

## 2. Fire Management Planning Process

### California Fire Plan

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDFFP) has initiated a pre-fire management initiative to reduce wildland fires and the associated costs of suppressing these fires. This initiative includes a systematic application of risk assessment, fire safety, fire prevention and fire hazard reduction techniques. The goal of the initiative is to identify those areas within the state responsibility areas that are high-priority areas in terms of assets at risk, and with a high probability of large wildfires with associated costs and losses. The end product of this initiative is the California Fire Plan, and its local component, The Siskiyou Unit Fire Management Plan.

### Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the California Fire Plan is to reduce total costs and losses from wildland fire by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions and increased initial attack success.

The California Fire Plan has five strategic objectives.

- To create wildfire protection zones that reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- To assess all wildlands, not just the state responsibility areas. Analysis will include all wildland fire service providers, federal, state, local government, and private. The analysis will identify high-risk/high-value areas, and develop information on and determine who is responsible, who is responding, and who is paying for fire emergencies.
- To identify and analyze key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes in public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total costs and losses by increasing fire protection system effectiveness.
- To have strong fiscal policy, focus and monitor the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
- To translate the analyses into public policies.

## California Fire Plan Framework

There are five major components that form the framework of an ongoing fire planning process to monitor and assess California's wildland fire environment

- *Creation of wildfire protection zones* that reduce the risks to citizens and firefighters.
- *Initial Attack Success*...The fire plan defines an assessment of the protection system for wildland fire. This measure can be used to assess the Department's ability to provide an equal level of protection to lands of similar type. This measurement is the percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs are incurred.
- *Assets protected*...The Plan establishes a methodology for defining assets protected and their degree of risk from wildfire. The assets addressed in the plan are: citizen and firefighter safety, watersheds and water, timber, wildlife and wildlife habitat, (including rare and endangered species) unique areas (scenic, cultural and historic) recreation, range, structures and air quality.
- *Pre-fire management*... this aspect focuses on system analysis methods to protect assets from unacceptable risk of wildland fire damage. Projects include a combination of fuels reduction, ignition management, fire safe engineering activities, and forest health to protect public and private assets. The priority for projects will be based on asset owners and other stakeholders' input and support. Pre-fire management prescriptions designed to protect these assets will also identify who benefits and who should share in the project costs.
- *Fiscal framework*...the Board of Forestry and CDFFP are developing a fiscal framework for assessing and monitoring annual and long term changes in California's wildland fire protection systems. State, local and federal wildland agencies along with the private sector have evolved into an interdependent system of pre-fire management and suppression forces. As a result, changes to budgeted levels of service of any of the entities directly affect the others and the service delivered to the public.

## The Local Plan

The Siskiyou Unit Fire Management Plan is a dynamic, working plan that provides for an ongoing assessment of the fire situation in the unit. The document includes stakeholder contributions and priorities. The plan identifies targets for pre-fire management as defined by those who live and work with the local fire problem.

Utilizing computer based scientific data and Geographic Information Systems, the Siskiyou Fire Plan systematically assesses the existing Level of Service, identifies the high-risk, high value areas for potential large damaging fires, ranks those areas, and suggests pre-fire engineering solutions to lower costs and losses from wildfire.

To accomplish this assessment, the Unit follows the processes outlined in the California Fire Plan. The assessment has four components that will be discussed in detail later in this document.

- Level of Service (Ignition workload)
- Assets at Risk
- Hazardous Fuels
- Severe Fire Weather

The information from these assessments is used to create Unit maps that help identify high-risk/high-value areas where large, damaging fires are most likely to occur. The GIS information is validated by field personnel and then analyzed by the Unit's senior management staff with input from the Field Battalion Chiefs, Fire Prevention Battalion Chief, and the Pre-Fire Engineer. The assumption used in developing the pre-fire management Unit plan is that pre-fire projects will reduce the costs and losses during periods of severe fire weather, which is when most of California's wildfire costs and losses occur.