

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Ramona

San Diego County, CA

January 3, 2006

Introduction

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was developed by the community of Ramona with guidance and support from the County of San Diego, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), the United States Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This CWPP supplements San Diego County, Department of Planning and Land Use documents referenced in Appendix A.

The process of developing a CWPP can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. It can also lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options and implications for the surrounding watershed.

COLLABORATION: COMMUNITY/AGENCIES/FIRE SAFE COUNCILS

Representatives involved in the development of the Ramona CWPP are included in the following table. Their name, organization, and roles and responsibilities are indicated below:

CWPP Development Team:

Name	Organization	Roles / Responsibilities
Kristi Mansolf Patrick Uriell	Ramona Community Planning Group	Primary development of CWPP and decision-making, community risk and value assessment.
Jason Batchelor	County of San Diego, Land Use and Environment Group	Primary development of CWPP and decision-making, community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.
John Wiecejorek	County of San Diego, Office of Emergency Services	Provides input and expertise on planning and hazard mitigation.

Chief Mike Bratton	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF)	Facilitation of planning process and approval of CWPP process and minimum standards. Provides input and expertise on forestry, fire and fuels, and FireWise concepts.
Robin Kinmont	San Diego County Fire Safe Council	Provides educational outreach and support for pre-wildfire disaster planning, defensible space, fuel reduction, and hazard assessment.
Chief Thomas Brand	United States Forest Service	Provides input and expertise on federal lands forestry, fire and fuels, and FireWise concepts.
Chief Michael Vogt	Ramona Fire Department	Provides local information and expertise inside of the Ramona Municipal Water District (RMWD) boundaries. This could include community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.
Chief David Nissen Chief Cary Coleman Chief Gilbert Turrentine	San Diego Rural Fire Protection District Intermountain Volunteer Fire Department San Pasqual Volunteer Fire Department	Provides local information and expertise in specified areas outside of the boundaries. This could include community risk and value assessment, development of community protection priorities, and establishment of fuels treatment project areas and methods.
Clayton Howe	Bureau of Land Management	Provides local information and expertise for BLM lands, including fire prevention, fuels treatment and land management activities.

Community Overview

Ramona is located in the Santa Maria Valley approximately 35 miles northeast of San Diego, and about 25 miles east of the coast. It is bordered by the City of Poway to the west, the unincorporated community of Lakeside and the Barona Indian Reservation to the south, the unincorporated community of Santa Ysabel to the east, and the City of Escondido, City of San Diego and the North Mountain Subregion to the north. The Santa Maria Valley is at

approximately 1,400 feet elevation. Mountains at the Ramona/Poway border reach elevations of about 2,800 feet. Ramona is in the unincorporated area of San Diego County, conforms to the Ramona Community Planning Area, and covers approximately 130 square miles.

Ramona is characterized by steep slopes, rocky terrain, rolling topography, deep canyons, high valleys, and expanses of grassland. There are natural lands bordering, in, and surrounding Ramona by which wildfire can make its way into the community. Slopes surrounding Ramona and within the Planning Area are covered with chaparral and coastal sage scrub. The valleys contain grasslands. Woodlands are found in some of the natural drainage areas and in some of the grasslands throughout the Planning Area.

Ramona has a long history of small and large brush fires that have directly impacted all of Ramona except for the Town Center. Portions of the southern part of Ramona burned in larger fires in 1913, 1928, 1956 (Inaja), and in 1970 (Boulder). This entire area burned again in 2003 (Cedar). Portions of the northern part of Ramona burned in 1929 and in 1967.

The community of Ramona has a population of approximately 36,088 residents, domiciled in approximately 11,463 households (SANDAG, 2005). The most densely populated area of Ramona is the Town Center and vicinity. Development spreads out in concentric circles from the Town Center, with large clusters of homes in the Mt. Woodson planned development at the far western side of Ramona (189 homes); Fernbrook in the Mussey Grade area to the south; the Holly Oaks (approximately 100 homes), San Diego Country Estates (SDCE) (approximately 3,000 homes) and Rancho San Vicente (approximately 200 homes) planned developments to the south; and the Oak Tree Ranch modular home park (approximately 100 homes) north east of the Town Center, and approximately 2 miles south of the Cleveland National Forest. The Rosemont area consists of many private road easements that come off of State Hwy 67 to the north and south, with a varying number of homes on each. The portion of the Ramona Planning Area east of Magnolia is outside of the RMWD boundaries, and east of the County Water Authority line. Residences are on large parcels and the land is more rolling. There are many smaller planned developments, and individual residences on large acreages dispersed throughout the Planning Area. Large areas of open space are often directly adjacent and integrated into developed areas. Ramona has 20 biological Resource Conservation Areas that are located outside of the Town Center, throughout the Planning Area.

