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This Plan:

- Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties, federal, state, city, and county agencies within the Unit have been consulted and are listed in the plan.
- Identifies and prioritizes pre fire and post fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk within the Unit.
- Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only. It is the responsibility of those implementing the projects to ensure that all environmental compliance and permitting processes are met, as necessary.

Reno DiTullio Jr.  5/7/2021
Unit Chief
Reno DiTullio Jr.

Chad Cooper  5/7/2021
Pre-Fire Engineer
Chad Cooper
Executive Summary

California’s Strategic Fire Plan is the state’s road map for reducing the risk of wildfire. By placing the emphasis on what needs to be done long before a fire starts, the Strategic Fire Plan seeks to reduce firefighting costs and property losses, increase firefighter safety, and to contribute to ecosystem health. The San Benito-Monterey Unit, with the cooperation of key stakeholders, has designed a plan with the intention of meeting the goals set by both the stakeholders and the California Strategic Fire Plan. Pre-fire management projects are designed to reduce costs and losses, especially during periods of severe fire weather. With the use of fire resistant landscaping, mechanical fuels treatment, prescribed burns, building construction standards, infrastructure, land use planning, and escape plans, the Unit strives to keep what would otherwise be a large, catastrophic fire, to smaller fire with less intensity, reducing suppression costs and property loss.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit management intends to support the Fire Plan and make it successful by meeting the following objectives:

- Collect, analyze and prepare data to assess communities at risk and in need of fuel reduction or other projects
- Work with grant writers and stakeholders to secure funds to implement projects.
- Utilize CAL FIRE personnel and resources in conjunction with other public and private efforts to assist with the project work on the ground.
- Educate the public on fire prevention and incorporating fire resistant landscaping and construction to their property, as well as hazardous fuel reduction to keep their lives, homes, property and natural resources safe from catastrophic wildfires.

With these goals in mind, the Unit strives to reduce fire suppression costs, property loss, and damage to our environment and local ecosystems in the San Benito-Monterey Unit through our pre-fire work and by protecting life, property, and the environment from destructive wildfires.
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Section I: Unit Overview

Unit Description
The San Benito-Monterey Unit is located along the central coast between San Luis Obispo County to the south and Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties to the north. The Pacific Ocean abuts the western side of the Unit and the Diablo Mountains and the San Joaquin Valley lie to the east. The Los Padres National Forest lies along the coast south of the Carmel Highlands encompassing the Ventana Wilderness and the Silver Peak Wilderness. The community of the former Ft. Ord also lies within the Unit and has largely become Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land for public recreational use. Pinnacles National Park is centered in the Unit in both Monterey and San Benito Counties.

The Unit encompasses over 3 million acres, of which 2.1 million acres are State Responsibility Area (SRA), representing one of the largest state responsibility jurisdictions in CAL FIRE.

The topography of the Unit varies from steep and rugged mountains with moderate to heavy vegetative cover to rolling hills used for livestock grazing. Plant species vary by aspect, slope, elevation, soil type, past fire history, and distance from the coast. The predominant vegetation types are coastal chaparral, and oak/grass woodland, with the Monterey Peninsula supporting stands of various coastal tree species.
The weather in the Unit is divided into two basic patterns. The northwestern area of the unit experiences a common coastal weather pattern with low clouds and fog which by mid-day give way to temperatures in the mid 70’s to 80’s, recovering in the evening with the marine layer moving in. This tends to keep fires near the coast to the first burn period. The eastern and southern areas of the unit generally have less fog and temperatures commonly reach the 90-to 100-degree range with strong afternoon valley winds upwards to 10-15 mph. Fires in the eastern and southern parts of the Unit have greater potential of going into extended attack, especially late in the fire season when heavier fuels are dry. Winters are mild with rainfall from 7 to 30+ inches. Wind speed and direction is variable, but is predominantly northwest at 7-10 mph.

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

Fire history in the San Benito-Monterey Unit is collected for every fire 10 acres and larger. Much of the fire history is in and around the Los Padres National Forest on the west side of the Unit, primarily due to 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 farming, industry, and tourism.
Unit Preparedness and Firefighting Capabilities

The San Benito-Monterey Unit is operationally divided into three divisions and further into six battalions and offer a wide variety of special programs which include: Fire Prevention, Resource Management and Wildfire Resiliency, Law Enforcement, Air Attack, Helitack, Conservation Camp, Emergency Command Center (communications), and Cooperative Fire Protection.

Firefighting Resources

- Fire Stations – CAL FIRE ................................................................. 12
- Fire Stations – Cooperative Fire ..................................................... 10
- Air Attack ......................................................................................... 1
- Helitack Base .................................................................................. 1
- Conservation Camp ......................................................................... 1
- Volunteer Fire Stations ................................................................. 4

Equipment

- Engines – CAL FIRE ...................................................................... 17
- Engines – Cooperative Fire .......................................................... 16
- Dozers – CAL FIRE ......................................................................... 3
- Water Tenders – Cooperative Fire ................................................. 2
- Ladder 100’ – Cooperative Fire ..................................................... 1
- Patrol – Cooperative Fire ............................................................... 2
- Squad – Cooperative Fire .............................................................. 3
- Air Tankers – CAL FIRE ............................................................... 2
- Helicopter – CAL FIRE ................................................................. 1
- Air Attack plane – CAL FIRE ......................................................... 1
- Rescue Boat (IRB) - Cooperative Fire .......................................... 2
- Rescue Water Craft (RWC) – Cooperative Fire ......................... 2
- UTV ......................................................................................... 1

Personnel

- Permanent – CAL FIRE ............................................................... 225
- Seasonal – CAL FIRE ................................................................. 131
- Defensible Space Inspector– CAL FIRE ....................................... 4
- Volunteer FF ................................................................................ 60
- Inmate Crews ............................................................................... 6
- California National Guard Crew ................................................. 1
**Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements**
- Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District
- Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District
- City of Soledad Fire Department
- Cypress Fire Protection District
- Pebble Beach Community Services District
- South Monterey County Fire Protection District

**Dispatch Agreements**
- Cachagua Fire Protection District

**Mutual Threat Zone Response Areas**
- Fort Hunter Liggett

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

**Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District has auto aid with:**
- North Monterey County Fire District
- Pajaro Valley Fire District
- San Benito County Fire Department

**Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District has auto aid with:**
- Cypress Fire Protection District

**Cypress Fire Protection District has auto aid with:**
- Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District Monterey Fire Department
- Monterey County Regional Fire District
- Monterey Fire Department
- Pebble Beach Fire Department
Pebble Beach Fire Department has auto aid with:
- Cypress Fire Protection District
- Monterey Fire Department

The City of Soledad Fire Department has auto aid with:
- Greenfield Fire Protection District
- Mission Soledad Rural Fire Protection District
- South Monterey County Fire Protection District
- Correctional Training Facility Fire

South Monterey County Fire Protection District has auto aid with:
- Greenfield Fire Protection District
- City of Soledad Fire Department

CAL FIRE has local operating agreements with:
- USFS-Los Padres National Forest
- Pinnacles National Park
- Bureau of Land Management-Central Coast Field Office
Section II: Collaboration

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

Plan Development Team:

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<tr>
<td>Fire Safe Council for Monterey County</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Benito Fire Safe Council</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA Forest Service</td>
<td>District Ranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management</td>
<td>Field Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Conservation District of Monterey County</td>
<td>Forest Health Coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Monterey – Resource Management Agency</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific Gas &amp; Electric</td>
<td>Vegetation Management Manager</td>
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Section III: Values at Risk

Values
Valued assets susceptible to fire damage are identified in the Fire Plan as air quality, rangelands, recreation, agriculture, structures, timber, water and watersheds, wildlife and habitat, and other resources (cultural, historical, and scenic). The focus of this plan and relative importance of each value has been determined by reviewing input from local stakeholders and CAL FIRE managers. The San Benito-Monterey Unit Fire Plan has been engineered with these issues in mind.

The priority values in the San Benito-Monterey Unit are tourism, recreation, and rangelands. Pinnacles National Park is split on the border of Monterey and San Benito County attracting visitors all year long. The Monterey Peninsula thrives on tourism year-round as home of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row, Pebble Beach’s 17-Mile Drive, and many world-famous golf courses. The Big Sur area is another popular attraction bordering the Los Padres National Forest (LPF) that was heavily impacted during the recent River, Carmel, and Dolan Fire of 2020.

Laguna Seca is a popular recreational facility playing host to several large events throughout the year.

Agriculture is a big industry in the Unit. Cattle ranches encompass hundreds of thousands of acres of rangelands in the Unit, while most of the floor of the Salinas Valley is crops of various produce. Vineyards line the foothills of the valley, bringing tourists to wineries throughout the Salinas Valley, Carmel Valley, and the Monterey Peninsula.

