

CONTENTS

6.	Santa Monica Mountains Community Context	1
6.1.	Social and Legal Setting	1
6.1.1.	Land Use and Development Trends	1
6.1.2.	Community Legal Structure and Jurisdictional Boundaries.....	2
6.2.	Fire Protection Agencies.....	3
6.2.1.	Los Angeles County Fire Department.....	4
6.2.2.	Ventura County Fire Department.....	5
6.2.3.	National Park Service.....	6
6.2.4.	Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.....	7
6.3.	Public Lands.....	7
6.3.1.	Federal Lands	8
	National Park Service.....	8
	United States Navy.....	10
6.3.2.	California State Lands.....	11
	California State Parks.....	11
	Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.....	11
	University of California Natural Reserve System.....	12
6.3.3.	Nonprofit Agency Lands.....	13
	Mountains Restoration Trust.....	13
	Nature Trust of the Santa Monica Mountains.....	13
6.3.4.	County Lands	13
6.3.5.	Municipal Lands.....	13
	City of Malibu.....	13
	City of Calabasas.....	14
6.3.6.	Other Local Lands	14
	Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.....	14
	Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency	15
	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	15
6.4.	Community Planning Context	15
6.4.1.	Los Angeles County: Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (1986).....	16
6.4.2.	Los Angeles County: Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan.....	18
6.4.3.	Ventura County General Plan.....	20
	Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan	23
	Ventura County Coastal Area Plan	24
6.4.4.	Los Angeles County All Hazard Mitigation Plan	24
	Los Angeles County Fire Plan	25
6.4.5.	Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Ventura County	26
6.4.6.	Las Virgenes–Malibu Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan	27
6.4.7.	City of Malibu General Plan	28
6.4.8.	City of Malibu Local Coastal Program, Land Use Plan (2002).....	30
6.4.9.	Calabasas General Plan 2030.....	31
6.5.	Integrating Fire Safety: The Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance.....	33

This page is inserted to facilitate double-sided printing of the document.

6. Santa Monica Mountains Community Context¹

6.1. Social and Legal Setting

The Santa Monica Mountains (SMM) region is home to a variety of plant, animal, and human communities. Most of the area is rural and unincorporated, particularly the western part of the mountain range in Ventura County (with the exception of the Hidden Valley and Lake Sherwood areas). Further east in Los Angeles County are more concentrated urban populations, including the CWPP Planning Area's two cities, Malibu and Calabasas.

The SMM's increasing popularity and desirability as a place to live can be attributed to its proximity to the metropolis of Los Angeles and the appealing combination of beaches, mountains, and fresh air. Communities include a mix of historic ranches, decades-old houses on land purchased long before it was prime real estate (the Monte Nido area, for example), and newer upscale houses and gated communities in the canyons and along the ridges built after more recent population influxes. The city of Malibu has a unique character of its own with its surfing culture and the many celebrities who make their home here.

6.1.1. Land Use and Development Trends

Land uses in the Planning Area are primarily residential and recreational. The area is all within the roughly 160,000-acre Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA).² Administered by the National Park Service, the SMMNRA was created in 1978.

Urban development in the region had already started in earnest in the 1920s, with most of it occurring after World War II. Growth spiked in the period between 1970 and 1990, during which the SMM's population increased by 45%. Suburban development grew at four times the rate of the rest of Los Angeles County, and the rate of conversion of open space to developed space tripled.³



Many of the residences in the Santa Monica Mountains are personal second and third homes, and thus not inhabited all year round. Furthermore, many of the permanent residents are not home during the day as they commute out of the Planning Area for work. In both cases, day laborers often occupy the area in the absence of homeowners.

Despite the existence of urban pockets in this region, the CWPP Planning Area's borders are almost congruent with those of the SMMNRA, 90% of which is undeveloped.⁴ The Planning Area contains myriad public parks and

¹ Much of this chapter was written by Stephen Umbertis, with assistance from Deanna Sverdlov.

² See section 6.2.1 below for more information on the National Recreation Area.

³ Julie D. Clark De Blasio (2007), "Defensible Space: Environmental Implications of Fire Clearance Regulations in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area," UCLA, LD791.7 U7 D351 2007: pp. 21–22.

PUBLIC DRAFT

natural areas, making it popular for hiking, horseback riding, birding, camping, and more. Further details of the recreational uses are found later in this chapter (*see “Public Lands,” section 6.3, below*).

Public and private development projects in the Santa Monica Mountains are ongoing and increasingly controversial. There is growing support for limiting human impacts among concerned stakeholders across the board: private, public, and local governments. Regulators say that the SMM area is “*built out*” and the infrastructure cannot handle much more development, yet at any given time there are scores, if not hundreds, of proposed projects in the SMM. Two current notable and controversial projects involve a proposed development by The Edge, guitarist for the rock band U2, and a city park slated for Trancas Canyon.

6.1.2. Community Legal Structure and Jurisdictional Boundaries

A variety of jurisdictions is found within the Planning Area, each with a different mandate, different area of focus and priority, and varying degrees of regulatory authority. **There are two counties (Los Angeles and Ventura), two cities (Malibu and Calabasas), several water management districts (see below), two federal agencies (National Park Service and US Navy), and two state agencies (California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy).** Two joint exercise of powers agencies, local agencies, and some nonprofit organizations also are active in land-use planning and conservation in the Santa Monica Mountains and coastal areas. This creates a challenge for coordinating policies and actions across the CWPP Planning Area.

The Planning Area is situated within the 41st California State Assembly District, the 30th and 24th US Congressional Districts, and State Senate Districts 23 (mostly) and 19. With the exception of Malibu and Calabasas, the Planning Area is unincorporated, with no other municipal jurisdictions. Both Malibu and Calabasas were incorporated in 1991.⁵

Los Angeles County is governed by the five-member Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, each with a constituency of approximately two million people.⁶ The portion of the CWPP Planning Area within Los Angeles County falls in the third supervisorial district.⁷ In Ventura County (also governed by a five-member Board of Supervisors) the majority of the Planning Area falls into the second supervisorial district, with some portions in the third district.

In 2004, a Blue Ribbon Task Force appointed by the Governor examined the State’s fire protection system in the wake of the devastating 2003 fires. The Commission found that the greatest impediment to effective fire fighting in the state was “conflicting public policy mandates, lengthy bureaucratic administrative processes and procedures, and antagonistic litigation tactics,” and that the key to protecting communities and residents was “fire prevention and effective vegetation/fuels management programs.”⁸

The seemingly conflicting goals of environmental protection and vegetation management for fuels reduction continue to challenge agency managers and policy makers across the state. These concerns have been addressed in

⁴ National Park Service (2002), General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Volume 1: p. 3.

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malibu,_CA

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles_County_Board_of_Supervisors

⁷ <http://portal.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/lac/government/>

⁸ The Governor’s Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, Report to Governor, 2004. Executive Summary, www.oes.ca.gov/WebPage/oeswebsite.nsf/Content/56A8C1B3AAF790058825742600818EC0?OpenDocument

some cases with habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or multi-species conservation plans, which provide an ecosystem approach to environmental protection on a landscape level. These types of plans are an effective way to balance fire protection with environmental standards.⁹

6.2. Fire Protection Agencies

Wildfire suppression in the Santa Monica Mountains is carried out by several agencies, principally the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) and the Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD). Additional wildland fire protection (primarily for parkland) is provided by the National Park Service (NPS) and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA).¹⁰



Source: NPS / SMMNRA

The two county fire departments provide fire protection for all structures in the CWPP Planning Area, and have the majority of fire-suppression resources in and near the SMMNRA. LACFD provides structural fire protection for all unincorporated land in Los Angeles County in the Planning Area, as well as the cities of Calabasas and Malibu, which are part of the Consolidated Fire Protection District of Los Angeles County (a.k.a LACFD). VCFD provides structural fire protection for the Ventura County portion of the Planning Area.

All fire-protection agencies have the responsibility to provide fire suppression within their jurisdictional boundaries. These jurisdictions include *Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA)*, State Responsibility Areas (SRA), and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA). Jurisdictions are based on a variety of factors, including ownership, population, and land use. Different fire-protection agencies will be dispatched based on these jurisdictional boundaries. However, agreements are in place for *Mutual Aid* in order to provide the best emergency services to all areas.

On FRA lands, federal agencies have primary responsibility for protection of wildlands in case of fire. This includes the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires. NPS wildfire resources can respond to any wildfire emergency in the National Recreation Area, and the agency is specifically responsible for wildland fire on NPS-managed land. NPS has cooperative fire agreements with the State of California, LACFD, and VCFD for wildfire suppression on NPS land.

The US Navy protects its jurisdictional lands on both sides of Pacific Coast Highway at Point Mugu in the northwestern part of the Planning Area. Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) maintains its own fire-fighting force, which is responsible for fighting fires and protecting infrastructure at the facility. It has a Mutual Aid agreement with VCFD for fighting fire in the areas adjacent to NBVC, Point Mugu.¹¹ See section 6.3.1 for more on NBVC.

⁹ Christopher Zimny, California Board of Forestry, personal communication, March 5, 2010.

¹⁰ www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25415

¹¹ Salim Rahemtulla, Community Planner and Liaison Officer, Naval Base Ventura County, personal communication, April 7, 2010.

PUBLIC DRAFT

SRA lands are defined based on land ownership, population density, and land use. The California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) determines SRA lands per the guidelines established by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. CAL FIRE has a legal responsibility to provide wildland resource fire protection on all SRA lands, including the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires. In both Los Angeles and Ventura County unincorporated lands within the Santa Monica Mountains, CAL FIRE contracts with the county fire departments to provide fire protection to SRA lands. Lands in incorporated cities or surrounded by federal land are excluded from SRA lands.

Local fire districts and urban fire departments are responsible for providing structure fire protection on SRA lands. They are also responsible for providing all fire protection on LRA lands. Los Angeles and Ventura County Fire Departments have the primary responsibility for fire protection for LRA lands within the Planning Area.

For a map of FRA, SRA, LRA and locations of fire stations and other fire protection resources, *please see Map 6-1, Fire Protection Resources of the Santa Monica Mountains.*

6.2.1. Los Angeles County Fire Department

The operations of the LACFD are divided into three regional bureaus. They are the North Region, the Central Region, and the East Region. Each bureau is centrally based in the community it serves.¹² The Central Region Operations Bureau, specifically Division VII, Battalion 5, is responsible for the Los Angeles County section of the CWPP Planning Area.¹³

FIGURE 6-1. LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT STATIONS IN THE SMM

STATION NAME & NUMBER	STATION ADDRESS	GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA (APPROX)	PUBLIC PHONE #	TOTAL NO. REGULAR STAFFING
Fire Station #65	4206 N. Cornell Rd., Agoura, CA 91301	17.43 square miles	818-889-0610	3
Fire Station #67	25801 Piuma Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302	16.08 square miles	818-222-1099	3
Fire Station #68	24130 Calabasas Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302	9.02 square miles	818-222-1107	5
Fire Station #69	401 S. Topanga Canyon Road, Topanga, CA 90290	17.87 square miles	310-455-1766	4 – add’l call firefighters available but number varies
Fire Station #70 Division Headqtrs.	3970 Carbon Canyon Rd., Malibu, CA 90265	7.96 square miles	310-456-2513	4, plus 1 BC 1 AC
Fire Station #71	28722 W. Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu, CA 90265	25.62 square miles	310-457-2578	5
Fire Station #72	1832 Decker Canyon Rd., Malibu, CA 90265	22.16 square miles	310- 457-6186	3

¹² <http://fire.lacounty.gov>

¹³ www.fire.lacounty.gov/HometownFireStations/HometownFireStations.asp

PUBLIC DRAFT

STATION NAME & NUMBER	STATION ADDRESS	GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA (APPROX)	PUBLIC PHONE #	TOTAL NO. REGULAR STAFFING
Fire Station #88	23720 W. Malibu Rd., Malibu, CA 90265	8.39 square miles	310- 456-2812	5
Fire Station #99	32550 PCH., Malibu, CA 90265	8.04 square miles	310-457-3706	3
Fire Station #125 ¹⁴	5215 N. Las Virgenes Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302	5.93 square miles	818-880-4411	7

LACFD has 11 fire engines in the CWPP Planning Area on a year-round basis, and consistently adds one to three *engine strike teams* during Red Flag conditions. LACFD also maintains helicopters as air support for fire suppression. This is critical to effective wildland fire suppression due to the remote nature of many areas and road-building restrictions in many of the protected areas of the SMMNRA.

