

S a n D i e g o C o u n t y | 2 0 1 9

# Community Wildfire Protection Plan



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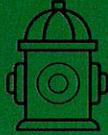


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# Preface: What is a Community Wildfire Protection Plan?



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 toward emergency preparedness. Among the key goals of San Diego County's CWPP, which is developed collaboratively by citizens, and federal, state, and local management agencies, are to:

- Align with San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE's cohesive pre-fire strategies, which include educating homeowners and building understanding of wildland fires, 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 treatment types and methodologies that will protect and prepare the community.
- Recommend measures to increase structural hardening throughout the area addressed by the CWPP.

*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. Dept. 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, landscape and identity. Below is a brief description of what sets this area apart.

## A. Overview

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is regional in nature, covering all of San Diego County. San Diego County is known for its white-sand beaches, Mediterranean climate, and natural wonders, and is also considered a major 'hot spot' for biodiversity with over 2,000 plant species - more than any other county in the nation. This region varies greatly in its landscape and includes mountains, desert, and seventy miles of coastline, as well as urban, suburban, and rural communities. It is home to a world-famous zoo and multiple recreational and historical sites. San Diego County has also experienced some of the largest wildfires in California, such as the 2003 Cedar Fire and the 2007 Witch Creek-Guejito and Harris Fires, both of which burned over 280,000 acres and destroyed over 1,000 structures.

Population: According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), the San Diego County population is estimated at 3,338,330 residents. The county is vast, made up of 2.897 million acres (4,526 square miles), including 28% developed and approximately 72% undeveloped open space. The county includes several communities that may be highly vulnerable to wildfire, including those with limited egress, elderly or disabled residents who live independently, residents living in isolated areas, and homeless individuals living in canyons or other areas containing highly-flammable vegetation.

Climate: San Diego County's climate is categorized as semi-arid or Mediterranean. The area's climate often varies dramatically over short geographical distance, due to the county's topography. Average monthly temperatures at the coast range from 65 °F in January to 76 °F in August, although late summer and early autumn are typically the hottest times of the year, with temperatures occasionally reaching 90 °F-100 °F or higher, especially in inland areas. Snow and ice are rare in the wintertime, typically occurring only inland from the coast when present.

San Diego County records an average of 267 sunny days per year and an average annual precipitation of approximately 10 inches. Rainfall is strongly concentrated in the cooler parts of the year, particularly during December through March, and precipitation is lower than any other part of the U.S. West Coast. In contrast, the warmer months are usually rainless. Rainfall is highly variable on annual and monthly scales, and San Diego County is often subject to both droughts and floods.

The months of September through February bring warm Santa Ana winds from the desert. Occurring about 10 days out of the year, these winds send dry and sometimes hot air to the region with the capacity to reduce relative humidity to single digits. As such, winds can travel quickly from inland and mountain passes and canyons in gusts of over 100 mph to spread and worsen wildfires; in comparison, coastal areas rarely see gusts over 40 mph.

Land management: The following local, state, and federal public agencies hold and manage land in San Diego County:



- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- State of California
- County of San Diego
- Eighteen incorporated cities
- Nineteen Federally-recognized tribes
- Military: the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard have bases and/or stations in the County
- Airfields: San Diego International Airport (Lindbergh Field), Montgomery Field, Gillespie Field, McClellan-Palomar Airport, Brown Field Municipal Airport, Oceanside Municipal Airport, Ramona Airport, and seven local airfields

## B. Landscape

Geography and Topography: San Diego County spans elevations up to 6,536 ft (1,992 m). While the western side is coastline, the remainder of the region is spread across deep canyons and hills separating its mesas, creating small pockets of natural parkland scattered throughout the region, giving it an undulating geography. The eastern side is characterized by high elevation mountains or desert on two-thirds of the County, with Anza Borrego State Park occupying the northeast. The western portion is primarily urban:



traditionally, San Diegans have built their homes and business within the mesas, while leaving the canyons relatively wild. In addition, the San Diego River runs through the middle of San Diego from east to west, creating a river valley that serves to divide the City of San Diego into northern and southern segments. Several reservoirs and Mission Trails Regional Park are also located between developed areas of the city.

Downtown San Diego is located along San Diego Bay, and the Cuyamaca Mountains and Laguna Mountains rise to the east of the city. Cleveland National Forest is a half-hour drive from downtown San Diego in the central north portion of the county. Numerous agricultural operations are found in the valleys northeast, east, and southeast of the city.

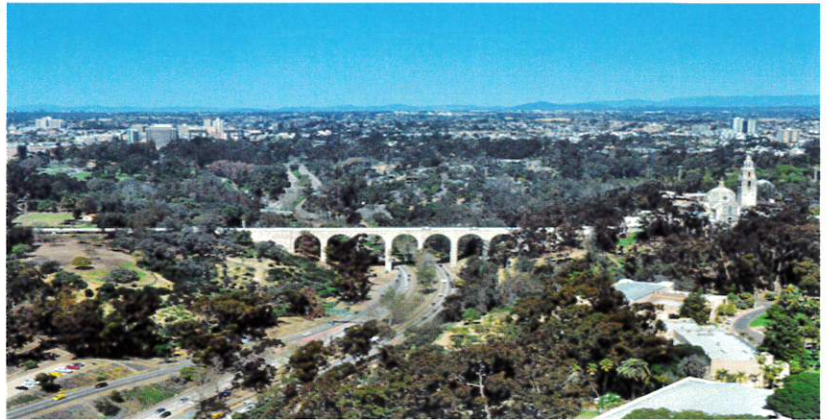
Vegetation: The type of vegetation found in the wildland urban interface (WUI) and mountain areas varies widely depending upon local conditions and topography and includes:

Foothills, Mountains, and High-Desert vegetation:

- Mixed Chaparral
- Chamise Chaparral



- Mountain Chaparral
- Grassland/Meadows
- Oak Woodland
- Riparian Forest
- Coniferous Forest
- Riparian Scrub
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Desert Scrub
- Buckwheat Scrub



#### Coastal and Inland vegetation:

- Coastal Salt Marsh
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Grasslands
- Eucalyptus
- Other highly flammable vegetation

Vegetation not recently burned may be over 60 years in age, greatly increasing the fire danger. San Diego County has one of the highest counts of animal and plant species that appear on the endangered species list among counties in the U.S.

Biodiversity: San Diego County is very rich in biodiversity, more than any other county in North America and, along with the rest of California, is among the top 10 biodiversity regions on earth. The mild, Mediterranean climate (hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters) and varied landforms create a number of distinct habitats, including: beaches, salt marshes and lagoons, coastal sage scrub, grasslands, chaparral, oak woodlands, riparian corridors, mixed conifer forests, freshwater marshes and meadows, and deserts.

