

A: DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS**CAL FIRE BATTALION 1: COVELO**

CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit Battalion 1 consists of 272,729 acres of SRA located in the northeast corner of Mendocino County. Within the Battalion is the town of Covelo, centered in Round Valley, with a population of approximately 2,200 people. A large percentage of the population are Native Americans who live on Round Valley Indian Tribe (RVIT) controlled lands established in 1856. The Round Valley floor is predominately Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and fire protection is the responsibility of the Covelo Fire Protection District (CFPD), although CAL FIRE responds to all calls in the District through an automatic mutual aid agreement.

The economy is mainly supported by cattle ranchers, small timber harvest projects, and a great deal of "medical" marijuana. The climate is Mediterranean in type, and vegetation is oak woodlands changing to conifer timberlands in the higher elevations.

CAL FIRE Covelo station, the Covelo Fire Protection District, and the U.S.D.A Forest Service (USFS) have joined forces for several public education activities at local schools and community events. CAL FIRE also works with the Round Valley Indian Tribe's Department of Natural Resources on vegetative fuel reduction in the SRA. CAL FIRE engine and dozer crews from Covelo have constructed a fuel break on the western ridge above the Round Valley Indian Housing tract, and CAL FIRE crews continue to maintain it. CAL FIRE has also taught several Incident Command Classes to the Round Valley Indian Tribe (RVIT) crews to assist them to qualify for fire line duty.

The USFS, CAL FIRE, CFPD, and the Fire Safe Council have determined that the entire Covelo battalion is an at-risk WUI area, with several specific areas having greater hazards. To address the fire problem in the Covelo Battalion without looking at the Local Responsibility Area fire causes would not produce a true evaluation. More than 70 percent of the fires in the Battalion occur within one square mile on the Round Valley Indian Housing tract within the LRA. Arson is the leading cause of fire in the Battalion and has been for several years. The County Sheriff's Office and CAL FIRE work cooperatively to investigate and incarcerate arsonists. Local, state, and federal fire cooperators as well as the Sheriff's Office continue to educate in the schools and community in hopes of reducing arson and accidentally caused fires.

The "Fire Defense Plan" prepared for the RVIT by CAL FIRE in May 1992 is intended to be an integral part of land management planning on the Indian Tribe lands. It identifies several fuel breaks and Vegetation Management Program projects that can mitigate hazards and risks impacting the Battalion and the Covelo community. With the increasing likelihood of wildfires on the west side of the valley, it is imperative that a maintained fuel break exist on the ridge west of the Round Valley Indian Housing Tract. As was noted above, CAL FIRE constructed and continues to maintain a fuel break there, known as the Little Valley fuel break. This break is an extension of one completed by the RVIT crews and provides direct protection to the 100 homes below it. Continuing northwest from Little Valley, another fuel break, known by the name "Pink," was developed in the plan. This break will minimize the risk of uncontrolled fires becoming large and damaging on both the west side of Round Valley and the east side of Poonkinney Ridge.

CAL FIRE BATTALION 2: WILLITS

CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit Battalion 2 encompasses 384 square miles and 245,636 acres of State Responsibility Area. State Highway 101 bisects the Battalion, with predominately redwood and Douglas-fir forest to the west and mixed pine forest, brush, and grassland to the east. Highway 20 goes west from Willits to Fort Bragg for approximately 13 miles within the Battalion. The eastern border of the Battalion is the Mendocino National Forest's Covelo and Upper Lake Districts.

One CAL FIRE station, Howard Forest, co-located with the Mendocino Unit Headquarters, provides the initial ground attack fire protection for Battalion 2. The fire complement of the station consists of two Incident Command System (ICS) Type 3 fire engines plus one reserve Type 3 engine, a Type 2 bulldozer unit. Howard Forest Helitack Base is located at this facility and is administered by the Battalion Chief assigned to Howard Forest. One forest fire lookout facility, Two Rock, closed in 1994 and has been returned to private ownership.

