

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

### ***Miramonte Conservation Camp***

The Miramonte Conservation Camp (Camp) in partnership with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) provides four (4) inmate handcrews supervised by CAL FIRE Captains and CDCR Officers. The handcrews support fire operations, pre-fire activities and projects, and other public agencies and approved non-profit organization for public services. The Camp is located near the community of Miramonte in the South East portion of Fresno County. When the handcrews are not assigned to emergency incidents, they serve as the key workforce for implementing pre-fire/resource management activities and projects. Typically, the Camp provides approximately three hundred crew days per year toward pre-fire/resource management activities and projects. Nearly all the fuel reduction projects listed in Appendix A are implemented by using Camp Crews. In terms of funding support for Camp Crews, various State and Federal Grants provides reimbursement funds to offset operational cost to support grant funded fuels treatment projects. Fire safe councils may utilize camp crews for community fuels treatment projects. The Camp is instrumental in completing most of the fuels projects within the Unit and without them it would be difficult to achieve priorities and goals that have been outlined in this plan!

### ***Battalion 11 - Millerton Battalion***

The Battalion is situated on the eastern foothill edge of the San Joaquin Valley with elevations ranging from 300 feet to 2,800 feet. The pre dominate terrain within the Battalion is gently sloped foothills. The San Joaquin River Drainage is a significant topographic feature and presents fire suppression challenges due to steep slopes, difficult access, and spot fire potential across the river onto the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit. Unique to the area are the basalt lava table topped mountains. The vernal pools on the table tops contain sensitive plant and animal species, requiring modified fire suppression tactics when possible. Most of the table top mountains are owned by the Sierra Foothill Nature Conservancy.

The Millerton Battalion is located on the north end of the Fresno-Kings Unit and includes the communities of Friant, Prather, and Auberry. CAL FIRE wildland fire protection resources are located at the Millerton and Hurley fire stations. CAL FIRE protects 98,020 acres of State Responsibility Area (SRA) within the Battalion. The Fresno County Fire Protection District, via a Schedule A Contract with CAL FIRE, protects approximately 1,629 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Approximately 81,790 acres of SRA are concurrently within the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Approximately 19,314 acres of SRA are concurrently within the County of Fresno Community Service Area (CSA) #51, also known as the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department. Additionally, the Battalion protects approximately 5,070 acres of Sierra National Forest lands under CAL FIRE Direct Protection Responsibility (DPA).

The Battalion is moderately populated with structures on ranch/farm lands and suburban type subdivisions. The communities of Friant, Prather, and Auberry contain some light commercial and retail occupancy. The Fire Hazard Severity Zone

classifications in the battalion are “Moderate” and “High. Most fires in the area travel quickly due to the light fuels and pose an immediate threat to structures. The Millerton Lake recreational area attracts large numbers of people during the summer months and poses a high risk for ignitions. The San Joaquin River below the Friant Dam is in the LRA and receives heavy recreational use during the summer months. Fires originating in the river bottom often pose an immediate threat to the SRA. CAL FIRE and Fresno County Fire Protection District also respond to several swift-water rescue incidents at the river each year.

The wildland fuels are predominately fuel model 1 (annual grasses) and fuel model 2 (annual grasses / oak / grey pine). A brush component is introduced along the northern slope aspects of the San Joaquin River Drainage and at the upper elevations of the Battalion. The upper elevations contain fuel model 4 (mature brush), fuel model 6 (intermediate brush) and fuel model 2 (grass / oak / pine). The north and east slope aspects contain a significant dead fuel load.

## **Weather**

Situated near the San Joaquin Valley Floor, the area experiences much of the same hot and dry weather as the valley. Daytime temperatures over 100 degrees with minimal cooling at night are common during the months of July and August. The area occasionally experiences severe fire weather as frontal systems approach or thunderstorms develop. Critical winds do not occur frequently. The last significant fire activity caused by lightning was in 2006. Average annual precipitation is approximately 14 inches.

## **Fire History**

The recent major wildland fires are the Powerhouse Fire in 1989 and the Valerie Meadows Fire in 1979. The Battalion typically experiences a few extended attack fires in the 30 – 300 acre range each year. Most of the lands at the upper elevations have experienced fire within the past fifty years. Fires at the lower elevations generally do not offer fuel reduction benefits in following year(s) due to re-growth of annual grasses.

## **Priorities and Goals**

### **1. Defensible Space Inspections**

CAL FIRE personnel enforce Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 by conducting defensible space inspections (LE100). Engine crews and inspectors (when funded) conduct inspections for the purpose of educating property owners/tenants about fire safety and enforcing the 100 feet defensible space law. There are an estimated 2,500 structures in the Battalion and the goal each year is to inspect 50% of them.

