

## **COLLABORATION**

CAL FIRE San Diego Unit staff participate in many forums and organizations to actively collaborate on issue of public safety and forest health. Listed are the major collaborating groups that the unit staff actively takes a lead role. From this participation, the CAL FIRE San Diego Unit Resource Department staff can develop the methodology to strategically plan and implement vegetation management programs and projects.

### **Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST)**

FAST is the regional planning task force consisting of federal, state, local agencies, and private stakeholders for the management of wildfire risk, mitigation and citizen education in San Diego County. The mission of FAST is to promote the protection of life and property and health of our forests, wildlands, and urban-interface lands through collaborative efforts. The objectives of FAST include regional planning, fuel reduction, forest restoration, evacuation planning, maintenance of treated lands, and outreach and education. Components of FAST operations are covered by committees organized around three strategies designed to achieve the FAST mission. Each committee covers a functional area related either to project planning and implementation, reporting information or natural resource and fire education. Groups are formed within the committees to accommodate specific tasks and projects.

### **The Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC)**

The concerned citizens of the United States and Mexico formed the Border Agency Fire Council. It is a consortium of government and private entities, emergency responders, environmental specialists, law enforcement, fire protection, and elected officials. Thirty-two organizations make up BAFC members. The BAFC meet quarterly during the winter and every six to eight weeks during fire season. The meetings are held at the CAL FIRE San Diego Unit headquarters in El Cajon, California. An unprecedented bi-national mutual assistance agreement is in place and working because of the BAFC. Through collaborative effort, they have altered the environment to allow better access into the wildland for emergency responders while respecting the natural values of the area. The BAFC has enhanced communication among emergency responders on both sides of the U.S. - Mexico border. From the beginning, their motivation has been primarily to save lives, but also to protect the sensitive habitat of the border area.

### **Fire Safe Councils**

The mission of the Fire Safe Councils in San Diego County is to provide education, exchange information, and foster fire prevention and fire safety with in their local communities of San Diego. In 1997 The Fire Safe Council of San Diego County was formed. It is comprised of a 15-member Board of Directors consisting of representatives of federal, state, local agencies, and stakeholders to provide support to communities that wanted to establish a Fire Safe Council. In San Diego County there are currently 70 communities with a Fire Safe Council. Once a Fire Safe Council is established in a community the council is encouraged to write a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP addresses issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection. It is intended to be a living document that change as the community evolves. The CWPP emphasize the need for federal, state and local agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and place priority on treatment areas identified by the communities themselves in a CWPP.

### **San Diego Fire Chiefs Association Defensible Space MOU**

Shortly after the destructive Harmony Grove Fire in 1997, the San Diego County Fire Chief's Association and the Fire District's Association of San Diego County entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This MOU allows the removal of flammable vegetation within 100 feet of any structure and 30 feet from any roadway without a biological survey. The purpose of the MOU is to establish guidelines by which CAL FIRE, Cities and Fire Districts can continue to protect lives and property from the threat of fires by requiring the abatement of flammable vegetation pursuant to State Law, County, District ordinances and Cities municipal codes. This will establish a cooperative mechanism whereby the US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game may assess, minimize and help account for potential adverse impacts to sensitive species and habitats resulting from vegetation abatement activities.

### **Goldspotted Oak Borer Steering Committee (GSOB)**

Goldspotted Oak Borer is contributing to the on-going oak tree mortality occurring on federal, state, private, and Native American lands in San Diego County. Widespread oak mortality can have severe implications to the environment and human safety. Due to the current and potential impacts, locally and statewide, a steering committee of multiple agencies and organizations are working together in the research, education and outreach efforts regarding this pest.