

*By July 1, 1,459 fires
spanned across 435,894
acres of land.*



Siege Summary Part III: Tuesday, July 1

The immense scale of the 2008 June Fire Siege prevented any detailed description of the activities during each day. This section, Part III is a broader, more in-depth view of the activities on July 1 and provides a detailed description of a single day to illustrate the scope and complexity of the siege. The fires are presented in the priority order determined by CalMAC with input from the NorCal and SoCal MAC groups. (Today, FEMA also joined the CalMac group). Priorities continue to emphasize the protection of life, property, critical infrastructure and natural/cultural resources. This day was chosen to represent a day in the siege, not because it was exceptional, but because it was typical.

Status

By July 1st, the 2008 June Fire Siege was fully underway. The 2,000 fires defining the siege were identified and the vast majority were already contained by the relentless work of firefighters from California and throughout the nation. State, local and federal firefighters continued to battle more than 75 uncontained large fires from Kern County, north to the Oregon border. While some fires immediately threatened communities, others were in areas so remote and rugged that they burned until the arrival of fall rains. Nationally there were 337 new fires and a total of 95 uncontained large fires which taxed scarce suppression resources and required fire managers to constantly reassess priorities. Fires burned in the hot, extremely dry weather. A few of the fires within the complexes remained unstaffed due to limited resources. Governor Schwarzenegger visited the Shasta Complex and the Forest Service Chief's principal representative visited North Zone. Military assistance continued to

increase in the form of helicopters and air tankers. The Governor ordered 200 California National Guard soldiers to be trained and deployed to fight wildland fires. The Governor proclaimed a state of emergency in Mariposa County that brought the total to ten counties (Plumas, Butte, Kern, Mendocino, Monterey, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta and Trinity).

Statistics

The Governor was briefed with a daily Statewide Fire Overview which included the following statistics:

Statewide Fire Overview: July 1, 2008

Fires: 1,459
 Acres: 435,894
 Personnel Committed: 18,457
 Resources Committed:
 Engines: 1,399
 Crews: 488
 Dozers: 335
 Water Tenders: 410
 Helicopters: 100

Highway closures: State highways and local roads are closed throughout California due to wildfire activities. Closures are in place for State Highways 1 near Big Sur, 32 between Chico and Chester, and 70 in the Feather River Canyon with delays on Highway 299 along the Trinity River. Numerous county and local roads are closed as well.

Evacuations: Areas of Monterey and Shasta counties are under evacuation orders. Precautionary evacuation orders are in place for areas in Butte, Kern, Mendocino, Monterey, Plumas and Shasta counties.

Structures Threatened:

8,076 residences, 165 commercial, 3,045 outbuildings

Structures Destroyed:

31 residences, 1 commercial, 28 outbuildings

Weather Forecast

Northern Predictive Services: Another weak disturbance was crossing Northern California from SW to NE. It brought mid and high-level clouds (thickest over the northwestern half of the area). The marine layer deepened to 2000-2500'. The biggest concern was the SW gradient winds ahead of the trough. Record high Energy Release Components and record low 1,000-hour fuel moisture levels were reached in 3 Northern California predictive service areas.

Southern Predictive Services: A ridge of high pressure over the southwestern states maintained temperatures a little above normal over most of the region. Morning low clouds and fog moved into coastal areas. Humidity remained very low above the marine layer.

Activity by Complex

Butte Complex (CAL FIRE's Butte Unit): Of the 36 fires in this 17,000 acre complex, 11 were contained and 12 had merged with other fires, which left 13 active fires. Some of the fires in the Canyon Complex on the neighboring Plumas National Forest had the potential to join or influence fires in this complex. The two incident management teams closely coordinated firefighting efforts with each other and with the team managing the nearby Cub Fire on the Lassen National Forest. The Butte and Canyon complexes threatened major electrical transmission lines in the Feather River Project and the communities of Magalia, Coutolenc, Butte Meadows, Jonesville, and Jarbo Gap. Successful

firing operations were carried out last night on the Breakneck Fire. The Camp Fire joined with other fires and grew to 5,900 acres. The complex was still not able to take effective perimeter control actions on all of the fires due to the unavailability of additional engines, crews, dozers, and overhead. During the day, the Butte Complex grew by 1,000 acres and was 30% contained.

