

FOREWORD

WILDFIRE ACTIVITY STATISTICS

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) under the direction of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection provides an annual Wildfire Activity Statistics report. Although it contains other information, this report is primarily a statistical record of wildfire incidents responded to by CAL FIRE employees (Schedule B) within CAL FIRE Direct Protection Area (DPA).

The existing overall fire protection system involving CAL FIRE and California as a whole is rather complex. A number of technical terms are utilized and the use of fire statistics typically presupposes some understanding of the overall framework. A description of this framework can be found at (<http://www.fire.ca.gov/about/about.php>); and in the Glossary of terms at the end of this document.

The first Forest Fire Summary (RED BOOK) was published in 1943 and has continued to this date. Prior to 1989, data and statistics were tabulated manually; today statistics are derived from an automated database and in some cases made more explicit through spatial analysis using Geographic Information System techniques. CAL FIRE began electronically entering incident data into the Emergency Activity Reporting System (EARS) on July 1, 1989. Starting at the end of 2006, CAL FIRE began reporting incidents using a web-based subscription service called California All Incident Reporting System (CAIRS). This data is imported into the CAIRS database by CAL FIRE staff and the data is uploaded quarterly to the National Database maintained by the United States Fire Administration (USFA). Due to the changes in data collection, methods and systems over the years, information may not always be comparable and data may be of differing accuracy or completeness.

Throughout this report, the statistics are displayed by **who** provides the wildfire protection. Forces include those from Schedule A, Schedule B, Contract County or federal firefighters. The second part of the statistical reporting is **where** the protection is provided. Areas are categorized as State Responsibility Area (SRA) or previously defined DPA.

SRA is State and privately-owned forest, watershed, and rangeland for which the primary financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires rests with the State (Map 1). Just over three-quarters of SRA is protected by CAL FIRE. However, under cooperative agreement or other arrangements, federal agencies protect 13% of SRA and local government protects the remaining 11% of SRA (Table 3).

The term "Direct Protection Area" is applied to indicate when a particular fire protection organization has the primary responsibility for attacking an uncontrolled fire and for directing the suppression activity. Thus, in addition to lands in SRA, CAL FIRE may have "direct protection" responsibility on lands in federal jurisdiction. At the same time, federal agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service may have "direct protection" responsibility for lands in SRA. The lands in SRA and federal areas for which CAL FIRE has "direct protection" responsibility for fire protection responses are depicted on Map 2.

State law also permits the CAL FIRE Director to contract with local government to protect SRA lands; in this document they are referred to as Contract Counties. To date, the Director has permitted six counties: Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, Santa Barbara, and Ventura.

CAL FIRE provides fire protection services to many California citizens through the administration of approximately 150 cooperative fire protection agreements in 36 of the State's 58 counties. Wildfire statistics associated with incidents where local government reimburses CAL FIRE for services, commonly referred to as Schedule A, are displayed in Table 1.

This report also includes a statewide summary of California wildfires and a listing of wildfires over three hundred acres for all wildfire agencies (Table 5). The statistical information in this report is gathered from data in the previously defined CAIRS and Incident Status Summaries (ICS-209) on the National Fire and Aviation Management (FAMWEB) website <http://fam.nwcg.gov/fam-web/>.

The data within the statistic reports and graphic displays on pages 14 through 40 include only wildfire incidents in CAL FIRE's direct protection area that are filtered into general cause categories. A description of the general cause categories can be found in the Glossary of terms at the end of this document.

The majority of the 2011 wildfire activity occurred in Southern California, primarily in Kern County. Dry lightning storms that moved through Los Angeles, Kern and Tulare counties ignited over 70,000 acres in a two-week period. This wildfire activity is displayed in tables 1, 2, 5 and 7. However, it is not displayed in the tables or graphic figures (specifically Graphic Figure 6. – Fires and Acres by Region) that start on page 14, which are queried from the incident reports in the CAIRS database. Since most of the Contract Counties do not report their wildfire activity to the Office of the State Fire Marshal, we are not able to query this data from our database and display it in this annual statistic report.

Additional Wildfire Activity Statistics for previous years can be found at the following website: http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_protection/fire_protection_fire_info_redbooks.php