

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State of California

Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission



Report to the Governor

Senator William Campbell, (Retired)
Chairman

“Unless and until public policymakers at all levels of government muster the political will to put the protection of life and property ahead of competing political agendas, these tragedies are certain to repeat.”

—*Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission*



Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

FORWARD

In October of 2003, Southern California experienced the most devastating wild land/urban interface fire disaster in its history. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, a total of 739,597 acres were burned, 3,631 homes were destroyed and 24 lives were lost, including one firefighter. The aftermath of the fires saw even greater loss of life wherein 16 people perished in a flash flood/mudslide in an area of San Bernardino County due to the loss of vegetation impacted by the fire.

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission was established to conduct a review of the efforts to fight the October 2003 wildfires and present recommendations to make California less vulnerable to disasters of such enormity in the future.

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission includes the following federal, state, and local partners:

Chair

California State Senator William "Bill" Campbell (Ret.)

Federal Partners

U.S. Senate – Dianne Feinstein, Senator
U.S. Congress – Susan Davis, Congresswoman
U.S. Congress – Jerry Lewis, Congressman
U.S. Department of Defense – Peter Verga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
U.S. Forest Service – Jerry Williams, Director, Office of Fire & Aviation
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency – David Fukutomi, Federal Coordinating Officer
U.S. Department of the Interior – Larry Hamilton, Director, Office of Fire & Aviation, Bureau of Land Management

State Partners

California Senate – Deirdre Alpert, Senator
California Senate – Jim Brulte, Senator
California Senate – Dennis Hollingsworth, Senator
California Senate – Nell Soto, Senator
California Assembly – Robert Dutton, Assembly Member
California Assembly – Christine Kehoe, Assembly Member
California Assembly – Jay La Suer, Assembly Member

State Partners (continued)

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection – Andrea Tuttle, Director
California Emergency Council – Chip Prather, Chief, Orange County Fire Authority
California Office of Homeland Security – Rick Martinez, Deputy Director
Governor’s Office of Emergency Services – Kim Zagaris, Chief, Fire & Rescue Branch
Office of American Indian Affairs – Marilyn Delgado, Director
Office of American Indian Affairs – Ed McOrmond, Fire Chief, Pechanga Fire Department
Office of State Fire Marshal’s Office – Ronny Coleman, Fire Marshal (Ret.)
FIREScope – P. Michael Freeman, Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department

Local Partners

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors – Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Supervisor
Riverside County Board of Supervisors – James Venable, Supervisor
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors – Dennis Hansberger, Chair
San Diego County Board of Supervisors – Greg Cox, Chair
Ventura County Board of Supervisors – Judy Mikels, Chair
San Bernardino City – Judith Valles, Mayor
San Diego City – Dick Murphy, Mayor
San Diego Fire and Life Safety Services – Jeff Bowman, Chief, San Diego City Fire Department

Associations

California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association – William Bamattre, Chair & Chief, Los Angeles City Fire Department
California Fire Chiefs Association – William McCammon, President & Chief, Alameda County Fire Department
California State Firefighters Association – Jeff Sedivec, President
California Professional Firefighters – Bob Wolf, 6th District Vice President

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Governor's
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

April 5, 2004

Senator William Campbell, (Ret.)
Commission Chairman

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Representative Susan Davis
U.S. Representative Jerry Lewis
Senator Deirdre Alpert
Senator Jim Brulte
Senator Dennis Hollingsworth
Senator Nell Soto
Assembly Member Robert Dutton
Assembly Member Christine Kehoe
Assembly Member Jay La Suer
Director Larry Hamilton
Deputy Director Rick Martinez
Director Andrea Tuttle
Director Jerry Williams
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Greg Cox
Supervisor Dennis Hansberger
Supervisor Judy Mikels
Supervisor James Venable
Mayor Dick Murphy
Mayor Judith Valles
Chief Bill Bamattre
Chief Jeff Bowman
Chief Bill McCammon
Chief Ed McOrmond
Chief Ron Coleman
Chief P. Michael Freeman
Chief Chip Prather
Chief Kim Zagaris
David Fukutomi, FCO, FEMA
Jeff Sedivec, President, CSFA
Peter Verga, Asst. Sec. of Defense
Bob Wolf, President, CPF

Commission Staff:

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R. Blair Springer, Counsel
Robert Gerber, Executive Secretary
Denise Banker, Executive Assistant

Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor State of California
Office of the Governor
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Final Report

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Just as it has been my great honor to serve as Chairman of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, I am now honored to present to you the final report of that body. As you know, this Commission was formed in the wake of California's historically devastating series of wildland fires that ravaged Southern California during the fall of 2003.

The magnitude of that tragedy, not only in terms of the loss of human life and property, but in the loss of valuable watershed, wildlife, and critical environmental habitats, was truly catastrophic. After a series of extensive and deliberative public hearings, the Commission determined that, while the bravery and dedication of California's fire service continues to be exemplary, many lessons from similar past tragedies have gone unlearned by those responsible for development of fire safety and prevention policies.

Foremost among those lessons, is the lack of political will to prioritize among competing but important, public policy goals. Vegetation and fuel management, habitat preservation and environmental protection have often conflicted with sound fire safe planning in the development of wildland areas. When adverse weather and fuel conditions combine, our firefighters have been given the impossible task of protecting life and property in the face of those policy conflicts. Unless and until public policymakers at all levels of government muster the political will to put the protection of life and property ahead of competing political agendas, these tragedies are certain to repeat.

Additionally, the Commission recognized the difficulty the fire service faces in meeting the fire protection challenges of explosive development growth along the wildland/urban interface. Among the findings and recommendations, the Commission urges the same commitment of professional training afforded the valiant men and women of law enforcement to our California fire service.

Finally, our recommendations have been categorized as primarily public policy solutions or fiscal issues. The Commission was sensitive to the financial plight of California government at all levels, and recognized that few of the fiscal recommendations would have meaningful value in the absence of the critical public policy changes that must proceed them.

In closing, and on a personal note, in my more than two decades as a member of the California State Legislature I have never been more privileged to serve with such a dedicated and committed group of professionals than with my colleagues who served on this Commission. You and former-Governor Davis are to be commended for selecting individuals who brought expertise, passion and a search for ways to prevent such future tragedies while resisting opportunities to either advance individual agendas or politicize a very controversial debate. We can only hope that our combined efforts result in the action the people of California deserve in the wake of this fire disaster.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small mark above the 'i' in "William".

Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

INTRODUCTION

For 40 years, the California fire service has operated the most effective and cooperative mutual aid and incident command systems in the country. Time after time, firefighters from across the State have responded to the aid of neighboring or distant communities to provide the necessary resources to combat California's catastrophic wildfires. Unfortunately, in October 2003, Southern California experienced the most devastating wildland fire disaster in state history. Over 739,597 acres burned; 3,631 homes, 36 commercial properties and 1,169 outbuildings destroyed; 246 injuries; and 24 fatalities, including one firefighter. At the height of the siege, 15,631 personnel were assigned to fight these fires.

*"Through the action we take, we will serve the legacy of those who fought and perished in the fires."
— Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger*

It is imperative that we learn from this disaster to reduce the impacts of wildfires on California residents. It is in this spirit that former Governor Gray Davis and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger established the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission on November 2, 2003. The Commission, which is broadly representative of the firefighting community and local, state and federal stakeholders and affected communities, was tasked to hear testimony on what worked and what didn't work in the efforts to fight the State's 2003 wildfires and to review and provide recommendations on what is needed to improve and enhance wildfire response and operational relationships between the federal, state and local planning agencies.



*"All of these firefighters are heroes. They have all done extraordinary work to defend peoples' properties and lives."
— former Governor Gray Davis*

Tasked with a very short timeframe, the Commission examined:

- Reducing and eliminating jurisdictional and operational barriers that prevent the expeditious response of federal, state and local agencies to combat wildfires;
- Providing continuous readiness training of personnel and military equipment approved for use within the California incident command system;
- Developing and/or revising an interstate and/or regional master mutual aid system similar to California's; and
- Updating local building and planning regulations to include more stringent construction standards for high fire threat zones, requirements for brush clearance and fuel modification, and land use planning techniques that protect property.

*"We cannot continue those policies that impede our efforts to reduce dangerous fuel loads or hamper our fire protection and firefighting efforts."
— State Senator Bill Campbell (Ret.)*

“We are very grateful to the people who helped with the fires—to the fire departments and the forest service departments. I don’t think we can thank them enough for the work that they did and the work that they do putting their lives on the line time and time again.”
— Senator Nell Soto

We owe much to the heroic men and women who saved our lives and properties. However, we cannot continue to put them in harm’s way without doing everything possible to prevent such destructive fires in the future.

Many who testified warned that similar catastrophic fires will take place again due in part to our warm temperatures and low humidity, prolonged drought periods, the Santa Ana winds, chaparral, dry brush, burgeoning population and residential development in wild land areas, to name a few. The Commission’s recommendations stresses pre-fire management programs, which involve not only the cooperation of federal, state and local agencies, but also local communities and individual property owners.

“I am confident that this Commission can come together to produce a report that will serve as a genesis for essential policy changes that will help prevent and protect Californians from future fire disasters.”
-- Assembly Member Christine Kehoe

And finally, the Commission expresses its deepest sympathies to the families and loved ones of those whose lives were lost during this tragic fire siege, and to the many thousands who lost their homes and their private personal treasures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Commission Staff:

Robert Gerber, Executive Secretary
Denise M. Banker, Executive Assistant
Robert Eplett, Photographer
Rob Allingham, Video/Audio Technician
Grace Koch, Executive Liaison
Patricia Livingston, Secretary

*"I am truly optimistic that the work of this Commission will have a positive impact in addressing the wildfire challenge that California faces."
— Chief William R. Bamattre, L.A. City Fire Department*

Acknowledgments

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission wishes to acknowledge the valuable contributions made by the many individuals and organizations assisting the Commission on this most challenging endeavor. The Commission members sincerely appreciate the time and effort of those who prepared and/or presented both public and written testimony at our various hearings. The testimony from these individuals, the community and public and private officials were crucial in understanding the scope of the wildland fires and the promise for proactive solutions to mitigate future losses.

*"We are further ahead in our firefighting capabilities than any other state in the nation."
— Director Dallas Jones, Governor's Office of Emergency Services*

A special thanks to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), Director Dallas Jones and his executive staff for their administrative support to the Commission. Many thanks to the OES Information and Public Affairs Unit for their media affairs assistance and in documenting each Commission meeting in video, audio and still digital photography.

*"The system did not fail. It was strained. It was pushed to its max. But it didn't fail."
— Jim Wright, Deputy Director for Fire Protection, CDF*

The Commission appreciates California Highway Patrol Commissioner D.O. "Spike" Helmick and his officers for providing security at the seven public hearings.

The firm of Sergeant Major Associates, Inc., especially Jerry M. Haleva, President, and R. Blair Springer, are thanked for assisting the Commission in the review of the October fires. The Commission would also like to thank Joan Kawada Chan and Kenneth Kobrin of Integrated Solutions for Business and Government, Inc. (ISBG) for analyzing the data and drafting the report.

PREFACE

“In this state, there are now approximately 35 to 36 million people that are scattered over in excess of 100 million acres of interface and intermix with communities. The liability of one major interface or intermix incident not only affects residents, it jeopardizes communities, companies, as well as economies.”
— Dave Neff,
Deputy Chief, CDF

Over the course of the seven hearings that the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission conducted, it became abundantly clear that conflicting public policy mandates, lengthy bureaucratic administrative processes and procedures, and antagonistic litigation tactics were the most significant barriers and impediments to reducing the threat of wildland fires and preventing periodic, catastrophic loss of life and property from such disasters. The key to protecting our communities and residents is through fire prevention and effective vegetation/fuels management programs. While the State must act to ensure that our fire service agencies have the necessary funding, personnel, training, and resources to provide and maintain an effective firefighting capability, the State cannot ignore the public policies and governmental barriers that contribute significantly to the periodic catastrophic fires that overwhelm our firefighting response capability.

The Commission members recognize that continued expenditures on firefighting resources and capabilities without directly addressing and eliminating the public policy, bureaucratic and obstructionist litigation barriers to critical fuel management, fire safe building codes and fire wise community standards, will only marginally increase our ability to avoid future catastrophic losses to wildland fires.

“We have to strengthen our forest health, strengthen fuels management across the state, and implement regulations and codes for both building and infrastructure to make California as fire safe as we can.”
— Jim Wright,
Deputy Director for
Fire Protection, CDF

The Governor’s Blue Ribbon Fire Commission adopted a flow chart (Appendix I) to assist the members in articulating its findings and recommendations in an objective, risk management approach to mitigating the loss of life and property to wildland fires. This flow chart will also assist readers and policy makers in reviewing the Commission’s findings and recommendations, and recognizing the barriers that impede the implementation of critical wildland fire prevention and fire safety measures.

The Commission members recommend that the flow chart be utilized as a reference tool in a review of the Commission’s findings and recommendations, and in framing the public policy debate and determination to achieve sound, cost-effective, protection of life and property from the devastation of wildland/urban interface fires. This chart represents a “systems approach” to a very complex problem. It does not rely on any one factor that contributes to a large or catastrophic fire, but rather introduces a method that looks at how several factors need to be addressed in order to reconcile this level of threat under adverse weather conditions.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

The Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, which was established by former Governor Gray Davis and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on November 2, 2003, was tasked to conduct a thorough review of the Southern California wildfires and present recommendations to policy-makers that will promote a fire safe environment in the wildland urban interface environment in California.

"As Abraham Lincoln stated so well, a nation with no regard for its past will have little future worth remembering. Let's make the terrible lessons learned from our October fires our blueprint for the future."

*— Supervisor
Jim Venable,
Riverside County*

Background

In October of 2003, Southern California experienced the most devastating wild land/ urban interface fire disaster in California's history. The statistics are staggering: 739,597 total acres were burned; 3,631 homes, 36 commercial properties, 1,169 outbuildings destroyed; approximately 500 farmlands were torched costing \$40 million in agricultural products alone; 246 people were injured and 24 lives were lost, including one firefighter.

"We have an ongoing crisis in California that could ultimately make the fires that burned over 3,000 homes look small in comparison. We have a million dead trees still waiting to burn, and thousands of acres of scorched soil that could come crashing down on whole neighborhoods."

*— Congressman
Jerry Lewis*

To avert future catastrophes, then-Governor Gray Davis, along with Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger, established the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. Named to the Commission were firefighters, community officials, along with local, state and federal representatives. The Commission was tasked to conduct public hearings in the six impacted counties and report its findings and recommendations in 120 days.

Summary of Public Hearings

Hearings were held in the counties that were impacted by the wildland fires — Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Ventura, San Diego, Riverside and Orange.



The Inaugural hearing was conducted on November 13, 2003, in Manhattan Beach, California. The Commission

"I want to take this opportunity to thank every one of my fellow Commission members for their dedication and commitment attending these meetings. I have never witnessed a greater commitment of time, energy and focus by such a high level group of appointees, and I am truly grateful."

*— State Senator
Bill Campbell (Ret.)*

"We need to explore what happened with these conflagrations and learn from them so that we can do a better job."

— Senator Dennis Hollingsworth

members were welcomed by then-Governor Gray Davis and were given a general description of the impacted areas, a chronological overview of the fires, and the challenges that confronted our firefighters during the October siege.

The second hearing was conducted on December 4, 2003, in San Bernardino, California. The focus of this hearing was on the resources available to combat the wild land fire, mutual aid, and barriers that prevented the expeditious use and response of these resources.

Fire prevention and pre-fire management efforts were the topics of the third hearing in Thousand Oaks, California, on January 7, 2004. Discussions centered on local building codes, planning and land use regulations, vegetation management and fuel modification programs.

"The losses were tragic, but I am confident the spirit of recovery will heal us and take us all forward."

— Director Andrea Tuttle, CDF



At the fourth hearing in San Diego, California on January 21, 2004, testimony was heard regarding after-action reviews conducted by other federal, state and local entities relative to the October 2003 fire siege, and an in-depth review of the responses to the Cedar Fire in San Diego County.

On February 5, 2004, at Riverside, California, the hearing focused on communications and interoperability.

The sixth hearing, which was conducted in Costa Mesa, California on February 19, 2004, centered on fire service training, emergency medical services, and building and insurance industry programs.

Finally, on March 18, 2004, the Commission met in Los Angeles to review the findings of their deliberations and to collectively reach agreement on the many recommendations contained in this report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Following is the list of findings from the public hearings and written testimony received by the Commission.

JURISDICTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BARRIERS

FINDING 1

There is confusion as to whether there is a requirement that all available local resources, including civilian contract aircraft, be exhausted before requesting federal resources to assist in fighting WUI (Wildland/Urban Interface) fires.

FINDING 2

There are numerous conflicting land management and environmental laws and regulations at all levels of government.

FINDING 3

One-third of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CDF) workforce has retired during the past few years, resulting in vacancies in key positions. In addition, the number of fire crews has decreased due to a decline in the number of Department of Corrections (CDC) inmate firefighters, California Youth Authority (CYA) wards and California Conservation Corps (CCC) members. As a result, CDF had to deploy higher level managers to perform Assistant Chief level functions during the October 2003 Fire Siege.

FINDING 4

CDF is operating a fire protection system year around on an eight month budget allocation.

FINDING 5

CDF acquires used military aircraft through the federal excess property program and refurbishes them into working firefighting aircraft. However, availability of these federal excess property aircraft is diminishing and will soon be exhausted.

*"The role and mission of the United States Department of Defense is the military defense of our country. That is what we're organized, trained and equipped to do. We do have a longstanding tradition of providing support to civil authorities and have a well organized and well ordered process to do this."
— Peter Verga,
Assistant Secretary,
U.S. Department of
Defense*

*"Our challenge is to live and build our communities in a more fire safe manner, reduce the unnatural fuel levels in our wildlands, improve our evacuation plans and communication systems."
— Director Andrea Tuttle, CDF*

*"We are keenly aware that fires do not have an eight month season in San Diego, but a year long danger."
— Congresswoman Susan Davis*

“When I was able to send two engines with eight members instead of three engines with nine members, I was able to cover more ground and spread the engines further because it allowed one person to take a command role, to plan, to look where the fire’s going, to properly manage the fire.”

— Captain Fred Burris, Ventura County Fire Department

FINDING 6

Four person (4-0) staffing on fire engines may be more efficient than lower levels of staffing and allow firefighters to be more productive in their fire suppression activities, thereby maximizing engine response capability during WUI fires.

FINDING 7

CDF aircraft, federal aircraft and military aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) units operate with inflexible “cut-off” time policies.

FINDING 8

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, is the nation’s coordination center for wildland firefighting and has the ability to call upon the DOD when additional assistance is needed.

FINDING 9

Aerial firefighting resources cannot be solely relied upon to establish an effective fire line. It requires a coordinated effort with ground firefighting resources.

FINDING 10

There is a fundamental yet unmet need in WUI suppression and management to be able to consistently monitor and understand the behavior of wildland fires at their full scale and as they occur.

“We need to discuss what went well, because a lot of things did go well. We also need to discuss what we can improve on.”

— Assembly Member Robert Dutton

TRAINING

FINDING 1

There are currently no minimum statewide service level or training standards mandated by law for California firefighters, nor are there statewide mandates for continuing training or maintenance of performance standards.

“The lives of our brave firefighters and those they protect depend upon quality and accessible training programs.”
— State Senator Bill Campbell (Ret.)

FINDING 2

Training of California’s firefighters is complex and diverse, and has many agencies participating in the development and delivery of training programs. While California has led the way in developing new training programs, the programs have yet to be brought together in a coordinated manner.

“When you send crews into a threatened neighborhood when everybody else is trying to get out, the ability for them to do their job is not based on the fire truck they’re on, it’s based on their background, education and experience that allow them to function safely in that kind of environment.”
— Ronny J. Coleman, Interim Chief, City of Santa Rosa Fire Department

FINDING 3

Because participation in CDF/OSFM training programs is unfunded, a statewide needs assessment has not been conducted, new programs take years to develop, training programs are not readily available in all areas of the state, and instructor availability is limited in some geographic areas.

FINDING 4

Funding for the Army National Guard to conduct or participate in multi-agency training is not available at a time when integration of their resources into the state’s firefighting resources is needed.

“We need to give due credit to the training that the military does on bucket drops.”
— Assembly Member Jay La Suer

FINDING 5

Keeping up with the firefighting training component of the active military is very difficult.

FINDING 6

The USFS has six centers in California that provide training to federal, state and local government fire service employees and a National Wildfire Training Center that houses its national apprenticeship program.

“It is an appropriate federal responsibility to play a role in some of the funding relating to training and re-training.”
— Congressman Jerry Lewis

FINDING 7

A comprehensive public awareness education program is needed.

INTERSTATE/REGIONAL MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS

FINDING 1

Interstate Mutual Aid compacts provide liability and reimbursement clauses, but these compacts are not completely detailed and have not been regularly updated.

“The compacts were put together in the 50’s and 60’s so many people aren’t aware of the compacts. Also, issues such as who is covered under workers’ compensation, who pays and at what levels must be addressed regarding EMAC.”
— Director Dallas Jones, Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

FINDING 2

States vary as to their process for allocating resources.

FINDING 3

California has a variety of mutual aid and cooperative agreements through which public entities may be reimbursed.

FINDING 4

The Southern California Tribal Emergency Management Consortium consists of Native American tribes in San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and has developed the same firefighting capabilities as any other local or state government fire department.

“If we are to survive and continue living in a fire prone environment, we must all work together and form effective working teams among communities and emergency services as never before. This will happen again.”
— Chief Ray Quintanar, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USFS

FINDING 5

Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) is important to a unified and coordinated emergency response to WUI fires.

FINDING 6

California’s mutual aid system is recommended by the federal government as a national model.

LOCAL BUILDING, PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS; BRUSH CLEARANCE AND FUEL MODIFICATION

FINDING 1

The protection of life and property from wildfire cannot simply rely on the availability of firefighting resources. Until the removal of thousands of acres of dead bark beetle infested trees and sound forest stewardship is achieved, Southern California and other forested areas of the state will continue to have hazardous standing fuel just waiting to become the next conflagration. Fuel reduction and fuel modification programs are essential to reducing the potential threat of major WUI fires.

“Fire has no respect for boundaries. The only way to effectively protect our communities is to universally improve our ability to construct fire safe communities. We believe this can be done with the proper balance so that native habitats are protected, as well as other sensitive environmental concerns, while simultaneously thinning brush so that it provides the correct safety to structures.”
— P. Lamont Ewell,
San Diego Assistant
City Manager

FINDING 2

Community involvement is essential to helping implement necessary fire prevention and fire safety programs at the local level.

FINDING 3

Currently, appropriate minimum building standards and fire safety requirements are neither mandated nor consistently enforced in all communities in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

FINDING 4

The insurance industry must be an intimate and integral part of the solution to addressing the WUI problem.

“We estimate that there will be around 1.9 million claims from these fires and it will probably reach an estimated total of over \$2.03 billion.”
— Jerry Davies,
Director of
Communications,
Personal Insurance
Federation of
California

FINDING 5

Vegetation has not been adequately managed to mitigate wildfire risks. The most destructive, costly and dangerous wildfires occurred in older, dense vegetation burning under extreme conditions.

FINDING 6

Most structural losses occurred where homes had little or no vegetation clearance or were built using combustible building materials, and were thus vulnerable to wildfires.

COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

FINDING 1

Communications interoperability is essential in the effective command and control of personnel and resources during multi-agency, multi-discipline responses to major incidents.

“Let’s improve on what we have rather than going out and trying to sink a tremendous amount of money into something new.”
— Assembly Member Jay La Suer

FINDING 2

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) provides long loiter time surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence.

FINDING 3

Geographic Information System (GIS) technology is an effective tool for quickly providing a visual representation of critical information, such as the status and potential impact of complex incidents during a major wildfire.

“Many challenges made fighting these fires extremely difficult, such as tracking and anticipating the wind driven path of the raging inferno.”
— Congresswoman Susan Davis

FINDING 4

It is important that the public, elected officials and the media have accurate, timely information.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission recommends the following solutions, which involve not only the cooperation of the federal, state and local governments, but also that of the local community and individual property owners. The Commission has categorized each recommendation as a *Policy* or *Fiscal* recommendation, and numerically prioritized its importance as: (1) must implement; (2) should implement; or (3) should be studied further.

JURISDICTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BARRIERS

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OES arrange a meeting of federal, state and local partners to further clarify and improve the process of utilizing federal resources and access to military assets. (Policy-1)

“The Economy Act is often cited and discussed but rarely understood. We do not view this legislation as a limiting law, but rather as an enabling law which allows DOD to support other federal agencies.”
— Colonel Thomas LaCrosse, U.S. Army, Director, Civil Support, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that federal (U.S. Department of the Interior [DOI] and USFS), state (CDF and OES) and local fire agencies work in conjunction with the military to jointly develop and adopt agreements, regulations and operating policies for the employment of aerial assets during WUI firefighting efforts. In addition, FIRESCOPE should develop a statewide plan to increase local agency capacity to provide additional air resources for combating WUI fires. (Policy-1)

“No force of nature was as remarkable as the spirit of those men and women on those front lines. I saw firefighters running on nothing more than guts and adrenaline refusing to sleep, refusing to eat, refusing to think about anything except how to save one more home or one more life. They came from everywhere, from large departments like Los Angeles and San Francisco and from smaller departments like Davis, Modesto and Novato. These are the people who stood the ground against this force of nature.”
— Dan Terry, President, CA Professional Fire Fighters

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that a task force be established to review the social, political, economic and scientific issues relating to conflicts between environmental and ecosystem values and land management planning, and their impact on the use of proven fire prevention and fire safety measures to protect lives and property in our WUI areas. (Policy-1)

“The National Guard Bureau needs to amend its mission and add firefighting to its mission. By doing this, it would provide additional funds and training opportunities.”

*— Kim Zagaris,
Chief, Fire and
Rescue Branch,
Governor’s Office of
Emergency Services*

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that federal and state statutes be clarified, where necessary, to reaffirm the status of the fire service as a public safety entity and to recognize the integrated responsibilities for fuel management as reflected in the National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Restoration Act and existing agreements between the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and federal, state and local fire agencies. (Policy-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 5

“We need to identify the disparity between the current status of a fire crew staffing versus what the actual need is because it is such an important part of local mitigation issues, as well as statewide response.”

*— Jeff Sedivic,
President, CA State
Firefighters Assn*

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local forest firefighting agencies review their aircraft operations cut-off times and determine if there can be a window of flexibility to expand incident operations times, while at the same time taking into consideration flight crew safety. Additionally, these agencies should review available and emerging technologies to extend available aerial emergency response capabilities. (Policy-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 6

“Senator Dianne Feinstein and I were successful in securing \$725 million for California. Monies will go to FEMA to use for disaster relief for individuals and communities, to the U.S. Forest Service and Emergency Watershed Protection program to remove dead and dying trees from federal lands and for erosion control, to U.S. Department of Agriculture to assist farmers in rebuilding their farms, to ranchers to replace livestock, and to replace lost tree crops.”

*— Congressman
Jerry Lewis*

The Commission recommends that federal, state and local fire agencies implement 4-0 staffing for all fire engine companies responding to OES Mutual Aid calls for immediate, planned response, and set a goal of 4-0 staffing for WUI initial attack response. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 7

The Commission recommends that all firefighters responding to WUI fires be provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, safety and communications equipment. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 8

The Commission recommends that sufficient funds be allocated to state and local fire agencies to address California’s fire prevention and suppression needs. (Fiscal-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 9

The Commission recommends that federal, state and local policymakers consider creating a stable funding infrastructure for the California Fire Alliance and Fire Safe Councils. (Fiscal-2)

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the federal government (DOD, USDOJ, USFS, etc.) investigate whether the successful MAFFS program concept of operation and emerging technologies can be applied to other aerial firefighting systems. (Policy-1)

“Federal funding for firefighting is very minimal, and that’s one of the areas that we’ll have to look at.”
— Marilyn Delgado,
Director, Governor’s
Office of Indian Affairs

Federal Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Congress support and fund a single source database that enhances real-time and nighttime WUI intelligence. (Fiscal-1)

Federal Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that Congress consider authorizing additional federal grant funds for wildland fire mitigation, including the establishment of a National Fire Science Research Institute to compile, evaluate and fund technological advances related to fire prevention and suppression at the federal level. (Fiscal-1)

“If we’re trying to understand the impacts of fire on the environment and mitigate those impacts, it’s important to know about measuring fires.”
— Dr. Philip Riggan,
Scientist, Forest Fire
Laboratory, USFS

Federal Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that the federal government reduce or eliminate “match” requirements for federal grant funds for hazard mitigation programs in areas where there has been a state declaration of emergency. (Fiscal-3)

“We just went through the worst fires in California. As Chief of the San Diego Fire Department, we tried to implement several local building code and brush management changes. If you can imagine, the very people that came forward to fight us on those proposed changes were the ones that lost their homes, almost to a person.”
— Chief Jeff
Bowman, San Diego
City Fire Department

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends development of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security. As part of the Committee’s mandate, it will have responsibility, in so far as possible, to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. The Committee will oversee all relevant rules and regulations to resolve conflicting issues. Additionally, the Committee will have technical advisory committees to help evaluate strategies and shall periodically report its progress to the Governor and the Legislature. (Policy-1)

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission reconvene six months after the submission of this report, and again six months later, to assess progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations. (Policy-1)

State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE research and pursue efforts so mutual aid deployed engines have the capability to utilize newer technologies, such as foams and gels. (Policy-2)

State Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends establishing a secure year round operational capability for CDF, where appropriate, including the implementation of 4-0 staffing for all CDF state funded engine companies. (Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 5

The Commission recommends that the state examine alternatives for replacement and diversification of CDF's aging helicopter fleet and fire engine apparatus, and begin a replacement planning cycle. (Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 6

The Commission recommends that the state develop a program to fund the acquisition of 150 additional OES fire engines and the requisite logistical support necessary to address California's fire suppression needs. (Fiscal-1)

*"The Cedar Fire was the worst fire in San Diego history -- 280,000 acres were burned countywide, 10 percent of that was in the City of San Diego and the eastern part of the city. The city lost more than 400 structures, many of them completely destroyed. While we lost over 400 structures, thousands were saved and not one life was lost in the City of San Diego."
— Mayor Dick Murphy, City of San Diego*

TRAINING

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that nationwide training agreements be expanded. (Policy-2)

"We believe that we need to train 600-800 entry level firefighters to replace the attrition we face."

*— Ron Raley,
Deputy Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USFS*

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that Congress increase efforts to provide training for local fire departments through federal grant programs and expand the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) grant program. (Fiscal-1)

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the state create a multi-layered public education outreach campaign for residents living in WUI areas. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that CDF/Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) develop and maintain an adequately funded standards, training and education program, similar to the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) program to ensure that trained and qualified personnel are prepared to respond. The training plan should support the use of the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) and incorporate the Fire Officer Certification process approved by the State Board of Fire Services. (Fiscal-1)

"Unfortunately, training, drills, exercises are one of the first areas the fire service must cut back when budget reductions are forced upon them."

— State Senator Bill Campbell (Ret.)

State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that state funds be made available to each Operational Area to support annual WUI fire suppression training exercises that include National Guard and federal military resources. Funding should also be made available by the state to improve the training level of smaller fire departments. (Fiscal-1)

INTERSTATE/REGIONAL MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“More than 70 agencies participated in the worst wildland fires in California’s history, and they did so unselfishly. At its peak, there were more than 15,600 firefighters battling these devastating blazes. They came from all over California, from many of our western states, and even as far away as Canada. These firefighters did not hesitate. They put on their uniforms, got in their trucks and sometimes drove hundreds of miles in order to protect the property of people they had never met.”
— former Governor Gray Davis

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local fire agencies in California review their various assistance for hire agreements for appropriateness and their potential to undermine California’s Master Agreement and Master Mutual Aid System. (Policy-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE facilitate federal, state and local fire service agencies working together to reach consensus on the definition of structure protection versus perimeter control, and address the release of mutual aid companies back to their jurisdictions of origin when immediate needs dictate such return. (Policy-1)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that forest agencies integrate local incident command team members within their respective incident management teams when local agencies are in unified command on major WUI fires, and that a module relating to interfacing with local Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) be included in USFS Type 1 and 2 team training programs. (Policy-2)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies continuously maintain and update their mutual aid and cooperative agreements to reflect contemporary needs and costs. (Policy-2)

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OES and FIRESCOPE incorporate the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) into the Master Mutual Aid Agreement. (Policy-1)

LOCAL BUILDING, PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS; BRUSH CLEARANCE AND FUEL MODIFICATION

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security convene with appropriate representatives of federal, state and local governments to build upon existing governmental efforts to develop a comprehensive interagency, intergovernmental wildland vegetation management plan for California, and integrate the plan's direction into revised or amended federal, state and local land management, land use plans. (Policy-1)

"We need to look at the laws, regulations and the land use policies that dominate this problem. It's not so much a fire management issue at this point, as it is a public lands policy issue."

— Director Jerry Williams, Office of Fire and Aviation, USFS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that in WUI areas, the Statewide Fire Safe Council promotes the establishment of local Fire Safe Councils and encourages federal, state and local governments to assist in this effort. (Policy-1)

"The perfect house that would survive a wildland fire in the Santa Ana wind conditions would be a concrete bunker, but I'm not sure the public is willing to live in a structure of that nature."

— Jim Wright, Deputy Director for Fire Protection, CDF

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies and officials give serious consideration to fostering and advancing citizen involvement in the establishment and operation of disaster prevention, recovery and rebuilding groups. Furthermore, the state should develop a disaster recovery model based on the collective input of OES, FEMA, faith-based and community groups, victim advocates and other relevant organizations. (Policy-2)

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that USDOJ, FEMA, USFS, CDF and OES identify ways to assist, including financially, local governments with WUI fire preparation and mitigation efforts. (Fiscal-2)

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends the Wildland Fire Leadership Council address issues of Wildland Fire Prevention and Control and inconsistencies in the interpretation and implementation of the National Fire Plan, Wildland Fire Policy, Structure Protection, and Cost Apportionment process. (Policy-1)

Federal Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Congress considers establishing a National Wildland Fire Insurance Program (NWFIP), with appropriate eligibility criteria, under the direction of FEMA. (Fiscal-3)

“There’s a certain sense of responsibility that people must assume if they choose to live in a high hazard area.”

— Supervisor Judy Mikels, Ventura County

“I am incredibly proud of the work that was done and very appreciative of the communities that were involved in the MAST concept that was used in our mountain areas.”

— Supervisor Dennis Hansberger, San Bernardino County

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OSFM continues to conduct fire research, including development of fire test protocols for vents, radiant heat exposure for windows and other applicable areas to improve ignition resistant construction techniques. The research process should include implementation of a comprehensive damage assessment process to collect data on efficiency and effectiveness of mitigation practices. (Policy-1)

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) type programs be considered as a model for fire safe council efforts in target areas. (Policy-1)

State Recommendation 3

The Commission endorses SB 1855 by Senator Deirdre Alpert. (Policy-1)

COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that all EOCs dedicate a Public Information Officer (PIO) or establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to inform and respond to questions from the media, the public and elected officials. The PIO or JIC should be stationed in or near the EOC and have timely access to the latest information. All available technologies should be explored to expedite the timely dissemination of information. (Policy-1)

“Sometimes the major obstacles, the political turf, are far greater than the technology to overcome the human and institutional limitations, because there are a lot of people very comfortable with what they have. They don’t want to change. They don’t want to learn a new system. They don’t want to adjust.”

*— Glen Craig,
Executive Director,
CA Alliance For
Public Safety
Communications*

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that sufficient standardized frequencies be issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to meet the interoperable communication needs of fire and emergency personnel. (Policy-1)

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends integration of the Multi-Agency Incident Resource Processing System (MIRPS) with the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. (Policy-1)

“We had no eyes in the sky. It was very frustrating. Questions were asked: Where is this fire? How do we get in? How do we get out? Can we get in? What are we going to do?”

*— Chief Ray
Quintanar, Director,
Fire and Aviation
Management, USFS*

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that the state implement a research and development working group within FIRESCOPE to explore emerging technologies for firefighting purposes (e.g., military technology, GPS, UAVs, Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS)). (Policy/Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that each engine crew and chief officer have the capability to communicate effectively across multiple frequency bands. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

“No one should suffer harm or lose their property simply because public safety personnel from different agencies or jurisdictions cannot communicate with each other.”

— Curt Munro,
Manager, San Diego/
Imperial County
Regional
Communications
System

“During the Cedar Fire, they could not communicate with anyone else other than the San Francisco firefighters because the radio system didn’t interface. So when they were on a long dirt road with a lot of houses on it and the fire was coming at them, they had to devise a system that when they blast the air horn four times, that means everybody run for your life.

Because they didn’t have a radio system, that’s how desperate it is.”

— Bob Wolf,
President, CA
Professional
Firefighters

“We must not fall prey to bureaucratic foot-dragging or interagency turf battles when confronted with the need for new radio systems.”

— Senator
Bruce McPherson

State Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that local governments improve public outreach and emergency evacuation education. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 5

The Commission recommends that state agencies take advantage of the work that has been done locally to create regional communication systems and join with the local agencies on a regional basis to enhance those systems. (Policy-2)

State Recommendation 6

The Commission recommends that the state update and expand current handheld and mobile radios to be utilized on major mutual aid incidents as a short-term, temporary solution to the interoperability problem. (Fiscal-1)

State Recommendation 7

The Commission recommends that OES Fire and Rescue Command Networks be expanded. (Fiscal-1)

LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Recommendation 1

The Commission recognizes the critical role of timely emergency notification of the public of imminent threats and recommends that local governments prioritize the development of appropriate early warning systems to address the needs of their communities. (Policy-1)

2003 FIRE SIEGE
CAUSES, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

2003 FIRE SIEGE — CAUSES, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

California's integrated fire service system, which includes local, state and federal firefighting agencies and is one of the best in the nation, was literally tested under fire during the October 2003 wildfires. Due to prolonged drought periods, warm temperatures, low humidity, and 500,000 acres of dead standing trees due to the bark beetle infestation, Southern California was a kindling box waiting for a fire to occur.

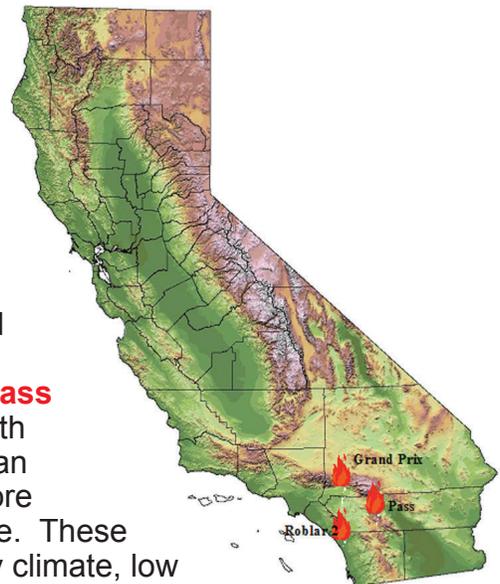
As reported by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), below is the chain of events that lead to the worse fire and largest mobilization of firefighting resources in California's history (see Appendix D for the detailed chronology of the fires).

Tuesday, October 21, 2003

Weather condition—warm temperatures, low humidity, gusty northeast winds.

Robler 2 Fire started near Camp Pendleton in San Diego County at 12:00 noon. Federal firefighting agencies were immediately contacted, as well as state and local government resources.

Because of the wind conditions, CDF forces initiated staffing patterns with additional engine crews, dozers and staff lookouts. A little after 2:00 p.m. the **Grand Prix Fire** started near Rancho Cucamonga. Two hours later, the **Pass Fire** started near Reche Canyon in Riverside County. With three fires in three counties--San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino--CDF initiated staffing patterns to bring on more resources. The federal counterparts were doing the same. These fires were burning hot, very erratic and fast due to the dry climate, low humidity and dead fuels.



Wednesday, October 22, 2003

Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties were starting their staffing patterns to bring on additional forces and state them in the wind prone areas. Gusty winds continued throughout the day.

Thursday, October 23, 2003

At 3:30 p.m., the **Piru Fire** started near the community of Ojai. Later that evening, the **Palermo Fire** broke out in Butte County. The fire rescue mutual aid system is now gathering and pulling resources from areas outside Southern California, at the same time aware of the fire risks in the northern portion of California.

Friday, October 24, 2003

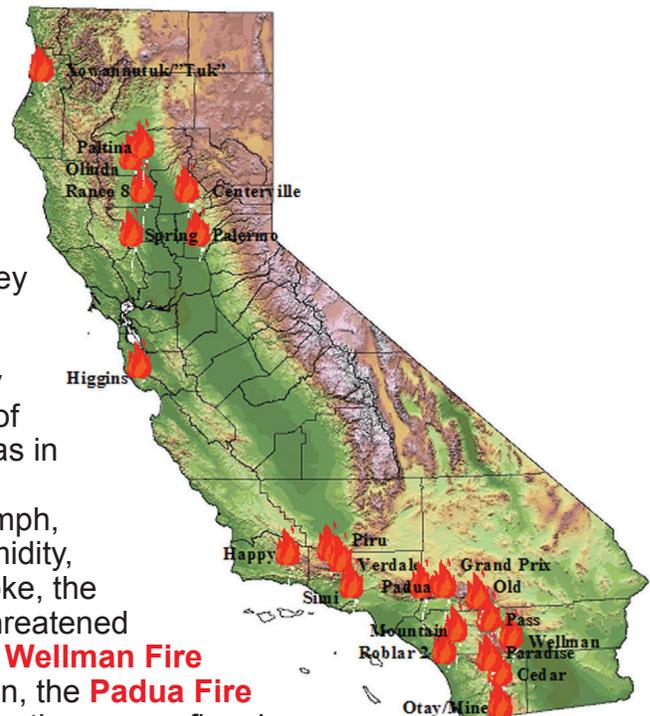
Because of the extreme fire behavior of the Grand Prix Fire, Interstate 15 and 210 were closed. CDF cancelled all days off for CDF fire suppression personnel. At approximately 10:00 a.m., the **Olinda Fire** started in Shasta County. Weather in the northern region had moderate to strong northeast winds and low humidity. At 1:45 p.m., the **Verdale Fire** starts near the City of Santa Clarita in Los Angeles County. Then at 3:00 p.m., the **Rancho 8 Fire** starts in Tehama County, and later at 3:00 p.m., the **Happy Fire** starts in Santa Barbara.

Saturday, October 25, 2003

On October 25, shortly after 9:00 a.m., the **Old Fire** started in the northern portion of the city of San Bernardino. The fire conditions at the initial stage of the Old Fire were extreme, predominately a wind-driven fire. Five thousand residents were immediately threatened with this fire. At 2:00 p.m., the **Simi Fire** started near the City of Moorpark. At 5:00 p.m., CDF requested, through OES, eight National Guard helicopters to join the forces of the aerial operations occurring for the southern California fires. The **Cedar Fire** broke out at 5:30 pm in the Cleveland National Forest in San Diego County after a hunter became lost during a hunting trip. A San Diego County Sheriff's helicopter searching for the hunter spotted the blaze near Ramona, California, late in the day and requested dispatch of firefighting aircraft. Within 2 hours of the report, more than 300 firefighters were on the ground but initial entry was difficult due to the rugged terrain, roadless area, brush 10-20 feet tall, and the exact location of the fire was unknown. Due to high winds, all fixed wing aircraft and helicopters were grounded. The rate of spread was unprecedented and the fire had a major run of 30 miles in 16.5 hours (5,000 acres per hour). The Verdale Fire was reporting extreme fire behavior with winds at 20 to 30 miles per hour and gusts up to 45 miles per hour and consuming 2,000 to 3,000 acres per hour.

Sunday, October 26, 2003

At 1:30 a.m., the **Paradise Fire** begins on the Rincon Indian Reservation near the city of Valley Center in San Diego County. At 7:00 a.m., the **Otay/Mine Fire** started near the city of Otay in southern San Diego County. The Multi Agency Coordination System (MACS), which consists of local, state and federal government entities, was in charge of coordinating and reallocating all resources. By midday, with winds at 30 to 45 mph, gusts to 75 mph, 63 degrees, 10% relative humidity, and aircraft grounded due to the wind and smoke, the Cedar Fire grew to about 100,000 acres and threatened suburban San Diego homes. At 1:00 p.m., the **Wellman Fire** began in Riverside County. Later that afternoon, the **Padua Fire** started in Los Angeles County. During this time, there were fires in Shasta, Humboldt, San Luis Obispo and Butte Counties in northern California as well.



Monday, October 27, 2003

By late morning, there were no more air tankers available. Federal resources continued to be mobilized throughout the state and helicopters were requested from the Nevada National Guard. Winds at the Cedar Fire were switching between Santa Ana winds and normal on shore winds creating its own thermal convection and pushing the fire in multiple directions at the same time. Fire was spotting over major highways and roads, and flame lengths reached 200 feet.

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

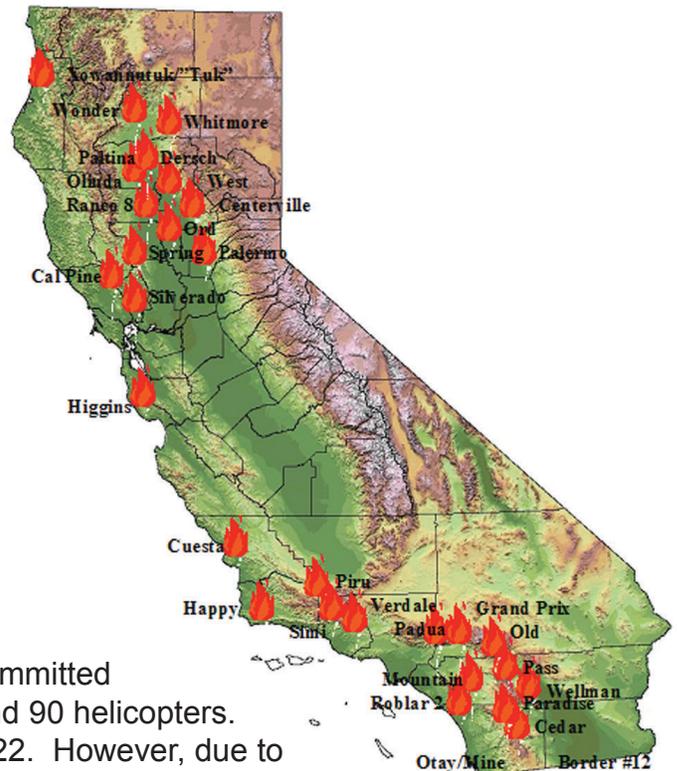
In the early morning, the **Border Fire** started in southern San Diego County. Demobilization of excess Type 1 Engine Strike Teams began. Northern California continued to experience wildland fires. Oregon National Guard helicopters were requested to assist with these fires. The Cedar Fire continued to experience extremely low humidities and high temperatures, hampering firefighting efforts. Transitional winds with stronger onshore winds burned an additional 114,000 acres. Additional resources came from Arizona. In some fire areas, aircraft could not fly because of wind conditions, and some federal air tankers were grounded because of cracked windshields.

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

The majority of the fires were ongoing and the northern California fires were being contained. At 12:30 p.m., Engineer Steven Rucker, from Novato Fire Protection District, met his fate and three members of his crew were injured when they were overrun by the Cedar Fire. The Cedar Fire continued its extreme fire behavior, spotting over major roads and highways, with 200 foot flames and increased humidity to 80%. The communities of Julian, Pine Hills, Cuyamaca and Guatay were evacuated. Two more fires broke out in Northern California in Napa and Sonoma Counties.

