

CONTENTS

- 11. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Community Fire Safety Action Plan 1
 - 11.1. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Description 1
 - 11.1.1. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Wildfire Environment..... 1
 - 11.2. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Evacuations 4
 - 11.3. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Community Meeting Summary 4
 - 11.3.1. Community-Identified Potential Projects..... 5
 - 11.4. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluasca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Action Plan..... 6

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

11. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Community Fire Safety Action Plan

11.1. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Description

This planning unit includes the neighborhoods and settlements within the historic range of Rancho Guadaluca in unincorporated Ventura County. This includes the area east of California State University Channel Islands to west of Hidden Valley. It includes County Line, Yerba Buena, Deer Creek Canyon, Deals Flat, The Colony, West Carlisle Canyon, and the many ranches and estates located within. The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon Planning Unit includes and extends from Mugu Lagoon and Rancho Guadaluca at the western base of the Santa Monica Mountains to the Ventura/Los Angeles county line in the east. It includes all beach and coastal mesa properties on both sides of the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) and extends north to just before East Carlisle Canyon. The Pacific Ocean borders the unit on the south. Newbury Park, Thousand Oaks, Hidden Valley, Lake Sherwood, and Carlisle Canyon are located north. The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit is 50.4 square miles in area.

Assets at risk in the built environment include less than 160 single-family homes and townhouses along PCH, and less than 150 single-family homes, ranches, estates, and mobile homes or trailers with over 500 outbuildings in the adjacent hills. Additional values include three state beaches (Point Mugu, Thornhill Broom, Sycamore Cove) and a state park (Point Mugu); Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu; state conservancy land, numerous national park properties, U.S. Department of Defense communications relay towers (Laguna Peak), many agricultural operations and equestrian ranches; temple-sponsored outdoor education facility, camp, and conference center; ranch for inner-city children, day camp ranch, church camp/ranch, eatery, and duck club.



Properties and homes vary in size. Coastal parcels range from six units per acre to 1-acre parcels. Inland lots are large. Five to 40 acres each is common. Real estate values for beach townhouses range from \$550,000 to \$1.7 million. Inland developed properties start at \$790,000 and are priced to \$6 million for large estates. Undeveloped land ranges from \$11,250 to \$225,000 per acre.¹

11.1.1. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Wildfire Environment

The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit contains critical wildlife corridors and habitats. It is surrounded by pristine coastal sage scrub, chaparral, coastal marsh, coastal wetland, and riparian habitat. Deer Creek Canyon and Yerba Buena feature pools and waterfalls in their gorges. Stands of native purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), part of historical native California grasslands, are found at La Jolla Valley in Point Mugu State Park and extend eastward throughout the planning unit.^{2,3} At least 32 sensitive species are identified for this unit.⁴ Significant

¹ Malibu, California Real Estate – Los Angeles County Real Estate – Bobby Lehmkuhl (accessed April 12, 2010), www.4malibu.com.

² J.W. Bartolome (1981), “*Stipa pulchra*: A survivor from the pristine prairie,” *Fremontia* 9(1): pp. 3–6.

³ David Magney Environmental Consulting (May 2006), Beltrani–Deals Flat vegetation map [data], Ojai, CA.

cultural resource sites are found at Calleguas Creek, Deer Creek, Mugu Lagoon, Potrero Pass, Rancho Guadaluca, Serrano Valley, and Sycamore Canyon.^{5,6,7,8} Constraints to development include cumulative losses of natural habitat, native plant communities, and scenic views; wildlife corridor disruption due to fragmentation, fencing, grading, and structures; related negative effects to adjacent open space and recreational uses of public lands, infrastructural costs, and availability of water and access by emergency services.^{9,10} Planning agencies such as the California Coastal Commission commonly request that new development footprints be condensed. In other words, outbuildings, landscaping, and developed recreation such as pools and courts must be built close to the main structure.¹¹



Passive recreational opportunities abound in this CWPP planning unit with its large tracts of public lands open space. Activities include beachcombing, bicycling, camping, cliff-diving, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, mountain biking, ocean diving, painting, paragliding, running, skimboarding, sunbathing, surfing, swimming, tidepool exploring, wildflower and wildlife viewing, and windsurfing. Developed and private types of activity include automobile touring, boating, dirt biking, motor biking, pool swimming, target shooting, and tennis.

Ingress and egress is from the thoroughfare of PCH and connector roads Deer Creek Canyon, Yerba Buena, Decker Road, and Mulholland Highway. Connectivity and condition of roads in the unit vary. Yellow Hill Road is privately maintained, fragmented, and has several loops and cul-de-sacs. Pacific View Road is similar in most respects to Yellow Hill. Some roads and drives are dirt. Roads are narrow, have little shoulder, and are winding with some hairpin turns and sheer drops.

