IV. Action Plan

CDF/County Fire staff understands that an effective action plan is dependant on a thorough risk assessment and cooperation and coordination with stakeholders. CDF/County Fire staff have made an initial county wide risk assessment and initiated contact with cooperating agencies and the main stakeholder groups within the county. For 2005 CDF/County Fire staff will:

- Continue to collaborate and coordinate with stakeholders
- Conduct Community and Rural Area Wildfire Protection Plans
- Continue to review, modify and enforce structural ignitability standards
- Continue to propose, prepare and administer fuel treatment projects

A. Community and Rural Area Wildfire Protection Plans

To address the special risks associated with communities and rural areas, CDF/County Fire staff will be conducting community wildland protection plans (CWPP) during 2005 in the following areas:

- Baron Canyon
- Cal Shasta Boat Club
- Cambria
- Christmas Cove
- Davis Canyon
- Heritage Ranch
- Morro Toro
- Oak Shores
- Parkhill
- Rancho Delargo
- Ranchita Estates
- Running Deer Ranch
- Santa Margarita Lake
- Santa Rita
- See Canyon
- South Shore Village
- South Templeton/Santa Rita
- Squire Canyon
- Suey Creek
- Tri Counties Boat Club
- Upper Lopez Canyon
- West Atascadero

CWPP's are intended to engage the public, encourage cooperation and coordination between agencies, identify risks and recommend mitigations to reduce those risks. The risk assessment process will also be utilized to develop recommendations to improve the county general plan which regulates development patterns. The community risk assessments will be administered by CDF/County Fire Prefire staff in cooperation with responsible agencies and the residents from the community. The assessment will follow the following steps:

I. Convene stakeholders

CDF/ Prefire staff will contact and encourage involvement by all of the effected stakeholders within the community at risk. Substantive input from a diversity of interests will ensure that the final document reflects the highest priorities of the community. It will also help to facilitate timely implementation of recommended projects. Potential stakeholders might include:

- Existing collaborative community groups
- City Council members
- County Board of Supervisors
- Resource Advisory Committees
- Homeowners Associations
- CA Department of Fish and Game
- CA Department of Transportation
- County Public Works
- Local and/or state emergency management agencies
- Water districts
- Utilities
- Recreation organizations
- Environmental organizations
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Watershed councils

II. Establish a Base Map

CDF/County Fire Staff using available technology and local expertise will develop a base map of the community and adjacent landscapes of interest. This map will provide a visual information baseline from which community members can assess and make recommendations regarding protection and risk-reduction priorities. To the extent practicable, the map will identify:

- Inhabited areas at potential risk to wildland fire
- Areas containing critical human infrastructure—such as escape routes, municipal water supply structures, and major power or communication lines—that are at risk from fire disturbance events
- A preliminary designation of the community's WUI zone

III. Conduct a "Community" or "Rural Area" Risk Assessment

The development of a community or rural area risk assessment will help to effectively prioritize areas for treatment and identify the highest priority uses for available financial and human resources. CDF/County Fire Staff is in the process of developing a risk assessment matrix. This matrix will identify all of the factors that contribute to costs and losses associated with wildland firefighters. Factors will include:

- Fuel Hazard
- Weather
- Topography
- Risk of Wildland Fire Occurrence
- Homes, Businesses, and Essential Infrastructure at Risk
- Local Preparedness and Firefighting Capability
- Emergency Access
- Water Supply
- Building Construction
- Clearance

A rating system of low, medium and high risk will be used to represent the risk posed to each community. These ratings will assist in the final decision-making process.

IV Establish Community Hazard Reduction Priorities

Once the community assessment and base map are completed, CDF/County Fire staff will convene all interested parties to discuss the results and their implications for local protection and hazard mitigation needs. A key objective will be to develop the community's prioritized recommendations for fire prevention measures. Recommendations will address fuel treatments and measures to address structural ignitability. CDF/County Fire will also identify and develop strategies to improve emergency preparedness and fire response capability.