Thursday, October 30, 2003

Military, state and federal air resources were committed totaling 208, including 104 fixed wing aircraft and 90 helicopters. Maximum number of engines committed was 722. However, due to smoke and weather conditions, most aerial resources were grounded.



Friday, October 31, 2003

Cedar, Old Fire and Simi Fire reported significant improvement in conditions due to scattered showers, higher humidity and lower temperatures. Poor visibility over most fires limited aircraft missions.

Saturday, November 1, 2003

Air remained saturated with measurable rain falling. Gained ground on Southern California fires. Fire started in Mendocino County. Nevada helicopters were released to go back home.

Sunday, November 2, 2003

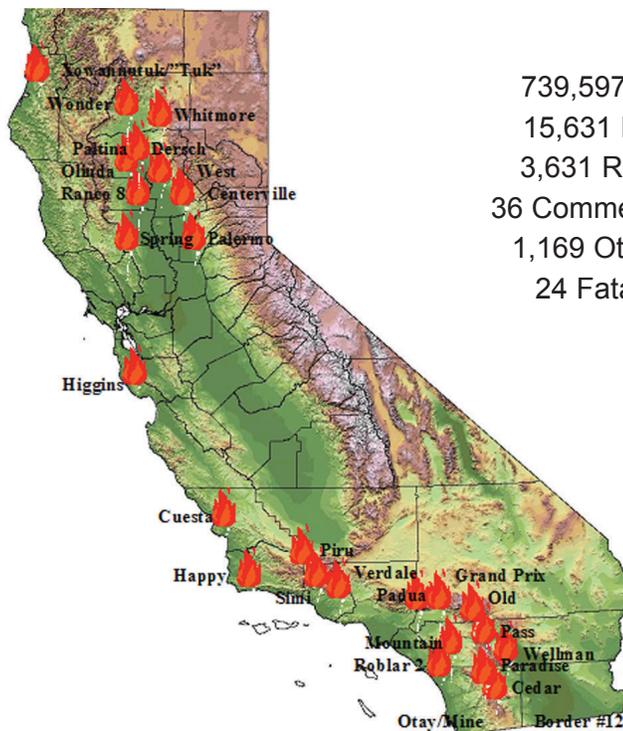
Other aircraft were released to go back to their home bases. Cedar Fire reported minor flare-ups in the fire's interior.

Monday, November 3, 2003

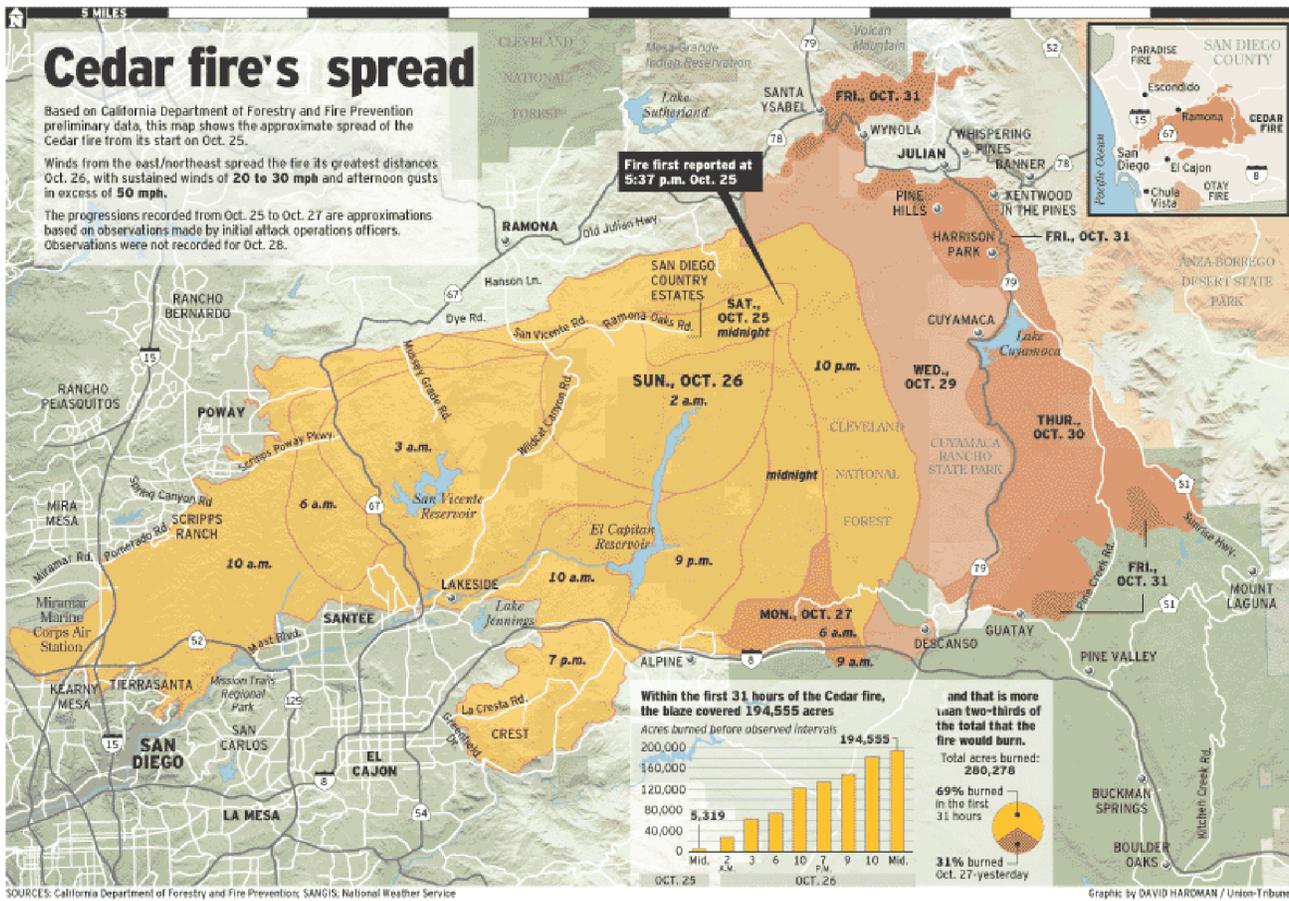
Residents returned to mountain communities on a community-by-community basis.

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Cedar Fire contained at 6:00 p.m. This became the largest fire in California's history, killing 14 people (including one firefighter), destroying 2,232 homes and burning 273,246 acres.



739,597 Total Acres Burned
15,631 Personnel Assigned
3,631 Residence Destroyed
36 Commercial Bldgs Destroyed
1,169 Other Bldgs Destroyed
24 Fatalities, 1 Firefighter
246 Injuries



Southern California fire siege final statistics on acreage destroyed:

Wellman Fire	100 acres
Happy Fire	250 acres
Pass Fire	2,387 acres
Roblar 2 Fire	8,592 acres
Verdale Fire	8,650 acres
Mountain Fire	10,331 acres
Padua Fire	10,446 acres
Otay Fire	45,971 acres
Paradise Fire	56,700 acres
Grand Prix Fire	58,448 acres
Piru Fire	63,991 acres
Old Fire	91,281 acres
Simi Incident	108,204 acres
Cedar Fire	273,246 acres

2003 FIRE SIEGE FINDINGS

2003 FIRE SIEGE -- FINDINGS

California is a fire prone state. Its Mediterranean climate, long dry summers, Santa Ana winds, chaparral, brush, rangelands, wooded foothills and forested mountains together make California a prime target for wildland fires. When combined with its burgeoning population; continued residential development of wildland areas; environmental and air quality regulations that impede the implementation of effective vegetation and fuel management programs; budgetary restrictions; and both negligent and malicious acts of some individuals; it's obvious that California will continue to experience the nightmare of wildland conflagrations.

Southern California, in particular, has the highest population in the United States that is in a fire prone wildland/urban interface (WUI) area. Its most critical parts are in and around the four southern forests. Long term drought, together with extremely low relative humidities, has caused widespread brush and timber mortality, record low dead fuel moistures, and widespread critically dry live fuels. In addition, its mountain and foothill communities have significant populations with limited means of egress.

"The most critical areas will continue to be the urban interface areas in and around the four southern forests. These communities have significant populations and limited means of egress. Concentrations of standing dead trees increase the potential for fire to spread rapidly. Evacuation and firefighting efforts in these communities are difficult and dangerous."
— Chief Ray Quintanar, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USFS

JURISDICTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BARRIERS

As recognized by California's Disaster and Civil Defense Master Mutual Aid Agreement, it is critical that all of California's resources be available to prevent and combat the effects of disasters that may result from such calamities as wildfire. With a multiplicity of federal, state and local departments, agencies, political subdivisions, municipal corporations, and other public entities, each with its own requirements and responsibilities, the elimination of jurisdictional and operational barriers to ensure the protection of life and property is a battle that demands mutual acknowledgment and cooperation.

"During the event, each day San Diego operated 50 engine companies, 22 brush companies, 9 trucks and 2 airport fire fighting companies. This represented the equivalent of approximately 500 firefighters who were deployed each day of the fire."
— P. Lamont Ewell, San Diego Assistant City Manager

FINDING 1

There is confusion as to whether there is a requirement that all available local resources, including civilian contract aircraft, be exhausted before requesting federal resources to assist in fighting WUI fires.

California state and local governments have been under the impression that the federal Economy Act requires that all local resources, including civilian contractors, be exhausted before requesting federal resources. According to representatives from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), no such requirement exists.



"It's going to take some extraordinary actions and some extraordinary recommendations from this Commission in order to deal with future fire sieges in the State of California."
— Chief P. Michael Freeman, L.A. County Fire Department

FINDING 2

“As we found in California with earthquakes, the further you get away from the earthquake, the less it’s on your mind, and what happens, I believe, is that many agencies, because of budget constraints and other factors, haven’t done as much training and exercising as we should.”

— Director Dallas Jones, Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

There are numerous conflicting land management and environmental laws and regulations at all levels of government.

Federal, state and local agencies have conflicting requirements and enforcement authorities that must be rectified. Environmental regulatory requirements have failed to adequately address fire prevention and fuel management needs, which have contributed to conditions that will likely result in future conflagrations if immediate action is not taken to resolve the crisis.



FINDING 3

One-third of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s (CDF) workforce has retired during the past few years, resulting in vacancies in key positions. In addition, the number of fire crews has decreased due to a decline in the number of Department of Corrections (CDC) inmate firefighters, California Youth Authority (CYA) wards and California Conservation Corps (CCC) members. As a result, CDF had to deploy higher level managers to perform Assistant Chief level functions during the October 2003 Fire Siege.

Over the past 20 years, CDF forces have been reduced by 25 fire engines and 36 fire crews, leaving only 336 fire engines and 197 fire crews remaining to support its statewide mission. Last year, the CCC withdrew from participation at two CDF camps (one in San Diego County) resulting in the loss of eight CDF fire crews. This year, CYA plans on withdrawing from two camps, resulting in the loss of an additional 10 CDF fire crews at a time when CDF is already trying to cope with over 50 vacancies at the key Assistant Chief level. These unfilled vacancies are the result of retirements, voluntary demotions and a recruitment/retention crisis resulting from salary compaction.

FINDING 4

CDF is operating a fire protection system year around on an eight month budget allocation.

Although CDF provides various contractual fire protection services in 35

“Wildfires are burning too many homes, killing too many people, destroying the environment and eroding homeland security.”

— Supervisor Jim Venable, Riverside County

of California’s 58 counties, its staffing is based on a fire season which has traditionally ranged from five to eight months. CDF has 21 administrative units throughout California. The three Southern California units—San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego—are funded based on an eight month fire season. Some sources say California is undergoing a climatic change, and its fire season is now year round in these areas.

FINDING 5

CDF acquires used military aircraft through the federal excess property program and refurbishes them into working firefighting aircraft. However, availability of these federal excess property aircraft is diminishing and will soon be exhausted.

*“Military surplus does not necessarily translate into less expensive.”
— Larry Roberts,
Senior Director,
American Eurocopter*

CDF is utilizing 1960 vintage Bell UH-1 (Huey) helicopters, some of which flew in Vietnam. These airframes are experiencing extreme structural fatigue and the availability of excess military aircraft is diminishing. CDF will soon need to begin replacing these helicopters, either by purchasing new ones or finding other alternatives, such as commercially certified helicopters.

FINDING 6

Four person (4-0) staffing on fire engines may be more efficient than lower levels of staffing and allow firefighters to be more productive in their fire suppression activities, thereby maximizing engine response capability during WUI fires.

*“Typically, CDF is staffed with three people on a fire engine, but in Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino, we’ve enjoyed for the last two years, 4-0 staffing and that has helped tremendously.”
— Kelly Zombro,
Battalion Chief, CDF*

Typically, CDF’s fire engines are staffed with three people (3-0) per engine. However, during the past two years, CDF engines in Riverside, San Diego and San Bernardino counties have had 4-0 staffing pursuant to a Governor’s Executive Order. Such 4-0 staffing may be more efficient, as it allows the captain or crew leader to take a command role, to plan, to consider where the fire is going and to properly manage his crew. In addition, 4-0 staffing adds a safety factor and accountability.



FINDING 7

“If you use the equipment we have in Alaska, I would feel comfortable flying those fire fronts . . . even during hours of darkness and during areas and times with very limited visibility due to smoke, haze, fog, etc.”
— Leonard Kirk,
University of Alaska

CDF aircraft, federal aircraft and military aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) units operate with inflexible “cut-off” time policies.

CDF aircraft, federal aircraft and military MAFFS units have cut-off times associated with sunrise and sunset, which are based on projected flight visibility and imposed for purposes of flight safety. These cut-off time policies restrict aircraft operations and allow no flexibility regardless of other considerations.

FINDING 8

“With no finger pointing whatsoever, I will point out that on the 30th we made the request for Predator UAV. In the time it took to process it, we lost roughly the state of Rhode Island.”
— Lt. Col. John Crocker, Air Guard Operations, California Military Department

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, Idaho, is the nation’s coordination center for wildland firefighting and has the ability to call upon the DOD when additional assistance is needed.

When NIFC, which is made up of many different agencies that are effective in protecting life, property and natural resources, requires additional support, it requests assistance from the Secretary of the DOD. The system has proven effective and, in the case of the October 2003 Fire Siege, some requests for DOD support were personally approved by the Secretary within two hours after receipt. While DOD has very few active duty military firefighters, most of whom are specially trained for aviation or ship type fires and deployed overseas, the available firefighters that DOD does have can be easily trained as Type II firefighters. However, because of worldwide commitments, DOD resources may not always be readily available for firefighting or other emergency support functions.

FINDING 9

Aerial firefighting resources cannot be solely relied upon to establish an effective fire line. It requires a coordinated effort with ground firefighting resources.

While aerial attack plays an important role in keeping a fire at bay, airplanes and helicopters do not put out large fires – firefighters do.

FINDING 10

There is a fundamental yet unmet need in WUI suppression and management to be able to consistently monitor and understand the behavior of wildland fires at their full scale and as they occur.

Reliable fire information is necessary for the strategic and tactical deployment of resources during fire suppression, to understand and mitigate fire effects in the environment, to improve firefighter safety and understanding of fire behavior, and to evaluate the effectiveness of forest management.

“We really have a need to have a downlink – real time downlink information. From the Cedar Fire we all know that there’s a need to know what’s going on at all times, where that fire’s headed, and what it’s doing.”
— Dennis Hulbert,
Regional Aviation
Officer, USFS



TRAINING

“The conditions that those firefighters were working under, something that in my near 30 years experience, were way beyond what I had ever seen before.”
— Jim Wright,
Deputy Director for
Fire Protection, CDF

California has over 62,000 firefighters, most of whom specialize in one of the following response areas: structural, airport, emergency medical services and wildland. While in the public’s mind all firefighters are the same, in reality, each individual firefighter has a specific level and type of training. When called upon, firefighters will all respond and do their best. However, their ability to do an effective job is dependent upon training and education, and each and every component of emergency response must be at the same level of readiness for firefighters to do their jobs effectively.

FINDING 1

There are currently no minimum statewide service level or training standards mandated by law for California firefighters, nor are there statewide mandates for continuing training or maintenance of performance standards.

“Under the California system, once you’re trained and certified, future training is not required unless you want to go on to the next level of certification.”
— Dave Ebert, Chief,
Training and
Education Program,
CDF



Unlike peace officers, whose minimum training standards and continuing education requirements are prescribed by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), there are no mandated statewide training and education standards for firefighters. Training programs are currently determined by the individual fire service entity based on local response needs and the availability of resources to provide training for its personnel. Fire service personnel who achieve certification for positions such as firefighter, company officer or driver/operator are not required to maintain certification through continuing education or other means.

“Firefighters put out their own money to take classes so they feel comfortable in doing their job.”
— Dennis Marsh,
Chair, California State
Firefighters
Association Training
and Education
Committee

As a result, firefighters, though certified, may not meet the performance expectations of an individual who functions at that level. Emphasis must be placed on the need to have a comprehensive, continual and adequately funded training and education system that meets the needs of all disciplines within the fire service profession, including, but not limited to, suppression, prevention, communications and emergency medical services.

FINDING 2

Training of California’s firefighters is complex and diverse, and has many agencies participating in the development and delivery of training programs. While California has led the way in developing new training programs, the programs have yet to be brought together in a coordinated manner.

The training of California’s firefighting workforce is complex and has many agencies and entities participating in the development and delivery of training programs. State agencies such as the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection/Office of the State Fire Marshal (CDF/OSFM), the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES), the State Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA), CAL/OSHA and California community colleges, as well as the California Fire Fighters Joint Apprenticeship Committee, the California State Fire Fighters Association, the California Fire Chiefs and Fire Districts Association, and the United States Fire Administration/National Fire Academy all play key roles and provide training and education opportunities for California firefighters.

“I fully support uniformity of training for firefighters. This is especially important in the wildland-urban interface where the firefighters may be trained for fighting structure fires, but not brush or open area fires. Uniformity of training will also undoubtedly assist in coordination of efforts.”

— Assembly Member Christine Kehoe

Over the last three decades, the increasing sophistication of firefighter training has transformed the profession. However, because there are no standardized training requirements or means to fund the development, delivery and cost to attend training, adherence to these standards is voluntary.

FINDING 3

Because participation in CDF/OSFM training programs is unfunded, a statewide needs assessment has not been conducted, new programs take years to develop, training programs are not readily available in all areas of the state, and instructor availability is limited in some geographic areas.

“This is a very, very serious problem, and I think we really have to take some action to do something about it.”

— Senator Nell Soto

Funding for staff to develop, deliver and coordinate these programs is derived from fees generated by student attendance, and the purchase of class materials and certification. The programs receive no support from the general fund or other sources of revenue.

Courses are currently being delivered based on economic factors in order to cover the cost of providing the training. Due to the cost to attend, post-cover costs (overtime to fill in behind the trainee) and travel costs, training programs may not be accessible in areas where the need is the greatest. Furthermore, no statewide needs assessment has been conducted to assist in the development of a comprehensive training plan.

FINDING 4

Funding for the Army National Guard to conduct or participate in multi-agency training is not available at a time when integration of their resources into the state’s firefighting resources is needed.

The training agreement between the California Military Department, the National Parks Service, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), CDF and OES is a model for the country, and the California Army National Guard is currently exporting the program to other western region states. However, Army National Guard aircraft crews have not performed the annual two day required training conducted by USFS and CDF because training funds are not available.

FINDING 5

Keeping up with the firefighting training component of the active military is very difficult.

Training with local government resources for effective wildfire suppression in the WUI is difficult due to the mobile nature of the active military.

FINDING 6

The USFS has six centers in California that provide training to federal, state and local government fire service employees and a National Wildfire Training Center that houses its national apprenticeship program.

The USFS plans on providing 143 training classes in 2004 for fire service employees. The USFS also has a National Interagency Wildfire Apprenticeship Program that is taught at the National Wildland Fire Training Center at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento. To replace attrition, it is believed that 600-800 entry level firefighters must be trained.

“We set up the emergency operation center and conducted three functional operations and two dress rehearsals within the past 12 months, which was very important. Everyone knew each other, knew how to coordinate, knew who to coordinate with and when.”

*— Chandra Waller,
San Diego County
Public Works
Department*

FINDING 7

A comprehensive public awareness education program is needed.

The lack of a comprehensive public education program by local, state and federal agencies has resulted in a public that is uninformed or apathetic about wildfire prevention, risk reduction and firefighters' capabilities to combat catastrophic wildfires.

"30,000 of these training kits were distributed to local governments, free of charge."

*— Carol Wills,
Communications
Director, California
Professional
Firefighters*



INTERSTATE/REGIONAL MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS

“Although there are 25 cities within Riverside County, our fire departments all come together anytime there is an emergency, dropping city, district and county boundaries and providing service to all. It is because of this extraordinary relationship and the cooperative efforts of all of our departments, that Riverside County is able to keep the fires within our county relatively small, quickly contained and controlled.”
— Chief Tom Tisdale, Riverside County Fire Department

California state and local governments have long recognized their responsibility to mitigate the effects of natural, manmade and war caused emergencies which produce conditions of disaster or threaten state resources, as well as their obligation to protect the health and safety and preserve the lives and property of the people of the state. To ensure that preparations are adequate to deal with such emergencies, mutual aid agreements have been developed to prepare for emergencies that by reason of their magnitude are, or are likely to be, beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment or facilities of any single jurisdiction.

During the Southern California fires, from throughout California, 1160 local government fire engines, 275 CDF fire engines, 102 OES fire engines, 5 OES water tenders, 2 California National Guard C-130 MAFFS air tankers and 8 California National Guard helicopters were deployed. In addition, 175 fire engines were committed by federal agencies, 50 fire engines and 3 National Guard helicopters arrived from Nevada; 50 fire engines were sent by Arizona; and 20 fire engines and 2 National Guard helicopters came from Oregon.

FINDING 1

Interstate Mutual Aid compacts provide liability and reimbursement clauses, but these compacts are not completely detailed and have not been regularly updated.

“At the peak of the activity we were dealing with 14 separate incidents and prioritizing them. That had its own unique difficulties.”
— Robert Praytor, Deputy Chief, FIRESCOPE Programs, Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

The Interstate Civil Defense Disaster Compact (ICDDC) is the master agreement for all 58 states. This agreement, which was written in the 1950’s and has not been updated, allows the Governor from one state to send resources into another state and sets the rates of pay. Under this compact, the sending state is responsible for tort liability, and a disaster does not have to be declared before moving resources. California has a subcompact with the states of Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon and Washington that more specifically sets the rates of pay.

Under the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which is administered by the National Emergency Management Association, a disaster has to be declared before moving resources and the receiving state is responsible for tort liability. Many liability concerns have not been resolved, however, such as issues



relating to workers' compensation, disability, death benefits and retirement. California is not a signatory to EMAC for these reasons.

FINDING 2

States vary as to their process for allocating resources.

Some states utilize strike team configurations, five fire engines per team, that are available and ready to launch when a call for assistance is received, while other states utilize an individual increment configuration.

FINDING 3

California has a variety of mutual aid and cooperative agreements through which public entities may be reimbursed.

California has six fire and rescue mutual aid regions, which are made up of 6 to 16 operational areas, over 900 city, county and special district fire departments and over 62,000 firefighters. There are currently two primary California agreements: the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, which is voluntary, and the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA), which provides financial support. The CFAA provides that in the case of a large wildland fire, the local government response is not reimbursed during the first 12 hours. If assistance is required beyond 12 hours, funding is provided for the full incident commitment time through the agreement under assistance for hire or other local agreements.

There are several reimbursement agreements under which the rate of pay is determined in advance. The Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement, consisting of CDF, USFS, Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service, provides that the agencies reimburse one another for costs when necessary. The agreement for local government fire suppression assistance to forest agencies is the CFAA arrangement under which local governments may obtain reimbursement.



"In California right now we have nearly 45 million acres of land that are ready to burn. Last October's fires were absolutely terrible, but we are still facing an even worse situation; one that could be the largest disaster California has ever seen."

*— Supervisor
Jim Venable,
Riverside County*

FINDING 4

The Southern California Tribal Emergency Management Consortium consists of Native American tribes in San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and has developed the same firefighting capabilities as any other local or state government fire department.

“In the October fires, we saw almost 3,000 to 4,000 patients and had almost 8,000 patient contacts.”
— Jeff Rubin, Chief, Disaster Medical Services Division, Emergency Medical Services Authority

The Southern California Consortium has 15 fire departments with various firefighting equipment, including specialized apparatus such as aerial ladder trucks, hazmat and paramedic units.

FINDING 5

Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) is important to a unified and coordinated emergency response to WUI fires.

A statewide medical response mutual aid system is important to minimize human suffering during major emergencies such as WUI fires.

FINDING 6

California’s mutual aid system is recommended by the federal government as a national model.

The California Mutual Aid System, Incident Command System (FIRESCOPE-ICS), Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS), and Standardize Emergency Management System (SEMS) have been recommended as a national model since 9/11.

“One of the components we need to discuss is how we used the Multi-Agency Coordination System, MACS, during the fire siege. MACS is designed to improve the control allocation of interagency coordination in situations where there are multiple incidents. The function of MACS is to coordinate resources, disseminate information to cooperating agencies, and establish priorities based upon incident values at risk.”

— Kim Zagaris, Chief, Fire and Rescue Branch, Governor’s Office of Emergency Services



LOCAL BUILDING, PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS; BRUSH CLEARANCE AND FUEL MODIFICATION

California has a growing population, with an ever increasing demand for new housing. This exploding population has forced an ever relentless encroachment of housing and development onto the state's wildland and rural areas, which geometrically increases the difficulty and demand for fire prevention and suppression programs and services. Sound, effective fire safety and fire prevention practices, including fire safe building standards and codes, realistic and coordinated fuel reduction programs, and the commitment of communities, families and individuals are critical to the prevention of future fire related disasters and the concomitant loss of life and property.

FINDING 1

The protection of life and property from wildfire cannot simply rely on the availability of firefighting resources. Until the removal of thousands of acres of dead bark beetle infested trees and sound forest stewardship is achieved, Southern California and other forested areas of the state will continue to have hazardous standing fuel just waiting to become the next conflagration. Fuel reduction and fuel modification programs are essential to reducing the potential threat of major WUI fires.

Contributing factors to conflagrations in California include extended years of drought; inadequate vegetation management; increased development of communities in WUI areas; poor accessibility; continued use of combustible building materials; topography contributing to extreme fire behavior; and inadequate water pumping/supply systems.

Fuel modification and fire management on private and public lands are essential to the preservation of public resources, property and lives. Creating defensible space around structures and employing other fire protection measures is essential to minimize risks.

The outcome of the 2002 Cone Fire on the Blacks Mountain Experimental Forest provides positive evidence that forest thinning helps stop catastrophic wildfire. The area of the forest that had been thinned and managed with prescribed burns effectively stopped the Cone Fire dead in its tracks.



“The City of San Diego has a five point plan that we are implementing that includes such things as toughening building code standards. Yesterday, the City Council banned wood shake shingle roofs in the City of San Diego. We are now pursuing strengthening brush management requirements, upgrading firefighting equipment and increasing firefighter personnel in the city.”
— Mayor Dick Murphy, City of San Diego

“As we continue to develop cities and subdivisions on top of an ecosystem, we will continue to have tragedies from wildfires. Over 90% of these fires burned in chaparral and coastal sage where fire is part of the natural system. High intensity fires occur every 25 to 50 years in chaparral, but it regrows quickly and is ready to burn as intensely again after only 7 to 8 years.”
— Director Andrea Tuttle, CDF

The League of California Cities (League) and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) have developed a collaborative plan to decrease the impact of WUI fires on public health and safety (Appendix F) and are seeking ways to create new jobs from the harvesting and use of biowaste in a productive and environmentally friendly way.

FINDING 2

Community involvement is essential to helping implement necessary fire prevention and fire safety programs at the local level.

*“Firewise Community Workshops bring the communities together to figure out how to solve these issues about living in wildland urban interface areas.”
— Mike Rogers, Consultant*

Federal Firewise Community Workshops bring communities in WUI areas together, teach them fire prevention programs and how to build fire safe communities. In California, Fire Safe Councils are developing and implementing County Fire Plans that promote pre-fire management and fuel reduction projects to protect communities and watersheds. Through the efforts of CDF and the Community Assistance Grants under the National Fire Plan, local community and County Fire Safe Councils are developing throughout the state and concerned citizens are working collaboratively towards environmentally safe and economically feasible solutions to existing hazardous fuel problems in their areas.

*“Over 27,000 acres in the City of Santee burned, that’s almost one third of the land area within our corporate limits, and 478 homes were directly threatened, and not one single home was burned.”
— Keith Till, Santee City Manager*



The National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) addresses key elements of wildland fire safety such as community education and training, risk analysis, thinning and pruning of live vegetation, access and egress for firefighters, adequate water supplies, building design, location and community planning and can be of assistance

to fire agencies in dealing with the escalating challenges of the increasing number of WUI communities.

Examples of fire safe communities include the following:

The Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) was a huge success. As the fire threatened the San Bernardino County mountain communities, mandatory evacuation orders were issued to all residents. Despite the conditions and limited evacuation routes, over 80,000 residents evacuated their homes and businesses without a serious incident. This task force is made up of state, local and county fire personnel and the community of Lake Arrowhead.

The Southern California Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs works with 29 tribes in Southern California, of which 10 are in San Diego County. The tribes have learned the importance of fuel management and are developing fuel reduction projects and WUI projects with federal funds. Twenty-two (22) of 29 tribes have completed or are currently working on developing a fuels reduction project.

It will only be through such collaborative efforts at the local level that a cohesive strategy will be put in place that works.

“Eleven tribal reservations were impacted by the fire, 30,403 acres were burned, 142 homes were destroyed, and 10 lives were lost on or near reservations.”
— Chief Ed McOrmond, Pechanga Fire Department

FINDING 3

Currently, appropriate minimum building standards and fire safety requirements are neither mandated nor consistently enforced in all communities in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

California Building Officials (CALBO) states there are many implementation challenges that must be dealt with by coordination between fire officials, building officials, planners, local governments and communities. The challenges are numerous and include: jurisdiction’s level of acceptable risk; willingness to enforce new code requirements for post-fire rebuilding; threshold of justification for increased requirements; lack of knowledge of techniques for mapping high fire hazard areas; ability to maintain defensible space over time; balancing environmental protection and brush management policies; establishing a stable funding source via assessment districts, general fund and grants; lack of wildfire based fire testing on building materials; balancing prescriptive requirements against maintaining architectural freedom; and coordination between fire officials, building officials and planners.

“It is critical that the building officials be part of the solution.”
— Brad Remp, Vice President, California Building Officials

Damage assessments from the October 2003 Fire Siege determined that structure proximity and orientation to slope; single pane and older windows; lack of defensible space; vegetation within 10 feet of the structure; overhanging vegetation; accumulation of vegetative debris on or near the structure; open wood eaves combined with venting and/or proximate vegetation; raised sub floors, especially when proximate to downward slope; attic and roof vent location, eaves and soffits increased structure vulnerabilities to fire. Quarter-inch mesh, which has commonly been used to block vents, and soffits were found to be insufficient to prevent entry or accumulation of embers. Structures that suffered badly from fire



Clearly, the fires in 2003 had enormous impact on the society and environment in Southern California. The most poignant of these impacts are the loss of life and the loss of structures and residences. But it’s important to remember that the fires have a variety of other impacts on the ecology, the environment and the natural resources of the region.
— Greg Greenwood, Deputy Assistant Secretary, California Resources Agency

often had low flow for water and no emergency shut-offs on site, resulting in tanks running dry when compromised. Untreated wood frame structures like patio covers and decks attached to homes were particularly vulnerable. The assessments also found that dual pane tempered and annealed windows, buffer zones immediately around a structure and within 10 feet, no vegetation right next to windows and walls, and fire retardant Class A roofing helped save structures.

FINDING 4

The insurance industry must be an intimate and integral part of the solution to addressing the WUI problem.

The California Department of Insurance (DOI) has received approximately 9,000 to 10,000 claims as a result of the Southern California fires, of which approximately 3,600 are total loss claims, a small number are partial loss claims, and the great majority are smoke damage claims and/or additional living expense claims for the time they were evacuated from their homes even though they did not suffer damage to their homes. The Department has received approximately 180 complaint claims to date. Some consumers discovered that the insurance they purchased was insufficient to make them whole and rebuild their homes. Others complained that living expense reimbursements (e.g., hotel, food and other living expenses) are time limited.

The Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC) is a trade association of insurance companies that writes approximately 46 percent of all the property and casualty insurance in the state. The members of the insurance companies routinely educate policyholders about fire safety, prevention and fire loss mitigation programs as part of their day-to-day operations, including distribution of brochures, pamphlets, booklets and videos to teach fire safety and prevention in schools throughout the state.

FINDING 5

Vegetation has not been adequately managed to mitigate wildfire risks. The most destructive, costly and dangerous wildfires occurred in older, dense vegetation burning under extreme conditions.

Approximately once a decade, weather and fuel conditions develop in Southern California that result in catastrophic wildfires. Where these conditions become manifest, wildfire growth and intensity overwhelm suppression efforts, including aerial assets.

“We have to educate the homeowners that if they choose to live in an urban interface area, it is going to cost more to build their homes and potentially to insure their homes.”
— Senator
Deirdre Alpert

“Over the last 40 years, the Santa Monica Mountains in western Los Angeles County have been entirely blanketed by wildfires, and they will continue to be so. . . .we must be extremely serious about our fuel modification.”
— Don Schmitz,
Land Use Consultant

FINDING 6

Most structural losses occurred where homes had little or no vegetation clearance or were built using combustible building materials, and were thus vulnerable to wildfires.

In Ventura County, where building codes and brush clearance requirements have been in place for over a decade, no homes were lost. Despite such successes, recommendations relating to vegetation management/fuel hazard abatement and building code requirements have consistently been among the most difficult to implement.



“22 out of 29 tribes have completed or are currently working on developing a fuels reduction project through BIA.”

— Steven Fillmore, Fuels Management Specialist, Southern California Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs

COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

“The Commission must ask not only what the practices are and what the capabilities of those protocols in 2003 were, but also what the technological capabilities in the 21st Century should be.”
— Congresswoman Susan Davis

“At one point we had to increase the 30-port line that was there and go to a more secure process. We went to 60 lines to bring on the additional folks from not only in-state but out-of-state and around the country that wanted an input into what was going on.”
— Robert Praytor, Deputy Chief, FIRESCOPE Programs, Governor’s Office of Emergency Services

“Interoperability should not be strictly limited to firefighting crews. Medical personnel, emergency services including utility providers, and homeland security must be incorporated. In San Diego, crews were out in the fire areas dealing with downed electrical lines, ruptured gas lines, and low water pressure. They all need to be able to communicate easily with one another.”
-- Assembly Member Christine Kehoe

The ability of firefighters to effectively and efficiently communicate when and where needed with one another, incident commanders, other agencies and the public is critical to their safety and the protection of life and property. Modern information technology has the capability to greatly enhance firefighter’s situational awareness and to provide the public with accurate and timely information.

FINDING 1

Communications interoperability is essential in the effective command and control of personnel and resources during multi-agency, multi-discipline responses to major incidents.

During the October 2003 Fire Siege, incompatible communication systems and technology often made it impossible for strike teams to communicate with incident

commanders or just about anyone else. Firefighters had to use their ingenuity to the fullest to compensate for such communications problems. Many used cell phones and two-way radios, while others developed special signals on their engines to send out emergency warnings. In some cases, firefighters found it necessary to carry three or four

different radios, two extra batteries, a text capable pager and a cell phone, and had to check multiple frequencies and contend with busy signals in order to maintain communications and obtain needed information. In fact, a number of strike team leaders found it necessary to designate someone to monitor radio traffic across the various frequencies. Some departments with more sophisticated 700 MHz and 800 MHz systems had an even more difficult time communicating, because of the limitations of these systems in areas with mountainous terrain.

Although FIRESCOPE did an excellent job devising standard radio loads, over the years, radio systems and frequencies have changed. Information regarding system and frequency changes has not been systematically shared with other entities with a need to know to ensure interoperable communications. Even when information has been shared, the costs associated with reprogramming existing radios to maintain interoperability can be insurmountable and may be as much as \$250,000 for some agencies. Yet failure to reprogram radios in advance



of a major event can result in an inability to communicate and the loss of critical time in the field. Use of cell phones by firefighters to augment radio communications can result in command personnel losing situational awareness and failing to adapt tactics to accommodate changing circumstances.

“Even if we had radios, it wouldn’t have worked, because the noise was so intense from the 100 foot wall of flames.”
— Lt. John Hanley,
President, Fire
Fighters Union

It may be too impractical, too costly and too slow for the state to consider building a statewide communications system that will solve all interoperability problems. Other alternatives must also be considered. State agencies can take advantage of work that has already been done at the local government level to create regional systems, and join with local agencies on a regional basis to enhance those systems. Solutions that deal not just with major disasters, but also the day-to-day interactions of public safety agencies and their interoperability requirements, must be found.

The Commission recognizes that communications interoperability is a major problem which requires immediate attention. The *Public Safety Radio Strategic Planning Committee* and *California Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee* are existing entities looking at these problems and need to address such issues as:

“I think it goes without saying that UAV capability might have been useful.”
—Lt. Col. John
Crocker, Air Guard
Operations, California
Military Department

- Developing short-term and long-term solutions;
- Assessing funding requirements and sources (including grants);
- Seeking additional spectrum (frequencies);
- Identifying the quantity of frequency converters necessary for regional, short-term solutions; and
- Evaluating satellite capabilities and uses.

FINDING 2

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) provides long loiter time surveillance, reconnaissance and intelligence.

With infrared image capability, UAVs make it possible to see people and flames and discern if there has been recent activity in areas based on heat marks. Some UAVs possess synthetic aperture radar and a variety of other capabilities that have great potential fire line applicability, including providing exact coordinates and fire plotting, which can greatly enhance firefighter situational awareness.

“There is a big difference between a news helicopter flying over a no fly zone, safely away from the instability that comes with a fire such as updrafts and turbulence, and somebody flying directly over that fire.”
— Supervisor Judy
Mikels, Ventura
County

FINDING 3

Geographic Information System (GIS) technology is an effective tool for quickly providing a visual representation of critical information, such as the status and potential impact of complex incidents during a major wildfire.

To maximize the effectiveness of GIS technology, issues surrounding the sharing of data between agencies must be addressed before an incident occurs, and focus placed on mitigation as strongly as it is on response.

FINDING 4

It is important that the public, elected officials and the media have accurate, timely information.

“Emergency preparedness should be part of the planning process and should consist of educating the public at schools, groups, organizations and emergency exposition dates.”
— Teresa Jordan,
Simi Valley Resident

An example is the public perception that if aircraft are not flying, fires are not being suppressed. Firefighting aircraft dropping water or fire retardant is the most visible fire suppression effort that the public sees. When these aerial resources are not flying, the public does not understand why these vital resources are not being utilized. It is important that the public is educated and understands the role and use of aircraft in firefighting operations. Aircraft can only be used when they are effective and do not pose an undue safety hazard to the pilot, other firefighters and the public. It is extremely ineffective and dangerous to fly in high wind conditions.

Efforts to provide the public, elected officials and the media with accurate, timely fire incident and personal safety information need to be expanded. San Bernardino County’s establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC); CDF’s use of a website for particular incidents; and the use of Public Information Officers at Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) are just some of the ways that are currently used to attempt to accomplish this goal. At the same time, information must be provided to the public before an emergency occurs so that individuals can minimize their risk and support the actions recommended by fire officials.



2003 FIRE SIEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

2003 FIRE SIEGE — RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission has categorized each recommendation as a *Policy* or *Fiscal* recommendation, and numerically prioritized its importance as: (1) must implement; (2) should implement; and/or (3) should be studied further.

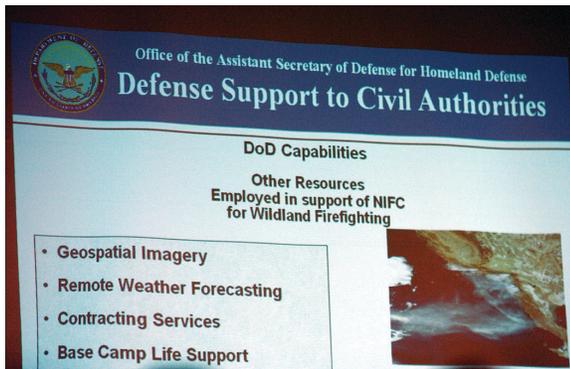
JURISDICTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BARRIERS

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OES arrange a meeting of federal, state and local partners to further clarify and improve the process of utilizing federal resources and access to military assets. (Policy-1)

According to representatives from the DOD, the federal Economy Act does not require that all local resources, including civilian contractors, be exhausted before requesting federal resources. Since many California state and local government officials have been under the impression that this requirement exists, the Commission recommends that OES arrange a meeting of appropriate representatives of all relevant entities to clarify and improve the process of utilizing federal resources and obtaining access to military assets.



Additionally, the Commission has been informed that Congress has requested that the Director of the Office of Management and Budget conduct a review of existing authorities regarding the use of Air Force and the Air National Guard Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) and other DOD assets to fight fires. This report is due to Congress at the end of March. Therefore, the Commission further recommends that Congress review the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act report and the updated Memorandum of Agreement prior to the beginning of California's 2004 fire season to ensure that federal law and policy facilitates, to the greatest extent possible, the use and rapid deployment of federal resources and assets to assist in combating WUI fires.

“As the fires were burning out of control in San Diego, we received calls from Arizona and Nevada offering assistance to the City and County of San Diego, but there was confusion about the ability to utilize these resources. I know we have a good mutual aid system in California, but what about our relationship with other states who are willing to help?”
— Mayor Dick Murphy, City of San Diego

“It doesn't take very long before you understand that there is a real problem, as in war, in knowing exactly what the fire's doing, where it is, there's terrain, there's smoke, there's brush, there's trees, it's hard to know what's coming when you see that glow. That glow may be a half-mile away, it may be five miles away. That's why there's such a need for good fire information.”
— Dr. Philip Riggan, Scientist, Forest Fire Laboratory, USFS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

“What happened in Southern California will happen again unless we make some significant improvements to address fuel management, land use policies and fire safe building standards that are vital to protecting lives, structures, infrastructure, watershed, community parklands and other community assets at risk to wildland fire in the state.”

— Chief Russ Tingley, Hermosa Beach City Fire Department

“Unless fuel reduction is combined with the restoration of the natural patchy structure and well adapted species composition of our pre-settlement forests, neither fire suppression nor fuel reduction, singly or in combination, will give us forests that can be sustained in the long run.”

— Frank Stewart, Sierra Region Director, California Fire Safety Council, Plumas County

The Commission recommends that federal (U.S. Department of the Interior [DOI] and USFS), state (CDF and OES) and local fire agencies work in conjunction with the military to jointly develop and adopt agreements, regulations and operating policies for the employment of aerial assets during WUI firefighting efforts. In addition, FIRESCOPE should develop a statewide plan to increase local agency capacity to provide additional air resources for combating WUI fires. (Policy-1)

Aerial resources play a critical supporting role in the suppression of WUI fires. Their capabilities to rapidly drop large quantities of water or other fire retardants on otherwise difficult to reach areas and areas in immediate danger is difficult to duplicate by other means. At the same time, aerial assets equipped with the latest technology can provide unparalleled real time information to firefighters regarding a fire’s current and predicted behavior, thus greatly enhancing resource planning and both firefighter and public awareness and safety.

Such capabilities are useless, however, if they cannot be readily accessed when needed, or if the very fact of their availability is unknown. To that end, it is critical that agreement and a common understanding be reached by all potentially relevant parties regarding the policies, processes and procedures for obtaining and utilizing these resources, as well as for ensuring that those who may need these resources are aware of their availability—or lack of availability—before the next WUI fire occurs.

Such agreements should include:

- Concurrence on meeting equipment, communications and training criteria as established by U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), USFS, CDF and OES;
- Submission of annual declarations of participation to DOI, USFS, CDF and OES by military base commanders by May 1st of each calendar year; and
- Weekly affirmation of availability status in accordance with developed policy.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that a task force be established to review the social, political, economic and scientific issues relating to conflicts between environmental and ecosystem values and land management planning, and their impact on the use of proven fire prevention and fire safety measures to protect lives and property in our WUI areas. (Policy-1)

In recent decades, the threat of fire to forests and adjacent communities has been exacerbated by inadequate forest and wildland fuel



management. Forest management and other agencies, as well as private landowners, face numerous restrictions that impede their ability to manage their responsible areas in an effective and timely manner, such as overly bureaucratic regulations, the threat of litigation, and excessive environmental review. In fact, according to a June 2003 report by Congress' General Accounting Office, 59 percent of all fuel reduction activities in the United States were slowed or stopped because of litigation. In California, 68 percent of all fuel reduction activities were stalled by legal action.

Conflicting federal, state and local environmental and land management laws, regulations and policies must be resolved, or efforts to prevent future conflagrations will be doomed to failure. To accomplish this, a task force made up of all appropriate impacted entities, including federal, state and local agencies; building and insurance organizations; environmental organizations; community representatives; elected officials and others should be established to explore solutions and develop recommendations. The recommendations of the Task Force should include: modification of existing laws and regulations, as necessary, including assignment of responsibility to a single entity with final authority to resolve conflict and enforce decisions with respect to environmental codes, standards and fire prevention programs; and establish mandatory fast track timelines with respect to any litigation that challenges fire prevention related actions.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that federal and state statutes be clarified, where necessary, to reaffirm the status of the fire service as a public safety entity and to recognize the integrated responsibilities for fuel management as reflected in the National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Restoration Act and existing agreements between the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) and federal, state and local fire agencies. (Policy-1)

*"The common denominators throughout all these fires is poor access for emergency vehicles, hot, dry weather conditions, sloping topography, a build up of wildland fuels, narrow roads, inadequate defensible space, and roads that hamper both the emergency access and evacuation of homeowners, and the use of construction of materials that are highly flammable – all these common denominators could have been eliminated through subdivision or individual home construction, planning and defensible space. Most of these wildfires and the losses from these wildfires can be minimized or avoided by very simple steps and precautions."
— Supervisor Gary Gilbert, Madera County*

*"We received a grant from the U.S. Fire Service to do prescribed burns between the national forest and the urban areas. Consequently, those prescribed burns were delayed because we ran into snags with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."
— Mayor Judith Valles, City of San Bernardino*

*"I'm here today to pledge NFPA's assistance to the Commission's efforts."
— Gary Tokle, Assistant Vice President, Public Fire Protection of the National Fire Protection Association*

Inclusion and identification of firefighting as a public safety entity would raise the level of public awareness of the critical services provided by firefighters and in the allocation of limited public funds between multiple competing priorities.

Recognition of fire agencies' integrated responsibilities for fuel management would elevate public awareness of fire agency responsibility for enforcement of fuel management requirements and the critical role it plays in the prevention of wildfires.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 5

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local forest firefighting agencies review their aircraft operations cut-off times

and determine if there can be a window of flexibility to expand incident operations times, while at the same time taking into consideration flight crew safety. Additionally, these agencies should review available and emerging technologies to extend available aerial emergency response capabilities. (Policy-1)



Concerns regarding pilot visibility and safety are of critical importance. However, agencies should review their aircraft operations policies and, if possible, establish general guidelines to provide a window of flexibility that takes into consideration the totality of the circumstances, and review other technological capabilities that impact flying during nighttime or limited visibility conditions.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 6

The Commission recommends that federal, state and local fire agencies implement 4-0 staffing for all fire engine companies responding to OES Mutual Aid calls for immediate, planned response, and set a goal of 4-0 staffing for WUI initial attack response. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

OES and CDF standards require four person crews on all engine strike teams. Engines with 4-0 staffing are safer and more efficient and enable crew leaders to take a command role to plan and properly manage their crews.

