

BORDER AGENCY FIRE COUNCIL



Hauser Drill – February 2008

Year End Report 2008

Border Agency Fire Council

The Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC) is made up of forty-three United States and Mexican government agencies and organizations representing fire protection, law enforcement, legislators, emergency responders, natural resource managers, and elected officials that address public safety issues pertaining to wildfire along the U.S/Mexico international border. It is a fact that people from other countries have and will continue to enter the United States illegally by crossing from Mexico into the United States. In an effort to stop the flow of illegal immigration, in 1995 the United States government began, "Operation Gatekeeper", an effort to tighten border security near city of Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, it instead pushed the crossers to the rugged east of the county and started a new immigration pattern. In desperation, people started entering on foot from the eastern part of Tijuana and without knowing; a trip that formerly took a few hours along the coast, turned into several days and involved a strenuous hike through rugged wilderness. People were not prepared for the summer heat that swelters or the winter where the temperature drops below freezing at the higher elevations.

Many of these people simply didn't understand the difficult conditions they would encounter and this lack of knowledge proved to be life threatening.

The Border Agency Fire Council was formally created during the 1996 fire season, with the first meetings conducted in the fall of 1995 due to a dramatic increase in wildfire activity in southeastern San Diego County. Investigators had determined that improperly extinguished campfires left by immigrants and torches being carried to guide their way at night were causing these fires, as they traveled through the San Ysidro Mountains. Fire agency officials concluded that these two activities were responsible for a huge increase in the number of wildfires and needed to be addressed. This meant hundreds of people were on foot every day in steep, rugged terrain with the potential of wildfires to start around them.

As people continued to accidentally set fires, local officials realized that they were putting their own employees in danger. Emergency response vehicles could not travel safely on the narrow dirt paths, there were no safe places for firefighters to stage at, there were no safe places for rescue helicopters to land and there was little cooperation between both countries on these border fires. The Border Agency Fire Council was formed with the goal of saving lives, property and to protect the sensitive habitat of the border area.

Three important goals of the Border Agency Fire Council Charter are:

1. Establish and maintain relationships with Mexican government agencies.
2. Strengthen awareness and cooperation on biodiversity.
3. Continue effective fire prevention, suppression, and emergency response.

Members meet quarterly during the winter and every six to eight weeks during fire season in San Diego County. Through collaborative efforts, the BAFC has altered the environment that runs along the border to allow better access into the wildland for emergency responders. At the same time, threatened or endangered species or habitat often designated "Wilderness", is now more protected and even improved because of the partnership brought together through the BAFC. Member agencies have enhanced communication among responders on both sides of the border, and have reached out to people in both countries with fire safety messages.

An unprecedented binational mutual assistance agreement is in place and working because of this program. In 2008, BAFC members from the U.S. and Mexico updated the Mutual Assistance Agreement. This important agreement establishes dispatching and resource utilization procedures that enable participating agencies to work cooperatively to suppress fires and take appropriate actions on floods and other emergency situations on border lands of the U.S. and Mexico.

Highlights and Issues of 2008

The BAFC decided many years ago to share its successes and attempts to solve problems experienced by member agencies. The key to success has been the ability to establish partnerships that allows difficult issues or hurdles to be overcome. Without such partnerships, individual departments may not accomplish goals or objectives in a timely manner, if at all. This section of the annual report is a continuing opportunity to identify significant events that are unreported in the media or appear to go unnoticed except for members of the BAFC. The year 2008 was no exception, as the organization continued to collaborate with information on problems and potential solutions in an open forum.

The summary below is only a snapshot of the activities and issues that partner agencies address each year. The BAFC believes its efforts have saved life and property! This organization needs to continue and not fall prey to the fire history cycle of periodic extreme fire and life safety situations, often followed by several years of more routine or minimal fire problems. The BAFC must always be on alert through its emergency response agencies and political partners to potential problems that wait in the future.

Fire Season 2008

The 2008 fire season in San Diego County surprisingly was quieter than expected with fewer and smaller fires being put out before they grew out of control, even while still under drought conditions. As a result of extreme fires in the last few years, California Department of Forestry and Fire (CAL FIRE) increased funding to staff chiefs, engines and stations.

The San Diego County Fire Authority (SDCFA) was officially launched after Board of Supervisors voted for a regional fire authority. The County program Fire Authority is within the Department of Planning and Land Use Fire Division, now known as County Service Area 135 (CSA135). The annual budget total is \$15.5 million. The SDCFA contracts with CAL FIRE, fire protection districts and volunteer fire companies to provide fire and Emergency Medical Service response 24 hours a day. SDCFA have added the additional chief officers and key staff positions to recruit, train and supervise operations. The field management is accomplished through two branches, CAL FIRE and Julian Cuyamaca, Zone 7 and 8 respectively. CAL FIRE also contracted with the SDCFA which provided funding to staff 10 CAL FIRE stations during the winter period throughout the county. The SDCFA through the Board of Supervisors has purchased 43 pieces of apparatus, including 16 engines, 13 water tenders as well as other support vehicles.

Visits

BAFC members continues to invite guests to participate in the meetings and perhaps to become members of the organization. Visitors for 2008 included Campo Reservation Fire and Rescue, and San Miguel Fire Protection District (who became a member on April 10, 2008).

International Fuel Break

Otay Mountain, a section of an international fuel break located at the border between the United States and Mexico in San Diego County California, was completed in 2002 and receives annual maintenance work. This on-going project has several goals that include protection of life and property in adjacent communities, improved endangered species habitat, reducing the risk of large scale fire in the protected Tecate Cypress groves on Otay Mountain and enhanced national security as a result of open areas that deter illegal immigration across the border. The ongoing work on the International Fuel Break is an excellent example of fire mitigation on an interagency basis that provides multiple benefits to the local communities in both the United States and Mexico. CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Comisión Nacional Forestal (CONAFOR) and the private Mexican Conservancy Pronatura worked in partnership, to protect citizens and habitat from fire. In 2008, the agencies continued to rehabilitate the international fuel break at Doghouse Junction at the top of Otay Mountain to protect life and property by providing fire suppression control line opportunities.

The Sunrise Fuel Break

The Sunrise Fuel Break in the Julian area also continues to receive needed maintenance to help protect the greater Julian area from fire. BLM and CAL FIRE have worked as partners to complete this necessary project.

Rescues

The U.S. Border Patrol continued to provide rescue service to international travelers. They conducted 58 rescues in Fiscal Year 2008 to victims of all types, undocumented immigrants and agents included. This was a significant reduction in rescues compared to the 93 rescues conducted in 2007. Border arrests increased 9% from FY07 in the San Diego region, but nationally decreased 32%.

Cold and Warm Weather Rescue Kits

Fire is not the only threat to human life in this area. Extreme temperatures in the rugged mountainous area of San Diego County in summer and winter have taken lives since the migration pattern has changed over the years. During the winter, temperatures drop to well below freezing in the higher elevations. During the summer, temperatures can rise to around 100 degrees with no water to be found. Smugglers lead unprepared people into this area and if they fall behind, the smugglers leave them to die. In 2001, the Border Patrol placed emergency rescue kits in specially marked underground sites within the area. Responders can now use a special tracking device to locate the kits and assist stranded or injured people. The kits contain blankets, basic medical supplies, food and water. Kits are checked and maintained annually by the Border Patrol.

