

Southern California Ignition Reduction Program

CHARTER

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INTRODUCTION

The Southern California Ignition Reduction Program (SCIRP) is a public-private partnership of governmental agencies and their partners working together to protect the region's innumerable assets at risk to catastrophic wildfires by trying to reduce the occurrence of human-caused ignitions. The SCIRP partnership is focused on supporting the development and implementation of a sustainable portfolio of prioritized projects to address wildland fire transmission primarily from roadways.

This charter describes the signatories' commitment to information sharing, coordination of activities, and resource sharing aimed to support the purpose of this partnership. The charter is a living document that defines the SCIRP's mission, vision, and shared goals, as well as the agreements on the geographic scope, organizational structure, roles, and underlying assumptions that provide the basis for collaborative actions. As new information, technologies, or partnership opportunities emerge, the charter may be modified.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Across the United States, wildfires have increased in size, intensity, frequency, and catastrophic devastation within the past 20 years. To confront the crisis, the U.S. Forest Service is working with partners to dramatically increase fuels and forest health treatments in high-risk "firesheds" (large wildland areas where wildfires may spread to communities).

In California, the State and the Forest Service established the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force to take an integrated approach to increasing the pace and scale of forest management and improve the resilience of increasingly threatened communities. In 2020, the State and the Forest Service entered into a Shared Stewardship Agreement to jointly develop tools, coordinated processes, and innovative approaches that will increase pace and scale of science-based forest and rangeland stewardship efforts, and better protect California's people, infrastructure, and ecosystems.



The U.S. Forest Service has identified high-risk firesheds in Southern California and its four National Forests: the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino (see map in Appendix E). Wildfires cross the borders of multiple federal, state, Tribal, and private lands, threatening incalculable ecological, economic, and social assets and the wellbeing of the region's 25 million residents. To confront the crisis, major investments are needed across boundaries and at a scale to help maximize impact, but the cost for such efforts would exceed appropriated funds for any single agency. It is critically important that the goals, strategies, and activities of everyone involved in wildfire crisis solutions in Southern California be coordinated, aligned, and sustainably funded.

In response to the wildfire crisis in Southern California, the U.S. Forest Service and its partners have collaborated to develop and implement the *Wildfire Risk Reduction Program*, consisting of four "cornerstones": Ignition Reduction; Strategic Fuelbreak Network; Montane Forest Conservation Strategy; and Community Planning and Preparedness.

Ignition Reduction

Approximately 95% of wildfires in Southern California resulted from man-made ignitions over the

SCIRP MISSION: To reduce catastrophic wildfire risk by reducing human-caused ignitions of wildfires in Southern California through systematically planning, prioritizing, funding, and implementing projects that target vegetation treatments and physical barriers primarily along roadways across jurisdictional boundaries, while increasing public awareness and support.

SCIRP VISION: In the future, Southern California fires will be limited to those started by humans for beneficial purposes or caused by lightning, and our roadways will be lined by ignition resistant materials and native plants. past five years (Syphard and Rustigan-Romsos, pers. comm. 2025).¹ Across the National Forest System for the same area, an estimated two-thirds of all wildfire ignitions occurred within 500 feet of a roadway. A core planning group was initiated by the U.S. Forest Service and project development partners in 2021/2022 to establish a multi-Forest and multi-partner cross-boundary coalition that could collaboratively secure funding and financing for treatments that reduce wildfire risk, with an initial focus on transportation corridors and roadside ignition reduction.

The Southern California Ignition Reduction Program (SCIRP) was formally chartered in 2023, with executive leadership spanning the U.S. Forest Service, Caltrans, CAL FIRE, the National Forest Foundation, as well as several USFS

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¹ Man-made ignitions include negligent activities by individual people, including arson, illegal fireworks, unextinguished campfires, and pile burning on red flag warning days, plus sparks from welding or mowing equipment, the dragging of trailer chains, and hot brakes on commercial trucks which in summary are the largest portion of human-caused risk and subject to criminal investigation of cause, but largely outside the control of public agencies prior to a wildfire incident.

Conservation Finance Project Development Partners: Blue Forest, World Resources Institute (WRI), and Conservation Investment Management (CIM). The SCIRP's supporting membership has since expanded to include a robust network of federal and state agencies, NGOs, Tribes, and academic partners.

