

Ignition Management Plan

Battalion 15

Battalion Description

Battalion 15 covers approximately 115,000 acres within Placer and Nevada counties including some portions of Sierra County. The primary population center is the Town of Truckee which is the Battalion Headquarters. This high sierra community has a permanent year-round population of 18,000 people. Due to the large number of vacation homes in the Battalion, the population can double on summer week-ends. A large portion of the Battalion lies within the boundaries of the Truckee Fire Protection District. In 1994, the Town of Truckee was incorporated, converting 21,000 acres of SRA to LRA. In 2010, a contract was in place between the Town of Truckee and Cal Fire for fire suppression on 11,100 acres of wildland within Truckee's LRA. The acreage is anticipated to drop to 10,400 acres for the 2011 fire season and into the future.

Fuel type varies from desert grass/brush to timber in topography ranging from mountain valleys to peaks over 9000 feet. The fuel makeup is typical of this eastside timber and meadow environment. The fuel loading is indicative of a rain shadow with generally lower fuel loading than Significant WUI problems exist and are difficult to mitigate due to the temporary nature of the residents. Up to half of the residential structures are vacation homes.

Cooperators include Truckee Fire, Northstar Fire, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, US Forest Service (TMU, Tahoe N.F., Plumas N.F.), and Army Corp of Engineers.

Battalion Fire History and Occurrence

Large damaging and costly fires do occur on the east side of NEU. Significant in terms of acreage are the Donner Ridge Fire (1960 – 44,812 acres), Cottonwood Fire (1994 - 46,800 acres), and Martis Fire (2001 – 14,126 acres). Fire hazard severity (2007 FHSZ) predicts a high likelihood that such fires will occur again. Typically, Battalion 15 will receive 15-25 vegetation fires per year dependent upon the occurrence of lightning, normally the primary ignition source (50% of ignitions). The balance of normal fire activity is primarily campfires, including homeless fires and party fires started by careless individuals. Other historic problems include freeway related causes from vehicle fires. Overheating and consumption of vehicles with the wildland as an exposure is the normal vegetation fire ignition source.

