



Bell Canyon - 2022

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN



PARTNERS IN WILDFIRE PREVENTION



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PREFACE: WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN?

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a blueprint for preparedness at the neighborhood level. It will organize a community's efforts to protect itself against wildfire, and empower citizens to move in a cohesive, common direction. The community's CWPP is developed collaboratively by citizens, and various government and community agencies. The key goals of a CWPP include:

- Align with the County and CAL FIRE's cohesive pre-fire strategy, which includes educating homeowners and building understanding of wildland fire, ensuring defensible space clearing and structure hardening, safeguarding communities through fuels treatment, protecting evacuation corridors, and preparing residents to evacuate when necessary
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatment
- Recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect the community
- Recommend measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
- Identify other fire prevention and preparation measures that are sensible and effective for this community

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

The Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council produced this document with significant support from the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council whose participation is funded by a Grants Clearinghouse grant from the U.S. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

SECTION I: SNAPSHOT OF THE COMMUNITY

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

A. Overview

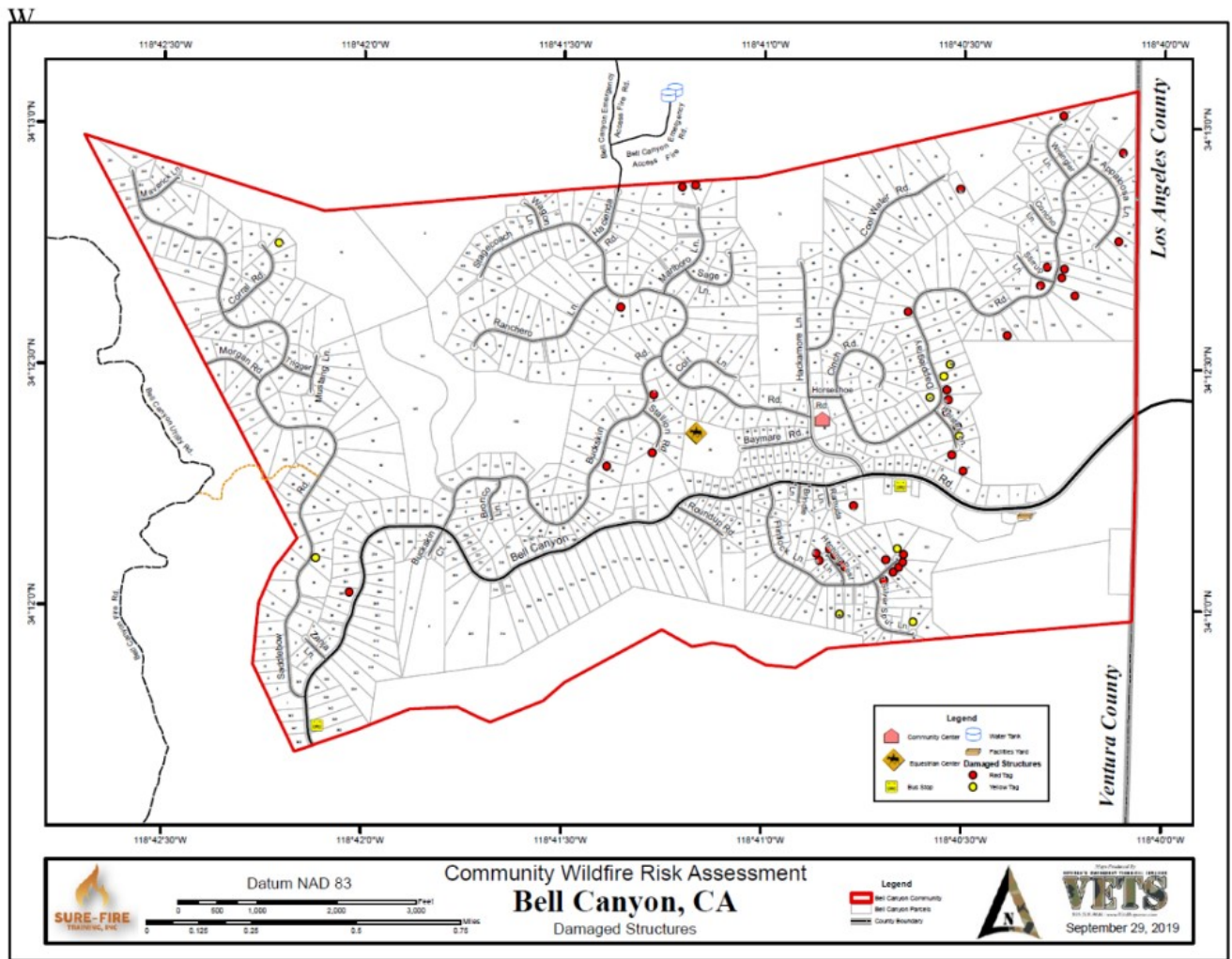
Bell Canyon is an unincorporated community located in the southeast corner of Ventura County just across the county line from West Hills in Los Angeles County. There are approximately 2100 residents, 700 residences, a large Community Center and Social Hall, an Equestrian Center (6 buildings housing nearly 75 horses), a tennis center, a park, and equestrian and hiking trails in the 3.62 square mile community located completely within the WUI. The value of the real estate is in excess of \$1 Billion. Bell Canyon is in the SRA and the fire risk is Very High, Tier 3, per the state fire risk map. The terrain is predominantly steep hills covered in chaparral with native and non-native trees especially near water sources.

There are two water tanks that supply fresh water to the community and the single powerline coming into the community from Southern California Edison. A principal asset is the single road coming in and out of Bell Canyon that provides the only access and that was blocked for a portion of a day during the Woolsey Fire.

There is also substantial wildlife in Bell Canyon and the surrounding area put at risk by wildfire. The wildlife is substantial enough that three years ago a Wildlife Corridor Ordinance was enacted by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to protect that wildlife from urban encroachment and allow wildlife free movement throughout the Simi Hills.

Bell Canyon is located in the extreme eastern end of Ventura County in the State Responsibility Area just across the county line from West Hills in Los Angeles County. Bell Canyon is in and surrounded by the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

During the Woolsey Fire 38 homes in Bell Canyon were completely destroyed and 12 more were yellow tagged by Ventura County due to fire damage.



B. Landscape (Topography, Fire History, Key Infrastructure, Maps)

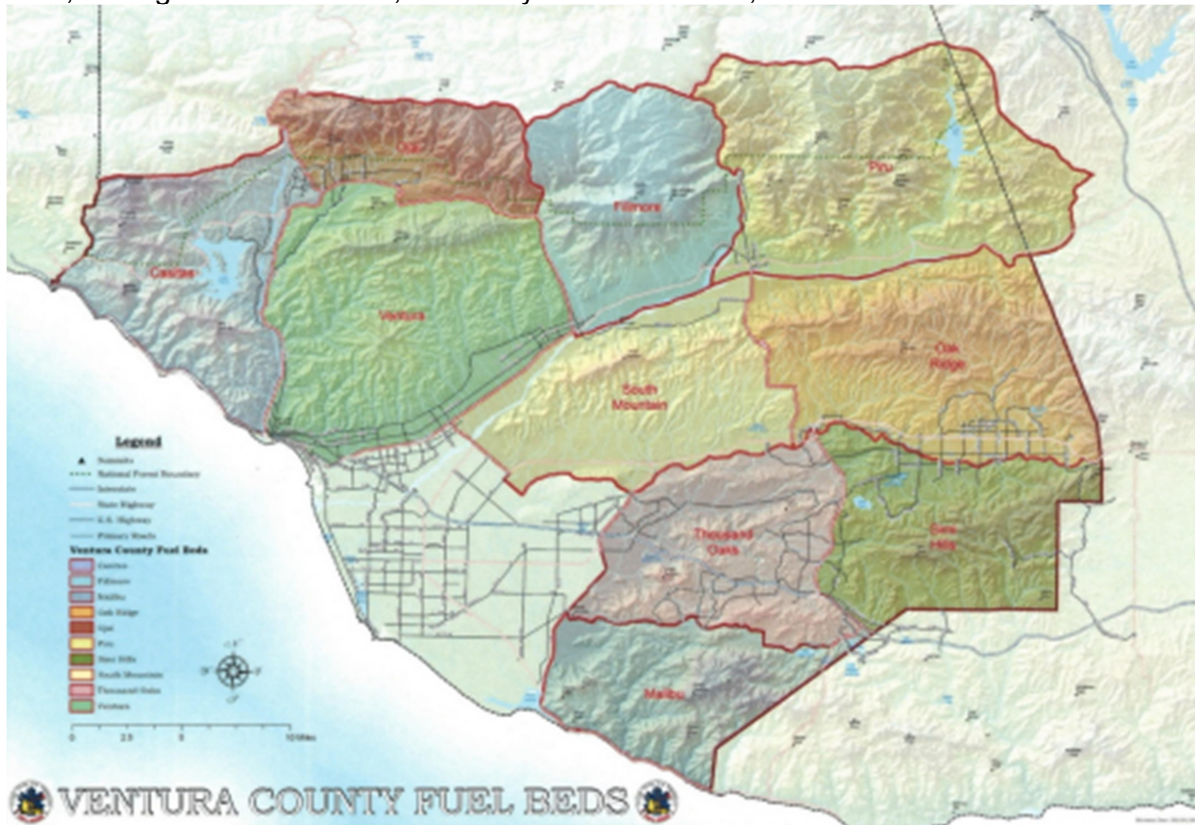
Topography:

Bell Canyon is located in the foothills of the western end of the San Fernando Valley, north and west of Los Angeles and just across the county line in Ventura County. The closest community is the West Hills neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles. Much of the area is hilly and rocky and the predominant ground cover is chaparral. Bell Creek runs from the northwest corner to the southeast boundary. Many trees follow the Bell Creek watercourse. Many homeowners have planted a variety of trees. Oaks are naturally present but eucalyptus, sycamore, bay, palm and other varieties are also present.

