

Elfin Forest Harmony Grove | 2022

Community Wildfire Protection Plan





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PREFACE: WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN?

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) are blueprints for preparedness at the neighborhood level. They organize a community's efforts to protect itself against wildfire, and empower citizens to move in a cohesive, common direction. Among the key goals of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove (EFHG) CWPP, which was developed collaboratively by citizens, and federal, state, and local management agencies, are to:

- Align with the with the region's cohesive pre-fire strategy, which includes educating homeowners and building understanding of wildland fire, ensuring defensible space clearing and structure hardening, safeguarding communities through fuels treatment, and protecting evacuation corridors
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatment
- Recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect the community
- Recommend measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan

Note: The CWPP is not to be construed as indicative of project "activity" as defined under the "Community Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act, Chapter Three, Projects Subject to CEQA." Any actual project activities undertaken that meet this definition of project activity and are undertaken by the CWPP participants or agencies listed shall meet with local, state, and federal environmental compliance requirements.

The Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County produced this report in partnership with the San Diego County Fire Safe Council. Funding is provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the Cooperative Fire program of the U.S. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

SECTION I: SNAPSHOT OF THE COMMUNITY

Each community in San Diego County has a unique history and identity. Below is a description of what sets this area apart, including its landscape, preparedness, and firefighting resources.

A. OVERVIEW

Elfin Forest – Population: 850

The community of Elfin Forest is a rural residential community characterized by large swaths of open space, residential large lots, and agricultural uses. Lot sizes vary from two to over ten acres, with a system of private equestrian and hiking trails throughout. The majority of Elfin Forest is undeveloped lands with unique biodiversity. It is a rural community that cherishes its peaceful and quiet environment without sidewalks, street lights, and stop lights, and dark night skies. The Elfin Forest community respects and strives to preserve existing undeveloped lands as natural habitat and open space areas; not only for its residents, but for *all* residents of San Diego County. Elfin Forest believes in and lives by community spirit, and promotes a “know your neighbors” environment.

Residential areas blend into the natural environment and are developed on minimum two- acre parcels. The homes are custom-built and utilize septic systems for sewage management. Agricultural uses including seed farms, citrus and avocado groves, nurseries, flower growers, and fruit growers are a key part of the community and uphold the rural community character. Access to the community is limited by a two-lane road. All other roads within the community are private and maintained by the residents.

Community services within Elfin Forest include a system of trails, the Fire Safe Garden, and the Elfin Forest Reserve. Environmental resources are primarily the Escondido Creek, which constitutes a portion of our southern boundary, and large open space parcels that are home to many unique and endangered species. The community of Elfin Forest believes in the preservation and protection of its unique habitat and the creation of wildlife corridors in any future development. The community values its sensitive habitat and wildlife corridors and believe that they must remain pristine.

Harmony Grove – Population: 300

Harmony Grove is rural in nature, extremely quiet, peaceful, and generally remains in its natural state, except for the agricultural uses. The dark night sky is an important aesthetic resource. The most scenic views in Harmony Grove are of the hills, valleys, riparian habitat, and grazing farm animals; and these visual qualities must be preserved. The area remains non-industrial with low-density, which preserve the community’s historic rural agricultural character. The residents embrace a green community, where they continue their rural small-town lifestyle, enjoy keeping leisure and market animals, and live in harmony with the land and the wildlife. The Village is a place where local farmers sell organically grown vegetables; and where residents’ children often find first homes, or where their parents can choose to live in retirement. The historic rural habitat is preserved where the Village is surrounded by large-lot rural homes and small, family-owned farms and vineyards that preserve the critical relationships necessary for this environmentally sensitive and balanced green community.

Harmony Grove Village – Population: 2500

Harmony Grove Village is a new master planned community in the hills of North County's Elfin Forest. The design embraces the surrounding rural character and open spaces, providing a balance between the benefits of small-town living and urban convenience. Numerous heritage trees and on-site boulders were relocated and used along with a regional plant material to create a natural character that supports the development's laid-back lifestyle. Harmony Grove Village's distinctive neighborhoods are connected by a series of winding trails and walkable streets, lending access to the community's expansive parks, community center, pool, and surrounding equestrian country. The timeless sense of community is further reinforced by details like front porches and wide sidewalks.