Shasta Complex (CAL FIRE's Shasta-Trinity Unit):

Of the 158 original fires in the 51,000 acre complex, an impressive 108 fires had been contained and 43 had merged with adjacent fires, which left 5 active fires. Several of these fires burned heavy fuels in remote areas with difficult access, west of Redding. The fires near Lake Shasta continued to threaten the major electrical power lines of the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which are significant sources of electricity for all of California and contribute to the Western Power Grid. The three fires of primary concern were: Motion fire (16,700 acres and 25% contained), the Deerlick Fire, (16,800 acres and 10% contained), and the Moon Fire (18,500 acres and 15% contained). The Moon and Motion fires included BLM jurisdiction in CAL FIRE DPA. Fires in the nearby Whiskeytown Complex and the Lime Complex to the west maintained the potential to influence or merge with these fires. The various management teams closely coordinated their plans and actions. During the day, the Shasta Complex grew by about 2,500 acres and was 20% contained. Governor Schwarzenegger visited the Shasta Complex.

Whiskeytown Complex (Whiskeytown National Recreation Area):

The four fires in this complex gradually grew to about 4,800 acres and were 30% contained. The fires threatened the WAPA power lines and critical radio, TV, and fire and law enforcement

BARELY A BEAR STORY



Forester Adam Deem had no idea that he was about to repeat history when he set out scouting the leading edge of the Moon Fire on July 17th. His story would capture the attention of the news media and the public.

You probably know that back in 1950, on a fire on the Lincoln National Forest in New Mexico, soldier-firefighters found a seriously-burned Black Bear cub clinging to a snag. Rescued and successfully treated for his injuries, this bear was adopted by a New Mexico game warden. Of course, he then grew up to be the original Smokey Bear, the iconic face of forest fire prevention in the U.S. over the last sixty years. Smokey Bear was once ranked as the number two most recognized character in the world, right behind Mickey Mouse.

When Adam Deem was confronted by a small bear cub crying and holding his burned paws up, he did what many of us might do, he tried to help the little fellow. Having made a quick recon to determine that a protective mother bear wasn't in the vicinity, Adam decided to try to catch the little cub. The little rascal naturally led Adam on a chase through the woods, which at this point consisted mostly of thick, brush that managed to scratch Adam up pretty good before he could corral the youngster.

Back at his truck, with the somewhat uncooperative bear pinned down with one arm, Adam backed one-handed about a half mile down the fireline, where he met a dozer that built him a turnaround. At a drop point along the way, the critter was wrapped in a towel to keep his sharp young claws at bay, and got on the radio to seek somebody qualified to properly care for the seriously-injured cub. After a few calls, someone at the Incident Base in Anderson suggested that it might be best for Adam to drive down to Anderson and meet a Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) biologist there, thus expediting getting the cub to proper medical care. Adam readily agreed to this plan, advising the incident dispatcher that "...I could use a little medical attention myself." Adam, in fact, went on to receive treatment for his wounds that included a round of rabies shots.

Adam dubbed the cub "Li'l Smokey," because of the original fire prevention bear, and because he was wrapped up like a sausage. After being quickly transported to a CDFG facility in Rancho Cordova, the bear received initial treatment, and then was transferred to the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care center, where his burns and an eye injury were treated. With TLC from the facility staff, Li'l Smokey made a good recovery from his burns, gained weight, and got feisty. The 11 month old male was released at a remote site in the Klamath National Forest on February 5th. It's rare that wild bears that come in contact with humans are successfully returned to the wild. Due to the proper care and handling by CDFG and the Lake Tahoe Wildlife Center, the return of a healthy Li'l Smokey to his natural habitat was made possible.

FIRE FIGHTING AIRCRAFT



The largest floatplane to be used operationally.

The Martin Mars Flying Boat

The Martin Mars flying boat is the largest floatplane ever used operationally. There are only two of the original six still in flying condition. Operated by Coulson Airplane, Ltd. from Canada, every summer they deliver tons of water or retardant to fires throughout the U.S. and Canada. Designed as a long-range, heavy bomber and anti-submarine patrol aircraft for the U.S. Navy, the giant floatplanes accumulated more than 87,000 accident-free hours before being retired by the Navy in 1956. With a wingspan of 200 feet, a length of 120 feet, and a gross weight of 162,000 lbs., the Mars lumbers through the skies at 190 mph. The big plane skims along the ocean or lake surface at 60-70 knots, scooping up 7,200 gallons of water in about 25 seconds. The four-person crew then increases thrust to takeoff power and the huge water bomber climbs. A lead plane scouts safe routes to and from the fire and water source. It covers nearly four acres on each run. The “Hawaii Mars” spent almost two months in California in 2008, where it operated on several fires.