Simi Fuel Bed

The Simi Fuel Bed is bordered on the south by Highway 101, on the north by Simi Valley, on the east by the San Fernando Valley (Los Angeles County), and on the west by Highway 23 and Olsen Road. The dominant vegetation in the fuel bed consists of oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grass. Recent fire activity has reduced the fuel load considerably in the Big Mountain Range north of the city of Simi Valley. Assets at risk are primarily structures. Single and multi-family dwellings in the North Ranch and Oak Park areas are a specific concern due to their alignment with a Santa Ana

(east) wind and heavy fuels. Most of the land management/ownership for the open space belongs to the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA), Rancho Simi Park and Recreation, and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). This fuel bed has sustained 23 fires of over 300 acres, most recently the 2019 Easy Fire. There are 68 miles of fire roads and 30 miles of fuel breaks maintained in this fuel bed. Wildland Pre-Fire Plans: Box Canyon/Lilac Lane Pre-Fire Plan, Kevington Pre-Fire Plan, Bell Canyon Pre-Fire Plan, and Townsite Pre-Fire Plan.¹



Fire History – major fires 1949 -2018:

Fire Name	Date	Acreage
Woolsey	November 8, 2018	96,949
Kittridge	June 19, 2015	6
Topanga	September 28, 2005	23,396
Calabasas	June 12, 2000	1,074
Dayton Canyon	October 9, 1982	43,097
Oat	October 31, 1981	17,787
Unknown name	June 28, 1974	30
Clampitt	September 25, 1970	115,537
Devonshire Parker	October 15, 1967	23,093
Rocketdyne	November 1, 1966	302
Unknown name	July, 7, 1959	385
Simi Hills	October 31, 1949	20,578

¹ Moomey, Celine. "Ventura County Fire Department 2021 Fire Plan." *Ventura County Fire Department*, 26 May 2021, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/pl3oihmp/2021_vnc_fireplan.pdf.

Total Acres	342,234
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Key Infrastructure:

Major infrastructure resources within the community:

- Bell Creek proceeds from the Northwest to the Southeast portions of Bell Canyon
- Community Services District- Multipurpose special district- Trash, graffiti abatement, recreational activities, traffic control,
- Ventura County Public Works Water District 17
- Residential structures
 - Approximately 700 homes with varying architecture on parcels ranging from .5 acres to multiple acres. Most parcels 1-2 acres
 - All utilities are underground
 - Country atmosphere with no sidewalks
 - Many homes have horses and corrals
 - Many homes have swimming pools
- Habitat features
 - The land is mostly chaparral with rocky peaks and hills. Some trees follow Bell Creek
- Landmarks, parks
 - Castle peak is a prominent landmark to the east of Bell Canyon Road before the entry gate to Bell Canyon
 - Bell Creek Park is south of Bell Canyon Road inside the entry gate to Bell Canyon
- Community Center including a social hall, offices, tennis courts and a gym
- Equestrian Center with boarding for almost 75 horses
- Hiking and riding trails throughout Bell Canyon

Maps:

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of the Bell Canyon Community (Appendix C). The following maps are visual aids from which the Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council and community members can assess and make recommendations (see Appendix A). (SEE CWRA report)

1. Area Communities Map
2. Fire Hazard Severity Map
3. Fire History (1910-2010)
4. Evacuation map
5. Fuel Treatment Projects – existing fuel beds needing prioritization
6. Residential Construction Vintage
7. Map of Hiking and Riding trails

C. Firefighting Resources

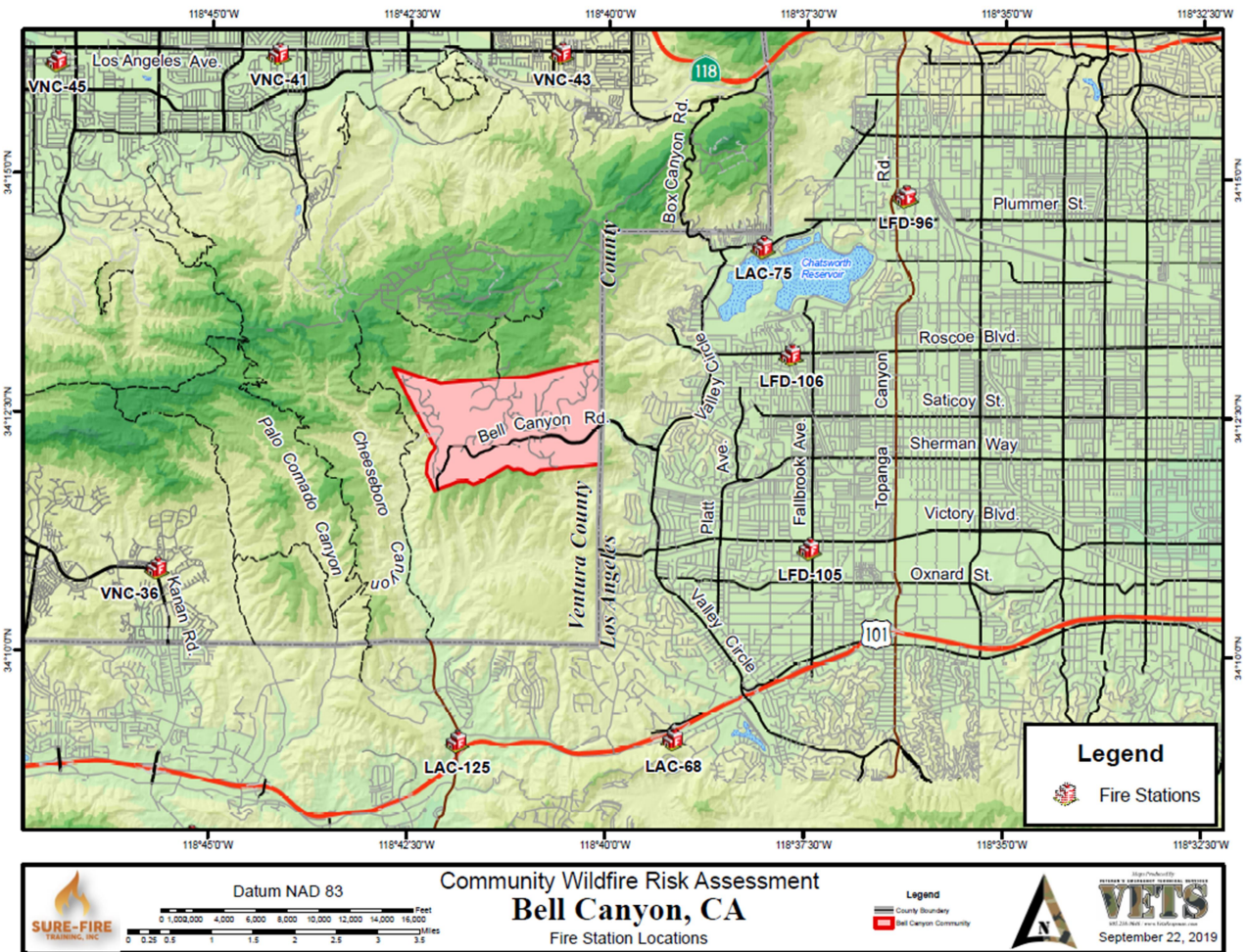
Ventura County Fire Department is an all-risk, full-service department, composed of 577 men and women. We proudly provide fire protection, medical aid, rescue, hazardous material response, and a variety of other services to the public. The Department's services are built around our mission of responding to the dynamic public safety needs of our diverse community. The Department has 33 stations serving a population of more than 480,000 in seven cities – Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley,

Moorpark, Camarillo, Port Hueneme, Santa Paula, Ojai, and the unincorporated areas of the County. The Department operates four Administration and Support facilities, 35 first-run fire engines, one first-run Quint, 16 reserve fire engines, 11 wildland fire engines, five ladder trucks (including two reserves), five water rescue and fire boat craft, three paramedic squads, 20 command vehicles, 12 pieces of heavy equipment (bulldozers, etc.) 3 type one helicopters, 3 type one hand crews, and 33 other emergency response vehicles. The Department responds to an average of 228 calls for service every day.

Wildland/Aviation - The Wildland Unit provides hand crew and bulldozer resources in the construction of fire control lines during wildfire suppression activities. When not engaged with fighting fire, the unit constructs and maintains fire breaks and fire roads, performs fuel management projects, and carries out other mitigation and prevention tasks. The Department also operates with the Ventura County Aviation Unit, which is a combined unit with the Ventura County Fire Protection District and Ventura County Sheriff Office. The unit provides public safety aviation services for fire and rescue incidents, including paramedic crew members and assistance with marijuana eradication. Ventura County's Aviation Unit has 8 helicopters available for fire department missions. Three Type 1 helicopters are hoist rescue, FLIR, firefighting capable via tank or collapsible bucket, with a 10-person fly crew capability. The four Types 2 helicopters are hoist capable, 8-person Fly crew-carrying, tank capability, and one Type 3 helicopter is available for mapping and FLIR missions.

In addition to these on-duty stations, the Department has emergency response agreements with other fire agencies within Ventura County and immediately adjacent to it. This includes Los Angeles County Fire, Santa Barbara County Fire, Kern County Fire, CAL FIRE, the U.S. Forest Service, Federal Fire, and the cities of Los Angeles, Oxnard, Ventura, and Fillmore.²

² Moomey, Celine. "Ventura County Fire Plan." *Ventura County Fire Department 2021 Fire Plan*, 26 May 2021, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/pl3oihmp/2021_vnc_fireplan.pdf.



Bell Canyon lies completely within a State Responsibility Area (SRA) in Ventura County and therefore Cal Fire has the primary firefighting responsibility. However, Ventura County is a contract county and The Ventura County Fire District (VCFD) has been contracted by Cal Fire to provide fire protection in all SRA locations in Ventura County. Bell Canyon falls under the responsibility of the Ventura County Fire Department Battalion 3, with the closest station located in Oak Park. The other closest VCFD fire station to Bell Canyon is in Simi Valley as part of Battalion 4. It takes VCFD approximately 30-45 minutes to reach Bell Canyon under siren and light. Therefore, VCFD has contracted with the Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) to provide the first response to any call. The closest LAFD Fire station is Station 106 which is approximately 4 miles from the Bell Canyon front Gate. LAFD's response time is approximately 15 minutes.



In 2020, a group of residents formed the Bell Canyon Volunteer Wildland Fire Department (BCVWFD) in response to the collective experience in the Woolsey Fire, which destroyed dozens of homes in Bell Canyon and damaged many more. BCVWFD is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation as are most volunteer fire departments in California. All twenty members have been trained to National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) standards and have been certified as FFT2 firefighters by a recognized firefighter school in Ventura County. All have had their training recorded with the California State Fire Marshal. The department now has three fire engines, two of which are brush trucks. They are also trained on wilderness rescue and have participated in multiple rescues with VCFD, LAFD and LA County FD. They had over 70 calls from June 2021 to June 2022. They maintain a training program with 1-2 drills per month. **The BCVWFD number is for additional support for emergencies only-- fire, medical, search and rescue, rattlesnakes, flood and other emergencies--and is not a replacement for 911.**





Brush 1 is a Ford F-550 4x4 with a 280 gallon tank.



Brush 2 is a rapid response Ford F-550 4x4 with a 300 gallon tank.



Engine #83 is a Type 2 FMC engine with a 500 gallon tank and is the department workhorse.



BCVWFD's Water Tender has a capacity of 2,000 gallons and will primarily be used to refill fire and brush trucks.

