

Alpine AL-1

Recommendation

CPG–Semi-Rural 10 (SR-10), Tribal Lands¹

Staff–Same as CPG

Property Description

Property Owner:

Viejas and 11 others

Property Size:

286 acres; 22 parcels

Location/Description:

Alpine Community Plan Area;

Adjacent to Viejas Reservation

Approximately one mile north of I-8;

Outside County Water Authority boundary

Existing General Plan/Zoning:

GP: Multiple Rural Use (1 DU/4, 8, 20 ac)

Use Regulation: A70

Lot Size: 8 ac

Travel Time (See Safety Element Table S-1):

Closest Fire Station — 10 to 20 minutes

Prevalence of Constraints (See following page):

● – high; ◐ – partially; ○ – none

◐ Steep Slope (Greater than 25%)

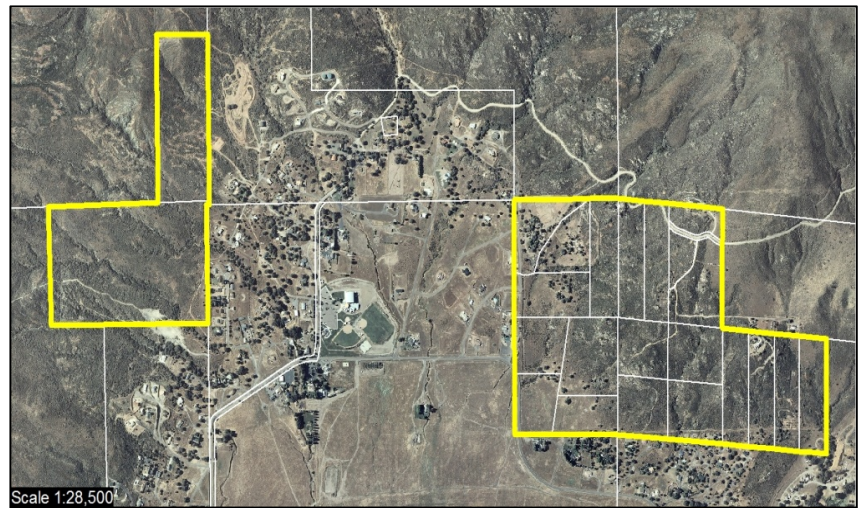
○ Floodplain

○ Wetlands

◐ Sensitive Habitat

○ Agricultural Lands

● Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Aerial

Category	Recommendation	
	Draft Map	Staff
Designation	SR-1	SR-10, Tribal Lands
Density	1 DU/1,2,4 ac	1 DU/10,20 ac
Maximum Potential Dwelling Units	238	20
Zoning Use Regulation	A70	A70, Indian Reservation
Lot Size (acres)	1	8
Spot Designation/Zone	No ²	No ²
Opposition Expected	Yes ³	No

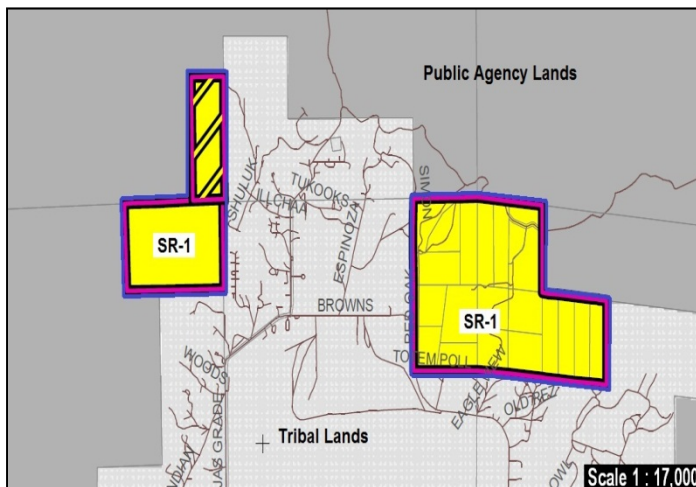
Notes:

1) CPG revised recommendation September 19, 2013

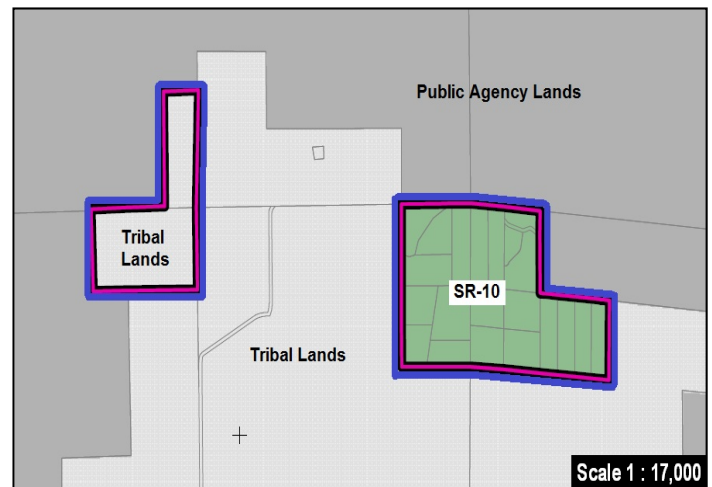
2) Areas are surrounded by the Indian Reservation and National Forest lands