The Fresno County Fire Protection District has a Weed Abatement Ordinance which is primarily enforced in the LRA. The Sky Harbor Subdivision, which is in the SRA, has small parcels with less than 30 foot setback. Property owners / tenants are not able to achieve 100 feet defensible space around their houses due to the small parcel size. Since this area is concurrently within the Fire District and there is a high potential for structure loss, the weed abatement ordinance is applied to vacant parcels that are

adjacent to structures. The Weed Abatement Ordinance is similarly applied to the Mira Bella, Ventana Hills, Brighton Crest, and any future subdivisions.

## **2. San Joaquin River Drainage**

The San Joaquin River is the boundary line between Fresno and Madera counties. The terrain is steep and fuels are heavy on the northern slope aspect (Fresno County side). The mouth of the drainage is in alignment with the prevailing wind. Strong up canyon winds create potential for a fire to spread to both sides of the river and move up-canyon quickly, threatening the communities of Prather, Auberry, Meadow Lakes, and Shaver Lake. Of particular concern along the drainage is the Powerhouse Road area, which has experienced several fires in the past 25 years. A skilled nursing facility (Wish-i-ah Care Center), housing 100 patients, is a significant target hazard in this area. The community of Auberry was partially burned over during the Powerhouse Fire in 1989 which started in the San Joaquin River Drainage.

CAL FIRE is using Federal grant funds to construct a fuel break, known as the “Comstock Fuelbreak,” to help protect assets near the San Joaquin River Drainage. Construction of the fuel break started in 2011 and will help protect Auberry, the Wish-i-ah Care Center, and the Big Sandy Tribal Rancheria from fires originating in the San Joaquin River Drainage near the Powerhouse Road area. The fuelbreak will also protect the communities of Meadow Lakes and Shaver Lake from fires originating in the Auberry area. The 400 feet wide fuel break is approximately 3 miles long and covers approximately 160 acres.

## **3. Morgan Canyon**

Morgan Canyon is south of the community of Prather. State Highway 168 travels through the canyon. The area is moderately populated with structures on 5 – 20 acre parcels. Many houses and roads in the area were constructed before the SRA Firesafe Regulations were implemented. Steep slopes, a brush fuel component, and inadequate private road systems pose significant challenges for fire perimeter control, structure defense, and civilian evacuation. Structure defense is an immediate priority due to the population density.

In an effort to protect the assets in the Morgan Canyon area, CAL FIRE personnel conduct defensible space inspections. Personnel conduct inspections for the purpose of educating property owners/tenants about fire safety and enforcing the 100 feet defensible space law. Defensible space inspections are conducted throughout the Battalion.

## **4. Sky Harbor Subdivision**

The Sky Harbor Subdivision is located at the upper end of Millerton Lake. The subdivision has approximately 40 houses tightly arranged mid-slope on steep terrain in a stand of grey pines. Property owners are not able to achieve 100 feet defensible space due to small lot sizes. There is a significant potential for wildland fire ignitions

from recreationists and residents. Structure defense is an immediate concern during a fire situation.

The Sky Harbor Subdivision is concurrently within the SRA and the Fresno County Fire Protection District. The Fresno County Fire Protection District has a Weed Abatement Ordinance which is enforced on vacant and inhabited parcels within the subdivision in order to reduce the flammable vegetation that poses a threat to houses.

CAL FIRE maintains a pre-suppression fire line along Sky Harbor Road for approximately two miles. This fire line helps to slow the spread of fires originating along the roadside near the Sky Harbor Subdivision.

## **5. Millerton Lake State Recreational Area**

The Millerton Lake State Recreational Area provides day use camping areas and boating access which is highly used during the summer months. The recreational area attracts thousands of people and poses a significant potential for wildland fire ignitions.

CAL FIRE coordinates with State Parks personnel to prevent unwanted fires. CAL FIRE personnel conduct high visibility patrols and public education during the recreation area's peak use times. CAL FIRE maintains roadside fire prevention signs along the main roadways to/from the recreational area.

## **6. Friant Dam**

The United States Bureau of Reclamation operates the Friant Dam at Millerton Lake. The dam is a homeland security concern as there are many assets below the dam that would be destroyed if a failure were to occur. CAL FIRE and the Fresno County Fire Protection District provide confined space rescue response to the dam facility. CAL FIRE and the Fresno County Fire Protection District participate in disaster planning exercises.

