

SUPPORT BUREAUS

OTHER PROGRAMS THAT NEED FUNDING WITHIN THE BUTTE UNIT

Magalia Reforestation Center – Forester II Rich Elliot

Purpose Statement

The Magalia Camp, formerly the Butte Fire Center, serves a dual purpose as the Magalia Reforestation Center and a regional training facility for CDF's northern region. The joint operation to staff firefighting hand crews at the Butte Fire Center between CDF and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) ended in the spring of 2003 when the CCC was forced to make reductions due to the state budget crisis. Efforts to staff CDF Firefighting hand crews for the 2005 fire season have been unsuccessful. The Magalia Reforestation Center is managed by a Forester II, Nursery Manager, with assistance from a Forester I, 2 Forestry Assistants and clerical support. The northern region training facility provides emergency response and support training to CDF and other interagency personnel from October to May annually.

The Magalia Camp was initially constructed in 1949, remodeled in the mid-fifties and in the early nineties, and is located 10 miles north of Paradise and east of the Skyway at the 2700 foot elevation near a residential community (Magalia-Paradise Pines). Butte Fire Center is open year-round, receiving moderate to heavy snowfall (some storms produce four feet of snow), and 70-90" of rain per year. The CDF owns the Fire Center property. It was originally constructed to house 60 inmate firefighters when the camp was a joint CDF-California Department of Corrections (CDC) operation. In the 1973 due to nearby urban encroachment, the camp changed from CDF-CDC to a California Ecology Center. In 1977, the Ecology Center changed to a CDF-CCC cooperative Fire Center partnership as it remains today. Several of the buildings are made of surplus materials.

During the period when CDF/CCC hand crews were operating from the Butte Fire Center the averaged 65,000 emergency response hours per year responding to fires, rescues, floods, vehicle accidents, and other public service needs. BFC also serves as a designated incident base for large fires supplying feeding, sleeping areas, command post functions, staging and communications.

The Magalia Camp is the only camp in Butte County which provides hand crews for emergency response and public service. Without question the loss of the CDF firefighting hand crews greatly impacts the CDF Butte Units firefighting and emergency response capabilities, as well as public service, fuel reduction and community service work, on the Upper Paradise Ridge, within Butte County, and statewide. The goal is to restore the Magalia Camp to its full resource management and fire protection levels capable of meeting California's reforestation needs and providing CDF firefighting hand crews capable of all-risk, fire, flood, or rescue, emergency response and reimbursable public service fuel reduction and community service work.

The Magalia Camp Present & Future Vision:

- Restore the camps ability to respond to all types of emergencies providing total, full-service, all-risk fire crew response.

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- Restore the camps ability to provide crew labor as a reimbursable project to the CDF Magalia Reforestation Center.
- Restore the camps ability to provide crew labor to reimbursement project sponsors such as the California Department of Water Resources, State Parks & Recreation, Cal Trans and the Department of Fish and Game.
- Restore the camps ability to provide hand crews for reimbursable fire safe fuel reduction work through area Fire Safe Councils.

CHICO AIR ATTACK BASE – Battalion Chief Marlene Heisey

Purpose Statement

CDF operates the Chico Air Attack Base at the Chico Municipal Airport. Firefighting aircraft such as air tankers and the command and control aircraft, air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) respond from the base during the contract response period, which is generally June 15 through October 15 of each year. Air tankers and command planes are termed, “fixed wing aircraft,” and constitute one part of the aerial firefighting resources. The other aerial component is helicopters, which are referred to as rotary wing aircraft. Both are critical elements utilized for effective wild fire suppression.

