

SECTION IV: PRE-FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

A: FIRE PREVENTION

Unit prevention efforts include fair exhibits, community fire safe day exhibitions, burn and 4290 permit procedures, fire patrols, news media releases, public service announcements, structure and dooryard premise inspections, and an active board member on the Humboldt County Fire Safe Council. Fire prevention programs are coordinated to the greatest extent possible with fire safe councils and local fire departments.

ENGINEERING & STRUCTURE IGNITABILITY

This plan recommends measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the Unit. Information drawn from a variety of sources were included in this plan to help educate the public as to what they can do to help mitigate potential problems associated with living in the Wildland Urban Interface. (WUI)

The Humboldt-Del Norte Unit contains many communities that are threatened with potential loss of life and property due to wildfires. These and many other communities in California are subject to threats from wildfire, yet thousands of homes continue to be constructed every year that are not safe for fire prone areas.

Following several destructive wildfires that have occurred in California, various statues and regulations have been enacted to combat the ever-increasing threats to lives and property due to wildfire. Laws have been enacted to govern fire safety in regards to vegetation management, land use and more. Fire Safe Building standards were enacted, effective Jan. 1, 2009. These standards apply in all State Responsibility Areas in the Unit. They require fire resistive roofing, windows, and siding. Eaves and soffits must be enclosed and the external vents must be engineered to limit the intrusion of embers. Additional standards requiring residential sprinklers on all new construction became effective on Jan. 1, 2011.

These measures are intended to reduce the spread of fire to and from structures, helping to save lives, minimize property loss, and protect the environment.

Other measures have been in effect for many years. Public Resources Code (PRC) 4290 (and its' equivalent local ordinances) provide standards for roads, emergency water supply, vegetation treatment setbacks, and addressing signage. In Humboldt County, these standards are embodied in the county's Fire Safe Ordinance 1951. PRC 4291 provides standards for vegetative clearance – requiring a 30-foot lean and 100-foot green zone.

CALFIRE provides numerous brochures and guides on minimum defensible space standards.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

CAL FIRE's HUU Fire Safety Education Programs come in the form of school programs, fair exhibits, roadside public fire information signs, posters, flyers, Smokey bear fire danger roadside signs, and thousands of other printed materials, radio and television spots, community meetings, one-on-one contacts with wildland homeowners under the LE 100 inspections, and in recent years, the internet. This information and education is provided to people of all ages.

Smokey Bear, Sparky the Fire Dog, and Pluggie the fire hydrant are utilized at numerous events throughout the County with the goals of teaching fire safety at home and in the forest. Smokey, Sparky, and Pluggie are used in both the classroom setting and at public events, such as the Humboldt County Fair. While Smokey, and Sparky are used primarily for teaching young individuals, the HUU prevention staff also provided other informational and educational, materials to teachers and Fire safe councils geared specifically to educators.

Public Resources Code 4290 & 4291

Fire Fighter personnel, working under the direction of the Fire Prevention Bureau, conduct compliance monitoring inspections of defensible space clearance requirements around buildings & structures on SRA lands. Concurrent with Fire Prevention inspections, Forest Practice personnel also conduct compliance inspections of projects which are exempt from Timber Harvesting Plan preparation, if applicable. Examples of such projects include fire hazard exemptions and/or less than three-acre timberland conversions which involve fuel treatment.

Volunteers in Prevention

The objective of the VIP Program is to involve and utilize citizens along with public service groups in non-salaried positions to reduce human-caused fires. VIPs educate thousands of children and their parents about fire prevention by participating in fairs, displays, and parades each year. Volunteers are trained to make preliminary wildland homeowner property inspections for fire safety as required by Public Resources Code 4291, and to discuss with homeowners ways to make their homes fire safe. These one-on-one contacts are an increasingly important education tool as the population in California's wildlands continues to grow. VIPs are trained to assist CAL FIRE's efforts during wildland fires and other emergencies by providing information to the media and public.

HUU Pre-Plans

- Multi Incident Coordination Area (MICA)

INTRODUCTION

Fortuna Emergency Command Center referred to as the ECC within this document identifies the CAL FIRE multi-agency dispatch and command center located in Fortuna, California. The impact upon this communication center with multiple simultaneous incidents is critical. This plan was developed to handle the multiple incidents that can occur within a very short time frame, for example: there have been as many as 75 lightning caused fires occur in one day on within HUU's jurisdictional boundaries. HUU has also experienced several major fires burning simultaneously. This plan has been developed to manage our resources in a safe efficient manner when the Central Dispatch System cannot handle the complexity of the situation.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This plan is developed to standardize the procedures used by HUU during a Multiple Incident occurrence.