Military Aircraft Contribute to Firefighting Operations

Military aircraft contributed to the fire-fighting operations throughout the 2008 June Fire Siege.

- ▶ Aircraft from the 302nd Air Expeditionary Group (AEG) conducted aerial firefighting support missions out of McClellan Field. The C-130 MAFFS air tankers flew sorties to such distant fires as the Gap Fire, Piute Fire, Shasta Complex, and Corral Fire. The 302nd AEG consists of C-130 MAFFS aircraft from the 145th Airlift Wing (Charlotte, NC); the 146th Airlift Wing (Channel Islands ANG, CA); the 153rd Airlift Wing (Cheyenne, WY); and the 302nd Airlift Wing (Peterson AFB, Colorado Springs, CO).
- ▶ The California Air National Guard 146th Airlift Wing moved critical reloading supplies to the Channel Islands National Guard Air Station to increase the efficiency of the MAFFS aircraft operating on fires in Southern California.
- ▶ Navy Reserve and Marine Corps helicopters operated out of Lemoore Naval Air Station flew missions primarily on the Basin Complex fires. Navy Reserve helicopters are from Helicopter Sea Combat Support Squadron 85 based at North Island NAS, San Diego, CA. This squadron flew MH-60 Seahawk helicopters with 420-gallon or 360-gallon fire buckets. The three Marine helicopter units – Medium Helicopter Training Squadron 164, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 268 (Camp Pendleton, CA), and Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 465 (MCAS Miramar, San Diego, CA) operated CH-46 Sea Knight and CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters equipped with 2,000-gallon fire fighting buckets.

Convair CV-580 Air Tankers

Four welcome visitors to Northern California Air Attack Bases during the 2008 June Fire Siege were Convair CV-580 air tankers. The low-wing twin-engine commercial aircraft had been outfitted for its firefighting role by Conair and Kelwona Flightcraft of Canada. The Convair CV-580 was outfitted with a 2,100 gallon capacity belly tank, cruises at 270 knots, and had a 4-hour endurance rating. Its powerful turboprop engines allowed it to operate safely in hot and dry conditions. Conair's proprietary tank and door system provided constant flow at variable volumes, making for consistent retardant coverage in a variety of cover types. In service since 2000, the 580 developed a reputation as a safe, reliable air tanker that is maneuverable enough to "get down in the weeds" to make accurate retardant drops in rugged terrain.

McClellan (very large) Airtanker Base

Very large air tankers such as the DC-10 and the National Guard MAFFS C-130s require reload bases with long runways, heavy duty taxi-ways, parking areas, and large quantities of fire retardant and fuel. The MAFFS air tankers require a large ground operating area to deploy large generators and air compressors to support their Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems. The DC-10 air tanker operates primarily out of its home base in Victorville, CA, with reload capabilities existing at only a few Air Attack Bases, including Fresno, Chico, and a temporary contract reload base at McClellan Field in Sacramento. The MAFFS air tankers have similar, but not quite as severe, reload base limitations, being able to operate out of shorter fields like Redding, Paso Robles, etc.

During the 2008 June Fire Siege, fire managers decided to group the very large air tankers at a central location, McClellan Field in Sacramento. This allowed the augmented fleet of smaller air tankers to operate more efficiently out of the regular bases (no waiting for the "Big Guys" to reload or refuel). McClellan was a U.S. Air Force Base until its closure in 2001 and had the long runways, heavy duty taxiways, and the high-capacity electrical and water utilities needed to support the "Big Guys."

The rapid expansion of the site from an occasional use facility for the DC-10 to a major support facility for extensive air operations began June 21st. A permanent retardant plant with more storage to better support the DC-10 was installed and expanded to allow three air tankers to be reloaded simultaneously. By June 26th the base was able to support all eight MAFFS air tankers, the DC-10 and two lead planes.

Telephone and internet lines to the office and ready-room trailers were installed, and storage for the support equipment obtained. On June 28th, the McClellan Field control tower was reopened and staffed with FAA air traffic controllers to improve the safety and efficiency of extensive flight operations during conditions of smoke reduced visibility. The "Big Guys" wait on the flight line at the McClellan Field airtanker base.

During the month of July things settled into a rhythm, and at the height of operations there were 8 MAFFS air tankers, Tanker 910, and up to 3 lead planes flying out of McClellan. On July 11 the MAFFS tankers hit 1 million gallons of retardant delivered, and Tanker 910 had delivered 210,000 gallons. On August 2nd, the last of the MAFFS air tankers was released, and Tanker 910 returned to Victorville and the Very Large Airtanker Base at McClellan was deactivated after delivering 1.86 million gallons of retardant.