Scientists describe our region as a conservation 'hotspot' because of the vast numbers and variety of threatened and endangered species that reside here. Many of these species are endemic, which indicates that they are native specifically and only to San Diego County.



Wildland Urban Interface (WUI): The WUI is the area where houses and wildland vegetation meet or intermingle, and where wildfire problems are most pronounced. The WUI is often



synonymous with fire risk to buildings. While fire outreach is often present near areas where buildings are destroyed by wildfire, many communities are established after major fires. WUI growth often results in more wildfire ignitions, putting more lives and houses at risk. Wildfire problems will not abate if recent housing growth trends continue.

#### Fire History:

San Diego County has experienced some of the largest wildfires in California, most notably the 2003 Cedar Fire and the 2007 Witch Creek-Guejito and Harris Fires. The chart below outlines the County's fire history over the past five decades.

Year	Name	Community	Acres Burned	Homes Destroyed	Deaths
1970	Laguna	Mount Laguna, East County	180,000	400	8
1985	Normal Heights	Normal Heights	300	116	0
1993	Guejito	Escondido	20,000	18	0
1996	Harmony Grove	Escondido	8,600	100	1
1997	Lake Wohlford	Escondido	500	7	0
2001	Viejas	Viejas, Alpine	10,000	5	0
2002	Gavilan	Fallbrook	5,700	40	0
2003	Cedar	San Diego County	273,246	2,200	15
2003	Paradise	Valley Center	56,700	200	2
2003	Otay	Otay Mountain	46,291	1	0
2007	Witch Creek	San Diego County	197,990	1,040	2
2007	Harris	San Diego County	90,440	206	5
2007	Poomacha	Palomar Mountain	50,176	143	0
2007	Rice	Fallbrook	9,000	206	0
2007	In-Ko-Pah	Santa Ysabel	1,118	0	0
2007	Pine	Julian	2,170	0	0
2007	Angel	Julian	837	0	0



2007	McCoy	Descanso	358	0	0
2007	Ammo	Camp Pendleton	21,004	0	0
2007	Juliett	Camp Pendleton	4,026	0	0
2009	Yankee	Camp Pendleton	1,500	0	0
2010	Aliso	Camp Pendleton	4,500	0	0
2010	Monte	Blossom Valley	953	0	0
2010	Cowboy	Campo	684	0	0
2010	Mesa	Barona	255	0	0
2011	Eagle	Warner Springs	13,993	0	0
2011	Great	Julian, Scissors Crossing	2,134	0	0
2012	Wilson	Ranchita	11,667	0	0
2012	Stewart	Scissors Crossing	10,630	0	0
2012	Banner	Banner	5,320	0	0
2012	Shockey	Tierra Del Sol, Campo	2,556	0	0
2012	Chihuahua	Oak Grove	2,007	0	0
2012	Old	Boulevard	996	0	0
2012	Vallecito	Mount Laguna, Cuyamaca	519	0	0
2013	Chariot	Mount Laguna	7,085	0	0
2013	Felipe	Scissors Crossing	2,780	0	0
2013	Deluz	Fallbrook	2,229	0	0
2013	General	Banner	1,271	0	0
2013	Lyon	Jamul	263	0	0
2014	Pulgas-Basilone	Camp Pendleton	15,186	0	0
2014	Tomahawk- Basilone	Camp Pendleton	5,365	0	0
2014	Cocos	San Marcos	1,995	40	0
2014	Combat-Basilone	Camp Pendleton	1,457	0	0
2014	Bernardo	Rancho Peñasquitos	1,331	0	0
2014	Highway	Vista, Bonsall	441	0	0
2014	Poinsettia	Carlsbad	377	28	1
2014	Gun	Pine Valley	270	0	0
2016	Border 3	Potrero	7,609	0	0
2017	Lilac	Fallbrook	4,100	0	0
2017	Jennings 2		400	0	0
2017	Gate		1,500	0	0
2018	Rock 5		225	0	0
2018	Recycle		250	0	0
2019	Caliente	Otay Mesa	448	0	0
2020	Valley	Alpine	16,390	30	0



### Key Infrastructure:

San Diego County has many valuable assets that could be threatened by wildfire. The County has 11 westward-draining watersheds (from north to south): San Juan, Santa Margarita, San Luis Rey, San Dieguito, Carlsbad, San Diego, Penasquitos, Sweetwater, Tijuana, Pueblo San Diego, and Otay. Each watershed includes urban areas and unique habitat that stand to be damaged in the event of a wildfire. Likewise, the rich biodiversity within San Diego County and the native species, including threatened and endangered species that rely on it are also at risk from wildfire.

Key infrastructure at risk includes the numerous City, County, and State Parks and the recreational opportunities they offer, as well as the natural resources they contain, including: schools, colleges, and universities; businesses including biotechnology firms and industry; military facilities; historical landmarks; and homes, particularly those situated above canyons and in the WUI. In addition, the San Diego County Farm Bureau reports that San Diego County has the greatest number of small farms (i.e. <10 acres in size) of any county in the nation. Many of these agricultural operations are located in fire-prone areas and are at higher risk from wildfire than urban areas.

### Maps:

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of San Diego County (Appendix B). The following maps are visual aids, for which the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC), its partners, and community members can assess and make recommendations.

1. Area Communities Map
2. Fire Hazard Severity Map
3. Fire History 1910-2010 (CDF FRAP)
4. Evacuation map
5. Fuel Treatment Projects (optional)

### **C. Firefighting Resources**

Regional firefighting responsibilities are shared by local fire departments/districts, San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and tribal fire departments.

Initial response to all structural fire, medical, and associated emergencies is the responsibility of the above-mentioned agencies. Using the closest unit concept, these agencies collaborate to respond to all emergency situations.