One of the SCIRP's key objectives is to leverage financial resources from a variety of sectors to collectively support wildfire risk reduction across Southern California using a project portfolio approach that can cover gaps in existing funding. SCIRP members will work together to prioritize, plan, and track project activities over the next ten years and beyond that will help address wildland fire ignitions in an intentionally coordinated investment strategy.

BUSINESS CASE OVERVIEW

Implementing the SCIRP's mission at the scope and scale necessary to help reduce catastrophic wildfire risks in Southern California will come with a cost. But NOT implementing the mission may come with an even greater cost in the losses of homes and businesses, and the economic impacts of wildfires. It's not difficult to understand that wildfires in the mega-urban Southern California region literally impact every one of its 25 million residents in some way and to some degree — through endangerment and loss of life; loss of structures and disruption of utility services; pollution of water sources and air quality; interruption of road access impeding general mobility, human services, and access to recreation facilities; and loss of the many ecosystem services and benefits provided by a healthy and resilient natural environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Wildfires in the U.S. have become increasingly large, destructive, and costly during the past 20 years. In Southern California, over a recent time period 95 percent of these fires were intentionally or accidentally human-caused, and occurred where large numbers of people live, work, and play—in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

The problem is compounded by the rapid growth of the WUI, exposing ever-increasing numbers of residents, homes, infrastructure, and other high-value human assets to wildfire risks.

The purpose of a business case is to explain how the rewards of investing in a business idea or initiative outweigh the risks and costs associated with not getting involved. Since the SCIRP intends to employ conservation finance and other innovative financing mechanisms beyond traditional government funding, it is important to include in this charter a description of the benefits (financial and otherwise) to potential public and private funders that will result from their investments in the SCIRP project portfolio and long-term investment strategy.

Benefits Register

The SCIRP plans to make systematic and deliberate investments in projects that are strategically targeted to reduce the number, size, and cost of future human-caused wildfire ignitions in Southern California. The following list summarizes the SCIRP's expected investment benefits in broad categories of avoided costs and desired outcomes associated with fewer ignitions.²

- Wildfire suppression costs avoided
- Property protection; property damage/destruction avoided

² Source: *U.S. Wildfire Cost-Plus-Loss Economics Project: The "One-Pager" Checklist* By Bob Zybach, Michael Dubrasich, Gregory Brenner, John Marker (downloaded on 9/10/2024 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237396187 US Wildfire Cost-Plus-Loss Economics Project The One-Pager Checklist)

- Public health benefits (e.g., reduced fatalities/injuries, smoke inhalation, health-related evacuations, health insurance premiums, long-term health impacts)
- Vegetation loss and cost of restoration avoided
- Climate resilience (reduced loss of carbon sequestration potential from overly frequent fire, installation of climate-resilient vegetation)
- Wildlife populations and habitat protection; avoided loss of listed endangered animals and their habitats
- Water quantity and quality protected (includes drinking water supply, hydropower and irrigation needs, sediment/erosion avoided)
- Air and atmospheric effects avoided (e.g., reduced air pollution, CO2 emissions, visibility impacts to air and ground transportation, carbon mitigation costs)
- Soil-related effects averted (less soil erosion, soil productivity losses, hydrophobic soil impacts, land instability)
- Recreation and aesthetics protected (reduced recreation facility closures/damages, scenic value degradation, compromised hunting/fishing/hiking/camping experiences)
- Energy production protected, and losses from damage and service interruptions averted
- Heritage (cultural and historical) resources protected

These outcomes can only be actualized through the type of integrated, cross-jurisdictional project planning & implementation that occurs through intentional and thoughtful partnership and capacity-building at a programmatic – rather than project – level. SCIRP intends to proactively build bridges across siloed agency programs in order to capitalize upon the full power of the resources, expertise, science, workforce, technology, and funding access that each organization can bring to the table. The costs of this collective endeavor are borne mostly by the core collaborators, and pale in comparison to the avoided costs of the potential duplication, miscommunication, and redundancies that would otherwise occur through ad hoc, disparate and disjointed land management strategies.



