

Pre-Fire Management Plan Process Summary

Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit (NYP) personnel have prepared this document as a plan to implement California's Board of Forestry's 1995 Fire Plan within the unit. NYP was the first unit in the state to draft a plan based on the guidelines set forth in the 1995 Fire Plan. The 1995 Fire Plan was a major departure from the previous Fire Plans as it was founded on a computer based geographical information system to aid in the analysis of the fire hazard within the unit. The acquisition of new data and new computer tools and programs will require re-analysis and changes as time goes on. This plan is limited to the CDF direct protection area within the unit. Subsequent analysis and plan changes may incorporate all of the lands within the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit.

The 1995 Fire Plan's goal is to reduce total government costs and citizen losses from wildland fire in California by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions and increasing initial attack success. The desired result of implementation of the Fire Plan is increased public safety, both to citizens and firefighters, reduced damage to assets, and reduced costs of suppression. This supports CDF's mission to "...protect the people of California from fires, respond to emergencies, and protect and enhance forest, range, and watershed values providing social, economic, and environmental benefits to rural and urban citizens." The term "wildland" refers to any area that may be affected by an uncontrolled fire. Uncontrolled fire is defined in Public Resources Code 4104 as *"any fire which threatens to destroy life, property, or resources and either: is unattended by any person; is attended by persons unable to prevent its unrestricted spread; or is burning with such velocity or intensity that it could not be readily controlled with those ordinary tools available to private persons at the fire scene."* Public Resources Code 4103 also defines forest fire, commonly referred to as wildfire, wildland fire, or vegetation fire, as *"a fire burning uncontrolled on lands covered with wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, grain, or other flammable vegetation."*

The basic framework of the Fire Plan is to assess the fire weather severity, assets at risk, fuels hazard, and the level of service that is provided for a given area to aid in considering where pre-fire prescriptions will reduce the potential of a costly and damaging fire. A costly and damaging fire results in unacceptable cost and loss verses those fires that are successfully suppressed during initial attack (see Appendix A). Once the areas that represent high hazard (based on fuel condition, fire weather severity, and level of service) and high value (based on numbers of assets) are targeted, pre-fire prescriptions are designed to reduce the potential of a costly and damaging fire. These pre-fire prescriptions can be any activity, particularly any one within a CDF program. The prescriptions may include fuel management projects, such as prescribed burns, fuel breaks, thinning, etc., to inspection or educational programs.

During the data collection and validation phase, input was solicited and invited from interested parties, called stakeholders, regarding assets ([see Appendix 5](#)). Stakeholders may be other government agencies, private landowners, service groups, or homeowner associations. It is a desire of the Fire Plan that those who benefit from the protection of an asset should also share in

cost for that protection. Thus, asset stakeholders may be expected to provide financial support for the projects that provide significant benefits to their assets at risk. A cost share formula may be developed for multiple benefactors of a particular project. NYP has a number of ongoing projects throughout the Unit. Due to limited CDF resources, we have been utilizing the talents of the various Fire Safe Councils to carry the message to and gather input from the stakeholder groups. Through the efforts of the Fire Safe Councils, project funding has been accomplished without adversely affecting our CDF budget. We have found that our Fire Plan data has been invaluable for presenting the problem to the stakeholders and we continue to make every effort to provide the Fire Safe Councils and others with the latest, validated data.

NYP – Pre-fire Planning Process

The assessment process is completed by the Unit's Pre-fire Planning and Vegetation Management staff. They then provide the results to local Battalion Chiefs who work with the stakeholders in their battalions to develop projects designed to mitigate the hazards and protect the assets in the areas beginning with those rated as having the highest potential to experience a costly and damaging fire. The group then works cooperatively to establish funding sources to implement the project. Projects are designed to tie into and enhance existing programs where possible.

On March 5th, 2002, voters passed the "California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002". With the passage of "Proposition 40", CDF saw an opportunity to utilize the funding available to implement more of these projects than ever before. Strategic fuel reduction projects can serve the dual purpose of potentially mitigating the occurrence of large and damaging fires while protecting the watershed from catastrophic post fire erosion. Additional State Foresters are now available to support the planning and evaluation of these projects on the ground. (See [Prop 40/CFIP/CAG summary](#))