

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**



CAL FIRE's Humboldt-Del Norte Unit is divided into five field battalions; prevention, planning, aviation, emergency command center, and training administrative battalions. Each field battalion works closely with the planning battalion to assure fuel reduction projects and other projects within the battalion are coordinated. Each field battalion is involved in VMP projects and decisions that are located within their areas. Field battalions may also participate in local fire safe council activities and CWPP development in conjunction with the pre-fire planning battalion.

The prevention battalion through comprehensive engineering and law enforcement programs strives to prevent fires. Reduction of loss from wildland fire each year is the goal of extensive planning by CAL FIRE, communities, coordination with non-profit groups and interagency cooperation. The HUU prevention officers are busy year round investigating fire causes, interviewing witnesses, issuing citations and setting up surveillance operations. Additionally, law enforcement staff provides assistance when requested by local fire and law enforcement agencies in arson, bomb, fireworks, and fire investigations.

The training battalion coordinates a wide range of firefighter and support staff training from the local courses, to nominations for national courses. Maintaining and developing a skilled, professional workforce that meets required training standards is a major goal of the training battalion. This improves service to the public while ensuring a focus on firefighter and public safety. The Unit endeavors to have staff qualified or in training to fill Incident Command System positions at all levels, from local to national Type 1 incidents. The training battalion plays a vital role in developing the hands-on skills, the career foundational skills, and the management skills necessary to provide for those that provide for the public's safety.

## **Desired Future Conditions**

Each battalion has areas where wildland fire could threaten important assets to the communities. Our goal is to increase public awareness of these conditions in hopes of spurring stakeholder interest to taking a more active role in improving defensible space. For many areas we hope to reduce the fire hazard through fuel reduction and increase public and firefighter safety, by helping improve the means of ingress / egress.

Additionally we hope to improve or maintain the many ecosystems that surround us in order to maintain the quality of life for the residents of Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. This would include cultural burning to help maintain the Native American culture.

## **Area Accomplishments**

The County and HUU Cal Fire staff has been successful in the CWPP update process. Cal Fire staff along with the Humboldt County Planning Department staff work together in the development and approval of the County's Master Fire Protection Plan (MFPP). The MFPP is a major part of the overall operating plan for the county. The Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan serves as the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

(CWPP) for Humboldt County, California and was approved. CWPPs were created through the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA). As defined by the HFRA, the requirements for a CWPP are a collaborative process, prioritization of fuel reduction projects, and treatment of structural ignitability.

## **CAL FIRE Chipper Program**

Humboldt Del Norte Unit augments funding for all 10 fire safe councils through grant support review and matching funds through staff time, chipper use, fire crews, engines and dozers. These resources are channeled mostly through letters of commitment in the grant application process and range from \$9,000 – \$60,000 depending on the type of grant application.

## **Prescribed Fire Program**

Prescribed fire can be an effective tool for fuels reduction, in addition to providing other positive results in managing the landscape. These projects may be small in scale, from landowner conducted individual burns through our LE-5 and LE-7 permit process, to large burns conducted by CAL FIRE under the Vegetation Management Program. Managed timberlands realize fuel reduction when piles are burned or a treatment unit is broadcast burned. CAL FIRE is also an active cooperater with other public agencies such as State Parks – providing equipment, crews, and other resources to assist with their burns. Training burns are also conducted, which may produce a fuels reduction side benefit.

Treating areas under CAL FIRE's VMP brings the liability for the burn on the State, under a cost-share contract. These projects are often "targets of opportunity" since it takes a landowner willing to enter an agreement with the State, a project that realizes adequate public benefit, and is feasible to conduct without significant impact to the environment or communities. A list of projects that are current, under development, and recently conducted and may be renewed are included in Appendix C. The goal is to have at least one VMP project in each of the five field battalions. Burn windows are usually limited to September and October, so approved projects may not be completed within the 3-year contract period.

Private landowners, local fire agencies, and fire safe councils also conduct burn operations. From May 1<sup>st</sup> until the end of the declared fire season, a CAL FIRE permit is required for burning. Outside of that period, burns may be conducted without a CAL FIRE permit, so our knowledge of those projects is often limited. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District requires a smoke management project permit at all times during the year. CAL FIRE coordinates with the AQMD for small pile "dooryard" permits – consolidated into a single document issued by the AQMD. Larger burns are not coordinated between the agencies unless CAL FIRE is conducting the burn.

Burning programs are also conducted on public lands by our federal cooperators. Redwood National Park has an active program that often uses CAL FIRE resources.

The BLM burns are usually coordinated with CAL FIRE since most BLM areas are within the State's Direct Protection Area by agreement. The US Forest Service – Six Rivers National Forest also has an active fuels treatment program. CAL FIRE assistance on these projects is rarely requested.

### **Sudden Oak Death Areas**

Scattered throughout the Unit are areas of Sudden Oak Death infestation. These areas become priorities for fuel treatment to check expansion of the disease, and reduce fuels buildup. Research conducted by UC Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with CAL FIRE and other private landowners, has examined fuel loading and predicted fire behavior in SOD affected stands. These areas produce greater fire control challenges due to higher rates of spread, greater flame lengths, and greater potential for failure of standing trees. Where SOD is expanding in newly found locations, the primary strategy is isolating the infection site with a 300 foot buffer – removing standing tanoak and California bay. This can check the advance of *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen that causes SOD. Other infected areas can become a priority for fuels treatment along roads and near communities, as SOD appears to produce 100 percent mortality in tanoak.

### **APPENDIX A: PRE- FIRE PROJECTS**

Below is a partial Table of fuel reduction projects that have been identified. These projects have been identified through local community meetings along with Fire Safe Council members, state, local, and federal fire agencies. The project information has been mapped and made available in the Humboldt County Master Fire Protection Plan as well as local area CWPP's. This data is available online at the links shown below in appendix G of Master Fire Protection Plan

[http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/fire\\_safe\\_council/local\\_fsc/orleans/cwpp-osb\\_fsc\\_draft\\_12\\_1\\_09\\_forreview.pdf](http://co.humboldt.ca.us/planning/fire_safe_council/local_fsc/orleans/cwpp-osb_fsc_draft_12_1_09_forreview.pdf)

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