Unit Headquarters facilities include the Unit's Administrative Headquarters, Training Center, Resource Management and Fire Prevention Bureau offices, Logistics Service Center, Automotive Fleet Maintenance shops, breathing apparatus maintenance facility, CAL FIRE's Emergency Command Center, and Howard Park, which is open to the public.

The Brooktrails Township is an unincorporated community located immediately northwest of the City of Willits and its subdivisions are some of the densest wildland/urban interface developments in Mendocino County. The limited access, steep slopes, and roads and dwellings interspersed with undeveloped, overgrown parcels surrounded by a natural greenbelt environment, offer the potential for expensive and large losses to wildland fire. The unincorporated community is subject to Public Resources Code 4290 requirements for new development. This steep and wooded area was noted as being the first community in the United States to blend a four square mile redwood and mixed growth forest Conservation Park with a fully improved residential subdivision. The conservation park is now called the Brooktrails Redwood Park and is locally referred to as the "Greenbelt." The park covers 2,300 acres that border a large portion of the lots in the subdivision. The Brooktrails Township is comprised of multiple subdivisions. Three main areas, Brooktrails, Sylvandale, and Spring Creek, are the most heavily populated.

In the event of a large fire in or threatening the Brooktrails subdivisions, the residents and responding agencies could face many problems. Residents evacuating down steep and narrow roads could impede responding fire apparatus, causing road blockage and long response times for fire personnel. Evacuation concerns are compounded by the fact that the narrow, winding Sherwood Road is the only paved major access road and escape route from Brooktrails, Sylvandale, and Spring Creek.

The Little Lake Valley is basically grassy oak woodlands that transition into brush towards the east, then to timber at the higher elevations. There are many structures intermixed in the area and especially in the Pine Mountain Subdivision. It has similar features outlined in the Brooktrails scenario, steep winding roads that provide adequate access during normal conditions but would be hard pressed to accommodate residents evacuating and fire resources entering the area, especially the transport/dozer units responding.

The Battalion overlays Willits, the only incorporated city, several unincorporated communities of various sizes, two high schools, and five grade schools. Miles of overhead power lines, a continuing source of vegetation fire starts, accompany ongoing building in the wildland.

Area logging is decreasing due to the economy, environmental concerns and changes in ownership/management goals and strategies. Current harvest plans are mixed between small and large acreage. With fewer logging operations the cumulative fire hazard from logging slash buildup increases only slightly annually in comparison to the buildup created during past boom logging eras. Additionally, the threat of fire starts in the remote backcountry from logging operations is reduced. However, a dramatic increase clandestine marijuana production does increase the fire potential in the remote areas.

The saving grace for the area inland of the California north coastal strip is the seasonal onshore marine push which usually keeps overnight relative humidity high during normal patterns. Occasionally interior high pressure does develop in Mendocino County and over the Willits area and creates critical burning conditions. When interior high pressure conditions develop, producing hot, dry north/northeast offshore winds, there is abundant potential for severe fires in the Willits area. These critical weather patterns typically develop four to five times each fire season. Each pattern usually builds and dissipates within several days.

Fire is widely recognized as a natural part of the California environment. Ecologically, studies have demonstrated wildlife's dependence on, and rapid recovery from, vegetation fires without funds being expended for regeneration. Much of the Willits Battalion would benefit from prescribed burning. Prescribed fires are far less costly than an uncontrolled fire burning through a developed community that will be costly to rebuild. The efficient burning of wildland tracts would provide an effective reduction of fuel loading in high, very high, and extreme fire hazard severity zones.

MEU Battalion 2 has several active Fire Safe Councils; the Pine Mountain FSC, the Sylvandale FSC, and Brooktrails FSC have been active. There are several more beginning to operate. These councils operate under the umbrella of the Mendocino County Fire safe Council.

There have been several grant projects in the Battalion 2, the two major projects have been the Brooktrails Shaded Fuel Break and the Pine Mountain Brush Chipping Project. These operations were managed by the Mendocino Fire Safe Council and CAL FIRE.

