

4.3.2.2 Additional Weighting Factors

Downgrading Hazard: A local agency may use the mitigation measures outlined below to reduce a zone's rating:

- Infrastructure—meets or exceeds minimums of ISO 8, NFPA 1231, PUC 103, or PRC 4290 -1
- Ordinances in place regarding housing, roofing (Class A, B, or better roof), sprinklers, firesafe construction, or fuel modification. -1
- PRC 4291 ordinance or better (Natural Resource Protection) -1.

Upgrading Hazard:

- Rough topography with steep canyons or draws that would impede responding personnel and equipment. +1
- Area with a history of relatively high fire occurrence, because of heavy lightning, railroad fires, debris burning, arson, etc. +1
- Area subject to severe fire weather (such as strong winds and lightning) or recurring seasonal weather patterns that can increase fire activity (such as the Santa Ana winds) +1
- Heavy concentration of flammable ornamentals or vegetation introduced by humans +1.

The various factors are tallied on the form illustrated in Table 4-4 to determine whether or not an area is a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

Table 4-4: Sample Form for Bates Bill Process Determination of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

TOTAL POINTS _____	
VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE ? YES / NO	
DESCRIPTION OF ZONE:	
1.	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE _____
2.	TOWNSHIP, SECTION, RANGE _____
3.	NARRATIVE OF ZONE _____

DATE _____	
SIGNATURE OF RATER _____	

The Bates rating system could be adopted as is, or with minor modifications, in most of California. The fuel types are easy to determine using the descriptions provided. The slope can be ascertained with field work or maps from planning departments, the USGS or the CDF. The minimum size of the rated area could be reduced from 640 acres to, say, 320 acres, or even the size of a subdivision. The weather component could be adjusted to reflect local conditions rather than county-wide conditions. Currently some coastal areas get rated too high and other areas, too low. Of greater concern is subjectivity in the rating process. For example, in Riverside County the most recent CDF map (January 6, 2000) illustrates very few VHFHSZs, yet it identifies VHFHSZs in areas which this study rates as having no susceptibility. However, topography and weather could be mapped using remote sensing to increase objectivity and thus uniformity.

Although the Bates system can make hazard maps that are useful to individual jurisdictions, and has the advantage of being applicable statewide, a large number of

local agencies decided not to acknowledge it. Thus the actual number of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones is much higher than total provided as part of the original Bates review.

4.4 Previous Fire Hazard Maps for Riverside County

In addition to the comprehensive County map done for this study, two other fire hazard maps exist for the western portion of Riverside County.

4.4.1 Environmental Hazards Map for Riverside County

The ***Environmental Hazards Map*** for Riverside County, dated June 10, 1997, scale 1"=6 miles, was prepared by the County of Riverside, Transportation and Land Management Agency. This map illustrates "Highfire Areas" for the portion of Riverside County west of the Coachella Valley, and is cited by the County Board of Supervisors in the adoption of Ordinance 787, the amended 1997 Uniform Fire Code (Riverside County, 1999). The map is applicable to real estate disclosure requirements for fire hazards, but does not include a more detailed severity ranking.

Riverside County (1999) amended the 1997 Uniform Fire Code to define "Hazardous Fire Areas". The Hazardous Fire Areas are delineated on the Environmental Hazards Map and defined as land which is covered with grass, grain, brush, or forest, whether privately or publicly owned, which is so situated or is of such inaccessible location that a fire originating upon such land would present an abnormally difficult job of suppression or would result in great and unusual damage through fire or resulting erosion. Such areas are designated on the maps entitled "Hazardous Fire Areas of Riverside County" on file in the office of the Fire Chief (County of Riverside, Transportation and Land Management Agency, 1997). The hazardous fire areas shall be reviewed from time to time to determine whether any changes in classification are appropriate.

4.4.2 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Fire Hazard Mapping

The California Department of Forestry (CDF) and Fire Protection Map of West Riverside County, ***Natural Hazard Disclosure (Fire)***, dated January 6, 2000, available from <http://www.fire.ca.gov/ab6/ab6lst.html> in Arcview® or Adobe Acrobat® formats. It defines "Wildland Areas" and "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones" within the western portion of Riverside County including the Coachella Valley.