

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Shasta – Trinity Unit Fire Management Plan documents the assessment of the wildland fire potential within the Unit. It includes stakeholder contributions, priorities, and identifies strategic targets for pre-fire solutions. *This plan is a living document to be amended as new information is collected.*

The goal of this plan is to reduce total cost and losses from wildfire by protecting assets at risk through focused prefire management prescriptions and increasing initial attack success.

This plan utilizes the five strategic objectives and fire plan framework identified in the California Fire Plan and incorporates them into the planning and implementation process.¹

- **Wildfire Protection Zones.** To create wildfire safety zones to reduce citizen and firefighter risks from future large wildfires.
- **Initial Attack Success.** The fire plan utilizes an assessment process to measure the level of service provided by the wildland fire protection system. This measure is used to assess the department's ability to provide an equal level of protection to lands of similar type as required by the Public Resources code 4130. This is measured in terms of a percentage of fires that are successfully controlled before unacceptable costs and losses are incurred. Knowledge of the level of service will help define the risk of wildfire damage faced by public and private assets in the wildlands.
<http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/success/index.cfm>
- **Assets Protected.** The plan has utilized a methodology for defining assets protected and their degree of risk from wildfire. The assets addressed in the plan are citizen and firefighter safety, watersheds and water, timber, wildlife and habitat (including rare and endangered species), rural communities, unique areas (scenic, cultural, and historic), recreation, range, structures, and air quality. Stakeholders for each of the assets at risk are identified. The assessment will enable the Unit and other fire service managers to set priorities for fire management project work.
- **Prefire Management.** This aspect focuses on alternatives to protect assets at risk. Projects include a combination of fuels modification, ignition management, fire-safe engineering activities such as regulation and zoning, educational programs, public information and road accessibility, department infrastructure including fire stations and water systems, alarms, and forest health. Prefire management prescriptions designed to protect these assets will also identify those who benefit and who should share in the project costs. Project priorities will be determined based on stakeholder input and support.

¹ "California Fire Plan" Executive Summary

- **Fiscal Framework.** The California Board of Forestry and CAL FIRE are developing a fiscal framework for assessing and monitoring annual and long term changes in California's wildland fire protection systems. State, local and federal wildland fire protection agencies, along with the private sector, have evolved into an interdependent system of prefire management and suppression forces. As a result changes to budgeted levels of service of any of the entities directly affects the others and the services delivered to the public. Monitoring system changes through this fiscal framework will allow the Board and CAL FIRE to address public policy issues that maximize the efficiency of local, state, and federal firefighting resource.

Unit Fire Plan Assessments and Data Layers

The unit continues to progress on the Fire Plan. Level of Service assessments have been completed and require only annual updating. Initial assessments have been completed for the fuels, weather and assets at risk.

Review of the fuels data indicate some incorrect fuel typing in the foothill regions of Shasta County. These areas are currently experiencing urban growth increasing the risk of catastrophic loss from wildfire. Obtaining an accurate fuels inventory of these lands is very important. In addition fuels within Federal Jurisdiction have not been completely validated. The Shasta Trinity National Forest has completed its fire plan.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/shastatrinity/fire/>

The timbered areas within the SRA lands of the Unit have been re-evaluated and the fuel type, crown closure, and ladder fuels were updated in 2004 and some of the brush lands were reassessed in 2005. Resource Management personnel within the Unit are assisting in the refinement of this data as individual Timber Harvest Plans are assessed.

The majority of the assets at risk have been identified and partially validated, however other resource values such as historical buildings and historical and cultural sites have not been completely identified. We are receiving cooperation in this assessment from Shasta and Trinity County Historical Societies as well as assistance from CAL FIRE's Archaeologist.

Population within the Unit is dramatically increasing therefore population density and structure locations require updating and validation. The Shasta County portions of the Unit have seen the greatest population expansion and will require additional time to validate. With assistance from the Trinity County Fire Safe Council and the Trinity County Planning Department, we were able to produce structure and water source location maps for urbanized areas within Trinity County.

Fire Plan Applications

The Unit has been involved in community pre-fire management projects since 1992 (Shingletown Community Fire Safe) and has a history of fuels management cooperation with stakeholders involved in CAL FIRE's Vegetation Management Program.

Additional fuels management projects have been cooperatively implemented throughout the Unit. Recent studies of fires burning into treated areas indicate these projects are successful in reducing fire damage. Continued funding and support are critical to the success of these projects.

Hindrances to the fire plan are concentrated on the financial process that the Department must follow in order to expend grant monies on projects and the lack of specific funding for pre-fire fuels management. The continued success of the fire plan requires streamlining this process.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

In 2005, both Shasta and Trinity Counties completed **Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP)**. These plans were developed in response to the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA). Both counties have worked on fuels and watershed management plans for several years prior to the adoption of the HFRA. Rather than rewrite the existing plans, they were reviewed for HFRA consistency and compiled. These compiled plans combined with the Shasta – Trinity Unit Plan were presented to and adopted by the respective County Boards of Supervisors in October, 2005. Like the Unit Fire Plan, these CWPPs are living documents that require annual review and updates when appropriate.

Shasta County Communities Wildfire Protection Plan:

http://www.shastacountyfiresafecouncil.org/Wildfire_CPP.html

Trinity County Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

http://www.tcrd.net/pdf/TC_Wildfire_Protection_Plan.pdf

Unit Fire Plan Responsibilities

The primary fire plan responsibilities in the Unit are assigned to the Prevention Bureau within the Special Operations Division. The Bureau led by one Assistant Chief, two Battalion chiefs, one Fire Captain Specialist-Law Enforcement, one Fire Captain-Prefire Engineer, one County Planning Inspector and one Fire Prevention Specialist. Field Battalion Chiefs are responsible for Community Fire Safe Projects within their Battalions with assistance from the Fire Prevention Bureau.

Key Issues

Both Shasta and Trinity Counties have a history of large and damaging fires. The continued urbanization of the Unit's wildland areas significantly increases both the damage and ignition potential. It is imperative that the Unit continues to have accurate and current assessments. The Unit must also, while working with local government and stakeholders, incorporate the fire plan analysis into current and future policy decisions when they relate to the wildland areas.

Significant amounts of the population and their properties are at risk within the Unit. Residents must provide and maintain a defensible space around their properties. Fuels along existing roadways should also be maintained in order to ensure safe passage. Fuel breaks and post-fire fuel management are required to help alleviate the risk of fire and help restore a healthy wildland environment. To achieve these; education, enforcement, fuels management and financial assistance should continue to be made available.

It is imperative that CAL FIRE and our stakeholders continue to seek funding and methods to mitigate the current risk as well as any future risks. Pre-fire planning and fuels management projects including those identified by the Vegetation Management Program and the California Forest Improvement Program should receive specific line item status in the California budget.

Prevention and education efforts must continue and when possible, concentrate on the reduction or elimination of preventable fire ignitions.