CAL FIRE BATTALION 3: UKIAH

Battalion 3 is a very diverse portion of Mendocino County. It encompasses a wide variety of vegetative fuel types consisting primarily of oak woodlands, brush and mixed conifer stands. The Battalion consists of 389,591 acres of SRA, 150,808 acres of LRA, and 30,999 acres of Direct Protection Areas (non-SRA). The Ukiah Valley, in Battalion 3, contains the densest population centers in Mendocino County, including the City of Ukiah and surrounding communities. A significant portion of the Battalion 3 population lives in the rural communities, considered in the urban-interface zone, outside of formal service districts.

Two state highways, Highway 101 traveling north and south and Highway 20 east and west, intersect in the center of the Battalion. The Battalion borders Sonoma County to the south and Lake County to the east. It extends west almost to the community of Comptche, and north past the community of Redwood Valley.

Fire protection for the State Responsibility Area in Battalion 3 is provided by two Schedule B stations. Hopland Station, located on Highway 101, two miles north of Hopland, is a single engine station covering the southern half of the battalion. Ukiah Station located at the intersection of North State Street and Hensley Creek Road is staffed with two engines and one medium dozer, covers the northern half the battalion.

CAL FIRE provides cooperative emergency services through a variety of aid agreements to the majority of fire department or district in Battalion 3. Local and federal governments provide fire and medical services within Battalion 3: Ukiah City Fire Department, Ukiah Valley Fire District, Hopland Volunteer Fire Department, Potter Valley Volunteer Fire Department, Redwood Valley/Calpella Fire District, and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service.

Battalion 3 works cooperatively with other public service agencies, to include California Highway Patrol, Mendocino County Sheriff's Office, Ukiah Police Department, Ukiah Ambulance Service, Redwood Empire Hazardous Incident Team (REHIT), Tribal police agencies, CalTrans, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Several popular recreation and tourist locations within Battalion 3 attract visitors to the Ukiah valley. These include Lake Mendocino, Cow Mountain Recreation Area, Montgomery Woods State Park, the Russian River, Eel River, numerous wineries, and the Mendocino National Forest. CAL FIRE provides direct protection to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Lake Mendocino Recreation Area and BLM's Cow Mountain and Red Mountain Recreation Areas.

Battalion 3 places very strong emphasis on fire prevention education and activities. The full scope of prevention activities in Battalion 3 includes; participation in school programs emphasizing home and fire safety, actively working with the local Fire Safe Councils, public education and safety programs, and defensible space compliance inspections.

CAL FIRE BATTALION 4: LAYTONVILLE

CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit Battalion 4 encompasses approximately 650 square miles, or about 416,000 acres, of SRA in the northwest portion of Mendocino County. The Battalion has two major highway corridors: State Highway 1 runs through the northwest corner of the Battalion, where it intersects U.S. Highway 101; and Highway 101 runs the entire length of the Battalion, a distance of 42 miles.

CAL FIRE operates two 2-engine fire stations within the Battalion, at Laytonville and Leggett. Year-round fire protection in the Battalion is provided by four volunteer departments: Long Valley (Laytonville), Leggett Valley, Piercy, and Whale Gulch. The Whale Gulch Fire Department is located within Mendocino County but is dispatched by the CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit because the road to its location is in Humboldt County.

The Battalion includes eight communities of various sizes. Several private camps are occupied primarily during the summer months. The State Parks System operates two campground facilities, one of which is classified as a wilderness park, plus three other day use areas. The Nature Conservancy has a large holding known as the Coast Range Preserve in the Branscomb area. There are several BLM holdings in the Battalion, most of which require modified suppression action plans.

The western portion of the battalion consists of some large timber company holdings that encompass approximately 75,000 acres. With the reduction of active logging and the decline of broadcast burning, the fuel loading has increased in the area due to the natural forest succession. Roads on the timber company lands have been abandoned and/or decommissioned which can lead to access difficulties. Although logging is decreasing, the fire threat relative to logging remains, due to the buildup of logging slash and the lack of access to the slash-covered areas due to road closures. In 2008 there were approximately 22 lightning caused fires in Battalion 4, the road closures on logging company properties created access issues for fire suppression resources.

