

SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS

A: DIVISION / BATTALION / PROGRAM PLANS

Battalion 11 – Millerton Battalion

Overview:

The Millerton Battalion is located on the north end of the Fresno-Kings Unit and includes the communities of Friant, Prather, and Auberry. CAL FIRE wildland fire protection resources are located at the Millerton and Hurley fire stations. CAL FIRE protects 98,020 acres of State Responsibility Area (SRA) within the Battalion. The Fresno County Fire Protection District, via a Schedule A contract with CAL FIRE, protects approximately 1,629 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA). Approximately 81,790 acres of SRA are concurrently within the Fresno County Fire Protection District. Approximately 19,314 acres of SRA are concurrently within the County of Fresno Community Service Area (CSA) #51, also known as the Auberry Volunteer Fire Department. Additionally, the Battalion protects approximately 5,070 acres of Sierra National Forest lands under CAL FIRE Direct Protection Responsibility (DPA).

The Battalion is moderately populated with structures on ranch/farm lands and suburban type subdivisions. The communities of Friant, Prather, and Auberry contain some light commercial and retail occupancies. The Fire Hazard Severity Zone classifications in the Battalion are “Moderate” and “High. Most fires in the area travel quickly due to the light fuels and pose an immediate threat to structures. The Millerton Lake recreational area attracts large numbers of people during the summer months and poses a high risk for ignitions. The San Joaquin River below the Friant Dam is in the LRA and receives heavy recreational use during the summer months. Fires originating in the river bottom often pose an immediate threat to the SRA. CAL FIRE and Fresno County Fire Protection District also respond to several swift-water rescue incidents at the river each year.

FUELS:

The wildland fuels are predominately fuel model 1 (annual grasses) and fuel model 2 (annual grasses / oak / grey pine). A brush component is introduced along the northern slope aspects of the San Joaquin River Drainage and at the upper elevations of the Battalion. The upper elevations contain fuel model 4 (mature brush), fuel model 6 (intermediate brush) and fuel model 2 (grass / oak / pine). The north and east slope aspects contain a significant dead fuel load.

TOPOGRAPHY:

The Battalion is situated on the eastern foothill edge of the San Joaquin Valley. Elevations range from approximately 300 feet to 2,800 feet. The predominate

terrain within the Battalion is gently sloped foothills. The San Joaquin River Drainage is a significant topographic feature and presents fire suppression challenges due to steep slopes, difficult access, and spot fire potential across the river onto the Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit. Unique to the area are the basalt lava table topped mountains. The vernal pools on the table tops contain sensitive plant and animal species, requiring modified fire suppression tactics when possible. Most of the table top mountains are owned by the Sierra Foothill Nature Conservancy.

WEATHER:

Situated near the San Joaquin Valley Floor, the area experiences much of the same hot and dry weather as the valley. Daytime temperatures over 100 degrees with minimal cooling at night are common during the months of July and August. The area occasionally experiences severe fire weather as frontal systems approach or thunderstorms develop. Critical winds do not occur frequently. The last significant fire activity caused by lightning was in 2006. Average annual precipitation is approximately 14 inches.

FIRE HISTORY:

The recent major wildland fires are the Powerhouse Fire in 1989 and the Valerie Meadows Fire in 1979. The Battalion typically experiences a few extended attack fires in the 30 – 300 acre range each year. Most of the lands at the upper elevations have experienced fire within the past 50 years. Fires at the lower elevations generally do not offer fuel reduction benefits in following year(s) due to re-growth of annual grasses.

PRIORITY AREAS

San Joaquin River Drainage

The San Joaquin River serves as the boundary line between Fresno and Madera counties. The San Joaquin River Trail is frequently used by hikers and mountain bikers year around. Access to the river and river trail is limited and there are few natural barriers in the river drainage to use for fire perimeter control. Cell phone service is limited, delaying report of fires and other emergencies. The terrain is steep and fuels are heavy on the northern slope aspect (Fresno County side). The mouth of the drainage is in alignment with the prevailing wind. The drainage is winding and narrow in places. Strong up canyon winds create potential for a fire to spread to both sides of the river and move up-canyon quickly, threatening the communities of Prather, Auberry, Meadow Lakes, and Shaver Lake. Of particular concern along the drainage is the Powerhouse Road area, which has experienced several fires in the past 25 years. A skilled nursing facility (Wish-i-ah Care Center), housing 100 patients, is a significant target hazard in this area. The community of Auberry was partially burned over during the Powerhouse Fire in 1989 which started in the San Joaquin River Drainage.

Morgan Canyon

Morgan Canyon is south of the community of Prather. State Highway 168 travels through the canyon. The area is moderately populated with structures on 5 – 20 acre parcels. Many houses and roads in the area were constructed before the SRA firesafe regulations became effective. Steep slopes, a brush fuel component, and inadequate private road systems pose significant challenges for fire perimeter control, structure defense, and civilian evacuation. Vehicle fires are frequent along Highway 168 which can rapidly spread to the wildland. Structure defense is an immediate priority due to the population density.

PROJECTS

1. Comstock Fuelbreak

CAL FIRE is using federal grant funds to construct a fuelbreak, known as the “Comstock Fuelbreak,” in the Auberry area. The fuelbreak will serve to protect Auberry, the Wish-i-ah Care Center, and the Big Sandy Tribal Rancheria from fires originating in the San Joaquin River Drainage near the Powerhouse Road area. The fuelbreak may also protect the communities of Meadow Lakes and Shaver Lake from fires originating in the Auberry area. The 400 feet wide fuelbreak is approximately 150 acres. Fuels will be treated by mechanical and hand methods. The fuelbreak adjoins Sierra National Forest land. The Sierra plans to treat its properties to make the fuelbreak contiguous. The Battalion expects to mechanically treat at least 40% of the project in 2011 by incorporating the project into the annual dozer proficiency training. Additional treatment will continue for 18-24 months.

