

# *Ignition Management Plan*

## *Battalion 12*

### **SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS**

#### **Battalion Description**

Battalion 12 covers approximately 209,657 acres of Nevada County. It is occupied by an estimated 71,000 people living in roughly 24,000 residential structures. Fuel types range from oak woodland to timber, and the topography ranges from rolling hills to mountains. The battalion has a significant urban interface problem.

Because of the significant urban interface problem, much of the fire prevention effort has been spent on reducing the potential for large damaging fires. This has been accomplished through the efforts of a seasonal fire prevention inspector who last year conducted PRC 4291 inspections on 2,772 residents within the battalion, along with a schedule 'A' Fire Protection Planner whose focus has been placed on land use review, concentrating on fuel modification, adequate access and egress and water storage for fire protection. Cal Fire is also involved with the Nevada County Fire Safe Council which oversees the Nevada County chipping program.

#### **Battalion Fire History and Occurrence**

The statistics show that escaped debris burns are the primary cause (25%) of wildfire in the Battalion. The residents realize that the fuel treatments near their residences must be done and often delay burning until the final weeks prior to burn bans being instituted. The result is a greater number of burn piles being burned later in the season, when control of the fires is more difficult due to weather and fuel conditions. Public education at the time of burn permit issuance is used to reduce the number of escapes.

Equipment and vehicle caused fires are the second highest cause (24%) 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. 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 any rural community.

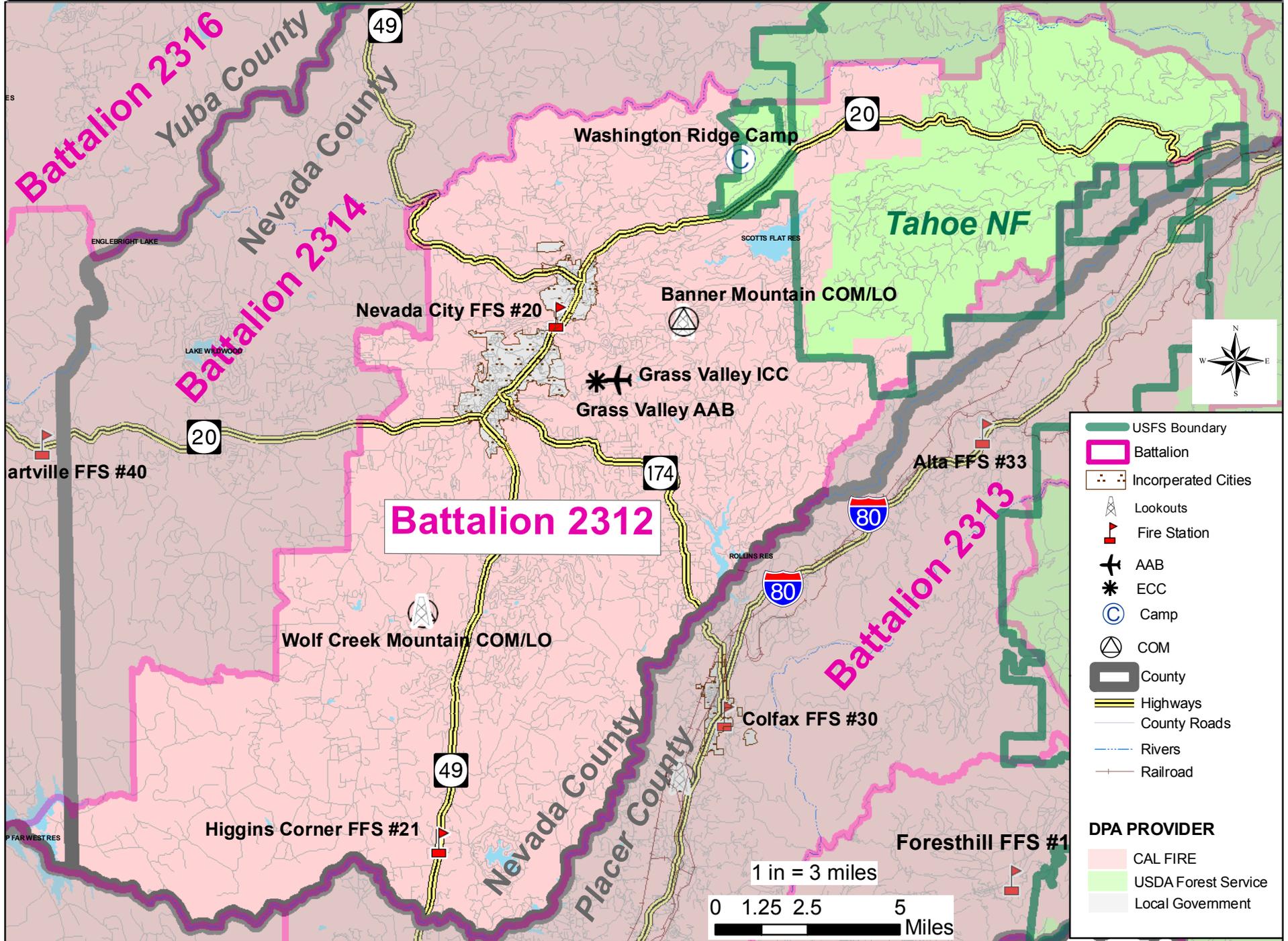
Arson and undetermined fires are considered equally and account for 24% of the fires in the Battalion. These fires are intentionally set fire or fires which the ignition could not be determined due to various factors. These fires are the most difficult to reduce due to their nefarious nature and difficulty 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.



