



Description of the County and the Fire Protection District

Ventura County Overview

Ventura County was formed in 1873 from Santa Barbara County and is home to beautiful, livable communities with unique characteristics. Many have names that reflect the native Chumash Indian, Spanish and Mexican heritage of the area. Early Spanish settlers described the area as the “land of everlasting summers” and named the region “San Buenaventura”, which means “good fortune.” The 10 incorporated cities in Ventura County are Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Ojai, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, San Buenaventura (Ventura), Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks.

Each city has distinct features that make their communities stand out. From the natural beauty of the terrain to mild climates with diverse recreational opportunities, the cities offer safe neighborhoods and family-oriented communities that make for a satisfying lifestyle.

Ventura County Geography

- Covers an area of 1,873 square miles, including 43 miles of coastline.
- Located northwest of Los Angeles County and bordered by Kern County to the north, Santa Barbara County to the west, and the Pacific Ocean on the southwest.
- 7.5 miles of shoreline are public beaches and 411 acres are State beach parks.
- The Los Padres National Forest accounts for 860 square miles of the northern portion of the county (46% of the county’s land mass.)
- Elevation ranges from sea level to the highest point on Mount Pinos at 8,831 feet.
- Ventura County ranks 26th in land size among California’s 58 counties.
- Gateway to Channel Islands National Park, one of only four designated national marine sanctuaries composed of five tranquil islands located a few miles off the Ventura County coast, comprising a 250,000-acre wilderness preserve/marine sanctuary.

Demographics of Ventura County

- Population of 797,740 makes Ventura County the 12th most populous county in the State of California.
- Median household income in Ventura County consistently exceeds national and state levels; median family income in 2007 estimated at \$72,762.
- Median home price (May 2005) - \$667,130.



Climate of Ventura County

- Coastal areas offer a Mediterranean climate often described as the best in the world, with average annual temperatures of 74.2 degrees.
- Ventura County's mountains, valleys and seashore give the area six different microclimates, more than any other county in the nation.



Ventura County Fire Protection District

The Ventura County Fire Protection District (VCFPD) has 31 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 four Administration and Support facilities, 30 first-run fire engines, one first-run Quint, 17 reserve fire engines, 11 wildland fire engines, four ladder trucks (including one reserve), five water rescue and fire boat craft, four paramedic squads, 14 command vehicles, nine 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.

Wildland Fire Protection Strategy

The VCFPD 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 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 it 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.



Ember zone may impact homes up to 1 mile from the fire front.



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, reliable water supplies, 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.



Positive results achieved by combining
Defensible Space, Hardened Homes and Preparedness

The sum effect of the Ready Set Go! Program is a force multiplier for active fire fighting resources. A single fire fighting resource may protect many more structures when preventative measures have been properly employed. In some cases, fire fighting 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 & 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 varied active fire suppression assets into an aggressive and coordinated fire fighting effort.