Communications such as repeater sites, cell towers, radio towers, FAA communications, and the Big Sur VOR are among the highest priorities to protect from wildfires. The unit maintains access roads to all the repeater towers and removes vegetation buildup, protecting these towers in the event of a fire.
**Priority Areas**

Several areas have been identified as “priority areas” by the San Benito-Monterey Unit management team. The identification of these specific areas was based on available data from Pre-Fire Engineering assessments and stakeholder input. Additionally, local employees provided anecdotal and historical information that was considered useful in understanding local conditions. Priority Areas described in this plan are not listed in order of priority but rather as elements of the overall Unit Plan and are listed below:

- State Highway 68 Corridor between Salinas and Monterey Peninsula / Laureles Grade
- Carmel Valley / Carmel Valley Village
- Carmel Highlands / Palo Colorado Canyon
- San Juan Canyon (San Benito County)
- Cachagua (Carmel Valley)
- Pine Canyon (King City)
- North Monterey County / Aromas
- Jacks Peak / Pebble Beach

Following the assessment of each priority area, a series of potential mitigation actions was identified and agreed upon by the Unit Management Team. The following describes each area’s geographic location, values, and potential mitigation actions:
**State Highway 68 Corridor / Laureles Grade:**

This area is located 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 a large number of 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 BLM wildland are located along the northern border. This area contains large plots of vegetation that have not burned in several years, resulting in a build-up of decadent mature fuels.

**Priority Area Goals:**

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

**Potential Mitigating Actions:**

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within this Priority Area.
- Strive to provide chipper services as available to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified assets at risk.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the 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 Priority Area that can be pre-planned and identified.
**Carmel Valley / Carmel Valley Village:**

This area is located 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 Hwy 101 in the Salinas Valley to Hwy 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 target area. This area contains large plots of vegetation that have not burned in several years, resulting in a build-up of dead mature fuel.

**Priority Area Goals:**

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

**Potential Mitigating Actions:**

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the Priority Area.
- Strive to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291, and reducing the overall wildland 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 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 located in the western coastal area of the Unit, and is bordered by the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the north, the Los Padres National Forest on the east, Andrew Molera State Park and Big Sur on the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west.

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

Priority Area Goals:

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

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within Priority Area.
- 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 Fuelbreak project. Phase 1 was completed, and now work is continuing to expand the fuel modification efforts.
**Jacks Peak / Pebble Beach:**

This area is located on the Monterey Peninsula in the western portion of the Unit, and is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west, the City of Monterey on the north, Carmel Valley and the Highway 68 corridor on the east, and the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the south. This area represents one of the most scenic and affluent communities in California.

Values for this area are varied, including resort areas, championship golf courses, single family and multi-unit residential structures. Highway 1 is the primary north-south travel route, providing access to Big Sur and other coastal areas to the south. The potential for a large damaging fire in this area is high. The vegetation lends itself to crown fires in the Monterey pine and Monterey cypress. The entire Priority Area has limited access and egress.

**Priority Area Goals:**

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

**Potential Mitigating Actions:**

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within target 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 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
Cachagua: (Carmel Valley)

This Priority Area is located 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 located in remote areas with limited access. Fire history in the area is minimal, leading to the overgrowth of dead brush and light flashy fuels.

Priority Area Goals:

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

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

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

This area is located in the northwestern part of the Unit, situated west of State Highway 101, south of State Highway 129, north of State Highway 156, and east of Highway 1. It includes the communities of Aromas, Pajaro, Las Lomas, Prunedale, Royal Oaks, and Moss Landing.

Values include the four major highways noted above. Each of these routes is vital to vehicular traffic in the region. Although considered a “rural” region, the area contains a large number of single-family dwellings, ranchland, and commercial/retail properties. Additionally, the Moss Landing power plant and Moss Landing Harbor are located on the western edge of the Priority Area. Moss Landing and Zmudowski State beaches and the Elkhorn Slough provide scenery, recreation, and wildlife refuge. The potential for a large damaging fire in this area has increased dramatically due to the large number of eucalyptus trees throughout the area.

Priority Area Goals:

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

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within Priority Area.
- Strive to provide chipper services, as available, to assist property owners in meeting the wildland fire safety requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291, and reducing the overall wildland fuels load adjacent to identified values.
- Reduction and/or removal of wildland fuels along primary access/egress routes to reduce the incidence of roadside ignitions, and to ensure safe access and egress by firefighters and residents in the event of a wildland fire emergency.
- Encourage development and distribution of wildland emergency plans for specific sub-areas of the Priority Area. Such plans should identify access routes, water sources, helibases and helispots, command posts, staging areas, and/or any other significant element of a wildland fire strategy for the target area that can be pre-planned and identified.
- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local stakeholders to identify additional mitigating actions suitable for the area.
- Annual chipper program jointly offered by CAL FIRE, Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District and the Aromas Water District
San Juan Canyon: (San Juan Bautista)

This area is located 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 SVRA on the east, and Wildhorse Canyon on the south.

Values include single and multi-family residential structures, many located in remote areas with limited access, and several large ranches. Access to and egress from the entire Priority Area is very limited.

Priority Area Goals:

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

Potential Mitigating Actions:

The following actions have been identified to achieve the Unit Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

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

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

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

**Priority Area Goals:**

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

**Potential Mitigating Actions:**

The following prescriptions have been identified as potential successful methods of achieving the Unit’s Fire Plan goals for this Priority Area:

- Annual inspection and enforcement of fire safety and clearance requirements of Public Resources Code Section 4291 for at least 33% of structures within the Priority Area.
- Roadside fuel modification to ensure egress / exit route safety and reduce the possibility of “roadside starts”.
- Work closely with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, the Resource Conservation District for Monterey County, and local fire agencies to identify additional prescriptions suitable for the area.
# Communities

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For more information on Communities at Risk and the California Fire Alliance go to [http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fireplan/fireplanning_communities_at_risk.php](http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fireplan/fireplanning_communities_at_risk.php)

* Communities listed as Communities at Risk on the California Fire Alliance website
Section IV: Pre-Fire Management Strategies

*Fire Prevention and Law Enforcement - Battalion 4620*

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

The San Benito-Monterey Unit management team addresses fire prevention through the engineering, education, and law enforcement programs. Their shared objective is reduced fire hazard and risk. This is more narrowly addressed in a planning process based on ignition management and loss reduction, including biomass utilization, fire resistant landscaping, mechanical fuels treatment, building construction standards, infrastructure, land use planning and pre-fire, safety zone and escape plans.

Ignitions are managed by preventing fires likely to exceed the capabilities of available suppression forces that could result in large damaging fires. Loss reduction is integral to mitigating large and damaging fires. Significant improvement can be achieved by reducing hazards (fuel buildups around structures and communities) and working with private industry to implement hazard reduction plans around residential developments in the rural-urban intermix areas. Additionally, pre-designated suppression and ingress/egress routes are effective tools in ensuring civilian and firefighter life safety. Successful programs permit more effective utilization of CAL FIRE’s initial attack forces and enhance firefighter and citizen safety.

*See Appendix B for Ignition Data*
Engineering and Structure Ignitability

While many structures in the Unit are not built to current standards, all new construction is being held to the California Building Code, Chapter 7 (Fire-Resistance-Rated Construction) and Chapter 7A (SFM - Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure) building construction standards. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) dictate what codes are to be followed in which areas. A map showing the FHSZs in the Unit is shown in the “Maps” portion of this document.

Title 19, Public Resources Code 4290 - Addresses fire apparatus access and water requirements and is implemented at the County level.

Protection Planning - Fire Protection planning is reviewed at the subdivision and parcel map level and typically implemented at the development stages of a project.

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

Title 19, Public Resources Code 4291 - Addresses defensible space around structures. Each battalion has predetermined areas in where to perform Defensible Space Inspections each year. Some battalions, due to housing density, have more inspections and are on a three-year cycle to alternate neighborhoods. Inspections will be done on any structure(s) when requested.

Pre-Plans - Unit personnel are constantly gathering updated data in each battalion to submit to Unit GIS personnel in efforts to produce updated battalion pre-plan maps. The San Benito-Monterey Unit also works with students from local colleges for pre-plan mapping of communities for emergency response. The goal of this is to increase public and emergency responder awareness of community values, hazards, egress/ingress routes, potential safe refuge areas, and coordinate emergency responders, while also providing students with the opportunity to engage in GIS projects and emergency planning for college credit.

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) – In 2007, FHSZs were updated with improved accuracy and adopted throughout the Unit— not only on state responsibility lands, but also in local jurisdictions. All cities affected within the San Benito-Monterey Unit adopted recommended changes in the Very High FHSZs, and now adhere to building code regulations contained in California Building Code Chapter 7A.
Information and Education

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

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

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

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

Vegetation Management Program (VMP)

The San Benito-Monterey Resource Management and Wildfire Resiliency Program strives to enhance the Unit’s natural resources for both present and future use. The Unit has a Registered Professional Forester on staff, an Environmental Scientist, and Pre-Fire Engineer to provide assistance and education to landowners on forestry issues.

The Unit administers an active Vegetation Management Program (VMP). The purpose of the VMP program is to reintroduce fire to the landscape, restoring aspects of historic fire regimes, and to reduce flammable vegetation that may contribute to large, damaging wildfires and high fire suppression costs. The flammable vegetation on public or private lands can be reduced through prescribed burning or mechanical treatment. Vegetation management also results in benefits to grazing, wildlife, plant diversity, and water quality.

Overview:

The Vegetation Management Program is a cost-sharing program that focuses on the use of prescribed fire and mechanical means for addressing wildland fire fuel hazards and other resource management issues on State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. The use of prescribed fire mimics natural processes restores fire to its historic role in wildland ecosystems and provides significant fire hazard reduction benefits that enhance public and firefighter safety.

