



Cal Fire

San Benito-Monterey Unit

2025 Fire Plan



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Signature Page

This Plan: was collaboratively developed. Interested parties, federal, state, city, and county agencies within the Unit have been consulted and are listed in the plan.

Identifies and prioritizes pre-fire and post fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk within the Unit.

Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only. It is the responsibility of those implementing the projects to ensure that all environmental compliance and permitting processes are met, as necessary.

DocuSigned by:

George Nunez
BEU Unit Chief

DocuSigned by:

Brice Muenzer
BEU Battalion 4605 Natural Resource Division

DocuSigned by:

Matt Guzman
Pre Fire Engineer

Executive Summary

The San Benito-Monterey Unit Strategic Fire Plan serves as a comprehensive framework for mitigating wildfire risks. By emphasizing proactive measures prior to fire ignitions, the plan aims to reduce suppression costs, minimize property losses, enhance firefighter safety, and promote ecosystem resilience. In alignment with these objectives, the San Benito-Monterey Unit, in collaboration with key stakeholders, has developed a strategic fire management plan to achieve both state and local fire prevention goals.

Pre-fire management initiatives are central to this approach, particularly during periods of heightened fire risk. Through the implementation of fire-resistant landscaping, mechanical fuels treatment, prescribed burns, adherence to building construction standards, infrastructure enhancements, land-use planning, and emergency evacuation strategies, the Unit seeks to mitigate the severity and spread of wildfires. These measures are designed to reduce overall suppression costs and protect critical assets.

To ensure the success of the Fire Plan, the San Benito-Monterey Unit is committed to the following objectives:

- **Risk Assessment & Data Analysis** – Collecting, analyzing, and leveraging data to identify communities at risk and prioritize fuel reduction projects.
- **Operational Preparedness** – Providing ongoing training to enhance firefighter safety and improve suppression effectiveness.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration** – Strengthening partnerships with public agencies, private industries, and community organizations to develop and implement cooperative fire prevention projects.
- **Public Education & Outreach** – Promoting fire prevention awareness through guidance on fire-resistant landscaping, construction best practices, and hazardous fuel reduction strategies to safeguard lives, property, and natural resources.
- **Funding & Resource Allocation** – Working with grant writers and stakeholders to secure financial resources necessary for project implementation.
- **Defensible Space Compliance** – Supporting enforcement and awareness initiatives to ensure effective fire-safe clearance around structures.

By adhering to these objectives, the San Benito-Monterey Unit is dedicated to reducing wildfire suppression costs, minimizing property and environmental damage, and enhancing community resilience. This Fire Plan aligns with CAL FIRE's mission, vision, and values, ensuring a proactive and strategic approach to wildfire management.

Unit Strategic Fire Plan Amendments

Date	Section Updated	Page Numbers Updated	Description of Update	Updated By
4/3/25	Fire Fighter Resource Table	10	Unit Preparedness and Firefighting Capabilities	M. Guzman
4/3/25	San Benito-Monterey Unit Values at Risk	15-18	Update information	M. Guzman
4/3/25	Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ's)	37	Updated Map	G. Haight
4/3/25	Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program	88-90	Updated	J. Silvera
4/21/25	San Benito-Monterey Fuels Reduction Projects	91-102	New Projects Added	B. Muenzer
4/21/25	Ignition Data	91-102	Updated table	M. Guzman
4/21/25	Exhibits: Maps	113-117	Updated Maps	G. Haight
4/3/25	Supplement	117-120	Emerging Technology	M. Guzman
4/24/25	Supplement	124-125	<u>Vegetation Management:</u>	M. Guzman
4/24/25	Supplement	126	Active CAL FIRE Grants in San Benito-Monterey Unit	T. Montgomery

Unit Description



The San Benito-Monterey Unit is located along the central coast between San Luis Obispo County to the south and Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties to the north. The Pacific Ocean abuts the western side of the Unit, and the Diablo Mountains and the San Joaquin Valley lie to the east. The Los Padres National Forest lies along the coast south of the Carmel Highlands encompassing the Ventana Wilderness and the Silver Peak Wilderness. The community of the former Ft. Ord also lies within the Unit and has largely become Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land for public recreational use. Pinnacles National Park is centered in the Unit in both Monterey and San Benito Counties. The Unit encompasses over 3 million acres, of which 2.1 million acres are State Responsibility Area (SRA), representing one of the largest state responsibility jurisdictions in CAL FIRE.

The topography of the Unit varies from steep and rugged mountains with moderate to heavy vegetative cover to rolling hills used for livestock grazing. Plant species vary by aspect, slope, elevation, soil type, past fire history, and distance from the coast. The predominant vegetation

types are coastal chaparral, and grass/oak woodland, with the Monterey Peninsula supporting stands of various coastal tree species.

The weather in the Unit is divided into two basic patterns. The northwestern area of the Unit experiences a common coastal weather pattern with low clouds and fog which by mid-day give way to temperatures in the mid 70's to 80's, recovering in the evening with the marine layer moving in. This tends to keep fires near the coast to the first burn period. The eastern and southern areas of the unit generally have less fog and temperatures commonly reach the 90-to-100-degree range with strong afternoon valley winds upwards to 10-15 mph. Fires in the eastern and southern parts of the Unit have greater potential of going into extended attack, especially late in the fire season when heavier fuels are dry. Winters are mild with rainfall from 7 to 30+ inches. Wind speed and direction is variable, but is predominantly northwest at 7-10 mph.

The coastal weather influence, together with periods of extreme fire weather conditions, provides a window for extreme wildland fire behavior in areas of potentially high dollar loss. These conditions combine with the expanding wildland interface and urban population to yield the potential for large, damaging, and costly wildfires. These areas at risk are defined further in the "Priority Areas" section of the Strategic Fire Plan. The Unit has an overall fire hazard rating of High (56% of Unit) in the State Responsibility Area (SRA), while 30% is rated Very High and 14% is in the Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

Fire history in the San Benito-Monterey Unit is collected for every fire 10 acres and larger. Much



of the fire history is in and around the Los Padres National Forest on the west side of the Unit, primarily caused by lightning and campfires. Fires in the foothills of the Salinas Valley in light, flashy fuels tend to be afternoon, wind driven incidents ranging from under 100 acres to over 1,000 acres, depending on temperatures, wind speed, and topography.

There are several priority areas identified in the Unit, which are further addressed in the Battalion priorities where fuel reduction projects and public education are discussed. Primary businesses in the Unit include agriculture and industry as well as hospitality and tourism.

Unit Preparedness and Firefighting Capabilities

The San Benito-Monterey Unit is operationally divided into three divisions and further into six battalions and offer a wide variety of special programs which include: Law Enforcement and Fire Prevention Bureau, Fire Prevention and Planning Bureau, Emergency Command Center, Resource Management and Wildfire Resiliency Bureau, Training Bureau, Aviation Program, including Fixed Wing and Rotary Wing Programs, a Conservation Camp Program and California National Guard Program, and Cooperative Fire Protection.

Firefighting Resources Overview		
Fire Stations & Facilities		
Facility Type	Quantity	
Fire Stations – CAL FIRE	12	
Fire Stations – Cooperative Fire	10	
Volunteer Fire Stations	4	
Air Attack – Helitack Base	1	
Conservation Camp	1	
California Military Department Fire Center (Pinnacles)	1	
Equipment		
Equipment Type	CAL FIRE	Cooperative Fire
Engines	19	16
Dozers	3	
Water Tenders		2
Aerial Apparatus (100', 75')		2
Patrol Vehicles		2
Squads		3
Air Tankers	2	
Helicopters	1	
Air Attack Planes	1	
Rescue Boats (IRB)		3
Rescue Water Craft (RWC)		3
Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV/RTV)	5	
Personnel		
Personnel Type	Quantity	
Permanent – CAL FIRE	285	
Seasonal – CAL FIRE	131	
Defensible Space Inspectors – CAL FIRE	4	
Volunteer Firefighters	25	
Inmate Crews	3	
California National Guard Crews	1	



Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements

- Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District
- Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District
- City of Soledad Fire Department
- Cypress Fire Protection District
- Pebble Beach Community Services District
- South Monterey County Fire Protection District



Dispatch Agreements

- Cachagua Fire Protection District

Mutual Threat Zone Response Areas

- Fort Hunter Liggett

Automatic and Mutual Aid Agreements:

CAL FIRE maintains several Automatic and Mutual Aid Agreements itself and through the Cooperative Fire Protection agreements in the Unit. All agencies in Monterey County are party to a countywide mutual aid agreement. Many of our contract districts maintain automatic aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions such as

Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District has Automatic Aid with:

North Monterey County Fire District

San Benito County Fire Department

Pajaro Valley Fire District

Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District has Automatic Aid with:

Cypress Fire Protection District

Cypress Fire Protection District has Automatic Aid with:

Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District

Pebble Beach Community Services District
Fire Department

Monterey County Regional Fire District

The City of Monterey Fire Department

Pebble Beach Community Services District has Automatic Aid with:

Cypress Fire Protection District

The City of Monterey Fire Department

The City of Soledad Fire Department has Automatic Aid with:

The City of Greenfield Fire Department

Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District

Correctional Training Facility Fire Department

South Monterey County Fire Protection District has Automatic Aid with:

The City of Greenfield Fire Department

Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department

Operating agreements with:

United States Forest Service - Los Padres National Forest

National Park Service - Pinnacles National Park

Bureau of Land Management-Central Coast Field Office

Section II: Collaboration

Community, Agencies, Fire Safe Councils

Representatives involved in the development of the Unit Strategic Fire Plan are included in the following table. Their organization and title are indicated below:

Organization	Title
Fire Safe Council for Monterey County	President – Richard Bates
San Benito Fire Safe Council	Chair – Rick Mazzarella Pitschka
Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association	President – Samuel Klemek
Los Padres National Forest – Monterey Ranger District	District Ranger – John (Fin) Eifert
Bureau of Land Management	Fire Management Specialists – Ed Fulton
Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	Fire Fuel Mitigation Program and Forest Health Coordinator – Jaime Tuitele-Lewis
County of Monterey – Resource Management Agency	Director – Carl P. Holm
Pacific Gas & Electric	Vegetation Management Manager – Scott Carlton
California State Parks	Chief Ranger Monterey District-Mike Dippel

Section III: Values at Risk

San Benito-Monterey Unit Values at Risk

Valued assets susceptible to fire damage within the San Benito-Monterey Unit have been comprehensively identified in the Unit Fire Plan to reflect the unique social, economic, and environmental fabric of the region. These assets include rangelands, which serve as both vital agricultural spaces and critical open-space buffers; recreational resources, such as parks, trails, beaches, and public lands that attract residents and visitors alike; and the hospitality and tourism industry, which plays a major role in the regional economy through high-profile destinations like Big Sur, Pebble Beach, and local wineries. The fire plan also recognizes the vulnerability of agricultural operations—including vineyards, orchards, and livestock grazing areas—that provide livelihoods and food supply chain connections across the state.

Other key assets at risk include residential and commercial structures, many of which are located in wildland-urban interface (WUI) zones where fire risk is most severe. Air quality is another critical concern, as wildfire smoke can pose significant health threats, particularly to vulnerable populations, and disrupt day-to-day life across large geographic areas. The region's remaining timberlands and forests, while limited in commercial use, provide essential ecological services, biodiversity support, and scenic value. Equally important are the region's water resources and watersheds, which are essential for domestic, agricultural, and ecological uses. Fires within these areas can lead to long-term erosion, sedimentation, and water quality degradation that affect downstream users and aquatic ecosystems.

The Fire Plan also acknowledges the importance of wildlife and wildlife habitat, recognizing the threat that high-severity fires pose to native species and critical ecological corridors. In addition, the protection of cultural, historical, and scenic resources is a key priority. These include indigenous cultural sites, historic ranching and mission-era landmarks, scenic highways, and viewsheds that define the character and heritage of the region. The diversity of these values requires an approach that goes beyond fuel reduction and fire suppression—it requires stewardship, collaboration, and careful land-use planning.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit Fire Plan has been thoughtfully developed with all of these values in mind. Its priorities have been shaped through collaboration with local stakeholders, community members, tribal representatives, landowners, fire safe councils, environmental organizations, and CAL FIRE managers. This inclusive process ensures that the plan reflects local priorities and balances fire resilience with the protection of the region's economic vitality, public safety, and natural and cultural heritage. By addressing these complex and interrelated values, the Fire Plan serves as a living framework to guide risk reduction efforts, resource allocation, and future planning throughout the Unit.

Tourism and Events:

The San Benito Monterey Unit encompasses some of the state's most stunning natural landscapes, world renowned attractions and events. From breathtaking coastal views to world-renowned golf courses, these attractions are not only sources of enjoyment for visitors but also vital to the region's economy and the livelihood of local communities.

Coastal Highway 1 of the most iconic scenic drives in the world. Running along the rugged coastline of Monterey County, offering stunning ocean views, dramatic cliffs, and picturesque attractions of Big Sur, towering coastal redwoods and the Bigsby bridge. This highway is a crucial route for tourists, drawing an excess of two million visitors annually visitors who contribute significantly to the local economy through lodging, dining, and recreational activities.

Pinnacles National Park located in San Benito County, Pinnacles National Park is a geological wonder, known for its unique rock formations, talus caves, and diverse wildlife, including the endangered California condor. The park attracts hikers, rock climbers, and nature enthusiasts, providing an economic boost to local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and outdoor adventure companies.

The Pacific Ocean and the rich marine ecosystem of Monterey Bay play a crucial role in the region's economy and ecological diversity. Monterey Bay is home to vibrant marine life, from sea otters to whales, making it a prime location for tourism, fishing, and marine research. The bay supports commercial and recreational fishing industries while also attracting tourists for activities such as whale watching, scuba diving, and kayaking. The bay's protected marine areas provide habitat for kelp forests, sea lions, and various seabirds.

Monterey Bay Aquarium world-famous institution, the Monterey Bay Aquarium is a leader in marine conservation and education. Located on Cannery Row, the aquarium draws over a million visitors each year, supporting local businesses, hotels, and restaurants. Its interactive exhibits and conservation efforts help protect marine species such as sea otters, sharks, and jellyfish while also driving sustainable tourism.

Cannery Row once the center of Monterey's booming sardine industry, Cannery Row has transformed into a lively waterfront district filled with shops, restaurants, and cultural attractions. Made famous by John Steinbeck's novel of the same name, Cannery Row is a must-visit location that continues to drive economic activity through tourism and retail. The area also serves as a gateway to marine conservation efforts, with ongoing studies on local fisheries and ocean health.

Pebble Beach's 17-Mile Drive a scenic toll road winding through Pebble Beach, 17-Mile Drive offers breathtaking ocean views, iconic landmarks such as the Lone Cypress, and access to some of the world's most prestigious golf courses. The drive is a major tourist attraction, with its entrance fees and associated businesses contributing significantly to the local economy. The coastal dunes and cypress forests along the route provide habitat for endemic plant species and rare wildlife, including the Monterey pine and black-tailed deer.

Golf Courses Monterey County is known worldwide for its premier golf courses, including Pebble Beach Golf Links, Spyglass Hill, and Spanish Bay. These courses host prestigious tournaments like the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, attracting professional golfers and spectators from around

the world. Golf tourism generates millions in revenue for the region, supporting hotels, and restaurants.

Annual Events:

Monterey and San Benito counties host numerous events that boost tourism and local commerce. Some of the most notable include:

- **Monterey Jazz Festival** – One of the world's longest-running jazz festivals, drawing top musicians and thousands of fans annually.
- **Concours d'Elegance** – A prestigious car show that brings in automobile enthusiasts and collectors from around the globe.
- **California Rodeo Salinas** – California's largest rodeo, showcasing rodeo sports, music, food and culture.

The attractions of Monterey and San Benito counties are not just points of interest; they are essential to the region's economic vitality and environmental health. Tourism, recreation, and hospitality industries provide thousands of jobs, supporting local families and businesses. Events and attractions contribute billions to the economy, ensuring the continued prosperity of the area.

Agriculture:

Monterey and San Benito counties are vital agricultural regions in California. Monterey County, with its fertile cropland and vast pastureland, is a powerhouse in agriculture, boasting 363,670 acres dedicated to crops and 861,980 acres for grazing. The economy relies heavily on farming, particularly in the Salinas Valley, often referred to as the "Salad Bowl of the World." San Benito County, though smaller, plays a significant role in California's agricultural industry, with 32,000 acres used for farming and 510,000 acres for cattle grazing. With 610 farms spanning a total of 520,127 acres, the county is known for producing high-quality crops and livestock, supporting local and state markets.

In terms of economic performance, Monterey County reported a gross annual revenue of \$4.35 billion in 2023, a slight decrease from its 2022 figure of \$4.63 billion. Monterey County remains a major contributor to California's agricultural revenue, benefiting from a climate that allows year-round production of vegetables, fruits, and wine grapes. San Benito County, on the other hand, generated \$360.86 million in 2023, showing a marginal dip from its 2022 earnings of \$362.35 million. The county's economy is driven by a mix of traditional farming and cattle ranching, which continue to sustain local communities and businesses.

Monterey and San Benito Counties wine and winegrape sector, along with supporting businesses, contributes approximately \$1.4 billion annually to the local economy. This figure encompasses various economic activities, including production, distribution, and tourism related to the wine industry. In San Benito County, wine grapes were among the top crops in 2023, generating approximately \$31.9 million in production value. This reflects the county's growing emphasis on viticulture within its agricultural sector. These figures highlight the significant role

that wine production plays in the economies of both Monterey and San Benito counties, contributing to employment, tourism, and overall economic activity.

Both counties face, impacts of wildfires which can influence annual revenues and overall agricultural productivity. Monterey County, with its large-scale commercial farming operations, and San Benito County, with its blend of small and mid-sized farms, contribute significantly to California's food supply.

Priority Areas:

Several areas have been identified as priority areas by the San Benito-Monterey Unit management team. The identification of these specific areas was based on available data from Pre-Fire Engineering assessments, historical fire information and stakeholder input. Priority areas described in this plan are not listed in order of priority but rather as elements of the overall Unit Plan and are listed below:

- State Highway 68
- Carmel Valley / Carmel Valley Village
- Carmel Highlands / Palo Colorado Canyon
- Jacks Peak / Pebble Beach
- Bryson Hesperia / Williams Hill
- San Juan Canyon (San Benito County)
- Cachagua (Carmel Valley)
- Pine Canyon (King City)
- North Monterey County / Aromas

Following the assessment of each priority area, a series of potential mitigation actions was identified and agreed upon by the Unit Management Team. The following describes each area's geographic location, values, and potential mitigation actions.

State Highway 68 Corridor / Laureles Grade:

This area is in the western portion of the unit, between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula. The area is bounded on the east by the Salinas Valley, on the north and west by the former Fort Ord Army Base, on the south by Carmel Valley, and on the west by Jacks Peak.

Values include many single and multi-family residences. Highway 68 is a major travel route between Salinas and the Monterey Peninsula. Several commercial / industrial parks are located along Highway 68, including the Laguna Seca Recreation Area. Large areas of undeveloped public land are located along the northern border. This area contains large plots of vegetation that have not burned in several decades, resulting in a build-up of decadent fuels.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within this priority area.
- Strive to provide chipper services as available to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified assets at risk.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the probability of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.

- Encourage development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the priority area. Such plans should identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the priority area that can be pre-planned and identified.

Carmel Valley / Carmel Valley Village:



This area is in the western portion of the Unit on both sides of Carmel Valley Road from State Highway 1 west to the Sleepy Hollow subdivision. It is bordered by Jacks Peak and State Highway 68 on the north, Garland Ranch Regional Park on the south, City of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the west, and Cachagua Fire Protection District on the east.

Values include a concentration of single and multi-family residences and other rural structures. Carmel Valley Road is a primary travel route leading to and from the Monterey Peninsula from Highway 101 in the Salinas Valley to Highway 1 in Carmel. Several commercial/retail centers are located along Carmel Valley Road as well as the Quail Lodge and Carmel Valley golf courses. Several wineries are also located in the area. Large areas of National Forest wildland / wilderness are located to the south of the priority area. This area contains large plots of vegetation that have not burned in several decades, resulting in a build-up of decadent fuel.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the priority area.
- Strive to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuel load adjacent to identified assets at risk.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Encourage development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the target area. Such plans should identify significant elements of a wildland fire strategy for the target area that can be pre-planned.
- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.
- Maintain and improve the Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads project. Phase 1 was completed and now work is continuing to expand the fuel modification efforts.

Carmel Highlands / Palo Colorado Canyon:

This area is in the western coastal area of the Unit and is bordered by the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the north, the Los Padres National Forest on the east, Andrew Molera State Park and Big Sur on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west.

Values include single and multi-family residences and other rural structures, many located in remote areas with limited access. Point Lobos State Reserve, and the California Sea Otter Refuge are also within this priority area. Highway 1 is the only access/egress route for this priority area.



Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 with a goal of 100% compliance in the priority area.
- Continue to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified assets at risk.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Continue development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the priority area. Such plans should identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the priority area that can be pre-planned and identified.
- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.
- Maintain and improve the Palo Colorado Fuel Break project. Phase 1 was completed, and now work is continuing to expand the fuel modification efforts.
- Carmel Highlands FPD is working toward completing the Carmel Highlands Fuel Break coined the Foothill Project, along the Wildland Urban Interface.



