

DRAFT
Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Talmadge
San Diego, California
November 17, 2005

Introduction

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was developed by The Talmadge Fire Safe Council/ Firewise Board with guidance and support from the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, City of San Diego Council District 3, California Department of Forestry and Fire, and United States Forest Service.

The process of developing the CWPP can help a community to clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. It can also lead community members through valuable discussions regarding management options.

Collaboration

The organizations and their roles/responsibilities involved in the development of the Talmadge CWPP are given below.

Talmadge Fire Safe Council/Firewise Board and City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department developed the CWPP in terms of community risk, value assessment, and community protection priorities, e.g. prioritized fuel reduction and recommended structural ignitability treatments.

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department, Open Space Division provided input and expertise on Open Space designations in relationship to brush management.

City of San Diego Development Services Department, provided input and expertise on hazard mitigation, brush management and fire resistive landscaping.

City of San Diego Council District 3 provided input and facilitated planning and implementation of recommended treatments.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection facilitated the planning process and approval of the CWPP. They also provided input and expertise on forestry, fire, fuels and firewise principles.

United States Forest Service provided input and expertise on fire, fuels, and firewise concepts.

San Diego County Fire Safe Council provided information and support for hazard assessment, defensible space and facilitated communication and coordination among fire professionals within the county and the community.

Firewise Communities/USA facilitated collaboration among fire professionals and the community while doing an Assessment of Talmadge. The Firewise urban forester assisted in identifying and making recommendations regarding structural ignitability and fuel hazards in Talmadge.

Natural Resource Conservation Service in consultation with San Diego County, Watershed provided a Fire Behavior Analysis of Talmadge, which assisted in prioritizing fuel reduction around residences.

Community Base Maps

Using Mapping Services (The California Fire Alliance, Fire Planning and Mapping Tools, Internet Map Service (IMS), San Diego Geographic Information Source (SanGIS), USGS, Google Satellite and local expertise the Talmadge Fire Safe Council supported by the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, has developed a series of maps depicting the site and situation of Talmadge. The maps will act as visual aids from which contributors to the Talmadge CWPP can assess and make recommendations, (Appendix-Maps). The maps provided include the following:

1. Area Map (Google Satellite)
2. USGS topographic quad map
3. Inhabited Areas and Infrastructure at Potential Risk to Wildland Fire, (SanGIS)
4. Topographic Map --20 foot contours (SanGIS)
5. Fire Threat, California Fire Alliance, (IMS)
6. Talmadge's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), (Google Satellite Map)

Community Risk Assessment

Location / Fire history- Talmadge is a densely populated urban community of San Diego, which surrounds the 62-acre Talmadge Canyon. Talmadge is located just east of Freeway 15 and just south of Freeway 8. Talmadge is situated between two large habitats in San Diego, Mission Trails Regional Park and Mission Valley. Mission Regional Park has burned three times. The last time was the Cedar Fire of 2003 when 3000 of its 5,800 acres burned. Some residents on the northeast side of Talmadge saw the fire burn up and over the canyon rim in the Park. Talmadge Canyon is part of a system of canyons, which extend through Talmadge on its east, west and north sides. On the west side the canyon system extends from Talmadge through the community of Kensington to Freeway 15, and beyond into the community of Normal Heights. Normal Height's last fire was 1985. The canyon system extends north from Talmadge along the south side of Freeway 8, east to San Diego State University as well as into the north side of Freeway 8 into the community of Del Cerro. Del Cerro's last fire was in 2004. At that time there was concern the fire might move south and cross Freeway 8 to the canyons near San Diego State University. Immediately due north of Talmadge the canyon system continues into the community of Alvarado Estates. Talmadge had one major fire, occurring in 1951 in a long narrow chimney on the east side of Talmadge initiated by two young boys "old enough to know better".

Fuel hazards- Four of Talmadge's major ingress/egress routes, were cited in July 2005 for fuel fire code violations. No corrections have occurred to date. These same four highly trafficked routes of Talmadge are immediately adjacent to the steep hillsides and vegetation of Talmadge Canyon.

