

*Unit Strategic Fire Plan*  
*Ventura County Fire Protection*  
*District*



July 5, 2012

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**SIGNATURES**

**Unit Strategic Fire Plan developed for Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD)**

This Plan:

- Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties, Federal, State, City, and County agencies within the Unit have been consulted and are listed in the plan.
- Identifies and prioritizes pre fire and post fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk within the Unit.
- Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only. It is the responsibility of those implementing the projects to ensure that all environmental compliance and permitting processes are met as necessary.

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**Unit Chief**  
Mark Lorenzen

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**Date**

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**Assistant Chief**  
Darrell Ralston

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**Date**

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**Pre-Fire Engineer**  
Brendan Ripley

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**Date**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ventura County Fire Department is an all-risk, full-service department, composed of 564 men and women. We proudly provide fire protection, medical aid, rescue, hazardous material response, and a variety of other services to the public. The Ventura County Fire Department's services are built around our mission of responding to the dynamic public safety needs of our diverse community.

We partner with our community to identify risks and empower people with the tools to prepare and protect themselves. As part of that responsibility, we enforce codes and regulations, review more than 2,800 plans a year, inspect more than 5,000 homes and businesses a year, and issue roughly 250 fire code permits and 445 film permits a year. We also work with more than 14,000 residents each year to create defensible space through our Fire Hazard Reduction Program and conduct hundreds of public education, fire prevention and safety programs for children, adults and seniors. In addition to the activities by the Fire Prevention Bureau, fire station personnel conduct over 1,100 fire safety inspections a year.

### **THE CALIFORNIA FIRE PLAN**

The State Board of Forestry and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) have drafted a comprehensive update of the fire plan for wildland fire protection in California. The planning process defines a level of service measurement, considers assets at risk, incorporates the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provides for public stakeholder involvement, and creates a fiscal framework for policy analysis. Ventura County Fire Protection District is one of the contract counties that maintains a contractual relationship with CALFIRE and utilizes the California Fire Plan within Ventura County.

**A: UNIT DESCRIPTION**

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (District) has 32 stations serving a population of more than 480,000 in six cities --Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme and Ojai -- and the unincorporated areas of the County. The District operates 4 Administration and Support facilities, 31 first-run fire engines, 1 first-run Quint, 17 reserve fire engines, 11 wildland fire engines, 4 ladder trucks (including 1 reserve), 5 water rescue and fire boat craft, 4 paramedic squads, 14 command vehicles, 9 pieces of heavy equipment (bulldozers, etc.) and 38 other emergency response vehicles. The District responds to an average of about 90 calls for service every day.

**Specialized Units:** Also available for response are specialized units with unique capabilities for incidents involving special hazards or needs. These units are not normally staffed. Personnel with the specialized training and qualifications will move from their regularly assigned units at the fire station and respond with these specialized units as needed. Often, these specialized units will respond and operate in conjunction similar units from other fire departments to form a regional response to incidents that present unique challenges.

**Crash/Rescue** - Crash 50 responds to incidents involving flammable liquids, primarily aircraft crashes, oil field facility fires, flammable liquid storage and transportation emergencies. Crash 50 has the capability of extinguishing flammable liquid fires and securing spills.

**Hazardous Materials (Haz Mat)** - The Haz Mat unit responds to incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, etiological hazards or any other unknown substances. The Haz Mat team will isolate a hazardous area, make entry, and identify and mitigate the hazard. They also perform decontamination of victims and emergency personnel.

**Urban Search & Rescue (USAR)** - The USAR unit responds to technical rescue incidents. These incidents involve victims who are trapped due to earthquakes, building collapse, cave-in, trench collapse, major transportation crash or other incidents where the entrapment exceeds the capabilities of the regular crews. The USAR team will stabilize the scene and make access to and extricate the victim.

**Water Rescue** - The water rescue unit responds to water rescue incidents that exceed the capabilities of land based units. The team is capable of in-water rescue and/or watercraft rescue. The team is trained in swiftwater, ocean and lake rescues.

**Wildland/Aviation** - The Wildland unit provides handcrew and bulldozer resources in the construction of fire control lines on wildland fires. The unit also operates with the Sheriff's Aviation unit to provide helicopter response to fire and rescue incidents.

## **B: UNIT PREPAREDNESS AND FIREFIGHTING CAPABILITIES**

The District takes a dynamic and strenuous approach to the prevention of wildland fires. A key component to the prevention strategy is the Fire Hazard Reduction Program. This program calls for a 100-foot mandatory brush clearance zone from homes located in the wildland urban interface. The mandate is rigorously enforced, although the District typically receives better than 95 percent voluntary compliance.

In conjunction with the Fire Hazard Reduction Program (FHRP), the District employs a comprehensive wildland fire prevention program to educate Ventura County residents on how to prepare their homes against a wildland fire, how to assemble everything they need for an orderly and early evacuation and, finally, how to safely evacuate in advance of the fire. This program is called “Ready, Set, Go!” and consists of a multi-faceted educational approach that includes brochures, videos, community meetings and other methods of communication.

The “Ready, Set, Go!” and FHRP initiatives, along with effective code enforcement efforts, work together to create defensible space, promote fire-safe construction and fire-resistant landscaping, emergency preparedness and ember awareness.

These elements all combine to create tactical advantages for firefighters when the inevitable wildland fires occur. They help to provide homes hardened against wildland fires, with reliable water supplies and access and safety zones.

Defensible space, hardened homes and a population educated on the dangers of wildland fires allow firefighters to protect more property using fewer resources, while reducing the risk of injury to firefighters and civilians and helping to limit property losses.

The sum effect of the Ready Set Go! Program is a force multiplier for active firefighting resources. A single firefighting resource may protect many more structures when preventative measures have been properly employed. In some cases, firefighting resources may not be necessary at all, thus freeing them for other uses.

## **Fire Suppression**

The most effective time to control a wildfire is in the incipient stages when intensities are lower and the perimeter is short. The combined resource attack is a coordinated suppression effort including ground assets (engines, crews and dozers), aviation assets (fixed and rotary wing), passive fire protection measures, and command elements. Using in-place passive fire protection systems, incident commanders weave the various active fire suppression assets into an aggressive and coordinated firefighting effort.

Aggressive prevention and suppression policies can artificially age fuel beds to a point of uncontrollable volatility. Fuel beds are managed to reduce the age and expanses of volatile fuel and provide barriers between values at risk and large areas of hazardous fuel. Particular attention is given to those areas in fuel beds that are adjacent to the interface.

One of the first steps in the hazard assessment process is the development of vegetation coverage maps and corresponding fuel rankings. The initial evaluation begins with identifying the vegetative communities that exist within the County. Having established a base from which to evaluate the available fuels, additional efforts are made to evaluate the hazards generated by these fuels in combination with other factors. The rankings depicted on Hazard Fuels Ranking Maps are based on a combination of factors that affect fire behavior, including the fuel type, slope and presence of ladder and crown fuels.

As part of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan (Fire Plan), methodology was developed for analyzing Assets at Risk (AAR). For each AAR, geographic areas will be ranked based on the potential impacts of a large fire event. This provides a series of displays of spatial rankings to assist in the identification of high value areas. Additional data related to fuels, weather, and level of service will be used to rank areas in terms of the likelihood or risk of a large fire event. This data provides the basis for identification of high value/high risk areas. As such, the analysis serves as a pointer to where pre-fire projects might have the highest benefit in terms of reduction of potential damages.