The problem: non-native vegetation ready to ignite along roadsides



A solution: physical barriers and no ignitable vegetation along roadsides

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The SCIRP's organizational structure is based on a polycentric governance strategy in which multiple governmental agencies and their partners are collectively addressing the complex issue of human-caused wildfire ignitions across their jurisdictional boundaries. This multi-organizational structure reflects the interdependence of individual member organizations working together to achieve shared goals while maintaining the independence of each organization.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

The SCIRP is comprised of an Executive Committee and five sub-teams organized around key themes: Conservation Finance; Vegetation Management Methods (Technical); Data Analytics & Technology; People & Partnerships; and Communications & Learning. In addition, a number of supporting organizations provide subject-matter expertise via SCIRP's monthly open forums and sub-team meetings. Administrative support (e.g., record keeping, file management, etc.) is provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the National Forest Foundation as needed.

Decision-making Process

The SCIRP's decision-making process is based on a consensus model when considering major decisions including but not limited to project goals, programs of work, funding strategies, and major resource commitments, as well as changes in governance and other charter revisions. Recommendations may be developed at the sub-team level, with final decisions being made by the Executive Committee. All SCIRP decisions will consider and be in alignment with the programs and priorities of the Charter signatory organizations, as well as the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force.

Charter Signatories

Signatory organizations to this Charter formally indicate a shared commitment to the SCIRP's purpose, mission, vision, and collaborative approach by signing the Charter. Each signatory organization will provide representation in the quarterly Executive Committee meetings.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee serves as the SCIRP steering committee and holds the authority to make formal decisions on behalf of the SCIRP. The Executive Committee is comprised of one representative and an alternate from the U.S. Forest Service, Caltrans, CAL FIRE, and the Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Southern Region (RFFC). One representative and an alternate from the National Forest Foundation (NFF), Blue Forest, and Conservation Investment Management will participate in an advisory role. New members of the Executive Committee will be considered on a case-by-case basis upon recommendation by and approval of the current Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the SCIRP's program of work and budget (i.e., work plan), and for ensuring that sub-team leads are designated and providing effective leadership. The Executive Committee meets on a quarterly basis, to consider and approve/ modify/ disapprove recommendations from the sub-teams and Open Forum deliberations.

Membership and participation in sub-teams is open to any Executive Committee member.

Open Forum

In addition to its quarterly meetings, the Executive Committee will convene a monthly Open Forum to provide all SCIRP members an opportunity to share information on progress, discuss and provide input to sub-team recommendations, resolve project-related challenges, and modify schedules or bring in added expertise as needed.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Organization	Tasks and Roles	
USDA Forest Service	Monitor and promote demonstration sites and amplify successes.	
00212101001001	 Identify, quantify, and prioritize treatment areas and optimal suite of complementary interventions based on Best Available Science. 	
	 Where applicable, assist partner organizations with grant implementation, oversight, and close out. 	
	 Support the development of conservation finance opportunities and instruments through partner networks, agreements, contract and in-house expertise. 	
	 Provide data and analysis support to evaluate wildfire ignition and transmission probability from roadsides. 	
	 Develop appropriate suite of landscape metrics for quantifying project success. 	
	 Provide recommendations for developing real-time dashboards and performance management for communicating project success 	
	 Work through partnership agreements to secure long-term (10 year) seedling and supply. 	
	 Provide condition- based NEPA authorization for fuels treatments and vegetation management. 	
	 Deploy work force accounts for roadside maintenance where applicable. 	
	Network to share information, generate input and feedback.	
California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans)	 Prioritize, fund, and implement roadside fuels mitigation projects on the State Highway System, in partnership with land managers like USFS via Good Neighbor Authority. 	
	 Ensure that District vegetation management contracts reflect project objectives of SCIRP. 	
	 Assist and (in some cases) act in a lead capacity for environmenta planning & analysis for project development on the State Highway System. 	
	 Develop a training program for Vegetation Management Crews to better understand wildland fire and fuels management and the 	