The fuels in the canyon are composed primarily of light grass along the road, then brush, and then compacted, aged, tall chaparral at the top. On the north and east facing slopes of the canyon the chaparral is heavier and denser. It is composed primarily of lemon ~~ade~~ berry, laurel sumac, scrub oak, sage bush, and toyon. On the south and west facing slopes the chaparral is smaller and drier. It is composed of coastal sage, chamise, and

buckwheat. There are also smatterings of eucalyptus, pine and palm trees scattered throughout the canyon. The latter tend to be clumped together near residences. All of the vegetation is situated within Open Space designations of steep hillsides (averaging 68%), multiple habitat, and environmentally sensitive vegetation. These designations limit official entry and have contributed to no brush management being done in decades in the majority of the 62-acre canyon. The canyon is configured with several fingers, a number of chimneys, saddles, and ridgelines so winds can be funneled into these areas and eddies created. Heat can be trapped, intensifying combustible fuels and potentially causing ignition through out the canyon, particularly under the right Santa Ana weather conditions. Neither a fire access road nor a fuel break has been developed within the canyon.

Homes, Businesses, Essential Infrastructure- Talmadge is composed of 1573 parcels. Only 7 parcels have no structure on them. An electric power station, an essential infrastructure, is located on an ingress/egress route. Approximately 1305 parcels are single family residences. Of these 282 are canyon ridgeline homes. Talmadge was established in the late 1930s early 1940s so that very few of these homes meet the current standards of a 30-foot setback from the canyon ridgeline. Each side of a home in Talmadge has a 5-ft set back from neighbors. Due to closeness and a need for privacy, fences have been installed, often made of wood. In order to enjoy the canyon view, decks were installed, often made of wood and unskirted. Many of the fences and decks are directly attached to the home. Most of the homes in Talmadge do not have boxed eaves. Approximately 33 homes in the community of Talmadge have shake roofs, of these 22 are on the canyon ridgeline or within 300ft of it. An additional 260 parcels are composed of Apartments, 3 large over 100 units, one of which is designated for those over 65 years of age. Approximately 178 are smaller apartments, composed of 4 to 10 units. Approximately 25 are two on one homes, 2 condominium complexes line Collwood Blvd representing approximately 250 units, 1 assisted living facility representing approximately 100 senior disabled patients, 4 churches, and 1 high school representing approximately 2100 students/staff. There are approximately 46 businesses lining El Cajon Boulevard, including 2 motels and several mini malls.

It is estimated the permanent resident population of Talmadge is slightly over 5000 people. The population in Talmadge at any one time is higher depending on the day, time and schedules of the high school and businesses. Talmadge's length is approximately one mile. Its width at the narrowest is 5/8 of a mile and at its widest is 1 1/4 miles. Firebrands can typically travel one mile from the site of a wildfire. Due to Talmadge's physical size, density and topography, a wildfire in Talmadge Canyon could impact much of the community as well as nearby communities.

In summary, it is important to recognize that a fire in Talmadge, which would be deemed a small-acreage fire in a rural setting, has the potential to represent a major loss of lives and structures. The average dollar loss per structure per acre burned in Talmadge would be significant. There is not an economic value that can be placed on the loss of lives.

