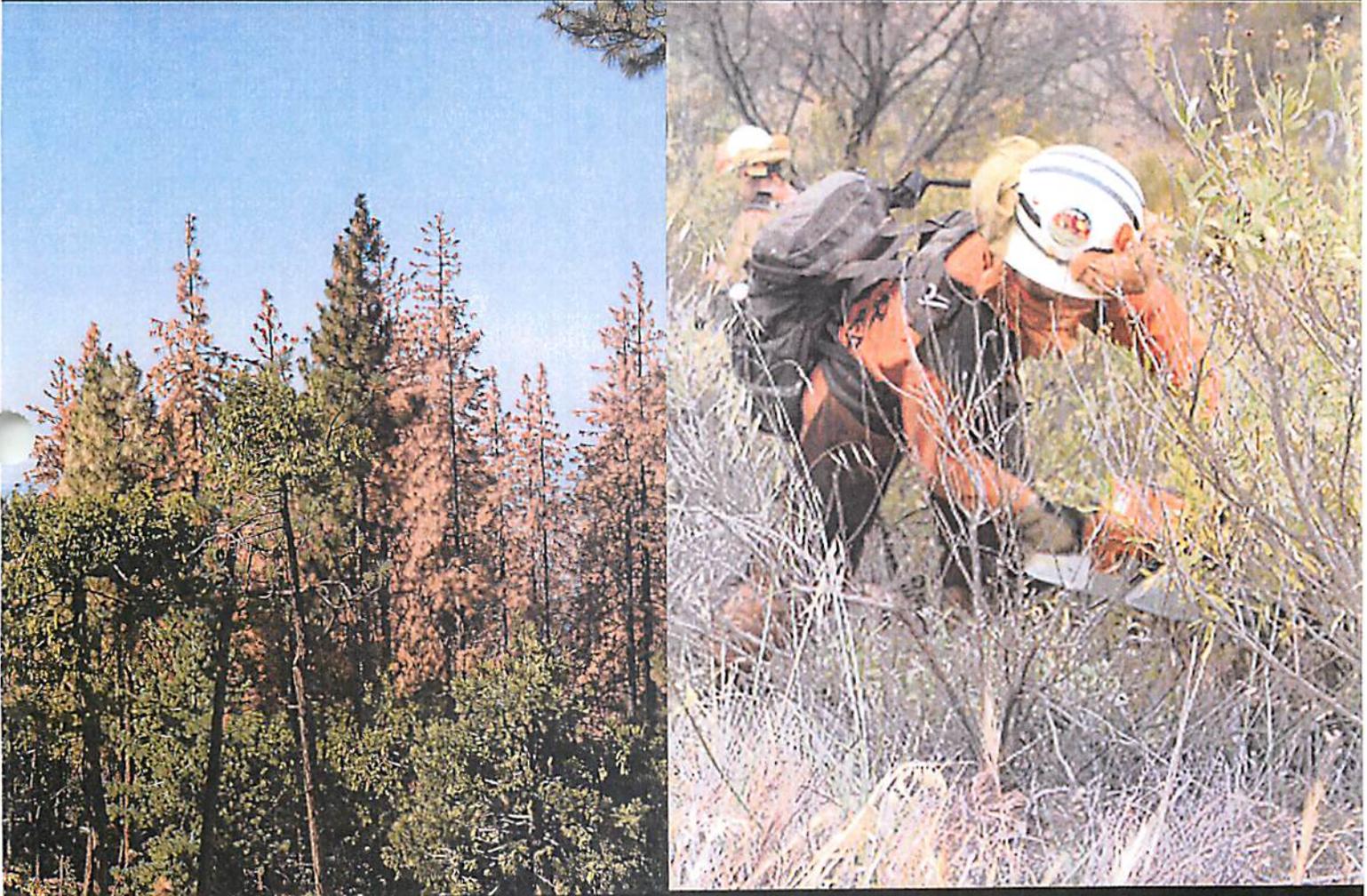


# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE  
**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**  
ON  
**STRATEGIC FIRE PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



"A vision for a natural environment that is more resilient and man-made assets which are more resistant to the occurrence and effects of wildland fire through local, state, federal and private partnerships."



KEN PIMLOTT, DIRECTOR  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION  
**OCTOBER 2015**

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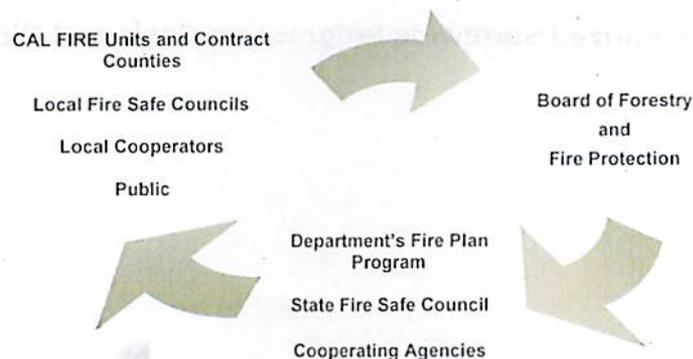
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## I. Background

CAL FIRE is in the fifth year of implementation of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan (Plan). This is the fifth annual report of progress on accomplishments to the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board). There has always been a strong collaboration to accomplish these goals between CAL FIRE, the Board, and all our cooperators throughout the State of California. The deepening impacts of drought and climate change, coupled with significant fire activity over the past year continue to strengthen these ties and meet these difficult challenges. One thing remains certain – there does not appear to be an immediate end to these challenges, and the Plan continues to gain strength in providing strong guidance in addressing the wildfire problem in California.

The foundation of the Plan is built upon seven goals and their associated objectives. Collectively, these goals and objectives provide a statewide framework to address the protection of lives, property and natural resources from wildland fire and improve environmental resilience to wildland fire. The Plan provides overall statewide goals and objectives, but it is the individual Unit Fire Plans that provide specific details on how these will be achieved locally through cooperative efforts. All Unit and Contract County Fire Plans for 2015 are available online at [http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire\\_er/fpp\\_planning\\_plans](http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire_er/fpp_planning_plans).

