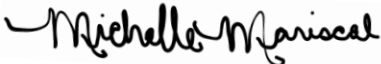


Puente Hills
Habitat Preservation Authority
Endowment Provided by the Puente Hills Landfill

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 17, 2022

To: Andrea Gullo, Executive Director



From: Michelle Mariscal, Ecologist

Subject: Amended Agenda Item No. 5) Discussion regarding recent fire in Authority's Sycamore Canyon and Spyglass Estates on Thursday, February 10, 2022.

Recommendation:

That the Board discuss, receive, and file.

Background:

On Thursday, February 10th at approximately 2:30 p.m., Los Angeles County Fire Department and MRCA's Chief Ranger Gomez and Ranger Just responded to a brush fire in the Sycamore Canyon area of the Preserve in unincorporated Los Angeles County (see attached Exhibit). Rangers worked to clear and secure the properties and contacted Whittier Police Department for their support in securing the entrances at Hellman and Turnbull Canyon trails.

The fire was located approximately 1 mile east of the Sycamore Canyon Trailhead parking lot on the north slope of the canyon adjacent to the Spyglass Estates neighborhood. In addition to a water-dropping helicopter and fixed wing aircraft, over 200 Los Angeles County fire units were on scene. The blaze was extinguished by 4:00 p.m. after burning approximately 3.5 acres, approximately 1.95 acres of which is Habitat Authority-owned property. Several structures on Cinco View Drive and Banyan Rim Drive were damaged and one person sustained non-life-threatening burn injuries. That person was arrested the following day and faces several charges of arson. High temperatures (mid-80° F) and windy conditions (15-20 mph) fueled the flames. The origin location of the fire has not been identified by fire officials yet.

The burned area on the Spyglass Estates Homeowners Association (HOA) managed property, directly behind the homes, was predominantly perennial non-native ground cover with scattered eucalyptus trees. The burned area on the Habitat Authority property was a mix of non-native annuals and coastal sage scrub perennial shrubs. On February 9th, one day prior to the fire, the Habitat Authority's contractor had conducted vegetation clearance activities in the fuel modification zone in this general area to remove non-native annuals. The fire's footprint partially overlaps with the area that had been cleared. Also, in September 2021, at the request of Los Angeles County Fire Department, the Habitat Authority conducted vegetation maintenance activities along the Sycamore Canyon Trail to improve accessibility for emergency response vehicles in the canyon; emergency response vehicles did use the canyon when responding to this fire.

