

**A: DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS****Battalion One** – Paradise, Magalia, Stirling City**Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Chris Haile  
Town of Paradise Fire Department  
Town of Paradise Fire Safe Council  
The Upper Ridge Coordinating Council

**Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion One encompasses two large communities, Paradise and Paradise Pines (Magalia), and the smaller community of Stirling City. The Town of Paradise and community of Paradise Pines are more characteristic of an urban interface environment where wildland abruptly adjoins high density housing. Both communities are relatively large and densely populated, comprised substantially of an elderly population. Other areas within the battalion can be characterized as intermix areas, where houses are scattered amongst the wildland, such as those south of the Town of Paradise and north and east of the community of Paradise Pines.

Emergency access into and out of both communities is a real concern, due to limited, narrow roads and the expectation of large numbers of citizens trying to evacuate simultaneously. This is especially true in Magalia where the population density is very high and there is only one arterial road, the Skyway, leading in to and out of the community. This is further complicated by a stretch of the roadway that crosses Magalia Reservoir. To mitigate the traffic issues during an evacuation, several miles of the Skyway has been reconstructed and paved from Stirling City to Butte Meadows as a possible additional evacuation route. Evacuation plans, have also been created and distributed to the public and service providers in cooperation with the Butte County Fire Safe Council, Town of Paradise, and Butte County Office of Emergency Management.

**Fuels**

There is a wide range of vegetation types found within the Paradise Ridge. The vegetation types range from grass, chaparral brush mix, oak woodland and mixed-conifer timber. The lower elevations of Paradise have an overstory of ponderosa pine/California black oak mix, with an understory chaparral brush component consisting primarily of manzanita, ceanothus, Scotch broom, and poisonoak. The upper elevations of Magalia and Stirling City have a mixed-conifer timber overstory including Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir and incense-cedar. Hardwood trees in the understory include California black oak, tanoak, canyon live oak, bigleaf maple and California laurel. There is also an understory chaparral brush component consisting primarily of manzanita, deer brush, ceanothus, Scotch broom and poisonoak. Some areas of undeveloped lots or greenbelt areas have very dense brush which can affect fire behavior.

All these vegetation types provide fire control problems because of overstocked and overgrown conditions due to years of successful fire suppression. The potential for a large, fuel driven fire is very real when fuel moisture conditions are conducive to burning. Fire control will be very difficult due to high fire intensities leading to fire behavior problems such as long-range spotting, high rates of spread and long flame lengths. Direct attack will be impossible under these burning conditions for safety reasons. An indirect attack with a defensive approach is the most likely scenario for fire control.

## **Topography**

The most prominent topographic features within the battalion are the numerous steep canyons dispersed throughout the area. The two largest of these canyons, and most influential on fire behavior, are Butte Creek Canyon and West Branch Feather River Canyon. Butte Creek Canyon borders Paradise and Magalia to the west, while West Branch Feather River Canyon borders both towns and Stirling City to the east. Less prominent canyons, but still very influential on fire behavior, are located along the south border of Paradise. The smaller canyons run north-south into town limits, but substantially decrease in size by the time they enter Paradise. These canyons include Nance, Hamlin, Berry, Clear Creek and Dry Creek.

Gently sloping, broad ridges make up most of the Paradise, Magalia and Stirling City residential areas. There are some smaller canyons entering both Paradise and Magalia. The canyons entering Magalia are Little Butte Creek and Middle Butte Creek. These canyons are relatively small where they enter Magalia. However, a well established fire starting in either canyon would provide a substantial resistance to control. There are also numerous tributary drainages to all of the canyons entering Paradise and Magalia, which can substantially influence fire behavior.

## **Weather and Fire History**

Butte County has a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot dry summers. Precipitation is normally in the form of rain, ranging from approximately 20 to 80 inches per year, with snow in the higher elevations. The average annual high temperature for January is 55 degrees and for July is 96 degrees.

The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures, low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area. North wind events usually produce *red flag warning* conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior.

Lightning is cyclic in this area and is generally a minor occurrence. However, there have been lightning storms that have started numerous, damaging fires. Recent examples of this occurred in August of 1999 and June 2008 when fires started by lightning burned 59,000 acres in Butte County.