Air Attack Bases (AAB) are located so that firefighting aircraft can initiate aerial fire suppression activities at any location within CDF’s jurisdiction within about 20 minutes. Other CDF air bases serving Northern California include the Redding AAB, Grass Valley AAB, Ukiah AAB, Santa Rosa AAB, Rohnerville AAB south of Eureka, and the Columbia AAB near Sonora. There are a total of 18 AAB's throughout California that form a statewide system. Of those, 10 are operated by CDF, 3 by the federal agencies (USFS and BLM). The remaining 5 bases are operated jointly between CDF and the Federal Agencies. The USFS also contracts with CDF to manage federal aircraft at state bases, as is the case at the Chico AAB. Northern California fixed wing aircraft distribution is as follows:

Nearby CDF and federal Air Attack Bases

BASE	CDF AIR TACTICS GROUP SUPERVISOR PLANE	CDF AIR TANKERS	USFS AIR TACTICS GROUP SUPERVISOR PLANE	USFS AIR TANKERS <i>See Note Below</i>
Chico	1 OV-10 Bronco	1 S-2 800 gallon tanker		
Redding	1 OV-10 Bronco	2 S-2 800 gallon tankers		
Chester			1 Cessna 337	
Grass Valley	1 OV-10 Bronco	2 S-2T 1200 gallon tankers		

*Note: Due to recent restrictions as a result of safety concerns over the airworthiness of the federal contract aircraft the USFS is limited on the number of aircraft which will be available for firefighting. Consequently these aircraft will be strategically located and repositioned based upon fire activity and weather conditions.

Within the Butte Unit, three air attack bases provide primary, initial action response. They are the Chico, Grass Valley and Chester bases from which the closest Air Tactical Group Supervisor and air tankers respond regardless of jurisdiction. When additional air tankers are needed, they respond from the next closest base. Historically, fast spreading wild fires within the Butte Unit require from three to eight air tankers. The heavier the vegetation, the more difficult the suppression is and the more air tankers that are required. In addition, the proximity of the base to the fire plays an extremely important role in being able to refill the air tankers and return them to the fire in a timely basis. This becomes an even more critical issue at rapidly evolving fires with significant values at risk such as structures and timber. Chico AAB annually delivers about 500,000 gallons of aerial retardant that is dropped on fires. The most

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retardant ever pumped during a year was during 1999 when over 1.3 million gallons were delivered. The August 1999 Butte Complex of lightning fires significantly contributed to the record. During the fire season Chico is staffed with a combination of CDF and contract employees. The daily staffing is from 14 to 16 personnel that include a CDF staff of 9, retardant contract personnel and contract pilots and a mechanic.

The AAB in Butte County was originally located at the Oroville Airport. About 1968 the base was relocated to Chico and an air attack facility constructed. Since the origin, the Chico facility has been remodeled several times including 1983 and during 1999. The remodels were only band-aid approaches to keeping the facility operational and attempting to meet the logistical needs of the personnel assigned to the base. Future plans call for the base to be relocated and rebuilt at the northeast corner of the airport. The proposed site will provide adequate space for the temporary presence of up to 12 air tankers including the MAFFS (Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System) California Air National Guard C-130 air tankers that drop 3,000 gallons of retardant. The new site also will include an office, adequate space and facilities to meet personnel needs, mechanic facilities, aircraft hanger and a control tower all of which will help ensure safe and effective operations by aerial fire fighting personnel and equipment protecting the life and property of our local area.

The Chico Air Attack Base Present & Future:

- Continue to respond to all types of emergencies providing total, full-service, air operations support.
- Continue the present aircraft staffing at CAAB including one state funded Air Tactics Group Supervisor command aircraft and one state air tanker.
- Work with the USFS to restore the federally funded air tanker at the CAAB.
- Continue to closely work with local airport cooperators including the City of Chico and with local community groups and elected officials who support the existence and operation of the CAAB.
- Work with the Mendocino National Forest to increase funding of the federal air tanker contract to better represent the actual operational and administrative costs to CDF.
- Develop a master plan for the CAAB.
- Develop a state funded capital outlay proposal to replace and relocate the CAAB at the Chico Municipal Airport.
- Improve the ability of the CAAB to service and support military firefighting aircraft, Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS).

