

## Fire History

The study of the Shasta –Trinity Unit’s fire history is not only a view of the past but also a representation of what can be expected from future fires in similar locations and conditions. Mapping of historical fires often indicates a pattern of fire behavior in a particular area that can be utilized when planning fuel breaks or fire safe zones.

The fire plan process utilizes the fire history data to help evaluate fuel conditions. As new fire perimeters and information are collected the fuel data layer is changed to represent the effects of the fire. Previous burned areas are “aged” to represent changes in fuel volume and maturity.

The majority of large fires within the Shasta – Trinity Unit have been documented since 1910. Local historical information provides other snippets of fire history such as:

“The third (Buzzard Roost Hotel) was destroyed along with the town in a raging forest fire in 1926” is the caption of a historical photograph stored at the Shasta Historical Society<sup>8</sup> Office.

An October 1870 fire started in the vicinity of the Fritz and Thatcher mills in Shingletown and burned approximately ten square miles of land as well as local homesteads. A 1917 fire in the Shingletown area also destroyed the village of Plateau and burned approximately 4 sections of land.<sup>9</sup>

October 10, 1905 “The Enterprise and Pacheco districts southeast of Redding were in the grasp of a fierce forest fire that already had burned an area 10 miles long by 2 miles wide. The fire fanned by heavy winds, had at times leaped 200 feet.”<sup>10</sup>

Some evidence of historic destructive fires exists. A brush field covering approximately forty square miles located east of Lassen Volcanic National Park was noted by immigrants using the Noble’s Route into Shasta County and called “The Chute” or the “Manzanita Chute”.<sup>11</sup>

1870 Shingletown Ridge fire scar

Undocumented 1940’s fire southwest of Redding



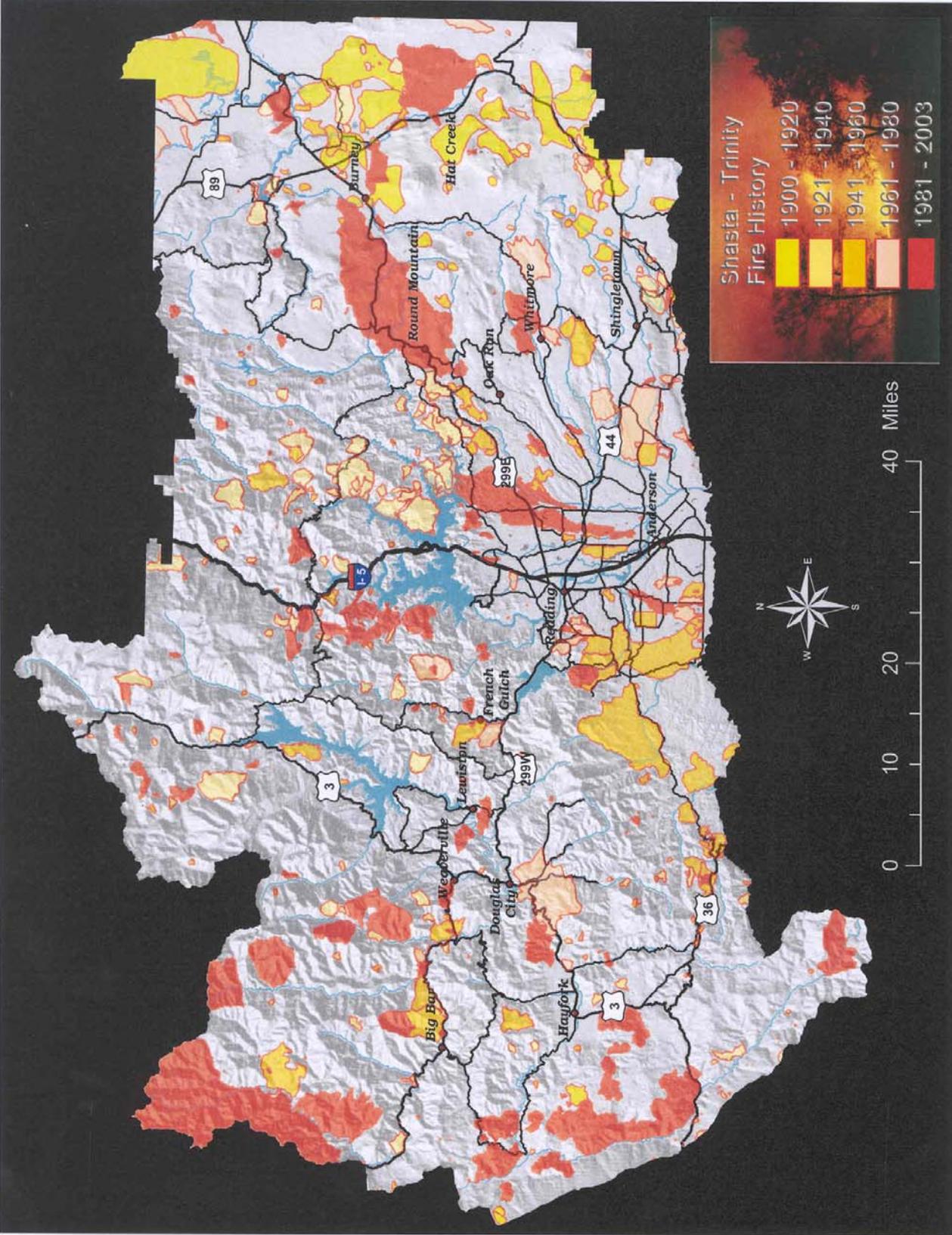
<sup>8</sup> Shasta County Historical Society 1449 Market St. Redding

