

# City of Scottsdale Wildfire Season Community Update

March 19, 2025



# City of Scottsdale Mayor Comments

Mayor Lisa Borowsky



# Subject Matter Expert Introductions

- Fire Prevention Services Assistant Fire Chief Kerry Swick
- COS Fire Marshal Kristy Gagnon
- COS Emergency Manager Jacob Johnson
- COS Fuels Management David Ramirez
- Fire Operations Assistant Fire Chief Clint Steeves
- Planning and Development Senior Planner Jesus Murillo
- Water Department Water Director Kevin Rose
- Police Department Assistant Chief Rich Slavin

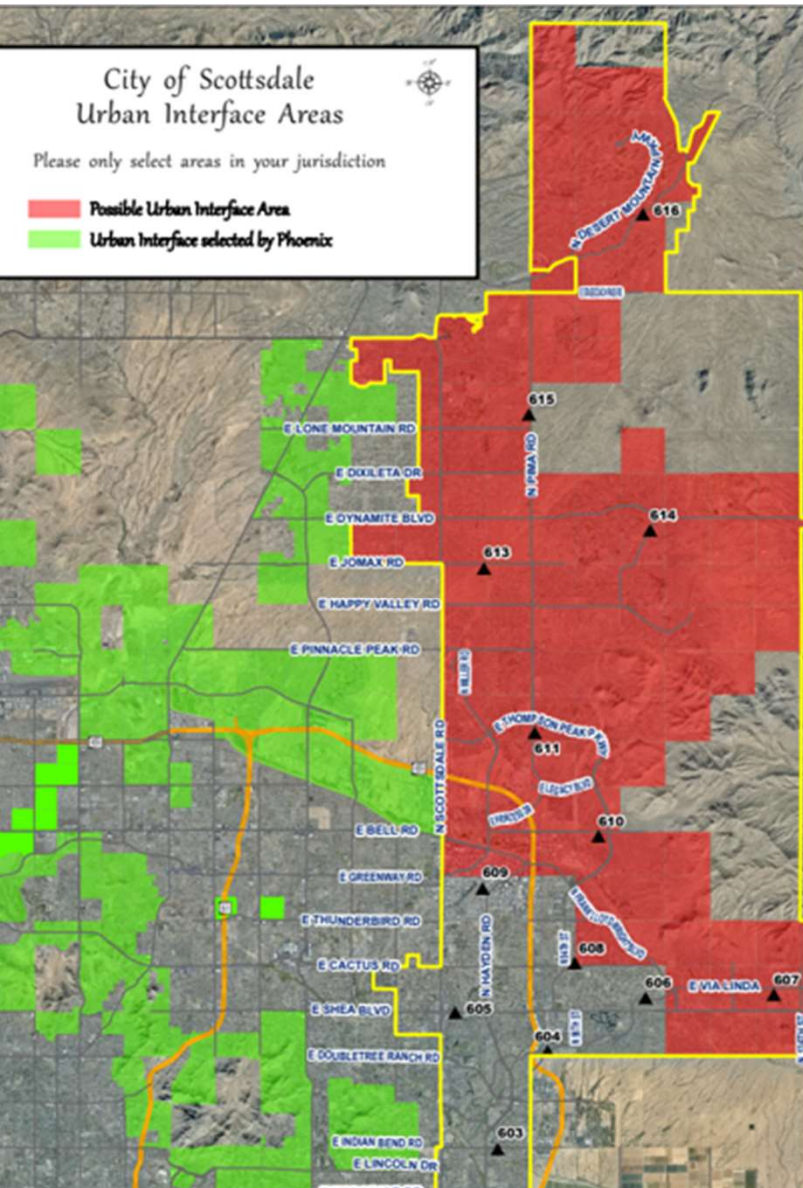
# WEATHER OUTLOOK



## Key Points

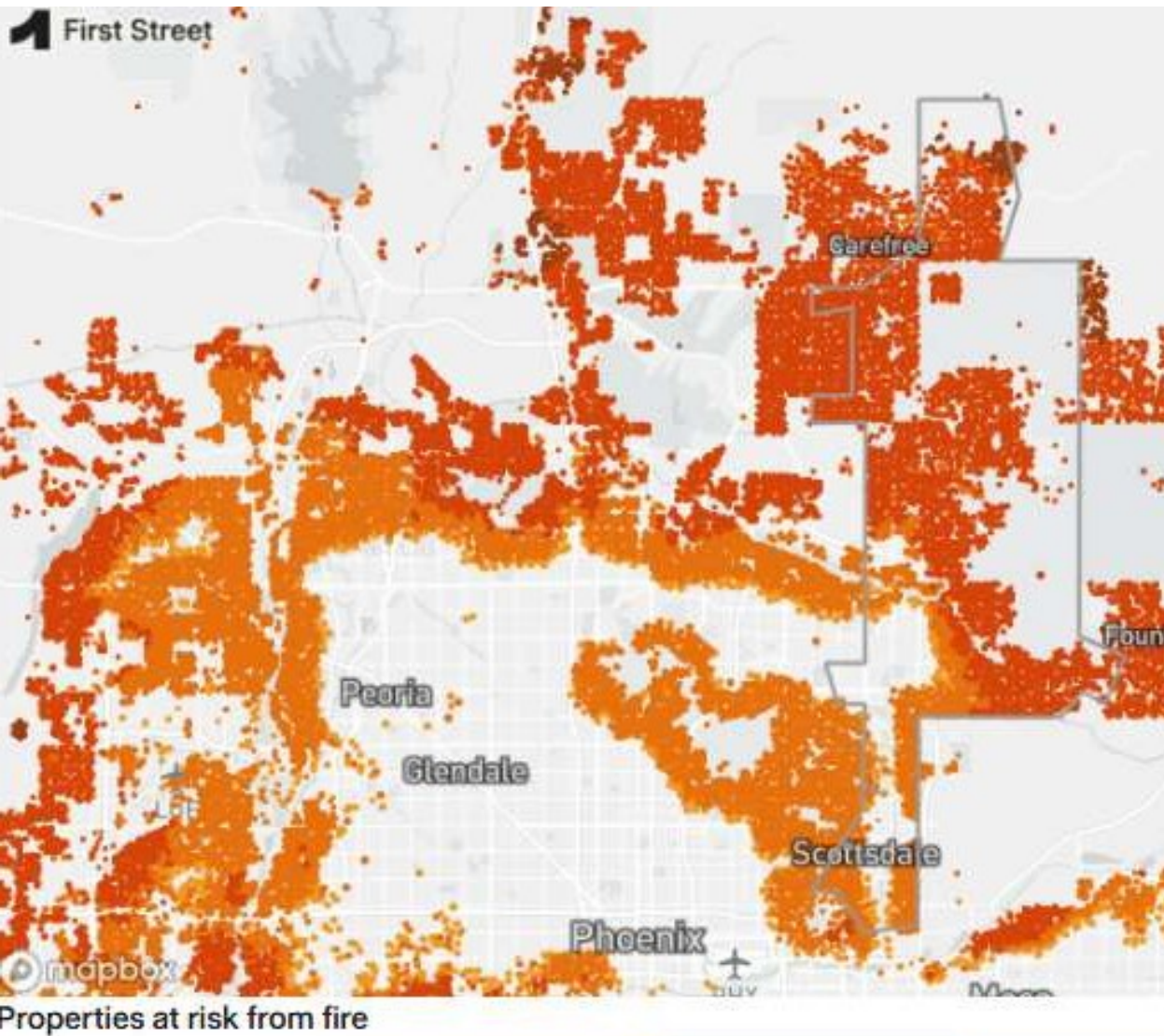
Weather Forecast Office  
Phoenix, AZ

- **Current drought status:** Extreme (D3) across much of the state, with additional areas of exceptional (D4) being introduced in the immediate future
- Snowpack status: 5-30% of normal to date across all basins
- **Temperature and Precipitation Outlooks:**
  - **Fire Season (April - June)** – Above normal temperatures favored, with below normal precipitation favored
  - **Monsoon Season (July - September)** – Above normal temperatures favored, with equal chances for above/near/below normal precipitation, however, **evidence suggests better chances for near/above normal precipitation during the Monsoon season following dry La Niña winters**
- **Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook (central to eastern Arizona):** above normal over the eastern half of AZ and over west-central AZ by May
- **Onset of Monsoon Season:** typically late June to early July



# Defining Risk in Scottsdale

- **Environment:**
  - Hot and dry climate
  - Sonoran desert fuel model (light, flashy fuels)
- **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI):**
  - An area where a built environment meets or intermingles with a natural environment.
    - Communities directly interfacing with fuels
- **Natural**
  - Lightning
- **Human caused**
  - Construction
  - Vehicles
  - Cooking/warming fires
  - Wind impact power line
  - Fireworks
- **What is Community Conflagration**
  - Denver Metro Area 2021, 2023
  - Paradise, CA, 2018
  - Los Angeles, CA, 2020, 2025



**Residential: Major Risk**

89,179 out of 108,617 homes at risk

**Commercial: Moderate Risk**

5,769 out of 5,471 properties at risk

**Infrastructure: Moderate Risk**

120 out of 166 facilities at risk

**Social: Moderate Risk**

146 out of 270 facilities at risk

TS



# Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) Definition\*

In **absence of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)**, the WUI includes:

- Areas **within ½ mile** of an at-risk community.
- Areas **within 1½ miles** of an at-risk community, if they include:
  - **Steep slopes** that increase wildfire risk.
  - **Fire breaks**, such as roads or ridges, that help slow fire spread.
  - **Condition Class 3 areas**, where:
    - Vegetation is severely overgrown.
    - There are **high fuel loads** from years of fire suppression.
    - The risk of **extreme, high-intensity wildfire** is greatest.
- Areas **next to evacuation routes** that need **hazardous fuel reduction** to allow safer evacuation from the community.

# Maricopa County CWPP

## Plan Objectives:

- Prioritize **fire prevention, suppression, and safety**
- Reduce **hazardous fuels** to protect property
- Restore **forest, rangeland, and riparian health**
- Support **community involvement** and protection
- Recommend ways to reduce **structural ignitability**
- Promote **economic benefits** from vegetation treatments
- Develop **evacuation and communication plans**
- Align with **neighboring fire management plans**

*Does not have objective criteria to define WUI*



## MARICOPA COUNTY Community Wildfire Protection Plan UPDATE

January 2020

Maricopa County  
Department  
of Emergency  
Management  
Arizona Fire & Medical  
Authority  
Avondale  
Buckeye  
Carefree  
Cave Creek  
Chandler  
El Mirage  
Fountain Hills  
Fort McDowell  
Gila Bend  
Gilbert  
Glendale

Goldfield Ranch  
Goodyear  
Guadalupe  
Harquahala Valley  
Litchfield Park  
Mesa  
Rio Verde  
Paradise Valley  
Peoria  
Phoenix  
Queen Creek  
Salt River  
Scottsdale  
Sun City  
Tempe

Tolleson  
Surprise  
Wickenburg  
Youngtown  
Arizona Public Service  
Salt River Project  
Arizona Department  
of Forestry and Fire  
Management  
Bureau of Land  
Management - Phoenix  
District  
United States Forest  
Service - Tonto National  
Forest  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
- Pima and Salt River  
Agencies



