



UPPER PINE RIVER
FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

WILDLAND EVACUATION PLAN

UPPER PINE RIVER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DISTRICT 4: VALLECITO LAKE

JUNE 2023

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Introduction

A strategy delineating the systematic evacuation of a region during a wildfire outbreak is defined as a wildfire evacuation plan. This detailed protocol is formulated with the key objective of ensuring the safeguarding of people and their possessions in case there is an imminent threat from a wildfire.

Such a plan usually encompasses data concerning recognizing the warning signs of a wildfire, the routes to be followed during evacuation, the allocated evacuation centers or safehouses, and critical emergency contact details. It could also contain instructions on preparing your residence for evacuation, and essential items to take along when you must depart.

The importance of having a prepared wildfire evacuation plan prior to any emergency situation cannot be overstated. Such forethought and planning can ensure everyone in the endangered area is informed about the appropriate actions and directions during an evacuation, thereby potentially saving lives and minimizing property destruction.

The principal aim of this scheme is to guide the evacuation of any sections of Vallecito which could be at risk due to a wildfire, while also caring for the overall wellbeing of individuals who are obligated to leave their homes or places of work. Although this plan is primarily aimed at wildfires, many of its principles can be applied to field operations during evacuations caused by other hazards, such as incidents involving hazardous materials.

In the course of a wildfire, the requirement might surface to transfer a portion of the population from a zone at risk to a safer location.

No plan can be crafted so inclusively as to predict all the situations that emergency response personnel might encounter when trying to evacuate the population during a wildfire occurrence.

This plan functions as a guidepost. Every incident presents a unique set of conditions and difficulties.

The ultimate decision-making authority for evacuation operations rests with the Incident Commander which will likely include a Unified or Area Command. It is likely that multiple Jurisdictional authorities will be involved with wildfire response.

These guidelines are designed to provide information to support decision-making by the jurisdictional authority and other personnel involved in the evacuation and sheltering mission.

This plan provides specific guidance for a wildland urban interface fire evacuation as it relates to:

- Identification of areas most likely to be impacted by wildfire
- Authorities and uses
- Evacuation issues
- Identification of limited access and egress areas
- Identification of individuals who need evacuation assistance
- Shelter-in-place decision tree
- Sheltering locations for evacuees
- Identification of evacuation phases
- Identification of identification routes
- Security of the evacuated area
- Notification of the affected population
- Education of public on Upper Pine Fire Department role before during and after evacuation

1 General

1.1 Authorities and uses

The fire location and ownership of land is essential to determine who is responsible for firefighting and the costs of suppression:

Local Responsibility Fire: Fires within LPC on non-federal land. The Sheriff and the Fire Chief share certain jurisdictional responsibilities for the incident. Both will be responsible for any cost share agreement with federal participants.

State Responsibility Fire: A fire that exceeds the county and the Sheriff's capability to control or extinguish and is escalated to the Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC). The county and state will provide an agency administrator to the incident. The state and county will enter into an agreement concerning the transfer of authority and responsibility for fire suppression and the retention of other responsibilities.

Federal Responsibility Fire: Federal participants are responsible for wildland fire protection on the respective federal lands within their jurisdictional boundaries.

Boundary Land Fire: A fire that occurs on lands of intermingled/adjoining protection responsibilities and that is adjacent to a protection boundary or located in an area of undetermined jurisdiction. The responsibility will be the initial attack of the protecting agencies on both sides of the boundary. If multiple agencies are engaged on a fire or near common boundaries, the agency representatives should mutually agree upon the fire strategy and delegate an IC. If the fire is confined to a single jurisdiction, that agency will delegate an IC. It is the responsibility of the jurisdictional agency to provide and mobilize replacement forces

1.2 Communication

The fire department of Upper Pine works with three communication centers:

- **Durango La Plata 9-1-1 Communications Center:** Provides coordination support to communications amongst Durango, Fort Lewis Mesa, Upper Pine River Fire Protection District, and LPC users.
- **Durango Interagency Fire Dispatch (DRC):** Support lands managed by the US Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) (Dispatch, 2021). Provides communication support for initial attack and incident support (link between local, state, tribal, and federal). Can dispatch resources beyond the 24-hr. mutual aid period, as described in the Operating Plan.
- **Southern Ute Dispatch Center:** Provides coordination support to communications amongst the Los Pinos Fire Protection District.