As stated in last year's report, it is appropriate to acknowledge the solidity and foresight of the 2010 Plan. It was not possible for the authors to foresee the unique challenges and opportunities we face today. The historic drought has only gotten worse over the past year. Coupled with the continuing impacts of climate change, we are now faced with unprecedented impacts of extreme fire behavior and forest mortality issues. But more robust efforts are underway to address these issues through grant funding, education, and hard work on the ground. As prevention efforts increase, we continue to document more successful accomplishments, proving the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan has provided a solid base to address our challenges. But more importantly, it also provides us with a strong roadmap on how we tackle these challenges and plan for the future.



## II. Detailed Statewide Report on Accomplishments by Goal

The Strategic Fire Plan has been successful in achieving many aspects of the original goals and objectives. When they were adopted in 2010, the seven goals of the Plan were fairly distinct and separate items. Yet each one has played a critical role in achieving the overall Vision of the Plan, which is to create a more resilient natural environment, and strive for man-made assets that are more resistant to the occurrence and effects of wildland fire through local, state, federal and private partnerships. A testament to the success of the Plan is how these seven goals have begun to merge and overlap. The following narrative outlines specific achievements in each of the seven goals, yet each of these achievements touch several goals simultaneously. Not only are the goals themselves converging toward the ultimate vision of the Plan, but the partnerships being forged between programs within CAL FIRE and partnering agencies and organizations at all levels is at an unprecedented high.

**Goal 1:** Identify and evaluate wildland fire hazards and recognize life, property and natural resource assets at risk, including watershed, habitat, social and other values of functioning ecosystems. Facilitate the sharing of all analyses and data collection across all ownerships for consistency in type and kind.

CAL FIRE continues to utilize the CAL FIRE Management Activity Project Planning and Event Reporting (CalMAPPER) application for collection and dissemination of forest improvement and fuels reduction activities in a geospatial format. Since the initiation of the new web based CalMAPPER program during the November, 2014 Fire Plan Workshop in Lone, the program has become more user-friendly and streamlined. Various programs within the Department and throughout the state can now analyze and compare projects, allowing for a more comprehensive overview of proposed and ongoing projects. This has led to a higher level of success in providing reports for ongoing accomplishments, and served as a platform for planning future projects.

Data in CalMAPPER has also become more widely used for emergency operational use. As the severity of fires has increased, planning and operational personnel have been turning to CalMAPPER more frequently to identify prevention projects in and around the fire vicinity. These projects can then be utilized as lines of defense for communities during firefighting operations.

In addition, CalMAPPER is also being used as a critical tool to track grant funding. CAL FIRE awarded \$9.525 million in the Spring of 2015 from the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund. Likewise, upcoming grants awarded from the Cap & Trade Program will also be tracked utilizing CalMAPPER. As these projects are documented electronically,

CAL FIRE will be able to analyze these projects across program boundaries. This will provide a more global comparison of all project work being performed across the state.

Now that the transition of all project data to the new web based program has been completed, this new statewide geodatabase (CalMAPPER v2) has captured projects that are complete, being maintained, or active, since 2009. Currently, this list includes the following statistics:

- The statewide database contains about 590 projects, 1,084 treatments and 2,317 activities on approximately 173,009 acres that have been completed or are still active since 2009. It is worth noting these statistics represent a significant increase from those reported a year ago. This is due to a combination of increasing project activity as well as improved reporting procedures.

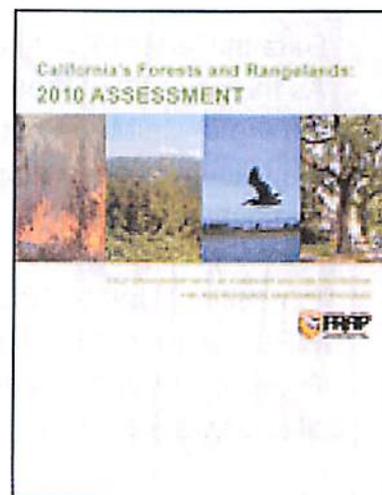
Treatment Objective	Acreeage	Percentage
Fuel Reduction	128,941	75%
Fuel Break	13,246	8%
Right of Way Clearance	10,406	6%
Public Outreach	8,527	5%
Land Conservation	4,330	3%
Other	7,559	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>173,009</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: CalMAPPER October 2015

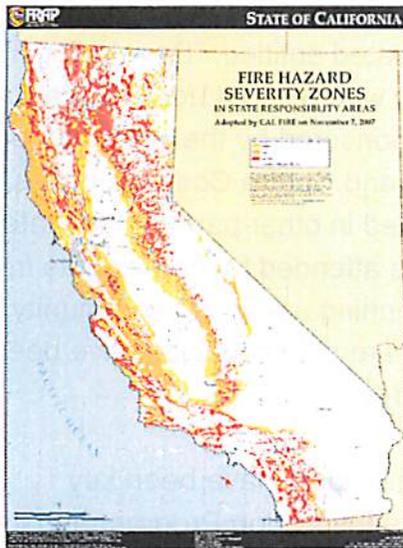
\*Fireplan projects complete or in progress since 2009

With the new web based program fully implemented, project inputs are experiencing a higher degree of accuracy. Since the inception of the program in 2011, steady improvements in reporting have been made, which are becoming more pronounced with the new web based program.

The Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) staff continue to work on updating the current 2010 State Forest and Range Assessment document. Anticipated completion is slated for 2016, and will provide a thorough, up to date analysis of the wildfire threat to ecosystem health and community safety. The updated document will describe wildland fire hazards, fire regime departures, and provide characterization and trends of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. A number of focused risk assessments of key natural resource assets will be analyzed. These include habitat, water quality and quantity, and forest carbon dynamics. A significant focus is being placed on the current



drought impacts, along with the most up to date climate change data. These include habitat, water quality and quantity, and forest carbon dynamics. The collected information and analyses will provide additional spatial datasets for CalMAPPER to use in prioritizing landscapes, defining projects and activities, and assessing the benefits realized by pre-fire programs.