3) USFS letter dated March 18, 2013

Recommendations

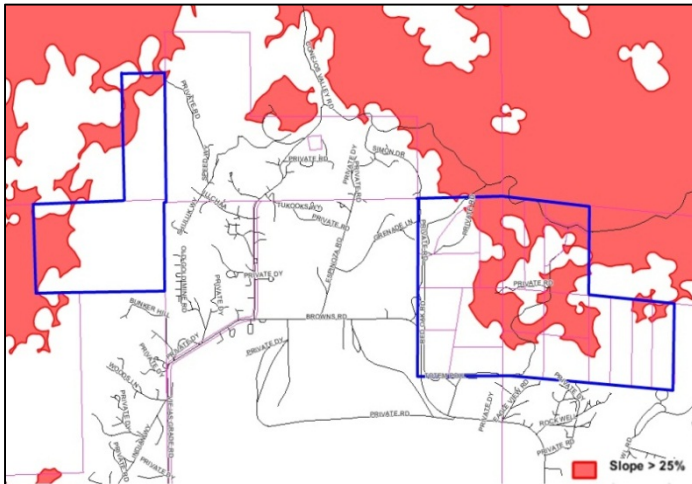


Draft Plan

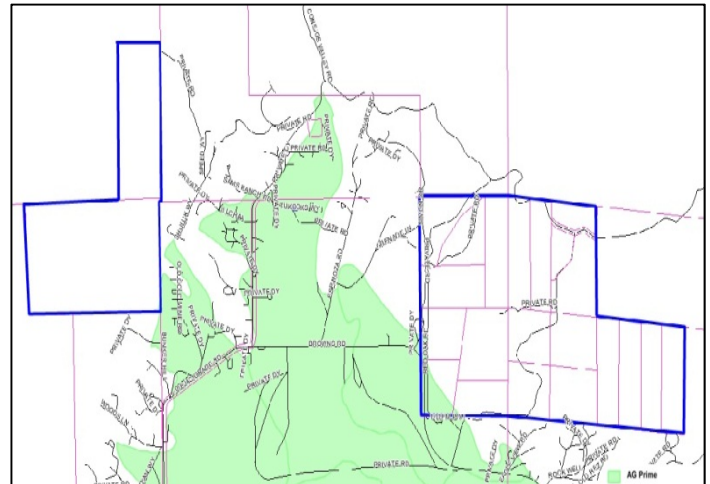


Staff Recommendation

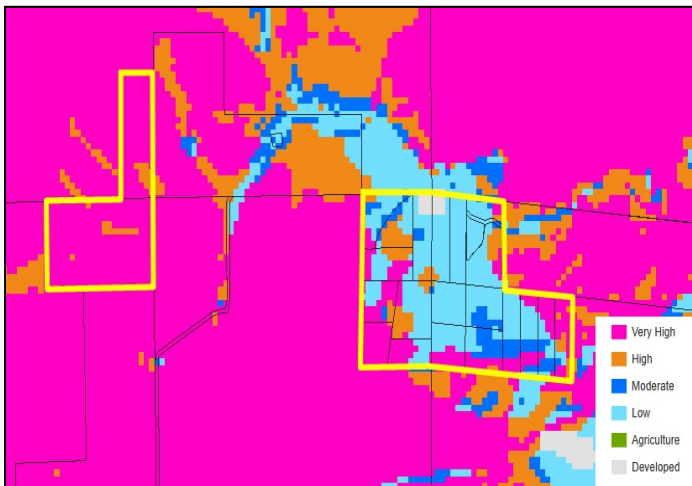
Alpine AL-1



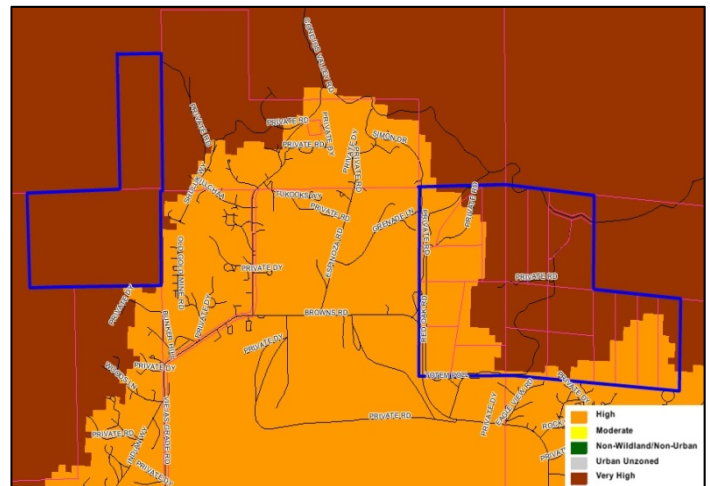
Steep Slope (Greater than 25%)



Prime Agricultural Lands



Habitat Evaluation Model



Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Context

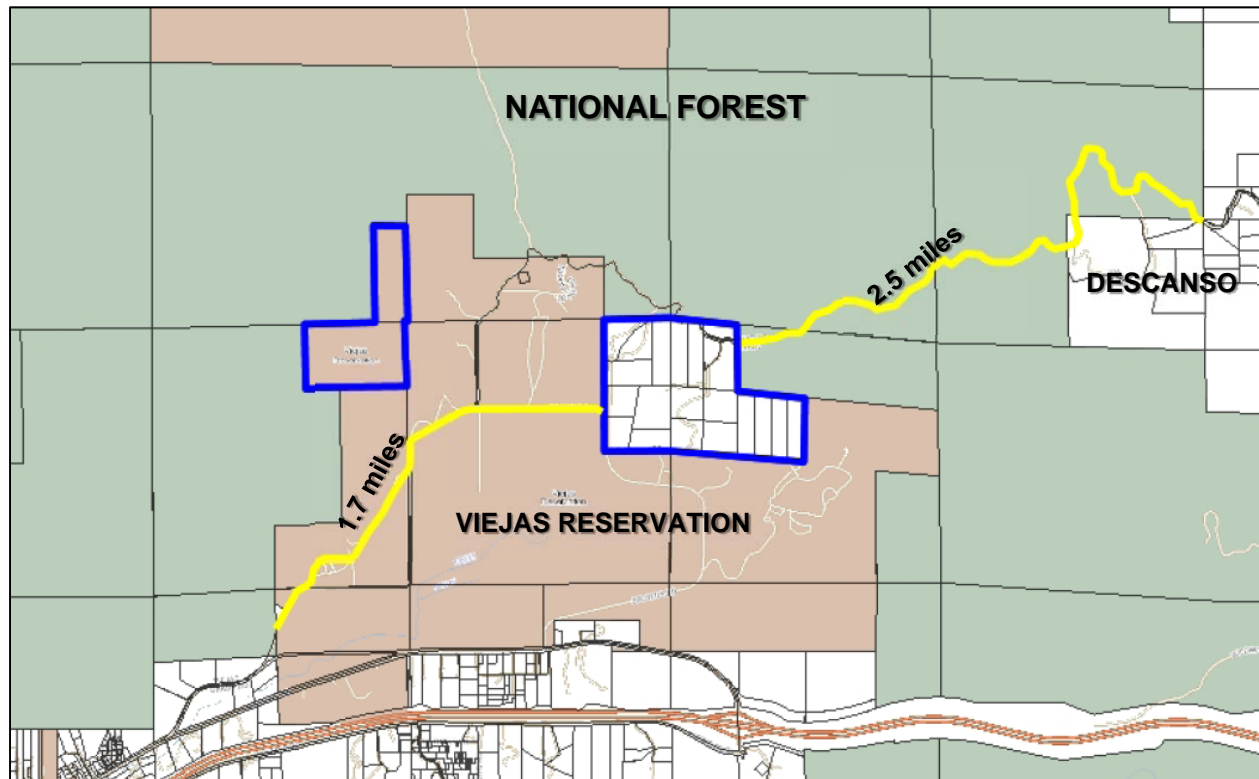
Alpine AL-1 consists of 22 parcels ranging in size from 9 to 60 acres for a total of 286 acres. The western two parcels have recently been transferred to trust status, so they are proposed for a Tribal Lands designation. The remaining parcels located in the northeastern portion of the Alpine Community Planning Area approximately one mile north of I-8 are only accessible through either National Forest or Tribal Lands. Of the 20 parcels northeast of the Viejas Indian Reservation, nine are owned by Viejas and 11 by others. Five of these parcels are developed with single family residential uses. The remainder only contains a few dirt roads. These parcels are outside of the County Water Authority boundary and surrounded by Cleveland National Forest and Viejas. Portions of them contain Oak Woodlands, and an ephemeral stream runs through the area. Steep slopes greater than 25% occur on approximately one-third of the area, and the entire area is in a Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. This area is groundwater dependent with a mean annual precipitation of 18 to 21 inches which, according to the San Diego County Groundwater Ordinance, gives it a minimum lot size of five acres.