Assets susceptible to fire damage are identified in the Fire Plan as air quality, range, recreation, structures, timber, water and watersheds, wildlife and habitat, and other resources (cultural, historic, and scenic). For purposes of this plan, greater weight was given to the protection of structures and infrastructure. Additional assessment maps will be available to assist in locating future pre-fire projects once adequate data is available to evaluate ignition starts and successes and severe fire weather patterns.

**SECTION II: COLLABORATION**

**A: COMMUNITY / AGENCIES / FIRE SAFE COUNCILS**

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan are included in the following table. Their organization and title are indicated below:

**Plan Development Team:**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative (title)</b>
Cal Fire PFE	Region Chief
Cal Fire, SLO	Unit Chief
California Department of Fish and Game	Ed Pert, Regional Manager
California Highway Patrol	J.A. Farrow
Southern California Edison	
Fillmore Fire Department	Rigo Landeros
Local Arborist	
Local Businesses	
City Manager Camarillo	Bruce Feng
City Manager Fillmore	Gayle Washburn
City Manager Moorpark	Steven Kueny
City Manager Ojai	Robert Clark
City Manager Oxnard	Edmund Sotelo
City Manager Port Hueneme	David Norman
City Manager Santa Paula	Jaime Fontes
City Manager Simi Valley	Mike Sedell
City Manager Thousand Oaks	Scott Mitnick
City Manager Ventura	Rick Cole
Local Land Owners	
Local Ranchers	Bud Sloan
Local Resource Conservation District	Marty Melvin, Executive Officer
National Park Service Santa Monica Mts.	Woody Smeck , Director

Natural Resources Advisor, University of CA	
Natural Resources Conservation Services	Glenn Bailey
Public Information Officer, Thousand Oaks	Andrew Powers
Santa Monica Mt. National Recreation Area	Kathryn Kirpatrick, Fire Management
Santa Paula Fire Department	Richard Araiza
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Hopper Mt.	Dan Tappe
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, Southern California Fire Management Zone	Lee Richard, F.M.O
USDA Forest Service, Ojai Ranger District	Div Chief Mike Strauwn
Ventura City Fire Department	Fire Chief Don McPherson,
Ventura City Fire Department	Fire Marshall, Brian Clark
Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner	Henry Gonzales
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	District 1 Supervisor, Steve Bennett
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	District 2 Supervisor, Linda Parks
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	District 3 Supervisor, Kathy Long
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	District 4 Supervisor, Peter Foy
Ventura County Board of Supervisors	District 5 Supervisor, John Zaragoza
Ventura County Farm Bureau	John Krist
Ventura County Fire Protection District	Brendan Ripley, Captain, Pre-Fire Planner
Ventura County Fire Protection District	Mark Lorenzen, Fire Chief
Ventura County Fire Protection District	Fire Marshall, Massoud Araghi
Ventura County Fire Protection District	Public Information Officer, Steve Swindle
Ventura County Sheriff	Geoff Dean
Ventura County Watershed Protection District	Dennis Kanthack
Central Ventura County Fire Safe Council	Richard Atmore, President
Mt. Pinos Communities Fire Safe Council	Janie Tominaga, President
Ojai Fire Safe Council	Will Castagna, Secretary
Ventura-Malibu Fire Safe Council	Thomas White, Chair
Ventu Park Fire Safe Council	Bill Pratt, President

**SECTION III:**

**VALUES AT RISK**

**A: ASSETS AT RISK**

There are approximately 802,983 people, 274,062 housing units and 13,700 businesses within the communities at risk in Ventura County.



## **B: COMMUNITIES AT RISK**

Ventura County is a coastal county in Southern California covering 1,845 square miles. The northern half of the county lies within the Los Padres National Forest, concentrating the population mostly in the southern part of the county. The Los Padres National Forest accounts for 860 square miles of the northern portion of the county, comprising 46% of the county's land area.

With its southern edge on the Pacific Coast of Southern California, Ventura County is bordered by Los Angeles County to the east, Santa Barbara County to the west, and Kern County to the north. Within Ventura County there are 14 at-risk communities, clustered in the southern half of the county.

- Camarillo ( Battalion 1)
- Casa Conejo (Battalion 3)
- Fillmore (Battalion 5)
- Meiners Oaks (Battalion 2)
- Mira Monte (Battalion 2)
- Moorpark (Battalion 4)
- Oak Park (Battalion 3)
- Oak View (Battalion 2)
- Ojai (Battalion 2)
- Piru (Battalion 5)
- Santa Paula (Battalion 5)
- Simi Valley (Battalion 4)
- Thousand Oaks (Battalion 3)
- Ventura (Battalion 2 & 5)

## C: INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGRICULTURE AT RISK



Ventura County offers some unique challenges when dealing with values at risk. The County is home to a booming agriculture community that requires the protection of many different types of Orchards. These orchards are intermixed and often pose a challenge when protecting the various trees. The Ventura County Fire Protection District takes an aggressive stance in protecting these costly investments through Pre-Planning and direct involvement with the Local ranchers.



Critical infrastructure always poses a challenge to Firefighters. Ventura County has numerous distributions systems the range from natural gas pipelines to major electrical carriers. But one unique challenge is the number of oil fields and oil distribution systems within the County. These installations pose significant exposure to wildfire.

**A: FIRE PREVENTION**

We know that wildfire plays an important role in the natural ecosystem within Ventura County. We want to prevent human-caused wildfire and minimize risk to lives, property and infrastructure during the wildfire events that will inevitably occur.

**Risk factors include:**

- Areas with limited or inadequate infrastructure to accommodate access for fire protection equipment or safe evacuation of residents during a wildfire event
- Residential landscapes with dry and/or highly flammable vegetation located close to structures, and inadequate or non-existent defensible space
- Many older homes constructed with flammable building materials and inadequate vent coverings that will allow penetration of embers and flame
- Population with limited education and knowledge regarding fire-safe behaviors and practices
- Communities at risk that have expanded (homes, infrastructure and assets) to the edges of large areas of old-growth chaparral

This plan recommends the following strategies to mitigate these risks:

- Continue existing vegetation management efforts and initiate new projects as appropriate to reduce risks in WUI areas within and around the communities at risk.
- Develop and implement focused community meetings, programs and wildfire safety education efforts directed at structure and property owners in the WUI areas, including topics such as:
  - Prevention of accidental starts
  - Creation and maintenance of defensible space
  - Fire-safe landscaping
  - Reduction of structural ignitability, and
  - Strategies for safety in a wildfire incident, including emergency evacuation in areas with limited infrastructure.

## - ENGINEERING & STRUCTURE IGNITABILITY

### **Causes of Structural Ignition**

Structures in or near a wildfire event can ignite for a number of reasons, including direct exposure to flame, radiant heat, and impact from falling trees that are burning.

However, the most significant cause of structural ignition, by both direct and indirect effect, is burning embers. In the high winds accompanying and often precipitated by wildfires, embers can be flung up to two miles in advance of the flame front. These embers can ignite grass; brush, landscaping and firewood piles, and can accumulate on wooden decks or under eaves. Without proper screening, they can also penetrate into the attic and ignite homes long after the firefight seems to be over.

### **Creating Ignition-Resistant Structures**

A multi-faceted approach is recommended to effectively protect structures from ignition during a wildfire event. A combination of defensible space, fire-resistant materials, and fire-resistant structural design can greatly increase the odds of survival in a wildfire event.