2. Defensible Space Inspections

CAL FIRE personnel enforce Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 by conducting defensible space inspections (LE100). Engine crews and inspectors (when funded) conduct inspections for the purpose of educating property owners/tenants about fire safety and enforcing the 100 feet defensible space law. There are an estimated 2,500 structures in the Battalion. The goal for 2011 is to inspect at least 80% of the structures.

The Fresno County Fire Protection District has a weed abatement ordinance which is primarily enforced in the LRA. The Sky Harbor Subdivision, which is in the SRA, has small parcels with less than 30 foot setback. Property owners / tenants are not able to achieve 100 feet defensible space around their houses due to the small parcel size. Since this area is concurrently within the Fire District and there is a high potential for structure loss, the weed abatement ordinance is applied to vacant parcels that are adjacent to structures. The weed abatement ordinance is similarly applied to the Mira Bella, Ventana Hills, Brighton Crest, and any future subdivisions.

3. Sky Harbor Road Pre-Suppression Fire Line

A pre-suppression fire line, approximately two (2) miles in length, is established along Sky Harbor Road to slow the spread of fires originating from the roadside. The fire line is re-constructed annually by fire crews from the Miramonte Conservation Camp.

4. Roadside Fire Prevention Signs

The Battalion maintains two (2) roadside signs year-around to educate the public about fire safety. The signs display seasonal appropriate messages. The goal for 2011 is to add a sign in the community of Auberry and south of the community of Friant.

Current Signs:

- Auberry Road / Foothill Rd
- Willow Avenue / Copper Avenue

5. School Team Teaching

The Battalion actively participates in annual team teaching programs at the following schools:

- Auberry Elementary School
- Big Sandy Tribal Rancheria Headstart Preschool

This is a cooperative effort with the Sierra National Forest and is accomplished during the month of April.

6. High-Visibility Public Interaction

The Millerton Lake State Recreation Area and the County of Fresno Lost Lake Park attract thousands of visitors during the summer months. High-visibility interaction with the public during critical fire weather and occasions of high recreation use prevent unwanted fires. The Battalion's resources engage the public in a positive manner to remind them of the danger of fire.

- July 4 fireworks patrol.
- Red Flag patrols.
- Memorial day weekend visits to recreation areas.
- Weekly visits to the recreation areas.

Collaborators with the Millerton Battalion

- Highway 168 Firesafe Council
- Sierra National Forest
- California State Parks, Millerton Lake Recreational Area
- United States Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Land Management
- Sierra Foothill Conservancy
- Fresno County Sheriff's Office
- Table Mountain Tribal Rancheria
- Big Sandy Tribal Rancheria
- California Highway Patrol
- CAL TRANS
- Pacific Gas and Electric

Battalion 12 – Blasingame Battalion

The Blasingame Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 121,192 acres of state responsibility land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Battalion is bordered on the east side by the Sierra National Forest.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from about 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of over 7,300 on the eastern border. Highway 168 runs through the Northern part of the Battalion. This provides a high volume of visitor traffic through the battalion each day to the many recreation areas within the Battalion and Sierra National Forest. Shaver Lake is located in the northern part of the Battalion and provides a high volume of summertime traffic. This reservoir is one of many that supply the San Joaquin River that runs through the Central Valley.

The Battalion has three (3) fire roads which incorporate 15 miles of access that has to be maintained annually. Currently, all roads have been mapped and GIS data gathered for future use in the Unit's fire plan. The Battalion's diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. In the middle of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models and continue to increase in size and complexity while moving to conifer models, the upper end of the Battalion is timber interspersed with a large number of residential structures. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The entire Battalion has seen a major increase in population over the past several years. This provides for an increase potential in ignitions along with the added WUI

problems that are associated in the foothill and mountain areas of California. Recent Battalion fire history indicates an average of 18 ignitions per year over the last decade. We have seen several large extended attack fires during the last few years in the Battalion. The last major significant event occurred in the 1989. The common denominators for large wildfires are fuel, slope, weather, and assets at risk. We cannot change slope or weather but we can modify fuels and ensure that the individual homes and communities have a defensible space. All new homes being built are subject to PRC 4290 regulations which assist us in the defense of these newest additions to the watershed.

Priority Areas

- Area 1
 - Bald Mt. Subdivision area contains approximately 350 homes. They are located at the ridge top of a south/west –facing slope. It is up slope of a Fuel Model 4. The ridge top is mainly Fuel Model 4 with 8 and 9 mixed. CAL FIRE response times are a minimum of 15 minutes. There is a high fire history in the area.
- Area 2
 - Linson Lane and Shaver Springs subdivisions have approximately 75 homes between them. They are both located at or near the top of a drainage. Drainage fuels consist mainly of Fuel Model 4 type. CAL FIRE response time to the area is approximately 15 minutes. Fire history has been moderate in the area but has high potential.
- Area 3
 - Sugarloaf/Meadow Lake North fuelbreak extensions. There are about 25 homes within this area but this fuelbreak would reduce fire traveling into another 100 homes within the North Bald Mt. Area. This project is located top of drainage with west facing slope. The fuels consist of Fuel Model 4 with 8 and 9 mixed. CAL FIRE response times are a minimum of 15 minutes. This area has high fire history.
- Area 4
 - The community of Cressman’s contains approximately 80 homes. It is located mid-slope on a south facing slope. Peterson Mill Road is located below the community of Cressman’s. Wildflower subdivision is located above Cressman’s. The fuel in the community itself is mainly Fuel Model 8. Fuels below would fall into Fuel Model 4. CAL FIRE response time is 15 minutes. Fire damage potential is extreme.

