

Ignition Management Plan

Battalion 11

SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS

Battalion Description

The Foresthill and Auburn Battalion covers an area 354,581 acres in size within Placer County along Foresthill Divide Road and Interstate 80. The area is densely populated and interlaced with an extensive road system. The elevation ranges from 510 feet in the drainage of the American River Canyon to 3,800 feet around Foresthill. The North Fork American River and Middle Fork American River form two distinct drainage systems with steep inner gorges and often dense heavy fuels. The fuels within the Battalion vary as widely as the elevations, spanning an area that contains blue oak woodland where annual grasses and oaks are mixed with brush and landscape plantings to the prime timber bearing soils of the Foresthill Divide which are covered with large pine and fir timber typical of the Sierra Nevada mixed conifer zone. In between these fuel types is a range of chaparral, conifer / oak forest, and grass meadows, all containing light flashy fuels and mixed with residential development.

The population centers are Auburn and Foresthill, surrounded by a densely scattered urban interface where parcels range from a half to 20 acres in size, much of which is developed with commercial, residential, and heavy industrial. This mix creates a true WUI problem where even the smallest fires with the most prompt emergency response can have a catastrophic result and result in burned structures.

Cooperators include Auburn Fire, Bureau of Reclamation, CA State Parks, Placer Hills Fire District, CAL TRANS, Foresthill Fire Department, Placer Fire Alliance, Placer County RCD, Placer County Land Trust, and USFS.

Battalion Fire History and Occurrence

Historically, large fires are known to occur within and adjacent to the Battalion. Notable in terms of size are the Volcano Fire (1960 – 44,386), Roadside #51 (1964 – 3,545 acres), Ralston Fire (2006 – 8,300 acres), and American River Complex (2008 - 19,580 acres). Each of these fires consumed significant SRA acreage within the Federal DPA. Other significant fires include the Auburn Fire (1961 – 672 acres) and Mammoth Fire (2009, 643 acres).

Equipment and vehicle caused fires are combined in this discussion and rank as the highest cause (44%) of wildfire in the Battalion. Much of the fuel work which occurs in the Battalion involves the use of equipment. Construction and land management activities often require the use of equipment. This equipment use takes place in the wildland areas where vegetative fuels are available and susceptible to burning. Portions of Interstate 80 within the Battalion lie in an area where commercial vehicle traffic often encounters problems as a result of the long downhill run off of Donner Summit. During fire season, as temperatures and vehicle traffic increases on Interstate 80, vehicles with overheating brakes can become an ignition source for roadside vegetation. Conversely, overheating and friction can affect vehicles climbing grades within the Battalion causing vehicles to ignite. Exclusive of Interstate 80, many of the roads in the Battalion are rural roads with vegetation growing very close to the road edge, or on the road surface. The exposure of these fuels to hot exhaust, exhaust discharge, or flame impingement from fires originating within the vehicle is a problem typical of the rural community.

Arson and undetermined fires are considered equally and account for 30% of the fires in the Battalion. These fires are intentionally set fire or fires which the ignition could not be determined due to various factors. These fires are the most difficult to reduce due to their nefarious nature and difficulty in assessing. The Unit's prevention program is charged with investigation and pursuit of arson as felonious activity. The Unit prevention also assists Battalion staff with cause determination if a fire problem persists with no apparent cause. The result is, over time, a reduction in arson fires and determination of cause on undetermined fires allowing fire prevention education to address the actual cause.

