



Cal Fire

San Benito-Monterey Unit

2026 Fire Plan



Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
SECTION I: INTRODUCTION	5
SIGNATURE PAGE	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
UNIT STRATEGIC FIRE PLAN AMENDMENTS	8
FIRE PLAN COLLABORATORS.....	9
UNIT DESCRIPTION	10
SECTION II: FIRE FIGHTER RESOURCES, EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES, AND CAPABILITIES	13
CAL FIRE SAN BENITO – MONTEREY UNIT RESPONSE	13
COOPERATIVE FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENTS	15
AUTOMATIC AND MUTAL AID AGREEMENTS	17
OPERATION AGREEMENTS	17
MUTAL THREAT ZONE RESPONSE AREAS	17
SECTION III: SAN BENITO – MONTEREY UNIT PLANNING OVERVIEW AND VALUES AT RISK	18
OVERVIEW	18
UNIT PRIORITIES	22
<i>State Highway 68 Corridor - Laureles Grade</i>	23
<i>Carmel Valley / Carmel Valley Village</i>	24
<i>Carmel Highlands / Palo Colorado Canyon:</i>	26
<i>Jacks Peak/Pebble Beach</i>	28
<i>Cachagua (Carmel Valley)</i>	30
<i>North Monterey County/Aromas</i>	32
<i>San Juan Canyon/San Juan Bautista</i>	33
<i>Pine Canyon/San Juan Bautista</i>	35
COMMUNITIES AT RISK	36
SECTION IV: PRE-FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	37
FIRE PREVENTION LAW ENFORCEMENT	37
ENGINEERING & COMMUNITY PLANNING.....	37
PROTECTION PLANNING	38
FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES	39

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EDUCATION	42
FIRE DANGER RATING AREAS	43
<i>COASTAL TIMBER ZONE</i>	44
<i>SALINAS VALLEY GRASS ZONE</i>	45
<i>SIERRA DE SALINAS ZONE</i>	46
<i>GABLIN SHURB ZONE</i>	47
<i>DIABLO GRASS ZONE</i>	48
FUEL MODIFICATION STRATEGIES	49
<i>Vegetation Management Program</i>	49
<i>Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP):</i>	51
<i>Burn Permit Program</i>	52
SECTION V: PRE-FIRE MANAGEMENT TACTICS.....	53
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: WEST DIVISION.....	53
<i>Battalion 1: Carmel Battalion - Battalion 4611</i>	53
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: WEST DIVISION.....	58
<i>Battalion 2: Peninsula Battalion</i>	58
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: SOUTH DIVISION	64
<i>Battalion 3: King City Battalion - Battalion 4613</i>	64
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: SOUTH DIVISION	69
<i>Battalion 4: Bradley Battalion – Battalion 4614</i>	69
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: NORTH DIVISION.....	74
<i>Battalion 5: Hollister Battalion – Battalion 4615</i>	74
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: NORTH DIVISION.....	78
<i>Battalion 6: Bear Valley Battalion – Battalion 4616</i>	78
DIVISION, BATTALION, PROGRAM PLANS: NORTH DIVISION.....	84
<i>Battalion 7: Aromas Battalion – Battalion 4617</i>	84
OPERATIONS DIVISION - OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS.....	89
<i>Operational Programs: Training Battalion-</i>	89
<i>Operational Programs: Camp and Hand Crews-</i>	91
<i>Operational Programs: Aviation Programs</i>	94
<i>Operational Programs: Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)</i>	96
APPENDIX A: PRE-FIRE PROJECTS	98
SAN BENITO-MONTEREY FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS:	98
<i>Battalion 1 Projects:</i>	99

<i>Cypress Battalion 2 Projects:</i>	102
<i>Carmel Highlands Battalion 2 Projects:</i>	104
<i>Pebble Beach Battalion 2 Projects:</i>	106
<i>King City Battalion 3 Projects:</i>	109
<i>Bradley Battalion 4 Projects:</i>	111
<i>Hollister Battalion 5 Projects:</i>	113
<i>Bear Valley Battalion 6 Projects:</i>	115
<i>Aromas Battalion 7 Projects:</i>	116
CURRENT CAL FIRE GRANTS IN SAN BENITO-MONTEREY UNIT.....	119
APPENDIX B: IGNITION DATA	121
SECTION VI: EXHIBITS.....	122
EXHIBIT 1: SAN BENITO MONTEREY UNIT MAP	122
EXHIBIT 2: SAN BENITO-MONTEREY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICTS MAP	123
EXHIBIT 3: SAN BENITO-MONTEREY UNIT IGNITION MAP	124
EXHIBIT 4: SAN BENITO-MONTEREY FIRE HISTORY MAP	125
SECTION VII: SUPPLEMENT.....	126
ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORTING	126
<i>Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering:</i>	126
<i>Education and Information:</i>	126
<i>Relationships and Cooperative Efforts with Tribal Entities:</i>	128
<i>Treatment Accomplishments:</i>	130
<i>Completed Grants:</i>	131
<i>Good Neighbor Authority:</i>	132
UNIT CHIEF SIGNATURE.....	133

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION



Signature Page

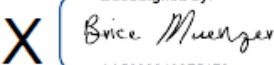
This Plan: was collaboratively developed. Interested parties, federal, state, city, and county agencies within the Unit have been consulted and are listed in the plan.

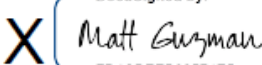
Identifies and prioritizes pre-fire and post fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk within the Unit.

It 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
2026	Cover Page / Plan Year	1	Updated plan year, cover image, and document title for the 2026 Fire Plan.	M. Guzman
2026	Table of Contents	2–4	Updated Table of Contents to reflect revised section structure, new headings, appendices, exhibits, and page numbers.	M. Guzman
2026	Section I: Introduction	5–10	Reorganized introduction, executive summary, fire plan collaborators, and unit description into a new Section I format.	M. Guzman
2026	Fire Plan Collaborators	7–8	Added collaborator narrative and table identifying core team, project input, public outreach, federal, utility, land management, and tribal partners.	M. Guzman
2026	Firefighter Resources, Equipment, Facilities, and Capabilities	10–14	Updated CAL FIRE and cooperative response capability sections, including personnel, stations, engines, aviation, UAS, rescue, and cooperative resources.	M. Guzman
2026	Automatic/Mutual Aid, Operating Agreements, and Mutual Threat Zones	15–16	Reformatted and updated agreement sections for cooperating agencies, operating agreements, and mutual threat zone response areas.	M. Guzman
2026	Planning Overview and Values at Risk	16–35	Reorganized values at risk into a broader planning overview section and updated priority area formatting and page references.	M. Guzman
2026	Pre-Fire Management Strategies	36–53	Updated fire prevention, engineering, protection planning, FHSZ, community outreach, fire danger rating areas, fuel zones, and fuel modification strategies.	M. Guzman
2026	Burn Permit Program	52–53	Added burn permit activity summary for 2023–2026 with permit totals, percentage change, and program trend observations.	M. Guzman
2026	Pre-Fire Management Tactics	54–98	Updated battalion and operational program sections, including revised page numbers for Battalions 1–7, Training, Camp/Hand Crews, Aviation, and UAS.	M. Guzman
2026	Aviation and UAS Programs	95–98	Updated aviation and UAS program sections and incorporated expanded UAS capability information across CAL FIRE and cooperative resources.	M. Guzman / J. Silvera
2026	Appendix A: Pre-Fire Projects	99–120	Reorganized fuels reduction projects by battalion and updated current CAL FIRE grant information.	B. Muenzer / M. Guzman
2026	Appendix B: Ignition Data	121	Updated ignition data appendix placement and page numbering.	M. Guzman
2026	Section VI: Exhibits	122–125	Updated All Maps	M. Guzman
2026	Section VII: Supplement	126–136	Updated supplement section, including accomplishments, emerging technology, prevention engineering, education, tribal relationships, treatment accomplishments, completed grants, and Unit Chief signature.	M. Guzman
2026	Good Neighbor Authority	134–135	Added new Good Neighbor Authority section describing CAL FIRE/USDA Forest Service cooperative restoration and fuels management agreement.	G. Haight

FIRE PLAN COLLABORATORS

Development of the San Benito–Monterey Unit Fire Plan is multi-agency planning process that emphasizes shared responsibility, landscape-scale wildfire resilience, and coordination among local, state, federal, tribal, nonprofit, utility, and community partners to reduce wildfire risk and improve community preparedness throughout Monterey and San Benito Counties.

Input from Unit collaborators provides critical insight into local wildfire hazards, infrastructure vulnerabilities, emergency response capability, evacuation concerns, environmental conditions, cultural resources, and community priorities. Fire agencies, emergency management organizations, Fire Safe Councils, Resource Conservation Districts, tribal governments, federal land managers, utilities, and community stakeholders contribute valuable operational knowledge and local perspective that help identify priority treatment areas, strategic fuel break opportunities, high-risk communities, and long-term mitigation needs. This collaborative approach supports development of consistent regional planning strategies and integrated wildfire mitigation efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

Consistent with the California Strategic Fire Plan, collaborative planning efforts support the identification and evaluation of wildfire hazards, values and assets at risk, and opportunities for integrated fuels management across jurisdictions. The Strategic Fire Plan recognizes the importance of local, state, federal, tribal, and private partnerships in achieving more fire resilient landscapes and communities. These partnerships help ensure that Unit Fire Plan priorities are informed by operational experience, emerging science, local community needs, and long-term wildfire resilience goals while supporting coordinated implementation of prevention, preparedness, evacuation, suppression, and post-fire recovery strategies throughout the San Benito–Monterey Unit.