Existing Fire Plan Projects

- **The Beal Fire Road**

The Beal Fire Road has been in place for many years. It is a joint venture with CAL FIRE, local homeowners and the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council. The road extends from Tollhouse Road near Burrough Mountain Road across Highway 168 at the 4 Lanes, below Meadow Lakes, to Auberry Road. The purpose of the project is to reduce fuel accumulations and to decrease the potential of a wildfire that would cause damage to natural resources including wildlife habitat in the Beal Fire Road area. The last VMP done on the Beal Fire Road was begun in 1994. It was a three (3) year project. Road grading occurs on a yearly basis on parts of the Beal Fire Road. The project was proven successful when put to the test in 1998. A fire burned from the bottom of the 4 Lanes near the bottom of Backbone Mountain, uphill toward Meadow Lakes. Brushing had been completed at the west end of Beal Fire Road that spring and summer. That action allowed fire equipment to enter on the Beal Fire Road and perform successful structure protection. The forward progression of the fire was stopped just beyond the Fire Road. Future needs for the Beal Fire Road include placement of cement water tanks at strategic points along the Fire Road for fire suppression use, and brushing of all the Fire Road. The project was completed in 2007 and the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council is conducting maintenance with the use of grant funding. Continuing maintenance is underway in the Spring of 2011 by CAL FIRE using a USFS grant.

- **Cressman's Road**

This is a grant project administered by the Unit Forester and the Fire Plan Coordinator. It was begun in 2000. The premise of the program is to reduce fuel loading along the main roads in the Cressman's subdivision. This will enhance emergency exit for civilians and make access easier for emergency equipment responding to the area. It will also help slow the spread of a wildfire approaching from below. This project was completed in 2004. Maintenance was started in 2010 as a continuing project for the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council with work completed in the spring of 2011 by CAL FIRE under a USFS grant.

- **Peterson Mill Road**

This is an additional grant project for the Unit that was ultimately started due to the success of the Cressman Road Project. The demonstration project began in the spring of 2005. This project, which is to reduce fuel loading, is dependent upon "Prop 40" funding, the cooperation of the Fire Safe Council, and that of the stakeholders in the area involved. As with the Cressman project, this project will also aid in the emergency access of civilians and emergency equipment and will help slow the spread of a wildfire. This project was completed by the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council with grant funds in

2008. Additional grant funding should be sought to provide maintenance to this project.

- **Meadow Lake / Meadow Lake North**

The Bald Mountain ridge top is a significant fire hazard area. There is great potential in the area for large dollar losses due to fire activity. Currently, the Beal Fire Road stands as the only defense against large fires rising from the slopes below the Meadow Lakes area. The first phase of line was constructed at the top of the ridge along Tower Lane. The second phase of line is under construction from the North end of Tower Lane to Auberry Rd. and the South end of the Acorn / Sugarloaf fuelbreak. The first phase was completed by the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council using grant funding. The second phase is underway by CAL FIRE using USFS grant funding.

- **Four Lane Pre-Suppression Fire Line**

Construction of a Pre-Suppression Fire Line near the bottom of the 4 Lane on Highway 168 at Backbone Mountain is a cooperative project in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service. The purpose of the trail is to prevent the spread of fires started from material dislodged from hot brake shoes. The project has been ongoing for a number of years.

Roadside Fire Prevention Signs

- The Battalion has a total of eight (8) Fire Prevention signs. Two (2) are in Blasingame's first in area and six (6) are in Shaver Lake's first in area. Shaver Lake Station has an annual fire prevention sign plan which includes Shaver Lake and Bald Mountain regions. This project is done in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service. The signs are placed along Highway 168 and Auberry Road. Throughout the Battalion, the signs are changed regularly to indicate seasonal messages. Sign examples include: "Ready, Set, Go", "It's flu season – clean your chimney", "Burn permits required", "Clear brush 100 feet around your house", "No Burning" and fire danger indicators. Ongoing projects include replacing and or repainting existing signs that are in poor repair.

- **Locations of Fire Prevention Signs in Battalion 12**

1. Auberry Road at the Beal Fire Road
N37°04.463'
W119.26.608
2. Bald Mountain Road south of Auberry Road
N37°04.324'
W119°24.594'

3. Auberry Road at Alder Springs (bulletin board)
 N37°03.911'
 W119°24.087'
4. Highway 168 at Vista Point (bulletin board)
 N37°03.541'
 W119°22.042'
5. Ridge Road in Ridge Top Subdivision
 N37°04.563'
 W119°20.449'
6. Highway 168 below Bretz Mill Road
 N37°05.550'
 W119°19.028'
7. Sample Road and Pittman Hill Road
 N36°54.540'
 W119°28.009'
8. Highway 168 ½ mile west of 17043 Highway 168
 N36°55.372'
 W119°30.922'

Potential Fire Plan Opportunities

- **Whispering Springs Rd.**

This would be a project by the Highway 168 Fire safe Council using grant money along the existing roadway; it would reduce fuels along both sides of the road for approximately two (2) miles. It would serve to prevent the spread of wildfires originating along Lodge Rd. West of Whispering Springs Rd. into the Whispering Springs subdivision.

- **Lower Beal Fuelbreak**

This would be a potential joint project involving the USFS, Highway 168 Fire Safe Council, and CAL FIRE. This would be used to reduce fuels on an existing fuelbreak that has not had work done on it in many years, running East of Highway 168 from the end of the Beal Fire Road and intersecting Tollhouse Rd below Linson Lane and is approximately one (1) mile in length. It would serve to prevent the spread of wildfires originating in the Tollhouse area upslope into the Linson Lane subdivision.

Prioritization of existing and potential projects/opportunities

1. Peterson Mill Road Project – Maintenance
2. Beal Fire Road – Maintenance
3. Cressman’s Project – Maintenance
4. Lower Beal Fuelbreak - Future
5. Meadow Lakes Fuelbreak – Maintenance
6. Sugarloaf North – Maintenance
7. 4 Lane Prefire Line(Rat Trailing)– Existing
8. Whispering Springs Rd. - Future

Battalion Objectives

- Develop a plan with the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council and have agreements from property owners in the current and future fuelbreak project areas.
- Working with the Highway 168 Fire Safe Council and USFS on the current and future fuelbreak project plans including identifying funding sources.

