

## **Battalion Three Planning Area**

Including the communities of Butte Valley, Butte Community College, Durham, Richvale, Nelson, Dayton, Concow and Yankee Hill.

**CAL FIRE Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Scott Lindgren  
Yankee Hill / Concow Fire Safe Council – Brenda Rightmyer**

### **Specific Fire Behavior Factors and Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

The following synopsis is intended to specify the fire behavior factors (fuels, topography and weather) and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) problems specific to the Fire Planning Area.

#### **Fuels:**

The local responsibility area (LRA) which is west of Highway 99 is primarily agricultural with orchards, rice and field crops. There is a diminishing amount of grass and valley oak, especially near the Sacramento River and the major creeks and sloughs. One exception to this is the Llano Seco Ranch where various government and private agencies are restoring parts of the ranch to native habitat.

The State Responsibility Area (SRA) which is east of Highway 99 is primarily oak woodland and grass with some brush. As the terrain continues up Hwy 70 along the north fork of the Feather River Canyon the fuel type goes from grass oak woodland to brush then into mixed conifers and black oak.

At 800', annual grasses and oak woodland with blue and valley oak cover the lower foothills. Brush appears at the 1000' elevation and is especially thick in the drainages ranging from manzanita, chaparral, toyon and white thorn. Between 2000' and 2500' mixed conifer, second growth ponderosa pine and black oak appear.

#### **Topography:**

The elevations range from 800' to 4300'. The Feather River drainages and their tributaries lend towards steep slopes and chimneys. This also contributes to strong and erratic wind patterns. Forest conditions are highly variable in the area.

#### **Weather: (refer to pg 9)**

The steep drainages that exist from the Butte Valley into the Plumas National Forest contribute to strong and erratic wind patterns. In 2008 there was a lightning event that caused 15 to 21 fires (many of which burned together), this was the second significant lightning event in ten years (1999).

## **Wildland Urban Interface Situation:**

This plan area consists of about 80,000 acres of which the U.S. Government, PG&E, Sierra Pacific Industries and other timber companies and local landowners control the larger tracts of land. There are extensive hydroelectric power facilities and transmission lines, Union Pacific rail line and a State scenic route up HWY 70. The Thermalito Irrigation District owns Concow lake and much of the land surrounding it. The greatest concentration of population is on developed parcels along Hwy 70, Concow Lake and the Big Bend area.

The Yankee Hill – Concow Fire Planning Area has a history of large wildfires; The Camp Fire which was part of the Butte Lightning Complex (2008) would burn or damage over 100 homes and account for a large portion of the 59,000 acres consumed during the siege; the Poe fire (09-06-01) burned 8,333 acres and destroyed 50 homes, the 70 fire (10-24-01) burned 1,711 acres, the Concow fire (09-19-00) burned 1,845 acres, with one fatality, several injuries to fire fighters and destroying 16 homes, and a lightning event in 1999 that burned tens of thousands of acres on the east side of Highway 70 north of Pulga.

Many areas have high concentrations of population with narrow access routes and inadequate defensible space. Another significant problem is the lack of water supply for fire protection with no pressurized community fire hydrants and very few large storage tanks.