Auburn State Recreational Area

June 2005

Fire Management Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The United States Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for the management of the Auburn Dam and Reservoir Project lands, a project originally authorized by Congress in 1965. The total acreage within the project boundary is 42,000 acres. Of this, Reclamation has ownership for approximately 26,000 acres. The remaining acreage is owned by BLM, the United States Forest Service, and private parties. California State Parks and Recreation (CSP) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) have management authority over all Project lands through cooperative agreements with Reclamation. The total lands are known as the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) and are operated by the State of California as a state recreation area.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has provided fire prevention and suppression services at the Auburn Dam and Reservoir project lands since 1979. Elements identified in the contract as a part of fire prevention and suppression services involve: 1) plan for fire suppression, 2) patrol the designated areas, 3) operate heavy equipment to construct and maintain fire roads, breaks and to reduce fire fuel, and 4) improve wildlife habitat.

This document will guide the activities of CDF personnel and act as a plan to accomplish fire prevention and pre suppression activities in the Auburn State Recreation Area.

STRATEGY

The strategy involved with identifying fire prevention activities in the ASRA is similar to that of developing a battalion fire prevention plan. The process begins by evaluating historic and potential ignition locations and causes. Identifying the assets at risk from wildfire within and immediately adjacent to Reclamation lands. Evaluating fire history, and evaluating fuels hazards throughout. An additional component involves an assessment from Department of Parks and Recreation resource ecologists to identify ecosystem conditions and what prescribed fire's role would effect.

After combining and evaluating the factors listed, pre-fire management activities or a prescription will be established in order to mitigate the identified threats, hazards of wildfire ignition, and protect assets at risk from wildfire.

An approach using "target areas" may be used to assist with focusing efforts; however, as of the time of this document creation, it is not necessary.

VISION STATEMENT

It is important to describe the, "Ideal Condition" of the Reclamation lands receiving fire prevention service. This statement provides the "light at the end of the tunnel", and is the condition which to focus activities towards.

A setting where accomplished fire prevention activities mitigate wildfire ignition and wildfire effect involves: 1) Fuel breaks adjacent to resource and property assets threatened by fire on Reclamation lands, 2) maintained fire roads with safety zones in strategic locations, 3) handline constructed around day use areas/picnic areas throughout the ASRA, 4) maintenance of established fuel breaks 5) fire prevention signage at all use areas throughout the fire season, 6) coordinated forest and fire law enforcement and patrol in all areas of ASRA, 7) establishment of industrial operations guide for industrial operators on Reclamation lands, with enforcement of the regulations within the guide and, 8) continued aggressive fire suppression of wildfires within the ASRA under CDF's operating procedures.

GOAL

To protect life and both public and private resources by reducing the risk and hazard of

wildland fire within the Auburn State Recreation Area by implementing management strategies that promote the preservation and restoration of natural resources and protection of cultural resources.

FIRE PLAN ASSESSMENTS

Fire plan assessments influence the prioritization and selection of fire prevention activities. These factors are the proof or statistics supporting prioritization. Not all projects are prioritized based on the assessments; other influences guide projects as well, such as: Politics, past practice, cost and ethics.

Fire Ignition History and Potentials

The leading number of ignitions in the ASRA are categorized as "miscellaneous" causes. Statistically, this information is not of much assistance to the planner, however, the following is. Arson is the second highest cause. Many fires are unidentified, which can be translated to either arson or vehicle caused fires. See Ignitions Map and Cause maps for distribution by cause.

VEHICLES

There are several thoroughfares within the ASRA, Hwy 49, Forest Hill Rd, Yankee Jims Rd, Ponderosa Way, and Auburn Foresthill Rd. These roads provide the highest potential from which, fires may start. The fire ignitions originate from vehicle exhaust, vehicle fires, and arson.

Other vehicle fire potential stems from the recreational vehicle use at Mammoth Bar and traffic leading to it. It is imperative that recreational vehicle exhaust systems be checked for compliance and limited to designate areas.
Additionally, it must be mentioned, there has not been a recorded fire starting from a recreational vehicle within the Mammoth Bar OHV area. This displays the effectiveness of managed recreational use and adequate engineering to prevent fires from the OHV area.

POWERLINES

Another potential ignition source exists from power line system within the ASRA. 3% of fires in the ASRA have been a result of powerline caused fires; however, these fires contribute a high percentage of acres, relatively, to the overall acres burned over the last twenty years. The ASRA contains both transmission and distribution lines, which must be inspected annually.