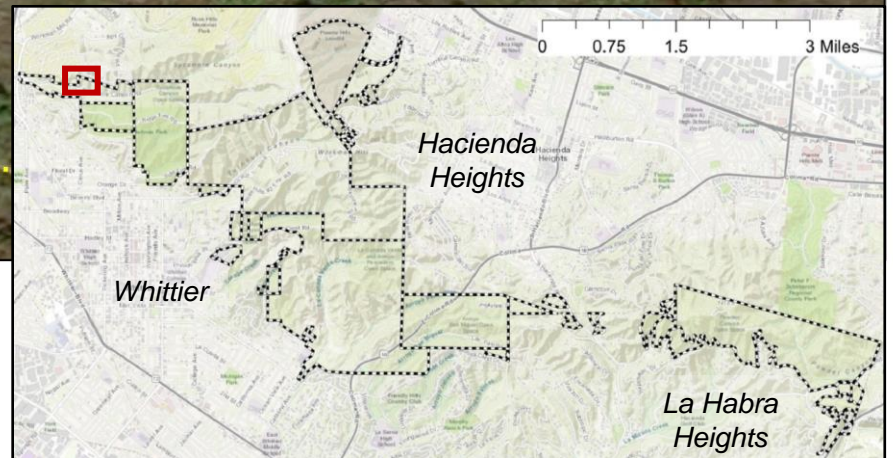
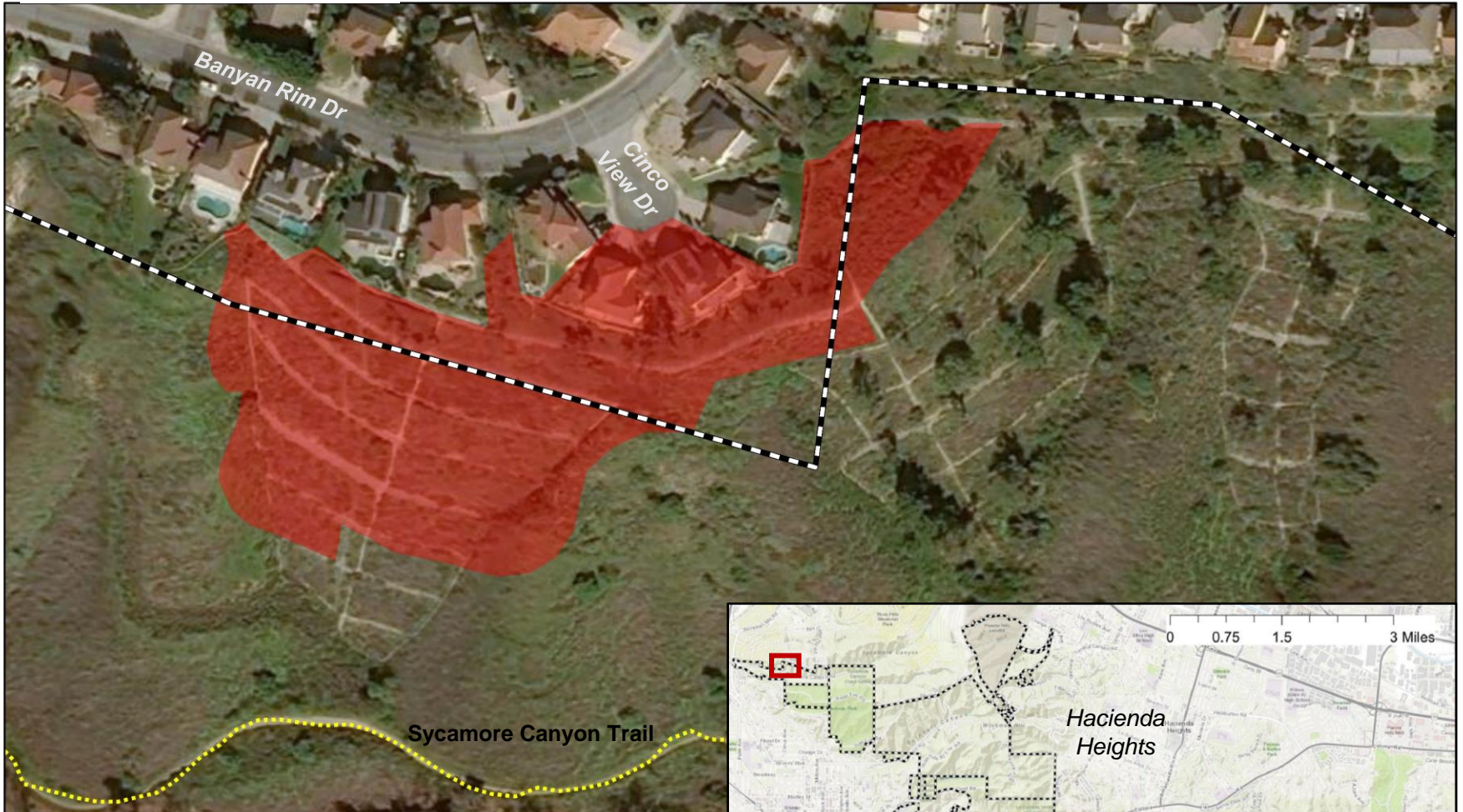
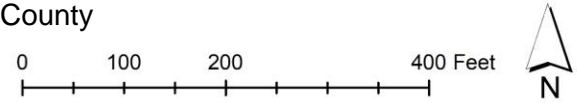
The burned area includes habitat that had been previously occupied by Coastal California Gnatcatcher, a Federally threatened species, and the species was heard upon a site visit to the area on Monday February 14. Restoration of the burn area to stabilize the slope and/or replace vegetation may be a future consideration. Because the HOA has a slope easement for the stabilization of the homes, this matter requires further investigation.

Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal impacts are not known at this time.

Item 5. Exhibit – Sycamore fire burn area (February 10, 2022)

Puente Hills Preserve, Los Angeles County



Legend

- Puente Hills Preserve boundary
- Sycamore fire burn area (3.5 ac)
- Habitat Authority trail