Table 1-1: Fire Plan Collaborators

Organization	Role/Contribution
CAL FIRE - San Benito Monterey Unit	Core Team Leadership, Project Input
Fire Safe Council for Monterey County	Education, Public Outreach, Project Input
County of Monterey Department of Emergency Management	Core Team Leadership, Project Input
Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	Project Input
Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association	Core Team Leadership, Project Input
Monterey County Regional Fire District	Project Input
Big Sur Fire	Project Input
San Benito Fire Safe Council	Education, Public Outreach, Project Input
San Benito Resource Conservation District	Project Input
San Benito County Office of Emergency Services	Project Input
Los Padres National Forest – Monterey Ranger District	Federal Partner, Project Input
Bureau of Land Management - Central Coast Field Office	Federal Partner, Project Input
Pacific Gas & Electric	Utilities Partner/Project Input
California State Parks	Land Management, Project Input
Local Tribal Governments	Cultural, Project Input

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 in the 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, 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. 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.



SECTION II: FIRE FIGHTER RESOURCES, EQUIPMENT, FACILITIES, AND CAPABILITIES

CAL FIRE SAN BENITO – MONTEREY UNIT RESPONSE

The San Benito–Monterey Unit maintains a comprehensive all-risk emergency response capability designed to protect lives, property, natural resources, and critical infrastructure within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) of Monterey and San Benito Counties. The Unit's operational resources support emergency response to wildfires, vegetation fires, rescues, hazardous materials incidents, severe weather events, and other large-scale emergencies. Staffed by 285 personnel operating from 12 strategically located fire stations, the Unit provides rapid initial attack capability and sustained incident support across diverse terrain, remote communities, and extensive wildland urban interface areas.



Table 2-1: San Benito-Monterey Unit Response Units

Resource	Quantity
Personnel	285
Stations	12
Type 3 Engine (Front Line)	19
Type 3 Engine (Reserve)	4
Bulldozers	3
Air Attack Base	1
Air Tactical Aircraft	1
Air Tanker	2
UAS Aircraft	9
Helicopter	1
Conservation Camp	1
Fire Crew (CDCR)	3
Fire Crew (California National Guard)	1

The Unit's frontline suppression resources include 19 Type 3 frontline fire engines supported by four reserve engines capable of responding to both wildland and all-risk incidents. Heavy equipment resources include three bulldozers utilized for wildfire suppression, fire line construction, and vegetation management operations. The Unit also maintains significant aviation capability through one Air Attack Base, including one Air Tactical aircraft, two air tankers, one helicopter, and nine Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) utilized for reconnaissance, mapping, fire intelligence, and operational support during emergency incidents. Additional staffing support is provided through one Conservation Camp, three California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) fire crews, and one California National Guard fire crew that assist with wildfire suppression, fuels reduction, and disaster response operations.

In addition to protecting local communities within the Unit, these resources are available for statewide mobilization under California's mutual aid system and routinely respond throughout the state in support of major wildfires, natural disasters, and emergency incidents. Collectively, these resources provide the San Benito–Monterey Unit with strong operational capability to support both local emergency response needs and statewide disaster response operations.

COOPERATIVE FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENTS

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

The San Benito–Monterey Unit provide critical all-risk emergency response capability through cooperative agreement. Providing structural fire protection, wildland fire response, rescue operations, emergency medical response, hazardous materials support, and disaster response within local fire district

The cooperative system is staffed by 63 career Cal Fire personnel and 13 on call volunteer firefighters operating from five staffed stations and three additional unstaffed stations strategically located throughout the Unit. Emergency response resources include frontline and reserve Type 1 structural fire engines, reserve Type 3 wildland engines, aerial ladder trucks, patrol vehicles, squads, water tenders, rescue boats, rescue watercraft, and specialized utility terrain vehicles capable of operating in difficult terrain and coastal environments. The cooperative agencies also maintain advanced Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) capability, including 24 UAS aircraft and a dedicated UAS support trailer utilized for incident intelligence, reconnaissance, mapping, search operations, and emergency response support.

These cooperative resources significantly enhance regional firefighting capability and provide critical support during wildfires, structure fires, rescue incidents, flooding, coastal emergencies, and other large-scale disasters. Through automatic and mutual aid agreements, these agencies work in coordination with CAL FIRE and allied partners to strengthen operational readiness, improve response times, and support both local and statewide emergency response operations.

Table 2-2: Cooperative Fire Response Units

Resource	Quantity
Personnel	63
Volunteer Personal	13
Stations (Staffed)	5
Stations (Unstaffed)	3
Type 1 Engine (Front Line)	5
Type 1 Engine (Reserve)	5
Type 3 (Reserve)	4
Aerial Apparatus Ladder Truck (100')	2
Patrol Vehicles	3
Squads	3
Water Tender	2
Rescue Boats (IRB)	3
Rescue Watercraft (RWC)	3
Utility Terrian Vehicles (UTV/RTV)	1
UAS Support Trailer	1
UAS Aircraft	24

AUTOMATIC AND MUTAL AID AGREEMENTS

Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District	
North Monterey County Fire District	City of Hollister Fire Department
Pajaro Valley Fire District	
Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District	
Cypress Fire Protection District	
Cypress Fire Protection District	
Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District	Pebble Beach Community Services District
Monterey County Regional Fire District	The City of Monterey Fire Department
Pebble Beach Community Services District	
Cypress Fire Protection District	The City of Monterey Fire Department
The City of Soledad Fire Department	
The City of Greenfield Fire Department	Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
Correctional Training Facility Fire Department	
South Monterey County Fire Protection District	
The City of Greenfield Fire Department	Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department
Camp Roberts Fire Department	

OPERATION AGREEMENTS

CAL FIRE - San Benito Monterey Unit	
United States Forest Service – Los Padres National Forest	National Park Service – Pinnacles National Park
Bureau of Land Management- Central Coast Field Office	Cachagua Fire Protection District

MUTAL THREAT ZONE RESPONSE AREAS

CAL FIRE - San Benito Monterey Unit
Department of War - Ft. Hunter Liggett

SECTION III: SAN BENITO – MONTEREY UNIT

PLANNING OVERVIEW AND VALUES AT RISK

OVERVIEW

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** – Californias 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.

UNIT PRIORITIES

The San Benito–Monterey Unit contains several high-priority wildfire risk areas concentrated throughout the Monterey Peninsula, Carmel Valley, rural Monterey County, and the San Juan Bautista area of San Benito County. These areas contain a complex mix of dense wildland urban interface development, critical transportation corridors, tourism destinations, agricultural operations, environmentally sensitive lands, and significant infrastructure vulnerable to wildfire impacts. Major values at risk include residential communities, commercial and retail centers, golf resorts, wineries, recreation areas, ranchlands, energy infrastructure, Moss Landing Harbor, and key transportation and evacuation routes including Highways 1, 68, 101, 129, 156, and Carmel Valley Road. Many of these communities are characterized by steep terrain, remote residential development, and limited ingress and egress, creating significant evacuation and firefighting challenges during major wildfire incidents.

The region is characterized by heavy fuel loading and large areas of decadent vegetation, including dense Monterey pine and cypress forests, eucalyptus stands, chaparral, oak woodlands, grasslands, and unmanaged wildland fuels that have not experienced fire in decades. Historic incidents such as the Tassajara, Carmel, and Soberanes Fires demonstrated the vulnerability of these communities to large, fast-moving wildfires driven by terrain, wind, and prolonged drought conditions. Areas including Pebble Beach and Jacks Peak face elevated

Wildfire risk due to dense native forest fuels and limited roadway access, while North Monterey County communities such as Aromas, Pajaro, Las Lomas, and Moss Landing continue to experience increasing wildfire concerns associated with eucalyptus fuel loading, expanding development, and the presence of critical infrastructure including the Vistra Moss Landing Energy Storage Facility. San Juan Canyon and Pine Canyon also present heightened wildfire concerns due to rugged terrain, narrow road systems, continued residential growth, and limited evacuation routes.

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 sections describe each area's geographic location, values at risk, wildfire concerns, and potential mitigation actions intended to reduce wildfire risk, improve community resilience, strengthen evacuation capability, and support long-term wildfire preparedness throughout the San Benito–Monterey Unit.

Table 3-1: Priority Areas

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

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.

MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 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.



MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 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.

MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS:

- 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.

MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 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.



MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS:

- 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

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.



MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 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 area located southwest of San Juan Bautista and bordered by State Highway 156, Fremont Peak State Park, Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area, and Wildhorse Canyon. The area is characterized by steep, rugged terrain and a mix of grasslands, oak woodlands, chaparral, and mixed conifer fuels that contribute to elevated wildfire risk. Residential development is scattered throughout remote canyons and ridgelines.