Recommendations to improve structure survivability in a wildfire are:

- **Roofing materials**

The roofing materials must be resistant to the heat from burning embers – a Class A rated roof, self-extinguishing if possible (this means that a burning ember will not burn through the roofing material and catch the wooden roof deck below it on fire). This is a key element of structural defense, without which the structure's risk increases dramatically.

- **Structural extensions and openings**

Awnings, decks and deck covers, patio covers, porches, eaves and open exterior stairways can provide a place where embers accumulate and ignite the extended structure, which can then ignite the main structure. Also, improperly screened attic or

crawlspace vents or soffits can allow embers to enter and ignite the structure.

Chimneys, open windows or single-pane windows that break easily when stressed by the heat of a wildfire can also allow embers to enter.

- Defensible space around the structure

Defensible space, when properly done, eliminates many of the causes of structural ignition. Essentially, it is the trimming and/or removal of potential sources of fuel for fire near the structure, including flammable landscaping, firewood, propane tanks, trees or overhanging limbs, wooden fences, trellises or other easily ignitable wood structures or objects. It should be understood, that “bare ground” landscaping is not the objective here -- rather, the landscape is carefully addressed to trim or remove “ladder fuels” that can carry fire from one shrub or tree to the next, and trees or shrubs that present direct risks due to their proximity to structures are trimmed or removed (with appropriate permits, if required).

- Firefighting equipment access to the structure

Roads, bridges and driveways leading to a structure must be adequate in width, overhead clearance and structural strength to accommodate firefighting equipment. Education is an important aspect of creating ignition-resistant homes and structures within the communities at risk. An outreach program to homeowners, as well as educational and reference materials for contractors, builders and architects are recommended.

## - INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Wildfires are now a year-round reality in Ventura County. This means that both firefighters and residents have to be prepared against the threat from brush fires at all times. Firefighters train hard and make countless preparations to be ready for a wildfire. Residents need to do the same. Successfully preparing for a wildfire requires you to

take personal responsibility for protecting yourself, your family and your property.

The Ventura County Fire Department takes every precaution to help protect you and your property from a wildfire. But the reality is, during a major wildfire, there will simply not be enough fire engines or firefighters to defend every home, especially during the first hours of a major wildfire, so you must become part of the solution.

If your home borders a natural area, what firefighters call the Wildland Urban Interface, you are directly at risk from a wildfire. And, if you live within one mile of a natural area, you live in the Ember Zone. Homes in the Ember Zone are at risk from wind-driven embers from a wildfire. Recent fires have resulted in entire neighborhoods being destroyed by fires started by embers, not the wildfire itself.

Through our program of “**Ready, Set, Go!**” you will learn about the Ember Zone and how to retrofit your home or ranch with features that protect it from embers. We’ll show you the importance of having defensible space around your home and the preparations you need to make so you can leave early, evacuating before the fire reaches you.

Since agriculture is a key component in the economy of Ventura County. We have designed a “Ready Set Go!” program for the agricultural community. The crops and livestock grown by the county’s farmers, ranchers and growers have an annual value of almost \$2 billion. The farms and ranches employ thousands of people and the industries that support them – packing houses, trucking companies and others – employ thousands more. Protecting the county’s agricultural assets is a key goal of the Ventura County Fire Department. Wildfire is a major threat to agriculture in Ventura County. Most of our agricultural properties are located either immediately adjacent to

natural vegetation or within a mile of it, an area we refer to as the Ember Zone. These properties are all at risk from the flaming front of an advancing wildfire or the embers it produces.

Fire is, and always has been, a natural part of the beautiful area where we've chosen to live. Wildfires, fueled by a build-up of dry vegetation and driven by hot, dry winds, are extremely dangerous and almost impossible to control. Many residents have built their homes and landscaped without fully understanding the impact a fire could have on them. This publication will help you prepare your home so you can leave early, confident that you've done everything you can reasonably do to protect your home.

It's not a question of if, but when, the next wildfire will occur. That's why the most important person protecting your life and property is not a firefighter, but you. With advance planning and preparation, you can dramatically increase your safety and the survivability of your property.

Defensible space is the required space between a structure and the wildland area that, under normal conditions, creates a sufficient buffer to slow or halt the spread of wildfire to a structure. It protects the home from igniting due to direct flame or radiant heat. Defensible space is essential for structure survivability during wildfire conditions.

This can be broken down into 2 zones:

Zone One extends 30 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

- Remove all dead or dying vegetation.
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet from structures and other trees.
- Remove leaf litter (dry leaves/pine needles) from yard, roof and rain gutters.
- Relocate woodpiles or other combustible materials into Zone Two.
- Remove combustible material and vegetation from around and under decks.
- Remove or prune vegetation near windows.

- Remove “ladder fuels” (low-level vegetation that allows the fire to spread from the ground to the tree canopy). Create a separation between low-level vegetation and tree branches. This can be done by reducing the height of low-level vegetation and/or trimming low tree branches.

Zone Two extends 30 to 100 feet out from buildings, structures and decks.

You can minimize the chance of fire jumping from plant to plant by removing dead material and removing and/or thinning vegetation. The minimum spacing between vegetation is three times the dimension of the plant.

- Remove “ladder fuels.”
- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Trim tree canopies regularly to keep their branches a minimum of 10 feet away from other trees.

## **Informational Websites and Documents**

<http://fire.countyofventura.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=F16UdBq8SxM%3d&tabid=231> “Ready Set Go!”

<http://fire.countyofventura.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=xDCkAK3DngE%3d&tabid=231> “Wildfire Preparedness for Farmers, Ranchers and Growers -

<http://fire.countyofventura.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=C0KWSbjDLM%3d&tabid=231> “Ready, Set, Go for Trail Users -

## **B: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**

### **Vegetation Management Methods**

When necessary, removal and/or modification of vegetation that, if ignited, would present risks to homes, infrastructure and assets within the communities at risk can be accomplished in several ways, including hand crews, mechanized equipment, grazing, herbicides and prescribed burns. Vegetation management projects are oftentimes accomplished using a combination of these techniques.



Regardless of the techniques used, the nature of the vegetation in Ventura County assures that unlike the forests in northern areas, the chaparral prevalent here will quickly grow back. As a result, in addition to the treatments themselves, successful vegetation management projects include planning, oversight and ongoing maintenance.

Proper planning of vegetation management projects includes careful consideration of all environmental, cultural and historical preservation aspects. Each of these areas needs to be addressed, and proper permits, approvals and permissions acquired before any work is done on the ground. This process is engaged on a project by project basis, taking into consideration the project's activities, geographic location and seasonal timeline.

### **Wildfire Safety Project Priorities**

While any wildfire protection project is important, the realities of funding constraints require priorities to be established among types of projects. Given the information within this document that is specific to Ventura County, the types of projects that are determined to be of highest priority, in priority order, are:

1. Vegetation management projects where a potential wildfire threatens life, property, agricultural assets, critical infrastructure and/or emergency ingress/egress in and around the communities at risk and unincorporated areas of the county.
2. Vegetation management projects where a potential wildfire threatens watersheds, riparian areas or other sensitive ecosystems; or high-traffic recreation areas.
3. Wildfire Safety Education Programs that provide homeowners, farmers, ranchers and other community members with information on defensible space, fire-resistant landscaping, emergency procedures, home defense and related topics; and Planning or Preparedness Projects that improve citizen and/or firefighter safety in the event of a wildfire.

