

# North County Rural Communities

## What LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) findings are unique in North County Rural Communities?

North County's geography is substantially different from the rest of the County, with unique climate impacts to consider. Other factors like socioeconomic trends, availability and proximity of services, and disparities in infrastructure affect the region. **Some of the climate and social impacts include:**

- **Heat**

- Seasonal temperatures can be most extreme in the northern areas of LA County, where 95th-percentile daily maximum temperatures of over 100°F are common during the summer months. These areas are expected to experience the largest increase in temperature by mid-century.
- North County communities have a relatively high proportion of older adults and children, who are more vulnerable to extreme heat.
- Regions in the unincorporated Northeast Antelope Valley have relatively large numbers of people who are highly exposed to extreme heat and medically dependent on electricity. Power outages may be particularly problematic for people living in rural areas outside Lancaster and Palmdale.
- Compared to the rest of LA county, Palmdale and Lancaster have a proportionately greater number of outdoor workers. Outdoor workers are highly vulnerable because they are more likely to have prolonged exposure during extreme heat events and have physically demanding jobs. For many workers, the decision to not work, or the inability to work, in extreme heat or another climate hazard can result in lost wages and mental stress.

- **Drought**

- In addition to direct impacts to water supply, drought creates dry conditions across LA County that can lead to secondary impacts. Impacts include increased wildfire risk, reduced evapotranspiration, damage to habitats and vegetation, and higher volumes of dust that lead to air quality and health issues.
- Communities in North County could face impaired groundwater basins or dry wells, requiring back-up drinking water sources, such as bottled water or storage tanks. Drought can also impact water quality in wells, when well water levels decrease and pollutant concentrations increase during drought conditions.

- **Inland Flooding**

- Several unincorporated communities, including North Lancaster, have higher than average number of persons living in mobile homes. Mobile homes have been shown to be more sensitive to the impacts of flooding because of susceptible water and wastewater systems. In some cases, mobile homes may not be permanently secured to a foundation, putting them at risk of movement and damage.

North County has a strong sense of resilience and independence. There are ongoing community adaptation efforts where many communities have come together in a variety of ways to face the above challenges, including:

- **Using community spaces** to store important goods, provide services, and support fire fighting.
  - The Women's Club in Agua Dulce has backup power and supplies, serves as a meeting place, and supports emergency response when needed.
  - Community members in Pearblossom organized to use a 40ft storage container to store essential supplies like food, water, and N95 masks.
  - Regional airports have been used as command posts, providing fire fighting equipment to support local efforts.
- **Onsite backup power** for water pumps is highly prevalent on individual properties and considered essential.
- **Neighbors knowing each other** well enough to knock on doors to facilitate evacuations, assist in evacuating people's animals, and provide other crucial support during emergencies.

North County communities organize in unique ways to build a strong sense of community. This has been a major asset in dealing with the threats unique to this region.