

3.1.8 Wildfire

This section of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) evaluates potential impacts associated with wildfire resulting from implementation of the Integrated Vector Management Program (Proposed Project or IVMP). This section is based on desktop research performed by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc., and Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

3.1.8.1 Existing Conditions

Regional Wildfire Risk

Wildfire, as defined in California Public Resources Code, Sections 4103 and 4104, is any uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels that threatens to destroy life, property, or resources. In the last 2 decades, wildfires in California have increased in number, acres burned, and number of structures destroyed (CAL FIRE 2019a) per year. In 2020 (the most recent year reported), San Diego County observed 179 wildfires totaling 386 acres and approximately \$1.05 million of wildfire-related damage (CAL FIRE 2020).

Several factors, including climate, wind patterns, native vegetation, topography, and development patterns, make the county susceptible to wildfires. A vast amount of the county's undeveloped lands support natural habitats such as grasslands, sage scrub, chaparral, and some coniferous forest. Extended droughts, characteristic of the region's Mediterranean climate, result in large areas of dry vegetation that provide fuel for wildland fires. In addition, climate change has also contributed to soil dryness. This dry vegetation is especially vulnerable to wildfire in areas with high winds. Therefore, wildfire risk tends to be high in locations with dense vegetation, dry conditions, and steep slopes (CAL FIRE 2007). As a result, high wildfire risk occurs in the hills and mountains of the eastern areas of the county where sparse development intermingles with fire-prone native vegetation.

Wildland Fire History in San Diego County

In San Diego County, fire season is typically defined from May through November, depending on variations in weather conditions. However, the threat of a wildland fire is always present and is influenced by weather conditions throughout the year.

The 2007 San Diego County firestorms were the second largest in county history, superseded only by the devastating firestorms of October 2003. The firestorms started on October 21, 2007, near the United States-Mexico international border and burned throughout the county until the last fire was fully contained on November 9, 2007. At the height of the firestorms, there were seven separate fires burning in San Diego County. The fires resulted in seven civilian deaths, 23 civilian injuries, and 89 firefighter injuries. More than 6,200 fire personnel fought to control the wildland fires, but the fires consumed approximately 369,000 acres, or about 13% of the county's total land mass. Additionally, the fires destroyed an estimated 1,600 homes, 800 outbuildings, 253 structures, 239 vehicles, and two commercial properties. The total projected damage costs of the 2007 San Diego County firestorms are estimated to exceed \$1.5 billion (EG&G 2007).

In 2020, the Valley Fire burned 16,390 acres within Cleveland National Forest in the southern portion of the county. The Valley Fire was ignited on September 5, 2020 (Cleveland National Forest 2020). This fire was intensified by dry vegetation, rugged terrain, and high temperatures and winds. The Valley Fire resulted in multiple power outages.

Fire Hazard Designations

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped areas of significant fire hazards in the county through its Fire and Resource Assessment Program. CAL FIRE defines and maps Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) to identify the potential fire hazard severity expected in different areas within the State as required by California Public Resources Code, Sections 4201 through 4205. FHSZs are determined based on an area's vegetation, topography (slope), weather (including winds), crown fire potential, and ember production and movement potential. FHSZ includes the classifications Very High, High, or Moderate in areas where the State is responsible for fire protection (State Responsibility Areas [SRAs]). The majority of San Diego County is included in an SRA for fire prevention and suppression. However, some areas, such as national forests, are within Federal Responsibility Areas, which are under the responsibility of the U.S. Forest Service for wildfire protection. FHSZ also includes the classification Very High in areas where local agencies are responsible for fire protection (Local Responsibility Areas [LRAs]). In San Diego County, local fire protection is provided by Fire Protection Districts and County Service Areas in unincorporated areas and by city fire departments and joint powers agreements within city boundaries. Local fire protection is discussed in more detail in Section 3.2.6, *Public Services*.

The majority of the county is designated as a Very High and High FHSZ, except for the Desert and eastern Mountain Empire subregions, which are in the Moderate FHSZ. There are also areas of Moderate FHSZ and un-zoned areas in the more densely populated communities around the county. Figure 3.1.8-1, *Fire Hazard Severity Zones*, identifies FHSZ in SRA regions in San Diego County.