6.2.2. Ventura County Fire Department

The Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) provides fire protection and emergency response services for the areas of Ventura County within the Planning Area. VCFD maintains two of its 31 fire stations inside the CWPP Planning Area, and has two others that service it.¹⁵

FIGURE 6-2. VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT STATIONS IN THE SMM

STATION NAME & NUMBER	STATION ADDRESS	GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA (APPROX)	PUBLIC PHONE NUMBER	TOTAL NO. REGULAR STAFFING
Lake Sherwood #33	33 Lake Sherwood Dr., Thousand Oaks, CA 91361	Hidden Valley and southern Westlake Village area of Thousand Oaks	805-371-1111 x33	Staffed by 3 firefighters, houses Engine 33, a reserve Engine 133, and Utility Pickup 233
Malibu #56	11855 PCH., Malibu, CA 90265	South coast, Yerba Buena and Deer Creek areas	805-371-1111 x.56	Staffed by 3 firefighters and houses Engine 56 and Patrol 56
Potrero, #32	830 S. Reino Rd., Newbury Park, CA 91320	Southwestern Newbury Park, Potrero Rd. from Hidden Valley to CSUCI.	805-371-1111 x32	Staffed by 3 firefighters and 1 firefighter/medic. Medic Engine 32, Medic Engine 332, Patrol 32
Airport, #50	189 Las Posas Rd., Camarillo, CA 93010	Southern Camarillo and Oxnard Plains. South Coast to Mugu Rock.	805-371-1111 x50	Staffed by 3 firefighter and 2 firefighter/medics. Engine 50, Crash 50, Haz-mat 50, Squad 50

¹⁴ Fire Station #125 is located outside the CWPP Planning Area but has jurisdiction within it.

¹⁵ <http://fire.countyofventura.org/AboutVCFD/Stations/tabid/80/Default.aspx>

6.2.3. National Park Service



The National Park Service manages fire in accordance with the National Fire Plan and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Fire Management Plan.¹⁶ The latter plan describes four Fire Management Units and discusses which agencies have primary responsibility for wildland fire within those boundaries. The SMMNRA enabling legislation states that the "NPS is specifically charged with protecting resources within the entire Recreation Area."¹⁷ NPS has two wildland fire engines stationed at Paramount Ranch. The Type III engine is fully staffed during fire season (5 firefighters, 7 days a week), and minimally staffed in the off season. The Type VI engine can be staffed as needed throughout the year. The park has a Fire Management Officer, qualified to act as an Incident Commander and Operations Chief, and a Fire Information Officer. They both respond to wildfires in the National Recreation Area. The fire management staff includes a fire program assistant, fuels technician, fuels crew, fire ecologist, fire monitor, and fire GIS staff. In addition, many SMMNRA employees hold wildfire qualifications and receive orders to provide their skill on incidents throughout the nation. Additional federal resources may be ordered during extreme fire weather conditions. All of these resources respond to emergencies throughout the nation.

FIGURE 6-3. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STATIONS IN THE SMMNRA

STATION NAME & NUMBER	STATION ADDRESS	CONTACT & TITLE	PUBLIC PHONE NUMBER	TOTAL NO. REGULAR STAFFING
Paramount Ranch	2813 Cornell Rd., Agoura Hills, CA 91301	California –Santa Monica Park Engine 73 & Engine 74 Fuels Staff	805-370-1840	Staffed business hours w/ 2 firefighters and 1 leader. Staffed during fire season w/ 5 firefighters, 7 days, and w/ 1 leader and 5-person fuels crew. One permanent and 3-5 seasonal crew members that implement mechanical fuel-reduction projects.

¹⁶ www.nps.gov/samo/parkmgmt/upload/Final_FMP_07update.pdf

¹⁷ National Park Service (2007), Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Fire Management Plan, p. 5; www.nps.gov/samo/parkmgmt/upload/Final_FMP_07update.pdf.

PUBLIC DRAFT

STATION NAME & NUMBER	STATION ADDRESS	CONTACT & TITLE	PUBLIC PHONE NUMBER	TOTAL NO. REGULAR STAFFING
SMMNRA HQ	401 W Hillcrest Dr. Thousand Oaks, CA 91360	Fire Management Officer, Fire Information Officer, Fire Program Management Assistant, Fire Ecology and Mapping	805-370-2300	Fire Chief & Fire Information Officer, Fire Program Assistant Fire Ecologist, Fire GIS

6.2.4. Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

A land-managing agency operating under a Joint Powers Agreement with the State of California, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) maintains an Operations Division that serves as a first responder to emergency incidents (wildland fires) on or adjacent to its lands. It responds to incidents on property that it or its partner state agency the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy owns and/or manages, as well as assists other agencies (primarily park agency partners) with fire protection. The MRCA participates in the Master Mutual Aid¹⁸ program and is dispatched through the California Office of Emergency Services (OES).¹⁹ It has four key area locations in which fire engines are pre-deployed to expedite response time to emergency incidents. Two of these are in the Planning Area:



- Holiday Camp (King Gillette Ranch) - 1670 Las Virgenes Canyon Rd., Calabasas
- Ramirez Canyon - 5750 Ramirez Canyon Rd., Malibu
- Temescal Canyon - 15601 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades
- Franklin Canyon - 2600 Franklin Canyon Dr., Beverly Hills

MRCA’s Fire Management Unit of the Operations Division cooperates with LACFD, VCFD, Los Angeles City Fire Department, California Dept. of Parks and Recreation, and NPS to prevent and protect against wildfire. The MRCA Fire Management Unit employs 106 trained and certified wildland fire-fighting personnel and is capable of deploying fire-fighting equipment including three Type III wildland fire engines, one 2,000-gallon water tender, two mobile command units, 50+ chainsaws, and eight fire patrol vehicles equipped with a minimum of 200 gallons of water. Personnel patrol parklands and the Mulholland Scenic Corridor.

6.3. Public Lands

More than 70 government and municipal entities share jurisdiction in the 154,095-acre Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area,²⁰ which includes the entire CWPP Planning Area and extends beyond to east of Topanga Canyon and north of Liberty Canyon across Highway 101.

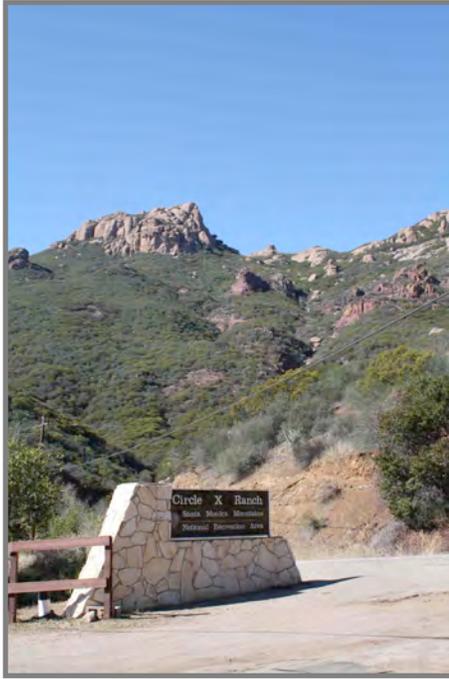
¹⁸ A state Office of Emergency Services program in which agencies provide the state equipment and staff to render mutual aid outside their operating areas.

¹⁹ State OES Region 1 contracts through the LACFD for dispatch of this service.

6.3.1. Federal Lands

National Park Service²¹

The US Congress designated the Santa Monica Mountains a National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) in 1978 following a campaign by local conservationists. There are 18 National Recreation Areas in the United States. Five of these, including the SMMNRA, are characterized by their proximity to major urban centers and were created to combine scarce open spaces with the preservation of significant historic and/or natural resources, with the goal of providing outdoor recreation opportunities for a large number of people.^{22,23}



The purpose of the SMMNRA’s designation is to “preserve the scenic, natural and historic, as well as public health values of the Santa Monica Mountains.”²⁴ **The area is nationally significant for encompassing the greatest expanse of mainland Mediterranean ecosystems in the National Park system (exhibiting one of the world’s rarest and most endangered ecosystems), as well as for having more than a thousand archeological sites within its boundaries.**²⁵

Most of the SMMNRA lies in Los Angeles County, while about one third of the western section extends into Ventura County. **It is the largest and most heavily visited urban recreation area in the US,**²⁶ **and is managed through a collaborative partnership among federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit groups.** A core tenet of the designation is partnership between federal/state agencies and private landowners. Parklands within the SMMNRA include national, state, and county parks, as well as beaches, municipal parks, and privately managed recreation sites.²⁷ A total of 69,099 acres of parkland are encompassed by the SMMNRA.²⁸

The National Park Service manages 18,172 acres, or about 15% of the total land within the Planning Area, and is responsible for operation, maintenance, resource management, education, and visitor protection on its lands.²⁹ NPS manages the following public lands within the CWPP Planning Area: Arroyo Sequit, Backbone Trail System, Castro

²⁰ NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 2: p. 443.

²¹ Most of the information for this section was gathered from www.nps.gov/samo.

²² www.ohranger.com/qa/15840/what-difference-between-national-recreation-area-and-national-park

²³ The difference between a National Recreation Area and a National Park is that National Parks have significantly stricter regulations, including the prohibition of resource extraction and hunting.

²⁴ NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 1: p. 34.

²⁵ NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 1: pp. 34–35.

²⁶ <http://samofund.org/About/about.htm>

²⁷ For a complete list of parks in the SMM, see www.lamountains.com/searchresults.asp?regionid=3.

²⁸ NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 1: p. 19.

²⁹ NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 1: p. 28.

PUBLIC DRAFT

Crest, Circle X Ranch, Diamond X Ranch, Paramount Ranch, Peter Strauss Ranch, Rancho Sierra Vista/Satwiwa, Rocky Oaks, Solstice Canyon, and Zuma/Trancas Canyons.^{30,31}

The NPS' land management goals for the SMMNRA are to protect and enhance species and habitat diversity; protect and restore native plant species, plant communities, estuaries, and wetlands; reduce the extent of invasive plants and animals; manage fire in the recreation area to mimic natural fire regimes and reduce the threat of wildfires; preserve the cultural history of the area; and maintain or improve water quality in riparian areas, estuaries, and coastal waters.³²

Fire Management

The SMMNRA Fire Management Plan guides management of wildland fire, prescribed fire, and hazard fuel reduction within the National Recreation Area.³³ NPS is responsible for wildland fire protection on all SMMNRA land.