RECREATIONAL

Wherever there are human activities, the potential for fire exists. The ASRA provides recreation opportunities, which enable people to venture into the wildland by vehicle, foot, and other non-conventional means. Although, there is not a high quantity of fires starting from people hiking, fishing, bike riding, horse back riding and rafting,

uneducated people burning toilet paper, sparks from horseshoes striking rocks, and illegal warming fires create
the potential for fire ignitions. Fires started by these sources may be difficult to access by firefighting personnel,
thus the fires get to extended attack and major status. The Ignitions Spot Map displays the pattern of fire causes
and their relative location. It is obvious that many fires originate around the "confluence" and the Forest Hill
Bridge. These areas will receive, as they have in the past, high fire prevention attention.

It is important to note that since 1990 there have been approximately 100 fires in the ASRA, while the ASRA has
received extremely high visitation. The ASRA received 287,891 visitors in fiscal year 1994-1995 and has steadily increased to 987,971 visitors in fiscal year 2000-2001. The ratio of fire starts to visitors is very low.
Much of this success is related to managed recreational use and steady fire prevention efforts. (See Ignition Spot
Map).

ASSETS AT RISK

Assets at risk in the ASRA involve natural resources and private properties in the form of residential structures and the lives of the people living in them. Structures located within the ASRA and whose residential properties adjoin the property with Reclamation lands are threatened by fire originating from the ASRA. On the other hand, natural resources are threatened by fires originating from those same structures. These interface lands create a significant management issue and will be addressed later in this document (see Housing Density Map). Reduction and quick control of unwanted fires protects these assets.

The location of highest structural risk involves the structures on the canyon rim in the City of Auburn and unincorporated areas down canyon and up canyon of the City. These residential properties share boundaries with the Reclamation lands and thus are directly influenced by wildfire originating on Reclamation lands.

The location of second highest priority involves the interface at the community of Cool in El Dorado County. This community has a moderate housing density and is also an exposure to wildfire burning out of the ASRA and into the community as does the threat from fire burning into the ASRA from the community. There is a process of further developing and maintaining a fuel break on the canyon rim adjacent to Cool primarily being performed by the CDF battalion chief in Amador –El Dorado Unit who has the Cool are in his/her battalion.

WILDFIRE HISTORY

Unfortunately, the fire history map in this document includes fires over 300 acres in size, however, the ignition spot map may be used to identify fire frequency. The benefit of the fire history map relates to the frequency of large damaging wildfires in the ASRA. Another aspect of the map reveals where fire has not occurred, which identifies the build up of fire fuels, which identifies the potential for large damaging fires. Another aspect of the map reveals the dependence that fire suppression resources put on stopping fires at the ridge tops. This information is useful while interpreting future and existing fuels management projects to other agencies and citizens.

FUEL HAZARD

The Fuel Hazard map displays fuel hazard status to the nearest 450 acres. Although, this map does not reflect fuels management activities, it can display the current status over the general area and show what the vegetation potential is. The last fires to burn in the ASRA having significant vegetation impacts were in the 1960s, yet the fuels status are high and very high. If correlated with the fire history map, the amount of fire fuels build up from a lack of fire is also evident.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

The most effective method of restoring the ecosystem to its original state is to reintroduce fire into the ecosystem. This creates edge, diversity, and reestablished native plant and animal species. The additional benefit is a reduced fuel load assisting fire suppression forces during wildfire events. Identify on map. State Parks resource ecologists have been consulted to provide information regarding potential projects involving prescribed fire and any favorable locations to burn. Although, a response to my request for input for relating to potential controlled burn locations has not been received, coordination efforts will me continued with CSP resource ecologists.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

There will be a continuous effort to enforce the Public Resources Code in the ASRA for both planned activities and patrol. Additional laws will be enforced as encountered by the Captain Specialist, such as Penal and Fish & Game Codes. Federal codes may be enforced in the ASRA as the lands are federal.

The Fire Captain Specialist will perform routine patrol of day use areas and popular visitation areas throughout the park. This will be accomplished through aircraft, vehicle, off road vehicle and foot access. Close coordination will occur with State Parks Personnel during many contacts with violators and law enforcement operations.

As per the Industrial Fire Prevention Guide established by the Captain Specialist, all commercial, recreational and industrial projects will be reviewed for fire prevention standards. Inspections of industrial and recreational equipment will be conducted and documented. Red tags will be used to put equipment out of service, if necessary.

Recreational vehicles are subject to inspection, and will be a target of inspection. The Mammoth Bar OHV area is a managed OHV area that receives much attention form state park rangers. Coordination for vehicle inspection is necessary, as to not duplicate efforts and to maintain efficient law enforcement.

Private lands within the ASRA are subject to PRC regulations. Enforcement of the PRC will be a priority on those private lands within the boundaries of the ASRA. The goal is to reduce fire threats to the ASRA wildland.