Another ongoing project with FRAP is an update to the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps within SRA. These maps identify areas broken into Moderate, High, and Very High Categories. Since these maps were last published by CAL FIRE in 2007, science methodologies have evolved and additional datasets have been created that did not exist then. Remapping with this new data will create more accurate zone designations such that mitigation strategies are implemented in areas where hazards warrant these investments. The zones will provide specific designation for application of defensible space and building standards consistent with known mechanisms of fire risk to people, property, and natural resources.

The West-Wide Risk Assessment (WWRA) report, compiled in conjunction with 17 Western States, was finalized in 2013. Staff members from FRAP played a key role in assisting with the direction and model development of this report, using a common methodology and datasets to obtain the most accurate data. The goal of this report was to conduct an analysis of wildfire risk across all 17 states on a broad scale with no boundary limitations. FRAP continues to evaluate the results and utilize parts of WWRA in the 2016 State Forest and Range Assessment currently under development, as described above. The WWRA report is available upon request from FRAP personnel.

**Goal 2:** Articulate and promote the concept of land use planning as it relates to fire risk and individual landowner objectives and responsibilities.

In 2012, Senate Bill (SB) 1241, (Chapter 311, statutes of 2012), the Wildfire Hazard Legislation Safety Element Planning and Zoning Law, required cities and counties adopt a comprehensive general plan with various elements including a safety element for protection of the community from unreasonable risks associated with various hazards, including wildfires. Guidelines for these reviews have been coordinated with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), and incorporated into their updated "Fire Hazard Planning" document. These guidelines offer a more thorough analysis for wildland fire hazards and safety factors.

Beginning in January 2015, Land Use Planning staff have actively engaged local fire and planning officials to discuss the requirements of CGC § 65302.5 and how the CAL FIRE Land Use Planning Program can assist them. Approximately 60% of the 189 cities and the 56 counties required to participate with the regulation have had positive contact with local government staff. Program staff anticipates the remaining 40% to be completed by spring 2016.



Local workshops were created entitled, "Developing Your Safety Element to Comply with SB-1241 for Wildfire Safety." These workshops were sponsored by the Hills Emergency Forum (HEF) of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, and are planned to be presented in other parts of the state. These forums, which were attended by participants from local fire departments, planning agencies, community development groups, and fire safe councils, have been conducted and were well received.

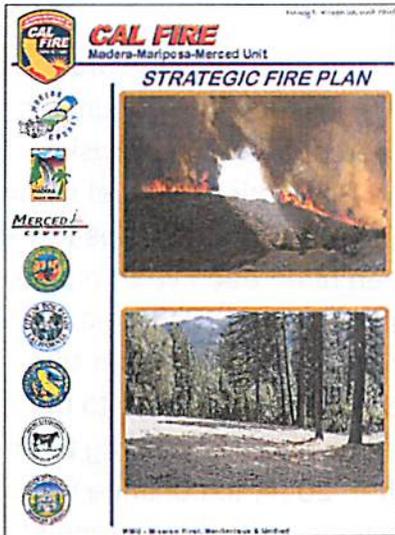
Land Use Planning staff members have been key participants in the Damage Inspection Program and its process. Their participation in "lead" roles with direction from the Wildfire Prevention and Engineering Program has

been vital to its success. The interaction of the two disciplines allows for first-hand knowledge in determining factors behind the damage and destruction of structures, which can then be discussed during Safety Element reviews. During the recent Valley and Butte Fires, respectively the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> most destructive fires in California's history, Damage Inspection Teams were overseen by Land Use Planning staff. It is anticipated that the rebuilding process in Lake and Calaveras Counties will begin in the Spring of 2016. Land Use Planning Program staff is prepared to assist local unit personnel and County agencies in fire and life safety review and permitting processes.

As meetings occur with local fire and planning officials, questions on subjects not directly within the scope of the Land Use Planning Program have been day lighted. Local planning agencies have reached out to request assistance in reviews of large scale development proposals, recognizing the expertise of CAL FIRE personnel to assist with fire safety measure. This has had a positive effect, opening additional dialog on additional and sometimes larger fire prevention possibilities and opportunities. Implementation of this program is a result of many years of research, analysis, and collaborative work by many agencies and individuals. As clearly articulated in the Strategic Fire Plan, wildland fires do not recognize boundaries or jurisdictions. The new Land Use Planning program addresses the need for a more global and collaborative approach to addressing the wildland fire problem based on specific hazards and risks of a given area. As this program is implemented, the long term goal of creating a higher level of fire safety through improved planning is becoming a reality.

**Goal 3:** Support and participate in the collaborative development and implementation of wildland fire protection plans and other local, county and regional plans that address fire protection and landowner objectives.

Each CAL FIRE Unit and Contract County prepares a Unit Fire Plan which is annually updated in June.



All the plans are available to the public at:

[http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire\\_er/fpp\\_planning\\_plans](http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire_er/fpp_planning_plans).

Accomplishments reported between June 2013 and May 2014, are provided in these individual reports. It is worth noting that improved standardization of these reports has taken place over the past few years. Today, each of these reports provides a summary at the end of the Plan that focuses specifically on accomplishments that have been made locally around the state. The collective measure of these accomplishments is impressive as a whole, and reinforces the level of prevention work being completed at the local level.

CAL FIRE continues to actively engage in strengthening partnerships with Fire Safe Councils and other local entities throughout the state. These relationships are being further tied together with the implementation of CAL FIRE's grant programs. A requirement for successful grant recipients is to ensure their projects are identified in the local Unit or Contract County Fire Plan, and also be a part of a local Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) or similar document. Each grant agreement includes a local contact person to engage with during the length of the grant, further connecting the programs back to the local Units and Contract Counties.

