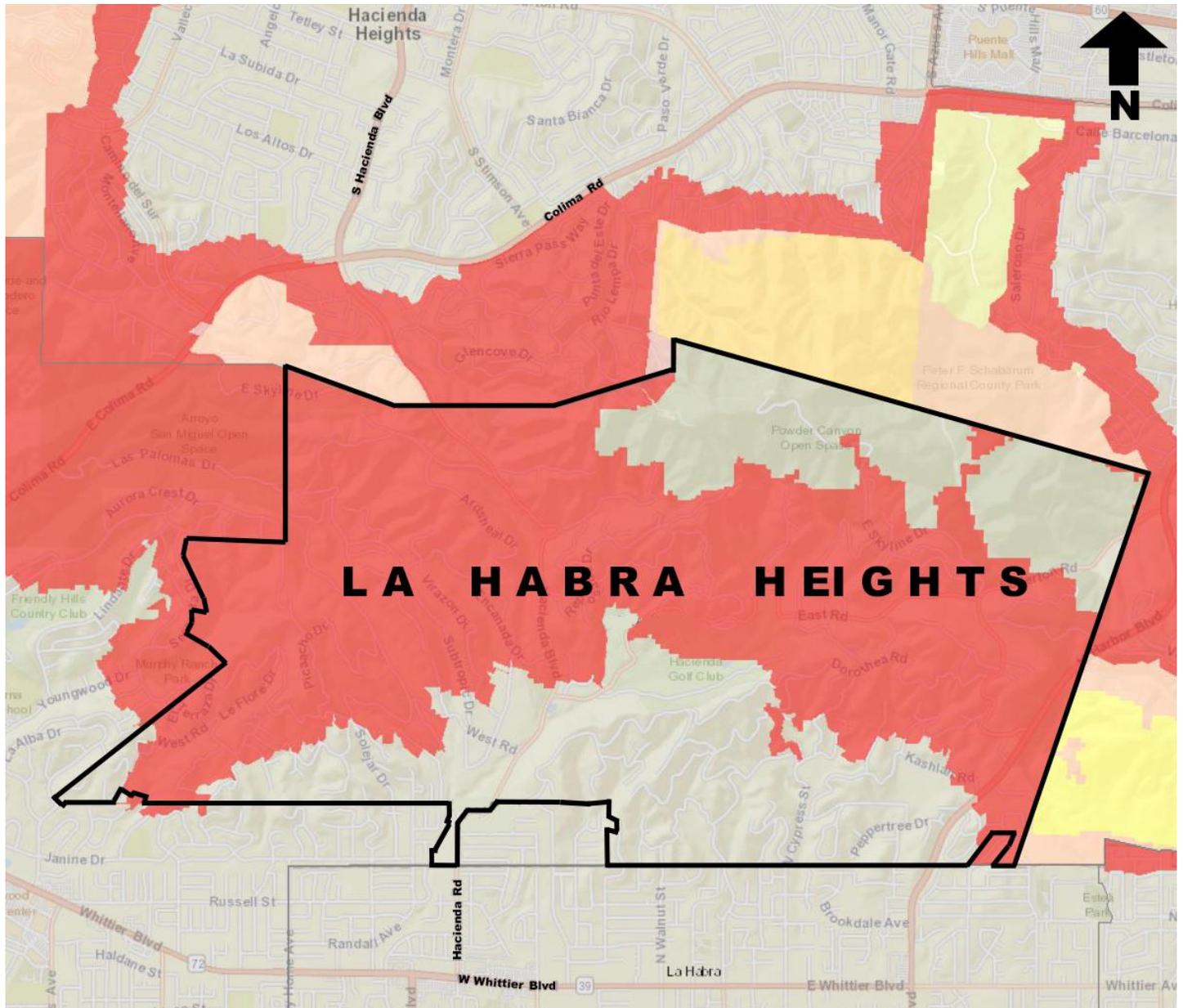


Eucalyptus Tree Article

Before addressing Eucalyptus tree challenges within our City, it is important to educate ourselves about the City's makeup. The State of California provides an Internet Geoportal including data from multiple state agencies. One of the critical items on this portal is information on Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (**VHFHSZ**). The emphasis of the map provided below is the **VHFHSZ** area depicted in orange. More than half of La Habra Heights is in that specific designation, and is surrounded by areas with the same designation.