MENDOCINO REDWOOD COMPANY

Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) owns and manages 228,000 acres of forest lands in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. Most of it in the coast redwood belt on the west side of Mendocino County.

The 2008 June Lightning Siege hit MRC hard, with several wildfires on its lands. So many fires were burning at the time that state and federal firefighters were totally committed to protecting life and improved property. MRC rallied their resources early in the siege to engage in suppression of fires burning on their lands. MRC foresters made initial assessments of the fires on company lands and provided input for fire suppression planning to company resource managers.

The company committed a high percentage of its personnel and equipment to fire control operations. They hired additional resources, including 50 pieces of heavy equipment from 17 private logging contractors, a heavy helicopter, and contract fire crews from Grayback Forestry and PatRick Corporation to fight fires on MRC land. Close coordination and constant communication with CAL FIRE was maintained throughout the siege, ensuring mutual support during critical operations.

As the fires near populated areas were controlled and more suppression resources arrived, government fire resources became available. The fires on MRC timberlands began to receive resources, including CAL FIRE and mutual aid fire engines and hand crews, as well as National Guard fire crews. A gradual transition of command from MRC to CAL FIRE took place, with MRC resource managers continuing to represent the company's interests in an advisory role.

Over 23,000 of the nearly 55,000 acres that burned in the Mendocino Complex, were MRC timberlands. Aggressive, independent, and coordinated action by Mendocino Redwood Company kept acreage totals lower than what was expected. The cooperative relationship allowed CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit to focus its scarce resources on the protection of life and property in populated areas, while receiving continuous reports on the more remote fires. Mendocino Redwood Company stood out as an example of responsible timberland management and cooperation.

“Mendocino Redwood Company stands out as an example of responsible timberland management...”



Gallery Fire (Basin Complex) burned along the Monterey Coast.

repeater sites on Shasta Bally. During the day, control lines held, and the Interagency Incident Management Team developed a plan with CAL FIRE on how to cooperate in containing the SE and SW flanks. Estimates of the acreage burned in this complex decreased as the smoke lifted enough to allow more accurate mapping of the fires.

Indians Fire (Los Padres National Forest): Eighteen miles west of King City, the Indians Fire grew by 20,533 acres (to 81,378 acres) as a result of a successful, large, burnout operation. The fire lines held in place and containment stood at 95%. Some crews were released for redeployment to other fires.

Basin Complex (Los Padres National Forest): Five miles southeast of Big Sur, the Basin Complex burned very actively in timber, brush, and slash. This complex added 12,079 acres, bringing the total area burned to 51,985 with only 3% containment. Evacuation orders were in effect for the community of Big Sur and Highway 1 was closed.

Oliver Fire (CAL FIRE's Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit): The Oliver Fire was held inside the indirect lines, with containment that grew to 75%. Full



Parts of the Union Pacific Railroad in the Feather River Canyon were threatened.

containment of the 2,789 acre fire was predicted for July 5th, and many resources were released for redeployment to other fires.

Lime Complex (Shasta-Trinity National Forest): The 35,766 acre Lime Complex in the Hyampom area of Trinity County originally included 70 fires, 30 of which were contained. Many of the active fires burned in steep, remote areas with limited access, that presented a significant challenge. Highway 3 and Highway 36 continued to be affected, and disrupted transportation in Trinity County. The fires grew by only 321 acres, but continued to move into more difficult terrain.

Iron Complex (Shasta-Trinity National Forests): The Iron Complex fires were scattered from south of Hayfork to the Trinity River Canyon and Highway 299 corridor and presented a serious challenge. The main fires of concern included the Eagle Fire, with several miles of open line on the south side of the Trinity River, the Ziegler Fire (which threatened the communities of Hawkins Bar and Trinity Village), the Ironside Fire, (which abutted Highway 299 and necessitated frequent closures), and the Cedar Fire.

A bulldozer roll-over on this complex resulted in arm and shoulder injuries to the operator. Ten fires in the Iron Complex were contained, but five fires remained active. During the day these fires grew by 1,061 acres to total of 19,178 acres and 25% containment.

