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7. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Community Fire Safety Action Plan¹

7.1. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Description

This planning unit includes the neighborhoods of Zumírez Canyon Road, Upper Ramírez Canyon, Ramírez Mesa, Winding Way Knolls, Paradise View Estates, Murphy Road, Escondido Canyon, Sycamore Park, Lower Latigo Canyon, Malibu Colony Ranch Estates, and Puerco Canyon.

The Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon unit is situated in the City of Malibu north of Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) between Puerco Canyon Road to the east and Kanan Dume Road to the west. Pacific Coast Highway is south, and north is a combination of Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area open space and private land. The Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon Planning Unit is 3.9 square miles in area.

Assets at risk in the built environment include nearly 400 single-family homes and condominiums, two churches, two preschools, two boarding kennels, two eateries, a small retail complex, gas station, winery, residential treatment center, equine show stables, private tennis club, private recreational vehicle park, plant nursery, aesthetic services, a certified organic retail farm, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area open space, and four state parks or open spaces (Corral Canyon, Latigo Canyon Creek, Escondido Canyon, Ramírez Canyon). Properties and homes vary in size. Condominiums at Rey de Copas and Zuma View Place are zoned six units per acre. Single-family homes located near the corner of Kanan Dume Road and PCH are two per acre. Sizes of other parcels range from 1 to 20 acres per home.^{2,3} Real estate values start at \$89,000 for undeveloped lots and \$459,000 for condominiums, and range from \$1.4 million to \$15 million for single-family homes.⁴



7.1.1. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Wildfire Environment

Most of the riparian corridors and open space in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon Planning Unit are considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs). All of the national and state park lands are ESHAs.^{5,6} Trails development is limited by the sensitive habitat despite the proximity to large tracts of public lands in the area.

¹ This document was written by Julie Clark De Blasio, Principal of Sweetgrass Environmental Consulting, in conjunction with ForEverGreen Forestry.

² California Coastal Commission Technical Services, San Francisco, CA (Revised 2002), *Land Use Map 2: Zuma Beach to Escondido Beach*. Local Coastal Program – City of Malibu [Data file].
www.ci.malibu.ca.us/download/index.cfm/fuseaction/download/cid/1603

³ California Coastal Commission Technical Services, San Francisco, CA (Revised 2002), *Land Use Map 3: Dan Blocker to Malibu Pier*. Local Coastal Program – City of Malibu [Data file].
www.ci.malibu.ca.us/download/index.cfm/fuseaction/download/cid/1603

⁴ Homes and Land.com, Homesandland.com/real_estate/CA/city/Malibu, accessed February 2010.

⁵ California Coastal Commission Technical Services, San Francisco, CA (Revised 2002), *ESHA and Marine Resources Map 2: Zuma Beach to Escondido Beach*. Local Coastal Program – City of Malibu [Data file].
www.ci.malibu.ca.us/download/index.cfm/fuseaction/download/cid/1603

⁶ California Coastal Commission Technical Services, San Francisco, CA (Revised 2002), *ESHA and Marine Resources Map 3: Dan Blocker to Malibu Pier*. Local Coastal Program – City of Malibu [Data file].
www.ci.malibu.ca.us/download/index.cfm/fuseaction/download/cid/1603

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Pristine chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitat is abundant on undeveloped land in this unit. Large areas of native grass stands and old-growth oak and sycamore woodlands are found here. Wildlife is abundant. Significant cultural resources are present and extend inland to this unit from coastal village sites.⁷

The community offers many opportunities for recreation. Developed types include swimming, tennis, dressage, off-road vehicle riding, and motorbike touring. Passive recreation types include walking, running, hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, bird watching, horseback trails riding, and landscape painting. The passive types of activities are popular in neighborhoods and along state lands trails and open space in the area.⁸

Ingress and egress is from the thoroughfares of Kanan Dume Road or PCH. Few roads are interconnected. Many roads and private drives are cul-de-sacs. Several homes or neighborhoods are gated. Streets in Ramírez Canyon and Sycamore Park are privately maintained. Ramírez Canyon roads have speed bumps.⁹

There are two active landslides in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon area. One is the RV Park Slide adjacent to Malibu Beach RV Park. The second is the Latigo Canyon Slide.