Since 2001, more than 1300 communities have been recognized as Communities at Risk. The heightened fire activity has increased community interest in creating CWPP's, and an increasing number of residents are working toward achieving official recognition as a Firewise Community. As of this Fall, more than 100 communities throughout the state have received this official designation, ranking California with the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of Firewise Communities in the nation. Collectively, these cooperative relationships are designed to increase resilience to wildland fires. The increasing level of community involvement mentioned above will be enhanced through the coordination of the new Land Use Planning goals identified in SB 1241. This highlights the overlap and coordinated efforts taking place to address our current challenges. Unfortunately, some of these Firewise communities have been impacted from recent wildfire events, and homes have

been destroyed in these designated areas, both inside California and other Western States. Studies are being prepared in conjunction with the National Firewise association to look at these areas and identify any "lesson's learned" that can be gained.

**Goal 4:** Increase awareness, knowledge and actions implemented by individuals and communities to reduce human loss and property damage from wildland fires, such as defensible space and other fuels reduction activities, fire prevention and fire safe building standards.

CAL FIRE has renewed an emphasis on public awareness and education toward the ever increasing threat of fires and Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) losses. The continuing intensity of the current drought has increased the public's perception of these risks. The Fire STEPP (Severity, Treatment, Education, Planning, and Prevention) Budget Change Proposal for FY 2013/14 has continued to provide funding to make great strides toward this goal. Additional Defensible Space Inspectors have been hired each year to perform an increasing number of inspections across the state, augmenting the programs already in place within the Units. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of inspections and public education hours, as reflected in the report below. Due to the severity of the drought, the Governor's budget has provided augmented funding to hire additional inspectors between July 1, and the end of October, 2014, to continue with inspections and assist with public education. These inspections and other means of public contact provide CAL FIRE with increased opportunities to meet with homeowners and educate them on the benefits of defensible space and other actions that make their homes more resilient to wildfire.

Prevention Activities	STATEWIDE					
	Totals FY 2009/10	Totals FY 2010/11	Totals FY 2011/12	Totals FY 2012/13	Totals FY 2013/14	Totals FY 2014/15
Citations Issued	1,902	2,857	1,655	890	2,539	631
Inspections	209,777	164,528	106,382	149,672	203,340	207,295
Education Hours	43,935	42,408	39,041	30,068	41,008	44,723.5

Table 1. SRA defensible space inspections and education between July 2009 and June 2014.

Goal 4 also emphasizes the importance of investigating all fires and determining the cause so that trends can be analyzed. Improvements in the way fire investigations are being reported are consequently improving the data available through the California All Incident Reporting System (CAIRS). Since the implementation of the reporting module for wildland

fires in the Preliminary Investigation Report, also known as a LE-66 Report, more wildland fire information is now being gathered. This new module collects all wildland fire information now being gathered, and makes it available to managers and investigators through a statewide database. Many more people are now able to analyze this information, making it easier to analyze trends in fire cause, and aid in collecting data for potential arson investigations. It also eliminates duplicate reporting, resulting in a more accurate database and improves the quality of information through CAIRS. Similar modules are currently in development for both structure and vehicle fires.

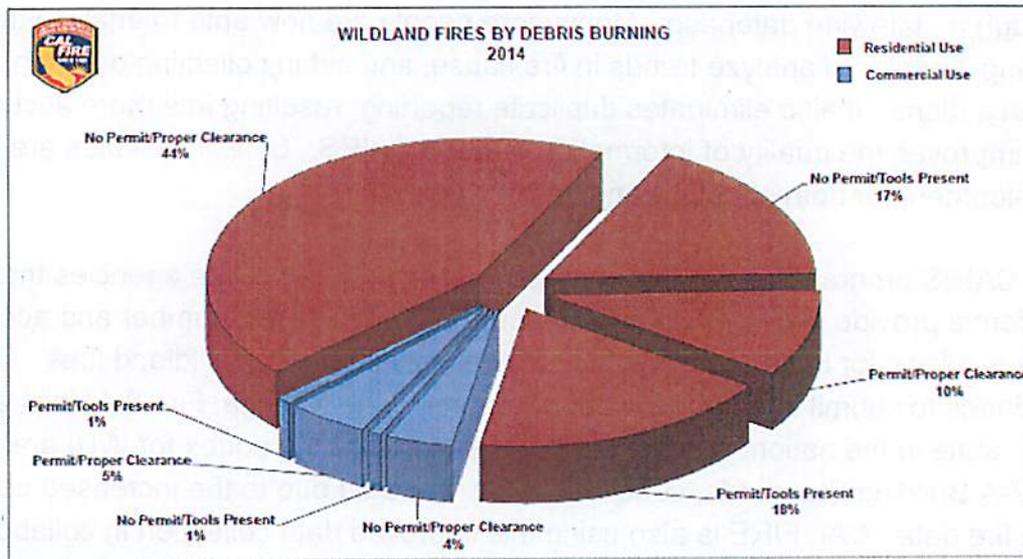
The CAIRS program has also seen an increasing number of fire agencies throughout California provide improved reporting records. An increased number and accuracy of reports allows for better analysis to help minimize impacts of wildland fires. California continues to submit a higher number of reports to the National Fire Administration than any other state in the nation. The heightened level of building codes for WUI areas, known as the 7-A Building Standards, continues to be validated due to the increased collection of post fire data. CAL FIRE is also using this improved data collection in collaboration with the Insurance Commissioner's Office to address insurance conflicts in WUI areas.

The ongoing impacts of the drought have resulted in some of the most critical fuel moisture readings on record, which has contributed to a significant increase in wildland fire ignitions during 2015. This has placed an even greater importance on our public education campaigns to ensure people are taking precautionary steps to prevent wildfires, and be prepared in the event a wildfire does threaten their home or property. The "Ready, Set, Go!" and "One Less Spark, One Less Wildfire" messages continue to resonate with the public and other fire agency partners. Through these and other public education efforts, CAL FIRE continues to fight impacts from the drought and dry fuel conditions.