Talmadge Hazard Reduction Priorities

Prioritized Recommendations for Fuel Treatment Projects in the WUI

1. Brush management projects to reduce fuel loads along identified ingress/egress routes need to be done in accordance with the City of San Diego Fire Code, II-A 17. The routes are prioritized in the following order: Montezuma Rd, Fairmount Ave., Aldine Dr., Collwood Blvd.
2. Brush management projects to reduce fuel loads need to be done around identified residences in accordance with San Diego City Fire/Brush Management Codes LDC Regulations. The canyon ridgeline residences are prioritized in the following order and facing:
 - A. North overlooking Montezuma Rd and east overlooking the northern portion of Collwood Blvd;
 - B. Northwest and west overlooking Fairmount Ave,
 - C. Northwest, west, and north overlooking the interior of the canyon and a large chimney starting from residences on the base of the canyon floor at Talmadge Canyon Row and ending at ridgeline residences Jean Drive, Miracle Drive, Louise Drive and Adams Avenue;
 - D. East and west overlooking Aldine Drive
3. Residences within 300 ft of the canyon ridgeline need to be contacted and educated regarding the need to meet Zone I requirements of the San Diego Brush Management Muni Code, LDC.

The Preferred Treatment Methods are manual removal of brush on the north and east facing slopes. On the south and west facing slopes goats will be used to remove brush with follow up manual removal.

The partnership that exists between San Diego City Fire-Rescue Department, San Diego City Council District 3, Talmadge Fire Safe Council and citizens allows the community of Talmadge to reduce hazardous vegetative fuel that could ignite residences and commercial facilities during Santa Ana weather conditions.

Recommended Measures to Reduce Structural Ignitability in the WUI

Community

1. In cooperation with the City of San Diego Council District 3, the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, the Talmadge Fire Safe Council supports and promotes Firewise activities. The Talmadge Fire Safe Council supports and educates its citizens in ways to reduce structure ignitability through meeting the City of San Diego Building and Fire Code LCD Regulation.
2. The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is responsible for weed abatement inspections and forced abatements.

Property Owners

1. "Reduce the connection of flammable plant material to existing structures to make a structure more fire resistant." (City of San Diego Guide to Canyon Fire Safety and Fire Safety and Brush Management for Private Property) Brush management to create 100 ft of defensible space around residences and businesses is detailed in the City of San Diego Fire/Brush Management LDC Regulation.

2. "Install a roof that meets the Fire Resistance Rating of Class A. Make walls, roof eaves and other overhangs one hour fire resistive or use non-combustible material, cover foundation and roof eave vents with ¼" non-combustible wire mesh screen, eliminate wood fences, wood decks, and other flammable structures that are connected to or in close proximity to the home or business. Enclose the underside of elevated decks with one-hour fire resistant materials or use non-combustible materials. In addition proper site maintenance is needed to include the cleaning of roofs and gutters, covering chimney outlets with nonflammable ½" or smaller wire screening, and making sure storage of flammable items is at least 30 feet from structures." (City of San Diego Guide to Canyon Fire Safety and Fire Safety and Brush Management for Private Property.) Construction enhancements detailed through City of San Diego Building and Fire code LCD Regulations.

Action Plan

1. TFSC will facilitate brush management projects with support from the City of San Diego Council District 3, Fire-Rescue Department, and General Services Department to reduce fuel loads along the four identified ingress/egress routes within the community.
2. TFSC will facilitate canyon ridgeline brush management projects by working with neighborhood coordinators, the volunteer fire consultant, property owners and landscape contractors. The goal is to reduce fuel loads around canyon ridgeline homes in prioritized high-risk fire areas, and to extend and complete the beginnings of a continuous fuel break at the top of the canyon. It is projected this will be a 3 to 5 year project with grant funding/ property owner match and a 6 to 10 year project without it.
3. TFSC will educate the community regarding ways to create defensible space, reduce structural ignitability, and do firewise landscaping. The education will be provided through workshops (4 annually), one on one meetings with neighbors, newsletters (4 annually), and a web page.
4. Property owners who have shake roofs will be contacted in person or by letter to encourage them to replace their shake roofs with a Class A Fire Rated roof. TFSC will develop a list of roofing contractors who have the necessary credentials, to do quality work and offer competitive pricing. The TFSC neighborhood coordinators and the volunteer Fire Consultant will work together with property homeowners and selected roofing contractors to encourage the conversion to Class A Fire Rated roofing systems.

Assessment Strategy

1. The TFSC will have a survey designed and implemented to assess before and after results of projects for fuel reduction and measures to reduce structure ignitability.
2. In addition before and after photographs will be taken.