Historically, extreme weather conditions have not been the primary factor in large fires within the Paradise and Magalia area. However, there is a huge potential for weather to be a strong influence on fire behavior and should not be discounted. In June 2008, the wind-driven Humboldt fire burned over 23,000 acres and 351 structures.

## **Battalion Priorities**

- PRC 4291 compliance inspections
- School fire prevention education presentations
- Shaded fuel break projects along primary community escape routes - Skyway
- Shaded fuel break projects adjacent to Magalia / Paradise Pines

## **Battalion Two – Cohasset, Forest Ranch, Butte Meadows**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Dan Summerville  
Cohasset Community Association  
Buzztail Community Services District  
Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve  
Forest Ranch Preservation Alliance  
Forest Ranch Fire Safe Council  
Butte Meadows/Jonesville Community Association  
Sierra Pacific Industries  
Lassen National Forest

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion Two encompasses the Chico foothills, Lower Butte Creek Canyon, and the Communities of Cohasset, Forest Ranch, Butte Meadows/Jonesville, and the Hwy 32 corridor from the Chico city limits to the Tehama County line. With the exception of the core area of the communities of Forest Ranch and Cohasset, which are similar to an urban interface environment, the communities in the battalion can be characterized as intermix areas. Residences are scattered amongst the wildlands, which makes the 100' clearance around structures vital, as these residences are not as densely located compared to a more urban interface environment. Protecting these structures are more challenging to protect due to a lack of resources. The Cohasset area also is faced with a 'one way in/one way out' evacuation concern.

Steep inaccessible terrain combined with the previously mentioned light, flashy fuels at lower elevations and heavy fuel loading at higher elevations dominate the Fire Planning Area. Fires that start in this area immediately threaten high value/high risk exposures and are often complicated by the challenges of wildland urban interface firefighting.

### **Fuels**

There is a wide range of vegetation types found within the Battalion 2 Planning area. The vegetation types range from grass, chaparral brush mix, oak woodland, and timber.

Vegetation found within the communities of Cohasset and Forest Ranch is predominantly timber and associated brush. The timber type is primarily ponderosa pine/California black oak mix, with an understory chaparral brush component consisting primarily of manzanita, deerbrush, ceanothus, scotch broom, and poisonoak. Some areas of undeveloped lots or greenbelt areas have very dense brush which can affect fire behavior.

The community of Butte Meadows/Jonesville has a mixed-conifer timber type. Species of conifer trees in the overstory include Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, white fir and incense-cedar. Hardwood trees in the understory include California black oak, tanoak, canyon live oak, bigleaf maple and California laurel. There is also an understory chaparral brush component consisting primarily of manzanita, ceanothus, Scotch broom, and poisonoak.

Vegetation found in the Chico foothills and in the canyons of lower Butte Creek, Little Chico Creek and Big Chico Creek range from grass and brush to oak woodland. Some species of trees in this area include gray pine, blue oak, California black oak and California laurel. Brush species include toyon, western redbud, poisonoak and ceanothus.

All these vegetation types provide fire control problems because of overstocked and overgrown conditions due to years of successful fire suppression. The potential for a large, fuel driven fire is

very real when fuel moisture conditions are conducive to burning. Fire control will be very difficult due to high fire intensities leading to fire behavior problems such as long-range spotting, high rates of spread and long flame lengths. Direct attack will be impossible under these burning conditions for safety reasons. An indirect attack with a defensive approach is the most likely scenario for fire control.

### **Topography**

Steep canyons and drainages are the dominant topographic feature in the Cohasset Forest Ranch Ridge Fire Planning Area. Typically these canyons/drainages have limited access for fire apparatus and have few options for control line placement which may allow fires to become well established and very resistive to control efforts.

### **Weather and Fire History**

Butte County has a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot dry summers. Precipitation is normally in the form of rain, ranging from approximately 20 to 80 inches per year, with snow in the higher elevations. The average annual high temperature for January is 55 degrees and for July is 96 degrees.

The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures, low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area. North wind events usually produce *red flag warning* conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior.

Lightning is cyclic in this area and is generally a minor occurrence. However, there have been lightning storms in the past that have started numerous, damaging fires. An example of this occurred in August of 1999 when 47 fires started by lightning burned over 33,000 acres across Butte County, the majority of which burned in Battalion 2.