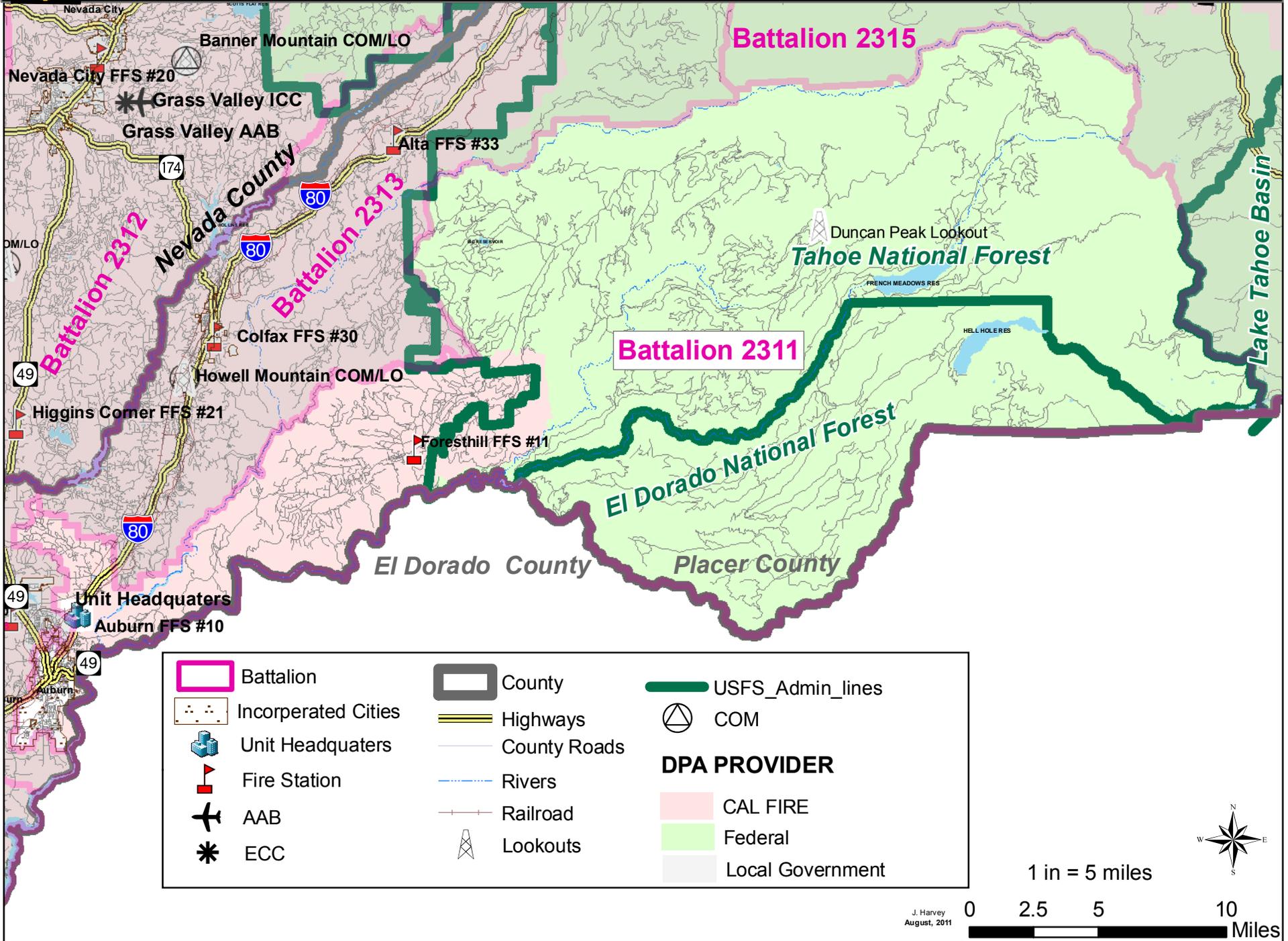
The balance of the fires is split between various causes which are considered normal accidental fires.

Fire occurrences overall in the Unit has dropped from its high of 740 in 2006 to 472 fires in 2010 with a low of 371 during the year 2007. After 2007, the Battalion fire occurrence has followed the Units fire occurrence pattern. Analysis of fire causes from 2005-2010 reveal that the fire occurrence is following normal patterns and that the primary cause has shifted between equipment use, vehicle use and debris burning over that time period. One fact is that prior to 2006, Battalion 11 was reduced in acreage during the creation of Battalion 18 concurrent with the incorporation of Placer County Fire personnel into Cal Fire.



NEVADA - YUBA - PLACER UNIT (NEU)

