

BATTALION 7 – Battalion Chief Mike Brown

Purpose Statement

Battalion Seven of the Butte Unit is in the southwestern corner of Butte County and includes the two small cities of Biggs and Gridley, the Mooretown Rancheria, and the unincorporated rural communities of Palermo and Honcut. CDF Fire provides Fire / Rescue and Life Safety Services to these communities through several Cooperative Agreements. Automatic aid agreements are maintained with the City of Oroville and the El Medio Fire Protection District, both improve public safety in the Oroville Urban Area. Gridley and Biggs benefit from an automatic aid agreement with Sutter County Fire Department that includes the City of Live Oak Fire Department. These agreements are via our role as the Butte County Fire Department, a role we have held for over seventy years. CDF Fire also provides wildland fire protection to the growing Mooretown Rancheria in the State Responsibility Area through our statewide agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 2002 the Concow Maidu Tribe and Butte County Fire agreed to cooperate in the provision of Fire and Rescue service to the Mooretown Rancheria.

In 2004, for the third consecutive year, there were no fatal fires in the Battalion. There were 233 total fires, compared to 213 the previous year, and 264 in 2002. In the Palermo area juvenile fire setting was down as was vegetation as a type of fire. Other year 2004 high points in the Battalion include an outstanding commitment to educating school age children in fire prevention / life safety, available in both English and Spanish. Additional prevention contacts were made in Hmong and Russian. A new type III fire engine was grant funded in Gridley and will be placed in volunteer staffed service in 2005.

Several values at risk are acknowledged in this project, including: life safety, property conservation, job protection, population density, as well as the resource values of rangeland and wildlife habitat. Wildland fire history has likewise been considered as large and damaging fires have occurred on both the eastern and western edges of the Battalion. The east side is a transition zone at the edge of the Sacramento Valley and is bisected by the State Responsibility Area, Local Responsibility Area line. This “front” is characterized by grass fuels on the flat valley edge and oak woodland or rolling Blue Oak Savannah in the foothills. The west side is the Upper Butte Sink of Butte Creek, an important flyway, fishery and wildlife habitat characterized by seasonal marshes, riparian habitat and a heavy loading of fine fuels. Much of Butte Sink is State property, the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (Department of Fish and Game).

In the center of the Battalion are the cities of Biggs and Gridley, small farm communities surrounded by intensely farmed land. Also bisecting the Battalion North / South is the Feather River. The river bottom is a ten-thousand acre hardwood forest with its own unique fire regime. Most of this habitat is in the DFG managed Oroville Wildlife Area. These two cities, and on the East side front country abutting the SRA line the growing Mooretown Rancheria and the rural communities of Palermo and Honcut have their own Structural Fire / Life Safety problems. In this narrow corridor parallel the SRA line, exists a significant interface fire history. In 2000 there were two separate fatalities in structure fires in Gridley, the first in thirty years. A tragic reminder that residential fires are the most threatening fire the public faces. The

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Battalion experienced a large loss fire at a rice mill in the city of Biggs in 1999. It is anticipated that as the aging inventory of mill and farm industry buildings gentrify, more large loss, commercial structure fires are likely in the coming years. Also in 1999 a large fire in baled rice straw threatened Biggs, a wake up call to prepare for the evolving market for rice straw, a natural fiber commodity with a threat of fire. In an adjacent Battalion a wildland fire escaped initial attack and spread from the Oroville Wildlife Area (DFG) and into the City of Oroville doing \$16,000,000 in estimated damages in an industrial tract. This was the third such fire in about thirty years that is until 2001 when four separate fires started in the Oroville Wildlife Area and escaped initial attack. The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) as a tool to reduce fuels on DFG lands in the Battalion is working. Consistent with the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Policy this important project will continue in 2005.

The Gridley Cooperative Agreement for Fire Protection (Schedule A) is due for renewal this year. The Biggs Agreement continues thru June 30, 2006. For all of the objectives listed in last year's plan acceptable effort was made and progress or completion resulted. Several benchmarks should be attained in 2005.

This year as the Gridley Cooperative Agreement runs out, it is very important it be renewed to maintain public safety in this part of Butte County. Staffing and adequate supervision of the Biggs and Gridley Engines remain the foremost goal of the agreements. An Administrative Captain position is needed in Gridley to maintain public life safety and service on a level comparable to the risk in this changing community. From Biggs an upgrade of the single position they fund from Firefighter II to Fire Apparatus Engineer will provide a greater depth of qualified Engine and Truck, Driver/Operators in the Battalion. We will seek support from a Tribal Gaming Grant to staff Engine 72 (Palermo) with a constant 3.0 personnel.

The planned Response Area (PRA) of R1, R11, R12, X3, X4 and Y3 all remain targeted for vegetative fuel reduction by a variety of means. The PRA R1, R11 (Mooretown Rancheria) and R12 all in the State Responsibility Area just east of the community of Palermo is targeted for Public Resources Code section 4291 enforcement. The cities of Biggs (PRA X3) and Gridley (PRA X4) are targeted for fuel reduction by local ordinance for "Weed Abatement". The Gray Lodge Wildlife Area in the Upper Butte Sink is mostly in the Y3 PRA, and is targeted for continuation of a very successful VMP project for fire safety and habitat improvement. Cooperation with DFG to "Control Burn" and on training burns remains a goal in 2005 when 1,000 acres is the target for burning.

The whole Battalion is targeted for the following: Compliance with Title 19, California Code of Regulations in structures where annually required, public education of adults via the print media and personal contacts, school programs targeting all third grade students, pre-fire planning of all high risk occupancies. Additionally, in the Palermo area, attention will remain focused on the continuing problem of illegal burning.

Objectives

- 1) Renew Cooperative Agreement in Gridley, enhance Biggs.

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- 2) Reduce vegetative fuels at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (DFG)
- 3) Educate school age children and adults to the risk of fire.
- 4) Reduce Interface Fire threat
- 5) Improve life safety in Title 19 CCR buildings
- 6) Enhance positions and apparatus in Biggs and Gridley
- 7) Reduce structure fire risk in Gridley, Biggs and Palermo
- 8) Cooperate with Mooretown Rancheria in Fire / Life Safety

1)	New Agreement in Gridley, upgrade Biggs FFII & get type III engine.	(B7, 73 & 74)
2)	Continue VMP of at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (DFG)	(B7 & 74)
3a)	Complete third grade school programs using station personnel, VIPs, and PALS	(72, 73 & 74)
3b)	Continue adult education via personal contact, permit process and media	(B7, 72, 73 & 74)
4a)	Targeted enforcement of PRC 4291 in Palermo PRA R1, R11 & R12	(72)
4b)	Promptly inspect all weed complaints	(72, 73 & 74)
4c)	Refer County Weed Abatement issues to the Weed Abatement Captain	(72, 73 & 74)
4d)	Refer blatant Air Quality violations to the AQMD	(72, 73 & 74)
5)	Enforce Title 19 annually in required occupancies	(72, 73 & 74)
6)	Budget work with City Councils for new Captain, upgrade FFII to FAE and for Grant funded Engine (Biggs) and new Quint Ladder Truck (Gridley).	(B7, 73 & 74)

- 9) Maintain Personal Protective Equipment to NFPA standards
- 10) Maintain departmental fire extinguishers to legal standards.

Prescriptions

7a)	Complete PreFire Plans of target hazards	(72, 73 & 74)
7b)	Establish Equipment Reserve Account in Biggs	(B7 & 73)
7c)	Enforce adopted fire code	(74)
7d)	Install smoke detectors	(72, 73 & 74)
8a)	Retain membership on the Mooretown Rancheria Public Safety Committee	(72)
8b)	Maintain membership on the Mooretown Rancheria TCI Task Force	(72)
8c)	Support staffing E72 to 3.0 via Tribal Gaming Grant.	(B7 & 72)
8d)	Renew dispatch agreement for Mooretown Rancheria Fire Department.	(B7 & 72)
9a)	Fully Utilize Extractor type commercial washing machine for PPE project	(73)
9a)	Maintain a vendor to serve as our "warehouse" for turn-outs	(73)
10a)	Manage extinguisher maintenance program consistent with available funds	(72)
10b)	Continue shift to station managed extinguisher maintenance	(B7 & 72)

Fuels Reduction

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Use City, County, and State Codes to secure the reduction of vegetative fuels in the communities of Biggs, Gridley, and Palermo. Continue VMP at Gray Lodge.