### **Battalion Priorities**

- PRC 4291 compliance inspections – the number of structures spread out throughout the area make this of vital importance
- Visible address signs – “help us find you”
- Shaded fuel break projects along primary community escape routes and firefighter ingress/egress routes.
- Sierra Pacific Industries H-line VMP

## **Battalion Three – Durham, Richvale, Yankee Hill**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Jeff Harter  
Yankee Hill / Concow Fire Safe Council

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion Three includes the communities of Butte Valley, Butte Community College, Durham, Richvale, Nelson, Dayton, Concow and Yankee Hill. It 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 railroad and a State scenic route (Highway 70) in the Feather River Canyon. The Thermalito Irrigation District owns Concow Lake and much of the land surrounding it. The greatest concentration of population is on developed parcels along Highway 70, Concow Lake and the Big Bend area. Many areas have 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. An evacuation plan and a community information radio station were created in cooperation with the Yankee Hill Fire Safe Council.

### **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 Highway 70 along the north fork of the Feather River Canyon, the fuel type transitions from grass-oak woodland to brush then to mixed conifers and black oak. Below 1000' elevation, annual grasses and oak woodland with blue and valley oak cover the lower foothills. At the 1000' elevation brush species including manzanita, chaparral, toyon and white thorn, appear and grow especially thick in the drainages. Between 2000' and 2500', mixed-conifer, ponderosa pine and black oak appear in the overstory.

### **Topography**

The elevations range from 200' to 4300'. The area west of Highway 99 is relatively flat agricultural orchards and crops. To the east of Highway 99, 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 and Fire History**

Butte County has a Mediterranean climate with cool, wet winters and hot dry summers. Precipitation is normally in the form of rain, ranging from approximately 20 to 80 inches per year, with snow in the higher elevations. The average annual high temperature for January is 55 degrees and for July is 96 degrees.

The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures, low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area. North wind events usually produce *red flag warning* conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior.

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.

The Yankee Hill – Concow area has a history of large wildfires. The Camp fire, which was part of the Butte Lightning Complex (2008), destroyed or damaged over 100 homes and accounted for a large portion of the 59,000 acres consumed during the siege; the Poe fire (2001) burned 8,333 acres and destroyed 50 homes; the Seventy fire (2001) burned 1,711 acres; the Concow fire (2000) burned 1,845 acres, killed one civilian, injured several firefighters and destroyed 16 homes; and a lightning event in 1999 burned tens of thousands of acres on the east side of Highway 70 north of Pulga.

### **Battalion Priorities**

- PRC 4291 compliance inspections - the number of structures spread out throughout the area make this of vital importance
- Visible address signs – “help us find you”
- School fire prevention education presentations
- Shaded fuel break projects along primary community escape routes and firefighter ingress/egress routes.
- Sierra Pacific Industries V-line VMP

## **Battalion Four – Chico foothills and valley (north)**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Greg McFadden  
City of Chico Fire Department

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion Four encompasses an area of approximately 170 square miles with a population of about 50,000 people in the northwestern corner of Butte County, including the greater unincorporated area surrounding the City of Chico. CAL FIRE personnel staff three Butte County Fire Department fire stations that make up “Battalion Four” which maintains automatic aid agreements with the City of Chico, Tehama County and Hamilton City Fire Department in Glenn County. Critical infrastructure includes a Union Pacific Railroad main line, an underground petroleum pipeline, Highway 99 and Highway 32 as well as the Sacramento River. The Chico Foothills have seen a substantial increase in home development. Prescription emphasis is placed on public education and enforcement.

### **Fuels**

The valley area contains a large agricultural component. The Chico foothills mainly consist of light to medium fuels such as annual grasses and chaparral brush mix. Combined with the topography and recent structural development, these fuels create a fire suppression concern due to their ability to quickly increase in size.

### **Topography**

The valley area is predominantly flat. The Chico foothills rise at approximately a 15% slope with a generally western aspect. The Butte Creek, Little Chico Creek and Big Chico Creek watercourses/drainages run through the battalion.

### **Weather and Fire History**

The valley (north) and Chico foothills do not exhibit any substantial differences to the Unit-wide weather pattern. Since the battalion lies in the lower elevations, annual rainfall is approximately 26” per year. The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures (above 100-degrees F), low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area.