*"We need to improve. The technologies that we need to fly at night are not night vision, that's a fallacy. We need comprehensive systems of navigation, terrain following, and the only ones that possess that technology, and we spent billions to get, is the military. And the military is willing, ready, and able to rent that resource to us anytime we call upon it and work with us."
— Tag Gaines, GT Equipment Services*

*"When you call 911, we're going to respond. Firefighters are going to be there. But what is the staffing level on that engine, who is going to be responding and how far away they're going to be responding is up to the legislators, it's up to the citizens and the public of the State of California to determine."
— Tom Gardner, Emergency Command Center Captain at Cedar Fire*

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 7

The Commission recommends that all firefighters responding to WUI fires be provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, safety and communications equipment. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

Firefighter safety must be of paramount concern. It is critical for the health and safety of firefighters responding to WUI fires that they be properly equipped with the appropriate protective, safety and communications equipment necessary to properly perform their duties.



“Aircraft are a wonderful resource, but airplanes don’t put out the fires. Firefighters do. Lots of firefighters with the right equipment and the right training.”
— Dan Terry,
President, California
Professional
Firefighters

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 8

The Commission recommends that sufficient funds be allocated to state and local fire agencies to address California’s fire prevention and suppression needs. (Fiscal-1)

California has more residents living in WUI areas than any other state in the nation. CDF is responsible for the protection of lives, property and watershed on these areas which comprise some 31 million acres of WUI lands and, on average, responds to approximately 7,000 large fires per year in State Responsibility Areas (SRA) totaling about 130,000 acres. CDF also assists by responding to wildfires on federal and local responsibility areas when necessary.

The limitations on CDF’s budget, as summarized in the Findings section of this Report, not only affects CDF’s ability to respond appropriately, but also creates a strain on California’s Master Mutual Aid System when local governments are not timely reimbursed for their fire agencies’ response to major emergencies. Consideration should be given to establishing a secure additional funding stream for CDF through user fees, logging revenues, or other revenue sources. Although Proposition 172 in 1993 explicitly identified fire and paramedic services to receive a portion of its 1/2 cent sales tax increase, little of this revenue has found its way into the fire service and consideration should be given to allocating a portion of future growth in Proposition 172 monies to fire and paramedic emergency services.

“Using future funds from Prop. 172 may be a way to fund some of the recommendations from this Commission.”
— Chief Chip
Prather, Orange
County Fire Authority

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 9

The Commission recommends that federal, state and local policymakers consider creating a stable funding infrastructure for the California Fire Alliance and Fire Safe Councils. (Fiscal-2)

“We found in the fire service community that funding Fire Safe Councils and supporting Firewise programs provides a significant benefit to those communities where they’ve been successful.”

— Chief William McCammon, Alameda County Fire Department; President, California Fire Chiefs Association

The California Fire Alliance is a statewide organization that supports community fire safety efforts and creates consensus on fire safety issues among diverse audiences. Local Fire Safe Councils are community organizations, made up of community members, active in minimizing the potential for wildfire damage to their communities and maximizing the health of California’s natural resources. They also assist communities in developing fire loss mitigation projects and provide outreach to increase community awareness of program opportunities.



The Lake Arrowhead communities’ Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST), which works in partnership with other local Fire Safe Councils, is but one example of these community based efforts. MAST was instrumental in the successful evacuation of over 80,000 residents during the October 2003 Fire Siege, without a single serious incident despite being in the cross hairs of the Old Fire.

To ensure continuation and expansion of such essential community based services in WUI areas, federal, state and local policymakers should explore funding for mitigation grants.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

“There are advanced technologies having to do with areas of aerial surveillance that may be applicable to firefighting, and I think that’s worthy of exploring.”

— Peter Verga, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Defense

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the federal government (DOD, USDOJ, USFS, etc.) investigate whether the successful MAFFS program concept of operation and emerging technologies can be applied to other aerial firefighting systems. (Policy-1)

The MAFFS program concept of operation, which is a partnership between the federal and state governments, has been successful for several decades and should be examined for potential application to other aerial firefighting systems, including emerging technologies such as UAVs, aerial infrared imaging, and synthetic aperture radar.

Federal Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Congress support and fund a single source database that enhances real time and nighttime WUI intelligence. (Fiscal-1)

An interagency fire intelligence/information gathering system with an expedited, single source database can greatly enhance real time and nighttime intelligence and predictive services and enhance information dissemination to incident management, ground resources, elected officials, the public and the media.

Federal Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that Congress consider authorizing additional federal grant funds for wildland fire mitigation, including the establishment of a National Fire Science Research Institute to compile, evaluate and fund technological advances related to fire prevention and suppression at the federal level. (Fiscal-1)



The Federal Emergency Management Administration’s (FEMA) flood and hurricane program for natural disasters should be considered as a possible program model.

“We’ll be providing in excess of \$14 million as a result of this fire disaster through OES.”

— David Fukutomi, Federal Coordinating Officer, FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Federal Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that the federal government reduce or eliminate “match” requirements for federal grant funds for hazard mitigation programs in areas where there has been a state declaration of emergency. (Fiscal-3)

“We need to develop a climate in which pre-fire management, fuels management, vegetation management, or whatever you want to call it, is socially acceptable and demanded. We’re killing more native species with wildfire than we’re saving by not having fires.”

— Bruce Turbeville, Chairman, California Fire Alliance

Although some counties have been notified that grant monies will be provided from a variety of federal sources, concern remains regarding the counties’ ability to take advantage of such grants due to potential match requirements during a time of severe budget shortfalls.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends development of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security. As part of the Committee’s mandate, it will have the responsibility, in so far as possible, to implement the

“We need to explore what happened with these conflagrations and learn from them so that we can do a better job. Where there were successes, we need to talk about those successes. In the case of the Cedar Fire contained in my district, the fact that there are 90% of the homes still standing in that area is a tremendous success when you are talking about a fire that broke out at absolutely the worst time weather wise, the worst time resources wise and the worst location that it could possibly have broken out. But where there were failures, we need to explore those and improve there as well, and there were failures. And where they were failures of law, we need the Legislature to fix those. Where they were failures of regulation, we need to have the agencies fix those. And if there were failures of command, we need to hold those people accountable.”
 — Senator Dennis Hollingsworth

“The good news is, that we can do this, that we can create the science and the policies to protect ourselves. The bad news is, is that you are almost certainly doomed to fail. And the reason why is because after this Commission goes home to Sacramento or Washington, D.C., and we made excellent recommendations at the Commission hearings, the guys in the trenches are going to continue to be assaulted by the different regulatory agencies that are going to do everything in their power to dissuade proper fuel modification.”
 — Don Schmitz, Land Use Consultant

recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. The Committee will oversee all relevant rules and regulations to resolve conflicting issues. Additionally, the Committee will have technical advisory committees to help evaluate strategies and shall periodically report its progress to the Governor and the Legislature. (Policy-1)



The Commission recommends that a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security be established to expeditiously review and resolve conflicting laws, regulations and responsibilities and develop

consistent guidelines for timely implementation of vegetation/fuel management fire mitigation activities.

The Committee should establish any necessary technical advisory committees, including representatives from the public safety and emergency services disciplines, to provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis and to take active roles in supporting the passage of any necessary legislation.

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission reconvene six months after the submission of this report, and again six months later, to assess progress in implementing the Commission’s recommendations. (Policy-1)

The Commission should reconvene and report back to the Governor and Legislature six months after the submission of this report, and again six months later, with an assessment of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of this report.

State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE research and pursue efforts so mutual aid deployed engines have the capability to utilize newer technologies, such as foams and gels. (Policy-2)

Such capabilities would provide greater probability of success in preventing homes and other structures from burning and enable firefighters to move on to other homes or structures more rapidly.

State Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends establishing a secure year round operational capability for CDF, where appropriate, including the implementation of 4-0 staffing for all CDF state funded engine companies. (Fiscal-1)

CDF's funding ebbs and flows in accordance with the traditional five to eight month fire season. This traditional funding source is no longer adequate due to the current year round nature of California's wildland fire threat.

Consistent with CDF standards requiring four person crews on all strike team engines, engines with 4-0 staffing have been found to be more efficient at keeping fires contained and in maintaining firefighter safety.

"There's no lack of technology. What we need to do is figure out how to best use that technology, how to bring it in, how to use the resources that we have."

— John Sorensen, CEO, Seagull Technology

State Recommendation 5

The Commission recommends that the state examine alternatives for replacement and diversification of CDF's aging helicopter fleet and fire engine apparatus, and begin a replacement planning cycle. (Fiscal-1)

CDF is utilizing 1960's vintage Bell UH-1 (Huey) helicopters, some of which flew in Vietnam. These airframes are experiencing extreme structural fatigue, and the availability of excess military aircraft is diminishing. Consequently, CDF will soon need to begin replacing its helicopters. Since excess military aircraft will not be available, replacement helicopters will likely need to be purchased from other sources.

"Most of all, I'm extremely proud of all of our firefighters, who everyday put forth an all out effort for all of our citizens and who performed heroically during the fire season of 2003."

— Chief Tom Tisdale, Riverside County Fire Department

State Recommendation 6

The Commission recommends that the state develop a program to fund the acquisition of 150 additional OES fire engines and the requisite logistical support necessary to address California's fire suppression needs. (Fiscal-1)

“There was a lot of shock that a fire could sweep into a city and devastate suburban communities.”
— Assembly Member
Christine Kehoe

The additional fire engines would be assigned by OES to local fire departments with commensurate staff available to meet deployment requirements. During the October 2003 Fire Siege, many fire service agencies throughout California reported that they had additional personnel available to respond to assist in fighting the wildfires but did not have additional apparatus to send. The additional fire engines would enable California and local government fire agencies to mobilize and support emergency incidents more effectively by the state maintaining a fleet of additional OES engines for surge capability and would expand mutual aid capabilities to utilize other available resources.



TRAINING

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that nationwide training agreements be expanded. (Policy-2)



The training agreement between the California Military Department, the National Parks Service (NPS), USFS, DOI, CDF and OES is considered a model for the country, and the California Army National Guard is exporting the program to other western region states.

“The most defining difference between those people who adversely are affected by future events and those who were sent to do something about it, is the training and education of those individual responders.”
— Ronny J. Coleman,
Interim Chief, City of Santa Rosa Fire Department

Although training for National Guard helicopter MAFFS is institutionalized and conducted annually, regular military personnel are only trained in firefighting on an “as-needed” basis. To maximize firefighting capabilities, federal, state and local governments should work together to determine where trained military assets could be best utilized. Appropriate military personnel should then be included in state and local fire service training exercises.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that Congress increase efforts to provide training for local fire departments through federal grant programs and expand the Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) grant program. (Fiscal-1)

Legislation should be introduced to expand funding for the RFA grant program and a depository or clearinghouse of relevant grant information and opportunities created for easy access by local fire agencies.

“Control burns provide invaluable tools to train new crews, especially at the beginning of fire season. Readiness, operations, and burning are one of the major control tools that we utilize in the fire service to combat these fires.”
— Bob Wolf, District Vice President, California Professional Firefighters

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the state create a multi-layered public education outreach campaign for residents living in WUI areas. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

Such educational outreach should: provide residents in WUI areas with fuel management education and promote fuel reduction and hazard recognition; encourage residents to develop plans to manage their safety in the event of a wildfire; educate residents on structural fire safety measures; and provide children with age appropriate information regarding WUI fire and fuel hazards.

State Recommendation 2

“While California has one of the best trained, best equipped and most experienced fire service communities in the world, on-going, constantly updated and comprehensive training is absolutely critical to maintaining that high level.”
— State Senator Bill Campbell (Ret.)

The Commission recommends that CDF/OSFM develop and maintain an adequately funded standards, training and education program, similar to the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) program to ensure that trained and qualified personnel are prepared to respond. The training plan should support the use of the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) and incorporate the Fire Officer Certification process approved by the State Board of Fire Services. (Fiscal-1)

The CDF/OSFM should conduct a statewide training needs assessment to determine the training that is needed for California’s fire service, and develop and implement a plan that establishes minimum standards, training and education, including mandated core WUI training and continuing education and recertification for all levels of certification. The plan should include a trainee mentoring program and support both CICCS, which provides specific training for firefighters to fill Incident Command positions on major wildland fires, and the Fire Officer Certification process.

Since training is critical to the fire service’s ability to save lives and protect property, California must find a means to ensure the training needs of the fire services are met. CDF should also identify and develop an ongoing funding mechanism similar to that utilized by POST as part of this plan.



State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that state funds be made available to each Operational Area to support annual WUI fire suppression training exercises that include National Guard and federal military resources. Funding should also be made available by the state to improve the training level of smaller fire departments. (Fiscal-1)

Since firefighting in a WUI environment requires different knowledge, skills, and techniques than fires that occur in an urban area, it's critical to firefighter safety and effectiveness that firefighters gain the experience that can only be provided through controlled group training exercises. Inclusion of National Guard and federal military resources in such exercises will not only increase their effectiveness, but also provide real world experience in integrating their activities with those of state and local firefighters, thereby enhancing overall efficiency, effectiveness and safety.

Smaller fire departments, with their limited resources, can especially benefit from state funding to improve their level of training and resulting ability to assist in responses to large scale, wildland incidents.

*"Nobody likes to think of it, but here in California, being the Disneyland of disasters, we all need to constantly remind ourselves that it could be worse."
— Director Dallas Jones, Governor's Office of Emergency Services*



INTERSTATE/REGIONAL MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

“At 0400 hours, the first request for mutual aid went outside the County of San Diego.”

*— Robert Praytor,
Deputy Chief,
FIRESCOPE
Programs, Governor’s
Office of Emergency
Services*

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local fire agencies in California review their various assistance for hire agreements for appropriateness and their potential to undermine California’s Master Agreement and Master Mutual Aid System. (Policy-1)



There are currently numerous mutual aid agreements in California that define individual agency responsibilities and obligations under a variety of circumstances, including rates of pay, liability and process for reimbursement, to name just a few. Some of these agreements are voluntary and some are mandatory, but the

number of and differences in these agreements can make it cumbersome for local governments to determine obligations and processes during times of crisis. Some agreements may have the potential to undermine California’s Master Agreement and Master Mutual Aid System, and should be reviewed for appropriateness and replaced with a single master agreement for coordination and reimbursement of all resources in California.

“It is a matter of fact that public safety officials from different state and local agencies cannot communicate effectively with one another. This limits success in routine daily business, such as pursuits across jurisdictions, and multi-agency responses in emergencies like natural disasters or terrorist strikes.”
*— Senator
Bruce McPherson*

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE facilitate federal, state and local fire service agencies working together to reach consensus on the definition of structure protection versus perimeter control, and address the release of mutual aid companies back to their jurisdictions of origin when immediate needs dictate such return. (Policy-1)

Lack of consensus on the definition of structure protection versus perimeter control is currently perceived to be undermining the effectiveness of mutual aid agreements and ordering requests. The difference in interpretations impacts reimbursements and can affect whether or not a given entity will send needed resources during critical times of need.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that forest agencies integrate local incident command team members within their respective incident management teams when local agencies are in unified command on major WUI fires, and that a module relating to interfacing with local Emergency Operations Centers (EOC) be included in USFS Type 1 and 2 team training programs. (Policy-2)

Lack of knowledge or awareness of local fire protection planning efforts, area geography, fire behavior, and political boundaries can negatively impact the effectiveness of fire suppression, logistical support, and public information efforts. As a result, local fire agencies have identified a need for the integration of qualified local agency personnel at all levels of incident management to insure that local knowledge and experience are incorporated into the incident management objectives and operational strategies and tactics.

*"I think we can all admit that if a fire's big enough, the weather's bad enough, we don't put them out. The only chance we have is to get them when they're little. We try to manage them, we try to put as much resources in the path of it, but until it runs out of fuel or the weather changes, we don't stop them."
— Robert Roy,
Retired L.A. Fire Department*

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies continuously maintain and update their mutual aid and cooperative agreements to reflect contemporary needs and costs. (Policy-2)

To ensure the efficacy of mutual aid and cooperative agreements, it is critical that such agreements reflect current needs and costs and that all relevant personnel are knowledgeable and, therefore, trained regarding the obligations and processes they establish. Reimbursement mechanisms must be clearly identified and understood in advance to avoid any delays in sending much needed resources during a firestorm.

*"We had tribal resources that were implemented throughout the state on all the fires as they were occurring from Simi Valley all the way down to here in San Diego."
— Chief Ed McOrmond,
Pechanga Fire Department*

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OES and FIRESCOPE incorporate the Emergency Medical Services Authority (EMSA) into the Master Mutual Aid Agreement. (Policy-1)

In order for EMSA to ensure a coordinated standardized approach and unified response to medical emergencies during a WUI fire, EMSA should be incorporated into OES' statewide Master Mutual Aid Agreement.



*"Under our umbrella, these groups agree about one thing— whatever we're doing to stop wildfires from damaging our communities, we need to do it better."
— Bruce Turbeville,
Chairman, California Fire Alliance*

LOCAL BUILDING, PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS; BRUSH CLEARANCE AND FUEL MODIFICATION

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that the Joint Legislative Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security convene with appropriate representatives of federal, state and local governments to build upon existing governmental efforts to develop a comprehensive interagency, intergovernmental wildland vegetation management plan for California, and integrate the plan's direction into revised or amended federal, state and local land management, land use plans. (Policy-1)

The central elements of the comprehensive plan should include, but not be limited to:

- A scientifically credible balance of harms assessment that evaluates long term costs and risks to people, capital improvements, and natural resources, including air and water quality and listed or endangered species;
- A wildland fuel hazard rating, indicating flammability potential and locations of highest wildfire risks, relative to social, community and ecological values;
- A wildland fuel treatment objective aimed toward achieving a safer mix of age-class distribution in chaparral fuel types and condition-class distribution in conifer fuel types;
- A prioritized treatment schedule aimed toward achieving wildland fuel treatment objectives in a specified timeframe;
- Economic incentives to establish new, unconventional markets as a means to accelerate fuel hazard abatement treatments, including: stewardship contracting, and tax incentives for alternative fuels (e.g. wood biomass for electric cogeneration);
- Development of programs to upgrade the fire safety of nonconforming structures in WUI zones;
- Consideration of tax credits for retrofitting older homes;
- An investigation into whether the MAFFS program concept of operation and emerging technologies can be applied to other aerial firefighting systems;
- Acquisition and implementation of real time and nighttime WUI intelligence;



"We have to set the priorities for public safety while maintaining some semblance of rationality when it comes to environmental regulations."
— Senator Dennis Hollingsworth

"With the CEQA guidelines, it takes us six to nine months to be able to get approval and get a burn done."
— Chief Bob Roper, Ventura County Fire Department

"The California Coastal Commission is creating a hazardous fuel preservation program up and down the coast. They've also implemented a \$12,000 an acre penalty for people doing brush clearance as penalty for complying with the L.A. County Fire Code."
— Ann Hoffman, President, Land Use Preservation Defense Fund

- Consideration of use of emerging technologies for firefighting purposes (e.g., military technology, GPS, UAVs, Operational Area Satellite Information System [OASIS]);
- An operational and funding strategy to implement an interoperable communications strategy; and
- Development of a comprehensive public outreach program that includes emergency evacuation education.

“It’s going to happen again, and we’ve got to get ready.”
 — Professor Patrick Pagnea, University of California, Berkeley

Until the thousands of acres of dead bark beetle infested trees are removed and sound forest stewardship is achieved, forested areas of the state will continue to have hazardous standing fuel just waiting to become the next conflagration. Existing efforts to remove this threat should, therefore, be expanded.

“This does not need additional research, debate and discussion, this needs application.”
 — Phil Aune, Vice President of Public Resources, California Forestry Association

One option for accomplishing this goal may be to focus CDF’s and USFS’s pre-fire management research towards developing uses and markets for the products of vegetation removal. A concerted effort in this regard could develop new products and new markets so that brush removal requires no more subsidy than timber harvesting or coal mining.

Local and state tax incentives, as well as insurance incentives, that would assist homeowners in retrofitting older homes should also be considered.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that in WUI areas, the Statewide Fire Safe Council promotes the establishment of local Fire Safe Councils and encourages federal, state and local governments to assist in this effort. (Policy-1)

“Firewise Community Workshops bring the communities together to figure out how to solve these issues about living in wildland urban interface areas.”
 — Mike Rogers, Consultant

Each committee would be instrumental in coordinating planning, response, and recovery activities and in implementing the recommendations contained in this report for their respective county. These committees should include local experts, citizens, elected officials, fire service and law enforcement personnel and other first responders, and should assist in ensuring effective, multi-agency evacuation planning and drills and encourage a consistent, long-term commitment to fire safe communities.



“These preservation modalities have resulted in a situation where it appears animal and plant habitat are more important in some cases than human habitat.”
 — Ann Hoffman, President, Land Use Preservation Defense Fund

“We were prepared, we have a fire resistant house, concrete, plank siding, Class A roof, and we have vegetative clearance. The house before us had a shake roof and no vegetation clearance, and he wasn’t very lucky. They lost the entire structure despite about a dozen helicopter buckets of water dropping on it.”
— Dr. Bob Martin, Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies and officials give serious consideration to fostering and advancing citizen involvement in the establishment and operation of disaster prevention, recovery and rebuilding groups. Furthermore, the state should develop a disaster recovery model based on the collective input of OES, FEMA, faith-based and community groups, victim advocates and other relevant organizations. (Policy-2)

Federal, state and local agencies and elected leaders should recognize the importance of citizen involvement in the establishment and operation of disaster prevention, recovery and rebuilding groups. Such groups represent community assets to be drawn upon.

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that DOI, FEMA, USFS, CDF and OES identify ways to assist, including financially, local governments with WUI fire preparation and mitigation efforts. (Fiscal-2)



The costs and required resources associated with preparation and mitigation efforts on the scale currently required can impose significant burdens on already financially strapped local governments. Federal and state

entities should work with local governments to identify ways, both financially and otherwise, to assist local governments to appropriately accomplish these goals.

“We need to develop a code that will generically address building construction methodology for all structures located in or near a designated wild land area.”
— John J. Tennant, California State Fire Marshall

“One of the barriers for fuels management program is funding.”
— Larry Hamilton, Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, BLM, U.S. Department of the Interior

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends the Wildland Fire Leadership Council address issues of Wildland Fire Prevention and Control and inconsistencies in the interpretation and implementation of the National Fire Plan, Wildland Fire Policy, Structure Protection, and Cost Apportionment process. (Policy-1)

The Wildland Fire Leadership Council would bring focus at the highest level to the problem and to inconsistencies that negatively impact interagency relationships, incident management, mutual aid systems, and local agency budgets.

As far as California being fire safe, let’s not fool ourselves, or anyone else. We have a long way to go.
— Bruce Turbeville, Chairman, California Fire Alliance

Federal Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Congress considers establishing a National Wildland Fire Insurance Program (NWFIP), with appropriate eligibility criteria, under the direction of FEMA. (Fiscal-3)

The fire protection services responsible for the interface zone, as well as inhabitants and developers, need positive incentives to do a better job of prevention and protection. There are no more tax funds available to provide these resources. Establishing a national wildland fire insurance program similar to the existing National Flood Insurance program would help protect homeowners, provide incentives for compliance with fire safe standards and assist with the funding of local fire protection systems. The program would allow insurance company buy-in and a portion of the premiums would help pay for recovery and for local fire protection, including inspections. In addition, a small commission to determine property owner mitigations and development standards that could be used to reduce premiums should be established.

*"I want to compliment FEMA who rushed to our aid, opened a local assistance center in the City of San Diego within 24 hours – 48 hours of the fire."
— Mayor Dick Murphy, City of San Diego*

*"It's been shown that when you thin pine, you grow better shrubs and the trees grow much better. These fuel treatments would be strategically located, first to protect structures and developments, special natural features, and archeological features, and then divide the landscape to aid fire protection."
— Ray Quintanar, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, USFS*

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that OSFM continues to conduct fire research, including development of fire test protocols for vents, radiant heat exposure for windows and other applicable areas to improve ignition resistant construction techniques. The research process should include implementation of a comprehensive damage assessment process to collect data on efficiency and effectiveness of mitigation practices. (Policy-1)

Statewide WUI fire safe construction features, hazardous fuels/vegetation clearance and modification programs, water supplies, access and defensible space issues should be addressed.

Based on its findings, OSFM should make recommendations on the adoption of and future changes to a new WUI Code and local ordinances, with consideration given to mandating a minimum standard of Class A roofing in high and very high hazard zones; double pane windows; louvered attic vent screens; residential addressing; firefighting water supply; defensible space requirements; attic sprinklers; proper ingress/egress for fire equipment; and fire shutters.



*"The fire burned 630 of our 650 acres but we didn't lose a single home on our reservation due to our strict building codes."
— Chris Walters, Disaster Services Coordinator, San Manuel Reservation*

*"Shortly after the fires, the rain came along and erosion took out almost as many lives as were lost by the fire."
— Congressman Jerry Lewis*

*“Despite the National Fire Plan, California Fire Plan, local fire plans, the 100 plus local Fire Safe Councils, etc., preventing wildfires is not a priority. Funding for prevention efforts is down from historic, yet still under funded, levels.
— Bruce Turbeville, Chairman, California Fire Alliance*

Discussions surrounding these and like issues should include building, fire, planning and environmental groups to enhance communication and support of OSFM’s fire testing efforts.

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) type programs be considered as a model for fire safe council efforts in target areas. (Policy-1)

Communities are encouraged to initiate planning where it does not exist and to review implemented efforts for completeness. Planning efforts should include community level danger recognition, evacuation planning, and coordinated response of law enforcement, fire services, public utilities, and other critical infrastructure.

State Recommendation 3

*“Insurance companies must notify homeowners of the incentives that are available to them as they make claims for reimbursement for losses and go forward and rebuild. Because all we’re doing is recreating the same mess that we just got ourselves out of.”
— Chief Jeff Bowman, San Diego City Fire Department*

The Commission endorses SB 1855 by Senator Deirdre Alpert. (Policy-1)

SB 1855 would eliminate unintended underinsurance by requiring insurers to provide a cost comparison and explanation of each available coverage for a particular home.



COMMUNICATIONS INTEROPERABILITY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that all EOCs dedicate a Public Information Officer (PIO) or establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to inform and respond to questions from the media, the public and elected officials. The PIO or JIC should be stationed in or near the EOC and have timely access to the latest information. All available technologies should be explored to expedite the timely dissemination of information. (Policy-1)

Dedicating a person in the EOC as the PIO or establishing a JIC similar to the one San Bernardino County used during the October 2003 Fire Siege enables the media, public and elected officials to obtain accurate, updated information without interrupting or interfering with fire suppression activities.

While fire agencies can inform the public through the media and/or Emergency Alert System of information such as road closures, path of the fire and evacuations, all available technologies should be explored for expediting the dissemination of such information.



If a JIC is created, the Commission recommends that the JIC be located adjacent to a county EOC so as to enhance information coordination.

FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends that sufficient standardized frequencies be issued by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to meet the interoperable communication needs of fire and emergency personnel. (Policy-1)

The ability of public safety emergency and support personnel to communicate with each other via voice and data in real time is critical in large magnitude events where multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions are involved. A lack of sufficient radio frequencies, as well as

“Coming in as a strike team leader, even though I had the standard load that CDF had, I didn’t have the frequency because the command net in Southern California was changed. We ended up having to reprogram six radios on the strike team because none of us had that frequency. That takes time, it accounts for a lot of confusion. There is also the possibility of inaccurately entering that frequency because it’s all done manually in the heat of the battle. It’s not good, it creates problems.

— Kevin O’Meara, Battalion Chief, CDF

“In the period of time during the fire, we had 265,000 buses in the east San Diego county area...that’s 24 times normal. That was from someone hitting the button on the radio, speaking into the mike and getting a busy signal.”
— Curt Munro, Manager, San Diego/Imperial County Regional Communications System

“Robert E. Lee had better communications at Gettysburg than we did.”

— Chief Darrell Jobes, East County Fire Department, quoting Cedar Fire Incident Commander David Hawkins

incompatible systems and technology, at times made it impossible for strike teams to communicate with incident commanders during the October 2003 Fire Siege. Many firefighters found it necessary to carry three or four different radios in order to keep communication lines open, while others used their cell phones or developed special signals on their engines to send out emergency warnings. Some strike team leaders found it necessary to designate someone to monitor radio traffic across various frequencies, or to do so personally, diminishing their availability for other critical activities and distracting their attention from the job of saving lives and property.

Consequently, funding for interoperable communications systems should be a high priority at the federal and state levels and consideration should be given to the use of homeland security funds, among other resources, to achieve this goal.

“It’s not within the realm of normal traditional business for agencies to share their information and work together, even between departments. But where this is done, success can be found.”

— Russ Johnson, Public Safety Industry Manager, ESRI—Geographic Information System

Currently, many state and local agencies rely on proprietary radio technology, which prevents public safety personnel with equipment from different manufacturers from communicating with each other. To facilitate emergency fire communications, fire communications vendors should be encouraged to adhere to consistent bandwidth and frequency standards and, as radio systems change and new communication frequencies are added, capability to continue to communicate on currently existing frequencies should be maintained and federal partners should continue to provide for narrow band analog for major incident communications until state and local agencies are equipped for digital communications.

STATE RECOMMENDATIONS

State Recommendation 1

The Commission recommends integration of the Multi-Agency Incident Resource Processing System (MIRPS) with the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System. (Policy-1)

Integrating MIRPS with the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System would increase efficiency and timely dispatch of mutual aid resources by enabling state emergency coordinators to quickly determine the status of local resources.

State Recommendation 2

The Commission recommends that the state implement a research and development working group within FIRESCOPE to explore emerging technologies for firefighting purposes (e.g., military technology, GPS, UAVs, Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS)). (Policy/Fiscal-1)

“We’re talking about saving lives. We lose people when we aren’t able to give them advance notice and say, the fire’s right there, head over there.”

— Robert Roy, Retired L.A. Fire Department

Scientific and technological advancements can increase wildfire predictive capabilities, preparedness and efficient real time responses, greatly enhancing fire suppression efforts and firefighter safety. New and existing technologies should be explored for, among other things, the ability to safely fly fire fronts during hours of darkness and times of limited visibility and the ability to identify fire location and assist in predicting a fire's future location and intensity.

For example, Predator-type UAVs have capabilities such as infrared and other equipment that would enable fire personnel to observe a fire line at night, including through smoke. Such platforms can be placed in an orbit above a fire or series of fires and provide continuous real time information, instantaneous situational awareness capabilities to firefighters and incident commanders that greatly enhance fire suppression efforts and save lives. GPS technology, attached to each fire engine, would enable Incident Command Centers (ICC) to know the exact location of each of its engines.

Coupled with other currently available technology, a graphic display of the current location of a fire and the predicted future location of the fire and its intensity, including annotation of the location of fire suppression vehicles and other air and ground resources, such as ground personnel, is possible.

The California National Guard's recently created mechanism that enables commanders to access real time information via the Internet and satellite downlink should also be explored.

State Recommendation 3

The Commission recommends that each engine crew and chief officer have the capability to communicate effectively across multiple frequency bands. (Policy/Fiscal-1)

Communication is critical to firefighter safety and effective fire suppression. With mixed frequency ranges utilized by diverse fire agencies, radio communication reliability must be improved. Much reliance is made on radio caches, but their on scene availability is often delayed.

The Commission also recommends that all local fire service agencies meet the FIRESCOPE requirements for minimum 32 channel VHF radio capability for radio interoperability on all firefighting resources responding to WUI fires.

"FIRESCOPE a number of years ago did an excellent job with coming up with these standard loads for the radios. Problem is, over the course of the last 30 years, radio systems have changed, people have changed frequencies. Unfortunately in the fire service, even though we share a lot of information, often times those changes in frequencies aren't shared. And even if they are shared, the cost of reprogramming the radios is insurmountable."
— Kevin O'Meara, Battalion Chief, CDF

"The lack of money for radio purchases and system upgrades is perhaps the largest barrier to the implementation of interoperable radio systems. It is clear that funding levels need to be significantly increased, but in these difficult budget times, that is easier said than done."
— Senator Bruce McPherson

“What happened that Sunday really changed the way people view the threat of fire in the city. As a result, there are many questions, media coverage and public discussions about how the fire got so big and why so many homes were destroyed.”
— Assembly Member Christine Kehoe

“People evacuated not because they were notified to evacuate but because their electricity went out. There needs to be a more effective and direct method of evacuation.”
— Hal Mintz, Property Owners Association, Disaster Service Coordinator

“We can make huge investments in communication systems and coordination systems and command systems that would have little or no real benefit under extreme burning conditions without paying attention to the factors that predispose these highly intense, severe, rapidly growing wildfires. I’m not sure that Humpty Dumpty and all the King’s men and the most expensive radio systems that we could ever imagine would ever keep up. The tin cans with the string don’t work anymore.”
— Jerry Williams, Director, Office of Fire and Aviation, USFS

State Recommendation 4

The Commission recommends that local governments improve public outreach and emergency evacuation education. (Policy/Fiscal-1)



Such outreach and education is necessary for public safety and to ensure public support of fire service activities. For example, it is not uncommon for the public to inaccurately assume that a fire is not being properly fought unless planes are in the air, and better public understanding of the appropriate use of aviation resources during wildfires is needed. While fixed and rotary winged aircraft are an important firefighting tool to slow the spread of fire, they are only one of many resources utilized. Additionally, it is considered both a life safety threat and potentially wasteful to make aerial retardant drops during wind conditions over 35 mph.

State Recommendation 5

The Commission recommends that state agencies take advantage of the work that has been done locally to create regional communication systems and join with the local agencies on a regional basis to enhance those systems. (Policy-2)

The state must begin to fashion solutions that deal not just with major disasters, but also the day to day interactions of public safety agencies and their interoperability requirements. The public safety community in California must move toward interoperability using a standards based approach and acceptance of the Project 25 standard as a criteria for federal funds, but must also realize that an independent funding mechanism will be necessary to expedite and accomplish interoperable communications. Additionally, any statewide communication system should include all strategic and tactical medical providers and both urban and rural coverage.

State Recommendation 6

The Commission recommends that the state update and expand current handheld and mobile radios to be utilized on major mutual aid incidents as a short-term, temporary solution to the interoperability problem. (Fiscal-1)

This lack of wireless interoperability often compromises safety and effective emergency operations during WUI firefighting and other mutual aid incidents. Updating and expanding current handheld and mobile radio caches can provide an immediate but temporary work around to address this critical problem.

State Recommendation 7

The Commission recommends that OES Fire and Rescue Command Networks be expanded. (Fiscal-1)

The doubling (putting one on top of the other) of the current 28 mountaintop repeaters will result in four different command nets to improve statewide communication. This will expand OES fire radio networks and allow better coordination between ICS and Operational Area Communications Centers.

Additionally, the OES OASIS Communication System, which connects all 58 counties and is utilized on a daily basis, was installed in 1989, and should be upgraded to maximize communications and interoperability.

LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Local Recommendation 1

The Commission recognizes the critical role of timely emergency notification of the public of imminent threats and recommends that local governments prioritize the development of appropriate early warning systems to address the needs of their communities. (Policy-1)

Many of the victims of the October 2003 Fire Siege indicated that they had no warning of the fire's approach. In examining potential early warning systems to address the needs of their communities, local governments should consider reverse 911, emergency evacuation siren systems and potential combination systems, especially in remote areas.



"The role of communications is a lifeline for firefighters."

— Mike Wingate,
Regional Incident
Communications
Coordinator, USFS

"As an engine company Captain, I want an incident action plan that actually has as part of it a communications plan."

— Captain Mark Hartwig,
San Bernardino
Professional Firefighters

"We are the ones that go out there and put the fires out. We are the ones that risk our lives out there. All I can say is that, without proper communications, I'm surprised we didn't lose more bodies than what we did, and I ask that the Commission look into the communication problems because there's nothing more frustrating to a company officer than, when you engage in a fire, and you have communication problems."

— Captain Dave Lopez,
L.A. County Firefighters

"One of things that was very frightening for a lot of people was getting a bang on the door or a sheriff's deputy going down their street with a PA system telling them to get out now without having any forewarning whatsoever."

— Supervisor Greg Cox,
San Diego County

"It's obvious, not just from these fires, but from other incidents as well, that we still have a way to go on interoperability of communications."

— Director Dallas Jones,
Governor's Office of
Emergency Services

**2003 FIRE SIEGE
SUCCESS STORY AND MODEL PROGRAMS**

2003 FIRE SIEGE — SUCCESS STORY AND MODEL PROGRAMS

The San Bernardino County mountain communities surrounding the greater Lake Arrowhead area were in the cross hairs of the Old Fire. Stopping the fire would be a formidable challenge due to over a million standing dead trees in the area due to bark beetle infestation. As the fire threatened the mountain communities, mandatory evacuation orders were issued to all residents. Approximately 80,000 residents evacuated during this time of high anxiety and perilous conditions. Despite the conditions and limited evacuation routes, the people negotiated this evacuation from homes and businesses in exemplary fashion. Regarding the massive evacuation, San Bernardino County Sheriff Gary Penrod, in an opinion page article in the Sun-San Bernardino newspaper, stated, “As chaotic as it was, it worked. As far as we know, no one was trapped and injured in the Old Fire. There were no serious traffic collisions.” Sheriff Penrod credited the successful evacuation in large part due to “...the planning and public education that took place in [the] mountains because of the extreme fire danger posed by the bark beetle infestation.” Congressman Jerry Lewis, along with other representatives, praised the evacuation and stated that the “efforts to fight the fire and evacuate residents out of the mountains was a model for efficiency and success.”



4-meter False Color, 10-28-2003, Space imaging



Instrumental in fire and disaster preparedness of the residents in the greater Lake Arrowhead communities is the work and partnerships of the Fire Safe Councils. Arrowhead Communities Fire Safe Council, Mountain Rim Fire Safe Council and the Big Bear Fire Safe Council worked directly with agencies of the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) to develop strategic evacuation pre-fire planning. Utilizing “town-hall meetings” with educational pamphlets, maps and news releases, these volunteer groups helped properly prepare residents well in advance of the 2003 wildfire siege.

It was brought to the attention of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, that the preparedness level of the mountain communities was a major contributor to the overall success of disaster activities in the Lake Arrowhead region. Moreover, the pre-fire activities of the area helped to improve the ability of the people and homes to survive. These pre-fire activities are what Fire Safe Councils are all about. The Fire Safe Council program is one of the active partnerships by local communities with public agencies for the purpose of community education and fire safety practices. Major partners include the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), San Bernardino County Fire Department, US Forest Service, Cal Trans, San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department, Southern California Edison, the California Conservation Corps and several local fire districts. Together their focus is on reducing fire hazards in the mountain top communities and pre-fire action measures.

According to Bruce Turbeville, Chairman of the California Fire Alliance Group, the mission of the Fire Safe Council organization is to utilize the combined expertise, resources and distribution channels of its members. The Fire Safe Council fulfills its mission to preserve California’s natural and manmade resources by mobilizing all Californians to make their homes, neighborhoods and communities fire safe. Since its formation in April 1993, the Council has united its diverse membership to speak with one voice about fire safety. The Council has distributed fire prevention education materials to industry leaders and their constituents, evaluated legislation pertaining to fire safety and empowered grassroots organizations to spearhead fire safety programs. More information on the Fire Safe Council can be found at www.firesafecouncil.org.



The Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) is comprised of government agencies, private companies and volunteer organizations concerned with public safety in the mountain areas of their respective jurisdictions. The primary focus of MAST is to reduce the risk of a major fire and to minimize the impacts on the mountain communities.

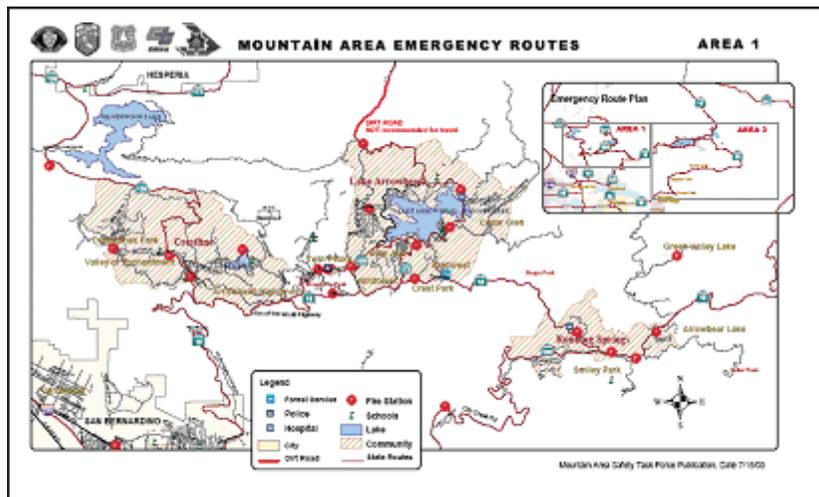
Together with the Riverside County MAST, both organizations have coordinated their response to the bark beetle infestation emergency while continuing to enhance and strengthen community emergency planning and response.

A five-point action plan has been initiated by the two County MAST organizations as follows:



- Assure public safety. Critical elements to this action include developing evacuation plans, clearing potential hazard trees from routes into and out of the mountains, and providing emergency planning and hazard mitigation information to the public.
- Obtain funds. Work with local, state and federal legislators to obtain funds to combat the problem.
- Reduce fuel and create fuel breaks. This means planning and organizing the removal of dead standing trees, the reduction of fuel on the ground, and the creation of defensible space around developed areas and homes.
- Develop commercial use or disposal options for waste wood products.
- Identify and develop plans for ensuring long-term forest sustainability.

More information about the MAST program can be found at www.calmast.org.



The Fire Safe Council and MAST programs are community-based programs that should be identified as “model programs” demonstrating best practices. They have proven to be an extremely beneficial partnership between the community residents, business owners and responsible governmental agencies.

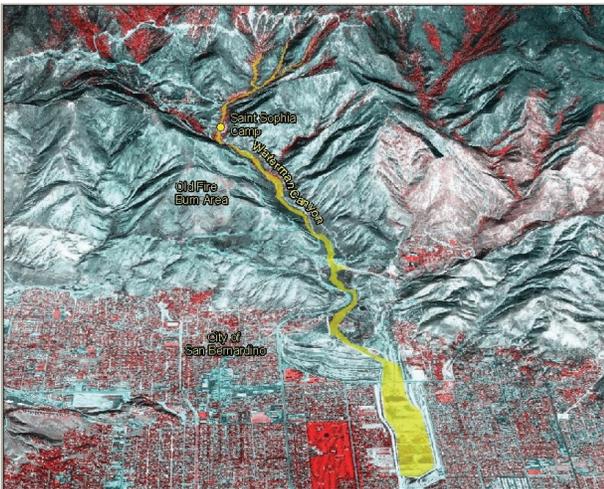
2003 FIRE SIEGE
THE TRAGEDY CONTINUES

2003 FIRE SIEGE — THE TRAGEDY CONTINUES

In the aftermath of the devastating fires that struck southern California there was tremendous concern about the barren landscape left behind by the wildland fires and the potential for erosion and major landslides. Tragedy struck on December 25, 2003 when a Pacific storm produced heavy rain over most of the mountains and foothills of San Bernardino County causing flash flooding and a mudflow to occur in Waterman and Cable Canyon killing 16 people. Over eight inches of rain fell at rates of up to one inch per hour in this area.

The map below presents the local terrain and mud and debris flow as it moved down from its origin as depicted on the map. A 12-15 foot high wall of water (with rocks, mud and other debris) was reported in Waterman Canyon.

14 people lost their lives in Waterman Canyon. The victims were gathered together for a Christmas Day celebration at the St. Sophia Camp. The denuded hillsides 5 miles to the west near Devore, saturated by fast flowing water, produced a mudslide that wiped out camper trailers, carried away vehicles and took the lives of two people at a KOA campground in Cable Canyon.



Due to the perilous conditions left behind by the fires and the fatal incident as discussed above, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors issued a “Proclamation of Existence Of A Local Emergency.” A subsequent request for official disaster recognition was successfully made to the Governor and President.

application of lessons learned from the Christmas Day flood disaster, in order to assist residents in “at risk flood zones” to increase awareness of flood signs, heed warnings to evacuate, and understand the limited safety of pre-flood barrier efforts.

The successful pre-fire management strategies of the Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) stimulated creation of the newly formed Flood Area Safety Taskforce (FAST). Comprised of officials from various agencies, FAST is working to form strategic pre-flood planning and response measures. FAST is engaged in the

While the primary focus of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Fire Commission was to examine wildland fire prevention and response measures, there was much deliberation and recognition of the potential for follow-on problems and disasters caused by major wildland fires.

The members of the Commission express their heart-felt sympathy to the families of those that lost their loved ones in this unfortunate disaster.



San Bernardino Fire Capt. Vince Gates works his way toward an unidentified man trapped under mud, boulders, tree trunks and other debris as a mudslide swept through a campground in Waterman Canyon.

Photo Source: William Wilson Lewis III/Press-Enterprise

APPENDICES

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Press Release



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PR03: 491
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 11/03/2003

GOVERNOR DAVIS AND GOVERNOR-ELECT SCHWARZENEGGER ANNOUNCE COMMISSION TO REVIEW FIREFIGHTING EFFORTS 11/02/2003

Focus will be on prevention, response coordination

SACRAMENTO

Governor Gray Davis, in consultation with Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger, today named a Blue Ribbon Commission to review the effort to fight the State's recent wildfires and provide recommendations to prevent destruction from future fires.

Eighteen firefighters, community officials, along with local, state and federal representatives will be named to the commission. It will make its report within 120 days.

"We need to take a hard look at what we can do to minimize the loss of life and property from wildfires," said Gov. Davis. "A disaster of this magnitude should never happen again."

The Commission will examine:

- Reducing and eliminating jurisdictional and operational barriers that prevent the expeditious response of military resources necessary to combat wild fires;
- Readiness training of personnel and military equipment approved for use within the California incident command system;
- Development of an interstate and/or regional master mutual aid system similar to California's;
- Updating local building and planning regulations to include more stringent construction standards for high fire threat zones, requirements for brush clearance and fuel modification, and land use planning techniques that protect property;

Named to the commission will be representatives from: the U.S. Forest Service; Dept. of the Interior; Dept. of Defense; Federal Emergency Management Agency; Southern California Tribal Chairman's Council; Boards of Supervisors of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura counties; the mayors of San Diego and San Bernardino; California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association; California Fire Chiefs Association; the San Diego Fire Chief; the California Dept. of Homeland Security; the California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection; the Governor's Office of Emergency Services; the California Emergency Council; and the California Professional Firefighters Association.

The Governor's Office of Emergency Services routinely conducts reviews of firefighting and emergency efforts following catastrophic fires. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the U.S. Forest Service participate in these studies.

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION MEMBER

WILLIAM “Bill” CAMPBELL, Chair

Senator William “Bill” Campbell (Ret.) was first elected to the State Senate in 1976, and represented the 31st Senatorial District, which includes portions of Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Shortly after his election, he became the first freshman Senator since 1939 to serve on the powerful Senate Rules Committee. In 1978, still in his first term, he was elected by his colleagues to serve as the Minority Floor Leader, a position he held through mid-1983. Senator Campbell fought unceasingly to eliminate unnecessary state regulatory agencies and state spending, and was a leader in business development and founding Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Business Development. Senator Campbell served as Chairman of the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the Joint Committee on Emergency Services. Other Senate Committee assignments included: Appropriations, Bonded Indebtedness and Methods of Financing; Vice Chairman of Government Organization, Health and Human Services, Industrial Relations and the Joint Committee on the State’s Economy. Prior to serving in the Senate, he served four terms in the State Assembly. Senator Campbell also was a member of the Board of Trustees for the California Museum of Science and Industry, the Advisory Board of the San Diego Olympic Training Center and President of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission during the 1984 Olympics. Senator Campbell served in the U.S. Army as a First Lieutenant in the 101st Airborne Division and was appointed by President Bush as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission. In 1998, Senator Campbell became President Emeritus of the California Manufacturers Association (CMA), after having served as President for more than eight years. Senator Campbell became President of William Campbell & Associates in April 2000. In November of 2003, former Governor Gray Davis and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Senator Campbell as Chairman of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Fire Commission.