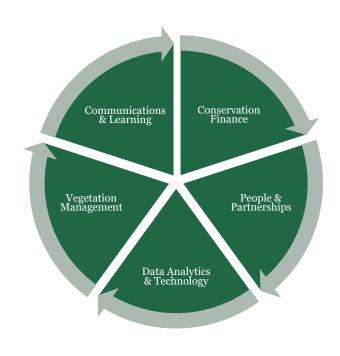
planning and implementation of annual routine maintenance activities to establish defensible space from the road edge outward to the highway fence line (property line).
 Ensure alignment between ignition reduction project priorities and other core goals of Southern California Wildfire Risk Reduction strategy (montane forest protection, fuel breaks and defensible space near communities).
 Provide state funding, technical assistance, and coordination support to regional entities for the express purposes of bolstering organizational capacity, broad-based public engagement, and training to plan and undertake Southern California wildfire resilience and community wildfire preparedness goals. Facilitate the development of Regional Priority Plans that collectively build inter-agency pipeline of wildfire resilience projects. Support the development of sustained investment strategies, including the securing of additional federal, state, and local grant opportunities.
 Key Implementation Partner. Can secure third party resource contributions for project support.
 Assists partner organization with grant implementation, oversight and close out, where applicable. Provide staff support gathering and evaluating existing data on potential benefits of roadside treatments. Partner and beneficiary identification and outreach to secure support for roadside treatment projects. Structuring direct agreements with beneficiaries for debt-based
 Assist with beneficiary engagement and partner identification to secure support for roadside treatment projects. Systems Analysis of current nursery and contractor capacity, identify path to scale.

SUB-TEAMS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sub-team leads will provide report-outs at the monthly Open Forum meetings.

CONSERVATION FINANCE SUB-TEAM

Identify financial resources (i.e., public and private financing, funding, and philanthropy) from a variety of sources to collectively support ignition reduction efforts across Southern California to support a project portfolio approach that can cover gaps in funding. This sub-team is comprised of representatives from the USDA Forest Service national and regional conservation finance program and the SoCal Wildfire Risk Reduction team, as well as Blue Forest, Conservation Investment Management, and the National Forest Foundation. The sub-team will consult regularly with project proponents to ensure that project activities meet the needs of the SCIRP.



VEGETATION MANAGEMENT METHODS (TECHNICAL) SUB-TEAM

Provide a natural resource perspective on strategies for incorporating climate-resilient vegetation types in landscape prioritization, restoration project planning, and implementation. This sub-team would be the connection to seed and nursery studies being conducted through agreements and academia. This cross-functional technical sub-team elevates to other sub-teams the best management practices and site suitability for vegetation management, such as invasive plant control, seeding and planting for desired species, and other supporting practices to improve ignition reduction along roadways. The team has representation across academic and conservation organizations as well as natural resource agencies. This group is comprised of representatives from the USDA Forest Service, Caltrans, the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program Southern Region, nonprofit and conservation finance partners, academic institutions, and may rely on technical consultation with third-party contractors.

DATA ANALYTICS & TECHNOLOGY SUB-TEAM

Develop seamless processes for performance management, project identification and tracking, and reporting on project impacts and outcomes in real time. This also includes modifying internal processes to expedite implementation and developing collaborative third-party platforms for information-sharing. This sub-team is comprised of representatives from the USDA Forest Service as well as members of the Vegetation Management Technical Team and may rely on technical consultation with third-party contractors.

PEOPLE & PARTNERSHIPS SUB-TEAM

Create and enhance the social license to invest in wildfire risk mitigations through interventions to reduce ignitions, primarily along critical roadways. This includes developing new partnerships, coordinating the sharing of information related to project and funding opportunities including best practices and mechanisms for formalizing partnerships, increasing regional awareness of SCIRP, and advocating for SCIRP strategies across sectors through targeted conversations via inperson and digital communications. This sub-team is comprised of representatives from the USDA Forest Service as well as nonprofit partners and the network of Southern California Regional Forest & Fire Capacity Program (RFFC) block grantees: Inland Empire Community Foundation, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, Irvine Ranch Conservancy, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

COMMUNICATIONS & LEARNING SUB-TEAM

Amplify science and technology, as well as key findings from demonstration sites. Build support (i.e., advocacy and resources), develop consistent program messaging, and increase awareness internally and externally of innovative interagency collaboration. This team will work closely first as part of the People & Partnerships sub-team and eventually as a stand-alone team dedicated to building consistent messaging and a platform for information-sharing.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The following competencies will be solicited and represented to advise on SCIRP strategies and deliverables on an as-needed basis:

Knowledge Area	What
Wildfire Ignition & Transmission	Forest Service wildfire management specialists, state & local fire authorities provide data and input to identify areas of highest risk of ignition, transmission, and vulnerability, as well as the types of complementary activities that can reduce those risks.
Indigenous Knowledge & Tribes	Cultural practitioners of regional Tribes; Tribal Liaisons, Tribal Heritage Protection Officers, Tribal Council Members, Tribal Affiliate organizations can play a role in wildfire management (proactive risk reduction as well as suppression efforts).
Research & Development	Includes academic organizations, Forest Service research and development laboratories, stations, and programs to develop, partner, and lead applied research that increases opportunities to test new climate-adapted vegetation types and quantify the relative contributions of wildfire ignition variables at different sites.
Business Management / Ownership	Organizations, experts to advise on contracting practices and nursery capabilities to expedite native replanting along roadways.
Local Communities	Townships, Municipalities, and County Council Members that can help to identify highly valued cultural, social, and economic assets most vulnerable to wildfire ignition and transmission across Southern California.
Conservation Finance	Investment firms, finance specialists, industry representatives, corporate interests.
	Advise on the broad suite of conservation finance structures. Identify good fit. Identify investors and develop financing instruments.
	Advise on investment opportunities, lender concerns, investor requirements, payoff schedules and ROI.
Forest Management	Public and private industrial timberland owners and managers in the project area. Advise on the nexus between roadway interventions, upland fuel breaks, WUI protection, and montane forest strategies based on existing and desired conditions of land management.
	Advise on state and federal policies, regulations related to state, private and federal forest practices.
Vegetation Management	Local academic institutions and on-the-ground resource specialists advise on techniques and practices for successfully eradicating and/or controlling problematic non-native invasive species and propagating desired species.
Transportation Access	State and local transportation agencies (Caltrans, LA Metro). Advise on ways to enhance access to public lands and open space sustainably, build communications campaigns to improve driver awareness and proper roadside etiquette to help reduce wildfire ignitions. Engage as potential implementation partners to complete roadside fuels treatments.

PROJECT MANAGER

SCIRP is benefiting from the capacity-building provided by a third-party Project Facilitator and Manager to build the initial governance structure and ensure more integrated communications across sub-teams. The hope is for this role to become less involved as interoperability between sub-teams, the Executive Committee, and other Supporting Organizations improves over time.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SCIRP CHARTER SIGNATURES

Representatives have read and agree to the terms set forth in this document.

[Other signatory organizations TBD]

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CV	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE MININ
FIRE	NAME Mike van Loben Sels Galtrans	NAMELICA WORTHINGT
	TITLE Southern Region Chief Caltans	Natural resource Mgr
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	SIGNATURE MANAGED TO THE SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
Department	NAME Chana Atherton-Bauer	NAME Sason Musker
Department of Conservation	Resource Protection Department	TITLE Acting Kegional
	of Conservation	
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National	NAME Marcus Selia	NAME Phil Sakea
Forest Foundation	TITLE Chief Conservation Blue Forest	TITLE Chief Scientist
	officer	
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Conservation Investment Management	THE Chief Executive Officer	TITLE Direct
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	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
	NAME	NAME
	TITLE	TITLE

APPENDIX B: SCIRP GOALS (2025 - 2030)

Project Coordination: Systematically prioritize, plan, and implement a portfolio of cross-jurisdictional projects strategically targeted to reduce wildfire ignitions, primarily along roadsides.

Information Sharing: Establish and maintain systems for sharing information among SCIRP partners.

Funding: Increase and leverage financial resources from a variety of sectors and beneficiaries to collectively support ignition reduction projects.

Social License: Create and enhance ongoing acceptance, awareness, and engagement of SCIRP mission, goals, and activities among beneficiaries, partners, and the general public.

Organization: Establish and maintain a formal organization structure to coordinate and integrate efforts across jurisdictional boundaries and ensure executive support of SCIRP member organizations.

APPENDIX C: AGREEMENTS AMONG SCIRP MEMBERS

Memorandum of Understanding: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, Irvine Ranch Conservancy, Inland Empire Community Foundation, and San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (10/11/2024).