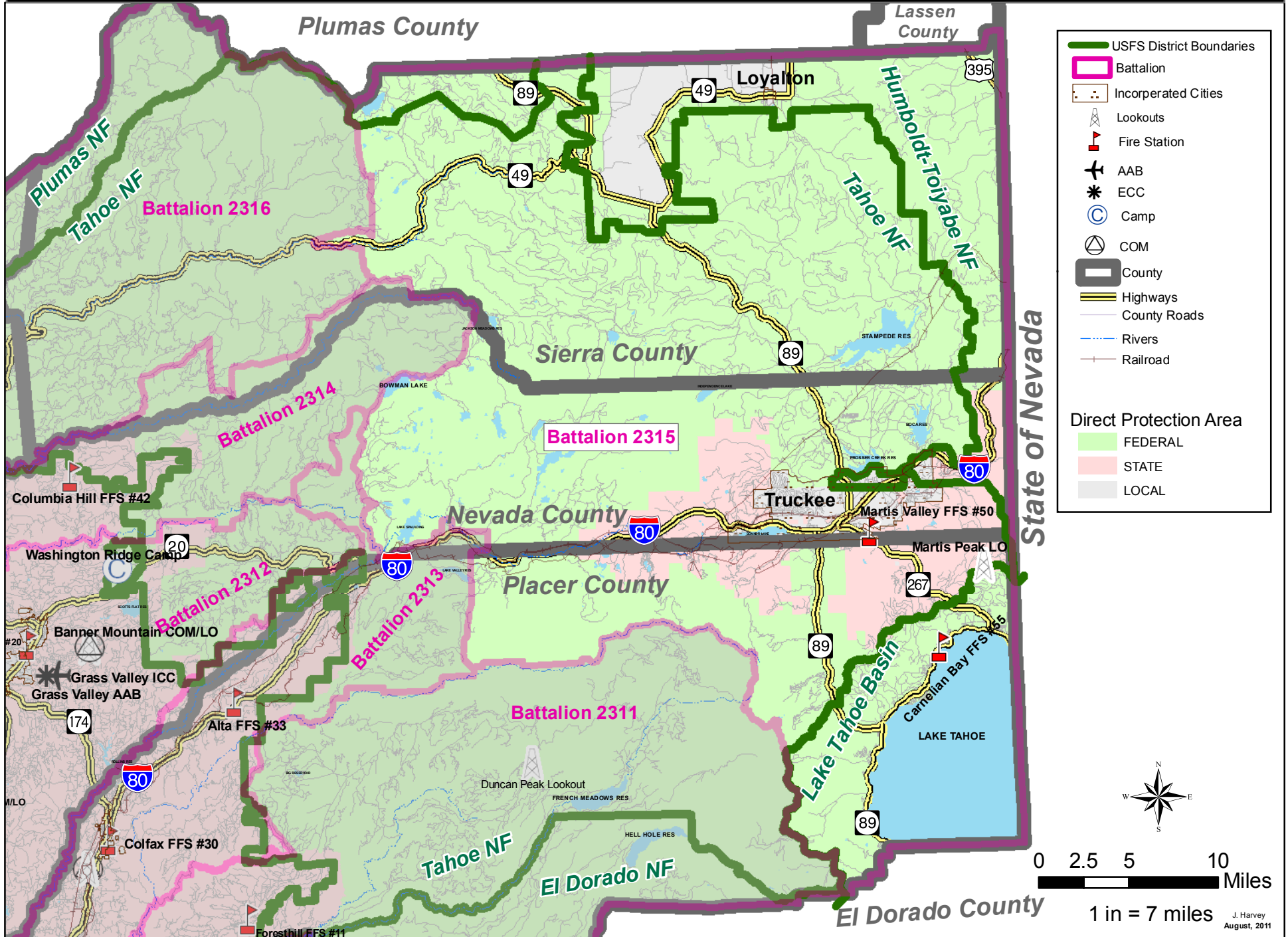
Statistics from the 2010 fire season do not represent normal fire occurrence in the Battalion. The fuel moistures and relatively cool moist fire season yielded fewer fires with abnormal ignition sources. Railroad caused fires are represented as 32% of the ignitions, which is typically much fewer. The 2010 railroad fires were a function of workers using fire causing tools and ignition within the locomotive which spread to the vegetation. Prevention is taking place by performing industrial inspections at work sites and providing advice on improving fire fighting ability of workers, by permitting work during fire season with mitigations to prevent fire, and by Union Pacific Railroad activities geared toward vegetation management along the rail line.

The balance of 2010 fire cause appears normal and do not reflect a significant fire problem. Despite this fact, the staff of the Battalion continues to employ fire prevention practices outlined below in order to reduce the total number of ignitions within the Battalion.

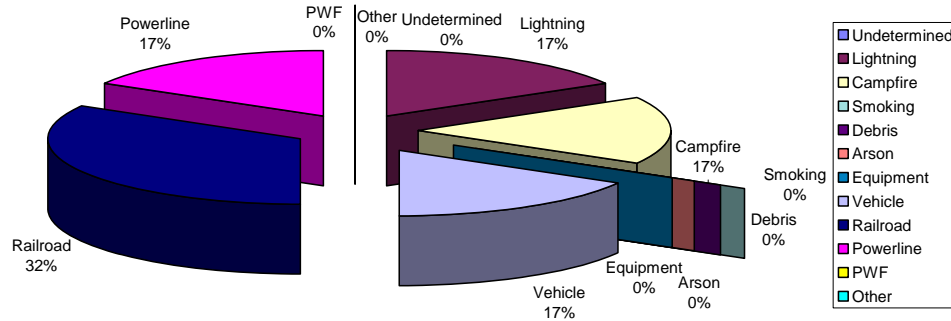


NEVADA - YUBA - PLACER UNIT (NEU)