North wind events usually produce red flag warning conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior. Wind is the primary factor in large fire spread in the battalion. Large fires in Battalion Four include the Skyway fire which burned 425 acres in 2006 and the Humboldt fire which burned over 23,000 acres in 2008.

### **Battalion Priorities**

- School fire prevention education presentations
- PRC 4291 compliance inspections

## **Battalion Five – Bangor, Berry Creek, Forbestown, Feather Falls**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Mike Shorrock  
Berry Creek Fire Safe Council  
Forbestown Fire Safe Council  
Feather Falls Fire Safe Council  
Plumas National Forest

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion Five covers the areas of Berry Creek, Brush Creek, Mountain House, Feather Falls, Forbestown, Clipper Mills and several Native American rancherias. There are also significant land holdings of Sierra Pacific Industries and State and Federal lands. Battalion Five spans three prominent ridges.

The community of Berry Creek is the most compact but still qualifies as a wildland urban *intermix*. Access and the remote location create a timely response concern in the event of a fast moving fire. The highest concentrations of structures are within the Lake Madrone development and along Bald Rock Road. The community also houses the summer retreat Camp Okizu. An evacuation plan has been created for the community.

The community of Feather Falls, on Lumpkin Ridge, is also a wildland urban intermix. Access/egress is via Lumpkin Road. Traffic from logging trucks and summer recreational travel increases seasonally. Many residents are located on remote roads that are ill-maintained and address identification is often limited. An evacuation plan has been created for the community.

Forbestown Ridge includes the community of Forbestown. Forbestown is near the edge of Butte and Yuba County. Steep mountainous roads create an increase in emergency response times. The Butte County Fire Department maintains automatic aid agreements with the Foothill Fire Protection District and Loma Rica/Brownsville Community Services District, both in Yuba County.

The communities have active fire safe councils that are involved in evacuation planning, fuel hazard reduction and outreach and education.

### **Fuels**

Battalion Five consists of a wide range of vegetation types. Below 1000' elevation, annual grasses and oak woodland with blue and valley oak cover the lower foothills. At the 1000' elevation, brush species, including manzanita, chaparral, toyon and white thorn, appear and grow especially thick in the drainages. Between 2000' and 2500' second growth ponderosa pine/ black oak appear in the overstory, and above 2500' there is a mixed-conifer overstory.

### **Topography**

Elevation ranges from 400 feet to over 4,000 feet. Prominent topographical features in the planning area are the numerous steep canyons dispersed throughout the area. The two main canyons form the Middle Fork and South Fork of Lake Oroville. The area contours for numerous tributaries including Oregon Gulch, Cedar Ravine, Jack Hill Ravine and Forbestown Ravine to name a few. The remote nature of the area makes access difficult along these areas.

### **Weather and Fire History**

The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures, low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind

speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area. North wind events usually produce *red flag warning* conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior. To the east, areas of the adjacent Plumas Forest generate weather patterns that produce thunderstorms and dry lightning throughout the fire season.

Battalion Five has had several large fires occur in recent history. These fires include the South and Union fires that were part of the 1999 Butte Lightning Complex, the Frey fire that burned 4,000 acres of SRA in 2008 and the Craig fire that burned 2,001 acres in 2008.

### **Battalion Priorities**

- PRC 4291 compliance inspections - the number of structures spread out throughout the area make this of vital importance
- Visible address signs – “help us find you”
- Community outreach/education at community events
- Forbestown Road Shaded Fuel Break
- Zink Road Shaded Fuel Break

## **Battalion Six – Oroville, Palermo, Kelly Ridge**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Russ Fowler  
City of Oroville Fire Department  
El Medio Fire Protection District  
Department of Fish & Game - Oroville Wildlife Area  
Department of Parks & Recreation  
Department of Water Resources

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

Battalion Six includes the communities of Cherokee, Oregon City, Thermalito, Kelly Ridge, WP Addition, Wyandotte, Copley Acres, and Palermo. The City of Oroville and the El Medio Fire Protection District lie within the planning area boundaries. Automatic aid agreements are maintained with the City of Oroville Fire Department and the El Medio Fire Protection District. There is extensive State Parkland and Department of Water Resources owned land throughout the area. There are two Indian Rancherias within the planning area, both with gaming casinos and tribal communities (Mooretown and Berry Creek). CAL FIRE provides wildland fire protection to the Native American rancherias in the State Responsibility Area through our statewide agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The main influencing factor for vegetation fires is light flashy fuels mixed in with numerous structures.