SECTION II: COLLABORATION

Strong working relationships are critical in ensuring that our communities are well-prepared. This section describes those key partners, and paints a fuller picture of the community’s landscape, as well as its local preparedness and firefighting resources.

A. Key Partners

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

Organization	Roles/Responsibilities
Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council	Author and Managed development of the CWPP
Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council	Facilitation Section IV, V, VI, support documentation
Bell Canyon Volunteer Wildland Fire Department	Provided input into risks and priorities
Ventura County Fire Department	Evacuation and provided guidance and input in CWPP development
Los Angeles Fire Department	Provided guidance and input in CWPP development
Ventura County Sheriff's Department	Maps Evacuation
Cal Fire	Evacuation Planning
Los Angeles County	Evacuation Planning
SoCal Edison	Collaboration regarding hazards during high-wind warnings
Tri-Counties Regional Center Human Services Agency California Child Services	Evacuation Planning
Veteran's Emergency Technical Services	Mapping and Fire History
SureFire Training, Inc.	Fire presentation consulting, principal author of Community Wildfire Fire Risk Assessment, provides training to BCVWFD, HIZ training programs in Bell Canyon, insight to risks and mitigations
Bell Canyon Association	Represented the Community
County of Ventura	Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (draft)

SECTION III: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

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

A. **Priorities**

Since the Woolsey Fire, the Bell Canyon HOA and more recently the Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council and the Bell Canyon Volunteer Wildland Fire Department have been exploring ways to improve fire response times, obtain firefighting equipment, and ameliorate the high fire risk Canyon properties face.

B. **Completed Projects**

In a move spearheaded by owners Greg McHugh and Bill Speer in 2019, Bell Canyon successfully applied to the California Fire Safe Council for a \$25,000 grant sponsored by Edison International with which to create a Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council, opening up grant funding for projects like fire safety training, resident information sessions, and bridging the gap between the Canyon and authorities on the local, state, and federal levels. The members of the BCFSC Board of Directors come from a broad background. They are an insurance industry executive, attorney, financial advisor, retired hi-tech/biotech corporate executive, entertainment industry production executive, CPA owner and construction company owner. Most have years of large-scale project and program management experience.

We are partnering with the Bell Canyon Association (homeowners) and the Bell Canyon Volunteer Wildland Fire Department, as well as VCFD and the Ventura County Wildfire Collaborative. We also interact with Fire Safe Councils in Los Angeles County in Chatsworth, West Hills and Calabasas. Bell Canyon Fire Safe Council provides ongoing community education to ensure that citizens are aware of the critical preparedness information. Community education focuses on:

- *Home Hardening*
- *Defensive Space*
- *Evacuation*
- Along with home defense training, the Bell Canyon FSC has successfully implemented a blue reflector program, where homeowners can apply for a reflector to let first responders know that they are volunteering their pool water for firefighting. So far, over 200 homes have signed up for a reflector.
- In early 2021, BCFSC was awarded a \$10,000 Capacity grant from Edison International for organizational infrastructure. In mid-2021, the BCFSC received a \$3,000.00 Listos grant from the State of California through the California Fire Safe Council to promote the State's program on disaster

preparedness. They added two pages to their site promoting Listos and conducted small group reviews of the Listos program. There are links on their website where a copy of the Disaster Planning Guide can be downloaded in either English or Spanish and are providing links to the State Listos website where guides are available in other languages and other support documents are available. BCFSC conducted a large number of short sessions with residents to educate them on Listos and hand out hard copies of the Listos Guide.

- The Volunteer Fire Department has 6 satellite phones to utilize if other modes of communications fail
- The Volunteer FD also has a Motorola communications system with two repeaters
- Multiple HAM radio operators on the Volunteer Fire Department and CERT team.
- The Bell Canyon HOA has an email flash system which goes out to each resident
- Every Door Direct Mail (EDDM) through the USPS is utilized to share important preparedness information to residents of Bell Canyon
- **VC ALERT PROGRAM**
 - Ventura County has implemented a state-of-the-art emergency notification system that may be used to deliver time sensitive emergency alerts to residents when there is a threat to your health and safety.
 - **Registration of Phone Numbers:** The VC Alert Emergency Notification System database currently includes all listed and unlisted landline telephone numbers that are serviced by AT&T and Frontier. If you would like to be contacted on your home phone, cellular phone, work phone, TTY device, email, fax or via instant messaging – you must register that information using the opt-in portal at <http://www.vcalert.org>. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Also may want to monitor LA County alert system at <http://ready.lacounty.gov/alerts/>
 - **Hearing Impaired / TTY Phones and Devices-**The VC Alert Emergency Notification System is capable of delivering messages to TTY/TDD devices. To register your contact information, please utilize the opt in portal or contact the VC Alert Hotline at (805) 648-9283 for assistance.
 - **Use of the System:** VC Alert may be used to deliver alerts when there is a threat to the health or safety of residents. It is important for residents not to rely on VC Alert notifications as their only means of emergency information. The system may be used in conjunction with information provided to the media, directions given by emergency responders, and information posted on official city, county and government websites/social media.
 - **How it Works-**The process begins when the City or County issues a message about a potential safety hazard or concern. Messages may be sent to all standard voice and text communication devices, including landline phone numbers, cellular phone numbers, email, and more. If you do not confirm receipt of the message, the system may continue trying to contact you until it receives a confirmation from you.³

³ “VC Alert.” *Ready Ventura County - Get a Kit. Make a Plan. Be Informed. Get Involved.*, 3 Sept. 2021, <https://www.readyventuracounty.org/vc-alert/>.

- Pulse Point and Citizen Apps on your cell phone-Provides incident information for residents about emergency response activities in their areas.

C. **Future Projects**

- Encourage the creation of FireWise Communities [NFPA standards] which includes:
 - Creating a board/committee to represent the community (can be the Fire Safe Council)
 - Updating the Community Wildfire Risk Assessment and expand the action plan to three years
 - Continued action plan implementation
 - Submit Application to Firewise USA for approval⁴
- Creating a tracking program to document the community participation in fire prevention efforts
- Educate residents about vegetation recommendations, fuel load reductions, and drought tolerant plants
- Evacuation notices did not come through during the Woolsey Fire for some areas of Bell Canyon. Research alternative methods to notify residents including a fire horn
- Create maps to help responding agencies identify navigable driveways throughout the community

⁴ "How to Become a Firewise USA® Site." *National Fire Protection Association*, 2022, <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Become-a-Firewise-USA-site>.

SECTION IV: STRUCTURAL HARDENING

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

A. **Priorities**

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

B. **Completed/Ongoing Projects**

- In 2020, the BCFSC, through the Bell Canyon Community Services District, received a \$37,257.00 CalFire Fire Prevention Grant (5GG19154) to conduct Home Ignition Zone training and inspection/surveys in Bell Canyon. They are in the process of managing that project and have utilized \$7,989.37 to date. They have successfully trained 47 people through online classroom training and 17 have also completed field training. The project has been hampered by the Corona-19 Pandemic. We conducted training again in 2021 but many people are unwilling to conduct inspections/surveys due to the continuing Pandemic. Late in 2021 the project was amended to make more use of an outside consultant to conduct an external survey of all residences in Bell Canyon and identify those top candidates for a complete HIZ survey. These identified residences are receiving letters from the Bell Canyon FSC offering free HIZ inspections to help the homeowners to conduct needed home hardening and/or create improved defensive space. Training and inspections will again be offered in 2022. The project performance period is through March 15, 2024. The BSFSC is confident they will complete the project prior to this date.
- The Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council and the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains also provide free Home Ignition Zone Assessments to residents throughout Ventura County, assisting them by identifying specific structural and landscaping vulnerabilities that could potentially threaten their homes during a wildfire and recommending mitigation measures to harden their homes against ember intrusion

C. **Future Projects**

- Extend HIZ program. Create rules adopted by the HOA to enforce. Building standards updated and adopted by the Architecture Committee within the HOA

- Develop and enforce building construction standards and update local fire codes.⁵ Lobby County to enforce CH. 7A of California Building Code (WUI Standards).
- Where appropriate, support retrofitting, purchase or relocation of structures located in hazard areas, prioritizing those that have experienced repetitive losses and/or are located in high- or medium-risk hazard areas.⁶

SECTION V: DEFENSIBLE SPACE

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

A. Priorities

100' clearance from structures required by VCFD. Reinforcing the Home Ignition Zone protection standards, especially within the immediate 0–5-foot area against the structure to reduce ember intrusion and potential for residual heat preheating building materials that would likely survive an ember storm when cleared.

Increase existing defensible space utilizing slope ecology, mosaics, and avoid loss of slope stability.

B. Completed Projects

Defensible Space – current work

- The Ventura County Fire Department conducts annual Residential Inspections for Wildland Fire Safety. Ongoing code enforcement/reporting of dangerous fire hazards. These reports are investigated by both Code Enforcement and the Fire Department and are cleared/mitigated where

⁵ Moomey, Celine. “Ventura County Fire Department 2021 Fire Plan.” *Ventura County Fire Department*, 26 May 2021, https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/media/pl3oihmp/2021_vnc_fireplan.pdf.

⁶ Portman, Dan. “Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2022.” *County of Ventura, Ventura County Sheriff Emergency Services*, 3 Mar. 2022, https://vcportal.ventura.org/OES/2022-03-01_VenturaHMP_Vol2_PublicReviewDraft-compressed.pdf.

appropriate. Those who are out of compliance are charged the cost for the contractor that is hired by the fire department to conduct the clearance and an administrative fee.

C. Future Projects

- *New Grant: \$49,234 to establish a chipper program in Bell canyon.* Conducting free Chipper events for the community made possible by grant funding as part of a vegetation management program to reduce the flammable fuel load and increase weed abatement activities in the community that borders the wildland urban interface threat zones. These events are either stationed drop off events at a designated location where residents can bring vegetation to be chipped and disposed of or curbside where a Chipper is brought into neighborhoods to provide chipping services.
- Habitat restoration and adaptive management to prevent type conversion to more hazardous fuels.
- Review defensible space standards based on CALFIRE standards for slope severity, increasing from the 100' to 200-300' depending on slope severity.

SECTION VI: FUELS TREATMENT

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

A. **Priorities**

Reduce fire risk and prevent type conversion while maintaining slope stability, ecological sustainability, and preserving viewsheds. Reduce the overall volume of hazardous fuels surrounding and within Bell Canyon.

B. **Completed Projects**

- SoCal Edison removes trees that have been identified as potential threats to powerlines. The only powerline that is above ground is before the entrance to Bell Canyon.
- VCFD regularly monitors fuel loads, moisture levels, and wind behavior to identify potentially hazardous fuels and reassess fuel reduction projects.