Jacks Peak / Pebble Beach:

The Pebble Beach Fire District is located on the western edge of the San Benito-Monterey Unit, encompassing a high-risk wildland-urban interface along the iconic Monterey Peninsula. Bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west, the City of Monterey to the north, Carmel Valley and the Highway 68 corridor to the east, and the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea to the south, this area represents one of the most scenic, economically significant, and fire-prone communities in California. World-renowned for its coastal beauty, luxury resorts, and elite golf destinations, the district draws international visitors year-round and contributes significantly to the region's tourism and economic stability.

While the area boasts affluence and natural charm, it also faces extreme wildfire danger due to its topography, vegetation, and limited access routes. A dense canopy of mature and decadent Monterey pine and Monterey cypress trees increases the potential for large, fast-moving fires. Steep terrain, narrow roads, and heavy vegetative fuels complicate suppression operations and evacuation efforts. One particularly significant landscape feature is Jacks Peak, located along the eastern edge of the district near the Highway 68 corridor. Home to Jacks Peak Park, this elevated area contains one of the last remaining native stands of Monterey pine forest, providing not only vital habitat and recreation but also presenting a substantial fuel load and

wildfire risk. The park's elevation offers sweeping views of the surrounding communities, but its rugged, wooded terrain adds complexity to fire planning and control efforts in the region.

The Pebble Beach Fire District is rich in critical assets and values at risk. High-value resort areas such as Pebble Beach Golf Links and nearby championship golf courses are internationally recognized venues for events like the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and the Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance. These attractions bring substantial economic activity to the region and underscore the importance of fire protection to preserve tourism and local business continuity. Residential development includes both single-family homes and multi-unit dwellings, many of which are built along ridgelines and in forested areas with limited ingress and egress.

Additionally, Highway 1—a key north-south transportation corridor—runs through the district, providing essential access for emergency response and connecting the community to Big Sur and coastal destinations to the south. Any disruption due to wildfire could severely hinder movement and emergency evacuation, making strategic fire mitigation and preparedness in this district a top priority.

The inclusion of Jacks Peak, the coastal corridor, and the area's globally recognized economic and recreational venues make the Pebble Beach Fire District a uniquely vulnerable and valuable region. Ongoing investment in vegetation management, community education, defensible space initiatives, and infrastructure hardening will be vital to protecting lives, property, and the long-term sustainability of this world-renowned location.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 with a goal of 100% compliance in the priority area.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.

- Continue development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the priority area. Such plans identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the priority area that can be pre-planned and identified.
- Continue enforcement of the Cypress FPD and Pebble Beach Community Service District Fire Defense Plan to ensure compliance and maintenance of emergency access routes, designated open space areas, and undeveloped parcels.
- Work closely with the Community Service District, the Monterey County Fire Safe Council, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.



Cachagua: (Carmel Valley)

This priority area is in the western portion of the Unit and is situated south of Carmel Valley Road and north of the Las Padres National Forest east of Carmel Valley Village. The area is served by the Cachagua Fire Protection District.

Values include single and multi-family residential structures, and several large ranches, many of which are in remote areas with limited access. Fire history in the area is minimal, leading to the overgrowth of dead brush and light flashy fuels. However, the recent Tassajara, Carmel and Soberanes Fires all posed significant threats to the area.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the priority area.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Continue development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the priority area. Such plans will identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant elements of a wildland fire strategy for the priority area that can be pre-planned and identified.
- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.
- Maintain and improve the Laurel Springs / Hennicksons Ridge Fuel Break project. Phase 1 was completed, and work is continuing to expand the fuel modification efforts.

North Monterey County / Aromas:



Picture 1 Quarry Fire 2023

Aromas Fire District Overview

Located in the northwestern portion of the San Benito-Monterey Unit, the Aromas Fire District encompasses a geographically diverse and strategically significant area. Bounded by major transportation corridors, this region stretches west and east of State Highway 101, south of State Highway 129, north of State Highway 156, and east of Highway 1. The district includes the communities of Aromas, Pajaro, Las Lomas, Prunedale, Royal Oaks, and Moss Landing—each with its own unique landscape and risk profile.

The area is considered primarily rural, yet it supports a wide mix of land uses, including dense pockets of single-family homes, agricultural ranchlands, and various commercial and retail operations. Critical infrastructure and community assets further increase the importance of the region. Four major highways—Highways 1, 101, 129, and 156—run through or near the district and serve as essential routes for regional traffic, commerce, and emergency response. On the western edge of the district lies the Vistra Moss Landing Energy Storage Facility, one of the world's largest battery storage systems, as well as the busy Moss Landing Harbor. These high-

value facilities, coupled with nearby residential areas, underscore the need for robust fire prevention and response strategies.

In addition to its infrastructure and residential importance, the area is home to several treasured natural and recreational resources. Moss Landing State Beach, Zmudowski State Beach, and the Elkhorn Slough provide scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and vital wildlife habitat. These natural areas attract visitors year-round and play a key role in regional tourism and environmental conservation. However, the area's wildfire risk has risen significantly in recent years due to the widespread presence of eucalyptus trees—a highly flammable, non-native species known for increasing fire intensity and spread. This growing fuel load, combined with the district's critical values and limited access in some locations, makes the Aromas Fire District a high-priority area for wildfire mitigation and preparedness planning

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within priority area.
- Strive to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified values.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Encourage development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the priority area. Such plans should identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the target area that can be pre-planned and identified.

- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.



San Juan Canyon: (San Juan Bautista)

San Juan Canyon is located in the wildland-urban interface southwest of the historic town of San Juan Bautista, California. This priority area is geographically bounded by State Highway 156 to the north, Fremont Peak State Park to the west, Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) to the east, and Wildhorse Canyon to the south. The region features steep, rugged terrain with a mix of grasslands, oak woodlands, mixed conifers, and dense chaparral—vegetation types that contribute to elevated wildfire risk, particularly during the late summer and fall months. The area is home to a combination of single-family and multi-family residences, many situated on large, remote parcels within densely vegetated canyons and along ridgelines. These homes vary in construction type and often lack adequate defensible space, increasing their vulnerability to wildfire. Several large working ranches are also present, contributing to the region's economic and cultural value.

One of the most significant wildfire planning challenges in San Juan Canyon is the area's limited access and egress. The local road network consists primarily of narrow and winding roads that may become impassable for emergency vehicles during a wildfire. San Juan Canyon Road is the main access serving the area, functioning as the sole point of entry and exit for both residents

and emergency responders. This road includes narrow sections, blind corners, and limited areas for vehicle turnaround, all of which complicate evacuation efforts and restrict the movement of firefighting resources. These constraints underscore the importance of improving vegetation management, access routes, and evacuation planning as part of a comprehensive wildfire preparedness strategy for the area.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the Priority Area.
- Continue to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified assets at risk.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Encourage development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the target area. Such plans should identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the target area that can be pre-planned and identified.
- Work closely with the San Benito County Fire Safe Council and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.
- Maintain and improve the San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break project. Phase 1 was completed, and work is continuing to expand the fuel modification efforts.

- Several VMP's are planned in this priority area along the Gabilan Range to create a landscape level mosaic.

Pine Canyon: (King City)

This area is southwest of the community of King City in southern Monterey County. It is bordered by Highway 101 on the north and east, and Fort Hunter Liggett to the west.

Values include single family and multi-unit residential structures. This area continues to grow with the construction of new residential sub-division projects in the planning stages.

Priority Area Goals:

- Increased public awareness and education relative to wildland fire threat and defensible space.
- Reduction of available wildland fuels, particularly adjacent to identified values and primary access/egress routes.

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Fire Plan goals for this priority area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the Priority Area.
- Roadside fuel modification to ensure egress / exit route safety and reduce the possibility of "roadside starts".
- Work closely with the Monterey County Fire Safe Council, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local fire agencies to identify additional prescriptions suitable for the area, including the recently funded Monterey County Multi-Community Chipping Grant.
- The Unit will seek opportunities to maintain the Dolan Fire Contingency Line above Pine Canyon.

Communities

Monterey County	San Benito County
Aromas*	Antelope Valley
Big Sur*	Bitterwater
Bryson-Hesperia	Cienega Canyon
Cachagua	Hollister*
Carmel-by-the-Sea*	Paicines
Carmel Highlands*	Panoche Valley
Carmel Valley*	Ridgemark
Carmel Valley Village*	San Juan Bautista*
Corral de Tierra	San Juan Canyon
Del Monte Forest*	Tres Pinos
Del Rey Oaks*	
Elkhorn*	
Fort Ord*	
Gonzales*	
Greenfield*	
Jamesburg	
King City*	
Las Lomas*	
Lucia*	
Marina*	
Monterey*	
Pacific Grove*	
Pajaro*	
Pinnacles National Park*	
Prunedale*	
San Benancio	
Soledad*	
Sand City*	
Salinas*	
Seaside	

**Communities listed as Communities at Risk on the California Fire Alliance website*

For more information on Communities at Risk and the California Fire Alliance go to [Communities at Risk \(ca.gov\)](https://www.firealliance.org/communities-at-risk)

Section IV: Pre-Fire Management Strategies

Fire Prevention and Law Enforcement

The primary goal of the San Benito-Monterey Unit Strategic Fire Plan is to prevent the ignition and spread of unwanted, human-caused fires with an emphasis on reducing losses due to large catastrophic fires. Utilizing fire history, fuels data, weather data, and assets at risk, as well as incorporating input from the Monterey County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, San Benito County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and Federal partners, the Unit has identified Priority Areas as indicated in this document. Proactive pre-fire suppression activities, public information, and education programs are key elements of this plan.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit addresses fire prevention through pre-fire engineering, education, and law enforcement. The goal is to reduced fire hazard and risk. More narrowly addressed in planning based on ignition data analysis, fire severity zone assessments, cause and origin investigations. Including engineering and enforcing fire prevention and public safety measures that include fire-resistant landscaping, mechanical fuel treatment, building construction standards, infrastructure, land use planning, and pre-fire safety zones and escape plans.

Engineering and Community Planning

While many existing structures within the Unit were built prior to the adoption of modern wildfire resilience standards and may lack fire-resistant features, all new construction is now required to comply with the California Building Code (CBC). Specifically, Chapter 7 (Fire-Resistance-Rated Construction) and Chapter 7A (Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure), developed in coordination with the State Fire Marshal (SFM), set the minimum standards for building materials and design elements in fire-prone areas. These chapters are critical in reducing the vulnerability of structures to wildfire by regulating ignition-resistant construction practices, including requirements for roofing materials, vents, exterior walls, decks, windows, and other structural components.

The application of these codes is determined by the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) in which a structure is located. FHSZs are classified into three categories—Moderate, High, and Very High—based on factors such as vegetation, topography, and prevailing weather conditions that influence fire behavior. These zones dictate the level of construction standards that must be met, with more stringent requirements applied to areas of higher fire hazard. For example, buildings in Very High FHSZs must meet the full set of Chapter 7A requirements to ensure greater resistance to ember intrusion and radiant heat. A map identifying the designated FHSZs within the Unit is included in the “Maps” section of this document, providing a visual reference to guide land use planning, permitting, and fire-safe construction practices.

Title 19, Public Resources Code 4290:

California Public Resources Code § 4290 establishes minimum fire safety standards for development within State Responsibility Areas (SRAs), which are areas where the state is primarily responsible for wildfire protection. These regulations are enforced by CAL FIRE and are intended to reduce wildfire risk through proper planning and design of new construction or subdivisions. The code outlines specific requirements related to emergency access, signage, water supply, and vegetation management. For emergency access, roadways must meet minimum width, grade, and turnaround standards to ensure fire apparatus can safely navigate the area, while also allowing residents to evacuate. Addressing requirements mandate that structures display clearly visible, non-combustible address signs so first responders can locate them quickly during emergencies.

In addition, PRC § 4290 requires that new developments provide a reliable and accessible water supply for firefighting, such as hydrants, tanks, or natural sources, depending on site conditions. The code also integrates defensible space planning through fuel modification requirements, which call for the reduction of flammable vegetation around structures and along roadways. While PRC § 4291 governs ongoing vegetation maintenance, PRC § 4290 ensures these measures are incorporated during the planning and approval phases. Overall, the code is designed to improve life safety and firefighting effectiveness in high-risk wildland areas by embedding fire resilience into the design of the built environment.

Protection Planning

Fire protection planning within the Unit is a critical component of land use and development oversight, particularly in areas designated as State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) with elevated wildfire risk. Planning is reviewed at the subdivision and parcel map level, allowing CAL FIRE and local planning agencies to assess potential fire hazards early in the development process. This proactive approach ensures that wildfire risk reduction measures are incorporated before construction begins and are fully integrated into the overall project design. Requirements typically include safe access for emergency vehicles, adequate water supply for firefighting, defensible space planning, and compliance with appropriate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) designations.

Code Enforcement

Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District, Cypress Fire Protection District, and Pebble Beach Community Services District have full time Fire Protection Planners who review all building permits. Among other codes, they enforce the current California Building Codes, which include Chapter 7 (Fire-Resistance-Rated Construction) and Chapter 7A (SFM - Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure).

Title 19, Public Resources Code 4291

California Public Resources Code (PRC) § 4291 requires property owners in State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) to maintain defensible space around buildings and structures to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and spread. The law mandates a minimum of 100 feet of defensible space, or to the property line, around all structures. This area is divided into two zones: Zone 1 (0–30 feet) focuses on removing flammable materials, maintaining clean roofs and gutters, and trimming vegetation away from structures; Zone 2 (30–100 feet) requires thinning of brush and trees to reduce fuel continuity. These measures create a buffer that slows the spread of wildfire, lowers flame intensity, and provides firefighters with a safer area to operate during a fire.

To support compliance with PRC § 4291, San Benito Monterey Unit conducts annual Defensible Space Inspections, with each battalion assigned specific areas to inspect on a rotating basis. Some battalions—especially those with higher housing densities—operate on a three-year inspection cycle, alternating neighborhoods to ensure coverage while balancing workload. In addition to scheduled inspections, property owners may also request an inspection at any time for educational or compliance purposes. These proactive efforts help ensure consistent application of defensible space requirements across the Unit and reinforce wildfire preparedness at the individual property level.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ's)

California's seasonally dry Mediterranean climate lends itself to wildfires, and to better prepare, CAL FIRE is required to classify the severity of fire hazard in areas of California. Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps arose from major destructive fires, prompting the recognition of these areas and strategies to reduce wildfire risks.

The State Fire Marshal is mandated to classify lands within State Responsibility Areas into Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ). Fire Hazard Severity Zones fall into one of the following classifications: Moderate, High, and Very High.

The Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps are developed using a science-based and field-tested model that assigns a hazard score based on the factors that influence fire likelihood and fire behavior. Many factors are considered such as fire history, existing and potential fuel (natural vegetation), predicted flame length, blowing embers, terrain, and typical fire weather for the area.

Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps evaluate “hazard,” not “risk”. They are like flood zone maps, where lands are described in terms of the probability level of a particular area being inundated by floodwaters, and not specifically prescriptive of impacts. “Hazard” is based on the physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30 to 50-year period without considering mitigation measures such as home hardening, recent wildfire, or fuel reduction efforts. “Risk” is the potential damage a fire can do the area under existing conditions, accounting for any modifications such as fuel reduction projects, defensible space, and ignition resistant building construction.

Classification of all lands within State Responsibility Areas (SRA) into Fire Hazard Severity Zones is required by law. Therefore, the Fire Hazard Severity Zone designations and accompanying maps must follow the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) and be approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL). The California laws that require Fire Hazard Severity Zones include California Public Resources Code 4201-4204, California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 1280, and California Government Code 51175-89.

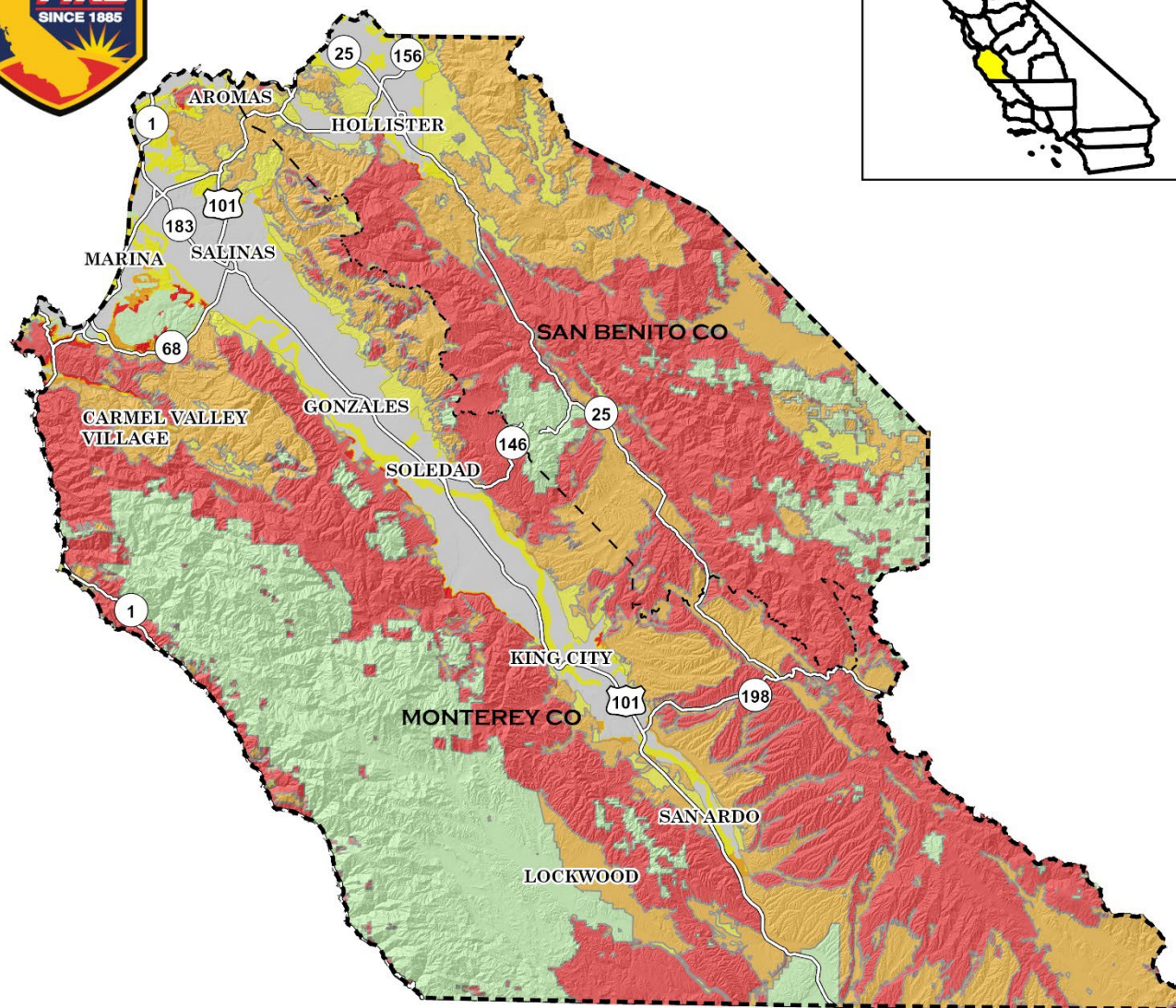
The Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps have recently been updated and re-evaluated after multiple periods of public comment. The most recent of the new maps with improved accuracy have been adopted and will take effect April 1, 2024.

To view the Fire Hazard Severity Zones viewer in the State Responsibility Area, click on the follow the link below.

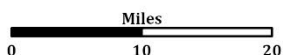
<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-hazard-severity-zones>

You can enter your address to locate your property on a map showing Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Due to the nature of this content, some users who require Assistive Technology may experience accessibility issues. If you experience any problems while trying to access this content, please call the hotline at (916) 633-7655 or e-mail: FHSZinformation@fire.ca.gov

2025 UPDATED FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES



Datum: NAD 83



FHSZ LRA

- Very High
- High
- Moderate
- Unzoned LRA

FHSZ SRA

- Moderate
- High
- Very High

Responsibility Areas

- Federal Responsibility Area (FRA)

Information and Education



Fire safety education is a high priority in the Unit, whether it is a formal school program or advising residents on how to keep their homes safe inside and out.

An analysis of San Benito-Monterey wildfire ignition data shows that recent vegetation fires caused by equipment use, smoking, and vehicles have been reduced. Unit managers believe that public education efforts are having a positive influence on members of the public. The Unit has fire prevention signs placed in strategic locations throughout the San Benito and Monterey County to spread fire safety messages. Several of the signs have been placed at fire stations of local fire agencies to gain high visibility of the dangers of wildfire.

The San Benito Fire Safe Council and Fire Safe Council for Monterey County actively seek grant funding to work with local landowners and stakeholders as well as CAL FIRE personnel to reduce roadside fuels, increase public awareness, build fuel breaks around communities, and develop updated egress/ingress plans in the Unit. Grant funding will enable Unit personnel to purchase newspaper ads, large roadside signs, fund a Unit website and other avenues for public outreach.