The City of Oroville and the El Medio Fire Protection District both have unique fire safety planning areas within their jurisdictions. The City of Oroville has large areas of wildland urban interface. The City has a weed abatement program to help alleviate the risk of wildfire to some of these occupancies. The El Medio Fire District has large areas of light flashy fuels, which have a yearly tendency to become ignited and spread rapidly into surrounding homes and businesses. The District attempts to mitigate this by conducting fuel hazard reduction burns in typically fire prone areas. However, this measure only treats a small portion of a relatively large area of the District.

Critical infrastructure within this planning area includes the Department of Water Resources State Water Project (Oroville Dam/ Hyatt powerhouse, Diversion Dam/ power plant, Thermalito Powerhouse), Pacific Gas and Electric Company's high-voltage transmission infrastructure (major power grid), Union Pacific railroad's all-weather transcontinental route, and South Feather Water and Power's hydro-generating and water distribution infrastructure.

Pre-fire prescription emphasis is in education and enforcement (hazard reduction). The battalion, in cooperation with the Butte Fire Safe Council, was a participant in "Fire in the Foothills" – a fire safe community outreach program to reach fire prone residents in the Eastern foothills of Oroville. Fire fighters maintain strong community ties, enhancing fire safety and prevention, by actively attending community meetings and events as well as participating in school education programs.

### **Fuels**

The southern portion of the fire planning area is predominately grass land. As the area extends north and east the fuel type's change with the increased slope in topography. Fuel types increase in size and type to include grass, oak woodland, and manzanita, chaparral, toyon and white thorn. The 11,869 acre Oroville Wildlife Area is primarily a riparian woodland habitat along the Feather River and grasslands around the Thermalito Afterbay.

### **Topography**

The southern area is predominately flat. As the area extends into the adjoining planning area, the slope increases (up to 25%), leading into the other planning areas. The steepest slopes can be found

leading up the Cherokee Ravine and the Oregon Gulch drainage. As the topography extends east the slope is not as severe but the area is scattered with multi- directional drainages and access is problematic due to sporadic road placement.

### **Weather**

Table Mountain – East Oroville does not exhibit any substantial differences to the Unit wide weather pattern. Nightly drainage winds develop on a regular basis in the eastern foothills, primarily below the Oroville Dam

### **Fire History**

Significant fire history (since 1990) includes wind driven grass/riparian fires and topographic driven brush/WUI fires (WUI listed if structures destroyed).

Brush Fires:	Oregon Fire, 2004, 1,955 acres, WUI, Oregon Gulch Rd Canal Fire, 1989, 595 acres, WUI, East Oroville/Mt Ida Rd Table Fire, 1994, 1,132 acres, Schrimmer Ravine/Table Mtn
Grass Fires:	Wild Fire, 1990, 257 acres, WUI, Oroville Wildlife Area Larkin Fire, 2001, 627 acres, Oroville Wildlife Area Larkin Fire, 2000, 487 acres, Oroville Wildlife Area Seventy Fire, 2003, 608 acres, WUI, Hwy 70/Palermo Ophir Fire, 2008, 959 acres, WUI, Hwy 70/Palermo 149 Fire, 1995, 2,140 acres, Hwy 149/Cottonwood Nelson Fire, 1993, 744 acres, Nelson Rd/Campbell Hills

### **Battalion Priorities**

- Increase awareness within the planning area by continuing education on the importance of defensible space around structures, importance of exterior construction materials, ingress and egress, visibility/address, and access to water supplies.
- Conduct Vegetation Management Program activities in the Oroville Wildlife Area and the Lake Oroville State Park System.
- Reduce debris burning caused vegetation fires by education and enforcement

## **Battalion Seven – Biggs, Gridley**

### **Collaborators**

CAL FIRE / Butte County Fire Department Battalion Chief Mike Brown  
CAL FIRE / Gridley Fire Department Fire Captain Skip Sannar  
Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (Department of Fish and Game)  
Cities of Biggs and Gridley  
Sutter County Fire Department

### **Wildland Urban Interface Situation**

The Valley (South) encompasses the southwestern corner of Butte County and includes the cities of Biggs and Gridley, and the unincorporated communities of Honcut and Manzanita. An automatic aid agreement is maintained and with Sutter County Fire Department/Live Oak.