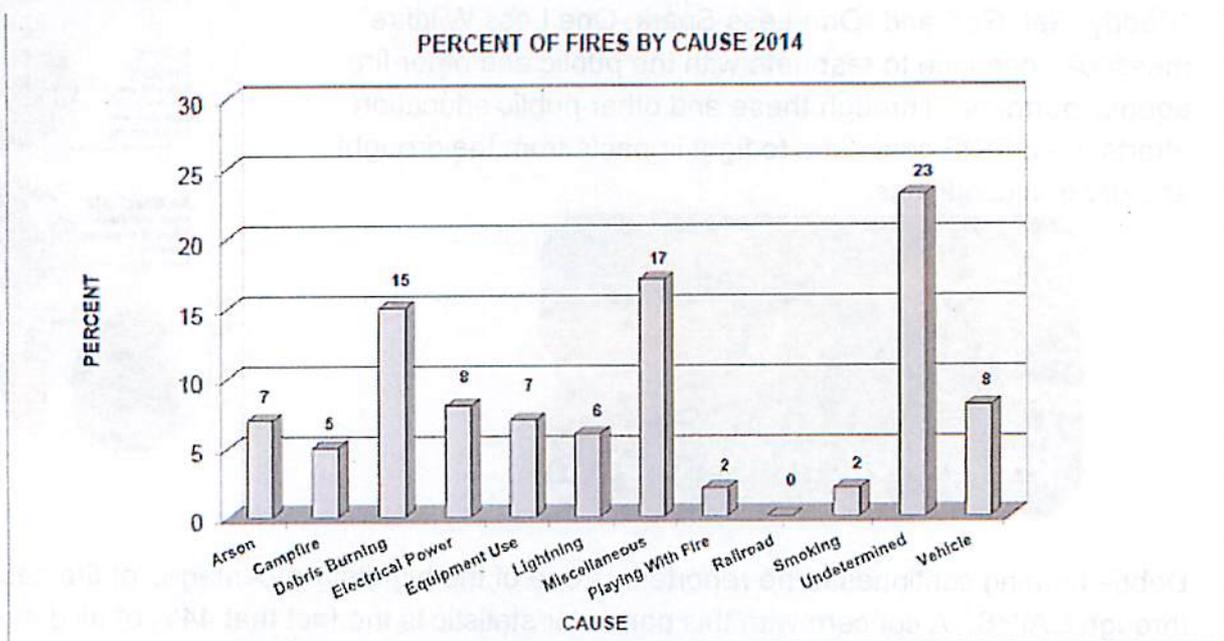
Debris burning continues to be reported as one of the highest percentages of fire causes through CAIRS. A concern with this particular statistic is the fact that 44% of all debris caused fires had no permit issued. By identifying this statistic, the Department can look at ways to reduce non-permitted debris burning through prevention and education. The chart

below displays the cause information for debris burning between May and December of 2014.

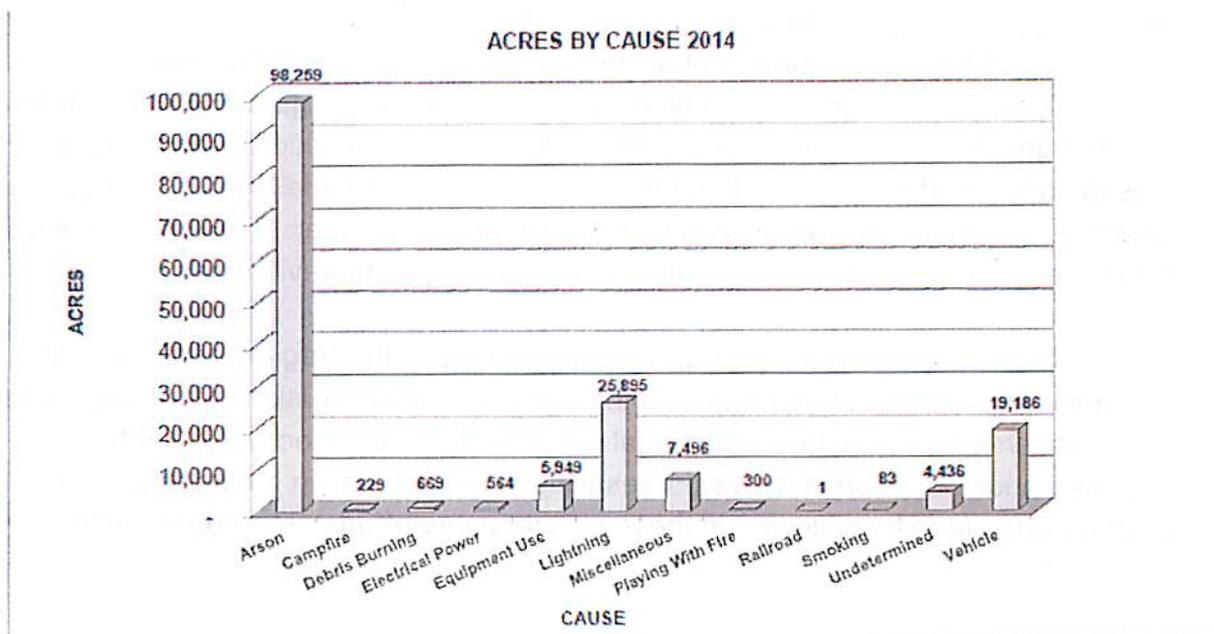


Graphic 1: Detail Debris Burning Wildland cause information reported into CAIRS May-December 2014.

The 2014 Wildfire Activity Statistics, commonly referred to as the Redbook, reflects a continuing improvement of data quality and distribution of cause counts, especially within the miscellaneous category, which dropped to 17% in 2014 from 54% in 2011. For 2014, the Redbook identifies a total of 4,978 wildland fires burned a total of 169,265 acres in CAL FIRE's Direct Protection Area (DPA). Causes of these wildland fires and acres by cause are shown in the charts below.