CAL FIRE designated the entire Santa Monica Mountains region as a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. The Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon unit is included.



Homes in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon area have a variable age-class. The densely developed neighborhood of Sycamore Park dates to the 1950s. Ramírez Mesa was developed in the 1990s. Older structures are often wooden type. Newer homes are mostly constructed of plaster, stucco, or cement. Many homes, regardless of age, have wooden decks and/or fences. It is common for properties in this planning unit to have swimming pools, tennis courts, or horse stables. Mature ornamental landscaping is found throughout the area. Vegetation often encroaches upon power lines here. Many of the larger, newer homes appear to not

utilize dense flammable landscaping. At closer inspection, plant materials are often immature and not appropriate for use in the wildland-urban interface zone. Many older homes have been remodeled. Most structures in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon unit, including remodels, are not retrofitted to current California WUI Fire and Building Standards.¹⁰ Ramírez Canyon is a densely vegetated canyon with older homes and a narrow winding road with a one-lane bridge.

The Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon Planning Unit experienced the following wildfires during the last century: Calabasas (1903); Topanga/Escondido (1913); the 30,000-acre Malibu-Latigo complex (1935); Woodland Hills #65 (October 6, 1943) with 150 homes lost between Corral Canyon and Point Dume; 16,400-acre Newton/Sherwood/Zuma complex (December 28, 1956) with more than 100 homes lost between Zuma Canyon and Bailard/Lunita; 18,000-acre Liberty (November 28, 1958) with more than 100 homes lost between US 101 and

⁷ City of Malibu (1995), *General Plan – Land Use Element – Appendix A. Neighborhood Descriptions*.

⁸ City of Malibu (1995), *General Plan – Land Use Element – Appendix A. Neighborhood Descriptions*.

⁹ City of Malibu (1995), *General Plan – Land Use Element – Appendix A. Neighborhood Descriptions*.

¹⁰ Building Standards Commission, State of California (2010), www.bsc.ca.gov, accessed February 2010.

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Ramírez Canyon; Latigo (October 30, 1967); unnamed (July 25, 1972); unnamed (August 26, 1978); 28,201-acre Wright (October 23, 1978) with 403 homes lost and ten fatalities from US 101 to the beach; 43,090-acre Dayton Canyon (October 9, 1982) with 74 homes lost between Agoura and the beach; 5,197-acre Piuma (October 14, 1985); Archery (October 18, 1991); Malibu (September 18, 1993); Kanan (August 5, 1994); Latigo (December 8, 1994); Corral (October 26, 2003); Latigo (January 5, 2003); Corral (November 24, 2007) with over 50 homes lost in the burn area; and Latigo (November 28, 2007).

Municipal water supply is through Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 29 in Malibu except for a gated 18-home subdivision in Paradise View Estates. Conveyance is along a transmission main that follows PCH. Water is stored in tanks located on the upland side of the highway. The county adopted mandatory water conservation measures in 2009. The service provider for the 18 gated homes in Paradise View Estates on Ramírez Mesa Drive is Valencia Heights Water Company. It provides billing and infrastructural maintenance for the homes. Water is from Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 29.^{11,12} Threats to the water supply in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon area include infrastructural age and lack of capital funds to upgrade, increased demand from new development, and emergency use such as during wildfire events; note that electrical failure during wildfire event may inhibit access to water.^{13,14} Water availability has always been a limiting factor in Malibu.