Staff Review: Rationale for Tribal Lands and SR-10 Designation

- The western two parcels have recently been transferred to trust status, so the appropriate designation is Tribal Lands, as these are now part of the Viejas Reservation
- Areas are only accessible through Tribal (1.7 miles) or National Forest lands (2.5 miles)
- Area is groundwater dependent with five-acre minimum lot size
- The SR-10 designation proposed for the eastern area is consistent with existing parcel sizes
- The reduction in density will reduce future traffic volumes and forecast congestion impacts to Willows Road
- Adjacent to National Forest lands that are designated Critical Biological Area by USFS Land Management Plan (U.S. Forest Service letter dated March 18, 2013)

Staff Review: Rationale for Tribal Lands and SR-10 Designation (continued)

The diagram below shows that the only access to these areas is through either Tribal or National Forest lands (see figure below). The staff recommendation would limit future subdivision of these areas due to their restricted access and their adjacency to the critical biological areas of the National Forest.



Alpine AL-1: Correspondence Received

Comments from Viejas Tribal Government supporting Semi-Rural 1 designation



P.O. Box 908
Alpine, CA 91903
#1 Viejas Grade Road
Alpine, CA 91901

Anthony R. Pico, Chairman
Robert "Cita" Welch, Vice-Chairman
Anita R. Uqualla, Tribal Secretary
Samuel Q. Brown, Tribal Treasurer
Raymond "Bear" Cuero, Councilman
Adrian Michael Brown, Councilman
Ernest "Chuka" Pingleton, Councilman

Phone: 6194453810
Fax: 6194455337
viejas.com

March 13, 2013

Mindy Fogg
County of San Diego
Planning & Development Services
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 310
MS O-650
San Diego, CA 92123

Re: Forest Conservation Initiative: Proposed Land Designation – Willows Road Area

Dear Ms. Fogg;

This correspondence is in response to the proposal land designations which were forwarded by the Alpine Planning Group to the County's Department of Planning & Development Services. The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians (Viejas Band) has a significant land management responsibility as a native sovereign nation over the trust lands of the Viejas Indian Reservation. In addition, the Viejas Band owns a substantial amount of fee simply land holdings in the east portion of the Alpine Planning Group's area. The Viejas Band facilitated community meetings and workshops with neighboring land owners regarding the land designations for the area of and surrounding Viejas Valley.