Battalion 15 - Administrative Boundary

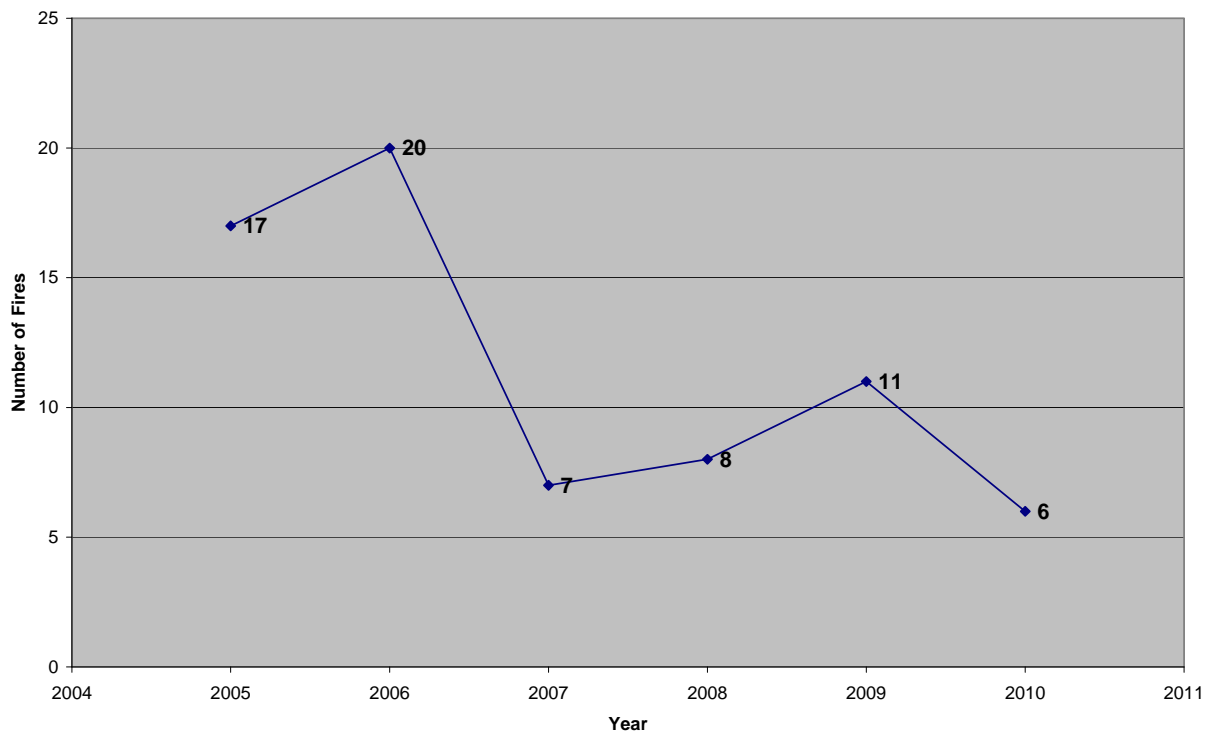


2010 Battalion 15 Fire Causes



Undet.	Lightning	Campfire	Smoking	Debris	Arson	Equipment	Vehicle	Railroad	Powerline	PWF	Other
0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0

Battalion 15 Ignitions (2005-2010)



Mitigation Strategies

1. Public Education:

Battalion 15 will work to reduce fire ignitions and reduce damage by fire occurrences by actively participating in public education programs, fuel reduction programs, and homeowner education programs. The components to meet these goals are as follows:

A. Burn Permit Administration

About 2000 dooryard burn permits are issued annually in the battalion. The majority are issued by our local government cooperators. Permits are required from May 1 through December 1. The CAL FIRE imposed burn ban is an important and necessary regulation. Burning on the eastside is daylight hours only on approved burn days. Escapes are rare and usually insignificant.

LE-5 (California Inter-Agency Burning Permit) and LE-7 (Project Type Burning Permit) are issued on SRA lands after an inspection by an authorized employee of CAL FIRE or USFS. These project burn permits are typically used to dispose of larger piles of material and typically require an inspection by agency personnel prior to authorization to burn. About three project burn permits are issued annually by the Battalion Chief.

B. Public Education Forums

CAL FIRE staff is involved in numerous public education programs. The Truckee-Tahoe area is a world known resort area. The target audience is quite large and has proven to be receptive to various programs.