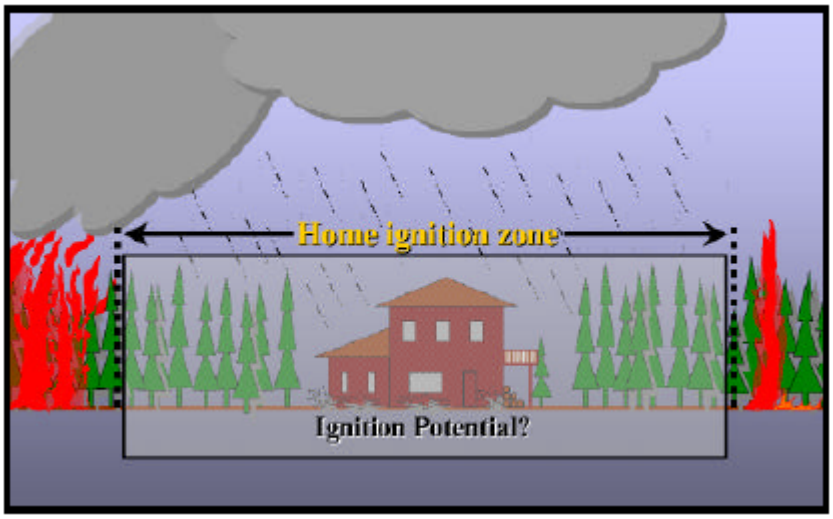
V Develop an Action Plan and Assessment Strategy

CDF/County Fire will coordinate with stakeholders to develop an action plan that identifies roles and responsibilities, funding needs, and timetables for carrying out the highest priority projects. This process will also involve establishing an assessment strategy for the CWPP to ensure that the document maintains its relevance and effectiveness over the long term.

B. Structural Ignitability Fire Prevention Standards

Wildland fires and fire sieges have been a significant part of the history of California. Major fire sieges have occurred in 1985, 1993, and 2003. In 2003 southern California experienced one of the most devastating wild fire disasters in our states history. During the 2003 fire siege, 14 major fires burned over 750,043 acres, 24 lives were lost and over 3,710 homes were destroyed. The environmental conditions that existed prior to the fire siege in southern California can also be found in parts of San Luis Obispo County. An after incident analysis of the 2003 fire siege was conducted and one issue that was identified was that county fire safe building requirements in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties played a significant role in reducing structure losses (The California Fire Siege 2003). Fire Safe building construction standards and defensible space have long been linked to structural survivability. Research results indicate that the home and

its immediate surroundings within 100-200 feet (30-60 meters) principally determines the home ignition potential during severe wildland urban interface fires. This area has been termed the home ignition zone. (Cohen)



US Forest Service

Homes can ignite from fires in the wildland urban interface from two general sources:

1) Flames directly impinging on the structure (radiation and convection heating)
2) Firebrands accumulating directly on the home.

In order to address structural ignitability and the structure ignition zone, CDF/County Fire utilizes state and local ordinances, fire prevention education, fire prevention inspections and enforcement.

1. Fire Prevention Statutes and Regulations

CDF/County Fire is responsible for the enforcement of numerous State and County statutes, ordinances and standards aimed at reducing the fire risk in the wildland urban interface. They include:

- State Public Resources Code
- State Health and Safety Code
- Locally adopted California Fire Code
- Locally adopted California Building Code
- Nationally recognized Standards
- County General Plan

a) Public Resources Code 4290 – California Code of Regulations (CCR) Chapter 1, Division 1.5 of Title 14

PRC 4290 is the Statute that requires emergency access; signing and building numbering; private water supply reserves for emergency fire use; and vegetation modification in areas designated as State Responsibility Area (SRA).