San Benito-Monterey Unit prioritizes making Public Information Officer (PIO) available to notify the media of emergencies in the unit. Since most fires are human caused, we believe public awareness is key to reducing ignitions and have partnered with the California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (CWCG) in the "One Less Spark, One Less Wildfire" campaign. This campaign educates Californians about how to prevent wildfires caused by sparks from sources around the home and vehicle, as well as by industrial usage.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has been proactive in gaining defensible space compliance by hiring Defensible Space Inspectors to conduct Defensible Space inspections in the interface areas. Public perception has been positive as residents are educated on the various ways that they can be compliant with the law, and still maintain an attractive landscape that will assist fire personnel in the event of a wildfire in their neighborhood. The Unit's ability to keep fires small with minimal damage in and around structures has proven that more residents are becoming fire safe, and our education efforts are working.

Fuel Reduction and Vegetation Management

Vegetation Management Program (VMP):

CAL FIRE's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is a statewide, cost-share program aimed at reducing wildfire risk by managing hazardous vegetation through prescribed burning and other fuel reduction techniques. The program focuses on strategic treatment of fuels on both private and public lands, especially in areas where wildland meets urban development. By reducing flammable vegetation, VMP projects help protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure while promoting healthier, more fire-resilient ecosystems.

In the San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU), CAL FIRE actively implements VMP as part of its comprehensive wildfire prevention strategy. The unit collaborates with private landowners, ranchers, and local organizations to conduct prescribed burns and mechanical treatments in high-risk areas. These projects are often located in remote or difficult-to-access regions where uncontrolled wildfires could threaten communities, watersheds, and transportation corridors. Through VMP, BEU has successfully treated thousands of acres, improving defensible space, reducing fuel continuity, and enhancing the effectiveness of fire suppression operations.

Beyond fire risk reduction, BEU's use of VMP supports broader land management goals, including promoting native plant regeneration, enhancing wildlife habitat, and controlling invasive species. By leveraging local partnerships and state resources, the San Benito-Monterey Unit uses VMP not only as a fire prevention tool but also as a means to build long-term landscape resilience across the unit's diverse and fire-prone terrain.

Overview:

The Vegetation Management Program allows public land managers and private landowners with assistance from CAL FIRE to use a combination of pre-wildfire strategies to accomplish a variety of fire protection and resource management goals. Implementation of VMP projects is by CAL FIRE Units. The projects fit within the Unit's priority areas (e.g., those identified within this Fire Plan) are considered most valuable to the unit, listed by battalion.

History:

The Vegetation Management Program allows public and private landowners to participate in wildland fuel reduction projects. The primary tool used is prescribed fire, although in more recent years CAL FIRE has used the program for mechanical treatments of vegetation as well.

Vegetation Management Program, or VMP, was preceded by the Range Improvement Program that was used aggressively by CAL FIRE to remove undesired woody vegetation and increase forage production for domestic stock and wildlife. Early records indicate that range improvement burns were conducted by CAL FIRE as early as 1945, when CAL FIRE was known as the Division of Forestry under the Department of Natural Resources. Acres burned during the period of 1949- 1953 averaged 141,400 acres per year and totaled approximately 707,000 acres for the same period (T. F. Arvola Deputy State Forester, Inter Office Memo, April 5, 1954). These burns were carried out in cooperation with landowners primarily interested in improving forage for livestock.

In July of 1980 Senate Bill 1704 (Keene) created the Chaparral Management Program. This legislation provided CAL FIRE authorization to contract with private and public landowners for the purpose of fuel hazard reduction, vegetation management, and the improvement of wildlife, range, and forest resources. The program is currently known as the Vegetation Management Program; however, the objectives and authority for fuel reduction projects are still guided by the statutes created by Senate Bill 1704.

Increasing rural populations, air quality issues, and new CAL FIRE programs have reduced the use of prescribed fire in many areas of the state. However, VMP is a cost-effective tool that is still used to treat vegetation where physical and social conditions are conducive to its use. The program has proven to be well suited for controlling invasive weeds and improving wildlife habitat under joint projects with organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. Its use to establish fuel breaks and eliminates heavy fuel accumulations in many areas of the state will continue.

Local Program:

The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) continues to be a vital tool for CAL FIRE's San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU) in addressing hazardous fuel buildup across high-priority landscapes. Locally, VMP efforts are focused primarily on Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and Wildland Urban Intermix zones, where communities are directly adjacent to flammable wildland vegetation. These areas are especially vulnerable to wildfire impacts, and fuel reduction treatments serve to protect life, property, and infrastructure while supporting long-term landscape resilience. VMP project selection in BEU also considers additional factors such as watershed protection, wildlife habitat enhancement—particularly for threatened and endangered species—and the individual goals of participating landowners.

Several VMP projects across the Unit illustrate this diverse approach to land and fire management:

- Rock Springs VMP, located in southern San Benito County, focuses on reducing dense fuel loads across remote rangelands and wildland areas. The project aims to protect local residents and reduce wildfire spread potential in this part of the county, where access challenges and rugged terrain can complicate emergency response.

- The Cienega VMP, situated in central San Benito County, features a mosaic of oak woodlands and coniferous forest. This project supports fuel continuity reduction and also promotes ecosystem health, encouraging the regeneration of native species while supporting sensitive wildlife habitats.
- South Pasture VMP, located in the Hollister Hills area, lies near a popular State Vehicular Recreation Area. Fuel treatments here are designed not only to reduce fire danger in a heavily visited recreation zone, but also to protect cultural and historical assets and maintain access for first responders during an emergency.
- The Bengard VMP, located northeast of the Salinas Valley, targets a large swath of coastal oak woodland. This project provides strategic benefits by breaking up continuous fuels near agricultural infrastructure and helping protect nearby communities from fast-moving wildfires that could travel through canyon and hillside topography.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has multiple VMP projects in various stages of planning and implementation, each identified in detail within the Battalion sections of this Fire Plan. CAL FIRE continues to work closely with landowners, tribal members, local agencies, community partners, and conservation groups to collaboratively implement vegetation treatments that align with both fire safety and ecological objectives. To support these efforts, BEU has dedicated crews and engines, and has also activated assistance from the California National Guard to help expedite progress on these high-priority fuel reduction projects.

Prescribed burns remain a core method under the VMP, and BEU is preparing to conduct multiple burns this year, pending weather conditions, permit approvals, and resource availability. These controlled burns are designed to be safe, carefully monitored, and highly effective in reducing fire risk. Public notification of upcoming prescribed burns will be communicated via press releases, social media, and temporary roadside signage, ensuring the community is well-informed in advance.

Through targeted project planning, interagency cooperation, and public engagement, the San Benito-Monterey Unit's use of the Vegetation Management Program is helping to create a more fire-resilient landscape while supporting the long-term environmental and economic health of the region.

Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP):

The California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) is a cornerstone of the state's wildfire prevention strategy, offering a streamlined process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to facilitate environmentally responsible vegetation treatment on non-federal lands. Developed and managed by CAL FIRE, the CalVTP provides a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) that agencies can use to complete project-specific analyses (PSAs),

allowing for faster planning and approval of critical fuel reduction projects while maintaining strong environmental protections.

For the San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU), the CalVTP has been instrumental in expanding and accelerating wildfire mitigation efforts across its varied landscape, which includes WUI zones, sensitive watersheds, agricultural lands, and ecologically significant habitats. The program supports treatments such as prescribed burning, manual and mechanical thinning, grazing, and pile burning—all aimed at reducing hazardous fuels, improving emergency response access, and building long-term landscape resilience.

To manage the complex environmental compliance requirements, BEU frequently subcontracts CEQA-related tasks to private environmental consultants, allowing field staff and fire managers to concentrate on operational planning and coordination. These contractors prepare project-specific documentation under CalVTP guidelines, conduct resource surveys, and assist with stakeholder engagement—streamlining the process and enhancing the Unit’s capacity to deliver high-impact vegetation treatments across its jurisdiction. As of 2024, BEU is actively engaged in CalVTP projects with the following status:

- Stone Canyon VTP (2024) – Actively being implemented; this high-priority project focuses on hazardous fuels reduction in the northern portion of the Unit and includes multiple phase treatment elements focusing on a strategic fuels reductions and restoration of vital watershed and critical habitat.
- Gabilan VTP (2025) – Currently submitted for review under CalVTP; the project is designed to address fuel continuity and community protection in a key rangeland and WUI area.

In addition, BEU is in the active planning for 2025/2026 on several major CalVTP projects, including:

- Handley VTP
- Peach Tree VTP
- Jack Ranch VTP
- Parkfield VTP

These planned projects will further extend fuels reduction across critical landscapes in both San Benito and Monterey counties, addressing wildfire risk while promoting habitat enhancement, watershed protection, and cultural site preservation. Public notification and community engagement remain core components of the process, with prescribed burns and mechanical treatments announced via press releases, signage, and stakeholder outreach.

By leveraging the efficiency of the CalVTP process, the technical expertise of private CEQA consultants, and strong interagency collaboration, the San Benito-Monterey Unit is making significant progress in executing a proactive, landscape-scale wildfire prevention strategy that protects lives, property, and natural resources.



FUELS

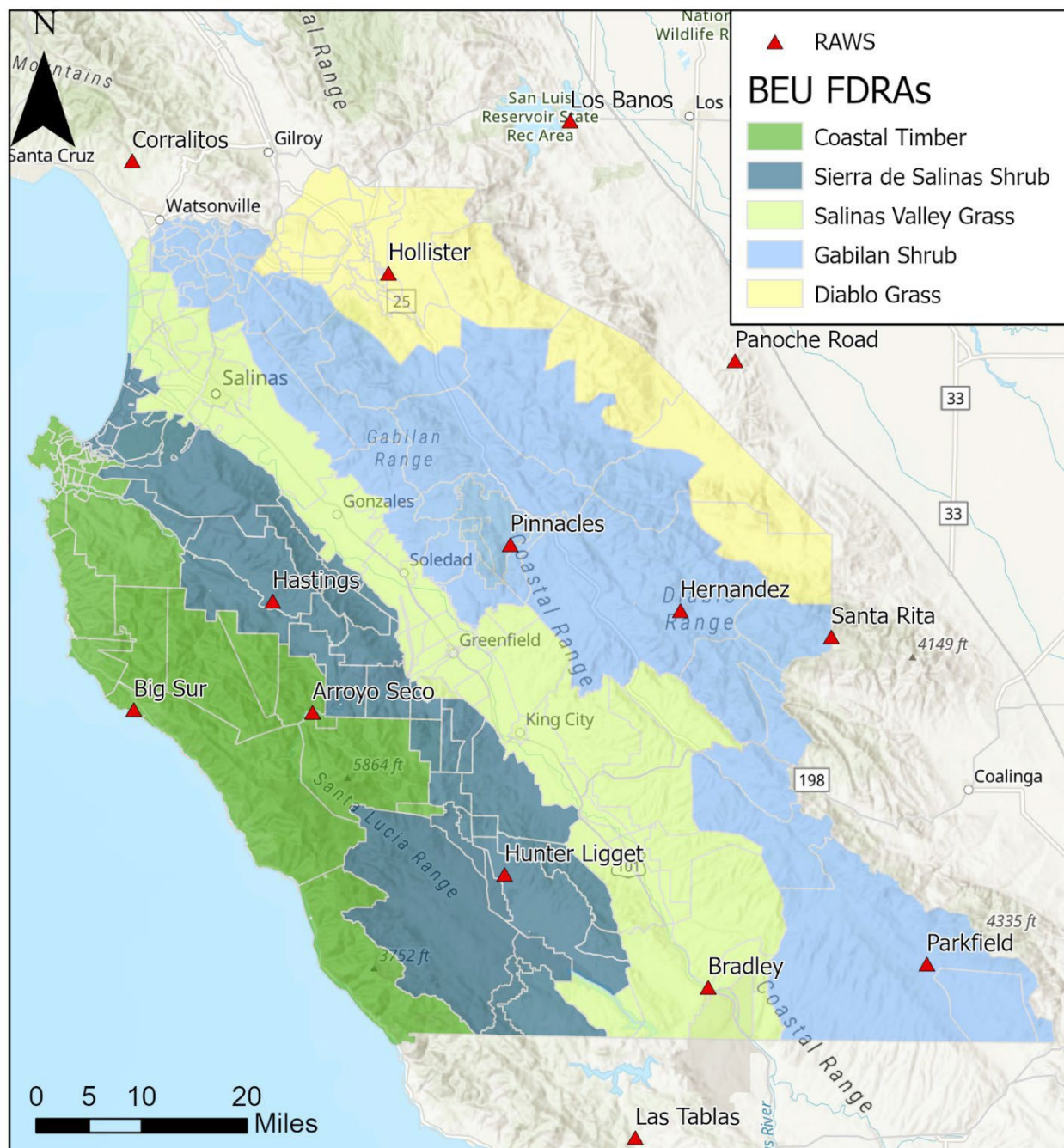


Figure 1: The map depicts the five (5) Fire Danger Rating Areas (FDRA's) for the San Benito Monterey Unit. These FDRA's are delineated geographic areas based on relatively homogeneous vegetation, climate, and topography. For more information, please see the Fire Danger Operating Plan for San Benito-Monterey.

Coastal Timber

Location: The Coastal Timber FDRA is bounded to the north by Pacific Grove, the Sierra de Salinas range in the east, continuing down to Fort Hunter Liggett and the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF) - Monterey Ranger District in the south, and includes the coastal mountains of the Santa Lucia Range.

Fuel Type: This FDRA is dominated by shrub (182,566 acres) which is closely followed by timber (155,597 acres). Interior areas of this region are dominated by grass fuels (109,247 acres).

Topography: The terrain of coastal timber is largely characterized by steep, rugged wilderness (Class 3, mean slope of 51.31% or 27.18 degrees). Elevations range from sea level up to 5870 ft atop Junipero Serra Peak. Other notable geographic features include Pico Blanco (3680 ft), Mount Manuel (3524 ft), Ventana Double Cone (4870 ft), Cone Peak (5155 ft) and Chews Ridge (5050 ft).

Climate: Weather patterns in this FDRA vary based on distance from the coastline. The influence of the Pacific Ocean keeps temperatures moderate west of the Coast Ridge Road and around the Monterey Peninsula. Fog events occur often during the summer months. East of the coast ridge and the more interior areas of this FDRA experience much more arid tendencies. Precipitation across the entirety of Coastal Timber is higher than any other FDRA in BEU.



Salinas Valley Grass

Location: The Salinas Valley Grass FDRA covers the entirety of the Salinas River Valley and borders the Pajaro Valley in the north, Gabilan Range in the east, Sierra de Salinas Range in the west, and Bradley (Camp Roberts) and San Luis Obispo County line to the south.

Fuel Type: The region is dominated by agriculture and non-burnable fuel types (1,148,078 acres). Significant areas of grass (916,969 acres) cover the foothills of the Gabilan and Diablo Ranges in the east, and the Sierra de Salinas Range in the west.

Topography: Terrain is dominated by the generally flat (Class 1, average slope 18.53% or 10.5 degrees) Salinas River Valley. Other notable geographic features include the northern flats of the Arroyo Seco watershed.

Climate: Consistently strong winds blow through the Salinas Valley from the ocean following the valley floor to the southwest towards Bradley and the San Luis Obispo County line. The region experiences relatively low precipitation, and temperatures follow an upward trend as the distance from the ocean increases.



Sierra de Salinas Shrub

Location: The Sierra de Salinas Shrub FDRA covers the region between the city of Marina in the north, Salinas Valley in the east, Bryson-Hesperia in the south, bordering the Santa Lucia Range in the west.

Fuel Type: The dominant fuel type is shrub (282,737 acres) covering the majority of the Sierra de Salinas Range and grass (163,140) encompassing the areas surrounding the Jolon Valley. Timber (84,776 acres) is present along riparian corridors and at moderate to high elevations.

Topography: Terrain in this rating area is varied but generally covers the foothills of the eastern Santa Lucia range (Sierra de Salinas Range). Slope here is moderate (Class 2, average slope of 30.57% or 17 degrees). Notable geographic features include Mount Toro (3550ft), Ell peak (4280ft), large portions of the Arroyo Seco watershed, and Fort Hunter- Liggett.

Climate: Weather patterns in the Sierra de Salinas Shrub vary from temperate coastal influence in the northern areas around Fort Ord, to much warmer, arid characteristics in the areas around Arroyo Seco and the Jolon Valley. The FDRA experiences moderate precipitation which increases with elevation.



Gabilan Shrub

Location: Gabilan shrub is the largest FDRA in BEU. The region borders Watsonville in the north, follows San Juan and Panoche Valley in the east, Cholame Valley in the south, and Salinas Valley to the west. This FDRA covers the entirety of the Gabilan range, and portion of the southern Diablo range.

Fuel Type: The dominant fuel type is shrub (579,122 acres) along the Gabilan range and southern Diablo range. Shrub is followed by grass (332,093 acres) which encompass the Chalome Valley, Peachtree Valley, and Highway 25.

Topography: Gabilan Shrub terrain can be characterized by moderate slopes (Class 2, average slope 31.47% or 17.47 degrees) and moderate elevation. This FDRA encompasses the entirety of the Gabilan Range, and a portion of the southern Diablo Range. Notable geographic features include Fremont Peak (3160 ft), Chalone Peak (3300 ft), and San Benito Mountain (5250 ft).

Climate: Gabilan shrub climate varies with distance from the ocean. Northwestern areas of Prunedale and Aromas experience more temperate, coastal influenced climates, while central and southern areas encompassing Pinnacles National Park and the Gabilan and Diablo range tend to be drier and more arid. The region experiences moderate precipitation which increases with elevation, and temperatures tend to increase from west to east.



Diablo Grass

Location: Diablo Grass is the easternmost FDRA in the BEU. The region borders Gilroy in the north, the Fresno County line (and BEU boundary) in the east, Ciervo Hills in the south, and the San Benito River valley to the west.

Fuel Type: This region is dominated by grass (180,233 acres) which covers the majority of the northern Diablo Range and significant areas of shrub (102,307 acres) lie along the north facing slopes in the Diablo Range.

Topography: Terrain of the Diablo Grass FDRA is generally characterized by low slope (Class 1, average slope 18.53% or 10.5 degrees) rolling hills, and dispersed mountain peaks. This region covers BEU's northern Diablo Range, the Panoche Valley, and Vallecitos. Notable geographic features include Santa Ana Mountain (3120 ft), Henrietta Peak (3590 ft), and the Quien Sabe Valley.

Climate: This region experiences a very dry climate and receives low precipitation. Temperatures range from 29 F in winter (January) to 100 F in the late fall (September). Relative humidity (%) continues from the low 60s in late fall to the mid 70s in winter.



Section V: Pre-Fire Management Tactics

There are three divisions within the San Benito-Monterey Unit, with six battalions. The West Division incorporates Battalion 1 and Battalion 2. It is important to note that Battalion 2 does not cover a large area and includes the contract districts, which are surrounded by Battalion 1. The South Division is comprised of Battalion 3 and Battalion 4. The North Division encompasses Battalion 5, Battalion 6 and Battalion 7.

Division, Battalion, Program Plans: West Division

Battalion 1: Carmel Battalion - Battalion 4611

Description:

The Carmel Battalion is in the western area of the San Benito / Monterey Unit. Encompassing more than 900 square miles, it contains a diverse amount of topography and vegetation. To the west, the Pacific Ocean beaches rise into the steep Santa Lucia coastal mountains, transitioning from coastal chaparral to redwood canyons bordered on the ridges by oak and grass woodlands. Inland, several east to west running valleys are bounded by the Sierra de Salinas Range to the east. The valley floors are predominantly grass and oak woodlands rising to dense chaparral stands on the south aspects and hardwood forests on the north aspects. Throughout most of these valleys, residential development has occurred both on the ridges and the floors, creating pockets of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The uppermost part of the battalion is comprised of an area of ancient sand dunes hosting the West Coast's largest maritime chaparral community in the former Fort Ord area. Most of that land remains in a natural state and is the State Direct Protection Authority of Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA). To the northwest, the Monterey pine stands of the Monterey Peninsula intermingle with a dense population of Wildland Urban Interface. To the South, Battalion 1 borders the northern boundary of the vast Los Padres National Forest and Ventana Wilderness.

Values at Risk:

Interspersed throughout the varied topography and vegetation, one will find the Battalion 1 assets at risk. They include large cattle ranches, exclusive gated communities, federal, state, and local forests, parks and recreation areas, commercial / industrial developments, vineyards, and many Wildland Urban Interface/Intermix (WUI) communities.

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of the Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 1.

- LRA acres: 89,457
- FRA acres: 250,789
- SRA acres: 252,360
- Total acres: 592,607
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 233,015

Fire History and Occurrence:

Fire history in Battalion 1 is varied. Many wildland fires have been started by lightning in inaccessible areas. Some of these have started on Federal lands and burned into State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Unattended controlled burns or campfires have historically contributed to damaging fires. Power line failures are also a common cause of fires due to the corrosive effects of the marine air on the lines. Major Fires in the battalion have included Marble Cone 1977, Rat Creek - Gorda Complex Fire 1985, Morse Fire 1987, Kirk Complex 1999, Basin Complex, 2008, Soberanes 2016, River Fire 2020, Carmel Fire 2020, and Dolan Fire 2020.