CAL FIRE designated the entire Santa Monica Mountains region as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, including this area.

The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon area has a history of frequent wildfires, with numbers on the rise over the last twenty years: 15,000-acre Potrero (November 1930) with property losses from Potrero Road to County Line Beach; La Fougé (November 7, 1947); Rancho Sierra Vista (November 16, 1951); Ventu Park (November 7, 1958); Houston (November 17, 1959); Broome Ranch (November 26, 1959); 12,298-acre Potrero (September 6,

⁴ California Wetlands Information System (CWIS): Mugu Lagoon (1997) [Data file], Sacramento CA: California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES), http://ceres.ca.gov/wetlands/geo_info/so_cal/mugu_lagoon.html.

⁵ California State University Channel Islands (2009), Facilities Project Supplemental Environmental Impact Report Section 4.4: Cultural Resources.

⁶ California Wetlands Information System: Mugu Lagoon (1997) [Data file], Sacramento, CA: California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES), http://ceres.ca.gov/wetlands/geo_info/so_cal/mugu_lagoon.html.

⁷ D. Davenport, J.R. Johnson, and J. Timbrook (1993), *The Chumash and the Swordfish*, www.antiquity.cc/ant/067/0257/Ant0670257.pdf.

⁸ Frederick H. Rindge (1898), *Happy Days in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Anderson, Ritchie, and Sons).

⁹ Ron P. Schafer (September 22, 2008), “Comments on Project LU08-0088...Little Sycamore Canyon and Deer Creek Canyon Watersheds,” correspondence from Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to Ventura County Planning Division.

¹⁰ Woody Smeck (September 3, 2008), “Project LU08-0088...Little Sycamore Canyon and Deer Creek Canyon Watersheds,” correspondence from Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to Ventura County Planning Division.

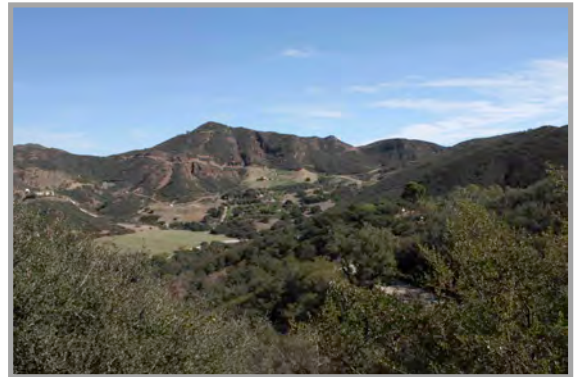
¹¹ Pat Veesart, Southern California Enforcement Supervisor, California Coastal Commission, personal communication, 2007.

PUBLIC DRAFT

1973); Potrero (February 28, 1975); Hill Canyon (October 28, 1980); Fence (May 50, 1983); La Jolla (November 10, 1984); 6,567-acre Decker (October 14, 1985); Rancho (August 6, 1986); Sycamore (April 10, 1988); Pacific (October 29, 1989); Center (June 1, 1991); Potrero (November 22, 1991); Party Rock (July 1, 1992); Satwiwa (July 16, 1993); Green Meadow (October 25, 1993) with 24 homes lost in the burn area; Circle X (May 20, 1995); Triunfo (May 8, 1996); Encinal (June 4, 1996); Sycamore (August 4, 1997); Yerba (August 14, 1997); Yerba (September 2, 1998); unnamed (June 11, 1999); Greenwood (July 15, 1999); Yerba (August 14, 1999); Wendy (August 9, 2000); Deer Creek (August 30, 2002); Sandstone (July 22, 2007); Deer Creek (September 7, 2007); Sterling (December 8, 2007); Sycamore (March 28, 2008); La Jolla (October 15, 2008); Yellow Hill (November 21, 2008); and Potrero (December 8, 2008).¹²

Ventura County Fire Department has conducted an annual defensible space program in the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon Planning Unit area for more than 40 years along fire roads, public roads, and county property that borders homes.¹³

Homes in the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit have a variable age-class. Older structures range from wooden to adobe types. Some of these buildings have been remodeled. Many homes, regardless of age, have wooden decks and/or fences. Most structures are not retrofitted to current California WUI Fire and Building Standards.¹⁴ Utilities are aboveground. Mature ornamental vegetation is found throughout the entire unit. Eucalyptus trees were planted historically as windbreaks on the mesa ranches of Deals Flat.