Mendocino Complex (CAL FIRE's Mendocino Unit):

The 37,800 acre Mendocino Complex originally included 129 lightning fires. Forty fires were active, 14 of which were unstaffed due to competition for fire suppression resources. This complex was 40% contained. Fires were spread over a large area and organized into six organizational branches. Multiple base camps were established and supported by a distribution center at the Ukiah fairgrounds. Large stands of valuable commercial timber, including coast redwood forests, were impacted. Mendocino Redwood Company took independent action on 15,500 acres within their ownership. Several fires continued to threaten Highway 1, the main north-south artery along the Pacific Coast. A strong marine influence with cool weather helped keep the fires from spreading much though fires in heavy fuel concentrations burned actively.

Piute Fire (Unified Command between the Sequoia National Forest and Kern County Fire Department):

The Piute Fire, located 17 miles northeast of Caliente, continued to threaten several small, mountain communities. Evacuations were implemented. Extreme fire behavior, with high rates of spread, torching and spotting which resulted in an additional 4,474 acres burned. The fire stood at 11,514 acres and 11% containment.

North Mountain Fire (Stanislaus National Forest and Yosemite National Park): The North Mountain Fire was located seven miles northeast of Groveland. The fire continued to back and creep, but the acreage

held at about 2,711 acres. Containment increased to 75%; full containment was expected within 2 days.

Canyon Complex (Plumas National Forest): The Canyon Complex was located in the rugged Feather River Canyon. Several fires had been contained including two fires (the Hartman Fire and Four Mile Fire) that were contained that day. Twelve of the original 42 fires merged with other fires. Of these, 9 fires remain active, one of which is still unstaffed. The fires were active, even at night when strong, gusty down-canyon and down-slopes winds fanned the flames. Firefighters rappelling from helicopters into the Belden Fire were removed due to intensified fire behavior. There was a bulldozer rollover accident and the operator was evacuated with injuries. Contingency plans were developed for protecting structures, power stations, and the railroad out ahead of the fires. The Incident Management Team and the forest developed a long-term strategy.

American River Complex (Tahoe National Forest):

The American River Complex grew by 1,112 acres to 5,292 acres when the Government Springs Fire made a run on its northwest corner. Firefighters tried to delay spread of the fire until indirect lines could be completed. The American River Complex continued to threaten the Interstate 80 corridor, the Union Pacific Railroad, and the community of Blue Canyon. The cost to close the railroad was estimated at \$1,000,000 per hour. Difficult terrain required the use of remote spike camps, which made logistical support difficult.

Yuba River Complex (Tahoe National Forest): The 3,619 acre Yuba River Complex included 3 fires and was 78% contained. Although the Scotchman Fire continued to spread in the Canyon Creek and Yuba

River drainages, good progress was made by firefighters who indicated that they had enough resources to continue progress under the harsh conditions.

Silver Complex (Sierra National Forest): The Silver Complex included 2 fires 12 miles southeast of Mariposa. Fire activity was moderate with only 50 more burned acres, which brought the total to 1,161 acres with 95% containment.

Mad Complex (Six Rivers National Forest): The 2,633 acre Mad Complex started as 29 separate fires. Twenty-three of these were contained, leaving 6 active fires. The Bonanza fire burned in steep terrain with difficult access. Anchor points were established for an indirect attack strategy. Fire managers were concerned about the fires on neighboring lands that could have potentially spread into the area, which would have adversely affected firefighter safety. Some fires remained unstaffed and containment was 40%.

Hell's Half Complex (Six Rivers National Forest): The two fires in this complex near Burnt Ranch continued to spread to the south and east. The Half Fire burned into the Shasta-Trinity National Forest

and approached structures. The Grouse Fire threatened a major power line. The fires total 2,793 burned acres, and are were 40% contained. Good progress was made, but the potential for significant runs by both fires remained high.

Ukonom Complex (Six Rivers National Forest): The 3 fires in the Ukonom Complex (Merrill, Jake, and Blue), north of Somes Bar grew by 474 acres to a total of 6,358 acres. The Blue Fire, in the headwaters of Blue Creek was difficult to access, but holding operations seemed successful. Fire managers tried to minimize the impact that the fire and suppression efforts had on Native American spiritual sites and the Forest Service facilities at Oak Bottom, and developed a long-term implementation plan. Containment was only at 5%.

Corral Fire (CAL FIRE's Lassen-Modoc Unit): The 15,000 acre Corral Fire burned about 10 miles north of Eagle Lake. It burned eastside mixed conifer (small to medium-sized trees) with grass and brush understory. The fire exhibited rapid rates of spread, erratic fire behavior and spotting over control lines



Homeowners' efforts to provide defensible space before fires occurred helped firefighters save many homes.

in the late afternoon gusty winds. Containment was 25%, but the continuing shortage of hand crews and dozer bosses was a concern as the fire continued to burn through the night.