VMP allows private landowners to enter into a contract with CAL FIRE to use prescribed fire to accomplish a combination of fire protection and resource management goals. Implementation of VMP projects is by CAL FIRE Units. The projects which fit within a Unit's priority areas (e.g., those identified through the Fire Plan) and are considered to be of most value to the unit are those that will be completed.

History:

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

Vegetation Management, or VMP, was preceded by the Range Improvement Program that was used aggressively by CAL FIRE to remove undesired woody vegetation and increase forage production for domestic stock and wildlife. Early records indicate that range improvement burns were conducted by CAL FIRE as early as 1945, when CAL FIRE was known as the Division of Forestry under the Department of Natural Resources. Acres burned during the period of 1949-1953 averaged 141,400 acres per year and totaled approximately 707,000 acres for the same period (T. F. Arvola Deputy State Forester, Inter Office Memo, April 5, 1954). These burns were carried out in cooperation with landowners primarily interested in improving forage for livestock.
In July of 1980 Senate Bill 1704 (Keene) created the Chaparral Management Program. This legislation provided CAL FIRE authorization to contract with private and public landowners for the purpose of fuel hazard reduction, vegetation management, and the improvement of wildlife, range, and forest resources. The program is currently known as the Vegetation Management Program; however, the objectives and authority for fuel reduction projects are still guided by the statutes created by Senate Bill 1704.

VMP acres treated have declined significantly in recent years, averaging approximately 13,000 acres per year since 1999. Increasing rural populations, air quality issues, and new CAL FIRE programs have reduced the use of prescribed fire in many areas of the state. However, VMP is a cost-effective tool that is still used to treat vegetation where physical and social conditions are conducive to its use. The program has proven to be well suited for controlling invasive weeds and improving wildlife habitat under joint projects with organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. Its use to establish fuel breaks and eliminate heavy fuel accumulations in many areas of the state will continue.

Local Program:

Locally, the emphasis is on projects in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) and the Wildland-Urban Intermix. The intention is to treat hazardous fuel accumulations near structures and infrastructure to reduce potential losses during wildfire. Other items of concern for VMP project selection are watershed protection, habitat enhancement (especially for threatened and endangered species), and property owner goals.

The Unit has multiple projects in various stages of planning that are addressed in each Battalion section of this plan. CAL FIRE shall work, to the extent feasible, with other public agencies, landowners, and the communities themselves to implement these projects to implement rapid treatment of fuels. The department has assigned fuels engines and activated the California National Guard to the Unit, to assist with completing these projects.

Depending upon weather conditions and resource availability, we may be able to conduct multiple prescribed burns this year on projects with an active contract. Public notification of an impending prescribed burn shall be through a press release to local media outlets and may include road signs, as well.

**Vegetation Treatment Plan**

The new California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, is a critical component of the state’s multi-faceted strategy to address California’s wildfire crisis. The CalVTP includes the a variety of treatments including prescribed burning, mechanical treatments, manual treatments, herbicides, and prescribed herbivory. These tools allow us to reduce hazardous vegetation around communities in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), to construct fuel breaks, and to restore healthy ecological fire regimes. The CalVTP Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) provides a powerful tool to expedite the implementation of vegetation treatments to reduce wildfire risk while conserving natural resources.
Fuels:
Four distinct wildland fuel types dominate the San Benito-Monterey Unit.

**Fuel Model 1 (annual grasses)**

Although inter-mixed with fuel model 4 (brush), this fuel model dominates the foothills of the eastern portion of the Unit. Extending from the Santa Clara County line southward along the foothills east of the Salinas valley, this fuel model represents more than fifty percent of the fuel types in the Unit.

**Fuel Model 2 (oak woodland)**

This fuel model is typically located on the north and east facing slopes of the Unit. It is predominant in the northeast, southeast and southwest areas of both San Benito and Monterey Counties and typically aligned with Fuel model 4 (brush), on the opposite facing slopes.

**Fuel Model 4 (shrub)**

While a substantial amount of brush is located in the foothills east of the Salinas Valley, in the area of Pinnacles National Park, the majority of this fuel type is found in the mountains west of the Salinas Valley throughout the coastal range. Typically, it is found on south and western facing slopes in areas not used for cattle grazing. Brush can be found measuring over five feet in height, which corresponds to over 30 years of age.

**Fuel Model 9 (conifers)**

Conifers consisting of several species of pine and redwood are located in three distinct areas within the Unit, specifically, in the Gabilan Range, as well as the Diablo Range and throughout the coastal mountains south of Monterey. The conifer forests extend into the Big Sur and Ventana Wilderness areas.
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 counties, which are surrounded by Battalion 1. The South Division is comprised of Battalion 3 and Battalion 4. The North Division encompasses Battalion 5 and Battalion 6.

Figure 1: This map shows the distribution of battalions, facilities, and Direct Protection Area (DPA) within the San Benito-Monterey Unit.
Division, Battalion, Program Plans: West Division

Battalion 1: Carmel Battalion - Battalion 4611

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

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

- LRA acres: 86,245
- FRA acres: 249,722
- SRA acres: 252,330
- Total acres: 594,243
- CAL FIRE DPA acres: 232,940

Fire History and Occurrence
Fire history in Battalion 1 is varied. Many wildland fires have been started by lightning in inaccessible areas. Some of these have started on Federal lands and burned into State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Unattended controlled burns or campfires have historically contributed to damaging fires. Power line failures are also a common cause of fires due to the corrosive effects of the marine air on the lines. Major Fires in the battalion have included Marble Cone 1977, Rat Creek - Gorda Complex Fire 1985, 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, which is a very narrow canyon with one way and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

Target Area 2: The communities of Jamesburg and Cachagua, which have a major WUI issue with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Target Area 3: Carmel Valley at large. Carmel Valley is a WUI issue with narrow driveways and limited access to homes and step driveways and many one way in and one way out areas etc.

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

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan
1. Public Education/Contact:

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

   A. Burn Permit Administration

   LE-62’s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued by CAL FIRE at an open State Facility and or obtained online via CALFIRE website. Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn hours.

   LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.
LE-7/LE-8’s (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

B. 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
- Participate in tabletop drills

C. Stakeholder

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 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)
- Big Sur Land Trust (BSLT)
- Monterey County (MoCo)
- Hastings National History Reservation
- Del Monte Forest Conservancy (DMFC)
- Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District (CHF)
- Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD)
- Cypress Fire Protection District (CYP)
- Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC)
- Local, State and Federally Elected Officials
2. Fire Prevention Engineering

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

A. 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

B. 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 as well as controlled burns are being used to reduce fuel loads, create strategic fuel breaks to protect communities, and maintain safe egress in case of fire.
C. 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.

D. Inspection:

Battalion staff will continue working with PG&E to guide and assist in powerline engineering and PRC 4293 enforcement. This will include prioritizing their line inspections to be in line with the identified target areas along with identifying and removing any hazard vegetation that could compromise the lines and create a fire ignition.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has two 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.

A. 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. This process will include an initial LE-100 inspection. After the initial inspection, if any violations are found, a 2nd inspection will be required to assess the property. If after the 2nd inspection is completed and violations are still present, the property owner will have a 3rd and final inspection. If violations are found on the last inspection, the property owner shall be cited. 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.
Battalion 2: Peninsula Battalion (Schedule A – Contract Districts)

Battalion 4605 – Prevention & Planning
Battalion 4612 – Cypress FPD & Carmel Highlands FPD
Battalion 4618 – Pebble Beach CSD

Description

Battalion 2 is comprised of three local government cooperative fire protection agreements or “Schedule A” contracts made up of the Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD), Cypress Fire Protection District, and Carmel Highlands Fire Protection District.

The Pebble Beach area is entirely within the State Responsibility Area (SRA). Also referred to as the Del Monte Forest, this area has a closed-cone coniferous forest with areas of chaparral and coastal scrub, as well as small remnants of coastal prairie in the common areas. There are homes throughout the forested areas, including homes interfaced between golf courses and timber. Small fires that occur in these areas pose a major threat to many high-dollar homes. The Morse Fire in 1987, started by an illegal campfire, burned 190 acres, and destroyed 31 structures, causing an estimated damage of approximately $18,000,000. Fire road signage, mapping, and maintenance are a high priority in the district due to recreation and fire occurrences in the open spaces within the forest.

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

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

Fire Prevention

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

Defensible space remains a high priority in Battalion 2 due to the housing density within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The battalion has an aggressive LE-100 program employing Veterans utilizing the Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program, to educate homeowners and to ensure compliance throughout the districts. The Fuel Management Officer/Fire Captain has been working on fuel reduction projects in all three Districts of Battalions 2 to increase fire fuel reduction and defensible space efforts. The Fuel Management Officer works with the Fire Protection and Planning Battalion (FPP) staff.
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 SRA; starts from the Chualar area and encompasses both sides of the Salinas Valley “ridge top to ridge top” south to Highway 198.

