

Burn Area Recovery Task Force (BARTF) Report Los Angeles\Ventura County Ranch Fire



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Executive Summary

The Ranch Fire consumed almost 60,000 acres of land in two counties; Los Angeles and Ventura. Areas at potential risk of flooding or debris flows from the burned areas include portions of the city of Fillmore and the unincorporated town of Piru. The affected watersheds include Agua Blanca Creek; Hopper Canyon; Lake Piru; Lower Castaic Creek; Piru Creek/Fish Creek; Santa Clara River/Pole Creek; and the Santa Clara River/Tapp Canyon watersheds. There are three protected species found within the burned area: the Southern California steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), the arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*), and the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) (see Environmental Permitting Requirements Appendix).

Purpose

This BARTF report presents a brief description and assessment of the Ranch Fire, one of the numerous Southern California wildfires included in the Presidential Disaster Declaration FEMA-1731-DR. This report will facilitate in prioritizing emergency protective measures and hazard mitigation projects, identify post-fire flooding, erosion, and debris flow hazards. This report will also identify gaps in funding, proposed funding sources for all projects, and potential issues related to recovery.

Introduction

The fire burned approximately 58,400 acres, roughly half of which were private lands and half within either the Angeles or Los Padres National Forests. Over 80 percent of the burned area was of low severity, as there have been previous fires in this area, and vegetation had not yet fully returned. The city of Fillmore and unincorporated town of Piru are at risk from either debris flows or flooding. There are seven watersheds affected by the fire. The hazards and potential emergency protective measures are discussed by watershed below.

Several state and federal listed species are located within the risk areas. Project-related impacts to these species may require consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Environmental permits may be required for many of the proposed projects identified in the BARTF Report. Many of these proposed projects can be completed under emergency conditions or under the waiver process identified in State Executive Order (S-13-07). Projects that do not fall under these classifications would need to follow the regular permit process (see Environmental Permitting Requirements Appendix).

The BAER report for the Ranch Fire is included in the BAER Small Fires report. It can be viewed or downloaded from the California Office of Emergency Services web site: www.oes.ca.gov

For any cultural resource concerns refer to the Archaeological Appendix.

Agua Blanca Creek, Piru Creek/Fish Creek, and Lake Piru

Background

These watersheds are north or northeast of Lake Piru, and are situated within the Los Padres and the Angeles National Forests. All three watersheds drain into Lake Piru. Lake Piru Recreation Area falls under the jurisdiction of the Los Padres National Forest.

Analysis

There is no identified risk to lives or property within these watersheds. This is due in part because portions of the burned areas within these watersheds burned previously in the 2003 Southern California wildfires DR-1498 (Piru Fire). In addition, the potential debris flows that may originate from these watersheds may be transported during heavy rain events to Lake Piru, leading to an increased sedimentation rate and reduce the capacity in Lake Piru to hold water.

Potential Emergency Protective Measures

- The Los Padres National Forest may evaluate the feasibility of sediment removal from Lake Piru.

Hopper Canyon Creek

Background

The Hopper Canyon Creek watershed is northwest of the city of Fillmore. A portion of the burned area within this watershed is located within the Los Padres National Forest. Some of this burned area also burned ten years ago in August 1997 when a fire broke out in Hopper Canyon and Piru.

Analysis

Although the Post-Fire Hazard Awareness Map indicates that potential debris flow may threaten the rural area between the unincorporated areas of Cavin and Buckhorn, this land is primarily agricultural.

Potential Emergency Protective Measures

- No protective measures were suggested.

Lower Castaic Creek

Background

This watershed is bisected by Interstate 5 and extends from Castaic Lake south along Castaic Creek. Although there is very little burned area within this watershed, much of it is at the head of the Violin Canyon (west of I-5). This canyon may be subject to substantial debris flows out of the burned area.

Analysis

- Up to 60 homes may be directly threatened by debris flows down Violin Canyon.