A major wildfire concern within San Juan Canyon is the limited ingress and egress provided primarily by San Juan Canyon Road, which serves as the main evacuation and emergency response route. Narrow roadways, blind curves, steep terrain, and limited turnaround areas create significant challenges for evacuation and firefighting operations during a wildfire incident. These factors make San Juan Canyon a critical focus area for vegetation management, defensible space improvements, evacuation planning, and long-term wildfire mitigation efforts.

MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS

- 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/San Juan Bautista

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.



MITIGATION 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.

MITIGATING ACTIONS:

- 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 at Risk

Table 3-2: Communities at Risk

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

Section IV: Pre-Fire Management Strategies

FIRE PREVENTION LAW ENFORCEMENT

The CAL FIRE Law Enforcement and Fire Prevention Bureau play a critical role in wildfire risk reduction through detailed origin and cause investigations conducted throughout the San Benito–Monterey Unit. Investigators analyze burn indicators, fire spread patterns, witness statements, weather conditions, equipment involvement, vegetation conditions, and physical evidence to determine where and how a fire started. Fire investigation findings generate critical data that directly informs long-term wildfire prevention and pre-fire engineering strategies across the Unit.

Information gathered through fire investigations allows CAL FIRE and partner agencies to identify ignition trends, recurring problem areas, and common human-caused fire factors within specific communities, roadways, and infrastructure corridors. This data is used to help prioritize mitigation projects, roadside clearance operations, defensible space inspections, public education campaigns, fuel reduction treatments, and strategic fuel break placement. By understanding where fires repeatedly occur and what conditions contribute to ignition, prevention personnel can focus resources in areas with the highest likelihood of future wildfire occurrence.

ENGINEERING & 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 (State Fire Marshal - Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure).

TITLE 19, PUBLIC RESOURCE CODE 4291

California Public Resources Code (PRC) § 4291 requires property owners within State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) to maintain defensible space around buildings and structures in order to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition and fire spread. The law generally requires 100 feet of defensible space, or to the property line, surrounding all structures. Defensible space is divided into two management zones. Zone 1 (0–30 feet from structures) emphasizes the removal of flammable vegetation and materials, maintenance of roofs and gutters free of combustible debris, and separation of vegetation from structures. Zone 2 (30–100 feet) focuses on reducing fuel continuity through the thinning and spacing of vegetation and trees. Together, these measures help reduce wildfire intensity, slow fire spread, improve structure survivability, and provide firefighters with safer conditions for suppression operations.

To support compliance with PRC § 4291, the CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Unit conducts annual Defensible Space Inspections (DSI) throughout the Unit's State Responsibility Area. Battalion areas are assigned inspection responsibilities on a rotating basis, with some higher-density communities operating on multi-year inspection cycles to ensure comprehensive coverage while balancing operational workload. In addition to scheduled inspections, property owners may request inspections at any time for educational guidance or compliance assistance.

The Unit's Defensible Space Inspectors play a critical role not only in enforcement and inspection activities, but also in public education and community outreach. During inspections, inspectors work directly with residents to explain defensible space requirements, identify hazardous vegetation conditions, and provide practical recommendations for reducing wildfire risk. Inspectors also educate homeowners on home hardening concepts, including ember-resistant construction, maintenance of ignition-resistant zones, and methods to improve structure survivability during wildfires. These interactions provide valuable opportunities to increase public awareness, encourage voluntary compliance, and strengthen community preparedness and resilience to wildfire throughout the San Benito-Monterey Unit.

FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) are classifications developed by CAL FIRE to identify areas based on the likelihood and potential intensity of wildfire. These designations are intended to support wildfire mitigation planning, land use decisions, building standards, emergency preparedness, and public awareness. FHSZ maps evaluate a combination of factors including fuel loading, slope, fire weather, ember cast potential, and historical fire occurrence to determine the relative wildfire hazard within a given area.

Within the San Benito-Monterey Unit, Fire Hazard Severity Zones are distributed across a diverse landscape consisting of coastal mountain ranges, inland valleys, grasslands, chaparral-covered slopes, oak woodlands, and forested wildland areas. Much of the Unit's State Responsibility Area (SRA) is classified as Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone due to the

combination of rugged topography, receptive fuel beds, seasonal dry conditions, and frequent wind alignment associated with major drainages and coastal canyon systems.

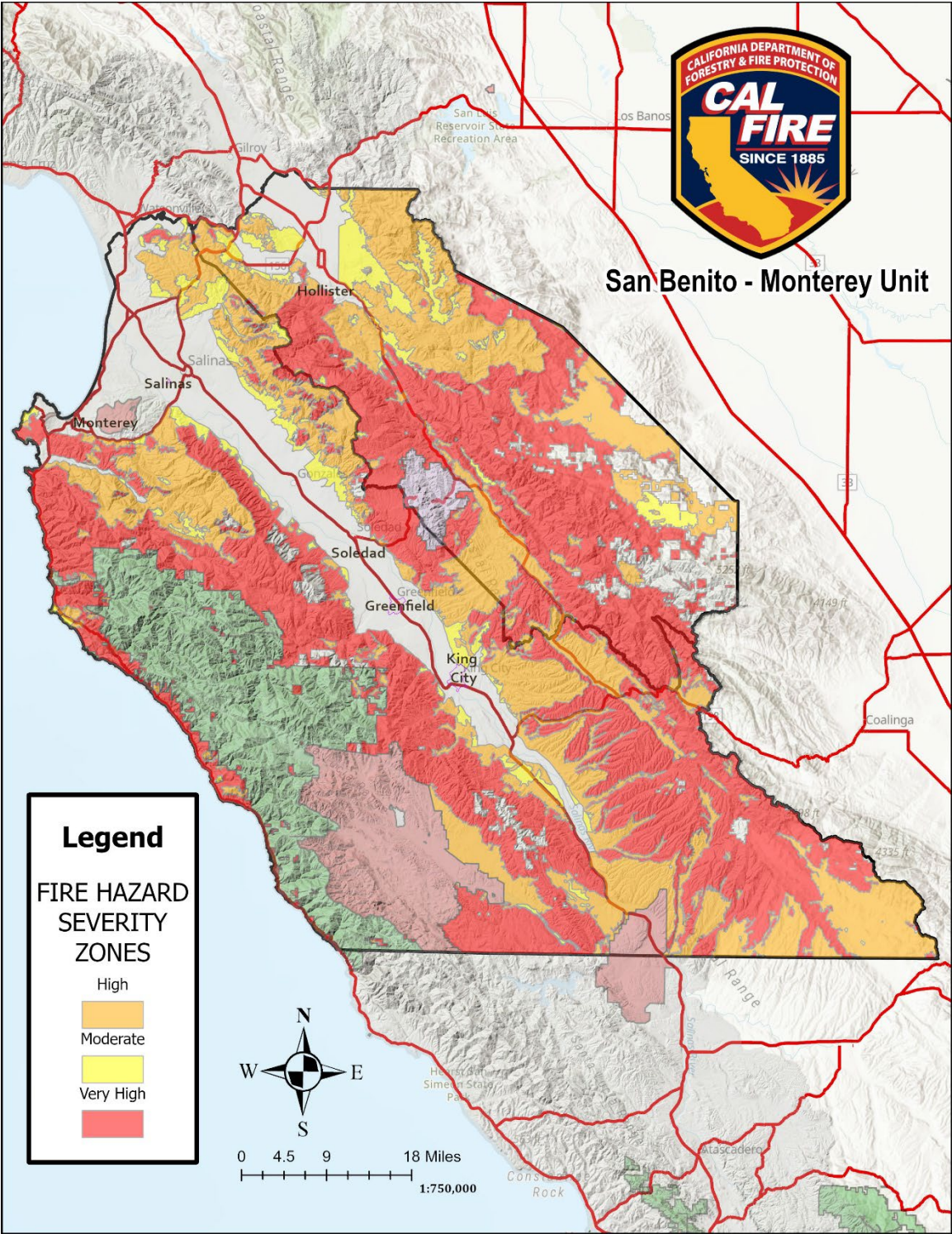
Areas identified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are generally concentrated within the wildland urban interface (WUI), particularly in communities adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest, the Big Sur Coast, Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley, Cachagua, Palo Colorado Canyon, San Benancio, and other mountainous and heavily vegetated areas throughout the Unit. These locations are characterized by steep terrain, limited ingress and egress, high fuel continuity, and the potential for rapid fire spread under critical weather conditions.

The designation of Fire Hazard Severity Zones carries important implications for development and wildfire mitigation requirements. Properties located within designated zones may be subject to enhanced building construction standards under Chapter 7A of the California Building Code, defensible space requirements pursuant to Public Resources Code § 4291, subdivision review requirements, and local planning considerations intended to reduce structure vulnerability and improve community resilience.

FHSZ mapping also assists the Unit and cooperating agencies in prioritizing hazardous fuel reduction projects, defensible space inspection programs, prevention activities, evacuation planning, public education efforts, and strategic deployment of firefighting resources. The identification of high hazard areas supports risk-informed decision making and helps focus limited resources in areas where wildfire is most likely to threaten life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources.

While Fire Hazard Severity Zones identify areas of elevated wildfire hazard, wildfire risk exists throughout the Unit. Changing climate conditions, prolonged drought, insect and disease impacts, increasing development within the WUI, and human-caused ignitions continue to influence wildfire behavior and increase the complexity of wildfire management across the San Benito-Monterey Unit. Continued collaboration between local governments, fire agencies, land management agencies, community organizations, and residents remains essential to reducing wildfire risk and improving long-term community preparedness.

