

## **Appendix R. Wildfire Prevention**

Unless specifically trained and certified, members of a trail crew do not have the knowledge, skills, and equipment to undertake initial attack fire response actions. Therefore, the scope of a trail crew's Wildfire Prevention Plan is limited to identifying means of preventing fires and extinguishing small fires that might be caused by construction activities.

### **R.1. Prevention**

There is no substitute for common sense in preventing wildland fires. Considering issues such as fuel load (e.g., dry grasses, large amounts of dead and dry woody debris) and weather conditions (e.g., wind, low humidity) should be second nature to the trail crew in evaluating the risk of fire and its relation to their activities. Specifically, the trail crew must cease operations when their activities present a significant risk of causing a wildland fire. Typically, guidelines for these conditions will be issued and communicated by the fire suppression authority with jurisdiction over the trail project area. This authority may be federal, state, or local. The trail project coordinator should initiate contact with the appropriate agency to ensure that relevant information is communicated.

Specific wildland fire prevention measures should include the following:

- Smoking on the worksite may be prohibited due to wildfire or other resource management concerns. Before allowing crew members to smoke on the worksite or in camp, check with appropriate staff to determine if smoking is allowed or appropriate. Smoking on the worksite or in camp may be allowed only in a designated smoking area. The designated smoking area must be free of material that could accidentally ignite. Cigarette butts should be extinguished and packed out by the smoker. It is a good idea to bring a small container with a tightly fitting lid to store cigarette butts until they can be properly disposed of in a trash container.
- The use of a campfire at spike camps may be prohibited during high fire conditions. If a campfire is permitted, provide a minimum 30 foot area around the campfire free of flammable materials and vegetation. Monitor weather conditions and forecasts and do not burn in winds exceeding 10 mph. Also, have a fire extinguisher or water source readily available to extinguish the fire. Do not leave the fire unattended and make sure it is fully extinguished when it is not in use.
- All mechanized and power equipment on a project site, including all chainsaws, generators, gas-powered drills, camp stoves, and anything that burns liquid or gas fuel, must be equipped with or located in direct proximity to an appropriately rated and sized fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers must be inspected and tested at prescribed intervals, and all personnel trained in the proper use. All equipment and tools must be used and maintained in a fire safe condition, including removing any wood or other flammable debris from engine compartments and ensuring that, when

required, power equipment is to have either a turbo charger or a functional spark arrester. Refueling must be carried out in a fire safe manner, which could include using a grounding wire on large fuel tanks and/or moving power tools away from the fueling area before being started.

- All vehicles and mechanized equipment must also be equipped with or in close proximity to basic hand tools, such as a shovel and axe or pulaski. These tools should be dedicated for the purpose of wildfire prevention, not simply a part of the trail tool complement. The tools can be used to extinguish very small fires that can be safely attacked by untrained personnel. It is essential that the personnel attacking the fire monitor conditions and be prepared to abandon the effort at the first sign that the fire is out of control. Once it is out of control, the fire becomes an emergency to be responded to by the appropriate fire agency. The trail crew must then provide for their own safety, most likely by communicating the emergency in accordance with the established emergency response plan and evacuating the area.
- Establish and maintain contact with the appropriate fire agency to make certain that construction activities are compatible with the prescribed fire conditions for that day.

## **R.2. Burning Guidelines**

Some trail projects will require burning piles of brush or debris. The fire control agency with jurisdiction over the area may require a burn permit be issued prior to any burning activities. In addition, a permit from the regional Air Quality Management District may be required.

Burn piles must be in compliance with the Department's Operations Manual Section 0313.2.2.9.4, Pile Burning in Wildland Settings. Good smoke management practices include assessing on-site weather conditions and igniting a test pile to monitor smoke rise and dispersal. Proceed with ignition only after determining that plants or animals will not be significantly impacted by smoke. Monitor the progression of the fire and smoke output. Ensure that only the desired piles are burned. If at any time smoke conditions become unfavorable, put out the fire. Expose all burnable fuel, coal, and ashes and douse with water until all ignition sources are fully extinguished. The smoldering stage of combustion produces more than twice the air emissions per amount of fuel consumed than does the flaming stage. Therefore, sort and arrange burnable fuels during burn-down to maximize flaming and minimize smoke.

Make the proper notifications every morning before burning. At the very minimum, notify the local fire agency, fire dispatch, state park or District, and California State Parks dispatch. Leave a contact telephone number. When burning a lot of acreage or near structures or communities, check with contacts during the burn day to ensure burn conditions have not changed. Provide advanced notice and periodic updates to park staff including the District Superintendent and park ranger(s).

Both burn piles and smaller warming or cooking fires must be located where there is no chance of spreading. In addition to providing adequate clearance of brush from around the fire, the area must be free of large standing dead trees or fallen logs where a spark could land and smolder until after the crew has left before igniting.