## 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 Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC), in partnership with the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCDGSDC), 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
Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County (RCDGSDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Programmatic administration, management, and support.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Assistance with maps for community Fire Safe Councils.</li><li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, review of all CWPP applications, and approval of completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li><li>• Preparation of CWPP maps.</li></ul>
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li><li>• Educational outreach and support for pre-wildfire disaster planning, defensible space, fuel reduction, and hazard assessment.</li><li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, reviews all CWPP applications, and approves completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li></ul>
San Diego County Fire/ CAL FIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assistance with the development of CWPP and decision-making, community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and</li></ul>



	<p>establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee and reviews all CWPP applications and approves completed applications for final authorization.</li> <li>• Facilitation of planning process and approval of CWPP process and minimum standards. Provides input and expertise on forestry, fire, fuels, and Fire Safe and Firewise concepts.</li> <li>• Development of CWPP maps.</li> </ul>
U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) CA Desert District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance by providing scientific and technical input and expertise on federal lands, fire, fuels and Fire Safe and Firewise concepts.</li> <li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, review of all CWPP applications, and approval of completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li> </ul>
U.S. Forest Service, Cleveland National Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance by providing input and expertise on federal lands, fire, fuels and Fire Safe and Firewise concepts.</li> <li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, reviews all CWPP applications, and approves completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li> </ul>
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance by providing input and expertise on federal lands, fire, fuels, and Fire Safe and Firewise concepts.</li> <li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, reviews all CWPP applications, and approves completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li> </ul>
San Diego Fire-Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance by providing input and expertise on City of San Diego lands, fire, fuels, and Fire Safe and Firewise concepts, including community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.</li> <li>• Participation in CWPP Review Committee, reviews all CWPP applications, and approves completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li> </ul>
San Diego County Fire Chiefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistance by providing local information and expertise. This may include community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participates in CWPP Review Committee and reviews all CWPP applications and approves completed applications for submittal to CAL FIRE for final authorization.</li> </ul>
San Diego County Community Fire Safe Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance with education and outreach needs through requests for information, presentations, workshops, ideas and distribution of brochures, handouts, posters, public service announcements, newsletters and media releases.</li> </ul>
California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance by providing guidance and input on the CWPP pertaining to evacuation planning.</li> </ul>





## 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. Completed and Ongoing Projects

The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSCSDC) provides ongoing community education to ensure that citizens are aware of critical preparedness information. Community education focuses on:

**Forming and Supporting Fire Safe Councils:** The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County is the umbrella organization for local Fire Safe Councils (FSC) across the region. We support existing FSCs, as well as to help communities start new councils. Our support programs include:

- ☐ Bi-monthly FSCSDC general meetings
- ☐ Fire trainings in San Diego communities
- ☐ Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) support
- ☐ Fiscal sponsorship
- ☐ FSC Volunteer Awards Lunch
- ☐ Outreach and informational materials

**Community Fire Safe Council (FSC) Outreach and Education:** Outreach programs are offered through the FSCSDC. The intended results of these outreach and education programs are to increase awareness of the value of defensible space and enable residents to create these buffers within their communities. These programs are funding-dependent and include/have included:

- Pre-fire education in all aspects of defensible space.
- Emergency preparedness and evacuation.
- Community involvement.
- Annual community FSC volunteer recognition awards program and event honoring volunteers and community FSCs.

**Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Management:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC acts as a clearinghouse for all CWPPs in San Diego County and provides administrative support to CAL FIRE as the agency charged with authorization of CWPPs. The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC maintains the approved CWPP template and guidelines for applicants. The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC provides templates and guidance to all San Diego community FSCs for the development and amendments of CWPPs. In addition, the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC plays an important participatory/advisory role on the San Diego County CWPP Review Committee, along with local, state, and federal agencies, in reviewing and approving all new and amended CWPPs.

**Training, Workshops, and Other Resources:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC offers or plans to offer the following training opportunities to residents: CWPP preparation and process;

defensible space; fire safety in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI); project management and environmental review requirements; CEQA/NEPA; tree care; grant writing for programs outside of Grant Clearinghouse; large animal evacuation; public relations for FSCs; fire hazard assessment; disaster preparedness; developing collaboration with community groups; fire resistant design components; success stories of local FSCs; 501(c)(3) benefits; by-laws & board development; community assessment; contractor training for 100 foot defensible space codes and best management practices; landscape changes for a Firewise county; and others as identified.

## **B. Priorities**

Continue to support the growing network of community FSCs through the activities outlined in Section III.A above.

Continue to provide education on wildfire preparation and prevention, in collaboration with agency partners and community FSCs.

## **C. Future Projects**

Continue to administer the projects outlined above and develop new single-topic informational resources for FSCs and San Diego County residents.





## 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.

This CWPP is a planning and assessment tool for vegetation management in high/severe-risk fire areas within San Diego County. Specific projects will be implemented after thorough environmental review, as required by specific treatments.

### A. Completed and Ongoing Projects

In cooperation with the County of San Diego, the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC supports and educates citizens on ways to improve structural hardening to meet the requirements of the San Diego County Building and Fire Codes.

The existing partnerships between various organizations (local, state, and federal agencies, volunteer groups, citizens, etc.) allow the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC and community FSCs to reduce hazardous vegetative fuels that could ignite residences and commercial facilities during Santa Ana winds and other high fire risk conditions.

### B. Current Projects (all projects include defensible space and landscaping education/outreach components):

- a. Smoke Alarm Program: In collaboration with the Red Cross, Burn Institute, and San Diego County Fire, we offer all residents a free smoke alarm and installation.
- b. Vent Program: In collaboration with the Sunrise Powerlink Mitigation Programs, we support and encourage home-hardening techniques and design, boxing of roof eaves, use of fire-resistant roofing materials, filling voids, and upgrades to home vents to provide resistance to ember intrusion.

### C. Priorities

- a. Raise awareness of the importance of home-hardening techniques to protect the potential flammability of the home ignition zone and work from the home out and the wildland in.
- b. Identify areas of greatest risk and apply for funds to support structural hardening in those areas.

**D. Structural Challenges** The following is a description of structural challenges, including proposed methods of improvement and implementation proposed for the community. San Diego County has a variety of residential structure types, many of which were built before modern, more stringent building standards were established. This presents the need to retrofit features, like vents to be more fire-resistant. In addition, firefighting resources are limited, so residents must be educated to keep fire hazards away from the structure and to do their part to mitigate against the risk of wildfire.

### **Measures to Increase Structure Hardening:**

1. **Workshops:** The importance of structural hardening is addressed in our WUI workshop.
2. **Education/Outreach Materials:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC provides structural improvement educational/outreach materials to community FSCs and residents of San Diego County.
3. **Website:** The FSCSDCs website includes suggestions on structural improvements as well as links to other websites that include additional information and resources.
4. **Codes:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC can provide hard or electronic copies of all pertinent building and fire codes to inquiring community members and community FSCs. Links to state and local codes are also provided.
5. **Sunrise Powerlink Mitigation Program (SPMP):** As part of the approval process to construct the Sunrise Powerlink transmission line, a grants program funded by SDG&E has been implemented. This includes funds for community protection and homeowner grants (for eligible parcels) for the creation of defensible space around homes or, alternatively, for residential structure hardening improvements. Through our website, as well as meetings and workshops, we inform community FSCs and other interested parties about this opportunity. When relevant, representatives from the SPMP attend workshops and meetings to share information about this program.