Causes of the fires within Battalion 4 range from accidental equipment use to arson. Fires caused by debris burning are a significant problem in Battalion 4. An increased effort by Battalion personnel to inform the public of debris burning regulations will be used to reduce these fires. Fires caused by equipment use are also a problem. Battalion personnel conduct public education on this subject, but such fires will probably continue due to the large amount of outdoor equipment use in the Battalion. Fires caused by the railroad have ceased because the railroad is not operating due to winter storm damage several years ago. If the railroad is again put in service, a fire prevention and inspection program will need to be implemented. An additional concern in the battalion is the increased number of marijuana growing operations which are accounting for a large number of the fires in the battalion.

The future outlook for Battalion 4 is for increased tourist traffic and more rural subdivisions. As these subdivisions expand, they bring with them the increased population in the rural areas creating an increase in wildland, structure, vehicle and debris fires, requiring greater public awareness of fire hazards.

The larger WUI areas within the Battalion include Bear Pen subdivision, Cooks Valley, Pepperwood Springs subdivision, Ebert Lane, Camp Saint Michael, Bell Springs Road, Cherry Creek subdivision, Twin Pines Ranch, Black Oak Ranch, Spy Rock Road area, Wilderness Lodge, Ten Mile Creek, Fox Rock Road, and Mulligan Lane.

Battalion 4 has had nearly ten Vegetation Management Program (VMP) projects in the works since the early 1990's, but most have been canceled due to expired contracts and budget problems. These were to have been primarily broadcast burning projects in cooperation with local stakeholders, involving from a few hundred to a few thousand acres. The most recent projects within the Battalion are the Sinkyone VMP and the Cahto Indian Reservation thinning project. Since 2010 the VMP program has increased with several new potential projects in Battalion 4.

Currently each local fire department and CAL FIRE station's personnel conduct separate and joint fire prevention education programs at local schools, road association meetings, and community events. During these education programs, strong emphasis will now be placed on the identified target areas. Funding is needed for local and state fire departments to provide up-to-date educational materials to the public. In the spring of 2010 monies were funded to hire two Fire Fighters who aggressively inspected identified target areas in Battalion 4, the locations were jointly determined between the Laytonville Fire Chief and the CAL FIRE Laytonville Battalion Chief.

In cooperation with the Mendocino Fire Safe Council, several WUI areas have identified the need for fire road access clearance and fuel reduction/shaded fuel breaks. In each of these locations, overgrown brush and young saplings cause a safety hazard for both fire crews trying to enter the area and residents trying to leave in a wildfire emergency. For each evacuation route listed here, projects need to be instituted to create shaded fuel breaks extending 50 feet on both sides of the roads, by removing understory brush and trimming up trees to remove ladder fuels.

- Spy Rock Road (including Registered Guest Road, Iron Peak Road, and Blue Rock Road) is inhabited by approximately 2,000 people living in various types of homes.
- Ten Mile Creek has approximately 200 residents.
- Bear Pen subdivision contains 18 homes.
- Ebert Lane is a narrow road accessing 11 homes; its vegetation includes not only brush and saplings but also timber.
- Pepperwood Springs subdivision has approximately 20 homes.
- Cherry Creek subdivision, which currently contains about 30 homes, is becoming a very popular area for new construction.
- Mulligan Lane contains areas of brush that need to be removed.
- Bell Springs Road, a major artery, has many heavily overgrown areas.

The lack of home addresses and road signage is a huge problem throughout Battalion 4. This is due in part to the vast amount of marijuana cultivation by persons who wish their addresses to be unknown. During public education programs, the benefits of proper addressing and road signage for both fire and medical emergencies will be strongly emphasized. Battalion personnel conducted an extensive PRC 4291 inspection campaign to try to gain compliance and acceptance to fire safe planning.

Two sets of fire prevention signs remind the general public of their fire prevention obligation and burning regulations. Each time a burn permit is issued, a fire prevention message is presented. Battalion personnel will continue Public Resources Code section 4291 and 4492 inspections of structures and power lines in each community.