Figure. 4-1: Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map



COMMUNITY OUTREACH 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 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.

FIRE DANGER RATING AREAS

Figure. 4-2: Fire Danger Rating Areas Map

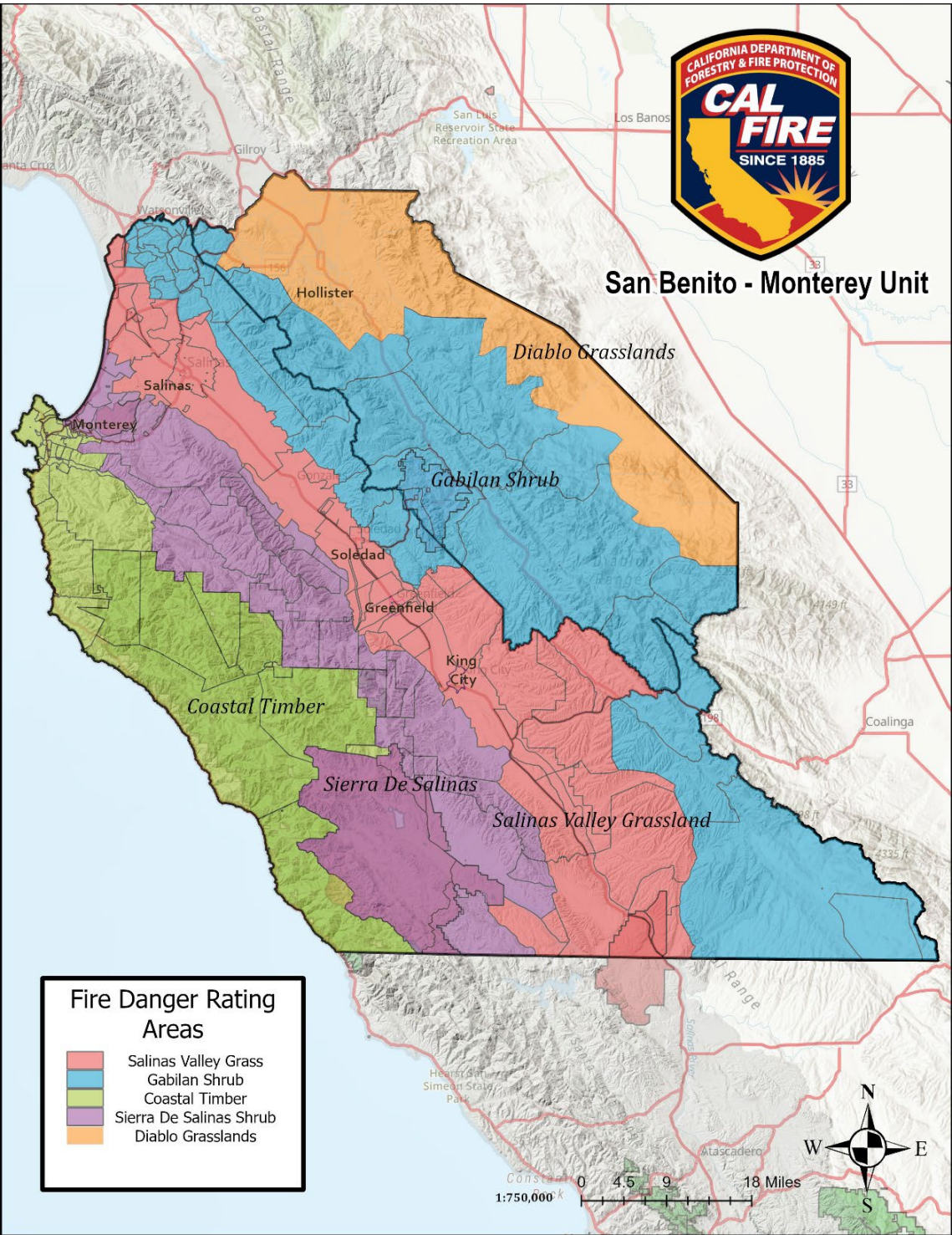


FIGURE 4-2: THE MAP DEPICTS THE FIVE (5) FIRE DANGER RATING AREAS (FDRA's) FOR THE SAN BENITO MONTEREY UNIT. THESE FDRA's ARE DELINEATED GEOGRAPHIC AREAS BASED ON RELATIVELY HOMOGENEOUS VEGETATION, CLIMATE, AND TOPOGRAPHY. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE THE FIRE DANGER OPERATING PLAN FOR SAN BENITO-MONTEREY.

COASTAL TIMBER ZONE

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 ZONE

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 ZONE

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.



GABLIN SHURB ZONE

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 ZONE

Location: Diablo Grass is the easternmost FDRA in 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.



FUEL MODIFICATION STRATEGIES

Vegetation Management Program

The Vegetation Management Program (VMP) continues to serve as a critical component of CAL FIRE's wildfire prevention and landscape resilience strategy within the San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU). VMP is a statewide cost-share program designed to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation through prescribed burning, mechanical treatments, and other vegetation management methods on both public and private lands. The program prioritizes treatment areas where wildland vegetation interfaces with or intermixes with developed communities, helping reduce wildfire intensity, improve firefighter access, and increase opportunities for successful suppression operations.

Within BEU, VMP efforts are focused primarily in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and Wildland Urban Intermix areas, where communities, infrastructure, and natural resources are most vulnerable to wildfire impacts. Project selection considers multiple factors including community protection, watershed health, critical infrastructure, wildlife habitat enhancement, threatened and endangered species considerations, and the management objectives of participating landowners. These projects are often implemented in remote or difficult-to-access terrain where fuel accumulates and limited access increase wildfire risk to communities, transportation corridors, and natural resources.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit actively collaborates with private landowners, ranchers, Resource Conservation Districts, Fire Safe Councils, and cooperating agencies to implement prescribed fire and mechanical fuel reduction projects across the Unit. Through these partnerships, BEU has successfully treated thousands of acres of hazardous vegetation, improving defensible space, reducing fuel continuity, and enhancing overall landscape resilience. In addition to reducing wildfire risk, VMP projects support broader ecological objectives such as promoting native vegetation regeneration, improving rangeland health, enhancing wildlife habitat, and controlling invasive plant species.

By integrating fuel reduction with long-term land stewardship and community collaboration, BEU utilizes the Vegetation Management Program not only as a wildfire mitigation tool, but also as a proactive approach to maintaining healthier, more fire-resilient ecosystems throughout the Unit's diverse and fire-prone landscapes.



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 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:** Located east of Chualar and centered between Monterey and San Benito counties. This project supports fuel continuity reduction and promotes ecosystem health, encouraging the regeneration of native species while supporting sensitive wildlife habitats.
- **South Pasture VMP:** Located east of Salinas Valley, towards Fremont Peak State Park. This project covers portions of previous VMPs to maintain and enhance landscape heterogeneity as well as reduce fuel loads.
- **The Bengard VMP:** Located northeast of the Salinas Valley. This project 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.

- **Gabilan VMP:** Located in the Hollister Hills area, lies near a popular State Vehicular Recreation Area. Fuel treatments 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 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 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 northeastern portion of the Unit and includes multiple phase treatment elements focusing on a strategic fuels reductions and restoration of vital watershed and critical habitat.

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.

Burn Permit Program

The San Benito–Monterey Unit administers a comprehensive burn permitting program under the authority of CAL FIRE to regulate open burning, reduce wildfire risk, and ensure compliance with state fire safety and air quality requirements. Permit issuance is coordinated with local air districts and limited to permissive burn days. The program supports defensible space compliance, agricultural operations, and hazard reduction efforts across the Unit.

Table 4.2: Burn Permit Activity Summary

Permit Type	2023-2024	2024-2025	% Change	2025-2026	% Change
LE-62A Residential Burning	1,815	2,089	15.1%	2,155	3.2%
LE-5 General (Agricultural)	291	277	-4.8%	224	-19.1%
LE-7/8 Broadcast (Hazard Reduction)	6	7	16.7%	11	57.1%
Total Permits Issued	2,112	2,373	12.4%	2,390	0.7%

Program Trends and Observations

Permit data from 2023 through 2026 shows a continued increase in residential burning activity, with LE-62A permits rising significantly between 2023–2025 (+15.1%) and continuing modest growth into 2025–2026 (+3.2%). This trend reflects sustained emphasis on defensible space compliance and public reliance on permitted burning for vegetation disposal.

Agricultural (LE-5) permits demonstrate a consistent decline, including a notable decrease of –19.1% in the most recent year. This may indicate shifts, increased regulatory constraints, or expanded use of alternative disposal methods.

Broadcast and hazard reduction burning (LE-7/8), while limited in volume, shows substantial percentage growth, particularly from 2024–2026. This reflects increased utilization of permitted burning for fuel reduction and wildfire mitigation, though overall numbers remain low relative to other permit types.

Overall permit totals increased sharply from 2023–2025 (+12.4%) and then stabilized (+0.7%), suggesting the program has reached a relatively consistent level of activity.