Potential Emergency Protective Measures

- Los Angeles Department of Public Works has identified 3 areas within Violin Canyon where they would like to install temporary timber walls to impede debris flows and thereby protect the homes at risk.
- Emergency protective measures including hydroseeding and installation of runoff barriers may help reduce the risk of destructive debris flows.

Lower Piru Creek, Santa Clara River/Pole Creek and Santa Clara River/Tapo Canyon

Background

The primary potential impact within these three watersheds is from runoff and debris flows into the Santa Clara River from the burned areas upslope. This may result in flooding and debris flows along the river, adversely impacting the residents and businesses along its banks.

Analysis

Communities at risk from flooding or debris flows include:

- Up to 60 homes are at direct risk from debris flows in the San Martinez Chiquito Canyon which is northwest of Val Verde.
- The unincorporated town of Piru which has up to 240 homes and businesses may be at risk from potential debris flows.
- The northeast section of the city of Fillmore which includes one school and up to 650 homes and businesses are at potential risk from debris flows during heavy rain storms.

Potential Emergency Protective Measures

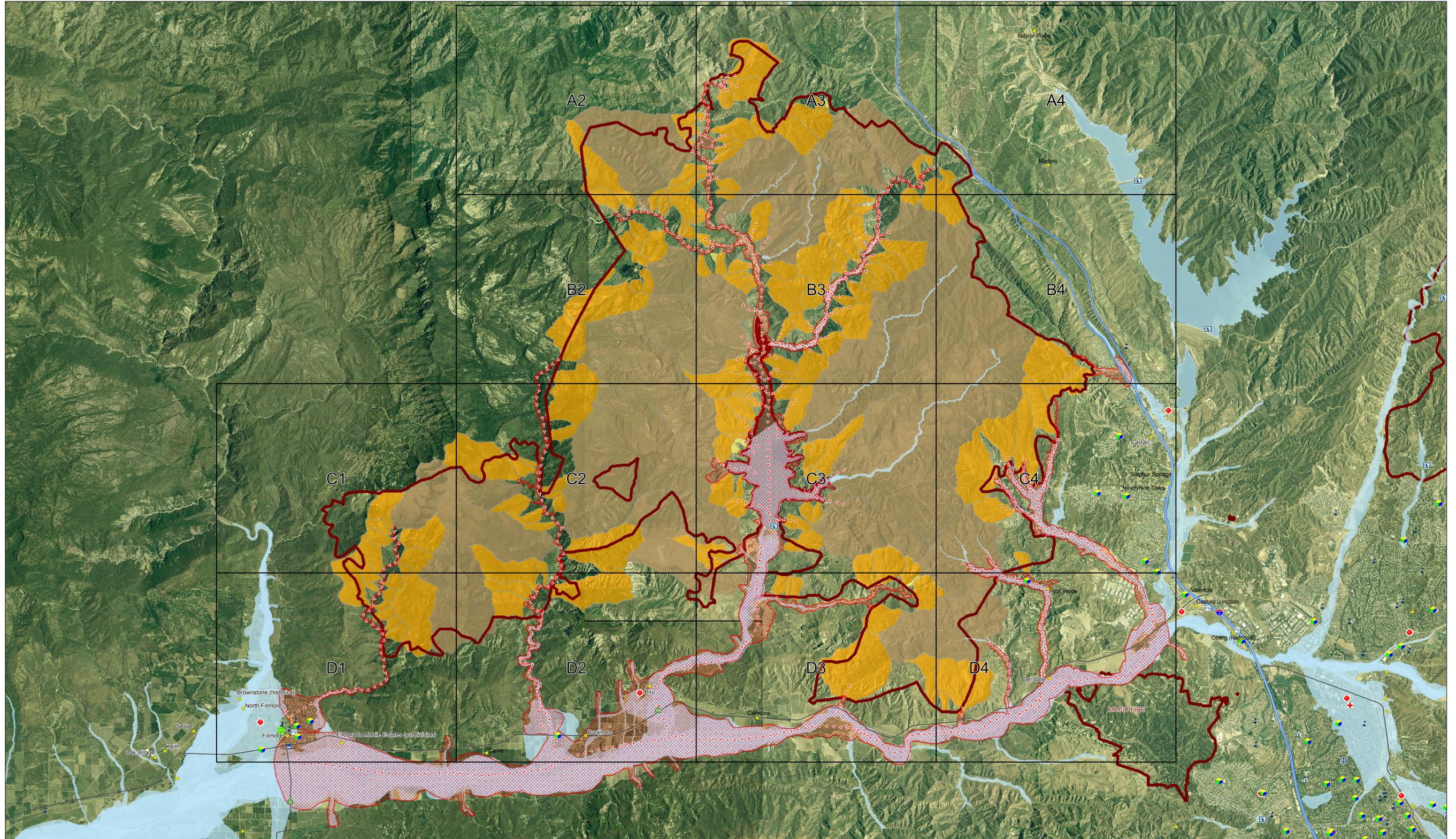
- Emergency protective measures including hydromulching and installation of debris barriers may help reduce the risk of destructive debris flows.
- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works has identified 4 sites in San Martinez Chiquito Canyon where it wants to install temporary timber walls to impede debris flows from the burned area, thereby protecting the homes at risk.
- The city of Fillmore may choose to evaluate the feasibility of installing additional debris flow barriers.
- Ventura County may evaluate the feasibility of installing debris barriers or other protective devices upslope of Piru.