Memorandum of Understanding: Caltrans and the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region (2023).

Memorandum of Understanding: Agreement for Shared Stewardship of California's Forest and Rangelands between the State of California and the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region (signed 8/12/2020).

Master Stewardship Agreement #23-SA-11132420-073: National Forest Foundation and the USDA Forest Service (signed 2/3/2023) (expires 2/3/2043).

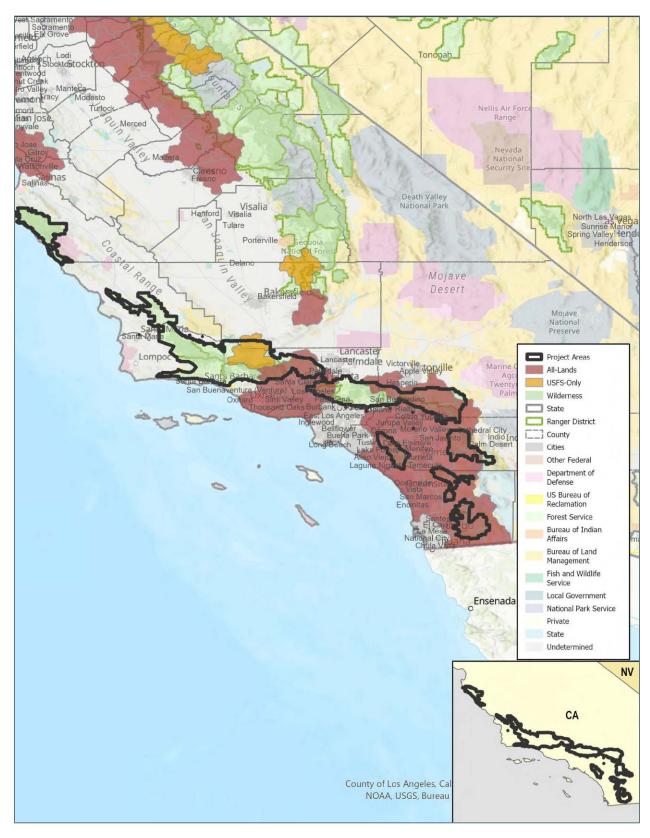
Stewardship Agreement Supplemental Project Agreement to Master Stewardship Agreement #23-SA-11132420-073: National Forest Foundation and the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Southern California Zone (signed 9/15/2023) (expires 2/3/2043).

CAL FIRE and USDA Forest Service Agreement [in process]