EM



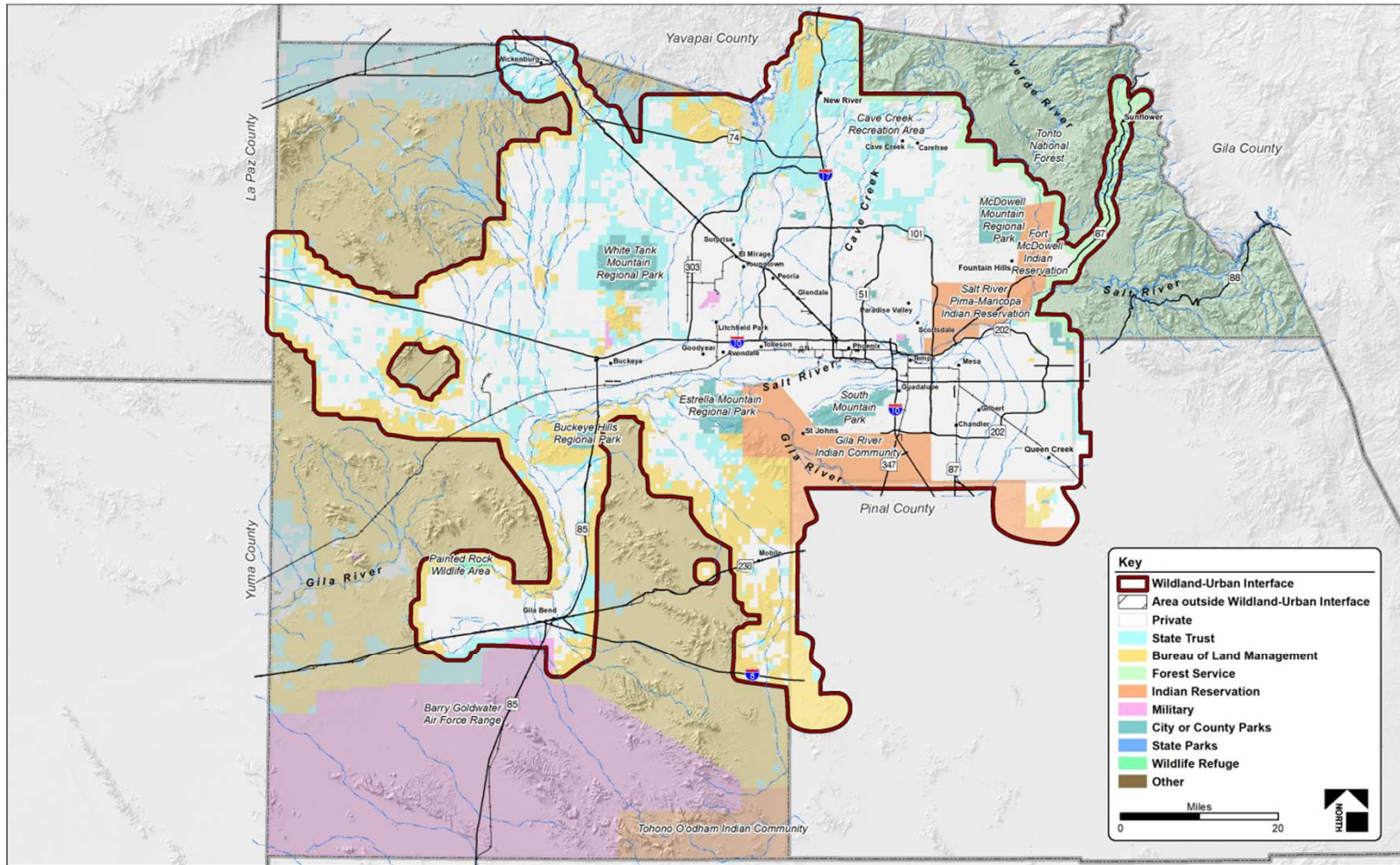


Figure I-1. Maricopa County Land Ownership and Wildland-Urban Interface

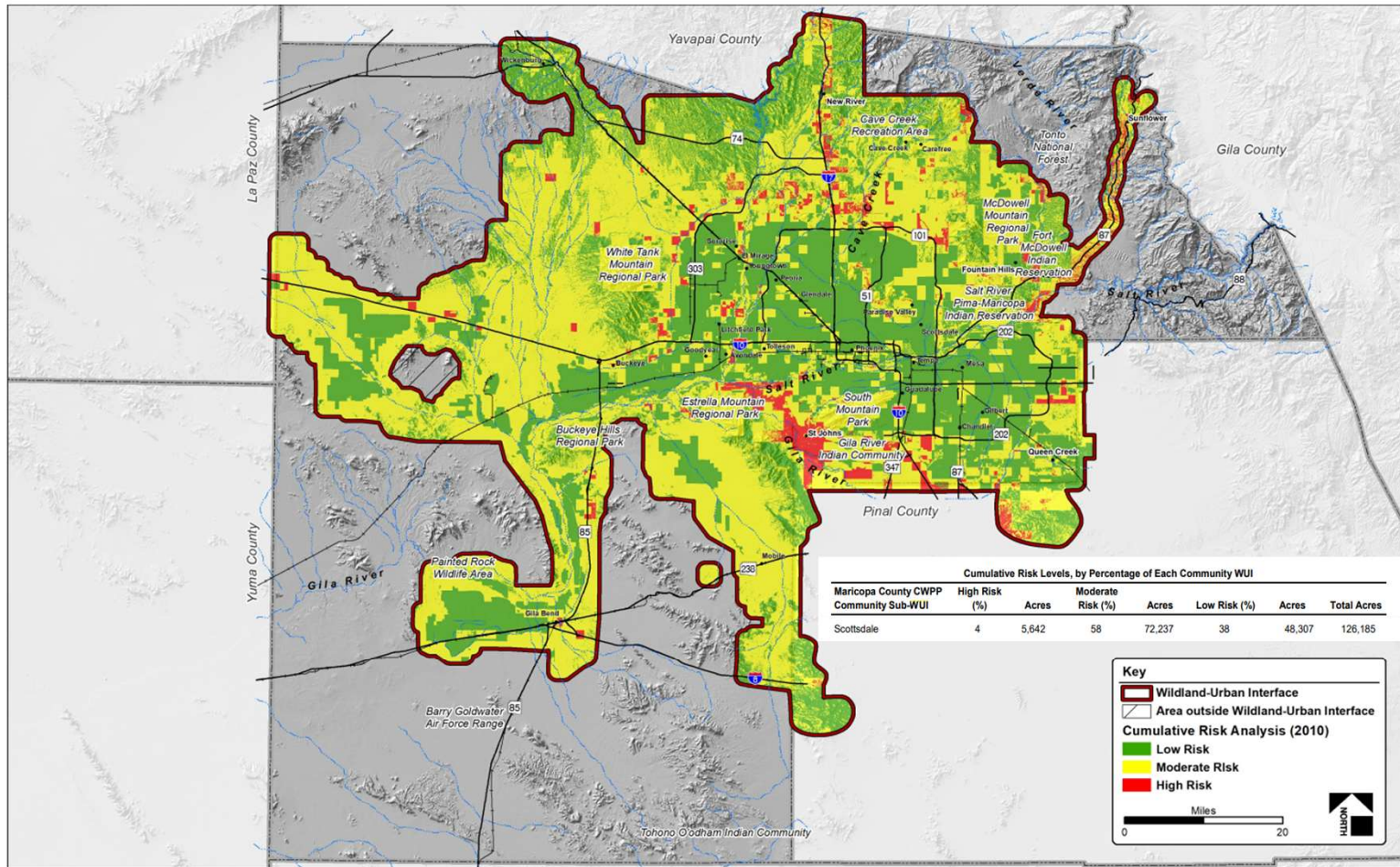
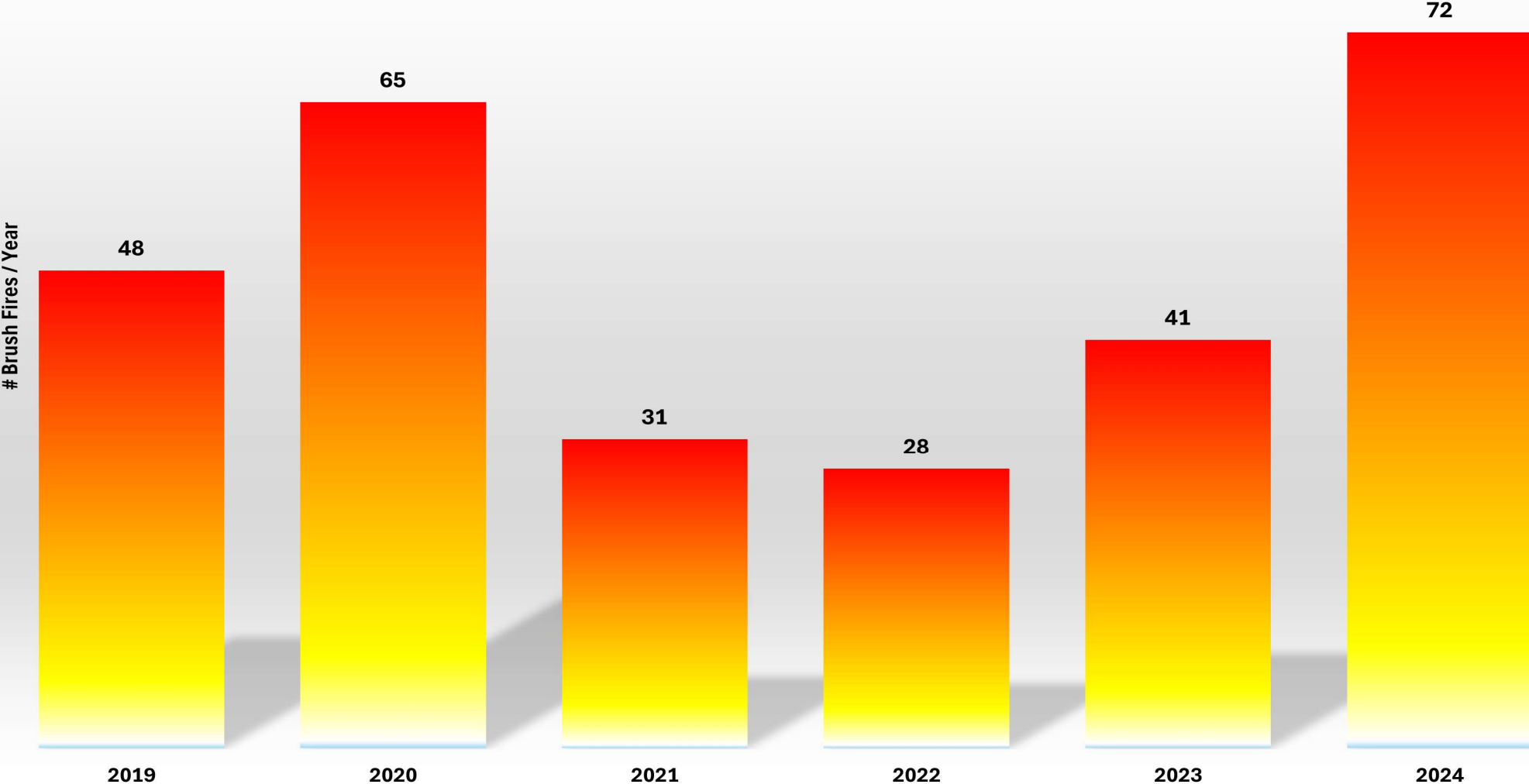
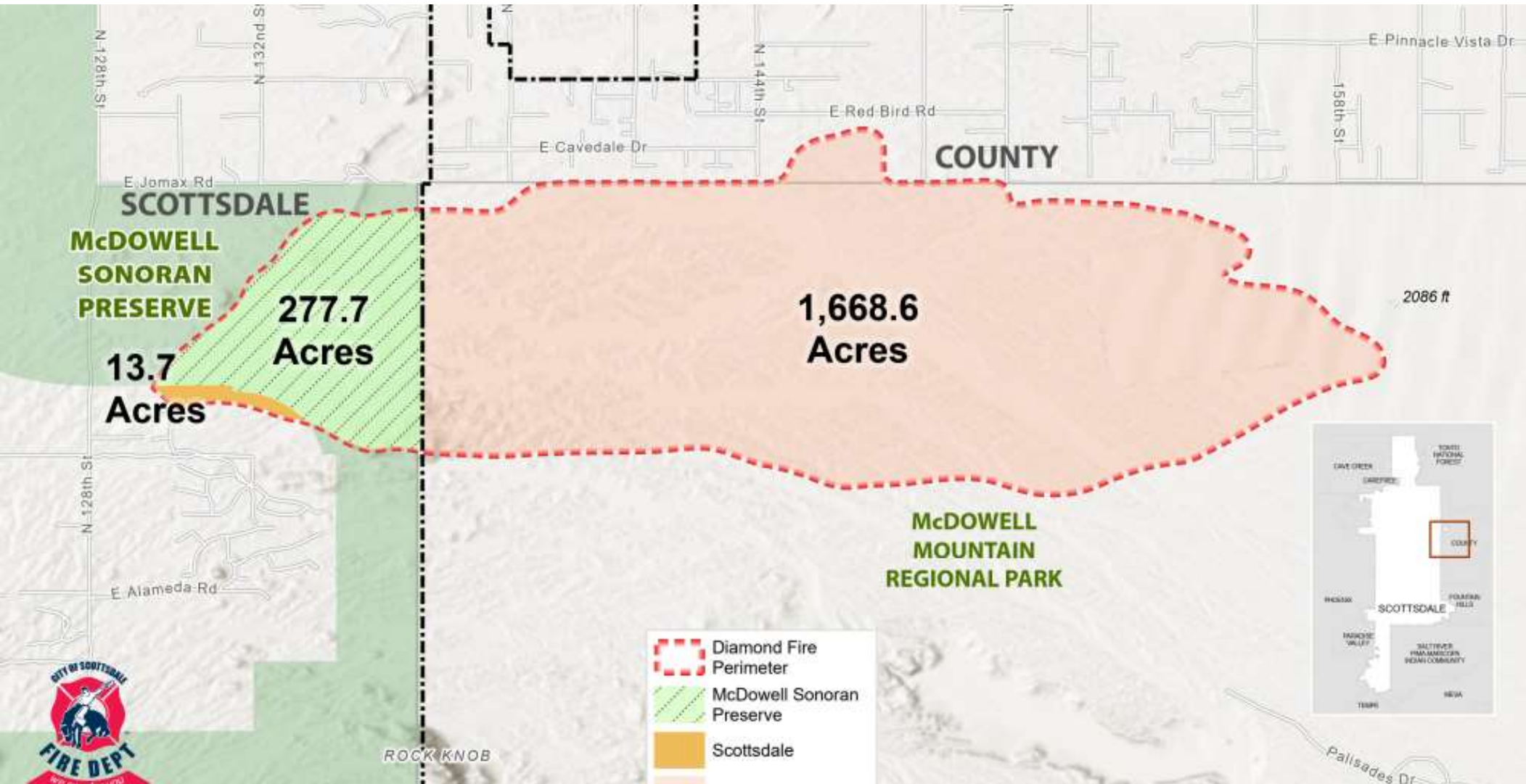
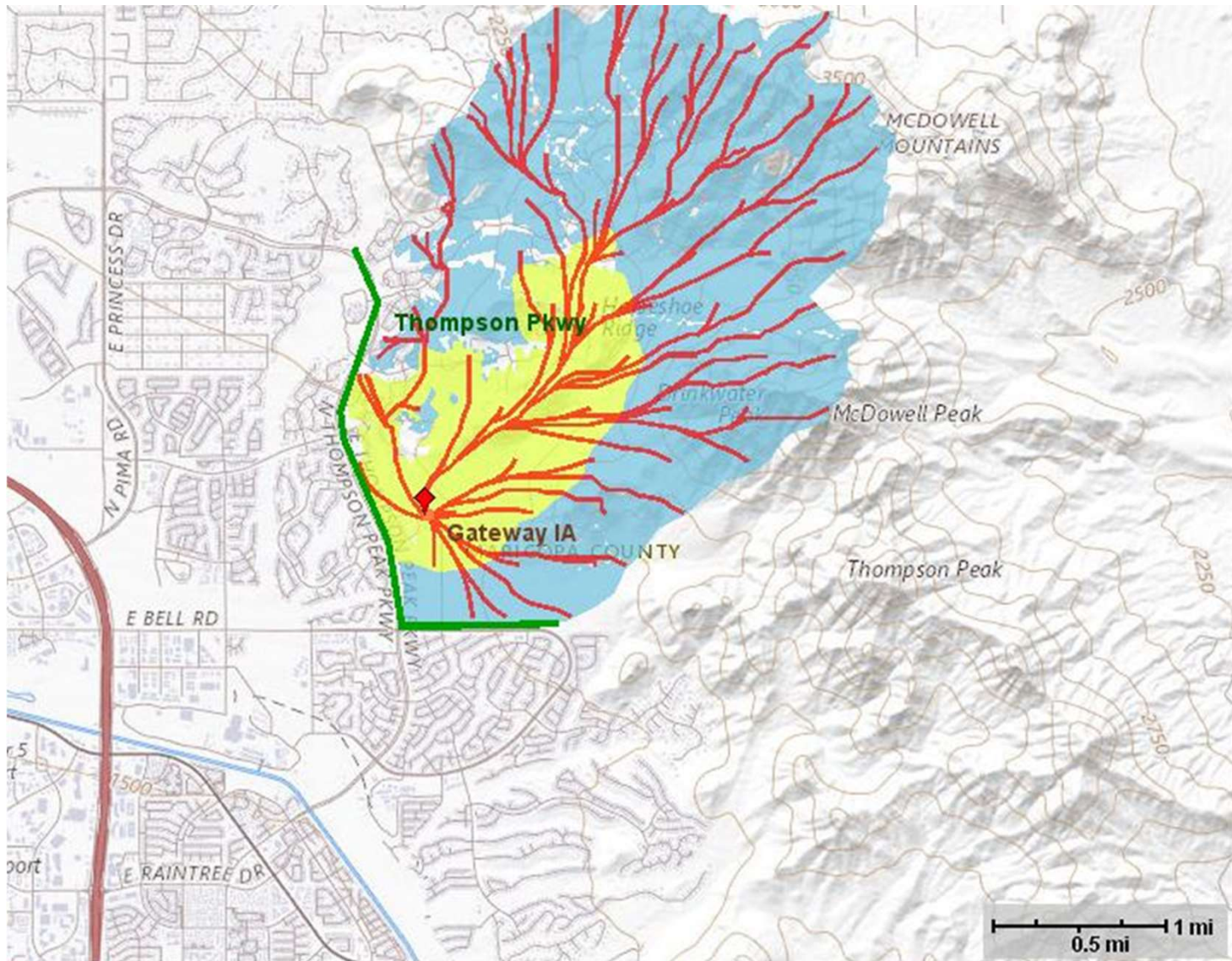


