

SECTION V: PRE FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS

A: DIVISION and BATTALION

CAL FIRE's fire protection objective states that a system of basic fire protection will be provided so that damages to life, property and natural resources will be held at or below a level acceptable within social, political and economic constraints. Board of Forestry and Fire Protection designates in the Fire Plan (1995) that CAL FIRE will strive to contain 95% of all unwanted fires at 10 acres or less. (Fire Operations Manual, the Fire Protection Objective, Section 7001.2 (October 2002).

To meet this objective, the San Diego Unit fire operation is organized by two field Divisions (Southern Division and Northern Division) and two conservation camp Divisions (McCain and LaCima Camps Division located in the Southern Division and Puerta La Cruz and Rainbow Camps Division located in the Northern Division). The field Divisions provides fire fighting leadership and coordination for seven battalions (three Battalions in the Southern Division and four Battalions in the Northern Division). The Camp Divisions provides nineteen handcrews based at four conservation camps (two camps in the Northern Division and two camps in the Southern Division). Additionally, Monte Vista Inter-agency Emergency Command Center (ECC) provides emergency services command, communication and support services for fire operations. Air Operations, based at Ramona Air Base, provides fire fighting leadership and coordination of both fixed and rotary winged aircraft to support fire operations.

The following information is provided by the field Battalion Chief regarding pre-fire/resource management activities associated with the Unit Fire Plan. Field Battalion Chiefs provide the direction and leadership to propose and implement projects for life, community and natural resources protection. Moreover, Field Battalion Chiefs are integral component at community level.

Southern Division – Battalion 2 (Monte Vista)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 2 (Monte Vista) is located in the southeast corner of San Diego County. It is bordered by the Republic of Mexico to the south, San Diego City being to the west. The administrative boundary for Battalion 2 includes the communities of Jamul, El Cajon, Alpine, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, Santee, Lakeside, Chula Vista and San Diego City; and the Battalion is approximately 170 Square miles and 107,000 acres. Listed below are the fire agencies within the battalion.

- San Miguel Fire Protection Dist.
- Alpine Fire Protection Dist.
- Rural Fire Protection Dist.
- Sycuan Reservation Fire Dept.
- Lakeside Fire Protection Dist.
- El Cajon Fire Dept.
- La Mesa Fire Dept.
- Santee Fire Dept.
- Chula Vista Fire Dept.
- San Diego City Fire and Rescue Dept.

San Diego Rural Fire District contracts with CAL FIRE for rural fire protection services (Schedule A contract). Additionally, San Diego County Fire Authority provides round staffing (stipend firefighters) to staff two San Diego Rural Fire Protection District fire stations (Dehesa and Harbison Canyon Fire Stations).

The rural fire protection in Battalion 2 is described as heavily populated rural/suburban environment. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating for the departments with in the Battalion are:

- San Miguel FPD: 4.9
- Alpine FPD: 4 – 9
- Rural FPD: 5 – 9
- Lakeside FPD: 3 – 9
- El Cajon: 2
- La Mesa FD: 2
- Santee DF: 2
- Chula Vista FD: 3
- Lemon Grove FD: 3
- San Diego City F&R: Not Required

Fuels, Weather, and Topography

The Battalion consists of mostly annual Grasses, and typical Southern California Chaparral Species (fuel

models 1, 2, 6, and some areas of fuel model 4). These types of fuels commonly support and promote rapid fire growth and development during peak fire season. In terms of weather conditions, the hottest month of the year is August with an average high of 92° F. Normal weather conditions for the summer months place the battalion in a high fire danger classification. The chance for Santa Ana wind conditions start around the first part of September and diminish around the end of November. In general, the terrain in the battalion is mixed with hills and gorges. The area is heavily populated with WUI communities.

2. PRIORITIES

The following reflects the pre-fire management activities and priorities for Battalion 2. The primary objective for these activities is to reduce the fuel loading to protect life, property and the environment by minimizing wildfire severity and costs.

Current Accomplishments:

1. Defensible Space - Battalion 2 conducted 1229 Defensible Space Inspections in 2010.
2. Valley View Truck Trail – Environmental review completed and maintenance is in-progress for 2011
3. Sycuan Truck Trail - Environmental review completed and maintenance is in-progress for 2011

Future Projects for 2011-2012:

1. Defensible Space -- Battalion 2 is expected to meet the number of inspections made in 2010. Emphasis is placed on making public contact and increasing public safety education.