### **E. Future Projects**

We have been exploring the possibility of operating a cost-share program to assist residents in hardening their homes, specifically by retrofitting homes with ember resistant vents. We are also considering offering a workshop specifically on structural hardening.





## Section V: Defensible Space



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

### A. Completed and Ongoing Projects

The partnership that exists between the listed organizations and citizens in this CWPP allows the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC to reduce hazardous vegetative fuels that could ignite residences and endanger infrastructure and commercial facilities, particularly during Santa Ana wind conditions. In response to the devastation caused by the 2003 Cedar Fire, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) declared removal of dead, dying, and diseased trees an “exigency” task. Major firestorm events in 2007 and 2014 exacerbated this problem and underscored the devastation of major wildfire impacts on lives, homes, properties, businesses, and habitat. Drought and warmer temperatures have also led to an increase in dry vegetation across the County, creating more fuel sources. Maintaining properties with the appropriate defensible space is a key factor to protecting lives and properties.

All programs and services listed below are provided through the FSCSDC, whose programs and services are administered by the RCDGSDC and overseen by the FSCSDC Executive Board. **All programs are offered as funding and resources permits.**

1. **No-Cost Chipping Service:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC No-Cost Chipping Service is funded by a National Fire Plan Grant from the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council and an agreement with the Cleveland National Forest of the U.S. Forest Service. The service is also supplemented by a grant from San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) and other funds, as and when available. The program offers free chipping services to at-risk and/or unburned WUI communities in San Diego County. Participants of the program are responsible for creating defensible space around homes and evacuation corridors, and resulting piles of cut vegetation are chipped by contracted chipping crews. This program is supported by the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC’s agency partners and community FSCs and assists WUI residents with ongoing fuel reduction and defensible space creation and maintenance.
2. **Defensible Space Assistance Program (DSAP):** This program, administered by the RCDGSDC/FSCSDC, assists low-income senior citizens and disabled residents of San Diego County in creating and maintaining 100 feet of defensible space. Tree removal is also offered on a case-by-case basis. The program is funded through a grant from SDG&E and through an agreement with the Cleveland National Forest.

### B. Priorities

It is a priority to continue delivering the programs outlined in Section A (above), including the following services within San Diego County communities:

1. **Fuel Reduction for High-Risk/Unburned Areas of San Diego County:** The RCDGSDC/FSCSDC offers no-cost or cost-share fuel reduction services to targeted communities within San Diego County. The communities selected for the program are



determined at the grant funders' request with an emphasis on high or extreme risk and unburned areas. All projects will be subject to environmental review requirements as appropriate to the individual project; work will be conducted according to grant requirements and California environmental laws, in collaboration with land management agencies (California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, others as applicable). The program includes all forms of vegetation reduction:

- Chipping: A service offered to qualified residents in targeted communities.
- Hand removal of vegetation: A defensible space service offered to low income seniors, disabled residents, and other at-risk populations.
- Fuel breaks: A service conducted in concert with lead agencies.
- Other landscaping changes as identified to optimize benefits of defensible space and provide maximum protection to residents from wildfires.
- Maintenance: Regular fuel reduction programs that also provide long-term vegetation maintenance.

### C. Future Projects

Continue to support our existing programs, as outlined in Section B.1 (above). No additional programs are planned at this time.







## 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. Completed and Ongoing Projects

#### Completed:

RCDGSDC/FSCSDC collaborated with San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to continue the Sunrise fuel break along private properties.

San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE also recently completed two large landscape community fuels treatment projects. Citing extreme peril due to wildfire risk, Governor Newsom in 2019 issued an emergency proclamation directing CAL FIRE to immediately implement projects to protect lives and property. As a result, CAL FIRE identified 35 high priority projects statewide, including two in San Diego County. The Crest Community Fuel Break (120 acres) and Guatay Community Fuel Break (66 acres) were designed to surround and improve community defensibility against fires approaching from any direction. Crews from San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE completed the breaks, which averaged 200 feet in width.

**Ongoing:** State and federal agencies (USFS, CAL FIRE, BLM, and USFWS) are creating and maintaining fuel breaks in many parts of San Diego County. Similarly, Caltrans provides roadside chemical abatement to reduce potential ignition rates of roadside vegetation.

Prescribed burns: San Diego land managers (USFS, San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE, BLM, USFWS, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation), in cooperation with



San Diego County Fire/CAL FIRE and other agencies, are conducting prescribed burns during annually cooler and wetter months with lower wildfire risk potential. These burns are part of a forest health and recovery program, including vegetation management, hazardous fuel load reduction, reforestation, and watershed and wildlife habitat improvement. This



treatment will enhance forest health by restoring essential nutrients to the soil and reducing the potential of a catastrophic wildfire. The land managers and agencies listed above are conducting controlled burns to remove an abundance of underbrush and make way to plant native conifer seedlings that will replace the forest damaged by wildfire.

Cuyamaca reforestation project: The Colorado Desert District of California State Parks initiated a mixed-conifer forest restoration project to re-establish native conifer trees at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park following the 2003 Cedar Fire. The project consists of planting 2,530 acres of former forest lands in a mosaic of patches that will become centers for seed dispersal and are expected to restore the larger conifer forest. Initial seedling densities and ongoing forest management practices are expected to reduce the threat of catastrophic, habitat type-conversion wildfires. Project activities started in the fall of 2007 with planning, mapping, and site preparation done by California State Parks and CAL FIRE employees.

The BLM wildland fire management efforts include a broad range of activities to safely protect the public, the natural landscape, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas. Specifically, their Fire and Aviation program includes: fire suppression, preparedness, predictive services, fuels management, fire planning, community assistance and protection, prevention and education, and safety.

## **B. Priorities**

Our key priority is to support agency partners and their fuels treatment projects by attracting match funding.

## **C. Current Forest Health and Fire Projects**

The Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program is one element of the state's efforts to improve forest health, protect communities from wildfire risk and implement the [California Forest Carbon Plan](#) and [Executive Order B-52-18](#). Projects funded through the program, including a project managed by the RCDGSDC, will build on priority projects identified by the [Forest Management Task Force](#) and CAL FIRE through [Executive Order N-05-19](#). This grant will help communities prioritize, develop, and implement projects to strengthen fire resiliency, increase carbon sequestration, and facilitate greenhouse gas reductions.