> 4290. (a) The board shall adopt regulations implementing minimum fire safety standards related to defensible space which are applicable to state responsibility area lands under the authority of the department. These regulations apply to the perimeters and access to all residential, commercial, and industrial building construction within state responsibility areas approved after January 1, 1991. The board may not adopt building standards, as defined in Section 18909 of the Health and Safety Code, under the authority of this section. As an integral part of fire safety standards, the State Fire Marshal has the authority to adopt regulations for roof coverings and openings into the attic areas of buildings specified in Section 13108.5 of the Health and Safety Code. The regulations apply to the placement of mobile homes as defined by National Fire Protection Association standards. These regulations do not apply where an application for a building permit was filed prior to January 1, 1991, or to parcel or tentative maps or other developments approved prior to January 1, 1991, if the final map for the tentative map is approved within the time prescribed by the local ordinance. The regulations shall include all of the following:
>
> (1) Road standards for fire equipment access.
> (2) Standards for signs identifying streets, roads, and buildings.
> (3) Minimum private water supply reserves for emergency fire use.
> (4) Fuel breaks and greenbelts.
> (b) These regulations do not supersede local regulations which equal or exceed minimum regulations adopted by the state.

CCR Chapter 1, Division 1.5 of Title 14 is the regulation adopted by the state regulatory agency CDF and the Board of Forestry to implement, interpret and make specific regulations to enforced and administered PRC 4290 and other fire safety statues. This is where the specific requirements such as road dead end lengths, road signage design and road turnaround dimensions are found.

b) Public Resources Code 4291

PRC 4291 implemented minimum fire safety standards related to defensible space within state responsibility areas:

> …any person that owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining any mountainous area, forest-covered lands, brush-covered lands, grass-covered lands, or any land that is covered with flammable material, shall maintain

around and adjacent to the building or structure a firebreak made by removing and clearing away, for a distance of not less than 30 feet on each side of the building or structure or to the property line, whichever is nearer, all flammable vegetation or other combustible growth. This 30 foot fuel break can be increased to a distance of 100 feet if it is determined that a special hazard exists. Also required under PRC 4291 is the removal of that portion of any tree that extends within 10 feet of the outlet of a chimney or stovepipe. Maintain any tree adjacent to or overhanging a building free of dead or dying wood. Maintain the roof of a structure free of leaves, needles, or other dead vegetative growth. Provide and maintain at all times a screen over the outlet of every chimney or stovepipe that is attached to a fireplace, stove, or other device that burns any solid or liquid fuel. The screen shall be constructed of nonflammable material with openings of not more than one-half inch in size.

c) SB 1369 (Keuhl)

On January 1, 2005, SB 1369 (Keuhl), was enacted. This legislation was in response to the enormous costs and losses associated with the 2003 Firestorm. This legislation will require:

Changes in Public Resources Code 4291

Increase from 30 feet to 100 feet the minimum clearance requirement for flammable vegetation around structures in State Responsible Areas (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) designated as very high fire hazard severity zones (VHFHSZ); Allow for greater clearance if required by state law, or local ordinance, rule or regulation; require property owners proposing to build a new structure or rebuild a structure that was damaged by a fire in these areas to obtain certifications from their local building official that the plans and construction comply with all building standards, including special fire safety standards developed by the State Fire Marshal (SFM) for homes in high fire risk areas, and provide a copy of the certifications to their property insurance carrier upon request; and Authorize the state to remove flammable vegetation if a landowner fails to do so, and impose a lien on the property for the costs of the vegetation clearance.

Due to issues with interpretation and implementation, this law is not scheduled to be fully enforced until December 31, 2005.

Changes in California Building Code

Under SB 1369 the Office of the California State Fire Marshall has been tasked with developing wildland urban interface building construction standards. The Office of the California State Fire Marshall has been diligently working on these standards for several months and is close to a final product. The purpose of these standards will be to increase the ability of a building or structure to resist the intrusion of flame or burning embers through the use of performance and prescriptive requirements. These codes will

apply to building materials and systems used in the exterior design for newly constructed buildings and structures subject to California Building Code located within:

- State Responsibility Areas designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection pursuant to Article 9 (commencing with Section 4201) of Chapter 1 of Part 2 of Division 4 of the Public Resources Code.
- Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones designated by a local agency pursuant to Chapter 6.8 (commencing with Section 51175) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5 of the Government Code.
- Wildland Urban Interface Communities and other areas designated by a local agency pursuant to Health & Safety Code 13108.5.