3. COLLABORATION

Battalion 2 works the Alpine Firesafe Council, which is organized to service the communities of Alpine, Carveacre, Dehesa, and Harbison Canyon. The Fire Safe Council work in a collaborative effort on community education, and fire defense planning, the specific groups are listed below:

Organization	Representative (title)
Alpine Fire Safe Council	Wendy Cornelius
Border Patrol	Nick Coates
USFS	TBD
BLM	Clay Howe
Sycuan Reservation Fire Dept	Bill Clayton

Collaborative activities

- Border Patrol – Provides maintenance of truck trails along the international border
- BLM – Collaborates on the International Fuelbreak
- SDG&E – Collaborates on fuels treatment under the major high-tension transmission lines
- USFS – Collaborates on various fuels treatment projects near community areas
- BIA – Collaborate on fuel breaks on Reservation Land.

Southern Division – Battalion 3 (Dulzura)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 3 (Dulzura) of the San Diego Unit is located in the south central portion of San Diego County, encompassing the community of Jamul on the western border, east to the community of Potrero, north to the southern border of the Cleveland National Forest, including the communities of Deerhorn Valley and Lawson Valley, south to the Mexican Border. Included in this geographical box are the Otay Mountain Wilderness area and portions of the Hauser Canyon Wilderness area as well as 2 major reservoirs that support the water delivery system of the City of San Diego. Battalion boundaries encompass approximately 570 square miles, and nearly 363,000 acres of State Responsibility Area as well as Direct Protection responsibility for BLM lands, and a small portion of Forest lands with-in the identified area.

Numerous county highways and 1 State highway traverse the battalion, serving the rural communities identified above as well as the additional communities of Dulzura, Barrett Junction, and Tecate.

Battalion 3 works with a number of cooperating fire agencies on virtually all fire incidents with-in the battalion including; San Diego Rural Fire Protection District, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. San Diego Rural Fire Protection District comprises the only cooperative (Schedule A) agreement with-in the Battalion. Data on this cooperative agreement is listed below:

The San Diego Rural Fire Protection District (SDRFPD) is located in the southern portion of San Diego County, west from Otay Mesa, east to Jacumba, south to the border of Mexico, and as far north as Ramona . It covers an area of 720 square miles and serves an estimated population of 42,000 with approximately 9,000 structures. Of this geographic boundary area, it is mixed with Local Responsibility Area, State Responsibility Area, and United States Forest lands. The vast majority of the communities served are located in the wildland fire hazard zone. The SDRFPD provides a full range of structural and wildland fire protection, as well as emergency medical care services from Fourteen District-owned fire stations (Stations 22, 24, 25, 26, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, and 45). Our department is a public Fire department whose members are a combination of paid and volunteer. The fire protection problem in the communities SDRFPD serves is classed rural/suburban. The SDRFPD has an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 5 and 9.

Fuels with-in battalion 3 is typical Southern California Chaparral species, (predominantly fuel models 3, 4, and 6) which readily lend themselves during seasonal norms to rapid fire spread and development. Elevations range from 700' MSL to 2900' MSL. As such, we experience an active wild land fire season typically from mid May thru December.

Weather patterns are typical for this latitude with lows during winter months in the 40's and can experience in the summer months prolonged periods above 100 degrees. Like most of Southern California, the area experiences on-shore winds in the afternoon during most of the summer months, and monsoonal thunder storm activity is typical during late July thru early September. Santa Ana weather patterns usually develop in early fall.

Battalion 3 has experienced 2 major fires during Santa Ana wind events in the previous 8 years. October 24 – 27 2003; "Mine Fire" Otay Mountain Wilderness area, over 49,000 acres, and October 2007 "Harris Fire", over 94,000 acres, originating in the community of Potrero and burning west to the urban communities of Rancho San Diego, and City of Chula Vista.

Statistically, Battalion 3 has a significant amount of initial attack wild land fire activity as well as the major fire activity listed above.

Of particular concern are the communities of Lawson Valley, and Lyons Valley. These communities were not impacted by the fires identified above. The last recorded fire activity in these communities was the 1970 "Laguna Fire", also a Santa Ana wind event catastrophe. Fuel age classes in these communities are over 40 years with a significant dead to live component in the decadent stands. The issue that has developed is significant residential development in these areas since the "Laguna Fire". In addition to the age class of the fuel, both communities share a significant problem with access and egress in the event of a major fire. In the case of Lawson Valley, Lawson Valley Rd. is the only means of access or egress into this community, and the only means of egress travel is to the west. Lawson Valley is essentially a cul-de-sac canyon with no eastern access or egress from the valley.