C. **Future Projects**

- *New Grant: \$33,600 to develop a fuel/vegetation management plan for Bell Canyon.*
- VCFD has committed to do the CEQA study to support the future goat grazing activities that will take place around the Equestrian Center, and Northeast and Southeast sections of Bell Canyon and around Bell Creek. VCFD has also mentioned assisting with the tree spacing and limbing activities around the Equestrian Center needed to open the area for a refuge point if residents are unable to leave Bell Canyon safely.
- Encourage Palm tree cleaning program/removal of hazardous and newly established invasive fan palm trees.
- Encourage the Architecture Committee to disallow new palm tree plantings.
- Create and enforce a do not plant list for invasive and flammable species.
- Work with VCFD to designate areas requiring fuel/vegetation abatement that are covered by the wildlife corridor ordinance.

SECTION VII: EVACUATION PLANNING

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

Evacuation planning is a dynamic process subject to the nuances of each community. Below is an overview of Bell Canyon's key ingress and egresses, as well as designated evacuation corridors, Temporary Safe Refuge Areas, completed projects, priorities and future projects.

A. Overview of Ingress and Egress

The main thoroughfare through Bell Canyon is Bell Canyon Road off of Valley Circle. It is the only legal road into and out of Bell Canyon.

B. Designated Evacuation Corridors and Temporary Refuge Area(s)

PACE

Primary: Provide residents with the formalized Ready, Set, Go! Program for disaster preparedness and evacuation planning. Issue an Evacuation Warning. Give Bell Canyon residents advance notice to go and stay outside of the threat zone.

Alternative: Issue an Evacuation Order. Advise an alternative, Temporary Evacuation Point outside of the Bell Canyon area.

Contingency Direct residents to evacuate to a Temporary Refuge Area at the Equestrian Center (after vegetation clearing is conducted)

Emergency: Allow for residents to stay in their homes and shelter-in-place

C. Completed/Ongoing Projects

- HOA has a voluntary census where residents can self-identify their needs and resources for evacuation assistance.
- Large Animal Evacuation Plan through the HOA
 - An agreement exists between the Bell Canyon HOA and Pierce College to house evacuated horses
- Established evacuation routes for Bell Canyon and created an evacuation map published on the Homeowners Association website. While there is only a single road leading out of Bell Canyon, someone not familiar with the roads inside the Canyon can easily become confused on how to exit the Canyon. During the Woolsey fire mutual aid crews from outside the area were not familiar with the road system in Bell Canyon. Cell phones mostly do not work in the canyon, so cell phone-based navigation tools also do not work. Crews were sometimes confused on how to quickly exit from the community. Maps are now maintained at the front gate for use in an emergency.

Sheriff Department Role in Evacuation: Sheriff's Deputies may make evacuation notifications for various reasons, including fires, a police incident, hazardous materials spill, etc. An Incident

Commander is established that may be a fire department official, a police official, or together in unified command. Once a decision is made that an area is under an evacuation order, the Sheriff's Office uses several different notification methods as a layered approach to reduce the chance that anyone might be missed.

This includes:

- the reverse 911 system,
- social media notifications
- Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) notifications
- Non-telephone or mobile device communication includes utilization of a hi-lo siren tone and vehicle speaker,
- and the last, most specific and targeted layer are door-to-door personnel notifications.

It should be noted that the Sheriff's Department does not force residents to evacuate an area that is under an evacuation order. The Sheriffs inform the resident/s in such an area they are in danger, and neither the Sheriffs nor other emergency personnel may be able to return to help them if they decide to stay.

The Sheriff's Department rarely physically evacuates residents. If Sheriffs encounter someone with medical or mobility problems that needs to be evacuated, Ventura County Emergency Medical Systems (EMS) is contacted, and EMS and their partners will typically use an ambulance for physical evacuations.

Law Enforcement is responsible for managing evacuations and may need to coordinate with Ventura County Transportation Commission for transportation resources to assist with evacuations.

D. Priorities

The following are key priorities to maintaining evacuation access for residents and visitors to (community):

Encourage residents to be prepared and to leave early.

E. Future Projects

- Work with various agencies to identify and develop alternate emergency evacuation routes. Previous attempts with VCFD to condition existing fire roads were blocked by both MRSA and SMMC. No public officials would support our efforts.
- Ventura County and the Area Emergency Operations Center are tasked with assembling data on the populations that will need evacuation, including information on special needs populations (such as the elderly, infirmed, disabled, transients, prisoners, and hospital patients) and persons who normally use public transit or alternative transportation to get to their destinations. Maintain communication with VCTC regarding emergency transportation capabilities and needs, including moving emergency resources into the affected portions of

each county, moving people who are injured or in danger out of the affected area, and meeting the requirements of special-needs populations.⁷

SECTION VIII: OTHER MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS PROJECTS

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

- **Priorities**
 - Develop creative alternatives to traditional mitigation and preparedness efforts.
- **Completed Projects**
 - Commissioned a professional Community Wildfire Risk Analysis of Bell Canyon. This report points out the many risks in Bell Canyon from hazardous fuel, leftover unburnt fuel, new fuel due to spring rains and the fact that more than 80% of the homes in Bell Canyon were built before the publication of California Building Code Chapter 7A WUI Building Code requirements in 2008. This report is a primary input into the community Wildfire Protection Plan project and accentuates the need for a Home Ignition Zone inspection and remediation program in Bell Canyon.
 - Established a program whereby residents can have the Homeowners Association place a 3" blue reflector on their mailbox post to identify the presence of a swimming pool that can be used as a water source during a fire. During the Woolsey fire Bell Canyon experienced a water main break that lowered pressure and significantly impacted the water supply in one area of the community. The water supply tanks located north of the community also ran dangerously low.
 - Established an emergency communications capability by purchasing satellite phones for first responder and CERT use. Cell phones mostly do not work in Bell Canyon. During the Woolsey Fire we had many mutual aid fire units in Bell Canyon. These agencies usually intercommunicate via cell phone. The lack of cell phone capability seriously hampered their ability to coordinate during the Woolsey Fire.

CERT PROGRAM

Ventura County Fire Department in coordination with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have joined together to assist its residents with disaster preparedness education and training.

The HOA and BCWFD sponsors CERT in Bell Canyon working with VCFD

⁷ "Transportation Emergency Preparedness Plan ." *Ventura County Transportation Commission*, 17 Dec. 2020, <http://tepp-vctc.org/Transportation%20Emergency%20Preparedness%20Plan%20FINAL%20No%20PII.pdf>.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program teaches community members about the potential disasters that could affect their area and how to safely and responsibly respond to them.

The Hybrid CERT program consists of online courses (9 units) that educates volunteers in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, team organization, hazards that may impact their area, and disaster medical operations.

Once completed, you just follow up with your local CERT Coordinator to complete the hands-on practical portion and receive your full CERT credentials.

The CERT team was developed to help with disaster situation when other emergency resources become overwhelmed and need training assistance

Being prepared in an emergency is critical. In the last 10 years, Ventura County residents have experienced wildfires, floods, mudslides, and earthquakes.

Ventura County Fire Department in coordination with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have joined together to assist its residents with disaster preparedness education and training.

Would you know what to do if an emergency struck your community, school, or workplace? After a disaster, professional responders will be needed everywhere.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program teaches community members about the potential disasters that could affect their area and how to respond to them safely and responsibly.

What We Do

CERT educates volunteers in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, team organization, hazards that may impact their area, and disaster medical operations.

CERT members receive hands-on training in:

- Disaster preparedness and response skills
- Reducing fire hazards in the home and workplace
- Setting up medical treatment areas
- Assisting emergency responders
- Treatment and triage evaluation
- Conducting light search and rescue
- Organizing and managing a CERT Team

It takes about 24 hours to complete the CERT program. Each graduate will receive a manual, a CERT Disaster start-up pack (helmet, gloves, vest and goggles) and a certificate of completion.

Future Projects

- Increase water storage capacity
- Create alternative water source
- Work with SCE to identify possible solutions to weak electrical power infrastructure

SECTION IX: SIGNATURES

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

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan as developed for (*community*):

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

President of Fire Safe Council submitting this CWPP

Date

Participating State, Local, or Tribal fire agency representatives (add or delete as required):

Bell Canyon Volunteer Wildland Fire Department
(*name, title*)

Date

Bell Canyon Association
(*name, title*)

Date

Ventura County Fire Department
(name, title)

Date

Los Angeles Fire Department
(name, title)

Date

Ventura County
(name, title)

Date

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

Chair of CWPP Review Committee

Date

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

STATE AGENCY (authorizing entity — required for finalization) Date

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

SECTION X: APPENDICES

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

Appendix A: Community Wildfire Risk Analysis 2019

See attached

DRAFT

Appendix B: Meeting Tracking Documents

This CWPP was developed for the community of Bell Canyon, through a series of community meetings.

8/24/21-Ventura County Human Services Agency

8/26/21-Home Hardening Best Practices Working Group

11/18/21- Invasive Plant Council Fuels Project Group

12/1/21-FlameMapper

1/11/22-Invasive Plant Council Fuels Project Group

1/12/22-Red Cross

1/28/22-Red Cross

1/28/21-FlameMapper

2/7/22-Ventura County Human Services Agency

2/9/22-Red Cross

2/16/22-Invasive Plant Council Fuels Project Group

2/24/22-Home Hardening Best Practices Working Group

3/9/22- Red Cross

3/24/21-Ventura County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services

4/6/22-FlameMapper

4/13/22-Red Cross

4/26/22-Ventura County Fire Department Communications

7/25/22- BCFSC and VRFSC site visit

7/29/22- BCFSC and VRFSC meeting

Appendix C: Maps

Figure 1: *Bell Canyon location in Ventura County and the State Responsibility Area*

