

Prescribed Grazing for Fire Safety in the Ojai Valley *Community-Supported Grazing Program*

May 16, 2023



Christopher Danch
Executive Director
Co-Founder of CSGP



Cole Bush
Co-Founder &
Advisor of CSGP



Michael Leicht
CSGP Advisor



Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council

Founded in 2000
501(c)(3) Nonprofit



Mission & History

- Promote wildfire safety in the Ojai Valley through community driven collaboration, action and education
- 2000-2019 –managed 26 federally funded grants totaling over \$1.6M with approx. \$2M in matching contributions
- Currently managing over \$2 million with 10 projects
- Administered community-based programs and projects
- Online resources
- Local and regional partnerships

HOLISTIC VISION OF THE OJAI VALLEY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

A Wildfire Risk Mitigation Strategy that enables the Ojai Valley community to better **prepare** for, properly **respond** during, and **recover** more quickly from a catastrophic wildfire event



The resilience and community cohesion created by this Strategy will also strengthen the community for other natural disasters and a rapidly changing world



How do we realize the new vision?

A New Initiative



- 1** Create a Road Map* 
- 2** Identify project areas for focus 
- 3** Design and implement priority projects** 

Road Map: General Concerns

Emergency Communications to Public



Evacuation Improvements



Loss of power to critical facilities



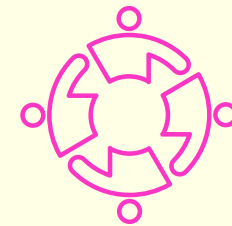
Vulnerable Populations



Improved Emergency Planning



Increased community capacity & resiliency



Road Map Conceptual Project Areas



HIZ surveys, risk scoring, and home hardening

Funded, In Progress

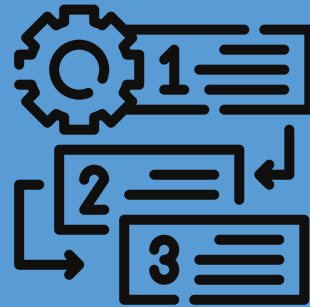


Integrating community water resources



Risk-Mapping, Evacuation Planning & Preparedness

Funded, In Progress



Ojai Valley CWPP

Funded, In Progress



Goat "Super-Highway"

Funded, In Progress



Ojai Valley Microgrid

What We Do: Our Current Projects

Funded, In Progress

- Community-Supported Grazing Program
- Ojai Valley Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Fine-Scale Risk Mapping
- Wildfire Vulnerability & Evacuation Assessment
 - *countywide extension*
- Ember Cast Modeling - *countywide*
- Structural Hardening
- 2010 Ventura County Wildfire Protection Plan Update
- County Coordinator Grant
- Countywide Vulnerability Assessment
- Regional Project Prioritization Plan



Ojai Valley Community-Supported Grazing Program



Community-Supported Grazing Program

GOALS & VISIONS

Overall increased wildfire safety and resiliency for the Ojai Valley and Ventura River Watershed

- Specifically:
 - Reduced fuel loads over a much greater area
 - Large-Scale Wildfire Intensity Reduction Zone- the “Corridor”-continuous as possible
 - Better firefighter access
 - Improved hydrology
 - Transferable Framework
 - Scalable model
- Ecosystem health
- Watershed Protection
- Decreased reliance on fossil fuel-reduced emissions and carbon sequestration
- Building local and regional food and fiber sheds
- Economic development and resiliency