**Community Wildfire Protection Plan
Certification and Agreement**

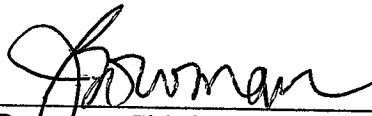
The Community Wildfire Protection Plan developed for Talmadge:

Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties and federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of Talmadge have been consulted.

This plan identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect Talmadge.

This plan recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

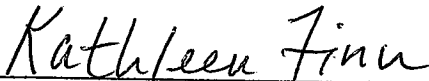
The following entities attest that the standards listed above have been met and mutually agree with the contents of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:



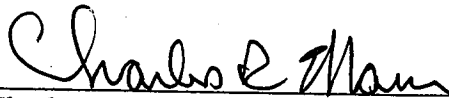
Jeff Bowman, Chief,
The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department



Toni Atkins, Council Member,
The City of San Diego Council District 3



Kathleen Finn, Facilitator, President
Talmadge Fire Safe Council, Talmadge Firewise Board



Charles Maner, San Diego Unit Chief,
State of California Department of Forestry
And Fire Protection

References:

City of San Diego Codes:

1. Fire/Brush Management, LCD and II-A 17
2. Building /Construction

City of San Diego Plan

1. Hazard Mitigation, 2005
2. Talmadge Evacuation, 2005

Documents

1. A City of San Diego Guide to Canyon Fire Safety, 2004
2. City of San Diego Fire Safety and Brush Management for Private Property, 2004
3. NRCS- Map and Summary of Talmadge BehavePlus Fire Modeling Analysis, 2004
4. Talmadge Firewise Assessment, 2005

Web Sites

1. <http://www.cafirealliance.org> California Fire Alliance, CWPP and other Documents.
2. <http://wildfire.cr.usgs.gov/fireplanng> California Fire Alliance, Fire Planning and Mapping Tools, Internet Mapping Service (IMS).
3. <http://earth.google.com> Google satellite maps.

Appendix -Maps

Figure 1. Area Map (Google Satellite)

Figure 2. USGS Topographic Quad Map

Figure 3. Inhabited Areas and Infrastructure at Potential Risk to Wildland Fire-Shows population centers, roads, and improvements in the community according to the County Assessor. (SanGIS)

Figure 4. SanGIS Topographic Map-20 Foot Contours-Utilizing this topographic map and standard calculating procedures it was determined the average slope in Talmadge Canyon was 68%.

Figure 5. Fire Threat (Modeled by Fire Planning and Mapping Tools, Internet Map Service (IMS), California Fire Alliance, shows Talmadge Canyon to have areas of very high fire risk. However it is believed that the Talmadge Canyon fire risk is even higher than stated. Talmadge Canyon slopes when modeled by IMS were determined to be in a range of 11-25%, which is inaccurate. The state standard minimum-mapping unit, 1 meter by 1-meter square, was not high definition enough to accurately measure slopes in a 62-acre canyon with an Open Space designation of steep hillsides. This may have resulted in an understated fire threat rating. Canyons with similar characteristics to Talmadge Canyon occur throughout the City of San Diego.