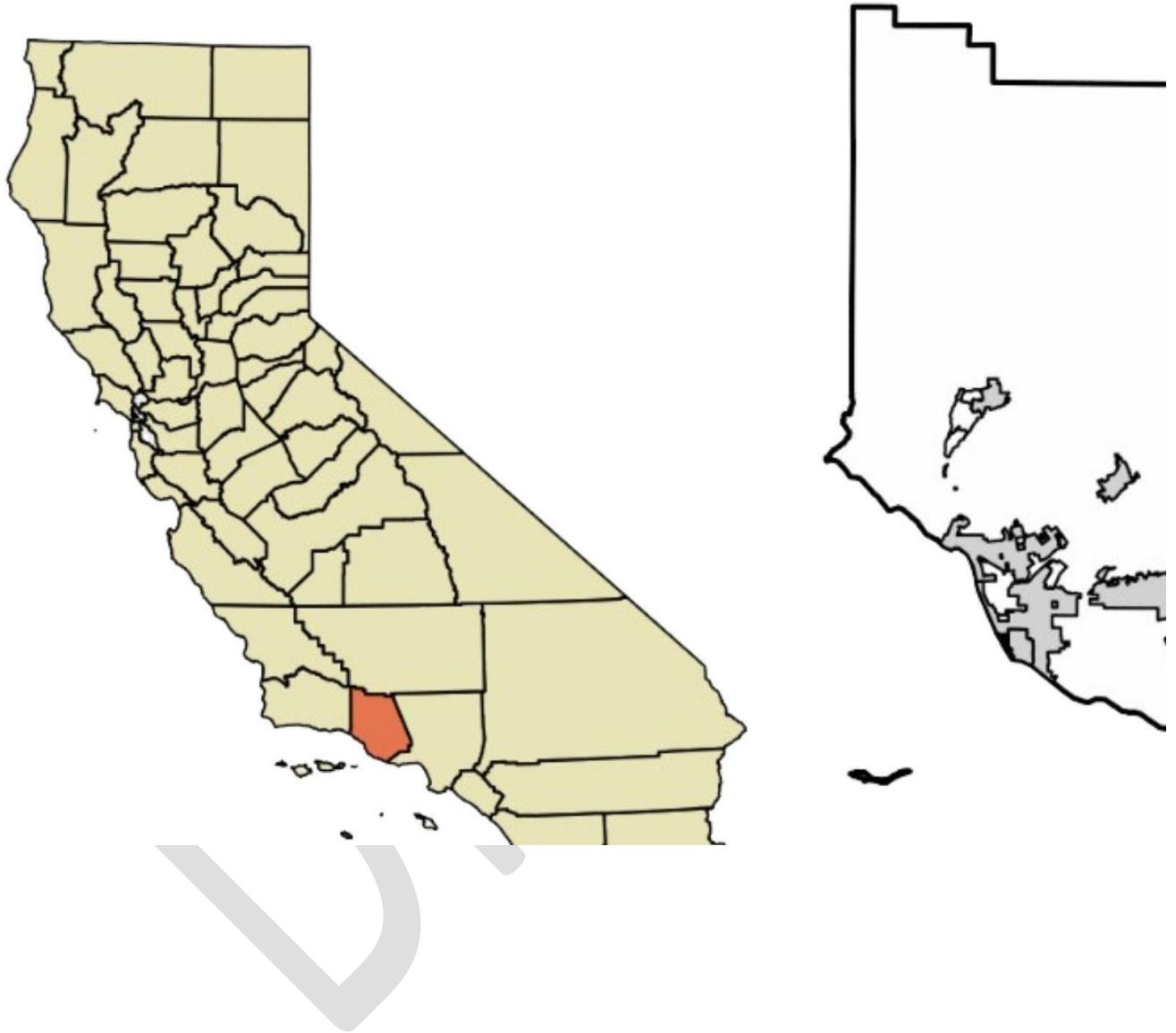
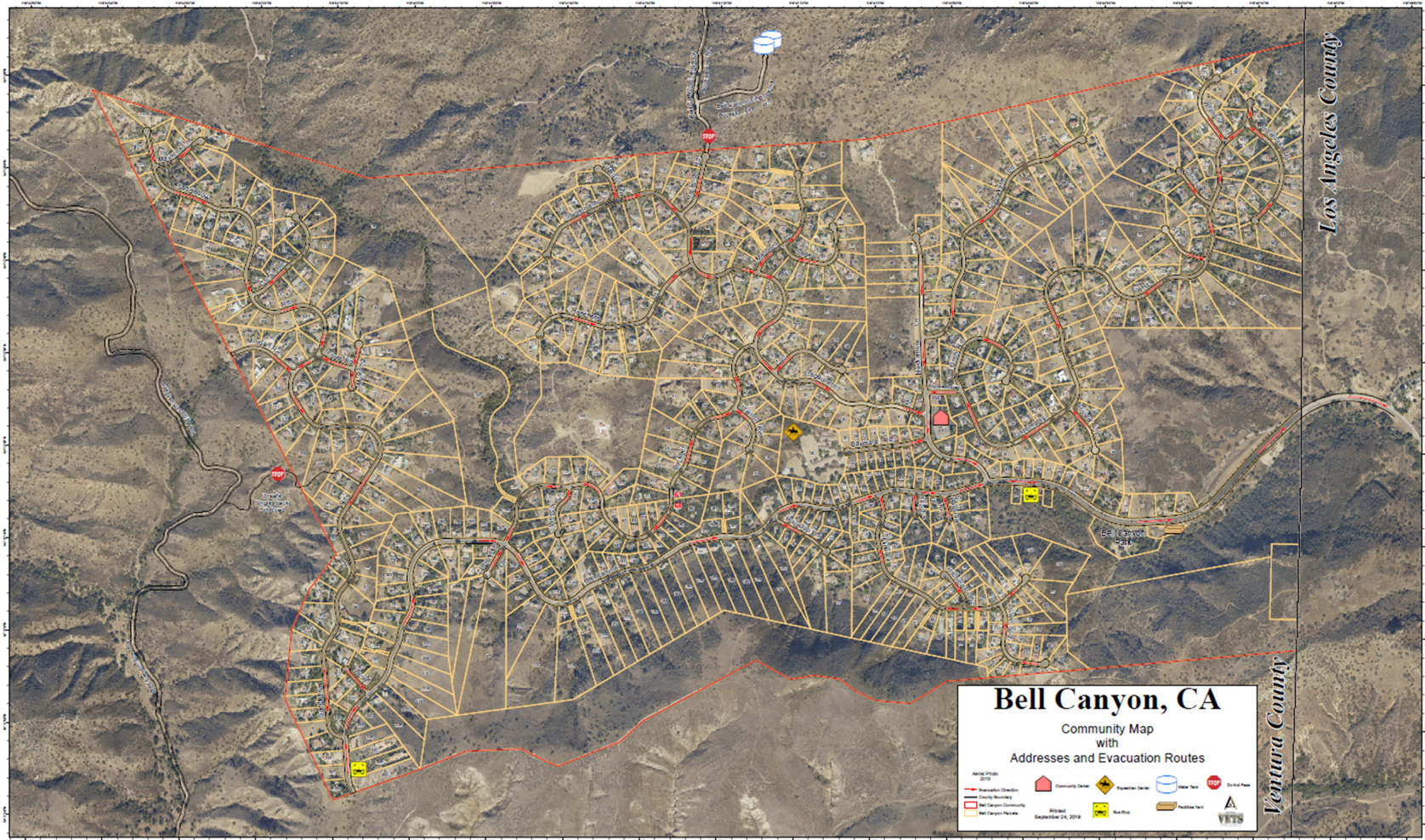


Figure 2: Bell Canyon Community Map



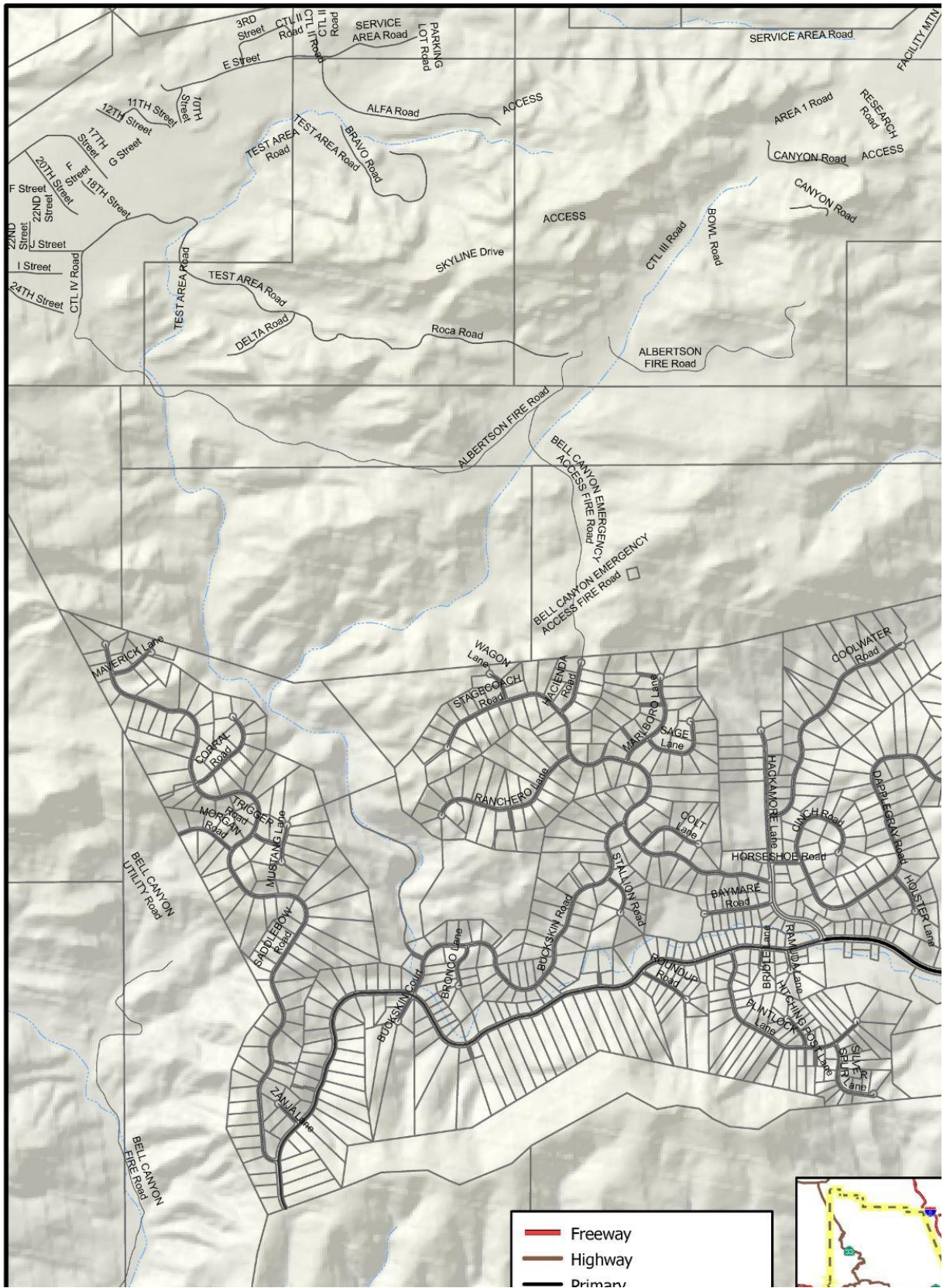
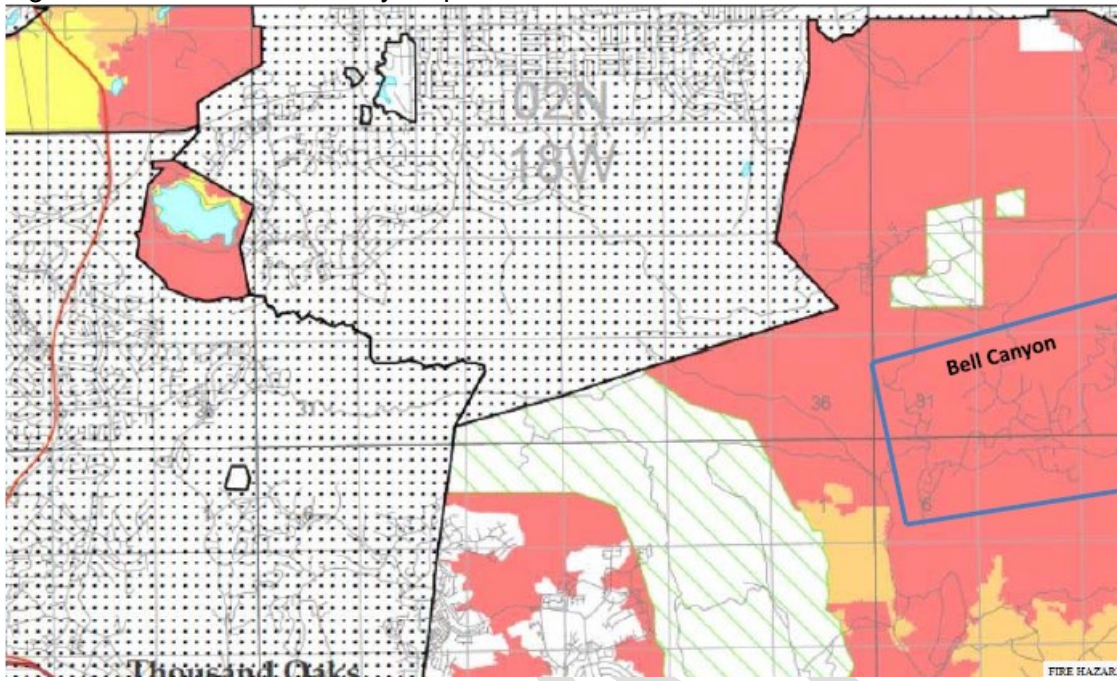