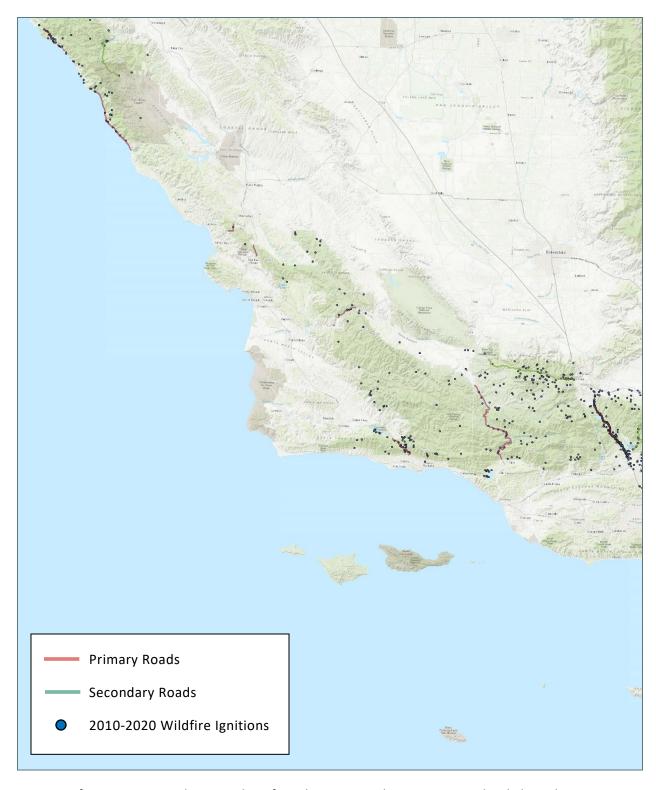
APPENDIX D: WORK PLAN/ STRATEGIES

- 1. Evaluate Project Suitability and Implement Pilots (3)
- 2. Develop and Implement Adaptive Monitoring & Reporting Process
- 3. Prioritize Activities, Improve Operational Efficiencies, and Scale to 10-Yr Portfolio
- 4. Develop Informational Infrastructure
- 5. Develop and Implement Portfolio Investment Plan
- 6. Establish Social License and Develop Partner Relations
- 7. Build Social Science Support for Public Awareness Campaigns
- 8. Create Governance Structure for Long-Term Administration

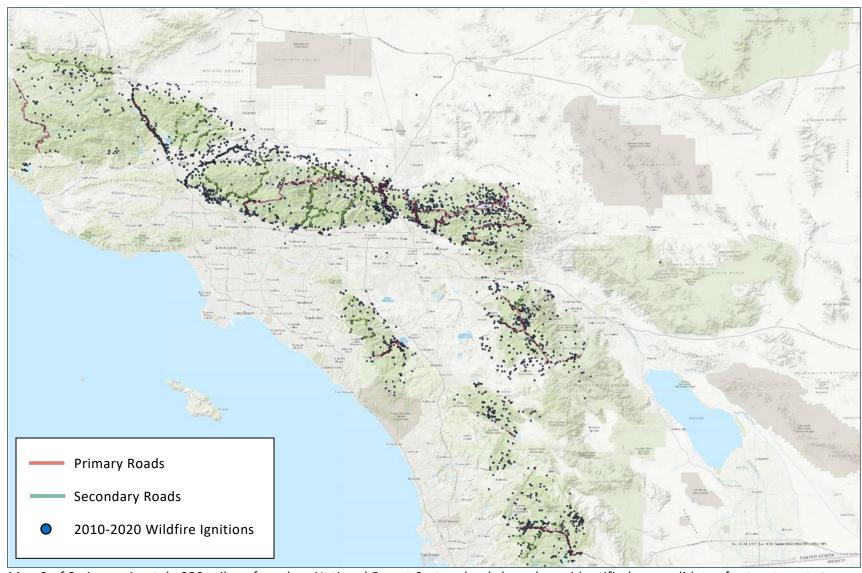
APPENDIX E: MAPS



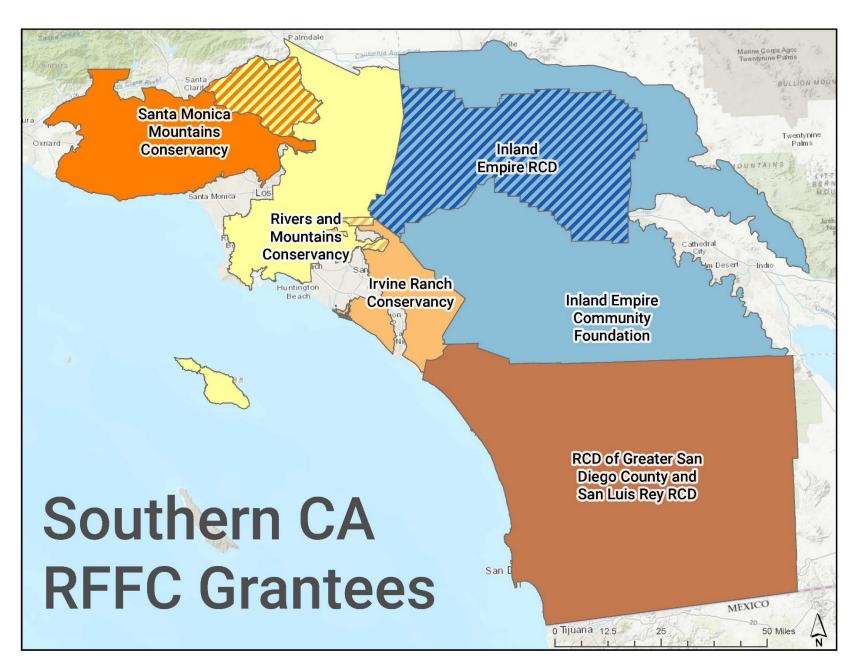
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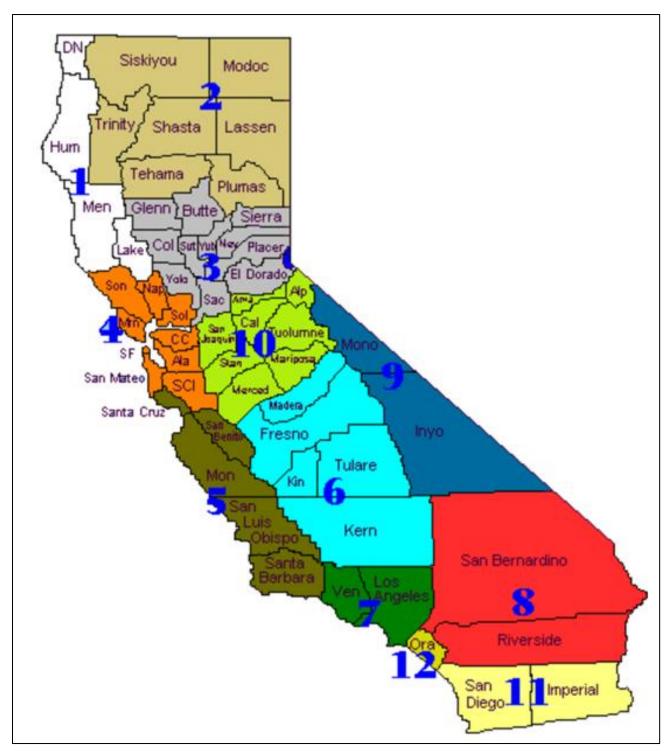