The new standards concentrate on three areas; roofs, exterior walls and ancillary structures. Roof assemblies will be required to provide protection in accordance with SFM-4 “Roof Assembly Test Standard,” or have a Class A roof covering or Class A roof assembly. Also addressed are roof spaces and openings, roof valleys, roof vents, eave protection, skylights and roof gutters and downspouts. Exterior walls will be required to provide protection from the intrusion of flames and embers in accordance with SFM-1 “Exterior Wall Test Standard.” The standard will also address exterior wall openings, exterior glazing, glazing in doors, wall vents, appendages and floor projections, unenclosed under floor protection, decking and ancillary structures.

d) Local Ordinance

San Luis Obispo County, as well as all other jurisdictions in the County, has adopted with amendments, the California Fire Code (CFC) and the California Building Code (CBC) into local ordinance. These regulations have many requirements for the protection of the citizens from wildland urban interface fires. These include:

- Water requirements
- Minimum access road requirements
- Roofing requirements
- Construction requirements
- Hazard Abatement
- Turnaround requirements

e) County General Plan

All development being reviewed by County Planning Staff in the County is also reviewed by the fire department to ensure the project is designed within the parameters of the County adopted General Plan. This document includes the Safety Element, access requirements, housing density, allowable occupancy use, community water system requirements, and property set back requirements. This review makes sure the

development has secondary access, proper water storage, and defensible space around the development and will use fire safe construction materials prior the subdivision of lands.

2. Inspection

CDF/County Fire has an inspection process in place to assure compliance with fire and safety codes. This includes both new construction and maintenance inspections of existing development. New construction is done by fire prevention staff as part of the county building permit process. The maintenance inspection program both the State's LE-38 program and the local hazard abatement programs are done by both fire prevention staff and by fire engine companies. They include inspection of:

- Clearance around Structures
- Equipment safety
- Power Line Right-Of-Way clearance
- Railroad Rights-Of-Way clearance
- Solid Waste Facilities clearance and safety

The hazard reduction inspection program (LE-38 program) is managed by CDF/County Fire field Battalion Chiefs. Engine companies are responsible for performing inspections within their initial attack areas. These inspections are usually performed during spring and summer. Engine companies only inspect properties where the owner is present. If a property owner is absent, the engine company is directed to leave a letter requesting the homeowner to set up an appointment for a reinspection. Engine companies are also instructed to leave letters at residences where access is blocked due to gates. During the inspection, engine company personnel review and educate the homeowner on fire prevention requirements. If there are violations, a notice is issued and the homeowner is instructed to mitigate the violation. The engine company will then return for a reinspection. If the violation is not mitigated, a citation may be issued and turned over to fire prevention staff for enforcement.

<u>2004 Accomplishments</u>

- In 2004 CDF/County Fire performed 2003 inspections, 105 of those inspections resulted in violations.
- In 2004 approximately 170 personnel hours were dedicated to the inspection program.
- In 2004 CDF/County Fire issued over 1000 fire safety plans and compliance inspections for new construction.
- In 2005 CDF/County Fire issued over 800 Notice of Violation letters for hazard abatement (weed abatement) in local jurisdictions.

2005 Projects

- Focus limited engine company time to Hazard Reduction (LE-38) inspections to unit wide priority target areas.
- Develop unit wide inspection training material for engine companies.
- Research the costs and benefits of a pre fire season inspection mailer.
- Look into an official county compliance date.
- Evaluate the time frame for inspection compliance.
- Utilize GIS and GPS for hazard abatement program parcel identification.

3. Fire Prevention Education

Educating residents is a key component in reducing overall costs and losses attributed to wildland fires. CDF/County Fire employs Fire Prevention Specialists to provide public fire safety education material and presentations. CDF/County Fire personnel are active participants in the County Fire Prevention Association and the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council (SLOFSC). Cooperation and coordination between agencies and the public are important.

The following are wildland fire prevention projects completed in 2004:

- Living with Fire Newspaper Inserts-The SLOFSC will be distributing these inserts in the local paper in July 2005.
- Fire Safe Demonstration Building-The SLOFSC constructed a building at the California Mid State Fair to demonstrate fire safe building construction and landscaping practices.
- Mid State Fair-CDF/County Fire staff present fire prevention education material and display firefighting equipment at a display located at the California Mid State Fair.
- Fire Safety Billboards-CDF/County Fire has billboards that are installed in the spring which depict fire safety messages such as “Mow before 10:00 AM”.
- Evacuation Plans for the communities of Parkhill and Avila Valley-CDF/County Fire staff developed evacuation plans for educating residents on what do during emergencies.
- Conducted fire prevention education programs for local schools and community groups.