On going events throughout the year:

- Truckee Rodeo Kid's Day – CAL FIRE will have an engine for interactive demonstrations at this year's event, scheduled for Friday, July 22nd.
- School Programs - An interagency effort by CAL FIRE, the Truckee Fire Prevention District, Northstar Fire Department, and the USFS, targets all schools in Truckee, reaching grades K - 3 in the spring. Students create fire safety posters for display on roadside fire prevention signs.
- Fourth of July Parade – CAL FIRE will have an engine in this year's parade.
- Pre School Programs – CAL FIRE will continue to provide age appropriate fire safety programs with an appearance by Smokey Bear at the request of any public day care centers.
- Reno Rodeo - Assist Sierra Front with staffing a booth.
- Tahoe Re Green - An on going process assisting allied agencies around the Lake Tahoe Basin. Projects include: fuel reduction on state owned and conservancy lands and PRC 4291 cooperative inspections.
- Channel 6 - The local message station will run the defensible space tape throughout the summer and event specific messages on request.

C. Fire Prevention

Martis Peak Fire Lookout - Martis Peak Fire Lookout was put into service as a detection platform on July 20th, 2010, and is staffed daily through September 30th. Martis Peak reported 24 smokes in 2010, at distances of up to 40 miles. Three of the smoke reports were initial reports, with one in the South Lake Tahoe area at a distance of 25 miles.

Martis Peak also recorded the locations of numerous lightning strikes, and is instrumental in tracking the progress of developing thunderstorms. Lookout VIP staff at Martis Peak made over 2000 public contacts in 2010, speaking with visitors from as far away as South Africa. The operating agreement with the USFS will remain in place for 2011 with minor changes. We will continue to promote the lookout through the local media and community groups this spring to generate interest in volunteer staffing. All volunteers will be signed up as Volunteers In Prevention (VIP). The Truckee Town Wildland Contract will fund a paid CAL FIRE Lookout position as in past years. This will be a four days per week position, so the remaining three days per week will require staffing by VIPs.

Fire Safe Programs – The Battalion will work regularly with developers and County Planning Departments to ensure PRC 4290 requirements are met on all new construction. Planners are assigned to Nevada and Placer Counties and will review projects where necessary. The BC will participate in field inspections at the BC level when needed. The objective is to emphasize fire safety during construction and compliance with PRC requirements when complete. The BC will also participate in the Eastside Chapter of the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

Railroad and Power Company Contact - The Battalion Chief makes annual contact with Union Pacific representatives. The Battalion is informed of any on-going maintenance along the thirty miles of active track within the Battalion. Spot inspections are usually made and provide suggestions on areas of fire safety improvement. Railroad starts in the area average about one per year.

Annually, the BC meets with both Sierra Pacific Power and Truckee Donner PUD reps to discuss summer work projects in the area. Report and cooperation with SPP has been outstanding. Conductor clearance crews are aggressive in the Battalion. Power line inspections are currently performed by the companies themselves.

D. PRC 4291 inspection:

PRC 4291 inspections serve a dual purpose. One is as a vegetation management motivator. The other is as a public education tool. Battalion staff will continue to support this activity. Station 55 personnel will continue to assist the North Tahoe Fire District with LE-100 inspections on the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe. NEU will supply a Fire Prevention Specialist to assist the Truckee Fire Protection District with LE-100 inspections within the Truckee town limits.

Northstar FD has a comprehensive inspection program in Placer County within SRA that has achieved near 100 percent compliance.

2. Vegetation Management: The vegetation management programs are directed at reducing the potential of a large fire and reducing the damage from a large fire.

B. Chipper Program / Residential Fuel Treatment

Truckee Fire funds and supports a residential chipping program within the Truckee Fire District. The program provides chipping services to landowners to abate hazardous vegetation with reduced costs to the landowner and fewer opportunities for an escaped control burn with the added benefit of reduced impacts to air quality. The Battalion receives great benefit from this program. The Battalion encourages landowners to keep their properties free from flammable vegetation. NEU will support this chipping effort by providing funding when available.

B. Installation and Maintenance of Fuel Breaks

The Battalion will support the acquisition of project funds that will achieve the installation and maintenance of fuel breaks. NEU Washington Ridge Fire Crews will continue to support the communities of Tahoe Donner and Northstar in a comprehensive fuel reduction and fuel break program.

C. VMP Projects

The purpose of these projects is to eliminate the potential for a large and damaging wildfire by eliminating the fuel in a controlled fashion. The current VMP schedule includes:

Donner State Park VMP –

Location: Approximately 23 acres within the Donner State Park boundary. The project area is located south and west of the town of Truckee. Donner Lake is north of the project area.