The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Safe Council (EFHGFSC) is very aware of the inherent risk of wildfires. Most residences are built as within the interface or intermix within wild lands, thereby placing many residents at high risk in case of wildfires. The EFHGFSC, therefore, values and supports the efforts of fire agencies to protect our community.



B. LANDSCAPE

TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of Elfin Forest /Harmony Grove is characterized by open valley floors associated with the Escondido Creek and surrounded by gently to steeply sloping hills and by sharp granite escarpments. A significant portion of the valleys, hills, and ridgelines are in their natural condition and provide natural open space and scenic vistas. Habitats include sensitive riparian wetlands, oak woodlands, native grasslands, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub. The Escondido Creek wildlife corridor is home to a plethora of rare, sensitive, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species. Elfin Forest is home to over 1800 acres of dedicated open space, including 750 acres at the Elfin Forest Reserve, 640 acres at the Questhaven Retreat and over 200 acres for Sage Hill – in total a full third of Elfin Forest’s total acreage in already protected open space, providing a large swath of habitat to the various native species.

FIRE HISTORY

2014 – Cocos	1987 – Del Dios
2007 – Witch	1986 - Harmony
1997 – Del Dios	1985 – Mt. Israel
1996 – Harmony Grove	1984 - Questhaven
1994 - Questhaven	1981 – Outside Origin
1990 - Paint	1980 – Elfin Forest
1989 - Harmony	1943 - Unnamed
1988 - Hodges	1919 - Unnamed



KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Water is provided by the Olivenhain Municipal Water District, the Vallecitos Water District, and on the Questhaven Retreat by the Questhaven Municipal Water District.
- Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve – This 750-acre open space park and recreational area was developed by the Olivenhain Municipal Water District in cooperation with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management as an element of the Olivenhain Water Storage Project. The Reserve offers approximately 17 miles of hiking, mountain biking, equestrian trails, primitive picnic areas, and scenic mountain viewing points. The Reserve includes oak riparian, oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, and chaparral plant communities.
- Private and public equestrian and hiking trails – Elfin Forest is home to more than 23 miles of private trails/linear parks and one public trail that runs from the Questhaven Retreat south for approximately one mile along Questhaven Road.

MAPS

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Community (Appendix C). The following maps are visual aids from which the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Safe Council and community members can assess and make recommendations.

- Area Communities Map
- Fire Hazard Severity map
- Significant Fire History
- Evacuation Map

C. FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

The communities contained within the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Safe Council (EFHG FSC) boundaries are served by the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD). The RSFFPD's mission is to serve the public through the protection of life, environment and property from fire and other emergencies through prevention, preparedness, education, and response. The RSFFPD spans approximately 50-square miles and protects over 34,000 citizens.

Furthermore, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is responsible for the fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's privately-owned wildlands, known as the "State Responsibility Area" (SRA). Preventing wildfires in the SRA is a vital part of the CAL FIRE mission, and all areas within the EFHG FSC boundaries are SRA.

Lastly, the fire agencies of the cities of Carlsbad, Vista, San Marcos and Escondido also support fire protection in the EFHG FSC area through automatic and/or mutual aid

SECTION II: COLLABORATION

Strong working relationships are critical in ensuring that our communities are well-prepared. This section describes those key partners and their roles in developing this CWPP.

A. KEY PARTNERS

The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Safe Council led the development of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), with guidance and support from several partners. The development team included representatives from the agencies described in the table below.

Organization	Roles/Responsibilities
Elfin Forest Harmony Grove Fire Safe Council (EFHGFSC)	Primary development of CWPP and decision-making, community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County/Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (FSCSDC)	Provide educational outreach and support for pre-wildfire disaster planning, defensible space, fuel reduction and hazard assessment. Collaborate among agencies and Fire Safe Councils.
San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE	Facilitation of planning process and approval of CWPP process and minimum standards. Provide input and expertise on forestry, wildland urban interface, fire, fuels and Firewise concepts. Provided meeting locations and support. Provide input and expertise on County lands as well as evacuation planning and GIS support. Develop maps for use in CWPPs.
Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District (RSFFPD)	Provide local information and expertise on wildland-urban interface, including fire prevention, fuels treatment and land management activities.
San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E)	Provide input and expertise on planning and hazard mitigation. Provide input, advice, programs, and grants in support of Fire Safe Council(s).