The SMMNRA Fire Management Plan states that wildfire will not be used as a resource management strategy within the SMMNRA, which means that all fires are suppressed. NPS believes that it is not feasible to manage wildfire in this high-population area without threatening public safety. Unlike fire-dependent forest ecosystems where fire may need reintroduction after being excluded by fire suppression, the Santa Monica Mountains have experienced an increase in fire frequency since the 1950s even with successful fire suppression.³⁴ This is due to an increase in human ignitions and the inability to control extreme wind-driven wildfires.³⁵ In fact, the mountain chaparral communities in the SMM “are not fire-limited (do not need additional fire, in the form of prescribed fire, to thrive) under the current fire management strategy of active suppression.”³⁶ If prescribed fire were to be utilized on NPS land it would be undertaken in cooperation with the jurisdictional agency, LACFD or VCFD, and South Coast Air Quality Management District or Ventura County Air Pollution Control District.^{37,38}

The goals of the SMMNRA Fire Management Plan are to provide for firefighter and public safety first, reduce fire hazards in the SMMNRA, protect ecological and cultural resources, and identify resource conditions and hazards on private property near the park boundary that require specific fire management actions. Finally, it provides a decision-making framework for fire and resource managers to evaluate fire management proposals.³⁹

³⁰ <http://smmc.ca.gov/partners.html>

³¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Monica_Mountains_National_Recreation_Area

³² NPS (2002), General Management Plan and Final EIS, SMMNRA, Volume 1: pp. 40–46.

³³ National Park Service (2007), SMMNRA Fire Management Plan, p. 5;
www.nps.gov/samo/parkmgmt/upload/Final_FMP_07update.pdf.

³⁴ See Chapter 3 for more information on SMM fire history.

³⁵ J.E. Keeley, C.J. Fotheringham, and M. Morais (1999), “Reexamining fire suppression impacts on brushland fire regimes,” *Science*, Volume 284: pp. 1829-1832.

³⁶ NPS (2007), SMMNRA Fire Management Plan, p. 20.

³⁷ NPS (2007), SMMNRA Fire Management Plan, p. 47.

³⁸ NPS (2007), SMMNRA Fire Management Plan, p. 17.

³⁹ National Park Service (2005), Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Fire Management Plan, SMMNRA, Chapter 1, pp. 3–4.

PUBLIC DRAFT

***FIGURE 6-4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE EXISTING FUEL PROJECTS
IN THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS***

PROJECT NAME	METHOD OF TREATMENT	ACRES TREATED
Arroyo Sequit	Defensible Space	4.4
Castro	Defensible Space	.9
Cheeseboro	Defensible Space	10.8
Circle X	Defensible Space	14.5
Corral	Defensible Space	.8
Decker School Road	Defensible Space	2.5
Diamond X	Defensible Space	4.1
Franklin Canyon	Defensible Space	6.1
Fryman Canyon	Defensible Space	5.2
Gillette	Defensible Space	1.8
Paramount	Defensible Space	6.8
Rancho Sierra Vista	Defensible Space	22
Rocky Oaks	Defensible Space	4.9
Shea	Defensible Space	.4
Trancas Canyon	Defensible Space	4.7
Zuma Canyon SE	Defensible Space	10.6
Cheeseboro	Strategic Fuels	89.5
Paramount Ranch NE	Strategic Fuels	64.1
RSV, Potrero Rd	Strategic Fuels	39.2
Las Virgenes	Strategic Fuels w/ CDPR	102.9
Reagan Ranch	Strategic Fuels w/CDPR	51.6

United States Navy

The US Navy and the Department of Defense operate the Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), Point Mugu. NBVC Point Mugu is a 28,000-acre facility surrounding the Mugu Lagoon, which is 22,600 acres of the total base area. The remaining 4,490 acres include runways and other land-based facilities. Most of these are outside the CWPP Planning Area. NBVC maintains a Mutual Aid agreement with the VCFD. VCFD is responsible for dispatching the federal fire resources as needed to fires adjacent to the base, or at the request of the fire department.⁴⁰

In addition to the federal resources located at NBVC, the facility houses the 146th Airlift Wing of the California Air National Guard. The 146th maintains a number of cargo aircraft (C-130E Hercules) that can be outfitted with Modular Airborne Firefighting (MAF) systems. These systems allow cargo aircraft to deliver and drop fire retardant as part of a larger fire-fighting effort. These airborne resources are dispatched as described in the National

⁴⁰ Salim Rahemtulla, Community Planner and Liaison Officer, NBVC, personal communication, April 7, 2010.

PUBLIC DRAFT

Mobilization Guide,⁴¹ which provides protocols for interagency operations during large regional fires such as those experienced across the western US in 2000.

6.3.2. California State Lands

Several California state agencies manage land within the CWPP Planning Area: California State Parks, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and the University of California Natural Reserve System. Together, these state lands add up to over 35,000 acres within the Planning Area.

California State Parks

California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR, or California State Parks) manages 278 park units in the state, and 8 in the Planning Area.⁴² CDPR focuses on natural and cultural heritage preservation, outdoor recreation, education and interpretation, facilities maintenance, and public safety. The following California State Parks and Beaches are located within the Planning Area and have a combined area of approximately 26,500 acres: Topanga State Park, Leo Carrillo State Park, Malibu Creek State Park, Malibu Lagoon State Beach, Point Mugu State Park, Point Dume State Beach, Point Dume Natural Preserve, and Robert H. Meyer Memorial State Beach.^{43,44}

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC, or the Conservancy) was established by the California State Legislature in 1980. It works in an “area of interest” of approximately 450,000 acres in which it acquires land, including within the CWPP Planning Area. Much of the land in its area of interest is publicly protected; the Conservancy works closely with other agencies to cooperatively acquire and manage land. The Conservancy’s goals and objectives were initially set in the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan⁴⁵ and the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor Master Plan.⁴⁶ These goals were to buy back, preserve, protect, restore, and enhance pieces of southern California to create a connected series of parks, trails, and habitats that are easily accessible to the public.

The Conservancy’s programs to educate landowners and developers on open-space benefits to property value, biodiversity, and ecosystem health have resulted in the acquisition of thousands of acres through private donations.⁴⁷ In addition, it utilizes a combination of funding sources and methods to acquire land and create parkland. These include State bond funds, local parks funding, grant funding, and funds generated from the partnership of numerous local, state, and federal entities.

Another signature mechanism through which the Conservancy expands its acquisition capabilities is the formation of joint powers agencies (JPAs) with local governments. JPAs allow the partners to exercise their separate authorities jointly. One of the JPAs with which the Conservancy works most closely is the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). *See 6.3.6 below for more information on MRCA and its relationship with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.*

⁴¹ www.nifc.gov/nicc/mobguide/

⁴² Information for this section came largely from www.parks.ca.gov.

⁴³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Monica_Mountains_National_Recreation_Area

⁴⁴ Craig Sap, Public Safety Superintendent-Angeles District, California Department of Parks and Recreation, personal communication, June 23, 2010.

⁴⁵ <http://smmc.ca.gov/objectives.html>

⁴⁶ http://smmc.ca.gov/ROV_Master_Plan.pdf

⁴⁷ Rorie Skei, Deputy Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, personal communication, February 2010.

PUBLIC DRAFT



The SMMC and MRCA are jointly proposing campgrounds in the Planning Area, which generated major concern amongst local residents at the CWPP community meetings in 2009-10. According to the proposed plans, SMMC will not allow campfires or barbecues of any kind, nor smoking in the proposed campgrounds.⁴⁸ All campsites will be closed during Red Flag⁴⁹ conditions. More information on the campgrounds, the proposed management actions, and environmental documentation can be found at the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority’s website.⁵⁰

FIGURE 6-5. SMMC AND MRCA EXISTING FUEL-REDUCTION PROJECTS IN THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS

PROJECT AREA	PROJECT NAME	METHOD OF TREATMENT
Ramirez Canyon Park	Hazard tree removal or pruning; maintain defensible space	Mechanical
King Gillette Ranch	Hazard tree removal or pruning; maintain defensible space	Mechanical
Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve	Hazard tree removal or pruning; maintain defensible space; exotic weed treatment	Mechanical, Pre-Post Emergents
Other Agency-Owned or Managed Lands	Defensible Space	Mechanical, Pre-Post Emergents

University of California Natural Reserve System

The University of California Natural Reserve System (UCNRS) is the largest and most diverse system of university-administered natural reserves in the world, managing 35 wildland sites in the state, together encompassing about 130,000 acres.⁵¹

Located in the Cold Creek watershed, the Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve is a 310-acre reserve administered by the University of California, Los Angeles Campus of the Natural Reserve System.⁵² Stunt Ranch officially joined the UCNRS in November 1995, becoming the system's 32nd site and the only one administered by the Los Angeles campus. After the 1993 Old Topanga Fire burned more than 17,000 acres of this region, the reserve is reopen and is being used for research and education.⁵³

⁴⁸ Coastal Commission, City of Malibu LCP Override, LCPA 1-08 Revised Finding, October 7, 2009.

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4 for more information on Red Flag conditions.

⁵⁰ <http://mrca.ca.gov/pwp4.html>

⁵¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_California_Natural_Reserve_System

⁵² <http://stuntranch.ucnrs.org>

⁵³ <http://nrs.ucop.edu/Reserves/stunt/Stunt1.html>

6.3.3. Nonprofit Agency Lands

Mountains Restoration Trust

The Mountains Restoration Trust (MRT) is a nonprofit land trust “dedicated to preserving natural land in the Santa Monica Mountains through restoration, education and land acquisition.”⁵⁴ MRT has acquired more than 6,000 acres throughout the SMM. In 1992, MRT and the California State Parks began the Commemorative Oaks program in Malibu Creek State Park, removing non-native vegetation and planting more than 2,500 oak trees. MRT has also completed numerous restoration projects and has partnered with state and local government agencies in environmental management.

Nature Trust of the Santa Monica Mountains

The Nature Trust of the Santa Monica Mountains is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to preserving and protecting environmentally significant areas within the Santa Monica Mountains. Its property is located in the western part of the City of Malibu, at the Malibu Riding and Tennis Club and Guest Ranch. Originally 280 acres, this property was first acquired by the Mountains Restoration Trust in 1997. It was subsequently transferred to the Nature Trust of the Santa Monica Mountains. In 2000, the Nature Trust transferred 180 acres of this land to Leo Carillo State Park. In addition to land stewardship, the Nature Trust partakes in habitat conservation, nature-based education, outdoor recreation, and wildland-urban interface research.⁵⁵

6.3.4. County Lands

The CWPP Planning Area spans two counties, though very little property within the Planning Area is actually managed by those counties. Los Angeles County controls tax default properties and some parkland, although it contracts with local municipalities or other entities to manage those areas. Ventura County manages or has easements on small pockets of land in the Planning Area, mostly dedicated to cell phone tower sites or watershed protection. More important than property ownership/management are the policies in the counties’ General Plans. These provide development and management guidelines for the unincorporated lands, and are described in Section 6.4 below.

6.3.5. Municipal Lands

City of Malibu

The City of Malibu, incorporated in 1991, encompasses 25 miles of coastline in Los Angeles County from the Ventura County line to Topanga Canyon Road. It encompasses the entire southern, or coastal, side of the Planning Area. The city extends approximately 2 miles inland and contains some slopes and coastal terraces of the SMMs. According to the 2000 Census, the city had a population of 12,575 people. The City of Malibu Parks and Recreation Department operates the 532-acre Charmlee Wilderness Park. In June 2003



⁵⁴ www.mountainstrust.org/about/mission.html

⁵⁵ www.naturetrust.net

PUBLIC DRAFT

the park was rededicated and ownership transferred from Los Angeles County to the City of Malibu, making it the largest park owned by the city. It manages numerous smaller parks and recreation centers.

The city itself is an urban area containing commercial, residential, and recreational land uses. The residential areas are typically clustered lots of approximately 10,000 square feet to an acre in size, with mid-sized parcels between 2 and 10 acres. There are large parcels, greater than 20 acres, on the coastal slopes throughout the city, reaching up to 300 acres in western Malibu.⁵⁶

City of Calabasas

The City of Calabasas is located on the eastern boundary of the Planning Area.⁵⁷ The city covers approximately 13 square miles and had a 2009 population of 23,375 people.⁵⁸ The city contains 8,615 housing units, the majority of which are single-family homes. The residents have consistently identified the scenic character and environmental quality as high priorities for preservation, and the city has a number of zoning regulations designed to protect natural



resource areas, restrict development, and maintain open character.⁵⁹ The city owns and manages 56.6 acres of parkland inside the city limits. It also manages around 300 acres of open space. There are approximately 3,000 acres of permanently protected open space within the city limits. SMMC, MRCA, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, and Mountains Restoration Trust manage these lands, along with a number of homeowner's associations that protect open space through deed restrictions and other vehicles.

