

Indians Incident

CA-LPF-001491



Appropriate Management Response: A Reasoned Approach to Long-term Strategy

June 17, 2008

Purpose

This Plan assesses scenarios that may be available to the Agency Administrator and the Incident Commander given:

1. The fire is in the 240,026 acre Ventana Wilderness. This wilderness is characterized by highly volatile fuel profile that can lead to extremely fast moving fires.
2. Well established fires can quickly threaten the wilderness boundary, live and adjacent property.
3. The values to protect are in close proximity to the wilderness boundary. Rapid Assessment of Values at Risk (RAVAR) and the Indians Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) have determined the value at \$469,700,000.

A traditional Long Term Implementation Plan (LTIP) is not warranted. A LTIP is a Plan that provides long term management direction for long duration wildfires based on an analysis of all factors affecting fire suppression capability and effectiveness, fiscal management, firefighter and public safety, values to be protected, and management objectives for the fire area. Drought, wind patterns and the flashy nature of the fuel profile, coupled with the close proximity of the fire to CalFire Direction Protection Area (DPA) and high values at risk does not necessarily give the Incident Management Team (IMT) the flexibility of time and space for a traditional LTIP.

What this Plan does is assess scenarios that may occur, and present potential management options to the Agency Administrator and the IC. This assessment uses the tool set of long term planning, and applies many of the components of long term planning. The WFSA decision minimizes the extent of fire spread outside the wilderness boundary; the boundary is not far from the fire perimeter and the proximity of high values to protect, dictates that there is not much time or space available for the IMT to use. The assumption is, therefore, that this fire will come to predetermined Primary Appropriate Response Areas boundary and be stopped once it reaches CalFire DPA. There are three scenarios that fire behavior/fire danger will influence.

Los Padres Land and Resource Management Plan Direction

The Record of Decision for the Los Padres National Forest was signed on April 3, 2006. A Forest Plan Errata was issued in April 2006, which clarified fire management direction.

Fire Suppression Emphasis

Improve wildland fire suppression capability when in proximity to communities or improvements. All human and natural ignitions will be suppressed using control, contain, confine strategies.

- Cross train with other fire agencies to improve suppression coordination and performance on fires burning in the wildland urban interface or developed area intermix.
- During periods of limited firefighter availability, communities within the forest direct protection area should be the highest priority for initial attack coverage.
- Consider protection of sensitive resources, values, and uses during suppression action.

Long-Term Strategy

Operational objectives are related to seasonal and fire danger/fire behavior elements. If indices are not indicative of adverse fire behavior or adverse consequences or, conversely, there is an expectation of adverse behavior then different actions would be warranted.

Staffing is designed to meet minimum standards for operational oversight, and mission accomplishment. Efforts to limit requirements for overhead and suppression resources are considered, while ensuring effective command and control while continually considering firefighter and public safety.

Actions are objective driven, mitigate known risks to firefighters, cost effective and have a high probability of successfully contributing to the containment of the fire.



Appropriate Response Areas

Appropriate response areas are defined as Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency (P.A.C.E. Strategic Planning Model)). Each area will have a determined appropriate response associated as required by the incident. This assessment focuses on the Primary Appropriate Response Area (PARA), while laying the ground work for assessing alternatives in the future if the objective of keeping the fire contained with the PARA fails.

Primary

The Primary Appropriate Response Area (PARA) is defined as the area within which the IMT has developed a “plan” for meeting the suppression objectives defined in the Letter of delegation and the WFSA. Predicted fire behavior coupled with expected consequences (operational, social/political, fire effects, etc) will dictate the type of and the timing for deploying tactics by the IMT.

When the fire becomes active, the projected average arrival timeline to reach the Arroyo Seco Road is seven to nine days. (Appendix B)

South Segment: The boundaries are delineated primarily by the Milpitas Rd. and a piece across the road on the western end of the road. The overall tactical approach for this Branch is immediate perimeter control. For the purposes of modeling, this is assumed as achievable and 100% accomplished.

East Segment: This boundary is defined as an improved dozer line/road that is in the upper reaches of Reliz Creek, starting from Milpitas Rd, heading north down the creek to

Vaqueros Creek until it ties into Arroyo Seco Rd. The appropriate management response is full control from Milpitas Rd up to the Rocks, and this strategic plan will assess the options north of the Rocks to Arroyo Seco Rd. Full control in the southern reaches is for protecting values at risk under CalFire DPA. The IMT is actively engaging the fire in this full control portion. Operations states that they will need three to five days to accomplish. The portion of this segment designated as full control is assumed to be 100% effective and will not be modeled.

