

## **SECTION IV: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **A: FIRE PREVENTION**

Based on the previous identified information the Fire Prevention Bureau has adopted the following actions to provide efforts of ignition mitigation to protect property, natural resource loss, and loss of life or injuries.

- **Law Enforcement**

- The enforcement of forest and fire laws will continue to be proactive in efforts to pursue and prosecute violators of statute. Efforts to reduce the miscellaneous category on the ignition statistics has improved. Fires must continue to be investigated in more detail. This may require some additional education/training of our fire personnel to assist them in origin and cause investigation and report writing. Our efforts to collect suppression cost on fires of negligent or criminal nature has improved. Emergency incidents are costly and the ability to collect suppression cost and punitive damages will remain active.
- Lastly, the law enforcement staff is given the authority and responsibility to identify, investigate and arrest subjects involved in criminal related acts. These incidents will be investigated and documented through proper case management. The management of these cases will be conducted with detail of documentation and proper evidence security. Finally, given the correct legal circumstances the cases will be actively pursued and prosecuted. Efforts to improve our evidence collection procedures and proper evidence security are a priority in this unit, in conjunction with continued education for our law enforcement officers, related to fire investigation, interviewing, and case development.

## **- ENGINEERING & STRUCTURE IGNITABILITY**

Through comprehensive engineering and the law enforcement programs are what the Tulare Unit strives to prevent fires. Reduction of loss from Tulare Units wildlands each year is the goal. Tulare Unit works with communities, and non-profit groups to educate the public and prevent wildland fires.

Tulare Unit also enforces the LE -100 program (Fire Hazard Inspections). All structures in the State Responsibility Area are inspected. Home owners who don't comply with the Public Resource Code (PRC) section 4290 are cited. The idea behind the program is not to issue a citation, but preventing the loss of structures when fire is moving through communities.

## **- INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

Information & Education is an integral part of the Fire Prevention Program. The focus is to reach out to the elementary school children with match & lighter safety education. In addition to the school programs, it is imperative to education the public on the importance of Defensible space clearance. The proper method to burn hazard reduction materials, and the correct times to use power equipment to achieve the code requirements.

The basis fire safety program that teaches children not to play with matches, lighters or fire is the "Team Teaching" program. Team Teaching targets Pre School through second grade.

Team Teaching is a highly professional program developed by teachers, CAL FIRE personnel and child psychologists. This program utilizes Smokey Bear an internationally recognized fire prevention symbol to teach children not to play with matches, lighters or fire. Pre-planning is the most important factor for a successful team teaching program. Historically, the program has been presented to school children in cooperation with local government and/or County Fire Departments, Fire Safe Councils and the United States Forest Service.

The first step in planning a fire prevention program is to identify what the Unit's priorities are. Review the Units fire plan to determine what fire causes occur in your target areas. For example child/match caused fires may have dropped in occurrence due to heavy saturation of schools with "Team Teaching" and other school education programs over the years, while "equipment use" or debris burning" caused fires have increased. This would indicate a change in priorities. The Unit could then choose to develop an annual maintenance program for "Team Teaching" and re direct emphasis on "equipment use" and "debris burning" programs or assign additional personnel to assist with the implement programs to meet those needs in targeted areas.

## **B: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT**

Natural Resource Management is supporting the TUU Fire Plan through Forest Practice activities as well as Vegetation Management Programs and other fuel reducing grants. Through the Forest Practice Program we are encouraging healthy forest through out the unit. Landowners as well as local Registered Professional Foresters are currently reducing overcrowded timber stands. This is being Implemented by either Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) or 1 one the several other timber exemptions.

TUU currently has 2 Vegetation Management Programs (VMP) approved with at least 2 others in the process. The VMPs and other fuel reduction grants typically have the same desired outcome. Both of these look at reducing the amount of high fire vegetation and providing an opportunity to fight fire safely and aggressively. Both of these programs look at increasing the water table by reducing the amount of evapotranspiration in the watershed. Reducing the amount of hazardous brush will also help in the foraging of not only livestock, but wildlife as well. By doing these projects it also helps bring the natural mosaic back to the landscape.