#### Brush Clearance Guide

##### Landscape (Ornamental)

- Remove all flammable vegetation and other combustible growth within 100 feet of any structure. Single trees, ornamental shrubbery or cultivated ground covers may be permitted provided they are maintained in a manner that they do not readily transmit fire from native vegetation to the structure.
- Special Attention should be given to the use and maintenance of ornamental plants known or thought to be high hazard combustible plants when used in close proximity to structures. Some of these known plants are, but not limited to Acacia, Cedar, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Juniper, Pine, and Pampas Grass. Planting of ornamentals should be properly maintained and should not be planted in mass plantings and groups. They should not be planted in such a manner that they could transmit fire from the native brush to the structure.
- The Ventura County Fire Department is strongly recommending an increase in brush clearance from 100' to 200' if any of the following apply to your property: House located on/or at the top of a slope, old brush not recently burned, east or south facing aspect, wood shake roof, limited access for Fire Department, ornamental shrubbery next to house, older construction, historical fire pattern in

your area, heavy chaparral fuels, limited or private water supply, or more than 5 miles from a Fire Station.

- Space tree canopies and shrubs a minimum of 15' from other shrubs or trees. All trees and shrubs need to be trimmed up off the ground 2 feet or 1/3 the height of the tree which ever is less. Maintain all plants by regularly removing all dead fall and litter.

#### Yard Maintenance

- Stack wood at least 30 feet from structures; remove flammable vegetation within 10 feet of woodpile.
- Remove all stacks of construction materials, pine needles, leaves and debris.
- Locate fixed butane/propane tanks at least 10 feet from any structure and give them 10 feet of brush clearance.

#### Roof Maintenance

- Remove dead branches overhanging your roof.
- Clean all dead leaves from your roof and rain gutters.
- Cover your chimney outlet with a spark arrestor consisting of a metal or non-flammable screen of ½ inch or smaller.

## **SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS**

### **A: DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS**

The Five-Year Vegetation Management Plan of the Ventura County Fire Department (commonly referred to as the Five-Year Burn Plan) was developed as a planning tool to assist in the overall strategic objective of modifying hazardous fuels within the county. Because vegetation management planning is dynamic by nature, this plan is intended to be a living document subject to changes caused by many variables. These variables include, but are not limited to, change in fuels due to natural fires, residential and commercial development into the interface areas, special governmental funding programs for hazardous fuels reduction, and continued participation by public and private landowners.

Six prescribed fire benefits, as defined by Cal Fire's Vegetation Management Program, were evaluated to prioritize specific projects. These benefits are fire hazard reduction, water yield, wildlife habitat improvement, fisheries habitat improvement, air quality improvement, and range forage improvement.

Based on analysis of fire benefits, projects in each identified area are prioritized as high, medium or low. Projects having benefits other than fire hazard reduction are rated as wither a medium or low priority based on the value of the other derive benefits. All of our projects have a maintenance component to keep the threat reduced.

Casitas, Ojai, Ventura, Fillmore, South Mountain, Thousands Oaks Malibu Oak Ridge, Simi, and Piru are the ten fuel beds that are identified and serve as the geographical basis from which the plan was developed. Fire history from the past 100 years, assets at risk, fuel types and weather patterns were all considered in the development of this plan.

**APPENDIX A: HIGH PRIORITY PRE FIRE PROJECTS**

Batt	Project Number	Project Name	Status	Estimated Completion Year	Project Type	Net Acres
	Rx-South-029-VNC	Adams Ventura Motorway	M	Ongoing	1	1760
	Rx-3-003-VNC	Broome Ranch	M	Ongoing	2	1150
	NPS #1	Cheeseboro Dennison Park Black Mt.	M	Ongoing	2	900
	Rx-3-025-VNC	Fillmore Front	M	Ongoing	1	1027
	Burn Permit	Fillmore/Santa Paula WUI Haley	M	Ongoing	1	30
	Rx-3-026-VNC	Hopper	M	Ongoing	1	1040
	Rx-3-028-VNC	Kevinton	M	Ongoing	1	377
	Fuel Reduction	NPS Roadside Clearance Oak Park WUI	M	Ongoing	1	
	NPS 9405	Palo Comado	M	Ongoing	3	675
	Rx-3-024-VNC	Shelf Road Sheppard's Flat	M	Ongoing	2	80
	Rx-3-025-VNC	Sisar	M	Ongoing	1	1099
	Rx-3-016-VNC	South Mountain Wildwood/ COSCA	M	Ongoing	1	642
	Hand/Mech. Tx	Reagan Library	M	Ongoing	1	85
		Las Lajas Fuel Break	M	Ongoing	2	
	Fuel Reduction	Corriganville Break KFA	M, A	Ongoing	1	18
	Hand/Mech. Tx	Yerba Buena	M	Ongoing	1	17
		Dos Vientos	M	Ongoing	1	
		Vedder Motorway	M	Ongoing	1	
	Rx-south-041-VNC	San Buenaventura Project	P	2016	1	43,362
	TRA #1	Matillija TRA	M	Ongoing	1	50

**Status Guide:** A = Active, P = Planning, C = Completed, O = Ongoing, M = Maintenance.



CAL FIRE Units were asked to identify two or more priority objectives under each goal in the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan for California. The Units' priorities are identified in bold and a measurement criteria are provided for each of the identified objectives. Throughout the next year, the Units will implement the identified priorities and report on the measurement criteria by June 2012. The priority objectives are displayed under three headings:

**A. SACRAMENTO PROGRAMS OR COMMITTEE ONLY**

**B. SACRAMENTO PROGRAMS AND STAFF OR COMMITTEE, REGIONS AND UNITS**

**C. UNITS ONLY**

These categories are not intended to exclude Units from addressing priority objectives in any of the three categories, they are only recommendations.

**A. SACRAMENTO PROGRAMS OR COMMITTEE ONLY**

Goal 1: Identify and evaluate wildland fire hazards and recognize life, property and natural resource assets at risk, including watershed, habitat, social and other values of functioning ecosystems. Facilitate the sharing of all analyses and data collection across all ownerships for consistency in type and kind.

Objectives:

- a) **Identify and provide appropriate automated tools to facilitate the collection, analysis and consistent presentation of datasets.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE shall establish policy that specifies spatial databases covering all forest and rangeland to not be older than 10 years. Include minimum requirements for spatial databases. Follow the coordinated work schedule with the USDA Forest Service to maintain cost effective collection and processing of data.*

Goal 2: Articulate and promote the concept of land use planning as it relates to fire risk and individual landowner objectives and responsibilities.

Objectives:

- a) **Identify the minimum key elements necessary to achieve a fire safe community, and incorporate these elements into land use planning, CWPPs and regional, county and Unit fire plans.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE to create a working committee with CAL Chiefs, USDA Forest Service and other key organizations to develop, monitor and refine elements of fire safe community, including evacuation plans. The Committee shall review existing templates for FIREWISE Assessments, CWPPs, fire plans and land use plans; identify the common elements and approaches for better integration. Utilize fire*

*protection, planning and engineering expertise to identify the key elements (from existing templates) necessary for fire safe communities. Once agreed upon, these key elements will then be used as a checklist to guide consistency in fire safe planning efforts across jurisdictions. At a minimum, annually report to the Board on results.*

Goal 3: Support and participate in the collaborative development and implementation of wildland fire protection plans and other local, county and regional plans that address fire protection and landowner objectives.