Further explanations of the different color coded areas can be found by going to the portal. A link to the portal is available on the Emergency Preparedness Committee page on the City's website.

<https://gis.data.ca.gov/app/CALFIRE-Forestry::california-fire-hazard-severity-zone-viewer>

Although all vegetation has the potential of being a fire hazard, over the years there has been exceptional observations made on the way Eucalyptus trees can exacerbate a wildfire event. Eucalyptus blue gum trees are commonly referred to as the "gasoline tree" and are commonly sighted as contributing to devastating fire events. The piles created under the Eucalyptus tree by the shedding of bark and dead leaves is part of the challenge. Another challenge is the oil produced

by the tree which when heated, releases flammable gas that ignites into a fireball. If you combine this effect with our routine Santa Ana winds, it compounds the danger in our community.

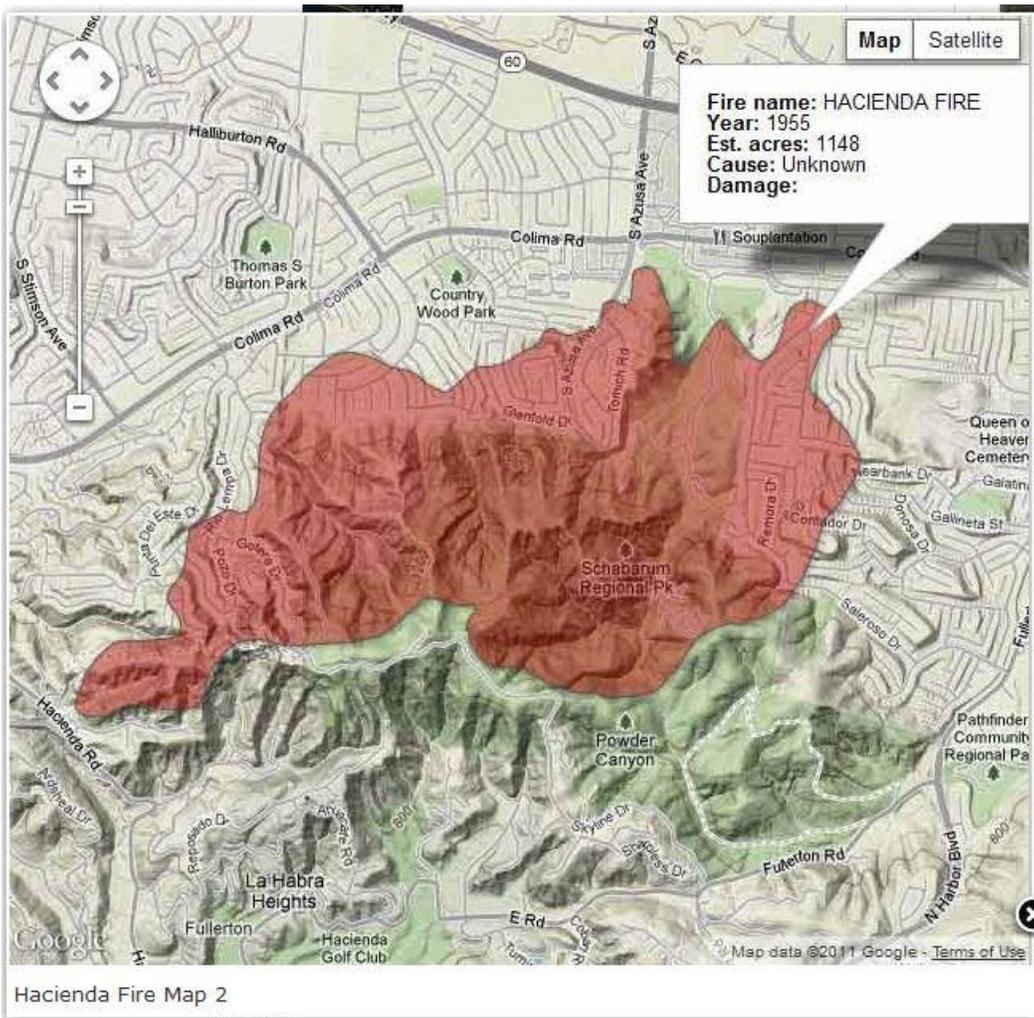
Due to the fire danger that Eucalyptus trees present, the La Habra Heights Fire Department has deemed Eucalyptus trees hazardous and, if you choose to remove such trees from your property, a Eucalyptus tree removal permit is not required. Tree removal is only required in instances of new or significant remodel development projects or when there is a dead tree on a property, but residents can remove Eucalyptus trees voluntarily. The city does not provide financial assistance for tree removal. La Habra Heights Municipal Code section 7.12.50, Tree Preservation, addresses this issue in further detail.

