

Support Bureaus

Vegetation Management Program (VMP) F-4517

During the past 10 years, the Unit has treated an average of 1000 acres annually under the Vegetation Management Program (VMP). Currently the Unit has treated approximately 19,825 acres since 1982, with an estimated 1500 additional treated acres by the end of the year. Many of the projects undertaken in the Unit have been within the wildland-urban interface. Due to the existing land use patterns within the Unit and the increasing population densities in Amador and El Dorado Counties, it is anticipated that the emphasis of the Vegetation Management Program will continue to focus projects within the wildland/urban intermix area. Future projects will concentrate on densely populated areas with high assets at risk.

Engineering

Prefire engineering is a critical part of the unit fire plan. By using GIS mapping to analyze the fire environment helps unit managers make key decisions for on the ground prefire projects. It is the goal of engineering to provide the most current and accurate data for the fire plan process. This goal is accomplished by field validating the data with unit battalions, collaborators, county officials, and federal agencies.

Objectives:

- Update the AAR data
- Update the fuels for the unit
- Maintain current and up to date county parcel data
- Work with Unit personnel and collaborators to enhance the fire plan data
- Asses the weather rankings for accuracy

AEU's data layer validation schedule by priority:

PRIORITY		STATUS	LAST UPDATED
1	Fuels Flags	50% done	1998
2	Sever Fire Weather	Need total review	1998
3	Assets at Risk	30% done	1998-2002
4	Ignition Workload Analysis	Done every year	2004
5	Fire History	Done every year	2004

Fire Prevention B-4520

The 2004 fire season in the Amador/El Dorado Unit began May 3rd and lasted through November 7th. The Unit experienced 296 fires within its Direct Protection Area (DPA) during that period. This number represents a 16% decrease from the 2003 season, and a 6% decrease over the 9-year average.

The five largest fires in the unit were:

1. Scott Fire at 700 acres, \$140,000 dollars of damage, and cost to suppress estimated at \$200,000
2. Wilson Fire at 163 acres, \$38,000 dollars of damage, and cost to suppress estimated at \$14,000
3. Powerhouse Fire at 115 acres, \$11,000.00 dollars of damage, and cost to suppress estimated at \$750,000
4. Hollow Fire at 48 acres, \$700,000 dollars of damage, and cost to suppress estimated at \$250,000
5. Miller Fire at 43 acres, \$8,600 dollars of damage, and cost to suppress estimated at \$25,000

Five largest fire in 2004	Acres	Total Cost	Cost Per Acre
Scott	700	\$340,000.00	\$485.71
Wilson	163	\$52,000.00	\$319.02
Powerhouse	115	\$711,000.00	\$6,182.61
Hollow	48	\$725,000.00	\$15,104.17
Miller	43	\$33,600.00	\$781.40

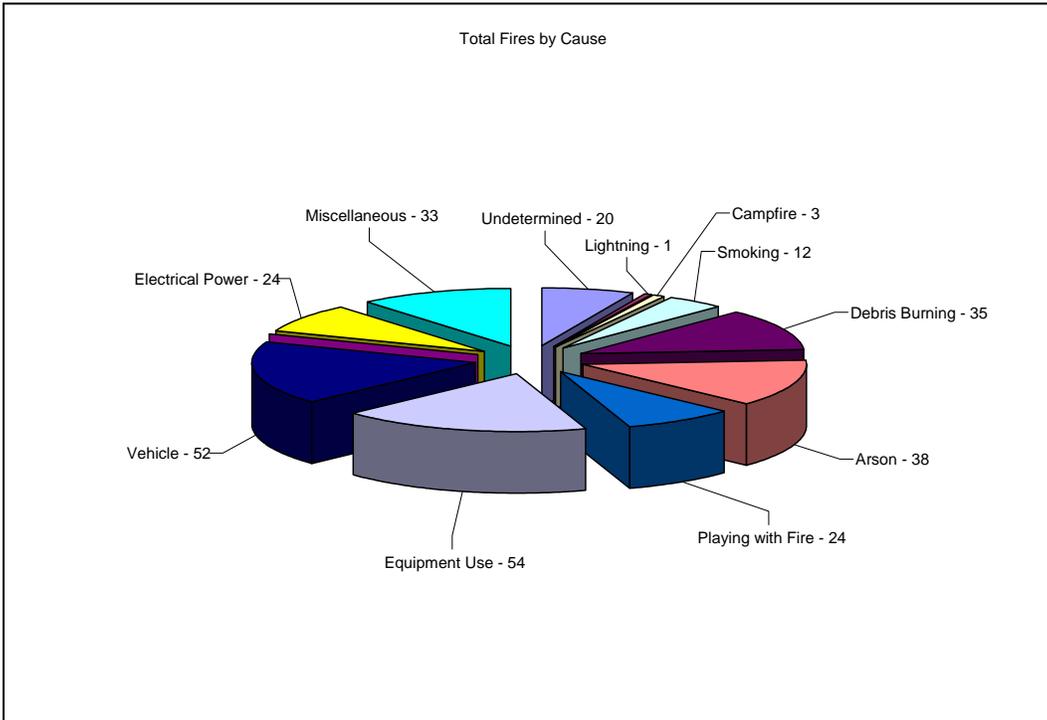
Approximately 1,574 acres burned in 2004 compared with the 9-year average of 2,788. The most significant change in the last 9 years has been the increased growth and recreation in the Unit causing a steady increase in vehicle, equipment, and juvenile activity caused fires. In reviewing fire causes during the 2004 season, it was found that the four leading causes of vegetation fires in the Unit were:

- Equipment use
- Vehicle
- Debris burning
- Arson / playing with fire

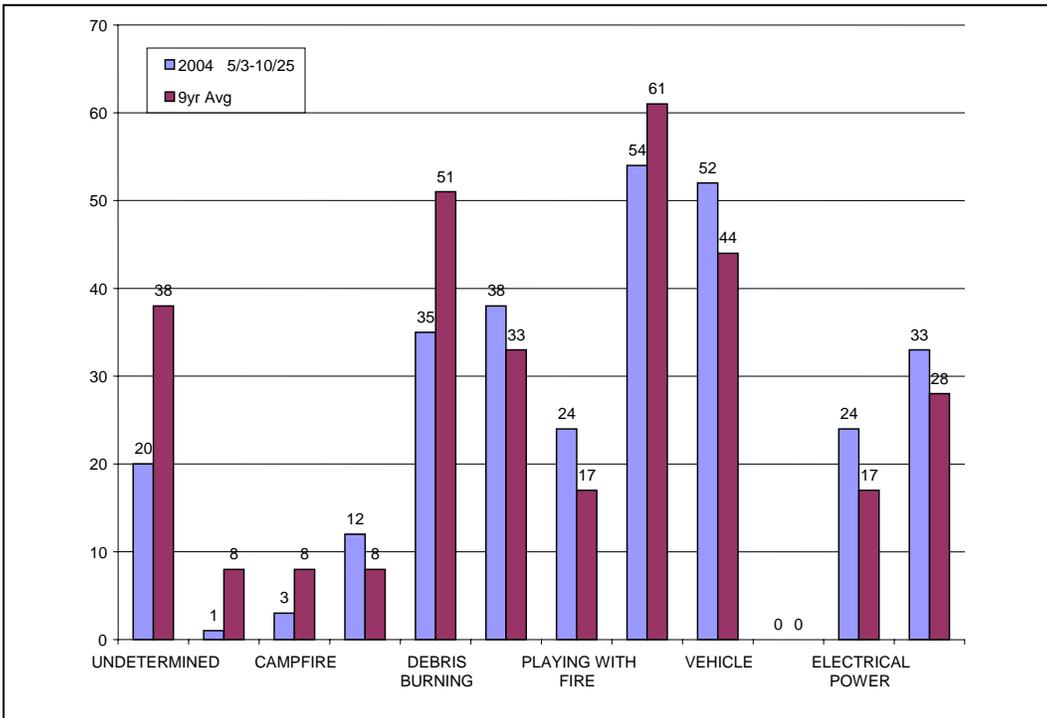
The rise in arson cases was because several juveniles playing with fire cases were handled as arson cases. These accounted for 69% of all fires that occurred. These were followed in order by: miscellaneous, electrical power, undetermined, smoking, campfire, lightning, and railroad. Fire

occurrences on the increase from the 9-year average were vehicle, playing with fire, electrical power, arson, miscellaneous, and smoking with all others on the decrease. Ignitions causing the most acreage loss were equipment use at 906 acres and electrical power at 336 acres. All other causes of fire were less than 100 acres.

The following chart compares the 2004 primary causes compared to the 9-year average.



Amador - El Dorado Amador / El Dorado 2004 Ignitions Compared to the 9-year Average



In order to better address ignition management for the Unit, a more detailed analysis of the fires in each major cause classification was conducted.

1. **Equipment use** accounted for 54 wildland fires or 18% of the total ignitions. This represents an 11% decrease from the 9-year average. Historically, this classification has been one of the top causes of wildfire starts in the Unit. Equipment use and debris burning were heavily targeted this year. Through continuing displays and education programs, we hope to continue a downward trend. In reviewing the specific causes within this classification, approximately 45% are due to the misuse of mowers and weed-eaters. Welding or grinding without adequate clearance caused 10% of the fires with approximately 25% caused by the operation of heavy equipment. The majority of the heavy equipment caused fires occurred in the El Dorado Hills Area. These fires were all quickly extinguished. Over 90% of the mower fires were due to the mower blades striking rocks or exhaust and friction belts igniting collected chaff around them. Ironically, most of the mower caused fires occurred as a result of residents trying to clear property for fire safety, but doing it during the hottest part of the day, usually between the hours of 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Equipment use caused the largest fire in the unit in 2004, the Scott Fire that burnt 700 acres in the Rancho Murieta Area.
2. **Vehicle use** accounted for 52 wildland fires or 18% of the total in 2004. This represents an 18% increase from the 9-year average. This category has been one of the leading causes of fires in the Unit for the past several years. The majority of these fires occurred along the major traffic corridors and Hwy 16, 49, 50, 88, and 124. 30% of the vegetation fires were exhaust/converter related, 20% of the fires were caused by vehicles on fire, 20% were caused by accidents, 15% by vehicles driving in the wildland, and most of the remainder was miscellaneous caused.
3. **Debris burning** accounted for 35 fires or 12% of the total fires. This cause saw a 31% decrease from the 9-year average. We believe a concerted educational program along with the elimination of debris burning during several months of declared fire season; (June through October) substantially limited the number and severity of these fires. 25% of these fires were before the burning band went into effect and just after the band was lifted. Lack of clearance is the #1 cause for the escape burns. 70% of the 35 fires were illegal burning during the burning ban. The remaining control burn escapes are due to old control burns re-igniting (coming back to life) after a weather change. Unattended control burns also

contributed to the totals. All fire departments in Amador and El Dorado County are assisting us in handing out legal notices (LE-38's) on all debris caused fires. These legal notices serve to educate the public and put them on notice their next escape would result in a citation. The new air pollution laws banning burn barrels have aided by getting rid of a potential ignition sources.

4. **Arson and Playing with Fire** accounted for 62 fires or 21% of the total fires in 2004. Arson accounted for 38 fires or 13% of the fires. This was a 1% increase over the 9-year average. Playing with fire accounted for 24 fires or 8 % of the fires in 2004. This was a 30% increase over the 9-year average. The increase in the arson cases is attributed to several juveniles caught playing with fire being cited / arrested for arson. There is a fine line between the playing with fire to arson or experimentation to recklessly causing a fire. Nine of the, playing with fire, cases were given to the district attorney offices for convictions.

Currently there are 5 open arson cases from 2004. These cases involve 4 adults and several juveniles. The Fire Prevention Bureau handled a total of 78 juveniles in 2004. 14 juveniles were sent to the Prevention Bureau for intervention / education by county's court systems. Over the last couple of years, we have had a growing concern over the increasing number of severely challenged juveniles that we have been the initial contact for. The Hollow Fire, which burnt 48 acres through the outskirts of Placerville, caused approximately \$700,000.00 damage to various utility companies and private properties was caused by juveniles playing with fire. 2004 saw an increase in young girls and groups of juveniles being responsible for starting fires. Juveniles between the ages of 9 – 13 were very active in 2004. Various diagnosed diseases due to alcohol, drug, and genetic disorders play a role in the juvenile problem. Past physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of the juveniles also plays a strong role into why those juveniles play with fire or intentionally light fire. The families (all within the foster care system) are working with County Social Services to handle these juveniles.

Due to the above concerns, a sub-committee was formed out of the El Dorado County Fire Prevention Officers Association in 2003 to write a standardized protocol for the Juvenile Fire Setter Program in El Dorado County. The handbook (including database) is near completion and will be distributed throughout the Unit and parts of the state.

