

## **V. Action Plan**

### **Goal Statement**

The goal of the MMU Fire Management Plan is to reduce costs and losses from wildfire within the unit. This action plan identifies the process that MMU will take to achieve this goal. MMU staff has identified and prioritized seven target areas that will receive the majority of prefire management activities in MMU. The target areas have been identified based on criteria provided from the battalion chief and the Fire Management Plan assessment process, which will be discussed in this section.

## **Target Area Statement**

The process of selecting the target areas for pre-fire management activities in MMU involve review of assets at risk information combined with evaluating stakeholder input, fire history, staff experience, level of service data, fuel hazard ranks and severe fire weather information. Each battalion provides one target area, after which, the areas are prioritized. In January the Battalion Chiefs meet to review the unit's accomplishment within the target areas. The target areas are reviewed and re-prioritized by the Battalion Chiefs if necessary. Objectives and mitigation prescriptions are developed for each target area. Due to the lack of resources, including personnel and equipment, many of the goals and prescriptions have been carried over from last year.

## ***Target Area #1 - Battalion 4***

### **AREA DESCRIPTION:**

Target area #1 is in Battalion 4, which involves the areas of Oakhurst, Nipinnawasee, Ahwahnee and Miami Saddle. (See Figure 10) Some of the influencing factors involved in identifying this target area includes: fire history, housing density, fuel hazard, timber values and range. Fire ignitions have not traditionally been a problem here. However, this target area is a direct threat to fires that start in the Chowchilla River drainage, where the Unit has had a significant fire history. Additionally, the target area is identified as having significant asset values with medium and high fuel hazard rankings; therefore efforts will emphasize threat protection. Fuel management will be the emphasis when mitigating the wildfire hazard in the area.

### **GOAL:**

The goal of Battalion 4 is to reduce the costs and losses from wildfire within the battalion and the Unit, and to establish the target area that has been identified in the Unit Fire Management Plan as the number one priority within the battalion. In addition, the battalion supports community action efforts such as Crooks Mountain Fuel Break Project, managed by the Eastern Madera Fire Safe Council, which uses State Proposition 40 funds to create a fuel break between the Chowchilla River basin and communities located east of that drainage.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- I. Support the local Fire Safe Fire Council and help heighten public awareness about the importance of fuel reduction in the area as it relates to assets at risk in the area.
- II. Implement an aggressive LE-38 inspection program within the battalion.
- III. Continue to educate the public through personalized contact with fire station personnel.
- IV. Support Unit and local Fire Prevention activities with a consolidated effort from station personnel.

### **ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES:**

- I.
  - a. Support and assist the local Fire Safe Council within the area.
  - b. Solicit VMP projects within the battalion.
- II.
  - a. Attempt to achieve 100% on LE-38 inspections in Nipinnawasee, Crooks Mountain and Road 628 in Ahwahnee.

- b. Achieve 100% LE-38 inspections on China Creek, John West Rd., Indian Springs Rd., Stillmeadow and Pierce Lakes Estates in and around Oakhurst.
- c. Achieve 100% inspections in the Sky Ranch, Yosemite Forks, Redwood Creek, and Ponderosa Acres subdivisions and around the Bass Lake residential areas.
- d. When the engines at Ahwahnee and Bass Lake FFS are staffed for fire season, implement a systematic method for doing inspections on a daily basis.

III.

- a. Continue to educate the public with the new policy of year-round burning permit requirements.
- b. Utilize the Fire Prevention Public Education Materials.

IV.

- a. Utilize station personnel to assist with fire prevention activities throughout the Battalion.

## ***Target Area #2 - Battalion 2***

### AREA DISCRIPTION:

Target area #1 is in Battalion 2 and involves the northern portion of the Chowchilla River drainage from south of Highway 49 including the Watt Fire Road area<sup>1</sup> to Ponderosa Basin and West to the Bootjack area. (See Figure 10) The influencing factors involved housing density, timber, fire history, and fuel hazard ratings. Most of MMU's large damaging fires have originated within this target area. The fires that start in this area immediately threaten high value/ high-risk exposures. The historic ignitions are difficult to manage, therefore, the emphasis of efforts will involve fuel management activities and protection of asset exposures.