Objectives:

- a) **Establish a working group, consisting of Board members and Departmental staff, to develop minimum standard elements for inclusion in Unit fire plans.**
- b) **Emphasize coordination of Unit fire plans with community wildfire protection plans to encourage and support one consistent approach. Develop county or regional fire plans by bringing together community-based groups, such as fire safe councils and affected fire and land management agencies.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *These measurement criteria meets objectives a and b. CAL FIRE to revise the template for the Unit fire plans to incorporate the goals and objectives of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan. During the revision, the template for a CWPP will be jointly reviewed in order to reduce duplication of fire planning efforts. The key elements identified through the process identified in Goal 2, Objective b will also be incorporated into the Unit fire plan/CWPP.*

- c) **Create and support venues in which individual community members can be actively involved in local fire safe councils, community emergency response teams, FIREWISE and other community-based efforts to develop readiness plans and educate landowners to mitigate the risks and effects of wildland fire.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *The California Fire Alliance to work with the California and local FSCs to develop venues (e.g., workshops) that assist landowners with readiness planning and education. CAL FIRE, California Fire Alliance Liaison to report to the Board annually on Alliance activities.*

Goal 4: Increase awareness, knowledge and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and other fuels reduction activities, fire prevention and fire safe building standards.

Objectives:

- a) **Educate landowners, residents and business owners about the risks and their incumbent responsibilities of living in the wildlands, including applicable regulations, prevention measures and preplanning activities.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *In coordination with the CAL FIRE Communications Program, the USDA Forest Service and local fire agencies, University of California and county cooperative extension offices, CAL FIRE to collect information on methods and effectiveness of existing outreach. Complete the information collection within year one of adoption of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan. Develop a common set of measures to assess CAL FIRE efforts, build those into Unit fire plans and report to the Board. Report the progress of implementation at the end of year two.*

Goal 5: Develop a method to integrate fire and fuels management practices with landowner priorities and multiple jurisdictional efforts within local, state and federal responsibility areas.

Objectives:

- b) **Work to remove regulatory barriers that limit hazardous fuels reduction activities.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *In conjunction with the Resource Protection Committee, CAL FIRE will develop an approach to identifying and recommending ways to address regulatory and other barriers that limit hazardous fuels reduction activities. This approach should include consultation with the Board's Interagency Forestry Working Group and with other agencies, such as the USDA Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Energy Commission, the Department of Fish and Game, regional water quality control boards, local government and the public. Finish this compilation within the first year of adoption of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan. Based on barriers identified and recommendations for change, report to the Board starting in the second year.*

Goal 6: Determine the level of fire suppression resources necessary to protect the values and assets at risk identified during planning processes.

Objectives:

- e) **Initiate and maintain cooperative fire protection agreements with local, state and federal partners that value the importance of an integrated, cooperative, regional fire protection system and deliver efficient and cost effective emergency response capabilities beneficial to all stakeholders.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE to identify the number and effectiveness of agreements and partnerships. In conjunction with the Board's Resource Protection Committee, CAL FIRE will develop suggested measures of effectiveness of cooperative agreements. This should be in collaboration with its partners, completed within 18 months of adoption of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan and reported to the Board.*

- i) **Provide for succession planning and employee development at all levels within CAL FIRE to maintain emergency response leadership capabilities, administrative management skills and pre-fire planning expertise.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE to revise and update the information developed in the 2005 Succession Planning meetings. This work should be completed within two years of the adoption of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan, with annual reporting to the Board based on issues raised, including identification of key training needs, funding available and expenditures on the training program, content of Academy curricula, number of students requesting and/or able to take classes at the Academy, local community college or other educational outlets.*

## **B. SACRAMENTO PROGRAMS AND STAFF OR COMMITTEE, REGIONS AND UNITS**

Goal 1: Identify and evaluate wildland fire hazards and recognize life, property and natural resource assets at risk, including watershed, habitat, social and other values of functioning ecosystems. Facilitate the sharing of all analyses and data collection across all ownerships for consistency in type and kind.

Objectives:

- b) Engage and participate with local stakeholder groups (i.e., fire safe councils and others) to validate and prioritize the assets at risk.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE shall designate personnel as advisors/liaisons to the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) and to each county or regional FSC. The advisors will be responsible for reporting activities to the Unit and Region. The advisor to the CFSC will report to the Board. Annual reporting of time-spent working will be displayed in hours at the Unit, Region and Headquarters level. Reporting will include activities with local FSCs, communities, watershed groups or others defining hazards and risk of wildfire and documenting these in a CWPP or Unit fire plan. Emphasize the products developed in Goal 3, Objective b. Advisors will emphasize using standard guidelines and templates for consistency throughout the state.*

Goal 2: Articulate and promote the concept of land use planning as it relates to fire risk and individual landowner objectives and responsibilities.

Objectives:

- b) Assist the appropriate governmental bodies in the development of a comprehensive set of wildland and wildland urban interface (WUI) protection policies for inclusion in each county general plan or other appropriate local land use planning documents.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE to appoint a committee including Unit, Region, Headquarters and Contract County representatives. Develop a work plan that identifies key elements of improving WUI strategies, including planning. Reporting should be based on elements identified and priorities for addressing them.*

*Under the Board's Resource Protection Committee, review existing Board policies as they relate to wildland fire and the relevance (ease of use, applicability) to incorporation in local general plans. Identify areas of possible improvement and update policies.*

*Track and report hours at the Unit, Region and Headquarters level spent in reviewing plans and projects; number of local Board/Council, Planning Commission meetings and/or meetings with other cooperators.*

Goal 4: Increase awareness, knowledge and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and other fuels reduction activities, fire prevention and fire safe building standards.

Objectives:

- c) **Increase the number and effectiveness of defensible space inspections and promote an increasing level of compliance with defensible space laws and regulations through the use of CAL FIRE staffing as available, public and private organizations, and alternative inspection methods.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE to form an advisory committee to review PRC §4291 regulations and make recommendations to the Board that will provide for consistency, streamlining and clarification of existing regulations. The Committee shall develop criteria to increase the number and effectiveness of defensible space inspections. The Committee will develop an implementation plan for the recommendations and report on progress to the Board*

Goal 7: Address post-fire responsibilities for natural resource recovery, including watershed protection reforestation, and ecosystem restoration.

Objectives:

- a) **Encourage rapid post-fire assessment, as appropriate, and project implementation to minimize flooding, protect water quality, limit sediment flows and reduce other risks on all land ownerships impacted by wildland fire.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *Provide training for CAL FIRE personnel on suppression repair and damage assessment procedures. Develop standard formats and documentation templates for these assessments. Identify and use the findings to reduce the impacts of fire suppression on the landscape and improve resiliency of assets at risk from wildfire.*

## C. UNITS ONLY

Goal 5: Develop a method to integrate fire and fuels management practices with landowner priorities and multiple jurisdictional efforts within local, state and federal responsibility areas.

Objectives:

- h) Support the availability and utilization of CAL FIRE hand crews and other CAL FIRE resources, as well as public and private sector resources, for fuels management activities, including ongoing maintenance.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE will report to the Board on the number of crews available each year with a description of projects, including acres treated, completed by each Unit. Report the number of agreements and/or amount of funding and acres treated that involve grants or partnerships with federal agencies, resource conservation districts, local FSCs, fire districts, watershed groups or other non-profit or community groups that support the ability to carry out fuels reduction projects.*

Goal 7: Address post-fire responsibilities for natural resource recovery, including watershed protection reforestation, and ecosystem restoration.