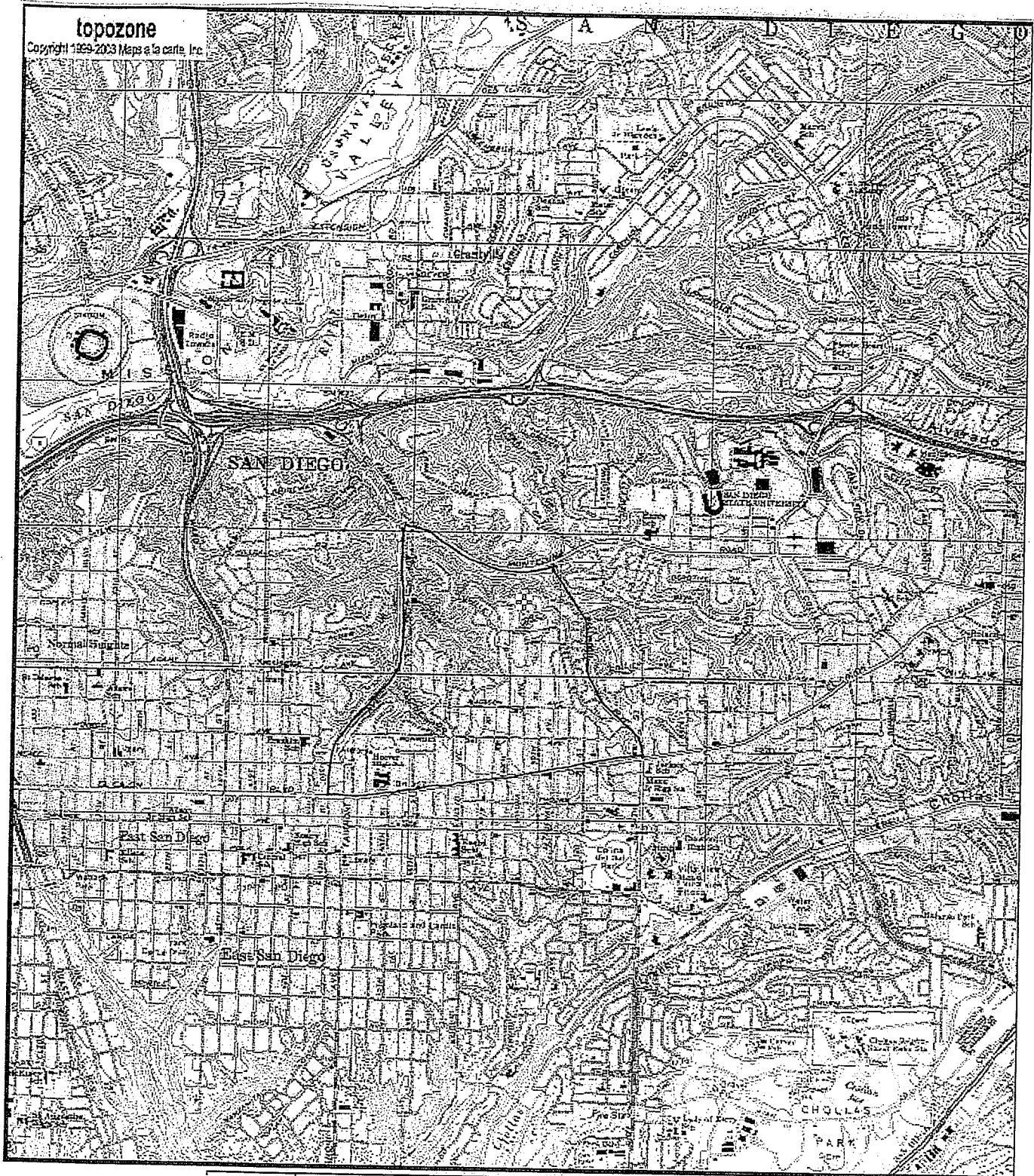
Figure 6. Talmadge's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) (Google Satellite Map)

TALMADGE



Figure 1.

TALDMADGE BOUNDARIES



Map center is UTM 11 491730E 3625549N (WGS84/NAD83)

La Mesa quadrangle

Projection is UTM Zone 11 NAD83 Datum

M
G
M=13.022
G=-0.048

Figure 2.

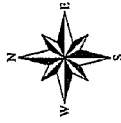
Talmadge-Inhabited Areas and Infrastructure at Potential Risk to Wildland Fire



Legend

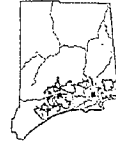
Roads

Parcels



1 Inch equals 305 feet

Vicinity Map



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Map Date: 08/19/04

Figure 3.