### **Priority: 1** Ponderosa Basin Fuel Break Project

This project is the Battalion's top fire mitigation project. The high residential concentration on small lots with heavy fuel loading characterizes the area. The area also has experienced a significant fire history although the developed area itself has not been burned in over fifty years.

The project calls for the creation of a shaded fuel break along the northwestern boundary of the community, a public education program and a complete PRC 4291 inspection program. The fuel break has been financed using the CDF Vegetation Management Program and grant funding. Private equipment working under contract and CDF fire crews have completed about 75% of the project, The personnel dollars required to complete the educational component's of this project were diverted away from Battalion II.

It is anticipated the Mariposa High School Grizzly Fire Department will be utilized to perform a major PRC 4291 inspection program in the area.

### **Project Goals:**

- 1) Complete the fuel break and burn residual brush piles.
- 2) Obtain 100% compliance with Public Resources Code 4291 using Mariposa Grizzly Fire Department to perform the inspection.

### **Project Needs:**

- 1) One Fire Captain is needed to be available for the project through out the next year.
- 2) A Fire Captain or Fire Apparatus Engineer is needed to be available for two months to assist with the hazard inspection program.
- 3) A Fire Captain is needed for approximately six months to assist with fuel the break construction.

**Priority: 2** Stockton Creek Fuels Management Project

Completed

**Priority: 3** Von Der Ahe Hazard Mitigation

In 1998, a local landowner, Wilford Von Der Ahe, injected herbicide into nearly all of the oak trees on a 200+ acre parcel of land in the lower Stockton Creek drainage. His intention was to have the dead trees removed and replace with either conifers or open, grazing land. The removal of the dead trees never occurred and the landowner has subsequently died.

There is now an accumulation of dead fuels that exceeds 7 tons per acre in a drainage that is situated below several populated areas. A public road also runs through the treated area, which increases the ignition risk. Should a fire start, it will quickly become unmanageable and threaten homes along Allred and Triangle roads. In the interest of public safety, CDF has become proactive in removing these fuels.

The Von Der Ahe Estate has indicated a willingness to enter into a VMP agreement with CDF to begin the removal of the trees. Due to the heavy fuels dozer piling and burning is the best tactic to employ. This will take approximately one to two months of work for a Heavy Forestry Equipment Operator (HFEO).

**Project Goals:**

- 1) Enter into a VMP agreement with the Von Der Ahe Estate to remove the dead fuel in the Stockton Creek drainage.
- 2) Begin piling the dead fuels for burning in the winter.

**Project Needs:**

- 1) One Forester 1 personnel month to establish a VMP agreement and conduct the environmental studies.
- 2) Two Fire Captains and one HFEO for one month to begin piling the dead fuel.

## ***Target Area #3 - Battalion 5***

### **AREA DESCRIPTION:**

Target area # 3 is in Battalion 5 and comprises of the area just north of the community of North Fork. This area was chosen for similar reasons as the first two. Fuel hazard, housing density, timber and range were the major factors. This target area has not had a significant fire history; however topography, fuel loading and historic knowledge of potential fire control issues all contribute to this area being priority area number three. Fuel reduction efforts, as a result of fire exclusion, will be emphasized. Additionally, public education will be a product of fuel management activities.

### **GOAL:**

The goal of Battalion Five is to reduce costs and losses from wildfire within the Battalion as well as the Unit and establish the target areas that have been identified in the Unit's Fire Management Plan as number one priorities within the Battalion.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- I. Support the local Fire Safe Council and help heighten public awareness about the importance of the fuel reduction process.
- II. Conduct an aggressive LE-38 program.
- III. Continue to support Unit and local Fire Prevention activities with a consolidated effort from station personnel.

### **ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECTIVES:**

- I.
  - A. Aggressively participate in stakeholder fuel management projects such as the Proposition 204 grant, within the target area.
  - B. Support local Fire Safe Council efforts within the area.
  - C. Utilize Department Fire Prevention public education materials.
  - D. Conduct one VMP project biannually within the area.
  - E. Oversee CDF's role in the Proposition 204 projects and assist with field inspections.