DEDE ALPERT

Senator Dede Alpert, whose district was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm, represents the 39th State Senate District after having served three terms in the Assembly. Recognized as one of the Legislature’s foremost advocates of public education, Senator Alpert’s legislative agenda has consistently stressed ensuring a prosperous economy for California, as well as advocating health and safety issues for women and children and safeguarding individuals’ privacy against identity theft. Senator Alpert currently chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee; the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Education; the Select Committee on Family, Child and Youth Development; and the Select Committee on Genetics, Genetic Technologies and Public Policy and Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture. Her standing committee assignments include the committees on Education, Natural Resources and Wildlife, Agriculture and Water Resources, and Revenue and Taxation. She is a member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Fiscal Oversight and various select and joint committees. Prior to her election to the California State Legislature, Senator Alpert served on the Solana Beach School Board for seven years. She was also a court-appointed special advocate for Voices for Children and was active with United Cerebral Palsy, PTA, and the Girl Scouts.

WILLIAM BAMATTRE

Fire Chief William Bamattre, with over 25 years experience in fire service, is Fire Chief of the City of Los Angeles. Chief Bamattre was first exposed to the fire service while attending Stanford University where he worked as a "Student/Firefighter" on the Stanford Fire Department. During his tenure at the Los Angeles City Fire Department, Chief Bamattre has held every promotional rank through Battalion Chief. Chief Bamattre has worked in assignments encompassing all Department Bureaus both in field and "Special Duty" capacities in the following geographic areas of the city: Downtown, South Central, Mac Arthur Park, Highland Park, Mount Washington, Baldwin Hills, Crenshaw District, Hollywood, San Fernando Valley, and East Los Angeles. In addition to work responsibilities, Chief Bamattre has remained active in the community. In 1989, then a resident of newly incorporated Dana Point, Chief Bamattre was elected to the inaugural City Council. He later served as the city's Mayor in 1991. Chief Bamattre and his wife Liz were honored as joint "Outstanding Citizens of the Year - 1991" by the Dana Point Chamber of Commerce.

JEFF BOWMAN

Fire Chief Jeff Bowman, whose community was impacted by the Southern California fires, was appointed as Fire Chief of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department on May 6, 2002. Prior to his appointment, he was Fire Chief of Anaheim Fire Department. Chief Bowman joined the Anaheim Fire Department in 1973 as a Firefighter. He graduated Paramedic training in 1976 and was promoted to Captain in 1979. In 1983, he was promoted to Battalion Chief, followed by a move to Division Chief two years later. On December 9, 1986, he reached the top rung, that of Fire Chief. Professionally, Chief Bowman has been president of both the California Fire Chief's Association and the Orange County Fire Chief's Association. He is both Chairman of the Fire Apparatus Committee and the Ground Ladder Committee of the National Fire Protection Association, and was the IAFC's appointee to the Operation Life Safety Steering Committee. In Orange County, Chief Bowman is a board member of the Emergency Medical Care Committee, Paramedic.

JIM BRULTE

Senator Jim Brulte was elected Senate Republican Leader in April 2000. A 13-year veteran of the Legislature representing the 31st Senate District that was impacted by the October 2003 Fire Siege, Senator Brulte has developed a national reputation as a dynamic leader and a trusted advisor to President George W. Bush and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. During his tenure in the Legislature, Senator Brulte has focused his efforts on education, regulatory reform, reducing crime, and common sense legislation to improve California's business climate. Additionally, Senator Brulte has been successful in his efforts to provide additional tax relief for senior citizens, increase funding for public safety, and both increasing and equalizing funding for school districts throughout the state. Senator Brulte is respected for his keen understanding of fiscal issues and is the lead Republican negotiator on the state budget. In addition to his duties as Republican Leader, Senator Brulte serves as a member of the Governmental Organization, Business & Professions and Transportation committees. Senator Brulte enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1974 and was later honored as "Outstanding Airman of the Year" for the United States and its territories. Senator Brulte served on the staff of U.S. Senator S.I. Hayakawa and in the Reagan/Bush Administration.

YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE

Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, who represents the Second District, just completed her third rotation as Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. She brings to the Board more than 30 years of experience in a distinguished public service career at the national and state, as well as local government levels. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, she has focused on the needs and education of children, especially those who must be cared for in the County's foster child programs. She has actively advanced economic development in the Second District by promoting the establishment of businesses in areas that have been underserved, and by providing services to small businesses. As a member of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Board of Directors, she continues to push for development of the Crenshaw Corridor, and for a light and heavy rail system in addition to buses, believing that in the long run the bus service alone cannot hope to provide the public transportation services so desperately needed in Southern California.

RONNY J. COLEMAN

Fire Marshal Ronny J. Coleman (Ret.), who has served in the fire service for 43 years, is currently a consultant for Citygate Corporation, Principal in Fireforceone, a website for fire protection services, President Emeritus of the Fire Education & Training Network, and consultant to the International Code Council (ICC) and the Environmental Systems Research Institute. He formerly served as the California State Fire Marshal, Chief Deputy Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Operations Chief for the Costa Mesa Fire Department, Fire Chief for the Cities of Fullerton and San Clemente, and in both the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Park Service. Since retirement he has assisted the cities of Fremont and Mountain View as interim Fire Chief and is currently the Interim Fire Chief for the City of Santa Rosa. Fire Marshal Coleman has served on many professional organizations, as an officer or member, including: International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC); International Committee for Prevention and Control of Fire; California League of Cities; International Fire Code Institute (IFCI), including the IFCI Urban-Wildland Interface Code Committee; Conference of Building Officials; National Fire Protection Association (NFPA); Institution of Fire Engineers; U.S. Fire Administration Oversight Committee; Orange County Emergency Medical Services Committee; "America Burning" panel; and U.S. Fire Administration's "Stakeholder Committee. Fire Marshal Coleman, who has authored over 12 textbooks on fire and emergency related topics, is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

GREG COX

Supervisor Greg Cox joined the San Diego County Board of Supervisors in 1995 to represent the First District. His district extends from the Pacific Ocean to the Otay and San Miguel Mountains, and from Mission Bay to the U.S./Mexico international border and was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm. At the heart of the district lies the San Diego Bay. He represents the County on a number of governmental organizations, including the National Association of Counties (NACO) and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). He is also a Past-President of the League of California Cities. Before joining the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Cox worked in both the public and private sectors. He began his career as an educator in the Sweetwater Union High School District. In 1976, he was elected to the Chula Vista City Council and was elected mayor of that city in 1981. In 1990, Supervisor Cox left public office for the private sector, but returned in 1991, as the Director of Local Government in the Governor's Office of Planning and Research under Governor Pete Wilson.

SUSAN A. DAVIS

Congresswoman Susan Davis, who represents the 53rd Congressional District, was elected in 2000. Her district encompasses much of the heart of San Diego and while the Cedar Fire of 2003 did not enter her district, her constituents, being part of San Diego, reacted emotionally to the event and many suffered physically from the smoke and ash. Congresswoman Davis serves on the House Armed Services Committee and its Subcommittee on Readiness and Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconditional Threats and Capabilities; the Education and Workforce Committee and its Subcommittee on Select Education and Subcommittee on Education Reform; and the Veterans Affairs Committee and its Subcommittee on Benefits. Congresswoman Davis served six years in the California State Assembly where she chaired the Committee on Consumer Protection, Government Efficiency, and Economic Development. Prior to serving in the Assembly, she co-created and was the first Executive Director of the Aaron Price Fellows Program. From 1983 to 1992, Congresswoman Davis served on the San Diego City School Board – serving as its President for five years.

MARILYN DELGADO

Marilyn Delgado was appointed by Governor Gray Davis as the Director of Office of the American Indian Coordinator. She facilitates and coordinates the relationship between the State of California and the 109 federally recognized tribes. Prior to this, Ms. Delgado was appointed by Governor Gray Davis as the Tribal Government Liaison to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Before coming to CDSS, Ms. Delgado worked for the Department of General Services, Office of Small and Minority Business, where she provided assistance and direction to state agencies and the public on the Minority, Women and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (M/W/DVBE) program. Ms. Delgado has also worked for the California Highway Patrol, California Lottery and the Franchise Tax Board.

BOB DUTTON

Assemblyman Bob Dutton, whose district was heavily impacted by the Southern California fires, was elected to the 63rd Assembly District in November 2002. Prior to his election to the California Legislature, Assemblyman Dutton was twice elected to the Rancho Cucamonga City Council. Assemblyman Dutton has served in a leadership role on numerous civic and community organizations including the YMCA, the Community Foundation, the local Chamber of Commerce, the Children's Fund, and the Red Cross. He also has 30 years experience as a local business owner, being the founder and CEO of Dutton & Associates, a real estate investment and management firm in Rancho Cucamonga. Assemblyman Dutton received an honorable discharge from the California Air National Guard.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN

Senator Dianne Feinstein was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992. Prior to this, she served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and was Mayor of San Francisco. Senator Feinstein serves on the following committees: Judiciary, Appropriations, Energy and Natural Resources, Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rules and Administration Committee. In addition, Senator Feinstein serves on the following organizations: Vice-chair, National Dialogue on Cancer; Co-chair, Senate Cancer Coalition; Co-chair, Southwestern States Border Caucus; Co-chair, Western Senate Coalition; Co-chair, U.S.-Israel Security Caucus; Congressional Seaport Security Caucus; Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control; Congressional-Executive Commission on China; and Congressional Baltic Congress. Senator Feinstein's priorities

DIANNE FEINSTEIN (continued)

include: reauthorizing the assault weapons ban; combating identity theft and protecting personal information; enacting the National Cancer Act; increasing funding for CALFED to address California's growing water needs and help restore the environmentally threatened San Francisco Bay Delta; increasing fuel efficiency standards; establishing the Energy Market Oversight Act; enacting the Crime Victims Constitutional Amendment.

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN

Fire Chief Michael Freeman, whose community was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm of 2003, is the Fire Chief of the Los Angeles County Fire Department. The Department provides fire protection and emergency medical services to more than three million residents in 2,200 square miles and 57 cities within the County. Since 1989, Chief Freeman has successfully led the Department through numerous large-scale emergencies, including the 1993 brush fires, the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, and most recently, the 2003 Southern California Firestorm. Under his leadership, the Department has added specialized services including Urban Search and Rescue, Swiftwater Response Teams, and state-of-the-art Firehawk helicopters. Chief Freeman is Chairman of the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, member of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Urban Search and Rescue Advisory Committee; Chairman of the International Association of Fire Chiefs Terrorism Committee, mutual aid coordinator for the five county area in Southern California, and serves on the Department of Homeland Security Emergency Responder Senior Advisory Committee.

DAVID FUKUTOMI

David Fukutomi, Special Assistant to Undersecretary Michael Brown, was appointed to the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) position in January 1999 and is currently one of three FCOs within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IX, which serves the States of Arizona, Nevada, California, Hawaii, the US Territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, American Samoa, and the Marshall Islands. Mr. Fukutomi began his career in emergency management with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) in January 1994 following the Northridge Earthquake. Mr. Fukutomi joined FEMA in June of 1998 as the Public Assistance Officer and Deputy Disaster Recovery Manager of the Northridge Long Term Recovery Area Office (Northridge Earthquake), and serves as the FCO on the ERT-N Blue Team, one of three FEMA National Emergency Response Teams for catastrophic disasters and emergencies. Prior to entering emergency management, Mr. Fukutomi spent 12 years in the real estate development industry as a project manager and public affairs and political advisor.

LARRY HAMILTON

Larry Hamilton became Director of the Bureau of Land Management's National Office of Fire and Aviation in April 2000. Before that, Mr. Hamilton was the state director of the Montana and Dakotas, associate state director for the BLM's Eastern States office in Springfield, Virginia, and Director of the BLM's National Training Center in Phoenix, Arizona. He has also held positions in Washington, D.C., Alaska, Nevada, and Colorado. Mr. Hamilton has served on the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Management Board, and the executive steering committee for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project. Located in Boise, Idaho, the National Interagency Fire Center is a joint effort of the BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park

LARRY HAMILTON (continued)

Service, National Weather Service, and the Office of Aircraft Services. Together, they coordinate and support wildland fire and disaster operations. Mr. Hamilton's honors include the Department of Interior's Meritorious Service Award, the President's Award for Outstanding Leadership and the Golden Reel Award for Fish and Wildlife 2000.

DENNIS HANSBERGER

Supervisor Dennis Hansberger, who is currently Chairman of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors, was elected in 1995 and is serving in his second term representing the Third District, which was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm. Previously, Supervisor Hansberger was a member of the Board of Supervisors from 1972 to 1980, serving as Chairman from 1975 to 1977. Supervisor Hansberger has resided within the Third District his entire life and is associated with the following organizations, to name a few: California Association of Counties, Children's Network Policy Council, Homeless Coalition, Inland Empire Health Plan, Inland Valley Development Agency, Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, OmniTrans, San Bernardino Association of Governments, San Bernardino County Redevelopment Agency, San Bernardino International Airport Authority, Watershed Fire Council of Southern California, Redlands Rotary Club, Redlands Community Hospital, CSU, San Bernardino, and the San Bernardino County Museum.

DENNIS HOLLINGSWORTH

Senator Dennis Hollingsworth is the Senator for the 36th District of California, which includes portions of San Diego and Riverside Counties, which were greatly impacted by the Cedar Firestorm of 2003. Senator Hollingsworth was elected to the California State Senate in November of 2002, after serving one term as the Assemblyman for the 66th District. Soon after being sworn into office, the freshman was tapped to serve as Senate Republican Caucus Whip. Senator Hollingsworth serves as Vice Chairman of the Senate Banking, Commerce and International Trade Committee, and Vice Chairman of the Housing and Community Development Committee. He is also a member of the committees on Agriculture and Water Resources, Local Government and the committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife. Prior to serving in the Legislature, Senator Hollingsworth was a business owner and Legislative Director for the Riverside County Farm Bureau. His work made him a nationally recognized leader in the defense of private property rights and he frequently testified before Congress on property rights issues such as the need for reform of the Endangered Species Act. An avid outdoorsman and conservationist, Senator Hollingsworth is past chairman of the state organization of Quail Unlimited, Inc.

CHRISTINE KEHOE

Christine Kehoe was elected to the State Assembly in November 2000 to represent the 76th Assembly District, which was effected by the Cedar Fire 2003. She previously served as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Assembly and served on the California Coastal Commission. Assemblymember Kehoe currently is Chair the Assembly's Select Committee on Park and River Restoration that led to the creation of the San Diego River Conservancy. While a member of the San Diego City Council from 1993 to 2000, she provided leadership and voted to support the establishment of the Regional Public Safety Academy, which provides firefighting and life rescue training for San Diego's firefighters and paramedics. She established city policy that called for the San Diego Fire Department to receive its fair share of City revenues for fire

CHRISTINE KEHOE (continued)

equipment and supplies. Ms. Kehoe contributed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from her council district to support the building and maintaining of fire stations in the city's disadvantaged neighborhoods. She provided support to ensure working men and women of the City's Fire Department received salary and benefits comparable to other major cities in California. She led the fight to secure State funds for City fire personnel to acquire wildland boots to use during brush and canyon fires. She serves on the Assembly Committees of Transportation; Water, Parks and Wildlife; Housing and Community Development; Veterans Affairs; and Public Employees, Retirement and Social Security, and Rules.

JAY LA SUER

Assemblyman Jay La Suer was elected to the California Assembly in November 2000 and represents the 77th District, which encompasses the East County Area of San Diego and was greatly impacted by the Cedar Fire of October 2003. Assemblyman La Suer served in the United States Army's 101st Airborne Division until his honorable discharge in 1961.

Assemblyman La Suer joined the San Diego Police Department and later joined the San Diego County Sheriff's Department in 1970, where he advanced through the ranks and retired in 1994 as Undersheriff. During his 25 years with the Sheriff's Department, he attended and graduated from the FBI National Academy, and also earned a Lifetime Teaching Credential from the California Community College System. He has taught at Grossmont Community College, Miramar Community College and National University.

JERRY LEWIS

Congressman Jerry Lewis, whose 41st Congressional District of Southern California, including much of San Bernardino County and a portion of Riverside County was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm, is a lifelong resident of San Bernardino County and 30-year owner of a life insurance business. A member of Congress since 1978, Congressman Lewis is one of the most senior members of the House Appropriations Committee and is chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, the panel with jurisdiction over all national security matters. From 1996-2001, Congressman Lewis served as Chairman of the House GOP California delegation, and Co-Chair of the entire 52-member delegation. Prior to his election to Congress, Congressman Lewis served in the California State Legislature. He was the lead author on legislation establishing the South Coast Air Quality Management District in Southern California, recognized as the leading regional air quality board in the United States. Lewis is also the author of the Child Development Act of 1972, which has since become a national model for innovative childcare. Additionally, he sponsored legislation placing the "Newsman's Shield Law" in the California State Constitution.

RICK MARTINEZ

Fire Chief Rick Martinez was appointed as the Chief Deputy Director to the California Office of Homeland Security in July 2003. He is responsible for assisting in security efforts for all state agencies in terrorism-related activities and for coordinating these activities with local agencies. Additionally, the Office of Homeland Security advises the Governor on all terrorism related issues and is the point of contact for the Federal Department of Homeland Security. Chief Martinez has served as the Fire Chief for the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District since October 1995 and has worked almost 30 years as a member of the Fire Service in Sacramento. He was instrumental in the establishment and management of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, which

RICK MARTINEZ (continued)

which responded to the Murrah Federal Building bombing in Oklahoma City in April 1995, served as the Incident Support Team Leader at the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 and also as the Incident Support Team Leader at the 2002 Salt Lake Olympics. Chief Martinez currently serves as member of the FEMA Working Group on Urban Search and Rescue management.

WILLIAM J. MCCAMMON

Fire Chief William J. McCammon is the Fire Chief of the Alameda County Fire Department (ACFD). He began his fire service career working for the Dublin San Ramon Services District Fire Department and then moved to the San Leandro Fire Department (SLFD). During his 14 years with the SLFD, he held the ranks of Firefighter, Engineer, Captain, Battalion Chief, and Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal. When Alameda County consolidated into the ACFD, Chief McCammon became the first Fire Chief of the newly formed department in 1993. The Department has doubled in size with the addition of contracts for service with the City of San Leandro, the City of Dublin, and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Chief McCammon implemented a water rescue, heavy rescue and a Hazmat Response Team serving the entire county, and the ambulance contract for county-wide services which provides paramedics on all first due fire engines. He is currently leading the efforts to create two regional dispatch centers within the county. Chief McCammon is involved in the following organizations: current President of the California Fire Chiefs Association, Governor's Emergency Response Training Advisory Committee, Board member on FIRESCOPE, Treasurer of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, Harvard University Fellow of the Executive Development Program for senior governmental officials, and served as the President of RotaCare of the Bay Area.

ED MCORMOND

Fire Chief Ed McOrmond is the Fire Chief for the Pechanga Fire Department of the Pechanga Tribal Council, Band of Luiseno Indians. Prior to this appointment, he spent the last 25 years in the Fire Service in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties as Operations and Planning Section Chief in the State's CDF Incident Command Teams. Chief McOrmond continues to work closely with the Southwest Riverside County FireSafe Council and is currently serving on the Riverside County Fire Chief Association, the National Native American Fire Chiefs Association, California Tribal Nations Emergency Management Council and the Southern California Natural Indian Resources Consortium. He has served as training liaison between the Department and Inland Valley Regional Medical Center in training drills in the event of disasters, chaired an all-volunteer "Emergency Services Committee" which was instrumental in educating the community about the benefits of staffing fire engines with paramedic firefighters, and ultimately resulted in the staffing of Paramedic Firefighters in southwestern Riverside County.

JUDY MIKELS

Supervisor Judy Mikels was elected to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors in November 1994. Her district, which includes Simi Valley and Moorpark and several unincorporated communities in Eastern Ventura County, was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm. Prior to her election to the Board, Supervisor Mikels was on the Simi Valley City Council and Simi Valley Planning Commission. Supervisor Mikels was a small business owner, member of the Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce and Moorpark Chamber of Commerce. Her community involvement includes: RDP-21 (Support group for Naval Base Ventura County); Ventura

JUDY MIKELS (continued)

County Air Pollution Control District, Board of Retirement; and Treasury Oversight Committee. Supervisor Mikels is also affiliated with the following organizations: Ventura County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and Justice Policy Council; Juvenile Detention Facility Steering Committee; Ventura County Medical Oversight Committee and Medical Resource Foundation; Simi Valley Civic Center Authority; Simi Valley Cultural Association; Simi Valley Unified School District Women's History Hall of Fame; Moorpark College Foundation; Southwest Defense Alliance; Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee; California Council of Governments; Southern California Association of Governments; and National Association of Regional Councils.

DICK MURPHY

Mayor Dick Murphy, whose city was impacted by the Cedar Fire, took the oath as Mayor of San Diego in December 2000. Although Mayor Murphy previously served one term on the San Diego City Council from 1981 to 1985, most of his career has been spent as an attorney and a judge. Mayor Murphy served as an officer in the U.S. Army, as the San Diego Marketing Director for Bank of America, and as an attorney at the law firm of Luce, Forward, Hamilton & Scripps. In 1985, he was appointed Municipal Court Judge by Governor George Deukmejian. In 1989, the Governor elevated him to Superior Court Judge where he presided over hundreds of complex criminal and civil trials. When Mayor Murphy served on the San Diego City Council, he chaired the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force, helping to create San Diego's largest park, and the Metropolitan Transit Development Board. As Mayor, his goals are, in part, to establish an ethics commission, reduce traffic congestion, clean up our beaches and bays, restructure regional government/construct an airport, complete the ballpark and build a library system.

CHIP PRATHER

Fire Chief Chip Prather, whose community was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm, became Fire Chief for the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) in October 1997. The OCFA serves 22 cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County, with a population of more than 1,300,000, 60 fire stations and 1,300 firefighters, reserves and professional staff. Chief Prather currently serves on the State Strategic Committee on Terrorism, Orange County Emergency Council, Chairs the Orange County Emergency Operational Area Council, Fire Scope Board of Directors and Co-chairs an Orange County Joint Law/Fire/Health anti-terrorism advisory committee. In 2002, Chief Prather was appointed by Governor Davis to the State Emergency Council. Chief Prather is the Co-chairman of the Prevent Child Abuse Orange County, serves as a member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board and the Trauma Intervention Program Advisory Board. Chief Prather is a recipient of the Boy Scouts Spurgeon Award 2000, and in 2002 was selected as the Fire Chief of the Year by the California Fire Chiefs Association. Chief Prather is a member of the following organizations: Orange County Chambers of Commerce, International Association of Fire Chiefs, Metropolitan Fire Chiefs' Association, California Fire Chiefs' Association, California State Firefighters' Association, the Orange County Fire Chiefs' Association and the National Fire Protection Association.

JEFF SEDIVEC

Jeff Sedivec has been the President of the California State Firefighters' Association (CSFA) since 1994. CSFA is the oldest and largest firefighter association in California, representing over 29,000 firefighters and emergency medical services personnel and sponsoring landmark legislation protecting firefighters and the general public. Mr. Sedivec started his 24 year long career in Fire/EMS in 1978 as an emergency medical technician (EMT) and worked his way up to firefighter/paramedic at the Santa Ana Fire Department (SAFD) in Orange County California. Mr. Sedivec set up joint fire behavior studies with the city of Santa Ana and the NIST, involving live burn testing and its relation to overcrowded residences. He also served on SAFD's apparatus committee and was in charge of setting up specifications for medic vans, rescues and utility vehicles. Mr. Sedivec also worked as a CART (Championship Auto Racing Team) racetrack medic for the Long Beach Grand Prix, in addition to managing a small community non-emergency ambulance company. In 1998 Sedivec retired from the SAFD.

NELL SOTO

Senator Nell Soto was elected to the Assembly in 1998 and served one term before winning a special election in March 2000 to represent the 32nd Senatorial District. The 32nd Senatorial District spans much of the Inland Empire, and was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm. Among Senator Soto's top legislative priorities are education, child safety, health care, groundwater quality and public infrastructure. Senator Soto chairs the Senate Committee on Public Employment and Retirement, as well as the Select Committee on Perchlorate Contamination and the Select Committee on Urban Economic Development. Prior to her arrival in the State Legislature, Senator Soto served 12 years on the Pomona City Council. Under her leadership, satellite police stations and the Equestrian Patrol Unit for downtown streets were created. She also championed the zero tolerance policy for graffiti and the removal of gang members from city parks, including securing Community Development Block Grant funds to provide jobs for low-income youth. The first woman elected from the San Gabriel Valley to the powerful South Coast Air Quality Management District, Senator Soto established a reputation as a problem solver, who worked effectively with environmentalists, industry and community leaders. She is credited with opening the regulatory process to all affected parties and helping to streamline the compliance process.

ANDREA TUTTLE

Andrea Tuttle has served as Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) since March 1999. CDF provides protection to 31 million acres of wildlands and wildland-urban interface, as well as fire, medical and rescue services through agreements with over 100 local agencies. The fire mission is directly integrated with the department's forest and fuels management responsibilities in implementing the California Fire Plan, supporting Fire Safe Councils and fuels management projects, regulating commercial timber harvesting on seven million acres of private forestlands, providing forest stewardship assistance, maintaining the state's fire, forest and rangeland data base, and providing resource management policy analysis. CDF is a strong cooperater with the U.S. Forest Service and local fire districts throughout the state. Director Tuttle serves as Chair of the California Fire Alliance and is a member of the Fire Committee of the National Association of State Foresters, FIRESCOPE, and the Western States Forestry Leadership Coalition. Prior to service with CDF, she served as principal consultant to the Select Committee on Forest Resources in the California State Senate, member of the California Coastal Commission and Northcoast Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

JUDITH VALLES

Mayor Judith Valles was first elected to public office in March 1998 and is currently the Mayor of the City of San Bernardino, which was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm. Since becoming Mayor, she has established a training program for all employees, a healthy budget reserve, a citywide marketing team, the Educational Roundtable, restructured the Economic Development Agency, expanded the City's youth sports program, established the nation's model for child care, and after school programs for all middle schools, which included the first G.I.S. mapping program in the City and a community youth art project, and reduced crime by almost 50%. Mayor Valles is an active member and representative for numerous transportation boards and commissions including San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), San Bernardino Airport Authority, Inland Valley Development Agency, JPA-Water, and Omnitrans. She chairs and or sits on several sub-committees such as Major Projects, Plans and Programs and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA).

JIM VENABLE

Supervisor Jim Venable has been the Third District Supervisor in Riverside County since 1997. The Third District contains over 311,000 residents and covers the south and central portions of the county and was impacted by the Southern California Firestorm of 2003. Supervisor Venable has always been an innovator in both the aviation and racing fields. Learning how to fly at the age of 14, he started crop dusting at the age of 16, took over his father's Hemet Valley Flying Service business in 1960. This was the pioneer aerial fire fighting company and became the largest in the United States, with offices operating worldwide. Supervisor Venable also raced cars and pick-up trucks for over 20 years. He also built a nationally-known racing team in the Indy Car and NASCAR circuit and was the creator and designer of the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series. After these accomplishments in the private sector, Supervisor Venable decided to put his energies into public life and to work toward improving his community. He was elected to two terms to the Hemet City Council and was sworn into office as the Third District Supervisor for Riverside County in January 1997.

PETER F. VERGA

Peter Verga, who is the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, is the principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense. Prior to this, Mr. Verga served as the Special Assistant for Homeland Security and Director of the DOD Homeland Security Task Force. Mr. Verga is a retired U. S. Army officer with over 26 years of service in a variety of operations and management positions, including combat service in Vietnam from 1969 to 1971. He is a career member of the Senior Executive Service. Mr. Verga has served as the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Integration, as Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Support and as Deputy Director for Emergency Planning in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Prior to this, Mr. Verga served as the White House staff as Special Assistant to the Assistant to the President for Management and Administration, Deputy Director of the Office of Emergency Operations of the White House Military Office, and Operations Directorate of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Mr. Verga has been awarded the Defense Distinguished Civilian Service Award and the Defense Meritorious Civilian Service Award. During his military service his awards included, among others: the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, four Bronze Star medals, the Purple Heart, three Defense Meritorious Service Medals, 21 Air Medals, and the Presidential Service Badge.

JERRY T. WILLIAMS

Jerry T. Williams is currently employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service as Director, Fire and Aviation Management, Headquarters, Washington, DC. Mr. Williams began his Forest Service career 32 years ago as a firefighter. He was a smokejumper for seven years and served in other varied fire management positions at the Forest Service District, Forest, Regional, and National Office levels. In his four year assignment as Regional Director of Fire, Aviation and Air, Northern Region, Mr. Williams provided leadership to fire prevention, suppression, and prescribed fire. He was responsible for overall coordination of aviation and fire management activity among the National Forests of the Region. He has worked successfully with forestry and fire management organizations in the northern States, other Federal agencies, and fire management personnel of independent fire protection associations. This success contributes to his appointment of May 2001, as the National Fire and Aviation Management Director, Headquarters, Washington, DC. Most recently Williams co-led development of a national strategy "*Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-adapted Ecosystems: A Cohesive Strategy*" designed to protect communities, watersheds, and species at risk in fire-adapted ecosystems. The strategy is one of the foundation documents for the National Fire Plan.

BOB WOLF

Fire Captain Bob Wolf, who is currently Fire Captain with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), is a 22 year veteran of California's fire seasons and has worked his entire career with the CDF. During Mr. Wolf's career he has held assignments through out the State, from the Oregon border to the deserts of Riverside County. Mr. Wolf's current assignments include 6th District Vice President, California Professional Firefighters representing 30,000 professional Firefighters; President for CDF Firefighters Local 2881 representing the 5,906 Rank and File firefighting professionals of CDF, and President of CDF Firefighters Local 2881. Mr. Wolf is an active duty combat firefighter whose last assignment included duty at one of California's most active municipal fire houses in Riverside County. Mr. Wolf holds numerous Incident Command qualifications that include Finance, Operations and Planning. He is also a wildland fire structure protection specialist during major wild land fire incidents is a Training Officer for several regional fire academies.

KIM ZAGARIS

Fire Chief Kim Zagaris was appointed as State Fire Chief for the State of California, Governor's Office of Emergency Services on April 1, 2001. Prior to this appointment, he was the Assistant Fire Chief for Governor's Office of Emergency Services Region IV since 1987. Chief Zagaris, who started his career as a seasonal firefighter and promoted through the ranks to Fire Chief, has over 27 years of fire service and emergency management experience. Chief Zagaris, who serves as the Executive Coordinator for OES Fire and Rescue Services Advisory Committee/ FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, is responsible for managing the FIRESCOPE Program, California Incident Command Certification, the California Fire Assistance Agreement, State Assistance for Fire Equipment Program, and serves on numerous state and national committees, associations and program. In addition to being responsible for OES's fire resources, Chief Zagaris manages California's eight Local/State/National Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces in cooperation with those sponsoring agencies. He is also responsible for several major program elements including the day to day management of the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System, which includes over 900 fire agencies, some 62,000 professional and volunteer firefighters that operate approximately 6000 fire engines statewide.

PRESENTERS BEFORE THE GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION

Presenters are listed in the order in which they appeared before the Commission. Transcripts are available at the OES website, www.oes.ca.gov, or call Robert Gerber, BRFC Executive Secretary, at (916) 845-8700.

Hearing in Manhattan Beach, California November 13, 2003

THE HONORABLE GRAY DAVIS, Governor of California
DALLAS JONES, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
JIM WRIGHT, Deputy Director, Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Hearing in San Bernardino, California December 4, 2003

Dallas Jones, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
JIM WRIGHT, Deputy Director, Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
MAJOR GENERAL PAUL D. MONROE, Adjutant General, California Military Department
COLONEL JEFF DAVIS, Director of Operations, California Military Department
COLONEL DAN NELAN, Army Guard Operations, California Military Department
LT. COLONEL JOHN CROCKER, Air Guard Operations, California Military Department
RAY QUINTANAR, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region

Public Comments:

HAL MINTZ, Property Owner, Lake Arrowhead
CHRIS WALTERS, Disaster Service Coordinator, San Manuel Reservation

Hearing in Thousand Oaks, California January 7, 2004

DALLAS JONES, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
BOB ROPER, Chief, Ventura County Fire Department
P. MICHAEL FREEMAN, Chief, Los Angeles County Fire Department
WILLIAM R. BAMATTRE, Chief, Los Angeles City Fire Department
JOHN J. TENNANT, State Fire Marshal
DAVE NEFF, Deputy Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
RAY QUINTANAR, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region
BRUCE TURBEVILLE, Chairman, California Fire Safe Council, Inc. and California Fire Alliance

Hearing in Thousand Oaks, California (continued)

PHIL AUNE, Vice President of Public Resources, California Forestry Association

RUSS JOHNSON, Public Safety Industry Manager, ESRI—Geographic Information System

GREG GREENWOOD, Deputy Assistant Secretary, California Resources Agency

Public Comments:

GARY TOKLE, Assistant Vice President, Public Fire Protection, National Fire Protection Association

ANNE HOFFMAN, President, Land Use Preservation Defense Fund

TERESA JORDAN, Simi Valley resident

Hearing in San Diego, California

January 21, 2004

ANDREA TUTTLE, Director, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

JIM WRIGHT, Deputy Director, Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

RAY QUINTANAR, Director, Fire and Aviation Management, U.S.D.A. Forest Service,
Pacific Southwest Region

R. LAMONT EWELL, Assistant City Manager, City of San Diego

CHANDRA WALLER, San Diego County Public Works Department

DAN TERRY, President, California Professional Fire Fighters

KELLY ZOMBRO, Battalion Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

LT. JOHN HANLEY, President, Fire Fighters Union

FRED BURRIS, Fire Captain, Ventura County Fire Department

DALLAS JONES, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services

PETER VERGA, Assistant Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense

COLONEL THOMAS L. LACROSSE, U.S. Army, Director, Civil Support, Office of the Assistant
Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense

COLONEL JEFF DAVIS, Director of Operations, California Military Department

ED McORMOND, Fire Chief, Pechanga Fire Department, Southern California Natural Indian
Resources Consortium

CHRIS WALTERS, Disaster Service Coordinator, San Manuel Reservation

STEVEN FILLMORE, Fuels Management Specialist, Southern California Agency of the Bureau of
Indian Affairs

Public Comments:

MIKE ROGERS, Consultant, formerly employed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service

TOM GARDNER, Emergency Command Center Captain, Cedar Fire

GEORGE COURSER, Hidden Valley resident

Hearing in Riverside, California February 5, 2004

DALLAS JONES, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
DON ROOT, Deputy Chief, Telecommunications Branch, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
MIKE WINGATE, Communications Specialist, U.S.D.A. Forest Service
DENNIS HULBERT, Regional Aviation Officer, U.S.D.A. Forest Service
GLEN CRAIG, Executive Director, California Alliance for Public Safety Communications
DARRELL JOBES, Fire Chief, East County Fire Department
CURT MUNRO, Manager, San Diego/Imperial County Regional Communication System
TOM TISDALE, Fire Chief, Riverside County
TOM STRICKLAND, U.S. Navy
TAG GAINES, GT Equipment Services
KEVIN O'MEARA, Battalion Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
KIM ZAGARIS, Chief, FIRESCOPE Programs, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
ROBERT PRAYTOR, Deputy Chief, FIRESCOPE Programs, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
LT. COLONEL JOHN CROCKER, Air Guard Operations, California Military Department
DR. PHILIP RIGGAN, Scientist, Forest Fire Laboratory, U.S.D.A. Forest Service
GARY GILBERT, Supervisor, Madera County and CSAC Representative
JOHN P. CHISHOLM, Engineer/Inventor
LEONARD KIRK, University of Alaska

Public Comments:

JOHN SORENSON, CEO, Seagull Technology
ROBERT ROY, Los Angeles Fire Department (Ret.)

Hearing in Costa Mesa, California February 19, 2004

TONY CIGNARALE, Chief, Consumer Services Division, California Department of Insurance
JERRY DAVIES, Director of Communications, Personal Insurance Federation of California
BRAD REMP, Vice President, California Building Officials
LARRY ROBERTS, Senior Director, American Eurocopter
DALLAS JONES, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services
JIM WRIGHT, Deputy Director, Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
DAVE EBERT, Chief, Training and Education Program, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
RON RALEY, Deputy Director, Fire and Aviation Management, U.S.D.A. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region
JEFF RUBIN, Chief, Disaster Medical Services Division, Emergency Medical Services Authority

Hearing in Costa Mesa, California (continued)

RICHARD WATSON, Director, Emergency Medical Services Authority

PRASHANT DOSHI, West Coast Region Manager, Homeland One, PRIMEDIA Workplace Learning

KEITH TILL, City Manager, Santee, California League of Cities Representative

RUSS TINGLEY, Fire Chief, Hermosa Beach, California League of Cities Representative

RON COLEMAN, State Fire Marshal (Ret.), Interim Chief, City of Santa Rosa

DENNIS MARSH, Chair, Training and Education Committee, California State Firefighters Association; Engineer, Laguna Beach Fire Department

CAROLL WILLS, Communications Director, California Professional Firefighters

Public Comments:

TONY MORRIS, Aerial Fire Protection Associates

BOB CAVAGE, President, Aerial Fire Protection Associates

DON OAKS, Land Use and Building Standards

ROB CLARK, Thermagel

PAUL VANDEVENTER, Owner, Community Partners In Los Angeles

STEPHEN BERWICK, Forestry Professor

PETER ROMERO, Licensed Public Insurance Adjuster

JANA MILLER, San Antonio Heights resident

**CALIFORNIA FIRE SIEGE 2003
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PREVENTION
CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

October 21 – November 7, 2003

739,597 total acres have burned in Southern California as a result of the Fire Siege

At the height of the fires 15,631 personnel were assigned to fires in California.

3,631 residential structures, 36 commercial properties, 1,169 outbuildings destroyed.

24 fatalities, including 1 firefighter, 246 injuries.

Monday, October 20, 2003

Total Vegetation Fire in the State: 32 Total Acres Burned: 20

Tuesday, October 21, 2003

Weather Report, October 21, 2003

Northern Region

***** MODERATE TO STRONG NORTHEAST TO EAST WINDS EXPECTED TO DEVELOP THURSDAY AND LAST WELL INTO THE WEEKEND *****

A strong high-pressure ridge will continue to dominate the weather pattern through the weekend at least. A low-pressure trough will move out of the Gulf of Alaska and roll over the ridge Wednesday. The ridge will rebound strongly after the trough passes, and this will generate some north to northeast winds across Northern California late Thursday into Sunday morning. The southern edge of the trough will reach into the very northern areas for a chance of some light showers there late Wednesday through early Thursday; otherwise the weather will continue to be dry into the foreseeable future.

Southern Region

A strong ridge of high pressure over the southwestern states will maintain warm temperatures and light winds today. Humidity will also continue to be very low today, except over the coastal areas. The ridge of high pressure will weaken as a weak pacific trough moves through Northern California bringing a little cooler temperatures and a little higher humidity Wednesday and Thursday. Another ridge of high pressure will build off the California coast Friday through the weekend bringing warm temperatures and low humidity to most of the region. There will also be locally gusty northeast winds over the mountains, deserts, and below some canyons and passes Thursday night through the weekend.

Tuesday, October 21, 2003

- **12:01 pm - Roblar 2 Fire** starts near Camp Pendleton.
- **1:39 pm** - Northern Region CDF staffs all engines, crews, and dozers 24 hours a day. Lookouts are staffed in "Wind prone areas" due to North wind event.
- **2:22 pm - Grand Prix Fire** starts near Rancho Cucamonga.
- **4:12 pm - Pass Fire** starts near Reche Canyon.
- **5:29 pm** - CDF San Diego Unit initiates Select Call for all DC's, BC's to remain on duty, coverage of a local CWN copter N215KA, and covers all crews 24 hours per day.
- **7:00 pm** - San Diego, San Bernardino and Riverside Units staff Camp and Reserve engines at 3-person staffing.
- **8:30 pm** - Roblar 2 Fire extreme fire behavior.

Wednesday, October 22, 2003

- **8:00 am** - Southern Region Units staff all Camp and Reserve engines at 3-0 staffing, LA County Strike Team of engines stage at Santa Clarita, Orange County staffs second helicopter and forms a Type 3 Strike Team, Ventura forms a Task Force of 3 Type 3 engines and 1 Watertender.
- **12:18 pm** - Weather reported as gusty southwest winds for areas east of the Cascade/Sierra Crest, and moderate to strong northeast to east winds in the Northern Region. High pressure continues over the South Region with light winds and lower humidity.

Thursday, October 23, 2003

- **11:00 am** - Weather reports indicate Northern Region with northwest to northeast winds with low humidity and poor overnight humidity recovery. Weather for the Southern Region shows the advent of strong and gusty northeast winds with very low humidity and above normal temperatures.
- **3:30 pm - Piru Fire** starts near the community of Ojai.
- **5:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire reports erratic fire behavior. Piru Fire reports extreme fire behavior.
- **Palermo Fire** - Butte County

Friday, October 24, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports closure of the Interstate 15 and 210 freeways. Extreme fire behavior with spotting and torching.
- **7:44** - Days off cancelled for all firefighting personnel in Southern Region.
- **10:01 am - Olinda Fire** starts in Shasta County. Contained at 50 acres.
- **11:00** - Weather report for the Northern Region is moderate to strong northeast winds with low humidity and poor overnight humidity recovery. The Southern Region will experience strong and gusty northeast winds, strongest and more widespread Saturday, 10/25 through Sunday night 10/26, with very low humidity and above normal temperatures.
- **11:00 am** - Pass Fire is 100% contained, 2,387 acres.
- **11:27 am** - All CDF airbases staffed by 0800 with all Air tankers, Air-Tactical, and Helicopters.

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- **1:43 pm - Verdale Fire** starts near the City of Santa Clarita.
 - **3:00 pm – Ranco 8 Fires** starts (Tehama County). Contained at 11 acres.
 - **3:05 pm – Happy Fire** (Santa Barbara County) starts. Contained at 250 acres.
 - **4:02 pm** - Verdale Fire reports evacuations.
 - **5:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire- CWN helicopter force landed for mechanical problems and was later destroyed when the fire overran the area where it has been grounded.

Saturday, October 25, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports widespread mandatory evacuations in Rancho Cucamonga.
- **9:17 am - Old Fire** starts near the City of San Bernardino
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region with moderate to strong northeast winds with low humidity and poor overnight humidity recovery. The Southern Region is now experiencing the Santa Ana wind conditions over all fire areas, with strong and gusty northeast winds through Monday, 10/27.
- **11:57 am** - Old Fire reports fire conditions are extreme and the fire is predominantly wind driven with spotting. 5000 residences are currently threatened.
- **12:23 pm** - All days off cancelled for all firefighting personnel in the Northern Region
- **2:41 pm – Spring #3 Fire (Napa County) starts. Contained at 20 acres.**
- **5:10 pm** – 8 California National Guard helicopters requested by CDF through OES to the California National Guard for assignment to Southern California fires.
- **5:37 pm - Cedar Fire** starts near the community of Santee.
- **6:00 pm** - Continued extreme fire behavior in Red Flag conditions
- **6:05 pm** - Verdale Fire reports fire activity extreme with the surfacing of the Santa Ana winds, (20 to 30 mph, with gusts to 45) producing spotting y to 1 mile ahead of the main fire, and the consumption of 2,000 to 3,000 acres per hour.
- **6:30 pm - Old Fire reports due to high winds that all fixed wing aircraft and helicopters were grounded due to high winds; in excess of 35 mph.** Thousands are being evacuated from the City of San Bernardino.
- **2:50 pm - Simi Fire** starts near the City of Moor Park.
- **9:58 pm** – 2 CA Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (MAFFS) requested by CDF through OES to the California National Guard.

Sunday, October 26, 2003

- **00:35 am** - The Governor of the State of California issues a proclamation claiming a “State of Emergency” in San Bernardino and Ventura counties.
- **1:30 am - Paradise Fire** starts near the community of Valley Center.
- **3:00 am** - Cedar Fire reports current weather over the incident is reporting winds out of the East at 30 to 45 mph, with gusts to 75, temperature 63 degrees, with Relative Humidity of 10%.
- **5:00 am** - Paradise Fire reports 1,600 acres and 0% contained. 0500 hr weather reports 80 degrees and Relative humidity of 11%, and East winds of 20 to 25 mph, with gusts to 35 mph.
- **5:30 am** - Piru Fire reports 1,253 acres and 85% contained. Incident Commander anticipates containment of this fire within this burning period.
- **6:00 am** - Verdale Fire reports experiencing easterly winds of 25 to 35 mph, with gusts to 45.

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- **6:00 am** - Old Fire reports “explosive” fire behavior through drought/disease stressed timber
 - **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports winds in excess of 45 to 50 mph have been reported. Extreme fire behavior with major spotting and torching.
 - **6:00 am** - Simi Fire reports suppression efforts are drastically limited due to initial attack resources primarily conducting structure protection.
 - **7:18 am** – **Otay/Mine Fire** starts near the city of Otay.
 - **8:00 am** – 5 CA CNG helicopter go to Los Alamitos
 - **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region to begin the decrease of Northeast to East winds, however, strong North to Northeast winds possible again by mid week. The Southern Region is experiencing locally strong and gusty northeast winds through Monday over southern California mountains and valleys.
 - **2 California MAFFS unable to fly due to wind and smoke.**
 - **10:57 am** – **Higgins Fire** (Santa Clara) starts. Contained at 30 acres
 - **11:45 am** - **Mountain Fire** starts near the community of Sage
 - **1:05 pm** – **Wellman Fire starts.**
 - **1:30 pm** - Piru Fire reports fire behavior is extreme with temperatures in the mid 90’s, strong northeast to East winds and relative humidity at 4%.
 - **1:30 pm** - Paradise Fire reports “extreme Santa Ana winds driven fire”.
 - **1:59 pm** - **Padua Fire** is established from the Grand Prix. The Grand Prix fire located in L.A. County will be managed separately but in coordination with Grand Prix Fire management.
 - **2:00 pm** – **Paltina Fire** in Shasta County starts. Contained at 53 acres
 - **2:22 pm** – **Centerville Fire** in Butte County starts. Contained at 100 acres
 - **2:25 pm** - Mine Fire reports fire winds at 50 to 60 mph from the East.
 - **3:36 pm** – **Xowannutuk/Tuk Fire** starts within the Redwoods Nat. Park in Humboldt County.
 - **5:00 pm** - Chief James Wright talks to Ray Quintanar, USFS Region 5, requesting additional national resources federal firefighting resources being ordered to help augment the firefighting resources already committed to major fires in Southern California. This included engines, crews, and military Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS).

Monday, October 27, 2003

- **2:18 am** – **Dersch Fire (Shasta County) starts. Contained at 23 acres**
- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports Santa Ana winds, high temperatures, low humidity with minimal nighttime recovery continue to hamper firefighting efforts.
- **8:00 am** - Northern Region Units staff all “B” engines 4-0 due to critical drawdown levels.
- **9:03 am** – **Cuesta Fire** (San Luis Obispo County) starts. Contained at 238 acres
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region with Red Flag warnings extended through Tuesday morning for the higher terrain of interior Northern California including the west slopes of the Northern Sierras. Southern Regions will experience somewhat lighter winds through Tuesday morning, ending Tuesday evening.
- **11:18 am** - No more air tankers available in California. 5 unfilled requests sent by United States Forest Service (USFS) at South Ops, to the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) in Boise.