Weather:

The weather patterns in Battalion 1 during the summer may range from cool and foggy 60s near the coast to 100s in the upper reaches of the inland valleys. The normal summer northwest air flow generally carries the cool moist marine air inland by evening, somewhat moderating the fire risk at night in the valleys. A summer inversion often keeps the upper elevations warm and dry throughout the 24-hour cycle.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values and mapping data of the following criteria: fuels, housing density, historical data of fire ignitions and major infrastructure including major highways and power lines. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk. Three target areas were identified in Battalion 1.

- **Target Area 1:** The community of Palo Colorado, limited egress, and narrow roadways.
- **Target Area 2:** The communities of Jamesburg and Cachagua, which have a major Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI) issue with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

- **Target Area 3:** Carmel Valley at large. Carmel Valley is a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) issue with narrow driveways and limited access to homes and steep driveways and many one way in and one way out areas.

The 3 target areas are adjacent to major fire history, including Marble Cone, Kirk, Basin, Soberanes and Carmel fires.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 1 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. The local Battalion Chief will work in the Monterey County Fire Safe Council, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and community stakeholders to prioritize projects and grant funding.

Burn Permit Administration

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums:

Battalion staff remains involved in multiple public education programs. Ongoing events throughout the year:

- Monterey County Fair
- Fire Prevention Signage
- Fire Safe Council for Monterey County Meeting and functions
- Battalion 1 Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs

Stakeholders:

Battalion staff works with the following stakeholders to ensure there is a common vision of fire prevention education:

- Pebble Beach Company (PBCo)
- Monterey County Regional Fire District (MCF)
- Cachagua Fire Protection District (CFC)
- Mid Coast Fire Brigade (MCFB)
- Big Sur Volunteer Fire (BSF)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
- California Department of Parks and Recreation (CSP)
- Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)
- United States Forest Service, Los Padres, Monterey District (USFS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Santa Lucia Preserve (SLP)
- Santa Lucia Conservancy (SLC)
- Tularcitos Ridge Firewise (TRFW)
- Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT)
- Hastings National History Reservation
- Del Monte Forest Conservancy (DMFC)
- Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District (CHF)
- Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD)
- Cypress Fire Protection District (CYP)
- Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC)
- Local, State and Federally Elected Officials

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

Battalion 1 will also focus its available resources to support the prevention of large wildfires in target areas 1, 2 and 3. The battalion, in cooperation Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Pre-Fire Planning and Prevention Staff, with Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continuously educate, evaluate, and propose current and new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area.

Strategic Community Fuel Breaks:

During the 2016 Soberanes Fire, there were many control lines established south of Carmel Valley which are being maintained as fuel breaks. These included but are not limited to:

- Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads - Carmel Valley
- Chamisal Ridge-San Clemente Fuel Break - Carmel Valley
- Laurel Springs/Hennicksons Ridge Fuel Break - Jamesburg
- Long Ridge-Green Ridge-Mescal Ridge - Palo Colorado
- Palo Corona-Corona-Red Wolf-Mal Paso area - Carmel Highlands
- Coast Ridge and Partington Ridge - Big Sur
- Pico Blanco-Mt. Manuel-North Coast Ridge - Big Sur

Vegetation Management:

Battalion staff works with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Resource Conservation District Monterey County, and other cooperators to reduce fuels with community chipping projects.

Fuel reduction programs involving mechanical means and controlled burns are being used to reduce fuel loads, create strategic fuel breaks to protect communities, and maintain safe egress in case of fire.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Battalion 1 works with Caltrans, Monterey County Public Works, and BLM to ensure fuels reduction practices on each agency's public easements is completed. These fuel reductions include mowing or clearing vegetation in a manner to reduce significant fire spread from a public roadway to the vegetation caused by vehicle caused fires. The application of the current fire and building codes to new construction in Battalion 1 directs homeowners in the safest ways to build their homes.

Inspection:

Battalion staff will continue working with PG&E to guide and assist in powerline engineering and PRC 4293 enforcement. This will include prioritizing their line inspections to be in line with the

identified target areas along with identifying and removing any hazard vegetation that could compromise the lines and create a fire ignition.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of PRC 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires, and investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers who are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of all Forestry and Fire Law within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. First, they are a vegetation management motivator. The second purpose is as a public education tool. In 2021, the goal is to complete LE-100 inspections of all the residential structures within the SRA in target areas 1 and 2. All inspections will follow the criteria found on the CAL FIRE LE-100 Defensible Space Inspection Worksheet. LE-100 inspection process will take place based on resource availability and completion of LE-100 inspections and fuel reduction projects in target Area 2.

Battalion 1 will work with Monterey County Regional Fire Department to complete the remainder of SRA LE-100 inspections within target area 3.

Division, Battalion, Program Plans: West Division

Battalion 2: Peninsula Battalion (Schedule A – Contract Districts)

Battalion 21 – Cypress Fire Protection District &
Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District
Battalion 22 – Pebble Beach Community Services District
Battalion 25 – Prevention & Planning Bureau
Battalion 26 – Emergency Medical Services

Description:

Battalion 2 is comprised of three Local Government Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements, or “Schedule A” contracts made up of the Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD), Cypress Fire Protection District (CYP), and Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District (CHF).

The Pebble Beach area is entirely within the State Responsibility Area (SRA). Also referred to as the Del Monte Forest, this area has a closed-cone coniferous forest with areas of chaparral and coastal scrub, as well as small remnants of coastal prairie in the common areas. There are homes throughout the forested areas, including homes interfaced between golf courses and

timber. Small fires that occur in these areas pose a major threat to many high-dollar homes. The Morse Fire in 1987, started by an illegal campfire, burned 190 acres, and destroyed 31 structures, causing an estimated damage of approximately \$18,000,000. Fire road signage, mapping, and maintenance are a high priority in the district due to recreation and fire occurrences in the open spaces within the forest.

The Cypress Fire Protection District borders the southern end of Pebble Beach and wraps around the city of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the North, East, and South, stretching from the beaches to approximately two miles East from the mouth of Carmel Valley and bordering Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District to the South. The lower part of the district to the East encompasses Highway 68, Josselyn Canyon, and the homes surrounding the Del Monte Golf Course. Cypress Fire Protection District is in both the State Responsibility Area (SRA), and Local Responsibility Area (LRA) with housing developments surrounded by wooded areas.

The Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District is the southern-most district in Battalion 2, with the northern border just South of the Carmel River, down to Mal Paso Creek, encompassing the wildland-urban interface on the West facing slope. The district has many large homes under a tall canopy of closed-cone coniferous forest with areas of chaparral and coastal scrub, as well as small remnants of coastal prairie in the common areas. Most of the district, both State Responsibility Area (SRA) and Local Responsibility Area (LRA), is rated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Fire Prevention:

The three districts maintain good working relationships collaborating on fuel reductions projects with several different agencies such as Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, Pebble Beach Company, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Caltrans, PG&E, homeowner associations, and private homeowners.

Defensible space remains a high priority in Battalion 2 due to the housing density within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The battalion has an aggressive LE-100 program employing Veterans utilizing the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, to educate homeowners and to ensure compliance throughout the districts. Each district has a goal of 100% compliance with the LE-100 program.



Division, Battalion, Program Plans: South Division

Battalion 3: King City Battalion - Battalion 4613

Description:

The King City Battalion covers an area of approximately 556,841 total acres with approximately 776 residents. The Battalion is comprised almost entirely of State Responsibility Area (SRA); starts from the Chualar area and encompasses both sides of the Salinas Valley “ridge top to ridge top” South to Highway 198.

This area includes the West entrance to Pinnacles National Park, Arroyo Seco, Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District, and many vineyards, cattle ranches, and infrastructure to name a few of the values at risk. There are two Federal Responsibility Areas (FRA) within the Battalion: The west side of the Pinnacles National Park (NPS) and the eastside of Los Padres National Forest - Monterey District (LPF).

Values at Risk:

The battalion is mostly located within the central and southern portion of Monterey County. The eastside of the Salinas Valley follows with the westly contour of the Gabilan Range, which is home to many large cattle ranches and grass-covered rolling hills (Fuel Model 1). The western side is home to Santa Lucia Highlands American Viticulture Area consisting of 50 wineries with over 6,200 acres under vine. The Santa Lucia Highlands has a mix of rural residential and commercial buildings on the foothills of the eastern side of the Santa Lucia Range, which is steep rugged terrain with heavy fuels, brush (Fuel Model 4) and conifers (Fuel Model 9).

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 3.

- FRA acres: 96,782
- SRA acres: 337,248
- LRA acres: 122,811
- Total acres: 556,841
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 343,996

Fire History and Occurrence:

Fire history shows that equipment use is a leading cause of ignitions and has resulted in several large, damaging fires in Battalion 3. As a result, the Unit has made it a high priority to educate ranchers and homeowners on the importance of spark arresters and mowing in cooler weather conditions. Large billboards signs are posted in the battalion stating to “mow before 10 a.m.”

before the heat of the day. Statistics show that these efforts have been successful, and ignitions have decreased. Powerline caused fires are also among the frequent ignitions in Battalion 3. Prevention staff have been working with the utility company to upgrade powerline equipment to reduce the number of fires in the Unit. Debris burning used to constitute a large percentage of ignitions, however, education of landowners on laws of debris burning has reduced the amount of control burn escapes in the Unit.

Weather:

The weather patterns in Battalion 3 during the summer months range from the 70s and into the low 100-degree mark. The valley winds ranging from 10-25 mph, usually begin early afternoon and subside around sunset when the marine layer occasionally blows in to cool the valley temperatures. The strong winds affect the early season fires, pushing grass fires from a few hundred acres into the thousands in the cattle grazing pastures of the eastern foothills. The steep terrain of Arroyo Seco and southern end of Carmel Valley has driven some large wildland fires in the late summer/fall crossing borders into the Los Padres National Forest where access for firefighting equipment becomes very challenging.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values, mapping data of the following criteria: fuels, housing density, historical data of fire ignitions and major infrastructure including major highways, railroad routes, and power lines. These areas are overlaid with historical data of fire ignitions and perimeters, revealing clear target areas. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk.

Target Area 1: The communities of Pine Canyon, which have a major Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) issue with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Target Area 2: Arroyo Seco, East Carmel Valley Road, with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Target Area 3: Southwest of Pinnacles, stretching from Stonewall Canyon, Metz Road and Highway 146 including Pinnacles National Park, which is a very narrow canyon with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Three target areas were identified in Battalion 3. First is Pine Canyon, West of King City. This incorporates areas of Monterey County, Jolon Road West towards the Los Padres National Forest and Fort Hunter Liggett boundaries. Second, including Arroyo Seco/East Carmel Valley Road and Arroyo Seco Road. The second is geographically located West of the community of Greenfield. The third is the area southwest of Pinnacles, stretching from Stonewall Canyon, Metz Road and Highway 146 including Pinnacles National Park.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact:

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 3 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. The local staff will work with the Monterey County Fire Safe Council and community stakeholders to prioritize projects and grant funding. The action plan for public contact and education is as follows:

Burn Permit Administration

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums

Battalion staff remains involved in multiple public education programs. Ongoing events throughout the year:

- Salinas Valley Fair
- School Programs at Santa Lucia, San Lucas Union School, and Soledad High School career day.
- Fire Prevention Signage
- Monterey County Fire Safe Council Meeting and functions
- YMCA National Night Out and Career Day

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

Battalion personnel in conjunction with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Pre-Fire Engineers and Prevention staff, Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continuously educate, evaluate, and propose current and new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area. Battalion 3 prioritizes educating the public as well as providing information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to Fire Danger Rating

System (FDRS) signs, the battalion has posted prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

Roadside Disk Line Program:

Property disking is an additional tool that can be implemented on larger lots to reduce fire spread. Property boundary disking to assist in controlling and even containing fires to a specific area. Property owners can significantly affect the containment of fires by supporting CAL FIRE in this program.

The priority is Metz Road, which is identified as the main thoroughfare in target area 3. This, combined with Caltrans and Monterey County roads providing Public Resource Code (PRC) Road clearance, will assist in preventing the highest percentage of ignitions for the battalion, a roadside start, from expanding to a large-scale conflagration.

The following are the program components:

- On vacant lots or tracts of wild land, disk a fire break line, 20 feet wide adjacent to roadways and or property lines.
- May 15th is the preferred date by which to create your fire break. However, any time after the grasses cure and are available to burn is a good time to disk your fire break.
- Call your local CAL FIRE station upon completion of your fire break and provide either your address or APN number or general location of the property. This information assists department personnel with pre-fire planning in the event of a fire on the property.

Vegetation Management:

The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing the potential of a large fire and reducing the damage from a large fire. The Sierra de Salinas Vegetation Management Program (VMP), totaling over 16,000 acres is in the planning stage and has been moved down on the priority list due to the extent of the River Fire in 2020. Unit staff will be revisiting this VMP to look for windows of opportunity to begin implementing the plan soon. This will provide a large reduction of fuels in the battalion, assisting in providing fuel breaks, establishing dozer lines, and limiting the extent of large scale, extended attack fires. It will also reduce decadent brush to enhance landscape heterogeneity and improve wildlife habitat.

Battalion staff are continually looking at new VMPs along Pine Canyon, as well as working with and educating landowners of the benefits/differences and avenues of Range Improvement (RI) burns and Vegetation Management Program (VMP) burns. Battalion staff regularly meet with local stakeholders regarding prescribed fire and fuel reduction projects. Both Battalion staff and Unit staff will be available as a resource to assist in planning and implementation of a Range Improvement burn. This will help ensure efficient and effective Range Improvement prescriptions, that align with both the landowner and the Department objectives.

Target areas 1, 2 and 3 have been identified to give prioritization to areas of the battalion for future Vegetation Management Program (VMP) planning. In concurrence with the Annual

Operating Plan (AOP) for Pinnacles National Park, the opportunity for a fuel break or Vegetation Management Program (VMP) to hinder a fire entering or exiting the Park is in the planning stages.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

In conjunction with Battalion 4 and the South Division, Battalion 3 staff will continue to focus on compiling water sources, road access, and assets at risk for battalion pre-plans. Battalion staff will also work to improve the database of historical fire perimeters, including Range Improvement burns.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of Public Resource Code (PRC) 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires and in investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers that are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of the Forestry and Fire Laws within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

The primary objectives in Battalion 3 will be to prioritize areas within the battalion that have a significant wildland fire threat, and to inspect homes utilizing the Public Resource Code (PRC) 4291 program. May and June are the more appropriate time of year to conduct inspections within the battalion because it aligns with the primary fuel type (annual grass) dead fuel moisture. The goal is to inspect all habitable structures in the battalion with 50% completion acceptable due to fire activity and drawdown, covering 100% of willing property owners over two years.



Division, Battalion, Program Plans: South Division

Battalion 4: Bradley Battalion – Battalion 4614

Description:

The Bradley Battalion is in the south end of the San Benito-Monterey Unit in Monterey County. The north end of the Bradley Battalion aligns with the Highway 198 corridor going east from Highway 101 to the San Benito County line and runs west of Highway 101 along the Eastern base of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range to the Southeastern border of the Los Padres National Forest. The East side of the battalion runs south from the San Benito County line along the Diablo Mountain Range, encompassing Priest Valley, Peach Tree Valley, Cholame Valley and the community of Parkfield running parallel with the San Andreas Fault and Fresno County border to the northern edge of San Luis Obispo County. Fuels on the Eastern side of the Battalion are predominantly open rangeland, transitioning to heavier fuels with extremely steep topography moving east. The west side of the battalion follows the Los Padres National Forest border South to the San Luis Obispo County line, encompassing the communities of Bryson-Hesperia, Lockwood, Bradley, San Ardo, and the Lake San Antonio Recreation Area. Fuels on the Western side of the battalion are predominantly grass, oak woodland, and chamise, which transitions to heavier fuels with steeper terrain. Battalion 4 is also comprised of two (2) Department of Defense military compounds: Fort Hunter Liggett and the northern section of Camp Roberts which also extends into San Luis Obispo County.

Values at Risk:

Valued assets within the Battalion include rangelands, communication towers and repeaters (i.e., Calandra and Smith Mountain), residential structures, recreation areas, agricultural land, watershed resources, and an abundance of oil fields in the Southern Salinas Valley. Working in conjunction with multiple entities— Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), Monterey County Water Authority, Fort Hunter Liggett, Camp Roberts, the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, staff will work on mitigating fire hazards to protect the people, property, and resources.

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 4.

- LRA acres: 11,345
- FRA acres: 193,097
- SRA acres: 602,072
- Total acres: 806,514
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 615,788

Fire History and Occurrence:

Statistics have shown that most of the fires started within Battalion 4 are due to roadside starts, with the leading causes of ignitions being equipment use, vehicles, and electrical power.

History has shown the Diablo Mountain Range and Santa Lucia Mountain Range have sustained the larger fires in the Battalion, with recent fires such as the 2018 Turkey Fire (2,225 acres), 2016 Coleman Fire (2,520 acres), and the 2006 Rico Fire (14,507 acres), which was classified as a major fire.

Weather:

The weather patterns in Battalion 4 during the summer months range from the 70's and into the low 100-degree mark, with some areas reaching the 118-degree mark. The valley winds range from 15-25 mph, usually begin early afternoon, and subside around sunset when the marine layer occasionally blows in, cooling valley temperatures.

The Southern Salinas Valley area of the battalion has seen wind driven fires extend into the hundreds of acres, where the Parkfield and Lockwood areas have been protected from topography and do not typically see the high winds.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values, mapping data of the following criteria: fuels, housing density, historical data of fire ignitions and major infrastructure including major highways, railroad routes, and powerlines. These areas overlaid with historical data of fire ignitions and perimeters then gave clear target areas. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk. Three target areas were identified in Battalion 4.

Target Area 1: Bryson Hesperia, a Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI) community with narrow driveways and limited access to homes with steep driveways, and limited ingress and egress.

Target Area 2: Lockwood-Jolon at large, a Wildland Urban Intermix (WUI) area with narrow driveways and limited access to homes with steep driveways, and limited ingress and egress.

Target Area 3: The communities of Parkfield and Cholame Valley, which have narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Three target areas were identified in Battalion 4. The first target area is the Bryson Hesperia area that has moderate to high population density in some areas and is still in need of fuel reduction and modification efforts. This area is comprised of Copperhead Road, Hesperia Road, Sapaque Valley Road, Smith Road, Pleyto Road, and Interlake Road. Target area 2 encompasses Lockwood-Jolon. This includes the Lockwood-San Lucas Road, Jolon Road, and the Calandra infrastructure, with the residential communities on the East and West flats of the Southern portion of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range. Target area 3 is comprised of the Parkfield Community and the Cholame Valley area. This area includes Ranchita Canyon Road, Turkey Flat Road, Vineyard Canyon Road, and Slacks Canyon.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within the battalion to reduce the number of ignitions. Target areas have been identified which prioritizes areas within the battalion.

These identified target areas work in conjunction with the Fire Safe Council of Monterey County, Bureau of Land Management, and through community outreach programs that help fund projects through prioritizing.

Burn Permit Administration:

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums:

Battalion staff remains involved in multiple public education programs and ongoing events throughout the year:

- Fire Prevention Signage
- Fire Safe Council of Monterey County Meetings and functions
- Local School Programs
- Battalion 4 Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs
- Parkfield Community Meetings
- Bryson Hesperia Community Meetings

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

Battalion personnel in conjunction with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, pre-fire engineering and prevention staff, Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continuously educate, evaluate, and propose current and new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area. The battalion is educating the public as well as providing information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to FDRS signs, the battalion has posted prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

Roadside Disk Line Program:

Property disking is an additional tool that can be implemented on larger lots to reduce fire spread. Property boundary disking to assist in controlling and even containing fires to a specific area. Property owners can significantly affect the containment of fires by supporting CAL FIRE in this program.

The following are the program components:

- On vacant lots or tracts of wild land, disk a fire break line, 20 feet wide adjacent to roadways and or property lines.
- May 15th is the preferred date by which to create your fire break. However, any time after the grasses cure and are available to burn is a good time to disk your fire break.
- Call your local CAL FIRE station upon completion of your fire break and provide either your address or APN number or general location of the property. This information assists department personnel with pre-fire planning in the event of a fire on the property.

Vegetation Management:

The Vegetation Management Programs are directed at reducing fuel loading and the continuity of fuels to help reduce fire spread which can prevent fires from going into extended attack or a major fire. To start the fuel mitigation process in the battalion's first target area, CAL FIRE will start vegetation management (brush clearing, burn piles, masticating and property owner education) along the Santa Lucia Mountain Range Ridge line which extends 27 miles from the Jolon north road to the Jolon south road. This process is labor-intensive and time-consuming and will be in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The vegetation management process for the second target area will be mitigated using multiple techniques (roadway brush clearing, masticating, range improvement burns, disk lines, and property owner education). The vegetation management process in the third target area will be to continue public education and enforcement of the LE-100 program utilizing the department's defensible space inspectors and engine company personnel.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Battalion personnel in conjunction with the Unit Pre-Fire Engineer will continue creating pre-fire plans for areas within the battalion by compiling water sources, road egress routes, staging areas and hazards that can interfere with suppression capabilities. These pre-fire plans assist fire department personnel with resource needs to contain/control a vegetation fire and give the public a methodical route to travel to safety.

