
**Dudek, "Draft Emergency Fire Response Plan for San Fernando Valley
Spineflower Preserves for Newhall Ranch Specific Plan Area"
(January 2008; 2008A)**

M E M O R A N D U M

3738-86C

October 2008

To: Matt Carpenter, Newhall Land
Corey Harpole, Newhall Land

From: Scott Eckardt, Dudek

Re: *Emergency Fire Response Plan for the Newhall Spineflower Conservation Areas*

This memorandum identifies and defines appropriate fire response and suppression techniques within San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*; spineflower or SFVS) preserve areas located on portions of the Newhall Ranch. The Airport Mesa, Grapevine Mesa, Potrero, San Martinez Grande, and Entrada spineflower preserve areas encompass approximately 167 acres entirely within Los Angeles County. SFVS occurs primarily within openings in sparsely vegetated California sagebrush, California buckwheat, and grassland communities on Newhall Land property. Proposed development adjacent to the preserve areas necessitates a proactive management strategy for maintaining SFVS populations while considering the public safety implications resulting from potential wildfire and associated suppression efforts. The wildfire response and suppression recommendations discussed in this memo are intended to serve as a component of the overall spineflower preserve management efforts on Newhall Land properties within Los Angeles County and are intended to be utilized as a tool by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department (CLAFD) during suppression efforts.

Wildfire response efforts must address a full range of factors, including first and foremost, protection of firefighters, public health and safety, protection of “assets,” environmental protection, and consistency with resource management objectives. The recommendations provided herein provide the CLAFD with guidance for emergency fire response within and immediately adjacent to SFVS preserve areas. This memo also outlines pre-fire and suppression management activities. The emergency wildfire response goals for SFVS preserve areas include:

1. Transferring critical SFVS preserve area information to CLAFD firefighting personnel responsible for incident response.
2. Providing public safety through wildfire response and prevention activities.
3. Avoiding catastrophic wildfires that negate the goal of SFVS population protection.

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4. Avoiding unnecessary ground disturbance within the preserve areas.
5. Emphasizing the use of passive fire protection systems, including defensible space management and structural ignitibility policies and practices.
6. Outlining pre-fire and suppression management techniques that compliment overall SFVS preserve objectives.

While this memo focuses on SFVS preserve areas, wildfire does not adhere to ownership or land-use boundaries. As such, it is necessary that cooperation and coordination between stakeholders is a seamless process. The recommendations for map preparation and on-going updates presented in this memo will result in improved communication by making available the most recent site information in a graphic format. This information will be used by preserve management staff and CLAFD firefighting personnel for pre-planning activities and for emergency response purposes. It is expected that this map will be referred to under stressful and potentially threatening circumstances. Therefore, the map needs to be intuitive and quickly understood by CLAFD personnel and by firefighting personnel from neighboring jurisdictions, who, during a large conflagration, may provide mutual aid and may not have familiarity with the preserve areas.

The following recommendations are provided for wildfire response and suppression efforts within the SFVS preserve areas:

1. Structural protection of preserve-adjacent homes or other structures should be focused within the defensible space zones outside of the preserve boundaries. During extreme weather conditions, this may not be possible, but should be given first consideration.
2. Access to the SFVS preserve areas for fire suppression efforts should primarily be via existing paved or dirt roads.
3. Necessary fire suppression actions within the SFVS preserve areas may include one or more of the following: direct attack with engines, fire crews, rotary and fixed wing aircraft, and firing operations. Heavy equipment should be limited to roads within the preserve areas to minimize ground disturbance.
4. Fire line construction activities within the preserve areas should be carried out by hand crews.
5. Dozers/road graders may be activated but should not be put into operation in the preserve area itself unless necessary for improving existing roads for engine access or constructing line or secondary line for preservation of high-value resources.
6. Staging areas for wildfire response should be outside of SFVS preserve areas.

Note: The CLAFD may, at its discretion and following standard incident command procedures, deviate from these recommendations in order to protect public or firefighter safety.

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The following recommendations are included as either pre- or post-fire management techniques and are intended to assist in effective wildfire response and suppression efforts:

1. At least one SFVS preserve management staff member should have a wildland firefighting Red Card which will allow him or her access to the preserve area during a wildfire event.
2. Existing dirt roads and utility easements retained within the preserve should be routinely monitored and maintained to allow emergency vehicle access. Such roads should be closed during extreme fire weather conditions.
3. All road or other preserve access gates should be equipped with a fire department or Knox lock and a Knox box.
4. An SFVS Preserve Fire Response Map should be created upon final establishment of the preserves. The map should be one sheet and should depict critical site features, including SFVS preserve area boundary locations, access roads (paved and dirt), gate locations, fence locations, adjacent fuel modification zone locations, and fire hydrant locations. Further, the SFVS Fire Response Map should include up-to-date emergency contact information for preserve management staff. The map should be updated at least annually (or more frequently to reflect necessary site or contact information changes) and multiple copies of this map should be available year-round and should be provided by preserve management staff to responding fire personnel during a wildfire event. A copy of the map will be kept within the Knox box at the primary preserve entrance.
5. If phos-chek fire retardant is applied to preserve lands during a wildfire event, management staff should wash it from unburned vegetation within the first several days following the fire.