The following is list of projects CDF/County Fire staff will initiate in 2005:

- CDF/County Fire Personnel will continue to cooperate with the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council and County Fire Prevention Association to coordinate wildland fire prevention education.

- CDF/County Fire staff in coordination with the SLOFSC is in the initial planning stages for a FireScaping seminar. This program will educate landscaping professionals, fire prevention inspectors and homeowners on fire safe landscaping techniques.

- CDF/County Fire staff will research the preparation of FireScape Landscaping educational flyers.

- CDF/County Fire staff will research developing an evacuation education flyer.

- CDF/County Fire staff will work with the California Polytechnic State University Landscaping Department in increasing awareness of FireSafe landscaping techniques.

- CDF/County Fire staff will continue to conduct fire prevention education programs for local schools and community groups.

C. Hazard Fuel Treatments

Fuel treatments are methods used to reduce the likelihood of fire ignitions and to reduce the fire intensity if an ignition occurs. The most common methods of fuel treatments are prescribed burning, mechanical thinning and hand thinning. Prescribed Burning is used to reduce fuel loading in fire adapted vegetation types. Mechanical fuel treatments involve the use of equipment to remove and reduce fuels. Common equipment includes mulchers and dozers. Hand fuel treatments involve the use of hand crews to manually remove fuels. These fuels can be removed or reduced by piling-and-burning or chipping. The following is a list of fuel treatment projects that were completed in 2004:

1. 2004 Fuel Treatment Projects

a) Cal Shasta Fuel Break

The Cal Shasta Fuel Break is located on South Shore Drive and Gage Irving Road on the Southwest side of Lake Nacimiento. The purpose of this fuel break was to provide a safe escape route for the communities of Cal Shasta, South Shore Village, and Rancho Delargo and to provide a planned fire line to stop a moving wildland fire. These

communities have a high recreation population during the summer months and South Shore Drive/Gage Irving Road is the only access route in and out of these communities. The fuel break is approximately 1.5 miles long and 150 feet wide (75' on each side of the road). Brush was removed by CDF/County Fire handcrews. The brush was then reduced by chipping and piling-and-burning.

b) Bee Rock Fuel Break

The Bee Rock Fuel Break is located on Bee Rock Road which is on the North side of Lake Nacimiento. The purpose of this fuel break was to provide a safe escape route for recreational areas on the North side of Lake Nacimiento and provide a secondary escape route for the Community of Oak Shores as well as functioning as a fuel break in heavy chaparral. The fuel break is approximately 1 mile long and 150 feet wide (75' on each side of the road). Brush was removed by CDF/County Fire handcrews. The brush was then reduced by chipping and piling-and-burning.