Talmadge Topography

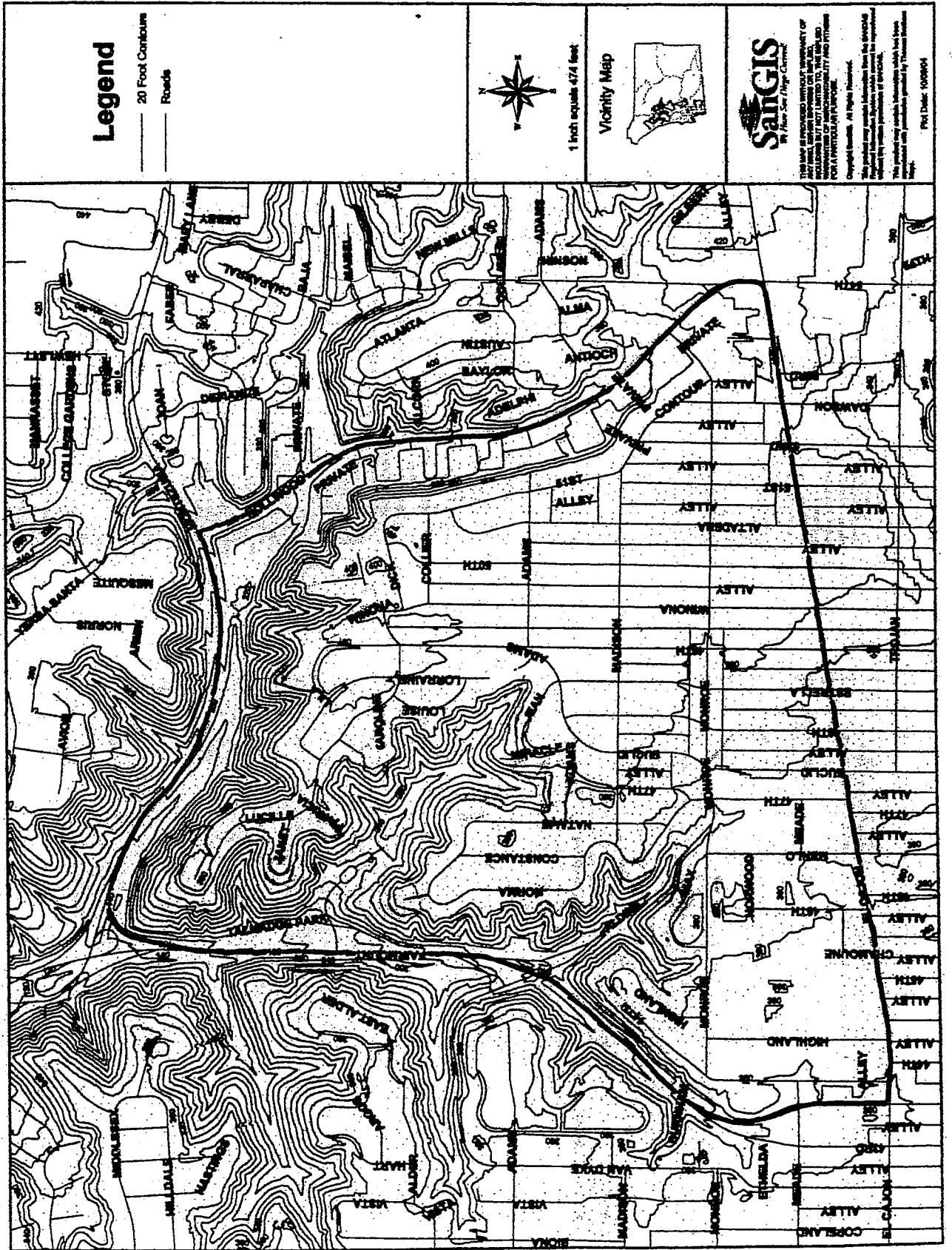


Figure 4.

