

SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS

A: DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS

The Orange County Fire Authority has a wide variety of programs and plans that have been developed, or are in the developmental stages, that have an impact on communities in or adjacent to the county's open spaces. The plans are either tactical or strategic.

At the Division and Battalion level the tactical fire suppression plans include concepts from the RSG program that specifically instructions homeowners on evacuation procedures and highlights residences that are susceptible to wildland fire due to building materials or surrounding hazardous vegetation.

- Silverado Fire Plan that includes Silverado Canyon, Ladd Canyon, Baker Canyon and Williams Canyon. The plan is intended to guide fire and law enforcement agencies during major wildfire occurrence. Within the plan sections identify the needs for local residents to evacuate, and the safest means of evacuations and potential rendezvous sites
- Modjeska Fire Plan that includes Modjeska Fire Plan, Santiago Canyon and the Modjeska Grade. The plan is intended to guide fire and law enforcement agencies during major wildfire occurrence. Within the plan sections identify the needs for local residents to evacuate, and the safest means of evacuations and potential rendezvous sites
- Trabuco Fire Plan that includes Live Oak Canyon, Trabuco Oaks, O'Neill Regional Park, Rose Canyon, Holy Jim Canyon and Robinson Ranch. The significant difference of this plan as compared to the Silverado and Modjeska Fire Plans is Robinson Ranch. Robinson Ranch is a large modern residential area within the City of Ranch Santa Margarita and nestled up against the Cleveland National Forest. The plan is intended to guide fire and law enforcement agencies during major wildfire occurrence. Within the plan sections identify the needs for local residents to evacuate, and the safest means of evacuations and potential rendezvous sites
- Newport/Laguna Coast Fire Plan was developed for a very large area of intermingled open spaces and densely populated residential and commercial development that lie within the incorporated cities Laguna Beach, Newport Beach and Irvine; coastal areas of Newport Beach and Crystal Cove State Park; and any unincorporated areas that under the jurisdiction of the county. This plan was a collaborative effort between Orange County Fire Authority, Laguna Beach FD and Newport Beach FD
- Tustin-Orange Foothills Fire Plan was developed for a very large area of intermingled open spaces and densely populated residential and commercial development that lie within the incorporated cities Tustin and Orange and Peters Canyon Regional Park. This plan was a collaborative effort between Orange County Fire Authority and Orange City FD

Orange County Fire Authority normally develops programs that reach across the Division and/or Battalion boundaries and therefore require Division or Battalion Chief level personnel to collaborate to aid in the development of programs. Also, many prevention style programs have been developed by organizations outside of the fire services but relied upon OCFA technical assistance and support to complete their plans and have concurrence with the action items of these plans. Examples of the plans are:

- Nature Reserve of Orange County (NROC) Tactical Fire Suppression Plan and the NROC Strategic Plan. The tactical plan addresses pre-suppression, suppression and post-suppression tactics. The suppression tactics identify desired actions and locations, while the post-suppression tactics identifies the actions and responsibilities for Fire Suppression Repair. The Strategic Plan is in development as the NROC is in the process of hiring a consultant to work with OCFA and all stakeholders to complete the plan. Scheduled completion date will be determined upon the consultant being hired. This plan is the conduit to discuss and develop pre-suppression and prevention activities to reduce the loss of life, property, environment and suppression costs
- The Southern Sub-Regional Wildland Fire Management Plan – Rancho Mission Viejo. This plan was developed by a consultant firm for the Rancho Mission Viejo Land Trust, an organization designed to manage the natural resources of the ranch lands of Rancho Mission Viejo. The OCFA, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the RMV Land Trust and a variety of other regulatory agencies were involved in the development. This plan addresses suppression tactics by identifying desired actions and locations and post-suppression tactics for actions and responsibilities for Fire Suppression Repair. This plan is the conduit to discuss and develop pre-suppression and prevention activities to reduce the loss of life, property, environment and suppression costs
- The Irvine Ranch Conservancy Wildland Fire Ignition Reduction Strategy, a collaborative effort between the Irvine Ranch Conservancy (IRC) and OCFA, to focus on reducing fire ignition and to carry out actions that will reduce the probability of wildland fire ignitions during Santa Ana Wind conditions. The plan highlighted five (5) major action areas: Fire Watch Network, Fire-Hardening Roadways, Powerline Safety, Wildland Access and Urban-Wildland Edge. Again, this plan is the conduit to discuss and develop pre-suppression and prevention activities to reduce the loss of life, property, environment and suppression costs; however, emphasis on ignition reduction for environmental concerns is the highest priority
- The Cowan Heights – Peters Canyon Project is currently underway. This project is a collaborative effort of the Orange County Public Works, Orange County Fire Authority and Orange County Parks and Recreation. The intended result is to reduce hazardous fuels to a minimum of 50% of the current available hazardous fuels (responsible agency – OCFA) and the restoration of the Lower San Diego Creek riparian area (responsible agency – OC Public Works). OCFA will also be conducting an outreach and education on the necessities of vegetation clearance and maintenance, home improvements that will add to the survivability during a wildfire.

B: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The objective is to develop an implementation plan to achieve a uniform approach to hazard and risk assessment using fire prevention and protection in the Wildland Urban Interface.

Fire protection in Wildland Urban Interface areas may rely more heavily on the landowner's personal initiative to take measures to protect their own property. Therefore, public education and awareness may play a greater role in interface areas.

The health and condition of shrub lands within Orange County will determine the magnitude of wildland fire. If fuels--dry or dead vegetation, fallen limbs and branches--are allowed to accumulate over long periods of time without being methodically cleared; fire can move more quickly and destroy everything in its path. The results are more catastrophic than if the fuels are periodically eliminated. Prescribed burning, fuel breaks and hazardous fuel reduction are efficient methods to get rid of these fuels.

In an effort to alleviate the dangers from wildland fires in or near the interface with urban development, the construction of fuel modification zones (firebreak, fuel break, or greenbelt) or the reduction of hazardous fuels is required. The application of these methods does have limitations and is therefore only a part of the solution.

The OCFA participates in an annual activities that include (but are not limited to) sponsorship of "community clean sweeps" and chipper days that encourage the property owners to meet vegetation clearance requirements and a depository for the cut brush at no cost (dumping or disposal fees) to the property owner.

The OCFA is also collaborating with Orange County Public Works and Orange County Parks to reduce the amount of hazardous vegetation in areas that are adjacent to residential areas.