Wildland Urban Interface

The wildland urban interface (WUI) is an area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels (USDA and USDOJ 2001) and occur in areas designated by CAL FIRE as an FHSZ. A WUI is defined as a buffer around areas of residential density greater than 0.05 dwelling units per acre and is divided into a Defense Zone (the area up to 0.25 mile from the developed area) and a Threat Zone (from 0.25 to 1.5 miles from developed areas) (USDA 2005).

The WUI creates an environment in which fire can move readily between structural and vegetation fuels. Once homes are built within (or adjacent to) natural habitat settings, fighting wildland fires becomes more complex because the goal of extinguishing the wildland fire is often superseded by protecting human life and private property.

The WUI is composed of communities that border wildlands or are intermixed with wildlands and where the minimum density exceeds one structure per 40 acres. WUI communities are created when the following conditions occur: (1) structures are built at densities greater than one unit per 40 acres, (2) the percentage of native vegetation is less than 50%, (3) the area is more than 75% vegetated, and (4) the area is within 1.5 miles of an area greater than a census block (1,325 acres). The 1.5-mile buffer distance was adopted according to the 2001 California Fire Alliance definition of vicinity, which is roughly the distance that pieces of burning wood can be carried from wildland fire to the roof of a structure (Radeloff et al. 2005). Figure 3.1.8-2, *Wildland Urban Interfaces in San Diego County*, shows areas in San Diego County mapped as WUI by CAL FIRE.

3.1.8.2 Regulatory Setting

Federal

International Fire Code

The International Fire Code (IFC), created by the International Code Council, is a model document that was adopted and then amended by the California Building Standards Commission and serves as the primary international means for authorizing and enforcing procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of any substance that may pose a threat to public health and safety. The IFC regulates the use, handling, and storage requirements for hazardous materials at fixed facilities. The IFC and the International Building Code use a hazard classification system to determine what protective measures are required to protect fire and life safety. These measures may include construction standards, separations from property lines, and specialized equipment. To ensure that these safety measures are met, the IFC employs a permit system based on hazard classification. The IFC is adopted and amended every 3 years, with the most recent version published in 2021.

State

California Fire Code

The California Fire Code (CFC) is Chapter 9 of Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). It is created by the California Building Standards Commission and is based on the IFC created by the International Code Council. It is the primary means for authorizing and enforcing procedures and mechanisms to ensure the safe handling and storage of any substance that may pose a threat to public health and safety. The CFC regulates the use, handling, and storage requirements for hazardous materials at fixed facilities. The CFC and the California Building Code use a hazard classification system to determine what protective measures are required to protect fire and life safety. These measures may include construction standards, separations from property lines, and specialized equipment. To ensure that these safety measures are met, the CFC employs a permit system based on hazard classification. The CFC is adopted and amended every 3 years.

The CFC includes requirements for building construction and vegetation management within areas designated as WUIs. In such areas, all new buildings must comply with the California Building Code, which defines wildfire protection building construction requirements intended to reduce wildfire exposure. In addition, buildings within the WUI must comply with California laws and regulations that require maintenance of a “defensible space” of 100 feet from structures (California Public Resources Code, Section 4291; 14 CCR 1299.03).

California Health and Safety Code

State fire regulations are set forth in Sections 13000 et seq. of the California Health and Safety Code and include regulations concerning building standards (as also set forth in the California Building Code), fire protection and notification systems, fire protection devices such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, high-rise building and childcare facility standards, and fire suppression training. The State Fire Marshal enforces these regulations and building standards in all State-owned buildings, State-occupied buildings, and State institutions throughout California.

California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 1.5

CCR Title 14 Division 1.5 establishes the regulations for CAL FIRE and is applicable in all SRAs, which are areas where CAL FIRE is responsible for wildfire protection. Most of the unincorporated county is an SRA, and any development in SRAs must comply with these regulations. Among other things, CCR Title 14 Section 1270, et seq., establishes minimum standards for emergency access, fuel modification, setback to property line, signage, and water supply. San Diego County's most recent adoption of the County Consolidated Fire Code was in 2020, and the code requirements meet or exceed Title 14 Section 1270, et seq. With the recent adoption, the County Consolidated Fire Code supersedes CCR Title 14 Section 1270, et seq., in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Local