There are concerns about cutting trees if they are not dead. The feeling is that cutting trees, even more fire-prone species like the Eucalyptus, would deforest the rural environment that we all love, and would also drastically affect our wildlife. However, there are ways to cut down trees and still protect both our community and the wildlife.

Southern California Edison, for example, proactively and routinely trims trees which could contribute to a fire event. Pursuant to California Government Code, Public Resources Code § 4292 SCE trims tree branches within 10-12 feet of powerlines to prevent fires emanating from transmission lines. This effort includes Eucalyptus trees. There is ample information on SCE's website which explains the strategy and information to keep in mind when considering the effects on the environment and wildlife when trimming and cutting vegetation. The information from SCE addresses issues such as the preservation of owls' nests. Owls help in keeping the pesky rodent population down and minimize the use of poisons. This also helps reduce the effect on other animals dying due to consuming poisoned carcasses. Links and references to this information are available on the City's website under the Emergency Preparedness Committee page.

Let's not forget about our City's uniqueness and how every resident can do their part to keep the entire community safe from fires. There is a permanent reminder in front of City Hall to one tragic event dating back to 1955. Unfortunately, Eucalyptus trees were part of the problem that contributed to six Firefighter fatalities.

<http://www.wlfalwaysremember.org/incident-lists/266-glenn-rockey.html>



REFERENCES:

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<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2002-sep-17-me-eucalyptus17-story.html>

<https://www.coastsidebuzz.com/are-eucalyptus-trees-flammable/>

<https://www.kqed.org/science/4209/eucalyptus-california-icon-fire-hazard-and-invasive-species>

<https://baynature.org/article/burning-question-east-bay-hills-eucalyptus-flammable-compared/>

<https://daily.jstor.org/how-eucalyptus-trees-stoke-wildfires/>

<https://www.thecommunityvoice.com/article/Iconic-trees-No-more>

<https://serc.berkeley.edu/the-east-bays-burning-question-how-flammable-are-eucalyptus/>

<https://abc7news.com/fire-danger-berkeley-oakland-hills-eucalyptus/324916/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51132965>

<https://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/australia-bushfires-climate-change-impact-and-recovery/>

Southern California Edison

<https://energized.edison.com/stories/sce-tree-trimming-a-critical-year-round-job>

<https://energized.edison.com/stories/effort-to-save-burrowing-owls-goes-underground-in-chino>

California Public Utilities Commission

https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/aspen/westofdevers/plans/nesting_bird_management_plan.pdf

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) produced a Nesting Bird Management Plan to specify the Southern California Edison (SCE) strategy and specific procedures to comply with applicable federal and state regulations and permits as well as to identify specific mitigation measures pertaining to nesting birds encountered during construction of the West of Devers Upgrade Project (Coachella Valley and western portions of Riverside County), and to obtain agency concurrence on the strategy and procedures.

Within the document there is a section that mentions birds and “Strigiformers” , referring to the Owl family name. In this paragraph, that starts with “ Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3505, 3513 – Birds”, it specifically mentions that it is unlawful to destroy the nest or eggs except as otherwise provided by CFGC.

We should keep in mind that this document talks about specific rules and regulations for a specific project involving SCE but it begins to provide a glimpse as to rules and regulations that could have or might have already impacted our community.

YOUTUBE.com - The Hacienda Fire Dedication Memorial

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gbMdtxv-6g>