All permitted burning remains subject to suspension during periods of elevated fire danger. The burn permitting program continues to serve as a key component of the Unit’s wildfire prevention strategy by reducing hazardous fuels and enabling the safe, regulated use of fire.

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 southern 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 varies. 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:

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.

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

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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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

Description:

Battalion 2 is comprised of three Local Government Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements ("Schedule A" contracts): Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD), Cypress Fire Protection District (CYP), and Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District (CHF).

The Pebble Beach Community Services District lies entirely within the State Responsibility Area (SRA). Commonly referred to as the Del Monte Forest, this area is characterized by closed-cone coniferous forest intermixed with chaparral and coastal scrub, along with small remnants of coastal prairie. Residential development is dispersed throughout the forested landscape, including homes located at the interface of golf courses and timber. Wildfire risk is significant, as even small fires can threaten high-value properties. The 1987 Morse Fire, caused by an illegal campfire, burned approximately 190 acres and destroyed 31 structures, resulting in an estimated \$18 million in damage. Due to frequent recreational use and fire occurrence within open space areas, fire road signage, mapping, and maintenance remain a high priority within the district.

The Cypress Fire Protection District borders the southern portion of Pebble Beach and surrounds the Carmel-by-the-Sea to the north, east, and south. The district extends from the coastline inland

approximately two miles east of the Carmel Valley mouth and shares its southern boundary with Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District. The eastern portion includes Highway 68, Josselyn Canyon, and residential areas surrounding the Del Monte Golf Course. Cypress FPD includes both State Responsibility Area (SRA) and Local Responsibility Area (LRA), with residential developments situated within and adjacent to wooded fuels, creating a significant wildland-urban interface.

The Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District is the southernmost district within Battalion 2, extending from just south of the Carmel River to Mal Paso Creek. The district encompasses steep, west-facing slopes within a prominent wildland-urban interface. Vegetation consists of dense closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub, with limited coastal prairie. The area contains numerous large residential structures situated beneath heavy canopy cover. A majority of the district cross both SRA and LRA is classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. Geographically, the district is located along the Unit's western coastal boundary, bordered by the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea to the north, Los Padres National Forest to the east, Andrew Molera State Park and Big Sur to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the west.

Statistics:

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

- LRA acres: 13,030
- FRA acres: 668
- SRA acres: 16,231
- Total acres: 30,233
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 16,231

Fire History and Occurrence:

Fire history in Battalion 2 is varied. Unattended controlled burns, escaped campfires, Power line failures, equipment usage have historically contributed to damaging fires. Major Fires in the battalion have included: Morse Fire 1987, and Soberanes Fire 2016.

Weather:

The area encompassing Battalion 2 has a classic Mediterranean climate pattern, defined by long, dry summers and mild, wet winters. Annual precipitation averages about 20 inches, with most rainfall occurring between November and April (U.S. Climate Data 2023). During the summer, fog frequently develops as warm inland air interacts with cooler marine air, creating persistent coastal cloud cover. The most critical period for wildfire activity typically occurs in the fall, when temperatures remain elevated and relative humidity drops, resulting in increasingly dry vegetation and heightened fire potential. Despite this seasonal trend, wildfire risk persists year-round due to

variable conditions such as drought, wind events, and heat waves that can occur across California.

Prevailing daytime winds generally originate from the northwest, bringing cooler, moisture-laden air from the Pacific Ocean into the region. This marine influence produces the well-known “marine layer,” often resulting in fog and low cloud cover over the Monterey Peninsula. These conditions can significantly moderate fire behavior by increasing fuel moisture and relative humidity. The proximity to the ocean also drives a daily land sea breeze cycle: stronger onshore winds dominate during the day, while lighter offshore winds flow from inland areas toward the coast at night. In the summer months, these wind patterns can intensify due to stronger pressure gradients, occasionally contributing to increased fire spread under conducive conditions.

The region is also subject to periodic offshore wind events, commonly referred to as Santa Lucia winds. These occur when high-pressure systems develop over the Great Basin, creating a pressure gradient that drives air from inland areas toward the coast. As these winds descend from higher elevations across the Santa Lucia Range, they compress, warm, and dry out, often displacing the marine layer offshore. This process results in elevated temperatures, reduced humidity, and potentially strong, gusty winds, conditions that can rapidly escalate fire behavior, particularly in narrow canyons and passes. Although these events are more frequent and intense in areas farther south, such as Big Sur, the Monterey Peninsula can still experience occasional periods of critical fire weather, most often during late fall and early winter.

Battalion 2 with its varying topography has regions that can differ significantly from nearby inland or higher-elevation areas. This variability is characteristic of a microclimate, where the extent and persistence of the marine layer play a major role in shaping conditions. As a result, wildfire hazards across the region is highly dynamic and closely tied to short-term, site-specific weather variations.

Values at Risk:

Battalion 2 contains a significant concentration of high-value assets, critical infrastructure, and environmentally sensitive areas that are highly vulnerable to wildfire. Internationally recognized destinations such as Pebble Beach Golf Links and surrounding championship golf courses host major events, including the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am and the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance. These facilities are key economic drivers for the region and are essential to sustaining tourism and local business continuity.

Residential development within Battalion 2 includes a mix of single-family and multi-unit dwellings, many of which are situated within dense vegetation, along ridgelines, and in areas with limited ingress and egress. This development pattern increases both structure vulnerability and evacuation complexity during wildfire incidents.

Transportation infrastructure is constrained, with Highway 1 serving as the primary north-south corridor and, in some locations, the sole access and evacuation route. Disruption to this route during a wildfire would significantly impact emergency response capabilities, evacuation operations, and regional connectivity, including access to Big Sur and other coastal communities.

Battalion 2 also encompasses important natural and ecological resources, including Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, the Carmel River Watershed, the California Sea Otter Refuge, Jacks Peak Park, and the broader coastal corridor. These areas provide critical habitat, recreational opportunities, and significant scenic value, further emphasizing the need for comprehensive protection strategies.

Given the combination of high-value development, limited evacuation routes, and sensitive environmental resources, Battalion 2 represents a high-priority area for wildfire risk reduction. Continued investment in vegetation management, defensible space compliance, public education, and infrastructure hardening is essential to reduce risk and protect life, property, and natural resources.



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. These target areas allow for a focus and prioritization that is specific and unique to the battalion and the assets at risk. The 3 target areas are Identified within each fire protection districts individual fire defense plans.

- **Target Area 1:** Cypress Fire Protection District; Aguajito, Carmel Hills, Hatton Canyon, Carmel Views, Carmel Woods, Del Mesa, Pacific Meadows, East Canada, High Meadows, Jacks Peak, Josselyn Canyon, Mission Fields, Quail Meadows, and Lower Carmel River.

- **Target Area 2:** Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District: Corona, Mt. Devon, Walden, Mal Paso, Victorine Ranch, Yankee Point, Spindrift, Aurora Del Mar, Upper Ridges, Red Wolf, Point Lobos, and Carmel Meadows.
- **Target Area 3:** Pebble Beach Community Service District: Huckleberry Hill Natural Habitat Area/SFB Morse Botanical Preserve, Pescadero Canyon, and Navajo Tract.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

Public Education/Contact

Public education and contact continue to be a priority within Battalion 2 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. Fire district prevention staff will continue to work with residents and local stakeholders on effective wildfire mitigation strategies.

Public Education Forums:

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

- Fire Prevention Signage
- Fire Safe Council for Monterey County Meeting and functions
- Battalion 2 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:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
- California Department of Parks and Recreation (CSP)
- Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)
- Santa Lucia Preserve (SLP)
- Santa Lucia Conservancy (SLC)
- Del Monte Forest Conservancy (DMFC)
- Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC)

Fire Prevention Engineering

Battalion 2 will also focus its available resources to support the prevention of large wildfires in target areas 1, 2 and 3. The battalion Pre-Fire Planning and Prevention Staff, with Defensible Space Inspectors, in cooperation with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County 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.

Vegetation Management:

Battalion staff works with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Resource Conservation District Monterey County, California State Parks, Pebble Beach Community Services District Cypress Fire Protection District, Carmel Highlands Fire District, residents and other cooperators to reduce fuels. involving mechanical means are being used to reduce fuel loads and maintain safe egress in case of fire.

Pre-Fire Engineering:

Battalion 2 works with Caltrans, Monterey County Public Works, and BLM to ensure fuels reduction practices on each agency's public easements are 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 2 directs homeowners in the safest ways to build their homes.

Inspection:

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 the westly contour of the Gabilan Range, which is home to many large cattle ranches and grass-covered rolling hills. The western side is home to Santa Lucia Highlands American Viticulture Area consisting of approximately 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 and conifers.

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 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 for Battalion 3 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. This incorporates areas of Monterey County, Jolon Road West towards the Los Padres National Forest and Fort Hunter Liggett boundaries.
- **Target Area 2:** Arroyo Seco, East Carmel Valley Road, with narrow roads and limited access to homes. Geographically located West of the community of Greenfield.
- **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.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan:

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:

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

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 large fires and reducing the damage from large fires. 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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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 transition 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 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:

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.

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

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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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 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 of 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 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:

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.

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

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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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:

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:

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

Fire Prevention Engineering

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.

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 discing 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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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:

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.

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

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.

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 determines 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.

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.

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.