Collaborators with the Blasingame Battalion:

- Sierra National Forest
- Fresno County Fire Protection District
- Highway 168 Fire Safe Council
- Bald Mountain Fire Protection District
- Pine Ridge Volunteer Fire Department
- Shaver Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Southern California Edison – Resource Management

Battalion 13 – Squaw Valley Battalion

The Squaw Valley Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 151,117 acres of State Responsibility Land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Battalion is bordered on the east side by both the Sierra and Sequoia National Forest.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of 5,500 on the eastern border. Highway 180 runs through the middle of the Battalion. Also known as Kings Canyon, it is the gateway to the Sequoia National Park and Kings Canyon National Park. This provides a high volume of visitor traffic through the battalion each day. Pine Flat Reservoir is located in the northern part of the Battalion and provides a moderate to high volume of summertime traffic. This reservoir supplies the Kings River that runs through the Central Valley.

The Battalion has 11 fire roads which incorporate 22 miles of access that has to maintain annually. Currently, all roads have been mapped and GIS data gathered for future use in the Unit's fire plan. The Battalion's diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. At the upper end of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models and continue to increase in size and complexity while moving to conifer models. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The entire Battalion has seen an increase in population over the past several years. This provides for an increase potential in ignitions along with the added WUI problems that are associated in the foothill and mountain areas of California. Recent Battalion fire history indicates an average of 20 ignitions per year over the last decade. We have not seen any large or devastating fires during the last several decades in the Battalion. The last significant event occurred in the 1950's. History indicates that it's not of matter of "if" we have a fire, but rather "when" we will have a fire. The common denominators for large wildfires are fuel, slope, weather, and assets at risk. We cannot change slope or weather but we can modify fuels and ensure that the individual homes and communities have a defensible space. All new homes being built are subject to PRC 4290 regulations which assist us in the defense of these newest additions to the watershed.

Squaw Valley Battalion Priorities and Goals:

1 Defensible Space Inspection program

- Approximately 1,400 inspections done in the Battalion each year. This comprises about 70% of the Battalion population. Continue to track inspections utilizing GPS coordinates. This provides for a real time picture of the amount and locations of all structures in the Battalion.

2 Pre-Fire Lines (Rat Trailing)

- Utilize the Miramonte Fire Crews to construct hand lines along high prone ignition road roadways to slow and contain potential fire spread.
 - Highway 180
 - Hills Valley Road
 - Sunnyslope Road
 - Sand Creek Road

3 Pre-Attack Plans and Business Pre-plans

- Development of Battalion Pre-Attack plans is essential for pre-identifying the needed resources of a large and rapidly expanding incident. Additionally, this will allow the Battalion personnel to be proactive in the communities, meet with local business owners, ranchers, and local school district personnel to develop positive public relations and interaction.
- In 2011 – Complete Risk Assessment Analysis for the following Communities:
 - a) Dunlap
 - b) Miramonte
 - c) Squaw Valley/Sand Creek
 - d) Wonder Valley
 - e) Tivy Valley
 - f) Pine Flat

4 Fire Control Road Maintenance and Identification

- To continue to maintain these essential accesses to difficult areas in the Battalion for the ability to assist in fire control operations. Continue to pursue the options of marking the entrance of each road with their identified name.

Collaborators with the Squaw Valley Battalion:

- Sierra National Forest
- Sequoia National Forest
- Kings Canyon National Park
- Sequoia National Park
- Oak to Timberline Fire Safe Council
- Mountain Valley Volunteer Fire Department
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Orange Cove Fire District
- Hume Lake Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department

Battalion 14 – Coalinga Battalion

The Coalinga Battalion of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit is located in Central California and makes up part of the Western San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 563,076 acres of state responsibility land under direct CAL FIRE protection. The Coalinga Battalion also has 151,967 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Direct Protection Area (DPA). CAL FIRE provides fire protection for most of the BLM property within the Coalinga Battalion. The total CAL FIRE DPA of the Coalinga Battalion is 715,043 acres. The Battalion is bordered by CAL FIRE Units of San Luis Obispo, San Benito Monterey, Mariposa Madera Merced and Kern County. The Coalinga Battalion is also boarded by Local Government of Kings County, Fresno County Fire Protection District and The City of Coalinga.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 400 feet along the western SRA border to the highest point of 5,500 on the eastern border. Interstate 5, runs 80 miles along the western boundary of the Battalion. This provides very high transit traffic. State Highway 198 and Los Gatos Creek Road are east west routes to State Highway 101. These routes have high traffic as well.

The Coalinga Battalion has three (3) fire roads which incorporate 42 miles of access that is maintained annually. Currently, all roads have been mapped and GIS data gathered for future use in the Unit's fire plan. There are a large number of ranch roads which provide access to the Battalion. There are several oil fields which crude oil and natural gas is produced and stored and transported by pipeline. This creates unique issues with fire control. The Battalion's diverse elevation provides for an array of fuels, which relate to the overall potential fire behavior. The primary fuel models at the lower end of the Battalion consist of seasonal grasses, which quickly transition into deciduous and evergreen oaks. At the midslope to higher elevations of the Battalion, the fuel models transition to California brush models. There are areas within the Battalion that contain stands of evergreen and conifer trees. These are located at the highest elevations of the Battalion. There are several areas, which are inaccessible, or control measures will be difficult due to steep topography. This provides the Battalion with many different fire behavior characteristics to be concerned with and a potential for a large fire growth if weather, fuel and topography come into alignment with an ignition.