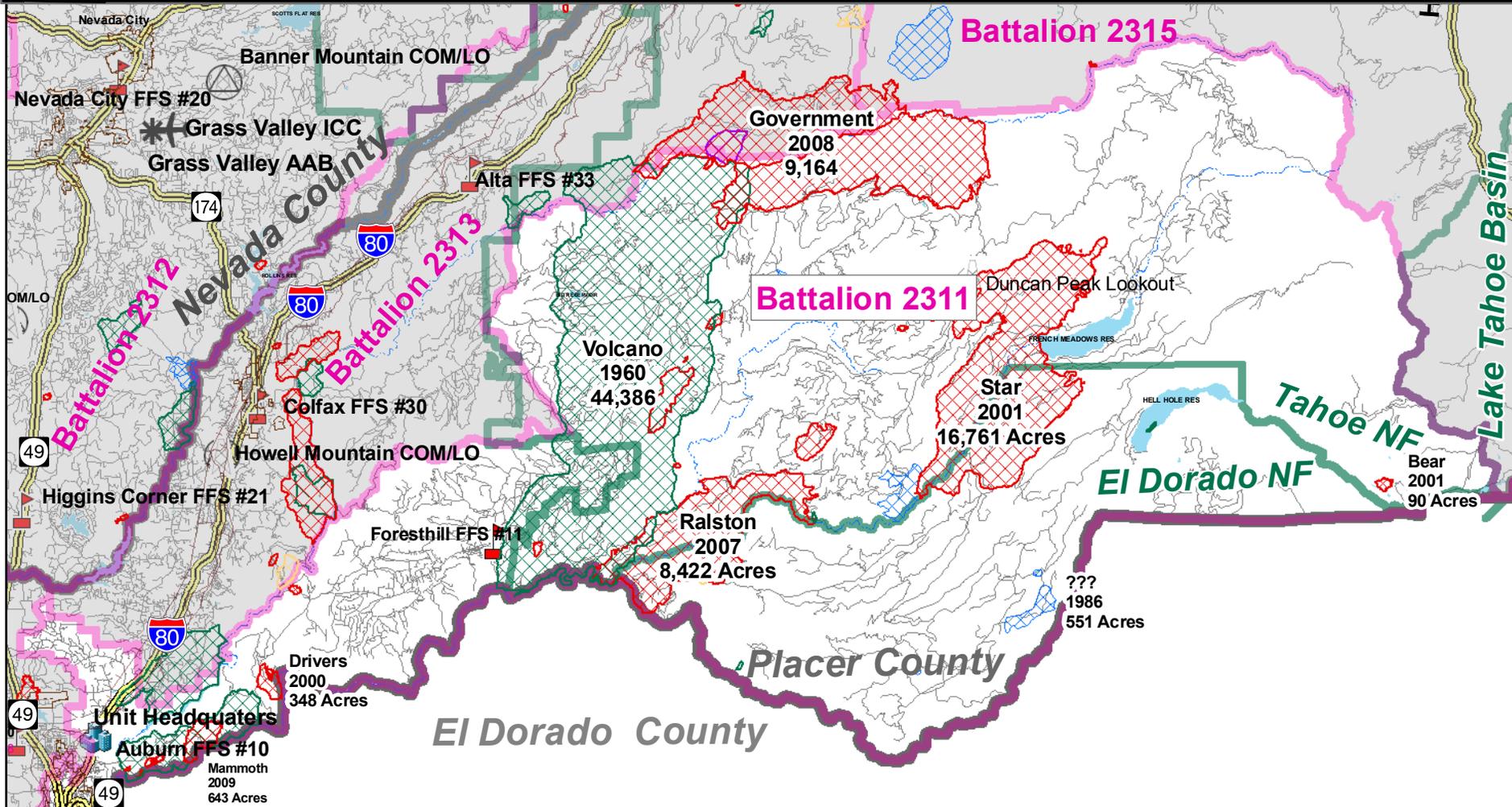
Battalion 11 - Administrative Boundaries





NEVADA - YUBA - PLACER UNIT (NEU)

Battalion 11 - Fire History



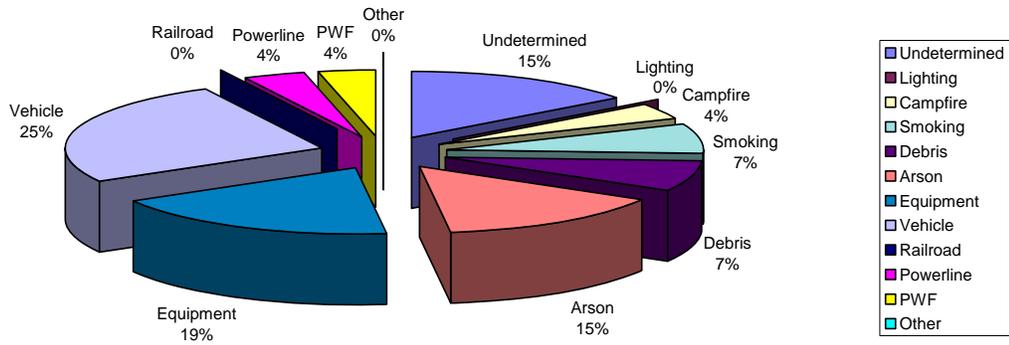
	Battalion		County		COM		1960 - 1969
	Incorporated Cities		Highways		Lookouts		1970-1979
	Unit Headquarters		County Roads		Rivers		1980 - 1989
	Fire Station		Railroad		USFS_Admin_lines		1990 - 1999
	AAB						2000 - 2010
	ECC						