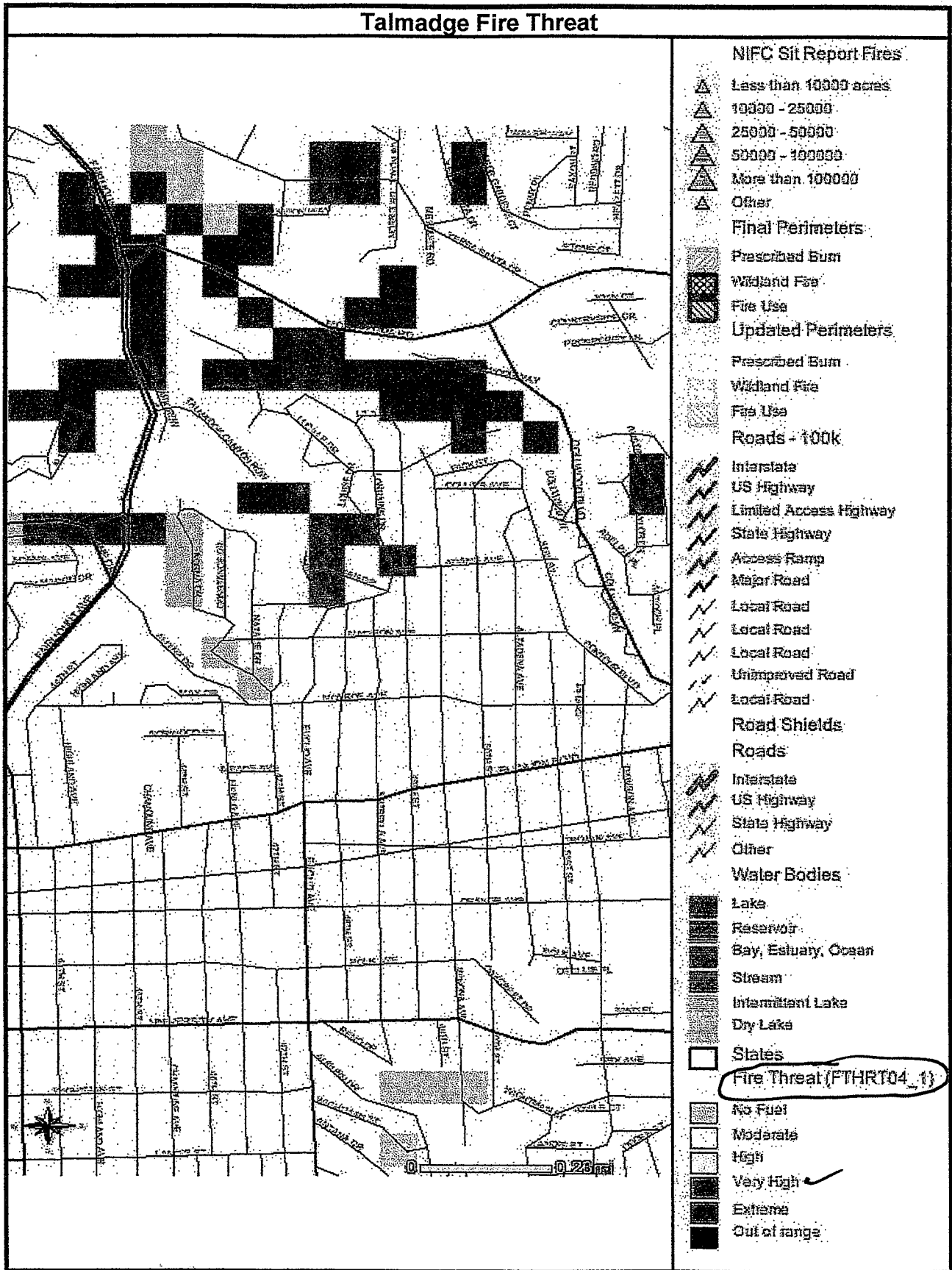


Figure 5.