## **7. Pre-Attack Plans and Business Pre-plans**

Development of Battalion Pre-Attack plans is essential for pre-identifying the needed resources of a large and rapidly expanding incident. Additionally, this will allow the Battalion personnel to be proactive in the communities, meet with local business owners, ranchers, and local school district personnel to develop positive public relations and interaction

### **Collaborators with The Millerton Battalion:**

- Highway 168 Firesafe Council
- Sierra National Forest
- California State Parks, Millerton Lake State Recreational Area
- United States Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Land Management
- Sierra Foothill Nature Conservancy
- Fresno County Sheriff's Department
- Table Mountain Tribal Rancheria

- Big Sandy Tribal Rancheria
- California Highway Patrol
- CAL TRANS
- Pacific Gas and Electric

## ***Battalion 12 – Shaver Lake Battalion***

The Shaver Lake Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 121,192 acres of State responsibility land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Battalion is bordered on the east side by the Sierra National Forest.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from about 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of over 7,300 on the eastern border. Highway 168 runs through the Northern part of the Battalion. This provides a high volume of visitor traffic through the Battalion each day to the many recreation areas within the Battalion and Sierra National Forest. Shaver Lake is located in the northern part of the Battalion and provides a high volume of summertime traffic. This reservoir is one of many that supply the San Joaquin River that runs through the Central Valley.

The Battalion has two (2) fire roads which incorporate 11 miles of access that has to be maintained annually. The Battalion's diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. In the middle of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models and continue to increase in size and complexity while moving to conifer models, the upper end of the Battalion is timber interspersed with a large number of residential structures. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The entire Battalion has seen a major increase in population over the past several years. This provides for an increase potential in ignitions along with the added WUI problems that are associated in the foothill and mountain areas of California. Recent Battalion fire history indicates an average of 18 ignitions per year over the last decade. We have seen several large extended attack fires during the last few years in the Battalion. The last major significant event occurred in 1989. The common denominators for large wildfires are fuel, slope, weather, and assets at risk. We cannot change slope or weather but we can modify fuels and ensure that the individual homes and communities have a defensible space. All new homes being built are subject to PRC 4290 regulations which assist us in the defense of these newest additions to the watershed.

### **Priorities and Goals:**

#### **1. Defensible Space Inspection program (PRC 4291)**

- CAL FIRE personnel enforce Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 by conducting defensible space inspections (LE100). Engine crews and inspectors (when funded) conduct inspections for the purpose of educating property owners/tenants about fire safety and enforcing the 100 feet defensible space law.
- Approximately 2000 inspections are completed in the Battalion each year.

## 2. The Beal Fire Road

The Beal Fire Road has been in place for many years. It is a joint venture with CAL FIRE, USFS, local homeowners and the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council. The road extends from Highway 168 at the 4 Lanes to Auberry Road below Meadow Lakes. The purpose of the project is to reduce fuel accumulations and to decrease the potential of a wildfire that would cause damage to natural resources including wildlife habitat in the Beal Fire Road area. This fuel break is the first defense for fires starting on the lower Highway 168 corridor. The last VMP done on the Beal Fire Road was begun in 1994. It was a three (3) year project. Road grading occurs on a yearly basis on parts of the Beal Fire Road. Future needs for the Beal Fire Road include placement of cement water tanks at strategic points along the Fire Road for fire suppression use, and brushing of all the Fire Road. The Highway 168 Fire Safe Council is conducting maintenance with the use of grant funding and continued maintenance is ongoing.

## 3. Meadow Lake / Meadow Lake North

The Bald Mountain ridge top is a significant fire hazard area. There is great potential in the area for large dollar losses due to fire activity. Currently, the Beal Fire Road stands as the only defense against large fires rising from the slopes below the Meadow Lakes area. The first phase of line was constructed at the top of the ridge along Radio Lane. The second phase of line is computed and runs from the North end of Radio Lane to Auberry Rd. and the South end of the Acorn / Sugarloaf Fuelbreak. The first phase was completed by the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council using grant funding. The second phase was completed by CAL FIRE using USFS grant funding.

## 4. Cressman's

The community of Cressman's contains approximately 80 homes. It is located mid-slope on a south facing slope. Peterson Mill Road is located below the community of Cressman's. Wildflower subdivision is located above Cressman's. The fuel in the community itself is mainly Fuel Model 8. Fuels below would fall into Fuel Model 4. CAL FIRE response time is 15 minutes. Fire damage potential is extreme.

- Cressman's Fuelbreak was completed by the Highway 168 Fire Council which was started in 2000 to reduce the fuel loading along the single lane main road in the subdivision. This will enhance emergency exit for civilians and make access easier for emergency equipment responding to the area. It will also help slow the spread of a wildfire approaching from below. This project was completed in 2004 and maintenance is ongoing dependent on funding.

## 5. Bald Mt. Subdivision

Bald Mt. Subdivision area contains approximately 350 homes. They are located at the ridge top of a south/west –facing slope. It is up slope of a Fuel Model 4.

The ridge top is mainly Fuel Model 4 with 8 and 9 mixed. CAL FIRE response times are a minimum of 15 minutes. There is a high fire history in the area.