Another major concern is that many of the juveniles (aged 12-17

years) are well aware of their wrongful acts, but simply don't care and figure they will not get caught. When they get caught, often times the parents are apathetic or in denial about their child's activities. The Law Enforcement, County Social Services, Probation Department, District Attorney, and Courts within the respected county hopefully can help make a difference in the life path the juvenile decides take.

5. **Miscellaneous causes** accounted for 33 fires or 11% of the fires in 2004. This classification includes causes such as spontaneous combustion, fireplace ashes deposited in the wildland, interior fires such as wiring, flue fires, barbequing, cooking fires, fireworks, and electrical wiring on the user side of the meter. This category saw a large increase to because of closer report analysis. Model rockets along with the usual unintentional firework start caused five fires this year. Several spontaneous combustion fires and structure fires, which spotted to the wildland helped, contributed to this category.
6. **Electrical power** accounted for 24 wildland fires or 8% of the 2004 fires. Although this is a 29% increase from the 9-year average, most of these were the result of a PRC violation, (poor maintenance) or pruning company mistakes; cost recovery was initiated for most of these violations. The USFS was heavily affected by this cause category. Three fires were caused when vehicles crashed into power poles and three other fires were caused when RVs backed into low branches, which struck power lines. None of these fires were larger than a spot.

The two largest electrical caused fires, the Wilson Fire – 163 acres and the Powerhouse Fire – 115 acres were caused by poor maintenance, no trees were involved. The biggest problem we noticed is that even though the trees are being pruned to required distance from lines, PG&E and SMUD contract crews are not always pruning vertically, leaving a tunnel effect of the trees growing over the power lines.

7. There were 20 **undetermined** fires or 7% of the fires in 2004. This is a 46% decrease from the 9-year average of 38 and the continued downward trend is due to the hard work and dedication of the Units Fire Prevention staff and the company officers who conduct thorough origin and cause investigations.
8. **Smoking** caused 12 fires. The majority of these fires were carelessly discarded cigarettes along our roadways. However, several bark and planter box fire were directly attributed to

smoking. The potential for a high dollar loss fire is very possible if a planter is next to the business.

9. **Illegal campfires and campfire escapes** caused 3 fires and burnt a total of 16 acres in 2004. The largest of these fires was the Gold Fire at Gold Beach in El Dorado County. An abandoned campfire along the Cosumnes River caused the fire.
10. **Lightning** caused on fire in the Unit in 2004. It was reported to be only a spot.
11. **Railroad** accounted for zero fires in 2004. No active rail lines are working in either Amador or El Dorado Counties at this time. Sacramento County contains very few working rail spurs in the SRA.

2004 Proposed Projects

The ignition management projects proposed for 2004 focus primarily on preventable ignitions that have had an increase in recent years, or historically have produced large damaging fires in targeted areas of the Unit. These projects dovetail with the Unit's Fire Plan projects in both ignition reduction and loss mitigation. These projects are in addition to various other fire prevention projects and programs routinely carried out each year. These routine activities include fire safe maintenance inspections, school team teaching, fire investigation and follow up, fire prevention, public education, etc.

Nine focused ignition management projects have been identified for 2004. These are outlined in the chart below in their order of priority. Priorities were set based on potential for resource/property loss, ignition preventability, prior historical data, and recent trends.

Priority chart giving general time frame for implementation.

PRIORITY	PROJECT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	TIME FRAME
1	Arson & JFS	Targeted	Task Force	Unit	Year Around
2	4 th of July Patrols	Targeted	Patrol	Unit	7/1 to 7/10
3	Burn Permit Administration	Targeted	Enforcement	Unit	4/1 to 11/15
4	Small Equipment Inspection	Targeted	Inspection	Unit	5/1 to 7/1
5	Public Education	Indirect	Education	Unit	2004
6	Campground Inspections	Targeted	Inspection	Unit	5/1 to 7/1
7	PG&E Contractor Inspection	Targeted	Inspection.	Unit	6/1 to 7/1
8	Power line Inspections	Mint.	Inspection	Unit	Fire Season
9	Holiday, Red Flag, Lighting	Targeted	Patrol	Unit	Fire Season

Education and VIP

The AEU VIP Program assists the Unit in a variety of Fire Prevention Activities. The VIPs support the Headquarters Office and fire stations, school programs, public education events (fairs, displays, parades, fire patrols) and fire information centers on an immediate need basis. The VIPs are active year round in Amador, El Dorado, Alpine, and Sacramento Counties.