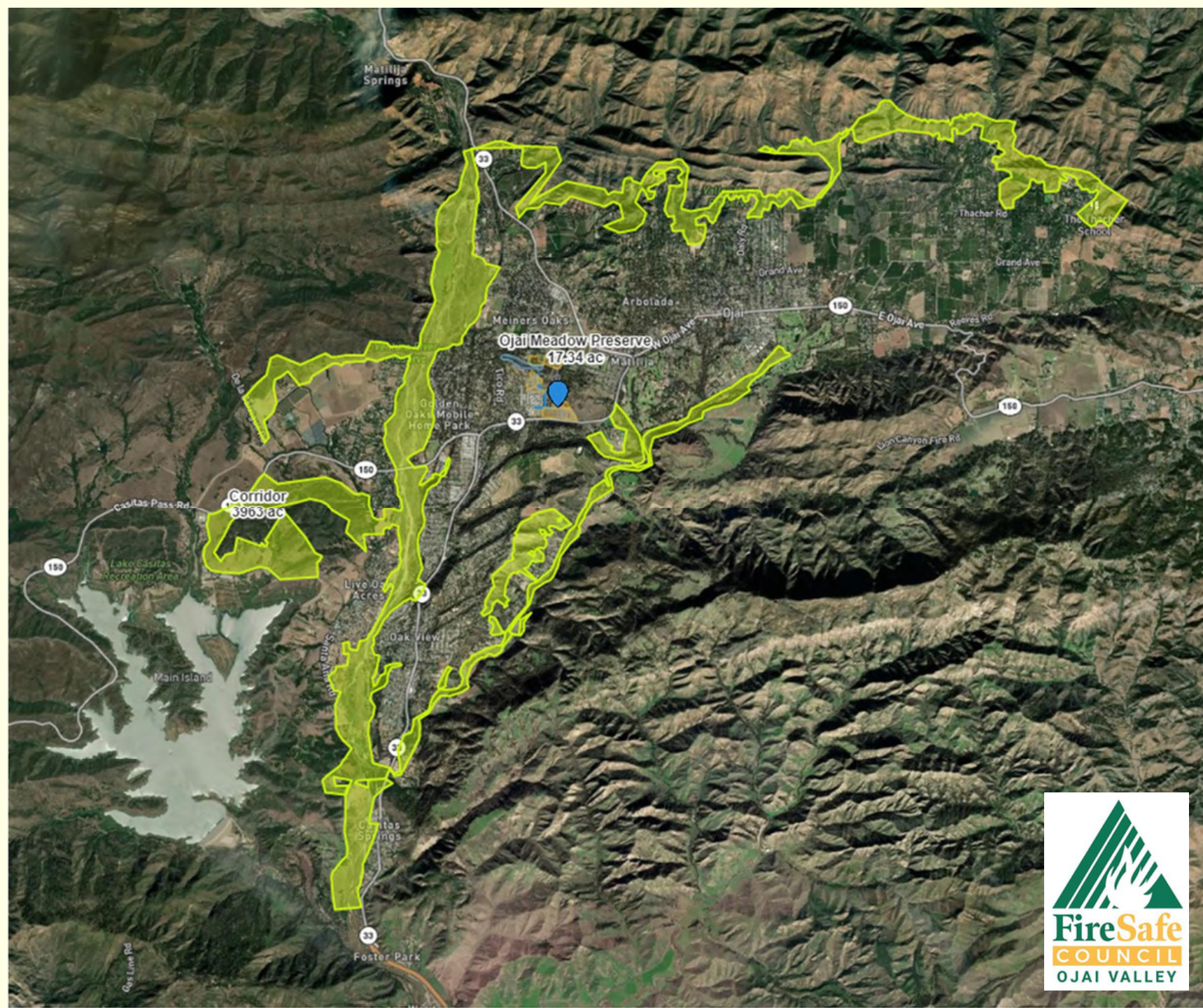


A Major Goal:

Wildfire
Intensity
Reduction Zone

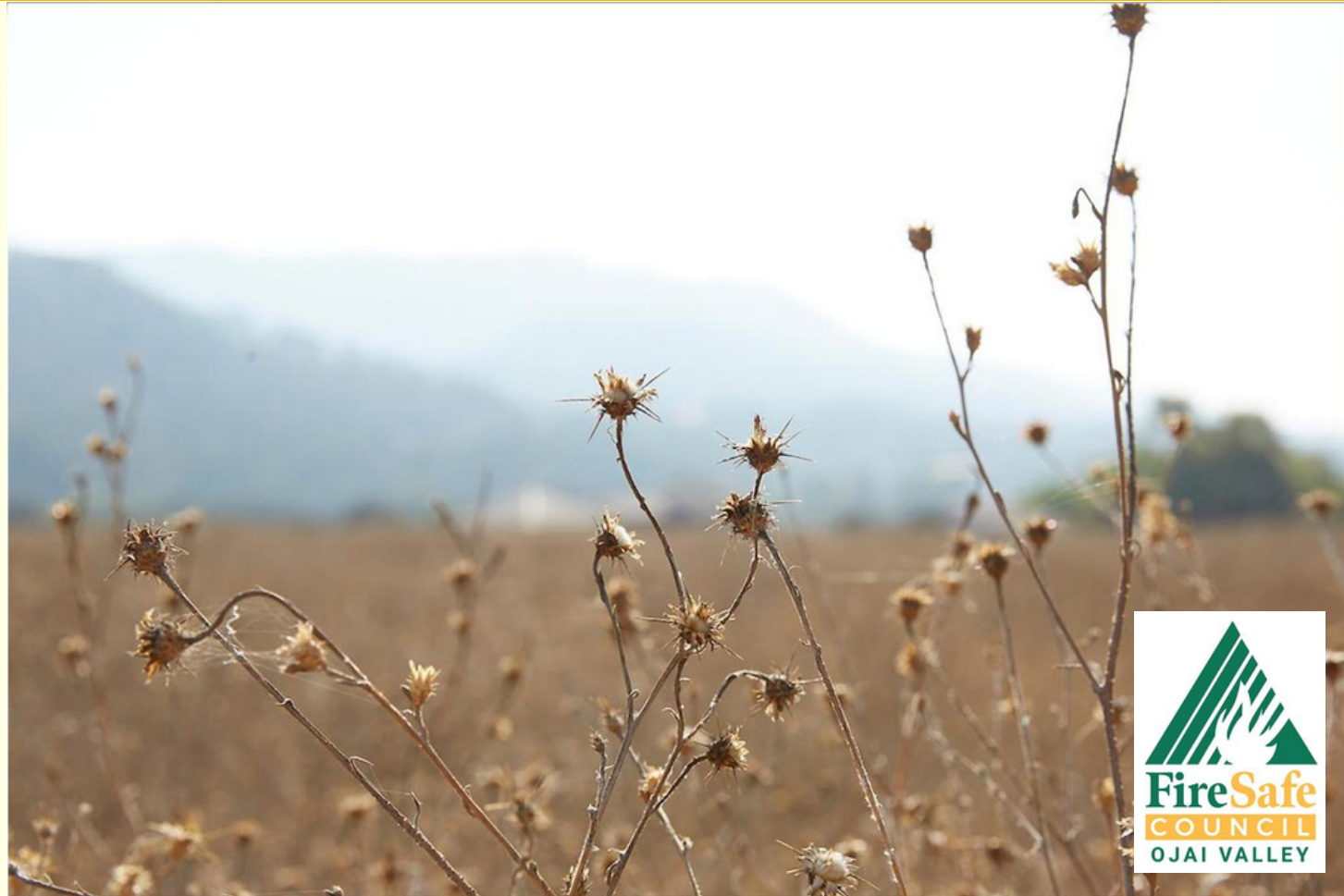
"The Corridor"