CAL FIRE BATTALION 5: BOONVILLE

Battalion 5 encompasses 674 square miles or 431,393 acres and 230 miles of state and county roads, and is the 10th largest Battalion statewide, according to 1964 Fire Plan data. Two major highways within the Battalion bring tourist traffic from the Bay Area to the north coast: State Highway 128 forms the northern boundary of the Battalion, and State Highway 1 defines the western boundary. Vegetation within the Battalion varies from dense redwood/Douglas-fir forests to grassy oak woodlands. The Battalion includes one city, Point Arena, and nine communities of various sizes: Gualala, Anchor Bay, Irish Beach, Manchester, Elk, Yorkville, Boonville, Philo, and Navarro.

Battalion 5 fire protection for the Battalion is provided by two Stations: Boonville (two engines, one dozer) and Point Arena (one engine). Additionally, four local government departments -- South Coast Fire Protection District, Redwood Coast Fire Department, Anderson Valley Fire Department, and Elk Volunteer Fire Department -- provide structure protection for their communities, as well as mutual aid to CAL FIRE for wildland fire protection. Redwood Coast Fire Department provides protection for the City of Point Arena and the communities of Manchester and Irish Beach.

The Battalion has one lookout, Cold Springs, which was closed in 1994 but has been intermittently reopened during periods of high fire danger and lightning storms. Cold Springs Lookout is listed in the National Historic Lookout Registry and has been identified in CAL FIRE's Management Plan for Historic Preservation.

The outlook is for increased tourist traffic and rural housing in single increments and small subdivisions. As the minor subdivisions expand, an increasing fire problem will exist in both the prevention and suppression of fires. Logging, which formerly provided the area's major economic resource, has been decreasing. However, future fire control problems remain a concern, as areas that are logged have an increase in logging slash and possibly a lack of access due to road closures. Areas where logging is not occurring may have a higher density of live and/or dead vegetation as well as an increase in poor or limited access. The Battalion's overall fire hazard potential will likely increase due to increases in tourism, traffic, off-road recreation, camping, and rural subdivision development in the Wildland Urban Interface. Vineyard conversions are still occurring, primarily within the oak woodlands. These conversions create greenbelts (fire fuelbreaks) on the valley floor, along the lower slopes surrounding the valley, and now reaching the upper ridges.

Battalion 5 fire prevention activities include:

- Display and information booth at the Mendocino County Fair and Apple Show
- Firefighters as Role Models (FARM), utilizing trained canine with 4th grade class.
- Participate in the Mendocino County Fair parade
- Participate in school programs with Smokey Bear emphasizing fire and home safety
- Fire Prevention and Safety at the Boy Scouts of America camp in Navarro
- LE-100 inspections of residences and inspections of power lines
- Roadside Fire Prevention signs
- *Burn permits issued in person with awareness and safety training given to permittees*
- *Joint educational outreach efforts with Fire Safe Council*

CAL FIRE BATTALION 6: FORT BRAGG

Battalion 6 encompasses approximately 532 square miles, or about 341,000 acres, with 240 miles of State and County roads, plus an estimated 1,305 miles of private dirt roads and 159 miles of railroad. The battalion has two major highways which bring tourist traffic to the north coast. State Highway 1 spans the entire west section of the battalion along the coast and intersects with State Highway 20, then continues north and intersects with US Highway 101 at Leggett. Highway 20 connects Highway 1 to Highway 101 and links the cities of Fort Bragg and Willits.

Geographically, the battalion boundaries are as follows: starting at the northwest corner from the Pacific Ocean near the town of Rockport, it runs south along the coast to the Navarro River at Highway 1 and Highway 128. It then runs east along the river and Highway 128 about 10 miles to Flynn Creek Road, then northeast to State Highway 20, then north to Sherwood Peak. It follows Sherwood Ridge about six miles continuing northwest, following mostly along ridge lines to the Pacific Ocean. It finally intersects at a point just south of the town of Rockport, a distance of about 25 miles, forming the northeastern boundary.