The Gray Lodge Wildlife area is an off map critical infrastructure area within the unit. The area has benefited from an aggressive Vegetation Management Program.

Pre-fire prescription emphasis is placed on education and enforcement, especially municipal weed abatement. Firefighters seek to establish strong ties to the community through the maintenance of pre-fire plans, smoke detector installation, third grade education programs and other community education events.

The greatest risk of fire loss to the Valley (south) is within the cities of Biggs and Gridley and the concentrated areas affecting agricultural processing plants, storage areas and crop acreage. Also, fires that start near the river bottom may spread to adjacent fire sheds.

### **Fuels**

The east side of the Valley (south) is a transition zone at the edge of the Sacramento Valley and is bisected by the State Responsibility Area and Local Responsibility Area line. This “front” is characterized by grass fuels on the flat valley edge and blue oak woodland in the rolling foothills. The west side is the Upper Butte Sink of Butte Creek, an important flyway, fishery and wildlife habitat characterized by seasonal marshes, riparian habitat and a heavy loading of fine fuels. The two cities are surrounded by intensely farmed land. The Feather River bisects the battalion flowing from north to south. The river bottom is a ten thousand-acre hardwood forest with its own unique fire regime.

### **Topography**

The Valley (South) is predominantly flat. Elevation ranges from 50’ to 110’. The river bottom contributes the only unique feature to the area.

### **Weather**

The Valley (south) does not exhibit any substantial differences to the unit-wide weather pattern. The predominant summer weather pattern includes high to very high temperatures, low humidity and light to moderate south winds associated with high pressure weather gradients. Occasionally during the summer, dry weather fronts will approach northern California bringing increased wind speeds from the south on approach, then changing direction to north winds after passing the area. North wind events usually produce red flag warning conditions and provide the highest potential for extreme fire behavior.

### **Battalion Priorities**

- Municipal weed abatement
- School fire prevention education presentations

- Red Suspenders Day – community outreach event
- Butte County Fair – Fire Resistant Building Materials Demonstration
- Butte County Fair – Fire Resistant Landscaping Demonstration

## **Training and Safety Bureau**

### **Purpose Statement**

The Butte Unit Training and Safety Bureau is responsible for the delivery and documentation of training for all career and volunteer personnel. The Bureau will ensure that all federal, state and local training mandates, laws and regulations are followed as they pertain to training.

The Bureau will operate within and enforce the policies, procedures and protocols of CAL FIRE, Butte County Fire Department and the Butte County Fire Chiefs Association.

In 2010, the Training and Safety Bureau provided or coordinated a total of 30,127 student instructional hours to over 420 career and volunteer firefighters from CAL FIRE Butte Unit, Butte County Fire Department and personnel from other Butte County Training officer Association agencies.

There was also a significant amount of staff time spent to coordinate students, courses, instructors, recording and tracking training, and ensuring accurate trainee and qualified ICS qualifications are listed in ROSS.

The Bureau is also responsible to coordinate and facilitate the unit-wide training plan, match training courses with approved personnel training requests and maintain a central location for updated training records for all employees.

The Bureau is currently staffed with four Fire Captains, one part time Office Assistant, One part time Photographer/Videographer, and one Battalion Chief.

The Butte Unit Training and Safety Bureau is an active participant in the Butte County Training Officer's Association.

### **Objectives**

- Enforce state/federal law, and CAL FIRE-Butte County Fire Department training policies, procedures and protocols as they apply to career and volunteer personnel.
- Ensure that all personnel receive the opportunity for training that is required for their specific positions.
- Document all employees training in a common database (Train Tracker and TMS).
- Work with the CAL FIRE Region Office regarding the allocation of training for CAL FIRE personnel and the presentation of training at regional training locations.
- Work with cooperators at the Butte Community College to ensure communications, cooperation and coordination of all public safety training.
- Work with cooperators as a member of the Butte County Training Officers Association.
- Meet or exceed those training standards identified in the CAL-FIRE Training handbook.