2 Evacuation issues

2.1 Evacuation ordered by fire Department or sheriff

The high density of residents in Vallecito raises public safety issues as well as increasing the fire risk. Evacuation could be a potentially life-threatening problem for the residents and a barrier to emergency response. The large number of residents, especially in the summer tourist season which is also the primary fire season, increases the chances that a human-caused fire will occur within or adjacent to the community.

At present, there exists only a single fixed route for entry and exit for all 500 residents of Vallecito and 2000 summer resident. In an emergency scenario, an exit can be created by opening the gate at the level of growth of Road 501 and Road 501A to the elk Point Lodge, forming a one-way emergency escape from the subdivision. On the east side

The main arterial road is County Road 501 enters the Vallecito Community from the south and proceeds around the north side of the reservoir. All the roads funnel into one main entry and exit point onto CR 501.

Due to the nature of the neighborhood (dense vegetation, one road in and out, many residents), Vallecito has been identified as a high-risk area for wildfire. Local land managers have been encouraging property owners to thin their lots for years, paying special attention to the area around the house.

The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) for Vallecito area begins on the south end at the junction of CR 240 and CR 501. It follows a ridge on the west side of CR 501 to the Ninth Parallel where it goes directly east to the Weminuche Wilderness boundary.

Even if evacuation routes were deemed safe, traffic congestion could pose a significant challenge during an emergency. In the event of a wildfire, dense smoke or inbound emergency equipment blocking a section of the evacuation route would render evacuation from certain parts of Forest Lakes impossible. This limitation on emergency access and egress constitutes a serious threat to residents' safety and hampers the ability of emergency management to respond efficiently to a wildfire.

2.2 Factors of risks

Some of the factors that create this high risk include:

- Vallecito is located around a lake with only one road as access
- The vegetation is a dense, overgrown ponderosa pine and Gambel oak forest
- Lightning strikes are common in the area
- Many of the homes in Vallecito have wood exteriors and wood shake shingle roofs
- There is only single ingress/egress, By county Road 501

3 Evacuation Phases

3.1 2 types of evacuation

Voluntary evacuations: Can be evacuations that are recommended by authorities, but are not necessarily required by them. Often, voluntary evacuations can be advised when a threat may reach an area in several days.

Voluntary evacuations may be announced to give livestock owner's time to round up and move livestock, or may be issued for persons with respiratory problems or other health issues to leave an area.

People may elect to self-evacuate an area when they perceive a risk.

Paradoxically, improved notification of evacuations may have the effect of reducing self-evacuation, even when people are in danger. If people come to rely on evacuation notices, they may elect to wait until told to leave.

Mandatory evacuations: Are those where an authority has directed an evacuation. Even so, mandatory evacuations can vary in just how "mandatory" they are. Mandatory evacuations can range from completely un-enforced to completely enforced.

Some mandatory evacuations consist of establishing a perimeter and notifying all residents that they are advised to evacuate, but not forcibly removing them from their homes.

3.2 Evacuation response

Evacuation response operations occur in five phases—mobilization, evacuation, impact, mass care, and re-entry. Phases, used in conjunction with evacuation zones, provide a construct to move people to safety. These phases help community's plan, organize, respond to, and delegate evacuation strategies, messages, tasks, and decisions. Phases differ across zones that face unique hazards and considerations, may not occur at all, or occur in any order based on the incident.

MOBILIZATION PHASE: The mobilization phase begins with the identification of a threat or hazard that could lead to an evacuation order. The first activity is initial notification of people, systems, and resources to establish incident command and management structures. Emergency management officials make coordinated decisions for protective actions and priorities, disseminating clear evacuation advisories and messaging to the public. In this phase, it is also recommended that community procedures and protocols for evacuation orders be taken into consideration.

EVACUATION PHASE: The onset of this phase is marked by a threat necessitating evacuation operations, either following or simultaneously with activities of the mobilization phase, contingent on whether the incident is reported or not. Evacuation measures will differ based on the magnitude and range of the incident.

This phase can precede the impact phase for reported incidents, or follow it for incidents with no prior notice, to meet incident objectives and safeguard lives and property.

IMPACT PHASE: During this phase, for notice incidents, communities work to secure facilities, people, and equipment and clear transportation systems in preparation for the hazard impact. Within the impact phase, the "zero hour" marks the time needed to ensure the safety of first responders as the hazard starts delivering impacts, and it is the designated point in time when it is no longer safe for responders to continue operations. For no-notice incidents, the impact phase, mobilization phase, and evacuation phase can be compressed or occur simultaneously.