A metered line was constructed in the 1990s to Ramírez Mesa after the district increased its supply, allowing this area to be developed.¹⁵ The 40-year-old water delivery infrastructure is slowly being upgraded. Portions of the existing 8-inch main line along Ramírez Canyon Road were recently replaced with another of the same size. An 8-inch lateral connection line between Zumírez Drive and Ramírez Canyon Road was also recently repaired to a new pipe of the same size. Improvements currently being considered for this planning unit area include installation of new 8-inch lines along Winding Way, Lower Latigo Canyon Road, and PCH.^{16,17}



Los Angeles County Fire Stations #88 on Malibu Road and #71 at Point Dume are located due east and west of the unit, respectively.

¹¹ Gloria Galindo, Customer Service Clerk/Accounting Clerk, Valencia Heights Water Company, personal communication, June 28, 2010.

¹² Arthur Schimke, Regional Water Service Superintendent, Waterworks and Sewer Maintenance Division, County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, personal communication, June 2010.

¹³ Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (September 2, 2009), *Malibu Parks Public Access Enhancement Plan – Public Works Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report – Water Supply*.

¹⁴ Arthur Schimke, personal communication, April–June 2010.

¹⁵ City of Malibu (1995), *General Plan – Land Use Element – Appendix A. Neighborhood Descriptions*.

¹⁶ Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy/Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (September 2, 2009), *Malibu Parks Public Access Enhancement Plan – Public Works Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report – Water Supply*.

¹⁷ Arthur Schimke, personal communication, April–June 2010.

7.2. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Evacuations

Possible impediments to emergency ingress and egress include downed power lines, trees, traffic, and landslides. There are several cul-de-sacs and gated homes in this unit. Gated neighborhoods include Malibu Colony Ranch Estates, Paradise View Estates, and parts of Ramírez Canyon. The Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon area is a popular recreation area. Many residents own horses. There are churches and preschools. These assets at risk pose additional considerations for evacuations.

Evacuation from Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon will travel either eastward or westward along 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, Kanan Dume Road or Malibu Canyon Road might become options. Zumírez Canyon Road can also evacuate from the north to Kanan Dume, although there are heavy eucalyptus fuels along this route. Ramírez Canyon Road is narrow, with one-way in-and-out access and a narrow bridge. It has an emergency egress route through a very narrow, one-lane tunnel out to the intersection of Paradise Cove and PCH. This route could easily be blocked and cannot accommodate fire engines.

Possible evacuation areas that should be considered by local law enforcement and fire departments in the Zumírez Canyon Road–Puerco Canyon unit include open disced fields along PCH, tennis courts, and swimming pool areas that have large unvegetated and paved open areas.

7.3. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Community Meeting Summary

The Zumírez Canyon–Puerco Canyon meeting was held in the City of Malibu Council Chambers on November 11, 2009. Eighteen residents and one non-resident attended.



The following assets at risk were identified at this community meeting. These can be seen on Map II.7-1 at the end of this document.

FIGURE II.7-1. COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS AT RISK

- St. Aiden's Episcopal Church
- First Church of Christ, Scientist
- Los Angeles County Fire Department #71
- Power Station

7.3.1. 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. These projects can be seen on Map II.7-1 at the end of this document.

FIGURE II.7-2. ZUMÍREZ CANYON ROAD–PUERCO CANYON COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED PROPOSED PROJECTS

IDENTIFIED ITEM DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED PROJECT CATEGORY	PRIORITY RANK
Alternate access for Ramírez Canyon Park	Evacuation / Fire Protection	1
Identify latitude/longitude and elevation of safe zones, put on “pocket card” with instructions and post on Internet	Evacuation / Education	2