Juvenile Firesetters

The JFS Program is initiated when a juvenile who have been experimenting with fire. The juvenile and parents /caregivers are assessed utilizing the FEMA JFS assessment program. Following the assessment, the family will view one or two videos specifically designed for JFS. If further assistance is needed, the referrals are processed through the juvenile justice system.

In excess of 70 juveniles were seen in 2004, the highest number to date. Assessments are done in cooperation with the US Forest Service and local fire districts.

Objectives:

- Identify juvenile firesetters
- Assess the juvenile firesetters needs
- Provide life skill training and education
- Provide referrals to family counseling
- Evaluate firesetters and program progress

Training B-4516

The CDF-AEU Training Bureau exists to provide mandatory and career enhancement training to CDF employees so that they can carry out the mission of the Department effectively and safely.

The CDF-AEU Training Bureau is currently staffed with a Battalion Chief and Fire Captain. The Training Bureau oversees the training for all permanent and seasonal Fire Protections employees as well as employees in Resource Management, the Emergency Command Center, Administration, and our Schedule "A" contract with the Cameron Park Community Services District.

In 2005, the Unit Training Bureau hosted a total of 12,000 hours of training. This training included courses on the Incident Command System, Wildland and Structural Firefighting, Emergency Medical System and

Hazardous Materials Incidents. Additionally, AEU employees participated in over 5,000 hours of Statewide and Regional Training primarily focused on courses related to the Incident Command System and fulfilling the CDF Mission.

Training and the Fire Plan

The Training that is provided through the AEU Training Bureau supports the Unit's Fire Plan. A well trained work force will not only perform more safely on a wildland fire, but will also more effectively mitigate and/or prevent major wildland fires from occurring. Training in the Incident Command System as well as refining basic company officer skills in prevention and suppression will complement the mission of the Fire Plan.

Emergency Command Center B-4509

The Amador El Dorado Interagency Emergency Command Center (CICC) provides the Command and Control for SRA, LRA, and FRA, of Amador, Alpine, and El Dorado counties.

AEU and ENF are located in CICC's dispatch center at Camino. This co-location allows each agency to assist the other during times of high activity, the opportunity to share personnel and assures coordination of local, state, and federal fire fighting forces during interface wildfires, structure fires, and medical emergencies. Dispatchers are cross-trained to perform each other's duties. They function without regard to agency jurisdiction. It is not unusual to see an ENF dispatcher handle an Amador County local fire department medical aid, nor is it unusual to see an AEU dispatcher handle a wildland fire in the ENF area.

CICC monitors fire weather conditions within the Unit to augment staffing prior to these weather events. CICC maintains 9 Remote Weather Stations (RAWS), and monitors these stations on a daily basis to set the appropriate dispatch level. A Standard Response Plan is pre-determined for each dispatch level for timely activation in the event of a wildfire, or other type fire which is threatening to burn the wildland.

CICC maintains an electronic Emergency Resource Directory, (ERD) which allows personnel to support any given incident within the area. The ERD contains information such as the ICS qualifications for AEU and ENF personnel, supplies, vendors, private resources available for hire, call when needed rosters (i.e.; dozers, helicopters, water tenders, etc), and Local Government cooperator information.

CICC also has an expanded operation. The CICC Expanded Dispatch is

used for large or complex incidents that outgrow the main floor of the command center. When an Initial Attack incident occurs that has the potential to become an extended attack or major incident, CICC immediately staffs expanded with ECC personnel. Once CICC Expanded is up and running, all ordering for the given incident takes place within this building and staffing levels are adjusted based on the size or complexity of the incident. The incident is assigned a separate Command Frequency, to allow the CICC to return to processing new incidents. As the incident continues to grow, additional resources are assigned from within AEU or ENF, or orders are placed to fill from other areas of the state or nation. The properly staffed Expanded Operation allows for timely resource ordering, cancellation, or reassignment of resources, overhead, and equipment while taking the load of supporting the incident off the CICC main floor.

In 2004, the CICC processed 22500 Incidents with the call volume for the CICC increasing by 5% from the previous year.

Mission Statement

The Camino Interagency Command Center, operated by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the United States Forest Service, is a cooperative interagency command center. The command center is dedicated to providing professional and efficient dispatch services for the residents and visitors of El Dorado, Amador, Sacramento, and Alpine Counties including the El Dorado National Forest and the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. The primary mission is to achieve the most economical and effective cooperative fire, aviation management, emergency medical response, law enforcement, and rescue service through collaboration.