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- **12:18 am** - Cedar fire reports that winds are switching between Santa Ana winds and normal on shore winds, which is pushing the fire in all directions.
 - **2:27 pm** – **West Fire** starts in Shasta County. Contained at 85 acres
 - **5:00 pm** – 2 more CA CNG helicopters arrive at Los Alamitos
 - **6:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire reports Red Flag conditions have been lifted over the fire area.
 - **7:00 pm** - 3 Helicopters requested from the Nevada National Guard through State-to-State agreement.
 - **8:00 pm** – **Wellman Fire** contained at 100 acres.
 - **8:05 pm** - Cedar Fire reports continued extreme fire behavior. Fire is spotting over major highways and roads. Observed flame lengths of 200 feet. Prevailing east winds have been lighter than predicted, though fire continues to generate thermal convections that push the fire in various directions.
 - **11:30 pm** - **Whitmore Fire**, in Shasta County, starts.

Tuesday, October 28, 2003

- **Border Fire** – San Diego County
- **6:00 am** - Old Fire reports due to the drought and disease stressed timber of the San Bernardino Forest and the extreme fire behavior is making it difficult to protect anything in the path of the fire.
- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports fire continues to make significant runs, mainly slope driven. This is the first report of demobilization of excess Type 1 Engine Strike Teams to other fires. Demob will begin this morning.
- **6:00 am** - Piru Fire reports fire is progressing northward into heavier fuels that have not burned in over 30 years. Fire spread is also moving into the Santa Paula Valley threatening several hundred residences and valuable agricultural properties.
- **6:00 am** - Mountain Fire reports winds are expected to transition back to on shore at 5 to 9 mph, with significant reduction in fire behavior.
- **6:30 am** - Verdale Fire contained at 8,650 acres
Massive demobilization and reassignments of resource will take place this morning. Resources will be reassigned. The incident will transition back to the local Battalion by 0800 hrs this morning.
- **6:30 am** - Paradise Fire reports fire continued to make significant runs through the night.
- **7:40 am** - Cedar Fire reports weather forecasts still predict winds in excess of 20 mph, and single digit relative humidity.
- **9:00 am** - Simi Fire reports fire is experiencing drastically diminishing winds, less than 3 mph.
- **10:57 am** - Shasta-Trinity Unit submits to OES their Initial Request for Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) on the Whitmore Fire. Initial estimates of size state 2000 acres, Red Flag conditions, and 150 homes threatened.
- **11:00 am** - California Wildland Incident Briefing reports weather for the Northern Region as having Red Flag warnings through Tuesday morning for Napa and for gusty northeast winds and very low relative humidity values for the upper slopes and ridge tops of Mendocino, Trinity, Humboldt and the eastern half of Del Norte Counties. Weather for the Southern Region reports lighter offshore winds this morning over the mountains and in the valleys below canyons and passes, with light

onshore winds in the afternoon. Continued very low humidity and low humidity recovery along with above normal temperatures. Stronger onshore winds Wednesday afternoon with cooler temperatures and slightly higher humidity. Strong and gusty southwest to west winds Wednesday afternoon through Thursday with low humidity.

- **1:16 pm – Wonder Fire** (Shasta County) starts. Contained at 15 acres.
- **2:00 pm** – Last CNG helicopter arrives at Los Alamitos
- **2:00 pm** - Three federal MAFFS arrive at Channel Isles. Being prepped.
- **3:00 pm** – 3 NNG helicopters arrive at Los Alamitos
- **4:00 pm- Reported windshield damage on six federal air tankers in Southern California because of flying debris in smoke columns resulting in grounded aircraft.**
- **5:00 pm** - Oregon National Guard helicopters requested through State-to-State agreement. 1 will be assigned to the Shasta-Trinity Unit to augment initial attack resources, due activity in Northern California.
- Three federal MAFFS arrive at Channel Isles with the two California National Guard MAFFS. Being prepped.
- **6:00 pm** - Simi Fire reports weather observed today are temperatures in the mid 60's, winds from the North at 5 mph, and humidities between 30 to 40%.
- **6:30 pm** - Cedar Fire reports fire continues to experience extremely low humidities and high temperatures, hampering firefighting efforts.
- **7:00 pm** - Mountain Fire reports fire behavior were winds transitioning back to on shore. Fire behavior was greatly reduced.
- **7:00 pm** - Paradise Fire reports fire is under an inversion. All aircraft unable to fly. The Cedar Fire influences fire spread.

Wednesday, October 29, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Mountain Fire reports good progress continues to be made aided by cooler temps, humidity of up to 50%, and light winds.
- **6:00 am** - Old Fire reports fire is still experiencing significant runs through disease/drought stressed timber.
- **6:00 am** - Piru Fire reports that recent weather changes contributed to decreased fire spread.
- **7:00 am** - Whitmore Fire reports winds are subsiding, and mop up and patrol efforts are underway.
- Three Nevada National Guard ships at Los Alamitos for flight training and outfitting.
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region windy today, with much colder weather on the way tonight and Thursday. Weather for the Southern Region predicts light southwest to west winds in the morning, becoming stronger and gusty late morning and afternoon, with cooler temperatures. Some increase in humidity most areas, especially lower coastal areas.
- **11:20 am** - Offer of air support from British Columbia and Honduras.
- **12:30 pm - Engineer Steven Rucker dies** and three members of his crew injured when they were overrun by the Cedar Fire. Steven Rucker was a member of the Novato Fire Protection District.
- **12:30 pm** - CDF Chief of Aviation Management and USFS Region 5 Aviation Manager discuss utilization of three Navy helicopters at North Island. CDF is told that the

Forest Service was bringing in a team and setting up at Camp Pendleton. USFS will attempt to incorporate Navy ships into the federal operations through the military chain-of-command which is coordinating Mira Mar, Pendleton and North Island aviation assets.

- **1:00 pm** – 1 Oregon National Guard (ONG) helicopter arrives at Los Alamitos, training and outfitting. Available for assignment October 30.
- **4:00 pm** - Second Oregon National Guard (ONG) helicopter arrives at Redding.
- **4:00 pm** – 3 additional (Federal Activation) MAFFS to Channel Island. Will be available for assignment 30 October, arrived 1600 hours
- **5:00 pm** – 4 Washington National Guard (WNG) helicopters offered through State-to-State agreement.
- **6:00 pm** - Simi Fire reports fire made moderate to rapid runs caused by strong gusty winds from the south and the southwest. Fire made runs into the community of Stevenson Ranch requiring strong structure protection efforts. I-5 was closed for 3 hours due to a spot fire over the freeway, which was later contained.
- **6:00 pm** - Old Fire reports canyon and uphill runs observed with long range spotting. Crowning observed in all areas.
- **6:00 pm** - Padua Fire reports significant decrease in fire behavior due to favorable weather conditions. Temperatures lower 60's, Relative humidity, 60%, winds less than 10 mph.
- **6:00 pm** - Mountain Fire contained at 10,331 acres.
- **7:00 pm** - Cedar Fire reports continued extreme fire behavior today. Fire is spotting over major roads and highways, 200-foot flame lengths observed. West winds continue pushing fire to the east and northeast. The communities of Julian, Pine Hills, Cuyamaca, and Guatay are evacuated.
- **10:27 pm** - **Silverado Fire** starts near the City of St. Helena in Napa County.
- **11:08 pm** - **Cal Pine Fire** starts near the community of Geyserville in Sonoma County

Thursday, October 30, 2003

- **Ord Fire** - in Glen County
- **5:00 am** - **Silverado Fire** (Napa County) reports 85 acres and 100% contained.
- **5:30 am** - Cal Pine Fire reports fire as being wind driven in heavy fuels, with no access.
- **6:00 am** - Old Fire continues to move unimpeded during night operations. Coastal strata is moving into the area but has had little affect on fire behavior. Rapid uphill runs and spotting are occurring.
- **6:00 am** - Xowannutuk Fire (Tuk) reports fire behavior is reported as "minimal".
- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports weather over the fire is 50 degrees, winds south at 12 with gusts to 25 mph, humidity at 90%.
- **6:00 am** - Padua Fire reports getting ready to transition to a Type 3 team on 10/31/03 at 0600.
- **6:30 am** - Piru Fire reports that fire spread slowed because of increased line construction and increased relative humidities.
- **7:00 am** - **Whitmore Fire** (Shasta County) contained at 1,004 acres. West to Northwest wind event today. 12 to 17 mph with gusts to 25 mph expected.
- **7:00 am** - Cedar Fire reports fire weather continued to be extreme, with winds in excess of 30 mph.

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- **7:00 am** - Paradise Fire reports higher humidity and nighttime drizzle are assisting in slowing the fire's spread in some areas.
 - **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region as having a low-pressure trough over the area producing cool and humid conditions with isolated showers through Friday. Snow levels will be near 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Weather for the Southern Region shows a Pacific trough bringing cooler temperatures and much higher humidity through the middle of next week. Snow level will be around 6,000 feet in the south. Showers over most of the Region on Friday and Saturday.
 - **11:00 am** - 208 Military, State, Federal, and contracted air resources committed, includes 104 fixed-wing and 90 helicopters.
 - **Most fixed wing resources are grounded pending improved smoke/weather visibility.**
 - **11:00 am** - 3 additional (Federal Activation) MAFFS arrived at Channel Island. Available for assignment 30 October, 2003
 - **2:00 pm** - **Cal Pine Fire** (Sonoma County) reports 75 acres and 100% contained.
 - **2:02 pm** - All Washington National Guard resources cancelled by South Ops, due to weather changes and unable to utilize aircraft available.
 - **6:00 pm** - Old Fire reports moderation in weather that is enabling firefighters to begin direct line construction.
 - **6:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire reports all evacuation orders have been lifted. Fire growth expected to be greatly reduced over the next 48 hours due to the incoming weather pattern.
 - **8:59 pm** - An accident investigation team was formed to report to CDF San Diego Unit Headquarters to investigate firefighter fatality on the Cedar Fire.

Friday, October 31, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Old Fire reports fire responding well to higher humidity and lower temperatures.
- **6:00 am** - Simi Fire reports fire rate of spread slowed considerably due to higher humidity with scattered showers overnight.
- **7:00 am** - Cedar Fire reports significant improvement in conditions, fire behavior and air quality, due to scattered showers.
- **7:00 am** - Paradise Fire reports much of the fire laid down during the night as a result of the marine layer and drizzle over the fire.
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region as having a low-pressure trough continuing to produce isolated to scattered rain and snow showers through midday Friday. Snow levels will be 4,000 to 5,000 feet. Weather for the Southern Region, a couple of Pacific troughs will maintain cool temperatures and high humidity through the middle of next week.
- **11:00 am** - Military Aircraft Status:
 - 8 MAFFS awaiting assignments
 - 7 CNG helicopters awaiting assignments; 3 CNG helicopters down for maintenance
 - 2 NNG 2 helicopters awaiting assignments; 1 NNG helicopter down for maintenance
 - 2 ONG helicopters awaiting assignments

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- **4:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire reports weather observations... Temperature, 40, Relative Humidity, 80 to 90%, winds westerly 8 to 15 mph
 - **5:00 pm** - 3 CNG helicopters assigned to the Simi Incident, 4 to the Paradise/Cedar Incidents, 4 to the Paradise/Cedar Incidents. 3 Nevada National Guard (NNG) helicopters assigned to the Paradise/Cedar Incidents.
 - **Poor visibility reported over most fires today with limit missions flown by aircraft.**
 - **7:21 pm** - Demobilization priorities are established.

Saturday, November 1, 2003

- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region as having another cold weather system with low snow levels on its way to Northern California. Weather for the Southern Region shows a series of pacific troughs will maintain cool temperatures and high humidity through next weekend. There will continue to be isolated showers over parts of the region today behind the first trough. Snow level will be around 4,000 feet.
- **11:00 am** - 8 MAFFS awaiting assignments
 - 6 CNG helicopters awaiting assignments; 3 CNG helicopters down for maintenance
 - Camp Pendleton - 5 USMC CH-53 Sea Stallion Helicopters available
- **2:00 pm** – 2 ONG helicopters released back to State of Oregon
- **2:47 pm** – **Bell Fire (Mendocino County) starts. Contained at 30 acres.**
- **4:00 pm** - Grand Prix Fire reports observed fire behavior shows periods of smoldering after widespread rain and snow over the area
- **4:45 pm** – 3 NNG helicopters released back to State of Nevada
- **6:00 pm** - Old Fire reports fire behavior has little to no open flame with less than 1-foot flame lengths. Stumps, dead trees, and heavily fueled islands continue to smoke.
- **7:00 pm** - Paradise Fire reports fire behavior shows smoldering and creeping with no significant runs.

Sunday, November 2, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Grand Prix Fire reports no fire growth is expected due to higher humidity, lower temperatures, and lighter winds over the area.
- **6:00 am** - Old Fire reports nighttime conditions would not support active surface fire.
- **7:00 am** - Paradise Fire reports 5 occasional light drizzle over the fire area.
- **8:00 am** – Simi Fire contained at 108,204 acres.
- **8:00 am** - 6 out of state MAFFS aircraft released and returned to home bases. The 2 California MAFFS aircraft are still staffed at Channel Island.
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region as having another cold low pressure trough dropping southward along the coast. This system will bring rain and snow to the area today with showers Monday. Snow levels will be 3000 to 4000 feet, and locally to 1500 feet in the extreme north. Weather for the Southern Region reports a pacific trough will maintain cool temperatures and fairly high humidity through next weekend.
- **11:00 am** - Military Aircraft Status:
 - 2 CA MAFFS awaiting assignments

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- 6 CNG helicopters awaiting assignments; 3 CNG helicopters down for maintenance
 - 3 NNG helicopters pending release
 - 2 ONG helicopters pending release
 - **1:00 pm** – 2 CA MAFFS released
 - **7:00 pm** - Old Fire, Grand Prix Fire, and Paradise Fire reports no significant incident activity.
 - **8:45 pm** - Cedar Fire reports minor flare- ups in the fire's interior.

Monday, November 3, 2003

- **8:00 am** – CDF cancellation of days off and annual approved vacations are rescinded
- **11:00 am** - Weather for the Northern Region as having another cold low-pressure trough is dropping southward along the coast. This system will bring rain and snow to the area today with showers Monday. Snow levels will be 3000 to 4000 feet, and locally to 1500 feet in the extreme north. Weather for the Southern Region reports a pacific trough will maintain cool temperatures and fairly high humidity through next weekend.
- **6:00 pm** - Old Fire Began demobilization and deactivation of Oak Glen Zone. Residents are returning to mountain communities on a community-by-community basis.

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

- **11:00 am** - Weather report for the Northern Region as having a northwesterly flow aloft will be bringing a weak weather system into the North Ops area later today and tonight. It will bring some light precipitation to NW California late today or tonight, with a lesser chance in areas farther south and east Wednesday morning. Weather for the Southern Region states: A pacific trough will maintain cool temperatures and fairly high humidity through the weekend. A couple of storms will bring periods of rain and high elevation snow.
 - Local government resources are being demobilized
- **6:00 pm- Cedar Fire** contained at 273,246 acres. Largest fire in the State's history.

Wednesday, November 5, 2003

- **6:00 am** - Simi Fire contained at 108,204 acres.
- **6:00 am** – Old Fire contained at 91,281 acres.
- **11:00 am** - Weather report for the Northern Region as having a northwesterly flow aloft will be bringing a weak weather system in to the North Ops area later today and tonight. It will bring some light precipitation to NW California late today or tonight, with a lesser chance in areas farther south and east Wednesday morning. Weather for the Southern Region states: A pacific trough will maintain cool temperatures and fairly high humidity through the weekend. There will be scattered showers over central California with a chance of showers over southern California Thursday. A couple of storms will bring periods of rain Thursday night through the weekend with one to two inches of rainfall over Central California.
 - Careful considerations given to formulating additional demobilization plans in order to ensure that an appropriate number of resources are available to respond as need on incidents.

**GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
2003 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRE SIEGE AFTER ACTION REPORT
PRELIMINARY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

INTRODUCTION

This document provides preliminary information on the 2003 Southern California Fire Siege. In California, as part of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), statute requires the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) to produce an After Action Report (AAR) within 120 days after each declared disaster. "This report shall review public safety response and disaster recovery activities." The supporting SEMS regulations require jurisdictions "declaring a local emergency for which the governor proclaims a state of emergency, and any state agency responding to that emergency shall complete and transmit an after action report to OES within ninety (90) days of the close of the incident period." Although the 2003 Southern California wildfires incident period officially closes on March 31, 2004, state agencies, local government and other stakeholders were requested to provide their AARs to OES by February 20, 2004. The purpose of this accelerated reporting requirement is two-fold: 1) to capture response efforts, lessons learned, and any recommendations before critical data is lost due to time, and 2) to ensure that information from the AAR process is accessible to the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission.

BACKGROUND

Beginning on October 21, 2003, southern California experienced the worst wildfire sieges in California's history. When the worst of the fires ended on November 5, 2003, there were 24 fatalities (one firefighter), 246 injuries, 3,631 structures destroyed and 739,597 acres blackened by 14 different fires in five counties. The response cost/damage estimate is over 2 billion dollars and required 15,631 personnel, including firefighters, law enforcement, administrative support and management staff, to assist with fire suppression efforts.

The catastrophic nature of these fires prompted Los Angeles, Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura counties to proclaim local emergencies. Governor Davis proclaimed a State of Emergency on October 26, 2003 for the counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura and requested a Presidential Declaration. President Bush issued a Presidential Declaration of Major Disaster for four of the five affected counties on October 27, 2003. Riverside County was added to the list of federally declared disasters on October 30, 2003.

The California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System brought together more resources than had ever been used in its 54-year history. This system effectively coordinated the response of approximately 5,480 personnel that staffed 1,160 local government fire engines and 102 OES fire engines. California's neighboring states, Nevada, Arizona, and Oregon, also provided vital support to the siege by sending in 120 additional fire engines and the accompanying staff.

Combined local, state, and federal resources totaled 15,631 personnel from the fire services and 1,898 fire engines. It exceeded the previous wildfire record set by the Wildland Fires of 1993.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

OES is continuing to prepare the comprehensive AAR on the 2003 Southern California Fire Siege. State agencies and operational areas (OAs) submitted their AARs using a Response Information Management System (RIMS) AAR form (original or modified versions). Over twenty state agencies were asked to complete this information. In addition, OES conducted fact-finding meetings with the impacted OAs during January 2004. OAs were given the option of using the fact-finding meeting (and supporting documentation) as their official AAR instead of completing the RIMS forms.

Preliminary Recommendations

The AAR process allowed OES to identify numerous recommendations for improving future responses to major incidents. Specific, itemized recommendations, which will subsequently become the basis for corrective actions, will be contained in detail in the comprehensive statewide AAR. Below are the preliminary findings and recommendations that fall into eight broad categories:

1. **Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS):** Most local governments and state agencies indicated that SEMS functioned well and helped them mount an effective response. Several agencies made specific recommendations to improve SEMS including: (1) capitalize upon existing SEMS strengths; (2) implement proposed modifications or refinements to SEMS based protocols and procedures; (3) modify Response Information Management System (RIMS) to make it more user friendly; (4) conduct SEMS training on a continuous basis to ensure all potential responders have the appropriate training; (5) encourage use of SEMS functions in the Disaster Field Office (DFO) environment.
2. **Improving MA response and capabilities:** These areas include (1) more mutual aid training to assist with coordination issues; (2) establishing a statewide standard badging identification system to allow appropriate personnel access to restricted areas; (3) state agencies, i.e., CHP and Caltrans, should develop protocols regarding use of their local agency office personnel and equipment.
3. **Communications:** Local government and state agencies need to have more interoperable communications in order to have a rapid and effective response. A number of local governments recommended that OES establish caches of communications equipment for easy access during disaster response. Local government and state agencies need to evaluate their communication requirements to ensure there is interoperability and redundancy. Governor's Office of Emergency Services

-
4. Interstate Coordination: Some states were unfamiliar with the provisions of the Interstate Civil Defense and Disaster Compact as it relates to response and reimbursement. Several agencies indicated there is a need to streamline the method of obtaining out-of-state resources to reduce the resource acquisition time frame.
 5. Accessing Federal Military Assets: Local government and state fire agencies indicated there is a need to streamline the method of obtaining federal military assets to reduce the resource acquisition time frame.
 6. Federal-State Coordination: Local government and state agencies indicated a need for a smoother transition from response to recovery. The consensus among respondents was that plans and procedures should be developed for the DFO in order to effectively integrate federal and state agency staff at the DFO and to minimize unnecessary organizational issues.
 7. State Agency Plans and Procedures: Several state agencies that had not been involved in previous disaster response activities identified a need to rework their plans and procedures to incorporate SEMS and mutual aid. Existing emergency plans in some agencies need to be revised to include the following issues: debris management, animal care during disasters, volunteer management, donations management, and medical/health/mental health integration.
 8. Financial Issues: Reimbursement issues need to be resolved for mutual aid deployments, volunteer organizations and other entities. All agencies identified a need for funding for training - regardless of the type of training. In addition, funding is needed for long-term environmental impacts due to the burned out and denuded landscapes

It is anticipated that the comprehensive statewide AAR will be available to public safety and emergency management organizations on or about May 1, 2004. Information about its distribution will be found on the OES website at <http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/1?OpenForm>.



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California State Association of Counties
1100 K Street, Suite 101
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**Wildland Urban Interface Fires
A Collaborative Plan to Decrease Impacts on
Public Health and Safety**

(Adopted February 2004)

The League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties recognize the need for multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency coordination, collaboration and communication to standardize and improve pre-fire mitigations, prevention and response to any fire hazard in the forest, rangeland, watershed, wildland urban interface/intermix and open space in the State of California.

The League and CSAC will aggressively work with all levels of government by: a) acting as a clearinghouse for local government regarding their experiences in dealing with conflicting government regulations that have made wildland mitigation efforts difficult or impossible, and to forward said information to our State legislature so they may begin to understand the problem; b) consider legislation that will expedite the adoption of state-wide wildland urban interface construction development standards; and c) co-sponsor public forums to discuss the adoption of future legislation, such as Oregon's Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act. The ultimate goal will be a systemic solution to California wildland fires and to ensure that the devastation created by past fires will remain a part of California's history, rather than its future.

Ron Loveridge, Mayor, Riverside
President, League of California Cities

Paul Stein, Supervisor, Calaveras County
President, California State Association of
Counties

Chris McKenzie, Executive Director
League of California Cities

Steven C. Szalay, Executive Director
California State Association of Counties

Supporting Documentation

I. League and CSAC Objectives

A call to action: Catastrophic wildfires are one of the most significant threats to communities, forests, and wildlands in California today. To address this threat, we propose the formation of a partnership between the League of California Cities (League), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the State and federal governments to cooperate, collaborate, and communicate in the development of better land use policies and wildland fuel management programs to resolve issues associated with wildland urban interface fires. Adoption of this Policy Statement indicates CSAC's and the League's desire to join a Task Team of City, County and State representatives that will develop strategy and call for action to create better local ordinances to improve land use regulation and fuels management policies for wildland fire protection concerns in and around cities and urbanized rural communities.

II. The Problems We Face

Californians are all too familiar with the serious impacts and devastating effects of fire in the forest, rangeland, watershed and open space in and near urban settings. The recent catastrophic fires that burned throughout Southern California in October and November 2003 provide a sobering look at the impacts fires have on public health and safety – jobs are lost, businesses and schools are impacted, infrastructure and environmental damages occur, and in the wildland intermix/interface (suburbs to the wildland) areas, lives, property and natural resources are threatened and often destroyed. These impacts leave citizens and government agencies faced with growing costs and losses from fire in the intermix and interface (see definitions on last page). Four key factors contribute to this major problem:

- A. Population Growth.** California's population growth continues to migrate into highly flammable (wildland interface or intermix) and high fire hazard zones. Homes are built on fuel-loaded (trees and vegetation) slopes with minimum defensible space against wild fires.

Local government must ensure that growth is prudent, responsible and limits risk, to an acceptable level, and that development meets Fire Safe Standards for both residents and the fire service.

- B. Increased Fuels.** Continued wildland fuel loading, higher tree density, and dead and dying trees due to insects and disease make fuel issues massive in scale. According to fire professionals and land managers, about 4 million acres of private land and 39 million acres of federal land are at risk and have the potential to burn catastrophically.

C. Vegetation Management. To comply with environmental and regulatory agency requirements, fire professionals and land managers have increasing difficulty in conducting vegetation, watershed and forest management activities and programs. A large aspect of this is the decreased use of mechanical methods and prescribed fires for the removal of wildland fuels. The fire service and local, state and federal agencies must work together on responsible and effective vegetation management plans.

D. Increased Costs Associated with Fire Suppression. Both the increasing frequency of large damaging catastrophic wildland fires and the ever-increasing suppression costs and damages caused by these fires can be significantly reduced by: a) local government policies, zoning, land use controls and building construction methods consistent with the tenets of the International Urban Wildland Interface Code; and b) with an aggressive vegetation fuels management program in these high-risk wildland fire areas.

III. Definitions

Catastrophic Fire – A wildland or wildland urban interface fire with a fast moving front, extending over a large area (300+ acres) and/or highly destructive to lives, property or natural resources.

Defensible Space – That area which lies between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat, and in which firefighters can safely establish themselves to defend a structure.

Fuel – Combustible structures and wildland vegetative materials. Includes dead plants, parts of living plants, duff, and other accumulations of flammable vegetation.

Fuels Management – The practice of planning and executive manipulation or reduction of fuels to obtain conditions which permit protection forces to meet fire suppression objectives.

Highly Flammable Fuels – Zones designated by CDF (or other fire agencies) as having specific characteristics – e.g., fuel loading, slope and topography, fire weather, and other relevant factors – that would allow a fire to become uncontrollable.

Natural Resources – A necessary or beneficial material source – such as timber, minerals, water, and grazing area – occurring in nature that has a value in human commerce.

Pre-Fire Mitigation – Prior to wildland fire ignition a systematic application of risk assessment, fire safety, fire prevention, and fire hazard reduction techniques to reduce wildland fires, damages and cost of suppression.

Prescribed Fire – a fire with a “prescription,” burning within a range of predetermined conditions (such as fuel moisture content, weather conditions, etc.) that will keep it controllable, at low intensity, and able to achieve its stated objectives.

Slope – A piece of ground that is not flat or level, it may rise or fall in percent; where one percent of slope means a rise or fall of one foot of elevation within a distance of 100 feet, thus 45% would equal 45 feet of rise in 100 feet.

Risk – the likelihood of wildfire ignition normally the result or activities of people.

Wildland – An area in which development is essentially non-existent, except for power lines, roads, railroads, and similar transportation facilities. Structures, if any, are widely scattered and are primarily for recreational purposes. Includes large cattle ranches and forests managed for timber production.

Wildland Interface – The geographical meeting point of two diverse systems, wildland and structures. At this interface, structures and vegetation are sufficiently close that a wildland fire could spread to structures or a structure fire could ignite vegetation.

Wildland Intermix – Interspersion of developed land with wildland, where there are no easily discernible boundaries between the two systems. Poses more problems in wildland fire management than *interface*.

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 (LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION)

March 16, 2004

Senator William Campbell (ret.) Chair
 Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
 Office of the Director
 Office of Emergency Services
 P. O. Box 419047
 Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

Dear Senator Campbell:

Thank you for sending me the draft report of the Blue Ribbon Commission. This letter offers my initial comments upon first review.

I want to thank you for all of your work and leadership in chairing this Commission. Your expertise, history, and guidance are greatly appreciated. As you deal with the diversity of perspectives from the members of the commission, I am confident that this Commission can come together to produce a report that will serve as a genesis for essential policy changes that will help prevent and protect Californians from future fire disasters.

Let me address a few issues of the report:

Interoperability: One of the most important recommendations coming out of the Blue Ribbon Commission's work is the importance of putting in place an interoperable communication system. It is imperative that our public safety agencies be able to communicate with each other in an emergency situation. Technical experts should develop a standards-based set of criteria, building on the work already done by many local jurisdictions. While some regions have adopted interoperable communication systems, the state's mutual aid policy means that public safety agencies could respond to an aid call anywhere in the state - or even in adjacent states.

With the significant advances in communication technology that have already taken place, as well as those still in development, we need to adopt standards that assure effective communication in both rural and urban settings. Interoperability should not be strictly limited to firefighting crews. Medical personnel, emergency services including utility providers, and homeland security must be incorporated. In San Diego, crews were out in the fire areas dealing with downed electrical lines, ruptured gas lines, and low water pressure. They all need to be able to communicate easily with one another. That's not the case at the present time.

POST Training: I fully support uniformity of training for firefighters. This is especially important in the wildland-urban interface where firefighters may be trained for fighting structure fires, but not brush or open area fires. Uniformity of training will also undoubtedly assist in coordination of efforts.

Fire Fuel Management and Abatement: Fuels management must be a key element of our strategy to reduce wildfires in the future. We need to work with experts in the field to develop best management practices for brush management on a regional basis that doesn't contribute to erosion and subsequent mudslides. What works in San Diego may not work in Alameda County. By establishing standards and streamlining the permit process, we can improve fire protection in the wildland-urban interface. Whatever recommendations are made in this area should reflect a consideration of fire and other natural disasters and hazards, quality of life, the environment, local community issues and concerns, and biologically-based habitat preservation requirements. Objective scientific data should be used.

Perhaps it would be more appropriate to modify Finding 1 under Local Building, Planning and Land Use Regulations; Brush Clearance and Fuel Modification, as follows:

"The Legislature needs to address and resolve existing inconsistencies in various public policies relative to brush management, fire prevention and fire safety measures, habitat and endangered species protection, coastal preservation and air quality regulations."

Finding 2 under the same category might be changed as follows:

"Fuels management is a key element in protecting and preserving human life and property, as well as open space and forest areas. Using best management practices, a fuel management plan and funding source should be developed to deal with the thousands of acres of dead trees from insects and diseases."

Pre-positioning equipment in red-flag conditions: The pre-positioning of equipment is critical in the wildland-urban interface. This is especially important for San Diego County where congestion on our freeways/roads can hamper efforts to move essential equipment to needed sites. Once we start evacuating people, it may be impossible to move the equipment to the fire.

Creation of a National Wildland Fire Insurance Program (NWFIP) under the direction of FEMA: Before we urge the federal government to act on this recommendation, we should carefully analyze the impact this might have on our residents, especially in Southern California. It may very well be that the costs so outweigh the benefits that Californians may find themselves going through great lengths to avoid designation of their home under such a program. Those living in high and very high fire hazard zones could include tens of thousands of households in our major cities where homes are built adjacent to open space canyons.

Before many of our homeowners find themselves facing serious increases in their insurance premiums, decreasing property values, or an inability to acquire insurance unless it's via a government program, we need to first determine that such a program is necessary.

Year-round fire season: We in Southern California know that we have a year-round fire season. Southern California counties must have funding and resources available on a year-round basis. This document needs to be consistent in this reference. If this report is going to recommend a year-round fire season, wherever we also make recommendations relative to a fire season, that fire season should be clearly stated as year round.

Coordination between Agencies: There are various recommendations in the report to increase and facilitate coordination between federal (including the military), local, and state agencies. Coordination between agencies is essential to a proper and timely response to natural disasters.

Joint Legislative Committee on Disaster Response and Homeland Security: As you and I have discussed, I think this is an important consideration. This committee would serve to bring more legislative focus to the issue and increase awareness of this critical public safety issue. This committee would serve as a bipartisan forum for resolution of issues. I am prepared to ask Senator Burton and Speaker Nuñez to create such a committee.

Review of fire-fighting aircraft cut off times: This review is appropriate. We need to clearly state that the review shall assure the safety of the firefighters in the air and on the ground and meet the need for timely aircraft firefighting efforts.

Follow-Up: I recommend that we ask Governor Schwarzenegger to reconvene the Commission in six months and again in one-year for purposes of tracking and reporting the implementation of policy changes recommended by the Commission. The Commission should prepare a six-month and one-year report on progress made. In 1970 San Diego experienced a similar fire - Like last year, the sky was black and soot fell all over the city for days. The October, 2003 fires were far worse in casualties and property lost as the fire swept from the east county into the heart of the city. Unfortunately, several recommendations made 30 years ago still have not been implemented. Reconvening this Commission in six-months and in one year will assure that there is some public follow up on our recommendations and that the tragedy of last year's fires may be avoided in the future.

High and Very High Fire Hazard should be defined in the glossary to assist the reader.

I have introduced legislative vehicles for purposes of making changes in law needed to implement Commission recommendations. These bills are available for authorship, joint authorship, or co-authorship by legislative members of the Commission and are listed below:

AB 224
AB 3052
AB 3053

AB 3054
AB 3065
AB 3066

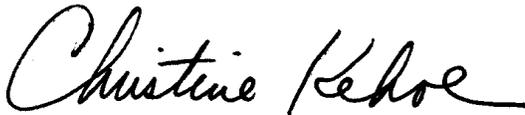
AB 3067
AB 3068

Senator William Campbell (ret.) Chair
March 16, 2004
Page 4

As the Commission makes its final recommendations, the report should clearly state what changes are needed in law so that these bills may be amended and move through the process.

Again, I thank you for your diligence in chairing this commission. Please feel free to call on me any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christine Kehoe".

CHRISTINE KEHOE
Assemblywoman, 76th District

CK:mm/ds

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(LITTLE HOOVER COMMISSION)

March 24, 2004

Senator William Campbell (ret.) Chair
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
Office of the Director
Office of Emergency Services
P. O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

Dear Senator Campbell:

Thank you for chairing such a productive Commission meeting last week. I was very pleased that we were able to work through the recommendations and reach consensus on such important issues. Your leadership and diligence in keeping the agenda moving is greatly appreciated.

Thank you also for sending me the revised draft of the recommendations of the Commission. This letter offers my initial comments on those recommendations.

The recommendations are designated as "Policy" or "Fiscal" recommendations. However, several of the policy recommendations also have a fiscal component that should also be reflected in the report. While the first step would be the adoption of the policy, to implement each of these recommendations, funds must be identified. This identification of funding is critical to implementing new policy.

Consequently, I believe the following recommendations should be listed as both policy and fiscal recommendations:

#5 (4-0 staffing)	#40 (communications equipment)
#6 (personal safety equipment)	#42 (interoperability)
#16 (new fire suppressing technologies)	#43 (public outreach and emergency evacuation education)
#21 (public education & outreach)	

Additionally, I would like to offer to draft a letter to the respective leaders of both houses of the Legislature requesting the joint committee (recommendation #29) to be created. I believe that the letter should be from all of the State Legislature members of the Commission and I will be asking for their cooperation in this letter. If you would also like to send a letter making this request, it would be helpful as well.

Senator William Campbell (ret.) Chair
March 24, 2004
Page 2

I also would like to ask that we explore expansion of the recommendation itself (#29) a bit. The joint committee should also consider the following issues in its development of a comprehensive plan:

- An investigation into whether the Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems program concept of operation and other emerging technologies can be applied to aerial firefighting systems.
- Acquisition, implementation, and communication of real-time and nighttime WUI intelligence
- Consideration of use of emerging technologies for firefighting purposes (e.g., military technology, GPS, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and the Operational Area Satellite Information System (OASIS) satellite communications system).
- An operational and funding strategy to implement interoperable communications
- Development of a comprehensive public outreach program that includes emergency evacuation education

I will also be asking my fellow legislators for their cooperation as we introduce legislation to accomplish the recommendations of the Commission. Toward this goal, it would be helpful if we identified in the recommendations themselves whether a change in law is recommended or whether the policy change can be accomplished administratively.

At the last meeting, we discussed commission member quotes and other issues relative to the final report. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to review the final report before it is released.

Again, I thank you for your diligence in chairing this commission. Please feel free to call on me any time.

Sincerely,



CHRISTINE KEHOE
Assemblywoman, 76th District

CK:mm/ds

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**Assembly
California Legislature**



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ASSEMBLYMAN, SEVENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT
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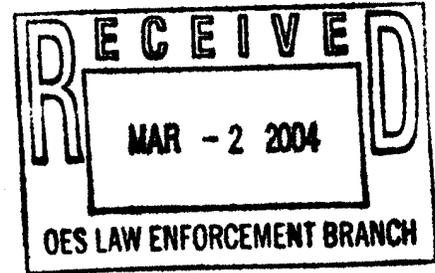
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February 26, 2004

Honorable William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
P. O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047



Dear Senator Campbell:

Included in this report you will find eight recommendations for improvement of our fire-fighting capabilities. Perhaps all members of the commission will not agree with all of my recommendations, that is to be expected. However, it is critically important that the information gleaned by this commission be more than just another report that gathers dust.

Changes must be made! The public in my district is anxiously awaiting the commission's report. Many fear that this commission will be nothing more than a "white wash" to protect some bureaucrats hindsides. I have assured them that this is not the case. The rest is up to us.

1. Early warning signs.

The Cedar fire in San Diego County destroyed thousands of homes and killed thirteen people in my area, Assembly District 77, San Diego County. Many of the fire victims I spoke with related that they had absolutely no warning of the fire's approach. Several people with whom I spoke related that a roar awakened them. Upon opening their eyes their bedroom was filled with an orange light, which was the fire as it approached their home. Several people barely escaped their homes and could only save the clothes they were wearing. Other people, however, were not so fortunate. People died in their garages attempting to get in their automobiles while attempting to flee the fire. Others died in their driveways and still others were trapped on roads they thought would take them to safety. The commission has heard recommendations to create a reverse 911 system. At first blush, this is an excellent answer to an early warning system. However, a reverse 911 system also has its limitations. Perhaps a combination of a reverse 911 and an emergency evacuation siren system in remote areas would cover

most of the bases. Emergency evacuation sirens are utilized quite successfully in areas where tornadoes are common, in areas where there is a significant threat from tsunamis and in areas where there is a threat from live volcanoes. Such sirens can be triggered to sound by areas, regions, or singularly by radio control and can be powered by solar energy. This would remove the potential for electrical power lines feeding them that would be destroyed before use.

Regardless of what if any system is developed, potential initial and long-term costs should be calculated.

2. Interagency (civilian and military) cooperation. Recognition of and minimizing of turf issues.

During the Cedar fires, civilian authority at the highest level of the California Department of Forestry (CDF) refused to make any request of the Department of Defense to pre-position aerial fire-fighting planes (both fixed winged and helicopters) in California for utilization when conditions permitted. This refusal came after the Department of Defense received approval via Congressman Hunter. In San Diego, we heard excuse after excuse why military fire-fighting aircraft could not be used. When every excuse was analyzed, it became obvious they were nothing more than excuses with no solid foundations for making such decisions. During the meetings I have attended on the commission, I have noticed more than one person gave testimony as to why military fire fighting aircraft could not be used. As I have pointed out, on more than one occasion at commission meetings, some of the finest pilots currently flying do so for the military. What amazes me about testimony given at the commission hearings, are those persons who could remove or help remove obstacles that prevented military aircraft from participating in fire fighting activities, seem to concentrate their focus on reasons why military fire fighting aircraft cannot be used. Only after pointed questioning did some of these people admit that military aircraft could in fact be used with very little pre-training.

It is of significant importance when one understands that wildfires are not a rare occurrence in California and that ongoing attempts to work with the military on this problem should have occurred. CDF's web page states that California experiences 6,300 wildfires each year. Those fires burn an average of nearly 144,000 acres annually. It appears either consciously or subconsciously that a determination has been made that assistance from the military will not be requested or accepted if offered. If that is in fact true then attitudes must be corrected or **we will continue to lose far more structures and far more lives than should ever occur.** In conversations that I have had with military authorities, they are ready, willing, and able to participate and assist civilian authorities when such disasters are occurring. However, the exact opposite attitude has been displayed at the highest level at the California Department of Forestry (CDF). **People of the State of California cannot afford to allow those who they depend on for protection of their lives and property to have such attitudes.**

3. Division of CDF.

An overview of the California Department of Forestry & Fire Fighting (CDF) reflects two separate and distinct functions. One function encompasses fire-fighting and public safety responsibilities, while the other function emphasizes the management and protection of California's natural resources.

CDF's web page states; *"Department foresters and fire personnel work closely to encourage and implement fuels management projects to reduce the threat of uncontrolled wildfires. Vegetation management projects such as "controlled burns" take teamwork between foresters, firefighters, landowners, and the local communities."*

At least at first glance, it appears that CDF is working at cross-purposes.

- During one of the commission hearings, I questioned high-ranking CDF personnel as to how many controlled burns have occurred in the San Diego County Region in the last few years and I received no answer. If one lives in San Diego County, one knows we have not had any controlled burns. I also asked a question referring to the literally thousands of dead trees in our forests that have been killed by the bark beetle. My question was very simple, "How many bark beetle infested trees has CDF cleared from our local forests?" There was no answer to that question. The only trees killed by this disease that have been cleared were those that have been destroyed by the Cedar fire.
- At the Riverside County commission meeting, Supervisor Jim Venable, when reading from a prepared statement referred to truthfulness and made the following statement:

"I recently read an article titled '*California Recovers*' in the January/February 2004 issue of *Government West*. The article says that the State and CDF recognized the threat caused by dead trees in our mountains in 2001 and began then to take corrective action. Unfortunately, that was NOT the case. I recall that we were still trying to get the attention of Sacramento as late as spring of 2003."
- It is becoming extremely obvious that CDF is responsible for accomplishing two separate missions that are diametrically opposed to each other. Fire fighters will tell you that part of a plan to prevent or lessen the effect of wildfires is the removal of fuel to feed the fire. The thousands of trees killed by the bark beetle were nothing more than fuel waiting for a wildfire. Yet nothing has been done to reduce this hazard, even though CDF's web page states that part of their duties for preventing the spread of disease is to identify

and remove affected trees. The same should also be true for fire breaks and controlled burns.

- It is obvious the maintenance of fire roads has been allowed to deteriorate to the point that wildfire engine crews were unable to get to the original location of the Cedar fire.
 - Consideration should be given to dividing CDF into two separate and distinct organizations. The fire-fighting and public safety portion perhaps should be placed under the direction of the Office of Emergency Services (OES) and become the California State Fire Fighting Department. The environmental portion of CDF should be placed under the Department of Agriculture or another appropriate department.
- 4. Assessing failure of bureaucrats at highest level to recognize problems and act immediately.**

During the Cedar fire, it is my belief, which I have expressed during open commission meetings, that there was a failure at the highest level in CDF. I stated at that meeting that fire fighters assigned to the firestorms of 2003 performed in an outstanding manner and should receive no criticism, only praise. Yet just the opposite is true of the director and the deputy director. My concerns have been communicated to the Governor. I would be most happy to share a copy of that letter with the Chair of the Commission.

- This state cannot afford leadership that is inflexible.
- This state cannot afford leadership at any level that fails to employ common sense.
- This state cannot afford leadership at any level that ignores logical decision-making. This state cannot permit people to remain in leadership positions who refuse to bring valuable fire-fighting equipment to our state to be positioned for use at the first opportunity.
- This state cannot afford any person to remain in a leadership position who permits, authorizes, or allows any action to be taken during a critical incident to fool the people -- California cannot afford "cosmetic drops" to be made at any time.
- This state cannot afford any person to remain in a leadership position that refuses to allow a helicopter carrying a bucket full of water to be turned away from dropping it on a fire.
- This state cannot afford to permit the current leadership of CDF to remain in place.

For the above reasons, which I will go into greater detail if you want, the director and the deputy director of CDF should resign or their services to the State of California be terminated immediately.

5. Creating meaningful laws that provide for realistic defensible space around structures, and effective fire reduction practices in our forests.

Supervisor Jim Venable, Riverside County made the following statement to the commission, *"Wild fires are burning too many homes, killing too many people, destroying the environment and eroding homeland security."*

According to a report put out by the University of California called *"A Property Owner's Guide to Reducing the Wildfire Threat,"* they recommend to increase fire safety in wooded areas the following should be done.

- A. Create defensible space around buildings.
- B. Recognize the impact of steep slopes on fire safety.
- C. Identify and manage trees to be fire safe.
- D. Set up a continuous management program to maintain a fire safe property environment.
- E. Develop a fire safe landscape plan for your home or business.

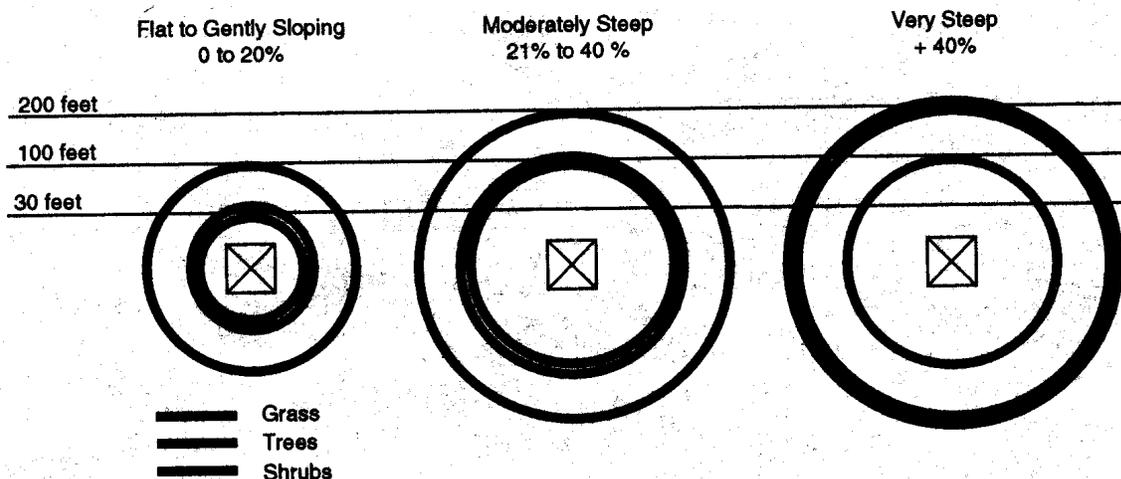
California law currently requires a 30-foot clearance around all structures. The firestorms of 2003 have proven that a 30-foot clearance has little effect on a raging wildfire as it approaches a structure. They recommend the following:

DEFENSIBLE SPACE DISTANCES*

	Distance	From	House
Percent Slope	Uphill*	Sides*	Downhill*
Level to 20%	100 ft.	100 ft.	100 ft.
21% to 40%	150 ft.	150 ft.	200 ft.
41% to 60%	200 ft.	200 ft.	400 ft.

*Adapted from "Wildland Home Fire Risk Meter" Simmerman & Fischer (1990)

The Institute of Business & Home Safety, a national nonprofit organization supported by insurance and reinsurance member companies, works to reduce social and economic losses caused by natural disasters. Their recommendations for defensible space are based on the steepness of slope as follows:



They define defensible space as an area where the potential for fire has been reduced by removing or pruning combustible vegetation. Unfortunately many of California's laws and practices have prohibited people from creating defensible space around their homes. The environmental bureaucrats have created a quagmire of rules and regulations that have confused, debilitated, or otherwise obstructed California homeowners from effectively taking early preventative action to save their homes. As a result of the mess of regulations that contradict common sense, fire reduction, or preventable tactics, we have literally seen thousands of homes destroyed and numerous lives lost. This is totally unacceptable! In my district alone approximately 2,000 homes were destroyed and 13 people lost their lives.