# NEVADA - YUBA - PLACER UNIT (NEU)

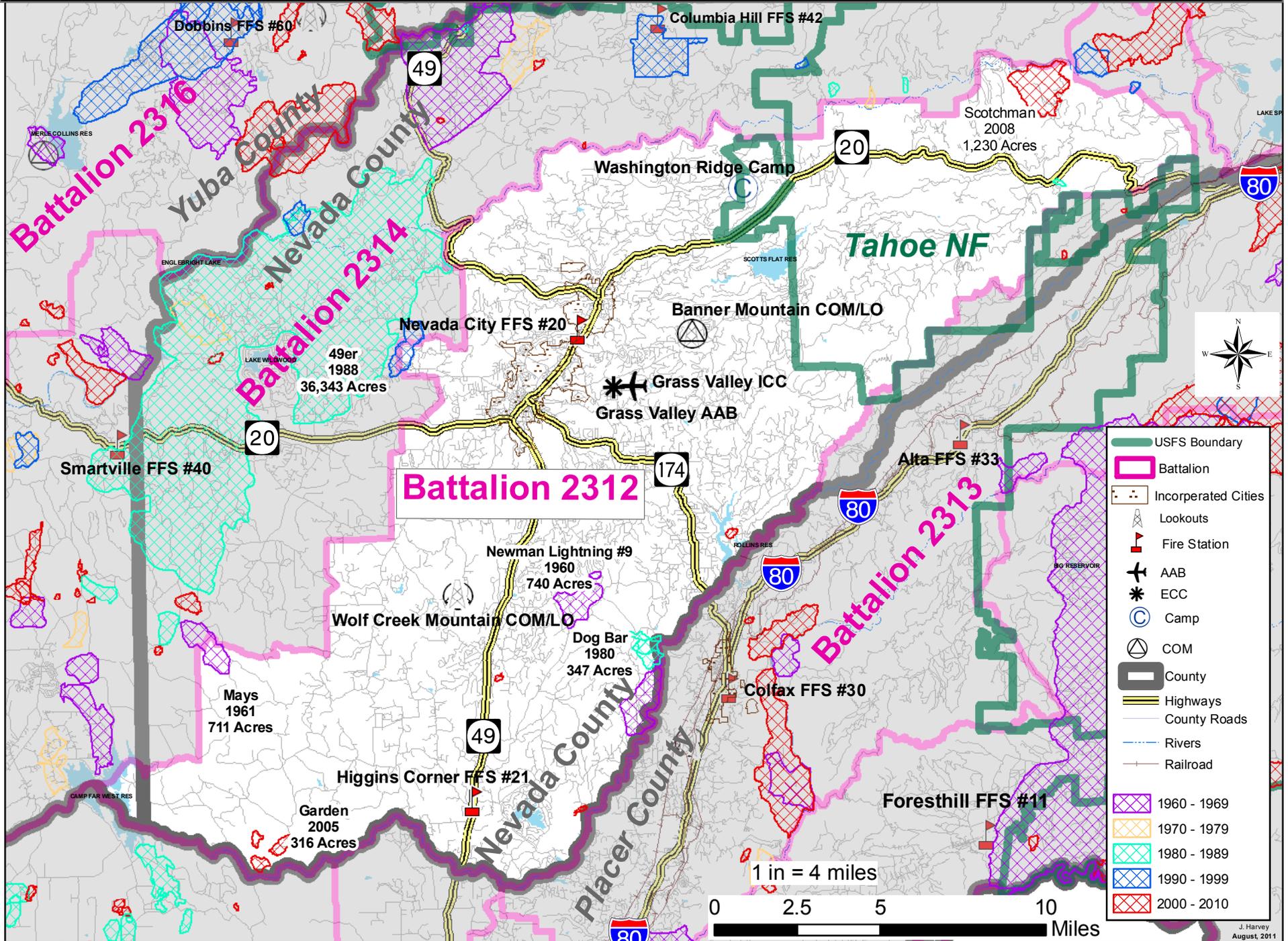
## Battalion 12 - Administrative Boundaries