Figure 3: Fire Hazard Severity Map



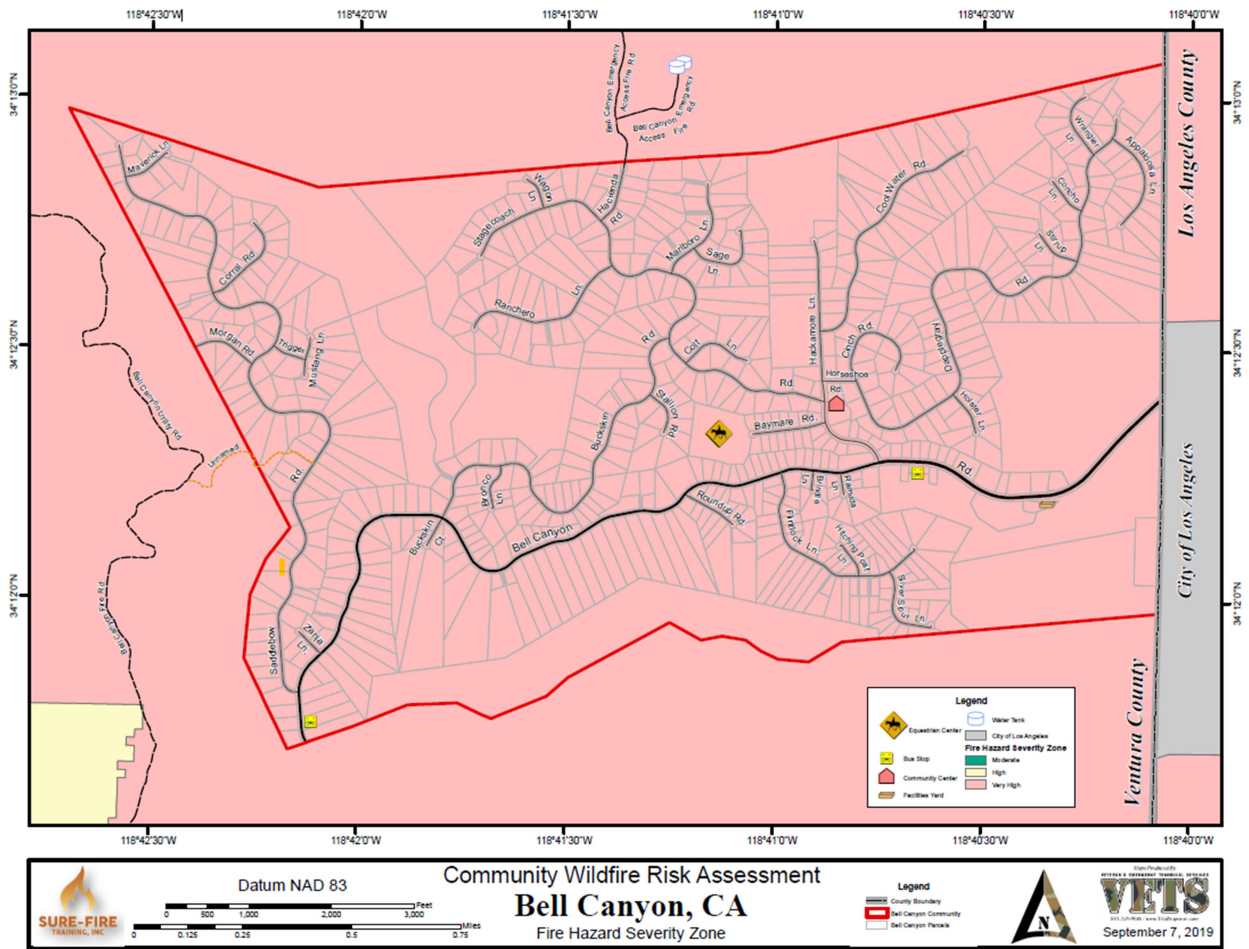
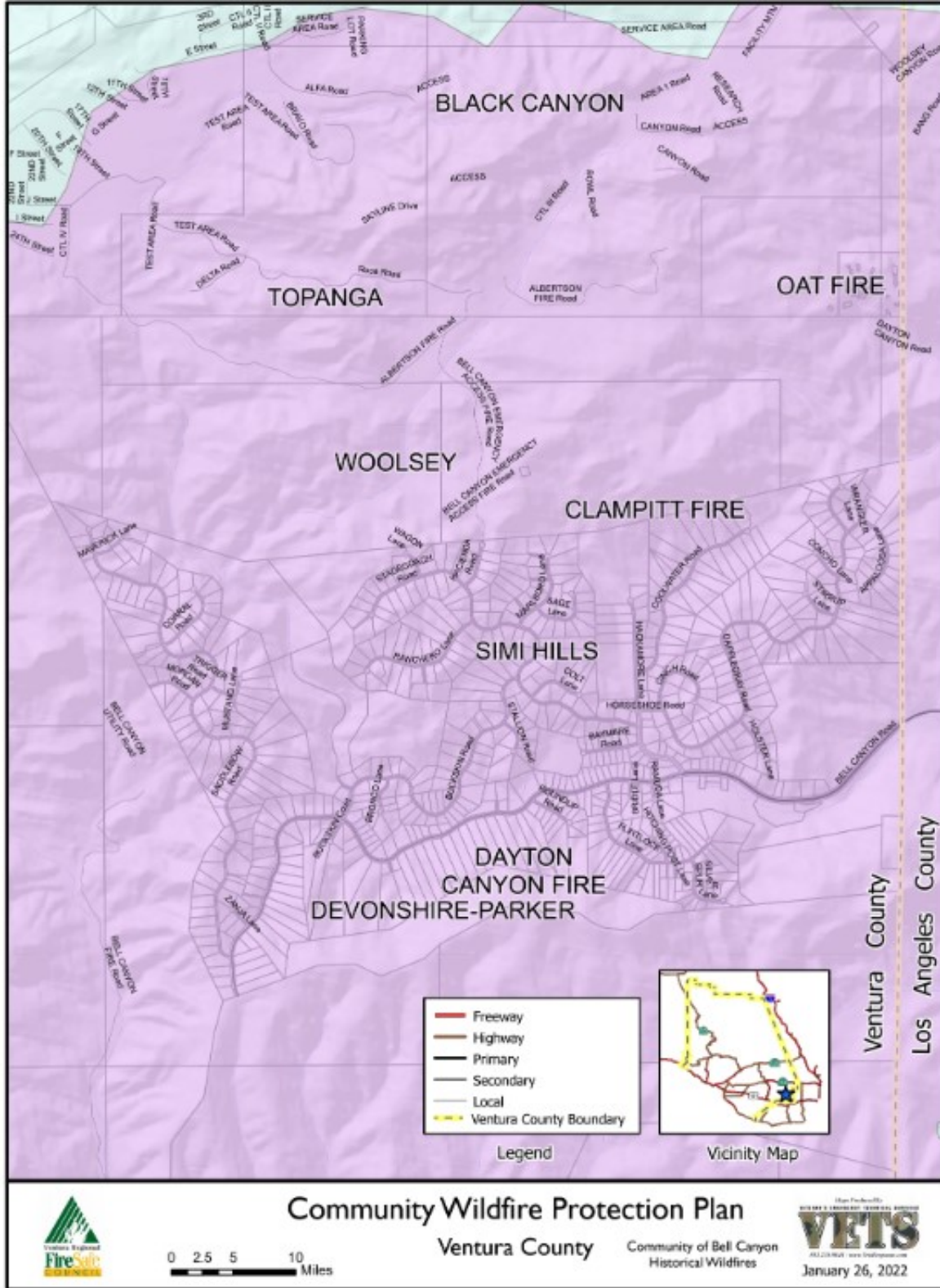


Figure 3: Fire History 1910-2010 (CDF FRAP)