Battalion 4 personnel will also be working with the Monterey County Fire Safe Council to continue the Chipping and Fuel Reduction program, which assists homeowners with clearing unnecessary fuel adhering to the Department's LE-100 program.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of Public Resource Code (PRC) 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires and in investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers that are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of all Forestry and Fire Law within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

Public Resource Code (PRC) 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. First, they are a vegetation management motivator. The second is a public education tool. In 2024 we anticipate a 100% LE-100 inspection process will take place on all structures within the SRA in all target areas. All inspections will follow the criteria found on the CAL FIRE LE-100 Defensible Space Inspection Worksheet. LE-100 inspection process will take place based on resource availability and completion of LE-100 inspections and fuel reduction projects.

Division, Battalion, Program Plans: North Division

Battalion 5: Hollister Battalion – Battalion 4615

Description:

The Hollister Battalion is located at the northeast corner of the Unit in San Benito County, following the county line on both the east and the west down to the end of Cienega Road and east to south of Panoche and Antelope Valley. The west side (Gabilan Mountain Range) of the battalion is comprised steep terrain and heavy fuels up in the Fremont Peak area. The east side (Diablo Mountain Range) is predominately grasslands, home to many large cattle ranches and quickly transitions into steep rugged terrain. The fuels commonly encountered in Battalion 5 are grass, oak woodland, Chemise, and Gray Pine.

Values at Risk:

The major values at risk in Battalion 5 are the life and property of local residences including residential structures, recreational areas, agriculture, watershed, and infrastructure. Major highway corridors 25 and 156 run through the battalion. Infrastructure values at risk include communication and repeater sites as well as major PG&E transmission and gas lines. Hollister Hills Recreational Area is near the Fremont Peak area and is frequented by off-road vehicles on California State Parks lands and is one of the values at risk. Other values include the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas in San Juan Canyon, Cienega Road and Paicines as well as the infrastructure at Fremont Peak State Park and Mission San Juan Bautista.

Cooperation of members from the San Benito Fire Safe Council, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Hollister City Fire Department, and CAL FIRE BEU North Division, will be diligent in protecting our local citizens and their properties and valued infrastructure.

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 5.

- FRA acres: 3,487
- SRA acres: 325,383
- LRA acres: 52,618
- Total acres: 381,489
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 328,716

Fire History and Occurrence:

Most fires within the battalion occur as roadside starts. These fires are classified as equipment, vehicle, electrical, or are undetermined as to specific ignition source. Most of these fires are contained at less than 10 acres. Large fires are not a regular occurrence in the battalion. Some

recent fires in the area include the Panoche Fire, Cienega Fire, Santa Ana Valley Fire, Massa Fire, and the Willow Springs Fire. Hollister Hills SVRA also experiences small fires that are usually contained to less than 10 acres. The largest recent fire to occur in Battalion 5 was the Panoche Fire, in 2021 which burned 145 acres of grass and brush near the Antelope station. The Panoche Fire threatened parts of the Willow Springs Community.

Weather:

The weather patterns in Battalion 5 during the summer months range from the high 70s and into the low 100-degree mark with the marine layer moving in most evenings and burning off mid-morning. The winds in the Hollister area range from 5-15 mph. The terrain is predominately rolling hills with some areas of brush-covered, steep slopes.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values, mapping data of the following criteria: fuels, housing density, historical data of fire ignitions and major infrastructure including major highways, railroad routes, and powerlines. These areas overlaid with historical data of fire ignitions and perimeters produced clear target areas. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk. Three target areas were identified in Battalion 5.

Target Area 1: Cienega road area, which has with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Target Area 2: Willow Springs community, which is remote with limited access and egress, and limited water supply.

The primary target area is in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) area of Cienega Road and State Highway 25, southwest of the community of Hollister.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 5 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. Target areas have been identified within the battalion to give prioritization to the respective areas. These target areas have been identified to work in conjunction with the San Benito County Fire Safe Council, and Monterey County Fire Safe Council.

Burn Permit Administration:

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An

authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums:

Battalion staff remains involved in multiple public education programs. Ongoing events throughout the year:

- San Benito County Fair
- Fire Prevention Signage
- San Benito County Fire Safe Council Meeting and functions
- Battalion 5 Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

The North Division will also focus its available resources to support the prevention of large wildfires in target areas 1 and 2. The North Division, in cooperation with the San Benito Fire Safe Council, Pre-Fire Planning and Prevention Staff, Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continuously educate, evaluate, and propose current and new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area.

Staff continue to educate the public and provide information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to FDRS signs, the battalion will post prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

Vegetation Management:

In 2023, the San Benito-Monterey Unit participated in vegetation management cooperative efforts with California State Parks including the San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break, and at the Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area. Within the battalion efforts were also put forth to manage fuels in Indian Canyon.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Public roadways have experienced significant number of ignitions. These ignitions can have a direct influence in the target areas due to heavy fuel loading and density of structures. Battalion 5 will petition Caltrans, and San Benito County Public Works Departments to perform fuels reduction practices on each agency's public easements in these target areas. The fuel reduction methods include mowing or clearing vegetation in a manner to reduce significant fire spread from a public roadway to the vegetation. Reduction of fuels adjacent to public roadways can also directly affect strategies and tactics for offensive and defensive fire control during wildfire events.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of PRC 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires and in investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers that are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of all Forestry and Fire Law within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. First, they are a vegetation management motivator. The second is a public education tool. In 2024, our goal is to complete LE- 100 inspection of all residential structures within the SRA's identified target areas. All inspections will follow the criteria found on the CAL FIRE LE-100 Defensible Space Inspection Worksheet. LE-100 inspection process will be a primary inspection for compliance, with a follow up inspection if needed.

Division, Battalion, Program Plans: North Division

Battalion 6: Bear Valley Battalion – Battalion 4616

Description:

The Bear Valley Battalion covers an area of approximately 484,322 acres with approximately 200 residents. The Battalion is comprised almost entirely of State Responsibility Area. However, Pinnacles National Park (National Park Service) lies within the battalion and is comprised of 26,000 acres Federal Responsibility Area (FRA); and the Clear Creek Recreation and Laguna Mountain Area (Bureau of Land Management) 77,000 acres CAL FIRE Direct Protection Area (DPA).

The battalion lies on the east side of the Unit in San Benito County and contains Highway 25, (also known as Airline Highway) running north/south down the center of the valley. The Northern border is Cienega Road with the southern border being Highway 198 to Priest Valley. The east and west boundaries are the Fresno and Monterey County lines, respectively. Terrain ranges from rolling hills on the east side (Westerly facing aspects of the Diablo Range) to steep rugged terrain with heavy fuels on the West side (East aspects of the Gabilan Range). Fuels are comprised of grass, oak woodland, chamise, and gray pine. The area is populated with rural residential properties varying in size from 5-50,000 acres. The fuels and topography are influenced by the local weather.

Traditional weather patterns during fire season range from mid-70's to low 100 degrees with low overnight RH recoveries. On average, winds range from 5-10 mph.



Values at Risk:

The main values at risk in Battalion 6 are the life and property of local residences including residential structures, agriculture, rangeland, watershed, recreational areas such as Pinnacles National Park, and critical infrastructure including communication sites and high voltage power lines.

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 6.

- FRA acres: 103,095
- SRA acres: 380,561
- Total acres: 484,322
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 460,105

Fire History and Occurrence:

A clear majority of fires within the battalion occur as roadside starts. These fires are classified as equipment, vehicle, electrical, or are undetermined as to specific ignition source. Most of these fires are contained at less than 10 acres. Large, costly, and damaging fires are not a regular occurrence in the battalion, although 2018 had 2 large-scale extended attack fires in the Beaver Dam area of the battalion. To mitigate the hazard from roadside starts, a fence line disk program was initiated in 2020.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values. Mapping data of hazard severity zones along with housing density and assets were combined. These areas overlaid with historical data of fire ignitions and perimeters then gave clear target areas. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk. Two target areas were identified in Battalion 6.

Target Area 1: Pinnacles, stretching from La Gloria Road south to include Pinnacles National Park, a narrow canyon with one way in and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

Target Area 2: The Coalinga Road corridor from Highway 25 to Clear Creek, this area has narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 6 to reduce the number of ignitions. Target areas have been identified to give prioritization to areas of the battalion. These identified target areas work in conjunction with the San Benito County Fire Safe Council. The action plan for public contact and education is as follows:

Burn Permit Administration:

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums:

Although very rural, battalion staff remain involved in multiple public education programs. Ongoing events throughout the year:

- San Benito County Fair
- Cattleman's Association Meetings
- School Programs at Jefferson and Bitterwater Schools
- Fire Prevention Signage
- San Benito County Fire Safe Council Meetings and functions
- Battalion 6 FDRS signs

Battalion staff will educate local homeowners and assist San Benito County Fire Department and San Benito Fire Safe Council in educating the public as well as provide information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs, the battalion will post prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

Roadside Disk Line Program:

Property disking is an additional tool that can be implemented on larger lots to reduce fire spread. Property boundary disking is used to assist in controlling and containing fires. Property owners can significantly affect the containment of fires by supporting CAL FIRE in this program.

The following are the program components:

- On vacant lots or tracts of wild land, disk a fire break line, 20 feet wide adjacent to roadways and or property lines.
- May 15th is the preferred date by which to create the disced line. However, any time after the grasses cure and are available to burn is a good time to disk your fire break.
- Call your local CAL FIRE station upon completion of your fire break and provide either your address or APN number or general location of the property. This information assists department personnel with pre-fire planning in the event of a fire on the property.

The priority roads are Highway 25, Coalinga Road, and La Gloria Road. These roads are identified as the main thoroughfares in target areas 1 and 2. Private disking combined with Caltrans and San Benito County Roads providing road clearance, will reduce the number of roadside ignitions extending into the vegetation.

Vegetation Management:

The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing the potential of a large fire and reducing the damage from a large fire. There are currently three Vegetation Management Program/Vegetation Treatment Programs in progress: The Stone Canyon VTP - 8,000 acres, the Rock Springs VMP - 7,000 acres, and the Moody VMP - 4,500 acres. Completion of these projects will greatly reduce fuels in areas of the battalion, assist with creation of fuel breaks and establish dozer lines. It will also help to convert from continuous uniform brush to create a mosaic landscape, enhancing wildlife habitat.

Battalion staff are continually looking for opportunities for new VMP's along the Gabilan Range, as well as working with and educating landowners of the alternate methods to help manage their land. Staff will explain the benefits/differences and avenues of RI (Range Improvement) burns and VMP (Vegetation Management Program) burns. Battalion staff regularly meet with local stakeholders regarding prescribed fire and fuel reduction projects. Unit staff will be available as a resource to assist in planning and implementation of RI burns helping to ensure efficient and effective RI prescriptions, that align with both the landowner and the Department objectives. Target areas 1 and 2 have been identified to give prioritization to areas of the battalion for future VMP planning. Additionally, staff is working with the Pinnacles National Park, developing a fuel break to help prevent a fire from entering or exiting the park.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Roadside fuel reduction with fuel break along Gloria Road extending from Hwy 25 across the county line into Battalion 3. This is to increase the egress and safety for evacuations in the area.

Continued work by resource management and battalion staff to reestablish the truck trail from Fremont Peak to Thompson Canyon along the Monterey San Benito County line.

Staff will continue to focus on compiling water sources, road access, and assets at risk for battalion pre-plans. Battalion staff will also work to improve database of historical fire perimeters,

including Range Improvement burns, allowing better strategic planning when focusing on the target areas.

3. Law Enforcement Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of PRC 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires and in investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers that are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of all forestry and fire law within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. First, they serve as a vegetation management motivator. The second purpose is as a public education tool. The Battalion 6 goal will be to target areas within the battalion that have a significant wildland fire threat, and to inspect homes using the PRC 4291 program. Bear Valley Station will focus on the Highway 25 corridor from Baker Grade to Pinnacle NP entrance, expanding out from there. Beaver Dam will start at the densest housing east of Hernandez Reservoir and work west along Coalinga Hernandez Road. These areas are prioritized by outputs of the data which determined the target areas. May and June are the more appropriate time of year to conduct inspections within the battalion, due to the annual grass component as the primary fuel type. The goal is to inspect all habitable structures in the battalion with 50% completion, covering 100% of willing property owners over two years.



Division, Battalion, Program Plans: North Division

Battalion 7: Aromas Battalion – Battalion 4617

Description:

The Aromas Battalion is located at the north end of the Unit encompassing portions of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz Counties. The battalion runs from the northern unit boundary over to Fremont Peak and down the Salinas Valley to just north of Chualar. The Aromas battalion is also home to the Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District, primarily residential structures with light commercial and agricultural occupancies and areas of wildland urban interface. In addition to the local population of approximately 6,000, the district experiences a constant increase to values at risk due to the major highways that traverse the district increasing the active population by hundreds of thousands per day. This exacerbates the issue of High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones throughout most of the district and the interface threats to residents.

The fuels and topography defined in the battalion are gentle slopes of oak woodland varied with steep terrain and heavy fuels in other areas encompassing many housing developments throughout. Highway 101 is bordered on both sides by dense stands of Eucalyptus groves that pose a challenge to firefighters and public safety.

Values at Risk:

The major values at risk in Battalion 7 are the life and property of local residences including residential structures, recreational areas, agriculture, watershed, and infrastructure. Major highway corridors 101, 129 and 156 run through the battalion. Infrastructure values at risk include communication and repeater sites as well as major PG&E transmission and gas lines. Additionally, the Moss Landing power plant and Moss Landing Harbor are located on the western edge of the battalion. Moss Landing and Zmudowski State beaches and the Elkhorn Slough provide scenery, recreation, and wildlife refuge.

Cooperation of members from the San Benito Fire Safe Council, Fire Safe Council of Monterey County, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Parks and Recreation, North County Fire Protection District, and CAL FIRE BEU North Division, will be diligent protecting our local citizens and their properties and valued infrastructure.

Statistics:

Below is the breakdown of Responsibility Area and Direct Protection Area for Battalion 7.

- FRA acres: 88
- SRA acres: 118,442
- LRA acres: 56,719
- Total acres: 175,250

- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 118,500

Fire History and Occurrence:

Most fires within the battalion occur as roadside starts. “Debris burning” also ranks among the highest sources of ignition of fires in Battalion 7. Fire department personnel make a concerted effort while writing burn permits and while out in the public, to educate residents on the laws of burn piles, what materials they can burn and safe ways to conduct their burn to not let it escape their control. Other leading causes of fires in Battalion 7 are roadside fires caused by exhaust carbon, blown tires and vehicles due to the heavy traffic on these highways. Most of these fires are contained at less than 10 acres. Large fires are not a regular occurrence in the battalion. Recent notable fires in the area include the Anzar Fire and Quarry Fire.

Weather:

The weather patterns in Battalion 7 during the summer months range from the 60s and into the mid 80-degree mark with the marine layer moving in most evenings and dissipating mid mornings. The winds in the area range from 5-10 mph.

Fire Prevention Plan Development:

The Fire Prevention Plan was developed through a systematic approach from statistical values, mapping data of the following criteria: fuels, housing density, historical data of fire ignitions and major infrastructure including major highways, railroad routes, and powerlines. These areas overlaid with historical data of fire ignitions and perimeters produced clear target areas. Target areas allow for a focus and prioritization specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk.

Target Area 1: The incorporated area, Aromas Tri-Counties, from Highway 101 to Highway 129.

Target Area 2: Prundale - San Miguel Canyon, Highway 101 corridor, Paradise Canyon, Strawberry Canyon, Castroville Boulevard, Crazy Horse Canyon Road.

Target Area 3: San Juan Canyon (San Juan Bautista) - This area is southwest of the community of San Juan Bautista and is bordered by State Highway 156 on the north, Fremont Peak on the west, Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) on the east.

Three target areas were identified in Battalion 7. The first is the Aromas Tri County and North Monterey County areas. Includes areas of Monterey and San Benito Counties, including Highway 101, Highway 129, and San Juan Road. The second target area is near Prundale with large stands of eucalyptus which create significant Wildland Urban Interface issues. The third target area borders Battalion 5. This includes several single and multi-family residential structures, as well as large ranches. Access to and egress from the entire priority area is very limited.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

1. Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 7 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. Target areas have been identified within the battalion to give prioritization to respective areas. CAL FIRE will work in conjunction with San Benito County Fire Safe Council, and Monterey County Fire Safe Council.

Burn Permit Administration:

LE-62's (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov . Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn day status.

LE-5's (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) is requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov an inspection may be required depending on weather conditions. An authorized CAL FIRE employee determine if an inspection is required and set up the inspection. These projects burn permits are typically used to remove larger piles of agricultural material.

LE-7/LE-8's (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are requested online via www.burnpermit.fire.ca.gov are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

Public Education Forums:

Battalion staff remains involved in multiple public education programs. Ongoing events throughout the year:

- Fire Prevention Signage
- San Benito County Fire Safe Council Meeting and functions
- Fire Safe Council for Monterey County Meetings
- Battalion 7 Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs
- Aromas Day, parade, and open house
- Aromas School Fire Prevention Poster Contest

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

The North Division will focus available resources to support the prevention of large wildfires in target areas 1, 2 and 3. The North Division, in cooperation with San Benito Fire Safe Council, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Pre-Fire Planning, Prevention Staff, Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continue to evaluate current and propose new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area.

Staff continue to educate the public and provide information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to Fire Danger Rating System signs, the battalion will post prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

Vegetation Management:

In 2024, the San Benito-Monterey made a concerted effort on the San Juan Shaded Fuel Break up toward Fremont Peak and the State Park. Several different people and resources spent time changing the arrangement and continuity of the fuels using manual and mechanical methods. The surface fuels were masticated, and hand lines were constructed to follow up with low intensity, prescribed fire.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Public roadways have experienced significant number of ignitions. Ignitions can have a direct influence in the target areas due to heavy fuel loading and density of structures. Battalion 7 will petition Caltrans, Monterey County Public Works, and San Benito County Public Works Department to perform fuels reduction practices on each agency's public easements in these target areas. The fuel reduction methods include mowing or clearing vegetation in a manner to reduce significant fire spread from a public roadway to the vegetation. Reduction of fuels adjacent to public roadways can also directly affect strategies and tactics for offensive and defensive fire control during wildfire events.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has four Law Enforcement/Fire Investigators in its Fire Prevention Bureau. These officers are tasked with enforcing all forestry and fire laws within the Unit and State. Law Enforcement duties include enforcement of PRC 4291, citation issuance for negligently caused fires and in investigations of all fires. The Unit has additional Law Enforcement Officers that are available to assist the Fire Prevention Bureau with the enforcement of all Forestry and Fire Law within the Unit and Battalion.

Defensible Space Inspections:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. First, they are a vegetation management motivator. The second is a public education tool. In 2024, our goal is to complete LE- 100 inspection of all residential structures within the SRA's identified target areas. All inspections will follow the criteria found on the CAL FIRE LE-100 Defensible Space Inspection Worksheet. LE-100 inspection process will be a primary inspection for compliance, with a follow up inspection if needed.

Unit Program Plans:

Division, Battalion, Program Plans: North Division

Training Battalion 4607



Description:

The San Benito-Monterey Training (BEU Training) Program is a comprehensive plan designed to enhance the skills, knowledge, and preparedness of personnel to effectively respond to and manage All-Hazard incidents. Aligned with the organization's mission of protecting life, property, and natural resources, the program focuses on key training objectives:

1. **Collaborative Partnerships:** The program fosters collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies through joint training exercises. Tabletop exercises are conducted to improve communication and coordination with partner agencies.
2. **Enhanced Incident Management Skills:** The program prioritizes incident command system (ICS) training for all personnel, with basic and advanced courses tailored for key roles from the entry-level firefighter up to Chief Officer.
3. **Firefighting Techniques:** A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring all firefighters are proficient in basic and advanced firefighting techniques. Hands-on training exercises are implemented to enhance skills in areas including fire line construction, firing operations, and pumping and driving emergency apparatus.