Municipal water supply for the lower coastal areas and beach community in the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit is through the Yerba Buena Water Company, which is owned by a local development interest. Two main groundwater wells serve the client base. No contaminants have been documented, but the water from these wells historically was declared vulnerable to contamination from roads, surface runoff, campgrounds, and recreation.^{15,16} Conveyance is along a transmission main that follows PCH, with water stored in tanks located on the upland side of the highway. The Yerba Buena Water Company has a history of financial problems that result in its inability to upgrade to current water quality standards.¹⁷ The State has repeatedly expressed its concern that the company is unsustainable and reliant on frequent loans from its financier, Crown Pointe Estates at Malibu LLC, especially because the financier is not a licensed water company.¹⁸

¹² Robert S. Taylor, Biogeographer/Fire GIS Specialist, National Park Service, personal communication, February 2010.

¹³ Captain Brendan Ripley (June 9, 2009), “Notice of Categorical Exemption: Malibu Fuel Bed and Fire Roads,” correspondence from Ventura County Fire Department to County Clerk of Ventura.

¹⁴ State of California, Building Standards Commission, www.bsc.ca.gov (accessed February 8, 2010).

¹⁵ California Department of Health Services–Santa Barbara District (2002 May), Yerba Buena Water Company Well #5 Drinking Water Source Assessment, Sacramento, CA.

¹⁶ California Department of Health Services–Santa Barbara District (2003 March), Yerba Buena Water Company Well #6 Drinking Water Source Assessment, Sacramento, CA.

¹⁷ California Public Utilities Commission Audit and Compliance Branch (April 27, 2006), Water Division Resolution W-4597 Discussion, http://docs.cpuc.ca.gov/published/agenda_resolution/55243-02.htm.

¹⁸ F. Curry (November 9, 2009), “California small companies positioning for sale,” *California Water Association*, “Investor owned water companies.”

Properties in the hills and upper reaches of the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit have independent water sources from individual groundwater wells.¹⁹ Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu, receives its water from Port Hueneme Water Agency, which contracts with both Calleguas Municipal Water District and California American Water Company.²⁰ California American Water Company supplies the needs of Point Mugu State Park.²¹ Threats to the water supply include infrastructural age and lack of capital funds to upgrade; increased demand from new development and depletion of the aquifer; electrical failure; and emergency use during wildfire events.²²

Ventura County Fire Station #56 is located on PCH within the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon Planning Unit. Response time to properties in the upper reaches of this unit is long, and access can be prohibitive due to road design, conditions, and distance required to travel from Station #56.²³

11.2. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Evacuations

Possible impediments to emergency ingress and egress include downed power lines, trees, traffic, and poor road conditions. There are many narrow, winding, unstable streets with hairpin turns, cul-de-sacs, and sheer drops. The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon unit has many public or private venues where large groups of people convene. These locations include public lands, campgrounds, private ranches, camps, and Neptune’s Net restaurant. There are sizable numbers of large domestic animals in this unit. Evacuation plans should include all these considerations.

Evacuation from the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon area will travel southward to PCH, depending on law enforcement recommendations based on fire behavior, wind pattern, traffic, and ingress of emergency vehicles. In some cases, and only by the advice of the sheriff, northward travel to Decker Canyon Road and Mulholland Highway may be options. Evacuation area options that should be investigated by local law enforcement and fire departments include County Line Beach, tennis courts, pools, and grassy or disced areas of large landscaped estates.

11.3. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Community Meeting Summary

The Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon community meeting for purposes of this plan was held in Gildred Hall at Camp Hess Kramer on November 3, 2009. Twenty-three residents and four non-residents attended.

The following assets at risk were identified at this community meeting. These can be seen on Map II.11-1 at the end of this document.

FIGURE II.11-1. COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS AT RISK

- "Animal Actors," "Rockets Film Fauna," wild animal living areas
- Camp Hess Kramer
- Circle X Ranch (National Park Service)

¹⁹ Thomas White, Jr, Resident, Upper Yerba Buena, personal communication, May 2010.

²⁰ Salim Rahemtulla, Community Planner and Liaison Officer, Naval Base Ventura County, personal communication, April–June 2010.

²¹ Dennis Dolinar, District Maintenance Chief, Angeles District, California State Parks, personal communication, March 30, 2010.

²² Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (September 2009), Malibu Parks Public Access Enhancement Plan–Public Works Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report–Water Supply.

²³ Alex Sanchez, Captain, Ventura County Fire Department, personal communication, November 2009.

