EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Luis Obispo County is located on the Central Coast of California approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection provides fire protection for State Responsibility Areas and serves as the County Fire Department, protecting most unincorporated areas within the County. In addition CAL FIRE /San Luis Obispo County Fire Department provides fire protection under contract for the City of Pismo Beach, the Community of Los Osos and the town of Avila Beach.

The County encompasses 2.1 million acres of which 1.5 million are protected by ***CAL FIRE*** /San Luis Obispo County Fire. County population is approximately 250,000. ***CAL FIRE*** /SLO County Fire provides protection to 61,000 people in the unincorporated areas including Los Osos and Avila Beach and 8000 people in the City of Pismo Beach. Located within the direct protection area are Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, San Luis Obispo County Airport, Hearst Castle, and Camp San Luis Obispo—home of the California National Guard, Tosco Oil Refinery and the Hartford Ocean Pier Complex.

CAL FIRE /County Fire identified wildland fires as a risk to residents of San Luis Obispo County. To mitigate this risk, CAL FIRE /County Fire initiated a Fire Management Plan in 1999. This plan is updated yearly and its goals are to:

- Improve fire prevention and suppression;
- Reduce hazardous fuels;
- Restore fire-adapted ecosystems;
- Promote community assistance.

The three major principles which guided the development of the Unit Fire Plan are:

- Priority setting that emphasizes the protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds at risk;
- Collaboration among governments and broadly representative stakeholders;
- Accountability through performance measures and monitoring for results.

The Fire Management Plan is an online dynamic living document, responding to ever changing environmental and social conditions. The Fire Management Plan utilizes the following strategies to accomplish the goals listed above:

- Collaboration with Stakeholders
- Risk Assessment of Wildland Urban Interface Areas (WUI)
- Development of high hazard wildfire community pre-attack plans
- Development of further community involvement trough assisting in the establishment of Fire Wise Communities.
- Monitor Effectiveness of programs, projects and initial attack success.

This Plan represents a commitment to help protect communities, natural resources, and most importantly, the lives of the public and firefighters. This commitment is shared among Federal agencies, States, local governments, and other partners. Collaboration, priority setting, and accountability are the guiding tactical principles will ensure the continued success of the Plan. Below are the tactical principles.

- Increase the safety to residents and firefighters during wildland fires
- Reduce the costs and losses associated with wildland fires
- Support implementation of the new 2008 Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Building standards through cooperation with local government planning departments
- Continue to support the implementation of fire safe clearance around structures and the new 100' standard.
- Support project work and planning efforts that encourage the development of safe ingress and egress routes for emergency incidents
- Utilize ***CAL FIRE*** and cooperating resources to mitigate large and damaging wildfires with defensible fuel zone/fuels reduction projects .
- Utilize prevention operations to reduce ignitions within the unit.
- Conduct incident analysis to evaluate Unit success in achieving the 95% threshold of keeping fires less than 10 acres in size.
- Educate the community on their role in the wildlands and support the Fire Safe Council and Fire Wise Community activities.

There are numerous stakeholders involved in mitigating the risk from wildland fires. Focused and coordinated collaboration is very important. ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire is an active participant in the San Luis Obispo County Community FireSafe Council (SLOFSC) and instrumental in its formation and continued success. The primary objective of the council is to provide education, exchange of information and foster fire prevention and fire safety within the County of San Luis Obispo. The SLOFSC is made up of a board of directors who represent the main stakeholders who are affected by wildland fires. The SLOFSC gives ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire a unique opportunity to work with other agencies in solving wildland fire related issues. ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire also works directly with homeowners during our yearly hazard reduction inspection program. ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire staff will also have many opportunities to work with residents, homeowners associations, and other governmental agencies during the preparation of Community and Rural Area Wildland Fire Protection Plans throughout 2009-2010. These plans are being initiated to deal specifically with the risks involved with these communities.

CAL FIRE /County Fire staff also performs a comprehensive "Risk Assessment". Risk is assessed at the county, community and individual home level. For the countywide analysis, ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire staff utilizes the ***CAL FIRE*** "Assets at Risk Assessment". This assessment utilizes Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to determine areas of high, medium and low assets at risk. This assessment is based on the best available data. Since the accuracy of some of the base data is not complete, a continued analysis will be necessary in the future. Because of these limitations we augmented the assessment with expertise from field Battalion Chiefs. The Battalion Chiefs were able to identify additional areas and the final product is a list of target areas needing mitigation to reduce the risks. This year staff has begun conducting individual community assessments during the preparation of the Community Wildfire Protect Plans (CWPP's), for inclusion to this living document. Lastly, we will continue to conduct our annual hazard reduction inspection program to provide corrective measures to individual home owners to better protect themselves.

CAL FIRE /County Fire will implement the action plan portion of this document to mitigate risks associated with wildland fires at three levels; the county, community and individual level.

- At the county level, ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire prevention staff will work with program level fire prevention practices such as reviewing, implementing and enforcing our fire prevention codes aimed at reducing structural ignitability, providing structured community fire prevention education programs, and developing fuel treatment projects.
- At the community level, ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire staff will be developing specific projects to mitigate hazards identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plans in an effort to produce Fire wise communities throughout the county.
- At the individual level, ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire staff will educate the public on specific measures to reduce risk during the hazard reduction inspection process.

CAL FIRE /County Fire monitors' fire prevention projects for their effectiveness. Monitoring enables ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire staff to determine if specific projects met their objectives and were financially cost effective and what future efforts are required.

Through a comprehensive risk analysis, a focused action plan, collaboration and monitoring, ***CAL FIRE*** /County Fire has developed this Fire Management Plan that will reduce the costs and losses associated with wildland fires and minimize risk to firefighters and residents in San Luis Obispo County.

There are however many challenges that must be overcome for the plans success. They include, acquiring accurate data for the Asset at Risk Assessments, obtaining and administering grant funding for projects, and an overwhelming need for GIS support at the local level. All this at a time of budget crises; lack of funding for community proposed projects; lack of staff to inspect and enforce the laws of the State and County. Lastly, the lack of proper technology to allow ***CAL FIRE*** personnel to work more efficiently.

CAL FIRE /County Fire personnel with the help and support of its communities will continue to look for solutions to these issues.