4. **Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** Refresher training in basic life support, first aid, and CPR is provided for all personnel, with advanced medical training offered to designated personnel to enhance emergency medical response capabilities.
5. **Technical Rescue Techniques:** CAL FIRE BEU has advanced Technical Rescue Programs, showcasing a commitment to excellence in emergency response beyond traditional firefighting. These programs encompass Water Rescue, Aerial Truck Operations, and Aviation,
 - A.) **Water Rescue:** With the ocean spanning a large area along the Monterey Coastline, CAL FIRE BEU recognizes the need for specialized expertise in ocean rescue related emergencies. The Water Rescue program equips personnel with advanced training in surf rescue techniques, rescue watercraft and inflatable boat operations, and swift water/flood response. Dedicated teams undergo rigorous exercises, simulating scenarios such as ocean/surf rescues and flood evacuations, ensuring readiness for real-world incidents. CAL FIRE BEU's Water Rescue program stands as a crucial asset for addressing water-related emergencies, safeguarding both residents and the natural environment.
 - B.) **Aerial Truck Operations:** In the West Division of the Unit, Aerial Truck Operations have become an integral component of the technical rescue strategy. Specially trained crews operate state-of-the-art aerial trucks, utilizing their elevated platforms for high-angle rescues, structure access, and swift evacuation of endangered individuals. Training drills involve scenarios like rescues from cliffs, large commercial structures, and confined spaces where traditional access methods are impractical. The Pebble Beach Truck program showcases CAL FIRE BEU's commitment to being prepared for all-risk emergencies.
 - C.) **Aviation:** CAL FIRE BEU's Aviation program takes to the skies to provide critical support in firefighting and emergency response. Specialized fixed and rotary wing aircraft and skilled pilots are equipped to perform precision drops of fire retardant and water, aiding ground crews in wildfire suppression efforts. The aviation program also facilitates rapid deployment of personnel to suppress wildfires, aerial reconnaissance for enhanced situational awareness, and hoist rescues in remote access areas. Continuous training ensures pilots and aerial firefighters are well-prepared for the dynamic challenges presented by California's diverse landscapes, demonstrating the organization's commitment to leveraging cutting-edge technology.
 - D.) **Urban Search & Rescue (US&R):** In 2024, the San Benito-Monterey Unit personnel will have an opportunity to apply for a position on the Monterey County Urban Search and Rescue Team.

The Training Schedule is organized into quarters, covering a range of topics ranging from Incident Command System and firefighting techniques to Emergency Medical Services and collaborative partnerships. The plan places a strong emphasis on evaluation and assessment, including regular drills, simulations, and post-incident reviews to identify areas for improvement.

Resources are allocated to ensure the successful implementation of the program, encompassing funding, personnel, and training facilities. The program will be subject to regular review and updates to reflect the evolving needs of CAL FIRE BEU, ensuring a highly skilled and resilient workforce capable of addressing the dynamic challenges posed by wildfires. This comprehensive approach underscores the organization's commitment to continuous improvement and community safety.



Division, Battalion, Program Plans: South Division

Gabilan Conservation Camp and Pinnacles Fire Center – Division 4603



Gabilan Conservation Camp:

Gabilan Conservation Camp (CC #38) is centrally located in Monterey County and the only camp servicing the CAL FIRE San Benito- Monterey Unit. The facility is situated in the front of CTF – Soledad and the Salinas Valley State Prison on Highway 101 between the cities of Soledad and Gonzales. Gabilan Camp has occupancy for approximately 60 to 70 low-risk inmates under the direction of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE operates 32 Type I Fire Crews and a Mobile Kitchen Unit (MKU) from Gabilan Camp. The crews are available to respond year-round to all-risk emergencies throughout the state such as wildland fires, floods, rescues, and other disasters.

In preparation for emergency response, Gabilan Camp conducts an annual Fire Crew Preparedness Exercise, which evaluates each inmate fire crew's performance through arduous evolutions in preparation for the upcoming fire season.

Gabilan Camp is actively engaged in Pre-Fire Management. Gabilan Fire Crews perform community service and hazard fuel reduction projects with the local governments, state and federal agencies within Santa Clara, Monterey, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Cooperators who sponsor Fuel Reduction and project work with Gabilan Camp include (but are not limited to): Hollister Hills State Park; California State Parks and Recreation; Monterey County Parks; Laguna Seca Raceway; City of Monterey; City of Del Rey Oaks; City of Soledad; Camp Roberts National Guard Base; Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District; Salinas Valley Fairgrounds; Salinas Airshow; San Benito County Park; San Benito County Historical Park; Monterey Peninsula College; Gonzales Unified School District; Washington Union School District; National Park Service; Bureau of Land Management; and San Benito-Monterey and Santa Clara CAL FIRE facilities. Numerous federal hazardous fuel reduction grant projects were also completed.

Since the opening in 1986, Gabilan Conservation Camp has continued to be a valuable resource for the State of California and the citizens of San Benito and Monterey Counties through conservation and the protection of life, property, and natural resources.





Pinnacles Fire Center:

The Pinnacles Fire Center in Monterey County is centrally located in the San Benito- Monterey Unit and is located next to Gabilan Conservation Camp. The program was founded in 2019 to support the states 5-year strategic fuel reduction plan. In 2021, Pinnacles Fire Crew obtained Type 1 Fire Crew status. Pinnacles Fire center supports a single crew composed of 24 California National Guard Soldiers, 3 CALFIRE Captains and 3 CALFIRE Fire Apparatus Engineers. CALFIRE over sees the program, supporting the crew with all fire training and equipment. The Pinnacles Fire Center has 2 Emergency Crew Transports (ECT) one frontline and one reserve, one rental support vehicle, one emergency response utility, and a variety of support tools.

In preparation for emergency response as a Type 1 Fire Crew, Pinnacles, participates in an annual fire crew preparedness exercise. The exercise evaluates the fire crew's performance through arduous evolutions in preparation for the upcoming fire season. To meet the knowledge, skills and abilities, the crew must meet both time and distance standards through multiple evolutions.

The Pinnacles Fire Crew is actively engaged in Monterey and San Benito counties in fuel reduction work. Fuel reduction work includes mitigating hazard fuel hazards and completing community projects. Pinnacles Fire Crew works with local governments, State Parks, Federal agencies and local Cities in Monterey and San Benito Counties.

Pinnacles Fire Crew uses remote controlled masticators, chippers, and chain saws to create defensible space and fire control lines. Pinnacles Fire Crew completes pile burning or broadcast burning programs to support our goals of fuel reduction.

To meet the Mission Vision and Values of CALFIRE the Pinnacles fire center is always training to respond to all risk incidents, as well as natural disasters



Division, Battalion, Program Plans:

Air Attack/Helitack Program – Battalion 4608

Description:

The Hollister Air Attack/Helitack Program based at Hollister Airport within the San Benito-Monterey Unit has a rich history and plays a vital role responding across a significant region. This program is committed to comprehensive fire and rescue response, utilizing a diverse fleet staffed with well trained and experienced personnel to protect and serve the community and the citizens of California.

The base was established in 1962 however, it originally started as a grass strip that was used by agricultural aircraft and then as a United States Navy training field during World War 2. In 1947 the Navy deeded the Airport to The City of Hollister. The Helitack module began in 1987 under the name Bitterwater Helitack located near King City. In 1992, it became Bear Valley Helitack when the program moved to Bear Valley Fire Station. The program moved a third time when the Helicopter moved to Hollister Air Base in 2021 and joined the rest of the fleet. Hollister Airbase responds to approximately 350 incidents per year.

Aircraft assigned to the Hollister Air Base include one OV-10A Bronco Air Tactical platform, two Type 3 S-2T Air Tankers, and one type one S-70i Helicopter, coined the CAL FIRE HAWK. The base also houses multiple utility vehicles and the Helitender which carries fuel, supplies and equipment required for the operation of the Helicopter. The base can produce 90,000 gallons of retardant per day. In 2020 the base pumped over 1 million gallons supporting major fires in the area.

Staff at the base consists of one Battalion Chief, twelve Fire Captains, four Forestry Fire Pilots, six Fire Apparatus Engineers, and 21 Seasonal Firefighters. The base provides initial attack for 3.1 million acres encompassing 11 counties, an area spanning north to Mt. Diablo, south of King City, east to Interstate 5 and west to the Pacific Ocean including portions of the Los Padres National Forest.

The OV-10A Bronco Air Attack platform daily staffing includes one DynCorp Air Tactical Pilot and one Air Tactical Group Supervisor. The Broncos tandem seating configuration offers great visibility for the Pilot and Air Attack Officer, combined with 5.5 hours of endurance making it an ideal platform for coordinating aircraft operations on wildland fires.

The S-2T tankers originally operated by the Navy as S-2As with radial engines were limited to 800 gallons of retardant. CAL FIRE converted the tankers to S-2Ts with turbine engines giving them better performance and reliability, allowing tankers to carry a maximum of 1,200 gallons of retardant. The S-2T tankers are considered Type 3 Air Tankers and are staffed with one DynCorp Air Tanker Pilot.

In 2019 CAL FIRE acquired S-70i CAL FIRE HAWKS to replace their fleet of Vietnam era UH- 1H Hueys. The CAL FIRE HAWK, a variant of the Sikorsky S-70i helicopter, is a multi-mission aerial firefighting and rescue machine designed for California's diverse emergencies. It is classified as a Type I Helicopter with a fixed tank capable of carrying 1,000 gallons of water and/or foam with retractable snorkel. The daily staffing for the HAWK includes one Fire Pilot, two Fire Captains, a Fire Apparatus Engineer, and five Firefighters. Once the HAWK arrives on a wildland incident, the back-seat Fire Captain and five Firefighters are deployed to engage the fire. The Pilot, front seat Fire Captain and Fire Apparatus Engineer stay on the ship to make water drops for ground resources and coordinate fire activities with other firefighting aircraft. The CAL FIRE HAWK also has an externally mounted hoist system which can be used on rescue missions assisting people in need from remote, austere environments. The personnel are equipped with Night Vision Goggles (NVG), a night vision system enabling operations in low-light conditions, further expanding the duration of availability. The helicopter performs approximately 12 rescues per year.



Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program



the San Benito-Monterey Unit, we take great pride in our ability to think creatively and solve problems effectively. CAL FIRE has had an Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) program since 2020, initially focused on providing real-time situational awareness during wildland fires. Recognizing the broader potential of this technology, we explored its application in an all-risk environment, testing and evaluating various mission sets. What began with a single donated aircraft to the Pebble Beach Community Services District and one qualified pilot has since evolved into one of the state's most robust UAS programs, now operating seven different airframes and employing ten qualified pilots.

While our core mission remains real-time situational awareness, we have expanded the program's capabilities to include the capture of data for producing infrared hotspot maps, ortho-

mosaic maps, and color detection for search and rescue operations. Additionally, we have the capacity for cargo delivery (up to 88 pounds) and aerial ignition.

In 2024, members of the BEU UAS program were assigned to every major incident statewide, collectively logging 187.26 flight hours. These assignments primarily involved hotspot detection, which significantly aided ground crews in efficiently addressing smoldering materials.

Our team also collaborates with CAL FIRE at the state level to develop policy and curriculum for the deployment of external cargo from our aircraft. As a test bed for this program, we continuously innovate and evaluate new payloads. Currently, we have approvals for several items, including personal flotation devices (PFDs), drinking water, dye markers, and AED and BLS medical kits.

The UAS has been an instrumental tool for several operations including, but not limited to:

- Search and Rescue
- Water Rescue
- Fuels Reduction
- Unit-wide incident support
- Aerial Ignition

Statistics:

- 199.01 Flight Hours on incidents in the unit
- 20.17 Flight hours on fuels projects
- 96.98 Flight hours on special events
- 98.69 Flight hours training
- Total flight hours 602.11
- 22,458 PSD balls dropped statewide for 10,600 treated acres

In an effort to keep moving forward and take advantage of all the emerging technologies in the UAS industry, we have set goals to continue setting the standard.

1 Year

- Increase competent A-450 pilots to a total of 12.
- Increase S-373 Pilots from 2 to 4.
- Develop Unit response card to add UAS to the initial dispatch for certain call types.
- Add 4 Type-4 UAS and 2 type-3 UAS to the BEU fleet.

- Market the program capabilities to local cooperators to increase mission profile types.
- Develop a quarterly recurrency skills exercise for all members of the program
- Purchase a FreeFly Alta-X for PSD operation.

3 Year

- Have the capability to have a UAS and Pilot available 7 days a week in the unit
- Have at least 2 qualified Aerial Ignition pilot in the unit with an aircraft to support aerial ignition requests.
- Continue working with TAO to develop curriculum and a carding process for cargo delivery and roll the program out state wide.
- Look at fixed wing UAS for longer duration mapping missions
- Continue working with NASA to develop safe and consistent passive airspace deconfliction.

5 Year

- Have A-450 and S-373 cadre members at the state level
- Have 1 UAS and pilot available in each division 7 days a week.
- Sponsor classes in the Unit that focus on SAR missions and air space deconfliction.
- Have UAS data processing capabilities.

Public Education/Contact:

The unit is proactively investing in the future of the UAS program by collaborating with local schools that offer UAS or robotics courses. In 2024, we had the opportunity to engage with Chartwell Academy and the Naval Postgraduate School, showcasing the department's capabilities and inspiring the next generation to explore the possibilities CAL FIRE provides.

Additionally, we participated as panelists at the AVUSI Xponential symposium, offering real-world insights on how UAS technology is enhancing public safety by reducing risks to professionals and acting as a force multiplier during large-scale incidents.

Furthermore, several of our local members contribute to national working groups focused on advancing UAS capabilities across all areas.

Appendix A: Pre-Fire Projects

San Benito-Monterey Fuels Reduction Projects:



Top left: San Juan Fuel Break-Southern Monterey County, Bottom Left: Ranchita Truck Trail-Parkfield, CA, Right Clenga VMP-Northern San Benito County

Carmel Battalion 1 Projects:

Project #1

Name: Cachagua Road / Tassajara Road Fuel Break
Description: Establish a fuel break along Cachagua and Tassajara Roads
Community: Cachagua, east of Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Public Works, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: Carmel Valley Regional Fuel Break
Description: Establish a fire road for emergency access
Community: Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cachagua Fire Protection District, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #3

Name: Robinson Canyon Road Fuel Break
Description: Establish a shaded fuel break along Robinson Canyon Road
Community: Carmel Valley, Santa Lucia Preserve
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Public Works, Santa Lucia Preserve, Community of White Rock

Project #4

Name: Palo Corona Fire Roads
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Communities: Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley, White Rock, Palo Colorado areas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, CA Department of Fish & Wildlife, Community of White Rock

Project #5

Name: Cachagua and White Rock Residential Chipping Programs
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owners
Community: Cachagua, White Rock areas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE

Project #6

Name: White Rock Fuel Break
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques including prescribed fire
Community: White Rock areas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE

Project #7

Name: Laureles Grade/Highway 68 Corridor Fuel Reduction
Description: Widen and improve width and depth of the existing roadway clearance
Community: Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Regional Fire, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, Bureau of Land Management, Private Landowners

Project #8

Name: El Sur Ranch Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP)
Description: Fuel reduction using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: North of Big Sur near Andrew Molera State Park
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #9

Name: Santa Lucia Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP)
Description: Fuel reduction using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: Santa Lucia Preserve/Santa Lucia Conservancy, Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Regional Fire Authority, Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, Santa Lucia Preserve/Conservancy

Project #10

Name: Molera Notice of Exemption (NOE)
Description: Fuel reduction and prescribed fire to enhance native vegetation
Community: Highway 1 North of Big Sur
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, CA State Parks, CALTRANS, local indigenous tribes



Picture 2: Andrew Molera State Park, East Molera NOE Broadcast Burn

Project #11

Name: Stone Pine Vegetation Management Program (VMP)
Description: Fuel reduction using prescribed fire
Community: Carmel Valley Village
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Regional Fire, Monterey County Parks, California American Water, Santa Lucia Conservancy, Private Landowners

Project #12

Name: Rana Creek Ranch Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP)
Description: Fuel reduction using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: Cachagua
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Cypress Battalion 2 Projects:

Project #1

Name: Aguajito/Jacks Peak Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Gentry Hill, Olmstead Road, Loma Alta, Aguajito
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Regional Parks, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works, Monterey County Fire Safe Council

Project #2

Name: Del Mesa Carmel / Pacific Meadows Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fuel break
Community: Del Mesa Carmel, Pacific Meadows
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Public Works

Project #3

Name: Hatton Canyon Fuel Break Maintenance
Description: Maintain current fuel break in canyon between subdivisions
Community: Carmel at the mouth of Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, CA. State Parks

Project #4

Name: Carmel Knolls Rancho Rio Vista Fuel Reduction
Description: Reduce fuels in open space areas and large parcels
Community: Carmel Knolls and Rancho Rio Vista
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works

Project #5

Name: Quail Meadows Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Quail Meadows subdivision south of Carmel Valley Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works

Project #6

Name: High Meadows Fuel Reduction
Description: Reduce fuels in open space areas, increase defensible space to 100' around community, maintain clearance on the roadway
Community: Via Mar Monte, Carmel Hills Drive, High Meadows
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Regional Parks, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works, CA. State Parks, Caltrans

Project #7

Name: Cypress Fire Protection District Chipping Program
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owner
Community: All communities within Cypress Fire Protection District
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #8

Name: Outlook to Outlook Fuel Break Maintenance
Description: Maintain current fuel break in canyon between subdivisions
Community: Carmel at the mouth of Carmel Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cypress Fire Protection District, Monterey County Public Works, Private Landowners



Carmel Highlands Battalion 2 Projects

Project #1

Name: Carmel Highlands Community Fuel Break (Foothill)
Description: 100' Fuel Break along the foothills of Carmel Highlands
Community: Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District,
CA. State Parks, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: San Jose Creek Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Carmel Highlands, Red Wolf Drive
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District,
CA. State Parks

Project #3

Name: Ribera Road (Carmel River State Park) Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Carmel Meadows subdivision
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District,
CA. State Parks

Project #4

Name: Carmel Highlands Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District, Monterey County Fire Safe
Council, Monterey County Regional Parks, Monterey County Public Works, PG&E,
Caltrans

Project #5

Name: Victorine Ranch Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Victorine Ranch, South end of Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District,
Victorine Ranch Homeowners Association,
Carmel-Lahaina Water Company

Project #8

Name: Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District Chipping Program
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space
maintenance by the property owners
Community: Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #9

Name: Corona Road Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Carmel Highlands, Corona Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands FPD, Corona Road private HOA

Project #10

Name: Mal Paso Creek Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fuel break
Community: Carmel Highlands, Mal Paso Creek area
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Carmel Highlands FPD, Carmel Riviera Water Management District, Mal Paso Creek Property Owners



Pebble Beach Battalion 2 Projects:

Project #1

Name: Sunridge Pines Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Pebble Beach, Sunridge Pines
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, PG&E

Project #2

Name: Huckleberry Hill Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Pebble Beach, Sunridge Pines
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, PG&E, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #3

Name: Shepherd's Knoll Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Community: Pebble Beach, Shepherds Knoll, Sunridge, 17 Mile Drive
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District

Project #4

Name: Navajo Tracts Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire roads
Community: Pebble Beach, Forest Lodge Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #5

Name: Forest Lake Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire roads
Community: Pebble Beach, Lopez Road, Congress Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, California American Water

Project #6

Name: Indian Village Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire roads
Community: Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, Stevenson Drive
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #7

Name: Crocker Grove / SFB Morse Memorial Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire roads
Community: Pebble Beach, Cypress Point X Portola Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #8

Name: Pescadero Canyon Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire roads
Community: Pebble Beach, Carmel Woods X Carmel Way
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, PG&E, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #9

Name: Pebble Beach Fuel Reduction
Description: Fuel Reduction, vegetation management, storm clean-up
Community: Pebble Beach, Del Monte Forest
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Services District, PG&E, Del Monte Forest Conservancy



King City Battalion 3 Projects:

Project #1

Name: Pine Canyon Residential Chipping Program
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owners
Community: Pine Canyon area West of King City
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: Sierra de Salinas Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques including prescribed fire
Community: Greenfield, Soledad, Paraiso Springs areas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Private Landowners

Project #3

Name: Paloma Truck Trail
Description: Establish a fuel break along Paloma Truck Trail
Community: Pine Canyon
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #4

Name: Handly Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire.
Community: Chualar
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Private Landowners

Project #5

Name: Community Right of Way Clearance
Description: Maintenance of access/egress routes for the communities
Community: Reliz, Monroe, Vaquero, Ramus, Arroyo Seco, Pine Canyon, Carmel Valley, Old Jolon Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey Public Works, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #6

Name: Highway 198 Notice of Exemption
Description: Improve width and maintenance of roadway clearance
Community: San Lucas, Priest Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, CALTRANS

Project #7

Name: Peach Tree Notice of Exemption
Description: Improve width and maintenance of roadway clearance
Community: Peach Tree Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Monterey County Public Works

Project #8

Name: Chalone Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Vegetation management using multiple methods
Community: Gabilan Range, North of Pinnacles National Park, La Gloria Grade
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #9

Name: Peach Tree Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Vegetation management using multiple methods
Community: South of Peach Tree Road the area of priest valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #10

Name: Dillard Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire.
Community: Pine Canyon, West of King City
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Bradley Battalion 4 Projects:

Project #1

Name: West Side Fuel Break
Description: Fuel modification using multiple vegetation management techniques
Community: Lockwood, Santa Lucia Mountain Range, Calandra Lookout, Williams Hill Recreation Area, Paris Valley Road
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques
Community: Parkfield, Cholame, San Miguel
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #3

Name: Bryson Hesperia Area Fuel Management
Description: Maintain and improve the clearance on the existing roadways for access. Seek opportunities to tie into and extend projects coming from San Luis Obispo County and Fort Hunter Liggett
Community: Bryson Hesperia
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Luis Obispo County Fire, Fort Hunter Liggett Monterey County Fire Safe Council, San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council, Southern Monterey County Fire, PG&E

Project #4

Name: Parkfield Area Pre-Plan
Description: Identify evacuation routes, temporary refuge areas (TRA), water sources, and fire suppression hazards
Community: Parkfield, Cholame Valley, Slacks Canyon, Parkfield Grade
Collaborators: CAL FIRE