The Viejas Bands encouraged and supported the community collaborative approach of consensus generated from the meetings and workshops. The Viejas Band does have some concerns regarding changes injected during the review of the proposed community designation at the presentation to the Alpine Planning Group.

The Viejas Bands supports the following:

1. The residential designation (Red Oak properties) on the north east side of the reservation. The land use designation is consistent with adjacent land use on the reservation.

The Viejas Band would like to clarify:

1. The residential area designated on the northwest corner of the reservation (APN 405-120-01 & 02 and 406-010-01 & 02) has been transferred to trust status.

The Viejas Band appreciates the opportunity to express our position regarding the proposed land designation for the eastern portion of Alpine. If there are any questions, please feel free to contact Robert Scheid, Director of Public and Community Relations (rscheid@viejas-nsn.gov or 619-659-5410) or Don Butz, Fire Chief (dbutz@viejas-nsn.gov or 619-659-2376).

Sincerely,

THE VIEJAS BAND OF KUMEYAAY INDIANS



Hon. Anthony R. Pico
Chairman

Comments from U.S. Forest Service opposed to CPG recommendation



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Cleveland National Forest
SO

10845 Rancho Bernardo Rd.
Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92127-2107
(858) 673-6180
(858) 673-6192 FAX
(800) 735-2922 CRS

File Code: 1560

Date: September 28, 2012

Eric Gibson
Director, Department of Planning and Land Use
San Diego County
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B
San Diego, CA 92123-1666

Dear Mr. Gibson:

The Cleveland National Forest appreciates the opportunity to comment on the potential environmental impacts of the General Plan Amendment for the former Forest Conservation Initiative (FCI) lands. The Forest's comments were developed from our recent meeting with San Diego County staff and review of the proposed land use maps. We will begin by highlighting key issues and management challenges related to urbanization that were described in detail in our 2005 Forest Land Management Plan. These issues are common to all former FCI lands and are central to the potential environmental issues associated with increasing population density within and adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest. In addition, issues particular to specific mapped areas of the plan are addressed at the end of this letter. Altogether, we are concerned about the potential environmental impacts that would be associated with the increases in population density on former FCI lands as depicted in the draft land use maps available for review.

The rapidly increasing population of Southern California, the growing level of development adjacent to the National Forest, and the resulting effects on the National Forest present some of our main management challenges. Higher density development in more remote areas leads to more Wildland/Urban Interface area that is at risk of and in need of protection from wildland fire. The combination of increased development and the need to protect these developed areas from fire and other natural events, such as flooding, will put increasing pressure on National Forest managers to alter landscape character to accommodate these uses. In the case of fire, these suppression efforts to protect communities can lead to the buildup of fuels and eventually to higher severity, more damaging fires than would occur naturally. Furthermore, increasing the number of homes in an area increases the likelihood of human-caused fires, which can increase fire frequency to levels that harm ecosystems, wildlife, and waterways. Finally, we have concerns about the potential difficulty of evacuating people from remote subdivisions in the event of wildland fire on the Cleveland National Forest.

Urban development also puts pressure on public lands to provide urban support facilities (i.e. infrastructure) through special-use authorizations as private land options for development are

exhausted. In the past, subdivisions have been established with the expectation that adjacent National Forest land can accommodate necessary water tanks, utilities, and fire perimeters (i.e. defensible space). Instead, we request that private lands be required to serve these purposes for future subdivisions. Along the same lines, where water delivery systems are not in place, the installation of wells for household use will lower the groundwater table beneath adjacent National Forest lands, thereby degrading habitats for native plant and animal species. To avoid these impacts, we request that water delivery systems be established before enabling increased density on former FCI lands.

Road access presents several primary issues associated with increasing population density within or adjacent to the National Forest. The narrow, winding National Forest road system was built in the 1930s to support fire protection and does not meet typical County access standards. Moreover, the greater the population density of an area, the wider a suitable road would need to be. The National Forest roads generally lack rights-of-way where they cross private lands, which would need to be obtained in order to widen them or convey utilities. Furthermore, any improvements to Forest or County roads on the National Forest would require substantial planning and environmental compliance to be borne by project proponents, if permitted. Widening roads, building new roads, and increasing traffic to accommodate increasing population density in remote County areas would negatively impact plants and animals in a variety of ways, including direct mortality and habitat loss and fragmentation, and would also increase erosion and sedimentation of waterways.