Battalion 6 includes two CAL FIRE Stations: the Fort Bragg Station (Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) and Battalion Headquarters) with one fire engine, and the Woodlands Station east of the town of Mendocino, also with one engine. Mendocino Coast Hospital provides ground ambulance service, and CALSTAR (Ukiah) and REACH (Lakeport and Santa Rosa) provide helicopter emergency medical services (EMS). The U.S. Coast Guard provides EMS and water rescue from Noyo Harbor in Fort Bragg and can provide additional helicopter support to local agencies apparatus from Eureka.

Included in the battalion is JDSF, purchased in 1947 from the Caspar Lumber Company and the largest State Forest at 50,200 acres. JDSF is a public use area excluding motorized vehicles and includes campsites and day use areas. The forest is a popular area for hiking, biking, hunting, horseback riding, swimming, and picnicking, and is visited by over 40,000 people annually.

The California State Parks and Recreation Department's Mendocino District is headquartered within the battalion at Russian Gulch State Park. Seven campground facilities and numerous state beaches and recreation areas are in the battalion. This includes the Mendocino Woodlands Campground which is contracted to private management with occupancies of up to 500 per day.

The future outlook for the Battalion is for increased tourist traffic and more residents in additional rural homes and subdivisions. Logging continues to decline with more timber harvest plans on smaller acres. Projected fire hazards and at-risk assets will continue to grow due to the changing demographics of the area. As rural development continues and subdivisions expand, an increasing fire problem will exist in both preventing and suppressing fires. The points below identify some issues that will increase the complexity of the future fire environment.

Response times outside developed communities can be quite extended, and resources are limited. The topography of the battalion, in conjunction with the winding, slow, and limited road system, is a contributing factor to response times.

Developed water resources are sparse with limited availability and accessibility in outlying areas. The increased population in rural areas will have an impact on, and strain the already limited resources in the area. This will potentially result in increased fire starts as well as medical aid and rescue response requests.

Increased public land use including off-road recreation and camping will result in additional potential for fire as well as medical aids. Property addressing and access continue to be marginal and inconsistent throughout Mendocino County, resulting in increased dispatch and response times. Population growth will increase equipment use and debris burns, increasing the potential for fire starts and control burn escapes. Lack of awareness and education regarding fire safe planning by persons moving from city to rural environments regarding fire safe planning manifests itself through poor preparation and ultimately increased risks.

Battalion personnel continue to participate and interact with the local schools to promote fire prevention and education program. This focuses on youth education and prevention as well as providing a conduit to parents for prevention information and fire safe planning. The program has been successful to date and has been well received by the community.

Battalion personnel regularly participate in community events including parades, fairs, and barbeques utilizing Smokey Bear, fire apparatus, and booths to distribute prevention and education materials including fire safe pamphlets. The events also provide opportunities for personal public “one on one” contact for adults and youth alike relating to prevention, education, career, and general CAL FIRE information.

Fire Safe inspections continue in the various communities with LE-100 inspections of residences and power lines. The annual issuance of Burn Permits including LE-63 (campfire), LE-5 (dooryard), and LE-7 (project burn) are used as opportunities to increase public awareness and conduct training in the proper and safe use of fire.

The battalion continues to participate in public outreach meetings sponsored by the Fire Safe Council, to assist in education, and to identify public concerns regarding prevention or future community projects. CAL FIRE Battalion 6 is committed to working cooperatively with the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, communities, and local government fire jurisdictions to assist in addressing specific concerns, by technical assistance or facilitation through administrative services.

The battalion co-sponsors, with timber stakeholders, the annual timber “industry meeting” to update and exchange contact information, identify available resources, and identify logging operations or major projects occurring within timber holdings.

CAL FIRE TRAINING BATTALION

Mission Statements

The Mendocino Unit Training Battalion responsibility is to provide on-going training, education and certification to fire service personnel. All training is focused on providing and maintaining the highest quality emergency service at both fire and medical responses to the citizens of California. Instructional programs target operational efficiency with emphasis on safe operating procedures for our personnel in all aspects of fire and emergency operations.