- The Meadow Lakes North and the Acorn/Sugarloaf Fuel Breaks are in position to help protect the communities around the Bald Mountain Area. This project is being done by CAL FIRE, Highway 168 Fire Safe Council and by the USFS on Federal lands.

## **6. Peterson Mill Road**

This project was ultimately started due to the success of the Cressman Road Project. The demonstration project began in the spring of 2005. This project, which is to reduce fuel loading (Fuel Model 4), is dependent upon "Prop 40" funding, the cooperation of the Fire Safe Council, and that of the stakeholders in the area involved. As with the Cressman project, this project will also aid in the emergency access of civilians and emergency equipment on a single lane road and will help slow the spread of a wildfire. This project was completed by the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council with grant funds in 2008. Additional grant funding should be sought to provide maintenance to this project.

## **7. Linson Lane and Shaver Springs**

Linson Lane and Shaver Springs subdivisions have approximately 75 homes between them. They are both located at or near the top of a drainage. Drainage fuels consist mainly of Fuel Model 4 type. CAL FIRE response time to the area is approximately 15 minutes. Fire history has been moderate in the area but has high potential.

- The Lower Beal Fuelbreak when it is completed would serve to reduce or prevent the spread of wildfires originating in the Tollhouse area upslope into the Linson Lane subdivision. The Highway 168 Fire Safe Council is working on the project.

## **8. Four Lane Pre-Suppression Fire Line**

Construction of a Pre-Suppression Fire Line near the bottom of the 4 Lane on Highway 168 at Backbone Mountain is a cooperative project in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. The purpose of the line is to prevent the spread of fires started from material dislodged from hot brake shoes. This is an annual project supported by CAL FIRE Fire Crews.

## **9. Roadside Fire Prevention Signs**

The Battalion has a total of eight (8) Fire Prevention signs. Two (2) are in Blasingame's first in area and six (6) are in Shaver Lake's first in area. Shaver Lake Station has an annual fire prevention sign plan which includes Shaver Lake and Bald Mountain regions. This project is done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. The signs are placed along Highway 168 and Auberry Road.

Throughout the Battalion, the signs are changed regularly to indicate seasonal messages. Sign examples include: "Ready, Set, Go", "It's flu season – clean

your chimney”, “Burn permits required”, “Clear brush 100 feet around your house”, “No Burning” and fire danger indicators. Ongoing projects include replacing and or repainting existing signs that are in poor repair.

### **Collaborators with the Shaver Lake Battalion:**

- Sierra National Forest
- Fresno County Fire Protection District
- Highway 168 Fire Safe Council
- Bald Mountain Fire Protection District
- Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- Shaver Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Southern California Edison – Resource Management
- Fresno County Roads

### ***Battalion 13 – Squaw Valley Battalion***

The Squaw Valley Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 151,117 acres of State Responsibility Land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Battalion is bordered on the east side by both the Sierra and Sequoia National Forest.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of 5,500 on the eastern border. Highway 180 runs through the middle of the Battalion. Also known as Kings Canyon, it is the gateway to the Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon National Park. This provides a high volume of visitor traffic through the Battalion each day. Pine Flat Reservoir is located in the northern part of the Battalion and provides a moderate to high volume of summertime traffic. This reservoir supplies the Kings River that runs through the Central Valley.

The Battalion has nine (9) fire roads which incorporate 21 miles of access that has to maintain annually. Currently, all roads have been mapped and GIS data gathered for future use in the Unit’s Fire Plan. The Battalion’s diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. At the upper end of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models and continue to increase in size and complexity while moving to conifer models. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The entire Battalion has seen an increase in population over the past several years. This provides for an increase potential in ignitions along with the added WUI problems that are associated in the foothill and mountain areas of California. Recent Battalion fire history indicates an average of 20 ignitions per year over the last decade. We have not seen any large or devastating fires during the last several decades in the Battalion. The last significant event occurred in the 1950’s. History indicates that it’s not of matter of “if” we have a fire, but rather “when” we will have a fire. The common denominators for large wildfires are fuel, slope, weather, and assets at risk. We cannot change slope or

weather but we can modify fuels and ensure that the individual homes and communities have a defensible space. All new homes being built are subject to PRC 4290 regulations which assist us in the defense of these newest additions to the watershed.

### **Battalion Priorities and Goals:**

#### **1. Defensible Space Inspection program (PRC 4291)**

- Approximately 1,400 inspections done in the Battalion each year. This comprises about 70% of the Battalion population. Continue to track inspections utilizing GPS coordinates. This provides for a real time picture of the amount and locations of all structures in the Battalion.