Fatalities

The U.S. Border Patrol reported there were 6 deaths along the border, within the San Diego Sector in 2008. This was a decrease compared to 2007 where there were fifteen (15) migrant deaths reported. The rugged terrain and variable harsh weather are contributing factors to these sad losses.

Border Fence

Concerns were raised about the border security fence being extended further east. In case of fire, firefighters would have to go to the port of entry to cross the border in order to access a fire and slow it down before it gets into the U.S.

Partnership with Mexico

Mexico's emergency response agencies have been valued cooperators from the beginning. In keeping with the Mutual Assistance Agreement, U.S. and Mexican firefighters remain available to assist each other automatically for wildland emergencies. The U.S. and Mexican consulates also play key roles in the education information process. In addition, Mexican firefighters continue to receive wildland fire training from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service.

Mutual Assistance Agreement with Mexico and the U.S.

The BAFC Operations Plan is the parent document that allows the detail of the Mutual Assistance Agreement to be developed and implemented. A steering committee made up of members, addresses future updates. It was last updated in 2007 to reflect changes in emergency contact phone numbers for assistance.

This unprecedented mutual assistance agreement has continued since 1998. The agreement between Mexico and the U.S. allows emergency responders, ground resources only, to cross the border to protect lives and property. The Mexican Consulate, Mexican officials and the U.S. fire officials review the document annually. This agreement continues to save valuable time in crossing boundary lines without delays and red tape. Emergency responders call immediately to the U.S. and Mexican authorities through their communications network. The response personnel may proceed directly to the scene for any necessary action without waiting for any approval process.

Beginning in June 2009, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative will require all emergency personnel responding to a fire in Mexico, to have a passport in order to cross back into the U.S. - no exceptions. CAL FIRE and elected officials are looking at ways to mitigate the problem.

Air resources are not allowed to cross the border at this time. The BAFC is pursuing a future change through the U.S. and Mexican Consulates to allow aircraft to fly one (1) mile across the border in order to suppress fires in either country. It is a possibility that a new air operations protocol may be established between countries in the future.

Training With Mexican Firefighters

The 4th Border Protection Wildfire Course took place in March 2008 at Rancho Ojai, Tecate, Baja California, Mexico. The course was organized by CONAFOR, CAL FIRE, Forest Service, and SEFOA and was based on S-130 and S-190 fire behavior courses. More than eighty (80) local community volunteers and officials from Tijuana, Tecate, and Mexicali, Baja California, attended the training. These annual training opportunities are allowed through the Mutual Assistance Agreement between the U.S. and Mexico.

Sister Forest Agreement - Cooperative Training with Mexico

The U.S.F.S. CNF continues to meet with partners in Mexico to increase cooperation between the two countries. An example of the training available is a 32-hour Basic Fire Fighter "train" the trainer module. Training materials in Spanish are given to participants for them to conduct the Basic Firefighter training at their home units. This type of training is conducted under the Sister Forest Agreement that was signed with Mexico in 2001. This agreement also allows departments to participate in the Binational Education Day Camp.

Forest Health - Oak Mortality Goldspotted Oak Borer

Since 2002, oak mortality has occurred throughout the Cleveland National Forest Descanso District and surrounding communities. This tree mortality problem had been attributed to insect infestation and also to the extended drought conditions in the county. Forest Service Forest Health Protection group discovered a wood-boring species not previously reported attacking oaks. The new discovery of insect-caused injury is believed to be playing a pivotal role in the oak mortality. Drought stress may be contributing to oak mortality and hastening decline, but is not the sole cause.

The Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST)

FAST is a consortium of agencies, private companies, and non profits working to make critical areas throughout the county less susceptible to catastrophic fire. Vegetation management has been their key to success. BAFC supports the pursuit of grants to remove dead, dying and diseased trees. Many members of BAFC are also members of FAST.

Coordinating with Other Emergency Groups

A multi-casualty drill took place at the eastern end of Hauser Canyon in February 2008. This site was chosen because it was the location of the 1943 Hauser Creek Tragedy. The drill simulated numerous burn victims found by Border Patrol agents in the canyon. The main goal of the drill was to train with as accurate of a scenario as possible. Additionally, CAL FIRE and Border Patrol held a training session to help Border Patrol employees during fires. Situational Awareness training was provided and the goal is to improve operational response and increase safety.



Firefighters in Baja California have actively trained more than 200 community members throughout the year. Groups included private citizens, the Mexican military, Bomberos del Municipio of Tecate, Bomberos and Protección Civil de Tijuana.

The County Office of Emergency Services held a wildfire awareness campaign with other county agencies and private industry. The major focus was on registering cell phone service so people could be notified by the County's emergency reverse 911 calling system. A mass mailing was sent out to residents with information on how to register their cell phones. A survey had showed that 20% of residents did not have a landline phone. This campaign was to decrease that number.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent DVD's to homeowners showing them how to create defensible space around their homes. San Miguel Fire Protection District also sent a DVD to inform residents and insurance companies of vegetation clearance regulations. The BLM posted signs along Highway 94 between Campo and Potrero reminding people to be, "Careful with Fire."

Emergency Medical Services at Border

Border Patrol is working with the County of San Diego Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Mexico on a plan for safe border crossing for medics and paramedics to make crossing the border faster and safer.

Environmental Cleanup

This year the U.S. Forest Service employed crews to pick up garbage left behind by undocumented immigrants. More than 13,728 pounds of trash were removed from wilderness areas.

Roads Continue to Serve

The Border Patrol continues to maintain the Otay Truck Trail and associated smaller roads improved through the efforts of the BAFC. These roads have made a huge difference in getting fire engines and other emergency response vehicles into this remote area. Partner agencies in the maintenance process also include the California National Guard and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Forest Closure

The Cleveland National Forest operates a Forest Use Restriction program throughout the year. When there is a low threat of fire and resources are available the Forest Use Restriction level may be at LOW. In 2008, the forest use restriction level got to the CRITICAL level. This level requires the Forest to close parts south of the 8 freeway. The public agreed that under CRITICAL conditions this area needs to be closed.

The Natural Resources Guidebook

The Resource Protection Committee (a sub-committee of BAFC) guidebook was completed. Six new areas were added to the BAFC document. CD's of the Guidebook will be the primary distribution mechanism available to member agencies. The guidebook is a valuable tool for response agencies that work in sensitive habitat within the BAFC boundaries. The goal of the Guidebook is to empower responders to perform their duties and protect the environment at the same time. The guidebook will contain an agency contact list with phone numbers matched to map quads, especially for fire fighters from outside of San Diego County.

Outreach

Members of BAFC are also encouraged to speak out on issues pertaining to the work of the council whenever the opportunity presents itself. BAFC representatives serve on boards, commissions and committees and attend meetings of other organizations, that have similar public safety and environmental missions.

Safety Messages

BAFC recognizes the importance of reminding people who are thinking about crossing, how dangerous it is to travel on foot through this border area. The Mexican Consulate added a Hazard Response/Emergency portal to their website. Staff from the BLM posted signs along the border with the BAFC safety message.