Priorities discussed with stakeholders include:

- Critical fuel break clearing and maintenance
- Post-fire debris management
- Forestry health and recovery plans
- Reforestation
- Removal of dead, dying, and diseased trees
- Strengthening outreach, education, and training in fire awareness and preparedness, which would include: defensible space and home hardening; the need for local Fire Safe Councils; CWPPs and emergency evacuation planning and preparedness; chainsaw and





other fire-sparking tool maintenance and safety; and contact with homeowner's associations, schools, and other public entities

- Agency collaboration and synchronization of controlled burns
- Strengthening local Fire Safe Councils and providing education on how to set up a 501(c)(3), how to write and manage grants, and how to engage your community
- Developing building permits in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) that require CWPPs and solid evacuation routes.

Another facet of the state's efforts to improve forest health is through CAL FIRE's Forest Health Grant Program. This program receives funding, allocated by the state legislature for California's Climate Investments, from cap-and-trade dollars through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. In 2019, the RCDGSDC was awarded a portion of these funds to carry out restoration projects across 1,575 acres on Palomar Mountain in an effort to save San Diego's last mixed-coniferous forest. The RCDGSDC partnered with state (California State Parks, Caltech) and federal (U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management) agencies along with private landowners (Palomar Land and Cattle) and two indigenous tribes (La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, Pauma-Yuima Band of Mission Indians) to implement forest restoration projects aimed to:

- Reduce forest fuels by mechanical thinning and prescribed fire
- Reforestation of oak trees
- Slow encroachment of incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) on oak habitat
- Strengthen relationships and communication among all stakeholders including governments, private landowners, indigenous tribes, and citizens





# 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 San Diego County's key ingresses and egresses, as well as designated evacuation corridors, Temporary Safe Refuge Areas, completed projects, priorities, and future projects.

Community FSCs are working on evacuation guidance for their specific communities. The information provided below aims to cover the County more broadly.

## A. Overview of Ingress and Egress

Main thoroughfares in San Diego County include the major freeways, Interstates 5, 15, 805, and 8, as well as the following state routes: 52, 54, 56, 67, 79, 94, 125, 163, and 905. These also serve as the County's main ingress and egress arteries. Caltrans helps to maintain safe roadways by conducting regular weed abatement along these well-traveled routes.

San Diego is a large and populous County, so in the event of wildfire, even these large, multi-lane freeways can become highly congested. In addition, the freeway entrances become backed up into adjacent communities, which presents a challenge for safe evacuation. Communication is another challenge to ensure that individuals know evacuation routes and procedures.

## Designated Evacuation Corridors and Temporary Safe Refuge Areas

The PACE model assists communities in planning and designating evacuation options. Under this mnemonic, P stands for primary, A for alternate, C for contingency and E for emergency, in reference to different ways to leave or shelter in a community during emergencies.

Planning ahead and selecting these options through the PACE system builds community education and awareness. During an emergency incident, however, conditions can vary greatly and these pre-designated options may no longer be safe. The Sheriffs will determine the best route to utilize; citizens are urged to stay informed and follow the guidance of authorities.

To identify PACE options, FSCs around the region are working with their jurisdiction's fire agencies to choose and vet evacuation corridors. These are then being included in the CWPPs for FSCs. For more specifics on a community, check the CWPP specific to that area. CWPPs are available through the [Fire Safe Council of San Diego County's website](#). Around the county, the above thoroughfares listed in Section A (above) could function as evacuation corridors.

The Red Cross operates evacuation shelters during wildfires when evacuation orders are in place.

## B. Completed Projects

- Preparedness and evacuation are addressed in the WUI workshops.
- SDG&E has established nine Information and Community Resource Centers across the County as places where community members can charge their electronic devices and receive information, food, and water during an emergency or a Public Safety Power Shutoff.
- We share County Fire/CAL FIRE's [Ready, Set, Go!](#) campaign materials with residents and community FSCs.

## C. Priorities

The following are key priorities to maintaining evacuation access for residents and visitors to San Diego County:

- Education on preparedness.
- Encourage FSCs to complete or update CWPPs to establish PACE options for their communities, in collaboration with the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and/or their local fire agency.

## D. Future Projects

We are exploring ideas for education/workshops, specifically on preparedness and evacuation.





## Section VIII: Other Mitigation & Preparedness Projects



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

### A. Completed Projects

The Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the FSCSDC, supports community FSCs in seeking and managing grants. This facilitates FSCs without 501(c)(3) designation or those without the capacity to manage grant funds. This funding enables mitigation and preparedness programs, such as standardizing street address signs, dumpster programs, fuel breaks, prescribed burns, and community outreach events.

### B. Priorities

- As the umbrella organization, the FSCSDC supports all local Fire Safe Councils as a fiduciary sponsor to obtain grant funding for fuel mitigation project implementation.
- The FSCSDC also works with communities to develop CWPPs.

### C. Ongoing and Future Projects

Through the RFFC program (see more information in section VI.C), the FSCSDC will bring agencies together to identify additional priorities for our region. To accomplish the program's objectives and reach our metrics, block grant recipients will oversee regional distribution of funding and collaborative planning with local entities, including local and tribal governments, nonprofits and non-governmental organizations, land trusts and managers, Resource Conservation Districts, and private partners.

## Section IX: Signatures



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

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), as developed for San Diego County:

- 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 increase structural hardening throughout the area addressed by the plan.
- Is only intended for use as a planning and assessment tool, 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 [CEQA], 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.

Sheryl Landrum

5/01/2020

**Executive Director, Resource Conservation District of  
Greater San Diego County & Vice President, FSCSDC  
Fire Safe Council submitting this CWPP**

**Date**



## Signatures page 2

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



**Chair of CWPP Review Committee**

*Don Butz*

*Chief, Lakeside Fire Protection District*

*President, Fire Safe Council of San Diego County*

5/21/2020

**Date**

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 CWPP are proposed to be met and mutually accepted:



**STATE AGENCY (authorizing entity —  
required for finalization)**

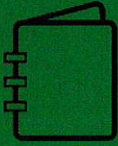
*Tony Mechem, Unit Chief*

*California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
(CAL FIRE) San Diego Unit*

