

INTRODUCTION

I am honored to present the inaugural edition of the Topanga Disaster Survival Guide. Topanga is a unique community—in terms of both its community spirit and its natural beauty—but that natural beauty comes with a price. The same forces of ecology and geography that make Topanga one of the most spectacular places in Southern California have also made it particularly vulnerable to natural disasters such as brushfires and floods. In order to better prepare for this threat, an extraordinary collaboration among members of the Topanga Community, numerous County Departments, and other government agencies has come together over the past two years to strengthen disaster response plans and make sure that every Topangan knows what to do when a disaster strikes. The Guide is an important tool in this effort, and I urge everyone to read it and use the checklists to plan and prepare now, because you never know when you will need to act quickly to protect yourself and your loved ones.

Topanga’s effort will be a model of disaster preparedness for the rest of the County, and I congratulate all those who worked on this effort.

Sincerely,
Zev Yaroslavsky
 Supervisor, Third District

County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

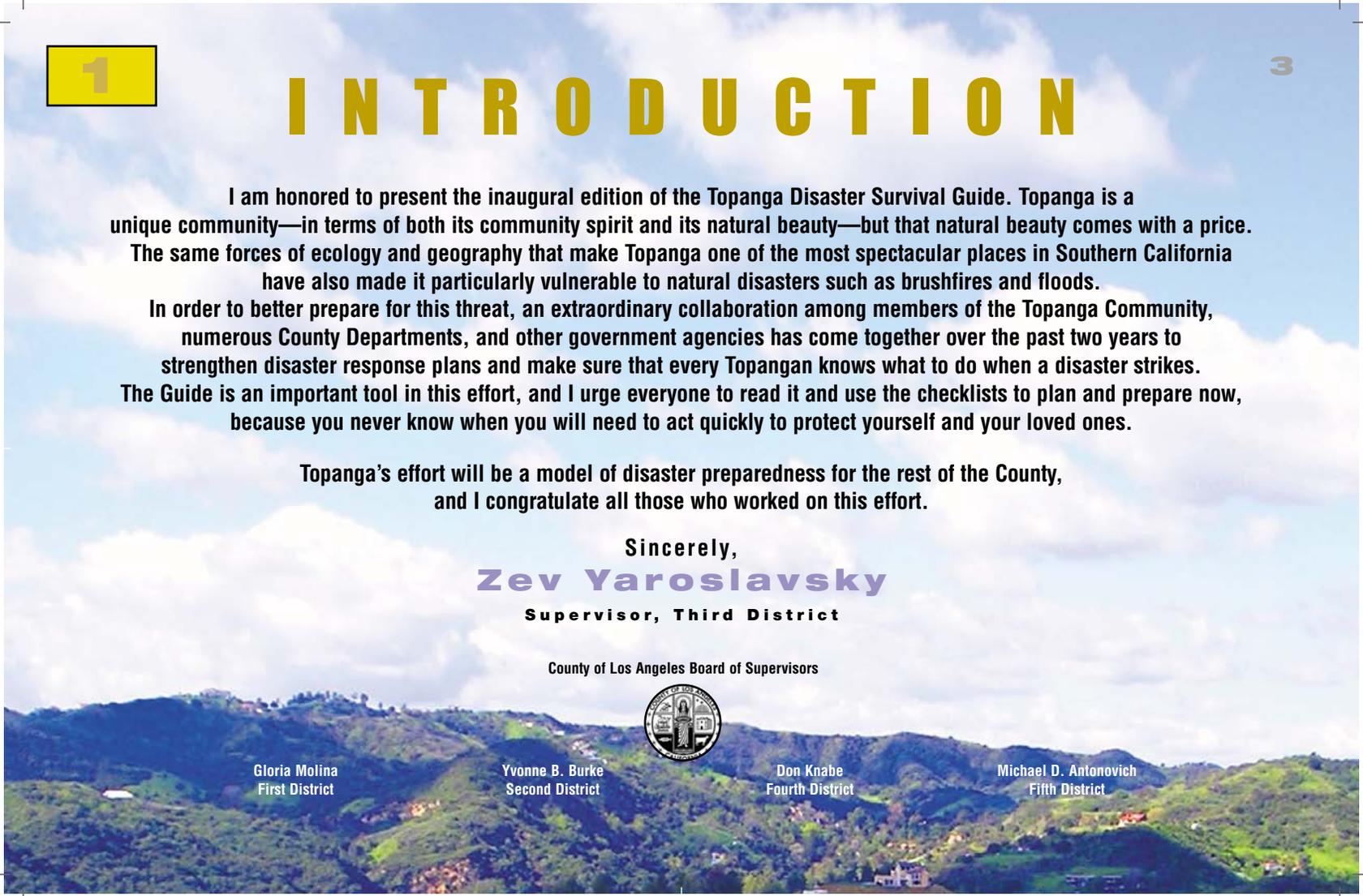


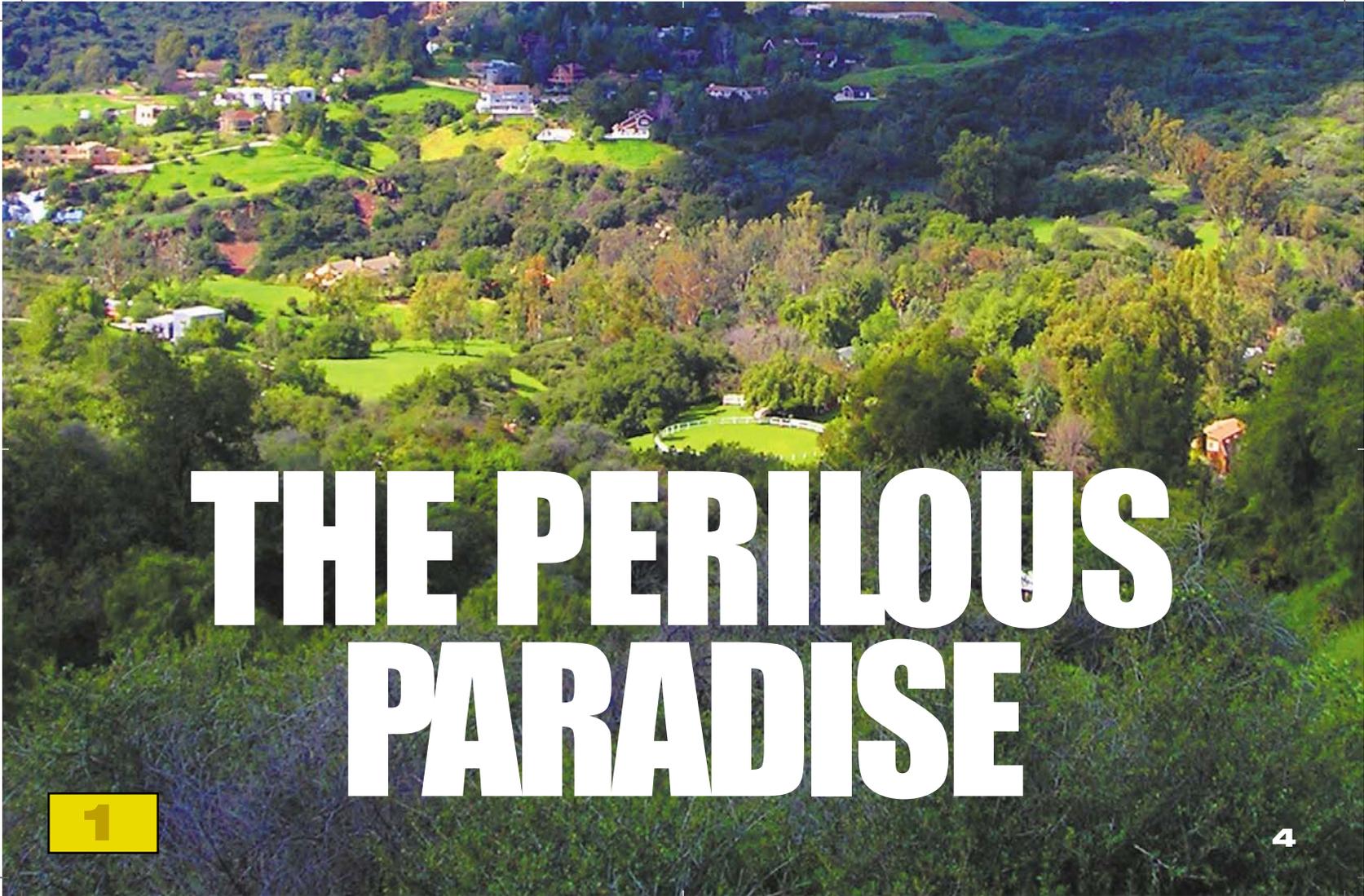
Gloria Molina
 First District

Yvonne B. Burke
 Second District

Don Knabe
 Fourth District

Michael D. Antonovich
 Fifth District





THE PERILOUS PARADISE

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PREPAREDNESS

Topanga's Best Answer to Coping with a Disaster-Prone Paradise

Topanga's beguiling beauty belies the fact that it is all too often visited by disaster. It is only a matter of time before Topanga once again floods, shakes, or explodes into flame. It's part of the price one pays for paradise. These stunning surroundings can lull one into a false sense of security, apathy, or even a deep denial of disaster. There's no panacea.