Fuel Bed Management

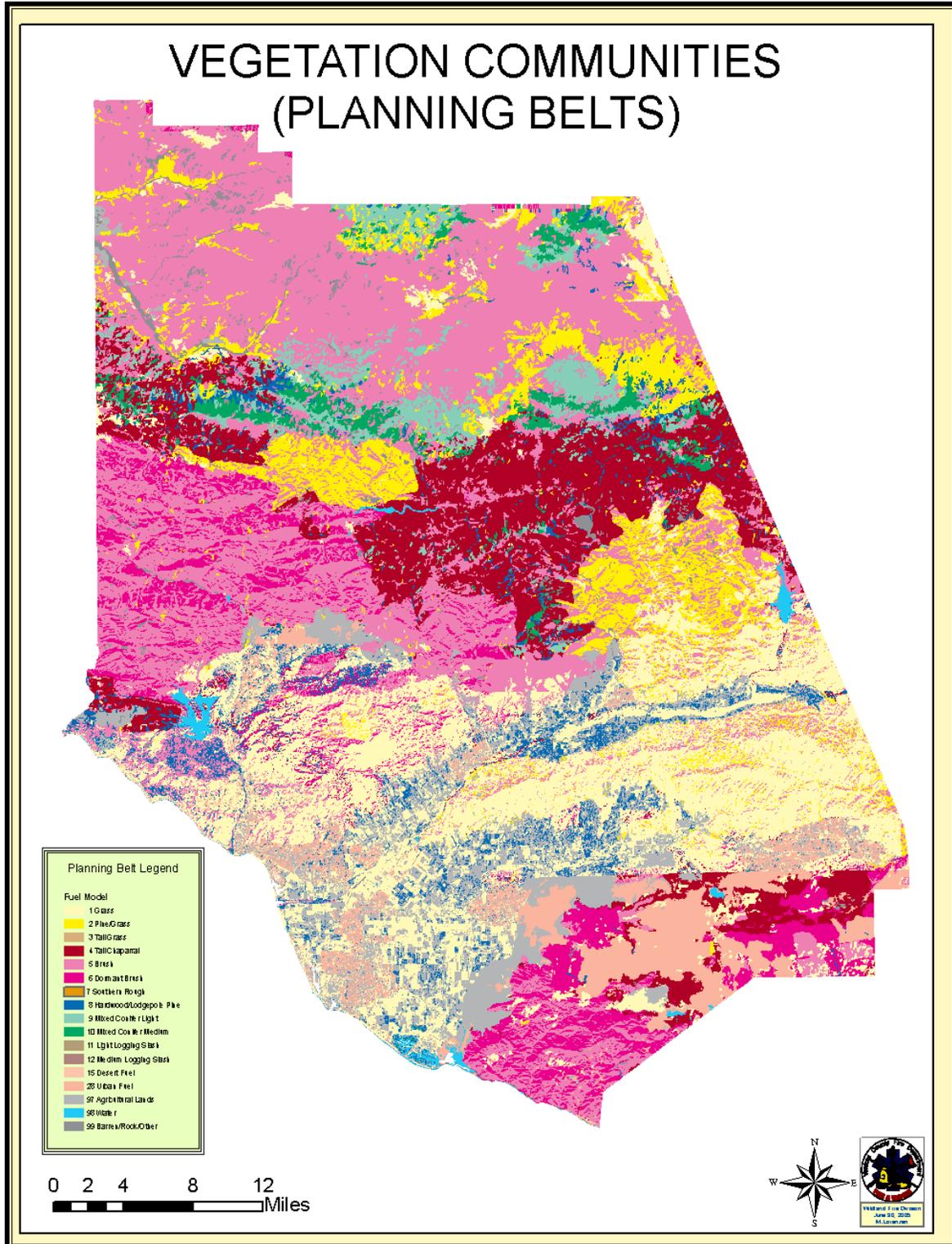


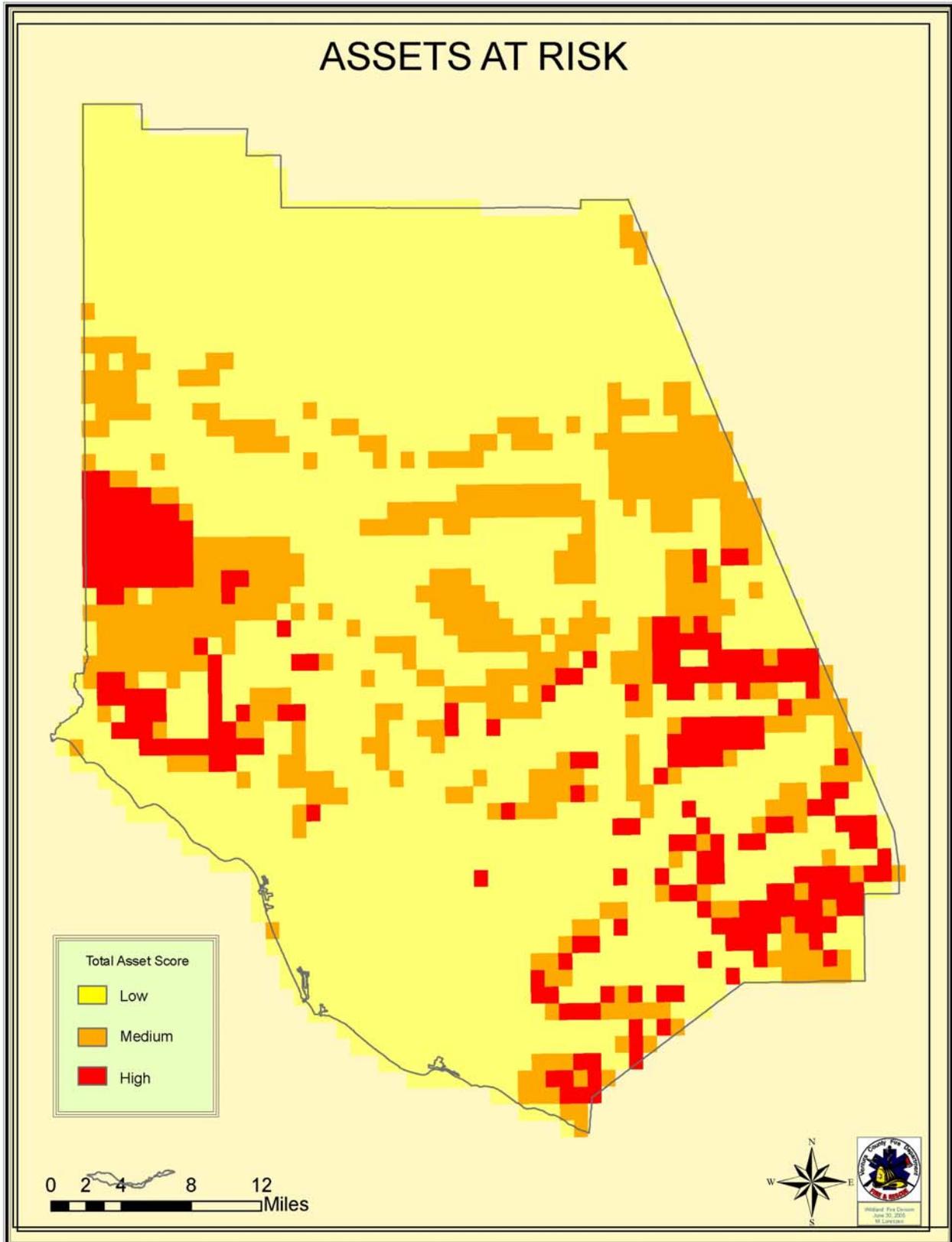
Aggressive prevention and suppression policies can artificially age fuel beds to a point of uncontrollable volatility. Fuel beds are managed to reduce the age and expanses of volatile fuel and provide barriers between values at risk and large areas of hazardous fuel. Particular attention is given to 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 the Hazard Fuels Ranking Map below 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 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 as 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.