Figure I-2. Maricopa County Cumulative Risk Analysis

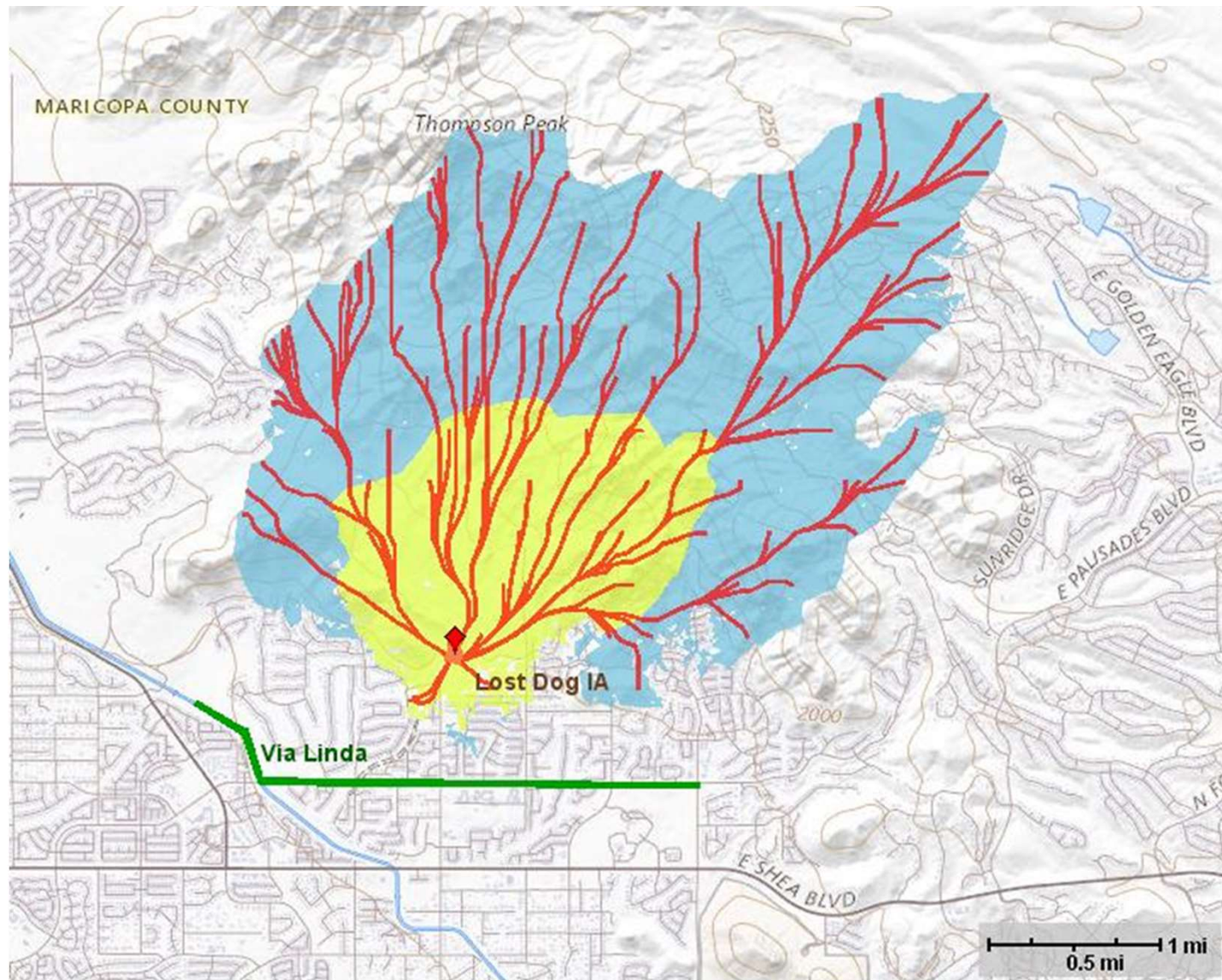
# Scottsdale Brush Fires 5 Yr History







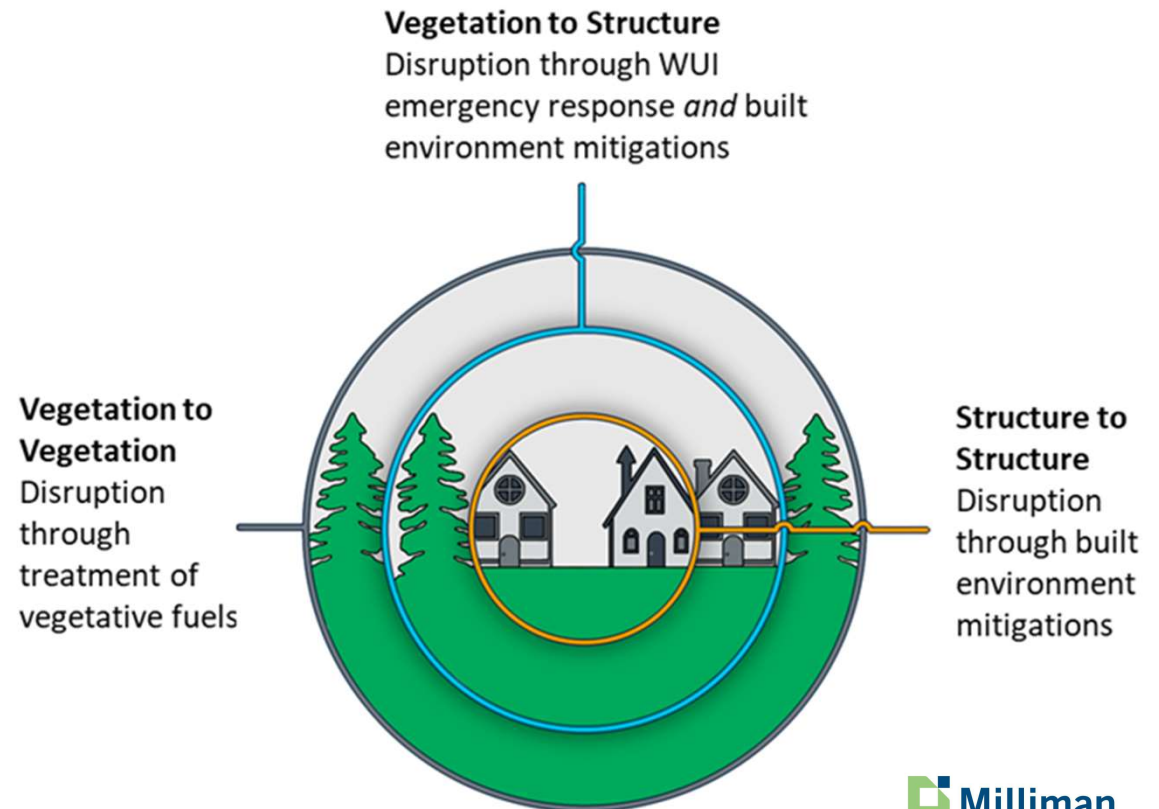
— Major Paths    
 — Ignitions    
 — Barriers    
 ◆ Point of Origin