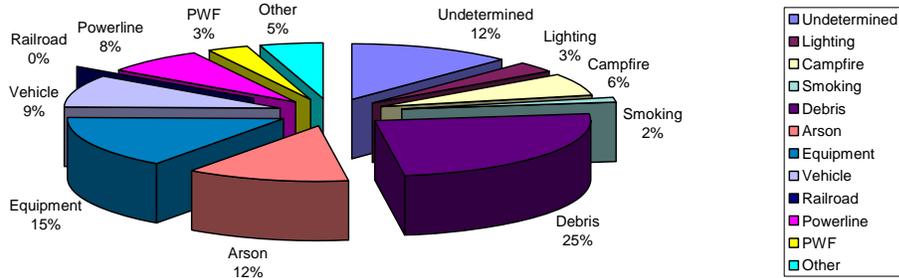


# NEVADA - YUBA - PLACER UNIT (NEU)

## Battalion 12 - Fire History

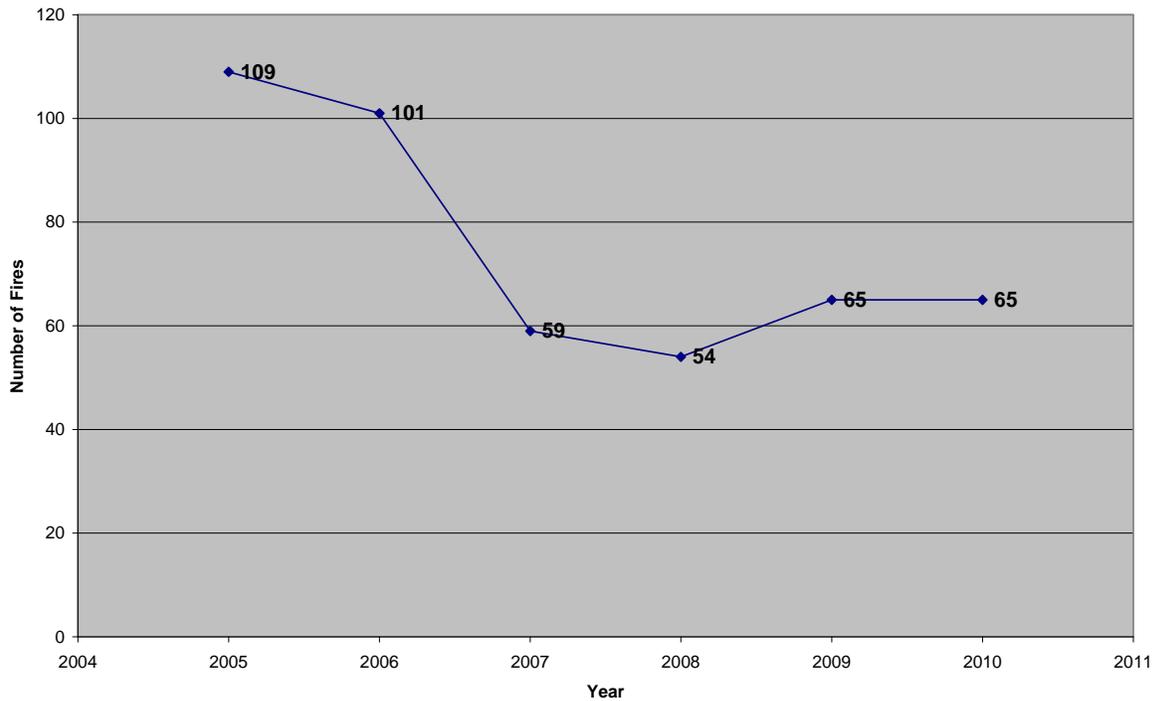


2010 Battalion 12 Fire Causes



Undet.	Lighting	Campfire	Smoking	Debris	Arson	Equip.	Vehicle	Railroad	Powerline	PWF	Other
8	2	4	1	16	8	10	6	0	5	2	3

Battalion 12 Ignitions (2005-2010)



## Mitigation Strategies

### 1. Public Education:

Public education continues to be a priority within Battalion 12 to reduce the number of fire starts. The action plan for public contact and education is as follows:

#### A. Burn Permit Administration

25% of the total fire incidents in the battalion were identified as escape debris burns. This indicates there is an increasing need to educate the public on proper debris burning technique. One effect may be that residents are new to the community and are unaware of the proper methods and timing for debris burning.