#### **2. Pre-Fire Lines (Rat Trailing)**

- Utilize the Miramonte Fire Crews to construct hand lines along high prone ignition road roadways to slow and contain potential fire spread.
  - Highway 180
  - Hills Valley Road
  - Sunnyslope Road
  - Sand Creek Road

#### **3. Pre-Attack Plans and Business Pre-plans**

- Development of Battalion Pre-Attack plans is essential for pre-identifying the needed resources of a large and rapidly expanding incident. Additionally, this will allow the Battalion personnel to be proactive in the communities, meet with local business owners, ranchers, and local school district personnel to develop positive public relations and interaction. Pre Attack plans are being completed to protect the communities of Miramonte, Squaw Valley, Sand Creek, Wonder Valley, Piedra and Sunnyslope.

#### **4. Fire Control Road Maintenance and Identification**

- To continue to maintain these essential accesses to difficult areas in the Battalion for the ability to assist in fire control operations. Continue to pursue the options of marking the entrance of each road with their identified name.

### **Collaborators with the Squaw Valley Battalion:**

- Sierra National Forest
- Sequoia National Forest
- Kings Canyon National Park
- Sequoia National Park
- Oak to Timberline Fire Safe Council
- Mountain Valley Volunteer Fire Department
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Orange Cove Fire District
- Hume Lake Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

## ***Battalion 14 – Coalinga Battalion***

The Coalinga Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Western San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 563,076 acres of State responsibility land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Coalinga Battalion also has 151,967 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Direct Protection Area (DPA). CAL FIRE provides fire protection for most of the BLM property within the Coalinga Battalion. The total CAL FIRE DPA of the Coalinga Battalion is 715,043 acres. The Battalion is bordered by CAL FIRE Units of San Luis Obispo, San Benito Monterey, Mariposa Madera Merced and Kern County. The Coalinga Battalion is also boarded by Local Government of Kings County, Fresno County Fire Protection District and The City of Coalinga.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of 5,000 on the eastern border. Interstate 5, runs 80 miles along the Eastern SRA boundary of the Battalion. This provides very high transit traffic. State Highway 198 and Los Gatos Creek Road are east west routes to State Highway 101. These routes have high traffic as well.

The Coalinga Battalion has three (3) fire roads which incorporate 42 miles of access that has historically been maintained annually. There are a large number of ranch roads which provide access to the Battalion. There are several oil fields which crude oil and natural gas is produced and stored and transported by pipeline. This creates unique issues with fire control. The Battalion's diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels, which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses, which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. At the mid-slope to higher elevations of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models. There are areas within the Battalion that contain stands of evergreen and confer trees. These are located at the highest elevations of the Battalion. There are several areas, which are inaccessible, or control measures will be difficult due to steep topography. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The Battalion has not seen a significant increase in population over the last decade. Predominately the Battalion is cattle ranches with large land ownership. The Battalion's WUI areas are along Hwy 198, Los Gatos Creek Road and some areas of Kings County. About 500 structures are in these areas. There are an unknown number of structures located within the ranches located within the Battalion. Recent Battalion's fire history indicates an average of 10 ignitions per year over the last decade. Most fires will reach 100 acres or more due to the significant response time of initial attack resources to the Battalion. The Battalion has a significant large fire every five (5) years on average.

## **Goals and Priorities**

### **1. Defensible Space Inspection program (PRC 4291)**

- a. CAL FIRE personnel enforce Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 by conducting defensible space inspections (LE100). Engine crews and inspectors (when funded) conduct inspections for the purpose of educating property owners/tenants about fire safety and enforcing the 100 feet defensible space law.
- b. Approximately 200 inspections are completed in the Battalion each year. With the large geographical area within the Battalion it is hard to complete defensible space inspections on all inhabited structures each year.
  - i. Inspection priorities will be the Los Gatos and Warthan Canyon areas due to the higher concentration of inhabitable structures.
  - ii. We will continue to track inspections utilizing GPS coordinates to help provide better tracking and improvement of the GIS layer in CAD and Toughbook's.

### **2. Fire Control Roads - Tar Canyon, Juniper Ridge, Mud Run**

Although these roads are located in entirely different locals, they are important to the philosophy of keeping fires small which will keep costs to a minimum. For a minimum investment in the late spring, we can provide ourselves with not only an access to some very inaccessible country but also create a secondary defense to stop a wildland fire. The maintenance of these fire roads is imperative to the mission of controlling fires at the earliest possible moment.

- a. Juniper Ridge Fire Road is located west of the City Coalinga running from Highway 198 north to Los Gatos Road. Its most apparent use would be for controlling a fire that originates in the oil fields or the foothills west of Coalinga.
- b. The Tar Canyon Fire Road is in Kings County, beginning just south of Avenal on Highway 33 going west through the hills towards Pacheco Rock. It provides access to some very rough country in and around the Black Hole Quadrant.
- c. Mud Run is a North /South fire control road that starts at the Los Gatos Canyon Road. It continues through several private ranches and ties into Warthan Canyon Rd. The significance of this control road is to provide access into an area that would otherwise be inaccessible to firefighting equipment. It also provides a control point prior to a wildfire moving into an area of WUI.