J. Harvey
August, 2011

1 in = 5 miles

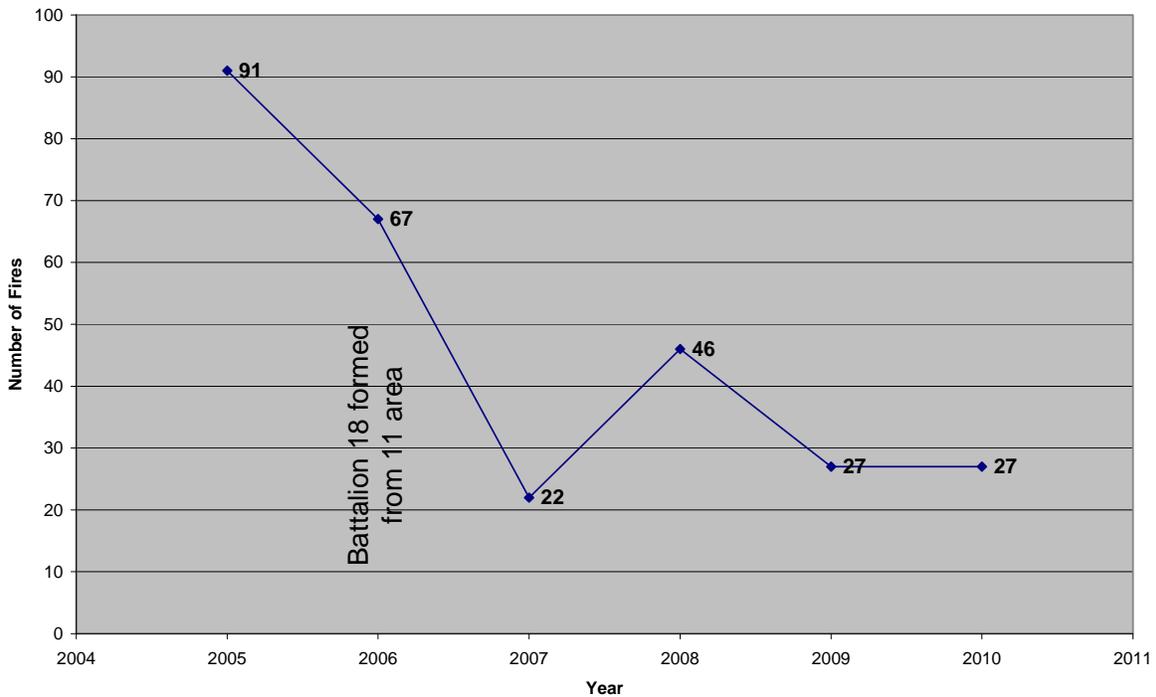
0 2 4 8 Miles

2010 Battalion 11 Fire Causes



Undet.	Lighting	Campfire	Smoking	Debris	Arson	Equipment	Vehicle	Railroad	Powerline	PWF	Other
4	0	1	2	2	4	5	7	0	1	1	0

Battalion 11 Ignitions (2005-2010)



Mitigation Strategies

1. Public Education:

Battalion 11 will work to reduce fire ignitions and reduce damage by fire occurrences by actively participating in public education programs, fuel reduction programs, and homeowner education programs. These efforts will center in the communities of Auburn, Foresthill, Newcastle, and Christian Valley. The components to meet these goals are as follows:

A. Burn Permit Administration

Only 7% of the total fire incidents in the battalion were identified as escape debris burns. Despite this success, there is always a need to educate the public on proper debris burning techniques. There is also a potential that new residents are unaware of the proper methods and timing for debris burning. Therefore, an effective program of issuing burn permits is critical to prevention of wildland fires.

LE-62s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued by authorized CAL FIRE personnel and cooperators. Headquarter staff, station staff, and VIP staff will administer dooryard burn permits to the public. Issuing points will be CAL FIRE Stations 10 and 11 and Placer County Fire Stations. The process will ensure that homeowners can easily acquire a permit. Burn hours will be determined by CDF outside the city limits and the individual cities within their boundaries. The emphasis will be placed on the terms of the permit, the responsibilities of the permit holder, and alternative methods of vegetation disposal.

LE-5 (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) and LE-7 (Project Type Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE or USFS. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by agency personnel prior to authorization to burn.