MASS CARE PHASE: If individuals are evacuated to locations outside of their home community, evacuees will remain in the host community until their community is safe for re-entry. During this phase, the evacuating communities should communicate with the host communities and coordinate shelters, numbers of evacuees, types of evacuees, and potential length of evacuation.

RE-ENTRY PHASE: This phase incorporates the coordinated movement of evacuees back into a community once the threat or hazard dissipates, and the event causing the evacuation ends. Re-entry typically marks the transition away from immediate response activities. First responders may re-enter the area first, if they had been evacuated. They would stabilize the area to a point where residents can return to their communities.

3.3 Delay times

Officials must consider delay time when determining how and when to issue public messages. The warning and protective action process is divided into three time periods:

- 1. Warning delay time:** The period between when a threat is first detected, or an emergency manager is first notified of the threat, and when an emergency manager with the proper authority issues a first alert/warning.
- 2. Warning diffusion time:** The period after the first alert/warning is issued and the time that people receive that alert/warning.
- 3. Protective action initiation time:** The period after people receives the first alert/warning and when they initiate protective action. During this time, most people do several things to prepare to implement a protective action. People may also receive subsequent warning messages during this time.

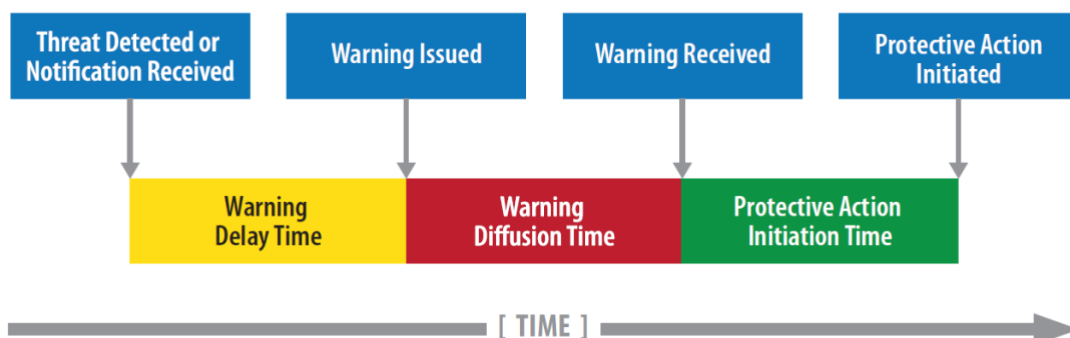


Figure 1 Warning and Protective Action Timeline

4 Notification

Residents and visitors of Vallecito should:

Be Ready	Get Set	Go
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create & maintain defensible space, harden home against flying embers• Assemble emergency supplies and belongings into a safe place• Plan an escape route	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare your family and home ahead of time for evacuation, have an evacuation plan• Learn your community's response plan and methods to receiving emergency notifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Go early for your safety• Take necessary evacuation steps to enhance your family and home's chance of surviving a wildfire

There are 3 methods of notifications;

4.1 Reverse 911

First, the reverse 911 is used by local authorities for the purpose of quickly notifying all the residents of Vallecito if there is an emergency by phone call, text message or email. This emergency notification system alerts the population of any potential hazard.

This system can be very useful in emergency situations like wildfires, natural disasters or meteorological disasters. Reverse 911 works by phone number and address data, which permit to warn the inhabitants of the area to evacuate quickly.

If you wish to be notified via phone, email or text message for each evacuation, we recommend you to sign up for reverse 911. For this, you can register on the La Plata website, via "emergency management" tab. If you are already registered, you can also check your contact information to ensure that the correct information is entered.

4.2 Code red Notification

CodeRED is an emergency notification system that is used by Vallecito to quickly alert residents of urgent and important information during emergency situations. CodeRED notifications can be sent via phone call, text message, email, or social media, depending on the user's preferences.

When an emergency situation arises, authorized personnel will use CodeRED to send out notifications to all registered users. These notifications may include information about evacuation orders, shelter locations, hazardous weather conditions, and other critical updates.

To ensure that you receive CodeRED notifications, it is important to register your contact information with the system. You can do this by visiting the Vallecito website and clicking on the "Emergency Management" tab. From there, you can sign up for CodeRED and customize your notification settings.

It is important to note that CodeRED is just one tool that authorities use to communicate with residents during emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, it is important to remain alert and aware of your surroundings, follow all instructions from authorities, and seek additional information and updates as needed.