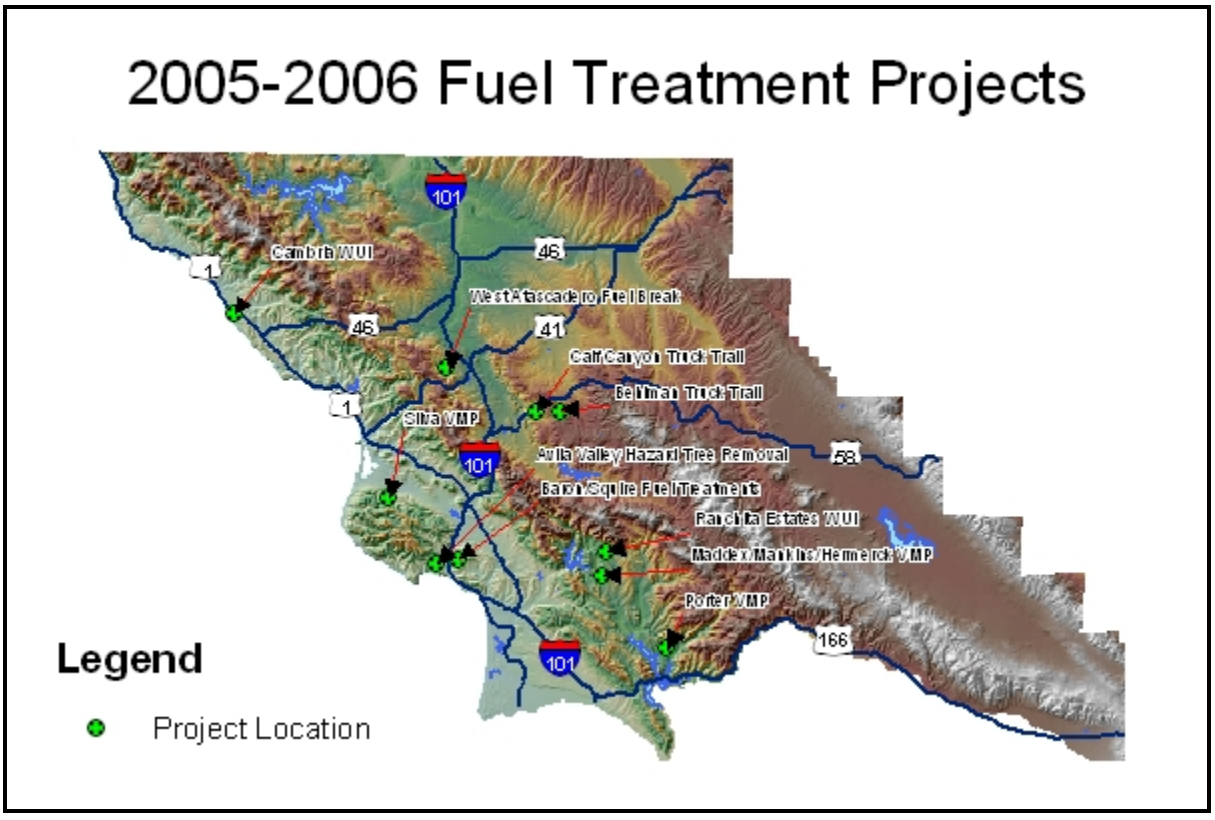
c) Brush Disposal Crew

This project was originally initiated by CDF/County Fire, the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council (SLOFSC) and the Air Pollution Control District in 1999. The intent of this project is to promote and educate the public about defensible space around their homes and provide an alternative to burning. Through grant funding, a California Conservation Crew, equipped with a chipper, is hired to chip material created by residents while preparing defensible space around their homes. Chipping events are usually set up and sponsored by communities, local fire

departments or homeowners groups. Homeowners are required to sign up for this service, cut the brush from around their homes and either pile the brush curbside or deliver it to a designated disposal site. This project has been a huge success. Over 1500 tons of material was chipped during 2004.

2. 2005-2006 Planned Fuel Treatment Projects

The following is a list of fuel treatment projects CDF/County Fire personnel will be working on in 2005-2006. With the initiation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP's), additional fuel treatment projects will be identified and prioritized for target areas within the county over the coming year. By identifying and prioritizing these projects CDF/County Fire staff will be able to effectively utilize limited resources and funds. Additionally, CDF/County Fire Staff will be able to link projects that have similar objectives and resource needs. This will facilitate applying for grant funding and project implementation.



Porter VMP

This is a cooperative project between CDF/County Fire, San Luis Obispo County Range Improvement Association and a private land owner. The project involves utilizing prescribed burning to treat approximately 1200 acres of brush. This fuel treatment

project has range improvement benefits as well as protecting wildland urban interface assets at risk. This project is scheduled for fall 2005.

Maddux/Mankins/Hermerck VMP

This is a cooperative project between CDF/County Fire, San Luis Obispo County Range Improvement Association and a private land owner. This project involves utilizing prescribed burning to treat decadent brush for range improvement and public safety. This project is adjacent to the Rancheta Estates WUI area that has been identified as a target area under our risk assessment. This project will provide a fuel break between the communities and the wildlands. This project is scheduled for fall 2005.