Operations Division - Operational Programs

Operational Programs: Training Battalion-

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:



- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Urban Search & Rescue (US&R):** Urban Search and Rescue is considered a "multi-hazard" discipline, as it may be needed for a variety of emergencies or disasters. This means that the personnel and the rescue apparatus can now be called upon to respond anywhere in the state to assist in the event of a variety of emergencies or disasters including earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, storms and tornadoes, floods, dam failures, technological accidents, terrorist activities, and hazardous materials releases.

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.

Operational Programs: Camp and Hand Crews–



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 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 defendable 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



Operational Programs: Aviation Programs

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 consist of Two 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 HAWK 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.



Operational Programs: Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)

Description

The CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Unit UAS Program provides advanced unmanned aircraft support for all-risk emergency response, wildfire operations, and pre-fire planning. The program has grown into a robust operational capability, supporting missions such as prescribed aerial ignition, wildfire aerial ignition, search and rescue, water rescue, fuel reduction reconnaissance and surveys, structure fire support, and real-time situational awareness for incident commanders. With a fleet of 33 aircraft configured for various mission types, the program enhances firefighter safety, improves decision-making, and expands the Unit's ability to assess hazards, monitor fire behavior, locate victims, and support operations in difficult or dangerous environments.

This capability also strengthens the Unit's prevention and preparedness efforts by allowing personnel to efficiently survey fuel reduction areas, document project conditions, and gather aerial intelligence before, during, and after incidents. CAL FIRE identifies uncrewed aerial systems as part of its broader aviation capability to improve firefighting effectiveness and situational awareness, and the San Benito-Monterey UAS Program reflects that mission at the local unit level

Table 5-1: UAS Program Operational Aircraft

Operational Aircraft	
Program	Quantity
Peninsula	19
SoMoCo	1
Aromas	1
State (BEU)	9
State(TAO)	3
Total	33

Table 5-2: UAS Program Flights & Hours

2025 UAS Flight Statistics		
	Flight Hours	Number of Flights
Training	287.8	1190
Fuel Reduction	74.53	371
BEU Active Incidents	87.9	296
Maritime SAR	33.84	107
Out of Unit Incidents	48.9	211
Law Enforcement Assist	28.85	80
Special Events	172.34	539
2025 Total	734.16	2794

Table 5-3: UAS Aerial Ignitions Statistics

2025 Aerial Ignition Statistics	
Flights	96
Flight Hours	23
Acres Treated	22497
Aerial Ignitions Ball	14961



Appendix A: Pre-Fire Projects

San Benito-Monterey Fuels Reduction Projects:



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

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: Monterey County Public Works, CAL FIRE, Monterey County Fire Safe Council, Private Landowners

Project #2

Name: Carmel Valley fuel break
Description: Establish a fire road for emergency access
Community: Carmel Valley
Collaborators: Monterey County Resource Conservation District, 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 fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for access
Communities: Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley, White Rock, Palo Colorado areas
Collaborators: Monterey Peninsula Regional Parks District, CAL FIRE
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,

Collaborators: CAL FIRE , and local residents

Project #6

Name: White Rock Ridge fuel break

Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fuel break

Community: Cachagua

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 Fuel Reduction

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 Fuel Reduction

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

Project #11

Name: Stone Pine Vegetation Management Program
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 Management Program
Description: Fuel reduction using various methods including prescribed fire
Community: Cachagua
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners



Photo Description: Andrew Molera State Park, East Molera Broadcast Burn

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 Drive 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 #6

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 #7

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 #8

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 Management 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 Management 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 Vegetation Management Program
Description: Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques and methods.
Community: Parkfield, Cholame, Slacks Canyon, Parkfield Grade, San Miguel, Indian Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE

Project #5

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

Project #6

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

Project #7

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

Project #8

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

Project #9

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: Cienga School Elementary Notice of Exemption

Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire

Community: Paicines, CA

Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Cienega Elementary School



Bear Valley Battalion 6 Projects:

Project #1

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 #2

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 #3

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 #4

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

Project #5

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 Fuel Break
Description: Fuel Reduction using multiple techniques and prescribed fire
Community: Aromas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, 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 Baustisa
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 Freemont 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, Freemont Peak
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Current CAL FIRE Grants in San Benito-Monterey Unit

The San Benito–Monterey Unit CAL FIRE Grant Program supports a wide range of wildfire prevention, hazardous fuels reduction, and community resilience projects throughout Monterey and San Benito Counties. The program emphasizes strategic fuelbreak maintenance, defensible space improvements, roadside vegetation clearance, prescribed grazing, community chipping programs, and wildfire prevention planning in high-risk wildland urban interface areas. Current and completed projects focus on protecting communities, improving evacuation corridors, reducing hazardous vegetation, and strengthening long-term wildfire preparedness through partnerships with local governments, fire districts, nonprofit organizations, conservancies, and community groups. Major project areas include Big Sur, Carmel Valley, the Monterey Peninsula, Hollister, San Juan Bautista, Greenfield, and Aromas.

Table A-1: CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Current Wildfire Prevention Grants

Project Name	Organization	Contract Start	Contract End	Summary
Monterey's Citywide Fuel Reduction Project	City of Monterey	2/4/2026	<u>2/15/2029</u>	The project will reduce fuels in Monterey City Green Belts in accordance with Monterey Cities' CWPP. The project goal is to reduce fuel in 465 acres out of a total of 790 acres of park areas, greenbelts, and open space that are intermixed woodland areas in proximity to approximately 1,000 homes. The proposed Project focuses on prescribed grazing, thinning and chipping.
Big Sur Strategic Community Fuel Break Maintenance	Big Sur Fire	2/4/2026	<u>2/15/2029</u>	Big Sur Fire will maintain a series of roadside strategic "fuelbreaks" in Big Sur. The project will encompass 220 miles of roads within Big Sur area which spans from Highway 1 from Ma Paso Creek to the San Luis Obispo County line. Treatments will include 25 feet of roadside clearance on strategic road networks and will cover 1,850 acres. Grant funds will be used to purchase an excavator with masticating head to treat roadside fuels.
Santa Lucia Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Santa Lucia Conservancy	1/15/2026	<u>2/15/2029</u>	Project activities include treating dense thatch and fine fuels utilizing cattle grazing on 3,600 acres of the Santa Lucia Preserve. Goat grazing is planned to reduce invasive species and brush encroachment into grasslands on 100 acres.
Fire Adapted Communities Program for Greater Big Sur	Community Association of Big Sur (formerly recognized as Coast Property Owners Association)	12/26/2023	3/15/2029	This wildfire prevention planning grant seeks to develop the Fire Adapted Communities program for Greater Big Sur to proactively plan and educate for wildfire prevention and management with residents, local businesses, and local fire agencies. The grant will employ a Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator for five years to develop the program. The program focuses on ten key areas which are prevention, regulations/policy, infrastructure, recovery, safety and evacuation, wildfire response, Firewise USA, community engagement, landscape treatments, and public health.
Greenbelt Fuel Reduction Action Plan	City of Monterey	1/29/2024	3/15/2029	The project consists of 316.84 acres of eight different greenbelts within the City of Monterey. The greenbelts wind through woodland areas and neighborhoods throughout the city and include approximately 1,000 habitable structures. The project directly affects the communities of the Presidio, Skyline, Monterey Vista, Alta Mesa, Glenwood, Deer Flats and Fishermen Flats. Treatment methods include manual treatment to thin forested/woodland areas and prescribed herbivory using goats.

Project Name	Organization	Contract Start	Contract End	Summary
San Benito Fuel Reduction Project	San Benito Fire Safe Council/ Community Foundation for San Benito County	12/9/2024	3/15/2030	Establishes off-site chipping program located at the Aromas Tri-County Fire station for residents of the unincorporated community of Aromas. Project also includes 32 acres of shaded fuelbreak maintenance at San Juan Canyon road using prescribed herbivory (goats).
Fire Adapted Big Sur Chipping Program	Community Association of Big Sur	11/5/2024	3/15/2030	Develops a chipping program for the Big Sur area. Chipping will occur in multiple Big Sur Communities. Homeowners will bring cut vegetation/slash to a tow-behind chipper that will move to different streets and communities throughout Big Sur.
MCRFD Community Hazardous Fuels Reduction	Monterey County Regional Fire District	12/2/2024	3/15/2030	Project includes approximately 140 acres of hazardous fuels reduction in shaded fuel breaks, roadway clearance, defensible space for elderly or disadvantaged residents, removal of dense dead vegetation and a multi-year residential chipping program. The work will be performed along roadsides and throughout different recognized Firewise communities located within the Monterey County Regional Fire District boundaries. Communities include: Mesa Del Toro, Vista Del Toro, Robles del Rio and Rancho del Sol.

Table A-2: CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Current Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants

Project Name	Organization	Contract Start	Contract End	Summary
Esselen Tribe of Monterey County Wildfire Resilience, Forest Health, Indigenous Food Sovereignty and Cultural Resource Revitalization Project	Esselen Tribe of Monterey County (ETMC)	4/22/2024	3/30/2028	ETMC plans to improve forest health and create shaded fuel breaks along access roads leading to Esselen-owned Tribal Lands, as well as improve Esselen hunting and gathering areas currently overgrown with ladder fuels and invasive exotic species.