Project #5

Name: Jack Ranch Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield, Cholame, San Miguel
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #6

Name: Smith Mountain Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield, Peach Tree, Indian Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #7

Name: Miller Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield, Peach Tree, Indian Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #8

Name: Vineyard Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield, Indian Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #9

Name: Parkfield VTP
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #10

Name: Smith Mountain VTP
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods
Community: Parkfield
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #11

Name: Self Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Lockwood
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #12

Name: Nadley Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Lockwood
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #14

Name: Rancho San Lucas Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Parkfield
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #15

Name: Indian Valley Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Bradley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #16

Name: Slack Canyon Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Parkfield, South Monterey County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #17

Name: Work Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Parkfield, South Monterey County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Hollister Battalion 5 Projects:**Project #1**

Name: San Benito County Fair
Description: Community outreach and public education about fire safety
Community: County of San Benito
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Benito Fire Safe Council

Project #2

Name: Cienega Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: South San Benito County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Wilbur Ranch, Enz Ranch, Clements Ranch, Private Landowners

Project #4

Name: Gabilan Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: San Juan Canyon
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Ca State Parks, Private Landowners

Project #5

Name: Thompson Truck Trail Notice of Exemption
Description: Clearance, brushing, water bars, and grading for access
Community: Thompson Truck Trail, Cienega Road to San Juan Canyon Road on the West side of San Benito County Line
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Benito Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners
University of California Davis

Project #6

Name: Harlan Notice of Exemption
Description: Fuel Break
Community: Grass Valley Road, Chualar Canyon, Gabilan Range
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners, University of California Davis

Project #7

Name: Panoche Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: Antelope
Collaborators: CAL FIRE Bureau of Land Management

Project #8

Name: Cienga School Elementary Notice of Exemption
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: Paicines, CA
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cienga Elementary School



Bear Valley Battalion 6 Projects:

Project #1

Name: San Benito County Fair
Description: Community outreach and public education about fire safety
Community: County of San Benito
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Benito Fire Safe Council

Project #2

Name: Stone Canyon Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel modification using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: Northwest of the Pinnacles National Park between Highway 25 and the Monterey County line.
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #3

Name: Rock Springs Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: Northwest of Beaver Dam FFS #48, South of Rock Spring Peak.
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #4

Name: La Gloria Fuel Break
Description: 12 miles of Fuel Break from Highway 25 to Salinas Valley
Community: Paicines, La Gloria Road, North of Pinnacles National Park
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #5

Name: Moody Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: San Benito County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #6

Name: Waterman Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: Northwest of the Pinnacles National Park Between Highway 25 and the Monterey County line adjacent to Stone Canyon VTP
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Aromas Battalion 7 Projects:

Project #1

Name: Rocks Road Fuel Treatment
Description: Hazard trees adjacent to Highway 101 and Rocks Road
Community: Aromas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, CAL TRANS, California Highway Patrol, San Benito Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: Bengard Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel modification using prescribed fire
Community: East of Salinas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #3

Name: San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break
Description: Maintain a fuel break along San Juan Canyon up to Fremont Peak
Community: San Juan Canyon, South of San Juan Bautista
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Benito Fire Safe Council, CA State Parks, Private Landowners

Project #4

Name: Aromas Residential Chipping Program
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owners.
Community: Aromas, North Monterey County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Aromas Water District, Private Landowners

Project #5

Name: Long Canyon Shaded Fuel Break
Description: Fuel break
Community: Prunedale
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Elkhorn Slough Foundation

Project #6

Name: Highway 101/156 Corridors Notice of Exemption
Description: Fuel break Highway 101 x Y Rd x Highway 156
Community: Aromas and San Juan Bautista
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, CAL TRANS, Private Landowners

Project #7

Name: Garlinger Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: East of Chualar, Gabilan Range
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #8

Name: Alisal Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: East of Salinas, Gabilan Range
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #9

Name: South Pasture Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques
Community: Salinas, North Monterey County
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, private landowners

Project #10

Name: Aromas Ingress & Egress Fuel Treatment
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: Aromas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, CAL TRANS, California Highway Patrol, San Benito Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #11

Name: Nyland Ranch Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: West of San Juan Bautista
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #12

Name: Fremont Fuel Break Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: South of Fremont Peak, Gabilan Range
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #13

Name: San Juan de Anza Vegetation Treatment Program
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: San Juan Bautista, Fremont Peak
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Appendix B: Ignition Data

Overview

Fire Cause Statistics:

Fire Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Yearly Acres
2011	8	637	-	137	144	-	26	8	1,451	2,411
2012	4	2,663	-	1	16	12	15	2	259	2,972
2013	-	1,276	3	214	13	1	2	-	286	1,795
2014	-	8	-	-	1	-	-	-	390	399
2015	72	145	-	-	21	1	1,087	3	719	2,048
2016	-	51	-	132,127	6,398	3	5	-	825	139,409
2017	79	29	-	-	6	-	7	-	2,194	2,315
2018	-	185	-	-	21	-	12	-	6,306	6,524
2019	-	4,077	4	2	46	-	24	4	321	4,478
2020	48,089	8,862	-	195	2	-	125,038	43	2,115	184,344
2021	-	1,585	-	2,879	5	-	-	-	37	4,506
2022	-	471	-	-	688	-	98	1	66	1,323
2023	-	456	-	-	72	-	6	1	582	1,117
2024	1	1616	1	191	130	-	2	2	2606	4548
Acres by Cause	48,253	22,071	8	135,746	7,563	17	126,322	63	18,157	358,200

Cause	Code
Lightning	1
Vehicle / Powerline / Equipment Use	2
Smoking	3
Campfire	4
Debris Burning	5
Railroad	6
Arson	7
Playing w/ Fire	8
Miscellaneous / Undetermined	9

Cause Code	Sum of Acres	Ignitions by Cause
1	48,253	27
2	22,071	480
3	7	12
4	135,746	40
5	7,563	115
6	17	5
7	126,322	73
8	63	2
9	18,157	655
Grand Total	358,200	1409

Fire Occurrence Battalion Statistics

Battalion 1 and 2 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 1	48,089	8,048	1	135,217	695	-	126,011	4	363	318,426
2011	-	7	-	-	4	-	-	1	4	16
2012	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	17	19
2013	-	917	1	213	-	-	-	-	7	1,138
2014	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	11
2015	1	98	-	-	-	-	1,087	3	1	1,190
2016	-	-	-	132,127	-	-	-	-	-	132,127
2017	-	10	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	14
2018	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6
2019	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	316	319
2020	48,088	6,994	-	-	1	-	124,924	-	1	180,008
2021	-	4	-	2877	-	-	-	-	-	2,881
2022	-	8	-	-	687	-	-	-	1	696
2023	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2024	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BATTALION 2	1	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	22
2011	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
2013	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
2014	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
2015	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2016	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2017	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2018	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2019	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
2020	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
2021	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2022	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
2023	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2024	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Grand Total	48,091	8,072	3	135,217	695	-	126,011	4	378	318,450

Soberanes (2016) - 132,127: Cause Code 4 - Campfire

River (2020) - 48,088: Cause Code 1 - Lightning

Dolan (2020) -124,924: Cause Code 7 - Arson

Battalion 3 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 3										
2011	-	310	-	-	2	-	1	-	890	1,203
2012	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	174	177
2013	-	4	-	1	5	-	1	-	152	163
2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	65
2015	-	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	3	12
2016	-	-	-	-	3,877	-	1	-	347	4,225
2017	75	2	-	-	-	-	6	-	37	120
2018	-	10	-	-	-	-	2	-	430	442
2019	-	2,567	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	2,570
2020	-	315	-	-	-	-	63	32	574	984
2021	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	33	35
2022	-	53	-	-	1	-	91	1	6	150
2023	-	46	-	-	-	-	2	1	108	157
2024	1	1347	-	7	65	-	-	1	329	1423
Grand Total	77	4653	-	8	3,967	-	167	34	3,148	12,053

Lonoak (2019) - 2,546 acres: Cause Code 2 – Vehicle / Powerline / Equipment Use

Battalion 4 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 4										
2011	7	232	-	135	91	-	19	-	419	903
2012	3	2,650	-	-	6	-	-	-	19	2,678
2013	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	20	22
2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102	102
2015	66	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	76
2016	-	6	-	-	2,520	-	-	-	258	2,784
2017	4	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,027	2,048
2018	-	167	-	-	2	-	10	-	3,232	3,411
2019	-	1,233	-	2	41	-	-	-	1	1,277
2020	1	650	-	195	-	-	-	-	50	896
2021	-	1,111	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	1,116
2022	-	147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	147
2023	-	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	453	506
2024	-	85	-	5	33	-	-	-	127	250
Grand Total	81	6,355	-	337	2,695	1	29	-	6,718	16,217

Turkey (2012) - 2,529 acres: Cause Code 2 – Vehicle / Powerline / Equipment Use

Coleman (2016) - 2,520 acres: Cause Code 5 – Debris Burning

Turkey (2018) - 2,225 acres: Cause Code 9 – Miscellaneous / Undetermined

Battalion 5 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 5										
2011	1	37	-	-	-	-	3	-	6	47
2012	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	38
2013	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	96	99
2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	-	8	-	-	9	-	-	-	8	25
2016	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	170	176
2017	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	70	73
2018	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,163	2,167
2019	-	204	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	208
2020	-	820	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	820
2021	-	171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	171
2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023	-	325	-	-	67	-	-	-	3	395
2024	-	8	-	6	-	-	-	-	1,252	1,266
Grand Total	2	1,585	4	6	82	3	3		3,802	5,485

Coyote (2020) - 1,485 acres: Cause Code 9 – Miscellaneous / Undetermined

Battalion 6 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 6										
2011	1	37	-	-	-	-	3	-	6	47
2012	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	38
2013	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	96	99
2014	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	-	8	-	-	9	-	-	-	8	25
2016	-	3	-	-	-	3	-	-	170	176
2017		-	-	-	3	-	-	-	70	73
2018	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,163	2,167
2019	-	204	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	208
2020	-	820	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	820
2021	-	171	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	171
2022	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2023	-	325	-	-	67	-	-	-	3	395
2024	1	184	-	191	31	-	1	-	645	1,053
Grand Total	3	1,760	4	191	113	3	4		3,195	5,272

Airline 2 (2018) - 1,314 acres: Cause Code 9 – Miscellaneous / Undetermined

Battalion 7 Ignition Statistics

Cause Code	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Grand Total
BATTALION 7										
2011	-	44	-	2	46	-	2	2	3	99
2012	-	-	-	1	1	12	14	2	13	43
2013	-	1	1	-	4	-	1	-	5	12
2014	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	195	196
2015	-	31	-	-	3	1	-	-	11	46
2016	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	43	47
2017	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	18	19
2018	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	-	59	75
2019	-	7	-	-	-	-	22	2	-	31
2020	-	24	-	-	1	-	51	1	4	81
2021	-	4	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	8
2022	-	106	-	-	-	-	3	-	55	164
2023	-	3	-	-	-	-	4	-	3	10
2024	-	5	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	10
Grand Total	0	225	2	5	77	13	102	7	412	842