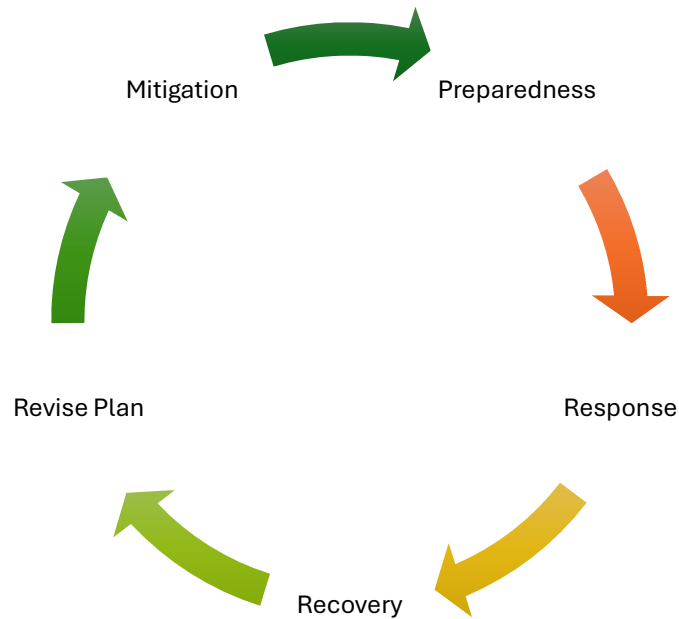
- Major Paths
- Ignitions
- Barriers
- Point of Origin

# Fire flow Pathways

- Wildfire enters communities via (3) pathways
  - Vegetation to vegetation
  - Vegetation to structure
  - Structure to structure
- Our goal is to disrupt these pathways in verifiable ways
  - Fuel Treatments
  - Defensible Space
  - Home Hardening
  - WUI Suppression Response



# Year Around Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Timeline



## Wildfire Season Planning Items and Timelines

Time	Topic	Responsible Division
Fall and Winter	CWPP, Fuels Mitigation, Grants	EM
Jan - Mar	RT130, Pack Testing, and Red Card Certs	EM / Ops
Feb	HazVeg Program starts	Ops / PIO / EM
Feb - Mar	Verify Water Dip Sites and Agreements	Ops / EM
Mar	Shoulder Grading	EM
Mar	Preserve Steward & Park Ranger Education Roll-out Build Plan	EM / Scott Hamilton
Mar	Partner Reach outs - DFFM, ADEM, MDEM, Preserve, Streets, all city departments + table top	EM / Ops / Prevention
Mar	Ops Wildland Apparatus Prep	Ops / Fleet
Mar	PIO Messaging and Education Roll-out	PIO / Ops
Mar	AWIMA	Ops
Mar	Wildfire Resources Outside of City Deployment Discussion	Ops
Apr / May	Fire Danger Sign Changes / Sign Trailers Deployed	
Apr	Fireworks Permits Preserve Construction Inspections Preserve Construction Flyer in Building Plans	Prevention
May	Ready Set Go - Door hangers & Water Bill insert HOA / Firewise Presentations	EM / PIO / Prevention
May 15 - June 15	Retail Signage, Show Promoters Awareness	Prevention
May 20 - June 20	Fireworks Retail Inspections	Prevention



# Current Risk Reduction Efforts:

- Community Engagement:
  - Community Risk Reduction Officers
  - Meetings with HOAs and residents
  - Construction fire safety guidelines letter included in every plan review
  - Meetings with home builders
- Fuels Reduction
- Inspections:
  - Inspector construction site inspections (over 200 per year)
  - Hazardous Vegetation assessments performed by crews (over 37,700 properties)
  - Home Safety defensible space assessments performed by Community Risk Reduction Captains (approximately 100 per year)
- Fire Code Enforcement (Chapters 33 and 35 of the International Fire Code)

# Firewise Program

- Limitations within NAOS

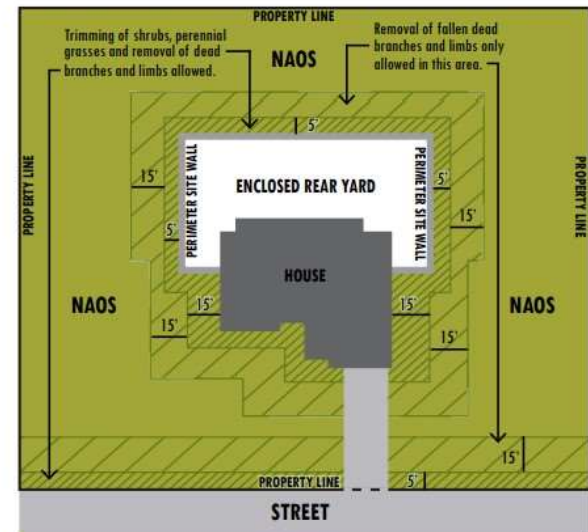
## Can I clean up an NAOS easement that is on my property?

NAOS maintenance is limited to the removal of man-made debris, wash obstructions, invasive plants including desert broom, parasitic plant growth only as it relates to the health of the host plant, and the creation of defensible space as recommended by the Fire Department. Dead plants, such as saguaros that have fallen over, serve as animal habitat and are to be left in place unless it is determined that they pose a health and safety concern.

## Can I create a firebreak in NAOS?

In cooperation with the Fire Department, it has been determined that a defensible zone may be maintained within 30 feet of a habitable structure with city approval. Contact the Fire Department at (480) 312-FIRE with questions.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE		
	Homes	Walls & Streets
Trim Live Vegetation	15 feet	5 feet
Remove Dead Vegetation	15 feet	15 feet
Total Defensible Dimensions	30 feet	20 feet



# Firewise Program

Before and After

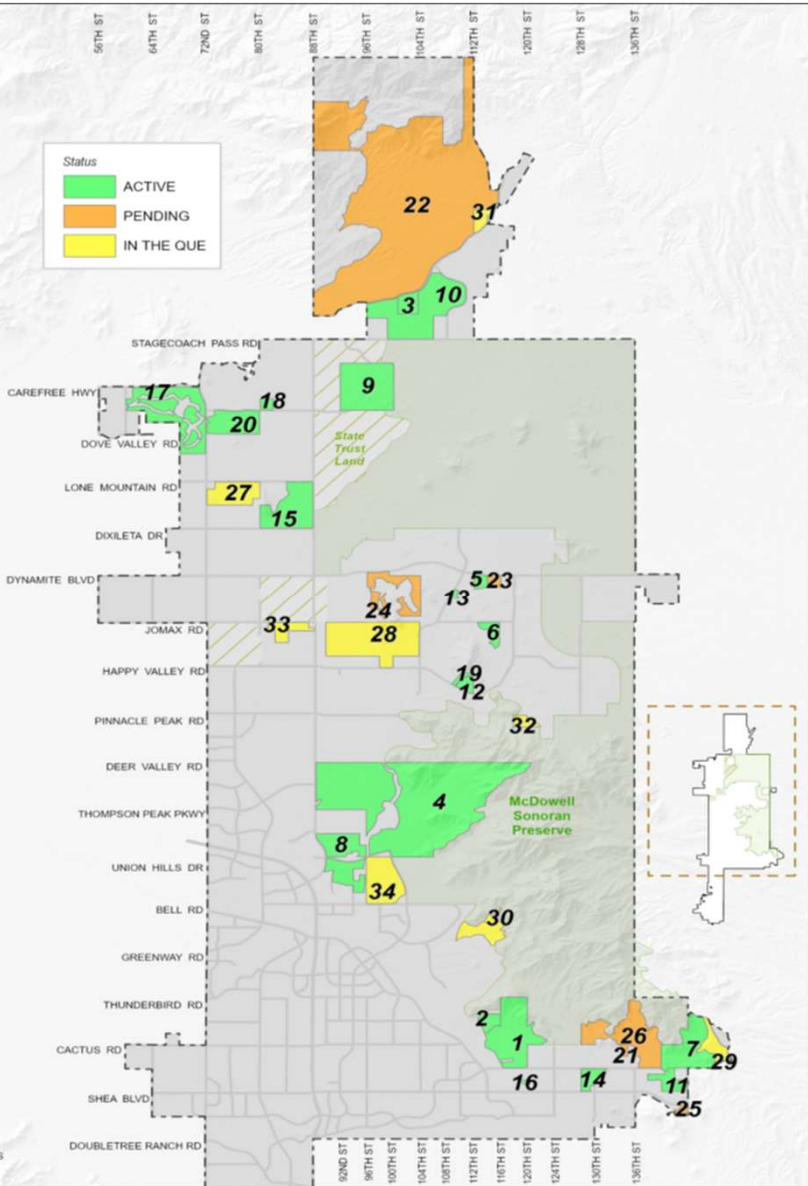


# Scottsdale Firewise Communities

**Status**

- ACTIVE
- PENDING
- IN THE QUE

ID	Community
1	Ancala HOA
2	Ancala West Estates
3	Cresita Norte
4	DC Ranch
5	Desert Diamond Estates HOA
6	Desert Views/Four Peaks
7	Hidden Hills of Scottsdale Community Assn
8	Ironwood Village Assn
9	Legend Trail Community Assn
10	Mirabel Community Assn
11	Paloma Paseo HOA
12	Quail Ridge at Troon Village
13	Quisana
14	Rio Montano
15	Sincudabos
16	Sonoran Estates
17	Tenavilla
18	Vendrite at Woodland Estates
19	Whispering Ridge at Troon Village Owners Assn
20	Winfield
21	Coyote Canyon
22	Desert Mountain
23	Desert Vista
24	Estancia
25	Saddleview
26	Scottsdale Mountain
27	Bellavista
28	Desert Highlands Area A
29	Eagle Ridge At Fountain Hills
30	One Hundred Hills
31	Quail Ridge
32	Troon Highlands Estates HOA
33	Vistana
34	Windgate Ranch



# High Risk Activity (Hot Work)

## What it is:

Any activity that creates a source of ignition — like flames, heat, or sparks.

- **Direct hot work:** Tools or equipment that produce flames.
- **Indirect hot work:** Processes like cutting or grinding that generate sparks.

## How to Control Hot Work:

- ✓ Complete a **risk assessment** for the work area.
- ✓ Check for other nearby work, flammable materials, equipment condition, and worker training.
- ✓ Use a **Hot Work Permit**, especially in areas not designed for hot work.
- ✓ Take extra care in **high-risk areas** (like confined spaces or where flammable substances are present).
- ✓ Consider **safer alternatives** before starting hot work.

