



California Fire Plan

Overview

The California 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 Fire Plan looks to reduce fire fighting costs and property losses, increase firefighter safety, and to contribute to ecosystem health. A cooperative effort between the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the basic principles of the Fire Plan are as follows:



Technology allows us to identify communities at higher risk for wildfire.

Involve the Community

Encourage community involvement to ensure that fire protection solutions meet individual community needs.

Assess Community Risk

Assess and identify community assets at risk of wildfire damage. Community assets at risk are public and private resources (natural and manmade) that could be damaged by wildfire:

- Life
- Structures, such as homes and businesses
- Air quality
- Recreation areas
- Water and watersheds

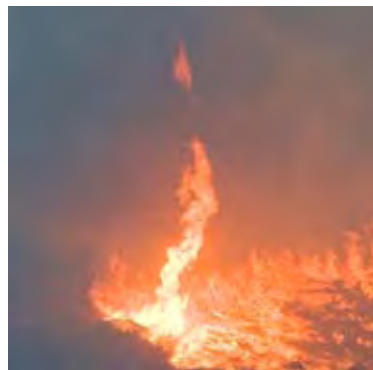
Develop Solutions and Implement Projects

Develop pre-fire management solutions and implement cooperative projects to reduce a community's potential wildfire losses.

Prefire Management

As an integral part of the California Fire Plan, pre-fire management focuses on taking action before fires occur. Projects are designed and implemented to reduce the frequency, severity, and size of wildfires, and associated losses and costs:

- Fuel breaks to stop wildfires
- Wildfire Protection Zones to buffer communities
- Forest stewardship for healthy forests
- Prescribed fire to reduce fire fuel



> Firefighters set prescribed fires to reduce the potential for total destruction that a wildfire can cause.



< Fire safe clearance and landscaping saved this house.

California's Environment

California's forest and rangeland vegetation grows in a Mediterranean climate with cool, moist winters and hot, dry summers. The combination of vegetation, climate, and topography creates a "world class" fire environment.

Fire is a necessary part of California's natural ecosystems. It is a caretaker of the landscape, contributing to ecosystem health by thinning forests, removing decayed growth, and preparing seed beds so that new plants can grow and support wildlife.

Past agricultural and farming practices used fire to create healthier crops and grazing land. However, in response to increased settlement and people's desire to live in and near natural landscapes, the law calls for extinguishing unwanted blazes immediately.

Fire remains a major natural force in California. It is not a matter of "if" a fire will burn, it is "when". Therefore, it is important for Californians to understand that living in California means learning to live with fire.



Much of what grows in California is fuel for wildfires.



Our already flammable wildlands are filling up with houses. It is not feasible for fire agencies to park a fire engine at every home when wildfire threatens.



California's Growing Fire Problem

Growing Population in Wildland Areas:

More than 8 million people own homes and businesses in wildland areas. As a result, fires that once burned as part of a natural process now threaten lives, property, and valuable resources.

Growing Demand for Services

The safety of those people and homes in our wildland areas force fire agencies to respond immediately to extinguish wildfires. As the population grows, so does the demand for firefighting services. This response has also resulted in an overgrowth of vegetation making it more susceptible to pests and disease. Dead and dying plants provide even more fuel creating hotter and more destructive fires.

Growing Cost of Protection

Fire agencies are constantly challenged to meet the growing demand for services, and the growing costs of providing those services.