To accomplish the training objectives in 2010, the Battalion provided a total of 10,000 student contact hours to 145 Company Officers, 137 Firefighters, and other local cooperators. There are also numerous training hours logged by all the permanent personnel using Target Safety, an online training program. There was also a significant amount of staff time spent to coordinate students, courses, and instructors, recording and tracking training, and ensuring those newly qualified trainees are listed in the statewide Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).

The first priority of the Mendocino Training Staff is to provide for the overall safety of Unit permanent personnel and seasonal employees through instructional programs that target operational efficiency with emphasis on safe operating procedures in all aspects of fire and emergency operations. The Training Battalion's responsibility is to also facilitate and to ensure coordination for the unit-wide training plan, match training courses with approved personnel training requests, maintain a central location for updated training records for all employees.

The Battalion staff comprises of one Battalion Chief and two field Captains that work in training in during non-peak staffing. The staff continually strives to provide creative, cost effective, innovative training, and always providing the highest commitment to safety. The state-funded training operations, which are divided into 16 separate program areas, are a seven-day a week operation, and listed below are:

- Administrative and Office staff
- Battalion Chiefs
- Company Officers
- Firefighters
- Training
- Emergency Command Center
- Howard Forest Helitack
- Fire Prevention
- Automotive Fleet Maintenance
- Pre-fire Engineering
- Joint Apprenticeship Program
- Vegetation Management
- Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials Responses
- Fire Safe Counsels
- Joint-Agency Operations

EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER

Howard Forest Emergency Command Center

Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) dispatch services are provided to those Local Fire Service Agencies and Ambulance providers of Mendocino County who are signatory to the Operational Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of November 1994. Coastal Valley Emergency Medical Services has designated the ECC as Mendocino County's air ambulance coordination center. The CDF Howard Forest ECC is the secondary Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) for Mendocino County. The CDF Expanded Dispatch is the OES Fire Rescue Coordination Center for Mendocino County.

Dispatch services are provided 24-hours daily, seven days per week.

CDF provides Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) for medical dispatching. EMD provides for a caller to respond to a standardized questioning format to help determine the type of resources required to appropriately assist the caller. EMD also directs the dispatcher to provide pre-arrival instructions to assist the patient once the emergency response has been dispatched.

Generally, all emergency calls will be dispatched within sixty (60) seconds of the call. This time frame is a general target; it is recognized that verification of location information and directions to the location of the emergency, as well as completion of the EMD process will sometimes require more than the 60-second time frame. Priority is placed on clear and reliable dispatch information for responding resources.

All emergency, non-emergency and administrative calls for service are logged into the Altaris Computer Aided Dispatch program (CAD). All key entries are automatically time stamped by the CAD program for accuracy. All entries that require a field response of any type are logged as incidents and administrative functions (such as Fire Department announcements) are logged in as events and do not generate an incident number.

All CAD data is available on a web based program that is accessible by a password protected program available to any agency or cooperator who does business with the dispatch center. The program used to retrieve this data is Crystal reports, an industry standard program for data retrieval. All users of this service will be restricted to access records that originate in the Mendocino Unit. This program has pre-built reports that the user can access. Any new reports must be requested through the Dispatch Center Manager with specifics of the information requested.

Staffing

CDF provides a wide awake dispatch center 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Staffing levels for the Dispatch Center are a minimum of 1 fully qualified Fire Captain and 1 fully qualified Communications Operator. During Fire Season, when the CDF fixed wing aircraft are on Contract (normally, 6/15 through 10/15), the Dispatch Center is staffed with a minimum of 1 qualified Fire Captain and 2 qualified Communications Operator during the day.

The ECC Manager is a CDF Battalion Chief. This person is responsible for all ECC operations and personnel and coordination with Mendocino County Dispatch contract. He/She is the primary contact for the Coastal Valley EMS coordinator for any changes in EMS dispatch policy or procedures.

Facilities

The CDF ECC infrastructure consists of two buildings that house the Dispatch Center and Expanded Dispatch along with all of the radio and telephone equipment. These two buildings together allow handling all of the normal daily activities and, if necessary, open an expanded dispatch to handle larger incidents. A 100 KW generator is also on site to automatically provide emergency power if necessary.