The Highland Hills Estates, Holly Oaks Ranch, Mt. Woodson, Oak Tree Ranch, Rancho San Vicente, Rancho Santa Teresa, and SDCE subdivisions all have CC&R's or rules and regulations in place where the homeowners maintain their own brush clearance, and, where applicable, clearance of common areas is maintained through a variety of arrangements. The RMWD contracts with Fire Prevention Services to provide fire inspections, and the Ramona Fire Department enforces clearance within the RMWD boundaries. Outside of the RMWD boundaries, fire inspections are conducted by CDF and enforced by the County, except in the Barona Mesa area, CDF conducts fire inspections and the San Diego Rural Fire Protection District enforces clearance. The USFS conducts hazard inspections of private lands within the boundaries of the federal lands, enforcing the County regulations of 100 feet of clearance.

The County of San Diego, City of San Diego and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have land holdings within the Planning Area. The County owns and manages the following Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) and open space lands throughout the Planning Area: the

Barnett Ranch, Simon Park, Luelf Ranch (Holly Oaks), and Boulder Oaks. The County has area specific management directives for managing MSCP and open space lands. Included in these directives is a fire management plan that includes vegetation management so that the lands are not a threat to structures. The City of San Diego owns Lake Sutherland, a portion of Mt. Woodson, portions of Boden Canyon, and the Fosters Ranch in Pamo valley. The Camp Hope project is located at Lake Sutherland. Vegetation management is conducted for the Camp. The City clears brush from the dam area, along access roads and around keepers' houses annually. No other vegetation management activities are conducted by the City of San Diego in the Planning Area. The BLM has a parcel in the Highland Valley area which the tenant was allowed to clear. The BLM leases the Mt. Gower Preserve to the County of San Diego, who maintains the land as part of their open space and MSCP fire management plan.

The 4,000 acre Monte Vista Ranch, northwest of the SDCE development, was recently purchased by The Nature Conservancy. A bed and breakfast is operated onsite. Grounds around the bed and breakfast in this area are landscaped and maintained. San Diego Gas & Electric has road easements through the Monte Vista Ranch that they maintain.

Public road easements throughout the Planning Area are maintained by the jurisdictions that own the road easements.

Identification of Values at Risk

Using technology and local expertise, the community of Ramona, supported by the County of San Diego, Department of Planning and Land Use, has developed a series of maps depicting the site and situation of the Ramona Community (Appendix B). A narrative of the community and adjacent landscapes of interest was also prepared. The maps will act as a visual aid from which community members can assess and make recommendations. The maps include the following:

1. Inhabited areas and values at potential risk to wildland fire
2. Fire threat designated by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection FRAP.
3. A preliminary designation of the community's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zone (CDF FRAP).
4. USGS topographic quad map of the community.

Local Preparedness and Firefighting Capability

Initial response to all structural fires, medical and associated emergencies within the RMWD boundaries is the responsibility of the Ramona Fire Department, through a contract with CDF. CDF provides fire protection for wildland fires outside of the RMWD boundaries, where applicable. The Intermountain Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection to structures and lands east of the County Water Authority line. San Diego Rural Fire Protection District provides fire protection to the Barona Mesa area of Ramona, south of the San Diego Country Estates. The San Pasqual Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection to the Highland

Hills area of Ramona, north of the Ramona grasslands, and portions of the Highland Valley area. The USFS provides fire protection to federal lands, including the Cleveland National Forest. Fire suppression on BLM lands is performed under a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Fire prevention, fuels treatment and land management activities remain the responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management's Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office.

Ordering of resources is managed through automatic aid agreements and mutual aid agreements between the above entities. All automatic aid agreements and mutual aid agreements, training, equipment, and response are the responsibility of the local fire department and the agencies listed above.

STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY

In cooperation with the County of San Diego, and the Ramona Fire Department, the San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, the San Pasqual Volunteer Fire Department, and the Intermountain Volunteer Fire Department, the community of Ramona supports and promotes Firewise activities. The community of Ramona supports and educates its citizens in ways to reduce structure ignitability through meeting County of San Diego Building and Fire Code requirements.