We all share the responsibility to ensure hot work is properly controlled and everyone stays aware of the risks

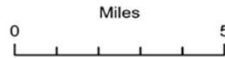
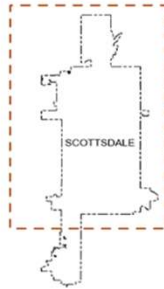


Mitigating hot work starts.

### 2021 Construction Site Safety Inspections

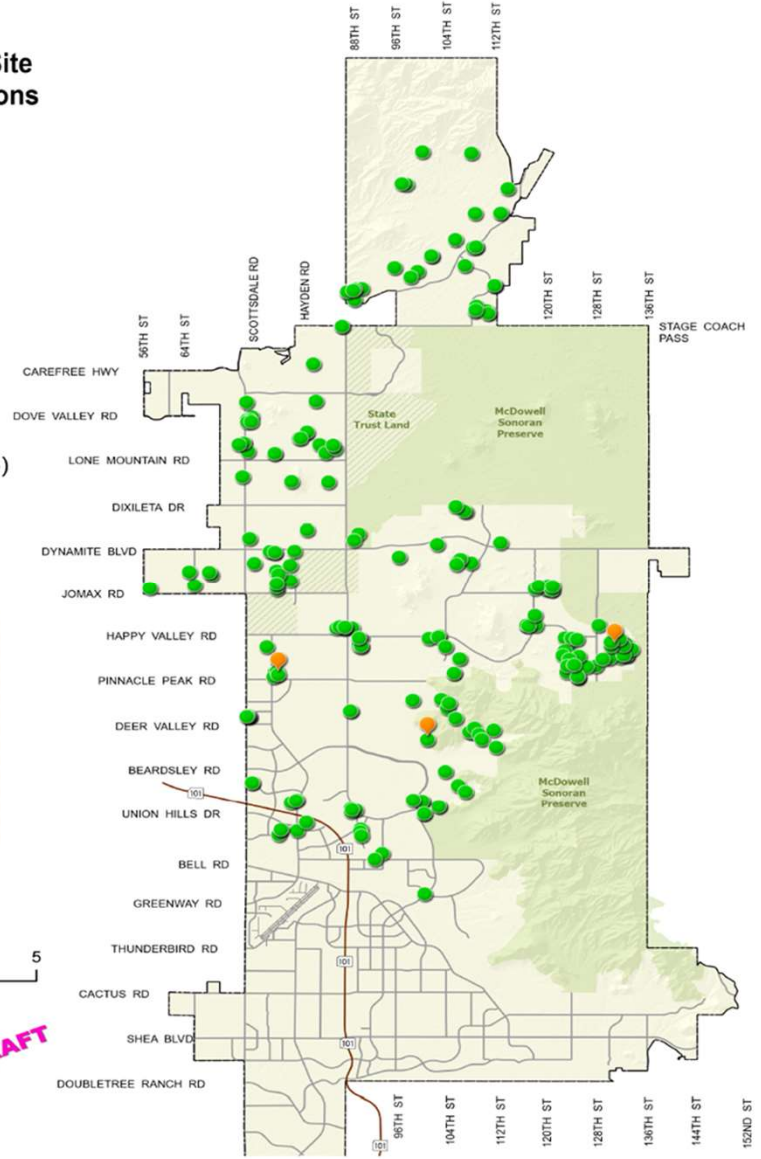


- Pass (226)
- Fail (3)



**DRAFT**

City of Scottsdale GIS  
4/10/2023



**FP**

# 2024 SFD Hazardous Vegetation Review

Review Status

All Locations

Issues

No Issues

Station/Shift

All



Locations Reviewed

33,733

Last update: 9 seconds ago

Total Issues Found

348

Last update: 9 seconds ago

Review Progress



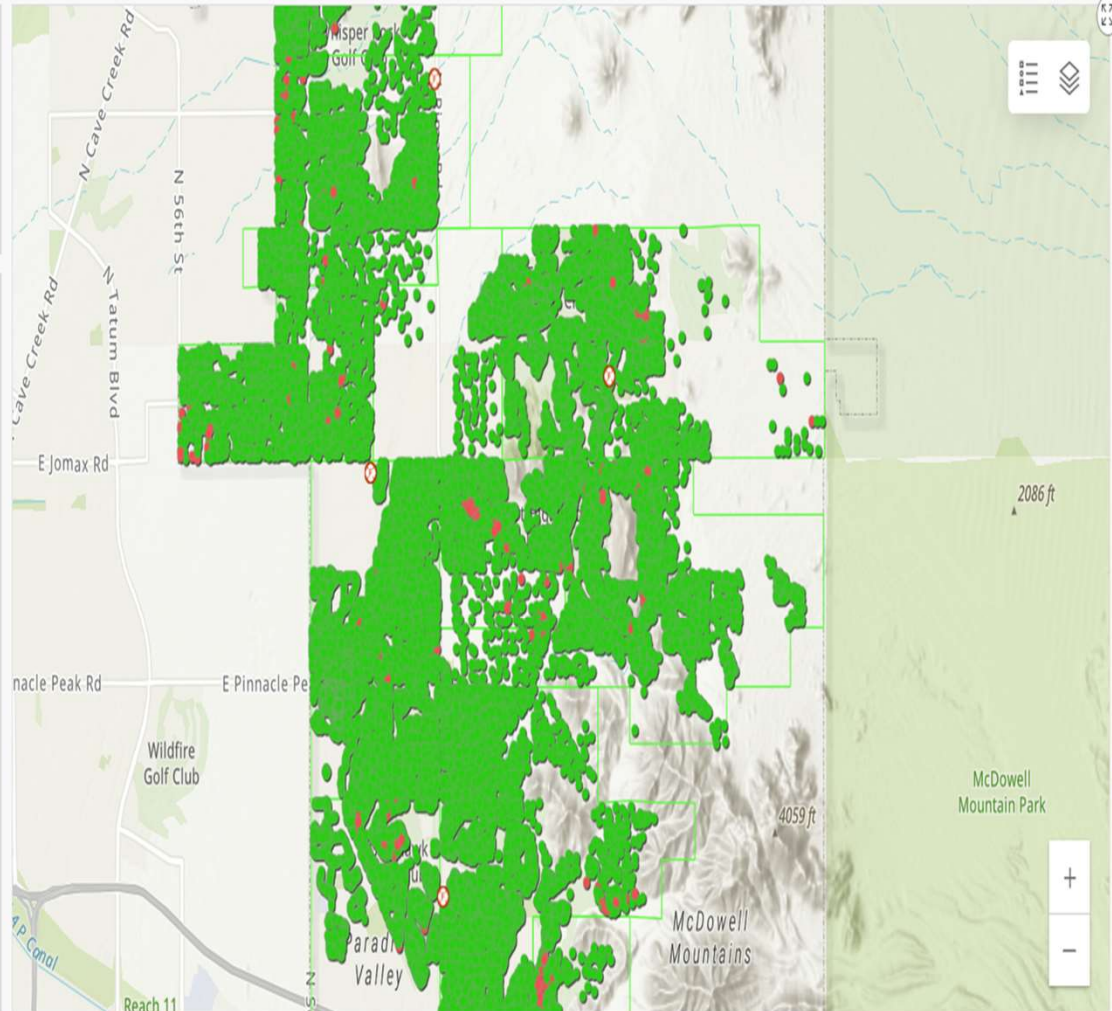
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Activity Today

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FP

Locations Reviewed



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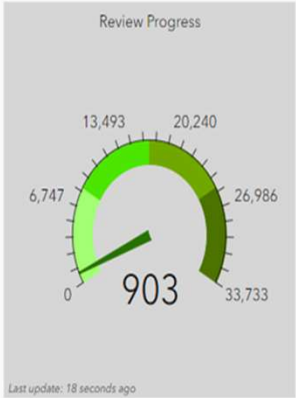
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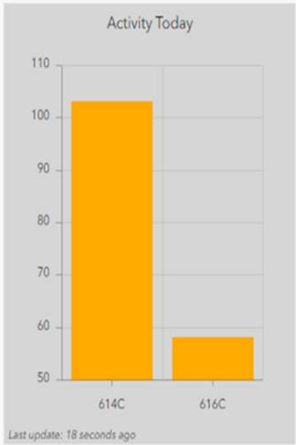


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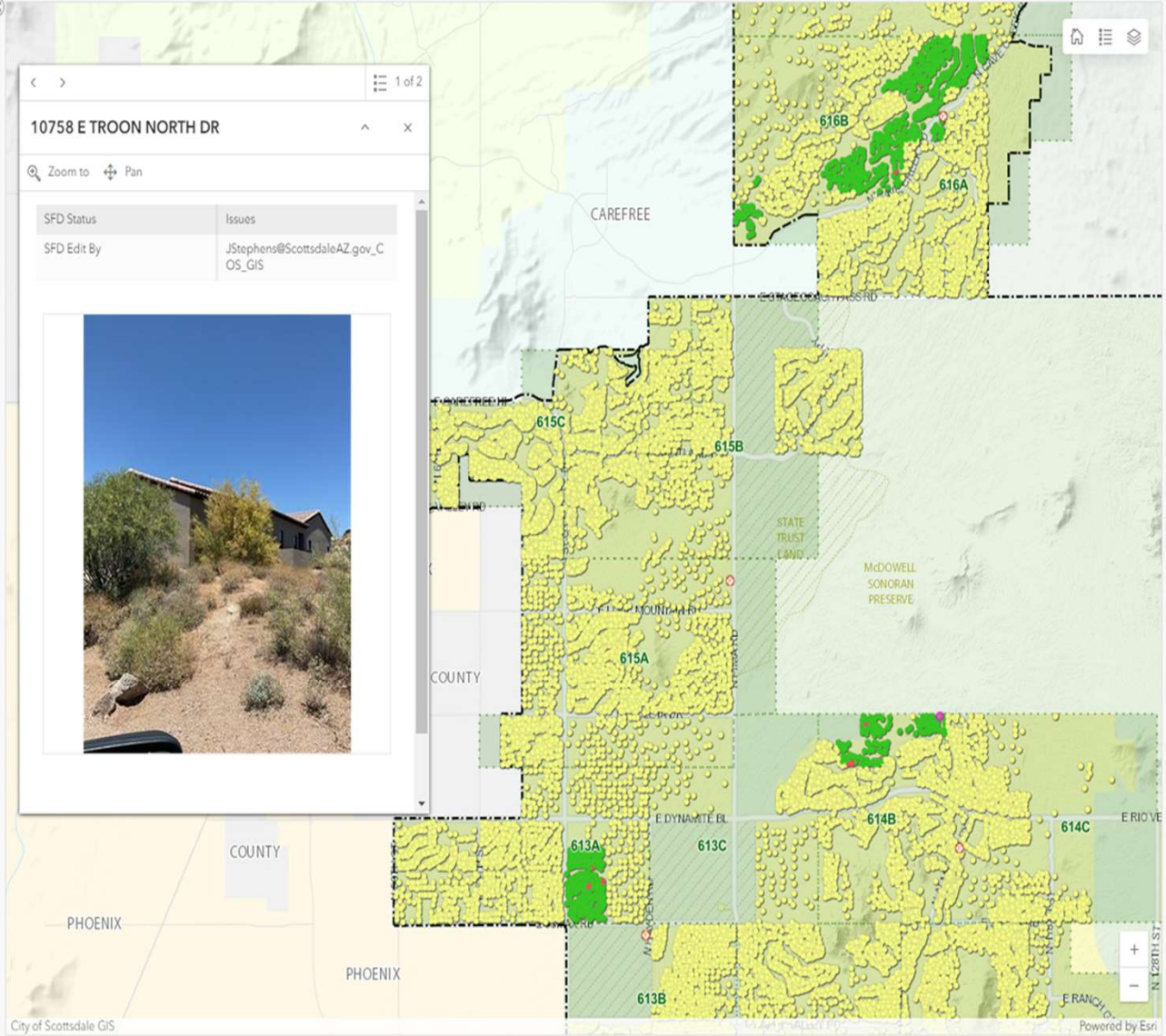
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Zoom to Pan

SFD Status	Issues
SFD Edit By	JStephens@ScottsdaleAZ.gov_C OS_GIS

City of Scottsdale GIS

Powered by Esri



# Brush Program

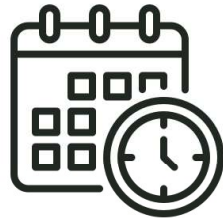
## Collection Services



**DC Ranch  
Area 2**



**Pile Size Limit  
10' x 6' x 4'  
9 Cubic Yards**



**NAOS  
Clean Out  
Courtesy**

**Jan, Feb, Mar,  
Apr, Nov, Dec**



### Roll-Off Program

**Current Pull Charge  
\$626.01**

**Includes (3) Free Tons  
Additional Tonnage Fee  
\$47.79 Per Ton**

**Waive the Pull Charge  
Only Charge for Tonnage  
\$47.79 Per Ton**



### Need Your Assistance

**Lithium batteries  
disposed of in trash,  
recycling or brush piles  
can ignite fires in  
collection trucks,  
endangering workers,  
damaging equipment, and  
increasing costs for  
residents.**

**Solid Waste**

## Ready. Set. Go!

The Ready, Set Go! program encourages proactive measures to take before an emergency and actions to follow when Scottsdale is threatened by disasters.