County of San Diego Consolidated Fire Code

The County of San Diego (County), in collaboration with the local fire protection districts, created the first Consolidated Fire Code in 2001. The Consolidated Fire Code contains the county and fire protection districts amendments to the CFC. The purpose of consolidation of the county and local fire districts adoptive ordinances is to promote consistency in the interpretation and enforcement of the Consolidated Fire Code for the protection of the public health and safety, which includes permit requirements for the installation, alteration, or repair of new and existing fire protection systems, and penalties for violations of the code. The Consolidated Fire Code provides the minimum requirements for access, water supply and distribution, construction type, fire protection systems, and vegetation management. Additionally, the Consolidated Fire Code regulates hazardous materials and associated measures to ensure that public health and safety are protected from incidents relating to hazardous substance releases. The Consolidated Fire Code is amended and adopted every 3 years, with the most recent version approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 25, 2020.

County of San Diego Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires all local governments to create a disaster plan to qualify for hazard mitigation funding. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is a countywide plan that identifies risks and ways to minimize damage by natural and human-made disasters. The plan is a comprehensive resource document that serves many purposes such as enhancing public awareness, creating a decision tool for management, promoting compliance with State and federal program requirements, enhancing local policies for hazard mitigation capability, and providing interjurisdictional coordination.

Each of the 18 cities in the county participated in the planning process, as well as the Alpine Fire Protection District, Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District, and Padre Dam Municipal Water District. Based on its review of jurisdictional-level hazard maps, Alpine Fire Protection District identified approximately 12,885 people, 4,814 residential structures, 1,355 commercial structures, and 142 critical facilities that are exposed to wildfire/structure fire hazards (Fire Regime classes II and IV).

The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan addresses wildfire risk within the San Diego region by assessing the exposure to wildfire hazard of populations in the different jurisdictions within the region. The assessment includes exposure of population, residential buildings, and commercial buildings, as well as exposure of critical facilities and infrastructure such as airports, bridges, and

electric power facilities. The plan then outlines goals, objectives, and actions for each jurisdiction within the San Diego region. Goals related to wildfire typically include reducing the possibility of damage and loss due to structural/wildfire. Objectives and actions related to wildfire typically include measures such as updating fire and evacuation plans, maintaining vegetation management policies, and maintaining adequate emergency response capability. This plan was last updated in 2018.

County of San Diego General Plan

The General Plan includes goals and policies in the Land Use Element, Conservation and Open Space Element, and Safety Element applicable to wildfire in the county.

Conservation and Open Space Element

Goal COS-5 advocates the protection and maintenance of local reservoirs, watersheds, aquifer-recharge areas, and natural drainage systems to maintain high-quality water resources. This goal is supported by Policy COS-5.3 that requires development to be appropriately sited and to incorporate measures to retain natural flow regimes, thereby protecting downslope areas from erosion, capturing runoff to adequately allow for filtration and/or infiltration, and protecting downstream biological resources, which reduces the risk of flooding or landslides following wildfires.

Goal COS-12 advocates for the preservation of ridgelines and steep hillsides for their character and scenic value. Policy COS-12.1 promotes the protection of undeveloped ridgelines and steep hillsides by maintaining semi-rural or rural designation on these areas, which serves a secondary purpose of minimizing development in steep environments that are more vulnerable to wildfire.

Safety Element

Goal S-1 promotes enhanced public safety and the protection of public and private property. This goal is supported by Policies S-1.3, S-1.4, and S-1.5. Policy S-1.3 advocates for support efforts and programs that reduce both the risk of natural and human-made hazards and that reduce the time for responding to these hazards. Policy S-1.4 promotes the review and update of the County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan be updated every 5 years. Policy S-1.5 promotes the participation in programs and procedures that emphasize coordination between appropriate public agencies and private entities to remove debris and promote the rapid reconstruction of the county following a disaster event and facilitate the upgrading of the built environment as expeditiously as possible.

Goal S-3 and Policies S-3.1 through S-3.6 require that fire hazards be minimized through responsible development, vegetation management, and maintenance of accessible road networks for emergency services.

Goals S-4, S-5, and S-6 relate to interagency and interjurisdictional coordination of fire prevention. Policy S-4.1 also recommends that the County develop fuel management programs based on comments from neighboring fire management jurisdictions. Policies S-5.1 and S-5.2 require regional coordination and agreements between fire protection services to maximize service levels. Policies S-6.4 and S-6.5 require that new development conform to travel time standards and that appropriate fire protection services be established before or concurrent to development.