IDENTIFIED ITEM DESCRIPTION	PROPOSED PROJECT CATEGORY	PRIORITY RANK
Repair Vía Acero at Kanan Dume	Evacuation	3
Bury power lines	Risk Reduction	4
Every community needs safe zone	Evacuation	
Large animal evacuation zone	Evacuation	
Fire box with fire plans at community gates/entrance (copy Ramírez Canyon model)	Fire Protection	
Urban warning siren for fire/emergency	Fire Protection / Equipment	
Clearance in/amongst Ramírez Canyon Park	Fuel Reduction	
Eradicate hazardous eucalyptus	Fuel Reduction	
Removal of non-native flammable fire-hazard trees	Fuel Reduction	
Fuel reduction on Willmott/Latigo ¼ mile up from intersection	Fuel Reduction	
Clear public property	Fuel Reduction	
Wet defensible firebreaks, 200-foot clearance with sprinklers or hydrants	Water	
Community water tanks/fire-fighting tanks	Water	

7.4. Zumírez Canyon Road – Puerco Canyon Action Plan

The following projects are the initial priorities for community action for the Zumírez Canyon–Puerco Canyon Planning Unit.

- Community organizing is needed in Ramírez Canyon to educate local residents on the need for hardened homes (resistant to wildfire) and fuel management in the home ignition zone.
- Residents throughout this planning unit should 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.
- Form a local Fire Safe Council (FSC). This will be the structure that will facilitate community preparedness for wildfire. Work with the California Fire Safe Council to create a FSC that will work best for this area. One option is a larger Malibu-wide FSC that could have representatives from each of the different neighborhoods and homeowner’s associations (HOAs).
- Implement a hazard tree removal/thinning program through a FSC, HOA, or other community organization starting in Ramírez Canyon and in cooperation with Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Consider replacing non-native trees with locally appropriate native oaks. Priority order for implementation is:
 - Along main evacuation routes, starting with Ramírez Canyon Road and the eucalyptus along the northern extent of Zumírez Canyon Road.
 - Along the spur roads to main evacuation roads,
 - Near homes, especially trees that threaten more than one home,
 - Trees in or near power lines.
- Ensure that at least one team from each homeowner’s association or neighborhood undergoes Malibu Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. This is the vehicle to begin