### Ready. "Prepare Now"

- Be aware of hazards that threaten Scottsdale (fire, floods, etc.)
- Create defensible space around your home by clearing 30 to 100 feet of vegetation to protect it from fire.
- Build an emergency GO Kit with enough food, water and emergency supplies for 72 hours.
- Write a family communication and evacuation plan.

### Set. "Be Alert"

- There is significant danger in your area.
- Consider voluntarily relocating to a shelter or with family/friends outside the affected area.
- Stay aware of the latest news and information from public safety officials.

### Go! "Evacuate"

- Danger in your area is imminent and life-threatening. Take your emergency Go Kit and evacuate immediately to a shelter or with family/friends outside the affected area.
- Follow instructions from emergency personnel and stay on designated evacuation routes.



For more information about Evacuation and Preparedness, use the QR code or visit [www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov) and Search "Ready Set Go"

## ATTENTION!

Your home is in the Wildland Urban Interface; you are at risk. Take steps to protect your life and property!



Our desert climate puts our beautiful Scottsdale surroundings and homes at increased risk for wildland fire during the months of April to September.

Scottsdale Fire Department asks for your assistance with making your property safer. Take steps to protect your property to reduce your risk of a fire.

Use the following tips to safeguard your home:

- Create a 20-foot fire safety zone around your home and other structures. This zone should be an area that is free of dried weeds and grass and dead vegetation.
- Trim your trees and remove any dead branches or leaves. Also, keep grass and foliage short around the tree.
- Do not keep any flammable items or foliage underneath wooden decks and combustible overhangs.
- Keep your gutters, eaves and roof clear of leaves and other debris.
- There are strict regulations about what vegetation can be removed. Visit [www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov) and search "NAOS."

Always remember to report smoke or fire by calling 911



Questions? More information about wildland fire prevention can be found by using the QR code or visiting [www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://www.ScottsdaleAZ.gov), and search "Wildfire Readiness"

Comments/Notes

We Care for You.

Scottsdale Fire Department  
8401 E Indian School Rd  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
480-312-8000  
@ScottsdaleFire



Scottsdale Fire Department  
8401 E. Indian School Rd.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251

Questions?  
Information about Natural Area  
Open Space (NAOS) and  
Wildland Fires  
is on our website:  
[www.ScottsdaleFD.com](http://www.ScottsdaleFD.com)  
or use the QR code below.



YOUR PROPERTY  
IS AT RISK  
FOR WILDFIRE

A proactive inspection was conducted at your property in north Scottsdale. It was determined that you need to take steps to reduce your risk of succumbing to wildfire.

Create a 20-foot fire safety zone around your home and other structures. Please remove invasive plants, grasses and dead vegetation and limb up trees to 4 feet from the ground in your yard.  
*Only perform work on your own property.*

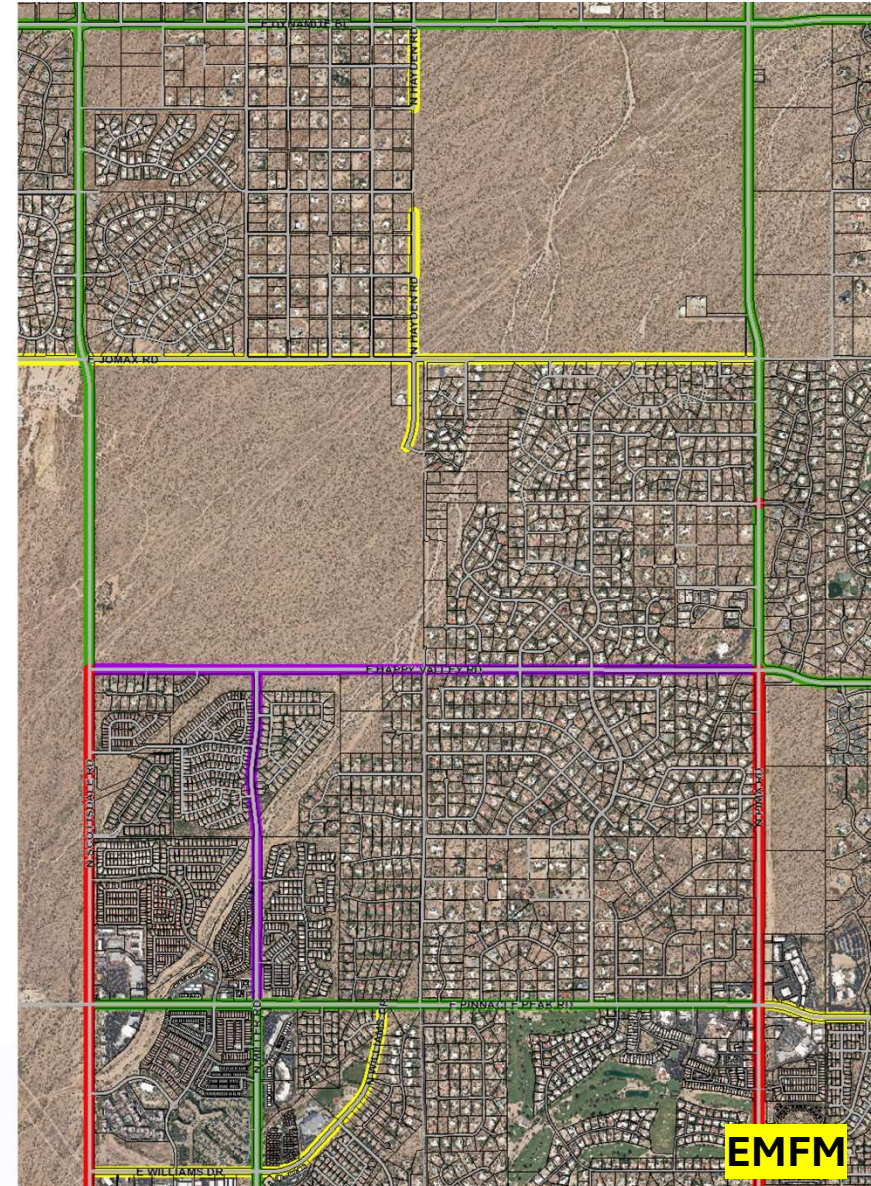
THIS  
IS YOUR  
GOAL

HELP US HELP YOU PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM WILDFIRE

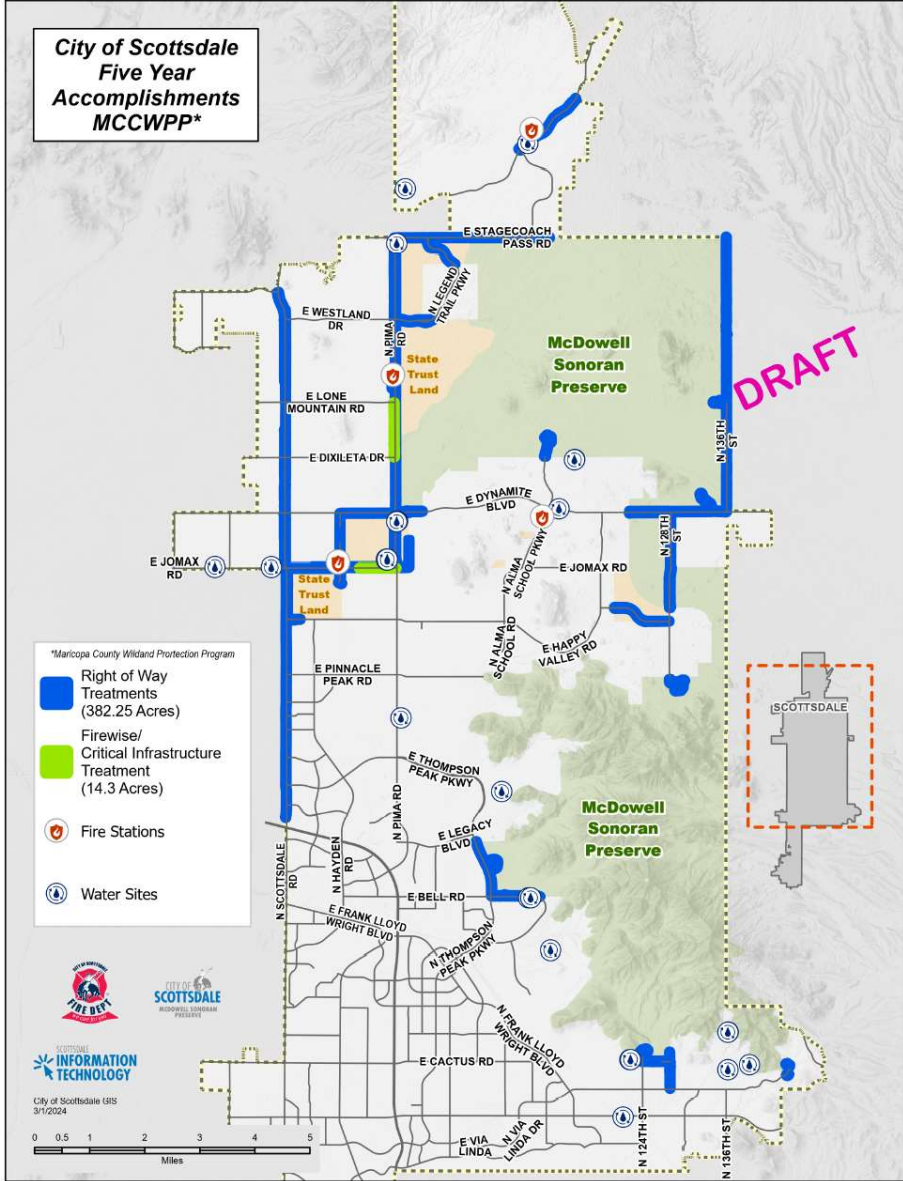
# ROW as Firebreaks

- Classification
  - $\frac{1}{4}$  ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  , 1-mile interval
  - Street, Trail, Powerline Corridor
  - Scenic Corridor
- Desired Width
- Access to Water