Table 1 – Possible Funding Sources

Yes	No	Funding Sources
X		California Disaster Assistance Act
X		FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program
X		Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
	X	Federal Highway Works Administration (FHWA)
	X	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
	X	Department of Interior (DOI)
	X	Insurance
	X	Other funding:

Appendices

- Appendix A – Environmental Permitting Requirements
- Appendix B – Archaeological
- Appendix C – Descriptions of State and Federal Program Funding
- Appendix E – Preliminary Suggested Projects



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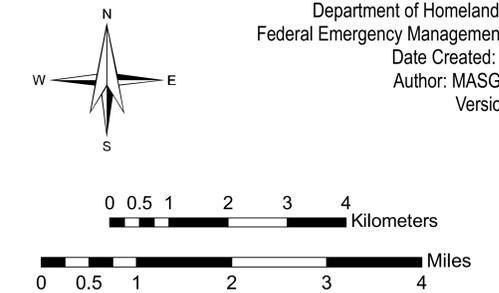
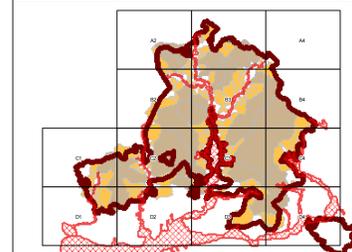
LEGEND

- Populated Places
- Dams
- Daycare Facilities
- EMS
- Fire Stations
- Hospitals
- Local Police
- Schools
- Red Cross
- FEMA Flood Hazard Areas
- Fire Perimeter
- FEMA Potential Debris Flow Risk Area
- Ranch Debris Flow Lines
- USGS Potential Debris Volume**
- 0 to 1,000 cubic meters
- 1,001 to 10,000 cubic meters
- 10,001 to 100,000 cubic meters

LOCATION MAP



INDEX MAP



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Federal Emergency Management Agency
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MAPS FOR ADVISORY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR INSURANCE RATING PURPOSES. For insurance rating purposes, please refer to the Flood Insurance Rate Map currently in effect. Debris flow information is PRELIMINARY. Debris flow volumes calculated in response to a 10 year recurrence based on 3 hour duration storm producing 2.25 inches of rainfall. Volumes based on a model currently being tested. Debris flow behavior is highly unpredictable and this map shows the best available information at the time of printing. Populations estimated using 2000 Census data and are calculated for those areas only within the grid index.