

## 24 YUBA COUNTY FOOTHILLS WATER SUPPLY PROPOSAL

**BACKGROUND:** Due to the rural make-up of Yuba County, most of the communities do not have a centralized water system. Water for fighting fires must come from ponds, creeks, pools etc... This project would establish at least two strategically located 10,000 gallon tanks in each of the foothill fire districts.

Yuba County is a very rural county. Other than one medium sized city, Yuba County is characterized by numerous small communities embedded in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas. Each of these communities is the epitome of a wildland urban interface area. The areas covered by this project are identified in the local CDF Unit Fire Plan as being at risk to a costly and damaging fire. Yuba County is recognized as having one of California's lowest per capita income levels. The communities do not have the resources or the funding to establish the water supply systems to adequately protect them from a spreading wildfire. However there is a strong sense of community involvement and any money spent will generate an outpouring of volunteers to see the project through. Since 1997, there have been two extended attack fires that threatened a number of these communities and destroyed several structures.

During the fall months, the local water agencies shut their systems down in part due to the lack of available water. Yuba Water Agency charged the fire agencies over \$15,000 for water used on the Pendola fire because they had to buy water back from other agencies.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

**Event 1:** Identify potential locations for water tanks. Work with the local fire districts and communities to determine locations that provide ease of access for fire fighting equipment, yet, discourage potential vandalism or misuse. The locations will need to be strategically located so firefighting equipment will be guaranteed an adequate supply of water until additional resources can arrive.

*(This portion has been completed)*

**Event 2:** Purchase and install water tanks. Based on the information gathered in **Event 1**, funding sources and the method(s) of installation will be determined. As this project has the potential to benefit a variety of districts, agencies, and private organizations, we anticipate a lot of participation and cooperation from the variety of stakeholders.

**Event 3:** Use fire personnel and volunteers to maintain the water tanks and the grounds they are placed on. Establish a maintenance schedule to keep the water storage tanks in a state of readiness.

The cost of this project will vary based on the number of locations available to site the water tanks, land costs, number of tanks, and tank costs. Original estimates were in the neighborhood of \$8,000 per tank, which would bring the total project cost to **\$80,000**. Yuba County has expressed some interest in assisting with project funding for this project.

As of June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005, five tanks have been installed under the auspices of this project, one in each fire district (Strawberry Valley, Camptonville, Browns Valley, Smartville, and Oregon House). These tanks were funded through a Fire Safe Council Grant. A continued effort will be made to install a second tank in each district as funding becomes available.

## **25 YUBA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS ROADSIDE CLEARING PLAN**

### **Actions involved in the proposed project:**

Roads side clearance projects that will benefit the various foothill community's fire protection and traffic safety have been identified by the cooperative efforts of CDF, USFS, and the Yuba Watershed Protection & Fire Safe Council. Through a system of prioritization and cooperation the Yuba County Department of Public Works (YCDPW) will direct their roadside clearing efforts to those roads identified as having the greatest potential for improving fire safety, evacuation, egress, and access.

**Event 1:** A priority list of roads will be provided to the YCDPW. They will then direct their roadside clearance crews to direct their efforts on the roads based on the established priorities. Under the current plan, it is anticipated that twelve to fifteen miles will be accomplished this coming fiscal year and there are a total of eighty-eight miles identified for treatment. **This portion of the project has been completed.**

Initial funding for this program was accomplished through Proposition 204 funds through the Fire Safe Council. Now that those funds have been expended YCDPW is continuing the program in coming fiscal years with partial funding through HR 2389 Title III funds and general gas tax revenues. The continuance of the funds is uncertain so currently the planning extends for the next five years. However, if additional funds become available they will be directed to the program and the list of roads may be expanded.

**Justification:** This project will result in a direct reduction of the fire hazard to the homes immediately adjacent to the identified roads and will provide enhanced protection to the communities of Dobbins – Oregon House, Brownsville, Challenge, Loma Rica and many more.