Appendix B: Ignition Data

Figure B-1: Annual Ignitions by Cause Class

CAUSE CLASS	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	GRAND TOTAL
LIGHTNING	0	0	6	2	8	16
VEHICLE/POWERLINE/EQUIPMENT USE	28	56	52	64	46	246
SMOKING	1	3	0	2	1	7
CAMPFIRE	6	5	1	6	1	19
DEBRIS BURNING	12	5	11	16	12	56
RAILROAD	0	0	0	0	0	0
ARSON	3	7	11	6	8	35
KIDS PLAYING W/FIRE	2	6	3	4	0	15
MISCELLANEOUS/UNDETERMINED	43	68	37	51	31	230

Figure B-2: Acres Burned by Ignition Cause Class

CAUSE CLASS	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	GRAND TOTAL
LIGHTNING	0	0	8.69	0.21	42.45	51.35
VEHICLE/POWERLINE/EQUIPMENT USE	1283.1	462.38	454.87	1632.7	716.53	4549.6
SMOKING	0.01	0.94	0	0.02	0.1	1.07
CAMPFIRE	1.96	0.33	0.1	217.17	0.01	219.57
DEBRIS BURNING	24.07	687.92	72.1	132.13	15.48	931.7
RAILROAD	0	0	0	0	0	0
ARSON	0.69	95.57	6.52	2.03	32.69	137.5
KIDS PLAYING W/FIRE	0.11	7.71	0.54	1.62	0	9.98
MISCELLANEOUS/UNDETERMINED	3125.7	93.34	574.2	2590.5	860.68	7244.36
TOTAL ACRES	4435.6	1348.2	1117	4576.4	1667.9	13145.13