10-15-2020

**Date**

# 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 San Diego County, through a series of community meetings.



## Appendix B: Maps

Figure 1: Area Communities Map

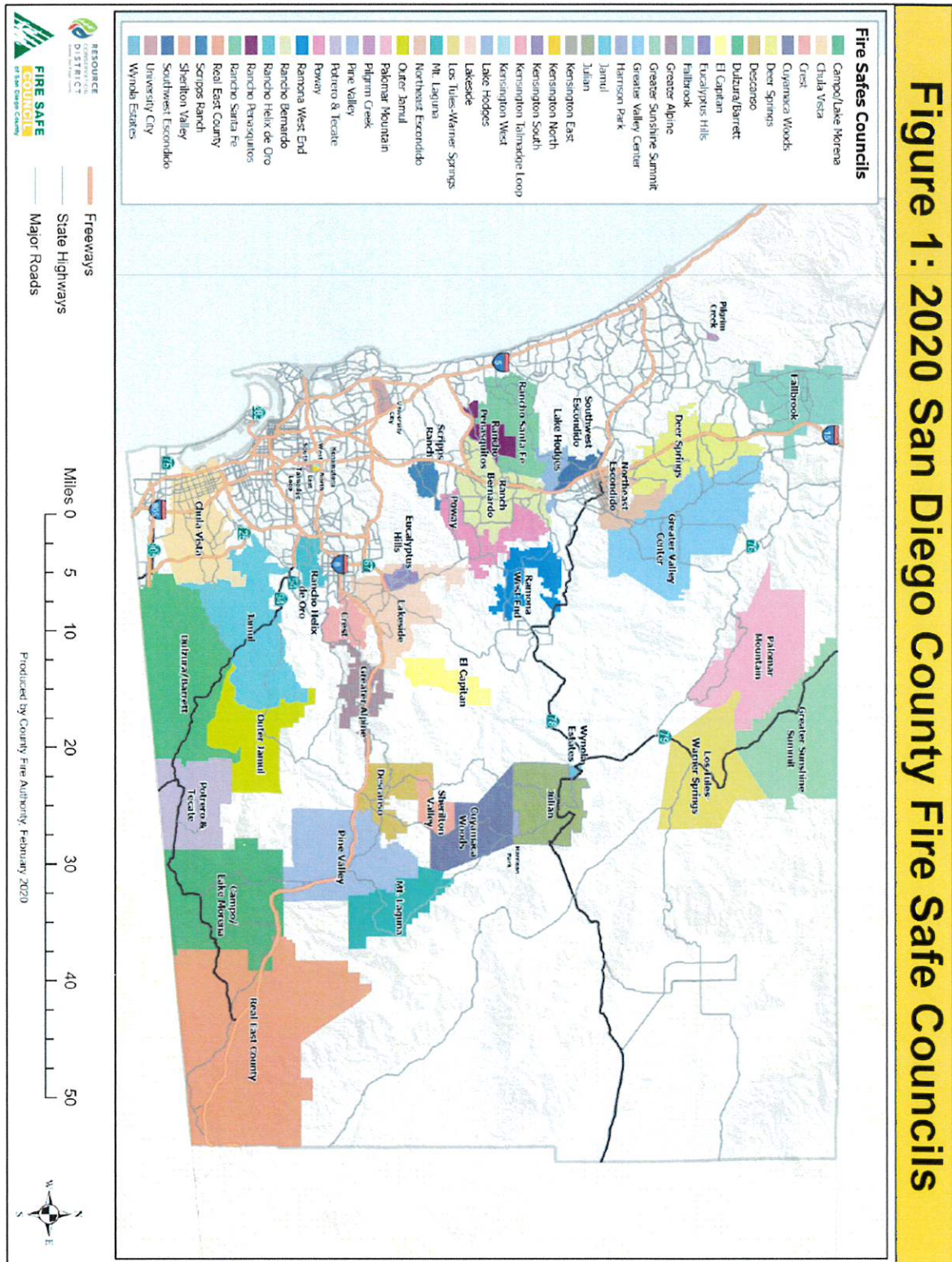




Figure 2: Fire Hazard Severity Map

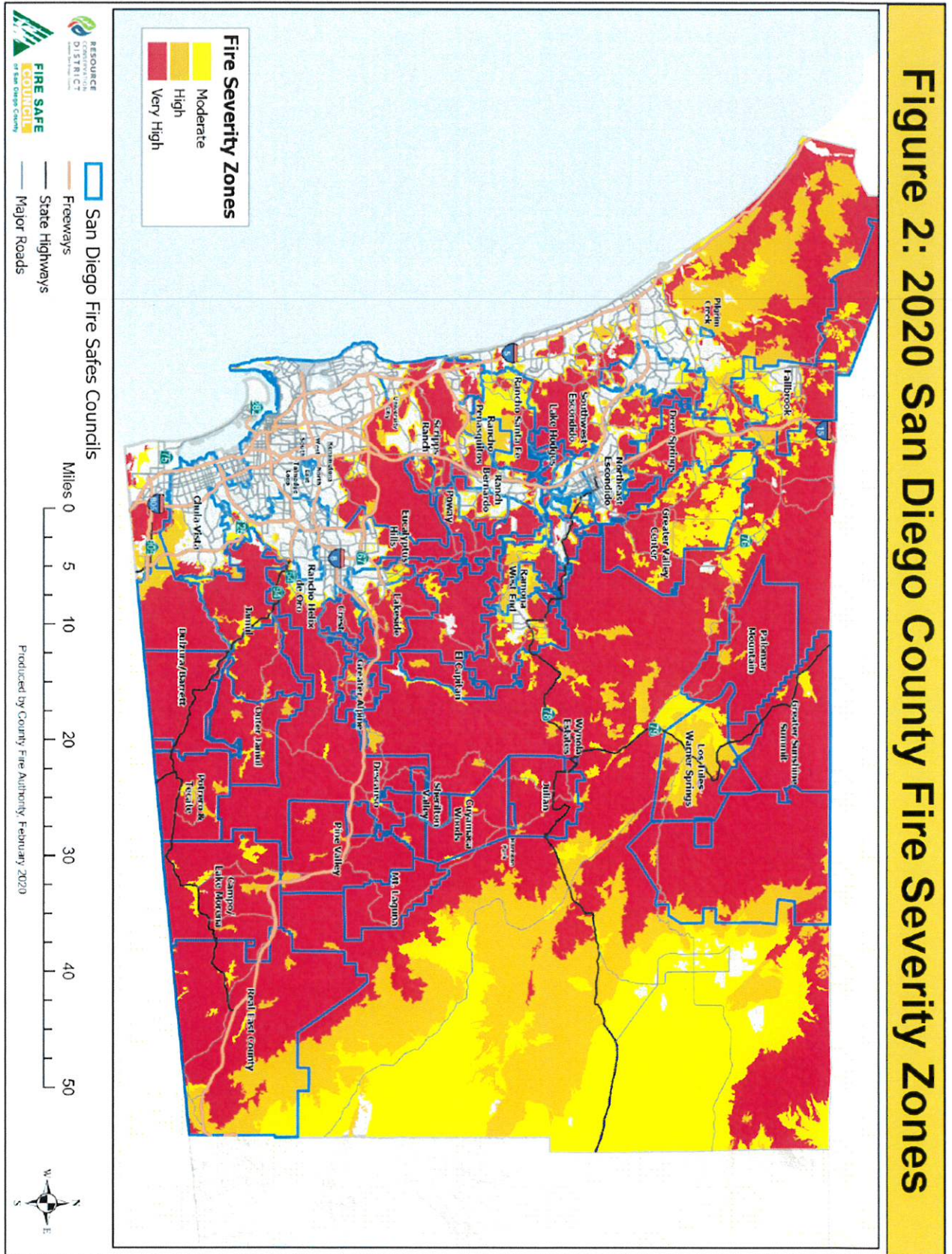




Figure 3: Fire History 1910-2010 (CDF FRAP)