In terms of Communities at risk, the following assessment each of the communities of concern:

- LAWSON VALLEY and LYONS VALLEY -- Hazard: Extreme. 40 year or older vegetation, remote limited access
- DULZURA -- Hazard: Medium. Burned in 2007 Harris Fire. Regular wildland fire history

- JAMUL -- Hazard: High to extreme. 40 year or older vegetation mostly north side near Rancho San Diego, Mount Miguel and up Skyline Truck Trail on the north side. Also, old fuel in the Jamul Dr area. Regular wildland fire history
- DEERHORN VALLEY -- Hazard: High. Remote limited access, burned in 2007 Harris Fire
- TECATE -- Hazard: High. Burned in 2007 Harris Fire, Regular wildland fire history
- POTRERO -- Hazard: High to extreme. Approximately 1/3 of the community was burned in 2007 Harris Fire. Community north of Potrero Park Dr and Round Potrero Rd was not impacted by the Harris fire, and has experienced typical initial attack wild land fire activity. Age class of fuels in this area is approaching 42 years.

2. PRIORITIES:

Battalion 3 priorities focus on five key activities:

1. Initial attack readiness (Training, equipment, support)
2. Continue inter-agency dialogue and training
3. Interaction with, and support of, community fire safe councils
4. Maintenance of existing fuel breaks
5. Continue rehabilitation of truck trails with-in the battalion to support initial attack success.

3. COLLABORATION:

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan within the Battalion 3 administrative area includes:

Organization	Representative (title)
Dulzura/Barrett Fire Safe Council	Stacey Magoffin
Potrero/Tecate Fire Safe Council	Brenda Wise/Bob Buerer
Carveacre Fire Safe Council	Wendy Cornelius
Greater Jamul Fire Safe Council	Tom Lamb
U.S Forest Service	Brian Rhodes/Jeff Robinson
Bureau of Land Management	Clayton Howe
U.S Fish and Wildlife Service	Larry Wade

Southern Division – Battalion 4 (Campo)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 4 (Campo) is located in the extreme southeast corner of San Diego County. It is bordered by the Republic of Mexico to the south, Imperial County to the east, and USFS land to the north. The communities of Pine Valley, Campo, Boulevard, and Jacumba fall with in Battalion 4's Direct Protection Area with a size totaling approximately 300 square miles. Listed below are the fire agencies within the battalion:

- Boulevard Fire
- Bureau of Land Management
- Campo Fire
- Campo Reservation Fire
- Pine Valley Fire
- San Diego Rural Fire
- United States Forest Service

CAL FIRE has a cooperative agreement with the San Diego County Fire Authority to provide year round staffing in Campo and White Star stations as well as a Schedule A contracts with Pine Valley Fire Protection District and San Diego Rural Fire District. The fire protection problem in the communities of battalion 4 is classed rural/suburban. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating for most of the battalion is 9 with the town of Pine Valley rated as 5.

FUELS, WEATHER and TOPOGRAPHY

The Battalion consists of mostly annual Grasses, and typical Southern California Chaparral Species (fuel models 1, 2, 6 and pockets of fuel model 4). These fuels promote rapid fire growth and development. The eastern part of the Battalion turns into desert. For the last two years Battalion 4 received 2 inches above normal in rainfall, stopping a several year drought cycle. The hottest month of the year is August with an average high of 96° F. In the summer months the battalion receives monsoonal moisture which brings lightning activity. Strong east winds are experienced through out the battalion during Santa Ana wind events. Normal weather conditions for the summer months place the battalion in a high fire danger classification. The battalion is mixed topography with hills and gorges. The elevation is 3,500’ to 4,500’ before dropping into the Anza Borrego desert to the east. The north end of the battalion butts up against the Laguna Mountains which top out at 6,000’.

2. PRIORITIES:

Current Accomplishments:

1. Defensible Space - The Battalion conducted 3,351 Defensible space inspections in 2010.
2. Corte Madera fuel break – Completed a 75 of the 97 acre fuelbreak along the access road.
3. Corte Madera VMP – Is a 2206 acre VMP project that has been active project for several years. In the last 5 years (2005-2010), approximately 500 acres have been treated under these two projects.

Future Projects for 2011-2012:

1. Defensible Space - The Battalion expects to match the 2010 inspection at 3,351 in 2011.
2. Corte Madera VMP – Plan to burn 200 – 500 acres in the overall 2200 acre Corte Madera VMP
3. Corte Madera Fuelbreak – Complete and maintain the 97- acre fuelbreak by felling and treating GSOB infested oak trees
4. Campo Hills Fuelbreak – Develop and implement a 15-acre project near the Campo Hills community.

