SECTION I: UNIT OVERVIEW

UNIT DESCRIPTION

The Siskiyou Unit (SKU) is located in Northern California along the Oregon border and is comprised of Siskiyou County. The Siskiyou Unit encompasses 1.2 million acres of ecologically diverse wildlands. Ecotypes range from high desert in the east, to the magnificent coniferous forests of the Klamath River drainage to the lush ranch lands carpeting the interior valleys. Magnificent Mt. Shasta serves as the Units geographical centerpiece rising abruptly to an astonishing 14,179 feet in elevation. The County is drained by the Sacramento River in the south, the Klamath River in the north and the Salmon River in the west.

The weather patterns in Siskiyou County are as diverse as its ecology. Summer temperatures may climb into the 100's, while winter temperatures may drop well below freezing with significant snowstorms common throughout the winter months. Fuel types in the Unit include timber, timber with a grass understory, grass, brush, oak woodland, desert sage and western juniper stands. Like most mountainous areas, Siskiyou County may experience a high occurrence of lightning activity during the summer months. Ranching, recreation and the timber industry fuel Siskiyou County's economy. The summer months see a large influx of tourists who take advantage of the County's wide-open spaces for outdoor recreation including, hunting, fishing, white-water rafting, mountain climbing and camping.

Most of the large fires in the Siskiyou Unit over the past 50 years have been wind driven fires. Lightning, equipment use and debris burning have historically been the determined lead ignition sources for these large fires.

The Klamath National Forest, Shasta-Trinity National Forest and the Bureau of Land Management are the largest public land ownerships adjacent to the Unit. Other public lands include the Shasta Valley, Horseshoe Ranch, Butte Valley, Lower Klamath and Tulelake Wildlife Refuge Areas.

In June of 2010, the Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) released *California's Forest and Rangelands: 2010 Assessment.* As part of the assessment, states were required to identify key issues and define the status and trends throughout the forests. Furthermore, states were asked to identify specific geographic areas, called "priority landscapes". The intent of identifying "priority landscapes" was to assist investment and other programs focusing on the issue areas. The assessment identifies forest and rangeland issues throughout the state including Siskiyou County. The assessment also identifies strategies to address these issues. The complete assessment can be found on the CAL FIRE FRAP Website. The "priority landscapes" identified within the Siskiyou Unit will be considered during the planning phase of future projects within the Unit. The following "priority landscapes" and strategies have been identified within the Siskiyou Unit:

Wildfire Threats to Ecosystem Health and Community Safety
Developing coherent strategies involves collaborative planning, given the unique and disparate audience for dealing with the threat (i.e., numerous individual landowners). In terms of protecting communities, this is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.3: Planning for and Reducing Wildfire Risks to Communities.

Sustainable Working Forests and Rangelands
Opportunities exist for landowner assistance to enhance productivity and health of working landscapes. Risk Reduction on Forestlands: Identifies areas with timber and biomass energy assets that are threatened by wildfire and forest pests. Risk Reduction on Rangelands; identifies areas where rangeland productivity is threatened by wildfire. Restoring Impacted Timberlands: identifies areas with timber and biomass energy assets that have been impacted by past wildfires or forest pest outbreaks.

Forest Pests and Other Threats to Ecosystem Health and Community Safety
Forest management tools include the removal of dead, dying and diseased trees, thinning of small and medium live trees, replanting multiple species, and other techniques used to remove hazards and improve ecosystem health. In California, responsibility for the control of forest pest outbreaks often falls to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) on state and privately owned lands and the U.S. Forest Service on federal lands. CAL FIRE, with the approval of the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF), can declare a zone of infestation for native and exotic insect and disease pests. Within a Zone of Infestation CAL FIRE employees may go on private lands to attempt eradication or control in a manner approved by the Board of Forestry.

Water Quality and Quantity Protection and Enhancement
Protecting and managing forests in source watersheds is an essential part of future strategies for providing a sustainable supply of clean water for a broad range of beneficial uses. Tools to address threats to water supplies include: water conservation, restoration of riparian forests, restoration of mountain meadows, and protection of groundwater. Tools to address water quality concerns include: reduction of soil erosion through Best Management Practices for forest roads and timber harvesting, additional protection for riparian areas in salmonid watersheds, road maintenance and fuel reduction treatments designed to reduce high severity wildfires.

Planning for Reducing Wildfire Risks to Communities
In California, community involvement in wildfire planning is extensive, as evidenced for example, by Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), as defined under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003), local and regional Fire Safe Councils, Resource Conservation Districts and community participation in the federal Firewise Communities/USA program. State laws requiring “defensible space” around structures, building codes, and other responsibilities are aimed at helping communities reduce their risk of loss when wildfire strikes. Federal programs, such as the National Fire Plan, also help with funding for fire hazard reduction.

Emerging Markets for Forests and Rangeland Products and Services
Strengthen and develop new market opportunities for forest products and benefits provide incentives for forest stewardship and conservation. Emerging markets for renewable energy, ecosystem services and niche products area impacting how forest and rangelands are managed. Developing appropriate policies will require a better understanding of the benefits and environmental impacts of these emerging markets and how society values the various market and non-market products and services provided by forests and rangelands.

Plant, Wildlife, and Fish Habitat Protection, Conservation and Enhancement
Numerous efforts in California are working towards identifying and protecting important wildlife, plant, and fish habitat. Tools for addressing wildlife habitat needs include the purchase of land and conservation easements, development planning, zoning, habitat mitigation banking, and habitat restoration, and policies, regulations and funding mechanisms that support these efforts.