6. Improving agency radio communications.

Information received by the commission was extremely accurate. Major flaws exist in the current communication system when mutual aid is requested. It is however important to remember the extreme cost of developing and implementing a totally new statewide radio system. The San Diego County Region Radio System is noted as an example of a preferred system. However, it was also pointed out that the system was overloaded to the point of almost ineffectiveness. Perhaps creating a committee of emergency communication experts would best solve the radio communications problem that confronted both law enforcement and fire fighting agencies during the firestorms in 2003. Such a committee must be given definite guidelines and parameters by the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. Such guidelines and parameters could, as an example, recognize improvement of local regional systems and the expansion of a statewide emergency band with numerous channels available for operational purposes.

7. Flying time.

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department reports that their ASTREA 3 Helicopter unit arrived in the area of the Cedar fire at approximately 5:51 p.m. They immediately reported a plume of smoke from a small brush fire.

That small plume of smoke would become the Cedar fire, the largest wildfire in the history of California. ASTREA 1 monitored the radio call from ASTREA 3. Due to the weather forecast calling for Santa Ana conditions, ASTREA 1 was already equipped with a water-carrying bucket.

ASTREA 1 arrived on scene with a full bucket of water at 5:57 p.m. The pilot was then directed by the Forest Service to disengage fire fighting because of safety regulations. It should be understood that at that time Sheriff's ASTREA 1 estimated the size of the fire at twenty acres. Sheriff's ASTREA 1 pilots estimated that they could have made up to four drops on the fire before dark.

CDF fixed wing aerial fire fighting aircraft stood silent parked on the tarmac at the Ramona airport during the events described above. Residents who spotted the fire at approximately 5:30 p.m. called CDF in hopes they would launch their aircraft and extinguish this small fire.

We have heard testimony that all the best aircraft could have done was to slow the fire down at that time. However, we have not received testimony of how many drops could have been made by CDF and the Sheriff's Department if they were flying by U.S. Forest regulations, which permits an additional hour of flight time.

At the San Diego Blue Ribbon Fire Commission, the Air Operations Chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Mike Padilla, said that the state would soon begin reviewing the cut off time for air tankers and helicopters.

Mr. Padilla further advised that he is both a qualified fixed wing and helicopter pilot. He then stated, and was quoted in the *San Diego Union Tribune* newspaper, "*I can tell you that, being a fixed-wing and helicopter pilot, I can put out any fire at any time ...!*"

Had the CDF air tankers responded and had the Sheriff's ASTREA units been allowed to make water drops, perhaps this fire would have been extinguished. Perhaps twenty-two people, throughout the county, would still be alive. Perhaps nobody would have lost his or her home. Perhaps thousands of acres of old forest would not have been destroyed; perhaps the San Diego burn area would not have already experienced mudslides that have destroyed additional homes.

Reports reflect that the Sheriff's ASTREA unit was still flying and advising ground units of the fire's progress and areas in need of evacuation at 1:26 a.m. the next morning. Changes to the flight time cut-off policy must be made. Changes to the flight time cut-off policy must be made now. There is no end to the fire season in San Diego County.

8. Funding Source for Firefighter On-Going Training.

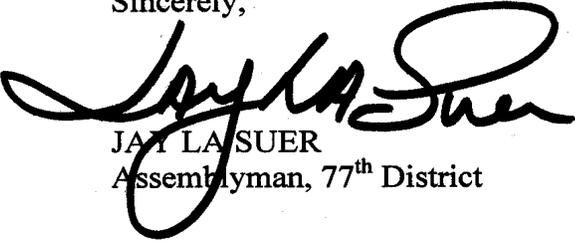
A major problem that was discussed briefly during the commission meeting that was held in Long Beach was an absence of a funding source for on-going firefighter training. Law enforcement statewide training is conducted and/or approved by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.).

P.O.S.T. is funded via monies paid on fines for traffic violations. The fire fighting service has no such funding stream/source. P.O.S.T. funding neither increases taxes nor

creates bonded indebtedness. The same should be the case of any funding source for firefighter training. I am currently researching the possibility of creating such a funding stream via legislation. Should my research end with positive results, I will advise the commission.

Thank you for your consideration of my recommendations.

Sincerely,



JAY LA SUER
Assemblyman, 77th District

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SENATOR ALBERT HIMPEN CALIFORNIA

California State Senate

SENATOR
DEDE ALPERT

THIRTY-NINTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

CHAIR

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEES
CHAIR, APPROPRIATIONS
AGRICULTURE AND
WATER RESOURCES
EDUCATION
NATURAL RESOURCES AND
WILDLIFE
REVENUE AND TAXATION

SELECT COMMITTEES
CHAIR, FAMILY, CHILD AND
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

JOINT COMMITTEES
CHAIR, MASTER PLAN FOR
EDUCATION
VICE CHAIR, FISHERIES AND
AQUACULTURE



March 1, 2004

To: The Hon. Bill Campbell, Chair, Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

From: Senator Dede Alpert, 39th District *DA*

Chairman Campbell, *Bill*

In response to your request for recommendations from Commissioners for inclusion in the final report, I submit the following for your consideration:

- 1) Task an existing body (possibly the CA Building Standards Commission) to do an immediate review of those codes not in compliance with the International Urban-Wildland Interface Code and determine whether such codes should be changed
- 2) No legal or environmental liability for clearing brush in compliance with state law
- 3) Training – develop uniform statewide minimum training standards similar to that developed by the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission.
- 4) Ask “line experts” (e.g. fire chiefs, police chiefs, etc) to help provide technical assistance on an ongoing basis and take an active role in passing necessary legislation; perhaps form an advisory commission for this purpose with membership specified from certain professions
- 5) Explore potential Biomass tax credits specific to fire safety and clean-up/prevention, such as removal of dead wood to be used in biomass projects
- 6) Finally, I would like the Commission to be aware of legislation I am carrying at the behest of the Insurance Commissioner, Senate Bill 1855. This bill is intended to avoid unintended underinsurance by requiring insurers to give a cost comparison of available coverages for a particular home, as well as an explanation of each available coverage.

March 1, 2004

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California State Senate

SENATOR
NELL SOTO

THIRTY-SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES:
PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND
RETIREMENT (CHAIR)
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION
INSURANCE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION
VETERANS AFFAIRS
SELECT COMMITTEES:
URBAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT (CHAIR)
ALAMEDA CORRIDOR EAST
CALIFORNIA/MEXICO
COOPERATION
CALIFORNIA'S HORSE RACING
INDUSTRY
URBAN LANDFILLS

March 17, 2004

Senator William Campbell, Chairman
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Members
Office of Emergency Services
Sent via fax 916-845-8511

Dear Senator Campbell, *Bell*

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Commission's draft recommendations. I appreciate the attention the report gives to our firefighting heroes. They risked their lives and may have put themselves at permanent risk.

The report shows that we can avoid the "perfect storm" that occurred in Autumn of 2003, if we make the investments. The planning and procurement of a new and improved fire prevention infrastructure will make the entire state safer and improve our economy.

The report does not document the costs, but we know they are significant. Do we then not proceed because we don't have funds? Do we propose that other existing programs be cut? We can not ignore the fire threat, or how we can prevent it. The proposal to expand Prop. 172 has merit, but that has been a wrangle, as you know.

We need a straight-line, non-general fund source of revenue. I ask you to consider my SB 1537 as one approach. It funds the needs identified by the Governor's Commission by a negligible ¼ cent for two years. This provides the certainty and broad-based commitment necessary to solve these problems.

I also want to avoid getting too dependent on the federal government. I oppose the creation of a Presidential Commission. Let's solve this as Californians, working together.

Sincerely,

Nell Soto
Nell Soto
Senator, 32nd District

*Dear Bill -
Hope you can make help
Thank you*

**To: Deputy Chief Robert Gerber, Executive Secretary
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission**

Fr: State Senator Nell Soto (D - Pomona)

Re: Draft Recommendations & Report

The meetings of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission and yielded a wealth of information that should enable us to devise a set of recommendations that reduce deaths and minimize the loss of property due to wildfires.

The testimony we have received has strengthened the belief I had before we embarked on this process: That while we possess the tools and the know-how to mitigate the threat of major fires, we lack the resources, and specifically, the proper staffing levels, needed to protect life and property.

Some of the conditions that contributed to the spread and severity of last year's wildfires are no less prominent today. California's human population continues to grow, people continue to want to live in close proximity to nature, and many chose to do so in forested areas that are dense with growth and susceptible, thanks to prolonged drought and the corresponding spread of bark beetle infestation, to the rage of wildfires.

Local fire and government officials, especially those in fire sensitive areas, have known for some time the steps we can take to reduce the threat of fires, including:

- * Clearing debris and brush from around the home, and ensuring that vegetation closest to the home is as non-combustible as possible
- * The use of sprinkler systems, including external sprinkler systems that can be used to douse flames
- * Most important of all, the use of flame retardant materials, including metal, on rooftops; some materials, such as asphalt or wood shake, may be more popular, but they are also more susceptible to burning embers, pine needles or other factors in the spread of fires

Many of these precautionary measures already exist in code; the problem is the capacity, or lack thereof, to engage in proper code enforcement.

There should be no doubting the will of local officials, particularly local fire officials, to enforce codes to protect lives and property. Nor should there be any illusions about the difficulty of funding enforcement activity at a time of budget crisis.

But absent the proper steps, California will have to confront the threat of major fires, major damage and significant loss of life for years and years to come.

If we as commissioners are to do our jobs properly, we will not shy away from the fact that we have to find the money we need to allow for proper code enforcement, as well as to keep our local fire agencies at their appropriate levels for staffing and equipment operation.

We can find a way to pay now, before more lives, more homes and more natural resources are lost, or we can pay later, in the form of further tragedy. It is in the best interest of the people of California that we pay now.

March 18, 2004

Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairmen &
Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission
Governor's Office Of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova CA. 95741

Subject: Recommendations of the Fire Service Representatives to the Blue Ribbon Commission

Dear Chairmen Campbell:

The fire service representatives to the Blue Ribbon Commission want to thank you for your commitment to the California fire service and your leadership as we have worked through these critical issues related to the 2003 Southern California Fire Siege.

The fire service in California including federal, state, local, and tribal government resources is no stranger to the devastating fires we experienced this past year. Through our long history of fighting these types of fires we have developed the most advanced system of organizing, deploying and coordinating resources in the world. Our experience has shown that while we learn from our operational experiences, and make improvements, we continue to find that some of the same issues never get resolved. There are shelves full of after action reports that contain recommendations that were never implemented. Had these recommendations been implemented it would have made a difference in the fire siege of 2003. The fire service representatives to the Commission are extremely concerned about the possibilities of the same thing happening to the Blue Ribbon Commission work.

We believe that in order to successfully implement recommendations that will have a lasting impact on wild fires of the future we need to focus our expectations and energy on the highest priority items. To that end the majority of the fire service members of the commission met on March 17th to review and prioritize the recommendations in the draft report. We reviewed all the recommendations and used the ranking system to rate them (see attached "Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendations and Ranking Worksheet"). We also condensed and consolidated recommendations that were redundant. Once we established a general ranking for all recommendations we prioritized the recommendations with "1" ranking. While we feel the number 1 recommendations are important, we believe that the 9 recommendations (see attachment "Blue Ribbon Commission Fire Service Representatives Highest Priority Recommendations") we are bringing forward have the highest priority and should be given special consideration.

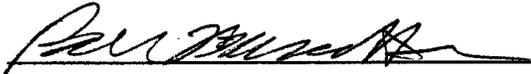
Additionally it is extremely important to consider funding options for the fire service. Implementation of these recommendations will require additional funding at a time when all levels of government are struggling to maintain services.

We believe that the Commission should address the following of revenue considerations:

- Some type of budgetary guarantee and/or protection for revenues that fund fire protection systems is necessary.
- There are least two possibilities for enhancing revenues for fire protection that we believe need serious consideration.
 1. Establishment of a statewide ¼ cent sales tax specifically dedicated to accomplishing the goals of the Blue Ribbon Commission.
 2. Redistribution of future growth by equal shares of Proposition 172 funds to fairly represent the fire service role in public safety.

Finally, we believe that the issues the Blue Ribbon Commission has identified go beyond the borders of California and have national implications. We recommend that a representative group of Commission members travel to Washington D.C. to meet with our Senators and Congressional representatives to present the finding of the Blue Ribbon Commission and seek their support.

Respectfully submitted by:

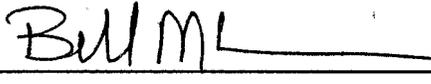
Bill Bamattre, Metro Chiefs 

Jeff Bowman, City of San Diego 

Ron Coleman, Interim Fire Chief of Santa Rosa 

P. Michael Freeman, FIRESCOPE 

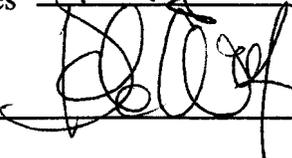
Rick Martinez, Calif. Dept. of Homeland Security 

Bill McCammon, Calif. Fire Chief's Assoc. 

Ed McOrmond, Bureau of Indian Affairs 

Chip Prather, Calif. Emergency Services Council 

Bob Roper, Association of Contract Counties 

Bob Wolf, Calif. Professional Firefighters 

Kim Zagaris, Governor's Office of Emergency Services 

3.

MJR 3: The Commission recommends that federal (USFS), state (CDF) and local fire agencies agree to develop and adopt regulations and operating policies with the military on how to employ aerial assets during wildland firefighting efforts to include:

- agreements to meet equipment, communications and training criteria as established by USFS/CDF
- annual declaration of participation from each base commander to USFS/CDF by the 1st of May each calendar year.
- Weekly affirmation of availability status per developed policy

In addition, the Commission directs FIRESCOPE to develop a statewide plan to increase local agency capacity to provide additional air resources to combat wildland fires.

~~communicate with adjacent military bases before each fire season to advise those authorities of any anticipate needs and to assess the potential availability of military resources for fire response, and ensure appropriate fire related training and equipment preparedness.~~

5.

MJR 5: The Commission recommends that federal, state and local fire agencies implement ~~explore the cost and advisability of~~ 4-0 staffing for all fire engine companies responding to OES Mutual Aid calls for immediate need and planned response, and set a goal of 4-0 staffing for WUI initial attack response.fires

7.

MJR 6: The Commission recommends that all firefighters responding to WUI fires must be provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, safety and communications equipment.

13.

SR 1: The Commission recommends development of a permanent Joint Legislative Committee for wildland interface that will have the authority to implement the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. The commission will oversee rules, regulations and resolve conflicting issues. Additionally, this commission will have technical advisory committees as needed.~~that a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Disaster Response and Homeland Security be established with applicable technical advisory committees to review and resolve conflicting laws, regulations and responsibilities, and develop consistent guidelines for timely implementation of vegetation/fuel management fire mitigation activities.~~

16.

SR 4: The Commission recommends establishing a secure year-round funding for CDF, including the implementation of 4-0 staffing for all CDF engine companies.

24.

SR 1: The Commission recommends that CDF/OSFM develop a and maintain an adequately funded fire training and education program to ensure that trained and qualified personnel are prepared to respond to major events. This system should support the use of the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) and incorporate the Fire Officer Certification process approved by the State Board of Fire Services. ~~Master Plan for fire training and education to ensure that trained and qualified personnel are on the fighting lines for their safety and the safety of others.~~

38.

MJR 1: The Commission recommends expansion of existing efforts by the FEMA, USFS, CDF and local governments to remove the threat of existing ~~dead timber~~ fuels created by the bark beetle infestation, including potential market development and reducing fuels in the wildland environment that will significantly reduce catastrophic wildland fires.

40.

MJR 3: The Commission recommends that uniform WUI ~~development~~ code and standards be developed that is consistent on a statewide basis. Additionally the Commission recommends that CDF and Local Government work together on land use and planning decisions as it relates to WUI and in the view of fuel management plans in high and very high hazard zones ~~in California that takes into consideration conflicting laws and regulations from federal and local governments as well.~~

58.

FR 1 of 1: The Commission recommend that sufficient ~~additional and~~ standardized frequencies be issued by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to meet the interoperable communication needs of fire and emergency personnel.



File Code:

5100

Date: February 27, 2004

Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
Governor's Office of Emergencies Services
P.O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

Dear Chairman Campbell:

Thank you for your leadership on Governor Schwarzenegger's Blue Ribbon Commission, addressing the wildfires experienced last fall.

In California history, the Bel Air (1961), Laguna (1970), Panorama (1980), and Malibu/Topanga (1993) fires stand out. Each of these wildfires, at 10-year intervals, burned under extreme weather conditions in heavy fuels. Each exhibited severe fire behavior that exceeded all initial efforts at control. Following each of these extraordinarily destructive wildfires, post incident reviews identified actions to prevent a reoccurrence.

The Fire Services have been significantly strengthened on the heels of each of these catastrophic wildfires. However, the fact that they continue to periodically occur, indicates that more strategic emphasis needs to be directed to the causal factors that predispose these types of wildfires. The magnitude of these disasters also suggests that public expectations for land managers and land management practices that they implement may be a significant contributing factor that can no longer be overlooked.

The few recommendations that follow are specifically focused to more effectively deal with the condition of fuels as a causal factor, the safety of people in hazardous settings, and the vulnerability of homes in the highly flammable fire environment that dominates southern California landscapes. They emphasize a proactive, preventative approach.

Recommendation 1:

Build on existing unit level efforts to more widely develop a Comprehensive Interagency, Inter-governmental Wildland Fuel Management Plan for southern California. Integrate this comprehensive plan's direction into revised or amended Land/Resource Management Plans. Essential elements of the Comprehensive Plan will include:

- A Balance of Harm Assessment that evaluates long term costs and risks to people, capital improvements, and natural resources including air/water quality and listed or endangered species.
- A Wildland Fuel Hazard rating, indicating flammability potential and locations of highest wildfire risks, relative to social, community, and ecological values.
- A Wildland Fuel Treatment Objective, aimed toward achieving a safer mix of age-class distribution in chaparral fuel types and condition-class distribution in conifer fuel types.
- A prioritized treatment schedule, aimed toward achieving wildland fuel treatment objective(s) in a specified timeframe.
- Economic incentives to establish new, un-conventional markets as a means to accelerate fuel hazard abatement treatments, including:
 - Stewardship Contracting
 - Tax incentives for alternative fuels (e.g. wood biomass for electric co-generation).

Recommendation 2:

Expand the concepts demonstrated in the Mountain Area Safety Task Force, statewide. Encourage initiation of planning where it does not exist and review implemented efforts for completeness. Complete planning that provides for community-level danger recognition, evacuation planning, and coordinated response of Law Enforcement, Fire Services, public utilities, and other critical infrastructure.

Recommendation 3:

Foster public/private partnerships by accelerating the efforts of FIREWISE/FIRESAFE programs. Create tax and insurance incentives for communities who develop and maintain defensible space and more “fire resistant” structures.

The Forest Service will support recommendations that continue to improve fire suppression capability, including increased staffing, integrated communications, more sophisticated and comprehensive predictive services, a modernized aviation fleet, and improved military use coordination. They will make a positive difference. However, the Forest Service makes clear that, until fuel hazard abatement efforts are adopted at meaningful scales, short-term gains in suppression capabilities will likely only be marginally effective.

Sincerely,

/s/ *Leslie Sekavec* (for)

Jerry Williams
Director, Fire and Aviation Management

March 4, 2004

“Balance of harm”

Definition:

Balancing of short and long term adverse effects
Evaluation or assessment of risk and benefits
The degree of harm suffered, to suffer disproportionately
Not a process or methodology
Sometimes used as “balance of harm and benefits”

Background:

The phrase “balance of harm” is used by a variety of disciplines: the courts, medical, military and natural resources, dealing with risk.

Per Linda Goodman, lawyer on the staff of USDA Homeland Security, the origins of this phrase is rooted in the UK child labor laws of the 1800’s.

Examples:

Part IV of the Family Law Act 1996 – UK

Balance of harm test:

“The court will also operate a 'balance of harm' test. This means the court must make an order if it appears that the applicant or child is likely to suffer harm attributable to conduct of the respondent if an order is not made as great or greater than the harm the respondent is likely to suffer if the order is made.”

Guidelines on Ethical and Legal Considerations in Research on HIV/AIDS and Drug Use at the Community Level – UK

Researchers have a moral duty to continually assess study practices to ensure that they are ethical. For example, including minors who are using drugs in a study requires a careful analysis of the legal context and the balance of benefit against potential harm. Researchers also have a moral duty to monitor the implications of their findings and facilitate their use in policies and programs. Researchers must make every effort to anticipate, and minimize the negative impact that studies might have on individuals, communities and service providers. Ensuring that a study is ethical involves an ongoing process of anticipating and monitoring the balance of harm and benefit. This process is complicated and involves a good deal of ambiguity. (Canadian HIV/AIDS Policy & Law Newsletter Spring 1997)

Government looks to ax environmentalists’ edge in legal logging battle - In discussing the “Healthy Forest Restoration Act”, Mark Rey said, “What we have suggested is to balance the proposition that you can’t uncut a tree against the equally valid proposition that you can’t unburn a forest”. He said, “give the courts some direction to balance the harm that would occur as a result of the project being carried out against the risk of inaction” (May 17, 2003 Reno Gazette Journal, Scott Sonner)

Evaluating the Net Benefit of Hazardous Fuels Treatment Projects - Per Marc Bosch/WFW, As part of the Healthy Forest Initiative, the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service developed guidance to assist in Section 7 consultation to evaluate the net benefit of hazardous fuels treatment projects. Basically, some projects may have short-term adverse effects on some species, but may have benefits in the long term. Also, "these projects can significantly reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires which can be devastating to wildlife." The guide assists them with evaluating and balancing "the long term benefits of fuels treatment including the benefits of restoring natural fire regimes and native vegetation, as well as the long term risks of catastrophic wildfire, against any short or long term adverse effects". (December 10, 2002 memorandum, "Evaluating the Net Benefit of Hazardous Fuels Treatment Projects")

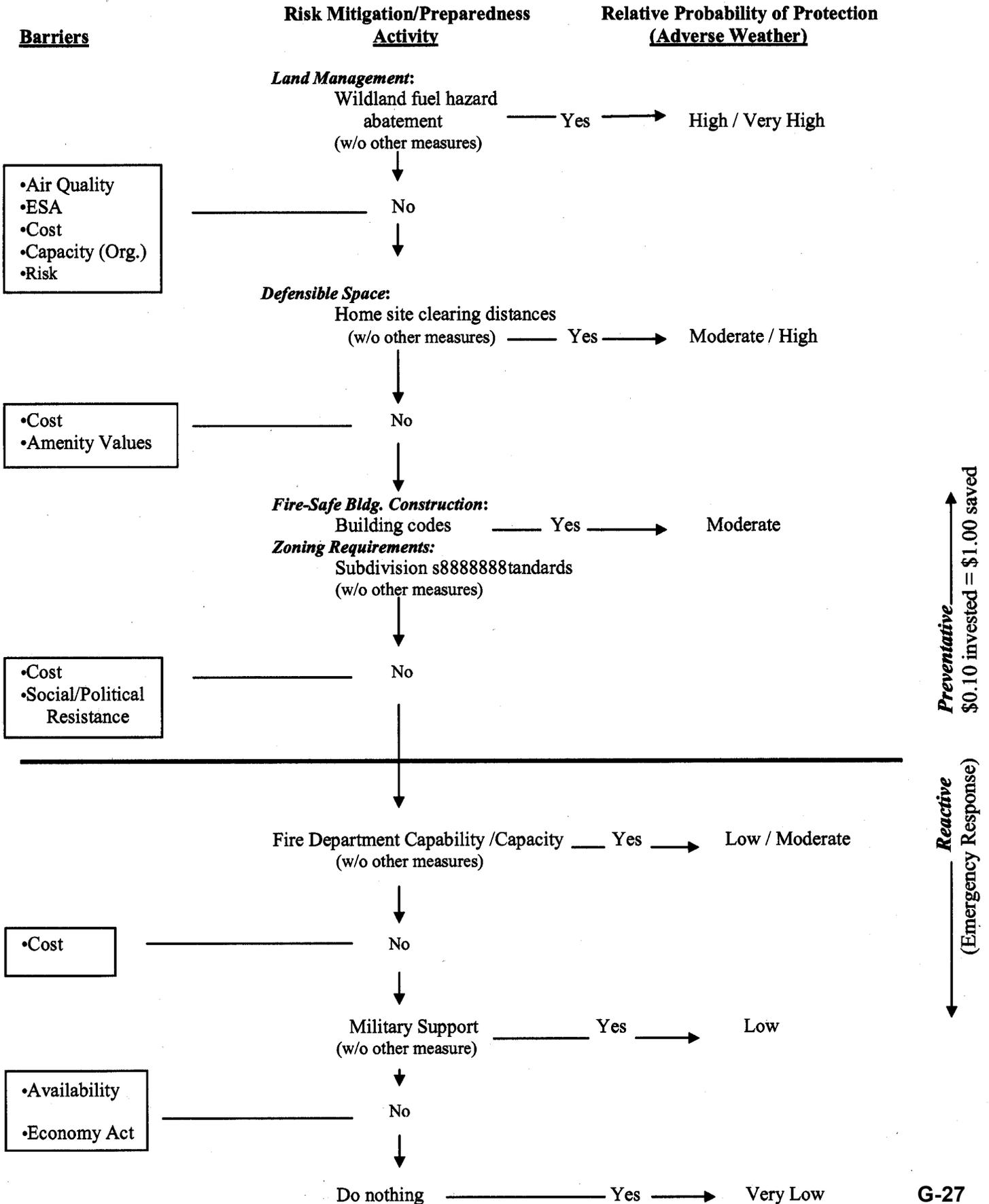
Look at the "big picture", look at the effects, and given all the benefits, accept some bad with the good.

Marc said someone within the Forest Service began to use to the phrase "balance of harm" in reference to the Net Benefit guidance.

The path to healthier forest - The senators agreed to speed up the too-slow citizen appeals process on forest health projects, and sensibly require that judges consider the "balance of harm," taking into account both the short- and long-term effects of their rulings on ailing forests. The agreement properly abandons a more dubious proposal that would require judges to defer to the arguments of the Forest Service and other public land agencies. (September 25, 2003 Oregonian, Editorial)

Don't play with fire - The bipartisan agreement that senators have reached with the White House is a reasonably balanced plan to counter the fires that have swept across millions of acres of thick, sick and dying forests. It speeds up too-slow citizen appeals and sensibly requires that judges consider the "balance of harm," taking into account both the short- and long-term effects of their forest rulings. (October 6, 2003 Oregonian Editorial)

**ORDER OF RISK MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS (RELATIVE RATING)
WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING UNDER MOST ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**





FIRESCOPE

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE/ FIRESCOPE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

3650 Schriever Avenue
Mather, CA 95655

DALLAS JONES
Director, Governor's Office
Of Emergency Services

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Chief, Los Angeles
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Fire Fighters Association

CHRISTY E. BOUMA
Governmental Advocate,
California Professional Fire Fighters

March 2, 2004

Honorable Senator William P. Campbell
Chairman, Blue Ribbon Commission
Office of the Director
Governor's Office of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

Dear Senator Campbell:

2003 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRE SIEGE RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of the FIRESCOPE Board of Directors, I am pleased to forward these important recommendations. We respectfully request that these recommendations be considered and included within the Blue Ribbon Commission's final report to the Governor.

The FIRESCOPE Board of Directors is well suited to bring these recommendations forward because of our broad and diverse representation of the California fire service. As the Advisory Board to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES), our organization was initiated after the devastating 1969/70's wildfires and is comprised of Federal, State, and local fire representatives. FIRESCOPE has been proven as a leader in developing a national Incident Command System (ICS) model, as well as coordinating vast amounts of emergency resources to cope with California's recurring emergency response needs.

Please accept these recommendations as FIRESCOPE's commitment to combat the ever-increasing threat of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fires. Many of these recommendations are not new to the fire service, but without a serious commitment between policy makers, the fire service and the public, needed progress will elude us all.

Sincerely,

P. MICHAEL FREEMAN
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GOVERNOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

FIRESCOPE's Recommendations from the 2003 Southern California Fire Siege

Following are recommendations from the FIRESCOPE Advisory Board of Directors to members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission. These recommendations are presented by topic for clarity and ease of reference.

Communications

Problem Statement:

There is an inability for emergency responders from different agencies to communicate via radio. This lack of wireless interoperability often compromises safety and effective emergency operations during wildland fire fighting and other mutual aid incidents.

Desired Outcome:

Reliable, statewide wireless interoperability which enables emergency responders to communicate during major emergencies.

Recommendations:

1. The Governor should commission a State-wide Interoperability Study Group composed of qualified individuals who will:
 - a) develop short-term and long-term solutions.
 - b) assess funding requirements and sources (including grants).
 - c) seek additional spectrum (frequencies).
 - d) identify the quantity of frequency converters necessary for regional, short-term solutions.
 - e) evaluate satellite capabilities and uses.
 - f) include representation from public safety, mutual aid participants.
 - g) complete their study with recommendations by July 31, 2004.
2. The State Legislature should request a recommendation from OES for additional hand-held and mobile radios to be utilized on major mutual aid incidents as a short-term, temporary solution

to this interoperability problem. Such action and funding should be completed by May 31, 2004.

Training

Problem Statement:

There are no State-wide, mandated training and safety standards for firefighters because many local fire agencies lack funding or other means to provide such training for their responders.

Desired Outcome:

A fully funded standardized training program for all firefighter responders to wildland fires.

Recommendations:

1. Develop State legislation that establishes training for firefighters similar to the Peace Officer Standardized Training (POST) program with funds to fully reimburse local fire agencies for such training.
2. Secure funding to support Federal, State, and local employees' cross-training in emergency management.
3. Request legislative funding to support the FIRESCOPE California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) which specifies advanced-level training firefighters need to fill Incident Command positions on major wildland fires.

Fiscal

Problem Statement:

Fire disasters of long duration are straining the Master Mutual Aid system within the State of California. Local government fire departments are becoming reluctant to send resources, which may be committed for long periods without certain reimbursement.

Desired Outcome:

The allocation of funding to lessen financial impacts for extraordinary costs associated with long-duration commitments on fire disaster responses. Awareness and understanding of the need to support legislative proposals for funding within the State administration and among legislators.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Governor and State Legislature:

1. provide adequate funding to offset the financial impacts to local government resources for response to major long duration emergencies when disaster relief is not available.
2. provide adequate funding to offset fiscal impacts to local government for pre-mobilization costs.
3. recognize that the wildland fire threat exists year-round and traditional funding sources need to fund twelve months of State readiness and staffing.
4. fire agency budgets need to be protected from declining revenue sources, i.e. ERAF.
5. partner with FEMA to use Hazard Mitigation Grants and other Federal funds to achieve the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations.

Safety**Problem Statement:**

Firefighter and public safety is the top priority of incident managers. Many fire departments lack the funding to properly equip their firefighters with all of the necessary and required individual wildland personal protective and safety equipment, including communications equipment.

Desired Outcome:

All local government firefighters are provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, safety equipment and communications equipment.

Recommendations:

1. Provide the necessary information and work with State administration and legislators to support funding sources, i.e., dedicating funds to support provisions of existing legislation (SB-90).

Mutual Aid and Resources

Problem Statement:

Large-scale Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) emergencies require a time commitment of unknown duration and a massive resource mobilization. Further, the State of California is in need of more wildland fire suppression hand crews as these were in short supply during the 2003 Fire Siege.

Desired Outcome:

State and, as appropriate, Federal funding to assure additional OES fire engines, wildland fire suppression hand crews and pre-event mobilization of response resources to include military assets as appropriate.

Recommendations:

1. Purchase 150 additional fire engines and logistical support for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). The additional engines would be assigned to fire departments with commensurate staff to meet deployment requirements.
2. Fund and augment the number of CDF and local government fire hand crews to meet the perimeter control needs of WUI fires (to be recommended by CDF via FIRESCOPE).
3. Fund research and development of new technology to enhance command and control functions and new suppression techniques.
4. Fund an electronic tracking system of all resources, Federal, State, and Local Government, within California at regional and operational area dispatch centers.
5. Fund FIRESCOPE with dedicated support staff to ensure maintenance and completion of Incident Command System (ICS) and Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS) products.
6. Establish a military liaison position within FIRESCOPE and MACS to best utilize military assets and streamline their implementation.
7. Provide funding so emergency resources can be pre-deployed when predicted and/or actual fire conditions present themselves before conflagrations develop.

Fire Safe Communities

Problem Statement:

Increased development and population within the Wildland Urban Interface heightens the risks associated with uncontrolled wildland fires.

Desired Outcome:

Fire Safe Communities with appropriate codes, fuels management, and knowledgeable residents and first responders.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that appropriate State officials (Fire Marshal, Building Standards Commission, etc.) incorporate the following into the 2006 State Building and Fire Codes, Public Resources Code and other relevant codes:
 - a) WUI fire-safe construction features (State-wide)
 - b) hazardous fuels/vegetation clearance and fuel modification programs
 - c) water supplies, access, defensible space, etc.
2. It is recommended that appropriate State officials develop WUI fire-safe insurance credits to provide financial incentives for property owners.
3. It is recommended that federal mitigations continue to fund local community Fire Safe Council efforts aimed at annual WUI fuel modification and public education programs in target areas.
4. It is recommended that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, through the State Fire Marshal, promote the importance of Fire Safe Councils in the local WUI communities with information related to available Federal financial assistance.
5. It is recommended that Federal grant funds be increased and distributed through the California Fire Alliance to fund local fire department support of local Fire Safe Councils.
6. It is recommended that funding and support be continued for the Fire Wise Communities Program.

PROCESS

Problem Statement:

Upon conclusion of the Blue Ribbon Commission efforts, follow-through and implementation of the recommendations may be fragmented and uncoordinated given the wide range of needs and stakeholders.

Desired Outcome:

Evaluate and implement the Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations in a timely, responsible manner with appropriate input from stakeholders and responsible governmental entities.

Recommendations:

1. The Governor and the Legislature should establish a Fire Siege Subcommittee consisting of legislators, fire officials, and others as appropriate to evaluate recommendations, develop implementation strategies and report back to the governor and legislature bi-monthly until efforts are concluded.
2. Establish a firm time frame for efforts of the Fire Siege Subcommittee, but not to exceed twelve months from date of formation.

United States Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
Office of Fire and Aviation
3833 S. Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705-5354
<http://www.nifc.gov>

In Reply Refer To:
9210 (FA100)

March 1, 2004

Senator William P. Campbell
California Governor's Blue Ribbon
Commission on Wildfires, Chairman
c/o Office of Emergency Services
P. O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Dear Chairman Campbell:

Thank you for your leadership on Governor Schwarzenegger's Blue Ribbon Commission, addressing the California wildfires experienced last fall. Your ability to raise the pertinent issues is greatly appreciated by the fire community.

The recommendations that follow focus on the Department of the Interior's (DOI) input to the flammable fire environment that dominates the southern California ecosystems. They reinforce an interagency approach to addressing the magnitude of these disasters and emphasize a proactive resource and fire service approach.

Recommendation 1:

- Initiate a review of the total costs of fire suppression, including restoration and insurance payments, and compare the costs to the value of resources and infrastructure saved.
- Conduct research on the best landscaping strategy and vegetation to be utilized in defensible space. This can be done for different fuel types and various topographies.
- Initiate research on social, political and economical values that conflict with environmental and ecosystem values. Some of this research is already underway at the Federal level.

Recommendation 2:

- Utilize research findings to ensure that value conflicts are mitigated through land management planning processes at the Federal, State and local levels.
- Modify existing building codes and zoning ordinances to comply with Firewise and FireSafe programs.

Recommendation 3:

- Request the Federal Emergency Management Agency develop a grant program for wildland fire mitigation. This program could be modeled after their flood and hurricane program for natural disasters.
- Request the Department of Energy to develop a grant program for utilizing woody biomass for electric co-generation.

Recommendation 4:

- Develop a monitoring program that tracks community assessments, Firewise treatments, and fuel reduction projects to determine if monetary investments are reducing the number of human caused fires and large fire suppression costs.

Recommendation 5:

- Direct the California Department of Forestry, Office of Emergency Services, United States Forest Service and Department of Interior to improve working relationships by updating interagency agreements that would leverage capability and capacity throughout California.

The Department of Interior supports the recommendations submitted by the California Department of Forestry and the United States Forest Service. We believe that the combined recommendations will make a significant difference in resolving all the issues brought before the Commission. We are looking forward to working on the solutions with our various partners throughout California. Thanks for your outstanding leadership.

Sincerely,

/s/ Larry E. Hamilton

Larry E. Hamilton, Director
National Office of Fire and Aviation

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
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(916) 653-7772



February 27, 2004

Senator William Campbell
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
c/o Bob Gerber
Office of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 419023
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9023

Dear Senator Campbell:

A sincere thank you for your outstanding leadership as Chairman of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. You have provided a broad and objective forum for examining in depth the California Fire Siege of 2003.

As with all disasters and response efforts of this large scale, there is much to be examined and evaluated. We take to heart your often-stated commitment that the findings and recommendations from this Commission will be broadly disseminated to decision-makers, and that positive steps forward will result.

CDF appreciates the several opportunities to testify before the Commission and to explain the many operations of the state's wildland fire response system. You and the Commission staff have provided extensive agendas over a broad range of topics, and the Commission members are to be commended for the many hours and close attention they have brought to this task.

Attached please find a list of recommendations that CDF offers from the perspective of the department. We also wish to endorse the recommendations from FIRESCOPE, the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Interior, and look forward to reviewing the ideas from other members.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By

Andrea E. Tuttle
Director

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION

Submitted by the
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION (CDF)
March 1, 2004

Recommendations

I. Retain and Strengthen CDF's Capacities

Background:

As a statewide fire department, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) performs a vital public safety function protecting lives, property and watershed values on 31 million acres of wildland and urban-interface lands. CDF's statewide span of jurisdiction provides strong benefits of coordination, efficiency and economies of scale. This contrasts with other states where state presence is weaker and coordination less effective across discrete local districts, volunteer companies, and federal agencies. CDF has an international reputation as a premier firefighting agency, known for the high caliber of its personnel, training and resources. The high success rate of initial attack – holding 95% of fires to 10 acres or less– is evidence of the strength and capability of the department.

Because of its size, population and extent of wildlands, California has more residents living in wildlands and the urban-wildland interface than any other state. Because of its Mediterranean climate and fuel types, CDF averages approximately 7000 large fires per year on State Responsibility Area, totaling around 130,000 acres. CDF also responds to wildfires on federal and local responsibility areas as a cooperator. Southern California is distinguished by a fall Santa Ana wind pattern occurring when fuels are driest. Over the years, because of recurrent fires in this Mediterranean fire regime, a well integrated partnership of local-state-federal firefighting response capability and command systems has developed.

Specific benefits brought by CDF's statewide presence include:

- a common command and control structure that can be applied in any situation throughout the state
- ability to deploy resources throughout the state where needed, providing pre-positioning during periods of elevated fire danger, and the ability to cover and backfill behind committed resources between the north and the south
- Standing availability of skilled Incident Command Teams for instant dispatch
- Consistent training and low injury rate

- Capability to manage multi-tasks and multi-incidents. CDF is routinely tasked by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services to manage and supplement non-fire disasters (e.g. floods, earthquake, epidemic outbreaks, major hazardous materials spills)
- Closely integrated coordination with Office of Emergency Services and the master mutual aid system

Specific Department Needs:

- Lengthen CDF Budgeted staffing periods to reflect changed weather and fuel conditions, especially in southern California. In particular, year-around budgeted staffing is needed in San Diego and some adjacent CDF administrative units.
- Examine alternatives for stationing additional helicopter(s) in San Diego for year-round fire response
- Authorize and budget for 4 person staffing on fire engines during the peak fire season period (generally from July through October) and when specific burning conditions are met
- Authorize and budget for staffing of additional fire crews and bulldozers when specific burning conditions are met
- As inmate and ward populations change, ensure impacts of fire crew reductions do not leave geographic gaps in CDF's fire protection system, or affect the number of available fire crews for initial and extended attack on fires, and for performing hazard reduction work on appropriate lands

II. Examine CDF and Inter-Agency Aviation Issues

- Examine alternatives for replacement and diversification of CDF's aging helicopter fleet (e.g. add Type I helicopters to fleet and begin a replacement planning cycle for the existing Type II helicopters)
- Amend the Federal Economy Act to permit immediate ordering of out-of-state MAFFS during gubernatorial declared emergencies or when a gubernatorial disaster declaration has been requested.
- Require military authorities to communicate with local fire agencies adjacent to military bases before each fire season to advise those fire authorities of specific military resources available for fire response, and ensure training and equipment preparedness.
- Where federal military assets are available, include federal military representatives in local MACS operations to assure full integration of all available military assets when prioritizing the deployment of resources.

III. Improve Fire Intelligence Gathering

- Support and fund improvement of interagency intelligence/information gathering systems, with the goal of creating an expedited, single-source data base that greatly enhances real-time and night-time intelligence, and disseminating information to incident management, predictive services, ground resources, elected officials and the media.

IV. Land Use, Fire Safe and Forest Health Requirements

The combination of dry fuels, strong Santa Ana winds and ignition can quickly exceed the response capability of any suppression force. Investments in preventive measures to reduce fuel loadings, provide fire-safe clearances around structures and subdivisions, and improve building standards are crucial for reducing the intensity and damage from episodic, large scale wildfire sieges. To this end:

- Accelerate focus on comprehensive fuels management throughout Southern California. Enhance existing framework of Fire Safe Councils, Forest Service resource management and local land use planning agencies through new inter-agency agreements between CDF, USFS and local districts to strengthen cooperative fuels management plans and programs. Encourage continuing involvement of utilities, the insurance industry, law enforcement officials and others in Fire Safe Councils and MAST-type organizations.
- Authorize CDF to place liens on tax rolls for non-compliance with weed abatement and clearance requirements (4290, 4291) requirements in the State Responsibility Area
- Authorize use of CDF fire crews on privately owned lands when part of a planned community protection fuels project, without need for a Vegetation Management Contract
- Increase wildland fire-agency involvement in local land-use planning decisions and review of fuel management plans. For CDF, gaps especially occur in areas where CDF does not provide local government fire protection services (i.e. does not have a Schedule A relationship).
- Consider requirements for homeowners to maintain forest health on residential lots, i.e. prevent development of unnatural, overstocked forest conditions
- Ensure new areas acquired or designated as “open space” and “resource management zones” include fire protection and fuels management as part of the habitat and land-use plan.

V. Training, Recruitment and Retention within CDF

- Resolve salary compaction problems between rank-and-file and manager/supervisor levels to assure continuous recruitment into fire manager and chief officer positions.
- Support training capacity at CDF Lone Academy to assure trained recruitment and succession into all classifications
- Support and enhance wildland fire training for local and volunteer fire districts

VI. Communications, Evacuation Preparedness, Interagency Coordination

- Reaffirm Firescope requirements for minimum 32 channel VHF radio capability for radio interoperability on all firefighting resources responding to wildland fires
- Improve evacuation preparedness of local fire and law enforcement agencies. Conduct annual pre-season tabletop exercises
- Improve public outreach and evacuation education

VII. Fire Protection Command and Control

- Support FIRESCOPE recommendations concerning changes to procedures and policies in command and control operations

VIII. Fire Suppression Products

- Encourage homeowner participation in use of firefighting suppressant/retardant products
- Continue evaluation of suppressant/retardant products such as gels and their various applications

**Board of Supervisors
County of San Bernardino**



DENNIS HANSBERGER
CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT

February 19, 2004

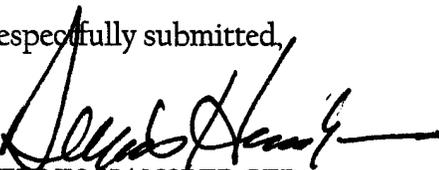
Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman &
Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
Governor's Office of Emergency Services
P. O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9047

RE: San Bernardino County Position Paper

Within the last year, San Bernardino County has had many learning experiences participating in fire suppression activities. In discussion with fire suppression personnel, we feel our experiences can contribute to the Blue Ribbon Commissions' objective by addressing recommendations aimed at preventing destruction from future wild land fires.

On behalf of the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors and local fire agencies, the attached position paper provides comments and recommendations for consideration and inclusion in the official record of the Commission's proceedings. We ask that specific task or task groups be assigned responsibility for the evaluation and implementation of the recommendations contained in the paper.

Respectfully submitted,



DENNIS HANSBERGER
Chairman
Board of Supervisors

San Bernardino County Position Paper

1. Incident Management

During major wildland/urban interface fires that have occurred in San Bernardino County over the last 4-5 years, and at which either a Type 1 or Type 2 United States Forest Service (USFS) Incident Management Team has been assigned to the fire, it has become increasingly apparent that the lack of knowledge or awareness of the local fire protection planning efforts, area geography, fire behavior, and political boundaries, has hampered the effectiveness of the fire suppression, logistical support, and public information efforts. As a result, local fire agencies have identified the need for the integration of qualified local agency personnel at all levels of incident management to insure that local knowledge and experience are incorporated into the incident management objectives and operational strategies and tactics.

As a point of information, the San Bernardino County Fire Chiefs Association is currently developing a county multi-agency local management team to both assist local agencies on incidents, and to also provide incident support on major wildland/urban interface fires within San Bernardino County.

During the recent fires, it was also apparent that USFS Type 1 teams appear to have lacked a familiarity or understanding of the critical need for interfacing with City or County Emergency Operation Centers (EOC). The coordination between the Grand Prix and the Old Fire Type 1 Management Teams, and the County EOC, became most critical during the re-entry task force deliberations and decision-making process. "After Action" reviews have identified the need to have an EOC representative assigned to the ICP to facilitate better coordination and insure timely information is available to the EOC.

Recommendation: That the forest agencies integrate local incident command team members with their respective incident management teams when local agencies are in unified command on major wildland/urban interface fires. Also, that the USFS pursue inclusion of a module in Type 1 and 2 team-training programs related to the interface with county or city EOC's.

The Old Fire was under initial attack incident command on Saturday October the 25th, transitioned to a USFS Type 2 Team on Sunday morning the 26th, and transitioned again on Monday morning the 27th to a USFS Type 1 Team. Subsequently, an Area Command Team was put into place on Wednesday October the 29th. Concern expressed by local fire agencies that the rapid transition from initial attack command, to a Type 2, to a Type 1 Incident Command Team on the Old Fire resulted in loss of command/control/logistical support etc. during some very critical periods of fire activity. As previously stated, the often unfamiliarity of Type 1 teams with the local area/political structure/resources/existing fire protection planning exacerbates the transition period complexities.

Recommendation: That the USFS reevaluate their current agency practices and criteria for ordering Incident Management Teams so as to better facilitate a more manageable transition process with local agency incident commanders.

As a result of the Mountain Area Task Force (MAST) planning and functional training exercises, all agencies agreed to have the Sheriff's Office in Unified Command with the Fire Service on any wildland/urban interface fires since there was a high potential for community evacuation. The Sheriff's Office was in Unified Command on the Bridge, Grand Prix and Old Fires. These incidents resulted in over 100,000 persons being evacuated from their homes, including over 50,000 from all the mountain communities in the San Bernardino National Forest, without incident or casualty. Having the sheriff's office in unified command substantially improved the coordination and communication with the incident management teams, area command, and the County EOC for both the initial evacuations and the reentry of citizens into the various communities.

Recommendation: That the Firescope Board of Directors considers standardizing the inclusion of the Sheriff Office or local law enforcement agency in the Unified Command Structure for all wildland/urban interface fires in California.

2. Mountain Area Task Force (MAST)

The bark beetle and tree mortality disaster in the San Bernardino National Forest resulted in the establishment of a coordinating group known as MAST. This group is comprised of federal, state, county, and local fire agencies, Sheriff, California Highway Patrol, County Administration/Roads/Solid Waste/Animal Control, local utility companies and Southern California Edison. Additional membership includes the fire safe councils who play a vital role in communication and liaison with other local community groups and citizens. MAST follows a traditional emergency organizational structure, and consists of unified command supported by sections for operations, plans, logistics, finance, public relations, and community liaison. The unified commanders report to the MAST MACS (Multi-Agency Coordination System), which acts as the executive/policy committee for MAST.

