

Section 4.0 Communities at Risk

The **WUI is defined as** “the urban wildland interface community exists where humans and their development meet or intermix with wildland fuel” (Federal Register 2000). The 2003 HFRA limited the WUI to an area within 0.5 **mile of a community’s boundary or within 1.5 miles when mitigating** circumstances exist, such as sustained steep slopes or geographic features that aid in creating a natural firebreak. However, the HFRA also states that a WUI can be refined in development of a CWPP.

The *Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan* uses a broader interpretation of WUI with the addition of the WUI Threat Zone, which includes an additional strip of vegetation that may be modified to reduce flame heights and radiant heat. The Threat Zone generally extends approximately 1.25 miles out from the WUI Defense Zone boundary. The extent of the Threat Zones is based on fire history, local fuel conditions, weather, topography, existing and proposed fuel treatments, natural barriers to fire, and community protection plans (CWPP). These zones combined can extend well beyond the 1.5 miles addressed in the HFRA. The expectation is that the design of these zones together makes structures more defensible (LPF LMP 2005).

Due to the potential fire behavior within and adjacent to the communities in the Planning Area, the Development Team refined the WUI boundary beyond the description provided in the HFRA (see Figure 19, CWPP WUI Map).

4.1 Designation as a Community at Risk

In 2003, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) undertook the task to enhance the list of communities at risk (CAR) for California as well as identify the level of fire threat to these communities. CAL FIRE used three main factors to determine which communities were at risk and their level of fire threat: 1) high fuel hazard, 2) probability of a fire, and 3) proximity of intermingled wildland fuels with urban environments. The California State Forester (CAL FIRE Director) has the responsibility for managing this list.

There are 1,329 communities identified at risk in California that include Santa Barbara, Goleta, and the communities within the Planning Area.

Communities that are at risk and were not captured in any state or federally recognized list, but were identified by the *2017 Santa Barbara County Unit Strategic Fire Plan* and *2011 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan* include Painted Cave, Trout Club, Rosario Park, and Paradise Road.

Section 5 of this CWPP analyses more site-specific risks and hazards within the Planning Area.

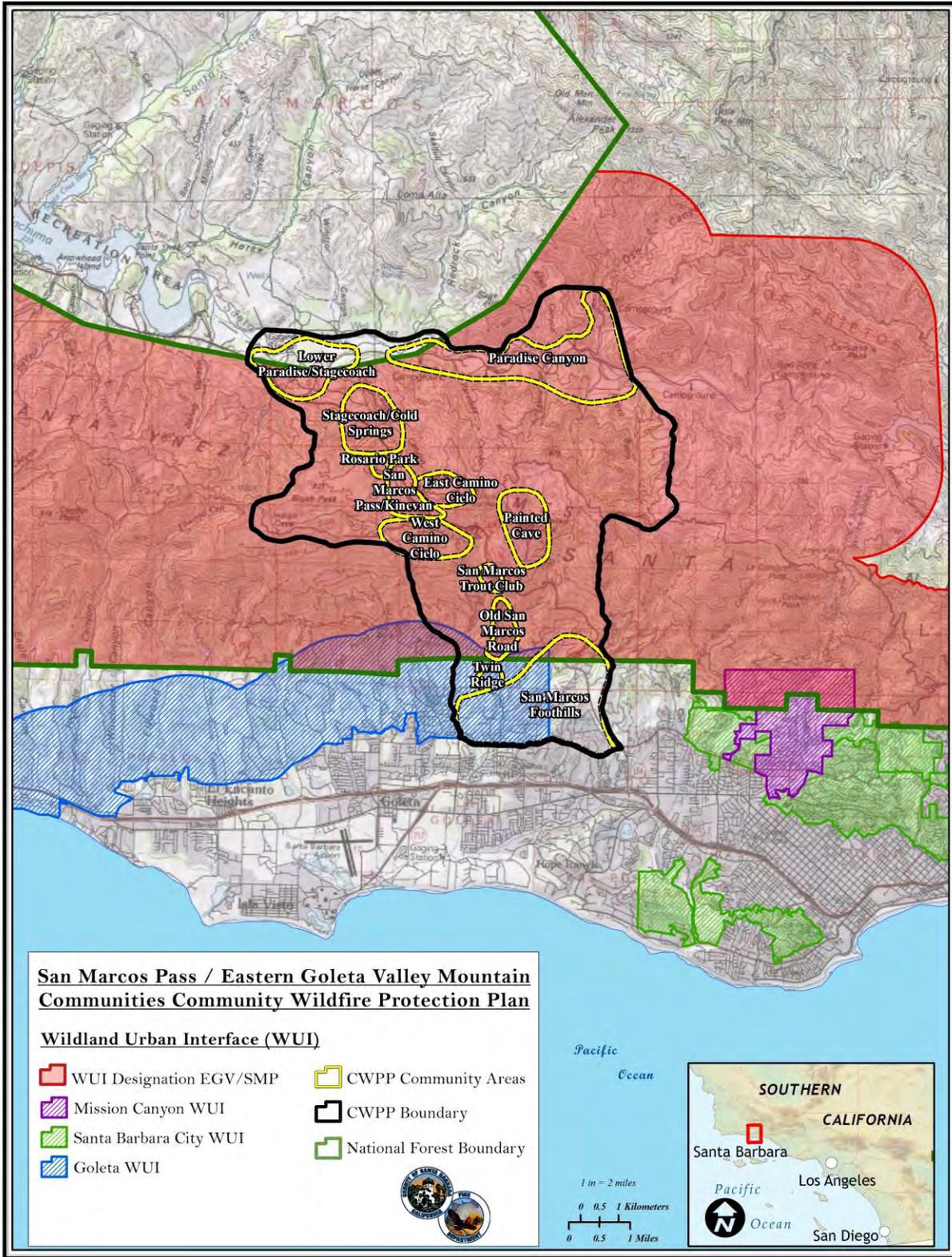


Figure 19. CWPP WUI Map