6.3.6. Other Local Lands

Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority⁶⁰

In 1985 the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy formed a joint powers entity partnership with the Conejo Recreation and Park District and two years later with the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. These agreements created the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), a local public agency established pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Act.⁶¹

The MRCA provides ranger services, fire protection, planning, and natural resources expertise, along with educational programs for more than 50,000 acres of public lands and parks administered by it and/or SMMC.⁶² The Operations Division is responsible for ensuring that all agency and agency-controlled parkland is well maintained

⁵⁶ City of Malibu (2002), City of Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, pp. 5–6.

⁵⁷ www.cityofcalabasas.com

⁵⁸ www.cityofcalabasas.com/stats.html

⁵⁹ Calabasas Parks and Recreation Master Plan, www.cityofcalabasas.com/pdf/Parks-Master-Plan/02-Sect%202%20Community%20Profile.pdf.

⁶⁰ Much of the information for this section came from www.mrca.ca.gov.

⁶¹ Section 6500 et seq. of the Government Code

⁶² www.preserveopenspace.org/background.html

PUBLIC DRAFT

and safe for public use. In addition, the Operations Division provides a wide variety of contract services, including loaning personnel and equipment resources during wildfires to several land management agencies (*see “MRCA” in 6.1.3, above*). These agencies include the County of Los Angeles, the Puente Hills Landfill Native Habitat Preservation Authority, the National Park Service, the State Coastal Conservancy, the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority, and the Eastern Ventura County Conservation Authority.

MRCA’s fire prevention activities include fuel reduction to protect structures on its properties, and the housing of a remote automated weather service station for the LACFD at Ed Edelman Park in Topanga Canyon.⁶³ MRCA provides helicopter landing zones on its property for Ventura County Fire Department, LACFD, and Los Angeles City Fire Department.

SMMC and the MRCA have ongoing fuel-reduction projects in Ramirez Canyon Park and King Gillette Ranch, among other locations. These projects include selective hazard tree removal and pruning; annual assessments of fuel loads; and fuel-reduction/defensible space activities around park buildings. The MRCA does not do prescribed burning or large-scale fuel-management projects on their property; rather it is focused on resource protection and exotic species removal.⁶⁴ *See Figure 6-5 above for MRCA fuel-reduction projects.*

Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency

The Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) was established in 1977 by a joint powers agreement between the City of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Recreation and Park District. This agency currently owns or manages 869 acres of open space in the Planning Area, and 15,000 acres in total.⁶⁵

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) provides potable water, wastewater treatment, recycled water service, and compost production from *biosolids*.⁶⁶ The District has infrastructure to and serves the communities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Westlake Village, and the unincorporated areas of western Los Angeles County. The LVMWD owns approximately 775 acres of land inside the Planning Area. Approximately 360 acres surround the Las Virgenes Reservoir, while the rest of their holdings are located at their headquarters on Las Virgenes Road and scattered parcels throughout the service area. Maintaining water quality in these reservoirs following wildfires has been difficult for local water management agencies in the past; controlling the land immediately around the reservoir is essential for the LVMWD to maintain water quality in its service area.⁶⁷

6.4. Community Planning Context

Integrating this CWPP planning effort with existing municipal and agency plans is important for the long-term success of wildfire prevention in the Santa Monica Mountains. Land management in the area is complex, with different management entities and jurisdictions operating in close proximity to each other.

⁶³ <http://smmc.ca.gov/fire-prevention.html>

⁶⁴ Rorie Skei, Deputy Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, personal communication, April 8, 2010.

⁶⁵ www.cosf.org/website/pdf/COSCA%20Open%20Space%20by%20Name.pdf

⁶⁶ www.lvmwd.com

⁶⁷ www.lvmwd.com

PUBLIC DRAFT

Wildfires are especially complex to manage due to the cross-jurisdictional nature of the events and the urgency of response efforts. As discussed in section 6.2 above, a number of Mutual Aid agreements and service contracts are in place between the counties, cities, state and federal agencies, and some of the nonprofit groups in the region.

Wildfire prevention is even more complex across these various boundaries. The Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance (*see section 6.5 below*) is moving in the direction of integrating wildfire planning and prevention in the area.



Source: NPS / SMMNRA

Land use in unincorporated Los Angeles County within the CWPP Planning Area is governed by both the 2000 Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan (NAP) and the 1986 Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (LCP). The LCP applies to the Los Angeles County lands in the coastal area surrounding (but not including) the City of Malibu. These documents are part of the Los Angeles County General Plan and provide focused policies for these areas. Land-use policies for the City of Malibu are provided in their own Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan of the same name, adopted in 2002 and discussed below in section 6.4.8. The

NAP provides guidance for all other Los Angeles County lands in the Planning Area.

The sections below provide relevant information and policies culled from various planning documents of local governments and land-use agencies.

6.4.1. Los Angeles County: Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (1986)⁶⁸

The 1976 California Coastal Act (CCA) codified a distinct set of policies governing coastal areas statewide. The Act established a permit process and an inland boundary line for the designated Coastal Zone,⁶⁹ and delegated the enforcement and policy authority to local governments through the adoption and certification of Local Coastal Programs (LCPs).

The LCPs contain the local government's land-use policies, zoning ordinances, and district maps, which must be detailed enough to guide the type, location, and intensity of land use in the Coastal Zone. The LCPs must be certified by the Coastal Commission as conforming with and meeting the goals of the CCA.

A large amount of the 1986 Malibu LCP is focused on providing or improving access to the beaches in the greater Malibu area. The CCA was enacted partly as a response to new developments removing access to the beaches and affecting quality of life in coastal areas. The relevant sections with policies pertinent to fire safety or environmental protection are listed below.

⁶⁸ Malibu Local Coastal Program, 1986 http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/malibu_local_coastal_plan/

⁶⁹ California's Coastal Zone generally extends 1,000 yards inland from the mean high-tide line. In significant coastal estuarine habitat and recreational areas it extends inland to the first major ridgeline, or 5 miles from the mean high-tide line, whichever is less. In developed urban areas, the boundary is generally less than 1,000 yards. These land and water area boundaries were established by the State Legislature as defined in Coastal Act Section 30103. Almost all of the CWPP Planning Area falls into the category of significant habitat and recreational area, so the Coastal Zone therefore extends up to 5 miles inland (or to the ridgeline) because of the many sensitive resources and riparian areas.

Section 4.2. Marine and Land Resource Protection

This section of the 1986 Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan contains a number of policies designating specific resources of concern to Los Angeles County. These include *Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs)* designated on the Sensitive Environmental Resources Map and any undesignated areas that meet these criteria and are identified through a *biotic* review process. Such undesignated areas include oak woodlands or other areas identified by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Habitat areas that can no longer support a significant number of species normally associated with healthy habitat “shall be designated as ‘Disturbed Sensitive Resources’.” This is juxtaposed against specific areas that were identified as relatively undisturbed and providing important contributions to the integrity of local woodlands, including: Arroyo Sequit, Zuma Canyon, Solstice Canyon, Corral Canyon, Malibu Canyon, Cold Creek Canyon, and Tuna Canyon.

Many of the policies in this section are designed to minimize impacts from proposed developments to these sensitive areas. One policy states that any project “which cannot mitigate significant adverse impacts as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act on sensitive environmental resources shall be denied.”⁷⁰

In addition, “ESHAs shall be protected against significant disruption of habitat values,” and only uses that are dependent on those resources will be allowed in those areas. Residential use is not considered a resource-dependent use and thus is inappropriate for these areas.

Within the Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan document, Los Angeles County required that buildings be clustered to minimize impacts unless it could be demonstrated that other mitigation methods would be more effective. Furthermore, open space or conservation easements could be required to protect undisturbed watershed cover and riparian vegetation from the proposed development.

Most relevant to fire protection are two policies (Policies 74 and 75) requiring that new developments be placed as close to existing roadways and services as possible to minimize the effects on sensitive resources, and that development adjacent to parks should be sited to allow enough room for fire preventative fuels management, respectively.

The majority of the LCP policies are focused on erosion control, riparian impacts, and preventing impacts to ESHAs. There are scattered policies, such as those discussed above, which address or are related to fire protection. One such policy (Policy 84) requires that “landscape plans shall balance long-term stability and minimization of fuel load.” The policy suggests a combination of taller and deep-rooted plants with low-growing ground cover to reduce heat output, and requires that native plant species be used, “consistent with fire safety requirements.”

Section 4.2.4. Hazards

The LCP contains a hazards section that covers geologic, flood, fire, and bluff and beach erosion. The first section provides policies regarding Public Notice and Waivers of Public Liability. There is some general language relevant to fire hazard specifying public policy on hazards. Policy 144 requires the County to provide hazard information and means to minimize the harmful effects of natural disaster to residents and private property.

The fire hazard section contains eight specific policies:

- Policy (P) 156: Continue to evaluate all new developments for impacts on, and from, fire hazard.

⁷⁰ Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan, 1986.

PUBLIC DRAFT

- P157: Continue to present requirements for fire-retardant roofing in fire hazardous areas (Fire Zone 4⁷¹).
- P158: Continue to enforce code requirements for clearance or reduction of flammable vegetation for a minimum distance of 100 feet around any residential structure in a fire hazard area (Fire Zone 4). Encourage use in landscaping of fire-retardant plant species.
- P159: Continue to present requirements on all new development for emergency vehicle access and fire-flow water supply, as determined by the Forester and Fire Warden, until such time as alternative mitigation measures providing an equivalent degree of safety are developed and implemented.
- P160: Require residential structures in fire hazard areas to utilize fire-resistant building materials and designs (i.e., one-hour fire-resistant walls and enclosed eaves, double-pane windows, and improved vent requirements).
- P161: Based on recommendations of Forester and Fire Warden, adopt a program for management of combustible vegetative materials (controlled burns) in fire-hazardous materials.
- P162: Encourage the establishment of a closure policy for public recreation areas during periods of extreme fire hazard.

6.4.2. Los Angeles County: Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan⁷²

The Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan (NAP), adopted in 2000, is a component of the Los Angeles County General Plan. It is used to focus policy in the unincorporated areas of the county west of the city of Los Angeles and north of the Coastal Zone boundary.⁷³ This covers all of the CWPP Planning Area in unincorporated Los Angeles County. There are two components of this plan with policies pertinent to wildfire planning. These are the Conservation and Open Space Element, and the Safety Element.

Conservation and Open Space Element

The guiding principle for managing natural resources in this portion of the Santa Monica Mountains, as stated in the NAP Conservation and Open Space Element, is that “resource protection has priority over development.” This is in recognition of the irreplaceable resource that the Santa Monica Mountains provide to the residents of the area, state, and nation. The benefits derived from the SMM in its immediate area, in terms of recreational, scenic, and educational opportunities as well as wildlife habitat benefits, are dependent on maintaining the area’s natural setting and wild nature.

In order to preserve the open space and biological functions of the area, a number of policies and programs have been put into place. These include Natural Resource Areas, Cultural Resource Areas, Significant Watersheds, and the Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) program. The latter identified areas throughout the county that contain unique, rare, or endangered species, and examples of rare or declining habitats.⁷⁴ There are several SEAs in the Santa Monica Mountains area:

- SEA No. 3A (Buffer) – Zuma Canyon
- SEA No. 3B (Buffer) – Zuma Canyon
- SEA No. 4 – Upper La Sierra Canyon
- SEA No. 6 – Las Virgenes
- SEA No. 12 – Palo Comado Canyon

⁷¹ Fire Zone 4 refers to areas classified by CAL FIRE as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

⁷² Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan, 2000,
http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/santa_monica_mountains_north_area_plan/.