The Battalion has not seen a significant increase in population over the last decade. Predominantly the Battalion is cattle ranches with large land ownership. The Battalion's wildland urban interface areas are along Hwy 198, Los Gatos Creek Road and some areas of Kings County. About 500 structures are in these areas. There are an unknown number of structures located within the ranches located within the Battalion. Recent Battalion fire history indicates an average of 10 ignitions per year over the last decade. Most fires will reach 100 acres or more due to the significant response time of initial attack resources to the Battalion. The Battalion has a significant large fire every five (5) years on average.

Existing Fire Plan Projects

1. Fire Control Roads - Tar Canyon, Juniper Ridge, Mud Run

- a. Although these roads are located in entirely different locals, they are both important to the philosophy of keeping costs to a minimum. For a minimum investment in the late spring, we can provide ourselves with not only an access to some very inaccessible country but also create a secondary defense to stop a wildland fire. The maintenance of these fire roads is imperative to the mission of controlling fires at the earliest possible moment.
- b. Juniper Ridge Fire Road is located west of the City Coalinga running from Highway 198 north to Los Gatos Road. Its most apparent use would be for controlling a fire that originates in the oil fields or the foothills west of Coalinga.
- c. The Tar Canyon Fire Road is in Kings County, beginning just south of Avenal on Highway 33 going west through the hills towards Pacheco Rock. It provides access to some very rough country in and around the Black Hole Quadrant.
- d. Mud Run is a North /South fire control road that starts at the Los Gatos Canyon Road. It continues through several private ranches and ties into Warthan Canyon Rd. The significance of this control road is to provide access into an area that would otherwise be inaccessible to firefighting equipment. It also provides a control point prior to a wildfire moving into an area of WUI.

2. Power Line Ignitions within Oil Fields

- a. Over the years the oil fields in and around Battalion 14 have provided numerous vegetation fires, most were caused due to power lines. Although the numbers have decreased significantly in the past years this is an on going project, keeping the oil companies which control these power lines, aware of their responsibility and liability. Contact by the Battalion Chief as well as the engine companies in the summer on a regular basis assists in the relationship with those companies so that proper maintenance will keep those ignitions to as few as possible.

3. Roadside Fire Prevention Signs

- a. The roadside fire prevention signs are located throughout the battalion on the main arteries. These signs provide the public with information that will make them a friendlier user of the wildlands, both private and public. In 2010, new signs were updated to provide the public with the most current fire prevention information.

Existing Locations:

Sign #1 36° 05.800' N 120° 31.521' W
Sign #2 36° 11.674' N 120° 24.901' W
Sign #3 36° 13.783' N 120° 34.280' W
Sign #4 36° 17.344' N 120° 16.751' W

Proposed Locations:

Sign #5 36° 05.689' N 120° 27.456' W
Sign #6 36° 17.605' N 120° 40.885' W

4. Westland Water District

- a. The Westland Water District has a water distribution system throughout many areas of Battalion 14. This system provides a 24 to 36 inch water line that has various connections, many of which are fire department compatible. These locations have been identified and are being produced in various formats by the Unit's GIS staff.

5. Fire Prevention Displays: Horn Toad Derby and Coalinga Fest

- a. Each year the City of Coalinga has two (2) major events, the Horned Toad Derby, and Coalinga Fest. Both of these are considerable in size and attended by a great majority of the local residents, as well as visitors to the area. The parade provides a venue to display Smokey and entice the public to a Fire Prevention booth where we can reach out to the youth of the area and to put forth any fire prevention message that is pertinent at the time.

Priority Areas

1. PRC 4291

- a. Over the last two (2) years rainfall has been above average for the given time period (7.00 inches), vegetation growth is above normal length of 16" to 18." Also with the above average rainfall, the 1-hour fuel continuity is much denser than in years past. In conjunction with the Unit's Fire Prevention Staff, an aggressive program will be implemented in the State Responsibility Areas.

2. Priority Area # 1 - Los Gatos Canyon

- a. Los Gatos Canyon is a sparsely inhabited area of the Los Gatos Creek drainage on Los Gatos Road west of Derrick Avenue to the County line. It is populated mostly by long time residents of the area which have a better than average knowledge of fire safe regulations and practices. It is this knowledge, which makes them unique in that they are very low maintenance in regards to fire prevention, allowing battalion crews to concentrate on the newer residents to the area. The fuel models consist of mostly 1 and 4 with the biggest challenge in the off road areas, being access. Although fire history does not support a tremendous problem there has been some activity usually related to ranch activities or lightning.

3. Priority Area #2 - Warthan Canyon

- a. This area lies up the Warthan Creek drainage along Highway 198, south the City of Coalinga to the County line and south on Parkfield Road to the County line. Its characteristics are not so different from those of the Los Gatos Canyon area with its problems and solutions being very much the same. Fuel Models are 1 and 4 and fire history has been very limited with most causes being equipment oriented mostly off the highway.

4. Priority Area # 3 - Kings County SRA

- a. The Kings County SRA lies along the Highway 33 corridor to the west from Coalinga to the Kern County line. Since the closing of the Cottonwood FFS, the response times have become considerable with the first in initial attack equipment now coming from CAL FIRE/SLU, Kern County Fire, or the Kings County Fire Department. The primary fuel model is 1 and 4. The extended response times can make this an interesting problem regarding suppression if IA does not have a positive effect in regards to suppression. Fire causes are generally a result of coming off the Highway 33. Support and interface with the cooperative agencies tends to keep a handle on this area's problems. Additionally there are two 230 KV electrical transmission lines. The Diablo-Gates and the Templeton-Gates are located in the south, in and around the junction of the Kings, Fresno, and Monterey County lines.

5. Priority Area # 4 - Oil fields

- a. The Oil fields lay in both the SRA and the LRA and although crisscrossed with roads are a definite threat to the wildland to the west should a fire

escape from this area. Its fuel model is a 1 and the primary cause for fires in this area has been power line related. These are not the normal utility lines in that they are owned privately by the oil companies and are maintained by them. We have an on going process of keeping the oil companies educated regarding their responsibilities about maintenance and the liability, if their lines are responsible for causing a fire. Through this process, along with our enforcement and cost collection procedures, has reduced the numbers of fires.