Cub Complex (Lassen National Forest):

Two of 4 fires in the 5,000 acre Cub Complex, 16 miles southwest of Chester, were contained and turned back to the Forest for patrol. Two fires remained active, the Cub Fire and Onion Fire. Short uphill runs and spotting up to ¼ mile were common with an additional 668 acres burned. Because of location and limited resource availability, the Cub Fire remained unstaffed and fire managers noted its potential to become a long-term event. Highway 32 remained closed. The complex was 25% contained.

Yolla Bolly Complex (Mendocino National Forest):

The Yolla Bolly Complex originally included 22 fires within the Yolla Bolly Wilderness Area. Thirteen were contained, and the Camp Fire was fully contained. The Frying Pan and Vinegar fires merged. Two new fires were detected. Smokejumpers contained one, but the second fire was unstaffed. Three fires (Harvey Ridge, Thomes, and the new Sugarloaf) were very active with running and spotting fire behavior. The additional 2,203 burned acres brought the total to 6,103 with 5% containment.

Clover Fire (Sequoia National Forest): The Clover Fire, 32 miles north of Weldon, continued to back and creep within the containment lines. It totaled 15,262 acres and was 70% contained. Full containment was not expected until July 15th due to difficult terrain.

Siskiyou Complex (Klamath National Forest):

The 3 Siskiyou Complex fires were burning in steep,

inaccessible terrain, southwest of Happy Camp. The fires were well established with potential for significant growth over an extended timeframe. The strategy was to merge those fires through additional fireline construction and burning out indirect hand lines along existing trails. Potential size was estimated at 40,000 acres. The 2,203 acres on the Dark-Three Fire increased the total acres burned to 9,915 with 25% containment.

Alps Complex (Shasta-Trinity National Forest):

The Alps Complex in the Trinity Alps Wilderness Area originally started as 13 fires. Of those, 4 are contained, and 5 are unstaffed. Fire behavior intensified as the inversion layer lifted. Some fires were in such steep terrain and heavy fuels that firefighters could not approach them. A long-term strategy was developed for an indirect attack, using the existing trail system and natural barriers. 595 acres burned and the complex totaled 3,245 acres with 2% containment.

Soda Complex (Mendocino National Forest):

The Soda Complex included 4 fires located about 15 miles northwest of Upper Lake. The Back Fire was contained. The western flank of the Mill Fire burned into the Sanhedrin Wilderness Area and was poised to merge with the Big Fire. The Monkey Rock Fire burned in the Yuki Wilderness Area and had no containment. High recreational activity was noted in the area of these fires. The complex was 5,100 acres with 72% containment, but potential for growth was rated as high.

Regional chief officers and CalMAC were concerned about maintaining an adequate reserve of forces for initial attack in the face of predicted thunderstorms and the remainder of a long fire season still ahead.

HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

New home construction requires ignition-resistant building materials to meet the new building and fire code regulations that apply to much of the wildland-urban interface (WUI) where homes are at risk from wildfires. Existing homes near wildlands should provide clearance around the home from flammable materials. Current regulations require a minimum 30-foot clearance around structures in the state's wildland areas, with up to 100-foot clearance required in the high and very high fire hazard areas that make up the WUI. These regulations do not require removal of all vegetation around homes, but treatment of the vegetation, reducing its volume, flammability and proximity to the house. Properly-pruned and appropriately sited trees and shrubs can be left to retain a desirable landscape. Homeowners are asked to locate firewood stacks and other flammable objects (RV's, automobiles, etc.) at least 30 feet from the house, as these have been shown to ignite nearby houses once they catch fire.

Each year, the wildland fire agencies make fire prevention inspections educating homeowners and enforcing regulations, but some homeowners fail to provide the "defensible space" necessary to ensure the protection of their homes. Some residents insist that there is no need to provide the clearance themselves, as fire fighters will do it for them before the fire gets there. While fire crews may indeed make such efforts when the time allows, it is foolish to plan on it, as there are more houses in the woods than fire engines.

For more information on clearance requirements to achieve defensible space see: www.fire.ca.gov or www.firesafecouncil.org.



A homeowner was rewarded for pre-fire preparation. While some neighboring homes were destroyed, the defensible space around this home aided in its survival.