The plan is designed to handle multiple incidents as a result of lightning or other large scale events. It does not include fire operational procedures, for example: a lightning fire that develops beyond initial attack will be removed from the lightning plan procedures and treated as a separate incident (assuming that sufficient resources and personnel are available to manage the fire properly).

ACTIVATION OF THE PLAN

Activation may occur when one or more of the following conditions exist, keeping in mind there could be outside influences or local conditions that will call for plan activation. The ECC will notify all field units by a radio broadcast of activation of Multiple Incident Plan when:

1. Widespread incidents i.e. lightning, earthquake, flood, terrorism, tsunami, etc.
2. Significant lightning forecasted for HUU Direct Protection Areas (DPA).
3. Down strikes occur on HUU DPA.

The MICA may be viewed on CAL FIRE webmail @ *Public Folders/Northern region/Humboldt Del Norte/HUU ECC* under the subject MICA.

Additionally, each Unit Battalion maintains a MICA kit. Each kit includes but is not limited to a copy of the MICA Plan, Maps and other items important to the successful implementation of the plan. Other battalion specific Pre Plans are maintained at the battalion level for first in response.

- Mutual Threat Zones

CAL FIRE has three Mutual Threat Zone areas identified in the Unit. Two are along the LRA/SRA boundaries with the City of Trinidad, and the City of Arcata. The memorandum-of-understanding on these two areas allows for automatic response by either the local entity or CAL FIRE to an incident within 1.0 miles of the LRA/SRA boundary. Costs for those responses may be billed to the responsible agency on an assistance-by-hire basis. These MOUs have greatly reduced the cost to these local agencies, which formerly had Local Wildland Agreements with CAL FIRE. These Mutual Threat Zone MOUs are reviewed annually by the participants. The third zone is along the Oregon / California border.

B. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is a cost-sharing program utilizing prescribed fire, and mechanical means, for addressing wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. The use of prescribed fire mimics natural processes, restores fire to its historic role in wildland ecosystems, and provides significant fire hazard reduction benefits that enhance public and firefighter safety.

VMP allows private landowners to enter into a contract with CAL FIRE to use prescribed fire to accomplish a combination of fire protection and resource management goals. The projects which fit within HUU's priority areas (e.g., those identified through the Fire Plan) and are considered to be of most value to the unit are those that will be completed.

CAL FIRE administers several state and federal forestry assistance programs with the goal of reducing wildland fuel loads and improving the health and productivity of private forest lands. California's Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) and other federal programs that CAL FIRE administers, offer cost-share opportunities to assist individual landowners with land management planning, conservation practices to enhance wildlife habitat, and practices to enhance the productivity of the land. The Department also delivers the Forest Stewardship Program which combines funds from state and federal sources to assist communities with multiple-ownership watershed and community issues related to pre-fire fuels treatment, forest health, erosion control, and fisheries issues.

C. PRE FIRE PLANNING

Environmental Review

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires public agencies to consider actions on projects that may directly or indirectly result in a physical change in the environment. CAL FIRE provides resource management and fire safe comments on proposed discretionary projects routed through the county/city planning process and from the State Clearinghouse. Where projects cannot meet fire safe standards, CAL FIRE provides expert analysis on proposed project alternatives. For discretionary projects where CAL FIRE funds, approves, permits, facilitates or carries out a project as lead agency, it is obligated to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken in complying

with CEQA by preparing an environmental review. The Planning Battalion manages the Unit's environmental review program.

Fire Safe Council / Firewise Support

The Planning Battalion provides staff support for local and county-wide Fire Safe Councils within the Unit. They attend meetings, develop materials, and fill an expert role on fire safe practices. The Unit has provided chipper support and other in-kind match value to local councils seeking grant funding. CAL FIRE, in the role of the State Forester, reviews and is a signatory to local Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

Fuels Treatment and Grant Management

Fuels treatment projects conducted by CAL FIRE staff are monitored by the Planning Battalion. The three conservation camps manage their own projects and sponsors. However, projects involving Sudden Oak Death and grants to CAL FIRE are administered by the Planning Battalion to ensure consistent reporting. CAL FIRE also reviews grant applications for local fire departments, fire safe councils, and Firewise communities.

Geographic Information Systems Support / Mapping

Map development using GIS is provided by the Planning Battalion. This includes incident support, response maps, jurisdictional information, demographic analysis, and numerous other mapping products can be provided. Unit level CAL FIRE digital data sets are developed and maintained in the pre-fire shop.

SECTION V: PRE- FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS

DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS

