

**A: UNIT DESCRIPTION**

The unit is comprised of three counties including Madera, Mariposa and Merced.

Madera County has a population of around 150,000 with a geographic area covering a total area of 2,153.32 square miles. The county includes the cities of Madera and Chowchilla. It also includes the communities of Ahwahnee, Bass Lake, Bonadelle Ranchos, Madera Ranchos, Coarsegold, Knowles, Madera Acres, North Fork, O'Neals, Oakhurst, Parksdale, Parkwood, Raymond, Ripperdan, Sugar Pine and Yosemite lakes. Nationally protected areas in Madera County are Devils Postpile National Monument, Inyo National Forest, Sierra National Forest and Yosemite National Park. Major highways through the county are State Routes 41, 49, 99, 145 and 152.



Mariposa County has a population of around 18,000 with a geographic area of 1,462.79 square miles. Mariposa County is known as the "Mother of Counties" and is located at the southern end of California's Mother Lode region. There are no incorporated cities within Mariposa County. There are numerous communities that are in Wildland Urban Interface that fall into a very high Hazard Severity Zone. The communities in Mariposa County include Bear Valley, Bootjack, Buckmeadows, Cathays Valley, Coulterville, El Portal, Foresta, Greeley Hill, Hornitos, Jerseydale, Lush Meadows, Mariposa, Midpines, Mt. Bullion, Oak Grove Estates, Ponderosa Basin, Wawona, Yosemite West and Yosemite Valley. Mariposa County is home to three protected areas: Sierra National Forest, Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park. Within this area, along the banks of the Merced River, is the sole habitat for the limestone salamander, a rare species endemic to Mariposa County. The Major highways are State Routes 41, 49, 120, 132 and 140.



Merced County has a population of around 255,000 people covering an area of 1,971.87 square miles. There are six cities in the county including Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos and Merced. The county also includes the communities of Ballico, Cressey, Delhi, Hilmar, Irwin, Le Grand, Planada, Santa Nella, Snelling, South Dos Palos, Stevinson and Winton. Merced County hosts two nationally protected areas: Merced National Wildlife Refuge and the San Luis National Wildlife refuge. The major highways are Interstate 5, State Routes 33, 59, 99, 140, 152 and 165.



The Unit is located in central California between Fresno County, to the south, and Tuolumne County, to the north. The western side of the Unit borders the counties of Santa Clara and San Benito. Yosemite National Park and Mono County lie to the east. The Sierra National Forest and the Stanislaus National Forest also lie along the east side of Madera and Mariposa Counties. The geographic center of the state of California is located in the Unit, between the town of North Fork and the Italian Bar area. The point is about 7.1 miles (11.4 km) driving distance from the United States Forest Service office in North Fork and is marked by a sign and a survey marker. NAD83 coordinates for the exact center of California are 37°09'58"N 119°26'58"W. The Unit consists of 1,211,000 acres of State Responsibility lands located on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountain range and the eastern slope of the Diablo mountain range in central California. Also included are the watershed areas of the San Joaquin River, Merced River, and associated drainages. The topography of the Unit varies from steep and rugged mountains with moderate to heavy vegetative cover to rolling hills used for livestock grazing. Plant species vary by aspect, slope, elevation, soil type. The lower elevations begin with annual grasses and about 1000' elevation change to oak-woodlands. At about 2000' elevation the