Safety Mirrors on Roads

Border Patrol maintains safety mirrors for vehicular visibility and safety on the Minnewawa Truck Trail.

BAFC Website

The web site is posted on the Cleveland National Forest. This has been effective in reducing paper usage when distributing council annual reports. Access to the website is www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland.

BAFC MEMBER REPORTS



USDA Forest Service Cleveland National Forest

Sister Forest Agreement Cooperative Training with Mexico – The Cleveland National Forest (NF) of United States Forest Service (USFS) continues to meet with partners in Mexico to increase cooperation between the two countries wherever possible. An example of this coordination is the joint National Commission of Forestry of Mexico (Comisión Nacional Forestal- (CONAFOR)); the Baja California Department of Agriculture, Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario (SEFOA); California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and USFS wildland firefighter training held in Mexico each spring.

The Fifth Annual Binational Wildland Fire Response Training in Mexico started on Monday April 21, 2008 and went through Saturday April 26, 2008. This year it was done at Rancho Ojai, located in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico, approx. 17 miles east from the Tecate Port of Entry. Agencies involved in making this event possible – USFS, CAL FIRE, CONAFOR, and SEFOA.

In 2008, the Cleveland NF, CAL FIRE, CONAFOR and SEFOA jointly sponsored and celebrated the 6th Annual Children's Binational Environmental Education event. The celebration took place at Potrero County Park in San Diego County and was a huge success. Over 250 children and adults from both sides of the border planted trees and participated in environmental education activities throughout the day. The children learned important lessons about natural resources and ecosystems that are shared between the two countries.

In the past, the Cleveland NF provided Basic 32 hour wildland fire suppression and 8 hour refresher training to individuals from various federal, state and municipal Mexican fire service agencies. All written and video materials for the Basic 32 and 8 hour refresher firefighter courses have been translated into Spanish by Cleveland National Forest staff. Thirty firefighters from 15 Mexican states completed a train-the-trainer course in 2003, and are teaching the Basic 32 hour course in the states in Mexico. The Cleveland NF and Mexican fire service agencies are looking at ways to expand the cooperative fire training program in the future, including sharing information and resources on prescribed fire and other hazardous fuels treatments.

Border Agency Fire Council Web Site - The Border Agency Fire Council continues to have a web site through the Cleveland NF, www.fs.fed.us/r5/cleveland and BAFC is listed on the home page of the site. It provides links and information on member agencies, accomplishment and annual report information.

Border Fire Prevention and Resource Protection Crew - The Cleveland NF, located some five miles north of the international border with Mexico, is the southernmost of the national forests in California. Unauthorized travel, camping, and campfires in the southernmost portion of the Forest create significant resource impacts. The Cleveland NF staffs a border fire prevention and resource protection crew that hikes daily on user created trails to pick up trash, extinguish abandoned campfires, and rehabilitate damage to the land. In 2008, there were 101 fires within the Descanso Ranger District, but none of them escaped. The accomplishments of this crew have been the detection of over 6200 illegal campfires of which 241 escaped and burned 18,599 acres. The likely wildfire suppression cost savings of this early detection and suppression action is \$1 to \$5 million annually. Since 1997, more than 141,000 pounds of refuse has been collected and removed. In the past, the crew has also assisted the Bureau of Land Management with resource protection work in the Otay Mountain Wilderness Area.

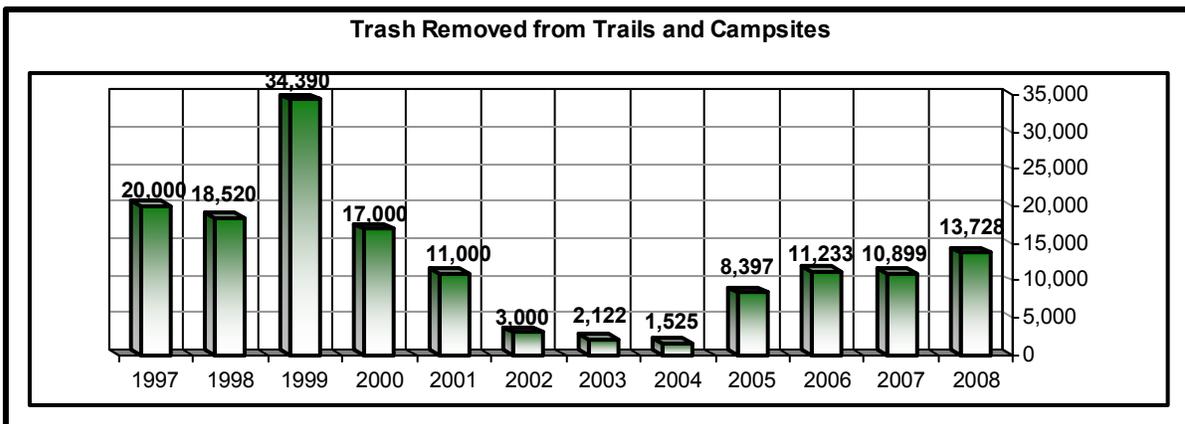
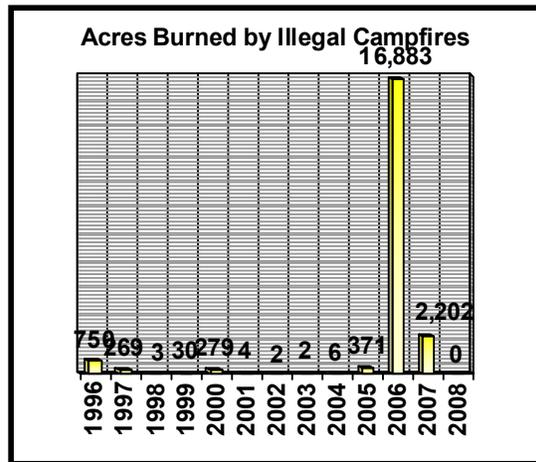
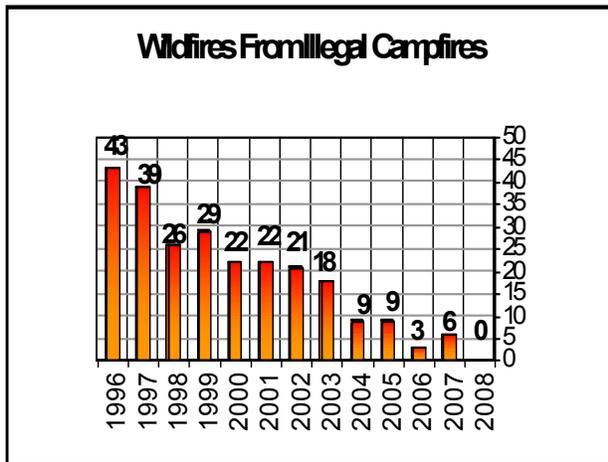
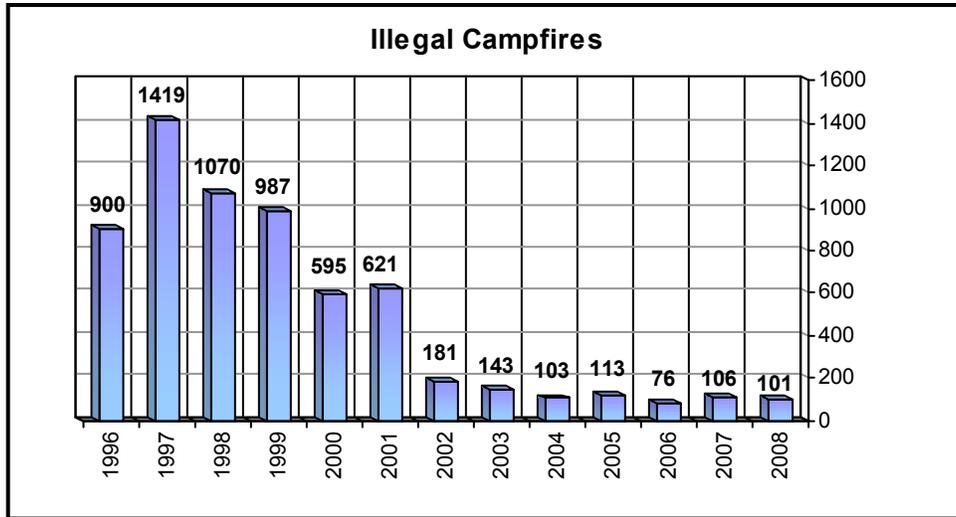
Safety Patrols - During stormy conditions, Cleveland National Forest personnel along with Border Patrol crews check the roads and trails in the Forest for people who might have been caught unprepared. These interagency efforts have significantly reduced the deaths of immigrants during winter storms in the mountains. Unfortunately, the number of deaths from exposure increased significantly last year.