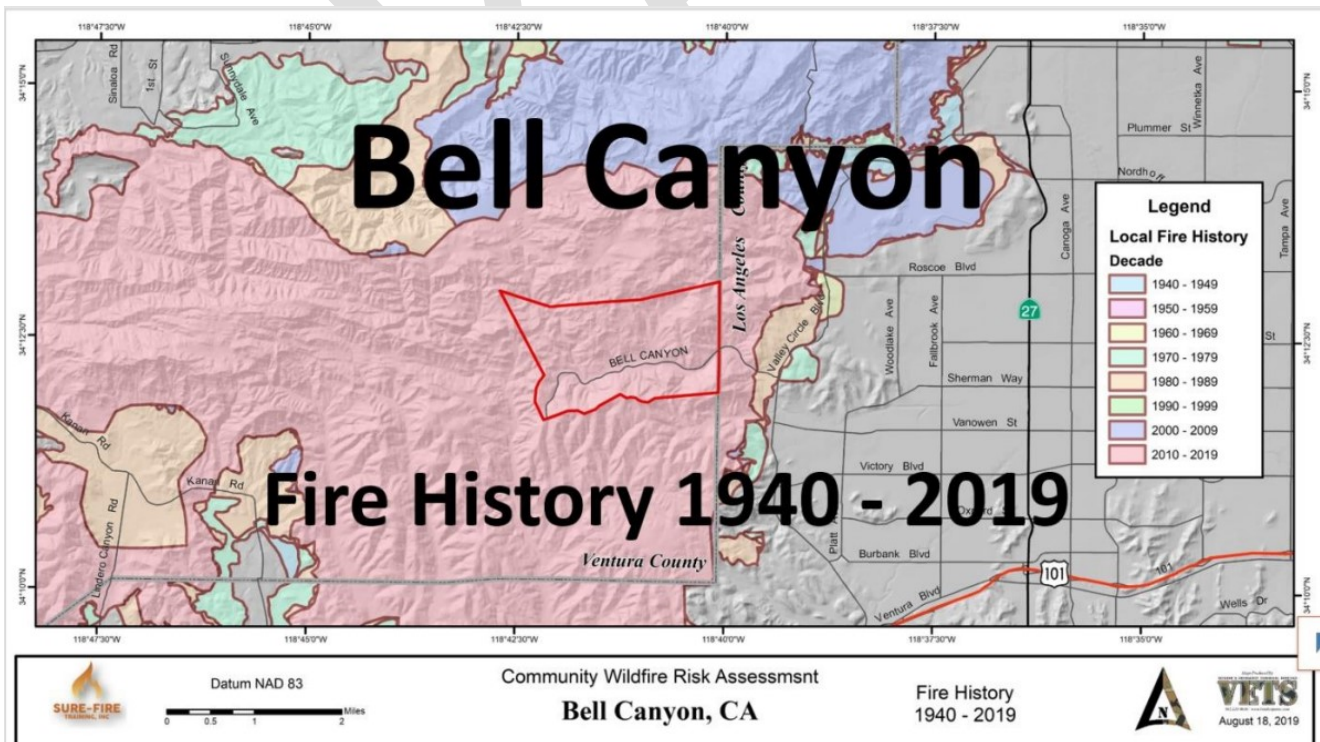
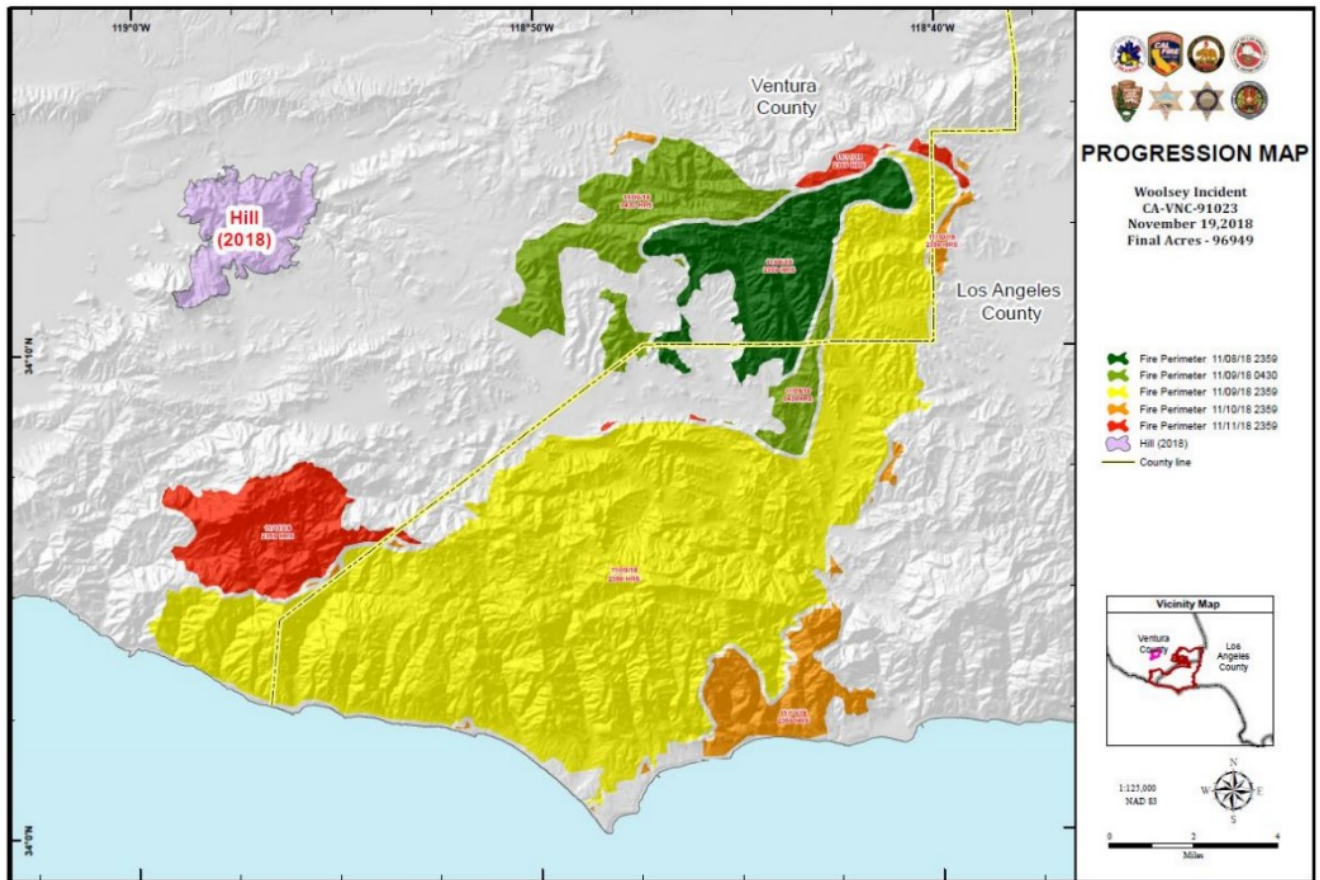


