



CAL FIRE

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Webinar Series

November 28, 2022

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs)

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs)

Speaker Introduction

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Resources can be found at:

osfm.fire.ca.gov/fire-hazard-severity-zones



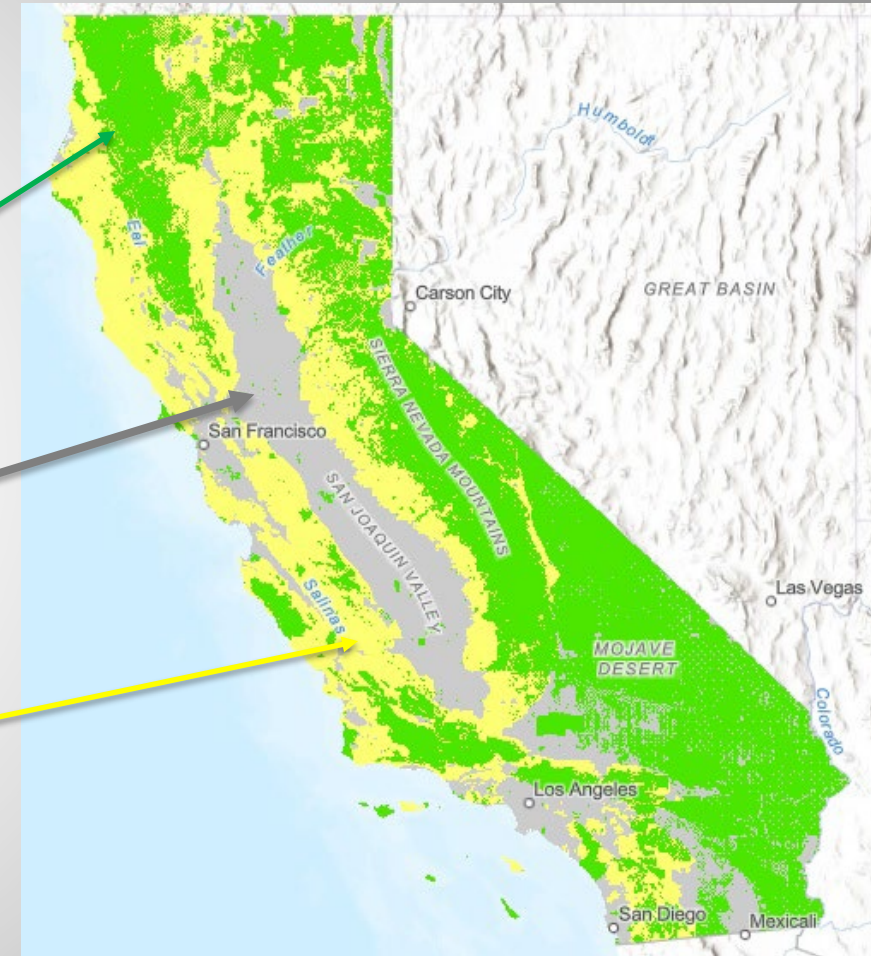
FHSZ Update/Status

- Current FHSZ maps (circa late-2000s) will be updated by a regulatory process beginning this December
- This webinar will talk about FHSZs in State Responsibility Area (SRA)
- This webinar will not present information on FHSZs in Local Responsibility Area (LRA)
- New FHSZ (SRA) maps will be circulated for public comment in the next few weeks, including a suite of informational resources
- New FHSZ (SRA) maps fall under the authority of the State Fire Marshal, as defined by Public Resources Code (PRC)