B. Public Education Forums

CAL FIRE staff is involved in numerous public education programs. The target audience is quite large and has proven to be receptive to various programs. On going events through out the year include:

- Meadow Vista Pioneer Day Parade
- Foresthill Fourth of July Parade
- Auburn Fourth of July Parade
- Auburn Air fest: Attend and assist fire prevention staff with static display during the Air Fest.
- Gold Country Fair: Construct and staff the fair booth display.
- Fire Prevention week open house: Conduct open house tours of the CDF / Placer County Fire Facility, Auburn Headquarters.
- Fireworks Patrols: With use of engines, paid staff, and VIP's conduct high visibility neighborhood patrols.
- Battalion Wide Fuel Reduction and VMP's

C. PRC 4291 inspection:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. One is as a vegetation management motivator. The other is as a public education tool. The intent is to support grant funded

inspectors conducting residential inspections for compliance for PRC 4291. Inspections will occur in the general vicinity of Auburn and Newcastle as well as the Christian Valley area. Correspondence with landowners will include information on reducing equipment use and debris fire ignitions.

2. Vegetation Management: The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing the potential of a large fire and reducing the damage from a large fire.

A. Chipper Program / Residential Fuel Treatment

The Battalion receives great benefit from support of the Placer County Chipping program. The program provides chipping services to landowners to abate hazardous vegetation with reduced costs to the landowner and fewer opportunities of an escaped control burn with the added benefit of reduced impacts to air quality. The Battalion encourages landowners to keep their properties free from flammable vegetation through support of the local Fire Safe and Resource Conservation District Fuel reduction efforts.

B. Installation and Maintenance of Roads and Fuel Breaks

The Battalion will continue to support the acquisition of project funds and cooperators that will achieve the installation and maintenance of roads and fuel breaks within the Battalion. The following roads and fuel breaks are deemed critical to provide fire equipment access and reduce the potential of a large costly and damaging fire which may originate in the American River Canyon:

- 1) New Auburn Foresthill Road to Clipper Gap Fuel Break, North Fork American West Rim
- 2) New Drivers Flat to Long Point Fuel Break, North Fork American East Rim
- 3) Existing McKeon-Ponderosa Fuel Break Improvement and Maintenance
- 4) Existing Lower Lake Clementine Fuel Break, North Fork American, East Rim
- 5) Existing Auburn to Robie Point Fuel Break Maintenance, North Fork American, West Rim
- 6) Maintenance of Stagecoach Road below the City of Auburn
- 7) Maintenance of Lower Lake Clementine River Access Road

C. VMP Projects

The purpose of these projects is to eliminate the potential for a large and damaging wildfire by eliminating the fuel, with fire, in a controlled fashion. The current VMP schedule includes the Foresthill Bridge VMP which has traditionally been instituted under agreement with the US BOR for fire prevention purposes. The project involved burning of the site prior to July 4th each year to eliminate the risk of an intentionally set fire. In contrast, the current project involves the abatement of flammable vegetation below the Foresthill Bridge in preparation for a retrofit project involving grinding and welding. The tertiary benefit of the project is the abatement of the flammable vegetation to achieve traditional goals. The Foresthill bridge VMP is a 3 year project to expire Fall 2012.

High Priority Target Areas

- Foresthill,
- Todd Valley
- Populated areas along canyon rim
- LRA areas during red flag warnings

Table. 2 – Battalion 11 Fuel Modification Projects, Community Outreach and Education Programs

Project Name	Status	Estimated Completion Year	Project Type	Net Acres
Foresthill Bridge VMP	O		Prescribed Fire	
I-80 Highway Chipping	A	2012	Fuel Treatment	
Placer County Chipper	O		Fuel Treatment	
Shockley Trails	O			

Status Guide: A = Active, P = Planning, C = Completed, O = Ongoing, M = Maintenance.

2011 Action Plan

- The Battalion will continue to implement the public education forums identified in the plan.
- The Battalion will work with Caltrans to reduce ignitions while mowing.
- The Battalion will encourage and support vegetation management programs within the Unit, plus roadside chipping and community chipping programs provided by agency cooperators.
- The Battalion will continue to implement a defensible space enforcement program in conjunction with the Unit Prevention Bureau and encourage landowners to remove hazardous vegetation adjacent to their structures.
- The Battalion will continue to maintain an excellent working relationship with various community fire agencies, public service groups, and Fire Safe Councils. This will ensure a rapid and effective response in order to protect the members of the community the Battalion serves.