Other Agency Regulations and Plans

In addition to the unincorporated areas, there are 18 incorporated cities within the County of San Diego, including Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Oceanside, Poway, San Diego, San Marcos, Santee, Solana Beach, and Vista. Incorporated cities within the County of San Diego may have their own plans and policies related to wildland fire hazards and emergency response plans that address these hazards.

Integrated Vector Management Program Best Management Practices

The IVMP follows vector control guidance documents and best management practices (BMPs) prepared by the California Department of Public Health that detail surveillance methods, vector control management strategies, and pesticide application procedures. These documents include the *Best Management Practices for Mosquito Control in California* (CDPH 2012), *Best Management Practices for Mosquito Control on California State Properties* (CDPH 2008b), and *California Mosquito-Borne Virus Surveillance and Response Plan* (CDPH 2021), which detail best integrated vector management practices for vector control and vector-borne disease prevention.

In addition, the County integrates BMPs into the IVMP serving as a comprehensive management framework for implementation of individual activities. The following BMPs have been developed by the VCP in combination with the above-referenced sources and would be incorporated into the IVMP, which demonstrate the County's commitment to avoid or minimize impacts to the maximum extent feasible:

- B13: The changing of oil, refueling, and other actions that could result in a release of a hazardous substance will be restricted to designated service areas, such as maintenance yards and gas stations, or when necessary, areas that are a minimum of 100 feet from any documented special status plant populations, sensitive habitats, or drainages. Equipment will be checked for leaks prior to operation and repaired as necessary. Fueling areas will be installed in the field, as applicable, by berms, sandbags, or other artificial barriers designed to prevent accidental spills.
- B17: VCP staff will modify, postpone, or cease pesticide application when weather parameters exceed product label specifications, such as when wind speeds exceed the velocity stated on the product label or may result in drift or when a high chance of rain is predicted and rain is a determining factor on the label of the material to be applied.
- B23: Staff will be trained annually on petroleum-based or other chemical-based storage and disposal regulations and procedures, including spill management protocols.
- B25: All vehicles will contain a fire extinguisher and first aid kit at all times.

3.1.8.3 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

The *County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements – Wildland Fire and Fire Protection* (County 2010c) provides guidance for evaluating adverse environmental effects associated with wildland fire. However, these guidelines have not been updated to reflect the current CEQA Appendix G questions related to wildfire. Therefore, the impact analysis that follows relies on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Based

on guidance provided in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would result in a significant impact if it would lead to any of the following:

1. Be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
2. Be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire.
3. Be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment.
4. Be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact on the environment if it would be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project involves the implementation of an IVMP to protect the public from vector-borne disease and public nuisances. Under the Proposed Project, the IVMP would continue to comprehensively approach vector control through various techniques, including surveillance and monitoring, source reduction (i.e., physical control), source treatment (i.e., biological and chemical controls), public education, outreach, and disease diagnostics. Source reduction and source treatment activities may require the ongoing and periodic use of vehicles and light trucks, such as pickup trucks and jeeps, or the use of construction-type equipment in or near SRAs and Very High FHSZ areas. The ongoing and continued use of vehicles to travel between County offices and vector activity sites, as well as construction-type equipment used for grading or earthmoving activities, would not result in a significant increase of vehicles on local roadways, and would not create roadway congestion that would interfere with emergency response or evacuation. Further, none of the Proposed Project activities would result in any road or lane closures or detours that would impede emergency response or evacuation. Intermittently, project activities may require the use of flaggers or cones to park equipment, but such activities would be temporary in nature. Also refer to the discussion under Emergency Access in Section 3.1.7, *Transportation/Traffic*, of this PEIR. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not construct new structures or residences that may significantly increase the county's population, resulting in more residents on local roadways, causing slower emergency response or evacuation times. The Proposed Project would not involve activities that could impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Impacts would be less than significant.

Expose Receptors to Pollutants from Wildfire

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact if it would be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire.