SECTION III: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Understanding wildfire risk is a key building block in preventing the loss of property and life. This section discusses efforts to build awareness, starting with the individual.

A. PRIORITIES

- Creation of Fire Safe Council sponsored community materials, including educational forums that provide up-to-date resources and other information to build awareness about wildfire risk and mitigation.
- Website development/repository for community-specific knowledge.
- Weekly/biweekly outreach via social media
- Quarterly outreach via newsletter
- Semi-annual outreach via workshops and community meetings

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

As this is the inaugural year of the EFHG FSC, there are no completed projects at this time.

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Introduce FSC to community via direct mail, social media, and web link to Town Council.
- Booth presence at Keeping' It Rural Race, and July 4 picnic/parade.

SECTION IV: STRUCTURAL HARDENING

Long before a wildfire sparks, there are numerous steps that residents can take to protect their homes and other structures. This section describes some of those efforts.

A. PRIORITIES

The following is a description of structural challenges, including proposed projects, methods of improvement, and implementation proposed for the community:

- Encourage homeowners to retrofit homes to meet the current, improved structure hardening standards regarding vents, doors, fencing, siding/cladding, etc.
- Encourage fire wise landscaping, which focuses on plant characteristics, properties, and maintenance to resist the spread of fire to homes.
- Educate the community on structural hardening to reduce potential home ignition.
- Creation of Fire Safe Council sponsored community educational resources such as a website, social media page, and educational forums that provide up to date structural hardening guidelines.
- Develop a publicly accessible resource guide that details where homeowners may access the materials necessary for structural hardening.
- Collaborate with fire agencies to reach out to homeowners who request assistance with the structural hardening of their property.

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

As this is the inaugural year of the EFHG FSC, there are no completed projects at this time.

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Write grants that will support the above projects.
- Develop metrics to evaluate the success of existing programs.
- Use defensible space evaluations to measure one-year improvement in pass rate.
- Determine ongoing and future community needs.

SECTION V: DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Creating a buffer between buildings and the grass, trees, shrubs, and other wildland areas surrounding it are essential to improving survivability. This section looks at efforts to build this key layer of protection.

A. PRIORITIES

- Encourage homeowners to meet the current defensible space standards as per RSFFPD.
- Educate the community on defensible space to reduce potential home ignition.
- Creation of Fire Safe Council sponsored community educational resources such as a website, social media page, and educational forums that provide up-to-date defensible space standards.
- Develop a publicly accessible resource guide that details where homeowners may access the materials and information necessary for defensible space standards.
- Collaborate with RSFFPD to reach out to homeowners who request assistance with meeting the defensible space standards.

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

As this is the inaugural year of the EFHG FSC, there are no completed projects at this time.

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Write grants that will support the above projects
- Develop metrics to evaluate the success of existing programs
- Determine ongoing and future community needs

SECTION VI: FUELS TREATMENT

Fuels are combustible materials such as grasses, leaves, plants, shrubs and trees that feed flames. This section describes efforts to treat and manage these materials in the community.

A. PRIORITIES

- Identify current threats
- Evaluate Eucalyptus Forests and Oak Woodlands
- Collaborate with fire agencies to identify threats and solutions
- Ensure fuels projects are contained within the CAL FIRE San Diego Unit Fire Plan to ensure access to State grant funds.

B. COMPLETED AND ONGOING PROJECTS

As this is the inaugural year of the EFHG FSC, there are no completed projects at this time.

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Collaborate with The Escondido Creek Conservancy to ensure adequate fuels treatment
- Collaborate with fire agencies to ensure adequate fuels treatment



SECTION VII: EVACUATION PLANNING

Identifying key corridors in and out of a community – as well as temporary safe refuge areas – is essential to being prepared for evacuation. This section provides an overview of the PACE system (primary, alternate, contingency and emergency) used to plan ahead.

Evacuation planning is a dynamic process subject to the nuances of each community. Below is an overview of the Elfin Forest Harmony Grove's key ingress and egress, as well as designated evacuation corridors, Temporary Refuge Areas, completed projects, priorities and future projects.

A. OVERVIEW OF INGRESS AND EGRESS

The Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove corridor has extremely limited ingress and egress. The 9000 block of Harmony Grove Road (between Wilgen Road and Wild Willow Hollow Road) is an area with heavy vegetation, narrow topography and a channel for West or East winds making this location an area for extreme fire behavior.

