

# BACKGROUND



From the appointment of the first State Board of Forestry in 1885, to the creation of the first State Forester position in 1905, and the organization of the original California Division of Forestry in 1927, CAL FIRE has protected the people, property, and natural resources of California. The Department's varied programs work together to plan protection strategies for over 31 million acres of privately-

owned wildlands, and to provide emergency services of all kinds throughout California.

CAL FIRE's jurisdiction extends the length and breadth of the State, and the heart of its emergency response and resource protection capability is a force of nearly 4,700 full-time fire professionals, foresters, and administrative employees; 2,400 seasonal firefighters; 5,600 local government volunteer firefighters; 2,600 Volunteers In Prevention; and 4,300 inmates and wards.<sup>1</sup>

The Department responds to more than 5,600 wildland fires that burn over 172,000 acres each year. Through cooperative agreements, mutual aid, and the State's emergency plan, CAL FIRE personnel respond to more than 350,000 incidents annually, including structure fires, automobile accidents, medical emergencies, swift water rescues, civil disturbances, search and rescues, hazardous material spills, train wrecks, floods, and earthquakes.<sup>1</sup>



In addition, CAL FIRE is responsible for the management and protection of California's rich and diverse natural resources. Of the 85 million acres classified as wildlands in the State, 33 million acres are forest lands, with 38 percent privately-owned and 62 percent government-owned or tribal. The State's 20 million acres of commercial forest lands grows 8.3 billion board feet yearly. The five-year average timber harvest volume and value is approximately 1.3 billion board feet, and \$326 million, respectively. In addition to timber, the State's wildlands also provide valuable watershed, wildlife habitat, and recreation resources.

<sup>1</sup> Figures are current as of June 1, 2012.



CAL FIRE's Resource Management Program plays an integral role in the management and protection of California's natural resources through its Forest Practice, Urban Forestry, Fuel Reduction, Demonstration State Forest, Pest Management, Landowner Assistance, Environmental Protection and Regulation, Archaeology, and Nursery programs.<sup>2</sup>

Since 1995, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) has supported the mission of CAL FIRE by focusing on fire prevention. Through major program elements that include engineering, education, enforcement, and support from the State Board of Fire Services, OSFM has a wide variety of fire safety responsibilities

including regulating buildings in which people live, congregate, or are confined; controlling substances and products which may, in and of themselves, or by their misuse, cause injuries, death and destruction by providing fire and resource assessment data, mapping, and tools; providing statewide direction for fire prevention within wildland areas; providing fire and resource assessment data, mapping, and tools; regulating hazardous liquid pipelines; developing and reviewing regulations and building standards; and providing training and education in fire protection methods and responsibilities.



Finally, CAL FIRE management staff provide policy direction essential to the successful completion of the Department's mission, including working directly with statewide control agencies to implement Administration and Legislative requirements. Administrative staff assigned to locations throughout the organization perform the day-to-day functions in support of the of the Department's mission, such as accounting, budgeting, business services, legal, human resources, labor relations, auditing, capital outlay and facility maintenance, and information technology services.

<sup>2</sup> Source: 2001-2005 USFS Forest Inventory and Analysis Report; State Board of Equalization timber harvest statistics; CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Programs, California's Forests and Rangelands: 2010 Assessment.