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project involves the implementation of a countywide IVMP to protect the public from vector-borne disease and public nuisances. The Proposed Project activities would occur throughout the county, including on lands classified as Very High FHSZ and in SRAs. However, the Proposed Project does not involve the construction of any buildings and would not introduce inhabitants that could thereby be exposed to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire. Additionally, source reduction and source treatment activities may include vegetation management, which may inadvertently lessen wildfire risk in the county. Further, the Proposed Project would implement IVMP BMPs that would ensure that the Proposed Project would not result in an increased risk of wildfire. Specifically, the changing of oil, refueling, and other actions that could result in a release of a hazardous substance would be restricted to designated service areas such as maintenance yards and gas stations or, when necessary, areas that are a minimum of 100 feet from any documented special-status plant populations, sensitive habitats, or drainages (BMP B13); pesticide application would be modified, postponed, or ceased when weather parameters exceed product label specifications (BMP B17); and all vehicles will contain a fire extinguisher and first aid kit at all times (BMP B25). The Proposed Project would not expose occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire with implementation of safety measures and BMPs. Impacts would be less than significant.

Exacerbate Wildfire Risk from New Infrastructure

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact if it would be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts on the environment.

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project would not involve or require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities. The components of the Proposed Project include surveillance and monitoring, source reduction (i.e., physical control), source treatment (i.e., biological and chemical controls), public education, outreach, and disease diagnostics. Surveillance and monitoring would be conducted via ground vehicles, aircraft (including drones¹), watercraft, and remote sensing equipment using existing

¹ For the purposes of this PEIR, “drone” is intended to generically mean a remotely piloted or unpiloted aircraft. As of this writing, the Federal Aviation Administration’s official terminology is Unmanned Aircraft Systems; however,

roadways and infrastructure. Source reduction and source treatment activities would alter the environment to prevent or remove vectors through biological or chemical controls. Such methods would not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure as biological controls include mosquito fish and bacterial larvicides, and chemical controls would be used through backpack applicators, truck-mounted equipment, or other motorized vehicles. Public education, outreach, and source treatment would occur within existing facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing impacts on the environment. Impacts associated with wildfire risk from new infrastructure would not occur.

Expose People or Structures to Significant Risks from Post-Wildfire Hazards

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

Based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Proposed Project would have a significant impact if it would be located in or near SRAs or lands classified as Very High FHSZ and would expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Impact Analysis

The Proposed Project does not involve the construction of buildings or infrastructure and would not introduce inhabitants to the county. One component of the Proposed Project would include grading or earthmoving activities to implement source reduction measures that could result in increases in erosion or siltation. However, such activities would be conducted in compliance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction General Permit, the County's Watershed Protection Ordinance, and the IVMP BMPs, which would limit erosion by minimizing site disturbance to the maximum extent practicable and requiring installation of erosion control BMPs to prevent off-site sediment discharges. As a result, the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts related to erosion or drainage changes related to wildfires or other vegetation removal activities. The Proposed Project involves vector management activities that would occur throughout the county and would not result in exposure of people or structures to significant risks as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Impacts associated with post-wildfire risks would not occur.

3.1.8.4 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Because of the transitory nature of wildfires, which can burn across multiple landscapes if suitable fuel is present, the geographic scope of the cumulative impact analysis for wildfire risk includes San Diego County and the surrounding regions, including Orange County, the southwest portion of Riverside County, and the western portion of Imperial County. Portions of these surrounding regions are also located in Very High FHSZs and may also be at an increased risk for wildfire. Cumulative projects include residential and non-residential land development, open space and recreation, and agricultural activities, all of which have the potential for ground disturbance, vegetation removal, and the application of pesticides. The Proposed Project and cumulative projects would be required to comply with applicable federal, State, and local regulations related to wildfires.

Federal Aviation Administration is transitioning toward gender-neutral terminology such as drone operator, certificated remote pilot, model aircraft flyer, and advanced air mobility operator.

Adopted Emergency Response Plan or Emergency Evacuation Plan

A cumulative impact would occur on adopted emergency response or evacuation plans if future activities associated with the Proposed Project combined with cumulative development would substantially impair an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan for wildfire or other natural disasters. Future population growth and changes to the mobility network could result in significant cumulative impacts associated with the following: (1) an increase in population that is induced from future development projects that are unaccounted for in existing emergency plans, (2) an increase in population that emergency response teams are unable to service adequately in the event of a disaster, or (3) evacuation route impairment if multiple development projects concurrently block multiple evacuation or access roads.