MAST, working with the Fire Safe Councils, coordinated numerous community meetings to inform the community of the hazards and to present information related to defensible space, evacuations, and tree removal programs. MAST established priorities such as protecting communications sites, evacuation routes, and life safety facilities. These priorities were then adopted by California Department of Forestry for the bug tree removal program, and by CalTrans and County Roads. Also identified were specific critical community protection areas wherein the USFS could maximize their agencies tree removal programs. Specific community protection plans were developed for all mountain communities for utilization by responding agency to clearly show streets, topographical contours, high hazard and safety zones, plus resource staging areas.

The organizational relationships established through MAST significantly facilitated the effective response and coordination during the Grand Prix and Old Fires. The successful evacuation of over 50,000 citizens from the mountain communities without a traffic accident or injury, plus the evacuation of two hospitals and a zoo, can be directly attributed to the actions and planning developed through MAST.

Recommendation: Since the MAST organization worked very well in San Bernardino County in helping to prepare for the major wildland/urban interface fires and specifically the evacuation of over 100,000 residents, recommend that the concept be considered for utilization in other communities in California faced with similar fire threats. Additionally, recommend the Commission support state or federal funding for mitigation grants to develop similar safety task forces.

3. Wildland Urban Interface

The Grand Prix Fire was driven by the Santa Ana winds into the newer residential communities in the northern areas of Rialto, Fontana, and Rancho Cucamonga. The Old

Fire was primarily driven into older neighborhoods in the north part of San Bernardino City. The newer communities with modern homes, block walls, and less dense vegetation sustained far less damage than those of the older neighborhoods in San Bernardino. Subsequent to major fires during the last fifty years, numerous building and fire code changes have been adopted by local agencies that primarily address new construction. Very few programs have been developed to make older communities "fire safe", and especially those communities directly adjacent to the wildland areas. A number of financial incentives should be considered to assist and encourage property owners into initiating such measures on their properties. For example, if a homeowner were to invest \$15,000 in fire safety improvements to an existing home, it would seem appropriate to require the assessors office not to reassess the property for a period of time for the increased value of the property and home. Another approach might be to establish State or local tax credits for such improvements to private property, or funding to assist with the improvements.

Recommendation: Recommend the Commission support the adoption of a uniform wildland urban interface development code and standards in California. In addition, recommend the Commission support local and state tax incentives to assist homeowners in older neighborhoods that are adjacent to the wildland areas to facilitate upgrades to homes, replace wooden fences with non combustible walls, install fire resistive plantings and create defensible space around homes.

4. Joint Information Center

Following the decision to create an Area Command Team to manage both the Grand Prix and Old Fire incidents, the establishment of a Joint Information Center (JIC) was also ordered by the USFS in support of the incidents. The concept had been discussed by MAST, but no facility was identified or logistical set-up for such a large operations undertaken. Unfortunately, the center took many days to be fully functional due to travel time and arrival of key staff, and the time required to complete the logistical support systems for such an operation. In principle, the concept is sound, however, in practice, the JIC information was usually dated and sometimes difficult to acquire. The establishment of the JIC further complicates the need for timely and accurate information to provide to the press, local communities, political offices, and requires extensive coordination between the incident PIO functions, the EOC (city and county) PIO functions, and local agency public information officers.

Recommendation: Recommend the USFS further evaluate the practicality of using JIC's on wildland/urban interface fires in Southern California, and to consider if it would be more practical to locate the JIC adjacent to a County EOC so as to enhance the information coordination. Housed with the local EOC, both agencies would be in constant contact with local support units, including public utilities, roads, flood control, schools, hospitals and other emergency transportation agencies.

5. Forest Management

In recent decades, threat of fire to the forest and to its adjacent communities has been exasperated by inadequate forest and wildland fuel management. Forest management agencies face numerous restrictions that impede their ability to manage their responsible area in a thorough and timely manner. They are faced with overly restrictive agency red tape, the threat of litigation, excessive environmental review, and a fear of criticism regarding any action they take. Additionally, there has been inadequate funding to achieve wildland and forest management.

Forest and wildland personnel are trained professionals committed to the responsible management of the resources entrusted to them. They have, however, been hampered

in such efforts by the abovementioned causes and are often subsequently blamed for bad outcomes and their lack of action.

Recommendation: Review and adopt a funding requirement plan designed to provide sufficient funding to achieve the management objectives. Modify existing laws and regulations to provide the assignment of responsibility and the latitude to act on that responsibility to forest and wildland management agencies.



GREG COX
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
San Diego County Board of Supervisors

February 27, 2004

Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman &
Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission
Governor's Office of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741

Via facsimile: 916/845-8314

Dear Chairman Campbell: *Bill*

Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. Based on our experience in San Diego County during the Southern California wildfires the following recommendations are submitted for consideration and inclusion in the official record of the Commission's proceedings:

1. Information on fire direction and behavior is critical for the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Assignment of a representative from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to the San Diego County EOC is essential to provide timely fire information. Without timely information, county officials cannot effectively alert, warn and notify residents of the appropriate actions to take including the need to evacuate. I fully understand that CDF's first priority is to fight the fire and hope that the State will give priority to ensuring sufficient CDF personnel are available to fulfill this important role. The County of San Diego will also do its part to dispatch County personnel to the field command post where it is possible to do so without impinging on fire response operations.
2. Priority must be placed on providing Interoperable Communications. The ability of public safety emergency and support personnel to talk with each other via voice and data in real time is crucial in large magnitude events where multiple disciplines and multiple jurisdictions are involved whether facing a wildfire, terrorist incident, or any similar emergency situation. Funding for regional interoperable communication systems, like the San Diego/Imperial Counties Regional Communications System, should be a high priority at the State and Federal levels and consideration should be given to use of state homeland security funds, among other sources, to achieve this goal.

Senator William Campbell (Ret.), Chairman &
Members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission
February 27, 2004
Page 2

- 3. Flexibility in the use of aviation resources which allows for decision-making at the local level is critical. We fully understand that aerial firefighting is dependent on many factors including availability, weather, communications capabilities and trained personnel. I urge the Commission to resolve the many issues surrounding use of CDF and military aircraft and flight cut-off times before the next large conflagration rather than in the heat of siege when fire managers are inundated with multiple priorities. What may be a reasonable requirement in one geographic area at one point in time might not be the best tactical decision in another area or at another time. Flexibility and common sense must be the prevailing operational models.**

On behalf of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, I would like to thank the Commission for its work and for the opportunity to provide comment. I would also like to recognize the tremendous dedication and efforts on the part of firefighters and emergency personnel from all over California who worked tirelessly to save lives and homes here in San Diego County.

Sincerely,



GREG COOK
Supervisor, First District

INFORMATION FOR INCLUSION IN BLUE RIBBON FIRE COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

Submitted by
Supervisor Jim Venable, Riverside County Representative

Item 1. We need to task the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with finding ways to financially support local government with preparation and mitigation efforts. (This will require legislation and needs to be a point of discussion.)

For too long we have had the process upside down. We spend far too much money fighting wild land fires and paying for our residents to recover when there have been specific ways we could have spent less up front to mitigate the hazard. A perfect example is our dying forest in Riverside County.

Two years ago in March 2002 we became so alarmed over what we were seeing in terms of tree mortality that I urged my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors to declare a Local Emergency. I also convinced the Board to give nearly \$500,000 of county funding to remove the dead trees, as well as buy chippers and generators.

That Local Emergency declaration read: "Conservative estimates of the number of trees that need to be treated is 500, with the number growing every day. Costs for removing these trees range from several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars, with an average of \$1000 per tree. Crews can only remove 5-8 trees per day and work orders are accumulating. With CDF insect control crews spread to their maximum, it would seem prudent to find ways to enlist the help of the private sector and other types of crews to meet this pressing need. Funding is needed to begin that type of program."

We were told, "there are no additional funding sources immediately available to supplement our Insect Control Program operating budget, nor is there any additional personnel authority and funding." (*Letter from Chief Jim Wright, Deputy Director for Fire Protection, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, February 15, 2002*).

We were also told, "Based on OES' assessment, we do not believe the current situation in Riverside County warrants a state of emergency nor have we been able to identify any other state or federal relief programs that would assist Riverside County at this time." (*Letter from Dallas Jones, Director, Governor's Office of Emergency Services, March 15, 2002.*)

During the following year we set up tours, wrote letters, attended conferences to address the decision makers, and lobbied relentlessly for state and federal help. It was in March 2003 that the state finally agreed that we had a problem and declared a State of Emergency. But even after that time, it still look nearly 9 months to finally get any kind of real tangible support.

I want to remind you that in March 2002 we estimated that we had 500 dead trees...and we were alarmed. The conservative estimate now, based on Sept. 2003 aerial photos, indicates that we have at least 1.2 million dead trees, or nearly 75% of our forest. And the numbers continue to grow each day. A tree mortality situation that could have perhaps been curbed with an expenditure of half a million dollars, is now going to take hundreds of millions of dollars to solve. And if we have a fire, the costs for response and recovery will soar into the billions.

Item 2. We need ongoing coordination with the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and League of Cities. We have to work together with all stakeholders before any emergencies start, in the preparation and mitigation phases. This is the one sure way to guarantee that the important recommendations developed by this Commission come to fruition. (Whether or not this will require legislation needs to be a point of discussion.)

This movement has already been started. The CSAC Agriculture and Natural Resources committee has issued a "call to action" and is asking for governmental entities at all levels to "cooperate, collaborate and communicate in the development of better land use policies and wild land fuel management programs." The Riverside County Board of Supervisors has adopted a resolution (*Resolution 2004 - 081, February 10, 2004; see attached*) supporting what CSAC and the League of Cities are doing. I assure you that my staff and I will continue to stay involved long after this Commission completes its work and I urge other elected officials, from the Governor's office to city council members, to join in this effort.

Item 3. We need to find a way to take the management of our public resources out of the courts and place it back in the hands of our competent fire professionals. (Whether this can be legislated by changes to the CEQA and NEPA regulations needs to be a point of discussion.)

A report from the federal General Accounting Office published in June 2003 stated that 59% of all fuel reduction activities in the United States were slowed or stopped due to litigation. In California, it was 68% of all fuel reduction activities that were stalled by legal action. In a recent House Resource Committee meeting on the subject, it was disclosed that the government has spent \$9 million in the last 3 years on litigation. This is a complete waste of our taxpayer's money, and I am calling on this Commission to help identify a way for it to be stopped.

Item 4. We need to find ways to reduce or eliminate "match" requirements for federal funds. (Whether or not this will require legislation needs to be a point of discussion.)

In Riverside County, when we finally received word that we would be receiving some desperately needed grant dollars from a variety of sources (FEMA, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resource Conservation Service) we were very grateful for this funding. But we remain very concerned about one aspect. All these grants require a match. The Forest Service grant is 50/50 and the others are 75/25. The County of Riverside, like all counties in this state, is facing a severe budget shortfall, and coming up with millions of dollars right now to meet these match requirements is just impossible.

My staff is working with our federal elected officials to see if there is any way possible to waive those match costs, but I feel we need a concerted effort to address this issue.

2
3 RESOLUTION 2004-081
4 RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
5 AND LEAGUE OF CITIES COLLABORATIVE PLANNING EFFORT TO DECREASE
6 IMPACTS ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY RESULTING FROM WILDLAND URBAN
7 INTERFACE FIRES

8 **WHEREAS**, catastrophic wildfires are one of the most significant threats to
9 communities, forests, and wildlands in California today, and;

10 **WHEREAS**, California's population growth continues to migrate into highly
11 flammable areas and local government must ensure that growth is prudent,
12 responsible and limits risk, and that development meets Fire Safe standards for both
13 residents and the fire service, and;

14 **WHEREAS**, it is critical that all levels of government learn to cooperate,
15 collaborate, and communicate in the development of better land use policies and
16 wildland fuel management programs to resolve issues associated with wildland urban
17 interface fires, and;

18 **WHEREAS**, in the State of California, about 4 million acres of private land and
19 39 million acres of federal land are at risk and have the potential to burn
20 catastrophically, and;

21 **WHEREAS**, to comply with environmental and regulatory agency requirements,
22 fire professionals and land managers have increasing difficulty in conducting
23 vegetation, watershed and forest management activities, and it is critical that fire
24 service, local, state and federal agencies work together to create responsible and
25 effective vegetation management plans, and;

26 **WHEREAS**, the increasing cost of large, catastrophic wildland fires and the
27 ever-increasing suppression costs and damages caused by these fires must be
reduced by forging collaborative efforts in land use planning and aggressive vegetation
fuels management programs, and;

1 **WHEREAS**, to address this threat, the California State Association of Counties
2 (CSAC) and the League of Cities (League) are proposing the formation of a
3 partnership between both entities as well as the state and federal governments, and;

4 **WHEREAS**, CSAC and the League have recommended that this partnership
5 focus on multi-jurisdictional and multi-agency coordination to standardize and improve
6 pre-fire mitigation, prevention and response to any fire hazard in the forest, range land,
7 watershed, wildland urban interface and open space in the State of California, and:

8 **WHEREAS**, Riverside County is heavily impacted by these fire management
9 issues and has many thousands of residents and properties located in high fire hazard
10 areas, and this County has always been at the forefront of addressing fire safety
11 issues;

12 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Riverside County Board of
13 Supervisors on the 10th day of February 2004, does hereby resolve to support CSAC
14 and the League in working toward a systematic solution to California wildland fires to
15 ensure that the devastation created by these past fires will remain a part of California's
16 history, rather than its future.

MEMORANDUM

To: Chairman Senator William Campbell, The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission

From: Board Member Ronny J Coleman

Date: February 18, 2004

Subject: Issues to be Reviewed; California Blue Ribbon Fire Commission - 2003 SoCal Fires

The Blue Ribbon Commission was to identify and evaluate four (4) topic areas

The four specific areas identified by Governor Davis and Governor-elect Schwarzenegger were:

- Reducing and eliminating jurisdictional and operational barriers that prevent the expeditious response of military resources necessary to combat wild fires;
- Readiness training of personnel and military equipment approved for use within the California incident command system (ICS);
- Development of an interstate and/or regional master mutual aid system similar to California; and
- Updating local building and planning regulations to include more stringent construction standards for high fire severity zones areas, requirements for brush clearances and fuel modification, and land use planning techniques that protect property.

We have received extensive testimony on the first three of these items. We have discussed the readiness and the deployment of the most sophisticated fire protection system in the county. This review process has also identified how the California Master Mutual Aid system is mobilized and managed under the most stressful of conditions. Fire command and control was discussed with respect to the use of ICS and FIREScope. We have heard a great deal about the process of accessing and utilizing military resources also.

Critical to addressing the problem is to also understand that we will never be able to totally eliminate urban wildland interface fires. Thus the focus on the last topical area is extremely important. Emphasis must be placed on how to minimize the destruction of private and public property in the interface areas. Preservation of the built environment and to insure the safety of the general public and the professional fire fighter who is asked to control and ultimately extinguish any given fire scenario will likely be impacted through effective fire protection mitigation planning. We do know that that California currently has one of the most progressive systems for the identification of the "fire threat zones" used in any state, having been developed through a coordinated effort between the state and county and local fire agencies and a very detailed mapping system was

developed by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) which identifies the wildland fire hazard severity zones.

Having said that, I recognize that we have also received testimony on the use of some very specific measures, which have been taken in the past to reduce the damage caused by these wildland fires by various jurisdictions. These mitigation measures have included:

- Defensible Space
- Fuel Modification
- Buffer Zones
- Greenbelts
- Fuel Breaks
- Landscape Walls

However, is my understanding that several of the agencies involved in the response to this series of fires has engaged in one more step that needs a more examination; extensive damage assessment documentation that identifies some of these same factors with supportive data from the experience of these fires. To date, I have not seen an example of any of actual damage assessment documents being offered in testimony to this body. I am not in reference to data on gross losses, but rather the specifics of what happened in individual scenarios during this event. Before we enter into the final evaluation phase of our review I would like to suggest that we do that.

In view of the need to create a better understanding by the various public and private sector stakeholder, including the insurance industry, planning and building departments regarding how to motivate and implement these mitigation practices it would seem appropriate that we receive the benefit of this information before finalizing our recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature. It would also seem to be appropriate to identify those successful factors that have aided buildings in surviving the assault from an interface fire. This information is also needed to encourage the development of local government policies and procedures to plan for and implement mitigation measure locally.

For example, it is clear that many communities are in need of better data on the effectiveness of mitigation measures as they make land use and General Plan amendments. If future General Plans are to deal effectively with these issues, both the recognition of the current urban/wildland interface problems, as well as incorporating “best practices” into the process the lessons learned from damage assessment may be very important when future potentially catastrophic fires occur. Many fire agencies are taking a more proactive role in Planning Processes, but need better data to identify effective practices. Many General Plans are to be updated in the next 5-years. Moreover, developers of both Large and Small Sub-divisions are being required to provide mitigations when submitting their Tentative Maps and Final Maps to reflect that they have an Environmental Impact Report or similar Fire mitigation plans that address the

potential fire problem. This process is similar to what is currently required for the developers to define water supply and sewage disposal plans to the County.

However, we often lack data on the cost effectiveness of specific practices. California citizens lost over 3,000 structures in this last fire siege. Responding fire forces also saved thousands more. What “fire safe practices” really made the difference? Does access really make a difference? Is the elimination of combustible roofs the deciding factor or are there other elements at play? This is an area of research that needs to be completely analyzed.

There were several damage assessment teams put into the field after the fires. I have reviewed the data from one such team and discussed the data in two others. These agencies have been developing data on the following characteristics of both buildings that were lost and those that were saved. This Commission should be given a review of their findings with regard to the following

Building Codes:

- Exterior Finishes
- Roof Coverings
- Window (glazing) Protection
- Eaves and Eave Vents
- Balconies and Canopies
- Addressing the issue of “Existing Structures”

Fire Codes:

- Water Supply
- Access Roadways
- Roadway widths
- Bridges
- Clearances

Vegetation Management

- Defensible space
- Shaded Fuel Breaks
- Vegetation Management policies

One thing that is known about the fire siege we have just witnessed, and that is that they will occur again, and once again we will wonder what could we have done differently to prevent the enormous loss of lives, private or personal property and public lands? As we study the issues surrounding the fires, and make proposals, which will result in additional resources, technology and regulations and/or concepts being employed, we should assure that we have conducted the most thorough diagnosis of what fire and building code

practices or the lack thereof made the greatest difference and incorporate them in our recommendations before finalizing the results.

The review process being utilized by this Commission will not be able to prevent a similar event from occurring again; however, it is hoped that through our deliberation the Commission Members will provide the most positive contributions into the specific techniques for reducing future deaths and loss of homes that any previous review process to date has achieved.

Recommendation

That the Blue Ribbon Commission encourage the completion of analysis of specific damage assessment projects to determine the degree of impact that various fire safe practices have on the survivability and loss of buildings in the wildland urban interface.

March 1, 2004

Senator William Campbell
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
C/o Governor's Office of Emergency Services
P.O. Box 419047
Rancho Cordova, California 95741

Dear Chairman Campbell:

On behalf of more than 30,000 career front line first responders, we want first to thank you for the respect shown our firefighters during California Professional Firefighters' presentations to the Commission on January 21st, February 4 and February 19th. Most firefighters are far more comfortable facing down a wall of flames than a bank of microphones, but you and your colleagues made it much easier. Attached to this letter, you will find a summary of the recommendations made by CPF during our three appearances before the Commission.

The task handed you and your colleagues is challenging, to say the least. The breadth of your charge requires that every Commissioner understand firefighting, aeronautics, zoning, forest management, meteorology, communications, fiscal policy, architecture ... the list goes on. Front line firefighters have concerns in all of these areas, but for us they are all tempered by one unblinking reality:

More devastating wildfires are in California's future.

As it will be our members who will be called upon to risk their lives, CPF's three presentations to Commission have zeroed in on the subjects that most directly impact front line firefighters: **staffing, communications and training**. The 2003 Firestorm revealed many positives in these areas, but also uncovered serious deficiencies. Many of the attached recommendations come with a price tag. Though we've suggested cost-effective options, we believe the expense of upgrading our state's emergency response system is minimal when compared with the enormous cost to our society and our citizens if these vital services are allowed to falter.

Once again, we appreciate the courtesy and professionalism shown by the Commission and its staff. If you have any questions regarding these suggestions, please feel free to contact either of us through the CPF offices – (916) 921-9111 – or via email: info@cpf.org.

Cordially

Dan Terry
President
California Professional Firefighters

Bob Wolf
CPF 6th District Vice President
CPF Rep – Blue Ribbon Commission

California Professional Firefighters

Summary of Recommendations To *Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission*

More than 15,000 front line firefighters put their lives on the line to protect lives and property during last fall's devastating Southern California Firestorm. For two weeks, firefighters battled fierce winds, blinding smoke and flames of unimaginable intensity, working on little more than guts and adrenaline.

When the fires were finally out, the toll was steep – more than 800,000 acres burned, 3300 homes destroyed, 22 lives lost. But thanks to the selflessness and resilience of these public safety professionals, thousands upon thousands of homes and lives were saved during the worst series of fires in California history.

In the aftermath of the 2003 Firestorm, Governor Gray Davis and then-Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger established the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. The Commission's task is to examine the events of last fall and make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on how to better prevent and combat future devastating wildland fires.

And make no mistake ... ***there will be more fires like those experienced last fall.***

As the representatives of the 30,000 men and women are called to serve when our state is struck by disaster, **California Professional Firefighters** was proud to present testimony and recommendations at three separate public hearings held by the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission. The testimony and recommendations centered on those areas that directly impact the ability of front line firefighters to do the job we ask of them as citizens. These recommendations are summarized here in four categories: staffing, communications, training and fiscal issues.

STAFFING

POSITIVES

Mutual Aid – The scope and speed of the response by California’s firefighters reinforced the importance of California’s trend-setting mutual aid response system.

Initial Attack – Even at the height of the deployment in Southern California, fully-staffed 4-person CDF crews were still able to make successful initial attacks on nearly two-dozen other fires that erupted in Northern California throughout the same period.

Temporary Staffing Enhancement – Annual state budget enhancements to boost CDF crew size to 4-person made more efficient use of resources. More importantly, it saved lives and property. In Simi Fire, the additional staffing authorized provided enough of a margin of error to keep the fire from moving into heavily inhabited areas of Malibu.

NEGATIVES

Resource shortages – Local fire departments that sent strike teams found their own resources severely depleted. In some cases, local departments had to call in regional mutual aid assistance to help them address local fires, because some of their resources had been deployed in Southern California.

Shorthanded crews – Despite OES and CDF standards requiring four-person crews on all engines, some strike teams deployed on the fires carried vehicles with three or fewer firefighters. These crews could not be deployed without additional backup, delaying their response. Those that responded anyway had a significantly greater risk of injury, and usually wound up being supported by fully staffed strike teams.

Over-emphasis on aerial response – While aerial attack plays an important role in keeping a fire at bay, airplanes and helicopters do not put out large fires – firefighters do. The public and media focus on aerial response has made it harder to draw attention to the critical staffing issues affecting both local fire departments and CDF.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Minimum four-person staffing on all California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection engine companies.***
- ***Mandatory 4-0 staffing for all LOCAL AND REGIONAL engine companies responding to an OES mutual aid call.***

- ***Acknowledge national and state safety protocols establishing four-person crews as the industry standard for all engine and truck companies for all professional fire departments – state and local.***

COMMUNICATIONS

POSITIVES

Existing communications caches – Those strike teams able to check out CDF “white” radios from communications caches were able to effectively communicate with CDF Incident Command

Intra-department communication – Firefighters from departments with significant urban-wildland interface areas were generally able to effectively communicate with fellow strike-team members on their own department frequencies.

Ad Hoc solutions – Firefighters used their ingenuity to the fullest to compensate for communications problems. Many used cell phones and two-way radios, while others developed special signals on their engines to send out emergency warnings.

NEGATIVES

Inter-departmental communication – Incompatible systems and technology often made it impossible for strike teams to communicate with incident commanders ... or just about anyone else. In some cases, strike team leaders had to carry three or four different radios in order to keep communication lines open. Almost all were forced to resort to cell phones at some point.

Ineffective equipment – In many cases, departments with more sophisticated 700mhz and 800mhz systems had an even tougher time communicating, owing to the limitations of these systems in areas with mountainous terrain.

Staffing shortages – The variety of frequencies used on the fires sometimes required the strike team leader to designate someone to monitor radio traffic across the various frequencies. Where staff was short, the captain would have to do the monitoring, distracting attention from the job of saving lives and property.

Insufficient attention to needs of firefighting personnel – California’s fire communications system is often driven more by the technological and market demands of the equipment providers than the actual needs of the front line firefighter. This disconnect is a primary contributor to the problem of communications incompatibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Fully engage front line firefighters in all committees and processes involving the development of new communications standards and equipment technology.***

- *Authorize establishment of nationally recognized frequency set-asides for fire and emergency response that are consistent across local, state and federal boundaries.*
- *To encourage competition, all communications vendors should be required to adhere to the new standardized bandwidth and frequency standards*
- *Upgrade and enhance CDF communications equipment*
- *Increase amount of CDF-compatible equipment available through communications caches at major fire incidents.*

TRAINING

POSITIVES

Quality of training -- Over the last three decades, the increasing sophistication of firefighter training has transformed our profession ... and California has led the way. CDF's training protocols are rightfully viewed as the model for the nation.

Better trained local firefighters – Since the Oakland Hills fire, large and medium-sized fire departments have dramatically ramped up training in urban-wildland interface techniques. Many departments have incorporated annual refreshers in wildland techniques

High quality apprenticeship training – More than 8,000 California firefighters have access to state-of-the-art I-Zone training through the California Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee, the state's labor-management training partnership.

NEGATIVES

Local training budget cuts – The economic downturn and fiscal pressures have forced an increasing number of local departments to consider significant service reductions. Fire department training is often the first line item to be reduced or eliminated in tight times.

Variation in training standards – There are any number of high-quality protocols available to train firefighters in urban-wildland techniques. But so far, these training protocols have yet to be brought together into a coordinated program with the support of all agencies involved.

Access to training – The smaller a department's size, the less likely they are to receive state-of-the-art training in urban-wildland techniques. This potential deficiency is most keenly felt among the small and/or volunteer forces that are increasingly finding their jobs complicated by encroaching urbanization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Use California's established firefighter training partnership – the California Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee (CFFJAC) – as a venue through which to develop a set of urban-wildland interface standards that enjoys broad consensus support in the fire service.***
- ***Develop a training program based on these standards, incorporating classroom, video-based training and substantial live and on-the-job***

demonstrations. Such a program should be comprehensive, modular and above-all portable.

- *Make this training and all materials available to all fire departments at little or no cost, utilizing the “train the trainer” format successfully implemented by the CFFJAC for anti-terrorism training (training officers and other key personnel learn the material at regional training sessions, then return home to train their own personnel).*

FISCAL ISSUES

POSITIVES

CDF Supplemental Appropriations – Every fire season, CDF has received additional funding through executive order to help bolster response during peak fire season. This augmentation has consistently included funding for 4-0 staffing on CDF rigs in fire-prone areas.

Shielding fire service from deep cuts – Governing bodies at the state and local level have, until this year, tried to protect fire and emergency services from the impact of the recession. This approach made it possible for the state to engage the kind of massive attack on display during the fires.

NEGATIVES

Lack of dedicated fire safety revenues – Since 1993, California has had a statewide dedicated ½ cent sales tax increase dedicated to public safety – Proposition 172. But while Prop. 172 explicitly included fire and paramedic services, little of this revenue has found its way into the fire service.

Chronic budget pressures – The state’s enormous budget deficit is only the beginning. Local governments throughout California are finding it increasingly difficult to protect vital public safety services. These cuts will make departments more reticent about deploying resources for mutual aid, for fear of leaving local citizens vulnerable.

Outmoded CDF financing model – CDF funding ebbs and flows in accordance with fire season. This model is not consistent with the new reality of California, where “fire season” is increasingly a year-long proposition. CDF is forced to run a 12-month department on an eight-month checkbook.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ***Establish year-round funding for CDF. Incorporate past augmentation levels into CDF’s base-budget, and establish minimum-staffing levels based on a realistic 12-month fire risk.***
- ***Establish secure additional funding stream – through user fees, logging revenues, or other revenue enhancement – dedicated to building up to full 4-0 staffing, as well as modernizing CDF equipment and communications systems.***
- ***Endorse local government efforts to re-allocate half of the growth in Prop. 172 sales-tax revenue to fire service. We are not calling for reallocating past revenues allocated to law enforcement. We are simply asking that the***

spirit of the Prop. 172 be followed by allocating a portion of future growth to fire and emergency services.

- *Encourage an end to the state's practice of siphoning away local property tax revenues to underwrite state budget deficits.*

**Department of Homeland Security-FEMA
CA Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission report recommendations
3/02/04**

The following represent the recommendations submitted on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for consideration by the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

The National Incident Management System (NIMS)

Background

In Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5), the President directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop, submit for review to the Homeland Security Council, and administer a National Incident Management System (NIMS). This system will provide a consistent nationwide approach for Federal, State, tribal, and local governments to work effectively and efficiently together to prepare for, prevent, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size, or complexity.

HSPD-5 requires all Federal departments and agencies to adopt the NIMS and to use it in their individual domestic incident management and emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation programs and activities, as well as in support of those actions taken to assist State, tribal, or local entities. The directive also requires Federal departments and agencies to make adoption of the NIMS by State and local organizations a condition for Federal preparedness assistance beginning in FY 2005. Compliance with certain aspects of the NIMS will be possible in the short-term, such as adopting the basic tenets of the Incident Command System identified in this document. Other aspects of the NIMS, however, will require further development and refinement to enable compliance at a future date.

NIMS has been approved and signed by Homeland Security Secretary Ridge.

Recommendation

That as local/state/federal agencies begin to address recommendations from the Commission report, they evaluate potential impact of NIMS as part of developing solutions to issues involving federal participation.

Multi-Agency Support Group (MASG)

Background

Immediately follow the start of the fires, a Multi-Agency Support Group (MASG) was formed to address immediate issues confronting the affected state and local government agencies, to support a coordinated recovery effort, and coordinate information and resources between state, local and federal agencies. A MASG or similar group can identify issues or unresolved projects and facilitate the deployment of resources at the

county-state level while assessing an appropriate federal role or address issues that originate from local agencies. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) incorporates the concept of MASGs or formation of similar groups to address multi-level and multi-jurisdictional needs.

The MASG is not a policy-making association like a Multi-Agency Coordination group (MAC). It does not usurp the responsibilities of the empowered local-state agencies, but acts as a catalyst to promote the resolution of unmet needs, specific initiatives or issues.

By utilizing a MASG, resources required for post-fire recovery and mitigation efforts can be prioritized and expedited to meet immediate threats and dangers. A strong coordinating agency such as FEMA can lead the initiatives from the MASG in identifying funding strategies, and resources to facilitate the completion of disaster preparation and mitigation projects.

The efforts of the MASG developed for the CA Fires are on-going and while most of it's work and successes are behind the scenes, it is a model for future events.

Recommendation

Consistent with NIMS, the Commission recommend the establishment of MASGs or similar structure, immediately following any significant events where multiple agencies or levels of government are participating or have jurisdiction. Also that the Commission recommend and support any similar efforts to develop groups such as the Mountain Area Safety Task force (MAST) to address pre-event or on-going issues.

Joint Information Center (JIC) Joint Information System (JIS)

Background

Joint Information System (JIS).

JIS provides an organized, integrated, and coordinated mechanism to ensure the delivery of understandable, timely, accurate, and consistent information to the public in a crisis. It includes the plans, protocols, structures used to provide information to the public during domestic incident management and encompasses all public information operations related to an incident, including all local, State, Federal, and private-sector public information officers, staff, and JICs established to support an incident. Key elements include:

- (1) Interagency coordination and integration;
- (2) Developing and delivering coordinated messages;
- (3) Support for decision-makers; and
- (4) Flexibility, modularity, and adaptability.

Joint Information Center (JIC).

A JIC is a physical location where public affairs professionals from organizations involved in incident management activities can collocate to provide critical emergency information, crisis communications, and public-affairs functions. It is important for the JIC to have the most current and accurate information regarding incident management activities. The JIC provides the organizational structure for coordinating and disseminating official information. JICs may be established at each level of incident management. The following are few key considerations of a successful JIC:

- (1) The JIC must include representatives of each jurisdiction and agency involved in incident management.
- (2) A single JIC location is preferable, but the system should be flexible and adaptable enough to accommodate multiple JIC locations when the circumstances of an incident require. Multiple JICs may be needed for a complex incident spanning a wide geographic area or multiple jurisdictions.
- (3) Each JIC must have procedures and protocols to communicate and coordinate effectively with other JICs and with appropriate components of the ICS organization.

Many comments were made at Commission hearings about this subject. DHS-FEMA strongly supports such efforts following any size events, particularly those that involve multiple jurisdictions or levels of government.

Recommendation

Consistent with NIMS, that pre-event coordination is encouraged to develop protocols and procedures for the rapid development of JICs following any incidents that involve multiple jurisdictions or levels of government or have significant public interest.

Also that existing efforts at the local level to develop this capability be looked at as potential models in fire hazard areas.



**Governor's
Blue Ribbon Fire Commission**

TO: Honorable Senator William P. Campbell
Chairman, Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

March 01, 2004

FROM: Fire Chief Ed McOrmond
Southern California Natural Indian Resources Consortium

SUBJECT: Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
Recommendations

Over the last several months I have listened to the testimonies from a large number of experienced and professional individuals. Many of the recommendations we have heard over and over again through the years, but with very few results. It is time that we continue to follow through with our recommendations and see them completed to prevent future devastation from wildland fires.

- **Reducing and eliminating jurisdictional and operational barriers that prevent the expeditious response of military resources necessary to combat wild fires.**

The jurisdictional boundaries are a problem. Multiple, departments unwilling to work together has been a problem for years due to the fact that each department wants to be their own entity. These agencies are forced to work together, but at the same time the command structure continues to be a problem due to the fact that most agencies will not call for additional help until the incident is beyond their ability to handle. They need to implement more automatic aid agreements, rather than rely on mutual aid agreements or consolidate.

The operational problems that are faced in San Diego County are due to the fact of many small agencies throughout the region needing to be consolidated under one direction. The continuing problems of communications involving different radios, such as VHF and 800 MgHz – there needs to be compatible systems when these large-scale incidents occur. Currently, the state and federal agencies utilize VHF to their fullest with not much problems. The problem here is that most local entities don't have VHF capabilities which are required under FIRESCOPE. What we need to do is assure that the entities that do not have these capabilities get funded for the VHF capabilities. VHF has proven, over the years, to work very well statewide and it's time that the local entities be part of the VHF system.

We have to structure the local, county, state and federal agencies and Tribal nations during these large multiple incidents. Many small departments are not experienced in nor trained to work large, multiple wildland incidents. We need to look at different avenues to bring the training levels up in these smaller departments. One of the recommendations would be to consolidate many of these smaller departments under the umbrella of a larger department. If this consolidation were to take place, it would reduce costs for the taxpayer – we're not duplicating costs, we're using the same common communications and the level of training is consistent.

The state and federal agencies already include the military in their firefighting operations. However, there is some fine-tuning that we need to do with the military and state and federal agencies, especially in the aviation section (radio frequencies, flight policies and safety procedures and availability of military aircraft). The chain of command and delegation of authority needs to take place quickly and without conflict of interest. Prior to any incident, in order to be utilized the private aircraft need to be inspected by government officials and meet the minimum qualifications for aircraft carding under state and federal agencies. They also must abide by Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) policies.

Coordination of ordering procedures for aircraft is not the problem. The availability of aircraft during multiple incidents is the problem. Recommendation is to utilize aircraft from other regions and/or states.

In summarizing, we should implement elements of the programs that are currently successful in Riverside, Ventura, Orange and Los Angeles Counties that deal with the urban interface areas (see testimony given by Fire Chief Tom Tisdale of the CDF/Riverside County Fire Department, February 24, 2004).

- **Readiness training of personnel and military equipment approved for use within the California incident command system.**

Many departments still have not complied with the training that is required to be successful in the California Incident Command System. All departments must be required to complete the necessary training and have a full understanding of FIREScope:

- Incident Command System (ICS)
- Multi-Agency Coordination System (MAC)
- Information Management System
- Technological Support
- Common Communications

All agencies must adhere to a Red Card system and National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) 310-1 for checks and balances.

- **Development of an interstate and/or regional master mutual aid system similar to California's.**

Hold regularly scheduled national conference meetings to address the wild land urban interface area issues that are affecting all states, to ensure a uniform level of communications among all agencies to fall within the interstate and regional master mutual aid systems.

- **Updating local building and planning regulations to include more stringent construction standards for high fire threat zones, requirements for brush clearance and fuel modification, and land use planning techniques that protect property.**

Both state and local jurisdictions have to be willing to look at these issues, and change and implement codes and building practices based on recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Panel, such as:

- attic sprinklers
- automatic shutters on eaves and vents
- require soffits to be enclosed
- window shutters
- minimum 100 foot clearance around all structures
- greenbelts with well-planned, fire-resistant landscaping
- look into abilities of foam systems for homeowners
- proper ingress/egress for fire equipment
- Community must have planned, approved written escape routes
- Educate and work with Insurance companies to give homeowners a break when in compliance with these new codes and safety features
- Insurance companies must work hand-in-hand with local fire agencies to ensure that requirements of both agencies are compatible
- Water departments must meet the local fire flow requirements to sustain adequate water pressure and volume for a large wild land fire in a given community

Due to the possibility of upcoming budget cuts, I recommend that public safety take priority. We need to focus on maintaining and increasing our wildland firefighting staffing capabilities where needed. Training and additional equipment must be funded to provide adequate trained resources to be deployed in the event of a large-scale incident. Programs that need this support include both state and federal air programs. The CDF fire handcrew program is a crucial resource in the State of California and should be expanded and funded.

A major asset that the State of California has to potentially successfully manage these large-scale incidents is the ability to deploy a large number of resources at any given time through the local, state and federal agencies, which includes the Incident Command Teams that have the high level of expertise to organize and run a large-scale incident. However, many jurisdictions are reluctant to order these Incident Command Teams at an early stage, when they can be most successful.

Recommendations
Submitted By: Senator Jim Brulte
Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission
Recommendations and Ranking Worksheet

No.	Recommendations (MJR = Multi Jurisdiction; FR= Federal Recommendation; SR= State Recommendation; LR= Local Recommendation)	Rank 1=Must Implement 2=Should Implement 3=Study
1.	JURISDICTIONAL AND OPERATIONAL BARRIERS MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS MJR 1: The Commission recommends that the U.S. Economy Act be amended to permit the immediate ordering of out-of-state Modular Airborne Firefighting Systems (MAFFS) units and the mobilization of military assets prior to the depletion of commercial assets during gubernatorial declared emergencies or when a gubernatorial disaster declaration has been requested. Similarly, amend state statute to activate the California National Guard.	1 Very Important to implement this change as soon as possible.
2.	MJR 2: The Commission recommends that consideration be given to the establishment of a task force to review the social, political and economic issues relating to the conflicts between environmental and ecosystem values and land management planning.	1 Recommendation is a bit weak.
3.	MJR 3: The Commission recommends that federal, state and local fire agencies communicate with adjacent military bases before each fire season to advise those authorities of any anticipate needs and to assess the potential availability of military resources for fire response, and ensure appropriate fire related training and equipment preparedness.	1 This is a basic step in strategic Planning
4.	MJR 4: The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local forest fire fighting agencies review their aircraft operations cut-off time and determine if there can be a window of flexibility during red flag conditions, while at the same time taking into consideration flight crew safety.	1 Recommend this be expanded to a stronger statement
	<p><i>Comments:</i> RECOMMENDATION MJR 4: <i>Expand emergency provision for discretionary decision making to allow a one hour period of immunity to incident commanders in the field that weigh various qualifiers listed below, and decide to allow aircraft to perform suppression activities in saving lives and property.</i></p> <p>Qualifiers include, but are not limited to the following::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct observation of fire conditions and location by reliable ground supervision</i> • <i>Size of fire and location of structures at risk</i> • <i>Distance of fire from aerial support</i> • <i>Readiness of aerial support to respond</i> • <i>Type of aerial support available and ready</i> • <i>Wind, visibility and other weather factors that may affect decision</i> • <i>Whether other resources within proximity to fire are a safer alternative</i> • <i>Communications with aircraft, ground crews, and other fire agency personnel</i> • <i>Monitoring means – Satellite or other technology that may affect decision</i> • <i>Backstop decision plan to require more than one decision maker agree to go outside standard protocol during the one hour “gray period”.</i> 	

5.	MJR 5: The Commission recommends that federal, state and local fire agencies explore the cost and advisability of 4-0 staffing for all fire engine companies responding to WUI fires.	3 Study effect on Budget
6.	MJR 5b: The Commission recommends that federal, state and local policymakers consider creating a stable funding infrastructure for the California Fire Alliance and Fire Safe Councils.	1 Return on investment is well worth the ranking.
	<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Direct Cost Savings:</i> Bob Roper, Chief of Ventura County Fire Department testified to savings of \$44 for every \$1.00 expended in controlled burns conducted by his fire crews. Oversight of properly prepared prescribed burn area cost “approximately \$25 per acre compared to suppression activity that would run \$1100.00 per acre” according to Roper. Mechanical fuel reduction through “cut & stack” programs produce a savings of \$17 for every single dollar invested.¹ • <i>Indirect Cost Savings:</i> Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) frequently cost thousands of dollars to perform and result in serious delay to mitigation of known fire threat zones. Biologist are frequently part of each staff, yet various agency mission statements or responsibilities seem to establish jurisdiction barriers and bureaucratic hurdles precluding acceptance of biologist surveys and reports from other agencies in need of expedited approval. In order to expedite planning and execution of controlled burns or mechanical thinning projects, any qualified biologist, archeologist, or environmental specialist report must be rebuttably presumed acceptable when incorporated into an otherwise suitable plan for fuels management and forest thinning through mechanical means or controlled burns. <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 5b:</i> Request an Executive Order, or initiate legislative measures, to seek and obtain clearly defined categorical exemptions to CEQA, NEPA, and other environmental oversight programs to facilitate fuels management and fuels reduction projects in all areas identified as high risk zones.</p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 5(b.1):</i> Provide “forest management and/or fire protection experts”, within recognized public safety agencies, immediate approval processes to expedite fuels management and fire mitigation measures necessary for the protection of life and property.</p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 5(b.2):</i> Provide and implement a policy of acceptance for cross-agency environmental assessment reports prepared by biologist, archeologist, and watershed management experts in conjunction with fuels management and forest thinning projects. Implement procedures to reduce redundant environmental surveys and/or habitat studies in order to achieve reduced cost, and expedite EIR approval procedures.</p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 5(b.3):</i> Require agency reports for mechanical thinning or controlled burns to include <u>basic</u> environmental habitat surveys necessary <u>to identify and prescribe rudimentary protection standards of species considered endangered or otherwise protected.</u> (This provision will allow fuels management and fire risk reduction to take place while protecting specific habitat locations or species within the designated area.)</p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 5(b.4):</i> Through legislative or regulatory change, implement universal acceptance of environmental reports between agencies in order to expedite forest and land management protection measures. Through such a caveat, appropriate fuels reduction and fire safe protections will be accelerated and millions of dollars in suppression cost shall be avoided.</p>	
7.	MJR 6: The Commission recommends that all firefighters responding to WUI fires	3

¹ Testimony of Bob roper, Chief, Ventura County Fire Department, Jan. 7, 2004.

	must be provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, safety and communications equipment.	Needed but must study cost and impact to agencies.
8.	FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FR 1: The Commission recommends that the National Guard Bureau and DOD add firefighting to their mission.	1 Proper preparation will improve overall effectiveness among all agencies.
9.	FR 2: The Commission recommends that Congress consider authorizing additional grant funds for wildland fire mitigation.	2+ Through study and interpretation of the Stafford Act, pre-fire mitigation funding will save 17-44 times the cost of suppression.
	<p><i>Comments:</i></p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 9: Task the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services with a duty to seek assistance through federal funding programs, even when an emergency is one that is considered “unusual” or unique to long-standing funding provisions, so long as the need is within the category described as a disaster emergency.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 9(a): Provide a mechanism to inform the Governor immediately of any potential disaster situation and include a means to communicate a federal funding request, at the direction of the Governor, without delay.</p> <p>Recommendation 9(b): Specifically include forest management thinning and fire fuels mitigation as a category for emergency funding assistance through State and Federal provisions, when such emergency is determined to exist and represents a clear and present danger to the population of residents within the Wildland Urban Intermix.</p> <p>Applicable Robert T. Stafford Act text for pre-fire mitigation funding assistance: Sec 404} 5170c. Hazard Mitigation (a) In General. The President may contribute up to 75 percent of the cost of hazard mitigation measures which the President has determined are cost-effective and which substantially <u>reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, loss, or suffering in any area affected by a major disaster.</u> Such measures shall be identified following the evaluation of natural hazards under section 5176 of this title and shall be subject to approval by the President. The total of contributions under this section for a major disaster shall not exceed 15 percent of the estimated aggregate amount of grants to be made (less any associated administrative costs) under this chapter with respect to the major disaster. [extract]</p> <p>Furthermore:</p> <p>{407} 5173. Debris removal (a) Presidential authority The President may make contributions-- (1) through the use of Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, to clear debris and wreckage resulting from a major disaster from publicly and privately owned lands and waters; and (2) to make grants to any State or local government or owner or operator of a private nonprofit facility for the purpose of removing debris or wreckage resulting from a major disaster from publicly or privately owned lands and waters. (b) Authorization by State or local government; indemnification agreement No authority under this section shall be exercised unless the affected State or local government shall first arrange an unconditional authorization for removal of such debris or wreckage from public and private property, and, in the case of removal of debris or wreckage from private property, shall first agree to indemnify the Federal Government against any claim arising</p>	