But there may be a silver lining. Topanga is setting a new nationwide standard in disaster preparedness. There is an unprecedented degree of cooperation with government, emergency services, spirited volunteerism, infrastructure, and planning. This Guide was designed for Topanga by Topangans and their local government to encourage residents to be realistic and proactive . . . and to act now! Read it with your family and loved ones, with special attention given to the Zone maps and Evacuation Instructions. Use this information to create a family plan. Keep a copy of the Guide in your car and in your house.

Stay safe, and above all, prepare!

TOPANGA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

**A MESSAGE FROM BATTALION CHIEF MIKE SANDEMAN,
Los Angeles County Fire Department**

Topanga Canyon has a serious fire interface problem because of its dense tree cover and numerous homes on steep hillsides with winding, narrow roads. Rain only serves to exacerbate the danger. The rains do nothing to significantly reduce drought conditions; instead, the result is more grass. That grass outweighs the benefit from the rains, producing a potentially worse fire season.

Additionally, historical data show us that every year we've had a heavy rain (over 20 inches), we've experienced a major Santa Ana-fueled fire.

Because of all this, Topanga Canyon can be viewed as a disaster waiting to happen. The Los Angeles County Fire Department is preparing for the worst, and hoping for the best. Topanga residents should do the same. Reading and following the important instructions given in this guide is how you can do so.

A Look at Topanga's Fire Season

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**Do Not
Panic!**



**PREPARE
PREPARE!**

PREPAREDNESS IS EMPOWERING!