As described in Section 3.1.8.3, the Proposed Project would not involve the construction of any buildings that would result in future development. Further, the Proposed Project would not introduce new inhabitants to the region or result in any roadway closures. While new development may occur in the surrounding regions that would yield an increase in population or interfere with emergency response and evacuation, the Proposed Project would not contribute to the impairment of an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative wildfire impact.

Expose Receptors to Pollutants from Wildfire

A cumulative impact would occur if future activities associated with the Proposed Project combined with cumulative projects would increase wildfire risk and pollutant exposure within San Diego County and neighboring communities. Increased development activities and residents in areas of Very High FHSZ and/or WUI, which are prevalent in the county, could expose more receptors to pollutants from wildfire risk. Additionally, increased development may result in the increased use of pesticides in these regions. The steep topography in portions of the county and neighboring communities exacerbates this risk and could lead to the rapid spread of wildfire beyond the boundaries of the county. Furthermore, particulate matter from the smoke associated with such wildfires can spread prolifically and have harmful consequences for short-term and long-term health of individuals nearby and in neighboring communities. This is a significant cumulative wildfire risk.

As described in Section 3.1.8.3, the Proposed Project would not involve the construction of any buildings that would result in future development. The Proposed Project would not result in an increased population and, therefore, would not contribute to increased population in areas of Very High FHSZ and/or WUI. While new development may occur in the regions surrounding the county that may increase populations in areas of Very High FHSZ and/or WUI, the Proposed Project would not contribute to the exposure of people or structures to pollutants from wildfire. The Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative wildfire pollutant impacts.

Exacerbate Wildfire Risk from New Infrastructure

Cumulative projects in the communities adjacent to and surrounding San Diego County within areas designated as a Very High FHSZ and/or WUI would have the potential to exacerbate wildfire risk by increasing the demand for new infrastructure and, thereby, potentially increasing pesticide usage. Due to the rural nature of portions of these communities, it is anticipated that new or expanded infrastructure would be required to accommodate cumulative projects in the region.

Infrastructure improvements to serve cumulative projects could include the paving of new roads and the extension of utility services such as electrical power lines. These improvements would likely increase the chance of wildfires within neighboring regions. Providing new and/or improved roads would allow greater access to previously inaccessible, less developed areas while providing new electrical services would increase the possibility of downed power lines during Santa Ana weather events. This is a significant cumulative wildfire risk.

However, as described in Section 3.1.8.3, the Proposed Project would not result in the expansion or development of infrastructure. The Proposed Project would include vector management activities throughout San Diego County using various methods of motorized travel via the County's existing infrastructure. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not contribute to wildfire risks related to infrastructure construction or maintenance. The Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative wildfire risk from new infrastructure.

Expose People or Structures to Significant Risks from Post-Wildfire Hazards

A cumulative impact would occur if future activities associated with the Proposed Project combined with cumulative projects would expose people or structures to significant risks from post-wildfire hazards in the county or neighboring communities. The most common and destructive post-wildfire hazards include downslope or downstream flooding, landslides, and debris flows, which typically result from runoff, post-fire slope instability, and/or drainage changes. Development and related activities within such areas, when combined with the cumulative growth and development in adjacent and surrounding communities, including tribal, State, and federal lands, could exacerbate wildfire risk and associated post-fire hazards in the county and neighboring communities.

As described in Section 3.1.8.3, the Proposed Project would not involve the construction of any buildings that would result in future development. The Proposed Project would not result in an increased population and, therefore, would not contribute to increased population densities in areas susceptible to post-wildfire hazards. While new development may occur in the regions surrounding the county that may increase population densities in areas of Very High FHSZ and/or WUI, the Proposed Project activities associated with pesticide use, vegetation removal, and ground disturbance would not contribute to the exposure of people or structures to post-wildfire hazards. The Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to the significant cumulative post-wildfire hazards.

3.1.8.5 Significance of Impacts Prior to Mitigation

The Proposed Project involves vector management activities to protect the public from vector-borne disease and public nuisances. The vector management activities involved in the Proposed Project include surveillance and monitoring, source reduction, source treatment, public education, outreach, and disease diagnostics. The Proposed Project does not involve the construction of any structures and would not introduce any new inhabitants to the region. Additionally, the Proposed Project would not result in any road closures or require the construction or maintenance of infrastructure. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not significantly impair an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, expose receptors to pollutants from wildfire, exacerbate wildfire risk from new infrastructure, or expose people or structures to significant post-wildfire risks. Further, the Proposed Project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to cumulative impacts related to these issues. The Proposed Project would not result in significant direct or cumulatively considerable impacts related to wildfire.