- ❖ Target areas are the Planned Response Areas (PRA)
- ❖ R1, R11, R12, X3, X4, and Y3
- ❖ Refer Butte County weed abatement issues within cities'
- ❖ Spheres of influence to the BTU Fire Prevention Bureau.
- ❖ Within city limits, use city specific ordinance, coordinate
- ❖ closely with city staff (Biggs X3, Gridley X4)
- ❖ In the Palermo target area (PRA R1, R11, R12) enforce California
- ❖ Public Resources Code sec. 4291. Use form L.E. 38
- ❖ Continue VMP at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area PRA Y3
- ❖ Captain 74 coordinate with Gray Lodge

Life Safety

Cooperate with Local and State Fire Marshals and Building Officials

- ❖ Captain 74 (Prevention Captain) work closely with the
- ❖ Gridley Building Official and Unit Fire Prevention Bureau
- ❖ Captains 72, 73, 74 Complete all annually required Title 19
- ❖ inspections in the entire Battalion
- ❖ Resolve discovered Title 19 CCR violations, with the
- ❖ assistance of Unit Life Safety Officer and State Fire Marshal
- ❖ Enforce the adopted Fire Code in the City of Gridley (PRA X4)

Education

Elementary Schools: Use age appropriate fire/life safety education topics to instruct pre-teens in fire safety at all public schools.

- ❖ Provide school programs to all third grade classes within the Battalion
- ❖ Use recognized age appropriate programs and topics
- ❖ Stop, Drop and Roll
- ❖ Exit Drills In The Home (EDITH)
- ❖ Smokey's Friends Don't Play With Matches
- ❖ Fire PALS

Public Education

Use community outreach to increase awareness of the risk to life safety from fire within the various communities. Emphasize the value of smoke detectors.

- ❖ Captain 72 work closely with the Mooretown Rancheria and Grange to increase life safety.
- ❖ Local newspapers: all Fire Captains are expected to present timely fire/life safety messages in the community paper (stress smoke detectors)
- ❖ Use personal professional contacts to educate adults to the risks from fire within their community.
- ❖ While issuing permits and in the public contacts you initiate, represent the department well.
- ❖ Use community groups to educate the business community to the risk of fire in their

industry.

Enforcement

Juveniles

Complete Field Interview (FI) Cards for all field contacts with juvenile subjects encountered at the Preliminary Fire Investigation level.

- ❖ Forward FI cards to the Fire Prevention Bureau.
- ❖ Cooperate and share information with Juvenile Probation authorities regarding juvenile offenders.

Adults

Enforce fire laws using enforcement tools available to the Officer at scene.

- ❖ Relay to the Air Quality Management District via fax any repeat or flagrant violators of their regulations, especially dooryard debris violators in Palermo PRA.
- ❖ Public Officers or Peace Officers are to be requested as needed for issuing citations or custodial arrest.
- ❖ Cooperate and share information with local law enforcement regarding adult fire law violators
- ❖ Gridley / Biggs Police in Gridley and Biggs, Butte County Sheriffs Office in Palermo and other unincorporated area and Mooretown Rancheria Security and Administration on Mooretown Rancheria
- ❖ In unincorporated Butte County, share information with the Butte County Code Enforcement Office
- ❖ Cooperate with the Butte County Arson Task Force

Electric Utility

Promptly relay power line clearance violations

- ❖ Within Biggs and Gridley, to the City of Gridley Electric Department.
- ❖ Within unincorporated Butte County, to the BTU Fire Prevention Bureau.

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