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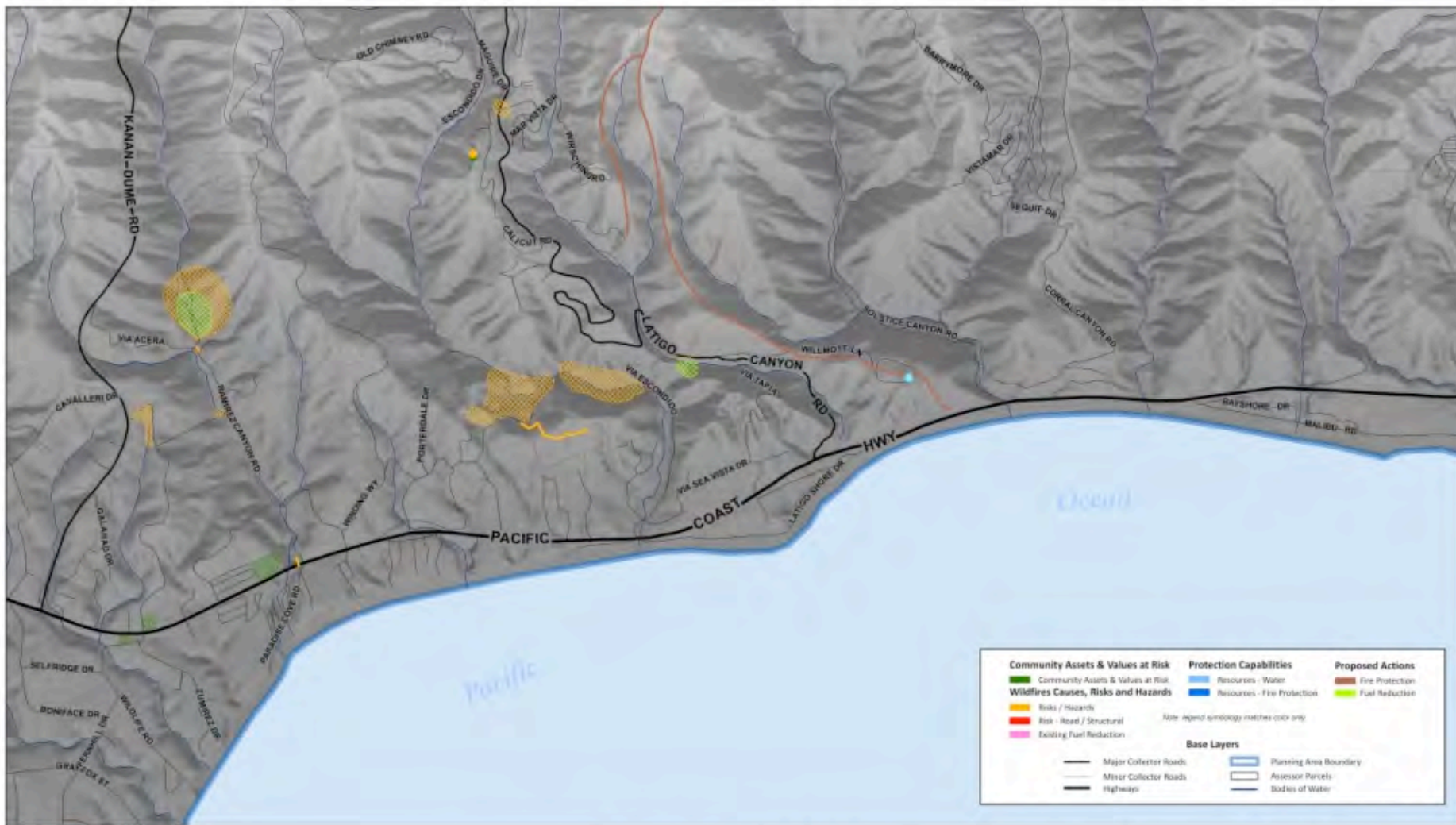
organizing locally for evacuation planning, in cooperation with local law enforcement and the fire department.


- Work through HOAs or FSCs to educate residents on the need to keep ingress and egress/evacuation routes clear. Residents need to understand the dangers involved in imprudent parking or long-term street storage of unused vehicles. Because natural disasters can strike at any time, key evacuation ingress/egress routes must be kept free of parked vehicles, especially trailers and other large objects that are difficult to move quickly. Trash cans and other items should be kept off the roadway and out of key turnout/passing areas.¹⁸ A neighborhood-organizing project would include creating off-street parking where it is limited. Neighbors can work together to help each other stay in compliance.
- Work with law enforcement and Los Angeles County Fire Department through a FSC, homeowners association (HOA), or other neighborhood-level association to develop local evacuation plans. This can be based on accomplishments already made in Ramírez by Ronald Coleman. Efforts should be made to ensure that local gates are open or accessible during Red Flag conditions.
- Explore community purchase and installation of WUI building products to upgrade homes to current WUI building standards.
- All residents upgrade homes to current California WUI Fire and Building Standards.



¹⁸ The law in Los Angeles County states that trash cans can only be on the street after 5 pm of the day preceding, and until 8 pm on the day of waste collection.

MAP II.7-1. ZUMÍREZ CANYON ROAD – PUERCO CANYON: COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED ASSETS, RISKS, HAZARDS, AND PROJECTS¹⁹

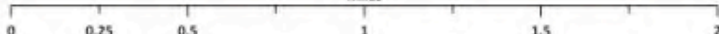





National Park Service
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

Zumírez Canyon - Puerco Canyon
Community-Identified Assets, Risks, Hazards, and Projects

Miles





Santa Monica Mountains CWPP 2010

Source: SMM CWPP
Community Meetings
2009-2010

¹⁹ This map prints best at 11x17. Visit to www.forevergreenforestry.com/smmcwpp_pub.html to download a print version.