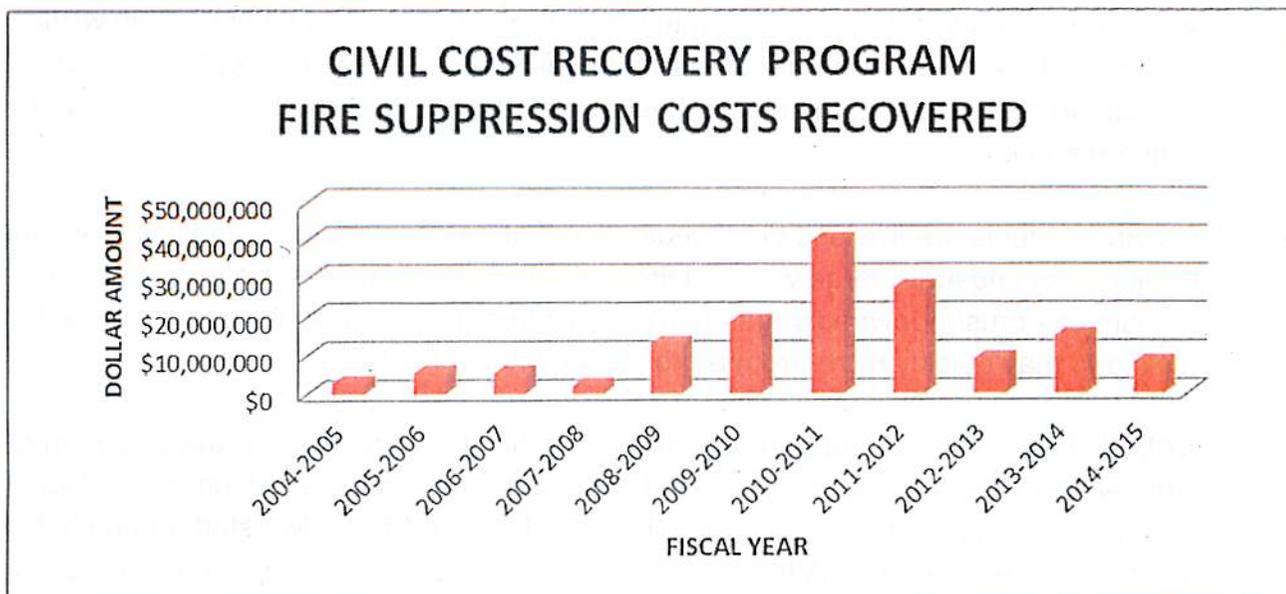


Graphic 2: Primary wildland fire cause identified on CAL FIRE direct protection areas displayed by number of incidents.



Graphic 3: Primary wildland fire cause identified on CAL FIRE direct protection areas displayed by number of acres burned.

Objective j addresses the importance of CAL FIRE's Civil Cost Recovery Program. The Civil Cost Recovery Program serves the State in multiple ways: it assigns fire suppression costs to culpable parties rather than to taxpayers as a whole, and it acts as a deterrent to carelessness that can result in destructive fires. Since 2004, more than 70 major cases have been resolved. Approximately \$9 million was collected during the Fiscal Year 2014/15 time period.



Graphic 4: CAL FIRE's costs recovered July 2003 through June 2014.

The fire suppression costs recovered are based on the fire activity. Fire activity during the 2010 and 2011 fire seasons was not as severe in previous years. The weather included sustained yearly rain, higher humidity and fewer red flag warnings, contributing to fewer fires throughout the State. Cost recovery efforts, including litigation, typically take several years to conclude following the date the fire occurs, resulting in a lag in the reporting of moneys collected, in comparison to fire activity in any given year. The 2013-2014 dollar figures are funds that were recovered from fires occurring in previous years.

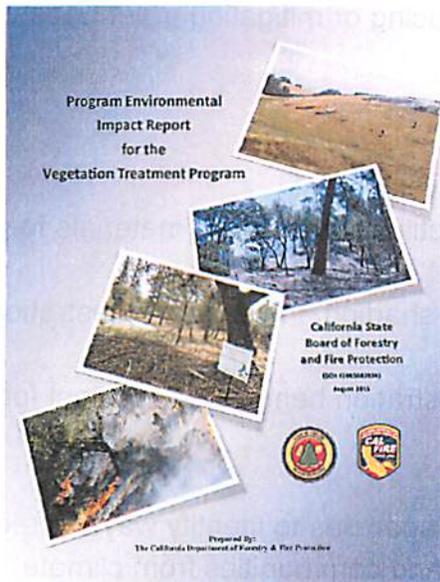
Employees working within the program manage cases at the Region level, assisting Units with equipment and personnel requests throughout the investigation. Sacramento staff provides oversight, consultation and legal support. The Cost Recovery Unit has completed audits from previous years, resulting in an increase in recorded costs from earlier reports. Monies collected in these cost recovery efforts are returned to the State's General Fund.

**Goal 5: Develop a method to integrate fire and fuels management practices with landowner priorities and multiple jurisdictional efforts within local, state and federal responsibility areas.**

The wildlands of California are naturally fire prone. Past land and fire management practices have had the effect of increasing the intensity, rate of spread, as well as the annual acreage burned on these lands. While most of the natural communities of plants and animals have adapted to natural fire conditions, these natural communities are now at risk from catastrophic wildfire primarily due to the hazardous fuel conditions. Also at risk are the communities that interface with these wildlands, including those within wildland-urban interface (WUI) and rural areas. Strategic management and control of wildland vegetation is essential to the safety, health, recreational, and economic wellbeing of California's citizens.

Hazardous fuels are live and dead vegetation that has accumulated and increases the likelihood of unusually large wildland fires. When fire encounters areas of heavy fuel loads (continuous brush, downed vegetation or small trees) it can burn these surface and ladder fuels and may quickly move from a ground fire into a crown fire.

CAL FIRE continues to support objective "a" of this goal through increased support of landowner-initiated hazardous fuels reduction using all available authorities, including the Vegetation Management Program (VMP). In 2014, CAL FIRE VMP staff treated 3,331 acres with prescribed fire. Additionally, 14,728 acres were treated mechanically or by hand crews. In order to increase treated acreage through VMP projects, efforts are being made to customize approvals and restrictions based on the project location.