### **3. Los Gatos Canyon**

Los Gatos Canyon is a sparsely inhabited area of the Los Gatos Creek drainage on Los Gatos Road west of Derrick Avenue to the County line. It is populated mostly by longtime residents of the area which have a better than

average knowledge of fire safe regulations and practices. It is this knowledge, which makes them unique in that they are very low maintenance in regards to fire prevention, allowing Battalion crews to concentrate on the newer residents to the area. The fuel models consist of mostly 1 and 4 with the biggest challenge in the off road areas, being access. Although fire history does not support a tremendous problem there has been some activity usually related to ranch activities or lightning.

- This asset is protected by LE 100 inspections, fire control roads, roadside prevention signs and VMP Burns.

#### **4. Warthan Canyon**

This area lies up the Warthan Creek drainage along Highway 198, south the City of Coalinga to the County line and south on Parkfield Road to the County line. Its characteristics are not so different from those of the Los Gatos Canyon area with its problems and solutions being very much the same. Fuel Models are 1 and 4 and fire history has been very limited with most causes being equipment oriented mostly off the highway.

- This asset is protected by LE 100 inspections, fire control roads, roadside prevention signs and VMP Burns.

#### **5. Oil fields**

The Oil fields lay in both the SRA and the LRA and although crisscrossed with roads are a definite threat to the wildland to the west should a fire escape from this area. Its fuel model is a 1 and the primary cause for fires in this area has been power line related. These are not the normal utility lines in that they are owned privately by the oil companies and are maintained by them. We have an ongoing process of keeping the oil companies educated regarding their responsibilities about maintenance and the liability, if their lines are responsible for causing a fire. Through this process, along with our enforcement and cost collection procedures, has reduced the numbers of fires.

- This asset is protected by meeting with company owners and educating them on clearances around their lines.

#### **6. Kings County SRA**

The Kings County SRA lies along the Highway 33 corridor to the west from Coalinga to the Kern County line. Since the closing of the Cottonwood FFS, the response times have become considerable with the first in initial attack equipment now coming from CAL FIRE/SLU, Kern County Fire, or the Kings County Fire Department. The primary fuel model is 1 and 4. The extended response times can make this an interesting problem regarding suppression if IA resources do not have a positive effect in regards to suppression. Fire causes are generally a result of coming off the Highway 33. Support and interface with the cooperative agencies tends to keep a handle on this area's problems. Additionally there are two 230 KV electrical transmission lines. The Diablo-Gates

and the Templeton-Gates are located in the south, in and around the junction of the Kings, Fresno, and Monterey County lines.

### **1. Vegetation Management Program Burns**

Due to environmental concerns and rising costs of associated with Vegetation Management Burn it has become difficult to conduct these burns. There are several ranchers in the Coalinga area that would like to conduct VMP burns. Given the fiscal climate of the economy, it is difficult for them to pay their cost share with such a project. Creating a Fire Safe Council or with the ranchers support may provide some opportunities for fuels reduction.

### **2. Pre-Attack Plans and Business Pre-plans**

Development of Battalion Pre-Attack plans is essential for pre-identifying the needed resources of a large and rapidly expanding incident. Additionally, this will allow the Battalion personnel to be proactive in the communities, meet with local business owners, ranchers, and local school district personnel to develop positive public relations and interaction

### **3. Fire Prevention Displays: Horn Toad Derby and Coalinga Fest**

Each year the City of Coalinga has two (2) major events, the Horned Toad Derby, and Coalinga Fest. Both of these are considerable in size and attended by a great majority of the local residents, as well as visitors to the area. The parade provides a venue to display Smokey and entice the public to a Fire Prevention booth where we can reach out to the youth of the area and to put forth any fire prevention message that is pertinent at the time.

### **4. Roadside Fire Prevention Signs**

The roadside fire prevention signs are located throughout the Battalion on the main arteries. These signs provide the public with information that will make them a friendlier user of the wildlands, both private and public.

#### **Collaborators with the Coalinga Battalion:**

- Bureau of Land Management Hollister.
- Fresno County Fire Protection District
- City of Coalinga
- County of Kings Fire Department
- California Department of Fish and Game

## **Battalion 15 (Fresno County Fire Protection District)**

### **Description**

Battalion 15 is located in the central and western area of the Fresno County Fire Protection District (FCFPD) in the Fresno Kings Unit. The Battalion consists of 730,970 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) making up part of the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion is bordered by Merced County Fire to the North, North Central Fire and FCFPD, Battalion 18 to the East, Kings County Fire Department to the South, and FCFPD, Battalion 14 which includes 563,076 acres of SRA to the West. The San Joaquin River acts partially as the north edge boarder, and the Kings River acts as partial boarder on the south edge of Battalion 15.