TRAINING AND SAFETY BUREAU – Battalion Chief Greg McFadden

Purpose Statement

“Today’s training is tomorrow’s performance,” is one goal of the Butte Unit Training and Safety Bureau. Another goal is to ensure that all firefighters come home from an emergency in the same condition that they responded. The Bureau provides staff service and support to the Unit in both the fields of training and safety for all career, volunteer and Fire Center firefighters. Firefighting is a very dangerous and demanding job that requires split second life, death and property conservation decisions. Firefighters must be able to quickly assess a situation, develop an incident action plan and execute the plan regardless of the type of emergency. The Training and Safety Bureau helps firefighters better and more safely perform their work. Many federal and state statutes regulate the business of firefighting and rescue. Consequently, the Unit must be totally informed and ready to provide comprehensive and accurate training and safety information to firefighters.

In the area of training, the Bureau is responsible to develop firefighter skill proficiency courses, present courses, conduct practice-training drills and evaluate firefighter performance. As much as is possible, the Bureau uses nationally or state certified courses to ensure that firefighters meet all required standards. Examples of certified courses include the basic Firefighter I and II training, pre-hospital Emergency Medical Technician and Medical First Responder courses, technical rescue classes such as Rescue Systems I, Confined Space Awareness and Operations courses and Swiftwater Rescue Awareness and Technician classes. In addition to formal classroom or field training courses, firefighters must constantly practice their skills, which are called drills. Generally, firefighters drill on the average about two hours per workday. The training officers provide training and drill to all Unit career, volunteer and CCC Fire Center firefighters.

The Safety Officer ensures that the department follows national health and safety firefighting, emergency medical, hazardous materials response and technical rescue standards. This is no easy task and was recently compounded by the national respirator fit standard. This standard requires that all firefighters annually complete a personal medical statement, possibly take a personal medical physical examination, be fit tested for any design respirator that the firefighter might wear during the course of an emergency and that firefighters only enter burning buildings in groups of two with an outside backup group of two firefighters. The Safety Officer also must ensure that the Unit Health and Safety Committee regularly meets, that firefighters are afforded counseling if they suffer from the effects of job stress such as Critical Incident Stress Disorder or have off duty issues that either effect their performance or work attendance and that firefighters correctly use all assigned personal protective equipment, mobile apparatus and tools.

Assigned to the Training and Safety Bureau are one Battalion Chief who functions as the bureau commander, two training Fire Captains, one Safety Fire Captain and a part-time clerical position responsible for firefighter safety and training compliance record keeping.

The Training and Safety Bureau members respond to greater alarm emergencies where they function as incident safety officers or assistant incident safety officers. They also respond to

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emergencies as additional command officers and have technical expertise in fields such as rescue.

Firefighter performance is directly related to their knowledge and proficiency of assigned emergency response duties. The Training and Safety Bureau helps to ensure that knowledge and proficiency meets required standards. Throughout all the mandates, the Training and Safety Bureau practices customer service and ensures that customer service is a viable part of all training and educational classes.

The Training & Safety Bureau Present & Future:

- Continue to provide all-risk training and safety service and support to all CDF/BCFR career, volunteer and CCC firefighters.
- Continue to provide staff oversight to ensure a safe work environment for all personnel.
- Continue to document every training and practice drill to ensure complete firefighter records, operational capability and reduced liability.
- Will assist or present all-risk training as is needed to meet the missions of CDF and the Butte County Fire Department.
- Worked with the Emergency Services Foundation of Redding to secure funding for eight additional automatic external heart defibrillators and 200 sets of spine immobilization backboards and spider straps.
- Worked with the local Emergency Medical Care Committee on pre-hospital emergency medical issues.
- In addition to instructing classes to career and volunteer firefighters also present training classes to other agencies and private citizens.
- Continue to work closely with other local fire departments and the local community college.
- Stay on the cutting edge of all improvements in firefighter health and safety subjects.
- Develop a master plan for the Training & Safety Bureau.
- Develop a state funded capital outlay proposal for an office and total training facility for the bureau.

EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER – Battalion Chief Russ Fowler

Purpose Statement

The Butte Unit Emergency Command Center (BTU ECC) provides command and control services, as well as “pre arrival” emergency medical services, for all of the unincorporated areas of Butte County, in addition to the Cities of Oroville, Biggs, Gridley, the El Medio Fire Protection District, and the Mooretown Indian Rancheria. The BTU ECC is also the CDF Fire Command and Control center for State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands within Plumas County.

Furthermore, the BTU ECC is the OES Fire Operational Area Mutual Aid Coordination center for Butte County. As the Operational Area Coordinator, the BTU ECC has responsibility to coordinate all fire mutual aid requests for all jurisdictions within Butte County. This responsibility also gives the BTU ECC the authority to directly obtain resources from all neighboring counties including Yuba, Sutter, Plumas, Glenn, Colusa, Tehama, and Lassen.

In 1995, the BTU ECC processed 12,024 incidents. In 2004, 15,888 incidents were processed, an increase of over 32% in 9 years. The BTU ECC is currently staffed with five Fire Captains, four Fire Dispatchers, one Telecommunications Systems Analyst, and one Battalion Chief. This staffing has remained fairly constant since 1992, and allows for three person staffing during the majority of the day shift hours, and two person staffing during the night shift, with one Dispatcher “wide awake” and the ECC Duty Captain sleeping close by.

Objectives

- ◆ Continue to provide quality command and control services, as well as excellent customer service, to all of our customers.
- ◆ Pursue staffing increases to support increases in daily incidents, as well as increasing job complexity, and to provide for two person wide-awake dispatching.
- ◆ Pursue cooperative agreements with other departments and agencies to enhance efficiency of resource command and control, within Butte County.
- ◆ Pursue available technology to more efficiently conduct command and control operations.
- ◆ Cooperate fully and effectively with allied agencies.

Mission

The mission of the Oroville Emergency Command Center is to provide a consistent, accurate, timely, and coordinated command and control system. “We will provide support, direction, and communications with our ultimate goal being the best service possible to all who depend on our team.”

FIRE PROTECTION PLANNING

Purpose Statement

The Butte Units Fire Protection Planning Bureau is charged with overseeing fire safe planning and hazardous fuel reduction work, and the unit's vegetation management program utilizing prescribed fire within the Unit. In order to do this the bureau is divided in to two functional branches. One branch consists of the pre-fire engineer whose responsibility is to plan, develop, and implement the Unit's Fire Management Plan which serves as the blue print for pre-fire management projects including fire safe and evacuation planning and hazardous fuel reduction. The other branch is the CDF Vegetation Management program where the department works with large landowners to conduct.

The pre fire engineer, using the power of GIS to conduct assessments, develops the Units Fire Management Plan which serves as the blueprint for fire safe and evacuation planning and hazardous fuel reduction. In implementing the Plan, CDF staff works very close with county and community fire safe councils in both Butte and Plumas County in order to complete the various pre fire management projects. Some of the significant accomplishments involving CDF include this document, community fire safe and evacuation plans for the Butte County communities of Cohasset, Forest Ranch, Upper Ridge, Town of Paradise, and Yankee Hill/Concow as well as the Plumas County communities of Meadow Valley/Bucks Lake, Greenhorn, Long Valley, Quincy, Grizzly Creek, and Plumas Eureka, shaded fuel breaks in Forest Ranch and the Upper Ridge, a community chipping program targeting homeowners and the creation of defensible space.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN FIRE MANAGEMENT



SPI Vegetation Management Burn, Fall 2001

Attainment of the fuels reduction goals of the BTU Fire Plan requires an on-the-ground effort and the Department's assistance in the use of CDF crews, and equipment. This can be a great help in many areas where stakeholders do not have the finances or resources to do an effective job individually or as a group. The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is currently the primary vehicle by which CDF resources may be used on privately owned lands in a cost share arrangement with the landowner(s).