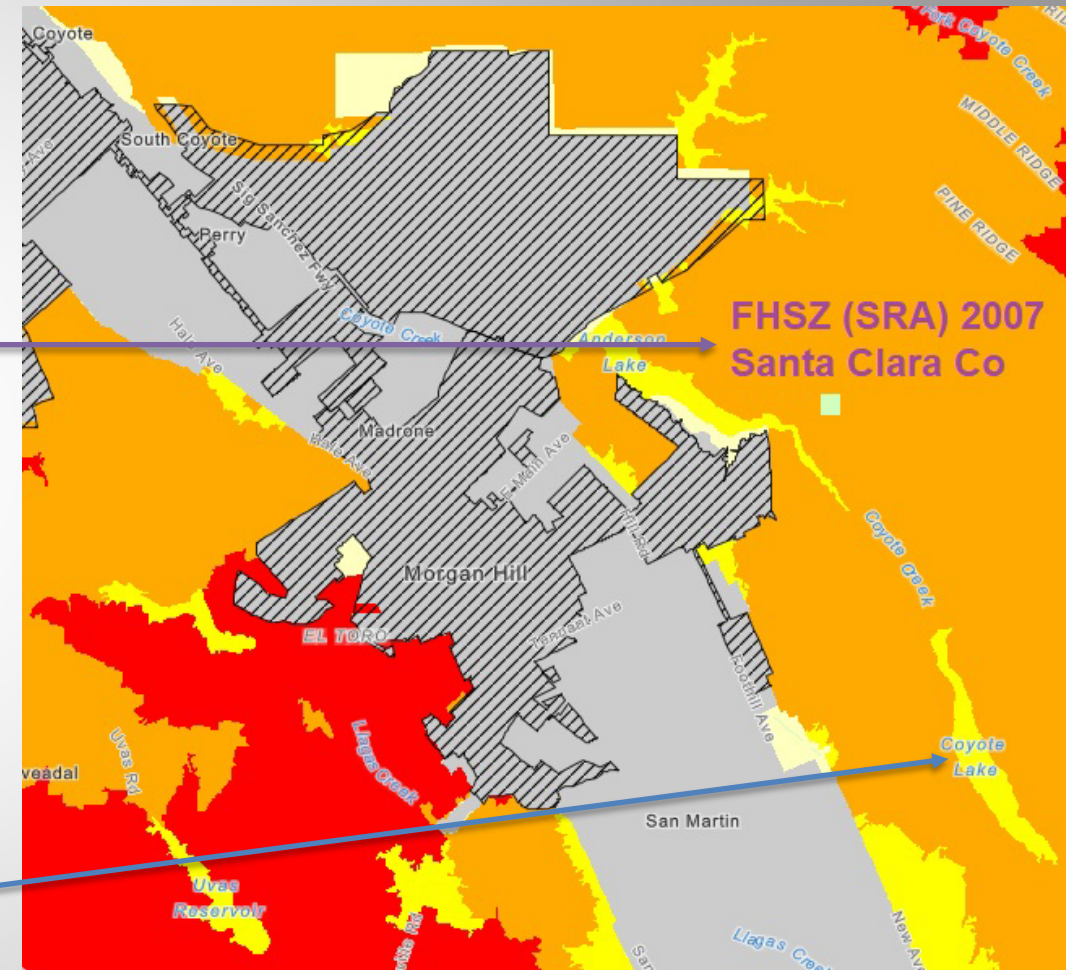
FHSZ Definitions

- RESPONSIBILITY AREA & FHSZ
- Who has legal responsibility to:
 - Prevent, suppress, and investigate wildfires
- Defined by PRC sections 4125-4137
 - **Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)**
 - All lands owned by the US Gov't
 - **Local Responsibility Area (LRA)**
 - Incorporated cities & 'not watershed'
 - **State Responsibility Area (SRA)**
 - Rural-wildlands with grass, brush, & timber
 - About 1/3 of CA, almost 1m residences
 - THIS IS WHAT WE ARE UPDATING



FHSZ History

- FHSZs have existed for about 40 years
 - Legislated in the 1980s
 - Updated in the 1990s (added LRA)
 - Updated again in the 2000s
 - (This is the current FHSZ map)
- All lands in SRA receive a FHSZ designation
 - **Very High** (Red)
 - **High** (Orange)
 - **Moderate** (Yellow)
- Including water bodies, ag, & barren lands
 - No 'un-zoned' lands in SRA



FHSZ Timeframes

- New FHSZ (SRA) maps will be circulated for public comment in December, including a suite of informational resources
- CAL FIRE will also conduct one public hearing in each county that has SRA (56 of 58 counties; excluding Sutter & San Francisco)
- Current FHSZ maps (circa 2007-2011) remain in effect until the regulatory process concludes
- FHSZ (LRA) should initiate in mid-2023, and will follow process outlined in Government Code



Emma Garrard/Sierra Sun

FHSZ (SRA) Authority

FHSZ (SRA) = Public Resources Code sections 4201 - 4204

- 4201 – provide for classification of lands within SRA
- 4202 – SFM shall classify lands within SRA: factors
- 4203(a) – SFM shall, by regulation, designate FHSZs
- 4203(b) – transmittal to county board + public hearing
- 4204 – SFM shall periodically review zones



Partial list of factors include:

- Fuel loading, slope, fire weather, fire history, fire brands
- Areas where winds have been identified as a major cause of wildfire spread (this factor is new!)

HAZARD vs. RISK

- Fire HAZARD Severity Zones do not score for RISK (how much damage)
- **HAZARD = Likelihood of damaging event (wildfire)**
 - Frequency of wildfire, flame length, fire brands
- HAZARD doesn't change much (long term, 30-50 year)
 - Steep topography, hot/dry windy areas
- **RISK = How much damage might occur**
- RISK changes frequently
 - Can change for better or worse
 - Immediately with RISK mitigation
- Known HAZARDS (like steep topography & winds) can feed RISK
- 'High' FHSZ in Yuba Co is functionally equal to 'High' FHSZ in Fresno Co



Risk Mitigation NOT weighted!

MITIGATION

Fuel Treatments
D-Space
Fire Dept
Water Supply
Roads

CONTRARY EVENTS

Fuel Treatments may not occur every year
Homeowner may not comply every year
May be on another emergency
Power outage or drought
Additional traffic impacts (more residents)

CAL FIRE HAZARD MAPS DO NOT ACCOUNT FOR RISK MITIGATION
FHSZ MAPS ARE DESIGNED FOR A 30-50 YEAR TIMEFRAME



FHSZ uses in SRA

Not much is changing in the SRA – ongoing uses include:

- Chapter 7A building code requirements
 - All zones
- State Fire Safe regulations
 - All zones
- Defensible Space clearance & inspections (PRC 4291)
 - All zones
- Real Estate Hazard Disclosures (AB 38, 2021)
 - Very High & High FHSZs only



Additional FHSZ resources

osfm.fire.ca.gov/fire-hazard-severity-zones

Videos

F.A.Q.s

Webmaps

Additional support tools

Regulatory information & public comment



FHSZ Questions?

Questions?

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Upcoming Webinars

Webinars held on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month at 11:30 AM via Zoom!

- 12/12/2022
- 1/9/2023
- 1/23/2023
- 2/13/2023
- 2/27/2023



More information on the webinar series can be found any time at osfm.fire.ca.gov/wildfire-public-education/