- Continued roadside clearing projects.

B. DESIGNATED EVACUATION CORRIDORS AND TEMPORARY REFUGE AREA(S) (TRA)

Elfin Forest

Primary	Elfin Forest Rd to San Elijo
Alternate	Harmony Grove Rd to Country Club Dr to Harmony Grove Village Pkwy to Citracado Pkwy
Contingency	N/A
Emergency – TRA	Last Resort, Residential arenas: 2004 Elfin Forest Ln and 20510 Elfin Forest Rd

Harmony Grove

Primary	Harmony Grove Rd to Country Club Dr to Harmony Grove Village Pkwy to Citracado Pkwy
Alternate	Elfin Forest Rd
Contingency	N/A
Emergency - TRA	Last Resort: 4 th of July Park and Harmony Grove Equestrian Park

Harmony Grove Village

Primary	Harmony Grove Rd to Harmony Grove Village Pkwy to Citracado Pkwy
Alternate	Elfin Forest Rd
Contingency	N/A
Emergency - TRA	Last Resort: 4 th of July Park and Harmony Grove Equestrian Park

C. PRIORITIES

Update evacuation plan to include additional and large animal evacuation.

D. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

The Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District has created an evacuation map and plan with Primary and Alternate Evacuation routes (see Appendix B, Figure 4 for reference).

E. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Data-driven analysis of multiple evacuation scenarios and realistic timeline to evacuate each community.
- Write grant proposal to pay for analysis.

SECTION VIII: OTHER MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS PROJECTS

There are countless ways that communities can act to protect themselves ahead of wildfires. This section details additional past, current and future efforts underway that were not previously mentioned.

A. PRIORITIES

- Continued work with the Sheriff for appropriate management of transient population and associated fire danger.
- Support a safe, firewise community.
- Work with our surrounding areas to understand the dangers and realities of evacuation during a wildfire
- Work with fire and law enforcement groups to identify and restrict illegal activities that pose a threat to wildfire.
- Collaborate with neighboring Fire Safe Councils.
 - Support each other
 - Lean from other groups
 - Create cohesion through similar areas
 - Better understand the needs of our community and how to make them work with surrounding communities.

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

As this is the inaugural year of the EFHG FSC, there are no completed projects at this time

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Identift at-risk (health, age, disabilities) community members
- Seek grants and financial assistance for at-risk community members

SECTION IX: SIGNATURES

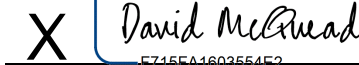
This plan must be approved by the following key parties: the local Fire Safe Council president, the chief of the primary responding fire agency and chair of the CWPP review committee. This section includes these signoffs.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as developed for Elfin Forest Harmony Grove:

- Was collaboratively developed and meets the intent of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) in emphasizing the need for agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and places priority on treatment areas identified by communities themselves in a CWPP. Interested parties and federal land management agencies in the vicinity of this CWPP have been consulted.
- Identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect areas within this CWPP.
- Recommends measures to reduce ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
- Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only, utilizing a compilation of community issues/goals and projected fire mitigation strategies. The CWPP is not to be construed as indicative of project "activity" as defined under the "Community Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act, Chapter Three, Projects Subject to CEQA." Per the Community Guide, Section 3.1.1, "CEQA only applies to public agency decisions to approve, or actions to carry out, a discretionary project." Any actual project activities meeting this definition of project activity and undertaken by the CWPP participants or agencies listed shall meet with local, state, and federal environmental compliance requirements.
- Assists and encourages compliance with current county and state fire code standards.

DocuSigned by:

 EE5C8B98547D40F
 President of the
 Fire Safe Council Submitting this CWPP

DocuSigned by:

 E745EA1602554F2
 Participating Fire Agency representative
 (State, Local, or Tribal)

SAN DIEGO COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLANS REVIEW COMMITTEE:

This CWPP was reviewed and recommended for approval by the San Diego Community Wildfire Protection Plan Review Committee as demonstrated by the signature below.

X DocuSigned by:
Donato H. Butz
Don Butz, President
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County

The CAL FIRE Unit Chief has final signing authority on CWPPs in San Diego County. The signature below attests that the standards listed in the section above and the content of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan are proposed to be met and mutually accepted.

