

# **I. Executive Summary**

The California Fire Plan

The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) have drafted a comprehensive update of the Fire Plan for Wildland Fire Protection in California. The planning process defines a level of service measurement, considers assets at risk, incorporates the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provides for public stakeholder involvement, and creates a fiscal framework for policy analysis.

## **Goal and Objectives**

The overall goal is to reduce total costs and losses from wildland fire in California by protecting assets at risk through focused prefire management prescriptions and increased initial attack success.

The California Fire Plan has five strategic objectives:

- To create wildfire protection zones that reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- To assess all wildlands, not just the state responsibility areas. Analysis will include all wildland fire service providers – federal, state, local government and private. The analysis will identify high risk, high value areas, and develop information on and determine who is responsible, who is responding and who is paying for wildland fire emergencies.
- To identify and analyze key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes in public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total costs and losses by increasing fire protection system effectiveness.
- To have a strong fiscal policy focus and monitor the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
- To translate the analysis into public policies.

## Fire Plan Framework

Five major components will form the basis of an ongoing fire planning process to monitor and assess California's wildland fire environment.

- **Wildfire protection zones.** A key product of this Fire Plan is the development of wildfire safety zones to reduce citizen and firefighter risks from future large wildfires.
- **Initial attack success.** The fire plan defines an assessment protection system for wildland fire. This measure can be used to assess the department's ability to provide an equal level of protection to lands of similar type, as required by Public Resources Code 4130. This measurement is the percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs are incurred.

Knowledge of the level of service will help define the risk to wildfire damage faced by public and private assets in the wildlands.

- **Assets protected.** The plan will establish a methodology for defining assets protected and their degree of risk from wildfire. The assets addressed in the plan are citizen and firefighter safety, watersheds and water, timber, wildlife and habitat (including rare and endangered species), unique areas (scenic, cultural, and historic), recreation, range, structures and air quality. Stakeholders-national, state, local agencies and private interest groups, etc. will be identified for each asset at risk. The assessment will define the areas where assets are at risk from wildfire, enabling fire service managers and stakeholders to set priorities for prefire management project work.
- **Prefire management.** This aspect focuses on system analysis methods that assess alternatives to protect assets from unacceptable risk of wildland fire damage. Projects include a combination of fuels reduction, ignition management, fire-safe engineering activities, and forest health to protect public and private assets. The priority for projects will be based on asset owners and other stakeholders' input and support. Prefire management prescriptions designed to protect these assets will also identify who benefits and who should share in the project costs.
- **Fiscal framework.** The Board and CDF are developing a fiscal framework for assessing and monitoring annual and long-term changes in California's wildland fire protection systems. State, local and federal wildland fire protection agencies, along with the private sector, have evolved into an interdependent system of prefire management and suppression forces. As a result, changes to budgeted levels of service of any of the entities directly affects the others and the services delivered to the public. Monitoring system changes through this fiscal framework will allow the Board and CDF to address public policy issues that maximize the efficiency of local, state and federal firefighting resources.

These are Fire Plan framework applications:

- Identify for state, federal and local officials and for the public those areas of concentrated assets and high risk.
- Allow CDF to create a more efficient fire protection system focused on meaningful solutions for identified problem areas.
- Give citizens an opportunity to identify public and private assets to design and carry out projects to protect those assets.
- Identify, before fires start, where cost-effective prefire management investments can be made to reduce taxpayer costs and citizen losses from wildfire.
- Encourage an integrated intergovernmental approach to reducing costs and losses.
- Enable policy makers and the public to focus on what can be done to reduce future costs and losses from wildfires.