Increased interface between developed private lands and National Forest boundaries also increases boundary management challenges including addressing occupancy trespass, clearly posting boundaries, and retaining clear title to National Forest System (NFS) land. For example, in re-marking forest boundary after the 2007 fires, we discovered major encroachments adjacent to some subdivisions.

Another challenge associated with urbanization is the complex problem of National Forest access. For example, traditional points of public and administrative access to the National Forest have been lost as private land is subdivided. New landowners are often reluctant to accommodate access across their land. At the same time, residents living adjacent to the National Forests want convenient access, often resulting in the development of unplanned roads and trails. Unauthorized off-highway vehicle use occurs and tends to be more of a management challenge on National Forest lands near private developments. As an example, illegal motor vehicle use of the Pacific Crest Trail has been reported from the Lake Morena area in the midst of the federally designated Hauser Wilderness.

Population growth within and surrounding the National Forests will probably be the single largest impact on National Forest recreation management in the foreseeable future. This growth has pushed urban development closer to and within the National Forest, in some cases directly adjacent to National Forest boundaries. Where NFS lands are or will be the boundary to this

development, there will be pressure on these adjacent lands to provide diverse kinds of recreation. Higher density development would be expected to increase this pressure. Recreation on the National Forest is managed according to Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) to provide choices for people to recreate in settings that vary from urban to primitive. In general, the Forest Service would prefer zoning on adjacent private lands to be complementary with the land use zone and ROS on the NFS land. For example, where there is interface between private lands and NFS lands within a designated Wilderness area or Inventoried Roadless Area, lower density County zoning would be the more complementary. Solitude, an increasingly rare opportunity, is a desirable feature in Wilderness, but would be difficult or impossible to retain in the face of the increasing population and high density development.

Extensive habitat conservation planning efforts led by local government and conservation organizations have identified the need to maintain an inter-connected network of undeveloped areas or landscape linkages, which retain specific habitats and allow for maintenance of biodiversity and wildlife movement across the landscape and led to development of several multi-species habitat conservation plans. National Forest System lands are a core element of this natural open space network and will play an increasingly important role as additional habitat fragmentation occurs on surrounding private lands. Fragmentation is the breaking up of contiguous blocks of habitat by urban development features into progressively smaller patches that are increasingly isolated from one another and of less value for conservation. Higher density zoning allows for a higher level of development and, accordingly, fragmentation. Habitat loss and fragmentation are the leading causes of species extinctions, and the Cleveland National Forest has many populations of federally-listed threatened and endangered species that could be affected by increasing population density on former FCI lands. Meanwhile, invasive species generally enter new areas through human activity in those areas, and so increasing population density would result in the introduction of new infestations that would damage Forest resources and be costly to manage.

To address all of the issues listed above, the Cleveland National Forest requests that the lowest density land use designations be granted to all of the former FCI lands in San Diego County.

The following comments on the proposed FCI land use plan apply to the specific area noted:

- **Alpine Community Planning Area (CPA).** The Forest is concerned about the density increases proposed for areas at the eastern end of Alpine, both south and north of Interstate 8. Road and water systems should be planned before enabling such increases, and the severe risk of fires starting along the freeway corridor and blowing westward into these areas should be addressed. In addition, Viejas Mountain was designated a Critical Biological Area of the National Forest by our Land Management Plan due to its unique botanical resources. The dense developments proposed for its perimeter and northeast of the Viejas Reservation, shown in yellow (SR-1) on the proposed maps, would be unlikely to effectively buffer this sensitive area from the impacts of residential development. This

20 since the last maps were made available, we would prefer that the RL-40 designation be retained instead to prevent the environmental and public health and safety impacts described above.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed land use zoning for the former FCI lands in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County. If you have any questions about these comments, please contact Gloria Silva, Forest Resources and Planning Staff Officer, at (858) 524-0136.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM METZ
Forest Supervisor

cc: Gloria Silva