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

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

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

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

Fire History and Occurrence
Fire history shows that equipment use is a leading cause of ignitions and has resulted in several large, damaging fires in Battalion 3. As a result, the Unit has made it a high priority to educate ranchers and homeowners on the importance of spark arresters and mowing in cooler weather conditions. Large billboards signs are posted in the battalion stating to “mow before 10 a.m.” before the heat of the day. Statistics show that these efforts have been successful, and ignitions have decreased. Powerline caused fires are also among the frequent ignitions in Battalion 3. Prevention staff have been working with the utility company to upgrade powerline equipment to reduce the number of fires in the Unit. Debris burning used to constitute a large percentage of ignitions, however, education of landowners on laws of debris burning has reduced the amount of control burn escapes in the Unit.
Weather

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

Fire Prevention Plan Development

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

Target Area 1: southwest of Pinnacles, stretching from Stonewall Canyon, Metz Road and Highway 146 including Pinnacles National Park, which is a very narrow canyon with one way in and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

Target Area 2: Arroyo Seco East Carmel Valley road, which is a very narrow canyon with one way and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

Target Area 3: The communities of Pine Canyon, which have a major WUI issue with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan

1. Public Education:

   Public contact and education continue to be a priority within Battalion 3 to reduce the number of fire ignitions. The local Battalion Chief 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:

   A. Burn Permit Administration

      LE-62’s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued at the following CAL FIRE stations: King City, Gonzales, and Soledad— If the station is not staffed,
signage will be posted to inform the public of the open CAL FIRE facility. Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn hours.

LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.

LE-7/LE-8’s (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

B. Public Education Forums

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

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

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

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

A. 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. Battalion 5 will mail a flyer out to property owners. Property owners can significantly affect the containment of fires by supporting CAL FIRE in this program.

The priority road is Metz Road, which is identified as the main thoroughfare in target area 1. This, combined with Caltrans and Monterey County roads providing 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.
- Fire break confirmation. Simply 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.

**B. Vegetation Management:**

The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing the potential of a large fire and reducing the damage from a large fire. The Sierra de Salinas 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 conduct some efforts soon. This will provide a large reduction of fuels in the south of the battalion, assisting in providing fuel breaks, established dozer lines, and limiting the extent of large scale, extended attack fires. It will also be converting a large amount of brush to enhance 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 RI (Range Improvement) burns and 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 an RI burn. This will help ensure efficient and effective RI 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 VMP planning. In concurrence with the Annual Operating Plan (AOP) for Pinnacles National Park, the opportunity for a fuel break or VMP to hinder a fire entering or exiting the Park is in the planning stages.

C. Pre-Fire Engineering:

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

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has two 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 the Forestry and Fire Laws within the Unit and Battalion.

A. Defensible Space Inspections:

The primary objectives in Battalion 3 will be to prioritize hot spots within the battalion that have a significant wildland fire threat, and to inspect homes utilizing the PRC 4291 program. To initiate the process, Battalion 3 fire stations have been assigned the target areas listed above. The Unit Defensible Space Inspectors will be assigned to eastside along Metz Road. This process will include an initial LE-100 inspection. After the initial inspection, if any violations are found, a 2nd inspection will be required to assess the property. If after the 2nd inspection is completed and violations are still present, the property owner will have a 3rd and final inspection. If violations are found on the last inspection, the property owner shall be cited. 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.
**Battalion 4: Bradley Battalion – Battalion 4614**

**Description**
The Bradley Battalion is in the south end of the San Benito-Monterey Unit in Monterey County. The north end of the Bradley Battalion aligns with the Highway 198 corridor going east from Highway 101 to the San Benito county line and runs west of Highway 101 along the eastern base of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range to the southeastern border of the Los Padres National Forest. The east side of the battalion runs south from the San Benito county line along the Diablo Mountain Range, encompassing Priest Valley, Peach Tree Valley, Cholame Valley and the community of Parkfield running parallel with the San Andreas Fault and Fresno County border to the northern edge of San Luis Obispo County. Fuels on the eastern side of the Battalion are predominantly open rangeland, transitioning to heavier fuels with extremely steep topography moving east. The west side of the battalion follows the Los Padres National Forest border south to the San Luis Obispo county line, encompassing the communities of Bryson-Hesperia, Lockwood, Bradley, San Ardo, and the Lake San Antonio Recreation Area. Fuels on the western side of the battalion are predominantly grass, oak woodland, and chamise, which transitions to heavier fuels with steeper terrain. Battalion 4 is also comprised of two (2) Department of Defense military compounds: Fort Hunter Liggett (167,000 acres) 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, Salinas River Cogeneration Facility, and the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, we can work on mitigating fire hazards and 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 the Battalion are due to roadside starts, with the leading causes of ignitions being equipment use, vehicles, and electrical power. Many these fires are wind driven fires, with successful control objectives keeping the fires 10 acres or less.

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).
acres), 2016 Coleman Fire (2,520 acres), and the 2006 Rico Fire (14,507 acres), which was
classified as a major fire. In 2020, the largest fire in Battalion 4 was the Rico fire (348 acres).

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 110-degree mark. The valley winds
range from 15-25 mph, usually begin early afternoon, and subside around sunset when the
marine layer occasionally blows in, cooling valley temperatures.

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

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

Target Area 1: Lockwood-Jolon at large, a WUI area with narrow driveways and limited
access to homes with steep driveways, and limited ingress and egress.

Target Area 2: The communities of Parkfield and Cholame Valley, which have narrow roads
and limited access to homes.

Target Area 3: Bryson-Hesperia, a WUI community with narrow driveways and limited access
to homes with steep driveways, and limited ingress and egress.

Three target areas were identified in Battalion 4. The first target area encompasses Lockwood-
Jolon. This includes the Lockwood-San Lucas Road, Jolon Road, and the Calandra
infrastructure, with the residential communities on the east/west flats of the southern portion of
the Santa Lucia Mountain Range. Target area 2 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. Target area 3 is the Bryson-Hesperia area that
has moderate to high population density in some areas and is still going through fuel
modification efforts. This area is comprised of Copperhead Road, Hesperia Road, Sapaque
Valley Road, Smith Road, Pleyto Road, and Interlake Road.

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan
1. Public Education/Contact:

   Public contact and education continue to be a priority within the battalion to reduce the
   number of fire starts. 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, BLM, and through community outreach programs that help fund projects through prioritizing.

A. Burn Permit Administration

LE-62’s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued at the following CAL FIRE stations when open; Bradley, Lockwood and Parkfield. If the station is not staffed, signage will be posted to inform the public of the open CAL FIRE facility. Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn hours.

LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.

LE-7/LE-8’s (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

B. Public Education Forums

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

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

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

Battalion personnel in conjunction with the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, pre-fire engineering and prevention staff, Defensible Space Inspectors, and various other local public agencies will continuously educate, evaluate, and propose current and new efforts to prevent a large-scale wildfire in this area. The battalion is educating the public as well as providing information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to FDRS signs, the battalion has posted prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.
A. 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. Battalion 4 will mail a flyer out to property owners. 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.
- Fire break confirmation. Simply 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.

B. Vegetation Management:

The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing fuel loads and 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 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.

C. Pre-Fire Engineering:

Battalion personnel in conjunction with the Unit Pre-Fire Engineer will continue creating pre-fire plans for prone 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 Fire Safe Council for Monterey County to continue the Chipping and Fuel Reduction program, which assists
homeowners with clearing unnecessary fuel adhering to the Department’s LE-100 program.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has two 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.

A. 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 2021 we anticipate a 100% LE-100 inspection process will take place on all structures within the SRA in all target areas. This process will include an initial LE-100 inspection. After the initial inspection, if any violations are found, a 2nd inspection will be required to assess the property. If after the 2nd inspection is completed and violations are still present, the property owner will have a 3rd and final inspection. If violations are found on the last inspection, the property owner shall be cited. 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.

LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.
Division, Battalion, Program Plans: North Division

Battalion 5: Hollister Battalion – Battalion 4615

Description
The Hollister Battalion is located at the north end of the San Benito/Monterey Unit in San Benito County and northwestern Monterey County. The Hollister Battalion follows the San Benito County line on the east down to the end of Cienega Road and East to South of the Panoche and Antelope Valleys. The west side (Gabilan Mountain Range) of the battalion is comprised of steep terrain and heavy fuels up near Fremont Peak. Included in the Battalion are the communities of Aromas, Castroville, Las Lomas, Pajaro, Prunedale, Royal Oaks, and Moss Landing. 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, chamise, and gray pine, with the Aromas-Las Lomas areas containing some heavily wooded areas of eucalyptus groves.

Values at Risk
The main values at risk in Battalion 5 are the life and property of local residences including residential structures, recreational areas, agriculture, watershed, and infrastructure.

Cooperation of members from the San Benito Fire Safe Council, Fire Safe Council of Monterey County, BLM, California Department of Parks and Recreation, 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: 3,493
➢ SRA acres: 443,646
➢ LRA acres: 120,625
➢ Total acres: 459,201
➢ CAL FIRE DPA acres: 446,827

Fire History and Occurrence
Most fires within the battalion occur as roadside starts. These fires are classified as equipment, vehicle, electrical, or undetermined as to specific ignition source. Most of these fires are contained at less than 20 acres. Large fires are not a regular occurrence in the battalion. Areas that had significant extended attack fires in recent years include Cienega and Panoche. Hollister Hills SVRA also experiences small fires that are usually contained to less than 20-30 acres. Last year the largest fire in Battalion 5 was the Coyote Incident at

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 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 5.