Potential Fire Plan Opportunities

1. Vegetation Management Program Burns

- a. Due to environmental concerns and rising costs of associated with Vegetation Management Burn it has become difficult to conduct these burns. There are several ranchers in the Coalinga area that would like to conduct VMP burns. Given the fiscal climate of the economy, it is difficult for them to pay their cost share with such a project. Creating a Fire safe Council with the ranchers support may provide some opportunities for fuels reduction.

2. New Water Sources

- a. The development of new commercial and agricultural businesses in and around the Battalion has resulted in draft water sources that may or may not be properly identified. The location of these and their GPS location will be obtained.

3. Fire Road Location

- a. The Tar Canyon, Juniper Ridge, and Warthan Fire Roads are on our standard Unit maps, the GPS location track has been sent to the Unit's GIS staff. Additional roads are being GPS tracked to provide data for a Battalion 14 road layer.

4. Battalion House Numbering System

- a. Personnel of Battalion 14 will make a conscience effort to evaluate the quality of the house numbering of existing residents and monitor for new construction so that new people to the area can be made aware of our standards, thus maintaining the integrity of the house numbering of the battalion.

5. Pre Suppression Map

- a. Personnel assigned to Battalion 14 are currently working with Unit's GIS staff to create a Pre Suppression Map for the Los Gatos and Warthan

Canyon areas. Components of this map will be structure locations, access roads, water sources, staging areas, and any other information that would be useful for outside resources.

Prioritization of existing and potential projects/opportunities

<u>Battalion Priority</u>	<u>Status</u>
Fire Control Roads	Existing
New Water Sources	Existing
Fire Road Locations	Ongoing
Pre Suppression Map	Ongoing
ID Water Sources in Westland Water District	Completed
Power Line Ignitions within Oil Fields	Existing
Horned Toad Derby / Coalinga Fest	Existing
Battalion House Numbering System	Existing
Roadside Fire Prevention Signs	Existing

Objectives:

- Objective #1 Meet with Cooperative Agencies by May 2011
- Objective #2 Meet with Oil Companies by May 2011
- Objective#3 Complete Fire Road Maintenance by June, 2011
- Objective #4 Horned Toad Derby, May 2011
- Objective #5 Coalinga Fest, September 2011
- Objective #6 Locate and map Draft Water Sources by January 2012
- Objective #7 Update roadside Fire Prevention Signs by June 2011
- Objective #8 Create Pre Suppression Maps by January 2012
- Objective #9 Research the feasibility of a Fire Safe Council

Collaborators with the Coalinga Battalion:

- Bureau of Land Management Hollister.
- Fresno County Fire Protection District
- City of Coalinga
- County of Kings Fire Department

Battalion 15 (Fresno County Fire Protection District)

Description

Battalion 15 is located in the central and western area of the Fresno County Fire Protection District (FCFPD) in the Fresno Kings Unit. The Battalion consists of 730,970 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) making up part of the Central San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion is bordered by Merced County Fire to the North, North Central Fire and FCFPD, Battalion 18 to the East, Kings County Fire Department to the South, and FCFPD, Battalion 14 which includes 563,076 acres of SRA to the West. The San Joaquin River acts partially as the north edge boarder, and the Kings River acts as partial boarder on the south edge of Battalion 15.

The elevation with-in the Battalion ranges from 150 in the valley and 600 ft along Interstate 5. Interstate 5, State Highways 180, 33, 41, 145, and 269 all run through Battalion 15. Due to the number of highways, Battalion 15 experiences high volumes of daily traffic.

The Central San Joaquin Valley is primarily used as agricultural land for crops, orchards and milk dairies. This contributes to the high volume of commercial and agricultural vehicle traffic on highways and local roadways. The communities of Laton, Riverdale, San Joaquin, Mendota and Firebaugh are encompassed in Battalion 15. FCFPD provides fire protection for the City of San Joaquin and Mendota.

The Mendota Wildlife refuge consisting of 14,000 acres and a portion of the California Aqueduct is also encompassed in Battalion 15.

Primary fuels for Battalion 15 are Fuel Model 1, annual grasses. This fuel is present along roadways, canals, fallow fields, with-in the housing areas and cities in Battalion 15. The fuel models along the rivers edge are Fuel Model 2, 5. Fuel Models in the Wildlife Refuge are 1, 3 and 5.

The entire Battalion has seen a drop in ignition in the last few years due to drought, lack of and sparse fuels. The drought has also slowed production of crops and left many agricultural fields fallow. Due to rainfall totals for the San Joaquin Valley in winter 2010/11, many fields that were fallow are now crops, and an abundance of annual grasses are present. This will increase commercial and agricultural roadway traffic. It is anticipated that wildland ignitions will increase as additional traffic occurs and agricultural harvests take place.

Priority Areas:

Priority Area # 1 – City of Mendota

The City of Mendota unemployment remains high per capita in the state of California. Due to the unemployment rate, an increase of foot traffic throughout the City occurs both day and night on city streets and on foot trails throughout the City. This has resulted in regular nuisance fires caused by arson or playing with fire. With the establishment of Mendota PD in August of 2009, fires with-in the City has significantly dropped. Nuisance fires still occur with-in the City; both the CAL FIRE/Fresno County Fire Protection District and The Mendota PD remain diligent on Fire Prevention through public education.

Existing Fire Plan Projects:

City of Mendota:

- Battalion 15 remains in contact with the Unit's Prevention Bureau. Work with allied agencies for intelligence and promote fire prevention education within the City.

Recruit and Retention:

- Continue to recruit PCF's and Reserves through public recruitment. Train all firefighters and provide incentives that will promote retention.