Climate Change: Threats and Opportunities
The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has identified five strategies to mitigate against greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions: reforestation, forestland conservation, fuels reduction, urban forestry and forest management to improve carbon sequestration.

UNIT PREPAREDNESS AND FIREFIGHTING CAPABILITIES

At the peak of firefighting preparedness, Siskiyou Unit suppression resources include approximately 70 career personnel and 120 seasonal personnel. The Siskiyou Unit is geographically divided into four fire battalions. Within these battalions the Siskiyou Unit has resources and facilities strategically located. These include: seven fire stations, one conservation camp, two dozers, and four fire lookouts. During summer months, thirteen schedule "B" engines, two dozers, four fire crews, and up to four fire lookouts are staffed. The fire lookouts are staffed based upon fire, weather and lightning activity levels. In the winter months, Siskiyou Unit staffs three stations with fiscal assistance from the County Amador Plan and the Zone of Increased Benefit (ZIB) in the McCloud area.

The Siskiyou Unit has an Emergency Command Center known as the Yreka Interagency Command Center (YICC). The YICC is located at the Siskiyou Unit Headquarters in Yreka and is a collaboration of CAL FIRE and United States Forest Service (USFS) staff. The YICC provides dispatching services for CAL FIRE, USFS, 30 local government departments and 5 ambulance companies. The YICC is responsible for emergency call taking, dispatching and tracking of resources. The YICC has an Emergency Dispatcher at the console 24 hours a day. The Goal of the YICC is to meet and exceed the standards set in NFPA 1221 section 6.4.2. These standards specify that 95 percent of all alarms be answered within 15 seconds and 99 percent answered within 40 seconds. In addition, Section 6.4.3 specifics that 95 percent of all dispatching be completed within 60 seconds.

Battalion 1 (Scott Valley Battalion) is located in the northwest portion of the Unit. Within the Battalion there is a CAL FIRE station located in the Fort Jones City. The Fort Jones Station houses three Type III fire engines and one Type II fire dozer. Deadwood Conservation Camp is located north of Fort Jones along McAdams Creek. Deadwood is a 90 man camp and is capable of providing four Type I hand crews. There are two fire lookouts located within the Scott Valley Battalion, Quartz Hill and Duzel Rock.

Battalion 2 (Shasta Valley Battalion) is centrally located in the northern portion of the Unit. Within the Shasta Valley Battalion there are two CAL FIRE stations. One station is in Yreka and one is located in Hornbook. The Yreka Station is considered the headquarters station and houses three Type III fire engines and one Type II dozer. Hornbook Station is located along Interstate 5 near the California and Oregon border in the town of Hornbrook. This station houses two Type III fire engines. Paradise Craggy serves as the fire lookout for the Shasta Valley Battalion.

Battalion 3 (Butte Valley Battalion) can be identified on a map as two distinct geographical areas separated by Federal Direct Protection Area. One portion of the Butte Valley Battalion is located in the central portion of the Unit near the City of Weed. The other is located in the northeast portion of the Unit and includes the Butte Valley and extends north to the Oregon border. Within the Butte Valley Battalion there are two CAL FIRE stations. One station is located in the Weed City. The Weed Station houses two Type III fire engines and serves as the battalion headquarters. The second station is located in the town of Macdoel. Macdoel Station houses one Type III engine.

Battalion 4 (McCloud Battalion) is located in the southern portion of the Unit. Within the McCloud Battalion there are two CAL FIRE stations. One is located in McCloud and the other is located in Pondosa. McCloud Station houses two Type III fire engines. Pondosa Station is located within Shasta County, but is staffed and administered by the Siskiyou Unit. Pondosa Station houses two Type III fire engines. Siskiyou Bear serves as a fire lookout in the McCloud Battalion.

LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The Siskiyou Unit is very appreciative of its local fire departments. A large number of these departments are staffed completely by volunteers and whose personnel are often the first to arrive at fires, medical aids and other types of emergencies. Often these departments are located within Fire Protection Districts (FPDs) or Community Services Districts (CSDs) and are typically governed by elected boards of directors and have authority to levy taxes to support their work. Within The Siskiyou Unit, CAL FIRE reciprocates emergency services using Mutual Aid and Automatic Aid Agreements.

The following local fire departments exist within the Siskiyou Unit:

Etna City Fire Department	South Yreka Fire District
Fort Jones City Fire Department	City of Yreka Fire Department
Scott Valley Fire Protection District	Butte Valley Fire Protection District
Happy Camp Fire District	Dorris City Fire Department
Copco Lake Fire Protection District	Seiad Valley Fire Company
Gazelle Fire Protection District	Tennant Community Services District
Grenada Fire Protection District	Tulelake Fire Department
Hammond Ranch Fire Company	Weed City Fire Department
Hilt Fire Protection District	Lake Shastina Community Service District
Hornbrook Fire Protection District	Castella Fire Protection District
Klamath River Fire Company	Dunsmuir City Fire Department
Mayten Fire Protection District	McCloud Community Services District
Montague Community Services District	Mt Shasta City Fire Department
Mt. Shasta Vista Fire Company	Mount Shasta Fire Protection District
Salmon River Fire Company	Pleasant Valley Fire Company