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- II.
  - A. Utilize engine crews to achieve a 100% LE-38 inspection rate in the Cascadel Wood's sub-division, North Fork proper and Road 274.
  - B. Utilize engine crews to achieve a 100% LE-38 inspection rate in the Quartz Mountain and Indian Lakes sub-divisions.
  - C. Utilize Volunteers-In-Prevention in the Yosemite Lakes sub-division to assist with the LE-38 inspection program, to achieve 100% inspections.
- III.
  - A. Utilize Volunteers-In Prevention to assist in public education school programs throughout the area.
  - B. Utilize the newly organized Explorer Program to assist in public education programs.
  - C. Continue to emphasize involvement of engine crews in public education programs.

## ***Target Area #4 – Battalion 1***

### AREA DESCRIPTION:

Target area #4 involves the Hunter's Valley, Greeley Hill and the Bear Valley areas. These communities are in Battalion 1. They have significant timber values, significant fire history, and a medium to high fuel hazard rank interspersed with a medium housing density.

### **Goal Statement:**

Our goal statement for the New Year is even more simplified than last, continue to eliminate unwanted wildfire within the Battalion boundaries utilizing the "Battalion Fire Prevention Plan".

### **YEAR IN REVIEW**

The 2004 fire season was relatively quiet in Battalion One, even though many initial attack fires were kept under ten acres. Three significant fires within the Battalion boundaries were concentrated in the Catheys Valley and White Rock areas. The largest of the three was a three hundred acre 'front county' fire started by a cigarette. The two fires in the Catheys Valley area although not large in acreage, held the most potential for damage. The fire prevention effort from Catheys Valley FFS and the great initial attack firefighting at the start of these fires are two reasons why they were contained at approximately 50 acres each.

This past year, the VMP projects within the Battalion moved forward, however none of these projects were completed. The Adams VMP, an eight hundred acre prescribed burn in the Catheys Valley area, was prepared for burning, but due to limited resources and air quality issues it was not completed. The Hunters VMP is still in the planning stages. The "Hunter Fire" in 2000 burned a significant 'black line' in front of the planned Hunters VMP. This project is scheduled to be completed in September 2006. The number one priority VMP burn within the Battalion is the Greeley Hill VMP. This project is approximately 200 acres and sits on a southwest facing slope between the communities of Coulterville and Greeley Hill. This project is the first line of defense in keeping the community of Greeley Hill safe from wildfire. It is located mostly on BLM ground and is "direct protection area" for the Coulterville FFS. In conjunction with the Greeley Hill VMP, the Mariposa/Greeley Hill Fire Safe Council, under guidance from BLM and CDF, has proposed a fuel reduction project around the privately owned structures that are situated east of, and along the ridge line adjacent to, the VMP. This project will utilize private contractors to reduce the fuel and support the efforts of the VMP.

This past year all three fire stations, Catheys Valley, Hornitos and Coulterville participated in an aggressive PRC 4291 program. Each year the stations target selected areas within their initial attack responsibility. Hornito FF was able to complete 100 percent of its inspections. Catheys Valley FFS also was able to complete 100 percent of its initial attack area. Coulterville FFS targeted the Greeley Hill area and completed 50 percent of its target area.

This past year in conjunction with the Unit's fire prevention staff MMU again was able to conduct school programs in Catheys Valley, Coulterville and at the continuation school in Hornitos. Station personnel will again provide that support in the up coming year.

## ***Target Area #5 – Battalion 2***

### **AREA DESCRIPTION:**

Target area #5 is in Battalion 2 and involves the Midpines area. The area has a history of significant wildfire; in fact firefighters have died as a result of extreme fire behavior. The fuel hazard ranking, timber values, housing density, the Stockton Creek Watershed, which provides drinking water for the community of Mariposa and local knowledge of fire control difficulties all combine to justify the designation of this area #5.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) Reduce wildfires in the Midpines area.
- 2) Protect the Stockton Creek Watershed

### **PRESCRIPTIONS:**

The Battalion priority has been focused in the area of Target area 2 which is the Ponderosa Basin fuel break. The projects in the Midpines area have been delayed pending available resources.