3. COLLABORATION:

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan within the Battalion 4 administrative area includes:

Organization	Representative (title)
Pine Valley Fire Safe Council	Dick Dupree
Descanso Fire Safe Council	TBD
Boulevard- Jacumba Fire Safe Council	Mark Ostrander
Campo-Lake Morena Fire Safe Council	Larry Johnson
Bureau of Land Management	Clayton Howe
Border Patrol	Nick Coates
SDG&E	Hal Mortier

Collaborative activities

- Border Patrol – Provides maintenance of truck trails along the international border
- BLM – Collaborates on the International Fuelbreak
- SDG&E – Collaborates on fuels treatment under the major high-tension transmission lines
- USFS – Collaborates on various fuels treatment projects near community areas

Northern Division – Battalion 1 (Red Mountain)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 1 is located in the northwest corner of San Diego County. The battalion is bordered by Fallbrook, Vista, San Marcos and Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base to the west, Riverside County to the north, Pala Indian Reservation, Valley Center and the Cleveland National Forest (Palomar District) to the east, and the City of Escondido to the south. The Battalion is a classic example of wildland urban interface (WUI) where vegetation fires routinely threaten structures and infrastructure.

Staff works with a variety of local government, Federal and Reservation Fire Departments throughout the battalion including North County Fire Protection District, San Diego County Fire Authority, Vista Fire Department, Escondido Fire Department, San Marcos Fire Department, Pala Reservation Fire Department, Cleveland National Forest, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Deer Springs Fire Protection District (Schedule A), and the Valley Center Fire Protection District (Schedule A).

North County Fire Protection District utilizes Red Mountain Station 10 as part of the Districts standard response plan under the San Diego County's master mutual aid agreement. CAL FIRE and the Pala Reservation Fire Department have an automatic aid agreement. CAL FIRE also provides direct protection to Pala Reservation 16,000 acres for wildland fires. CAL FIRE and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have an agreement where CAL FIRE provides direct protection for approximately 1,000 acres on BLM land in Battalion 1. CAL FIRE and the San Diego County Fire Authority have automatic aid agreements specific to the De Luz area. Currently the Deer Springs Fire Protection District is working with the North County Fire Protection District on a boundary drop for ambulance services.

Battalion 1 has had limited significant fire activity/history in the past thirty years with the exception of two fires. The Rice fire started on October 22, 2007 and burn 9,472 acres and destroyed 248 structures. The Gavalin Fire started on February 10, 2002 burning 5,763 acres and destroying 43 structures. Since these fires, the County has experienced significant precipitation and the vegetation has re-grown.

Target areas of concern are: **Interstate 15:** Approximately ninety thousand cars traverse I-15 through Battalion 1 daily. The continuous vegetation along Interstate 15 is of significant concern to several communities including Fallbrook, Rainbow, Deer Springs, Vista and San Marcos. **Highway 76:** Has a large amount of unburned vegetation between the communities of Valley Center, Pala Indian Reservation and the Riverside County Border. **De Luz:** A main drainage traverses the Santa Margarita River through the community of De Luz and the Northern portion of Fallbrook.

The Deer Springs Fire Protection District works closely with the Deer Springs Fire Safe Council on issues of wildland/urban interface fire threats, defensible space, community outreach, and information distribution in times of heightened fire risk. The Fire Safe Council is a nonprofit community service organization, and as such has been able to secure grants for the advancement of fire safety goals within the district boundaries. Most notably, the Fire Safe Council obtained a grant through the US Forest Service to provide a Fuel reduction zone on the Moosa Canyon Rim surrounding the community of Hidden Meadows. Other grants have helped fund various other fuel reduction programs as well as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Fire Safe Council also operates an informational notification system on a subscription basis that is similar to a reverse 911 system. This system is utilized to provide information during times of crisis or possible heightened fire risk.

2. PRIORITIES:

The following is a list of projects targeted to protect communities within Battalion 1:

1. Moosa Canyon Rim- fuelbreak project in progress
2. Tenaja Truck Trail- maintenance of truck trail is in progress
3. Roblar Truck Trail- maintenance of truck trail is in progress
4. Peitt Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review
5. Santa Margarita- maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review
6. Red Mountain- maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review
7. Red Mountain Lookout- maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review

8. Rainbow- maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review

3. COLLABORATION:

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan within the Battalion I administrative area includes:

Organization	Representative (title)
Deer Springs Fire Safe Council	Craig Cook (President)
Deer Springs CERT Team	Bob Frey (President)

Northern Division – Battalion 5 (Julian)

1. OVERVIEW:

Through the cooperation with the San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) and CAL FIRE (CF) Battalion 5 is responsible for three State Fire station facilities and provides two SDCFA County fire station facilities with Cal Fire Staff. In addition to the state mission, Battalion 5 personnel work closely with the SDCFA, the USFS, State Parks, BLM, BIA and several Volunteer Agencies in order to provide the most effective fire protection to the citizens we serve.

Operational Summary

Battalion 5 is the largest single battalion in San Diego County consisting of approximately 176 square miles and 860,000 acres that border Imperial County to the east and Riverside County to the North. It also contains a unique landscape ranging from deserts in the far eastern portion to mountains in the central. The fuel models range from type 1 grasses in the desert at elevations near sea level to type 10 hardwood timber at elevations above 6000 feet. Temperatures range from mid teens in the winter with snow in the higher elevations to 105+ degrees in the desert portions during the summer.