Mutual Assistance Agreement with Mexico and the U.S. - CAL FIRE and the Cleveland NF recently updated the Mutual Assistance Agreement with Mexico. This important agreement establishes dispatching and resource utilization procedures that enable participating agencies to work cooperatively to suppress fire and take appropriate actions on floods and other emergency situations on border lands of the U.S. and Mexico.



Coast Guard Volunteers picking up trash along trails in the Hauser Wilderness

Cleveland National Forest Border Impact Statistics





California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

For 1.5 million acres of San Diego County, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is the fire department. CAL FIRE maintains a joint emergency command center with the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE shares the supervision of inmate firefighters with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation at four conservation camps. There are 25 CAL FIRE fire stations providing fire protection and other emergency services within the county. CAL FIRE fights fire from the air with air tankers stationed at Ramona Air Attack Base and helicopters at Gillespie and Fallbrook Helibases.

Fire Season 2008 – The peak wildfire season for CAL FIRE San Diego was very mild with no large and damaging fires occurring within the county.

Binational Prescribed (Controlled) Burn With Mexico – Prescribed burns conducted by fire agencies are still planned around Tecate Peak near the border and other similar areas. The project protects life, property and sensitive habitat on both sides of the border. A fire brigade from Rancho La Puerta and Pronatura (Nature Conservancy) members in Mexico participated with CAL FIRE and Comisión Nacional Forestal (CONAFOR). This is a continued partnership of this type to enhance the habitat and to protect citizens of both countries. Prescribed fire will be a key element of a successful program. CAL FIRE San Diego continues to work with partners in Mexico that control acreage adjacent to the U.S. property. Mexico has embarked on a new era to protect the environment on private lands that matches well with CAL FIRE goals. Another example of BAFC working to protect people and the environment.

Protecting the Environment and Preventing Fires – Determining how to remove fire hazards (weeds, brush, dead trees, etc.) while protecting threatened and endangered plant and animal species continues to be the challenge for BAFC. The Quino Checkerspot Butterfly survives in the Coochama State Forest (west of Tecate). CAL FIRE in cooperation with San Diego County planned a series of “test plots” in which various methods of fuel reduction was to be implemented. These methods may include the burning of small blocks under low intensity fire, hand clearing of selected vegetation, and possible use of goats to reduce fuel load. The intent of the project is to discover which of these methods has the least impact, if any, on the Quino habitat. Another goal is to determine if Quino habitat can be improved or created through any of these methods. This is another example of BAFC working to protect people and the environment.

Firefighters Use the Border Guidebook – When CAL FIRE firefighters respond to a wildfire in this area, they consult the Guidebook created in 1998 by BAFC. This publication provides information to the firefighters on how to extinguish fires, while minimizing harm to the environment and the endangered species that live there. The book is expected to have a complete revision in 2008.

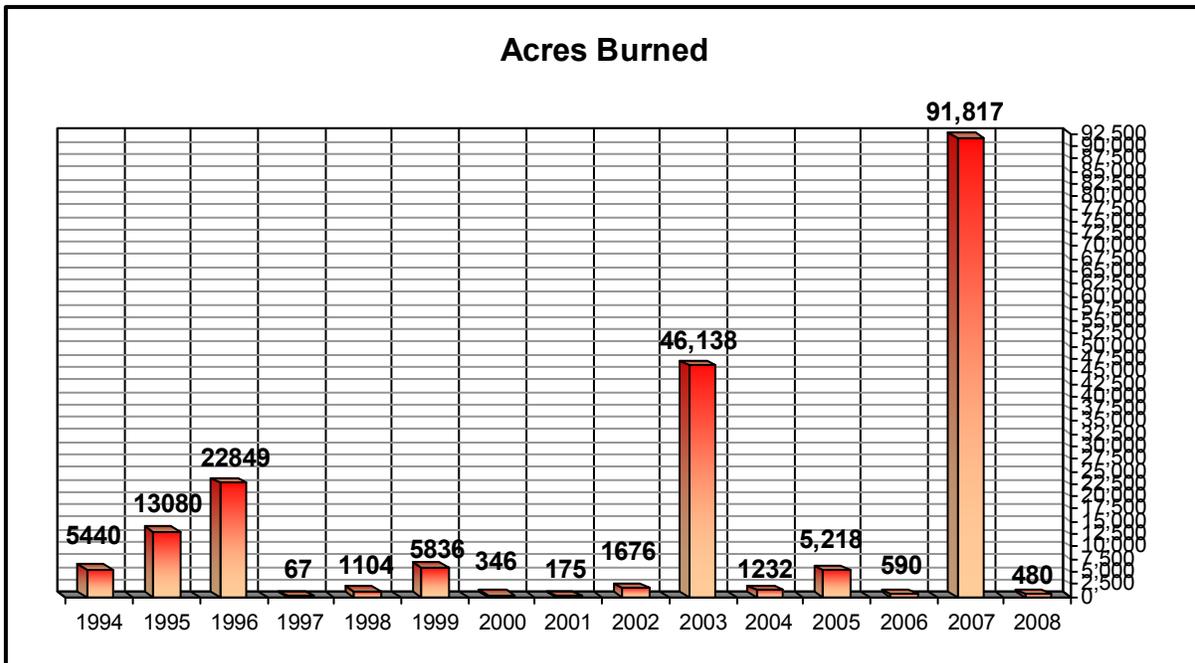
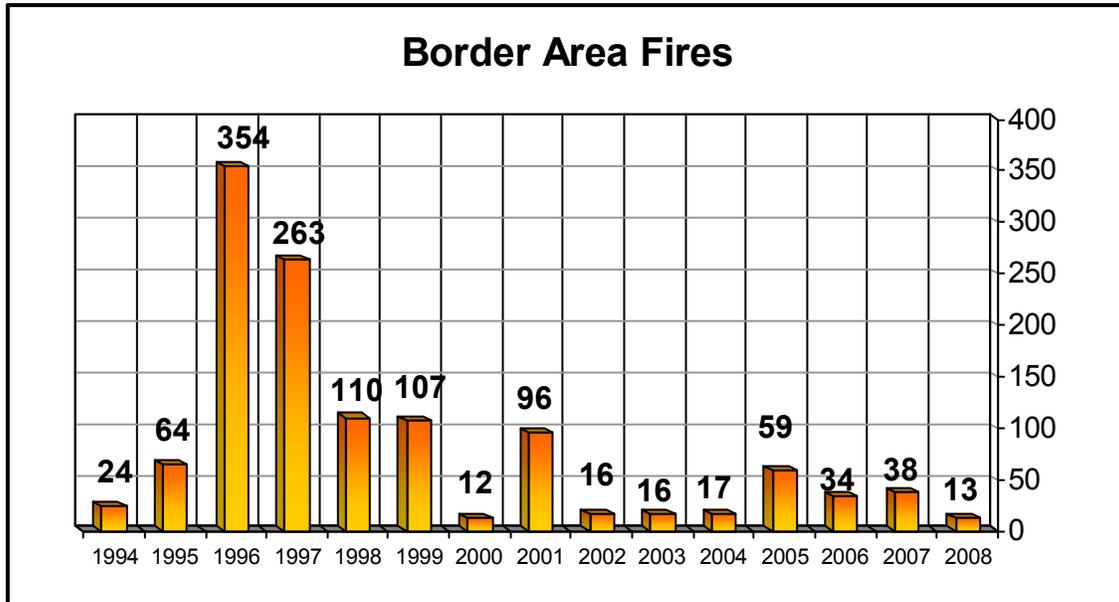
International Fuel Break-Otay – CAL FIRE continues to work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and to maintain the necessary work needed on this fuel break parallel to the Otay Truck Trail. Fire crews from McCain Valley Conservation Camp under the direction of an on-site BLM representative conduct this work. The project also creates habitat within the Otay Wilderness.