⁷³ Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan, p. I-1.

⁷⁴ http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/gp_web-ch06.pdf

PUBLIC DRAFT

Because the value of the biological areas does not stop at the rather arbitrary SEA boundary, the NAP recognizes the importance of buffering these places from development. Protecting the surrounding lands and using them as development buffers helps to protect the SEAs from effects of runoff, erosion, grading, and vegetation clearing.

The Biological Resources Goals and Policies section contains one goal and eight supporting policies. The goal is: “An environment that retains significant animal and plant communities in an undisturbed condition and provides the highest possible protection for Significant Ecological Areas.”

The first policy places “primary emphasis on the preservation of large unbroken blocks of natural open space and wildlife habitat areas” as well as protects the linkages and corridors between such areas. The policy supports purchasing open-space lands for preservation purposes, clustering new developments to preserve the maximum amount of open space and reduce the need for vegetation clearing, and having new developments meet high environmental sensitivity standards.

Other pertinent language requires that development designs provide adequate space to buffer habitat areas from development impacts (such as grading-induced erosion and runoff), prevent the use of non-native or invasive species for landscaping, and allow for fee-title acquisition of property for open-space dedications by a public agency wherever possible to ensure long-term preservation.

The Open Space section of the element provides policy guiding the management of the more than 5,000 acres of permanently protected public open space in the region of the North Area Plan. This is approximately one-fourth of the land area in the NAP jurisdiction, and it is managed by the National Park Service and the State of California.

Preserving open space is a recognized land management tool for protecting significant environmental resources, protecting public health and safety, managing the production of resources, and providing public recreation. Fire safety and prevention is clearly within the realm of public health and safety. The plan states that since fires occur in the SMM, certain areas in the mountains are best left in their natural condition, protected from development.

The first policy in the Open Space section requires that areas set aside for open space have clearly defined open-space functions, and that management of such areas be consistent with the stated function. Subsequent policies also require that open-space corridors physically link open space and habitat areas to populated human areas and other open-space resources.

Safety Element

The Safety Element of the NAP takes the approach that “it is more prudent to avoid environmental hazards than to attempt to overcome them,” and that only the most unavoidable risks should be tolerated.⁷⁵ The NAP states that “the entire jurisdiction of the North Area Plan and surrounding communities are susceptible to varying degrees of urban and/or wildland fire hazards.” In order to lessen the risk of fire damage to human developments, the following goals and policies were adopted:

- Goal V-3: A built environment designed to minimize the potential for loss of life, physical injury, property damage, economic loss, and social dislocation due to wildland fires.
- **Policy V-8: Promote fire prevention as the region’s preferred management strategy and facilitate programs aimed at the prevention of fires; where fire safety is compromised by vegetation growth, vegetation management (selective plant clearance and use of low-combustion plant materials) shall be emphasized over complete clearance.**

⁷⁵ Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan, Safety Element.

PUBLIC DRAFT

- Policy V-9: Promote the connection of fire and unpaved private roads to other local roads, to be used as escape routes in the event of fire.
- Policy V-10: In fire-hazardous areas with significant biological resources, place a higher priority on avoiding development than on designing mitigation measures that would require intrusive fuelbreaks and fuel-modification areas to protect new development.
- Policy V-11: Minimize potential biological impacts of fuel-modification activities by limiting modification areas to those necessary to protect existing development, whenever feasible, and by emphasizing the planting of fire-resistant vegetation that is compatible with the area's natural vegetative habitats, rather than the use of open fuelbreaks.
- Policy V-12: Require that new development within areas subject to wildland fires be designed and sited in a manner that minimizes the threat of loss from wildland fires (located low on slopes, or set well back from tops of slopes) while avoiding the need for massive vegetation clearance; such designs should facilitate access by fire-fighting equipment and provide adequate evacuation routes for residents. Improvements shall be set back from public lands where possible—particularly where required vegetation clearance may affect the public lands. However, massive vegetation clearance should be avoided where safety is not an issue in order to protect the area's natural environment.
- Policy V-13: Prohibit development in areas with insufficient water pressure, fire flows, or other accepted means for adequate fire protection unless such safety measures can be reliably provided.
- Policy V-14: Encourage, where appropriate, "prescribed burn" programs and special planting and maintenance programs to reduce potential fire hazards in hillside and wilderness areas.
- Policy V-15: Maintain, where feasible, alternative water resources for fire-fighting purposes during a disaster.
- Policy V-16: Require that structures within rural areas be located along a paved, all-weather, and publicly accessible road in a manner that avoids the need for firefighters to move equipment onto private properties without adequate turnaround space. If a structure cannot feasibly be sited in this manner, require that interior fire sprinklers be installed.

6.4.3. Ventura County General Plan⁷⁶

General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs

The Ventura County General Plan was last amended and approved on December 16, 2008. The document contains goals, policies, and programs for Resources, Hazards, Land Use, and Public Facilities and Services. The following is a review of relevant sections from the document.

Hazards

The Hazards chapter focuses on general "...goals, policies, and programs relating to known existing and potential hazards, and other significant physical constraints to development/land use." There is specific language regarding a variety of natural and man-made hazards. Those specifically related to fire hazards, vegetation management, or natural hazards in terms of fire safety are included here.

Goals, Policies, and Programs

The goals are to: identify all major hazards and other physical constraints to development in Ventura County; protect public health, safety, and welfare; shield public and private property and essential facilities; minimize loss of life, injury, and damage to structures, as well as economic and social dislocations resulting from identified hazards and potential disasters.

The policies require that applicants for land-use and development permits must show how identified hazards may affect or be affected by their proposed project, and proposed mitigation. Additionally, all essential facilities, special

⁷⁶ Ventura County General Plan, www.ventura.org/rma/planning/General_Plan/general_plan.html.

PUBLIC DRAFT

occupancy structures, and hazardous materials storage facilities shall be designed to resist natural hazards. Finally, the County [Ventura] will develop and maintain cooperative response plans and mutual training and aid agreements with other public agencies.

There are a number of programs in the Safety Element; Programs 1, 5, 6, and 9 are most pertinent. These policies require that: the County Planning Division and the Public Works Agency periodically review and update the Hazards Appendix; that the Sheriff's Department Office of Emergency Services (OES) will maintain and periodically update the Ventura County Multihazard Functional Plan, including mitigation measures and preparedness, response, and recovery strategies for 12 contingency areas, including fire; all agencies involved with warning and evacuation activities should review and update their plans and procedures; and the Planning and Resource Management divisions maintain an updated GIS of county hazards.

Fire Hazards

This section of the Goals, Policies, and Programs document is focused on fire hazards in Ventura County. These include wildland, structural, chemical, petroleum, electrical, vehicle, and other human-caused material fires. The Fire Chapter, however, is focused on the rural and/or wildland areas of the county. According to the Ventura County General Plan, the following parts of the CWPP Planning Area are of particular concern due to the length of time since the last fire, the build-up of flammable brush and other vegetation, and inaccessibility: Yerba Buena Road–Carlisle Canyon Area, Lake Sherwood area, and the Santa Monica Mountains in general.

The goals, policies, and programs that apply to fire hazard are included below.

Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goals are to minimize the risk of loss of life, injury, damage to structures, and economic and social dislocations resulting from fire hazards, and to ensure that development in high fire-hazard areas is designed and constructed to minimize fire-hazard risk.

Four policies specifically target fire safety and risk reduction. They mandate that all projects requiring discretionary permits shall provide adequate water supply and access for fire protection and evacuation. In addition, these projects must include hazard-reduction measures in the project design, including fire-resistant vegetation and cleared firebreaks, or provide a long-term comprehensive fuel-management program. The policies state that new residential subdivisions will have no less than two means of access for emergency vehicles and resident evacuation, unless the proposed road conforms to the County Road Standards, and the County Fire Chief approves the road. Finally, all new subdivisions, multi-unit residential complexes, and commercial and industrial complexes must show that adequate fire protection is available, or will be available prior to occupancy.

Other Ventura County programs include a coordinated street-naming procedure with VCFD, the Public Works Agency, and cities. The Sheriff's Department Office of Emergency Services and VCFD maintain the County Multi-hazard Functional Plan's Wildland Fire Contingency section. The County Office of Emergency Services provides public information on emergency response notification, evacuation, and sheltering due to fire.

Land Use

The Land Use Chapter of the General Plan provides Ventura County policies related to land use, the establishment of zoning, and subdivision regulations. It also establishes the distribution of specific land uses and allowable densities throughout the county. While the majority of these policies are focused on "...promoting orderly growth and development," there are some targeted at maintaining healthy environments and preventing encroachment on hazardous areas. Those are summarized here.

Goals and Policies

The first two goals, while focused on preventing uncontrolled growth in Ventura County, emphasize two important criteria when considering the placement of new development. The first Land Use goal acknowledges that new development should be steered “away from hazardous areas,” which implies high fire-hazard areas. The second goal seeks to prevent “step-out development,” which can stretch the ability of firefighters and emergency personnel to adequately serve residents.

Most of the policies in this section do not apply directly to this CWPP. However, Policy 2 is focused on ensuring consistent zoning where discrepancies or uncertainties exist, and it utilizes the presence of natural hazards as part of the criteria for resolving those uncertainties. There is recognition that significant natural resources and hazards and the provision of adequate public services can affect zoning and development decisions at the county level.

Land-Use Designations

The Ventura County General Plan uses six basic land-use designations: Urban, Existing Community, Rural, Agricultural, Open Space, and State and Federal Facilities. In terms of fire hazard, the Rural, Agricultural, and Open Space designations are most likely applied to the areas representing the highest risk of wildfire.

This section contains goals specific to each land-use designation in the Ventura County General Plan. There are few goals related to hazards or fire safety. However, the county has a policy that new rural residential areas should avoid hazards and provide adequate public services. Similarly, the policy states that open-space areas should be used to site development away from hazardous features to protect public safety.

There is no language in the policy section related directly to hazard abatement or fire protection. However, the policies acknowledge that not all land is suitable or appropriate for rural residential development.

Public Facilities and Services

This chapter of the General Plan is intended to ensure that all residents of Ventura County receive adequate public services relative to public health, safety, and welfare. The county is responsible for providing such services to the unincorporated areas, including fire and emergency services. Many of the General Goals and Policies are directed to that task. Those policies have not been included here in the interest of limiting redundancy. Below is a summary of the introduction to section 4.8, and a list of Goals, Policies, and Programs specific to fire safety and service.

Fire Protection Goals, Policies, and Programs

The Ventura County Fire Department provides “fire prevention, fire education, fire suppression, and rescue services” to the unincorporated areas of the county and eight cities. The Fire Protection District (a.k.a. VCFD) is responsible for enforcing the Uniform Fire Code, inspecting “buildings, schools, and homes,” and also sponsors fire prevention programs in the “schools, service clubs, and other organizations.”

The County’s goal is to reduce the loss of life and property by providing effective fire prevention, suppression, rescue services, and facilities. To do this, development will only be permitted if adequate water supply, access, and response time for fire protection can be made available. Fire stations will be centrally located to minimize response time, and VCFD’s Bureau of Fire Prevention will continue to review all new development to ensure that an adequate level of fire protection can be provided. VCFD will continue to retain Mutual Aid agreements with all adjacent cities and counties, military installations, and other appropriate federal agencies, and to be a partner in the California Master Mutual Aid system.

Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan⁷⁷

The Lake Sherwood/ Hidden Valley Area Plan is an integral part of the Ventura County General Plan that provides focused development guidelines for these communities. The Area Plan covers approximately 8,252 acres in the Lake Sherwood basin and was first adopted on July 14, 1987. The document is required to present policies consistent with the Ventura County General Plan under California law. It states that the Planning Division of Ventura County will coordinate with the National Park Service and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to ensure that future amendments to their plans are consistent with the Area Plan.⁷⁸

The Plan contains four major sections – Land Use, Resources, Hazards and Constraints, and Public Facilities and Services. Of these, the subsections concerning biological resources and fire hazards are most relevant. They have policies regarding the removal of hazardous fuels, the inclusion of drought-tolerant and fire-resistant landscaping, the provision of emergency vehicle access to developments, and guidelines for adequate water for fire flow. All policies are subservient to the Ventura County Fire Ordinance, discussed in Chapter 4 of this CWPP.

The Biological Resources section gives policies on protected tree species (such as oaks), mitigation requirements if protected trees are removed, and makes provisions for wildlife corridors in the plan area. Most pertinent to fire safety are Policies 3, 4, and 6, which are applicable to the entire area of the plan and focused on brush removal, fuel modification, and landscaping. Policy 2 states that “brush clearing” must be limited to 2 acres or less per lot, unless more is required by the Fire Protection Ordinance; Policy 4 says that the required fuel modification zones be replanted with fire-retardant native plants. This dovetails into Policy 6, which requires that all landscape plans use non-invasive, fire-resistant native species “to the maximum extent feasible”.⁷⁹ These policies not only protect the developed areas from wildfire, but help to prevent fires from spreading out of urban areas into wildlands.

The Fire Hazards section is entirely applicable to the CWPP, as the policies are focused on both urban and wildland fire protection and prevention. The fire-related goals of the plan are to: protect the public and minimize public and private losses due to fire; ensure that development in “High Fire Hazard” areas provides adequate protection of life and property; and support controlled burn programs and other fire-prevention measures.

The policies of the Fire Hazard section all support and provide authority to VCFD. As previously discussed, the Area Plan is subservient to the countywide Fire Ordinance, which provides for defensible space areas around buildings and other specific information. These Fire Hazard policies are only pertinent to the Lake Sherwood Community and the Hidden Valley area, and take precedence over the Biological Resources policies where any conflict may occur.

The section gives the VCFD the authority to require adequate water and access for fire-fighting purposes in development permit applications, and directs all residences in High Fire Hazard Areas to have non-combustible roofs and exterior siding. These residences must also landscape with fire-retardant plants and maintain defensible space areas as required by other fire policies. The policies have strict requirements on cul-de-sac lengths, emergency vehicle access, fuel-modification programs in the immediate vicinity of residential buildings, and overall conformance to VCFD standards.

⁷⁷ Ventura County General Plan – Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan (4-6-10 edition), www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/plans/Lk_Sherwood_Hidden_Vly_Area_Plan_4-6-10.pdf.

⁷⁸ Ventura County General Plan – Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan.

⁷⁹ Ventura County General Plan – Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley Area Plan.

Ventura County Coastal Area Plan⁸⁰

The Ventura County Coastal Area Plan applies to the coastline and adjacent settlements located within Ventura County, including the western portion of the Santa Monica Mountains within the Coastal Zone. The policies for the SMM are focused on preserving the unique and rare habitats that occur in the area, and protecting other valuable natural resources. Similar to the Los Angeles County LCP and Malibu LCP, and in line with the State Coastal Act, within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) or their buffer areas (100 feet from the boundary of an ESHA), only the following uses are permitted: a) nature study; b) developments where the primary function is habitat enhancement or restoration; c) shoreline protective devices; d) passive recreational uses not involving structures; e) uses dependent on habitat values such as aquaculture and scientific research; and f) Public Works facilities in accordance with Section 8175-5.9 of the Coastal Zoning Ordinance. The Coastal Zone portion of the Santa Monica Mountains in Ventura County has been designated as the “M” overlay zone to recognize that the Mountains are a coastal resource of statewide and national significance. The Mountains contain ESHA, but these areas have not been identified or mapped, and therefore development, including vegetation removal and grading, require case-by-case consideration in order to identify and ensure protection of ESHA. Because the “M” overlay zone is considered to be a sensitive area, even minor developments (e.g., fences and walls 6 feet in height or less, grading less than 50 cubic yards, vegetation removal on less than one-half acre of land, structures under 400 square feet) require a discretionary permit and review of potential environmental impacts.⁸¹

The document directs that all new development should preserve unique native vegetation, which could potentially conflict with the need to create reduced fuel zones around new development.⁸² However, the overriding goal of the Coastal Area Plan as it pertains to the SMM in Ventura County is to preserve and protect the unique habitats that the Mountains provide. It states that ensuring that communities are protected from wildfire, and that the natural environment is protected from urban fires, will help to protect both the environment and the residents of the SMM.

6.4.4. Los Angeles County All Hazard Mitigation Plan⁸³

The Los Angeles County All Hazard Mitigation Plan is a massive document covering all aspects of county governance related to hazards. It contains population estimates and analysis, as well as descriptions of the different county departments and their responsibilities during emergency situations. A breakdown of the emergency response assets such as personnel, vehicle types and amounts, areas of responsibility, and other pertinent information is included. Due to the length and depth of the document, only discussions and policies specifically focused on wildfire and WUI issues are summarized here. For more information on Los Angeles County’s Hazard Mitigation programs, please see: <http://lacoa.org/hazmit.htm>.

Hazard Vulnerability Analysis, Natural Hazards

This section of the Hazard Mitigation Plan provides an analysis of Los Angeles County’s vulnerability to a variety of natural hazards, including seismic, wildland-urban interface fire (WUI), flood, drought, landslide, severe weather, tsunami, a rise in groundwater, volcano, and tornado.

⁸⁰Ventura County General Plan – Coastal Area Plan (9-16-08), www.ventura.org/rma/planning/Programs/local.html.

⁸¹ Christine Danko, Staff Biologist, Ventura County Planning Division, personal communication, June 21, 2010.

⁸² Ventura County General Plan – Coastal Area Plan.

⁸³ <http://lacoa.org/hazmit.htm>

PUBLIC DRAFT

The Wildland-Urban Interface Fire section is detailed, discussing a wide variety of issues ranging from land-use planning to smoke hazards to the hazards of clean-up following a wildfire. The breadth and coverage of this section illustrate the importance of the issue to Los Angeles County.

Because of the expanding wildland-urban interface, not only are homes now more at risk from wildfire, but the wildlands themselves are more at risk from spreading structure fires. **In order to more effectively prepare for wildfire, the hazard plan suggests a number of land-use strategies to reduce the risk of fire to both wildlands and homes. These include fire-resistant construction standards and hazard reduction near structures (defensible space).**

The Hazard Mitigation Plan discusses the characteristics and effects of wildfire smoke on the public, especially residents with increased sensitivities such as age, cardiovascular disease, or respiratory problems. These health issues are yet another reason to engage in fire planning to reduce the extent and severity of wildfire where possible.

Los Angeles County Fire Plan (or Pre-Fire Management Plan)⁸⁴

The Los Angeles County Fire Plan is part of the All Hazard Mitigation Plan focused on creating a planning and operational framework for state, federal, and local officials, and the public. The goals of the fire plan are:

- Allow the County of Los Angeles Fire Department to create a more efficient fire protection system focused on meaningful solutions for identified problem areas.
- Give citizens an opportunity to identify public and private assets and to design and carry out projects to protect those assets.
- Identify, before fires start, where cost-effective pre-fire management investments can be made to reduce taxpayer cost and citizen losses from wildfire.
- Encourage an integrated intergovernmental approach to reducing cost and losses.
- Enable policy makers and the public to focus on what can be done to reduce future cost and losses from wildfire.



Source: NPS / SMMNRA

The Fire Plan also provides an outline of Los Angeles County's Wildfire Protection Strategy. This is an eight-point strategy founded on prevention, vegetation management, agency cooperation, and stakeholder involvement. The programs that make up the strategy are summarized below. For a full discussion, please refer to the Hazard Mitigation Plan.⁸⁵

- **Prevention:** The County Fire Department is focused on preventing fire using educational programs, developing fire and building codes coupled with enforcement, and focusing in high-priority areas such as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The efforts are coordinated by the department's Fire Plan Unit.
- **Vegetation Management:** The Vegetation Management Program is a cost-sharing program that addresses wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State Responsibility Area and Local Responsibility Area lands and allows private landowners to contract with CAL FIRE to use prescribed fire.

⁸⁴ Los Angeles County Fire Plan, <http://fire.lacounty.gov/Forestry/PDF/LACoFDPre-FireMgmt.pdf>.

⁸⁵ <http://lacoa.org/hazmit.htm>

PUBLIC DRAFT

- **Brush Clearance:** This program is able to declare a public nuisance where it is deemed that “hazardous vegetation” exists and can require that the vegetation be removed. The intent of the program, managed by the county’s Brush Clearance Unit, is to create “defensible space” and enforce “the Fire Code as it relates to brush clearance.”
- **Fuel Modification:** The intent of this program is also to create defensible space by reducing fuel loads adjacent to open-space zones and around the perimeter of subdivisions for new developments. Ornamental vegetation can be replaced with drought-tolerant, low-fuel-volume plants to create fuel-modification zones.
- **Environmental Review:** The Fire Department works with the Department of Regional Planning to implement existing environmental ordinances. The department also provides recommendations on CEQA⁸⁶ documents.
- **Passive Protection:** Rather than a program, this section describes an approach to fire preparation. It is based on defensible space, fire-resistive landscaping and construction, and good housekeeping.
- **Fire Suppression:** The goal of the county and its fire-fighting partners is to attempt to control fires at “the incipient stages when intensities are lower and the perimeter is small.”
- **Stakeholders:** The department identifies stakeholders as “any person, agency or organization with a particular interest, a stake in fire safety, and protection of assets from wildfires.” Involving stakeholders not only results in a more widely accepted plan, it improves community education and knowledge of fire issues.

The remainder of the Fire Plan provides a summary of assets at risk in Los Angeles County, the current fire situation, fire history of the county and surrounding area, and a glossary of terms and conditions affecting the wildfire environment. The section provides maps showing the location of fuel types, densities, and comparative rankings, and discusses the locations and impacts of severe weather as it relates to wildfire.

The section also discusses the Level of Service (LOS) provided by the department in different parts of the county, describing methods for developing their LOS. In the SMM, the LOS is good in the inland areas, but fires in the coastal areas are prone to escape the firefighters’ initial attack due to topography and severe weather.

Perhaps most relevant to the CWPP is the Fire Plan’s discussion of Priority Areas. These areas are derived from a WAFL calculator (Weather, Assets at Risk, Fuel, and Level of Service), which takes aggregated scores for individual areas and uses them to target “critical areas and prioritize projects.” The weakness of the WAFL system is that it does not account for community dynamics, which are essential to implementing fuel reduction and other fire-safety projects. However, the county does believe that the system, “in conjunction with other intangibles,” provides them with a good method of assessing the needs of the different areas in the county, and the likelihood of accomplishing such projects. The WAFL identifies much of the SMM as “High: Top 5%” priority for fire management.

6.4.5. Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Ventura County⁸⁷

The Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was developed with “county residents, adjacent jurisdictions, and interested local, state, and federal agencies.” The plan was developed in response to the many natural hazards that face Ventura County (floods, landslides, fires, and earthquakes), as well as the requirements of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The intent of the Act is to “facilitate cooperation between state and local authorities, prompting them to work together to address hazard mitigation planning in a comprehensive manner.”

The Ventura County HMP was developed in order to serve the county on a large scale as well as the individual municipalities, and all 34 communities in the county are eligible to receive disaster mitigation and planning funding.

⁸⁶ California Environmental Quality Act

⁸⁷ http://portal.countyofventura.org/portal/page/portal/cov/emergencies/mitigation/plan/OES_MHP_03-02-05.pdf, p.5-90-5-96.