ENGINEERING

Fire prevention engineering is the most influencing factor relating to protecting assets at risk from wildfire. Engineering involves the creation of fuel breaks, fire breaks, fire road construction, and other fuels management activities. *CDF's primary pre-fire engineering fuel break strategy involves two objectives: Protect assets at the canyon rims, and inhibit fire from spreading up and down the river canyons.* There is an existing system of fuel break throughout the ASRA (see Fuel Break Map), which are designed behind this philosophy. They are listed below. Both shaded and unshaded fuel breaks are evaluated for condition and need on an annual basis. The establishment of new fuel breaks is also an evolving process, which is paced by resource availability and future maintenance capabilities. There are two wildland-urban interface shaded fuel breaks proposed in the ASRA. The Auburn Shaded Fuel Break is proposed to stretch along the canyon rim adjacent to the City of Auburn, and the Auburn Lake Trails Fuel Break is proposed to rest along the canyon rim and adjacent to the community of Auburn Lake Trails. Work on the Auburn Fuel Break is scheduled to start in May of 2002 while the Auburn Lake Trails Fuel Break is proposed to begin in 2003.

Fire roads are also an integral part of pre-fire engineering. The fire road system in the ASRA is intended to provide access for fire suppression crews to areas difficult to access. Additionally, the fire road system provides, to a lesser extent, fire break benefits when applicable. The fire roads are incorporated into wildfire preplanning and tactics while fighting wildfire. Fire roads within the ASRA are maintained by CDF, and are evaluated annually. The fire roads within the ASRA are listed below. (See Fire Road Map for correspondence)

Prescribed burning is another tool used as a pre-fire engineering mechanism, which modifies fuels into a less hazardous loading and provides wildlife habitat conditions favorable to early stage succession. With the exception of the "Bridge Burn" controlled burn planning is evolving. In terms of strategic planning for prescribed burns, effort will focus on wildlife habitat improvement, exotic weed control and fire fuels reduction. With the evolution of this document, future editions will identify the strategic use of controlled burning.

FUEL BREAKS IN THE ASRA (Does not include trails)

NAME	LOCATION	NUMBER
Long Point Fuel Break	Upper end of Lake Clem, South of river	1
Drivers Flat	Drivers Flat road area south of Long Point	2
Brushy Mtn	Along Brushy creek down to Middle Fork	3
Mammoth Bar	Connects Forest Hill Rd & Mammoth Bar	4
Auburn Shaded Fuel Break	Along canyon rim/ Auburn City	5
Auburn Lake Trails Fuel Break	Along canyon rim/ Auburn Lake Trails	6

FIRE ROADS

NAME	LOCATION	NUMBER
Stage Coach	Under Forest Hill Bridge	1
Drivers Flat	Drivers Flat to river canyon	2
McKeon- Ponderosa	Middle fork to Ponderosa Rd	3
Lake Clementine Access	Lower Lake Clem Rd to middle of Lake	4
Knickerbocker Flat	Olmstead Loop trail, Cool	5
Long Point South	Foresthill Rd to Mid Fork Am River	6
Long Point North	Foresthill Rd to N. Fork Am River	7
Western States	Hwy 49 under Robie Point	8

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

Information and education is a necessary tool to the prevention of fire within the ASRA. CDF will be proactive in attempts to reach visitors to the ASRA. The primary method of information will come from sign posting. Non traditional sign locations will be identified and posted. The public contact made by the Fire Captain Specialist will be a major educational component, and when necessary, media releases will be made through radio and newspapers.

YEAR 2005

FIRE PREVENTION PLAN

The intent of this annual Plan is to organize a sequence of events or projects that drive CDF personnel to achieving the goals and vision described in the Auburn State Recreation Area Fire Prevention Plan.

In 2005, there will be few new developments for fire prevention on the Bureau of Reclamation Project Lands (ASRA). Most of the fire prevention activities will be maintaining and revisiting projects developed in 2002 & 2003. Fire prevention projects within the ASRA are categorized within the following three wildfire prevention elements: Law Enforcement, Engineering-Planning, and Information-Education.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

PATROL

Law enforcement patrols will occur throughout the ASRA, although, high priority areas will receive more frequent patrol, many areas of the park will be patrolled. High priority patrol areas include: **River confluence, Lake Clementine (upper and lower), down river of confluence, and Mammoth Bar.** These areas receive the majority of visitation during the summer and have a history of fires.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

There will be coordinated patrol efforts between state park rangers and CDF (P2323). Often the need arises for hike-in contacts or high-risk contacts, where back up and more officers are necessary to make contact with violators. As these situations arise without notice, the mutual aid efforts are developed as needed.