North Segment: This boundary is entirely defined by Arroyo Seco Rd from Vaqueros/Sweetwater Cr junction heading west to Indians Rd. Indirect control features include dozer and hand line south of the structures along Arroyo Cr. The specific appropriate response for this area is being analyzed by this assessment.

West Segment: This section is defined by the Indians Rd from its intersection with Arroyo Seco to Escondido campground. Direct options are not currently on the table. Resource conservation principles are being applied; difficult terrain that is challenging and exhausting crews and it is very early in the fire season. The Operations Section is searching for a viable indirect option to anchor actions. Final determination of the appropriate management action to take will be evaluated by this assessment.

Alternate

When the fire becomes active, the projected timeline is 13 to 14 days for the fire to reach the West Segment boundary. For the North Segment the project timeline is 7 to 9 days. (Appendix B)

The Alternate Appropriate Response area is defined in the WFSAs as Alternative A. It is described in WFSAs 2 prepared June 12, 2008. Appendix D has a map of potential fire line placement with a brief narrative of each. More specificity will be placed on this if it is determined that the fire cannot be contained within the Primary area.

Contingency

For the 14 time period analyzed, the fire does not reach the Contingency line. A new analysis would need to be done.

The Contingency Appropriate Response area is defined in WFSAs 2 as Alternative B, which is the selected alternative for this fire.

The development of long-term actions is pending the collection of additional situational awareness. Appendix E has a map of potential fire line placement with a brief narrative of each. More specificity will be placed on this if it is determined that the fire cannot be contained within the Alternate area. If this boundary is breached, a new WFSAs will need to be prepared.

Emergency

Within 48 hours of any threat to the communities along the northern and eastern boundary as well as in Carmel Valley.

Scenario Assessment

There is an array of scenarios that could be assessed for this analysis. The focus will be on the area defined by the Primary Appropriate Response Area as defined by the Unified ICs with concurrence from the Agency Administrator. As is the case on most incidents, fire behavior is going to dictate the ultimate tactics that will be employed. In terms of fire behavior and fire danger assessments, special probability profile has been completed through WFDSS FSPro Model to help with determination of fire extent within the next 14 days (See appendix B for detailed fire modeling discussion).



There are three possible outcomes for this fire if it were to remain within the Primary Appropriate Response Area. If circumstances find that the incident exceeds the Primary Boundary, there is still decision space within the WFSA to apply another analysis of scenarios. Scenario assessments would need to be developed for each Appropriate Response Areas if or when needed. A new WFSA would be needed if the Contingency Appropriate Response Area is breached.

Actions and assumptions common to all scenarios

Current actions are putting the fire on the high ground. The T1 IMT is working aggressively at getting the fire to a point where an incident management organization can remain on an offensive rather than a defensive posture.

The following suppression objectives have been accomplished:

- East segment – from the Rocks south to Milpitas Rd, dozer line is in and firing operations to the Rocks will be accomplished in three to five days. The ICs have a high degree of confidence in this operation. The assumption for modeling is that the operation will be 100% successful. If, for some reason, this objective cannot be achieved, this assessment will be modified.
- South Segment – much of the fire line is inactive, lined and out. The fire extension southwest of the Milpitas Rd is inaccessible but is not deemed to be problematic at this

time and is not likely to pose a problem in the future. The assumption for modeling is that this segment will be 100% contained and not be a factor for modeling.

- West Segment – This segment of the fire is open and not contained at this point. The IMT is actively pursuing an anchor point as there are no readily identifiable action points for construction of a containment boundary. The assumption is that one will be found, but fire is not immediately threatening this segment. This segment is being modeled.
- North Segment – Containment lines are constructed. The fire is not immediately threatening this segment. This segment is being modeled.

Additional Assumptions include:

- All objectives mentioned above will be accomplished within a three to five day period.
- Costing will be the same for all scenarios through the three to five day period.
- WFDSS modeling assumes the barriers, or objectives accomplished to date, will be 100% successful. If objectives assumed to be accomplished cannot be met, then this analysis needs to be refreshed.
- The fire ultimate fire extent will range from 74,000 (Alternative A WFA2) to 81,600 acres projected in the Active Fire Behavior Scenario (the entire PARA).