**Target Area 1:** The unincorporated area from Highway 101, Highway 129 and San Juan Canyon Road, which are areas of highly traveled highways to a very narrow canyon with one way in and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

**Target Area 2:** Cienega road area, which has with narrow roads and limited access to homes.

Two target areas were identified in Battalion 5. The first is the Aromas Tri County and North Monterey County areas. This includes areas of Monterey and San Benito Counties, including Highway 101, Highway 129, and San Juan Canyon Road.

The second is geographically located in the WUI area of Cienega Road and State Highway 25, southwest of the community of Hollister.

**Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan**

1. **Public Education/Contact:**

   Public contact and education continue to be a priority within Battalion 5 to reduce the number of fire 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, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, their community outreach and helping in prioritizing projects through their grant funding.

   **A. Burn Permit Administration**

   LE-62’s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued at CAL FIRE Aromas station when open or provide signage to an open State Facility. Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) determines burn hours.

   LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.

   LE-7/LE-8’s (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.
B. 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
- Fire Safe Council for Monterey County Meetings
- Battalion 5 Fire Danger Rating System (FDRS) signs

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

The North Division will also focus its available resources to support the prevention of large wildfires in target areas 1 and 2. The North Division, in cooperation with the San Benito Fire Safe Council, the Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, 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.

Battalion 5 is educating the public as well as providing information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to FDRS signs, the battalion is considering prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

A. 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. Battalion 5 will mail a flyer out to property owners. 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.
- Fire break confirmation. Simply 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.

B. Vegetation Management:

Fuels Management Programs include the Aromas Tri Counties FPD annual chipper program. This program runs in conjunction with our transition from winter preparedness into peak fire season. The chipper program is free to the Aromas
community and lets residence drop off clippings they have accumulated while creating defensible space around their homes.

C. Pre-Fire Engineering:

Public roadways have experienced significant number of ignitions. These ignitions can have a direct influence in target areas 1 and 2 due to heavy fuel loading and density of structures in the area. Battalion 5 will petition Caltrans, Monterey County Public Works, and San Benito County Public Works Departments to perform fuels reduction practices on each agency’s public easements in target areas 1 and 2. These fuel reductions should 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. Reduction of fuels adjacent to public roadways can also directly affect strategies and tactics for offensive and defensive fire control during a wildfire event.

3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has two 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.

A. 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 2021, our goal is to complete LE-100 inspection of all residential structures within the SRA in target areas 1 and 2. This process will include an initial LE-100 inspection. After the initial inspection if any violations are found, a 2nd inspection will be required to assess the property. If after the 2nd inspection is completed and violations are still present, the property owner will have a 3rd and final inspection. If violations are found on the last inspection, the property owner shall be cited. 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.

The remainder of SRA in Battalion 5 will be under the LE-100 Defendable Space Inspection process. These sections are outside of target areas 1 and 2 generally consist light fuels and a low residential population, in conjunction with minimal fire ignition trends. This process will be a primary inspection for compliance, with a follow up inspection if needed.
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 SRA. However, there are two areas of FRA: Pinnacles National Park (NPS) 26,000 acres; and the Clear Creek Recreation and Laguna Mountain Area (BLM) 77,000 acres CAL FIRE DPA. The battalion lies on the east side of the Unit in San Benito County and contains Hwy 25/Pinnacles National Park Hwy (also known as Airline Hwy) running north/south down the center. The northern border is Cienega Road with the southern border being Hwy 198/ Priest Valley. The east/west boundaries are the Fresno and Monterey County lines, respectively. Terrain ranges from rolling hills, home to many large cattle ranches, on the east side (west aspects of the Diablo Range) to steep rugged terrain with heavy fuels on the west side (east aspects of the Gabilan Range). Battalion 6 is comprised of grass, oak woodland, chamise, and gray pine. The area is populated with rural residential properties/ranches 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.

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 20 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, which is a narrow canyon with one way and one way out roads and narrow driveways.

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

Mitigation Strategies and Action Plan

1. Public Education/Contact:

Public contact and education continue to be a priority within Battalion 6 to reduce the number of fire starts. 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, their community outreach and helping in prioritizing projects through their grant funding. The action plan for public contact and education is as follows:

A. Burn Permit Administration

LE-62’s (Residential Burn Permit – Burn Pile) will be issued at CAL FIRE Bear Valley station, when open, or provide signage to an open State Facility. The local pollution control district determines burn hours.

LE-5’s (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by CAL FIRE prior to authorization to burn during declared fire season.

LE-7/LE-8’s (Project Type Burning Permit/Minimum Precautions for Project Type Burning) are issued for specific projects such as Range Improvement burns.

B. Public Education Forums

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

- San Benito County Fair
- School Programs at Jefferson and Bitterwater Schools
- Fire Prevention Signage
- San Benito County Fire Safe Council Meeting 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 providing information regarding equipment use and fire safe programs. In addition to FDRS signs, the battalion is considering prevention signs with interchangeable messages based on the season.

2. Fire Prevention Engineering

A. 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. Battalion 6 will mail a flyer out to property owners. 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.
- Fire break confirmation. Simply 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. This, combined with Caltrans and San Benito County Roads providing PRC road clearance, will assist in preventing the highest percentage ignition for the battalion, a roadside start, from extending

B. 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 VMP/VTP’s in progress: The Rock Springs VMP, totaling over 9,000 acres, Stone Canyon VMP totaling 8,000 acers, and the Moody VMP 4,500 acres. This will provide a large reduction of fuels in the south of the battalion, assisting in providing fuel breaks, established dozer lines and limiting the extent of large scale, extended attack fires. It will also be converting a large amount of brush to enhance wildlife habitat. Over 6,000 acres were burned and completed in November 2019 at the Rock Springs VMP. The goal is to return to Rock Springs VMP and treat more acres in the future.
Battalion staff are continually looking at new VMP’s along the Gabilan Range as well as working with and educating landowners of 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. Both battalion staff and Unit staff will be available as a resource to assist in planning and implementation of an RI burn. This will help ensure efficient and effective RI prescriptions, that align with both the landowner and the Department objectives. For instance, the Battalion 6 personnel worked with the UC Cooperative Extension to host a training RI burn in the Bitterwater area to help educate and reintroduce RI burns, and possibly create a RI Association. Target areas 1 and 2 have been identified to give prioritization to areas of the battalion for future VMP planning. In concurrence with the AOP for Pinnacles National Park, the opportunity for a fuel break or VMP to hinder a fire entering or exiting the Park is in the planning stages.

C. Pre-Fire Engineering:

In conjunction with Battalion 5 and the North Division, Battalion 6 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. This will in turn allow us to better plan and prioritize mitigation strategies when focusing on the target areas.
3. Law Enforcement

The Unit has two 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.

A. 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. Staff will advise the battalion chief of a violation; the battalion chief will conduct the last inspection and determine if enforcement is necessary, and if so, advise the Law Enforcement Bureau to issue a citation. 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 acceptable due to fire activity and drawdown, covering 100% of willing property owners over two years.
Training – Battalion 4607

The Unit Training Division maintains a highly active and dynamic program. Not only is the Training Division tasked with providing and delivering the departmental training program at the Unit level, but it also delivers and coordinates training classes for over 275 CAL FIRE permanent and seasonal personnel, and up to 60 volunteers. Delivering and tracking of certifications for CAL FIRE personnel, the Training Division utilizes a web-based service – Target Solutions – to deliver on-line training courses and to track certifications. Additionally, the Training Division coordinates and delivers the annual Wildland Fire Preparedness Exercises.

In terms of supporting the Unit Fire Plan, the Training Division provides two key functions:

1. Provides training to ensure all staff meet operational readiness
2. Provides training to support the Unit’s Pre-Fire/Resource Management, Education and Prevention (PEP) programs.

In terms of meeting the Unit’s operational readiness standards, the Training Division provides basic and intermediate training courses to support the entry-level firefighter through the Chief Officer/Command Staff disciplines to ensure all firefighters are proficient. Key training classes provided by the Training Division include wildland firefighter safety and survival, C-234 Intermediate Firing Operations and the breadth of the CAL FIRE and NWCG Incident Command courses. Additionally, the Training Division coordinates with the Unit’s Emergency Command Center and tracks the number and type of Incident Command System qualified and trainee positions within the Unit. To further ICS qualifications, the Training Division has set two goals:

1. All fire suppression employees receive A-Faller training/certification within two years of employment with the department. Selected personnel will be chosen to attend Class “B” or “C” faller training.
2. All Chief Officers and Fire Captains receive CAL FIRE(C-234) Intermediate Firing Operations training/certification.