There is intent to have 4th of July patrols throughout the recreation area, with the high use/priority areas receiving the majority of attention. Law enforcement operation will involve surveillance and high visibility patrols. This effort will be coordinated with other law enforcement agencies if the need arises.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

INSPECTIONS / CODE ENFORCEMENT

There will be a meeting between PG&E and CDF to identify distribution and transmission lines throughout the ASRA. These lines will be inspected for PRC 4292 and 4293 compliance. All lines on private lands within the ASRA will also be subject to inspection. Violations will be documented and handled throughout the fire prevention bureau's notification or citation process.

Priority
H____
M_X___
L_____

There will be inspections of all commercial, industrial and recreational projects within the ASRA for PRC compliance and compliance with the requirements identified in the Fire Prevention Requirements for Industrial, Commercial, and Recreational guide for the ASRA. Equipment will be inspected on all such operations. (Refer to Guide for additional information).

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

All structures on private lands within the ASRA will be inspected in accordance with PRC 4291 as will the code be enforced on such properties. Recording of the location of structures and compliances will be obtained for future records.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

Further review will be conducted of all activities within the ASRA to determine if fire prevention has been addressed as a condition of implementation. For example, a policy and procedure will be discussed with State Parks involving off road vehicle restrictions during high fire hazard days within the ASRA

Priority
H____
M_X___
L_____

ENGINEERING / PLANNING

Implement CDF's Fire Prevention Plan for Industrial, Commercial and Recreational Operations for the Auburn State Recreation Area.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

Update the CDF Fire Prevention Plan for the Auburn State Recreation Area for 2005 and complete a year-end report of activities for 2004.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

FUEL BREAKS

Continue implementation of the Auburn Shaded Fuel Break. The fuel break is 75% complete. It will be necessary to contract with the RCD for them to hire a project manager on CDF's behalf in order to continue to have a project manager to work on the project.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

Continue herbicidal and manual maintenance treatments of the Auburn Shaded Fuel Break, State Park Headquarters and the BOR building on Maidu Rd.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

Continue implementation of the Auburn Lake Trails Shaded Fuel Break in conjunction with AEU CDF.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

There will be general fuels reduction work accomplished in all campgrounds in attempts to reduce spotting potential of any fire that does occur within a campground.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

There will be an ongoing effort to identify and record existing fire roads, and fuel breaks along with identifying the need to develop additional fire roads and fuel breaks. Concurrently, there will be an effort to revisit fire roads and fuel breaks that have gone un-maintained for over time. Efforts will occur in the Spring to prioritize projects accordingly.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

FIRE ROADS

The following fire access roads will be graded this year:

Stage Coach	Hwy 49 to Robie point	Priority H____ M__X__L_____
Long Point	Drivers Flat to river canyon	Priority H____ M_____L X___
McKeon- Ponderosa	Middle fork to Ponderosa Rd	Priority H____ M__X__L_____
Lake Clementine Access	Lower Lake Clem Rd to middle of Lake	Priority H____ M_____L X___
Knickerbocker Flat	Olmstead Loop trail, Cool	Priority H____ M_____L X___
Sliger Mine Road	Park boundary to Cherokee Bar	Priority H_X___ M_____L ___

More effort will be made to identify fire roads within the ASRA that should be maintained by CDF. The names will be recorded in the Master ASRA Fire Prevention Plan and prioritized in terms of strategic importance. A corresponding map will also be produced.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

HAND LINE CONSTRUCTION

Handline firebreaks will be constructed around each area where campfires are permitted. Theses areas include:

GROUND FIRES ALLOWED				BBQS ALLOWED(Seasonal)
Iowa Hill Campground	←	Priority H__X__ M____ L_____	→	Yankee Jims Parking
Drivers Flat Campground	←		→	Ponderosa Way Parking area
Kelleher Campground	ALL		ALL	Upper Lake Clem Day Use area
Lake Clementine Boating Access Camps	←		→	
Cherokee Bar Campground	←		→	

Handlines will be constructed along both sides of the North Fork of the American River at the Forest Hill Bridge. This will be accomplished in June 2004.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

PRESCRIBED FIRE

Understory burning between control lines around the Forest Hill Bridge.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

There might be some understory burning conducted on the Auburn Shaded Fuel Break for maintenance purposes.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____

INFORMATION / EDUCATION

Ensure fire prevention signing is posted throughout ASRA and that signs are in good condition. Make repairs or replace as needed.

Install fire prevention signs at Cherokee Bar.

Priority
H__X__
M____
L_____