With the assistance of the Mariposa Fire Safe Council, the homeowners in the Davis Road area of Midpines have completed a fuel reduction project in their community.

The Von Der Ahe VMP project is located within the Stockton Creek Watershed, which originates in the Midpines area. This project will directly protect the town of Mariposa when a wildfire occurs in the Stockton Creek drainage. A VMP contract has been secured with the Von Der Ahe Estate to remove dead fuels in the Stockton Creek drainage.

## ***Target Area #6 – Battalion 7***

### **AREA DESCRIPTION:**

Target area # 6 is in Battalion 7 and involves an area west of Interstate 5 and south of the city of Los Banos. This area has significant fire history and continues to draw firefighting resources during early fire season events. The area experiences extreme fire weather due to wind patterns and exposure. Ignitions are numerous due to the traffic on Interstate 5. The Level Of Service, range and soil erosion potentials all contribute when choosing this area. The area is characterized by frequent ignitions that result in large, fast moving fires.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1) A. Confine roadside ignition area.
- 2) B. Reduce roadside fire ignitions.
- 3) C. Reduce fire size potentials.

### **PRESCRIPTIONS**

- 1) A. Establish roadside vegetation reduction projects in strategic areas.  
B. Projects may include prescribed strip burning and disking of vegetation.  
C. Emphasis needs to be on the area west of I-5, south of Canyon Road and south to Fresno County line.
- 2) A. Inventory the fire roads in the area and annually report on the status of them.  
B. Establish firebreaks in strategic areas in order to reduce fire sizes.  
C. Improve Laguna Seca Road from I-5 west to Langdon Canyon Road.  
D. Improve Paul Negro Road from I-5 west to Langdon Canyon Road.

## ***Target Area #7 – Battalion 7***

### **AREA DESCRIPTION:**

This target area #7 is in Battalion 7 and involves the Hwy 152 area north of San Luis Reservoir. Highway 152 experiences an average daily traffic flow of 24,300 vehicles (Cal-Trans 1999 Traffic Census). The area experiences similar factors as target area #6, frequent fires that are large, but not considered damaging to life or property and frequently drawing firefighting resources from other areas. Soil erosion, scenic values, Level Of Service and range values are significant in this area.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Confine roadside ignition fires.
- 2) Reduce roadside fire ignitions.

### **PRESCRIPTIONS**

- 1)
  - A. Establish roadside vegetation reduction projects.
  - B. Conduct surveillance if needed.
- 2)
  - A. Establish fire breaks in strategic areas.
  - B. Inventory existing fire roads and annually report on their condition.
  - C. Establish cooperative pre-fire projects with various land management agencies e.g.: State Parks and the wildlife refuges.

## *Discussion*

The objectives and prescriptions previously discussed were designed to be general in direction. MMU staff will identify more specific prescription efforts throughout Fire Management Plan implementation. The battalion Fire Management Plans will discuss actual efforts and activities performed annually.

All schools in MMU's SRA will receive fire prevention education attention. This attention will be in the form of interpretive programs and material disbursement. This effort is included as a more detailed prescription within the target areas and will be recorded by fire prevention staff.

MMU continues to revere cooperative pre-fire management projects as valuable events. MMU staff will strive to increase the quantity and quality of interagency pre-fire management projects in order to improve the protection of shared risks.

Stakeholder cooperative fuel management projects continue to increase in frequency within MMU. (See Figure 11) MMU staff participation has been instrumental in these processes. MMU staff will continue to support these cooperative projects and provide technical and, administrative and political assistance as necessary.

The target area selection is essential to implementing the California Fire Management Plan and MMU Fire Management Plan. The results from the prefire management efforts within the target areas will include fuel breaks around communities, general fuel reduction projects, an increased public awareness of the need for prefire management, increased community participation with pre-fire activities, and more successful initial attacks on fire. Not listed are the efforts, activities and awareness that are attracted to these communities resulting from collaborative efforts. The benefits snowball and increase the momentum of prefire management. The goal of MMU staff is to utilize the MMU Fire Management Plan as a tool and a guide to maintain the intensity of pre-fire management within MMU.