Battalion 5 has two CAL FIRE inmate conservation camps providing a valuable resource for project work and fire suppression. Battalion 5 has a significant fire history over the past 10 years that encompassed a large portion of Battalion 5. Two of the largest fires in California's history, Cedar and Witch Fires, have burned in portions of Battalion 5. In 2002 the Pines fire burned most of the Central portion of the battalion on the Volcan Mountain and Banner Grade side burning 60,500 acres. In 2003, the Cedar fire started near the southern edge of the battalion and eventually consumed a large portion of the eastern and southern side including all of Cuyamaca and the area east of Santa Isabel resulting in numerous structure losses. In 2005, the Volcan fire burned 625 acres on Volcan Mountain on the west side near the town of Julian. In September of 2007 the Angle fire burned 875 acres on the East side of Julian threatening the small rural mountain town. In 2007, the Witch fire burned all of the area south of Santa Isabel and West into the City of Escondido and San Diego. The areas south west of the town of Julian and most of the Warner Springs area on the north side of Hwy 79 to the county line have not had a major fire in the past 20 years. These areas have the most chance of a destructive fire and a significant life and property threat.

2. PRIORITIES:

Establishing defensible space around homes in the battalion is a priority and defensible space inspections take place year round. During these inspections crew educated citizens to the process of defensible space and the benefits it provides. We also educated citizens through our community outreach presentations of, "Ready, Set, Go", Defensible space, and "Before, during, and after a wildland fire". These sessions cover not only defensible space, but also Building standards and materials, fire safe landscaping, and evacuation concerns. With our assistance Firesafe councils have been formed in the Sunshine Summit and Warner Springs communities.

Safety is always the number one priority for firefighters. Written expectations highlighting this fact are provided to all firefighters within the battalion. Safety goals involve protection of life and physical well-

being of employees, the public and property. This is accomplished in several different ways. First, by the use of Injury Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) that has been established at each facility. In the past year, we have identified several potential work hazards and have been able to eliminate most, but not all, due to budgetary constraints. Unfortunately, accidents have occurred and we have had to utilize the workers compensation process to treat injured employees. Overall there has been an increase in safe employee attitude and behavior. Enforcement of department health and physical fitness guidelines has helped accomplish this. The second area of safety has been placed on apparatus and equipment. A standardized procedure has been implemented to ensure all apparatus and equipment meet current mandates, are operating properly, and are being maintained to policy. Lastly, training has been focused on to ensure the safety is complete. All personnel have been provided training to meet current mandates and standards required in the fire service. Courses in Rope Rescue, Auto Extrication and Confined Space Rescue continue to be given; as well as, classes in driver operations and Incident Command. Both State and volunteer stations get together and complete weekly multi company training drills both during the day and sometimes at night to ensure ongoing proficiency. All training is documented thru Target safety and allows for continual training on various topics and allows for more effective assessment to ensure training mandates are being met by all personnel. Although it consumes much of our time, Training is probably the most significant process that keeps people safe both in the workplace and on emergency incidents. Because of this, Battalion 5 spends a large portion of time training.

Vegetation Management

In cooperation with CAL FIRE Pre-Fire/Resource Management, La Cima and Puerta La Cruz Conservation Camps, Battalion 5 personnel have been working on vegetation management programs to reduce the possibility of another destructive fire in Battalion 5. A 75 acre VMP burn on Middle Peak in the Cuyamaca area was completed in 2009 and another 40 acres of masticated vegetation is scheduled for later this year. Through the cooperation with our resource management department and the State parks an effort to replant the once pristine forest lands that were devastated during the Cedar fire of 2003 and the Witch fire of 2007 is under way. Several other VMP burns are scheduled for 2011 in San Felipe Valley and pile burning along the Sunrise Highway Fuel Break. The community continues to assist with defensible space clearance, pile burning by way of issuance of burn permits and LE-7 burns when possible. Several community fuel breaks have been placed in and around the communities of Julian, Cuyamaca and Warner Springs to increase the defensible space around the hundreds of homes that are located in the rural mountain area. These forest management efforts play a key role in improving public and firefighter safety.

3. COLLABORATION:

The battalion works with a wide variety of agencies and participates in Fire Safe Councils, and CERT programs in the communities of Julian and Warner Springs. In addition a good working relationship has been formed with Julian/Cuyamaca Volunteer Fire Department, Intermountain Volunteer fire and rescue, Sunshine Summit Volunteer Fire Department, State Parks and the USFS for mutual aid response. Staying active helps to increase relations and keep all informed of our efforts to continually enhance fire protection within the battalion.