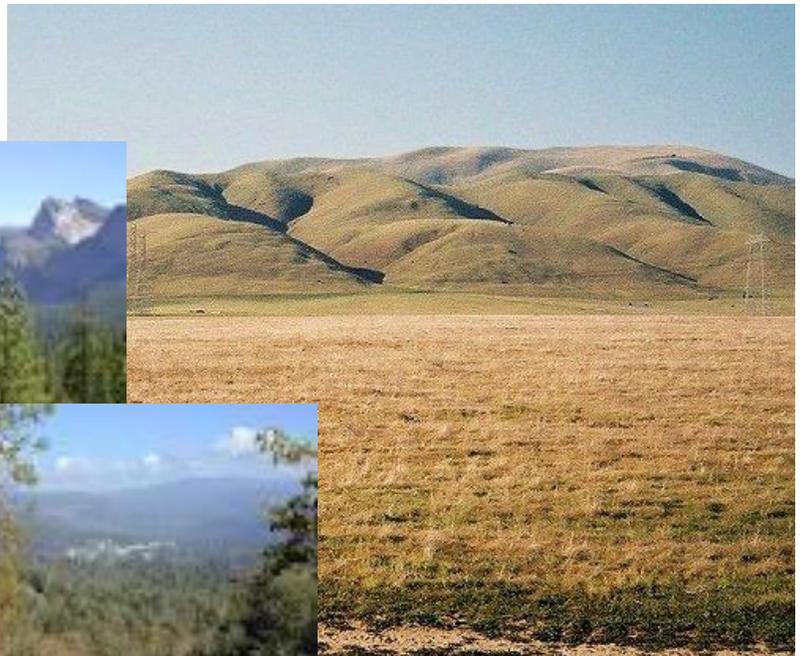


brush fields start intermixing with the oak-woodlands and brush becomes the more prominent natural vegetation as you approach 3000' elevation. From 3000' to 4500', brush and timber become more mixed. Above 4500' the fuel is mixed conifer timber. The fuel loading varies from about 2 tons per acre in grass to over 100 tons per acre in timber fuels.

The weather in the Unit brings hot, dry weather to almost all elevations in the summer. The valley and lower foothill temperatures average close to 100 degrees in the daytime and 65 degrees by night. The average humidity in summer is 15 to 20 percent. The average temperatures lower and the humidity slightly rises as the elevation increases. There is typically no rainfall from May until mid-October except for an occasional thunderstorm. These thunderstorms are more prominent over the higher elevations of the Sierra Mountains. Most of the rainfall occurs in the months of December, January, and February. An average yearly rainfall is 12 inches for the valley and between 20 to 45 inches in the higher elevations. Snowfall begins around 3000 feet, averaging about seven inches. Winds are generally predictable during fire season - diurnal surface winds are up-canyon by day and down-canyon by night. Prevailing upper level winds are out of the west to northwest. These winds are more intense when they surface at the higher elevations and can have a negative impact on fire behavior. Western Merced County has its own microclimate with temperatures ranging from 90-105 degrees with humidity in the low teens to single digits. Strong northwest winds brought on by marine influence in the afternoon bring increased humidity with slightly lower temperatures. The coastal weather influence, together with periods of extreme fire weather conditions, provides a window for extreme wildland fire behavior in this area in the months of May, June and July.

These conditions, combined with the expanding wildland urban interface and population growth, create potential for large, damaging, and costly wildfires.

Primary businesses in the Unit include farming, industry, and tourism.



**B: UNIT PREPAREDNESS AND FIREFIGHTING CAPABILITIES**

The Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit is operationally divided into three divisions and further into nineteen battalions, offering a wide variety of programs which include: Automotive, Confined Space, Conservation Camp, Crash Rescue, Emergency Command Center (Communications), Fire Prevention/Law Enforcement, Hazardous Material, Rescue, Resource Management, Safety, and Training.

CAL FIRE Initial Attack resources involve approximately 167 full time employees, 174 state seasonal firefighters operating the Department’s equipment, supplemented by as many as 450 Madera & Merced County paid-call (PCF) and Atwater City reserve firefighters, and 110 state inmate firefighters. CAL FIRE facilities are comprised of 11 CAL FIRE stations, 20 Merced County Fire Stations, 18 Madera County Fire Stations, 2 Atwater City Fire Stations, 2 Madera City Stations, 1 jointly operated Central California Women’s Facility Fire Station, and 1 CAL FIRE Conservation Camp.