LE-62s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued by authorized CAL FIRE personnel and cooperators. Issuing points will be CAL FIRE Stations 20 and 21, Nevada County Consolidated FPD, Peardale/Chicago Park FPD Stations, Higgins FPD Stations and Ophir Hill FPD. Only those personnel trained and authorized by the CAL FIRE Battalion Chief will be allowed to issue a LE-62. 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. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn.

#### B. Public Education Forums

Battalion staff remains involved in numerous public education programs. Many programs are cooperative efforts with other fire agencies. The Nevada County Fair is an example of agency cooperation that provides information and education to the public. This venue provides a receptive and captive audience.

On going events through out the year:

- Fire Safe Council & Community Groups
- School Programs
- Career Days (Bear River & Nevada Union High Schools)
- Home & Garden Shows
- Fire Safe Work Shops / Fire Prevention Week
- Lake Vera Camp Grounds
- Nevada County Air Fest
- Nevada County Fair
- Higgins FPD Open House

#### C. Fire Prevention/News Releases:

CAL FIRE will continue to utilize a local radio station, the local news paper, as well as the Lake of the Pines & Alta Sierra monthly publications and the Nevada County Fire Safe Council's newsletter to educate the public on fire safe issues.

In addition CAL FIRE will work with local equipment rental yards and dealers with prevention material and to ensure compliance with spark arrestor laws. The focus will be trying to mitigate the rising occurrence of equipment caused ignitions.

A Schedule 'A' Fire Protection Planner works with developers and the Planning Department on land use and PRC 4290 issues, ensuring that adequate access/egress, fuel modification and other fire protection standards are met.

**D. 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. Two seasonal fire prevention inspectors, CDF engine companies, or a local government fire prevention officer within the battalion will conduct the 4291 inspections, dependent on funding availability. The focus of the inspections is defensible space compliance and public education.

**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. PRC 4291 inspections:**

PRC 4291 inspections are completed annually by Nevada County seasonal fire prevention inspectors, CAL FIRE engine crews and Nevada County Consolidate F.P.D. personnel.

**B. Hazard Reduction Programs:**

CAL FIRE has worked in past years with the Nevada Firesafe Council to support a residential chipping program. Last year the program treated 340 parcels within the project area. The projection for this year is to treat around 350 to 400 parcels. This spring we will be starting work on the shaded fuel break portion of the project, the plan is to treat approximately sixteen (16) miles of road ways in the project area.

CDF, USFS and BLM are working together to complete a shaded fuel break in the Harmony Ridge Scott's Flat area. Work should begin late spring and will tie in with a shaded fuel break that BLM completed a few years ago. This will provide a shaded fuel break along the ridge above the South Yuba River from North Bloomfield Rd. to Scott's Flat Cascade Shores subdivision.

**High Priority Target Areas**

- Nevada City (high structure loss potential)
- Grass Valley (historical value, high population)
- Banner Mountain Community
- Cascade Shores.

**Table. 3 – Battalion 11 Fuel Modification Projects, Community Outreach and Education Programs**

Project Name	Status	Estimated Completion Year	Project Type	Net Acres
Ponderosa Fuel Break			Shaded Fuel Break/ Community Protection	
Deer Creek Fuel Break			Shaded Fuel Break / Community Protection	
Wolf Mtn CAL FIRE Lookout	O	N/A	Active Fire Lookout	N/A
Banner Mtn CAL FIRE Lookout	O	N/A	Active Fire Lookout	N/A
Truckee / I80 Fuel break				
FSCNC Chipping program	O	N/A	Fuel Reduction	

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

### Success Stories

#### Fire Safe Council of Nevada County –

FSCNC earned the 2010 Firewise Leadership Award from the National Fire Protection Association for establishing five formal Firewise Communities in Nevada County.

### 2011 Action Plan

Debris Escapes – Battalion staff will work with local fire protection districts (Peardale, Chicago Park) and the FSCNC to provide educational materials on safe burning practices to local and visiting residents.

Powerline Fires – Powerline fires are a consistent problem within this Battalion and have the potential to increase due to the large quantity of snow and storm damaged vegetation present following the winter of 2010. Battalion staff will respond to citizen complaints regarding right of way clearance, coordinate LE-100 inspections and provide necessary tree review to PG&E when questions arise during powerline inspections.

Equipment Fires - Battalion staff will work with the Unit PIO to locate equipment rental yards and equipment dealers. Battalion staff and PIO will provide educational materials to the vendors and the public regarding fire safe equipment use. Battalion staff will also provide, upon request of the public, inspections of equipment to ensure fire safe operation. Unit PIO will provide radio interviews regarding safe use of equipment in the area.