Battalion 5 has a Schedule A agreements with SDCFA:

Warner Springs Fire Station

- Staffed with Cal Fire personnel min. of 2.0 from June to October.
- Staffed with SDCFA stipend personnel min of 2.0 from October to June
- Works with local volunteer fire dept. in providing training, operations and admin.

Ocotillo Wells Fire Station

- Staffed with Cal Fire Personnel min of 2.0 from October to June.
- Staffed with SDCFA stipend personnel min 2.0 from June to October.
- Works with local volunteer fire dept. in providing training, operations and admin
- Develop IAP for desert region offroading and communities fire protection and EMS
- Added logistical support for influx of staff related to call load (sleeping trailers, com unit, SDSO Search and Rescue)
- Establish Auto Aid with Imperial County from June 30th to Dec.30 approx. 300 calls.

In addition to providing staffing, CAL FIRE personnel coordinate stipend and volunteer staffing, vehicle maintenance and training for the SDCFA program in the North East portion of San Diego county.

Northern Division – Battalion 7 (Valley Center)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 7 (Valley Center) is located in north central San Diego Unit. It is bordered to the north by Riverside County and the Cleveland National Forest (Palomar District), to the east by CAL FIRE Julian Battalion, to the west by CAL FIRE Red Mountain Battalion and the Deer Springs Fire Protection District, and to the south by the cities of Escondido and San Marcos. The Valley Center Battalion is unique in its orientation (SW to NE); this orientation lines up with northeast wind events (Santa Ana) which presents the potential for large fast moving fires.

CAL FIRE is partnered either through local agreements or contracts with the following agencies:

1. Valley Center Fire Protection District (Schedule "A" contract comprising two fully staffed fire stations).
2. Pala Tribal Fire Department.
3. Pauma Tribal Fire Department.
4. La Jolla Tribal Fire Department.
5. Rincon Tribal Fire Department.
6. Palomar Mountain Volunteer Fire Department.

Valley Center Battalion has topography as varying as its fuel types and ranges from the rolling hills of the Pacific Coastal Plains in the southwest corner, flat plateaus, rolling hills, and deep canyons/drainages in the center, and steep mountainous terrain in the north and northeast corner. Weather can vary widely depending on where you are in the battalion and can have vast differences in temperature, relative humidity, and dew points in relatively short distances. Most of the Valley Center Battalion is comprised of contiguous State Responsibility Area (SRA) ranging from grass lands, medium brush, various hardwood trees, and conifer forests. With the formation of cities and tribal reservations several islands and pockets of SRA have been created within the battalion. While battalion 7 has normal initial attack fire activity it has been subjected to large fires in the past. Of the large fires in the past the most notable of the last ten years are:

- 2003 Paradise Fire; burned 56,700 acres and destroyed 221 residences, 192 outbuildings, 2 commercial properties, and 75 vehicles. In addition, 10 residences and 5 outbuildings were damaged. 2 civilian fatalities and 24 injuries.
- 2007 Poomacha Fire; burned 49,410 acres and destroyed 138 residences, 1 commercial property, 78 outbuildings and caused an estimated 15 injuries costing \$20.6 million dollars to suppress. The Poomacha eventually joined with the Witch fire to the south.

After the events of 2003 and 2007 the State of California and County of San Diego enacted laws requiring increased clearance and fuel reductions around structures or other improvements abutting SRA lands. The County of San Diego also formed a County Fire Authority post 2007 which included fire prevention inspection and mitigation departments. Unfortunately the County of San Diego still does not have all of the unincorporated areas in San Diego signed on to the consolidated fire plan. Because of this there has been confusion on which degree of clearance is needed (by law) and who, if anyone, can force mitigation. Fortunately most people in Battalion 7 still have a clear vision of the destruction of the fires of 03 and 07 and have willingly complied with notifications requiring property clearance.

Besides the "Communities at Risk" identified in the Section III- B Communities at Risk section, the following area are of concern as well:

- Valley Center
- Pala Indian Reservation
- Pauma Indian Reservation
- Pauma Valley
- Rincon Indian Reservation
- La Jolla Indian Reservation
- San Pasqual

2. PRIORITIES:

The following is a list of projects targeted to protect communities within Battalion 7:

1. Short Term and continually ongoing- Defensible Space inspections.

2. Inspection areas within the “Valley Center Fire Protection District” are being tracked and mapped to show when and where inspections were made.
3. Priority inspections are being performed on the west side of the District where large scale fire activity has not occurred in 20+ years.
4. VMP Burns - (1 Year Plan) Palomar Mountain within SRA boundaries.
5. Truck Trail Maintenance - (1-2 year Plan):
 - La Jolla Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is in progress
 - Guejito Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is in progress
 - Bear Ridge Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review
 - Von Sagren Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review
 - Wohlford Truck Trail - maintenance of truck trail is undergoing environmental review