In place since 1981, the program has been an effective fuels reduction / rangeland improvement tool. Because of increasing competition for smoke allotments, CDF's use of fire to reduce fuel load may eventually be in jeopardy. If the use of fire is phased out, chipping and biomass supply will likely be the primary disposal method in the future.

As previously stated, the VMP process is a cost-share program. The State's share of a project's cost may range from zero to ninety percent. This is based on a public benefits formula, the greater benefit to the public, the greater the share of the cost of the project CDF

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may assume. Since, by their nature, fuels reduction projects in critical areas identified in this plan will have a high public to private benefits ratio, Unit efforts will be concentrated in these areas. Conversely, projects that are essentially range improvement burns that are not near population concentrations will require a higher degree of landowner effort and proportional costs. This is not to say that rangeland burning is of minor importance. Through this century, range improvement burns have been vital in managing wildland fuels on a landscape basis. However, increasing population in the rural areas have brought constraints such as smoke management and liability concerns. Such constraints have made the LE-7, range improvement project, less attractive and has put VMP projects in higher demand with ranchers in the Unit.

The Unit currently has a variety of VMP and non-VMP projects in various stages of planning and preparation. Projects range from those with range and wildlife habitat improvement as the primary goals (Gray Lodge) to the Paradise Pines/Firhaven Shaded Fuel Break project, which has a community fire protection goal of providing a shaded fuel break around the community and improving defensible space around residential and commercial properties. The Butte Unit will make a concerted effort to pursue projects that meet the wide array of demands placed on the Vegetation Management Program in Butte County.

There are currently no CDF Fire VMP projects in Plumas County. There are numerous projects in Plumas County that are the result of the Quincy Library Group's efforts to establish fuel modification projects throughout the Plumas National Forest in Plumas and Lassen Counties. The Plumas County Fire Safe Council has several projects in the planning stages, non of which are under the VMP program.

Fall burning in 2004 did not occur due to, heavy rains immediately following the close of fire season, a lack of favorable burn days and adverse weather made burning impossible.

Objectives

The vegetation management program will shift emphasis to:

- ❑ Smaller fuel reduction projects closer to new developments.
- ❑ Find alternatives to fire, such as mechanical fuel treatment.
- ❑ Emphasis on quality over quantity
- ❑ In some instances the program may be limited to simply providing wildland safety and protection zones around high value assets.

Prescriptions

VMP projects planned or being considered for FY 02/03 include:

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Battalion 1

- **SPI V Line VMP-** most of this portion of the project is in Battalion 1, with a small section in Battalion 3. The VMP agreement is currently being updated and will be valid from 10/03 to 10/06.
- **Paradise Pines/Firhaven Shaded Fuel Break-** The project is 70% completed. Currently working with Fire Safe Council to address the completion of remaining 30% and maintenance of the entire fuel break by the local fire safe council. There is still no workable maintenance plan in place. **Note- this is not a VMP project but is being done under a Negative Declaration.**

Battalion 2

- **SPI H Line VMP-** 600' wide fuel break w/ broadcast burning from Hwy 32 to Cohasset (17 acres completed in calendar year 2002). This is an ongoing VMP. The current VMP agreement will expire 3/15/03. The new agreement will be valid from 10/03 to 10/06, 1050 acres.
- **Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve-** In discussion, considering roadside cutting, piling and burning approximately 315 acres in the Big Chico Creek drainage. Work on this project not expected until 2004 at the earliest.

Battalion 3

- **SPI V Line VMP-** A small portion of this VMP is in Battalion 3. This is a 600' wide fuel break which uses broadcast burning for maintenance. The current VMP agreement expires 3/15/03. A new agreement is being developed.
- **Llano Seco Ranch-** Training and Fire Protection Planning conducted a 50 acre training/habitat improvement burn in 2002 to assist The Nature Conservancy. Last word from The Nature Conservancy indicates they do not have any plans to enter in to a VMP agreement for the 9000 acre conservation area.
- **Jackovich VMP-**, (End of Granite Ridge) 50 acre VMP agreement currently being completed. Expect to burn at least once between the Fall 2004 and Fall 2006. Expect this to be an ongoing VMP project with five to seven year burn intervals.
- Numerous non-VMP projects currently underway in the Yankee Hill area including roadside treatments, shaded fuel breaks along Jordan Hill Rd. and another proposed for Concow Rd., community chipping defensible space projects, focused 4291, and fuel reduction demonstration areas.