PUBLIC DRAFT

- Communications towers/repeaters (Sandstone Peak)
- Gilmore Ranch *aka* Salvation Army Road
- Hilltop Camp
- Laguna Peak Repeater Site
- Lazy J Ranch
- Neptune's Net
- Rare/Endangered Areas
- United States Navy Target Range
- Ventura County Fire Station #56



11.3.1. Community-Identified Potential Projects

The following items are community-identified projects from the community meeting. Residents were encouraged to “think big,” and not be concerned about project cost or property ownership for the project brainstorming process. Following the brainstorming, residents prioritized projects based on which were most realistic and most important to them. These projects can be seen on Map II.11-1 at the end of this document.

**FIGURE II.11-2. VENTURA: RANCHO GUADALASCA-YERBA BUENA CANYON
COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PROJECTS**

IDENTIFIED ITEM DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED PROJECT CATEGORY	PRIORITY RANK
Map-grid SMMs for public use evacuation information, etc.	Emergency Preparedness	1
Reverse 911 for public information on fire	Policy	2
High-speed Internet service “FIOS”	Emergency Preparedness	3
Underground power lines	Risk Reduction	4
Create safe zone at Leo Carrillo State Beach	Evacuation	5
Clear Yellow Hill Motorway old fire road to Mulholland and PCH for an escape route	Evacuation / Fire Protection	5
Roadside vegetation mechanical clearance program	Fuel Reduction	5
Create community emergency kits (food, water, blankets, etc.)	Emergency Preparedness	6
Coordinate between counties on information pages	Education / Policy	7
Signage: no smoking, Red Flag warning, and fire danger	Education / Policy	7
Create email/text message emergency information system	Emergency Preparedness	7
Phone trees for neighborhoods	Fire Protection	7
Clear fire roads (in general and specific area on map)	Evacuation / Fire Protection	8
Create CERT and have trainings	Emergency Preparedness	9
Incentive to replace wood siding or trim	Policy	9
Widen Yerba Buena for passing	Evacuation / Fire Protection	
Fire education	Education	
Bring cell service to areas identified on map	Emergency Preparedness	
Identify emergency water sources (e.g. lakes, streams, tanks, large swimming pools) for use in areas where hydrant systems are not adequate or available	Emergency Preparedness	
Update Google and Mapquest (Yellow Hill - old name doesn't connect to Mulholland)	Emergency Preparedness	

IDENTIFIED ITEM DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED PROJECT CATEGORY	PRIORITY RANK
Wildfire information phone # (recorded and updated)	Emergency Preparedness	
Community chipper days/program	Fuel Reduction	

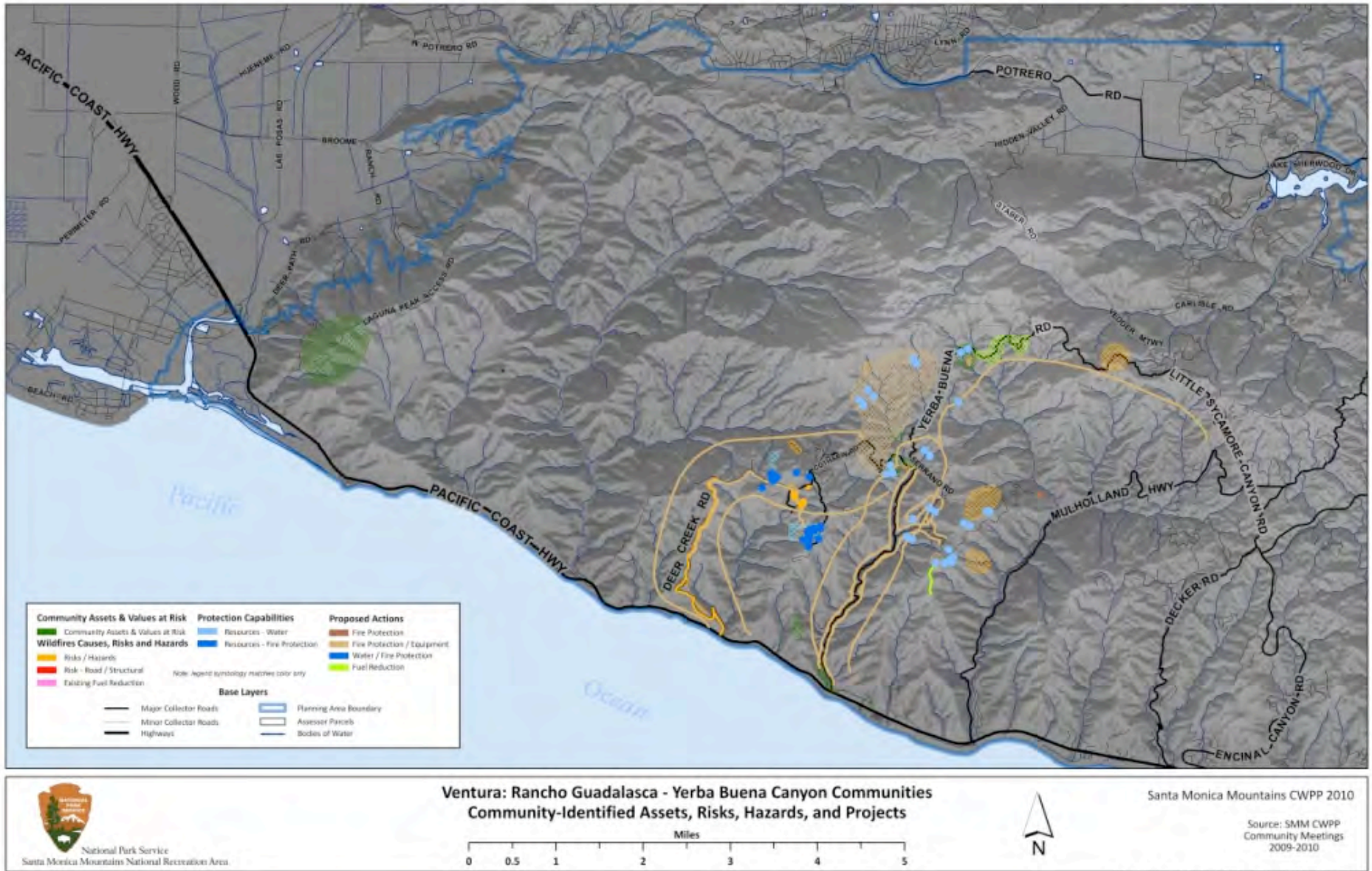
11.4. Ventura: Rancho Guadaluca – Yerba Buena Canyon Communities Action Plan