The Training Division provides and coordinates training that integrates departmental programs. An example, all BEU Fire control personnel assigned to Helitack or Hollister Air Attack base attend the following training where applicable: RT-372 Helicopter Manager Refresher Training, RT 378 Air Attack Group Supervisor, Basic Helicopter Safety – Hoist Rescue, and Air Base Safety Training. Another example, to meet the Resource Management and Wildfire Resiliency program objectives for fuels treatment and acres burned under the Vegetation Management Program, the Training Division conducts and coordinates live fire training under the C-234 and the Fire Control 7 (FSTEP program by the State Fire Marshal).
Gabilan Conservation Camp – Administered by Division 4603

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 Soledad State Correctional Facility and the Salinas Valley State Prison on Highway 101 between the cities of Soledad and Gonzales. The camp houses approximately 100 to 132 low-risk inmates under the direction of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and CAL FIRE. CAL FIRE operates 6 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 for the upcoming fire season.

In addition to emergency responses, 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.

Sponsors during the last years include (but are not limited to): Hollister Hills State Park; 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; 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.

*Due to COVID Release, Camp population has decreased availability of staff to 3 Fire Crews.*
Hollister Air Attack base was established in 1962 at Hollister Airport. The base is located 30 miles south of San Jose, within the San Benito-Monterey Unit. Hollister Airport started as a grass strip that was used by agricultural aircraft and then as a US Navy training field during World War 2. In 1947 the Navy deeded the Airport to Hollister City. The Helitack module began in 1987 under the name Bitter Water 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. Hollister Base responds to approximately 350 calls per year.

Aircraft assigned to the Hollister Air Base include one OV-10A Bronco Air Tactical platform, two type 3 S2-T Air Tankers, and one type one S-70I Helicopter. The base also houses multiple utility vehicles and the Helitender which carries fuel, supplies and equipment required for the operation of the Helicopter. The base can produce 90,000 gallons of retardant per day. In 2020 the base pumped over 1 Million gallons supporting major fires in the area.

Staff at the base consists of one Battalion Chief, seven 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-2 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-2 tankers are considered type 3 air tankers and are staffed with one DynCorp Air Tanker Pilot.

In 2019 CAL FIRE acquired S-70I CAL FIRE HAWKs to replace their fleet of Vietnam era UH-1H Hueys. The CAL FIRE HAWK is a Type I helicopter with a fixed tank capable of carrying 1,000 gallons of water. 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 Hawk to drop water from the fixed tank, and coordinate fire activities with other firefighting aircraft. The CAL FIRE HAWK also has an externally mounted hoist system which can be used to rescue injured people from remote, austere environments. The helicopter performs approximately 12 rescues per year.
## Appendix A: Pre-Fire Projects

### 2020 List:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
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<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>VMP Pine Canyon</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>VMP Point Lobos Fuel Reduction</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>VMP Ranchita Canyon</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>VMP Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| FirePlan | Ventura County Fire District Chipping Program | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Moody | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP McCray | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP Multi-Community Cooperative Chipping for Monterey County | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Outlook Drive | Complete |
| FirePlan | VMP Pacific Meadows Fuel Reduction | Complete in Maintenance |
| FirePlan | VMP Palo Colorado Fuel Break | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Palo Colorado PreFire Planning_mapping | Complete |
| FirePlan | VMP Palo Corona Fire Roads | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Paloma Truck Trail - Fire Road | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP Paloma Truck Trail | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP Pebble Beach Fuel Reduction | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Pescadero Canyon | Complete in Maintenance |
| FirePlan | VMP Pine Canyon | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP Point Lobos Fuel Reduction | Active |
| FirePlan | VMP Ranchita Canyon | Planned |
| FirePlan | VMP Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail | Planned |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FirePlan</th>
<th>Rancho Tierra Grande Chipping Program</th>
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<tr>
<td>VMP</td>
<td>Rock Springs VMP</td>
<td>Active 6,940</td>
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<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>Reducing Fuel Load to Manage Wildfire Risk at Jacks Peak County Park, Monterey, California</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break</td>
<td>Active 1,470</td>
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<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>Shepherds Knoll</td>
<td>Active 15</td>
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<td>Smith Mt. Fire Road</td>
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<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>West Side Fuelbreak</td>
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<td>White Rock Fuel Reduction</td>
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<td>FirePlan</td>
<td>White Rock Ridge Fuelbreak</td>
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<td>VMP</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,135</strong></td>
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Battalion 1 Projects:

Project #1
Name: Palo Colorado Wildland Fire Pre-Plans
Description: Pre-plan community with updated maps and wildfire tactical planning
Community: Palo Colorado, South of Carmel
Collaborators: Mid Coast Fire Brigade, Monterey FSC

Project #2
Name: Hatton Canyon Fuel Break Maintenance
Description: Maintain current fuel break in canyon between subdivisions.
Community: Carmel at the mouth of Carmel Valley
Collaborators: State Parks, Cypress FPD

Project #3
Name: Outlook to Outlook Fuel Break Maintenance
Description: Maintain current fuel break in canyon between subdivisions.
Community: Carmel at the mouth of Carmel Valley
Collaborators: Monterey County Public Works, Private Landowners, Cypress FPD

Project #4
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, Monterey FSC, Private Landowners

Project #5
Name: Carmel Valley Regional Fuel Break
Description: Establish a fire road for emergency egress.
Community: Carmel Valley
Collaborators: Cachagua FPD, Private Landowners, Monterey FSC

Project #6
Name: Robinson Canyon Road Fuel Break
Description: Establish a shaded fuel break along Robinson Canyon Road.
Community: Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel Valley
Collaborators: Santa Lucia Preserve, White Rock, Monterey County

Project #7
Name: Palo Corona Fire Roads
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway.
Communities: Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley, White Rock, Palo Colorado areas
Collaborators: MPRPD, DF&W, White Rock Community

Project #8
Name: Residential Chipping Program
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owners.
Community: Cachagua, White Rock areas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners
Battalion 2 Projects:

**Project #1**  
Name: Aguajito/Jacks Peak Fuel Reduction  
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, chipping.  
Community: Gentry Hill, Olmstead Road, Loma Alta, Aguajito  
Collaborators: Cypress FPD, CAL FIRE, HOA, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Monterey Co Regional Parks, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works

**Project #2**  
Name: Del Mesa Carmel / Pacific Meadows Fuel Reduction  
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fire break. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways and fire breaks in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, chipping.  
Community: Del Mesa Carmel, Pacific Meadows  
Collaborators: Cypress FPD, CAL FIRE, HOA, Monterey County Public Works

**Project #3**  
Name: Hatton Canyon Fuel Break Maintenance  
Description: Maintain current fuel break in canyon between subdivisions. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.  
Community: Carmel at the mouth of Carmel Valley  
Collaborators: State Parks, Cypress FPD, CAL FIRE

**Project #4**  
Name: Carmel Knolls Rancho Rio Vista Fuel Reduction  
Description: Reduce fuels in open space areas and large lots. Utilize hand crews and contractors to masticate, limb trees, cut brush and chip material. Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and open space areas with mowing, weed eating and additional brush clearance.  
Community: Carmel Knolls and Rancho Rio Vista  
Collaborators: Cypress FPD, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, CAL FIRE, HOA, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works.
**Project #5**
Name: Quail Meadows Fuel Reduction  
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing.  
Community: Carmel Views, Carmel Knolls  
Collaborators: Cypress FPD, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, CAL FIRE, HOA, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works.

**Project #6**
Name: High Meadows Fuel Reduction  
Description: Reduce fuels in open space areas, increase defensible space buffer to 100 feet around community. Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment and crews utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing.  
Community: Via Mar Monte, Carmel Hills Dr, High Meadows  
Collaborators: Cypress FPD, CAL FIRE, HOA, Monterey Co Regional Parks, State Parks, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works, Caltrans, HOAs

**Project #7**
Name: Residential Chipping Program  
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owner. Four chipping cycles by private contractor from spring to fall.  
Community: All communities within Cypress Fire Protection District  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, private landowners
Project #1
Name: Carmel Highlands Foothill Grant
Description: Provide 100-foot fire line along the foothills of Carmel Highlands. Equipment utilized for masticating, chipping, crews to cut brush, goats in open grasslands and steep areas.
Community: Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: Private residents, Carmel Highlands FPD, CAL FIRE, State Parks

Project #2
Name: San Jose Creek Fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for ingress and egress. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, chipping.
Community: Red Wolf, Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: State Parks, Carmel Highlands FPD

Project #3
Name: Ribera Road (Carmel River State Park) Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway for ingress and egress. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, chipping.
Community: Ribera Road
Collaborators: State Parks Carmel Highlands FPD

Project #4
Name: Carmel Highlands Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.
Community: Carmel Highlands
Collaborators: Carmel Highlands FPD, CAL FIRE, Private HOA, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County, Monterey County Regional Parks, PG&E, Monterey County Public Works, Caltrans.