The Dispatch Center is capable providing all dispatching services on multiple frequencies. Fire and EMS are being dispatched at the same time using the Mendocino County Dispatching frequencies. CDF has Altaris Computer Aided Dispatch program (CAD) in a laptop and CDF can use another location's phone service along with a Mobile radio for a short duration. If this is not possible CDF has the ability to use a mobile location with Cell phone service. CDF has access to a Mobile Communications Center for a backup Emergency Command Center, if needed for a long duration event, which is usually available within four hours.

Local Agencies Dispatched Pursuant to this Contract

- Albion Fire
- Anderson Valley Fire
- Brooktrails Fire
- Comptche Fire
- Covelo Fire and Ambulance
- Elk Fire and Ambulance
- Fort Bragg Fire
- Hopland Fire
- Laytonville Fire and Ambulance
- Leggett Valley Fire
- Little Lake Fire Protection District
- Mendocino Fire
- Piercy Fire
- Potter Valley Fire
- Redwood Coast Fire
- Redwood Valley Fire
- Ridgewood Ranch Fire
- South Coast Fire
- Ukiah Valley Fire
- Westport Fire

Additionally, the following agencies are dispatched, all or in part, by Howard Forest:

- CALSTAR IV Air Ambulance - California Shock Trauma Air Rescue
- Anderson Valley Ambulance
- Fort Bragg Ambulance
- Ukiah Ambulance
- Redwood Empire Hazardous Materials Response Team (REHIT).

JACKSON DEMONSTRATION STATE FOREST

Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) is an approximately 48,652 acre redwood/Douglas-fir forest which straddles Highway 20 between Fort Bragg and Willits. The City of Fort Bragg, where the JDSF headquarters facility is located, is 2 miles north of the western property boundary. The town of Mendocino is located 2 miles west of the southwest corner of JDSF. The town of Willits and the community of Brooktrails are located approximately 7 miles to the east. The western edge of JDSF is an urban interface.

JDSF is managed by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for the purpose of demonstrating sustainable forest management, as directed by statute and Board of Forestry policy, which includes production of forest products and protection of values related to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, fisheries, and aesthetic values. JDSF is open to the public for recreation including but not limited to: camping, hunting, bicycling, hiking, and horseback riding. There are 22 campgrounds containing a total of 65 sites on JDSF.

Conservation camp crews are routinely working on JDSF projects. In addition to the fire station and conservation crew camps, there are three residences, a historic school house, and a barracks/learning center located along Highway 20 on JDSF.

JDSF has a Mediterranean climate, characterized by a pattern of low-intensity rainfall in the winter and cool, dry summers. Fog is a dominant climatic feature, generally occurring frequently during the summer months, and less frequently during the rest of the year. Air temperature is strongly influenced by the extent of the coastal fog belt, which extends inland up to 20 miles or more during summer nights, generally burning off back towards the coast by afternoon.

In general, the landscape is characterized by moderate to high relief. Slopes are less steep in the western watersheds within the Forest, and are steeper to the east in the watersheds nearer the crest of the Mendocino Coast Range. Elevations range from less than 100 feet within stream valleys along the western edge of JDSF, to a maximum of 2,092 feet in the southeast corner.

The dominant vegetation is redwood/Douglas-fir, which covers over half of the Forest. Other vegetation types are hardwood, pygmy forest, closed-cone (Bishop) pine/cypress, and alder. Grassland/bare ground and brush vegetation types together make up less than 1 percent of JDSF.

JDSF experiences periodic lightning caused fires. The primary risk of fire starts comes from the urban interface on the west and human caused fires resulting from public use of the Forest including Highway 20 traffic. Other potential ignition sources include logging and a 60KV PG&E transmission line roughly paralleling Highway 20 from Willits to Fort Bragg.

The conservation camp crews conduct road brushing on JDSF roads to maintain administrative, public, and emergency access throughout the forest. The projects include vegetation removal to reduce fuel loading adjacent to high use and strategically located roads and around the structures mentioned above.



Cal Fire Mendocino Unit Battalion Map



Author: S. Zimmeraker
2/8/11

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