Preliminary
Mapping



PRESCRIBED GRAZING BENEFITS IN THE OJAI VALLEY

- Wildfire safety
- Fuel load reduction
- Invasive species management
- biodiversity improvement
- Soil disturbance + enhancement
- Watershed function
- Economic development
- Local food and fiber shed production
- Community resilience (awareness, education, culture of care)



A MULTISTAKEHOLDER APPROACH



- COMMUNITY
 - "GOAT FUND ME" 2023
- GOVERNMENT
 - PUBLIC SAFETY
 - RESOURCE CONSERVATION
 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- LANDOWNERS & MANAGERS
 - PUBLIC & PRIVATE INDUSTRY
- CONSERVATION + ENVIRONMENTAL
- FUNDERS + INVESTMENT
- EDUCATIONAL + SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY



CALIFORNIA
FARMLINK



OAK GROVE SCHOOL
The Art of Living and Learning



OJAI VALLEY LAND
CONSERVANCY

PROTECTING YOUR VIEWS, TRAILS, WATER & WILDLIFE



Ojai Valley
Chamber of Commerce



The C.R.E.W.



Concerned Resource & Environmental Workers



THACHER



70+ Years
VENTURA RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SEEKING MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS AND DIVERSE SOURCES OF FUNDING



- GRANTS (DIVERSE SOURCES)
 - WILDFIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY
 - AGRICULTURAL
 - CLIMATE CHANGE
 - EDUCATION
 - RESEARCH
 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS + PRIVATE DONORS
- FOOD AND FIBER SHEDS
- ECOSYSTEM SERVICES
 - CARBON CREDITS
- INVESTMENT - WHAT COULD THIS LOOK LIKE?
- HOW CAN THIS BE REPLICABLE/TRANSFERABLE?

SEEKING MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS AND DIVERSE SOURCES OF FUNDING

GRANTS (DIVERSE SOURCES)

- WILDFIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY AGRICULTURAL
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- EDUCATION
- RESEARCH
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATIONS + PRIVATE DONORS

FOOD AND FIBER SHEDS

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

INVESTMENT - WHAT COULD THIS LOOK LIKE?

HOW CAN THIS BE REPLICABLE/TRANSFERABLE? HOW CAN THIS BECOME WIDELY ACCESSIBLE?

BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES OF THE COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED GRAZING PROGRAM

- Cost of Grazing
 - To Landowner
 - To Grazier
 - To the Community
- Land Access
- Lack of Off-Season Pasture & Revenue
- Need for more Graziers - Small and Medium
- Lack of Coordination and Cooperation Across Jurisdictional and Property Lines
- Environmental Clearance & Compliance (CEQA)
- Gaining Community Support
- Long-term Planning Horizons



Community-Supported Grazing Program
Planning Summit—April 8, 2022



1st Inaugural: Regional/State Working Group

- Planning & Development
- Structure
- Strategy
- Landowner Subsidies
- Fund Development
- Design Transferable Framework



Key Takeaways of the 1st Planning Summit

We can integrate both ecological resilience and wildfire mitigation needs through prescribed grazing. These benefits include:

- **Ecological Resilience**—biodiversity, habitat restoration, improved hydrology, and soil restoration
- **Wildfire Mitigation**—buffer zones, reduced fuel loads, impactful alternative to mechanical and chemical treatments
- **Climate Change Mitigation**—reduced carbon footprint, carbon sequestration
- **Public Awareness and Education**
- **Economic Development Opportunities**