MMU Protection Areas	
State Responsibility Areas	
Areas where CAL-FIRE has responsibility for emergency services.....	1,211,000
Total project area of MMU.....	3,570,000+
Total square miles of the Unit.....	5,580+
Total population.....	284,000+
Local Responsibility through Local Government Contracts Areas where MMU provides some type of emergency services to local government via contract.....	3 counties & 5 cities
Personnel (numbers approximate)	
Permanent.....	167
Seasonal.....	174
Local Government Volunteer Firefighters (organized by MMU).....	450
Volunteers in Prevention (VIPs).....	177
Fire Fighting Inmates.....	110

Facilities and Equipment	
CAL FIRE Fire Stations.....	11
Local Government Fire Stations (operated by CAL FIRE via contract).....	41
CAL FIRE Fire Engines.....	20
Local Government Fire Engines (operated by CAL FIRE via contract).....	50
Water Tenders.....	23
Bulldozers.....	2
Aerial Ladder Trucks.....	2
Rescue Squads (swift water rescues, jaws of life, defibrillators, ECT.).....	17
Air Craft Crash Trucks.....	2
Hazmat Units.....	2
Mass Decon Units (ability to decontaminate 15,000 people).....	3
Foam Unit.....	1
Conservation Camps.....	1
Hand Crews.....	5

Fire and Emergency Responses (average)	
Wildland Fires.....	300
Non-Wildland Fire Emergencies (structure fires, medical aids, hazardous material spills, etc.).....	<19,000

Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) Reviews (averages)	
Acres of Timberland CAL FIRE has THP Review Jurisdiction	
Timber Harvesting Plans CAL FIRE Reviews Yearly.....	2 to 5

## COOPERATIVE FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENTS

- Atwater City Fire Department
- Madera City Fire Department
- Madera County Fire Department
- Merced County Fire Department



CAL FIRE also maintains several Automatic and Mutual Aid Agreements itself and through the Cooperative Fire Protection agreements in the Unit. The Unit maintains Automatic Aid Agreements with neighboring jurisdictions such as:

### Dispatch Agreements

- Dos Palos City Fire Department
- Gustine Fire Department
- Livingston City Fire Department
- Mariposa County Fire Department
- Mariposa Public Utility District
- Mercy Ambulance

### Automatic/Mutual Aid Agreements

Local fire departments that the Unit has Mutual or Automatic Aid Agreements with are:

- Chowchilla City Fire
- Dos Palos City Fire Department
- Los Banos City Fire
- Fresno Fire
- Fresno County Fire District
- Gustine Fire Department
- Livingston City Fire Department
- Mariposa County Fire Department
- Mariposa Public Utility District Fire Department
- Merced City Fire
- Newman City Fire
- City of Turlock
- Turlock Rural Fire Protection District
- West Stanislaus County Fire Protection District

[www.atwater.org](http://www.atwater.org)

[www.ci.chowchilla.ca.us](http://www.ci.chowchilla.ca.us)

[www.losbanos.org](http://www.losbanos.org)

[www.co.fresno.ca.us](http://www.co.fresno.ca.us)

[www.fresno.gov/](http://www.fresno.gov/)

[www.fresnocountyfire.org](http://www.fresnocountyfire.org)

[www.cityofgustine.com](http://www.cityofgustine.com)

[www.livingstoncity.com](http://www.livingstoncity.com)

[www.cityofmadera.org](http://www.cityofmadera.org)

[www.madera-county.com](http://www.madera-county.com)

[www.mariposacounty.org](http://www.mariposacounty.org)

[www.mariposapud.org](http://www.mariposapud.org)

[www.co.merced.ca.us](http://www.co.merced.ca.us)

[www.mercyambulanceservice.com](http://www.mercyambulanceservice.com)

[www.cityofmerced.org](http://www.cityofmerced.org)

[www.cityofnewman.com/](http://www.cityofnewman.com/)

[www.ci.turlock.ca.us](http://www.ci.turlock.ca.us)

[www.turlockruralfire.com](http://www.turlockruralfire.com)

[www.weststanfire.org](http://www.weststanfire.org)