X DocuSigned by:
Tony Mecham
Tony Mecham, Unit Chief
CAL FIRE San Diego Unit

SECTION X: APPENDICES

This section includes important additional information that complements other portions of the plan.

APPENDIX A: MEETING TRACKING DOCUMENTS

This CWPP was developed for the community of Elfin Forest Harmony Grove, through a series of community meetings. The Elfin Forest Harmony Grove FSC members who contributed to the document include the following:

Community Representatives

- Erik Trogden
- Jenny Davis
- Nancy Reed
- Shelly Kolkey
- Susan Williams
- Eric Neubauer
- Joseph Marrique
- Scott Sutherland
- Michele Knaeir

Agency Representatives

- David McQuead, RSFFPD Fire Chief
- Tony Mecham, CAL FIRE San Diego Unit Chief
- Jessica Martinez, CAL FIRE/San Diego County Fire CWPP Coordinator

Meetings Dates

- January 27th, 2022
- February 24th, 2022
- March 24th, 2022

APPENDIX B: MAPS

FIGURE 1: AREA COMMUNITIES MAP

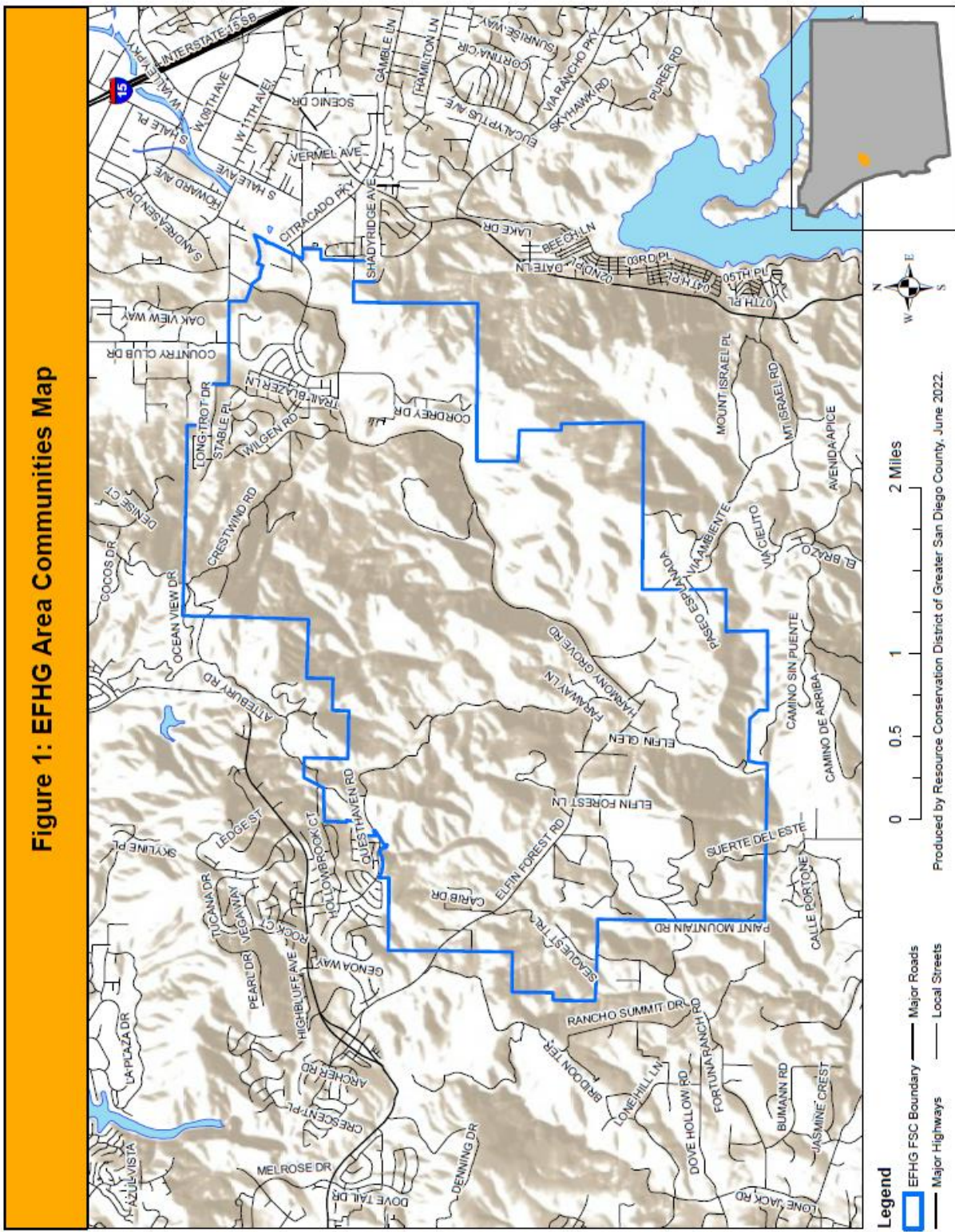


FIGURE 2: FIRE SEVERITY MAP

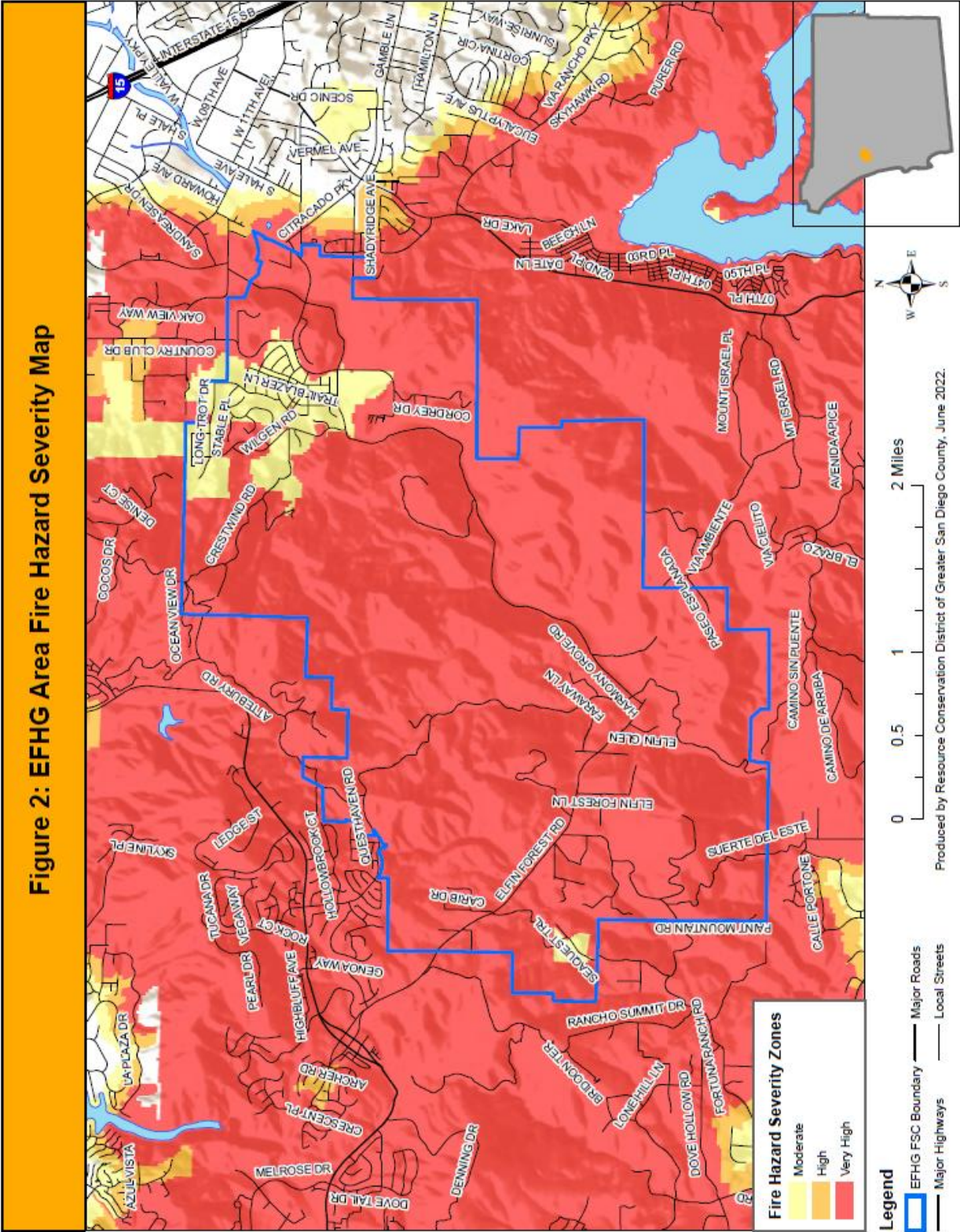


FIGURE 3: FIRE HISTORY 1910-2010

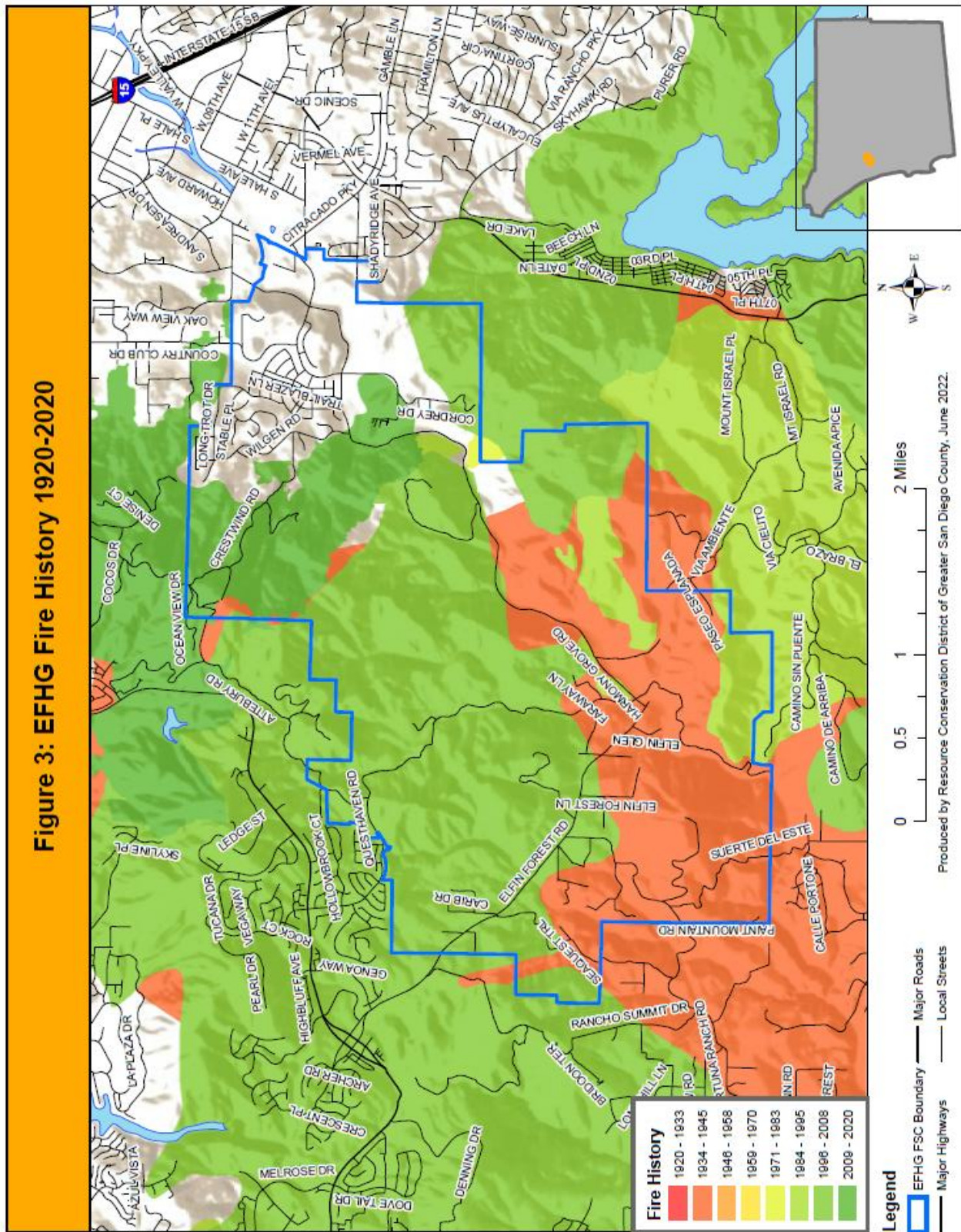


FIGURE 4: EVACUATION MAP