4.3 Door to door evacuation

In the event of an evacuation in Vallecito, authorities may implement a door-to-door evacuation strategy to ensure the safety of all residents. This strategy involves emergency personnel going door-to-door to notify residents of the evacuation and providing instructions on where to go and what to bring.

If you receive notification of an evacuation, it is important to remain calm and follow the instructions of emergency personnel. Gather essential items such as medications, important documents, and clothing for a few days. Ensure that all family members and pets are accounted for and evacuate immediately.

If you require assistance with evacuation, such as mobility assistance or transportation, notify the emergency personnel who are assisting you. They will make arrangements to ensure that you can evacuate safely.

It is important to note that if you choose not to evacuate during an evacuation order, emergency personnel may not be able to assist you in the event of an emergency. It is always safer to follow evacuation orders to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

If you have any questions or concerns during the evacuation, seek assistance from emergency personnel who are present in the area. Remember to remain vigilant, stay informed, and prioritize your safety during this time.

5 Evacuation routes

5.1 Roads use to evacuate

The main arterial road in Vallecito for ingress/egress is county Road 501. Numerous side roads sprout from this Loop Road. Every road funnel into a singular main entry and exit point onto **CR 501**. You need to use County Road 501 in a case of evacuation, on the west on Vallecito Lake (green road on the map).

During an emergency evacuation, if the fire of located on the west of Vallecito Lake the gate at the base of County Road 501A and 501 can be opened to create a one-way emergency egress out of the subdivision.

In addition, Vallecito has established only one evacuation access route through all Vallecito Lakes but another road can be use accessible at gates located between County Road 501 and County Road 501A. However, this route is still in development and access is currently closed to all motorized vehicle travel. So the evacuation Road is the County Road 501, on the West of Vallecito.

Residents are encouraged to see the map, get familiar with the route, and share this information with their neighbors.

5.2 Distribution of areas

To carry out the evacuation of Vallecito, three zones have been created to facilitate the process. The purpose of creating these zones is to ensure that the evacuation process is orderly and efficient.

Each area is supposed to be evacuated by the road west of Vallecito (green road)

Zone 1, Zone 2, and Zone 3 have been designated as the areas where residents will evacuate from.

- If there is a fire at the North of **zone 1**, only the inhabitants of **Zone 1** will have to evacuate, the resident of zone 2 and 3 should do a shelter in place.
- If there is a fire located in **zone 2**, all the resident of **zone 1 and 2** will have to evacuate because if the road is blocked at the level of zone 2, the residents of zone 1 will no longer have any way to leave zone 1. The residents of zone 3 should do a shelter in place.
- If a fire is declared at the level of **zone 3**, there will be an evacuation of **all the zones** by the County Road 501.

Do not use the County Road 501A if you have not received the instruction by authorities.

This strategy has been put in place to prevent traffic congestion and ensure that everyone can evacuate quickly and safely. The creation of these three zones and the designation of specific routes for evacuation is intended to streamline the process and ensure that everyone can evacuate safely and efficiently.

For each evacuation, please follow and respect the instructions given by the authorities.