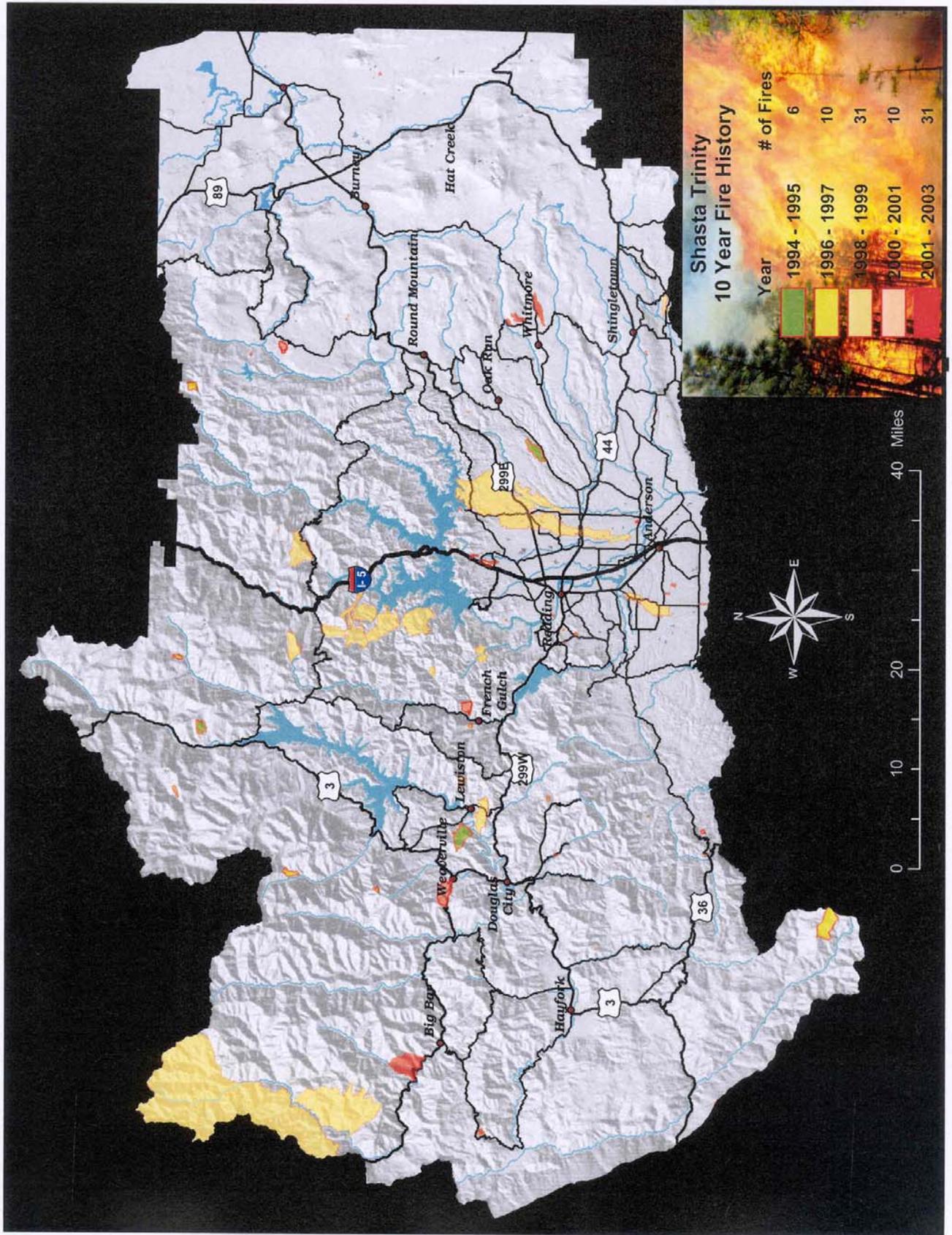
<sup>9</sup> “The Covered Wagon” 1970 Shasta County Historical Society

<sup>10</sup> Record /Searchlight Oct.10, 2005

<sup>11</sup> “The Covered Wagon” 1970 Shasta County Historical Society

The following 1900 – 2003 Fire History Map indicates that the Shasta – Trinity Unit has experienced many large and damaging fires during the last century.





Fire history within the Unit shows that a large and damaging fire can occur almost anywhere within the Unit. Recent large fires within the Unit have destroyed almost 2000 structures.

|        | Fire Name | Acres  | Structures |
|--------|-----------|--------|------------|
| Aug-92 | Fountain  | 63,960 | 636        |
| Jul-99 | Lowden    | 1,945  | 43         |
| Sep-99 | Canyon    | 2,580  | 230        |
| Oct-99 | Jones     | 26,200 | 954        |
| Aug-01 | Oregon    | 1,694  | 33         |
| Aug-04 | Bear      | 10,484 | 114        |
| Aug-04 | French    | 12,898 | 42         |

Both the Jones and Canyon fires burned mostly in woodland areas covered by grass and brush. These were fast moving fires causing the majority of the damage in one day. The Fountain Fire started in grass and brush lands and quickly spread into timber. The Lowden and Oregon fires burned in timber.

The destruction of structures and other properties is not confined to large acreage



fires. Almost every year relatively small vegetation fires damage or destroy homes and other private assets.

This five-acre fire destroyed three outbuildings, two cars, and wood fencing. (Note: dry standing grass immediately next to properties. Main house with garden and lawn received no damage.)