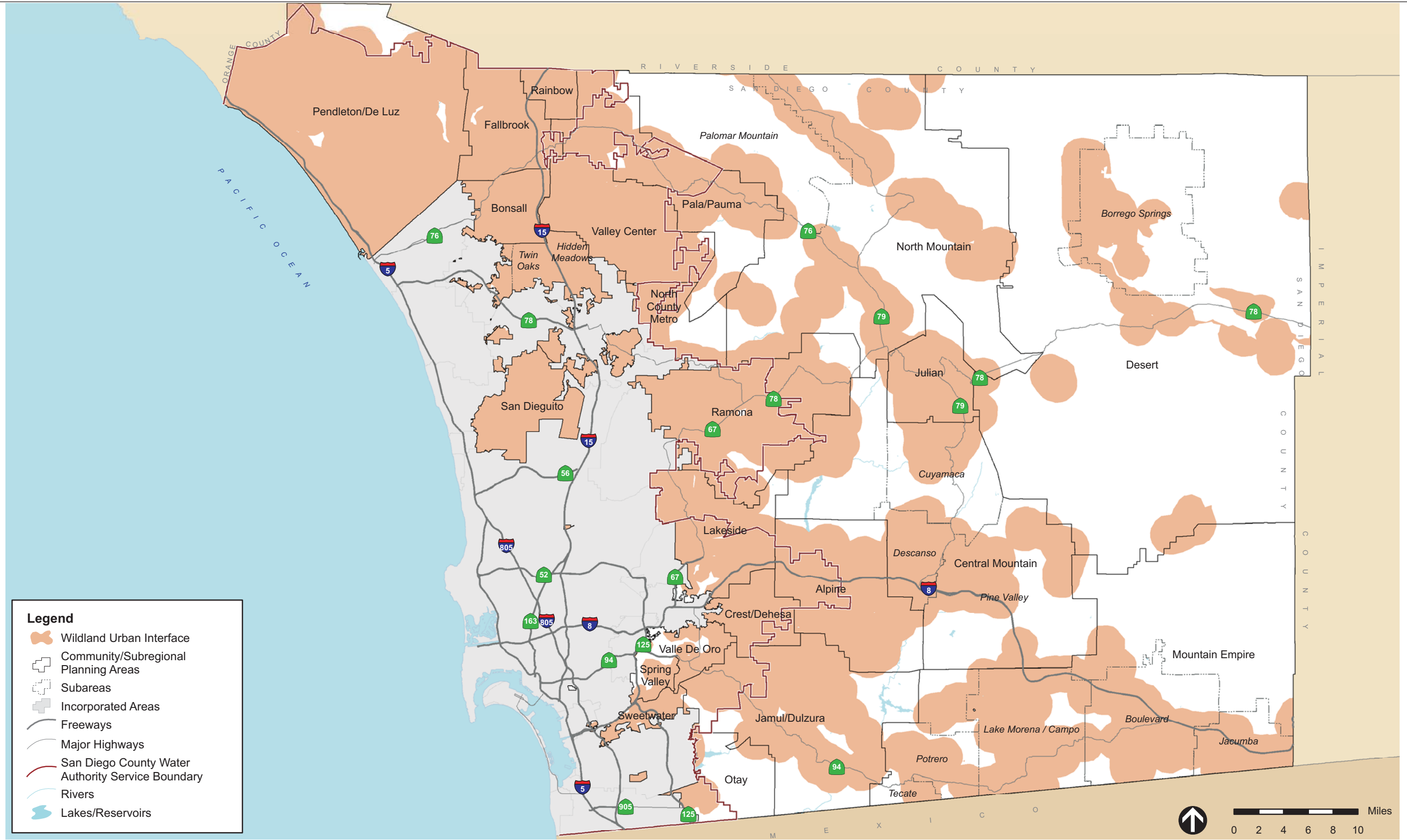
3.1.8.6 Mitigation Measures

Because the Proposed Project would not result in significant impacts, no mitigation is required.

3.1.8.7 Conclusion

Implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in any significant project or cumulative impacts related to wildfire risk.

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Source: County of San Diego 2008

Wildland Urban Interfaces in San Diego County

Figure 3.1.8-2