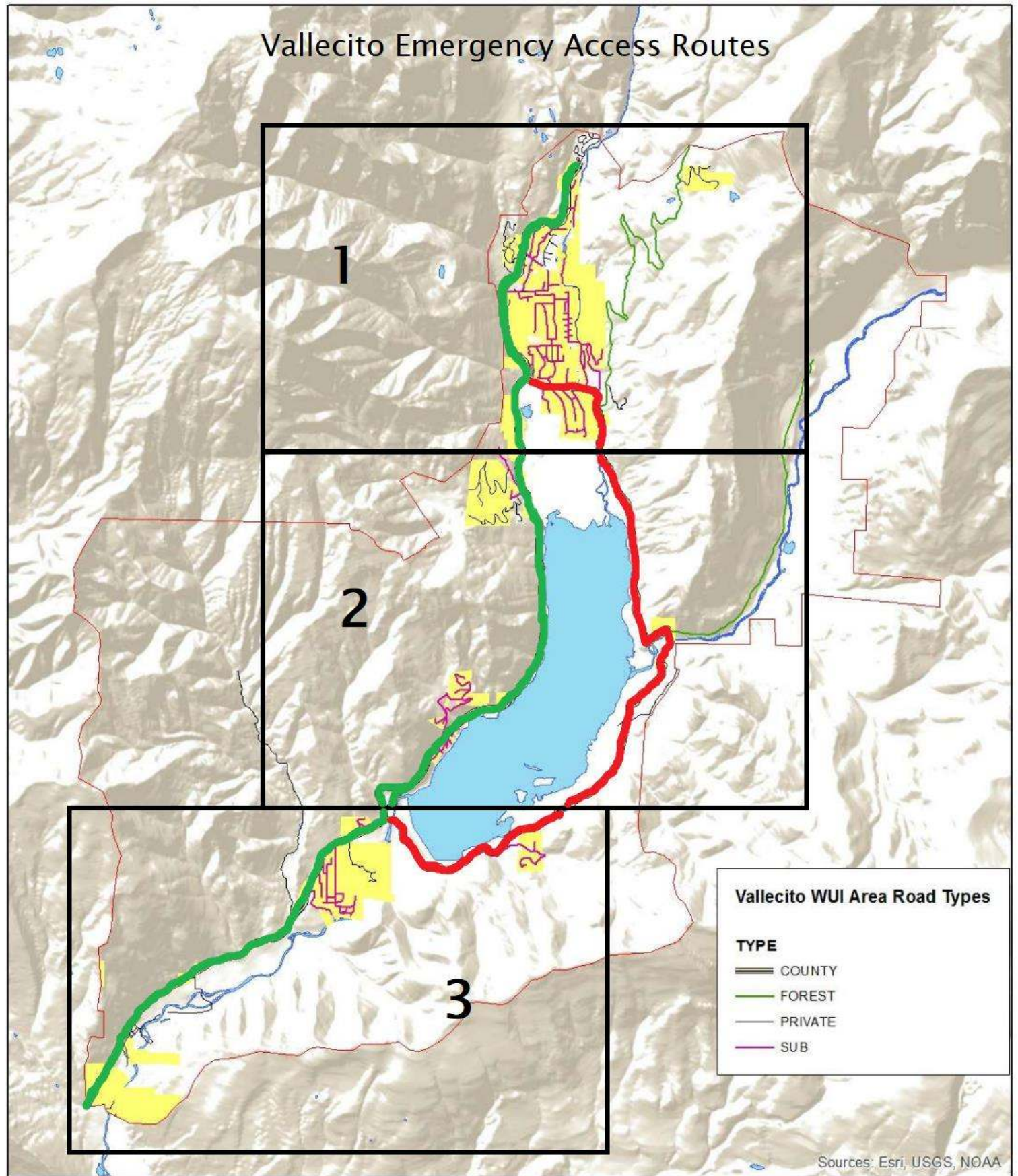


Figure 2 Vallecito emergency areas and emergency Routes

5.3 Time average

Below, you will discover the time required to utilize each evacuation route from various evacuation zones, taking into account traffic conditions during daytime, as a normal speed. These times serve as a guideline, not as a reference. For each zone, we time from the top of the zones to Bayfield High School, one of the collection points.

County Road 501, green road, west side:

- 32.25 minutes

County Road 501A, red road, east side:

- 42.00 minutes

Times of evacuation depends of how fast the gates can be opened and where the fire is located, speed may be affected by evacuation.

6 Transportation

Populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, including but not limited to: maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care. Individuals in need of additional response assistance may include those who have disabilities; who live in institutionalized settings; who are elderly; who are children; who are from diverse cultures; who have limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking; or who are transportation disadvantaged.

- **Communications** – Relates to the individual’s ability to receive critical warnings and other emergency information, communicate effectively with emergency response personnel, and understand information being communicated so they can act to help themselves. Individuals may require auxiliary aids and services and may need to have information given to them in alternate formats.
- **Maintaining health** – Many will require continued access to specialized medical equipment, medications, supplies or personal assistance to maintain their health and prevent the decline of medical conditions if they are removed from their daily environments due to a disaster.
- **Independence** – Relates to support that people may need to remain independent and to take care of themselves like durable medical equipment, communication devices, service animals, and accessible facilities.
- **Safety, Support services and Supervision** – Some individuals require the support of people (personal care assistants, family, or friends) to cope with the challenges of emergencies; some may lack the cognitive ability to assess emergency situations and react appropriately without support and/or supervision.
- **Transportation** – Some individuals cannot drive, some need specialized vehicles for transport, and some do not have their own vehicles and rely solely on public transit.
 - Requiring med unit: provide ambulance for transport
 - Not requiring med unit: provide other means of transport

7 Collection points

After an evacuation of Vallecito, residents are instructed to gather at designated points of assembly for safety and accountability. Two such points of assembly are **Bayfield High School**, located to the south of Vallecito, and **La Plata County Fairgrounds**, located to Durango.