- Implement the training priorities set by the Butte Unit's executive staff.
- Identify the needs of each employee to help achieve career development goals.
- Seek alternative funding sources in the form of grants, participation with universities and sharing courses with other agencies.

**Mission**

The Butte Unit Training and Safety Bureau Program goal is to assure quality service to the public by developing the skills and abilities of all CAL FIRE, Butte County Fire Department's career and volunteer personnel. This is accomplished through training that is economical, effective, and consistent with the needs of the public, the State of California, the County of Butte, the Department, and the employee.

## **Emergency Command Center**

### **Purpose Statement**

The Butte Unit Emergency Command Center (BTU ECC) provides command and control services, as well as "pre arrival" emergency medical services, for all of the unincorporated areas of Butte County, in addition to the Cities of Oroville, Biggs, Gridley, the El Medio Fire Protection District, and the Mooretown Indian Rancheria. The BTU ECC is also the CAL FIRE Command and Control center for State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands within Butte County.

Furthermore, the BTU ECC is the California Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA) Fire Operational Area Mutual Aid Coordination Center for Butte County. As the Operational Area Coordinator, the BTU ECC has responsibility to coordinate all fire mutual aid requests for all jurisdictions within Butte County. This responsibility also gives the BTU ECC the authority to directly obtain resources from all neighboring counties including Yuba, Sutter, Plumas, Glenn, Colusa, Tehama, and Lassen.

In 1995, the BTU ECC processed 12,024 incidents. In 2010, 15,411 incidents were processed, an increase of over **28%** in 15 years. The BTU ECC is currently staffed with five Fire Captains, seven Communications Operators, and one Battalion Chief. This staffing has remained fairly constant since 2006, and allows for three person staffing during day shift hours, and generally two person staffing "wide awake" during the night shift with the ECC Duty Captain available close by.

### **Objectives**

- Continue to provide quality command and control services, as well as excellent customer service, to all of our customers.
- Pursue staffing increases to support increases in daily incidents, as well as increasing job complexity, and to provide for relief dispatchers.
- Pursue cooperative agreements with other departments and agencies to enhance efficiency of resource command and control, within Butte County.
- Pursue available technology to more efficiently conduct command and control operations.
- Cooperate fully and effectively with allied agencies.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Oroville Emergency Command Center is to provide a consistent, accurate, timely, and coordinated command and control system. "We will provide support, direction, and communications with our ultimate goal being the best service possible to all who depend on our team."

## **Butte County Fire Safe Council**

The Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) is the County's largest ally in educating and assisting the public with wildfire preparedness. The BCFSC is funded by grants and community donations, and it operates in cooperation with public works and fire agencies throughout Butte County.

The BCFSC is the "parent" organization to several active and organized local fire safe councils throughout the county. Local fire safe councils have been established in the Town of Paradise, Upper Ridge, Lower Pentz (below Paradise), Yankee Hill, Berry Creek, Forbestown, Feather Falls, Palermo-Oroville, Cohasset, and Forest Ranch. The BCFSC Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from the local councils and representatives of many public and private stakeholders throughout Butte County, including CAL FIRE/Butte County Fire Department.

Several defensible space assistance programs are provided by the BCFSC. The Fire Safe Home Visit Program allows residents to receive free expert advice to improve their home's chances of surviving a wildfire. The Chipping Program is available to chip brush and tree trimming slash for community members of the fire safe council. The Residents Assistance Program assists Butte County residents who are physically and financially unable to maintain defensible space around their home and have no other person to assist in the clearance.

The BCFSC is also a wildfire education outlet. The "Wildfire in the Foothills" 6<sup>th</sup> grade education program educates students on proper planning to reduce risks and survive a wildfire. The organization also produces and distributes information to residents on public safety topics including wildfire safety, evacuation planning and preparedness, and tips for dealing with winter weather events.

The BCFSC has taken the lead to implement many fuel reduction projects. Projects typically involve shaded fuel breaks, reducing ground and ladder fuels along community escape routes. Many projects are implemented in cooperation with Butte County Public Works and CAL FIRE handcrews. Most projects are conceived, planned and implemented by the initiative and dedication of community volunteers with support from the BCFSC staff, local agencies and various grant funding sources.

Additional information regarding the BCFSC and the programs and resources it provides can be obtained at their website [www.thenet411.net](http://www.thenet411.net).