Project #5
Name: Victorine Ranch Fuel Reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Equipment utilized for mowing, weed eating, cutting/removing materials.
Community: Victorine Ranch
Collaborators: Carmel Highlands FPD, Carmel Lahaina Water Co., Private HOA
Project #6  
Name: Residential Chipping Program  
Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space creation and maintenance by the property owner.  
Community: Carmel Highlands  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE / Private landowners

Project #7  
Name: Corona Road Fuel Reduction  
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, cutting trees and chipping.  
Community: Corona Road  
Collaborators: Carmel Highlands FPD, Corona Road Maintenance Association, private HOA

Project #8  
Name: Mal Paso Creek Fuel Reduction  
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway and fuel break. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.  
Community: Mal Paso Creek  
Collaborators: Carmel Highlands FPD, Carmel Riviera Water Management District, Mal Paso Creek Property Owners
Project #1
Name: Sunridge Pines common area fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.
Community: Sunridge Pines common area, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, CAL FIRE, Private HOA, Pebble Beach Community Service District, PG&E

Project #2
Name: Huckleberry Hill fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway, fire roads and fuel breaks. Utilize crews to perform clearance along target roadways in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.
Community: Sunridge Pines common area, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Service District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy, PG&E

Project #3
Name: Shepherd's Knoll fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing.
Community: Shepherds Knoll, Sunridge, 17 Mile Dr, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, CAL FIRE, Private HOA, private contractor

Project #4
Name: Navajo Tracts (Area B and Area C) fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway, fire roads and fuel breaks. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing.
Community: Forest Lodge, Majella, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #5
Name: Forest Lake fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway, fire roads and fuel breaks. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing.
Community: Lopez, Congress, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, Pebble Beach Community Service District, CAL AM
Project #6
Name: Indian Village (Indian Village Annex) fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway, fire roads and fuel breaks. Utilize crews to perform clearance in target areas in SRA. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.
Community: Spyglass Hill, Stevenson, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Service District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #7
Name: Crocker Grove / SFB Morse Memorial fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway fire roads and fuel breaks. Utilize crews to perform clearance in target areas in SRA. Equipment utilized for weed eating, cutting/removing materials, mowing, and chipping.
Community: Cypress Point, Portola, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, Del Monte Forest Conservancy

Project #8
Name: Pescadero Canyon fuel reduction
Description: Maintain the clearance on the existing roadway, fire roads and fuel breaks. Equipment utilized for masticating, weed eating, cutting/removing materials, chipping, and mowing. Livestock utilized in steep canyons and areas inaccessible for equipment or crews.
Community: Carmel Woods, Carmel Way, Pebble Beach
Collaborators: Pebble Beach FPD, CAL FIRE, Pebble Beach Community Service District, Del Monte Forest Conservancy, PG&E
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion 3 Projects:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project #1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name: Residential Chipping Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Treatment and disposal of vegetative material created during defensible space maintenance by the property owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community: Pine Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborators: CAL FIRE / private landowners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Project #2**       |
| Name: Sierra de Salinas VMP |
| Description: Fuel Modification with Fire Use. |
| Community: Greenfield, Soledad, Paraiso Springs areas |
| Collaborators: BLM, Private Ranches, CAL FIRE, MBARD |

| **Project #3**       |
| Name: Santa Lucia School Program |
| Description: Public Education on Fire Safety Awareness to 5th grade students. |
| Community: King City |
| Collaborators: Santa Lucia Teachers, CAL FIRE |

| **Project #4**       |
| Name: Arroyo Seco Homeowners Association |
| Description: Public education on fire awareness and preparation for wildland fires. |
| Community: Arroyo Seco |
| Collaborators: Arroyo Seco HOA, CAL FIRE, South Monterey County Fire Department (SoMoCo), Monterey County SO |

| **Project #5**       |
| Name: Deer Creek Homeowners Association |
| Description: Public education on fire awareness and preparation for wildland fires in homeowners’ area. |
| Community: Deer Creek Subdivision, Pine Canyon Road, King City |
| Collaborators: Deer Creek HOA, CAL FIRE, SoMoCo, Monterey County SO |

| **Project #6**       |
| Name: Highland Hills Homeowners Association |
| Description: Public education on fire awareness and preparation for wildland fires in homeowners’ area. |
| Community: Highland Hills Subdivision, Pine Canyon Road, King City |
| Collaborators: Highland Hills HOA, CAL FIRE, SoMoCo, Monterey County SO |

| **Project #7**       |
| Name: Via Cañada Homeowners Association |
| Description: Public education on fire awareness and preparation for wildland fires in homeowners’ area. |
| Community: Via Cañada Subdivision, Via Cañada Rd (lower Pine Canyon) King City |
| Collaborators: Via Cañada HOA, CAL FIRE, SoMoCo, Monterey County SO |
### Battalion 4 Projects:

#### Project #1
- **Name:** West Side Fuel Break  
- **Description:** Fuel modification using vegetation management techniques (Pile burning, masticating, road widening, vegetation thinning and brushing).  
- **Community:** Lockwood, East/West side of Santa Lucia Mountain Range, Williams Hill Recreation Area, Communication Infrastructure, Calandra Lookout, Paris Valley Road  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Private Landowners

#### Project #2
- **Name:** Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail (Brush clearing/VMP)  
- **Description:** Fuel clearing, road widening assisting fire department ingress and egress, Range Improvement burns (local landowners), live fire use.  
- **Community:** Parkfield, Cholame Valley  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

#### Project #3
- **Name:** Bryson-Hesperia Area Fuel Management  
- **Description:** Increase public awareness on defensible space throughout the area, continue widening roads by brush clearing and removing ladder fuels.  
- **Community:** Bryson-Hesperia  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE, Fire Safe Council for Monterey County

#### Project #4
- **Name:** Parkfield Area Pre-Plan  
- **Description:** Identify evacuation routes, temporary refuge areas (TRA), water sources, and fire suppression hazards.  
- **Community:** Parkfield, Cholame Valley, Slacks Canyon, Parkfield Grade  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE

#### Project #5
- **Name:** Indian Valley Cattle Company VMP  
- **Description:** Live fire use for fuel modification.  
- **Community:** Indian Valley Area  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

#### Project #6
- **Name:** Sky Rose Vegetation Management Project  
- **Description:** Fuel Modification using multiple vegetation management techniques.  
- **Community:** South Monterey County, Vineyard Canyon Road, Portuguese Canyon Road  
- **Collaborators:** CAL FIRE, Private Landowners
Battalion 5 Projects:

**Project #1**
Name: Thompson Truck Trail Improvement  
Description: This road was maintained annually by CAL FIRE and is a main access road to areas in that part of the county. The trail can also be used for evacuation of citizens from the San Juan Canyon area. Collaboration with the various property owners and gaining their trust and permission to allow CAL FIRE to continue maintenance of the road is crucial to the success of this project. Brushing of the roads, utilizing crews, and grading and installing water bars are some of the items that would need to be addressed.  
Community: Thompson Truck Trail runs from Cienega Road to San Juan Canyon Road on the West side of San Benito County  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE Gabilan Camp crews, San Benito Fire Safe Council (pending grant approval), Private Landowners

**Project #2**
Name: Public Education  
Description: Increase public awareness on defensible space throughout San Benito County, with emphasis in the south county area and the Panoche Valley. Personnel will utilize public events such as the San Benito County Fair.  
Community: San Benito County  
Collaborators: San Benito County Fire Department, San Benito Fire Safe Council

**Project #3**
Name: Thompson Valley VMP  
Description: Burn 1000 acres of brush and grass. This project is in the active stage.  
Community: South San Benito County  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Wilbur Ranch, Enz Ranch Private Landowners

**Project #4**
Name: Battalion 5 Hazard Assessment  
Description: Use gathered hazard assessment data to begin updated preplans and tactical/strategic planning.  
Community: Aromas, North Monterey County  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE

**Project #5**
Name: Gabilan Ranch VMP Prescribed Burn  
Description: This project is in the planning stage.  
Community: South San Benito County  
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, private landowners
Project #6
Name: Range Improvement burns
Description: Multiple Ranchers - Taylors RI, Silacci RI, Gabilan Ranch RI, Bengard RI
Community: Eastern foothills of Salinas Valley
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, Private Landowners

Project #7
Name: 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 #8
Name: San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break
Description: Establish a fuel break along San Juan Canyon up to Fremont Peak.
Community: San Juan Canyon, South of San Bautista
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, SBFSC, State Parks, Private Landowners

Project #9
Name: Bird
Description: Burn 1139 acres of brush/grass. This project is in the planning stage.
Community: San Juan Canyon
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #10
Name: McCray VMP
Description: Burn 283 acres of brush/grass. This project is in the planning stage.
Community: San Juan Canyon
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #11
Name: Bengard VMP
Description: Burn approximately 2,500 acres of brush/grass. This project is in the planning stage.
Community: East of Salinas
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

Project #12
Name: Burma VMP
Description: 1,826 acres of fuel modification with fire use in planning phase.
Community: East of Salinas, West of Fremont Peak State Park
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private landowners
Battalion 6 Projects:

**Project #1**
Name: Public Education
Description: Increase public awareness on defensible space throughout the south county area of San Benito County utilizing public events such as Neighborhood Prevention Gathering and San Benito County Fair.
Community: County of San Benito
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, San Benito Fire Safe Council

**Project #2**
Name: Stone Canyon VTP
Description: The site is the first of two or three separate burn projects located all on the Stone Canyon Ranch, approximately 8,000 acres in total. This project is in the planning phase and will tie in with Battalion 5’s VMP projects on the Gabilan Mountain Range.
Community: Northwest of the Pinnacles National Park between Highway 25 and the Monterey County line.
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

**Project #3**
Name: Rock Springs VMP
Description: Approximately 6,970 were treated in November 2019. Per completion report from January 2020 there was a recommendation to burn the brush fields, especially Bear Gulch due to limited fire intensity and narrow burn window.
Community: Northwest of Beaver Dam FFS #48, South of Rock Spring Peak.
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners

**Project #4**
Name: Moody VMP
Description: Burn approximately 4,500 acres. This project is in the planning stage.
Community: Call Mountain Ranch, Moody Canyon area, South East of Fremont Peak
Collaborators: CAL FIRE, Private Landowners
Appendix B: Ignition Data

Overview

According to the statistics in the San Benito-Monterey Unit, fire cause is relatively consistent. The largest number of acres burned was caused by lightning, even as there were only a few lightning fire days. The reverse is true for “electrical power”, which contributed to 21 percent of fires and burned approximately 722 acres. This illustrates that number of ignitions per each cause is not the only factor in acres burned, and overall fire problem in the Unit. Refer to Figure D for geographic distribution of ignitions.
Fire Occurrence Battalion Statistics

**Battalion 1**
The most notable fires of 2020 in Battalion 1 were the River and Carmel incidents. The reported cause for the River Fire was lightning, while the Carmel Fire was caused by a vehicle. Only 3 percent of fires were caused by lightning, which burned nearly 50,000 acres.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Battalion 1 Fire Cause</th>
<th>Count of Day</th>
<th>Sum of Acres Burned</th>
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<tr>
<td>Debris Burning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Power</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Playing with Fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under Investigation</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,488.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td>6,904.2</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,486.6</strong></td>
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Battalion 1 Fire Cause Statistics: 2020 Acres Burned
Battalion 3

In 2020, there were only 15 fires and they varied widely on cause. However, the cause that resulted in the most acres burned was “electrical power”. There were only 3 fires caused by “Electrical Power”, while there were 5 caused by vehicles. The largest fire in Battalion 3 in 2020 was the Bitterwater Incident, which burned 211 acres due to “electrical power”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion 3 Fire Cause</th>
<th>Count of Day</th>
<th>Sum of Acres Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
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<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical Power</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Under Investigation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>356.45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Battalion 4**

Over 995 acres were burned within Battalion 4 during 2020. Of these 32 fires, most burned acres were caused by “electrical power”. The Rico Fire (348 acres caused by “electrical power”) burned the greatest number of acres, followed by the Bradley Fire (230 acres caused by “equipment”).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion 4 Fire Cause</th>
<th>Count of Day</th>
<th>Sum of Acres Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campfire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electrical Power</td>
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<td>Equipment</td>
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<td>Vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

![Battalion 4 Fire Cause Statistics: 2020 Acres Burned](image)
**Battalion 5**

In Battalion 5 there were a total of 41 fire and approximately 152 acres burned. “arson” and “electrical power” were the leading fire cause for acres burned. There were limited fires caused by “arson” including the Stage Fire, which burned 51 acres. Many more ignitions were caused by “electrical power”, which resulted in the same number of acres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion 5 Fire Cause</th>
<th>Count of Day</th>
<th>Sum of Acres Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debris Burning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Power</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing with Fire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under Investigation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>151.97</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Battalion 6

There were only 8 fires recorded in Battalion 6, but they burned nearly 821 acres. The largest fire in 2020 for this Battalion was the Bitter incident, which was caused by a vehicle and burned 813 acres. This area is off a main travel route in rural San Benito County (Highway 25) and is quite rural with grass-shrub as the main fuel type. These factors paired with warm weather allow for fast rate of spread.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battalion 6 Fire Cause</th>
<th>Count of Day</th>
<th>Sum of Acres Burned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>813.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>820.61</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exhibits

Figure A: Unit Map

San Benito-Monterey Unit Map
Figure B: Land Ownership
San Benito-Monterey Fire History
Larger map depicts ignition points, and the smaller map illustrates hot spots where large numbers of acres were burned from wildfires in 2020.
Figure E: Priority Projects and Fire Perimeters

Governor's 35 Priority Projects
San Benito-Monterey Unit
**SUPPLEMENT:**

**ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORTING (2020)**

**Fire Planning:**

The Unit continues to assemble and refine Unit-wide fire incident maps. Community members, fire safe councils, and homeowner groups have come together to assist Unit personnel in gathering information, collecting data and making maps of their respective areas, to compile a resource to educate residents and visitors in the event of an emergency, as well as assist responding emergency personnel. The Pre-Plan grant awarded to California State Monterey Bay University (CSUMB) was successful in completing six new map packages, including: Fort Ord, Arroyo Seco, Cachagua, San Juan Canyon, Pine Canyon, and Willow Springs. The maps are available in digital and paper formats to allow for wide distribution and accessibility.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit updated and revitalized the Fire Danger Operating Plan (FDOP) to align with hourly weather data and NFDRS 2016 fuel models in Fire Family Plus. This Plan includes a new fourth dispatch level, which is designed to prepare the Unit for changing fire weather conditions.
Technosylva Wildfire Analyst

For the 2021 fire season, the San Benito-Monterey Unit will begin using Technosylva’s Wildfire Analyst Enterprise Software (WFA - E). This technology models both wildfire risk and fire behavior for use in CAL FIRE’s tactical and strategic operations. The fire behavior module, FireSim, projects a wildfire’s path using observed and forecasted weather data (updated daily), periodically updated fuel models, and high-resolution terrain. FireSim will aid first responders with tactical intel and support the ICS-209 and FMAG documentation. The risk forecasting module, FireCast, creates a fire risk forecast by running 8-hour fire spread models every 1000 meters across the state and calculating accumulated buildings and population impacted by simulated fires. This information is then consolidated to produce geographic data showing where the highest risk occurs for the next four days. BEU has filled a Research Data Specialist II position, who will act as the WFA-E subject matter expert train ECC Staff, division chiefs, battalion chiefs, and any interested personnel in the use of the technology.

Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering:

In 2020, 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 5,377 inspections recorded for 2020, with 4,451 compliant, 925 non-compliant, and one citation.

Programs like CalMAPPER and other ESRI based products such as Survey123 have been instrumental in collecting data, tracking, fiscal reporting, emergency response, planning, and assessment, for fuel reduction projects in the San Benito-Monterey Unit. The Unit hopes to continue to utilize these tools for statistical analysis and operational purposes.

Education and Information:

In conjunction with fire districts and other groups such as fire safe councils, the Unit has completed multiple community fuel reduction projects. CAL FIRE is committed to working with fire safe councils and other local groups to seek new grant funding or other sources to create a more fire safe environment for the citizens.
CAL FIRE attended the Monterey County Fair, the San Benito County Fair, and other public events. CAL FIRE also visited numerous schools to illustrate the importance of preparedness and safety.

**Vegetation Management:**

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has an active and successful Vegetation Management Program, with many planned, active, and ongoing projects. In 2020, CEQA was started on several VMP’s, VTP’s, and fuel reduction exemption projects. Biological and archaeological field surveys were completed for over 8 projects throughout Monterey and San Benito County.

The Unit completed phase 1 of the 4 Governor’s Priority Projects in 2019: Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads, Palo Colorado Fuel Break, Laurel Springs-Hennicksons Ridge Fuel Break, and the San Juan Canyon Shaded Fuel Break. These projects proved to be strategically placed for the River and Carmel Fire, which erupted in August 2020 burning approximately 55,000 acres. Refer to Figure E in “Exhibits”.

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.
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 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 Resource Conservation District of Monterey County and the Monterey Bay Air Resources District. In 2020, the San Benito-Monterey Resource Management team aided in the establishment of the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association, which aims to increase prescribed burning capacity through educating and assisting landowners in the use of safe firing operations. In 2021, the Unit hopes to continue these partnerships, including internship and curriculum opportunities for CSUMB students. Our cooperators are an integral part of the overall Vegetation Management Program.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has proposed broadcast burn projects in the Gabilan Range (Bengard VMP, and Gabilan Ranch VMP) and Diablo Range (Stone Canyon VTP), as well as a portion of the Sierra de Salinas Range (Sierra de Salinas VMP). Implementation of these projects is dependent upon weather and fire activity.

The San Benito-Monterey Unit has proposed a maintenance program for historic fuel breaks and truck trails, such as the West Side Fuel Break, Thompson Truck Trail, Ranchita Canyon Truck Trail, and the Paloma Truck Trail. Work has begun on these projects to secure property owner access and environmental compliance. In addition, we have begun planning work for the overall Santa Lucia Fire Defense system, including future phases of the Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads, Palo Colorado Fuel Break, and Laurel Springs-Hennicksons Ridge Fuel Break.

**Other Fire Prevention Projects in SRA:**

The San Benito-Monterey Unit Strategic Fire Plan sets forth a vision to identify and evaluate wildland fire hazards and recognize life, property and natural resources at risk, including watershed, habitat, social and other values of functioning ecosystems. In 2020, the San Benito-Monterey Unit continued to foster inter-agency relations, collaboration, and abiding by the goals and objectives set forth in the Strategic Fire Plan for California. The Gabilan Conservation Camp crews actively continued collaboration with neighboring agencies. The newly formed Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association will hopefully contribute to the expansion of education and fuels reduction efforts within SRA.

*The San Benito-Monterey Unit will continue to support the Mission through collaboration, innovation, and operational excellence.*
Reno DiTullio Jr.       5/7/2021
Unit Chief
Reno DiTullio Jr.
Date

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