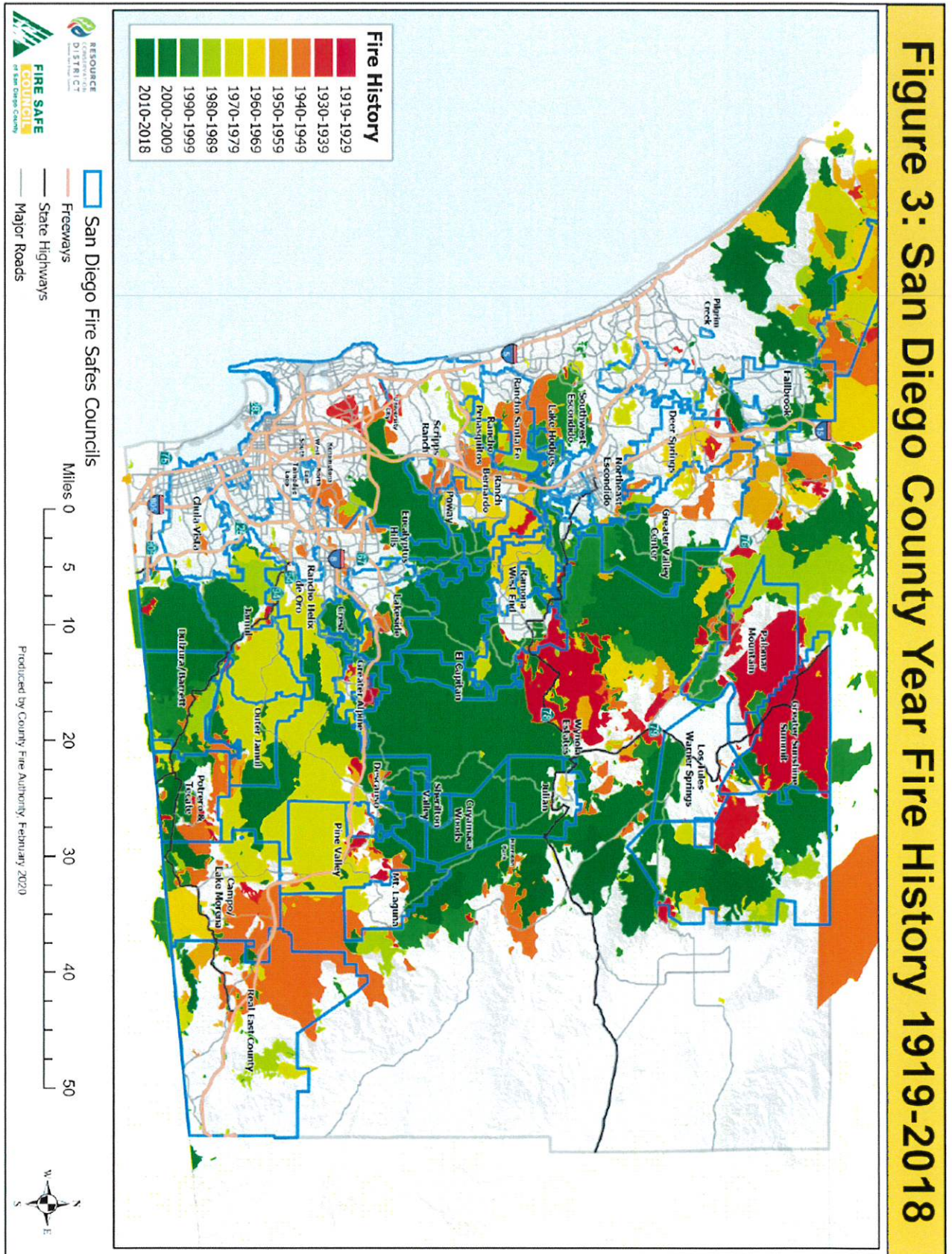




Figure 4: Evacuation Map

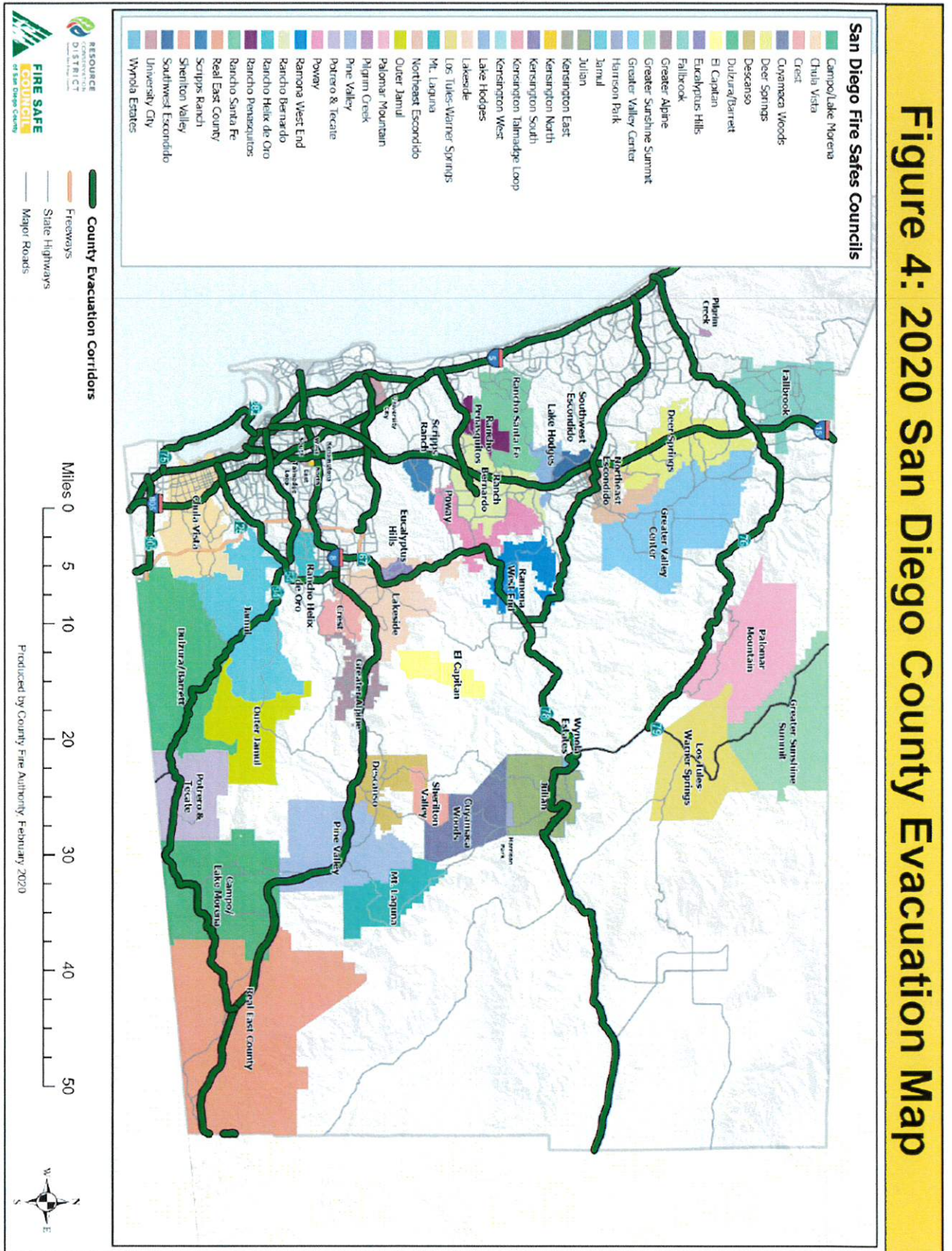
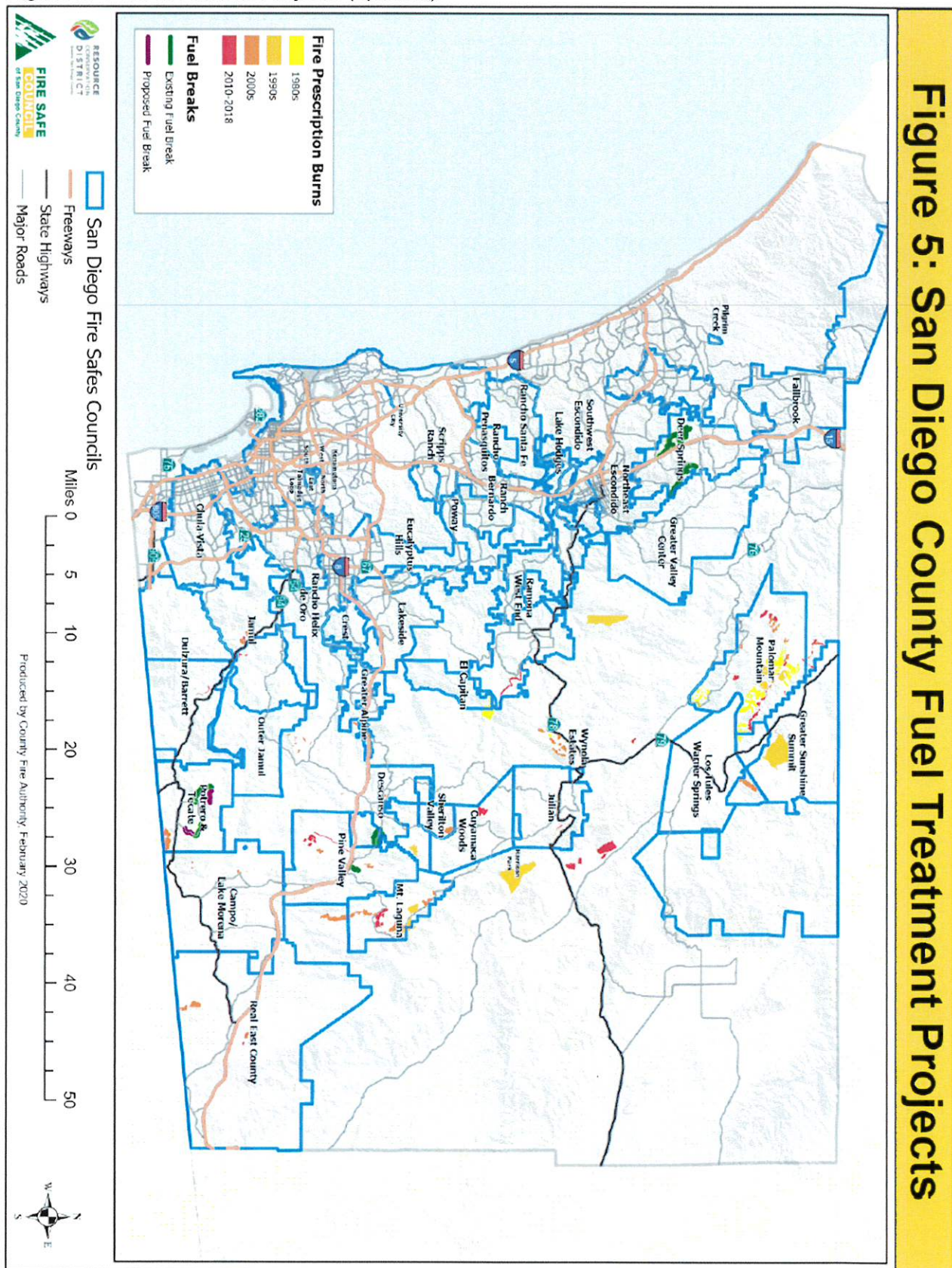




Figure 5: Fuel Treatment Projects (optional)



**Appendix C: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment (as applicable)**

***Community Wildfire Protection Plan Amendment***  
**For**  
***San Diego County***

**Date Amendment Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE PAGES

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**Appendix D: 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment (as applicable)**

***Community Wildfire Protection Plan Amendment  
For  
San Diego County***

**Date Amendment Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

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SIGNATURE PAGE(S)

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