CAL FIRE and the Board continue to work on revisions to the Vegetation Treatment Program Environmental Impact Report (VTPEIR). The Board is updating and revising the Notice of Preparation for this PEIR to seek input from responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the PEIR, and to ensure accurate information is contained in the public notices relating to this PEIR. The Board is also conducting a scoping meeting.

During June of 2015, a total of \$9.525 million of prevention grants were awarded from the SRA Fire Prevention Fund. 83 grants across the state received funding to help alleviate drought impacts, as well as improve wildland fire resilience to habitable structures in SRA throughout the state. These prevention projects are underway, and have until March of 2017 to be completed. For the 2015/16 Fiscal Year, an additional \$5 million has been appropriated by the Legislature for a second year of prevention grants. Applications will be due in early January, 2016, and successful applicants will receive approval to complete these prevention projects between July, 2016 and March, 2018. CAL FIRE is excited to use these funds for such important projects, and look forward to increasing our level of fire prevention activities with the public.

CAL FIRE Resource Management has also closed out a federal grant which contributed to biomass utilization. A \$400,000 grant for biomass utilization is now complete for three projects in Humboldt and Nevada counties that utilized nearly 6400 bone dry tons of forest biomass from fuel hazard reduction projects consistent with local Unit Fire Plans. CAL FIRE also participates with the long standing Biomass Working Group, sharing information and opportunities to promote the use of bio-feedstock as renewable energy source, and the development of bioenergy infrastructure.

CAL FIRE is also leading the interagency Forest Climate Action Team (FCAT), and partnering with the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and the Air Resources Board (ARB) to help organize and coordinate the development of a statewide Forest Carbon Plan. This plan is outlined in the Natural and Working Lands section of ARB's Updated Scoping Plan, and can be read at:

<http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/updatedscopingplan2013.htm>

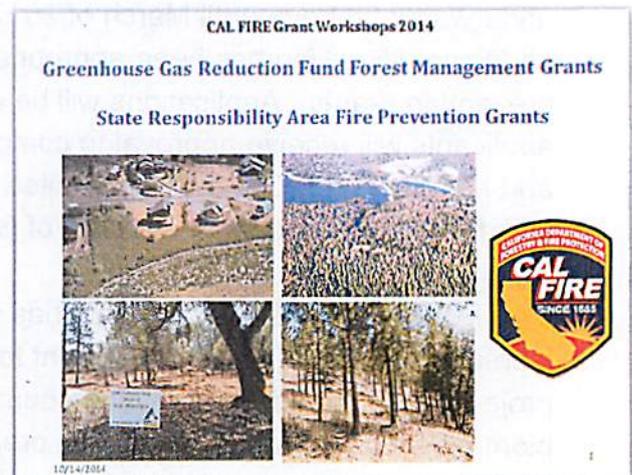
CAL FIRE is working at local, state and national levels to protect and manage California forests so they can continue to provide net greenhouse gas benefits and so that we can reduce impacts to forests of those climate changes already taking place.

CAL FIRE has identified five forestry strategies for reducing or mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. They are:

- Reforestation to sequester more carbon.
- Forestland conservation to avoid forest loss to development.
- Fuels reduction to reduce wildfire emissions and utilization of those materials for renewable energy.
- Urban forestry to reduce energy demand through shading, increase sequestration, and contribute biomass for energy generation.
- Improved management to increase carbon sequestration benefits and protect forest health.

CAL FIRE is also working with stakeholders and other agencies to identify ways to reduce or adapt to unavoidable impacts to forest ecosystems and communities from climate changes that have already begun to occur.

A series of grant programs was initiated in October 2014, to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improve carbon sequestration capabilities of the state's forest lands. This Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) amounting to \$42 million for Fiscal Year 2014/15 is being allocated from the Cap & Trade Program through the Governor's budget. This funding is being distributed via existing programs within the Resource Management section of CAL FIRE. The distribution will be spread over the following programs:



- Fuels Reduction – Vegetation removal for wildfire hazard reduction.
- Reforestation – Planting forest trees.
- Forest Pest Control – Improve forest health by thinning forest and controlling pests.
- GHG Research – Research to study GHG reduction and carbon sequestration projects.
- PTEIRs -- Program Environmental Impacts Reports for improved timber management
- Urban Forestry – A variety of projects that expand and improve urban forests.
- Forest Legacy Program – Conservation Easements

Over \$27 million has been awarded for projects from this fund to date. The remaining funds need to be awarded by June 30, 2017.

**Goal 6:** Determine the level of fire suppression resources necessary to protect the values and assets at risk identified during planning processes.

In recognition of the potential increase in fire activity due to the drought, an early cooperative relationship was established with the California National Guard. CAL FIRE has utilized these military forces in the past, which provided the groundwork for training



and operational efficiencies. As heightened fire activity has come to fruition, these additional forces have been instrumental in providing CAL FIRE with a level of surge capacity we would not have had otherwise. This has enhanced the state's capabilities to minimize the growth of the increased number of initial fire starts that have occurred throughout the state.

Emergency response resources are increasingly able to utilize Pre-Attack Plans and other forms of emergency planning. These include coordinated efforts with local communities who have created evacuation plans in conjunction with local Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP's). Local Units throughout the state are tapping into the valuable resources available from FRAP to help pre-identify intelligence data that is needed in advance of an uncontrolled wildfire. As more fuel reduction projects are completed, initial attack forces are utilizing them as part of their suppression strategy and tactics. From the outbreak of wildland fires in San Diego in May of 2014, and in numerous fires throughout the summer, post-fire assessments have revealed the positive impact these pre-fire management projects have had on suppression efforts.

CAL FIRE continues to engage in studies to improve overall firefighter and public safety. From safety gear through the ongoing progress to upgrade the emergency response fleet, both on the ground and in the air, these improvements will continue to provide the highest level of safety possible.