Battalion Pre-plans

- Continue to update existing and prepare new pre-plans as new business' are opened.

Battalion Weed Abatement within LRA

- Continue inspections to meet the intent of the weed abatement program. Work with the Unit's Prevention Bureau with enforcement of the program.

Panoche Hills and Tumey Hills

- Continue working relationship with BLM representatives. Work with BLM representatives in promoting Fire Prevention Awareness in the Panoche Hills and Tumey Hills BLM areas.

Public Education

- Continue efforts with communities, community leaders and local schools on fire prevention education.

Potential Fire Plan Opportunities:

Vegetation Management Burn

Mendota Wildlife Area (Alkali Sink)

- Assist the California Department of Fish and Game with their efforts for enhancement of wildlife and endangered plants in the Alkali Sink Reserve through noxious non-native vegetation removal.

Prioritization of existing and potential projects/opportunities:

Battalion Priority	Project Name
1.	City of Mendota
2.	Battalion Preplans
3.	Battalion Weed Abatement
4.	Panoche, Tumey Hills BLM
5.	Public Education
6.	Recruitment and Retention
7.	DF&G Alkali Sink

Objectives:

Objective #1 – Continue efforts with local agencies for intelligence gathering. Work with the Unit’s Fire Prevention Bureau to reduce the number of arson fires within the City of Mendota. Promote fire prevention education within the City through public education. Continue weed abatement efforts within City.

- As arson fires have dropped in recent months, these efforts are on going.

Objective #2 – Engine companies to continue updating existing preplans. Continue preplanning new commercial construction. Continue research efforts for Unit wide preplan program that will be available on all Mobile Data Computers (MDC) within the Unit.

- Preplans are ongoing

Objective #3 – Continue weed abatement within the Battalion to meet the intent of the program. Maintain contact with Program coordinator and provide updates as necessary.

- Annual event – Start date April 1, 2011
- Projected completion date – July 1, 2011

Objective #4 – Continue annual meetings with BLM representatives. Exchange information regarding fire suppression efforts and public education within the Panoche Hills and Tumey Hills BLM areas.

- This is an on going annual event.

Objective #5 – Continue involvement with local schools in fire prevention education. Work with community leaders to promote fire prevention education within their Cities through established monthly mailers.

- This is an on going effort and continues annually.

Objective #6 – Continue to recruit PCF's and Reserve's for both the Battalion and Western Division. Provide professional training all firefighters for safety, incentive and motivation.

- Recruitment and training to all personnel is an on going effort.

Objective #7 – The DF&G Alkali Sink Burn was unsuccessful in Fall of 2010 due to unfavorable air quality. We will continue our efforts with DF&G and the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District through communication and coordination.

- Estimate project completion, Fall 2011.

Collaborators with Battalion 15:

Laton Community Services District
Riverdale Community Services District
City of Firebaugh Fire Department
California Department of Fish and Game

Battalion 17 (Fresno County Fire Protection District)

Battalion 17 is integrating the fire plan into the Battalion Fire Management Plan. By identifying problems and target areas, we will strategically implement the plan into our battalion goals.

Description:

The Metropolitan Area of the Fresno County Fire Protection District is identified as Battalion 17 of the CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit (FKU). It is located in Central California and makes up part of the Central/Eastern San Joaquin Valley. The Battalion consists of 113,810 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) land that is under contractual agreement with CAL FIRE to provide personnel services and management on behalf of the Fresno County Fire Protection District. The Battalion is bordered on the North and East sides by State Responsibility Area (SRA) under direct protection of CAL FIRE.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 250 to 400 feet along the western SRA border. State Highways: 41, 99, 168, and 180 run through the Battalion. This highway infrastructure contributes to a high volume of commuter and visitor traffic through the battalion each day.

The primary fuel models within the battalion consist of seasonal grasses adjacent to roadways, within suburban living areas, and transitioning to rural agricultural areas.

The entire Battalion has seen an increase in population over the past several years and as a result has the highest population density of all of the Battalions within the Fresno-Kings Unit. The population density coupled with the high traffic transportation corridors provides for an increases potential for wildland fire ignitions.

Priority Area

Station 85/86 Response Areas

Due to increased urban development within an agricultural/wildland sphere of influence, structure fires have become more frequent within these areas. These types of incidents require a large number of resources, extensive water supply, and extended commitment times.

Existing Fire Plan Projects:

1. Identify Draft Hydrants in Station 85/86 Response Areas:

The onset of new subdivisions in the outlying areas of the county has brought a need for water sources. Draft hydrants are being utilized in certain areas to provide the necessary water for these high value homes. Draft hydrant operations are very specific and require a great deal of familiarity for effective fire ground success. The potential for personnel or cooperating agencies to respond to incidents within these areas without being familiar with these types of hydrants is great. Clearly identifying these hydrants with visible markings, knowing their locations, and having the operational experience to execute their use would improve fire ground operations and lessen the fire loss to homeowners.

This project would cover the following areas:

- Work with Protection and Planning in developing a standard for draft hydrants throughout the Unit.
- GPS the location of all the hydrants within our Battalion and map them
- Mark all draft hydrants to department standard.
- Map and indicate water tank size and pump capacities that are attached to a draft hydrant.
- Establish a service record for these draft hydrants.

Have the Training Bureau establish a quarterly drill for draft hydrant operations.

2. Preplans

Update existing preplans and preplan any new businesses in the Battalion. This contact allows the station personnel to be proactive, meet business owners, school district personnel in their area and create positive public relations. There are numerous industrial complexes in the battalion which can be identified and updating contact numbers or special circumstances pertaining to that business or school

3. School Program Plan

Be more involved with the schools in our response areas. We do participate in some activities, but more intervention would go a long way in developing a strong relationship with the communities. Programs such as Career Days, Fire Safety, Fire Prevention Day or Station Tours are some ways we can interact with the children.