The partnership that exists between the listed organizations (federal, state, local, and citizens) allows the community of Ramona to reduce hazardous vegetative fuels that could ignite residences and commercial facilities during Santa Ana-wind fire conditions. Maintaining properties with the appropriate defensible space is a key factor to protecting lives and property in this community in the foothills.

HAZARD REDUCTION PRIORITIES

1. Conduct brush management projects whereby fuel loads are reduced along selected ingress/egress routes, and homes in the community.
2. Map all roads, road markers, and water sources in the communities.
3. Measures to reduce structural ignitability
 - a. Weed abatement inspections conducted by USFS (on federal lands), CDF, and the Ramona Fire Department through a contract with a private company. Forced abatement by the Ramona Fire Department, the San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, and the County of San Diego.
 - b. Construction enhancements through County building and fire code requirements.
 - c. Class A re-roofing through County building and fire code requirements.

Current/Planned Projects

1. **USFS Project: Black Canyon Prescribed Burn Project.** Planning stages. Description: The District is proposing to treat 1488 acres of mature mixed chaparral between Black Canyon Rd. to Pamo Valley Rd. with mechanized equipment and a cooperative prescribed burn project with the CDF.
2. **CDF Project: San Vicente Community Protection Plan (preliminary stages):** The CDF, in cooperation with the USFS, BLM, Ramona Fire Department, San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, and Barona Indian Reservation, is planning a project to use a combination of prescribed burn and fuel breaks with the objective to encircle the SDCE and adjacent residential areas, from the upper San Diego River drainage to Ramona Oaks, south of the Barona Mesa area, across to Wildcat Canyon Rd., to beyond the Barona speedway.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan developed for the community of Ramona:

- Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties and federal land management agencies in the vicinity of Ramona have been consulted.
- This plan identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect the community of Ramona.
- This plan recommends measures to reduce ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

RAMONA CWPP

The following entities attest that the standards listed above have been met and mutually agree with the content of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

Charles R. Mann

California Department of Forestry
and Fire Protection, San Diego Unit

Raymond Leuninger

County of San Diego, Land Use and
Environment Group

Ralph Steinhoff

County of San Diego, Fire Services
Coordinator

Michael J. Vogt

Ramona Fire Department

D. N. ...

Rural Fire Protection District of
San Diego

[Signature]

Intermountain Volunteer Fire Department

Albert J. Turunens

San Pasqual Volunteer Fire
Department

Marty Rowell

Fire Safe Council of San Diego County,
President

Peter Chiell

Ramona Community Planning Group

County of San Diego, Office of
Emergency Services

[Signature]

County of San Diego

Appendix A

Documentation Affecting Fuels Reduction, Building Construction, and Community Fire Protection

1. County of San Diego Building Code (2004)
2. County of San Diego Fire Code (2004)
3. County of San Diego Combustible Vegetation and Flammable Material Ordinance (2004)
4. County of San Diego, OES *Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2004)

5. County of San Diego, *Fire, Defensible Space and You...* (2005)
6. County of San Diego, *Fire Safety and Fuels Reduction Program Overview* (2005)
7. <http://frap.cdf.ca.gov> for additional maps, data, and documents
8. <http://www.cafirealliance.org> California Fire Alliance website for additional documents.
9. <http://wildfire.cr.usgs.gov/fireplanning> *California Fire Alliance* mapping tool for additional planning and documents.

Appendix B

Figure 1: *Ramona Community Planning Area Map*

Figure 2: *Communities Map*

Shows the main population centers.

Figure 3: *Assets at Risk*

Shows improvements in the community according to the County Assessor. Some improvements, not in the Assessors parcels, may not be shown in this map.

Figure 4a-4c: *USGS Topographic Maps*

Figure 5: *Fire Threat (modeled by CDF FRAP)*

Combines expected fire frequency with potential fire behavior to create 4 threat classes.

Figure 6: *Fire History 1910 – 1993 (CDF FRAP)*

Large fire history, generally 300-acre minimum for CDF fires since 1950 and 10-acre minimum for USFS fires since 1910, but many smaller fires as well.

Figure 7: *Wild land-Urban Interface zone designations (CDF FRAP)*

Depicts areas where there is wildland fire threat to human development.

Figure 8: *Vegetation Classification*

Shows vegetation classified using Holland 95 classification schema. Last updated July 2005.