These points of assembly serve as gathering places where residents can reunite with loved ones, receive information and updates from authorities, and receive assistance and support as needed. They also facilitate a coordinated response from emergency personnel and first responders in the event of an evacuation or emergency situation.

Residents are advised to familiarize themselves with the locations of these points of assembly and to follow instructions from authorities in the event of an evacuation. It is important to note that these points of assembly may be subject to change depending on the nature and scope of the emergency, and residents should remain aware of any updates or changes to the evacuation plan communicated by authorities.



Figure 5 Bayfield High School



Figure 4 La Plata County Fairgrounds

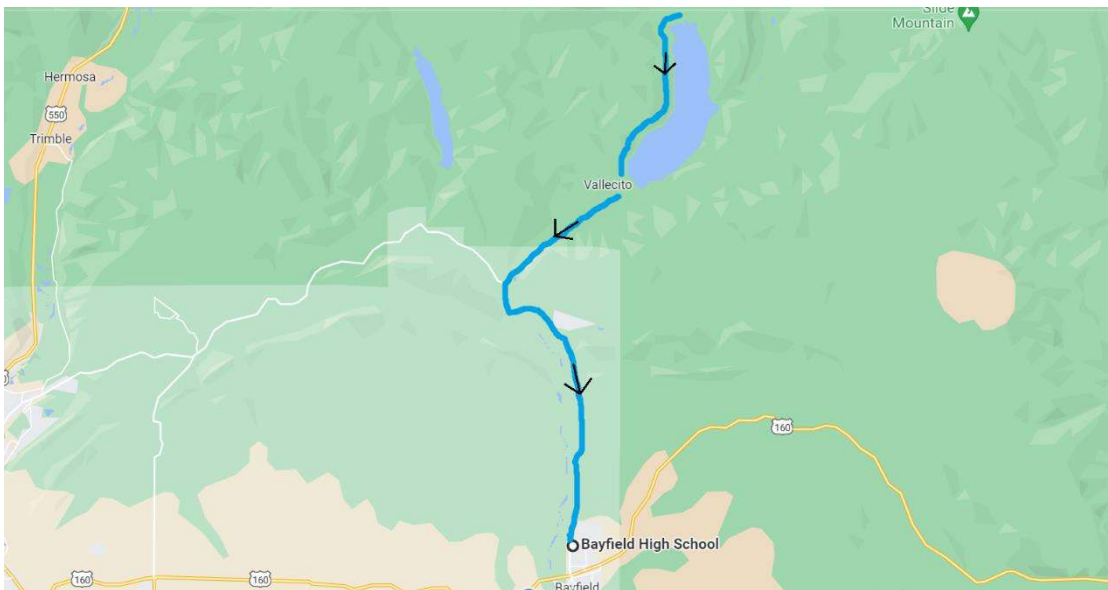


Figure 3 Maps of the direction of evacuation

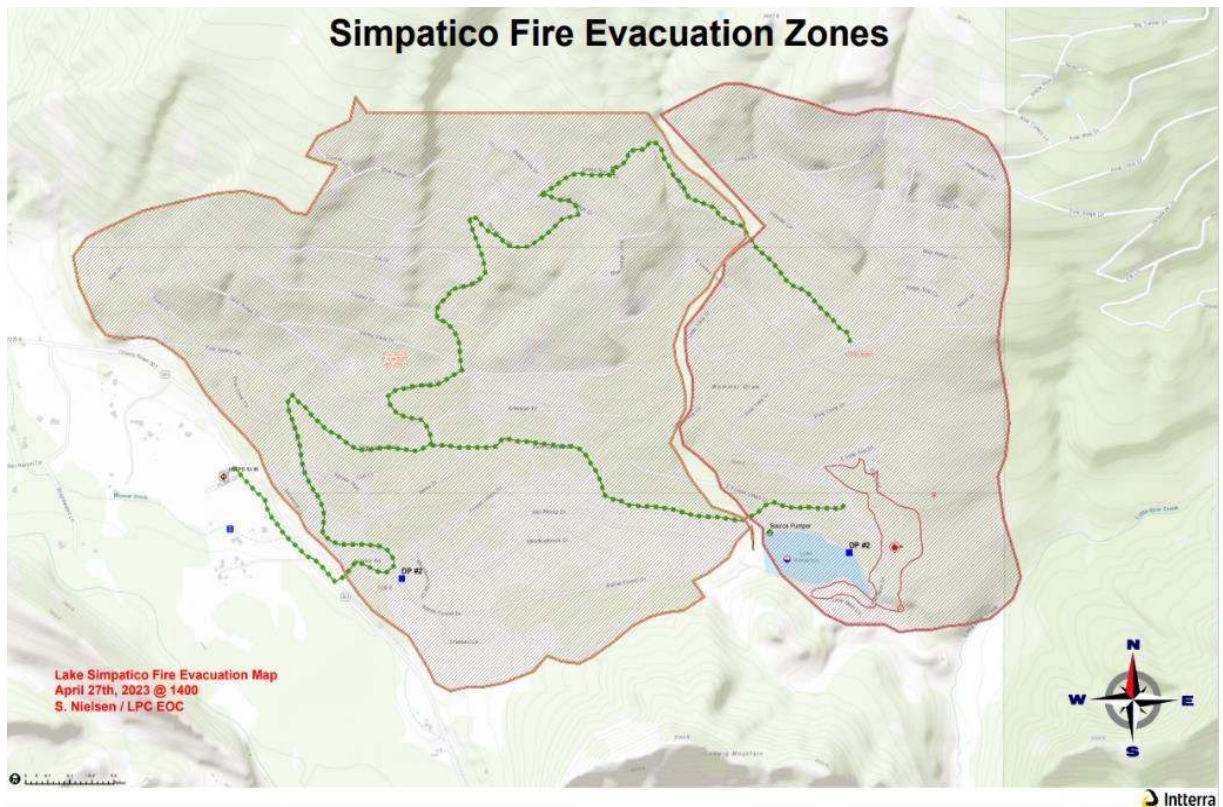
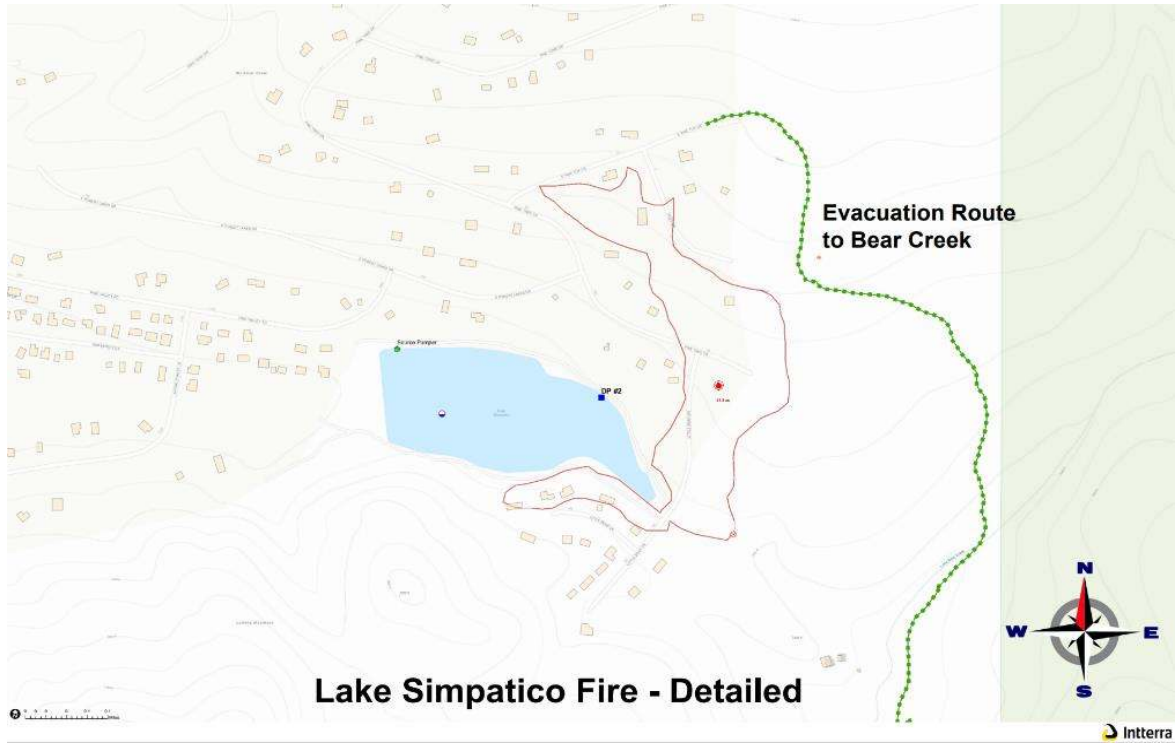
8 Evacuation drill

The La Plata County Office of Emergency Management is organizing a multi-jurisdictional evacuation drill from Tuesday, April 24th to Thursday, April 27th to prepare residents and responding agencies for emergency situations like wildfires.