Map 1 of 2: Approximately 850 miles of road on National Forest System lands have been identified as candidates for treatments to reduce roadside ignitions. Pictured above are roads and wildfire ignitions on the Los Padres National Forest.

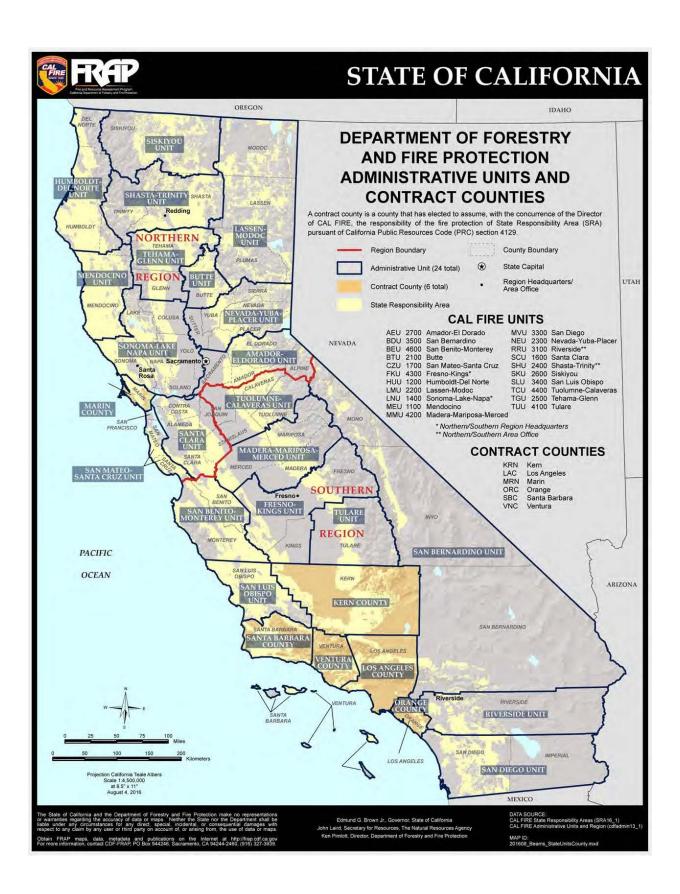


Map 2 of 2: Approximately 850 miles of road on National Forest System lands have been identified as candidates for treatments to reduce roadside ignitions. Pictured above are roads and wildfire ignitions on the Angeles, San Bernardino, and Cleveland National Forests.





Caltrans District Map and California Counties





Pacific Southwest Region National Forests