The elevation with-in the Battalion ranges from 150 in the valley and 600 feet along Interstate 5. Interstate 5, State Highways 180, 33, 41, 145, and 269 all run through Battalion 15. Due to the number of highways, Battalion 15 experiences high volumes of daily traffic.

The Central San Joaquin Valley is primarily used as agricultural land for crops, orchards and milk dairies. This contributes to the high volume of commercial and agricultural vehicle traffic on highways and local roadways. The communities of Laton, Riverdale, San Joaquin, Mendota and Firebaugh are encompassed in Battalion 15. FCFPD provides fire protection for the City of San Joaquin and Mendota.

The Mendota Wildlife refuge consisting of 14,000 acres and a portion of the California Aqueduct is also encompassed in Battalion 15.

Primary fuels for Battalion 15 are Fuel Model 1, annual grasses. This fuel is present along roadways, canals, fallow fields, with-in the housing areas and cities in Battalion 15. The fuel models along the various rivers edges within the Battalion are Fuel Model 2, 5. Fuel Models in the Wildlife Refuge are 1, 3 and 5.

### **Priorities and Goals:**

#### **1. City of Mendota**

The City of Mendota unemployment remains high per capita in the state of California. Due to the unemployment rate, an increase of foot traffic throughout the City occurs both day and night on city streets and on foot trails throughout the City. This has resulted in regular nuisance fires caused by arson or playing with fire. With the establishment of Mendota PD, fires with-in the City has significantly dropped. Nuisance fires still occur with-in the City; both the CAL FIRE/Fresno County Fire Protection District and The Mendota PD remain diligent on Fire Prevention through public education.

- a. Weed Abatement and Public Education will help reduce the number of nuisance fires.

## **2. Pre-Plans**

Update existing preplans and preplan any new businesses in the battalion. This contact allows the station personnel to be proactive, meet business owners, school district personnel in their area and create positive public relations.

- a. Priority of preplans: Schools, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Target Hazards and Industrial Businesses with large war forces
- b. Engine Companies continue to update existing preplans and preplan new businesses in the battalion.
- c. Continue to work with and support Department IT personnel on development of a server based application to make the preplans available to CAD and Toughbook's.

## **3. Weed Abatement**

Continue inspections to meet the intent of the weed abatement program. Work with the Unit's Prevention Bureau with enforcement of the program.

- a. Work with communities within the battalion to gain compliance in the program

## **4. Public Education**

Continue efforts with communities, community leaders and local schools on fire prevention education.

- a. Stations and Engine Companies participate in Parades, carnivals, station tours, "Every 15 Minute" Programs and etc.
- b. Continue school programs and outreaches
- c. Continue involvement with community leaders to promote fire prevention education within their communities through established monthly mailers.

## **5. Mendota Wildlife Area (Alkali Sink)**

Assist the California Department of Fish and Game with their efforts for enhancement of wildlife and endangered plants in the Alkali Sink Reserve through noxious non-native vegetation removal.

### **Collaborators within Battalion 15:**

Laton Community Services District  
Riverdale Community Services District  
City of Firebaugh Fire Department  
California Department of Fish and Game

### ***Battalion 17-Fresno County Fire Protection District***

The Metropolitan Area of the Fresno County Fire Protection District is identified as Battalion 17 of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit (FKU). It is located in Central California and makes up part of the Central/Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 113,810 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) land that is under contractual agreement with CAL FIRE to provide personnel services and management on behalf of the Fresno County Fire Protection District. The Battalion is bordered on the North and East sides by State Responsibility Area (SRA) under direct protection of CAL FIRE.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 250-400 feet along the western SRA border. State Highways: 41, 99, 168, and 180 run through the Battalion. This highway infrastructure contributes to a high volume of commuter and visitor traffic through the Battalion each day.

The primary fuel models within the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses adjacent to roadways, within suburban living areas, and transitioning to rural agricultural areas.

The entire Battalion has seen an increase in population over the past several years and as a result has the highest population density of all of the Battalions within the Fresno-Kings Unit. The population density coupled with the high traffic transportation corridors provides for an increases potential for wildland fire ignition.

The mission of the Battalion is to provide the highest level of customer service while reducing the costs and losses from fire through education of the public, active involvement in school programs and communities and maintaining a positive and professional relationship with allied agencies.