PUBLIC DRAFT

It identifies four types of wildfire: those that occur mainly on federal lands, interface fires, firestorms, and prescribed fire. It identifies fire hazard areas consistent with CAL FIRE's Fire Hazard Severity Zones, thus the entire SMM area is Very High. The most relevant action items from the Mitigation Strategy are:

- Objective 1.A. Encourage and facilitate the development or updating of general plans and zoning ordinances to limit development in hazard areas.
 - Action 1.A.4. Establish buffer zones for development near hazard-prone areas.
 - Action 1.A.5. Prohibit development in extreme hazard areas that cannot be adequately mitigated and set aside for open space.
 - Action 1.B.1. Adopt local building codes to address local building issues in hazard areas.
- Objective 3.D. Assure adequate infrastructure is in place for emergencies
 - Action 3.D.1. Promote the establishment and maintenance of safe and effective evacuation routes, ample peak-load water supply, adequate road widths, and safe clearances around buildings.
- Objective 9.A. Develop a comprehensive approach to reducing the possibility of damage and losses due to wildfires.
 - Action 9.A.1. Evaluate the need for an alerting and warning system in the wildland-urban interface and implement a system, if needed.
 - Action 9.A.2. Continue wildfire hazard reduction pilot project that reduces fuels in high-risk areas.
 - Action 9.A.3. Annually conduct fire safety inspections to reduce the risk of wildfire.
 - Action 9.A.4. Evaluate existing emergency resources (e.g. brush trucks, water tenders) and, if necessary, purchase additional resources.
 - Action 9.A.5. Ensure the open space around structures is sufficient to promote fire safety.
 - Action 9.A.6. Ensure the space separating buildings is consistent with fire-safety practices.
- Objective 9.B. Prevent the loss of life in wildland fires.
 - Action 9.B.1. Continue public awareness campaign for current wildfire risks.
 - Action 9.B.2. Ensure that street widths, paving, and grades can accommodate emergency vehicles and fleeing residents.
- Objective 9.C. Prevent the ignition of structures by wildland fires.
 - Action 9.C.1. Incorporate fire-resistant building materials and construction methods in new development adjacent to wildlands.
 - Action 9.C.2. Ensure a defensible fire-fighting space adjacent to wildlands in new developments.
 - Action 9.C.3. Pursue state and Federal funding for the elimination of combustible roofs and siding on existing homes and structures.

6.4.6. Las Virgenes–Malibu Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan⁸⁸

This 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was the result of a joint effort by the cities of Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Hidden Hills, Malibu, and Westlake Village. The five cities signed a Joint Powers Agreement in order to engage in regional planning and coordination. The effort resulted in a five-year action plan, including background on conditions and descriptions of the hazards facing the area. The HMP goals are to protect life, property, and the environment; develop public awareness of hazards facing the area; strengthen existing partnerships and coordinate implementation of the plan; and ensure effective emergency management.

Implementation of the HMP is expected to be carried out by each of the individual cities. The individual governments are able to fulfill the requirements of the HMP by implementing the recommended mitigation measures

⁸⁸ Las Virgenes–Malibu Council of Governments Hazard Mitigation Plan (2004), www.cityofcalabasas.com/pdf/documents/Risk/Hazard-Mitigation-Plan-1-3.pdf

PUBLIC DRAFT

through existing city programs. All five cities contract with Los Angeles County Fire Department for fire protection services. The HMP contains a description of each of the cities, their relevant general plans, population information, critical facilities, and general environmental descriptions.

Section 7 of the HMP focuses on wildfire risks in the region. It includes a section on fire history in the area, a description of the fire department assets and the cost of fire suppression, and a discussion of the causes and characteristics of wildfire.

The major wildfire concerns center on the wildland-urban interface areas and the threat of urban conflagrations spreading outward to the wildlands. The document states that the “mountainous areas of southern California are considered to be interface areas” and addresses slope, fuel buildup, unsafe structures and landscaping, and increased development in the wildlands in relation to fire hazard.

The HMP discusses existing mitigation strategies currently in use by the city governments and LACFD. These include: prescribed burning, pre-fire management plans, fuel modification and vegetation management programs, and a “brush clearance” inspection program. Each of these is intended to address fuel buildup and residential safety within the WUI. As stated above, the HMP aims to use existing programs to address the needs identified as part of the planning process.

6.4.7. City of Malibu General Plan⁸⁹

The City of Malibu uses both a City General Plan and a Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. The California Coastal Commission requires the latter, since the entire city is located in the Coastal Zone. Settlement began in the original areas of the city in the 1920s. As more exclusive residents moved in, residential development expanded into the mountains and canyons to the east.

Generally speaking, the Land Use Element of the General Plan is focused on preserving the community character and scenic vistas commonly associated with the City of Malibu. Policies are in place to prevent “leap-frog” development and construction on ridge lines and visible hillsides, and to require new developments to design landscaping and structures to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Open Space dedications from developments and guidelines on clustering new structures are included. These are balanced with recreational guidelines intended to limit visitor parking in residential areas, and prevent recreational uses from impairing the privacy of residents.

Safety Element

The Safety Element discusses policy addressing the variety of hazards affecting the City of Malibu. The City is subject to flooding, earthquakes, landslides, beach erosion, and wildfire. This element recognizes that wildfire is inevitable, and states that structural loss due to wildfire is more commonly the result of inappropriate siting, flammable ornamental landscaping, or flammable outbuildings. To minimize the risk to residential structures, the following measures are required by the County and/or City:

- Elimination of wood-shake roofs for new construction.
- Establishment of minimum greenbelt systems along new subdivisions.
- Improvement in existing water systems and vehicular access in a number of areas.
- Improvements made in the “Incident Command System” used by the Los Angeles County Fire Department and in the emergency communications and coordination among various fire resource agencies.

⁸⁹City of Malibu General Plan, www.ci.malibu.ca.us/index.cfm/fuseaction/nav/navid/250/

PUBLIC DRAFT

- Installation of smoke detectors in homes and sprinkler systems in commercial buildings.
- An aggressive brush clearance program.

The City aims to be a “community that is free from all avoidable risks to safety, health, and welfare from natural and man-made hazards.” The Safety Element contains a number of fire-specific implementation measures that are targeted at developing a fire prevention and hazard identification master plan; working with other agencies to “ensure effective and efficient fire suppression, prevention, and rescue services;” encouraging residents with swimming pools to have gas-powered pumps for fire-fighting use; and establishing guidelines for fire-safe landscaping, including buffers of fire-resistant vegetation between residential areas and open-space areas.

Other implementation actions include developing dedicated water storage facilities for fire fighting, creating an evacuation plan based on major streets and routes, and developing fire-safe guidelines for home remodels in terms of design elements and materials. There are other measures included that provide for keeping fire-suppression systems and agreements up to date to ensure adequate emergency response when needed.

The City of Malibu contracts with the Los Angeles County Fire Department for fire services. There are seven fire stations serving the city, four of them located inside the city limits. The Environmental and Building Safety Division oversees the adoption and enforcement of building codes and permits, including fire code. The City of Malibu has adopted Los Angeles County Code Title 32, Fire Code.⁹⁰ This code applies within Malibu as well as in all unincorporated Los Angeles County communities.

Open Space and Recreation Element

The Open Space and Recreation Element is intended to improve the overall quality of life for Malibu residents through good management of its recreational areas. The city occupies most of the SMMNRA coastline; hence coordinated management between the city government and the National Park Service is essential to meeting the goals of both. There are two parks in the city managed by outside agencies—Corral Canyon Park, run by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and Solstice Canyon Park, managed by the NPS.

Pertinent Open Space objectives and policies include:

- OS Objective 1.3. Open Space that complements the City’s health and safety policies.
- OS Policy 1.3.1. The City shall favor the dedication of open space where the dedicated land could be used to prevent damage from fires, flood, landslides, and other natural disasters.

The implementation measures associated with the policy above state that open-space dedications can be required where there are potentially hazardous impacts as a result of proposed development, and provide that the applicants must obtain fire department cooperation in protecting coastal sage scrub habitat from unnecessary clearing for fire hazard-reduction purposes.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element discusses a variety of resources, including mineral, air, wildlife, and beach resources. Of concern to fire planners are the seven different vegetation communities within the city limits and their resistance to fire. These include chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and a number of different grassland types. Many sensitive wildlife species also live in the area, making habitat conservation a mandated priority for development review. One policy in the General Plan states that “development in areas adjacent to Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such

⁹⁰ http://search.municode.com/html/16274/_DATA/TITLE32/FIRE_CODE.html

PUBLIC DRAFT

areas.” The element goes on to identify specific wildlife habitat linkages, specific habitat types, significant watersheds in the city, and resource protection goals for each of them to prevent impacts from development.

The Conservation Element contains policies focused on preventing habitat degradation and impacts to natural resources. These are applicable to fire planning in that new developments must reduce their impact to the surrounding environment. Siting these new developments in locations where they are buffered from habitat and wildlands with open areas not only mitigates long-term impacts as a result of the development but also helps to prevent fire from moving out of the urban areas and into the wildlands, a significant concern in the SMM.

6.4.8. City of Malibu Local Coastal Program, Land Use Plan (2002)⁹¹

Municipal regulations in Malibu relevant to vegetation management and building are guided in part by certain sections of the Local Coastal Plan, 2002 (LCP). (*Note:* This LCP has the same name, but is not the same as the LCP mentioned for unincorporated Los Angeles County lands in section 6.4.1 above.) The Land-Use Plan component of the LCP addresses fuel-modification requirements and management of post-burn areas, requiring that new development minimize the removal of natural vegetation except in cases where required by the fire department to reduce the risk of fire hazard. The document also states that wildfire burn areas be allowed to revegetate naturally, except where previously subject to fuel modification or brush clearance for existing structures.⁹² In general, fire protection and fuel-modification activities are guided with regard for causing minimal habitat or natural vegetation disturbance. Protecting Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs) is a high priority of the LCP.

Furthermore, the LCP outlines requirements for new development in order to minimize risks from fire hazard. These include fuel-modification rules stating that developments shall be sited in such a way as to minimize fuel modification in order to protect habitat. The LCP adds that alternative fuel-modification techniques, including fire walls, shall be used when possible and without degrading visual resources. Fuel-modification plans must be submitted for review that depict areas of vegetation removal, quantify the area subject to the modification, and provide mitigation measures to ESHAs in the area.

The City Manager Department oversees an Emergency Preparedness program, which coordinates the city’s response to disasters such as fires, floods, earthquakes, and storms. Under the City Manager’s direction, the Emergency Services Coordinator is responsible for maintenance and implementation of the city’s Emergency Operations Plan. This includes training of city staff and community volunteers, equipping and managing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), overseeing of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and managing the city’s emergency notification systems.⁹³ The city’s Planning Division maintains and implements the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and prepares other specialized planning documents. It reviews development requests for conformance with planning policies and standards, and conducts environmental review under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The department provides staff support to the Planning Commission and City Council through the processing of rezonings, subdivisions, use permits, variances, and other entitlements.

⁹¹ www.coastal.ca.gov/ventura/malibu-lup-final.pdf

⁹² City of Malibu (2002), *City of Malibu Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan*.

⁹³ www.ci.malibu.ca.us

6.4.9. Calabasas General Plan 2030⁹⁴

Safety Element

The Safety Element of the Calabasas General Plan focuses on identifying natural and man-made hazards, and to the extent feasible, reducing their impact on the public's "health, safety, and property." The Calabasas Safety Element discusses six specific hazards, including Fire.

Fire Hazards

The Calabasas General Plan recognizes three different types of fire that threaten the city. These are "wildfires which affect open space and development on the urban fringe," structure fires, and industrial fires. The following section focuses on wildfire policy, though the General Plan states "Fire...can result both from natural processes and from the intentional or accidental actions of people."