Training Video – CAL FIRE has provided videos for the CHP and Sheriff on shelter deployment and wildland fire dangers that may affect officers of these departments. In an effort to make the CAL FIRE fire safety training more available to all agencies in need, CAL FIRE and the Border Patrol produced a video of the training. CAL FIRE provided the training and the Border patrol taped, edited and copied the video. The product was then distributed by CAL FIRE. Since the beginning of BAFC, CAL FIRE has provided fire safety training to law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical technicians who might be exposed to wildfire. This video supports that effort.

Mutual Assistance Agreement - A positive relationship between the fire agencies from both countries continues to grow and improve.



CAL FIRE Border Impact Statistics





California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

The year 2008 marked the sixty second year of cooperation between the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) and Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) in the Conservation Camp Program. Our state pioneered the employment of incarcerated individuals in wildland fire protection. Since its inception, the program has expanded into a highly mobile work force engaging in all forms of risk disaster mitigation, pre-fire fuel management, the development and maintenance of fire defense improvements and facilities; and the performance of conservation related projects for local, state, and federal agencies. This program provides convicted felons with the opportunity to give something back to California citizens while paying their debt to society.

In addition to the missions listed above, the Camp Program is an active participant in the Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC). There are three Conservation Camps located in San Diego County that act as first responders to border fire emergencies. These camps are:

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|---------------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| • Puerta La Cruz (Female) | Warner Springs | 132 inmates/5 Crews |
| • La Cima (Male) | Julian | 90 inmates/4 Crews |
| • McCain Valley (Male) | Boulevard | 110 inmates/5 Crews |

Combined, these camps have the ability to provide a total of fourteen hand crews in a very short time to isolate, contain, and mitigate wildland fires. Puerta La Cruz also houses a Mobile Kitchen Unit (MKU) that is dispatched to larger fires to provide full meal service to the participating agencies.

In 2008, one or more of these camps played a direct role in controlling the 11 wildfires that occurred on the border between the United States and Mexico involving nearly 10,000 acres of wildland saving California taxpayers hundreds and thousands of dollars.

When these women and men are not fighting fires or training to fight fire they provide invaluable assistance with various conservation programs, County or State Park maintenance, as well as public road assistance.



San Diego County Sheriff's Department

The San Diego County Sheriff's Department is proud to be one of the founding members of the Border Agency Fire Council. Working in partnerships with our communities as well as fellow members of BAFC, deputies assigned to the Rural Law Enforcement Division continue to provide quality service to the citizens of the rural areas.

Working with our partners in the fire service, we assisted in numerous fires that occurred throughout the backcountry portion of San Diego County, including the massive Cedar Fire that took place in October of 2003 and the "Fire Siege of October 2007".. Our goal to provide services at fire scenes resulted in a massive activation of Sheriff's personnel for the 2003 Cedar, Paradise, Otay Fires and for the 2007 Witch, Harris, Poomacha, and Rice Fires. These fire emergencies were truly a team requiring effort and partnership with our fire department colleagues in these historic critical incidents.

The Sheriff Departments' excellent working arrangement with the various fire and law enforcement agencies in the backcountry areas has proved very useful at both fire and disaster scenes. Deputies assigned to the Rural Law Enforcement Division of the Sheriff's Department carry fire turnout gear, extra water for rescue personnel and victims, as well as the ability to utilize common radio frequencies to talk to other agencies.

Adhering to our mission statement of ***"In partnership with our communities, we provide the highest quality public safety services"***, the Sheriff's Department continues to support the Border Area Fire Council by actively participating in the regular meetings and various projects.





U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) continues to actively participate with its cooperators who share membership in the Border Agency Fire Council.

Two Field Offices, Palm Springs-South Coast and El Centro of BLM's California Desert District suffer impacts due to immigration and smuggling activity. Among many, these impacts include Wildfire and its associated impacts to BLM's neighbors on adjacent privately owned lands. This relationship requires a commitment to the public with appropriate sensitivity and is demonstrated by Fire Mitigation Education efforts, traditional fire prevention actions including fire patrol, signing and public contacts. Hazardous Fuels mitigation efforts adjacent to communities and restoration of the International Fuel Break system to assist CAL FIRE, our fire suppression service provider. Assigned biologists, archaeologists, geologists, wilderness specialists, range specialists, public affairs officers, and managers all contribute as requested to facilitate the safe use of BLM Administered Public Lands in the Border area.

BLM Fire management activities include continued service delivery under BLM's *Community Assistance Program* to provide grants to FireSafe Councils, participate in the development of Community Wildland Fire Protection Plans and sit upon the Board of Directors of the Greater FireSafe Council of San Diego County. The *Rural Fire Assistance program* helps offset costs incurred by underfunded Volunteer Fire Departments on wildfires on BLM Lands by providing grant opportunities for wildland firefighting equipment. The *Ready Reserve Program* allowed BLM to pay student tuition, materials and instructor costs through presentation of the course "Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface" (ICS S-215) to 60 area volunteer firefighters.

