

2 NEVADA-YUBA-PLACER 2006 PRE-FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN

2.1 Introduction

In 1995, the State Board of Forestry and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection drafted a comprehensive update of the fire plan for wildland fire protection in California. The planning process defines a level of service measurement, considers assets at risk, incorporates the cooperative interdependent relationships of wildland fire protection providers, provides for public stakeholder involvement, and creates a fiscal framework for policy analysis. The final version was approved June 3, 1996, and implemented in the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit. This unit was the first in the state to utilize the new Fire Plan.

The overall goal of the Fire Plan is to reduce total government costs and citizen's losses from wildland fire in California by protecting assets at risk through focused pre-fire management prescriptions and increasing initial attack success. The 1995 Fire Plan has five strategic objectives:

1. To create wildfire protection zones that reduces the risks to citizens and fire fighters.
2. To assess all wildland, not just the state responsibility areas. Analyses 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 wildland fire emergencies.
3. To identify and analyze key policy issues and develop recommendations for changes in public policy. Analysis will include alternatives to reduce total costs and/or increase fire protection system effectiveness.
4. To have a strong fiscal policy focus and describe the wildland fire protection system in fiscal terms. This will include all public and private expenditures and economic losses.
5. To translate the analysis into public policy.

Five major components form the basis of an ongoing fire planning process to monitor and assess California's wildland fire environment. These components are:

1. **Wildfire Protection Zones.** A key product of this Fire Plan is the development of wildfire safety zones to reduce citizen and firefighter risks from costly and damaging fires.
2. **Initial Attack Success.** The fire plan defines an assessment process for measuring the level of service provided by the fire 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, as required by Public Resources Code 4130. This measurement is the percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs are incurred. Knowledge of the level of service will help define the risk to wildfire damage faced by public and private assets in the wildlands.
3. **Assets Protected.** The plan has established 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 habitat (including rare and endangered species), unique areas (scenic, cultural, and historic), recreation, range, structures, and air quality. Stakeholders – national, state, local, and private agencies, interest groups, etc.—were identified for each asset at risk. The assessment defined the areas where assets are at risk from wildfire, enabling fire service managers and stakeholders to set priorities for pre-fire management project work.
4. **Pre-fire Management.** This aspect focuses on system analysis methods that assess alternatives to protect assets from unacceptable risk of wildland fire damage. Projects include a combination of fuels reduction, ignition management, fire-safe engineering activities, reduction of structural ignitability and forest health to protect public and private assets. The priority of projects is based on asset owners and other stakeholder's input and support. Pre-fire management prescriptions designed to protect these assets also identify who benefits and who shares in project costs.
5. **Fiscal Framework.** The Board of Forestry and CDF 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 fire protection 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 services delivered to the public. Monitoring system changes through this fiscal framework will allow the board and CDF to address public policy issues that maximize the efficiency of local, state, and federal firefighting resources.

These are Fire Plan applications:

- ◆ Identify for state, federal, and local officials and for the public those areas of concentrated assets and high risk.
- ◆ Allow CDF to create a more efficient fire protection system focused on meaningful solutions for identified problem areas.
- ◆ Give citizens an opportunity to identify public and private assets and designing and carrying out projects to protect those assets.
- ◆ Identify, before fires start, where cost-effective pre-fire management investments can be made to reduce taxpayer costs and citizens losses from wildfire.
- ◆ Encourage an integrated intergovernmental approach to reducing costs and losses.
- ◆ Enable policy makers and the public to focus on what can be done to reduce future costs and losses from wildfires.

The Fire Plan includes a new framework for a systematic assessment of the existing levels of wildland protection services. It identifies high-risk and high-value areas that are potential locations for costly and damaging fires, ranks the areas in terms of priority needs, and prescribes what can be done to reduce the future costs and losses. This assessment system has four major components:

1. [Level of Service](#)
2. [Assets at Risk](#)
3. [Fuels](#)
4. [Fire Weather](#)

Each of these components is described later in this document.