Purpose: In cooperation with California State Parks, the primary objectives of the project are fuel hazard reduction and wildlife habitat improvement. The project area is strategically located to protect State Park facilities and the Town of Truckee from a summer wildfire burning in the Coldstream Valley or on Schallenberger Ridge. The project shall reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and improve native forest composition and structure.

Program Funds: VMP

CEQA: PEIR

Chinquapin – North Tahoe Fire Protection District VMP

Location: Approximately 20 acres between the Dollar Point subdivision and the Chinquapin Condominiums within the North Tahoe Fire Protection District near Tahoe City and Kings Beach. An additional 50 acres will be treated south of the Kingswood West subdivision. The burn will be conducted by CALFIRE, North Tahoe Fire Protection District and other local fire agencies.

Purpose: The primary objectives of the project are for fuel hazard reduction, fuel modification and wildlife habitat improvement. The project area consists of Sierra mixed-conifer timber type.

Program Funds: VMP, Community Assistance Grant

CEQA: Cal Fire Mitigated Negative Declaration

Waddle Ranch VMP

Location: Waddle Ranch consists of approximately 1,462 acres of forest land within the Martis Valley. The landowner is the Truckee Tahoe Airport District.

Purpose: The primary objective is the reduction of fuel. Project area is 60 acres divided into 10 units, all of which have been previously masticated.

Program Funds: VMP

CEQA: PEIR

Table 6 – Battalion 15 Fuel Modification Projects, Community Outreach and Education Programs

Project Name	Status	Estimated Completion Year	Project Type	Net Acres
Chinquapin	A		Prescribed Fire	
Donner State Park VMP	A		Prescribed Fire	
Waddle Ranch	P		Prescribed Fire	
Truckee Home Show	O		Community Education, 2-Day Event	
Truckee Rodeo	O		Youth Education	

Status Guide: A = Active, P = Planning, C = Completed, O = Ongoing, M = Maintenance.

Success Stories

80 Fire Success Story Results from Cooperative Fuel Reduction Efforts

CAL FIRE works cooperatively at the state, county and local levels to complete fuels reduction projects throughout the Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit. Projects are designed to encourage landowners to create defensible space and to protect communities from costly and damaging fires. NEU utilizes state and federal grant funds to support these fuels reduction projects.

Recently, on August 22, 2007 cooperative fuel reduction efforts completed by the Tahoe/Donner Homeowners Association, Truckee Fire District and CAL FIRE proved to be a critical component in stopping the advancement of what could have been a devastating wildland fire. The fire started near Highway 80 and quickly advanced upslope towards the Tahoe/Donner subdivision. As the fire approached the subdivision, it



burned into an existing fuel break and was stopped. The fuel break was designed and implemented by the Tahoe/Donner Homeowner’s Association and the Truckee Fire District fuel reduction programs. Cal Fire has provided support to these programs through the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) and the Proposition 40 Fuels Reduction Program.



The purpose of Cal Fire's California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) is to encourage private and public investment in, and improved management of, California forest lands and resources. The program scope includes the improvement of all forest resources, including fish and wildlife habitat, soil, and water quality. Cost-share activities include land management planning, site

preparation, tree purchase and planting, timber stand improvement, fish and wildlife habitat improvement, and land conservation practices.

The goal of Cal Fire's Proposition 40 Fuels Reduction Program is to reduce wildland fuel loadings that pose a threat to watershed resources and water quality. This fuel reduction program is funded by Proposition 40, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002.

High Priority Target Areas

- North side of Highway 80
- Glenshire
- Tahoe-Donner.

2011 Action Plan:

Although 2010 proved to be a slower than average year for vegetation fires, Battalion 15 remains quite busy with prevention activities. The strong relationship between CAL FIRE, Truckee Fire Protection District, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, Northstar Fire Department, U.S. Forest Service and others has provided for a professional and comprehensive program that has shown benefits in public awareness and concern. Many of the fires are caused by people who reside outside the area. Lightning activity is traditionally a wild card in the high country, and most lightning activity in 2010 brought significant moisture. There were no fire starts in 2010 attributed to debris burning or playing with fire. This indicates that education of the public during dooryard burn permit issuance, and education programs aimed at preschool and school aged children have been quite successful.