Silva VMP

This is a cooperative project between CDF/County Fire, San Luis Obispo County Range Improvement Association and a private land owner. This project involves utilizing prescribed burning to treat decadent brush for range improvement and public safety. This project is located adjacent to the community of Los Osos and is located within the Morro Bay Estuary. This project is scheduled for fall 2005.

West Atascadero Fuel Break

West Atascadero has been identified as a target area within Battalion 13. To reduce the risk to residents within this wildland urban intermix area, a fuel break will be constructed to provide a control line. This project is a cooperative effort between CDF/County Fire, Atascadero Fire Department and private landowners. This fuel break is currently in the planning stage. CDF/County Fire personnel are working with private landowners, conducting an initial environmental review and evaluating resource needs.

Avila Valley Hazard Tree Removal

This project is located in the San Luis Bay Estates which is within the Avila Beach Community Services District. The San Luis Estates Focus group is a member of the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council. The focus group recently applied and has received tentative approval for a hazard tree removal project. This project involves chipping of dead tree material and trimming of trees to reduce the fire hazard adjacent to structures. If grant funding materializes in late October, work will take place in winter through spring 2006.

Squire/Barron Canyon Fuel Reduction Projects

The Squire/Barron Canyon areas have been identified as target areas in Battalion 16. During 2005-2006 CDF/County Fire Staff in cooperation with the Squire/Barron Canyon FireSafe Council Focus Group will be integrating past preplanning and fuel treatment plans into a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). In 2004 CDF/County Fire Staff in cooperation with the focus group prepared a preattack plan, an evacuation plan and fuel treatment plan. These documents will be integrated into the CWPP format. The Squire/Barron Focus Group applied for grant funding in 2005 to fund a fuel break, road access fuel removal and open space fuel reduction project utilizing goats. Grant funding was unsuccessful. CDF/County Fire Staff along with the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council will continue research funding opportunities to initiate these projects.

Ranchita Estates Fuel Treatment Plan

Ranchita Estates has been identified as a community at risk within Battalion 12. During 2005-2006 CDF/County Fire Staff in cooperation with the Ranchita Estates FireSafe Council Focus group, and other effected stakeholders will be conducting a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A component of this plan will be an action plan to address issues identified during the community risk assessment. Part of the action plan will address fuel treatments. CDF/County Fire in cooperation with Ranchita Estates initiated the hand removal and piling and burning of brush adjacent to an evacuation route in 2005. During the CWPP process, the current fuel treatment projects will be reevaluated and recommendations for additional fuel treatment projects will be identified and initiated in late 2005-early 2006.

Cambria WUI

Cambria has been identified as a community at risk and a top target area within Battalion 11. During 2005-2006 CDF/County Fire Staff in cooperation with the Cambria FireSafe Council Focus Group, Cambria Fire and other effected stakeholders will be conducting a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A component of this plan will be an action plan to address issues identified during the community risk assessment. Cambria currently has a fuel treatment plan in place. In 2003, the East/West Fuel Break was completed. This fuel break was constructed using hand removal of fuels and chipping. This plan will be reevaluated during the CWPP process and additional fuel treatment projects will be initiated in late 2005-early 2006.

Brush Disposal Crew

As discussed in the 2004 fuel treatment section, the Brush Disposal Crew has been a great success and CDF/County Fire in cooperation with the SLOFSC will continue to support it. This project has grown to a level where CDF/County Fire Staff have been overwhelmed with administration of this project. CDF/County Fire Staff recommend that this program should have a part time employee hired to administer this program.

Administration includes setting up chipping events with groups, working with the contractor, maintenance of chippers and preparing grant applications and quarterly reports. CDF/County Fire and the SLOFSC will continue to look for grant funding to continue this program.

Calf Canyon and Behlman Truck Trails

Both of these truck trails are located within the Parkhill WUI as identified under or assets at risk assessment. CDF/County Fire has been maintaining these roads for firefighting assess and control lines. Maintenance includes road grading and brush removal. Access roads have been successfully used for control lines on major fires in the past including the 2003 Highway 58 Fire.