Objectives:

- e) Assist landowners and local government in the evaluation of the need to retain and utilize features (e.g., roads, firelines, water sources) developed during a fire suppression effort, taking into consideration those identified in previous planning efforts.**

**Measurement Criteria:** *CAL FIRE (utilizing Incident Command Teams) to schedule a post-fire review of the planning documents that cover the area affected by the fire. Review the goals, objectives and projects (implemented and planned) to identify successes and failures. Review the features developed during the fire and incorporate them into the existing Unit fire plan documents. This objective will only be reported when a fire occurs in an area with an existing Unit fire plan document. Incident command teams may conduct this post fire assessment under the direction of the Unit Chief.*

## **D. ADDITIONAL UNIT SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

### ***SUMMARY***

The Ventura County Fire Protection District is responsible for wildland fire protection within Ventura County under policies set forth by the Board of Directors. The elements of effective protection are:

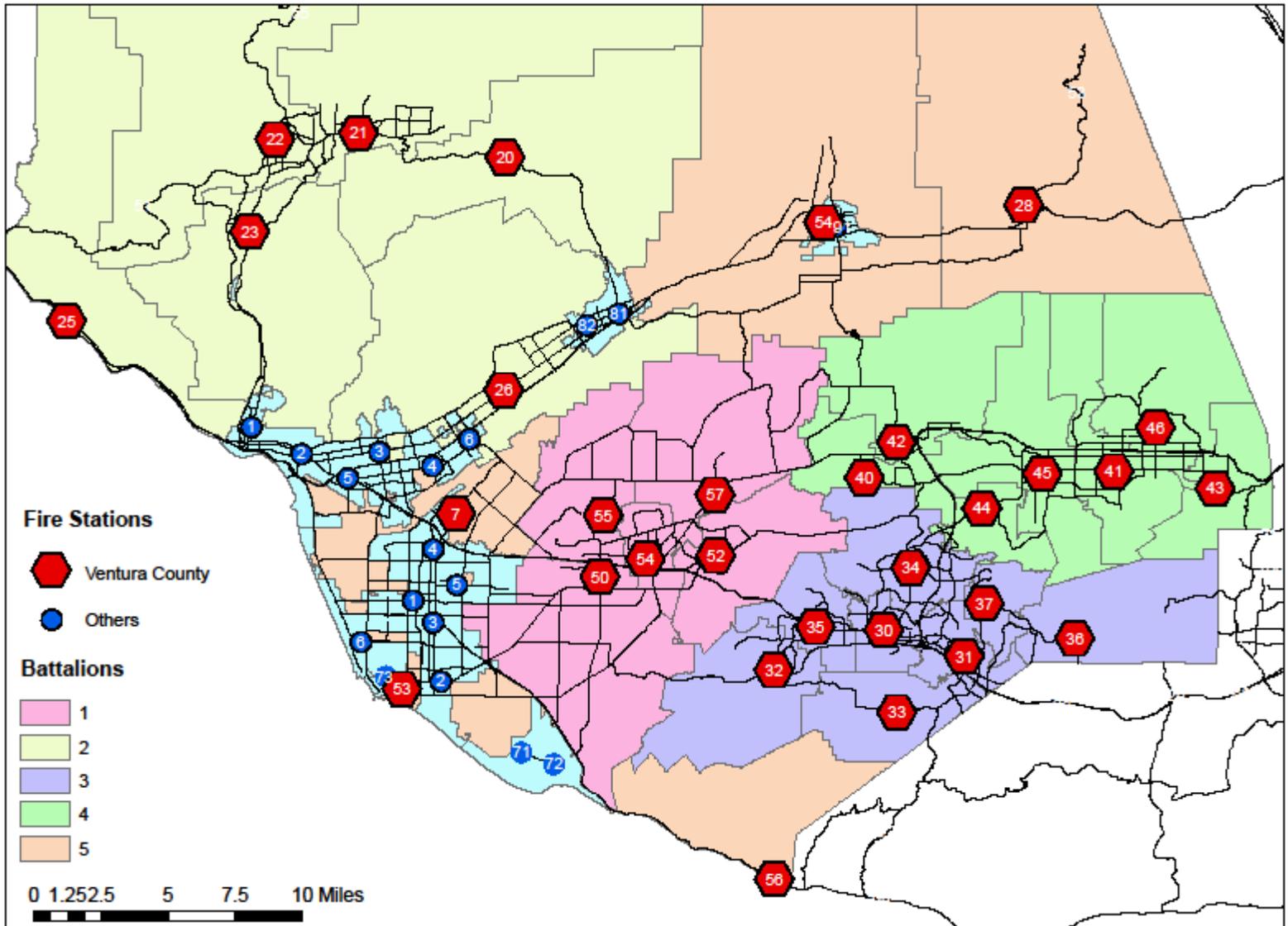
- Comprehensive Planning
- Ongoing Community Education
- Vigorous Prevention
- Aggressive Fire Suppression

With the proper mix of these elements, values at risk within Ventura County can be effectively and economically protected from the risks of wildfire.

EXHIBITS:

MAPS

Battalion Maps/Unit Maps

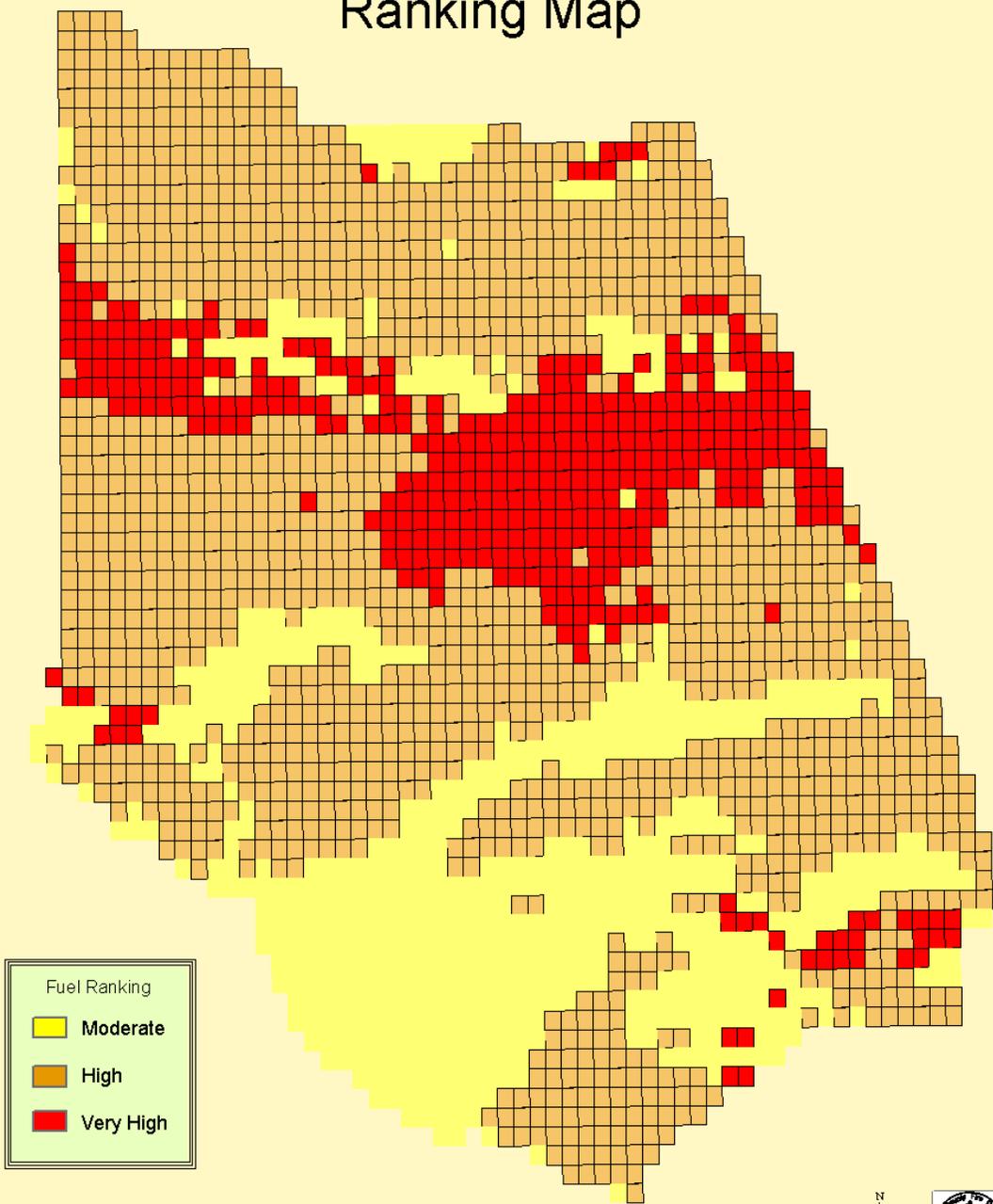


Ventura County Fire Department

Ventura County Fire GIS  
December 09, 2010

Ventura County Fire GIS

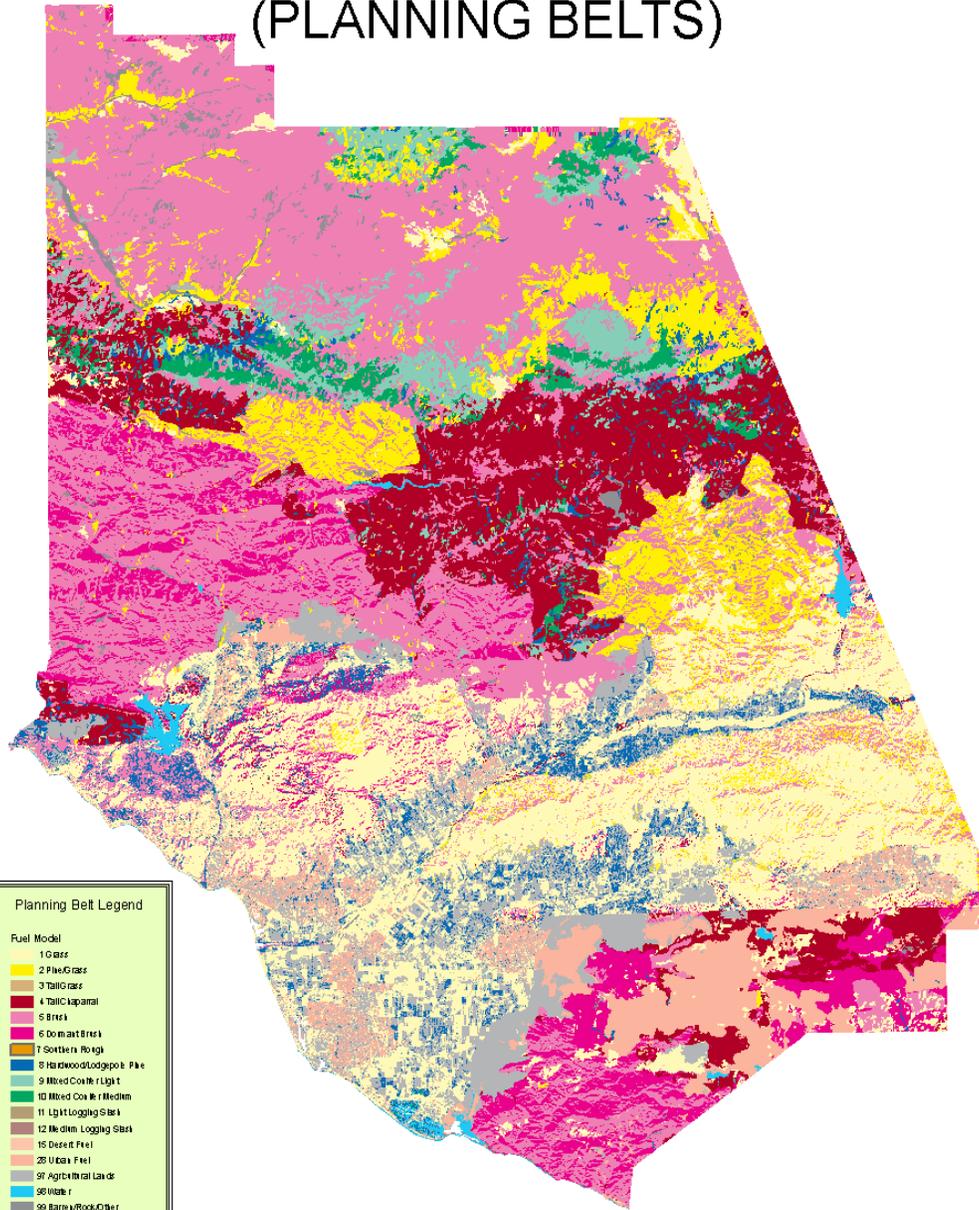
# HAZARD FUELS Ranking Map



0 2 4 8 12  
Miles

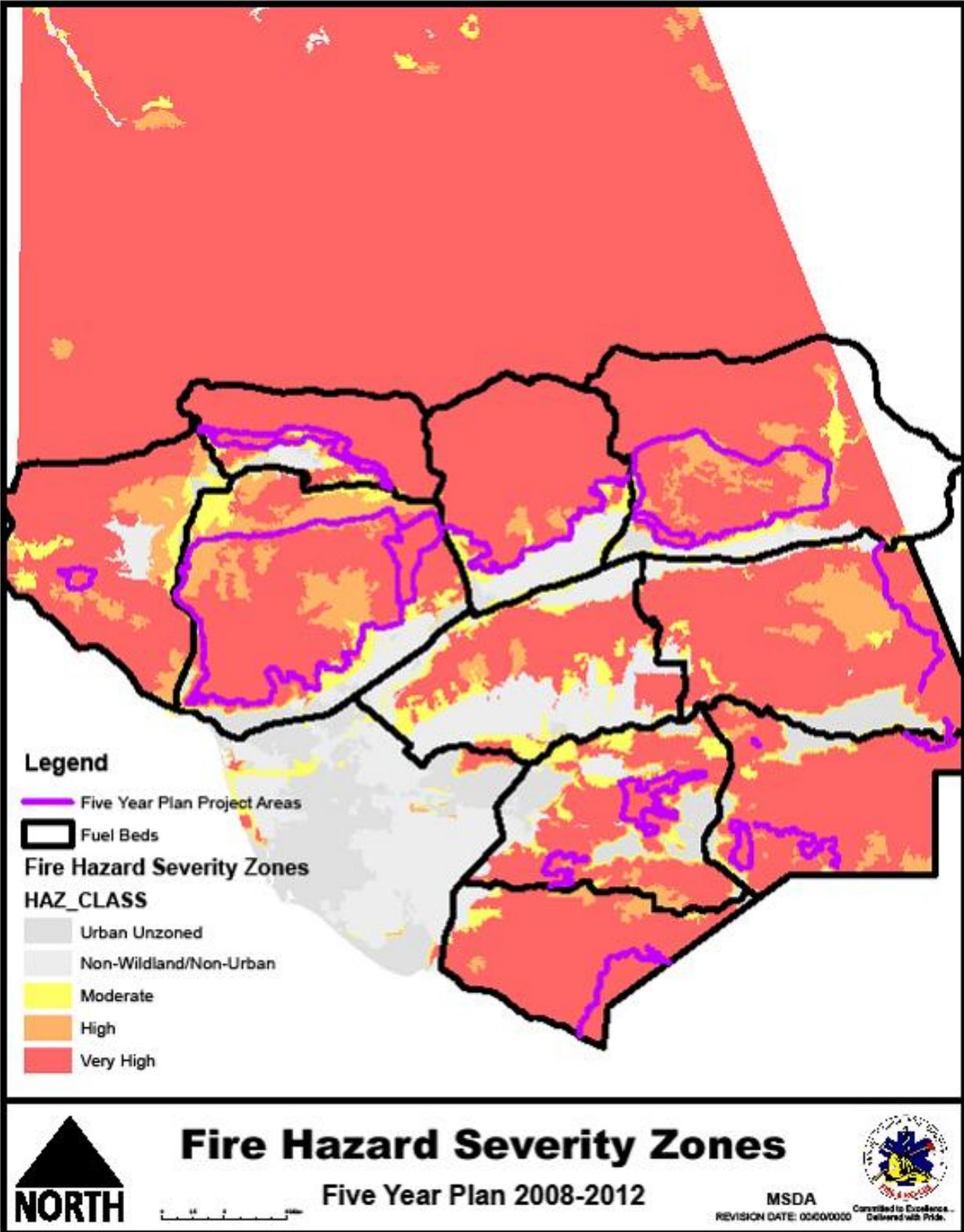


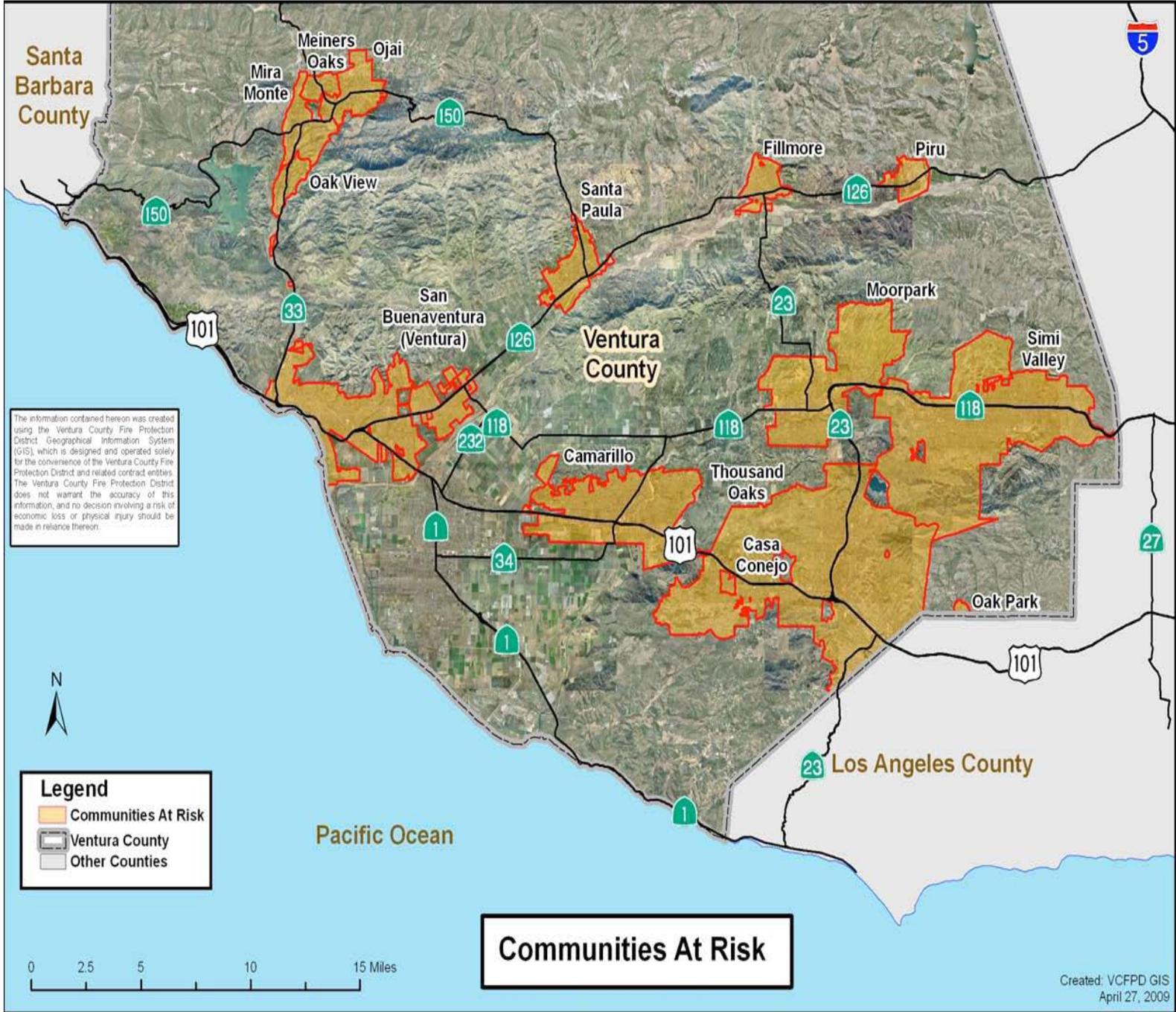
# VEGETATION COMMUNITIES (PLANNING BELTS)



0 2 4 8 12 Miles







The information contained herein was created using the Ventura County Fire Protection District Geographical Information System (GIS), which is designed and operated solely for the convenience of the Ventura County Fire Protection District and related contract entities. The Ventura County Fire Protection District does not warrant the accuracy of this information, and no decision involving a risk of economic loss or physical injury should be made in reliance thereon.



### **Goals and Objectives**

The overall goal is to reduce total cost and losses from wildland fire in Ventura County by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions and increased initial attack success. With this in mind, the Ventura County Fire Protection District will support the use of the California Fire Plan.

### **The California Fire Plan has five strategic objectives:**

1. To create wildfire protection zones that reduces the risks to citizens and firefighters.
2. To assess all wild lands. Analyses will include all wildland fire service providers – federal, state, local government and private. The analysis will identify high risk, high value areas, and develop information on and determine who is responsible, who is responding, and who is paying for wildland fire emergencies.
3. To analyze and identify key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes of public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total cost and losses by increasing the fire protection system effectiveness.
4. To have a strong fiscal policy focus and monitor the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
5. To translate these analyses into public policy.

## Fire Safe Councils Contacts:

Fire Safe Councils utilize the combined expertise, resources and distribution channels of its members, the Fire Safe Councils fulfill its mission to preserve Ventura County's natural and manmade resources by mobilizing all residences to make their homes, neighborhoods and community's fire safe.

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