3. COLLABORATION:

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan within the Battalion 7 administrative area includes:

Organization	Representative (title)
Fire Safe Council	Jim Courter, President
CERT	Jim Courter, President
VC Large Animal Safety Team	Kathy Ames, president
SD County Sheriff-Critical Worker Pass	Bob Bishop, Sergeant

Northern Division – Battalion 8 (Ramona)

1. OVERVIEW:

Battalion 8 is in the center of San Diego County. Battalion 8 is bordered by Julian and the Cuyamaca mountains to the east, The Barona Reservation, and Lakeside to the south, Escondido, San Diego, and Poway to the west, and the Cleveland National Forest (Henshaw District) to the north. The eastern boundary of Battalion 8 is The Highway 78 x Hwy 79 crossing in Santa Isabel. The southern boundary is in Lakeside at Slaughterhouse Canyon Rd X Hwy 67. To the west, it is the San Pasqual area near the San Diego Wild Animal Park X Hwy 78.

The largest single population base in Battalion 8 is the unincorporated community of Ramona, with a population of about 40,000. It is served by the Ramona Fire Department, currently under cooperative fire protection agreement with Cal Fire. They have 3 stations and the engines are staffed 2.0. Cal Fire has 2 stations in Battalion 8. One at the Base of Mt Woodson on Hwy 67, and one at Witch Creek, between Whale Mountain and Witch Mountain on highway 78. Ramona is host to the Cal Fire / USFS Air Tanker reload base out of the Ramona Municipal airport. The Airport has a 4000’ runway. Battalion 8 enjoys cooperative working relationships with all of the neighboring departments and has automatic and mutual aid agreements with many of them.

We coordinate with:

- Barona Reservation Fire Department and Lakeside FPD to the south.
- San Pasqual Volunteer Fire Department, San Diego City and Poway to the west
- Rural Fire Protection District, and Julian / Cuyamaca Fire Protection district to the east
- US Forest Service and Intermountain VFD to the north.

The fuel models in Battalion 8 generally are fuel models 1, 4, or 5. At 1,450 ft. above sea level, Battalions 8’s average temperatures are High: 94.4 Low: 53.3 in the summer and High: 67.8 Low: 35.4 in the winter. Average Humidity is 30% in the summer and 70% in the winter. Battalion 8 was ground zero for the Cedar Fire in 2003, and the south and eastern borders of the community of Ramona were severely impacted. Most of the vegetation re-growth is now 8 years old. The Witch Fire in 2007 again severely impacted. The north and west boundaries of the battalion have 4 year old vegetation re-growth.

We have re-established the Foster Truck Trail as a fire road. Through the Local Fire Safe Council secured funds to create the West End Fuel Break and the Snuz Mountain fuel break, These Isolate and protect the only area of Ramona not impacted by the Cedar and Witch fire. This is the southwest area between Mussey Grade and Rock House Rd. The USFS has established the San Vicente Fuel Break in the north eastern area of Ramona known as the Ramona Country Estates.

Besides the “Communities at Risk” identified in the Section III- B. Communities at Risk section, the following area are of concern as well:

INFRASTRUCTURE:

- Mount Woodson Peak communication facilities and towers
- SDGE main lines coming into Ramona at Creelman.

WATERSHED:

- Ramona Reservoir
- Lake Sutherland

2. PRIORITIES:

1. Continue to conduct defensible space inspections of properties in the Wildland Urban interface, by maximizing the use of Schedule A resources with a particular focus on the Mussey Grade / Fern Brook area and the Barona Mesa area of the Ramona County Estates.
2. Continue to create fuel breaks in the eastern area of the battalion around the Barona Mesa area of the Rural Fire Protection District, and the Ramona County Estates.
3. Work with the USFS on the Cleveland National Forest to identify areas of the FRA SRA boundary that will create a barrier to fire spread from the east to the west and further protect the community of Ramona, like re establishing the Kimbal / Barona Fuel break.
4. Continue to work with the West End Fire Safe council to create and maintain the fuel breaks in the Rosemont area near Rock House Road.
5. Continue to work with Ramona Municipal Water District to identify and create fuel modifications for the purpose of protection of water infrastructure, such as water tanks, reservoirs, and access roadways
6. Maintain the Foster Truck Trail on the south end of Battalion 8.
7. Continue to work with the City of San Diego to modify the vegetation on the top of Mt Woodson to protect critical communications infrastructure.
8. Continue to work with State and County Road officials to treat the vegetation on the local highways and roads that are designated as evacuation routes per the Ramona CPEP.