**Goal 7:** Address post-fire responsibilities for natural resource recovery, including watershed protection, reforestation and ecosystem restoration.

The importance of post fire recovery, and the documentation identifying fire impacts, continues to increase. Making the effort to study and learn from destructive wildfire events will allow us to better analyze how wildfire is affecting our communities, and how well our current codes, policies, and procedures are working. A standardized process to engage in Damage Inspection after a wildland fire event is now being utilized throughout the state. A

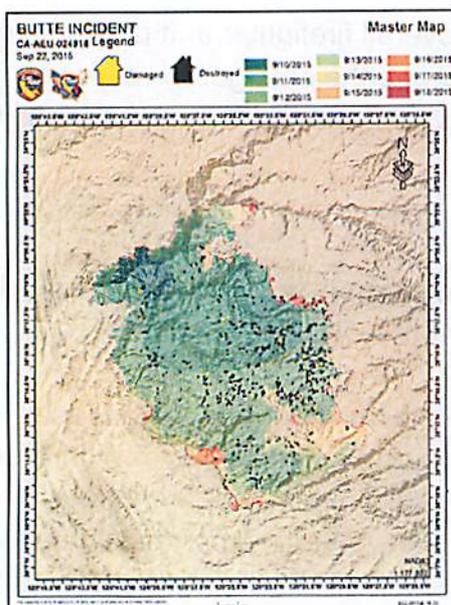
Damage Inspection Policy has now been developed, which will further standardize this procedure.

During several of the devastating Wildland fire incidents in 2015, the Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering Program developed a process to collect post-fire damage inspections using the ESRI Collector application designed for Android tablets and phones. In addition to the data collection process, the Damage Inspection Summary Report was developed and is the standard output for incidents using



trained personnel who function as Damage Inspection Specialist (DINS) Teams. This process resulted in accurate collection of more than 3,000 damaged or destroyed structures statewide during numerous incidents. CAL FIRE staff continues to move forward with development of an integrated inspection system entailing both pre fire defensible space inspection data, and post fire inspection information after a fire has burned through a particular area. The collection of this data both pre and post fire is continuously being improved and streamlined. The ultimate goal is to capture captures data via a tablet/phone which can access geo spatial maps and build a digital, statewide, standardized data base of pre and post fire inspection information.

Collecting this information will provide a far more accurate method of analyzing fire impacts. In turn, this data will lead to a better understanding of how defensible space and building construction help in reducing wildland fire impacts. These systemic changes to gathering information in a more integrated manner will improve safety to both firefighters and the public.



There is also an increasing importance of improving post-fire recovery and rehabilitation of forestlands to minimize impacts to watershed resources. Watershed protection is becoming increasingly important due to the drought, and the need to maximize both water quality and quantity.

The California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) continues to be an integral part of forestry assistance and post fire rehabilitation in many Units. Reforestation efforts will also be enhanced by the Cap & Trade grants mentioned earlier in this report.

## Summary:

As mentioned throughout this report, we find ourselves in a unique and critical time. We hear the words “historically unprecedented” being used more often, not just in describing fire activity, but also in relation to the drought, the severity of tree mortality, and overall climate change impacts. Any one of these factors can leave one overwhelmed, but the coincidence of experiencing them all at once is, well, unprecedented.

The 2010 Strategic Fire Plan continues to provide a strong base for all these efforts to be addressed. As also pointed out at the beginning of this report, many of the programs and activities outlined in this report overlap several of the seven goals identified in the Strategic Fire Plan. In large part, this overlap of the seven goals has continued to narrow down to the two primary elements identified in the Vision Statement of the Plan – to create a more resilient natural environment, and more resistant man-made assets to the effects of wildfire. This has fostered a level of programmatic cooperation both within and outside the department unseen in the past. It is through this convergence of expertise, ideas, and knowledge that will allow CAL FIRE to be successful.

While the Plan has served well as a guideline to address the wildfire problem in the State, the cumulative impact of all the factors listed above deserve our full attention. There are several factors that require a conversation on how we address the future. In September, 2014, Governor Brown vetoed AB 2465, but in his explanation back to the Legislature, directed CAL FIRE to, “develop an Appendix to the State Fire Plan on prescribed fires for consideration by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.” In response to this direction, CAL FIRE will bring options addressing prescribed fire to the Board for their consideration and inclusion into the Plan.

Should the Board choose to add additional language regarding prescribed fire at some point in the near future, the question arises about taking the opportunity to look at other potential changes to the document. The 2010 Plan contains a written timeline that states the next comprehensive update to the Plan will take place in 2018. But the authors of the current Plan could not have foreseen the severity level of the ongoing climate change impacts that exist today. These impacts include the historic drought, healthy forest issues including statewide tree mortality, and increasing fire severity, with the accompanying hillside runoff and water quality issues. Additionally, the SRA Fire Prevention Fee also didn't exist until after the 2010 Plan was adopted.

All of which raises the question as to whether now might be a good time to consider beginning the next comprehensive update to the Plan. Certainly, the existing Plan provides a very solid foundation upon which to build, and which has served very well over the past several years. There are many aspects of the 2010 Plan that remain viable

today. One is the fact that the Plan was created and remains a living document. Although no formal changes have been made since its approval, this is more a testament to the strength of the document than a statement that nothing has changed. The current Plan refers to climate change, wildfire threats to ecosystem health, and accurately identified the historical trends in wildland fires at the time it was written. But as has been identified above, significant impacts are now affecting the forest environment and fire ground that were not fully anticipated in 2010. This is not a recommendation to begin the next scheduled update, only a suggestion to take it under consideration.

Any consideration to embark on a comprehensive update will provide opportunities to address the current impacts identified above. The success of an undertaking like this will hinge on healthy discussions, along with good cooperation and coordination both internally and externally with our many and varied partners. The Fire Plan Program will continue to work closely with the Resource Protection Committee as the many efforts identified in this program unfold. With support and guidance from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, a more resilient and safer environment can be accomplished.