	<i>from such removal. (c) Rules relating to large lots The President shall issue rules which provide for recognition of differences existing among urban, suburban, and rural lands in implementation of this section so as to facilitate adequate removal of debris and wreckage from large lots. (d) Federal share The Federal share of assistance under this section shall be not less than 75 percent of the eligible cost of debris and wreckage removal carried out under this section. [Complete section]</i>	
10.	FR 3: The Commission recommends that the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) initiate a review of the total costs of fire suppression during the October 2003 Fire Siege in Southern California, including restoration and insurance payments, and compare the costs to the value of resources and infrastructure saved	3 see insert
	Recommend: Include all losses be tabulated in cases where no insurance existed or otherwise uncompensated losses are incurred. Code changes and infrastructure expenditures due to post-fire/flood reviews may be qualified incidental losses for a separate category. Loss of business revenue and related loss of taxes to government should be included in full scope of disaster assessment.	< insert
11.	FR 4: The Commission recommends that the federal government reduce or eliminate "match" requirements for federal funds.	2
12.	FR 5: The Commission recommends that Congress support and fund a single source data base that enhances real-time and night-time WUI intelligence.	1 Better intelligence serves to improve response to fire areas and placement or allocation of resources to the location were most needed.
13.	STATE RECOMMENDATIONS SR 1: The Commission recommends that a permanent Joint Legislative Committee on Disaster Response and Homeland Security be established with applicable technical advisory committees to review and resolve conflicting laws, regulations and responsibilities, and develop consistent guidelines for timely implementation of vegetation/fuel management fire mitigation activities.	2. This is a basic model of M.A.S.T. It works and should be emulated Statewide.
	<i>Comments: This is a MAST model that will serve to improve interagency cooperation and multi-discipline understanding for streamlined response and improved cooperation. If the JLC can reduce conflicting legislative sections and consolidate guidelines for maximum response in emergencies, the result may be superior to past experience and a cost savings to the State in fire suppression related expense.</i>	
14.	SR 2: The Commission recommends that fire service be identified and considered as a public safety entity.	???? Is this not the case already?
15.	SR 3: The Commission recommends that sufficient funds be allocated to CDF to address California's fire prevention and suppression needs.	3 This is a budget item that may trigger tax increases if

		not studied carefully.
	<i>Justification to this recommendation includes substantial parity resolution in salary and other components to CDF funding. Creative funding in fire emergencies to assess chargebacks by CDF to cities or jurisdictions where no contract exists, may be a means of achieving balance in cost to a year around program.</i>	
16.	SR 4: The Commission recommends establishing a secure year-round funding for CDF.	1 Evidence of year around fire season is abundant.
17.	SR 4b: The Commission recommends that funding made available to allow each engine to <u>have the capability to disperse</u> new extinguishing agents such as foams and gels.	2
	<i>If limited to “capability to disperse” the Commission must include a criteria that mandates WUI areas be equipped with a “cache” of foam and gels to be strategically located throughout WUI communities, and utilized when a fire in the region occurs.</i> <i>If this recommendation presupposes that only CDF engines are involved in WUI fire suppression efforts, further logistical analysis is needed. The Commission recommendation must include overall State fire protection with utilization of all resources, whether local cities, mutual aid, or federal fire fighting engines, suitably equipped to apply foams and gels when necessary for structure protection.</i>	The details for implementation beyond CDF is necessary.
18.	SR 5: The Commission recommends that the state examine alternatives for replacement and diversification of CDF’s aging helicopter fleet and begin a replacement planning cycle.	3 Study further
	<i>Comment:</i> <i>MAFFS retardant units are available on skid platforms for easy insertion to many conventional aircraft. These units can be purchased and stationed at strategic airfields throughout the State. Sources of aircraft and pilots are a bigger problem and cost to consider. The matter is important but too complex to implement without substantial study and review.</i> <i>RECOMMENDATION 18 / SR5: Review potential use of commercial aircraft currently in “moth-balls” and stationed at Victorville, for retrofit and contract use in MAFFS style fire retardant distribution systems. Position MAFFS retardant systems at each airbase where storage of commercial aircraft exists and contracts are secured for utilization in emergency conditions.</i> <i>RECOMMENDATION 18 b.: Develop and implement a program of training for pilots capable of flying commercial aircraft secured as indicated above.</i>	
19.	LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS LR 1 of 1: The Commission recommends that all local jurisdictions develop and maintain an effective, countywide disaster plan. This plan should involve multiple jurisdictions, and includes a multi-agency communications plan for police and fire. This plan should also include training and equipment for all risk scenarios including working cooperatively with the military.	2 This is a MAST style coordination effort with prepared disaster planning criteria.
20.	TRAINING MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS MJR 1: The Commission recommends that funding be secured to support federal, state, and local employees’ cross training in emergency management.	3 Study How many? How frequent? What is the

		<p>turnover? Why not a dozen specialist strategically positioned in the State?</p>
	<p><i>TRAINING: Testimony of CDF personnel and California Fire Fighters, confirms that substantial issues exist involving low training budgets, radio transmission issues, operational unfamiliarity, and inadequate wildland fire protection training among city based fire agencies. These situations adversely affect readiness of firefighters statewide.</i></p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 20: Establish provision to require OES to structure mandatory readiness training in geographical areas most suited to provide Wildland Urban Intermix readiness skills throughout California. Task CDF, OES, and other agencies, to develop a curriculum suitable to provide unified skills in anticipation of Mutual Aid emergency response incidents among first responders.</i></p> <p><i>RECOMMENDATION 20 (a): Develop OES oversight to implement a plan of rotation among fire agency crews normally involved in mutual aid, through training in typical fire situations and communications programs involving Wildland Urban Intermix fires and related emergencies.</i></p>	<p>If funding will produce a “Train the Trainer” concept that OES and CDF can bring back to California, implement in a Statewide training campaign, and replicate the EMI model, the funding is worth considering on an immediate one-time basis.</p>

21.	MJR 2: The Commission recommends that nationwide training agreements be expanded.	3 See Comment
	<i>Comment: The problem with this recommendation is it comes from the State to impose a duty on the Federal Government that is non-binding in nature. The concept of readiness in defense of our nation is “number one” according to the Department of Defense, with Fire Suppression as “number two” according to testimony of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. Therefore, the recommendation by the Commission necessitates a call upon the Governor to obtain a “military training agreement from the Federal Government” to equip all personnel in specific Military Occupation Specialties (MOS) that may be pressed into duty for fire suppression in California.</i>	
22.	FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FR 1: The Commission recommends that, given the risk of wildland fires as a terrorist tactic, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security fund training exercises to address the threat.	2 Funding from Homeland Security should be sought.
23.	FR 2: The Commission recommends that Congress increase efforts to provide training for local fire departments through federal grant programs and expand the Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program.	2 “The Commission noted that Funding is “imperative.”
	<i>Testimony and evidence confirms that many local fire departments lacked sufficient experience in dealing with WUI fires and structure protection in the WUI zones. Much of the evidence indicates metropolitan agencies are insufficiently trained, or inadequately experienced, to provide maximum fire protection. Training budgets are not tied to performance and certification of Metro-FD’s, therefore resulting in lower skill-sets and higher risk of injury or death.</i> <i>RECOMMENDATION: 23: Establish provision to require OES to structure mandatory readiness training in geographical areas most suited to provide Wildland Urban Intermix readiness skills throughout California. Task CDF, OES, and other agencies, to develop a curriculum suitable to provide unified skills in anticipation of Mutual Aid emergency response incidents among first responders.</i> <i>RECOMMENDATION 23 (a): Develop OES oversight to implement a plan of rotation among fire agency crews normally involved in mutual aid, through training in typical fire situations and communications programs involving Wildland Urban Intermix fires and related emergencies.</i>	FR2 re: #23: This Rx needs the Governor to call upon Congress, and specific financial incentives to local agencies.
24.	STATE RECOMMENDATIONS SR 1: The Commission recommends that CDF/OSFM develop a Master Plan for fire training and education to ensure that trained and qualified personnel are on the fighting lines for their safety and the safety of others.	1 CDF and the OSFM can perform this Rx now.
25.	SR 2: The Commission recommends that CDF/OSFM amend the California Certification System to require Fire Command Company Officer and above to complete the new 40-hour, Fire Command 1C course. This course is designed to provide structural-based Company Officers with tools and techniques to use in wildland fire control.	1 This Rx can be implemented now. (See comments below Rx)

26.	SR 3: The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE be utilized to more fully develop both the training and implementation methodology to support a post incident action summary for all fires in which significant structural loss occurs (more than 50 structures simultaneously on any specific event). Such training should be conducted in cooperation with the CDF/OSFM to assure consistency with the National Reporting Policies. Incident Assessment Teams should be established and "on-call."	2 See Comments
	<i>Comments: Rx 26 fails to link OES to the process of post-fire assessment in large structural loss situations. OES is an integral component to disaster assessment and a key link to disaster funding through Federal sources. Rx: OES should be included as a part of the incident assessment team with CDF/OSFM for post disaster assessment and evaluation relative to FIRESCOPE. The tri-party Incident Assessment Team will assure not only consistency, but application to all training and updated information in order to provide replicable results Statewide, among mutual-aid and local jurisdictions, based on findings or studies.</i>	
27.	SR 4: The Commission recommends that the state develop funding to support the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS).	3
28.	SR 5: The Commission recommends that additional <u>state money</u> be provided for wildland fire suppression training exercises to include National Guard and federal military resources. Also, funding should be made available by the state to improve the training level of smaller fire departments.	3 What is the estimated amount of this funding? Why is this not requested of Federal agencies to fund, since it benefits the national interest?
29.	SR 6: The Commission recommends that the state create a multi-layered public education outreach campaign for residents living in WUI areas.	See notes
	<i>***Notes: Rx29 /SR6 above is contemplated as part of recommendation 5b by Commission in item #6 previously ranked. Recommend Rx 29 be moved to Rx 6 and thereby merged with a high priority for implementation tied to funding.</i>	***
30.	INTERSTATE/REGIONAL MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS MJR 1: The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local fire agencies in California review their various assistance for hire agreements for appropriateness and their potential to undermine California's Master Agreement and Master Mutual Aid System. The Commission further recommends that a single master agreement for coordination and reimbursement of all resources in California be developed.	Priority 1: Rx a date specific for completion of a Statewide Master Mutual Aid Agreement.

31.	MJR 2: The Commission recommends that forest agencies integrate local incident command team members within their respective incident management teams when local agencies are in unified command on major WUI fires, and that a module relating to interfacing with local EOCs be included in USFS Type 1 and 2 team training programs	Priority 1: Training is the key to success of integration components.
32.	MJR 3: The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies continuously maintain and update their mutual aid and cooperative agreements to reflect contemporary needs and costs.	Priority 1: This Rx should be incorporated into MJR2 above.
33.	<p>STATE RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>SR 1: The Commission recommends that FIRESCOPE facilitate federal, state and local fire service agencies working together to reach consensus on the definition of structure protection versus perimeter control. (Ventura AAR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FIRESCOPE (FIrefighting RESources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies) is a cooperative effort involving all agencies with fire fighting responsibilities in California</i> • <i>FIRESCOPE was organized after the disastrous 1970 wildland fires in southern California. The goal of this group was to create and implement new applications in fire service management, technology and coordination, with an emphasis on incident command and multi-agency coordination. This dynamic state-wide program continues to serve the needs of the California Fire Service today</i> 	<p>Priority 1:</p> <p>This is a sound recommendation that is consistent with the Mission and Vision of FIRESCOPE .</p> <p>Development of a cross training program between WUI forces and metro-FD's is needed.</p>
34.	SR 2: The Commission recognizes the value of having a statewide mutual aid agreement that involves both public and appropriate private entities, and in that regard, recommends the development of a statewide master emergency medical services agreement.	Priority 3: See text below SR2 #34
	<i>Since Coop Agreements among 11 of the 58 counties, this Rx requires further study to determine the efficacy of the current agreement and enhancements derived from Statewide application. A cost/benefit analysis and review of details pertaining to private and agency provided Emergency Medical Service is also needed.</i>	
35.	SR3: The Commission recommends that the state acquire 150 additional fire engines and related necessary logistical support for the Governor's Office of Emergency Services to take advantage of fire department personnel currently available to staff these engines.	Priority 3 See notes below SR3 #35
	<i>Re: SR3 Rx for 150 fire engines - The recommendation is insufficient in detail to support State imposed expense in acquiring 150 additional fire engines and related "necessary logistical support". While Rx SR3 #35 indicates the engines will be staffed by "personnel currently available"... this contradicts recommendations in MJR 5 #5,</i>	

	<p>calling for 4-0 staffing on fire engine strike teams. If additional personnel are required, staffing may include as many as 600 fire fighters plus salary, benefits, training, etc. Clarification is necessary to determine impact on the current and future State budget, staffing issues and necessity of creating a larger OES Fire Agency when current State resources exist in CDF.</p>	<p>←</p>
<p>36.</p>	<p>SR 4: The Commission recommends that FIREScope develop a definition and curriculum for an ICS military resource specialist for staffing on incidents on MACS operations.</p>	<p>Priority 2 with amendment</p>
	<p><i>RECOMMENDED AMENDMENT:</i></p> <p><i>“The Commission recommends that FIREScope develop a definition and curriculum for an ICS military resource specialist for staffing on incidents on MACS operations, <u>and upgrade existing FIREScope danger modes to specify a “Mode 2” as a “moderate situation” for assessing a serious potential situation . (A moderate situation is a recognized “fire season” with high potential for involvement of Multi-Agency resources, and appropriate MACS coordination.”</u></i></p> <p><i>Note: FIREScope WEBSITE DEPICTS THE “MODE” OF FIRE DANGER on a daily basis. See extract from website below</i></p> <p><i>FIREScope WEBSITE: Four operating modes have been established for the Multi-Agency Coordination System.</i></p> <p><i>“The decision to change modes will be made by a MACS Conference Call, or collectively by the OES Southern California Deputy Chief, CDF Region Operations Chief, and USFS South Zone Emergency Operations Coordinator or designees.</i></p> <p><i>“Modes 1 and 2 reflect a non-critical regional situation. In general, in modes 1 and 2 there are no major multiple incidents which would require extended use of multi-agency resources. Most of the MACS coordination points will be operational on a 24 hour day basis in modes 1 and 2, although several points will make alternate arrangements for contacts and responsibilities during night time and /or weekends. The basic distinction between Modes 1 and 2 is seasonal.</i></p> <p><i>“Mode 3 is called to reflect a serious situation or the potential for a serious situation. A serious situation could be a high potential incident which involves the use of Multi-Agency resources. Generally, a mode 3 condition would prevail when one to three such incidents were occurring simultaneously . A mode 3 could also be called if the potential for an emergency situation would warrant. For example, severe weather conditions or a tsunami warning could be sufficient to initiate a mode 3. Another condition which could warrant a mode 3 would be a major commitment of fire suppression resources to out-of-region incidents.</i></p> <p><i>“Mode 4 signifies the existence of an all-out regional effort where resource use priorities requires a concerted multi-agency coordination effort. Under mode 4, the MACS/OCC command conference room would be established as a regional GHQ. Agency representatives to the MACS/OCC GHQ under mode 4 should be fully authorized to speak and commit for their agency.”</i></p> <p>→ http://www.firescope.org/mac-modes.htm</p>	<p>See amendment</p> <p>←</p> <p>Rx regarding FIREScope Operating Modes for MACS</p>

37.	SR 5: The Commission recognizes the importance of MACS and recommends that FIREScope continue to review processes and protocols to maintain a high level of efficiency and effectiveness.	Priority 1 with Rx Amendment to language
	<p>Recommendation: <i>Restate the Commission recommendation as follows:</i></p> <p><i>The Commission recognizes the importance of MACS as essential to WUI fire fighting preparedness and recommends that FIREScope implement a process for immediate review of all protocols to achieve the highest level of efficiency and effectiveness.</i></p>	<p>Rx a stronger statement as shown to the left.</p> <p>←</p>
38.	<p>LOCAL BUILDING, PLANNING AND LAND USE REGULATIONS; BRUSH CLEARANCE AND FUEL MODIFICATION MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>MJR 1: The Commission recommends expansion of existing efforts by the FEMA, USFS, CDF and local governments to remove the threat of existing dead timber fuels created by the bark beetle infestation, including potential market development</p>	<p>PRIORITY 1 With amendment</p> <p>The current Rx is too broadly stated and requires separate Rx's.</p>
	<p>38 MJR 1a: Recommend amendment as follows:</p> <p>The Commission recommends the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Expansion of existing efforts by the FEMA, USFS, CDF and local governments to develop commitments by and between each agency to achieve expedited removal of dead timber fuel in WUI zones.</i> 2. <i>Implementation of best management practices in Forest Management and fuel reduction throughout national and state forest areas near WUI communities, and within a specified range sufficient to mitigate fuels, control fire spread, contain fire to specific area, and improve protection of communities in WUI "I-Zones" from wildland fires.</i> 3. <i>Investigate and implement mitigation measures in all areas where Bark Beetle infestation has caused or contributed to forest mortality rates above normal levels.</i> <p>MJR1b:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Convene a taskforce of nationwide experts to develop and implementation programs for expanded wood utilization markets, or product manufacturing programs with an emphasis toward market development, alternative fuels utilization, biomass, energy production and other uses., to divert Bark Beetle and forest fuels from landfills and open burning where economically feasible and environmentally reduction efforts,</i> 	<p>←</p> <p>←</p>

	California.	
43.	MJR 6: The Commission recommends that local government consult with CDF regarding local land-use planning decisions and in the review of fuel management plans in high and very high fire hazard zones.	Priority 3 This needs further study prior to implementing
44.	MJR 7: The Commission recommends that federal, state and local authorities work in conjunction with insurance and building industry representatives and property owners to consider, develop and encourage insurance and tax incentives for fire safe practices, including fuel modification in existing wildland developments.	Priority 1: see insert
	<p><i>Insert/Comments re MJR7: This recommendation is a solid improvement that is needed now.</i></p> <p><i>Insurance issues should include a provision for reporting and data gathering by the Insurance Commissioner to track all FR1 and FR2 fire policies before and after modifications to fire risks.</i></p> <p><i>Fire safe construction standards and FIREWISE landscaping may require incentives to stimulate voluntary compliance leading to an industry trend over time. The Commission recommendations may need to include an enactment date for compulsory compliance of construction standards and landscaping in designated WUI zones.</i></p> <p><i>Tax Credits for retrofitting homes with non-flammable roofing and other material changes outlined in official guidelines to qualify for insurance incentives and tax deductions, or waiver of tax assessments for possible "improvements" related to fire retardants, and structural change to a residence is a cost shift to the homeowner with a passive/neutral effect on a current tax base.</i></p>	<p>←</p> <p>←</p> <p>←</p>
45.	MJR 8: The Commission recommends that a Fire Safe Planning Committees be established in every county and that federal mitigation's continue to fund local community Fire Safe Council efforts aimed at annual WUI fuel modification and public education programs in target areas. <u>Where large counties of diverse WUI locations exist, more than one committee shall be formed as needed to represent community areas. Each area Fire Safe Council shall designate at least one person, but not more than two members, to participate in Fire Safe Planning Committees nearest the Fire Safe Council.</u>	Priority 1:
46.	<u>Comments: MJR8 Establishes a committee without requirement that Fire Safe Councils be a part of the committee, or that specific member (s) be designated representatives to the committee. Since Fire Safe Councils promote educational events throughout the communities, it is important to tie them into the Fire Safe Planning Committee which involves agency personnel. Furthermore, the size of some counties precludes effective representation if only one committee is established. For example, San Bernardino County is far too large for dispersed Fire Safe Councils to contribute meaningful information to a committee hundreds of miles away from the base location.</u>	
46.	MJR 9: The Commission recommends that all federal, state and local agencies and officials give serious consideration to fostering and advancing the establishment and operation of citizen-led disaster recovery and rebuilding groups.	Priority 1 see notes below box 46
	MJR 9 Recommends "fostering and advancing" citizen-led disaster recovery and	

	<p>rebuilding groups.....</p> <p><i>This recommendation is in need of additional steps to fund and provide post-disaster recovery programs to include reentry tools to assist disaster workers and volunteers. Essential reentry necessitates a cohesive stream of information outlets to meet the limited abilities of evacuees. Funds should cover publications, maps, communications on local television, direct dial telephone, radio and internet updates during disasters for all individuals evacuated and hungry for information on the status of their home, community and conditions.</i></p>	<p>NOTES</p> <p>←</p> <p>Commission text in support of Rx 46 (MJR9) is nearly 3 pages of very detailed discussion and well reasoned positive statements.</p>
47.	<p>FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>FR 1: The Commission recommends the <i>creation of a Presidential Commission</i> to address issues of Wildland Fire Prevention and Control and inconsistencies in the interpretation and implementation of the National Fire Plan, Wildland Fire Policy, Structure Protection, and Cost Apportionment process.</p>	<p>Priority 1</p> <p>This is a solid and well deserved Rx.</p>
48.	<p>FR 2: The Commission recommends that Congress consider establishing a National Wildland Fire Insurance Program (NWFIP) under the direction of FEMA.</p>	<p>Priority 3</p> <p>(see notes)</p>
	<p><i>FR2 establishes an unknown element to the Insurance issue in creation of the NWFIP. While incentives are needed for homeowner to take the initiative to mitigate fire fuels near their home, change out roofing, remove flammable materials from sides, retrofit landscaping to firewise plants, the major component missing from the incentives needed is a reduction in homeowner insurance rates. Further clarification on the 50/50 premium buy-in and recovery allocation is needed.</i></p>	<p>← Rx</p> <p>← Clarify</p>
49.	<p>STATE RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>SR 1: The Commission recommends that local government consult with CDF regarding local land-use planning decisions and in the review of fuel management plans in high and very high fire hazard zones.</p>	<p>Priority 3</p> <p>This raises significant questions</p>
	<p><i>Rx49 – SR1 above: recommends CDF be consulted in “local land-use planning decisions.” In those area that are not on contract to CDF for fire protection already raise serious complaints among residents that pay local fire protection assessments on their parcel, yet face a new tax for a benefit they do not receive in fire protection services. If local land-use planning decisions access CDF for any “service”, it may be construed as a qualifier of non-contract areas for taxes under provisions similar to SB 1049.</i></p>	<p>Tax issue?</p> <p>Mandatory?</p> <p>Benefits to local land-use agencies?</p>

50.	SR 2: The Commission recommends that the state review and standardize fire codes in high and very high fire hazard zones on a statewide basis.	Priority 1 with stronger Rx.
	<p><i>The Commission acknowledges that structure loss in all of the 14 fires relates to inadequate construction standards to withstand advancing fire, and highly flammable shake shingle roofing. The recommendation should be modified to reflect the concerns of the commission findings:</i></p> <p><i>The Commission recommends that the state review and standardize fire codes for statewide application through legislative measures. The Commission recommends fire resistant standards in building industry construction, and wood shake shingle roofing be precluded from future construction in WUI zones. The Commission further recommends elimination of all flammable siding that lacks a one hour fire barrier, attic vents greater than one-quarter inch screening, and other construction issues known to contribute to the spread of fire through structure fire ignition points in within high, and very high, fire hazard zones on a statewide basis.</i></p>	<p>←</p> <p><u>Stronger Rx provision for building, design, and improved fire resistance</u></p> <p>←</p>
51.	SR 3: The Commission recommends that the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) should continue to conduct fire test research, including development of fire test protocols for vents, radiant heat exposure for windows and other applicable areas. It should also develop a code to address building construction mythology for all structures located in or near a designated wildland area that can be widely enforced and/or amended by local ordinance where appropriate.	Priority 3 Further evaluation needed.
52.	SR 4: The Commission recommends that the California Building Standards Commission review the building standards and codes impacting structures in high and very high fire hazard areas to determine inconsistencies in land use and zoning policies and to see if stricter building standards should be implemented.	Priority 1 Same as #50? Minimal cost involved to implement.
53.	SR 5: The Commission recommends that the California Department of Insurance (DOI) review the experiences and needs of victims of wildfire with respect to insurance and report to the Legislature on appropriate changes.	Priority 3 DOI review is needed, and a deadline for the report to the Legislature must be stated.
54.	SR 6: The Commission recognizes and applauds MAST type programs and recommends that MAST be considered as a model for other areas.	Priority 1 (see note)
	Note: <i>The Mountain Area Safety Taskforce of the San Bernardino Mountains, Lake Arrowhead region, developed and utilized an exemplary pre-fire Incident Command System (ICS) approach that facilitated excellent results in the Old and Grand Prix fires. Recent development of FAST, Flood Area Safety Taskforce is similarly structured and yielding positive results in use, at this time.</i>	

55.	SR 7: The Commission notes that SB 1855 (Alpert), which is intended to eliminate unintended underinsurance by requiring insurers to provide a cost comparison of available coverages for a particular home, as well as an explanation of each available coverage, is currently pending before the Legislature.	No Rx.
56.	LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS LR 1 of 1: Local government must ensure that growth is prudent, responsible and limits risk to an acceptable level, and that development meets Fire Safe Standards for both residents and the fire service.	Priority 3 Applies to local jurisdictions.
57.	COMMUNICATIONS AND INTEROPERABILITY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS MJR 1: The Commission recommends that all Incident Command Centers (ICC) dedicate a Public Information Officer (PIO) or establish a Joint Information Center (JIC) to inform and respond to questions from the media, the public and elected officials. The PIO or JIC should be stationed in or near the ICC and have timely access to the latest information. All available technologies should be explored to expedite the timely dissemination of information.	Priority 1 Information is the most important need to the recently evacuated and family members.
58.	FEDERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FR 1 of 1: The Commission recommend that sufficient additional and standardized frequencies by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) to meet the needs of fire and emergency personnel.	Priority 1 Radio Frequency failures were well documented to have caused major problems.
59.	STATE RECOMMENDATIONS SR 1: The Commission recommends that the state fund a research and development section within CDF to explore emerging technologies and the transfer of military technology for firefighting purposes.	Priority 3 This needs more study to develop RFP's for military type tech R&D.
60.	SR 2: The Commission recommends that state agencies should take advantage of the work that has been done locally to create regional communication systems and join with the local agencies on a regional basis to enhance those systems.	Priority 2
61.	SR 3: The Commission recommends that the California National Guard seek federal funding for a pilot project for the utilization of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) technology in wildland firefighting applications.	Priority 2 Rx to Military and National Guard
62.	SR 4: The Commission recommends the state increase utilization of satellite technology, including the upgrading of OES' OASIS satellite communications system	Priority 3

63.	SR 5: The Commission recommends integration of the Multi-Agency Incident Resource Processing System (MIRPS) with the California Fire & Rescue Mutual Aid System.	Priority 3
64.	SR 6: The Commission recommends increased utilization of GPS technology for firefighting resources.	Priority 2
65.	SR 7: The Commission recommends that the state update and expand current handheld and mobile radios to be utilized on major mutual aid incidents as a short-term, temporary solution to the interoperability problem.	Priority 1
66.	SR 8: The Commission recommends that OES Fire and Rescue Command Nets be expanded. (H-2)	Priority 2
67.	SR 9: The Commission recommends that each engine crew and chief officer have the capability to communicate effectively across band frequencies. (H4-USFS)	Priority 1 Retrofit time needs to be determined.
68.	SR 10: The Commission recommends that local governments improve public outreach and evacuation education.	Priority 2
69.	LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS LR 1: The Commission recognizes the critical role of timely emergency notification of the public of imminent threats and recommends that local governments prioritize the development of appropriate early warning systems to address the needs of their communities.	Priority 1 Reverse 911 is reasonable

Ranking submitted by: Senator James L. Brulte

Additional recommendations or comments: See text boxes inserted below Commission Recommendations.

(323) 881-2401

March 18, 2004

TO: SENATOR WILLIAM P. CAMPBELL, CHAIR
AND MEMBERS OF THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

FROM: FIRE CHIEF P. MICHAEL FREEMAN 
LOS ANGELES COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations, there are three additional recommendations I would like to propose which are as follows:

1. The Commission recommends that Congress take the necessary steps to provide the U.S. Forest Service updated state-of-the-art fire fighting aircraft, especially in the regions where National forests are adjacent to urban areas.
2. The Commission recommends that the Governor establish a State-wide interoperability study group which will:
 - a) develop short-term and long-term solutions.
 - b) assess funding requirements and sources (including grants).
 - c) seek additional spectrum (frequencies).
 - d) identify the quantity of frequency converters necessary for regional, short-term solutions.
 - e) evaluate satellite capabilities and uses.
 - f) include representation from public safety, mutual aid participants.
 - g) complete their study with recommendations by July 31, 2004.
3. The Commission recommends that the Governor and the Legislature establish a Fire Siege Committee consisting of legislators, fire officials, and others as appropriate to evaluate recommendations, develop implementation strategies and periodically report progress to the Governor and the Legislature. (I would suggest this so that implementation is tracked and documented.)

PMF:cg

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AERIAL FUELS - All live and dead vegetation in the forest canopy or above surface fuels, including tree branches, twigs and cones, snags, moss and high brush.

AIR TANKER - A fixed-wing aircraft equipped to drop fire retardants or suppressants.

ANCHOR POINT – An advantageous location, usually a barrier to fire spread, from which to start constructing a fireline.

AREA COMMAND – An organization established to: 1) oversee the management of multiple incidents that are each being handled by an incident management team (IMT) organization; or 2) to oversee the management of a very large incident that has multiple IMTs assigned to it. Area command has the responsibility to set overall strategy and priorities, allocate critical resources based on priorities, ensure that incidents are properly managed, and that objectives are met and strategies followed.

BACKFIRE – A fire suppression tactic. Any intentionally set fire used to consume the fuel in the path of a free burning wildfire.

BAMBI BUCKET - A collapsible bucket slung below a helicopter. Used to dip water from a variety of sources for fire suppression.

BI - Burning Index: An indices of NFDRS, it is a number related to the contribution of fire behavior to the effort of containing a fire. It rates fire danger related to potential flame length over a fire danger rating area.

BIA – Bureau of Indian Affairs

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

BRFC - Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission

BRUSH - A collective term that refers to stands of vegetation dominated by shrubby, woody plants, or low growing trees, usually of a type undesirable for livestock or timber management.

BRUSH FIRE - A fire burning in vegetation that is predominantly shrubs, brush and scrub growth.

BUCKET DROPS - The dropping of fire retardants or suppressants from specially designed buckets slung below a helicopter.

BUFFER ZONES - An area of reduced vegetation that separates wildlands from vulnerable residential or business developments. This barrier is similar to a greenbelt in that it is usually used for another purpose such as agriculture, recreation areas, parks, or golf courses.

BURNING CONDITIONS - The state of the combined factors of the environment that affect fire behavior in a specified fuel type.

BURNING INDEX - An estimate of the potential difficulty of fire containment as it relates to the flame length at the most rapidly spreading portion of a fire's perimeter.

BURNING PERIOD - That part of each 24-hour period when fires spread most rapidly, typically from 10:00 a.m. to sundown.

CALMAC – California Multi-Agency Command. The information coordination center established in Sacramento tasked to gather timely information from regions, cooperating agencies, the media, the director, interested government leaders and the public.

CDF – California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CHIEF OFFICERS – Agency Administrators, Fire Chiefs and other strategic level staff overseeing Incident Commanders.

COMMAND STAFF - The command staff consists of the information officer, safety officer and liaison officer. They report directly to the incident commander and may have assistants.

COMMISSION ON PEACE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING (POST) - POST was established by the Legislature in 1959 to set minimum selection and training standards for California law enforcement.

COMPLEX - Two or more individual incidents located in the same general area which are assigned to a single incident commander or unified command.

CONTAINMENT – A fire is contained when it is surrounded on all sides by some kind of boundary but is still burning and has the potential to jump a boundary line.

CONTROLLED – A fire is controlled when there is no further threat of it jumping a containment line. While crews continue to do mop-up work within the fire lines, the firefight is over.

CONVECTION COLUMN - The rising column of gasses, smoke, fly ash, particulates and other debris produced by a fire.

COOPERATING AGENCY – An agency supplying assistance including but not limited to direct tactical or support functions or resources to the incident control effort.

CREW LEADER - A person in supervisory charge of usually 16 to 21 firefighters and responsible for their performance, safety, and welfare.

CROWN FIRE – A fire that advances from top to top of trees or shrubs, more or less independently of the surface fire.

DEAD FUELS - Fuels with no living tissue in which moisture content is governed almost entirely by atmospheric moisture (relative humidity and precipitation), dry-bulb temperature, and solar radiation.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE - Creating a fire safe landscape for at least 30 feet around homes (and out to 100 feet or more in some areas), to reduce the chance of a wildfire spreading and burning through the structures. This is the basis for creating a “defensible space” - an area that will help protect your home and provide a safety zone for the firefighters who are battling the flames. It is required by California law.

DIRECT ATTACK – A method of fire suppression in which suppression activity takes place on or near the fire perimeter.

DIRECT PROTECTION AREA (DPA) – That area for which a particular fire protection organization has the primary responsibility for attacking an uncontrolled fire and for directing the suppression action.

DISPATCH - The implementation of a command decision to move a resource or resources from one place to another.

DISPATCHER - A person employed who receives reports of discovery and status of fires, confirms their locations, takes action promptly to provide people and equipment likely to be needed for control in first attack, and sends them to the proper place.

DISPATCH CENTER - A facility from which resources are directly assigned to an incident.

DOZER - Any tracked vehicle with a front-mounted blade used for exposing mineral soil.

DROP ZONE - Target area for air tankers, helitankers, and cargo dropping.

ENGINE - Any ground vehicle providing specified levels of pumping, water and hose capacity.

ENGINE CREW - Firefighters assigned to an engine.

EXTREME FIRE BEHAVIOR – “Extreme” implies a level of fire behavior characteristics that ordinarily precludes methods of direct control action. One or more of the following is usually involved: high rate of spread, prolific crowning and/or spotting, presence of fire whirls, strong convection column. Predictability is difficult because such fires often exercise some degree of influence on their environment and behaves erratically, sometime dangerously.

FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA (FRA) - The primary financial responsibility for preventing and suppressing fires is that of the Federal Government. The Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, National Parks Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs generally protect these lands.

FIRE BEHAVIOR - The manner in which a fire reacts to the influences of fuel, weather and topography.

FIRE BREAK - A natural or constructed barrier used to stop or check fires that may occur, or to provide a control line from which to work.

FIRE CREW - An organized group of firefighters under the leadership of a crew leader or other designated official.

FIRE DANGER RATING – A management system that integrates the effects of selected fire danger factors into one or more qualitative or numerical indices of current protection needs.

FIRE FRONT - The part of a fire within which continuous flaming combustion is taking place. Unless otherwise specified the fire front is assumed to be the leading edge of the fire perimeter. In ground fires, the fire front may be mainly smoldering combustion.

FIRE INTENSITY - A general term relating to the heat energy released by a fire.

FIRE LINE - A strip of area where the vegetation has been removed to deny the fire fuel, or a river, a freeway or some other barrier which is expected to stop the fire. Hose lines from fire engines may also contribute to a fire being surrounded and contained.

FIRE PERIMETER – The entire outer edge or boundary of a fire.

FIRESCOPE – Firefighting Resources of California Organized for Potential Emergencies. A multi-agency coordination system designed to improve the capabilities of California’s wildland fire protection agencies. Its purpose is to provide more efficient resource allocation and utilization, particularly in multiple or large fire situations during critical burning conditions.

FIRESTORM - Violent convection caused by a large continuous area of intense fire. Often characterized by destructively violent surface indrafts, near and beyond the perimeter, and sometimes by tornado-like whirls.

FMAG – Fire Management Assistance Grant. A federal assistance program managed by FEMA through the state Office of Emergency Services (OES). This program is designed to help state and/or local jurisdictions impacted by high cost, high damage wildland fires.

FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN (FMP) - A strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires and documents the Fire Management Program in the approved land use plan. The plan is supplemented by operational plans such as preparedness plans, preplanned dispatch plans, prescribed fire plans, and prevention plans.

FLARE-UP - Any sudden acceleration of fire spread or intensification of a fire. Unlike a blow-up, a flare-up lasts a relatively short time and does not radically change control plans.

FUEL BED - An array of fuels usually constructed with specific loading, depth and particle size to meet experimental requirements; also, commonly used to describe the fuel composition in natural settings.

FUELS - Combustible material. Includes, vegetation, such as grass, leaves, ground litter, plants, shrubs and trees, that feed a fire.

GACC – Geographical Area Coordination Center, see South Ops

GIS – Geographic Information System

GROUND FUEL - All combustible materials below the surface litter, including duff, tree or shrub roots, punchy wood, peat, and sawdust, that normally support a glowing combustion without flame.

INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS) – A standardized on-scene emergency management concept specifically designed to allow its user(s) to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of single or multiple incidents, without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

INCIDENT COMMAND TEAM (ICT) – see Incident Management Team

INCIDENT COMMANDER – This ICS position is responsible for overall management of the incident and reports to the Agency Administrator for the agency having incident jurisdiction.

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM (IMT) – The incident commander and appropriate general and command staff personnel assigned to an incident. Also known as an Incident Command Team.

INDIRECT ATTACK – A method of fire suppression in which suppression activities takes place some distances from the fire perimeter, and often advantage of fire barriers.

INFRARED (IR) – A heat detection system used for fire protection, mapping, and hotspot identification.

INITIAL ATTACK (IA) – An aggressive suppression action taken by first arriving resources consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected.

INTERFACE ZONE – It is the area where the wildlands come together with the urban areas. Also referred to as the I-Zone.

INTERMIX ZONE – It is areas where homes are interspersed among the wildlands. Also referred to as the I-Zone.

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER (JIC) – An interagency information center responsible for researching, coordinating and disseminating information to the public and media. Formed through the MAST effort.

LIVE FUELS - Living plants, such as trees, grasses, and shrubs, in which the seasonal moisture content cycle is controlled largely by internal physiological mechanisms, rather than by external weather influences.

LRA – Local Responsibility Area

MACS – (Multi-Agency Coordination System) Is a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications integrated into a common system with responsibility for coordination of assisting agency resources and support to agency emergency operations.

MAFFS – (Modular Airborne Firefighting System) A manufactured unit consisting of five interconnecting tanks, a control pallet, and a nozzle pallet, with a capacity of 3,000 gallons, designed to be rapidly mounted inside an unmodified C-130 (Hercules) cargo aircraft for use in dropping retardant on wildland fires.

MAST – Mountain Area Safety Taskforce

MIRPS - Multi-Agency Incident Resource Processing System

MOBILIZATION - The process and procedures used by all organizations, federal, state and local for activating, assembling, and transporting all resources that have been requested to respond to or support an incident.

MODIS – (Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer) – is a key instrument aboard the Terra and Aqua satellites. This instrument provided important intelligence for fire managers regarding fire perimeters and fire growth throughout the fire siege.

MOP-UP – Extinguishing or removing burning material near control lines, felling snags, and trenching logs to prevent rolling after an area has burned, to make a fire safe, or to reduce residual smoke.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT - Written agreement between agencies and/or jurisdictions in which they agree to assist one another upon request, by furnishing personnel and equipment.

MUTUAL THREAT ZONE (MTZ) – A geographical area between two or more jurisdictions into which those agencies would respond on initial attack. Also called mutual response zone or initial action zone.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) - NEPA is the basic national law for protection of the environment, passed by Congress in 1969. It sets policy and procedures for environmental protection, and authorizes Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Assessments to be used as analytical tools to help federal managers make decisions.

NIFC – National Interagency Fire Center located in Boise, Idaho.

NPS – National Park Service

OES – The California Governor’s Office of the Emergency Services.

OSC – (Operations Section Chief) The ICS position responsible for supervising the Operations Section. Reports to the Incident Commander. The OSC directs the preparation of unit operational plans, requests and releases resources, makes expedient changes to the Incident Action Plan as necessary and reports such to the Incident Commander.

OSFM - Office of State Fire Marshal

PREDICTIVE SERVICES – Those Geographic Area and National-level fire weather or fire danger services and products produced by wildland fire agency meteorologists and intelligence staffs in support of resource allocation and prioritization.

PREPAREDNESS LEVELS – A national system of preparedness for incidents. The levels are 1 through 5. They are:

Preparedness Level 1 – Few or no active fires under 100 acres. Minimal or no commitment of fire resources. Low to moderate fire danger. Agencies above draw down levels.

Preparedness Level 2 – Numerous fires under 100 acres. Local commitment of resources for initial attack. Moderate fire danger. Agencies above draw-down levels and requests for resources outside local area are minimal.

Preparedness Level 3 – High potential for fires 100 acres & above to occur, with several 0-99 acre fires active. Fire danger moderate to very high. Mobilization of resources within the region and minimal requests outside of region. Agencies above or having difficulty maintaining draw down levels.

Preparedness Level 4 – Fires over 100 acres are common. Fire danger is high to very high. Resource mobilization is coming from outside the region. Agencies at minimum draw down levels.

Preparedness Level 5 – CALMAC is fully activated. Multiple large fires are common in the north and or the south. Fire danger is very high to extreme. Resources are being mobilized through the National Coordination Center.

Activation of National Guard or military done or under consideration.

PRESCRIBED FIRE - Any fire ignited by management actions under certain, predetermined conditions to meet specific objectives related to hazardous fuels or habitat improvement. A written, approved prescribed fire plan must exist, and NEPA requirements must be met, prior to ignition.

RATE OF SPREAD - The relative activity of a fire in extending its horizontal dimensions. It is expressed as a rate of increase of the total perimeter of the fire, as rate of forward spread of the fire front, or as rate of increase in area, depending on the intended use of the information. Usually it is expressed in chains or acres per hour for a specific period in the fire's history.

RED FLAG WARNING - Term used by fire weather forecasters to alert users to an ongoing or imminent critical fire weather pattern.

REHABILITATION – The activities necessary to repair damage or disturbance caused by wildfire or the wildfire suppression activity.

RESOURCES - 1) Personnel, equipment, services and supplies available, or potentially available, for assignment to incidents. 2) The natural resources of an area, such as timber, grass, watershed values, recreation values, and wildlife habitat.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RMP) - A document prepared by field office staff with public participation and approved by field office managers that provides general guidance and direction for land management activities at a field office. The RMP identifies the need for fire in a particular area and for a specific benefit.

RETARDANT - A substance or chemical agent which reduced the flammability of combustibles.

SAFETY ZONE - An area cleared of flammable materials used for escape in the event the line is outflanked or in case a spot fire causes fuels outside the control line to render the line unsafe. In firing operations, crews progress so as to maintain a safety zone close at hand allowing the fuels inside the control line to be consumed before going ahead. Safety zones may also be constructed as integral parts of fuel breaks; they are greatly enlarged areas which can be used with relative safety by firefighters and their equipment in the event of a blowup in the vicinity.

SANTA ANA WINDS – Is a type of Foehn wind. A Foehn wind is a warm, dry and strong general wind that flows down into the valleys when stable, high-pressure air is forced across and then down the lee side slopes of a mountain range. The descending air is warmed and dried due to adiabatic compression producing critical fire weather conditions. Locally called by various names such as Santa Ana winds.

SLOP-OVER – A fire edge that crosses a control line or natural barrier intended to confine the fire. Also called break-over.

SPOT FIRE OR SPOTTING – A small fire that is ahead of the main fire that is caused from hot embers being carried to a receptive fuel bed. Spotting indicates extreme fire conditions.

STAGING AREA - Locations set up at an incident where resources can be placed while awaiting a tactical assignment on a three-minute available basis. Staging areas are managed by the operations section.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREA (SRA) - The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection classifies areas in which the primary financial responsibility for preventing and suppressing fires is that of the state. CDF has SRA responsibility for the protection of over 31 million acres of California's privately owned wildlands.

STRIKE TEAM - An engine strike team consists of five fire engines of the same type and a lead vehicle. The strike team leader is usually a captain or a battalion chief. Strike Teams can also be made up of bulldozers and handcrews.

STRUCTURE FIRE - Fire originating in and burning any part or all of any building, shelter, or other structure.

SURFACE FUELS - Loose surface litter on the soil surface, normally consisting of fallen leaves or needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches that have not yet decayed enough to lose their identity; also grasses, forbs, low and medium shrubs, tree seedlings, heavier branchwood, downed logs, and stumps interspersed with or partially replacing the litter.

SUPPRESSANT - An agent, such as water or foam, used to extinguish the flaming and glowing phases of combustion when direction applied to burning fuels.

UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (UAV) - Remotely piloted or self piloted aircraft that can carry cameras, sensors, communications equipment or other payloads.

UNIFIED COMMAND – In ICS, unified command is a unified team effort which allows all agencies with jurisdictional responsibility for the incident, either geographical or functional, to manage an incident by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.

USDOJ - United States Department of the Interior

USFS - U.S. Department Of Agriculture Forest Service

VERY HIGH FIRE SEVERITY ZONE - Pursuant to Government Code 51178, Very High Fire Severity Zones were identified and recommended to local agencies by the Director of Forestry and Fire Protection based on a criteria which includes fuel loading, slope, fire weather and other relevant factors. Pursuant to Government Code 51179, a local agency is required by ordinance to designate Very High Fire Severity Zones in its jurisdiction based on the recommendations of the Director.

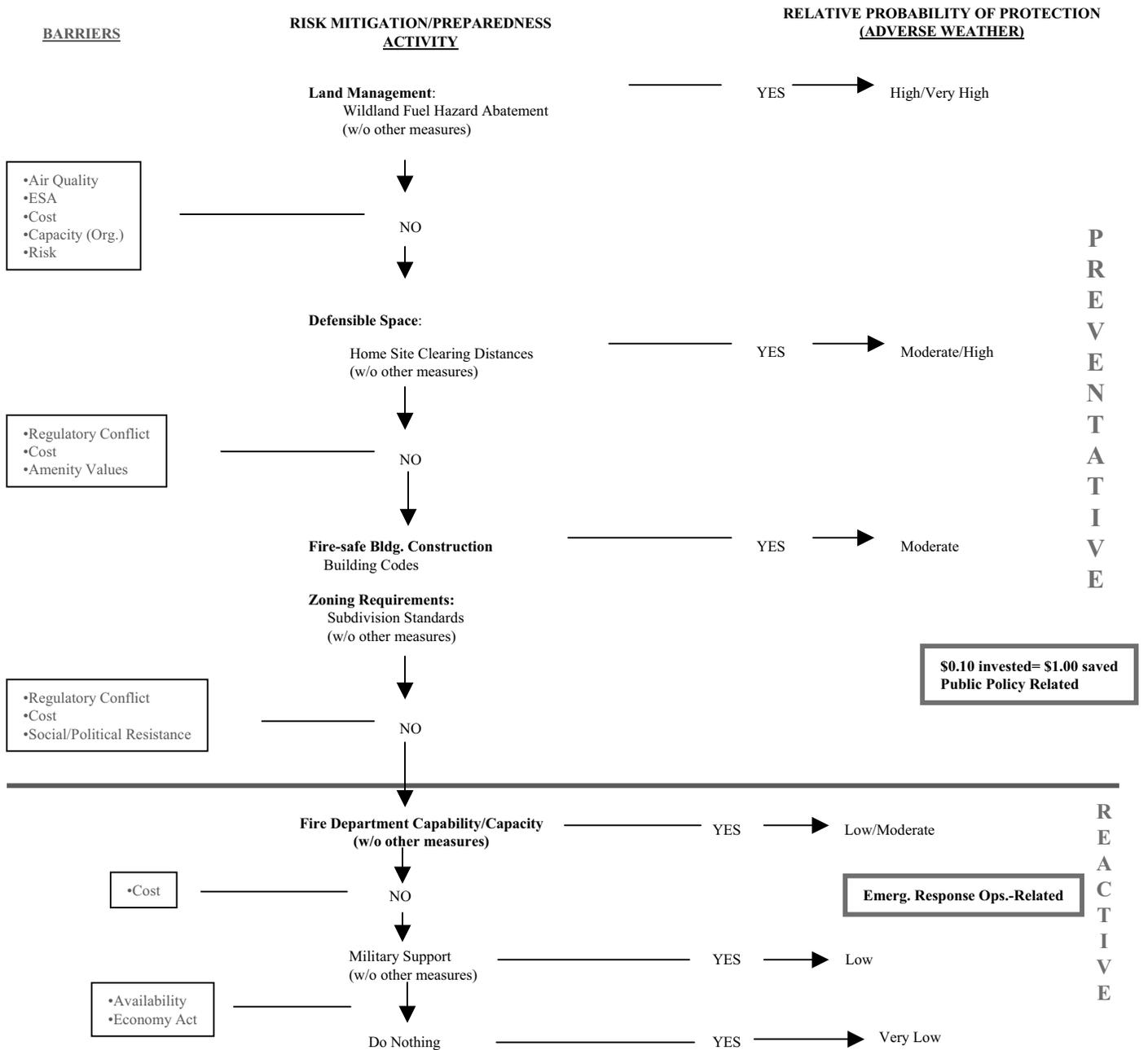
WATER TENDER - A ground vehicle capable of transporting specified quantities of water.

WFSA – Wildland Fire Situation Analysis

WILDLAND FIRE - Any nonstructure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland.

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) – The line, area, or zone where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels.

Order of Risk Management Effectiveness (Relative Rating) Wildland Firefighting *Under Most Adverse Weather Conditions* (Source: Jerry Williams, USFS)



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