Figure 4: Evacuation Map

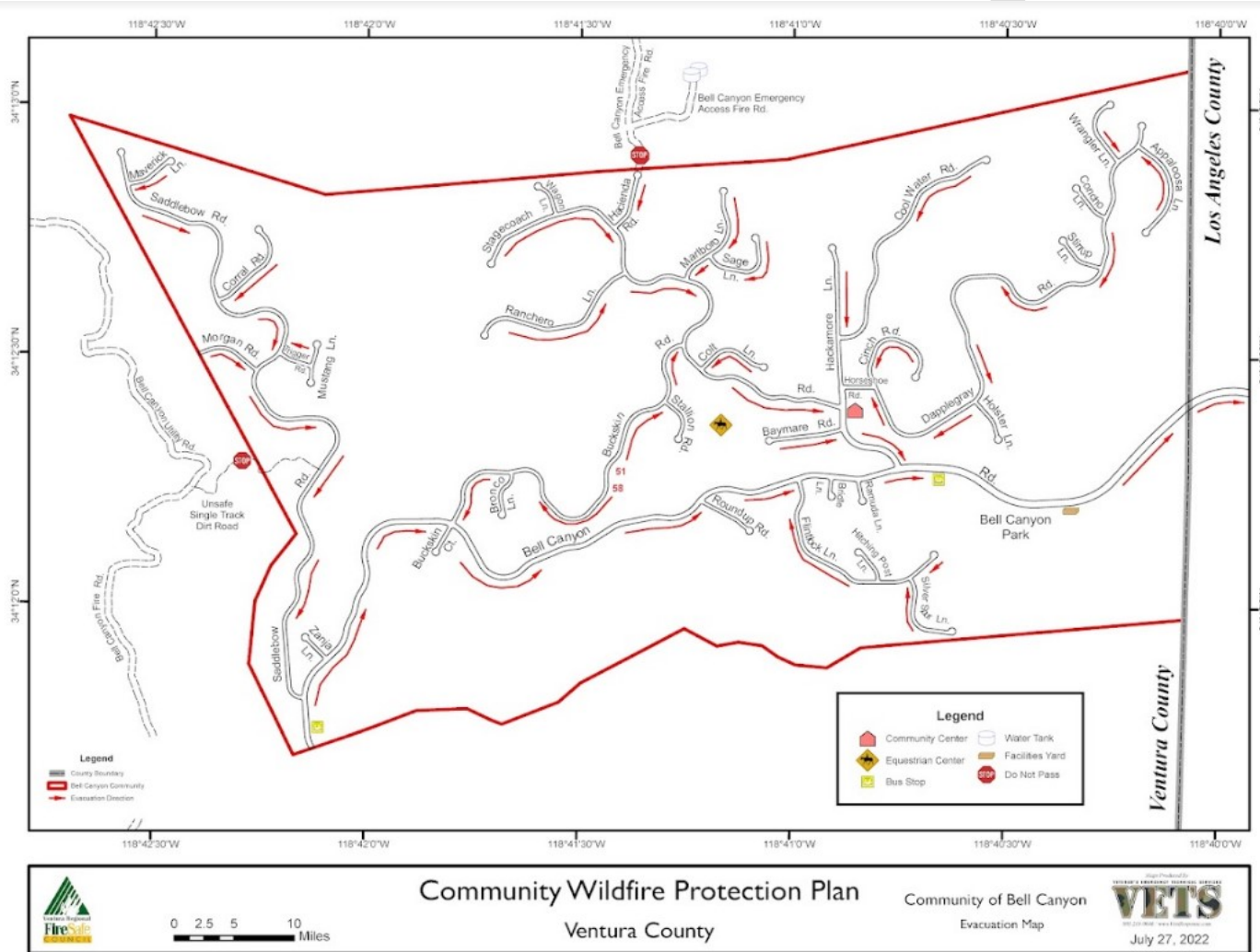


Figure 5: Fuel Beds Requiring Prioritization

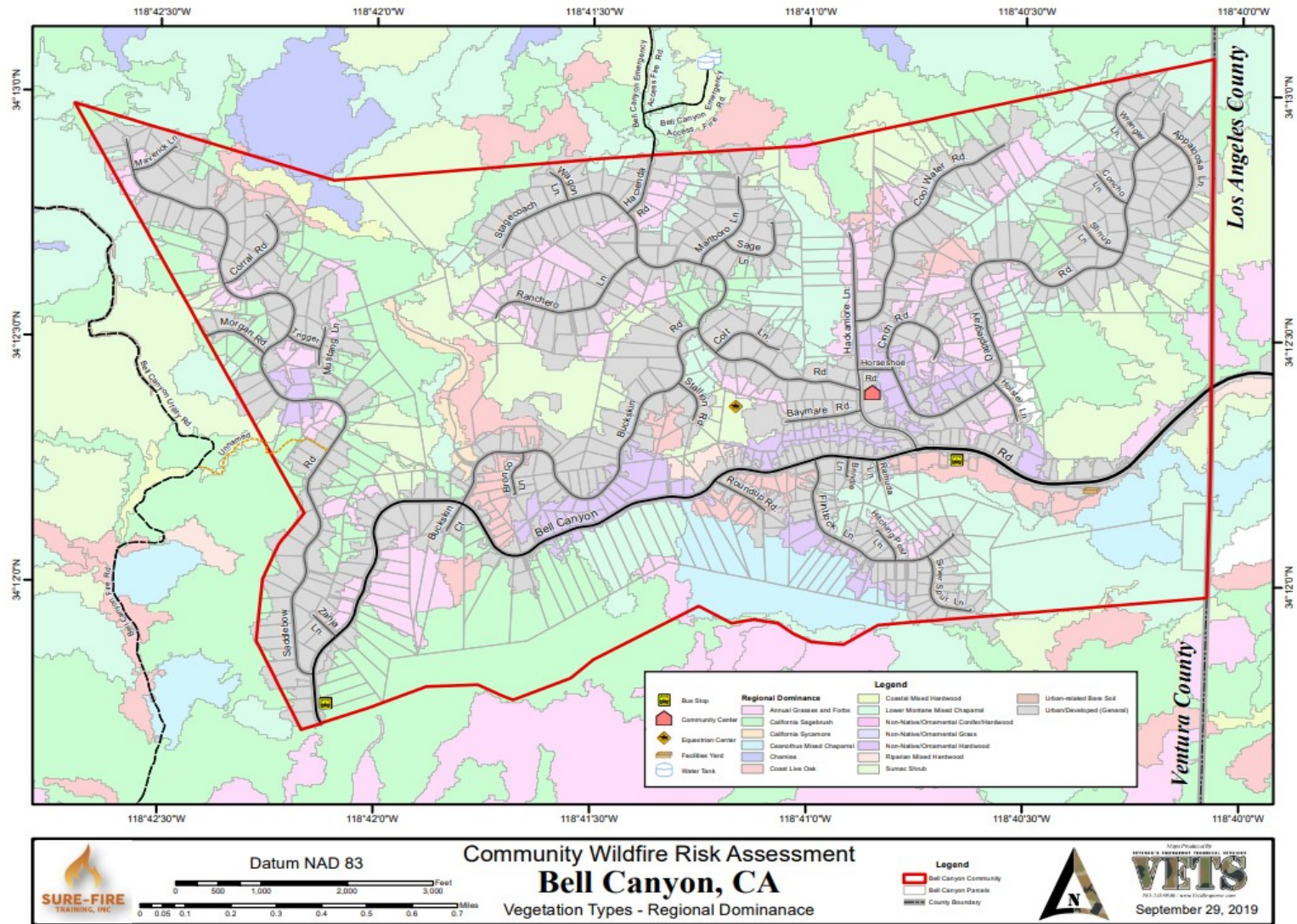


Figure 6: Residential Construction Vintage map

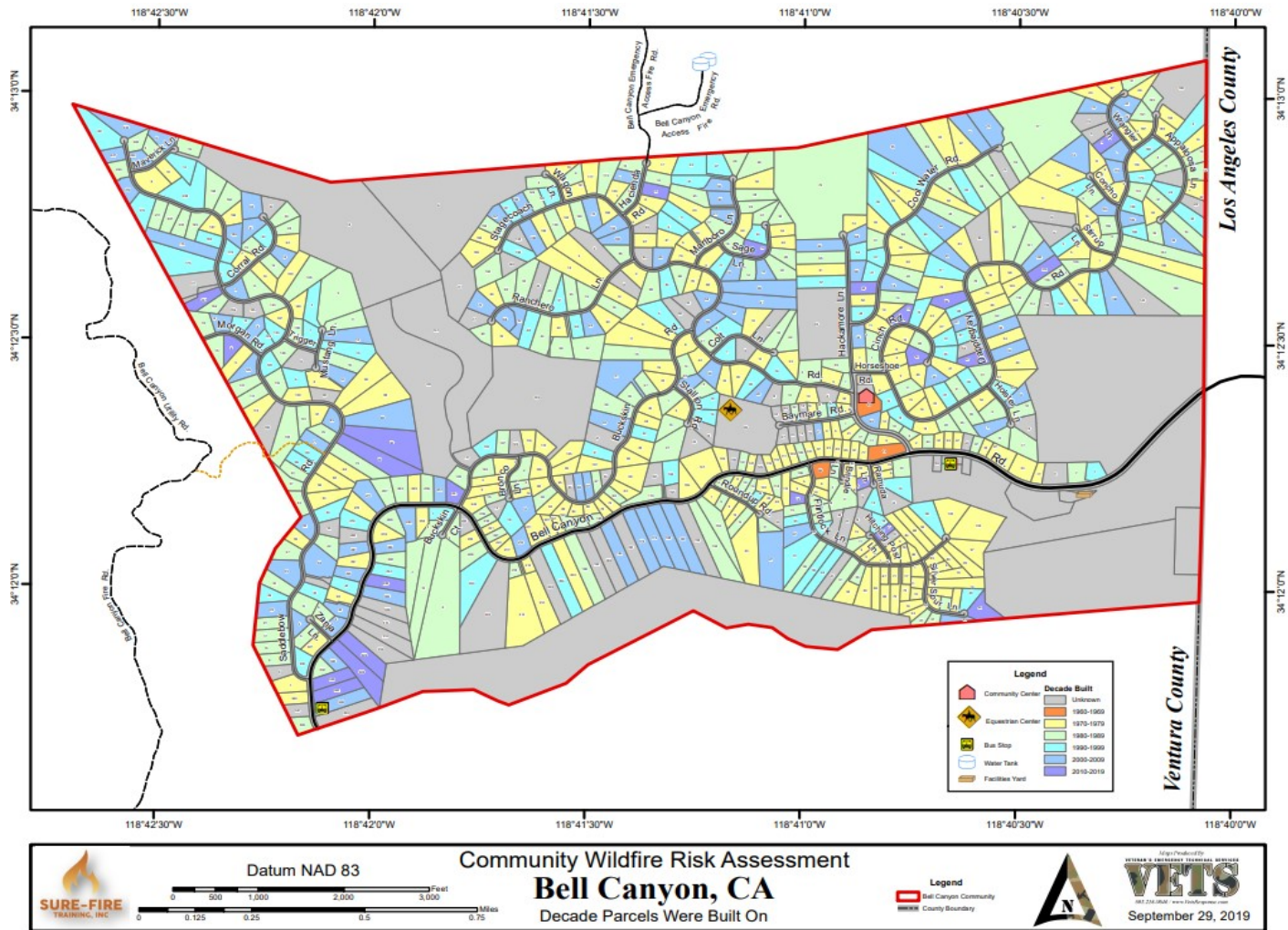
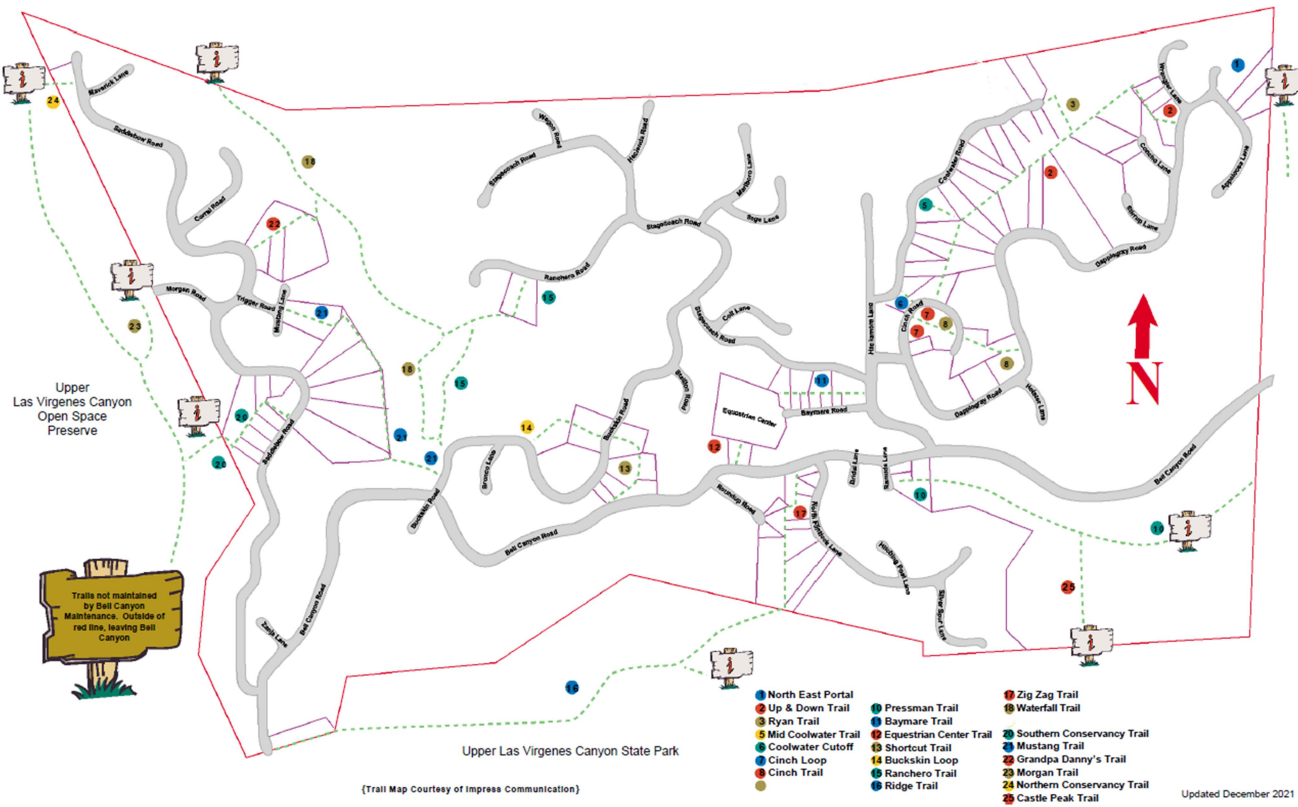


Figure 7: Riding and Hiking Trails



Appendix C: 1st Amendment (as applicable)

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Amendment

**For
(Community)**

Date Amendment Submitted: _____

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(list only those sections as amended)**

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SIGNATURE PAGES

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Appendix D: 2nd Amendment (as applicable)

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Amendment

For

(Community)

Date Amendment Submitted: _____

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