Potential Projects:

Addresses

A common problem found throughout our county is the lack of addresses posted or they are posted but unreadable. This not only increases response times but creates a safety problem as we are trying to search for addresses in the dark or fog. Some possible solutions would be to:

1. Send out fliers explaining the importance of posting legible addresses.
2. Enlisting the help from schools, either as a school project or after school activity.
3. Using the PCF Companies to fund raise for their companies. If the Unit and County can adopt a standard for posting addresses, such as having a sign with their numbers, maybe the PCF Companies can make these to sell. This one is open for discussion.

Prioritization of existing and potential projects/opportunities.

<u>Battalion Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>
1.	Draft Hydrants
2.	PrePlans
3	Addresses
4	Schools

OBJECTIVES:

Objective # 1 - Identify and map all draft hydrants in the Battalion.

Objective # 2 - Complete these preplans in order as identified by importance:

- Schools(concurrent with inspections)
- Care or Foster facilities (rest homes)
- Any Industrial complexes creating mass evacuations i.e; cold storage, bulk hazardous material storage etc.
- Industrial businesses with large work forces.

Objective # 3- Create an informational flier, public spots, and newspaper advertisements stressing the importance of posting addresses.

- This project is still in the planning stages, due to lack of funds.

Objective # 4 - Contact schools and Fire Prevention to coordinate programs.

- This will be in conjunction with the annual school programs. All stations are involved with school programs and local area prevention programs.

Collaborators with Battalion 17:

- Clovis Fire Department
- Fresno Fire Department
- California Air National Guard Fire Department

Battalion 18 (Fresno County Fire Protection District)

Battalion 18 is integrating the fire plan into the Battalion Fire Management Plan. By identifying problems and target areas, we will strategically implement the plan into our battalion goals

Battalion 18 Description

Battalion 18 is a suburban to rural area of Fresno County in the San Joaquin Valley of California . The Battalion consists of 186,950 acres of Local Responsibility Area (LRA) land. The Battalion contains many of the medium to smaller communities in Fresno County such as Sanger, Del Rey, Fowler, Selma, Kingsburg, Reedley and Orange Cove.

The elevation of the Battalion ranges from 260 feet along the Kings River to 1,752 feet on Campbell Mountain on the East side of the Battalion. State Highways 43, 99 and 180 run through the Battalion. This highway infrastructure contributes to a high volume of vehicular traffic through the Battalion every day. The Kings River also runs through the battalion and contributes to a large volume of recreational traffic and related water rescue incidents.

The primary fuel models within the battalion consist of seasonal grasses to oak woodland along the Kings River. The majority of the land in the Battalion is in agricultural production.

Mission Statement

The mission of Battalion 18 is to provide the highest level of customer service while reducing the costs and losses from fire through education of the public, active involvement in school programs and communities and maintaining a positive and professional relationship with allied agencies.

Priority Area

Kings River

The section of Kings River between Adams Avenue and Dinuba Avenue contain a high fuel loading both on the riverbanks and islands. Due to increased usage of the river water ways and urban interface, fires and rescues have become more frequent. These types of incidents require a large number of resources and extended commitment times. Firebrands from resultant fires have a potential for ignition of roof fires in the City of Reedley and adjacent urban residences

Existing Fire Plan Projects:

Preplans

Update existing preplans and preplan any new businesses in the battalion. This contact allows the station personnel to be proactive, meet business owners, school district personnel in their area and create positive public relations. There are numerous industrial complexes in the battalion which can be identified and updating contact numbers or special circumstances pertaining to that business or school.

School Program Plan

Be more involved with the schools in our response areas. We do participate in some activities, but more intervention would go a long way in developing a strong relationship with the communities. Programs such as Career Days, Fire Safety, Fire Prevention Day or Station Tours are some ways we can interact with the children.

Potential Project

Kings River Plan Update

The existing Kings River Plan was created in 1995. The Kings River Plan identifies access points to the Kings River for first responders during all types of emergency incidents. The access points are identified on photocopies of topographical maps. The maps cover the Kings River from the Fresno-Tulare County line to Trimmer Springs Rd. The Plan needs to be updated utilizing GIS to include addresses and parcel numbers printed on aerial images and topographical maps. The mapping should also extend above Pine Flat Reservoir to Kirch Flat. A component of the Kings River Plan update could include identifying areas for fuel reduction projects to help reduce fire behavior and improve access to the River for water rescues.

Prioritization of Projects

<u>Battalion Priority</u>	<u>Project</u>
1.	PrePlans
2.	School Programs
3.	Kings River Plan Update

Objectives:

Objective # 1 – Continue to complete these preplans in order as identified by importance:

1. Schools(concurrent with inspections)
2. Care or Foster facilities (rest homes)
3. Any Industrial complexes creating mass evacuations i.e; cold storage, bulk hazardous material storage etc.
4. Industrial businesses with large work forces.

Objective # 2 – Continue to contact schools and the Fire District Public Information Officer to coordinate programs. This will be in conjunction with the annual school programs.

Objective # 3 - Update the Kings River Plan. Coordinate with Reedley City Fire Department and the Fresno County Sheriff's Office to update and distribute the plan.

Collaborators with Battalion 18:

- City of Selma Fire Department
- City of Sanger Fire Department
- City of Reedley Volunteer Fire Department
- Orange Cove Volunteer Fire District
- Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Training Bureau

The Fresno Kings Training Bureau is responsible for identifying and delivering the Unit's training needs. This training includes CAL FIRE training mandates, Federal and State OSHA mandates, and fire service related training. The training is delivered in the form of multi company drills, scheduled courses including local operational area wildland spring exercise, Firefighter 1 returnee academies, HFEO proficiency training, Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC) training and testing and Incident Command System(ICS) qualification courses. The Training Bureau will seek opportunities to train individuals in the various ICS disciplines when appropriate on pre-fire projects.