- Major Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector



**City of Scottsdale  
Five Year  
Accomplishments  
MCCWPP\***



**DRAFT**

# Stagecoach Pass (Preserve-WAPA Line)

**Before**



**After**



# Scottsdale Road Project

**Before**



**After**



# Westland Drive(Scottsdale Road to Hayden)

**Before**



**After**



# Site 42

**Before**



**After**





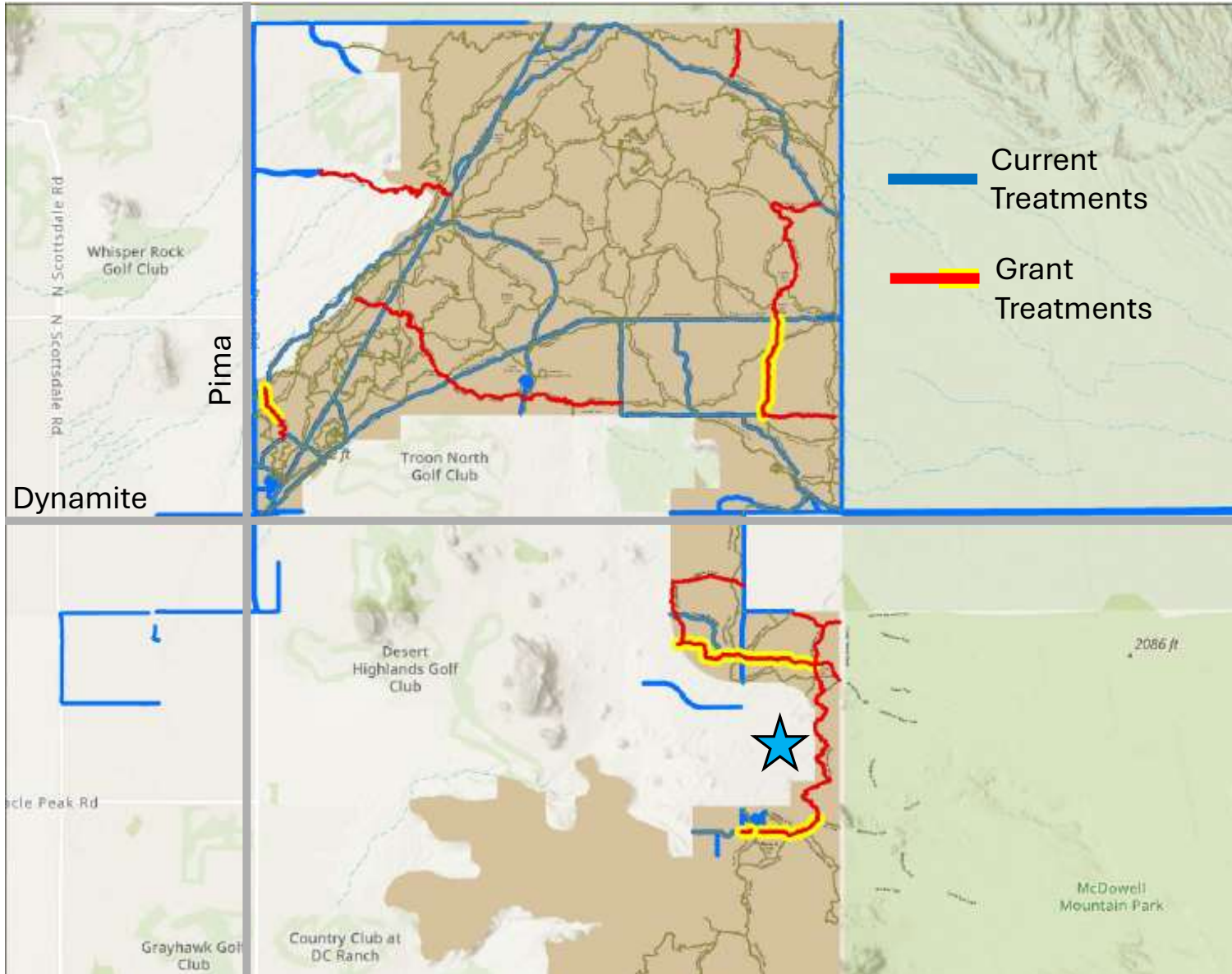
# Fire Station 611/ Foothills Police Station

**Before**

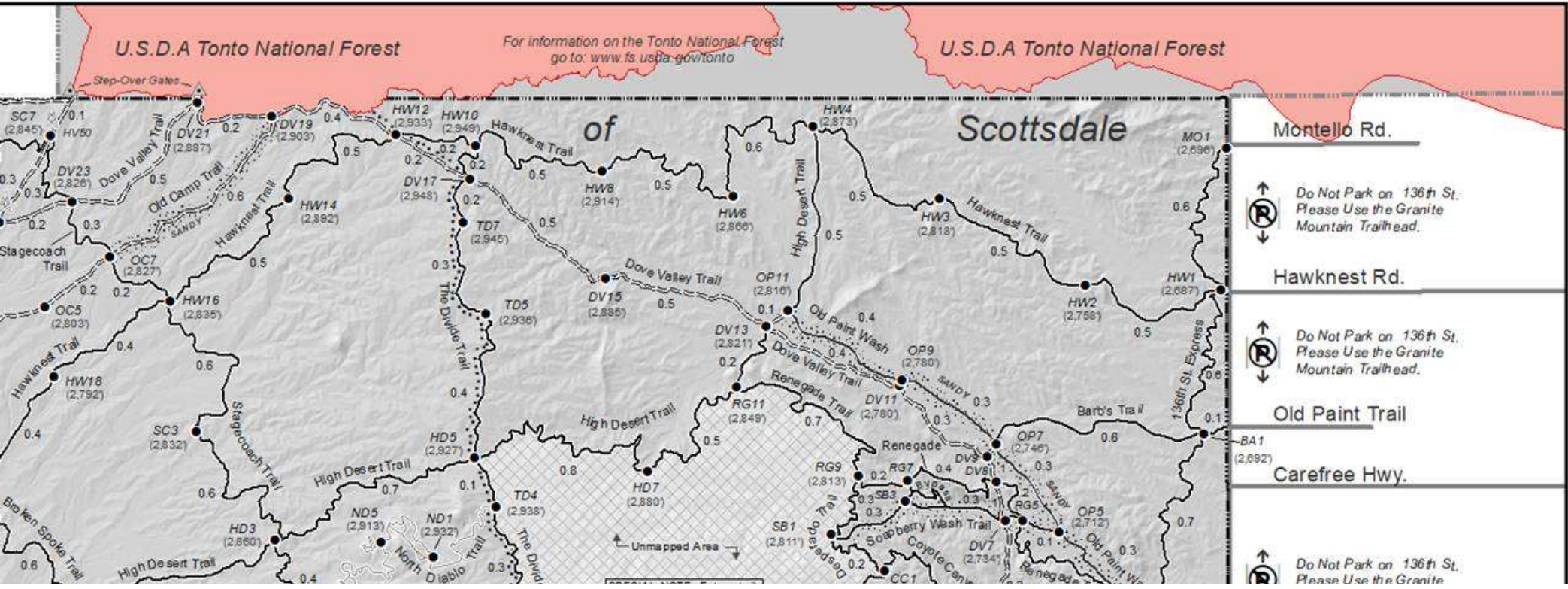


**After**





**EMFM/Preserve**



**EMFM/Preserve**



EMFM/Preserve



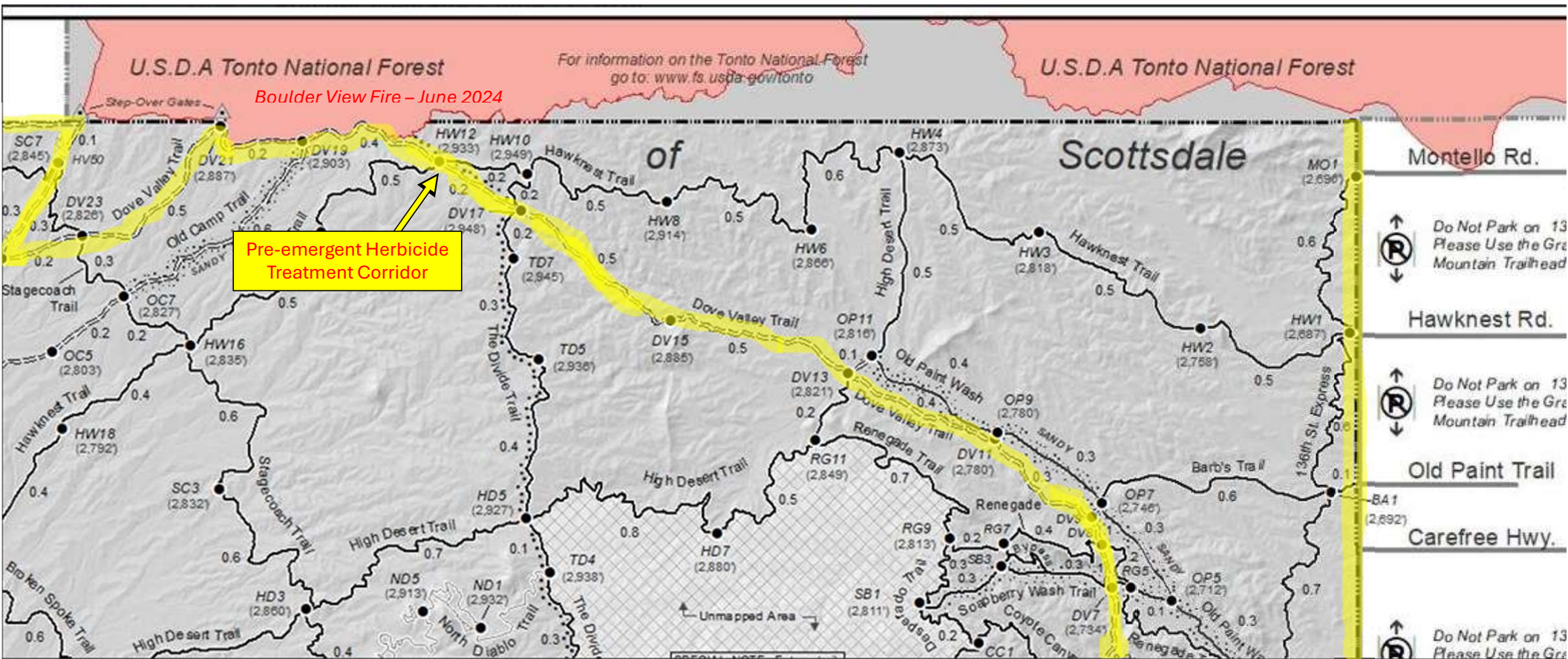
**EMFM/Preserve**



EMFM/Preserve



EMFM/Preserve



**EMFM/Preserve**



# Why be concerned?

- **Increased Wildfire Risk**
  - Scottsdale's desert landscape is prone to wildfires
- **Property & Life Safety**
  - Homes near wildlands face higher fire danger
  - Firewise practices create defensible space and reduce risk
- **Financial Impact**
  - Wildfires financially impact the community due to damage of homes, public infrastructure, and similar assets
  - Wildfires financially impact the community through clean-up and restoration
- **Environmental & Community Resilience**
  - Protects natural habitats and reduces emergency response strain
  - Strengthens overall wildfire preparedness in Scottsdale



# ESL / NAOS

- **History – Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) Ordinance**

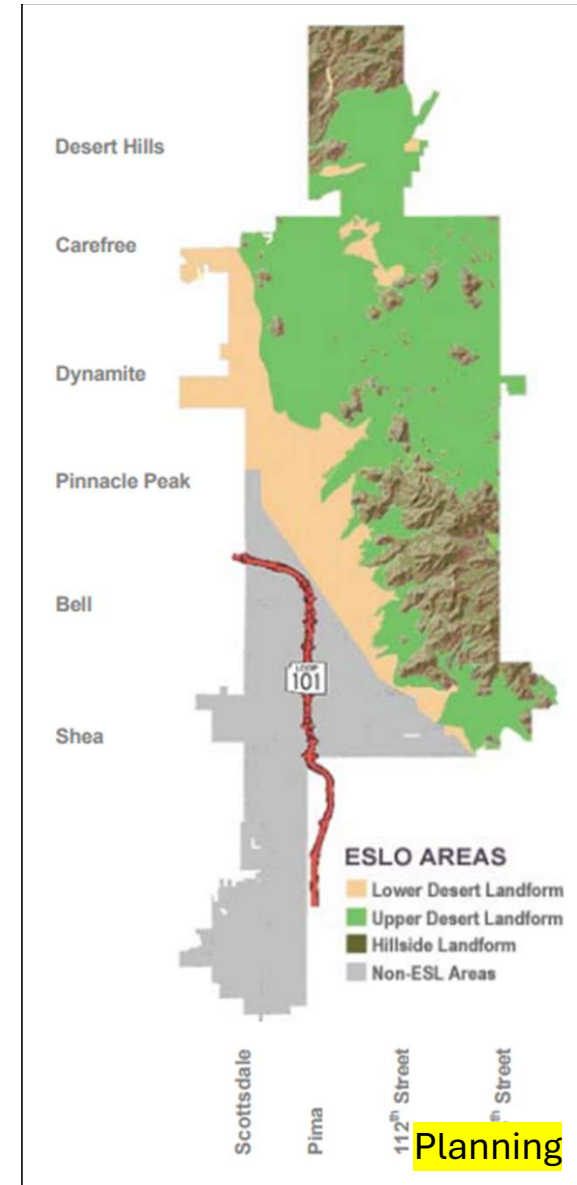
- 1979 - Hillside Ordinance
- 1991 - ESL (Version I)
- 2001 - ESL (Version II)
- 2002 - ESL (Version III)
- 2004 - ESL (Version IV)

- **Purpose and Character**

- To identify and protect environmentally sensitive lands in the city and to promote the public health, safety and welfare by providing appropriate and reasonable controls for the development of such lands.