3. COLLABORATION:

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan within the Battalion 8 administrative area includes:

Organization	Representative (title)
West End Fire Safe Council	Kristi Mansolf
USFS	John Forrester Battalion Chief
Ramona Fire Department	Saul Villagomez Battalion Chief Fire Marshall
Intermountain Fire Department	Cary Coleman
Barona Fire Department	Randy Sandoval
Fish and Game	Jason Price
SD County Parks	Jennifer Price

B: EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER

Monte Vista Inter-agency Emergency Command Center (ECC) is a joint command-communication center with the USFS-Cleveland National Forest. Monte Vista ECC provides emergency communication and support services for the fire operations and routine radio communication for the San Diego Unit. Additionally, ECC provides, by contractual agreement, command-communication center services to over 25 departments and other fire districts. Each year, ECC dispatches over 14,900 calls each year, while most of the calls are for emergency medical care, nearly 300 calls are wildland fires. In order to coordinate and dispatch resources to emergency incidents, ECC tracks over 140 fire fighting equipment plus personnel on a daily basis. Recently, ECC coordinated the narrow-banding of all VHF radios in the fire fighting equipment.

In terms of support for prescribe fire projects, ECC coordinates and processes the Live Fire Use – Approval/Notification Form (FC-400) between the Incident Commander (Battalion Chief), the Unit Duty Chief, the Region Operation Center and the Region Duty Chief. Additionally, ECC assigns resources (fire fighting equipment and people) to prescribe fire project per direction by the Incident Action Plan.

In terms of new technologies, ECC is actively engaged in the Automatic Vehicle Locator and Dynamic Dispatching services. This type of dispatching services is intend to track and coordinate fire fighting equipment in order to dispatch the closest resource to emergencies. ECC, along with field staff are exploring opportunities with the Next-Generation Incident Command System (NICS) project. This project, formerly known as the Lincoln Distributed Disaster Response System (LDDRS) project, is developed by MIT Lincoln Laboratory in partnership with the CAL FIRE and sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate is designed to improve first-responder situational awareness and collaboration, as well as interagency interoperability in disaster response. For more information, go to the website: http://www.ll.mit.edu/publications/technotes/TechNote_NICS.pdf. Lastly, the HPWREN project is the systematic placement of high speed video camera through out the County that allows for fire start detection and monitoring.

C: AIR OPERATIONS

The San Diego Unit operates one of the most comprehensive firefighting aviation programs in the Nation. The Unit operates two aviation programs; a fixed wing program and a rotary wing program. The fixed wing program operates out of the Ramona Air Attack Base. It consists of one OV-10 Air Attack aircraft and two S-2T Type III airtankers. The rotary wing program operates out of Gillespie airport. This is a unique program that combines San Diego Count Sheriff pilots with CAL FIRE Helitack crews. This Interagency program operates two Type II Bell Super 205 helicopters. The Sheriff department has additional auxiliary aircraft that are utilizes for specials missions when applicable. The aviation program also enhancements to the Units Pre-Fire/Resource Management Division. Some of them are as follows:

Rotary Wing Program

- Helitack Fuels Crew. Helitack Firefighter positions have been funded through the year. This crew will aide in VMP burns and projects.
- Unit vegetation assessments. Aerial reconnaissance flights
- Aerial Ignition. Future equipment will include aerial capabilities to assist in VMP burns.

Fixed Wing Program

- Air Attack 330 has a unique Infrared/Video camera system that is capable of down-linking to vehicles. This data is recorded onto a onboard hard drive or to the Chief's vehicles hard drive. This camera system assists the pre-fire program by:
 - Unit wide fuel assessments.
 - IR/Video data collection of incident.
 - IR/Video data collection of vegetation health state. Including GSOB mortality

D: CAMP PROGRAM

The Conservation Camp Program, in partnership with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, provides nineteen handcrews to support fire operations, pre-fire/resource management activities and projects, and other public agencies and approved non-profit organization for public services. Four conservation camps are located in the San Diego Unit, two are located in the Southern Division -- McCain Valley and La Cima Conservation Camps are staffed with male inmates and the two are located in the Northern Division -- Puerta La Cruz and Rainbow Conservation Camps are staffed with female inmates.

When the handcrews are not assigned to emergency incidents, they serve as the key workforce for implementing pre-fire/resource management activities and projects. Typically, the camps provide at least two hundred crew days per camp per year toward pre-fire/resource management activities and projects. Nearly all the fuel reduction projects listed in Appendix A are implemented by using conservation camp crews.

In terms of funding support for camp crews, the Hazardous Fuels Treatment Grant provides reimbursement funds to offset operational cost to support grant funded fuels treatment projects. Fire safe councils may utilize camp crews for community fuels treatment projects – especially for those projects identified in their Community Wildfire Protection Plans.