Student Conservation Association - This crew of Fire Education Corp members under a grant and supervision of BLM Fire, completed over 250 FireSafe inspections, associated Risk Assessments and homeowner education in BAFC area communities and direct assistance to the FireSafe Councils. After a fire on Hauser Mountain, a BLM Wilderness Study Area, the crewmembers placed over 200 Spanish Language fire prevention signs on immigration trails which may have contributed to no further wildfires in that area in 2008. Similar efforts by the previous SCA Crew and CAL FIRE may have contributed to the successful protection of numerous homes in the Campo Community during this year's (2008) wind driven Shockey Fire.

Sadly, the remains of an immigrant were found by CAL FIRE in the Carrizo Gorge area during an immigrant related fire. This is an extremely rugged picturesque area protected as Wilderness' by California State Parks and BLM.

BLM with its cooperating agencies were able to plan and implement a mass casualty drill at Hauser Canyon which was very productive to several cooperating agencies.



Fire Education Corps with Greater Alpine FireSafe Council and retired fire engine.

BLM remains committed to the continued success of the Border Agency Fire Council.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

In November 2007, the California and Nevada Operations Office (CNO) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) officially changed its name to Region 8. The Fire Management Program in Region 8 includes National Wildlife Refuges and Fish Hatcheries throughout California, Nevada, and Oregon's Klamath Basin. In San Diego County, FWS manages about 15,000 acres of wildlands on a complex of four National Wildlife Refuges (NWR) which provide 12 critical habitat areas that are home to 21 threatened or endangered species in San Diego County. FWS representatives attend the Border Agency Fire Council to facilitate communication and coordination for fire and law enforcement between all BAFC agencies.

BAER and ESR Programs - There was a sizeable workload associated with the Burned Area Emergency Response and Emergency Stabilization (BAER) and Rehabilitation (ESR) Programs.

Collaboration and Partnerships - Region 8 fire management staff was actively involved in the California Fire Alliance and provided technical assistance and support to numerous fire-safe and fire-wise partners. The Fire Alliance is interagency forum of local, tribal, state and federal agencies coordinates statewide pre-fire management efforts and provides assistance to local communities at risk to wildfire.

The San Diego NWR Complex has partnered with the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County (FSC) on various WUI projects. With funding provided by the FWS, the FSC has worked to promote fire safe projects in communities adjacent to FWS managed land. We have also been successful in supporting existing community FSCs in San Diego and encouraging many interested and emerging communities to establish local FSCs.



United States Border Patrol

"To enforce the rule of law along the border, enhancing the quality of life of the people we proudly serve."

The San Diego Sector of the U.S. Border Patrol is responsible for 66 linear miles of the U.S./Mexico border, and nearly 7,000 square miles, roughly corresponding to the boundaries of the County of San Diego. Since the implementation of Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, illegal entries in San Diego County have steadily declined.

The success of Operation Gatekeeper has enabled the San Diego Sector to appropriate more resources to the development of search & rescue teams, anti-smuggling investigative units, public outreach programs, and border safety initiatives. The availability of personnel and resources has enabled the sector to become more proactive and the leader in innovative uses of new technology. San Diego Sector has evolved from the most neglected area of the southwest border to the flagship of the U.S. Border Patrol and a model of effective, efficient, and humane border control.

Department of Homeland Security - The President has charged the new Department of Homeland Security with the mission of stopping another terrorist attack on American soil. Securing our borders is a crucial aspect of that mission. Border security can no longer be an immigration issue alone. It can no longer be a Customs issue alone. It can no longer simply be about air or port security. Instead, it must encompass all of these issues. And so, on March 1, 2003 the United States Border Patrol joined the new Department of Homeland Security under the Bureau of Border and Transportation Security.

Border Safety Initiative - The Border Safety Initiative (BSI) began in San Diego in 1998 as an effort to make the international border safer for everyone. BSI addresses related concerns in the following areas: **Prevention** of illegal entries through potentially hazardous areas, **Search and Rescue** capabilities and commitments, and interactive support in situations requiring the **Identification** of deceased persons.

The San Diego Sector began issuing emergency response supplies to agents in 1998 as one facet of the Border Safety Initiative. Backpacks were loaded with a variety of items appropriate for summer or winter emergency aid. Each bag is packed with enough supplies for more than one individual. Easily digestible food, such as special granola "trail mix," dried "tropical fruit mix" and carbohydrate energy gel replaces earlier food items. "Gatorade" is included along with water and electrolyte tablets. Basic medical response supplies as well as first aid guides are included. Additional instant "cold-packs" were added. The San Diego

Sector supplied deputies from the Alpine Sheriff's Office and Sheriff's Rural Enforcement division with these same packs in the event they encounter individuals in remote areas suffering from dehydration, heat stroke or malnutrition.

Enforcement Technology Department (ETD) - The San Diego Sector created the U.S. Border Patrol's first Enforcement Technology Department (ETD) in January of 2000. ETD is charged with researching emerging technology that can enhance the capability, effectiveness, and efficiency of border enforcement and management activities. ETD was envisioned to enhance the sector by strengthening technology capabilities and awareness while serving as a coordinating tool within the agency.

The office has several collaborative efforts underway, including:

San Diego State University / NASA Trail Extraction Project. This effort uses remote sensing to extract trail network from imagery

San Diego Police Department / San Diego Sheriff's Department Data sharing. ETD is working with both agencies to develop a common operating picture for emergency response in the area.

San Diego County Border Agency Fire Council Mapping Project. ETD is facilitating the production of new maps for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The maps contain over thirty layers of information.





San Diego County Office of Emergency Services

The mission of the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is to coordinate San Diego County's response to disasters. OES assists public and private organizations in San Diego County with preparing for, responding to and recovering from major emergencies, including terrorism.

County OES has been an active supporter of the Border Agency Fire Council. OES has:

As a member of BAFC, staff from OES provided technical assistance in the original development of the Operating Plan. OES also assisted with the update of the plan each year. The BAFC Operating Plan coordinated medical and rescue response to any multi-casualty incident. OES continues to support the BAFC and the Operational Area to respond to and recover from disasters.



San Diego Gas & Electric



San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is pleased to continue as a member of the Border Agency Fire Council and shares the council's commitment to work cooperatively with all agencies involved in protecting life, property, and threatened habitat in the border area of San Diego County. SDG&E has been an active participant since the council's beginning and became a formal member in June 2005.

SDG&E has a formal Memorandum of Understanding with CAL FIRE to partner with them in fuels management and hazard mitigation along the path of the Southwest Powerlink where appropriate. It is the intent of SDG&E to continue to work with all agencies in future projects that occur within the SDG&E service territory.

SDG&E continues to work to improve fire coordination efforts with all fire agencies throughout its service territory. This year, SDG&E increased its electrical safety awareness training for fire department and law enforcement personnel and conducted more than 80 presentations to "First Responders" throughout San Diego County. The Border Agency Fire Council has been an excellent conduit to foster these special cooperative relationships.

SDG&E is looking at new ways to expand its coordination efforts with fire agencies, law enforcement personnel, land management agencies, and other private entities within the border area to provide for the safety of the public on both sides of the border. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this dedicated and vital organization.