Scenario Descriptions

Active Fire Behavior Scenario – The fire is actively burning and or prescriptive elements are in alignment for burning out and securing the North Segment. Firing and burning out to contain the fire south of the Arroyo Seco Rd will immediately proceed on or about June 21. 31 to 45 days would be required to accomplish this scenario.

Moderate Fire Behavior Scenario – The fire remains moderately active. The north flank remains open but is not actively advancing. Fire behavior factors are not favorable for burning out the north segment of the fire. There will be occasions of fingers running up to ridges, but a full blown suppression response is not warranted. The fire is expected to reach the North Segment over time and be checked at the fire line south of the Arroyo Seco Rd. An organization would be developed that would be in place to manage this fire activity. This scenario would be accomplished in 31 to 60 days.

Light Fire Behavior Scenario – The fire on the north does not advance. There may be visible smoke and occasional flares up, but there is no appreciable advance of the fire perimeter. A reduced organization would be in place to check the fire and to keep it in place. An organization less robust than moderate would be in place after day 30. If the fire does stay in place where it is, there will need to be a presence throughout the duration of the fire season.

Trigger Points

Trigger Points (TPs) are mapped specific locations where holding, checking or other mitigation actions can be initiated at the discretion of an Incident Management organization to limit or prevent fire spread that threatens the PARA boundary or protect identified values at risk from fire damage or negative impacts.

Trigger points are individual actions which describe the resources required to fulfill the planned mitigation actions. When any fire crosses or hits any of the TPs, the resources on the ground will notify Operations. Operations will ensure that the IC and Information Officer are informed. When a TP is reached and management response is ineffective, then actions should be reevaluated.

A trigger point is a preplanned location, time, situation or event that when it is met, it triggers a preplanned response.



Wilderness Boundary North (northerly progression of the fire) – The fire is fast approaching or is predicted to quickly approach the Wilderness Boundary

Actions

1. Implement appropriate structure protection plans along Arroyo Seco Rd
2. Complexity Analysis and order appropriate IMT
3. Refresh WFDSS and other predictive products for currency of expected events

Active Fire Behavior Northwest Uncontrolled Fire Edge

Actions

1. Implement structure protection plan for Arroyo Seco
2. Reassess current and expected fire behavior to assure containing the fire within the PARA is achievable. If not, prepare plan for containing fire within the Alternate Appropriate Response Area
3. Threat (actual or predicted) to Any Appropriate Response Area Boundary within 48 hours or less, assemble Assessment Team to refresh this assessment

Suppression Tactics

Engage with purpose... All planned actions are focused on the mission, and driven by realistic and integrated objectives.

Actions are conducted with speed, agility and focus.

Look beyond the immediate... Response to the Indians Incident considers values immediately at risk, as well as those at risk within three to five days.

Actions have a high probability of success in view of seasonal realities, fire location and behavior, and the ability to affect a positive outcome with available resources.

Methods for suppressing the Indians Incident:

- Cold trail, Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST)
- Resource Conservation – does the risk of committing fire fighting resources coupled with the resultant wear, while simultaneously considering the remaining fire season warrant committing said resources to a task with low probability of success.
- Deferring (redirecting the fire spread to a more strategic location, or a high ground, where future or subsequent fire fighting activities would be successful.)
- Anchor and flank, and burnout – when and where appropriate providing the IMT a high probability of success

Reference Budget

Principles

The following principles are used in determining a Reference Budget for incidents of national significance.

(1) The purpose of a reference budget is to set a risk-informed spending constraint (Federal threshold). Although not a “hard target” the reference budget is utilized as an “at or below” goal.

(2) Cost in the context of reference budgets is not an issue when risk to life exceeds an acceptable threshold. The threshold needs to be intentionally set by decision makers. Decision makers should plan to spend whatever it takes to evacuate citizens and/or firefighters from harm’s way if it exceeds the threshold.

(3) Using a reference budget to guide fire management investments and documenting those decisions in a Key Decision Logs helps Agency Administrator and Incident Commanders demonstrate stewardship of taxpayer capital while pursuing goals of protecting life, property and landscapes.

(4) A reference budget may need to be modified as the fire situation evolves because risk changes over time due to changes in assumptions, forecasts and outcomes. “During Action Reviews” will be used to track and understand those factors driving any departure from the reference budget. The Agency Administrator and Incident Commander should consider revising the reference budget when it would contribute to ensuring alignment of expectations for incident costs.