The exercise aims to practice inter-agency communication and coordination, increase public awareness and education, assess the readiness of the La Plata County OEM Incident Management Team and Emergency Operations Center (EOC), test Alert and Warning systems, and develop a common operating procedure.

The CodeRED alert system for registered residents will be tested, and several subdivisions will be involved in the drill. The American Red Cross will also participate by setting up a shelter and conducting sheltering training during the exercise. County officials, the sheriff's office, and local fire chiefs will participate in various fire simulations to obtain values at risk, develop safe evacuation routes, and conduct hypothetical home damage assessments. Residents are encouraged to register for the CodeRED system through the county's website to receive alerts and stay informed during emergency situations.





9 Glossary

Evacuation: The process of leaving a potentially dangerous area.

Drill: To review, practice, evaluate and strengthen the emergency plan.

Wildfire: An uncontrolled fire spreading through vegetative fuels, exposing and possibly consuming structures

Transportation Plan: Pre-determined action plan – including multiple modes of transportation (walking, buses, other vehicles) – to evacuate children and staff members from a facility to a host facility or alternate location following direction to do so by local emergency management official or first responders.

Wildland-Urban Interface: The geographical meeting point of two diverse systems -wildland and structures. In the WUI, structures and vegetation are sufficiently close so that a wildland fire could spread to structures or a structure fire could ignite vegetation.

Hazard: A situation that creates the potential for adverse consequences such as loss of life, property damage, or other adverse impacts.

Risk: The possibility of suffering harm from a hazard.

Risk assessment: The process of identifying the likelihood and consequences of an event to provide the basis for informed decisions on a course of action.

Vulnerability: The susceptibility to damage or injury from hazards.

Notification: To inform appropriate individuals about an emergency condition so they can take appropriate action.

Shelter-In-Place: The use of a structure to temporarily separate individuals from a hazard or threat. Sheltering in place is the primary protective action in many cases. Often it is safer for individuals to shelter-in-place than to try to evacuate. Sheltering in place is appropriate when conditions necessitate that individuals seek protection in their home, place of employment or other location when disaster strikes

Acre: An area of land containing 43,560 square feet. A square acre is 209 feet by 209 feet. A circular acre would have a radius of 117.75 feet.

Dispatch: The ordered movement of a resource or resources to an assigned operational mission, or an administrative move from one location to another.

Emergency: A serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action

Emergency Route: Primary exit path out of a facility.

Emergency management/response personnel: Includes Federal, State, territorial, tribal, sub-state regional, and local governments, private-sector organizations, critical infrastructure owners and operators, nongovernmental organizations, and all other organizations and individuals who assume an emergency management role. Also known as emergency responders.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC): The physical location at which the coordination of information and resources to support incident management (on-scene operations) activities normally takes place. An EOC may be a temporary facility or may be located in a more central or permanently established facility, perhaps at a higher level of organization within a jurisdiction. EOCs may be organized by major functional disciplines (e.g., fire, law enforcement, and medical services), by jurisdiction (e.g., Federal, State, regional, tribal, city, and county), or some combination thereof.

Incident Command System (ICS): A standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its users to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without hindrance by jurisdictional boundaries.

Jurisdiction: A range or sphere of authority. Public agencies have jurisdiction at an incident related to their legal responsibilities and authority. Jurisdictional authority at an incident can be political or geographical (e.g., city, county, tribal, State, or Federal boundary lines) or functional (e.g., law enforcement or public health).

Mitigation: Those activities designed to alleviate the effects of a major disaster or emergency or long-term activities to minimize the potentially adverse effects of future disaster in affected areas.

Mobilization: The process and procedures used by all organizations—Federal, State, tribal, and local— for activating, assembling, and transporting all resources that have been requested to respond to or support an incident.

Preparation: Those activities, programs, and systems that exist prior to an emergency that are used to support and enhance response to an emergency or disaster.

Recovery: Those long-term activities and programs beyond the initial crisis period of an emergency or disaster and designed to return all systems to normal status or to reconstitute these systems to a new condition that is less vulnerable.

Response: Those activities and programs designed to address the immediate and short-term effects of the onset of an emergency or disaster.