TALMADGE

Talmadge's Wildland
Urban Interface (W.U.I.)

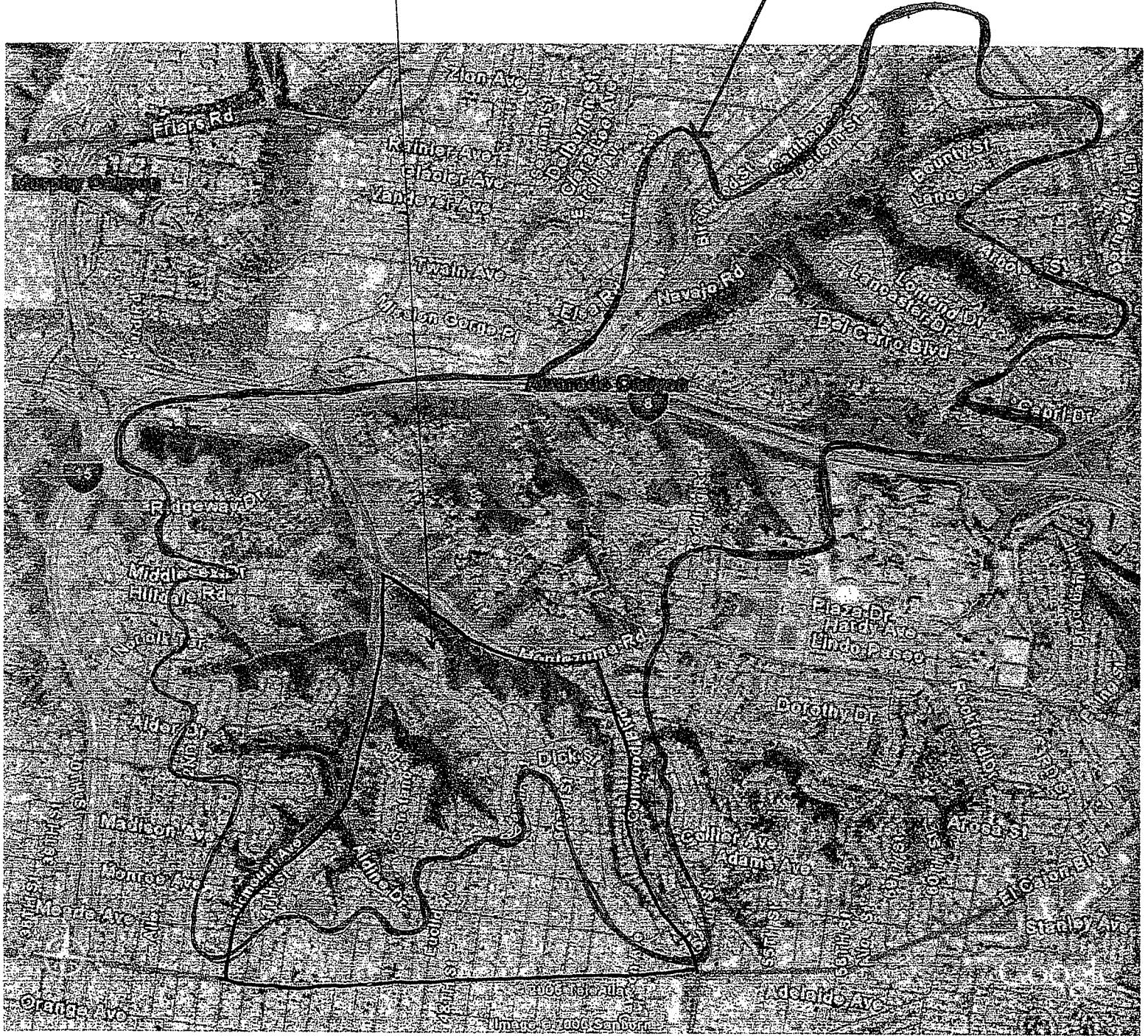


Figure 6.