The General Plan cites the need for quick response times from firefighters and adequate water supplies in order to minimize damage. The location of fire stations to new developments and open space and the ability to access those areas quickly are key factors in reducing the community's vulnerability to fire. All of Calabasas is considered a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The General Plan contains provisions to address the many issues affecting community risk reduction. In terms of fighting wildfire, the city states that "water availability and peak-load water supply are essential" to effective suppression.

Following are the policies from the Fire Hazards section of the Calabasas General Plan:

- Policy VII-12: Emphasize prevention of physical and economic loss associated with wildland fire through early identification of potentially hazardous conditions prior to project approval.
- **Policy VII-13: Promote fire prevention as the City's preferred management strategy; facilitate programs that are aimed at the prevention of fires.**
- Policy VII-14: Discourage development and encourage sensitive siting of structures within hazardous fire areas as higher priorities than attempting to implement fuel-modification techniques that would adversely affect significant biological resources.
- Policy VII-15: Require design and siting of new development within areas subject to wildfires in a manner that minimizes the threat of loss from wildland fire.
- Policy VII-16: Ensure that new development is designed to facilitate access by fire-fighting equipment and to maintain adequate evacuation routes.
- Policy VII-17: Do not permit development within areas that do not have adequate water pressure or fire flows until sufficient pressure and fire flows can be reliably provided.

The policies require that fire hazard be considered early in the development approval process to ensure that developments are not sited in hazardous areas. Biological resources are placed as a higher priority than fuel-modification techniques to discourage sensitive areas from being removed. Developers are encouraged to place new construction in other areas.

Policies VIII-15 and -17 may significantly reduce the pace of development in the outlying areas of Calabasas, thus reducing the expansion of the WUI, depending on the ability of property developers to provide new infrastructure and the city to deliver adequate water supplies. Taken together, this policy set will lessen the risk of wildfire to new developments. However, there is little here to address fire hazards for existing developments.

⁹⁴ Calabasas General Plan 2030, www.cityofcalabasas.com/general-plan.html

Open-Space Element

According to the 2030 Calabasas General Plan, there are currently 3,245 acres of land zoned as Open Space–Resource Protection. In addition, the City itself owns 302 acres of open-space lands dedicated to recreational purposes and resource protection (*see section 6.3.5 above for more information*). The City has a goal of reaching 4,000 acres of open space in and around the city to create an open-space system that “conserves natural resources, preserves scenic beauty, promotes a healthful atmosphere, provides space for a variety of recreational activities, and protects public safety.”

The City intends to continue its acquisition efforts on high-priority parcels throughout its jurisdiction. Approved methods include dedications, purchases and/or annexations, in whole or in part. The City has identified a number of hillside properties that are high priorities for acquisition.

Open-Space Policies

The City of Calabasas acknowledges a number of functions for its Open Space lands, including the protection of Significant Environmental Resources, Public Health and Safety, and providing public recreation. These multiple functions for public open space directly recognize the connection between open-space protection and management and fire safety. The management of these open-space lands for fire safety and risk reduction is compatible with the stated functions of the City of Calabasas’ General Plan. Properly planned and managed areas can provide anchor points for fire-suppression efforts and opportunities for firebreaks and vegetation management.

Conservation Element

The City of Calabasas has two general goals for the conservation of natural resources and environmental protection within its jurisdiction. These goals are to:

- Preserve significant environmental features within Calabasas and provide for their wise management.
- Minimize the consumption of natural resources needed to support life in Calabasas and ensure the wise use of those resources.

For the most part, this element is unconcerned with public safety and is focused on environmental health. However, a number of ideas and policies in this section can be helpful in reducing the risk of damage to human construction from wildfire. These include clustering development in the least sensitive areas of a parcel, maintaining buffers between riparian areas and development, and sustaining partnerships with the agencies involved in the SMMNRA. While the focus of these goals is to protect sensitive areas and species, the collaboration and the attention to site design and natural features will provide increased opportunities to discuss fire hazards.

Services, Infrastructure, and Technology Element

This General Plan element is focused on providing the basic services and infrastructure necessary for the orderly function of the City of Calabasas. Included in this element are: Fiscal Management, Municipal Services, Educational Services, Water Service and Infrastructure, Wastewater Service and Infrastructure, Storm Drains, and Technological Infrastructure.

Fire services are included in the municipal services section—pertinent objectives and policies are presented below:

- Ensure that local police and fire services meet the needs of the community.
- Coordinate development activity with the provision of municipal services and facilities in a manner that maintains defined performance standards, eliminates gaps in service provision to new development, realizes cost efficiencies, and achieves an equitable sharing of the cost of municipal services and facilities based on the principle that new development is to pay for itself, both in terms of capital facilities and ongoing operations and maintenance.

PUBLIC DRAFT

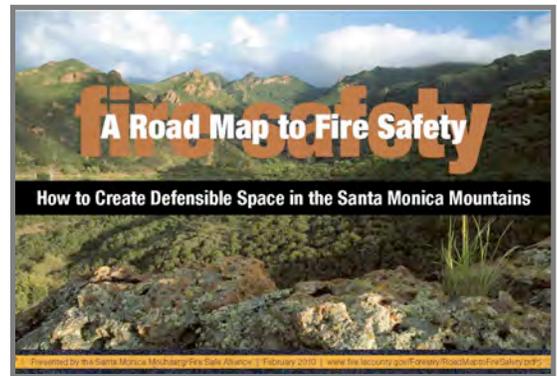
The Fire Protection Services segment in the Municipal Services section enunciates a vision and series of principles to guide the provision of services for the city. Fire-protection services are provided by the County of Los Angeles, which operates two stations in Calabasas, as well as others near Topanga Canyon, Agoura Hills, and Monte Nido.

The City of Calabasas emphasizes fire prevention on an equal basis, if not more heavily, than fire suppression. Preventing fire will help to create a “safer community and a reduction in the cost of providing fire protection services within Calabasas.” The City will provide “community education as well as fire-safe landscaping and brush clearing within hillside residential areas.”

6.5. Integrating Fire Safety: The Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance

The Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance is a group of agencies, municipalities, communities, and private citizens who cooperate in creating solutions for the challenging multi-jurisdictional regulatory environment of the area. The Alliance provides anyone with concerns about fire safety with a forum to address each of the entities with fire safety responsibilities in a particular place. The following is the mission statement of the Alliance.

"The mission of the Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance, a collaboration of related public agencies, departments, and communities, is to find solutions and resources for property owners and land managers to improve stewardship in the wildland-urban interface. Integration of best management practices will create defensible space while protecting wildland. The Alliance will help create safer communities and protect natural areas by involving and educating stakeholders, sharing information, and locating and providing beneficial resources."⁹⁵

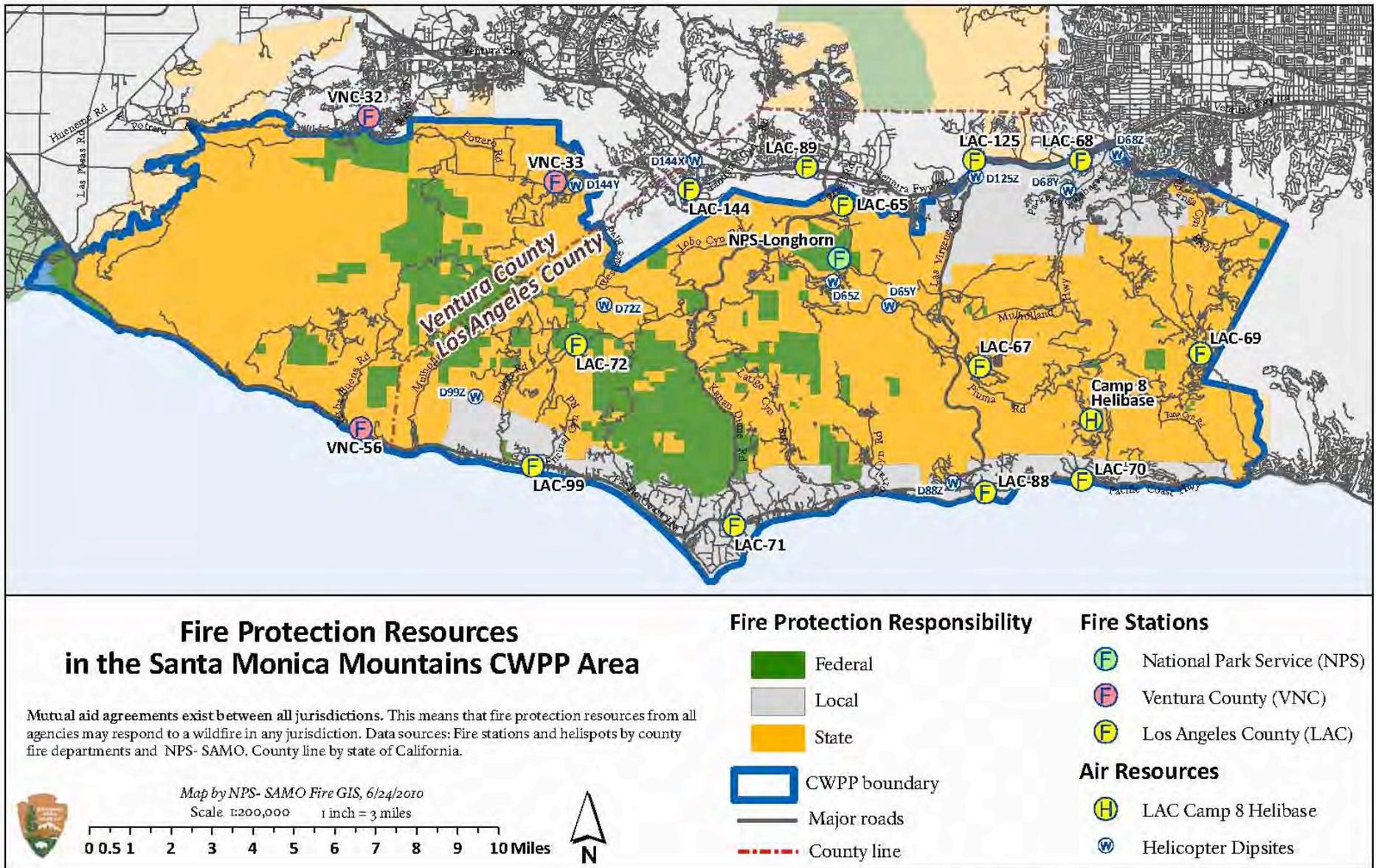


SMMFSA member groups include:

- California Coastal Commission
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California Fair Plan
- California Fire Safe Council
- California State Parks
- City of Calabasas
- City of Malibu
- Congressman Brad Sherman
- Former State Senator Sheila Kuehl office
- Governor Schwarzenegger
- Grandview module–South Topanga FSC
- Las Virgenes Municipal Water District
- Las Virgenes/Malibu Council of Governments
- Los Angeles County Agriculture Commissioner
- Los Angeles County Fire Department
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Yaroslavsky office
- Los Angeles Pierce College Foundation
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board
- Los Angeles San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council
- Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority
- Mountains Restoration Trust
- National Park Service
- Observation Medley module–South Topanga FSC
- Resource Conservation District of the SMM
- Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
- Southern California Edison
- State Assembly member Julia Brownley
- State Farm Insurance
- State Senator Fran Pavley
- University of California Cooperative Extension
- USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service

⁹⁵ The Santa Monica Mountains Fire Safe Alliance, www.fire.lacounty.gov/Forestry/RoadMaptoFireSafety.pdf

MAP 6-1. FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCES IN THE SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS⁹⁶



Map name: SAMO_CWPPFireProtectionResources85x11c.mxd June 24, 2010, robert_s_taylor@nps.gov

⁹⁶ This map prints best at 11x17. Visit to www.forevergreenforestry.com/smmcwpp_pub.html to download a print version.