure, access, and treatment zones prioritized in wildfire resilience planning. Not a final or approved site plan.

The Valley Stewards Initiative lays the groundwork for what could become one of the most significant wildfire resilience efforts in California history. At a time when government incentives are declining for this level of proactive land management and insurance carrier coverage remains in flux, these founding donors are leading an integrated strategy without precedent. They're not only funding work on their own properties, but also voluntarily supporting resilience projects across Napa County, including areas with landowners who lack means to act independently. This level of commitment, collaboration, and foresight is virtually unheard of and could serve as a blueprint for wildfire resilience statewide and beyond.

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Joe Nordlinger, CEO of Napa Firewise

“Our early supporters recognize the urgency and the opportunity before us,” said Joe Nordlinger, CEO of Napa Firewise. “They’re not just funding fire prevention. They’re investing powerful data tools for firefighters to improve long-term safety, sustainability, and vitality of our communities. They’re helping us shift the way we address wildfire, moving from fear and reaction to control and preparedness. Our founding Valley Stewards are transforming the way we think about community resilience.”

A New Model of Resilience and Stewardship

At the heart of the initiative are Enhanced Resilience Sites, strategically identified locations prioritized by CAL FIRE, Napa County Fire, and City Fire Districts. These sites are developed for improved response, combining fuel treatment areas, forest health, water storage, access, and fire-ready infrastructure. Once complete, they will be integrated into Tablet Command, a digital wildfire response platform used by all frontline fire personnel. Because many firefighting resources during a wildfire incident come from outside the area, this mapping ensures local, state, and federal responders have real-time access to critical site information, supporting faster, safer, and more effective containment.

Early sitework has already demonstrated impact. At Bergman Estate, vegetation management efforts prior to the 2020 Glass Fire helped slow the fire’s advance and created a safer staging ground for firefighting operations, an early case study in how proactive stewardship can reduce catastrophe. Napa Firewise has also seen positive insurance outcomes for large landowners pursuing Enhanced Resilience Site designation. We believe this approach has the potential to inform the broader insurance market, demonstrating credible, operationally informed mitigation strategies that reduce overall risk and benefit the entire community.

A Vision with Urgency and Momentum

The initiative will develop 100 Enhanced Resilience Sites over the next decade which will include hundreds of participating landowners. By mapping important work that is already completed and assisting landowners to make additional investments, these mapped landscapes become actionable intelligence for firefighters and serve dual roles, protecting people, homes, and critical infrastructure while conserving native ecosystems, supporting wildlife corridors, and



Firefighters and land managers review digital maps during a prescribed burn operation in Napa County. Technology-supported planning is a critical component of the Valley Stewards Initiative.

safeguarding watersheds essential to agriculture and residential life.

Achieving this vision will require approximately \$50 million over the next decade. Of that, \$22.5 million is being raised through philanthropic contributions via the Valley Stewards Fund. Landowners with financial capacity are incented to fund work on their own properties, although many properties across Napa County lack the financial means to complete this work on their own, which is why the Valley Stewards Fund was created. This arrangement demonstrates a powerful model of private leadership for public good.

To date, just over 10 percent of the \$22.5 million goal has been raised, including a direct award from CAL FIRE. The annual fundraising target is \$2.25 million, and momentum continues to build.

“This is about more than our land. It’s about our legacy,” said Shari Staglin. “We’re proud to support an initiative that’s combining science, urgency, and community action.”

Founding Valley Stewards

Founding Stewards are being recognized for their extraordinary leadership and vision in the launch year. Their pioneering support is building a framework for Napa’s future by accelerating resilience investments before government incentives, before mandates, and without precedent. They are setting the bar for what local, land-based climate action can look like. We’d like to highlight our growing list of Founding Valley Stewards.

Major Contributors Include

\$100,000 and above:

Shari and Garen Staglin

John and Sandi Thompson

Schlein Family

Bergman Estate

[Napa Valley Vintners](#)

Steve Merrill

\$50,000 and above:

JDL Ag Fund

Hudson Ranch Napa Valley

Michael Uytengsu

Napa Valley Community Foundation

Pacaso

\$25,000 and above:

Alpha Omega Winery

Anne and Chuck McMinn
Annette and Doug Shafer
Bart and Daphne Araujo
Circle R Ranch & Vineyards
Darioush Winery
Laurel Lagenaur
Phillips Family Farming LLC
PG&E
Senator Bill Dodd
The E. Richard Jones Family Foundation
Treasury Wine Estates

Additional Founding Stewards:

Bob Fiddaman, Bruce and Rosemary Cakebread, Cakebread Cellars, Davis Nemerever Foundation, David and Linda Jenkins, Dennis and Lisa Cakebread, Greg Flynn, Jim Keller, Kevin Coleman, Linda and Paul Cantey, Paul and Tara Heiselman, Simon Guendelman, The Howard Backen Estate on Pritchard Hill, Tom and Theresa Scripps, Vern and Betty Erickson

Napa Valley Vintners Champion Early Strategy

The Napa Valley Vintners (NVV) was among the earliest advocates of the Valley Stewards Initiative, recognizing the urgent need for landscape-scale wildfire resilience to protect Napa's agricultural economy and community. From the beginning, NVV prioritized wildfire mitigation as a critical, long-term investment, providing early funding and advocacy that helped build momentum for countywide action. Their leadership continues to underscore the vital role of the wine industry in advancing meaningful, community-driven solutions.

A New Path Forward

Wildfire risk is complex and evolving, but it is not insurmountable. Napa Firewise believes the Valley Stewards Initiative will not only create safer landscapes and faster emergency response, but it will also restore insurability, support the local economy, and reshape how communities live with wildfire.

"Fire is a unique peril in that we are only as resilient as our neighbor. We are proving that the community has power, over our fuels, over our response, and over our future," said Nordlinger. "This is how we begin to shift from crisis to control."

To learn more or become a steward, visit www.napafirewise.org/Valleystewards

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