Battalion 4

⇒ No VMP's planned at this time

Battalion 5

- **Sopher Wheeler VMP-** agreement in progress for possible fall 2004 burning. 249 acres over two units, one unit is between Lower Forbestown Road and Forbestown Road (118 acres), the second unit is west of Robinson Mills Fire Station (141 acres).

Battalion 6

- No VMP's planned at this time
The Table Mountain Ranch has expressed interest in bringing back a VMP project (formerly Carmichale VMP) in the 1,200 acre area north and east of the Table Mountain Ranch. No progress as of March 2004.

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Battalion 7

- **Gray Lodge VMP-** Habitat burn 800-1200+ acres per year, ongoing. The program began in 1999 and has total 3618 acres to date. No burning was done in 2003 due to weather constraints and emergency activity.



Gray Lodge VMP, March 02

With the possibility of additional grant funding during the year, additional projects may evolve. VMP projects must be closely tied to the Butte Unit Fire Management Plan and projects derived from the various Fire Safe Councils. Since CDF's most damaging fires are in the **urban interface**, VMP projects must focus on critical, at-risk community developments or where projects reduce the movement of fire into valued timber holdings.

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FIRE PREVENTION BUREAU (EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT) – Battalion Chief Jim Engel

Purpose Statement

The Butte Unit Fire Prevention Bureau is responsible for public education, public information, fire hazard abatement, life safety and fire investigation. Each of these sub-programs are important facets of a well balanced fire prevention program. Additionally, the Butte Fire Prevention Bureau works closely with the Fire Protection Planning Bureau to ensure that common fire prevention interests are met.

In 2003, the Butte Unit responded to 867 fires that were investigated. In 2002 the number was about 974.

2003 Fires by Cause		2004 Fires by Cause	
ARSON	136	ARSON	157
CAMPFIRE	18	CAMPFIRE	19
DEBRIS	182	DEBRIS	165
EQUIPMENT	258	EQUIPMENT	238
ELECTRICAL	49	ELECTRICAL	38
PWF	42	PWF (playing with fire)	38
		LIGHTNING	0
POWERLINE	22	POWERLINE	26
RAILROAD	3	RAILROAD	1
SMOKING	22	SMOKING	26
O/M	92	O/M	92
UNDETERMINED	43	UNDETERMINED	51
TOTAL	867	TOTAL	851

As in past years, the highest single fire cause was equipment use. Equipment Use includes a wide range of sub categories such as vehicle exhaust, vehicle mechanical, vehicle fuel and equipment other. The equipment other category includes machinery like lawnmowers, welders and grinders.

Over the last few years a number of fires have been caused by using machinery like lawnmowers to cut standing dead grasses. While doing this kind of mowing, fires start in a number of ways. These include mower blades striking rocks, mower exhaust igniting grass, mechanical failures to pulleys and improper fueling techniques.

To combat what appear to be preventable fires caused by mowers, the Department has developed brochures for public distribution, which provide detailed information about the hazards of mowing dry grass, and how to take preventative measures. In addition, the Butte Fire Prevention Bureau has developed a Public Service Announcement to address the problem. The PSA will focus on the factors contributing to the problem, including mowing during warm weather, and what steps can be taken to help prevent these types of fires.

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The fire prevention bureau will continue to support the preliminary fire investigation needs of the Unit, assisting with complex fire investigations such as those involving fire fatalities, commercial structures, arson, or detailed follow-up investigative work. Through the preliminary fire investigation process specific fire cause problems will be addressed utilizing focused prevention efforts of education and enforcement programs