## **Priorities and Goals:**

### **1. Preplans**

Update existing preplans and preplan any new businesses in the Battalion. This contact allows the station personnel to be proactive, meet business owners, school district personnel in their area and create positive public relations. There are numerous industrial complexes in the Battalion which can be identified and updating contact numbers or special circumstances pertaining to that business or school.

- Goal of completing or updating 25% of preplans each year
- Priority of preplans: Schools, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Target Hazards and Industrial Businesses with large war forces
- Specific Target Hazards: Hazardous material distribution facilities, fireworks storage facilities, large petroleum and propane facilities and Mega Commercial Warehouses

### **2. Addresses**

A common problem found throughout our County is the lack of addresses posted or they are posted but unreadable. This not only increases response times but creates a safety problem as we are trying to search for addresses in the dark or fog. Some possible solutions would be to:

- a. Send out fliers explaining the importance of posting legible addresses.
- b. Enlisting the help from schools, either as a school project or after school activity.
- c. Using the PCF Companies to fund raise for their companies. If the Unit and County can adopt a standard for posting addresses, such as having a sign with their numbers, maybe the PCF Companies can make these to sell.

### **3. School Program Plan**

Be more involved with the schools in our response areas. We do participate in some activities, but more intervention would go a long way in developing a strong relationship with the communities. Programs such as Career Days, Fire Safety, Fire Prevention Day or Station Tours are some ways we can interact with the children.

#### **Collaborators within Battalion 17:**

Clovis Fire Department  
Fresno Fire Department  
California Air National Guard Fire Department

### ***Battalion 18-Fresno County Fire Protection District***

The mission of Battalion 18 is to provide the highest level of customer service while reducing the costs and losses from fire through education of the public, active involvement in school programs and communities and maintaining a positive and professional relationship with allied agencies.

Battalion 18 is a suburban to rural area of Fresno County in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The Battalion consists of 186,950 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) land. The Battalion contains many of the medium to smaller communities in Fresno County such as Sanger, Del Rey, Fowler, Selma, Kingsburg, Reedley and Orange Cove.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 260 feet along the Kings River to 1,752 feet on Campbell Mountain on the East side of the Battalion. State Highways 43, 99 and 180 run through the Battalion. This highway infrastructure contributes to a high volume of vehicular traffic through the Battalion every day. The Kings River also runs through the Battalion and contributes to a large volume of recreational traffic and related water rescue incidents.

The primary fuel models within the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses to oak woodland along the Kings River. The majority of the land in the Battalion is in agricultural production.

## Priorities and Goals:

### 1. Preplans

Update existing preplans and preplan any new businesses in the Battalion. This contact allows the station personnel to be proactive, meet business owners, school district personnel in their area and create positive public relations. There are numerous industrial complexes in the Battalion which can be identified and updated contact numbers or special circumstances pertaining to that business or school.

- a. Continue to complete these preplans in order as identified by importance:
  1. Schools (concurrent with inspections)
  2. Care or Foster facilities (rest homes)
  3. Any Industrial complexes creating mass evacuations i.e.; cold storage, bulk hazardous material storage etc.
  4. Industrial businesses with large work forces. Schools (concurrent with inspections)
- b. Continue to work with and support Department IT personnel on development of a server based application to make the preplans available to CAD and Toughbook's.

### 2. School Programs

Be more involved with the schools in our response areas. We do participate in some activities, but more intervention would go a long way in developing a strong relationship with the communities. Programs such as Career Days, Fire Safety, Fire Prevention Day or Station Tours are some ways we can interact with the children.

- a. Continue to contact schools and the Fire District Public Information Officer to coordinate programs. This will be in conjunction with the annual school inspection program.

### 3. Kings River

The section of Kings River between Adams Avenue and Dinuba Avenue contain a high fuel loading both on the riverbanks and islands. Due to increased usage of the river water ways and urban interface, fires and rescues have become more frequent. These types of incidents require a large number of resources and extended commitment times. Firebrands from resultant fires have a potential for ignition of roof fires in the City of Reedley and adjacent urban residences.

- a. The Kings River Plan identifies access points to the Kings River for first responders during all types of emergency incidents. The access points are identified on photocopies of topographical maps. The maps cover the Kings River from the Fresno-Tulare County line to Trimmer Springs Rd. The Plan needs to be updated utilizing GIS to include addresses

and parcel numbers printed on aerial images and topographical maps. The mapping should also extend above Pine Flat Reservoir to Kirch Flat. A component of the Kings River Plan update could include identifying areas for fuel reduction projects to help reduce fire behavior and improve access to the River for water rescues. Coordinate with Reedley City Fire Department and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office to update and distribute the plan.

### **Collaborators within Battalion 18**

Sanger Fire Department  
Selma Fire Department  
Fowler Fire Department  
Kingsburg Fire Department  
Reedley Fire Department  
Orange Cove Fire Department