The following projects are the initial priorities for community action for the Rancho Guadaluca–Yerba Buena Canyon Planning Unit.

- Ensure that at least one team from each neighborhood undergoes Ventura County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. This is the vehicle to begin organizing locally for emergency response and evacuation planning, in cooperation with local law enforcement and the fire department. Explore and identify local emergency communication options, including a standardized map grid of the entire area. Use CERT to communicate with cellular service providers in regard to expanding service throughout this area. Organize local emergency supply caches. Educate residents on pool pumps, generators, and home fire preparedness equipment.
- Form a local Fire Safe Council (FSC). This organizational structure will facilitate community preparedness for wildfire. Work with the California Fire Safe Council to create a FSC that will best accommodate and empower this area.
- Implement a hazard tree removal/thinning program, and treatment for invasive species through a FSC, homeowner’s association (HOA), or other community organization, in priority order:
 - Along main evacuation routes, especially Yerba Buena Road,
 - Along the spur roads to main evacuation roads, including Cotharin, Houston, and Yellow Hill roads,
 - Near homes, especially trees that threaten more than one home, including the bottom of Houston Road and Bony Pony areas,
 - Trees in or near power lines.
- Work with law enforcement and Ventura County Fire through a FSC or other neighborhood-level association to develop a local evacuation plan. Efforts should be made to ensure that local gates are open or accessible during Red Flag conditions.
- Develop a neighborhood Arson Watch program. This could be integrated into the work of the Fire Safe Council. Work with the public land managers to help with Arson Watch in parks and other public lands during Red Flag weather.
- Residents register with Ventura County reverse 911 program at this website: <http://portal.countyofventura.org/portal/page/portal/cov/emergencies/reverse911/reverse911register>.
- Residents reduce urban fuels in the home ignition zone based on the Conservation Principles and Best Management Practices outlined in Chapters 1, 4, and 5 of this CWPP. Fuels maintenance should be a routine and ongoing practice for all homes and landscapes in the Santa Monica Mountains. This includes: ensuring structures are resistant to heat and embers, maintaining all vegetation “from the house out,” and removing anything in this zone that might ignite and spread fire.
- Explore community purchase and installation of wildland-urban interface (WUI) building products to upgrade homes to current WUI building standards. All residents upgrade homes to current California WUI Fire and Building Standards.

PUBLIC DRAFT

MAP II.11-1. RANCHO GUADALASCA-YERBA BUENA CANYON COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS, RISKS, HAZARDS, AND PROJECTS²⁴



²⁴ These two maps print best at 11x17. Visit to www.forevergreenforestry.com/smmcwpp_pub.html to download a print version.