- **Key Elements**

- Dedication of Natural Area Open Space (NAOS)
- Native Plant Ordinance
- Defensible Space



# Invasive Plants

The City encourages and directs the removal of invasive plants as they:

- Create fuel for fire and promote the spread of fires
- Damage the ecosystem by displacing native plants
- Alter water flow patterns

*Visit [ScottsdaleAZ.gov](http://ScottsdaleAZ.gov) and search “Native Plants” for a list of protected plant species.*

Salt Cedar



Buffel Grass



Desert Broom



Fountain Grass



# Maintenance of NAOS

Must remain in its **natural desert state** (no grading, clearing, or structures).

- **Allowed:**

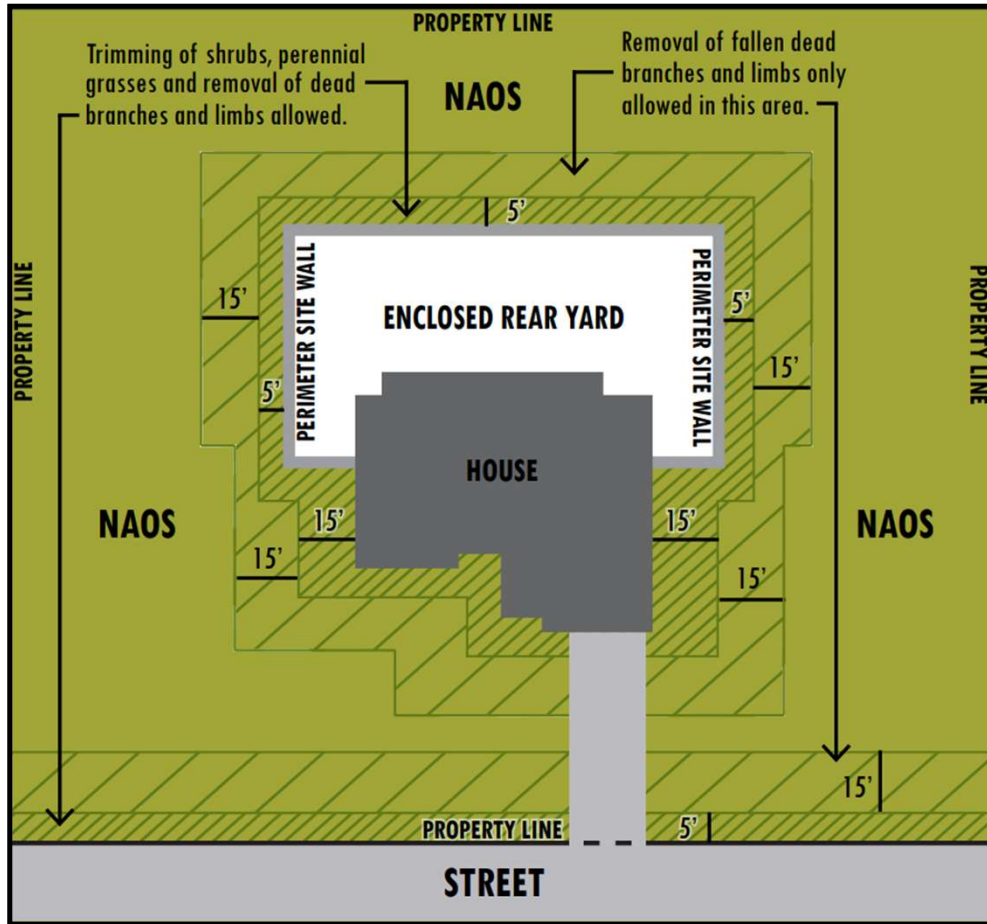
- Remove **man-made debris, wash obstructions, and invasive plants** (e.g., desert broom).
- Limited removal of **parasitic plant growth** if harming host plants.

- **Prohibited:**

- Pruning or removing **native plants**.
- Adding **decomposed granite, mulch, or non-native plants**.
- Using **pesticides or traps**.

## **Fire Defensible Areas (Within 30 Feet of a Structure)**

- Goal: Reduce wildfire risk while preserving NAOS.
- Allowed:
  - **Trim shrubs, grasses, and remove dead branches/limbs.**
  - Maintain **5-15-30 foot defensible space** per Fire Department guidelines.



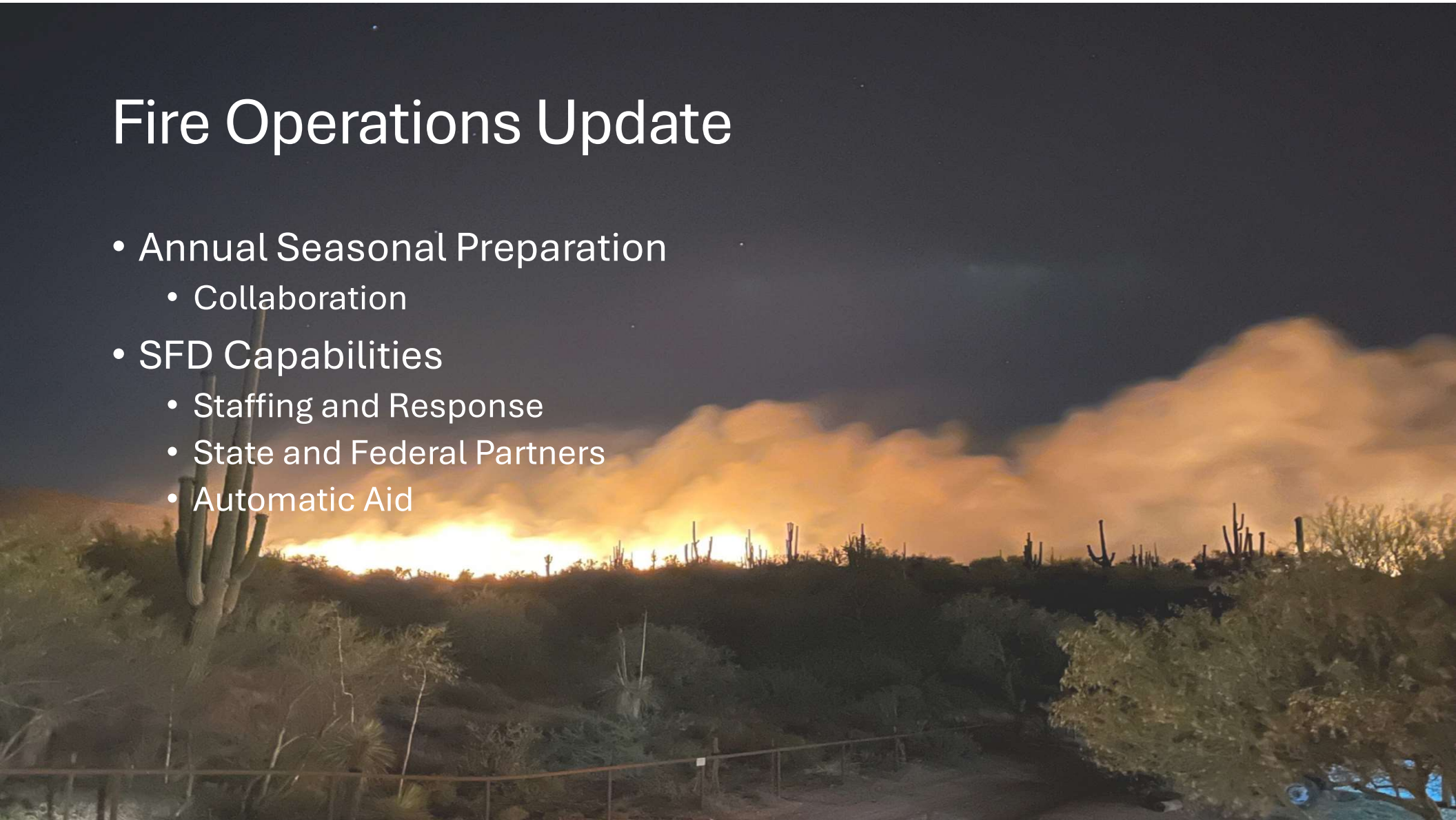
# Creating Defensible Space for Wildfire Protection

Homeowners and contractors should maintain a **defensible space** to protect structures from wildfires. This buffer zone reduces fire risk by removing flammable vegetation and creating a fire break.



# Fire Operations Update

- Annual Seasonal Preparation
  - Collaboration
- SFD Capabilities
  - Staffing and Response
  - State and Federal Partners
  - Automatic Aid



# Emergency Notifications



<https://www.maricopa.gov/5438/Wireless-Emergency-Alerts-WEA>

Scottsdale launches RAVE Alert System for emergency notifications

ONLINE ACCESSIBLE

**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE**

Residents and interested persons can subscribe to emergency alerts.

TEXT  
Scottsdale  
to  
77295

**Sign up**

Scottsdale Resident sign up:  
[Smart911.com](https://www.smart911.com)

Non-residents:  
TEXT **Scottsdale** to 77295

**ADDITIONAL INFO:**  
The city encourages all residents to register for emergency alerts. The system allows users to receive customizable community notifications, including updates on weather, safety, and utility issues. Alerts are sent via text, email, or voice message and can be tailored to individual preferences.

RAVE ALERT - TEXT Scottsdale TO 77295



# READY SET GO!

## READY

### **Prepare now.**

Register for local emergency alerts. Have a plan & an emergency go kit. Follow local officials on social media.

## SET

### **Be alert.**

Be packed up & ready to go. Monitor news & local official sources. Consider relocating to a safer area.

## GO!

### **Evacuate!**

Follow instructions from officials, stay on designated evacuation routes & avoid closed areas.



[ein.az.gov](http://ein.az.gov)

# Accountability:

- **Scottsdale City Code, Chapter 36 - FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION**
- Prosecutors can, and have, charged responsible persons with reckless burning. Reckless burning is a state crime and cannot be penalized further by ordinance.
- 13-1702. **Reckless burning; classification**
  - A. A person commits reckless **burning** by recklessly causing a fire or explosion which results in damage to an occupied structure, a structure, wildland or property.
  - B. Reckless **burning** is a class 1 misdemeanor.

# Fire Department Recommendations

- Update Scottsdale Community Wildfire Protection Plan Annex to the City of Scottsdale Emergency Response Plan
  - Continued Community Engagement
  - Continued Stakeholder Engagement.
  - Expanded inspection and fire code enforcement.
  - City Code Review and potential revision;
    - Specifically impacting fuel management in the City of Scottsdale.

# Questions and requests