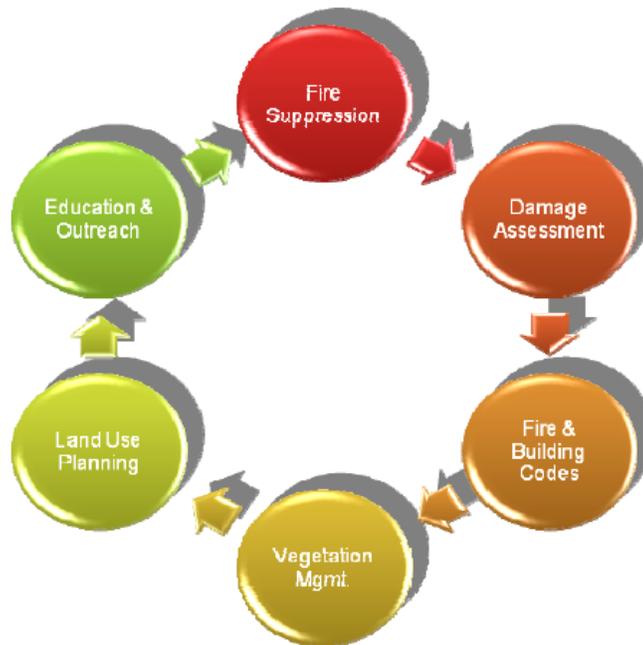
Department of Planning and Land Use

A Systems Approach To Addressing Wildfires And Fire Protection

What San Diego County has done to Protect People and Property from Wildfires.

BACKGROUND - In October 2007, wildfires raged across San Diego County just as they did four years earlier in 2003, destroying thousands of homes and forcing hundreds of thousands of people to flee. But when the fires died, crews found signs of hope inside the charred perimeter — evidence that County action to improve building codes and policies had better protected people and property. The evidence lay in the wreckage, or rather, in the lack of it.

The 2007 fires destroyed 13 percent of all the structures trapped inside their boundaries. But they only destroyed 2 percent of those structures that had been built to the codes that County officials improved after the 2003 wildfires. Those code improvements, many adopted in 2004, focused on six areas as reflected in the graph below.



This report summarizes some of the more significant changes the County has implemented following these wildfires.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

Year-Round Fire Protection. Starting in 2004, San Diego County and CAL FIRE signed contracts to provide year-round, 24-7 coverage in remote areas of the rural backcountry.

Reorganization. In June 2008, the BOS approved a plan to consolidate fire and life safety services in 1.56M acres of the unincorporated rural backcountry.

New Fire Suppression Equipment. To date, 30 pieces of suppression equipment were purchased including 13 Water Tenders and 13 Type II Engines and provided to the various volunteer fire companies and CAL FIRE.

Super Scoopers. In May 2008, the BOS leased two CL-415 Superscoopers and one air tactical aircraft, which communicates with the incident commander on the ground to decide where, when and how fires should be attacked from above. The planes provide support to any jurisdiction within the County of San Diego.

Night Flying Capabilities. Starting in September 2008, actions were implemented to allow for night aerial fire detection and suppression activities.

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT - Working on behalf of CAL FIRE, the County's Building Division has been in charge of assessing all damage caused by major wildfires since 1996. Several agencies rely upon our damage assessments to help their own work. They include the Red Cross (to distribute food and clothing); FEMA (to provide shelter for victims); insurance companies (to expedite claims); the Building Department (rebuild); and the Assessor's Office (to adjust tax rolls). Planning agencies also use the damage reports to figure out how to improve building codes so that future fires will cause less damage.

FIRE AND BUILDING CODES - In 2004 County leaders improved the local building codes by adding new requirements to use more ignition-resistant materials. That meant not just using Class A roofing, but non-combustible material such as stucco for exterior walls, and dual paned windows. It also meant building attic and foundation vents in locations that would deter burning embers from entering structures. And, for those structures built in the most fire-prone areas, the requirements were ratcheted up even further. Skylights had to be made of tempered glass; rain gutters must be metal instead of plastic; outside doors must be solid-core or noncombustible; eaves had to be made from ignition-resistant materials or heavy timber, and untreated small dimension wood patios, decks, and fences could not be attached to houses.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

3D Program. The County and local agencies spent nearly \$47 million to remove about 530,000 dead, dying and diseased trees in the Palomar Mountain and greater Julian areas. The focus was along evacuation roads and exit corridors (roughly 244 total road miles). The County is actively seeking an additional \$45 million to complete work in Palomar and Greater Julian areas over the next four years.

Combustible Vegetation Ordinance. Before 2004, the County's codes required builders and homeowners to keep "weeds" in check in the immediate 30 feet to 100 feet around structures. The County improved those codes in two ways. First, we dropped the "30 feet" and simply made the 100-foot requirement the standard. Then we clarified the vague "weeds" terminology, explaining that vegetation management included not just weeds, but combustible vegetation such as shrubs, green waste, dead and dying trees.

Codes Partnership. The Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU), working with local fire districts, CAL FIRE, and U.S. Forest Service, developed a combustible vegetation inspection program for the unincorporated area of the county. About 15,000 inspections are conducted annually, with 90% of the residents complying with the first notification.

FAST. The Forest Area Safety Task Force (FAST), an organization made up of federal, State and local agencies has identified nine target areas of dangerous fuel loads and is currently developing specific projects to be considered in those areas.

LAND USE PLANNING

Guidelines for Determining Significance. Until 2007, builders in San Diego County faced a confusing collection of fire codes from the state and local fire agencies. To fix that, the County created a wildfire and fire protection section for its "Guidelines to Determine Significance" ---- a document that tells builders how to assess the environmental impacts of their projects. The section spells out what the County expects from developers to make their projects as fire-safe as possible. Failing to comply could create a "significant" environmental impact that could jeopardize the project's approval.

Fire Protection Plans. All discretionary projects must submit Fire Protection Plans for their specific sites. The plans answer questions: How close are emergency responders? How quickly could they arrive? What water supplies are available? And they address code requirements about: fire sprinklers, ignition-resistant construction; defensible-space; and long-term vegetation management.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Wildfire Public Awareness Campaign. A Wildfire Awareness Guide was mailed to County residents providing information on creating defensible space, landscaping to reduce fire risk, a fire resistant plant guide and steps to safeguard homes.

Alert San Diego Registration. A campaign is under way to register cell phones, Voice Over Internet Protocol and email to receive emergency notifications. Home telephone numbers are currently in the system, but cell phones are not. To register, log onto www.readysandiego.org and click on the Alert San Diego icon.

OCTOBER 2007 CHANGES WORKING

The fact that the 2007 fires destroyed just 2 percent of the structures built to the improved codes and policies – opposed to the nearly 11 percent of the other structures – are evidence that the changes made a positive difference.



Palomar Mt. following the 10/2007 Wildfires

But we also know that we cannot rest. The County will continue to look at minimizing the risks from fires by finding new ways to improve the codes and policies that can make structures safer when fires hit. Question can be directed to the County website at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/index.html>

GOVERNMENT MUST CONTINUE TO FIND WAYS TO IMPROVE CODES AND POLICIES TO MAKE CITIZENS AND STRUCTURES SAFER WHEN FIRES HIT.



