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FOREWORD

In the twenty-five year period of 1955 through 1979 there were 2,408 structures lost to wildfire, yet in the fourteen years following (1980-1993) over three times as many structures (7,698) were lost. From 1990 through 1999, 6,309 structures were lost to wildfires in just nine events. This clearly demonstrates the changing makeup of the wildlands in California. 954 structures, 174 of which were homes, were lost during the 1999 fire season in Shasta County. This demonstrates that the potential for disaster exists. Because of that potential, this study was undertaken.

Fire hazard assessment and zoning have been an issue in California since before the 1961 Bel Air fire, and following each disaster there are usually a number of legislative proposals designed to mitigate the next disaster. Yet despite these new laws, disasters continue to occur. The last significant disaster (before 1999) was the Southern California firestorm of 1993, and additional legislation was enacted shortly thereafter. The appendix of this report contains copies of many of the more significant statutes affecting assessment, zoning and mitigation.

The objective of this *Fire Hazard Zoning Field Guide* is to provide accurate and updated information to CDF Ranger Units, local fire districts and land use planners about the sensitive issues of fire hazard assessment and zoning. It is hoped that as public awareness increases, local agencies and residents alike will recognize their responsibility to support and participate in the implementation of pre-fire safety strategies. Strong public backing and sound long-term planning can help Californians effectively protect residents from fire in the Urban-Wildland Interface.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection hopes this document will be well used to help enhance pre-fire management and minimize damage to developments in the [Urban-Wildland Interface](#). Users should copy graphics, quote regulations, etc. to expand the use of the information contained here.

[This document contains several hyperlinks to other documents and on-line sources of information about structural fire prevention and protection, to assist users in obtaining additional information.](#)