Collaborative Efforts between Partner Agencies and Cooperators

Fire knows no boundaries and accordingly, neither should a plan that seeks to reduce the risks from wildland fires. Collaboration is vital in developing a plan that helps us to protect our communities and assets at risk.

Other agencies and stakeholders, which VCFPD works closely with, are:

<u>Political Entity</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
VENTURA COUNTY SUPERVISORS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
LOS ANGELES, CITY OF	LOCAL GOVERNMENT/ LRA FIRE PROTECTION
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT	LRA AND SRA FIRE PROTECTION
CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY	OPEN SPACE CONSERVATOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, DPA FIRE PROTECTION
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, SRA FIRE PROTECTION
SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
CONEJO & SIMI REC. & PARK DISTRICTS	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
LOCAL WATER COMPANIES	WATER STORAGE & TREATMENT
NON-PROFIT OPEN SPACE DISTRICTS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMPANIES	STATE/COUNTY
CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FORESTRY	STATE/COUNTY
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT	STATE/COUNTY
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME	STATE/COUNTY
USDA-SOILS CONSERVATION	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
U.S FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Stakeholders

<u>Political Entity</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
THOUSAND OAKS, CITY OF	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ROCKETDYNE	PRIVATE/FEDERAL LAND OWNERSHIP
SIMI VALLEY, CITY OF	PUBLIC LAND OWNERSHIP, RECREATIONAL USE
AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY	PRIVATE LAND/FARMING
VENTURA COUNTY CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION	PRIVATE LAND/RANGE MANAGEMENT
WATERSHED FIRE COUNCIL	STATE/COUNTY
CALTRANS	STATE/COUNTY
ADVISORY COUNCILS	STATE/COUNTY
INSURANCE INDUSTRY	STATE/COUNTY
SERVICE CLUBS (KIWANIS/LIONS)	STATE/COUNTY
WATERSHED FIRE COUNCIL	STATE/COUNTY
LOCAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE	COUNTY
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS	COUNTY
LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT	COUNTY



Stakeholders (cont.)

<u>Political Entity</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>
HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATIONS	COUNTY
DEVELOPERS AND BUILDERS	COUNTY
PROPERTY MANAGERS	COUNTY
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTER ASSOCIATIONS	COUNTY
YOUTH GROUPS (4-H, FFA, BOY SCOUTS)	COUNTY
ARCHITECTS	COUNTY
LOCAL NURSERIES	COUNTY
AMERICAN RED CROSS	COUNTY

Fire Safe Councils

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 communities fire safe.

Ojai Fire Safe Council
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