(5) An incident risk assessment process is used as the basis for developing a mitigation plan for identified risks that exceed the decision maker’s threshold of concern. The purpose of the mitigation plan is to consider scenarios and implement the best course of action.

(6) Cost in the context of reference budgets is an issue when it comes to decisions to protect property and landscapes. Decisions to invest in protecting property and landscapes must weigh an estimate of values to protect, probability of occurrence and probability of protection.

Based on the best available data we assessed two scenarios for the reference budget. These scenarios are comparable to the figure based on the historical costs (SCI), current daily costs which may fluctuate but should not raise significantly over time unless conditions and values at risk change significantly, and remains well within the values to protect and the costs associated with the selected WFSA alternative. (See Appendix A: Assessment of Values to Protect and the establishing the Reference Budget)

Active Fire Behavior Scenario

The projected average cost per day as reported from I-Suite is \$1,200,000. Estimating 45 days to containment (from the selected WFSA alternative), the total cost would be \$55.3 million. The daily costs will decrease as the release of resources occurs.

Moderate Fire Behavior Scenario

The projected average cost per day as reported from I-Suite is \$788,000. Figuring 60 days to containment (from the selected WFSA alternative) the total cost would be \$47.3 million. The daily costs will decrease as the release of resources occurs.

Concurrence of the Reference Budget

There is an expectation the reference budget will reflect the tactics and strategies described with in this document. The concurrence of the reference budget resides with the Agency Administrator and Incident Commanders (Unified Command). Should there be a significant change in the nature of the incident (e.g., expansion of the fire beyond the selected WFSA boundary to the West or North) the ICs and AA should revise the reference budget to ensure alignment of expectations for the suppression of costs.

Values to Protect

The following values to protect were obtained from WFSA and RAVAR analysis and provide important context for establishing a reference budget. These values are based on no management actions being taken to control the fire. This provides a good benchmark for setting a budget in that it seems logical that suppression expenditures would not exceed the values to protect without some other significant factor influencing decisions. At the time of this analysis the total values to protect is \$469.7 million.

Structures	\$456,500,000 (RAVAR)
Wilderness	\$ 10,000,000 (WFSA)
Dev Rec	\$ 100,000 (WFSA)
SU Cabins	\$ 1,000,000 (WFSA)
Steelhead	\$ 100,000 (WFSA)
Trails	\$ 1,000,000 (WFSA)
Roads	\$ 1,000,000 (WFSA)
Total	\$469,700,000

The southeast portion of the fire has moved onto Ft. Hunter Liggett increasing the threat to infrastructure. Air quality on the fort is also critical as they currently have 8,000 troops preparing for deployment to the war theater in about two weeks.

Values at risk increase dramatically if the fire moves north of the Marble Peak Trail. Because of this one of the most critical control objectives is to prevent northern spread.

Values at risk include Carmel Valley, Reliz Canyon urban areas, the municipal water supply for the Carmel Valley and vicinity, Mira Observatory, Carmel River Watershed, steelhead habitat, Botcher's Gap/Boy Scout Camp, and extensive areas of Sudden Oak Death.

Communications Plan

The Los Padres has a rich history of large wildland fires. Internal and external publics are accustomed to seeing immediate results. There is a bias for action as inaction is deemed as not accomplishing objectives. It is imperative that publics understand that the Forest is focused on this incident but that the possibility exists that the fire may remain in place for some indeterminate time.

- Plan for the possibility of a long-term wildland fire event and the communication needs and expectations required for this potential circumstance.
- Provide a coordinated approach to communications associated with management of the Indians Incident to the public, agency personnel, elected officials, cooperators, news media, and other identified internal and external audiences.
- Provide current, accurate and timely information using a variety of communication methods, including but not limited to internet, community meetings, briefings, media tours, and operation of the joint information call center.

Resource Needs

Appropriate management response is predicated on a resource ordering and mobilization system that is agile and that can meet the needs of organizational changes in a timely fashion.

Resources Within the plan

Active Fire Behavior Scenario – No changes from the current organization but down sizing as suppression objectives are met.

Moderate Fire Behavior Scenario – This organization is less robust than the Active Scenario.

Reserved Force

Success of this plan is based on a commitment to priority access by the Southern California GACC to the resources upon request to meet critical and/or advantageous implementation tactics.