Anzar (2022) -101 acres: Cause Code 2 – Vehicle / Powerline / Equipment Use



Section VI: Exhibits

Figure A: Unit Map

SAN BENITO-MONTEREY UNIT MAP



Figure B: Fire Districts

SAN BENITO-MONTEREY FIRE DISTRICTS

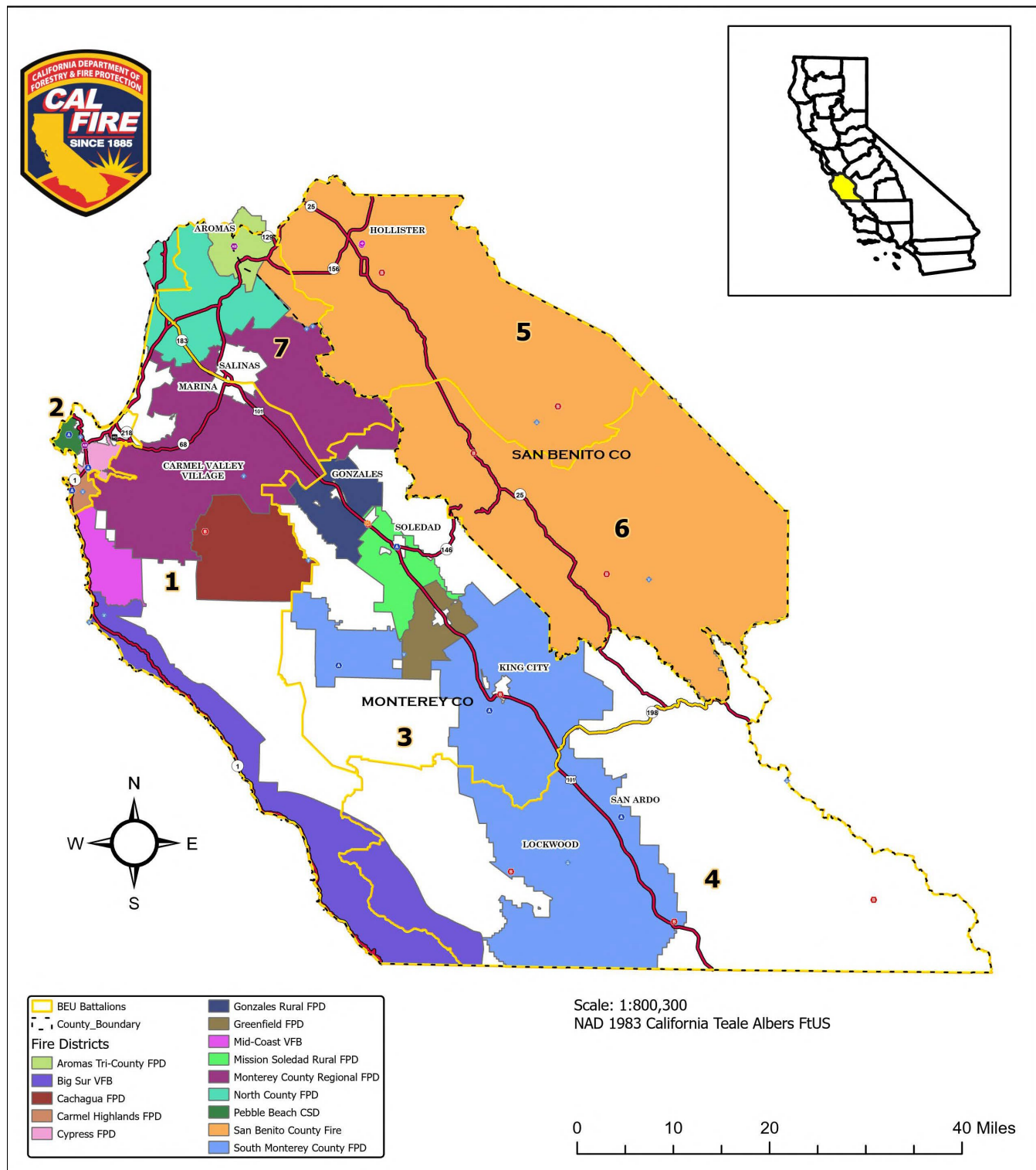


Figure C: Ignitions

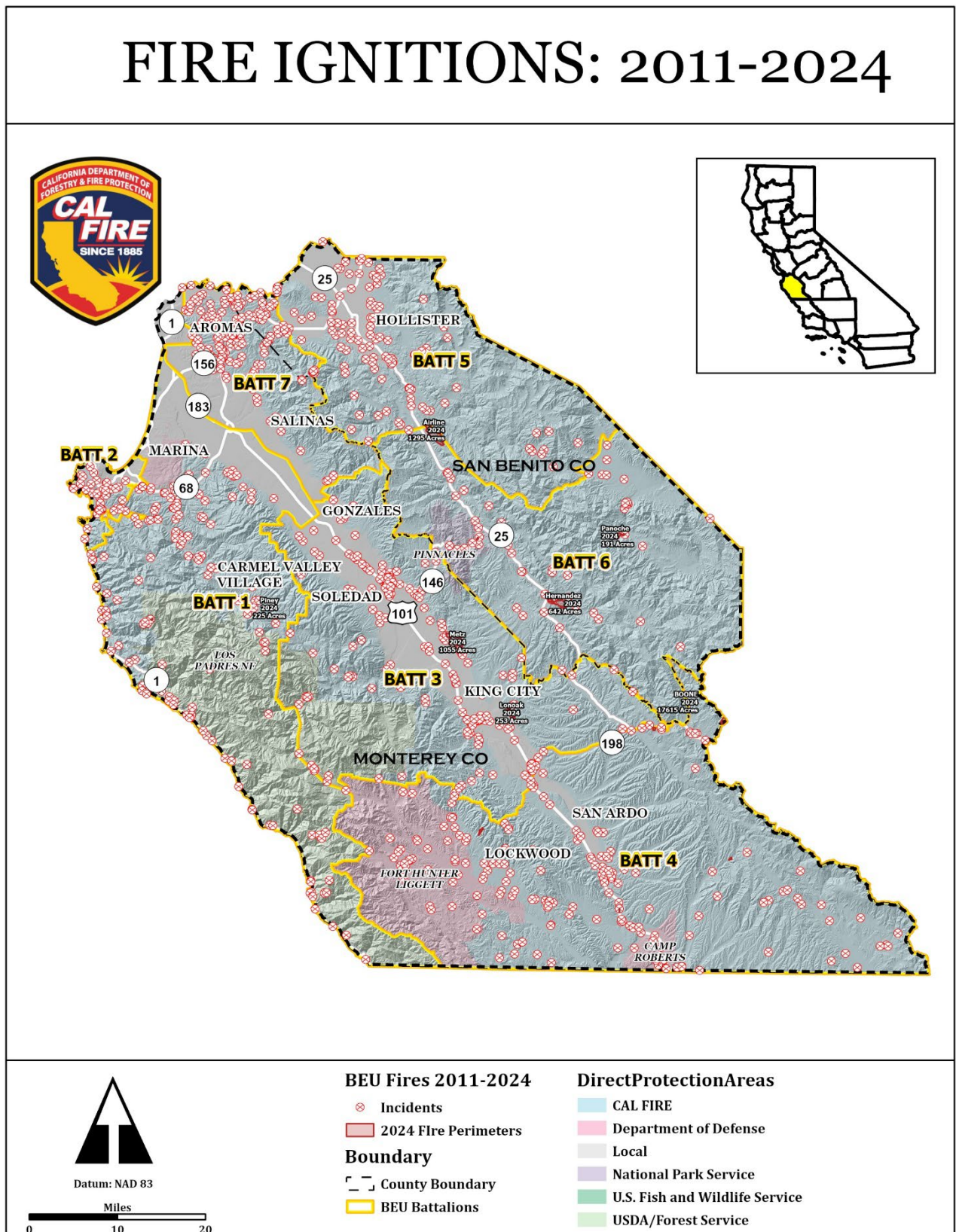


Figure D: Fire History

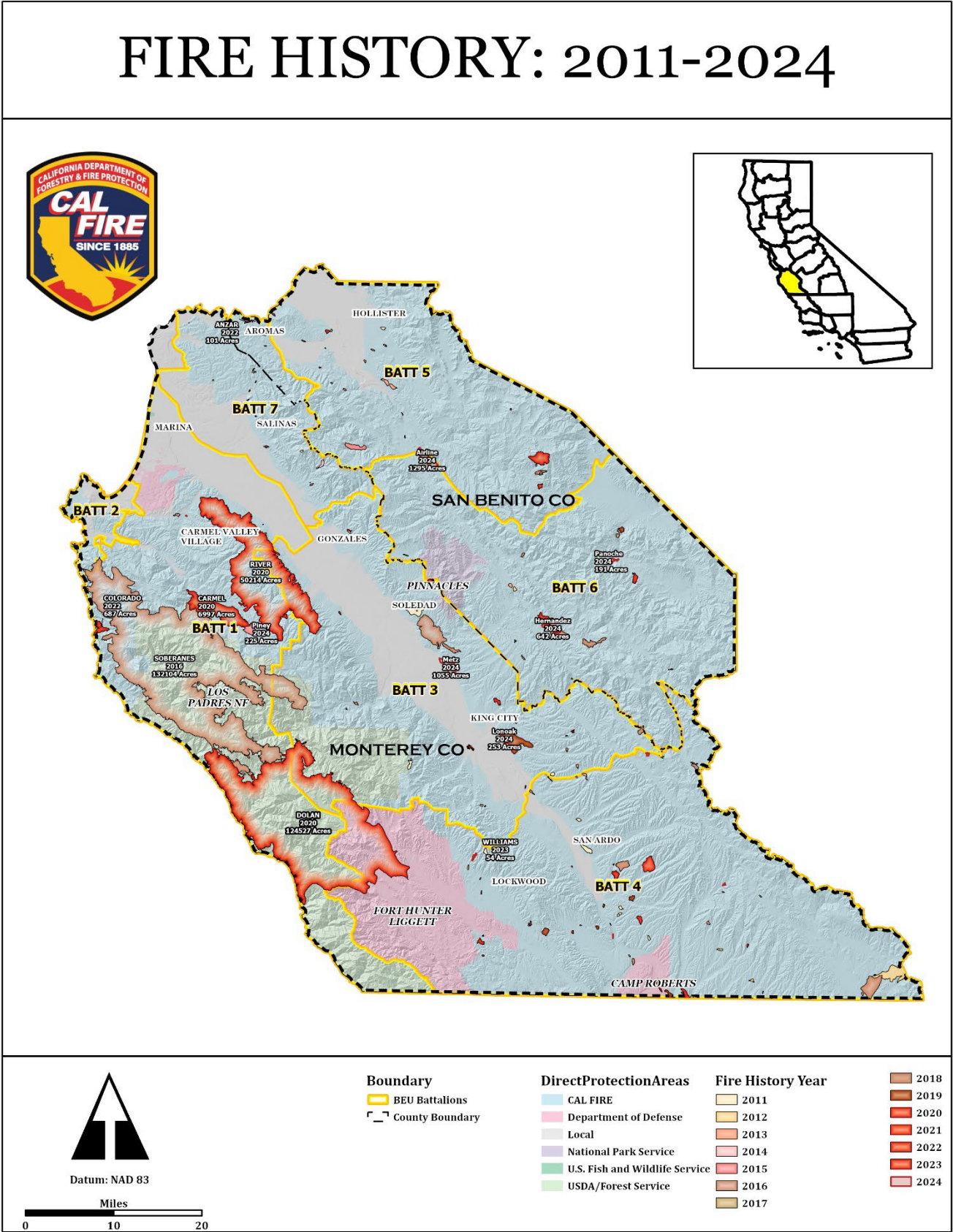
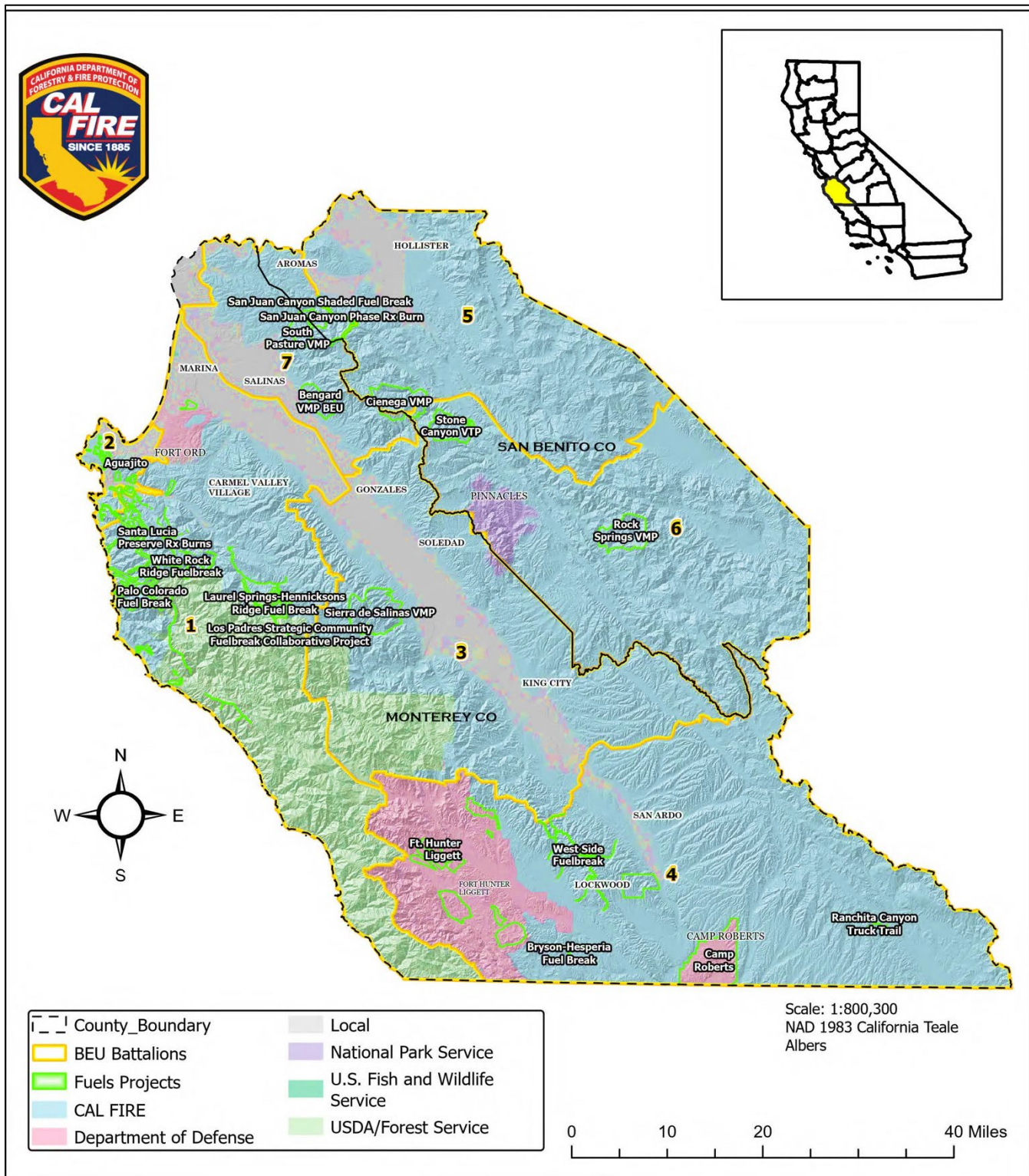


Figure E: Fuel Reduction Projects

SAN BENITO-MONTEREY FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS



Section VII: Supplement

Annual Accomplishments Reporting

Emerging Technology:

BurnBot: High-Tech Solution for Prescribed Burning

The San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU) has embraced a new frontier in wildfire prevention through its partnership with BurnBot, a pioneering startup reshaping vegetation management and prescribed fire operations. BurnBot's flagship technology, the BurnBot RX, represents a leap forward in how hazardous fuels are reduced, offering a safer, cleaner, and more controlled alternative to traditional burning methods. Designed as a remote-operated, self-contained system, the BurnBot RX integrates ignition, containment, and smoke management functions into a single platform—making it an ideal solution for low-impact, high-precision prescribed burning.

One of BurnBot RX's most significant advantages lies in its minimal disturbance to soil and surrounding ecosystems. Traditional mechanical treatments or hand pile burns often disrupt soil structure, increase erosion risk, or leave behind residual fire scars. In contrast, BurnBot RX conducts vegetation burns within a tightly controlled thermal envelope, concentrating heat only where it's needed and avoiding the collateral damage associated with open flame techniques. This low-soil-disturbance approach supports healthier post-treatment recovery for native plants and preserves vital topsoil integrity—crucial in erosion-prone landscapes like those found throughout BEU.

Equally important is BurnBot's impact on air quality and smoke management. The RX is engineered with built-in smoke control mechanisms that manage emissions more effectively than open prescribed burns, helping to reduce particulate matter and the release of greenhouse gases. By confining the combustion process, BurnBot minimizes the amount of smoke released into the atmosphere, making it a more sustainable option for fuel reduction—especially in areas where public health and air quality standards are a concern. These innovations support CAL FIRE's broader goals of achieving fuel reduction while maintaining environmental responsibility and public trust.

In 2024, the San Benito-Monterey Unit utilized the BurnBot RX during blacklining operations on the Stone Canyon Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP). This real-world application showcased the technology's ability to work across varied terrain while delivering consistent, controlled burns with a fraction of the environmental impact. The machine proved especially effective in areas where precision and low visibility smoke output were essential, affirming its potential to transform how prescribed burns are planned and executed.

As the challenges of climate change, limited burn windows, and wildland-urban interface expansion continue to grow, the integration of emerging technologies like BurnBot is more critical than ever. By combining innovation with ecological sensitivity, the San Benito-Monterey Unit is leading the way in adopting forward-thinking solutions that enhance wildfire resilience while

protecting both natural resources and community health. BurnBot represents not just a tool, but a paradigm shift in how we approach vegetation management and fire prevention in California.

Enhancing Firefighter Safety and Operational Efficiency with FireAI

FireAI is a groundbreaking advancement in wildfire and prescribed fire management, revolutionizing the way fire personnel monitor, analyze, and respond to incidents in the field. Designed with real-time intelligence and rapid decision-making in mind, FireAI combines advanced mapping technology with artificial intelligence to deliver highly accurate and timely fire data. Deployed through the San Benito-Monterey Unit's UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) program, the software processes infrared thermal imagery from drones to generate georeferenced maps with exceptional precision. These near-instant updates provide critical insights into fire behavior, location, and intensity—factors that are essential in dynamic and high-risk fire environments.

One of the most significant contributions of FireAI is its ability to dramatically improve firefighter safety. In traditional fire operations, crews often have to navigate through thick smoke, unpredictable terrain, and rapidly changing fire conditions with limited visibility and outdated intelligence. FireAI addresses these challenges by identifying smoldering hotspots, hidden embers, and heat signatures beyond containment lines, all without placing personnel in harm's way. This capability allows incident commanders to make more informed decisions and redirect suppression efforts in real-time, reducing the risk of flare-ups and fire escapes. By limiting unnecessary exposure to dangerous conditions, FireAI plays a crucial role in protecting the health and safety of frontline firefighters.

In addition to its safety benefits, FireAI significantly enhances operational productivity. The software enables fire managers to allocate resources more efficiently by pinpointing the areas that need immediate attention. Crews on the ground receive up-to-date maps and thermal overlays, allowing them to move with confidence and execute suppression strategies with precision. This efficiency leads to faster containment times, less strain on personnel and equipment, and better overall outcomes for incident response. FireAI also supports post-fire recovery and prescribed burn evaluations by providing archived data that can be used to assess burn effectiveness, residual heat, and ecological impacts.

By integrating cutting-edge artificial intelligence with aerial thermal imaging, FireAI is setting a new standard for wildfire response. It bridges the gap between real-time situational awareness and operational action, offering a powerful tool for incident commanders and firefighters alike. In an era of increasingly intense and complex wildfires, tools like FireAI not only increase the effectiveness of suppression efforts but also safeguard the lives of those who put themselves on the front lines to protect communities and natural resources. As the San Benito-Monterey Unit continues to innovate, FireAI stands as a prime example of how technology can transform emergency response and usher in a safer, smarter future for wildfire management.

Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering:

In 2024, the San Benito-Monterey Unit was successful in providing 4291 Public Resource Code inspections, fire prevention, and fuel reduction education to communities with the Defensible Space Inspectors and engine companies. There was a total of 9,214 inspections recorded for 2024, with 8,514 compliant, 174 non-compliant, and zero citations.



Education and Information:

Public education and outreach are essential components of CAL FIRE's fire prevention strategy in the San Benito-Monterey Unit. In collaboration with fire districts, fire safe councils, and other local organizations, CAL FIRE actively works to educate residents about wildfire risks and safety measures. Through workshops, community meetings, and public presentations, the Unit provides critical information on defensible space, home hardening, and evacuation planning. By engaging directly with the public, CAL FIRE ensures that communities have the knowledge and resources needed to reduce wildfire risks and respond effectively in emergencies.

CAL FIRE is also dedicated to expanding its outreach efforts through partnerships with local groups to secure grants and funding for fire prevention education. These funds support programs such as wildfire preparedness campaigns, school-based education initiatives, and public service announcements that emphasize the importance of early action in fire-prone areas. Informational materials, including brochures, online resources, and social media campaigns, help reach a broad audience, ensuring that fire safety messages are accessible to all residents. By utilizing multiple communication channels, CAL FIRE enhances community awareness and encourages proactive fire prevention behaviors.

Community engagement remains a top priority, and CAL FIRE consistently participates in public events to share life-saving information. The Unit attends local fairs, such as the Monterey County Fair and the San Benito County Fair, where firefighters interact with residents, answer questions, and provide hands-on demonstrations of fire prevention techniques. Additionally, CAL FIRE visits schools to educate students on fire safety, empowering the next generation with the knowledge to protect themselves and their families. These outreach efforts reinforce the importance of preparedness, fostering a fire-aware culture that benefits the entire region



Relationships and Cooperative Efforts with Tribal Entities:

The protection and preservation of Native American cultural heritage are vital considerations in CAL FIRE's fire prevention and land management projects. Recognizing the deep historical and spiritual connections that California's Native American tribes have to the land, CAL FIRE is committed to ensuring that its projects respect and safeguard cultural sites. Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52) amended the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to require meaningful consultation with Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project. This consultation process ensures that tribes have an opportunity to provide input on potential impacts to their cultural resources before a project moves forward.

Under AB 52, consultation is required when a lead agency prepares a Negative Declaration, a Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an Environmental Impact Report. To fulfill this obligation, CAL FIRE follows strict archaeological procedures that require project managers, in collaboration with state archaeologists, to conduct preliminary cultural surveys. These surveys assess whether a project's activities could potentially affect culturally significant sites, including sacred landscapes, historical villages, burial grounds, and other important cultural resources. Additionally, CAL FIRE project managers must send written notifications of proposed projects to the appropriate Native American tribes listed on the most current Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) list, allowing tribal representatives to provide feedback, request further studies, or initiate formal consultation.

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) plays a critical role in identifying and cataloging Native American cultural resources across California. The commission is responsible for maintaining a list of tribes and their representatives and ensuring that state and local agencies engage in meaningful consultation regarding projects that could impact these resources. As part of this process, CAL FIRE is required to notify the NAHC and relevant tribes of any pre-fire projects, providing them with information, inviting comments, and offering tribes the opportunity to request formal consultation. This proactive approach helps ensure that traditional cultural sites are not only identified but also adequately protected and respected throughout the project's lifecycle.

Beyond meeting legal requirements, the San Benito-Monterey Unit actively seeks to build and strengthen relationships with Native American tribes. Recognizing that fire has historically been an essential tool for Indigenous land stewardship, CAL FIRE aims to integrate traditional ecological knowledge into modern fire prevention and management practices. By fostering partnerships with tribal representatives, CAL FIRE can support cultural burning practices, learn from Indigenous land management techniques, and develop fire mitigation strategies that align with both environmental and cultural preservation goals. This collaborative approach ensures that fire prevention efforts not only reduce wildfire risk but also contribute to the ongoing protection of California's rich Indigenous heritage.

Through meaningful consultation, proactive communication, and collaboration, CAL FIRE remains committed to safeguarding Native American cultural resources while advancing its mission of fire prevention and land stewardship. By working closely with tribal governments and organizations,

CAL FIRE seeks to honor the historical and cultural significance of these lands, ensuring that future generations can continue to connect with and preserve their ancestral heritage.

Tribe Name¹
Amah Mutsun Tribal Band
Amah Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Esselen Tribe of Monterey County
Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Costanoan
Kakoon Ta Ruk Band of Ohlone-Costanoan Indians of the Big Sur Rancheria
North Valley Yokuts Tribe
Northern Chumash Tribal Council
Ohlone Indian Tribe
Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation
Rumsen Am:a Tur:ataj Ohlone
Salinan Nation Cultural Preservation Association
Salinan Tribe of Monterey, San Luis Obispo Counties
Santa Rosa Rancheria Tachi Yokut Tribe
Tule River Indian Tribe
Wuksache Indian Tribe/Eshom Valley Band
Xolon Salinan Tribe

Examples of Recent Collaboration

Kanyon Coyote Woman Sayers-Roods, Tribal Chair for Indian Canyon Nation, representing the Indian Canyon Mutsun Band of Coastanoan/Ohlone people was present for a blessing of the elements and all living things prior to a day of burning on the San Juan Phase Rx Burn in Mid-September of 2023.

In 2020, the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County acquired the Adler Ranch near Palo Colorado, through prop 68 as ancestral lands² under their non-profit organization. The Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association joined with Tom Little Bear Nason (Esselen Tribal Chairperson) to conduct prescribed burns on the land through CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants (2023).

An invite was extended to and accepted by Tribal Apprentices Chanel Keller (Esselen Tribe of Monterey County) and Esak Ordonez (Amah Mutsun Tribal Band) to attend and ignite the initial "Test Fire" on the Molera NOE that took place on the Molera State Park lands near Big Sur in Mid-December of 2023.



2. Ancestral lands are the areas, whether discrete or continuous, where NHO's, Indian Tribes, or their members have affiliation. These are areas that have cultural, historical, spiritual, subsistence, and/or ceremonial significance ascribed to them.

Vegetation Management:

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has an active and successful Vegetation Management Program, with many planned, active, and ongoing projects. In 2024, the Unit completed 8,071 acres of broadcast burning. The acres were achieved through the collaboration and cooperation of multiple ownerships and entities such as department of Defense, and private landowners. The projects where broadcast burning took place include Cienega VMP, Stone Canyon VTP, Stork NOE, and Fort Hunter Liggett.

Program	Project	Date	Type	Agency	Acres Treated
Cal VTP	P: Stone Canyon VTP	06/10/24 - 12/10/24	Broadcast Burn (VTP)	CAL FIRE	124
Fire Plan	P: Ft. Hunter Liggett	10/25/24 - 10/28/24	Broadcast Burn (Cooperator Assist)	CAL FIRE Assisting: DOD	2,131
VMP	P: Cienega VMP	10/22/24 - 10/24/24	Broadcast Burn (VMP)	CAL FIRE	495
VMP	P: Stork VMP	12/04/24 - 12/04/24	Broadcast Burn (VMP)	CAL FIRE	18
Fire Plan	P: Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail	01/17/24 - 02/29/24	Pile Burning	CAL FIRE	30
Fire Plan	P: West Side Fuelbreak T: 2024 Westside	03/13/24 - 03/16/24	Pile Burning	CAL FIRE	39

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has proposed broadcast burn projects in the Gabilan Range and Sierra de Salinas Range. Implementation of these projects is dependent upon weather and fire activity.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has proposed a maintenance program for historic fuel breaks and truck trails. In 202, the Unit began work on the Ranchita Truck Trail, which is in Southern Monterey County. The objective is to create safer access and egress of emergency personnel, through fuel breaks and road maintenance. In addition, we have begun planning work for the overall Santa Lucia Fire Defense system, including future phases of the Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads, Palo Colorado Fuel Break, and Laurel Springs-Hennicksons Ridge Fuel Break. Other proposed projects like this include but are not limited to Thompson Truck Trail and the Paloma Truck Trail.

These projects will continue to be expanded and maintained in the coming years to protect lives, property, and the environment. Much of the fuels reduction in the unit would not be possible without the countless hours put in by equipment operators, the California National Guard Crews, CAL FIRE Fuels Crews, and CDCR Crews, and cooperators.

Active CAL FIRE Grants in San Benito-Monterey Unit

Grantee	Project Title	Expiration	SRA acres	Description
Santa Lucia Conservancy	Palo Corona-White Rock Fuelbreak Access and Enhancement Project	March 2026	237 acres	Fuel reduction and fuel break maintenance of strategic ridgelines that were utilized in major fires. The planning of building a crossing for access to these strategic fuel breaks.
Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	Carmel Valley Fuelbreak Project	March 2026	403 acres	Fuel break - 238 acres: Rock Ridge, Vasquez Knob, Tularcitos, South of San Clemente
City of Hollister	San Benito County Fuels Reduction	March 2026	50 acres	Purchasing Boom Mower System
City of King	Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan	March 2026	N/A	Plan to address wildfires in Salinas riverbed and permitting required to address those issues.
Elkhorn Slough Foundation	Elkhorn-Las Lomas Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	March 2026	40 acres	Eucalyptus removal off Hall Road in Las Lomas
City of Del Rey Oaks	City of Del Rey Oaks-Fire Prevention Program	March 2029	41 acres	Work Memorial Park, Del Rey Park
City of Monterey	Greenbelt Fuel Reduction Action Plan	March 2029	N/A	317 acres of LRA in Monterey Greenbelts
Community Association of Big Sur	Fire Adapted Communities Program for Greater Big Sur	March 2029	N/A	Public education, planning for future strategic fuels reduction.
Monterey County Regional Fire District		March 2030	N/A	Maintenance of fuel breaks from 2020 River Fire and roadside clearance of historic fire roads near Hwy 68 and Carmel Valley.
Community Association of Big Sur		March 2030	N/A	Roadside chipping grant for big sur communities. Covers Andrew Molera park to San Luis Obispo County
Santa Lucia Preserve		March 2030		Purchase of remote control masticator to maintain roadside clearance.
San Benito Fire Safe Council/Community Foundation for San Benito County		March 2030	N/A	Aromas chipping program and roadside vegetation clearance of San Juan Canyon Rd. Maintenance of shaded fuel break
City of Greenfield		March 2030	N/A	Development of Fire Plan for Greenfield City/ Arroyo Seco

The San Benito-Monterey Unit works closely with many organizations within our Unit to achieve our goals in reducing the risk of wildfire. These organizations include but are not limited to the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, the San Benito Fire Safe Council, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the California Conservation Corps, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association (CCPBA), the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and the Monterey Bay Air Resources District. In 2024, the Unit hopes to continue these partnerships, whether through grants or other collaborative efforts.



The San Benito-Monterey Unit will continue to support the Mission through collaboration, innovation, and operational excellence.

Unit Chief Signature

DocuSigned by:
X *George Nunez*
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George Nunez
San Benito-Monterey Unit Chief