Section VI: Exhibits

Exhibit 1: San Benito Monterey Unit Map

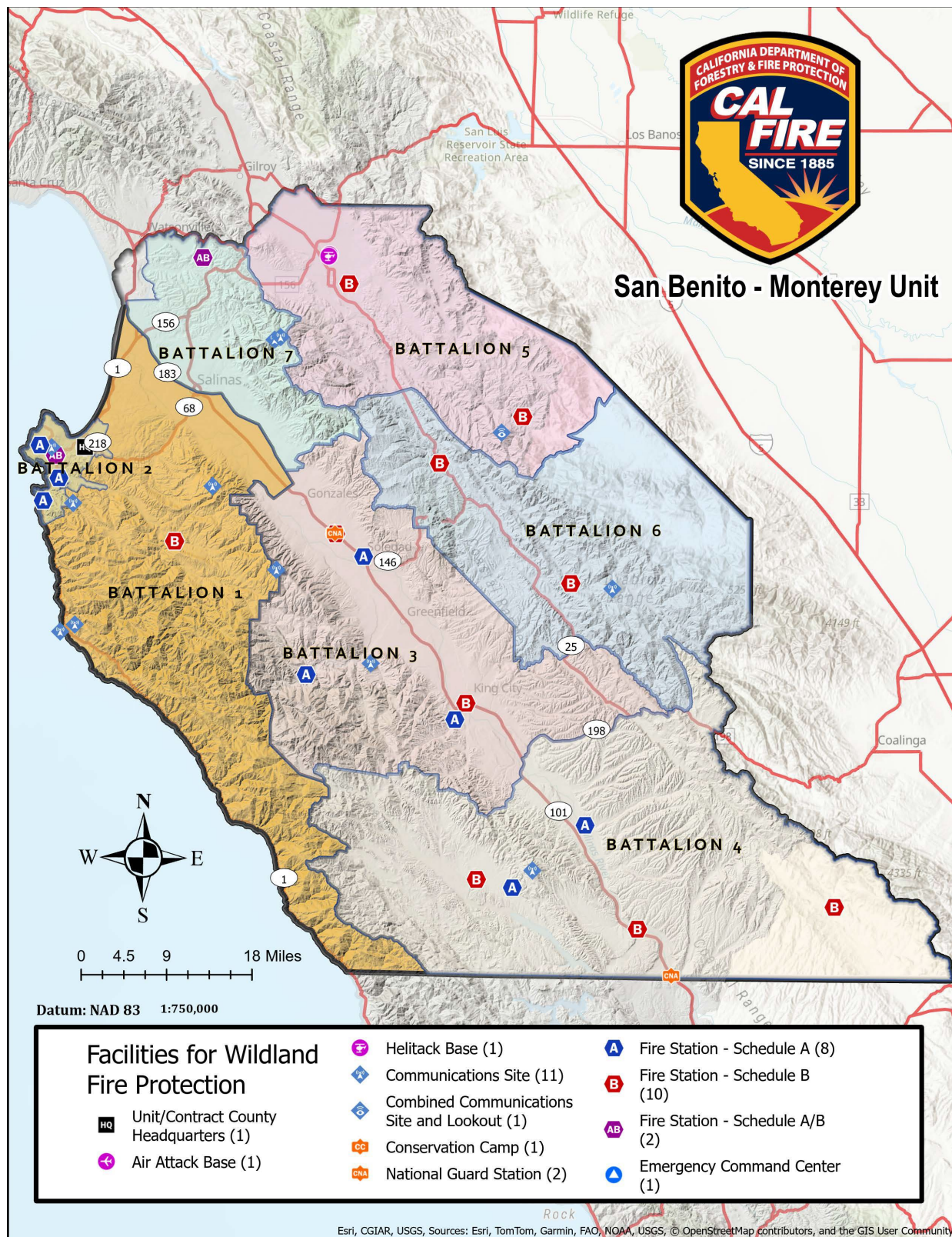


Exhibit 2: San Benito-Monterey Fire Protection Districts Map

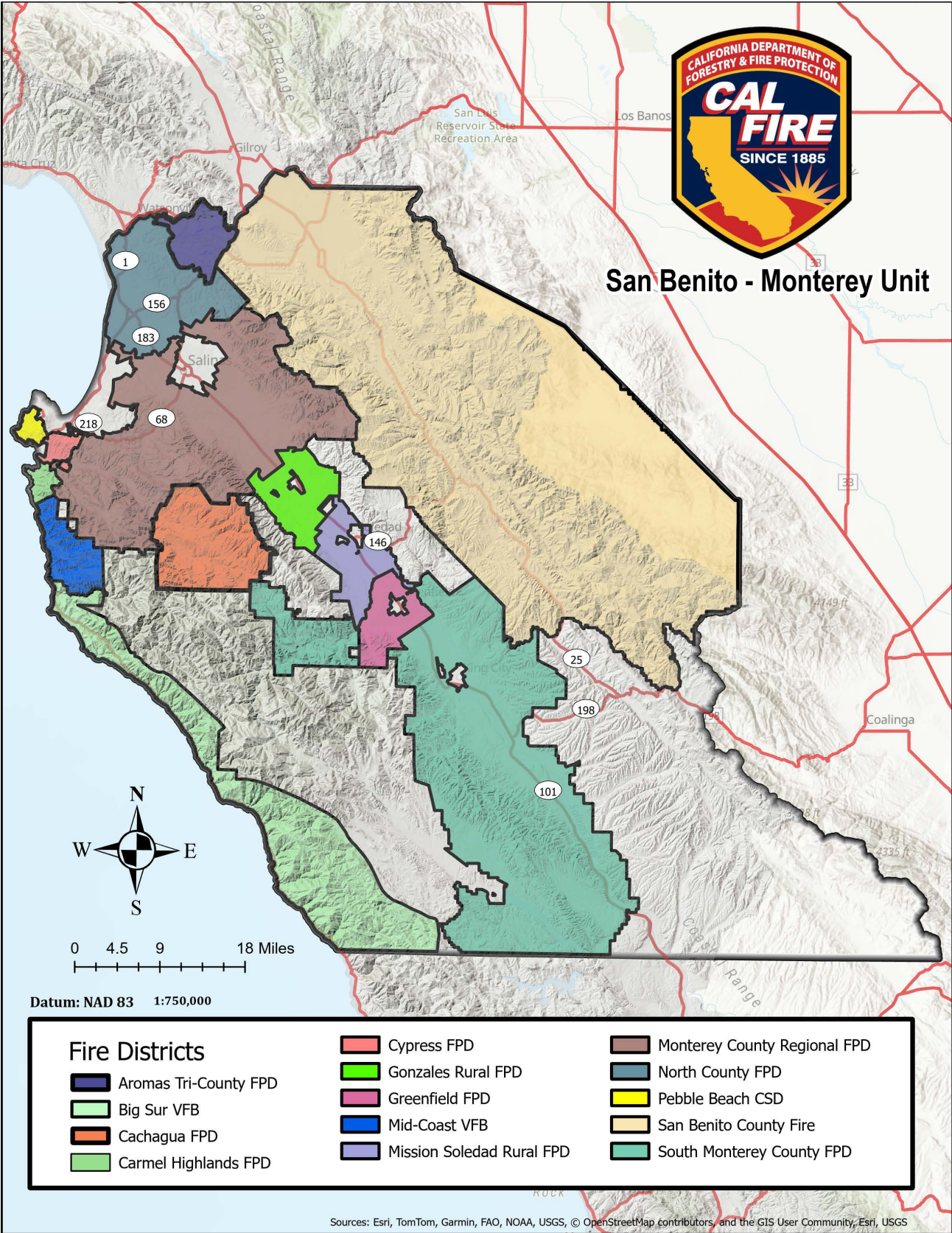
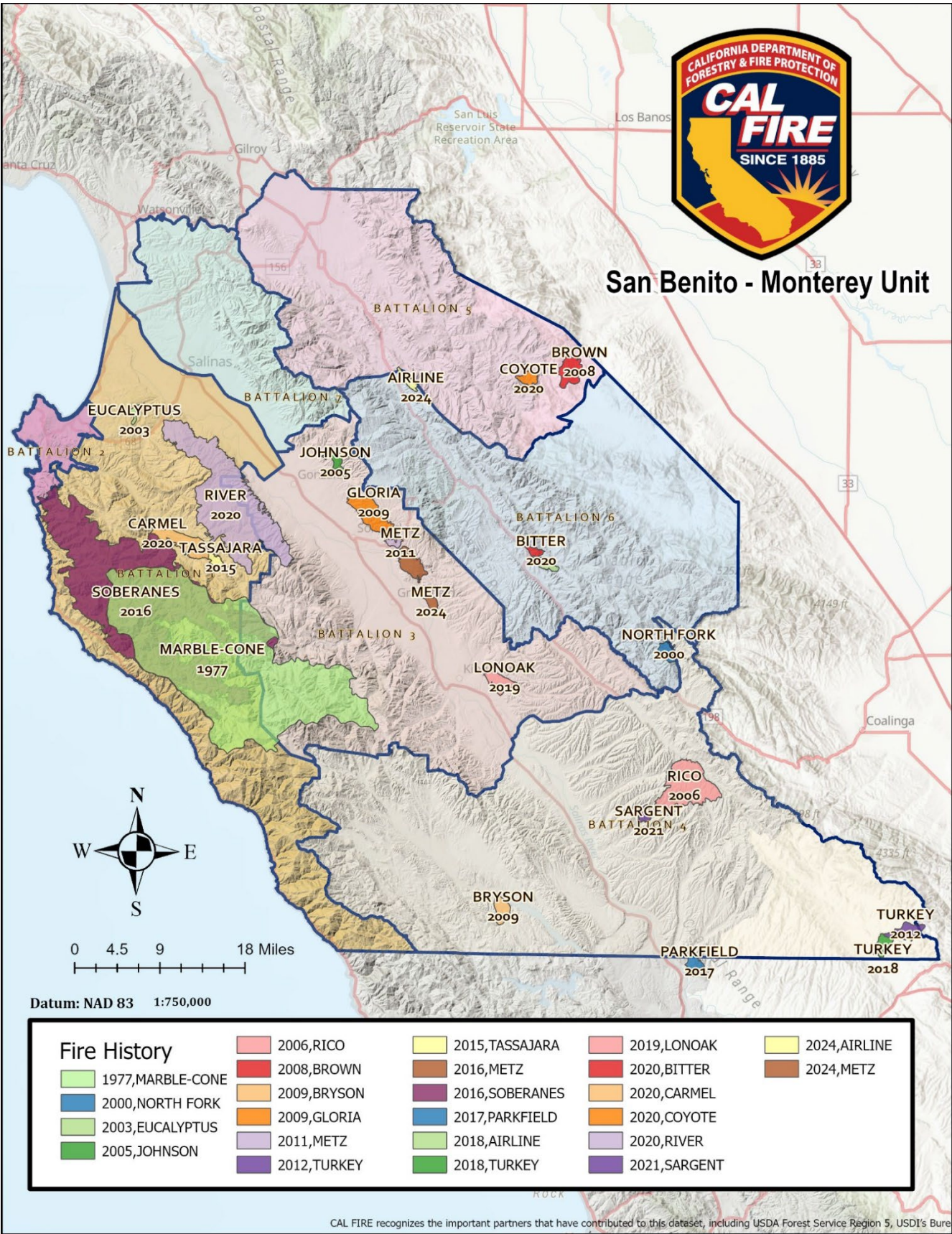


Exhibit 3: San Benito-Monterey Unit Ignition Map



Exhibit 4: San Benito-Monterey Fire History Map



Section VII: Supplement

Annual Accomplishments Reporting

Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering:

In 2025, 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 11,137 (primary structure) inspections recorded for 2025. Of that, records indicated 10,491 compliant and 233 non-compliant.



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.

Table 7-1: Native American Contacts in San Benito-Monterey Unit

Tribe Name
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

Treatment Accomplishments:

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has an active and successful prescribed burning team, with many planned, active, and ongoing projects. In Fiscal Year 2025, the Unit completed 26,827 acres of prescribed burning. The acres were achieved through the collaboration and cooperation of multiple ownerships and entities such as Department of War (DOW), California Military Department (CMD), and private landowners.

Table 7-2: 2025 Prescribe Fire Acres

Program	Project	Type	Agency	Acres Treated
FirePlan	Camp Roberts	Broadcast Burn	CAL FIRE / CMD	7,389
VMP	Cienega VMP	Broadcast Burn	CAL FIRE	495
FirePlan	Ft. Hunter Liggett	Broadcast Burn	CAL FIRE / DOW	18,783
VTP	Stone Canyon VTP	Broadcast Burn	CAL FIRE	142
VMP	Stork VMP	Broadcast Burn	CAL FIRE	18

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has several proposed prescribed fire projects. Implementation of these projects is dependent upon weather and fire activity. Additionally, the Unit has a number of proposed and active fuel reduction projects to maintain historic fuel breaks, truck trails, and establish fuel breaks.

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.

In 2025, BEU leadership staff who helped the Department achieve its annual goal of treating 50,000 acres through prescribed fire were honored with the Director's Award for Superior Accomplishment.

Completed Grants:

Table: Completed CAL FIRE Grants in San Benito-Monterey Unit

Project Name	Organization	Contract Start	Summary
Fuelbreak Maintenance at the Santa Lucia Preserve	Santa Lucia Preserve	12/9/2024	Project goal is to purchase remote control masticator and treat roadside fuelbreaks on the Santa Lucia Preserve. Masticator will be used to create/maintain a 50-ft buffer on either side of 37 miles of paved emergency access roads totaling 443 acres of existing fuel breaks.
BEU - City of Del Rey Oaks-Fire Prevention Program	City of Del Rey Oaks	12/26/2023	The purpose of this project is to reduce fuel loading in Work Memorial Park in the City of Del Rey Oaks. The 41 acres will include shaded fuelbreaks in oak woodland areas and the understory of forested areas.
BEU - Palo Corona-White Rock Fuelbreak Access and Enhancement Project	Santa Lucia Conservancy	8/7/2022	Project activities will occur on the Palo Corona-White Rock Fuel Break and Santa Lucia Preserve and will include: maintaining 12 miles and 143 acres of the Palo Corona-White Rock Fuel Break; reestablishing 8.67 miles and 94.16 acres of existing fuel breaks on the Preserve; and the evaluation, planning, design and permitting of critical access to the western section of the Palo Corona-White Rock Fuel Break through the Preserve.
BEU - San Benito County Fuels Reduction	City of Hollister	10/19/2022	Project activities include two roadside treatments along Cienega Rd and San Juan Canyon Rd within a 10 foot right of way as well as community education and purchasing of a mower tractor for road clearance maintenance.
BEU-Carmel Valley Fuelbreak Project	Resource Conservation District of Monterey County	7/29/2022	This project encompasses 403 acres and includes 238 acres of fuel break maintenance and 165 acres of community fuels reduction. Fuelbreaks include Rock Ridge, South of San Clemente, Tularcitos, and Vasquez Knob. Community fuels reduction include Carmel views, Garland Park (eucalyptus), Rancho Tierra Grande, and Robles del Rio.
BEU-Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan	City of King	9/22/2022	Prepare a riverbed wildfire prevention plan which will include San Lorenzo Creek and Salinas River.
Elkhorn-Las Lomas Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project	Elkhorn Slough Foundation	8/31/2022	Removal of 20.5* acres of eucalyptus on Elkhorn Slough Foundation Property in near Hall Road in Las Lomas. Eucalyptus will be felled, stumps sprayed, and logs will be used for biochar. *Original proposal was for 20.5 acres, approximately 41 acres were treated.

Good Neighbor Authority:

In 2025, the CAL FIRE San Benito-Monterey Unit entered into a cooperative agreement with the USDA Forest Service (Los Padres National Forest) to increase authorized forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration services on Forest Service lands. This agreement is intended to accomplish collaboratively developed priority management activities across southern California and within CAL FIRE local unit availability, capability, and interest in committing state resources to federal lands restoration. The objective of this work is to improve forest health, reduce the likelihood of a high severity fire, and increase safety in nearby communities from wildfire by:

- Enhancing previously planned treatments
- Promoting species composition
- Decreasing invasive species
- Reducing vegetation density
- Fuels management
- Maintaining existing fuel breaks
- Establishing new fuel breaks
- Reducing roadside fire starts
- Providing ingress/egress for first responders and the public during an emergency

This agreement is intended to cover a ten (10) year period in total. However, the specific project areas and treatment activities shall be identified on an annual basis.

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 2026, 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
E0000005ACAF401...

George Nunez Jr.
San Benito-Monterey Unit Chief