San Miguel Consolidated Fire Protection District

Fire Season Preparation

- Annual County Wildland Drill — Hosted by Barona this year
 - o Aerial operations and working with helicopter,
 - o Progressive hose lays,
 - o Structure triage
 - o Entrapment avoidance safety training

- RT-130 — In-house wildland refresher conducted during May and June
 - o Ten Standard Firefighting Orders
 - o Eighteen Watch Out Situation
 - o Fire shelter use
 - o Fire behavior and weather
 - o Tactics and Strategy
 - o Situational Awareness
 - o Fatigue Awareness

- Fire Season Concept of Operations
 - o Readiness considerations for anticipated wildland fire
 - o Alert phases during red flag condition
 - o Response levels base on size of the fire

- Resource Deployment Guide
 - o Strike Team deployment criteria
 - o Single resource deployment criteria
 - o Move-up matrix for covering fire stations

- I-Zone wildland Preplanning
 - o Identifying areas of concern within the District
 - o Preplanning response levels
 - o Identify safety zones within the District

- Fire Prevention Mailings
 - o Independent Action Plan that provided residents with information on ways to reduce vulnerability to wildland fire and identified emergency escape routes

- Firewise garden at Cuyamaca College



COMISIÓN NACIONAL FORESTAL

Comisión Nacional Forestal Gerencia Regional I Península de Baja California

The National Commission of Forestry (Comisión Nacional Forestal-CONAFOR) was created as a decentralized federal agency, as depending from SEMARNAT (Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources) on April 4, 2001. Its mission is to inspire the participation from Mexican society to make the necessary changes to create a new sustainable forestry development policy in Mexico. Its general goal is to develop and to impulse productive activities and forest conservation and restoration.

According with the Mexico's General Law of Forestry Sustainable Development, CONAFOR is the federal agency responsible for the coordination of the wildfires prevention, detection and suppression in whole country, with the assistance of other federal, state and county public administration agencies, including volunteer groups.

2008 Baja California Fire Season Statistics - In the 2008 Wildfire Season registered 242 fires in Baja California, which burned 32,000 acres. Six of those fires were considered large relevant fires.

Binational Activities

6th Binational Children's Camp – Forest Environmental Education - For the sixth consecutive year took place the Binational Children's Camp in Potrero, California at the Potrero County Park, which was organized by USFS, CAL FIRE, SEFOA and CONAFOR. It was a great party-education day for children from both sides of the border.



Tecate Fire Public Safety (Bomberos de Tecate)

In order to give better attention to the people here in Tecate BC and the tourist's that visit us from our country and from the United States we established the CIS (COMAND INCICEDENT SYSTEM) between the Mexican Red Cross, Rescue teams and the Direction of Fire Fighters and Civil Protection of Tecate.

- In the fire central we have 2 fire trucks, 2 pipes trucks and 3 rescue trucks.
- In Tecate we established a support point in Rancho La Puerta where we leave an ambulance and a rescue truck of a rescue team of Tecate.
- In Valle de Las Palmas we have a Fire Truck and established a Red Cross ambulance.
- In La Rumorosa we have a Fire Truck and 2 ambulances, one of the Red Cross and the other of a Rescue Team of the place, both ambulances equipped.
- In the Km. 6 of the road to Ensenada we established 2 rescue trucks.
- In Cerro Azul we have a Fire Truck and established 2 ambulance of a rescue team of Tecate, BC.
- In Lomatova we established 2 ambulances, one of Red Cross and the other of a rescue team of Tecate.
- In El Hongo we have a Fire Truck and we established an ambulance of Red Cross.
- In El Carrizo we coordinate the attention whit Tijuana Fire Fighters, Civil Protection of the State.
- In Sierra of Juarez we coordinate whit CONAFOR, Tijuana Fire Fighters and Civil Protection of the State.

The Director of Fire Fighters and Civil Protection of Tecate spends \$2461.00 for food and fuel for the different units established.

In 2008 we attacked 229 forest fires with equipment given to us from firefighters in Washington and at the direction of firefighters and Civil Protection of Tecate. We spent \$62,595 for services, food, and repair of our units, fuel and logistics. \$1056 was spent on logistics during the 2008 only forest fires. \$61538 was spent in reparation of units and equipment that we used in 2008 attending only forest fires in Tecate.



Office of State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny, 40th District

“As the State Senator for California’s 40th Senatorial District, I continue to support the efforts and bi-national opportunities my fellow Border Agency Fire Council (BAFC) members have taken to address fire safety concerns along the California/Baja California Border, and throughout California.

As our binational region continues to experience years of extended drought and growth of fire prone exotic plant species, we must continue to work together to foster interagency cooperation between participating BAFC agencies, and elected officials from both sides of the border. It is imperative that elected officials work with the fire and safety agencies to address both short-term and long-term remedies to California’s burgeoning wildland/urban interface zones.

As Chair of the Senate Budget committee, I have first-hand knowledge of California’s costs associated with fighting fires. As a bi-national region, it is imperative that we work with our partner agencies here in California and in Baja California to defray the costs associated with protecting life and property, coupled with the protection and sustainability of our natural resources.

I look forward to continuing the working relationship we have built with the Border Agency Fire Council to advance its mission of protecting our border region’s natural resources by fostering open binational communication.” **Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny**

Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny, a Democrat, was re-elected to the California State Senate on November 7, 2006, to represent the 40th District. As a native Californian, Senator Ducheny has been involved with neighborhood issues and improving the quality of life in her district for over 25 years.



40th Senatorial District - The district incorporates portions of San Diego and Riverside Counties and all of Imperial County, spanning the entire California/Baja California border from Imperial Beach to the Colorado River. Senator Ducheny chairs the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee. She is a member of the Senate

Public Employment and Retirement Committee and the Labor and Industrial

Relations Committee. She is also Vice Chair of the Border Legislative Conference, a binational forum of state legislators from the 10 U.S.-Mexico Border States sponsored by the Council of State Governments.



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BAFC Membership

Thirty-four organizations and elected officials are active members of the Border Agency Fire Council. Each contributes staff and funds to this unique collaborative effort.

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitations
California Department of Fish and Game
California Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection – CAL FIRE
California Highway Patrol
CONAFOR (Comician Nacional Forestal), B.C., Mexico
Direccion de Bomberos de Tijuana
Director de Proteccion Civil del Estado, B.C. Mexico (Baja OES)
Estatad de Forestal y Fauna Ensenada, Mexico (SEFOA)
FireSafe Council San Diego
Joint Task Force 6
Mexican Consul General San Diego (Associate Member)
Office of the Governor
Office of Supervisor Dianne Jacob
Office of Senator Denise Ducheny
Office of Senator Dennis Hollingsworth
Rural Fire Protection District
San Diego County Department of Health Services Agency
San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use
San Diego County Office of Emergency Services
San Diego County Sheriff
San Diego Fire and Rescue Department
San Diego Gas and Electric
San Diego Trauma Hospital Administrators
San Miguel Fire Protection District
Southern California Watershed Fire Council
Tecate Fire Public Safety (Bomberos de Tecate)
U.S.D.A. Forest Service
U.S.D.I. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Border Patrol
U.S. Attorney's Office
U.S. Consulate General Tijuana
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

BAFC AREA OF CONCERN

All of San Diego County

& south of the US/Mexico Border

