FUELS MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN
Greater Auburn Interface Area

This action plan lays out a process for implementing fire management strategies for Reclamation lands that interface with the Greater Auburn Area. The urban/wild land interface area identified as a priority starts at or about Shirland Tract, running east along the north canyon rim of the American River along Reclamation property lines up stream to approximately the Foresthill Bridge within Placer County.

This interface area will be divided into manageable sections based generally on geographical and location characteristics. Project Priority Selection Criteria will then be applied to these sections and a priority list will be developed. Each section will then be evaluated and a Fuel Break Prescription will be tailored to meet specific resource and fire management needs for the selected section. Appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation will be completed prior to fuels management. Implementation will be accomplished through coordination and in partnership with local entities.

On-going or long-term maintenance of these project sites is a significant issue that needs to be addressed as part of this fire management strategy. Local partnerships will need to play an important roll in this regard.

As an initial step, a demonstration project or projects will be planned to demonstrate the effectiveness of these implementation strategies and the Priority Selection Criteria. The selection of demonstration projects will be done in close coordination and partnership with local entities. A similar process as to the one mentioned above will be used to evaluate and select appropriate fuel management program for any demonstration sites on Reclamation lands before project implementation will occur.

Project Selection Criteria

- **Residential density**: Higher numbers of people living within the interface project area receive a high priority. Density of existing private property development is a high priority.

- **Defensible Space Activities:** An action or commitment by private property owners to reduce or modify the type or amount of vegetative fuel that will help prevent fire to move from a structure to the wildland, or the wildland to a structure.

- **Project Costs and Funding:** Project costs should include labor and equipment, management and administration for the planning, implementation, and on-going maintenance and oversight of a proposed project. Funding of a proposed project must cover the cost of the whole project and must be identified prior to initiating

the planning phase of the project. Project funding may come from grants, in-kind labor, matching funds, etc. A project will not be pursued until funding sources have been identified.

- **Local Partnerships:** Partnerships with local communities, counties and other local organizations are extremely important to the success of fuels management activities. Partnerships can be in the form of cost sharing or in-kind services and other local support. Partnerships will receive a higher priority.

- **Topography:** Topography has a direct relationship to the speed of wildland fire spread. The steeper the slope the faster the fire spread and the higher the priority. The ideal location to create a fuel break is at the break-over point from the canyon wall to the ridge top.

- **Fuel Characteristics:** Wildland fuel density and arrangement has a particular effect on the spread of wildland fire. By the removal of light flashy fuels, thick dead and/or live fuels, and ladder fuels from the landscape reduces the risk of catastrophic fire. High fuel density areas will receive a high priority.

- **Strategic Location and Accessibility:** Modifying fuel density from areas next to access roads and structures allow firefighting personnel to gain access and to more safely and efficiently control the advance of a wildland fire. Project areas that provide for strategic locations and accessibility will receive a higher priority.

- **Complexity of Environmental Review:** Generally, the environmental review and compliance process should be without unresolved conflicts or highly controversial environmental effects. Project actions not having adverse effects on unique or sensitive geographical, cultural or biological resources such as wetlands, historical features or endangered species, etc., will have a higher priority.

- **Project Maintenance and Administration:** To ensure the success of a project, an on-going maintenance program for the project site must be identified. Maintenance of a project site includes regular monitoring, and sustaining the integrity of the site through use of various vegetation management techniques. Administration of project maintenance includes coordinating and implementing the defined maintenance program, distribution of the funds to support the program, and monitoring on-going defensible space activity. Projects with an identified maintenance and administrative component will receive a higher priority.

- Other factors may be considered for project site selection as they are identified.

The decision-making processes will be accomplished by the representatives of the managing partners, (the Technical Team). Members of the Technical Team are responsible for coordinating with appropriate agency personnel, as needed, in order to ensure representation of their agency's position given a particular issue. Project decisions will be made by a consensus of the Technical Team. Should a Technical

Team member have a dissenting opinion for any action, no further project action will be taken until the issue can be resolved. Decisions may be elevated if appropriate.

Project Administration will continue as it currently exists. The CDF remains responsible for fire prevention and suppression activities on Reclamation lands as stated in the Cooperative Agreement. The California State Parks and Recreation maintains responsibilities for recreation and resource management on Reclamation lands as identified in its cooperative agreement. Funding and appropriate staff time to coordinate and administer this action plan should be made available from existing resources under these cooperative agreements.

Desired Project Benefits

Fuel break land treatments in wildland / urban interface areas include many benefits, some of which, tend to be intangible in nature. The true test of success resulting from fuel breaks on interface lands occurs after a wildfire has occurred. What life, property and natural resources were saved? What tactical advantage did firefighting resources encounter during the extinguishing of the fire? These questions are futuristic and may only be projected prior to wildfire.

The subsequent results are desired during and after interface fire protection projects are completed.

A. Public Safety:

Reduced fuel loading on fuel break lands produces a less intense fire behavior which allows firefighting crews to make a stand, either offensively or defensively, on fuel break lands. The result is a more effective effort to protect the lives of citizens living in the fire's path along with residential and commercial structures. The fuel loading on fuel break lands will change from fuel models of 4 and 6, which have approximately 13 tons per acre and 6 tons per acre respectively, to fuel models of 1,2, and 3, which have approximately .74 tons/ac, 4 tons/ac and 3 tons/ac. On an "average day" in the summer, the flame lengths from fuel model 4 on the fuel break lands, as they are now (without treatment), would support flame lengths of approximately 26 feet and a fireline intensity of 6784 Btu/ft/s. On fuel break lands without treatment the current fuel model 6 flame lengths would be approximately 8 feet with a fireline intensity of 415 Btu/ft/s. The resulting fuel models of 1,2 and 3 after treatment will support flame lengths of 6, 9 and 15 feet with fireline intensities of 327 Btu/ft/s, 797 Btu/ft/s and 2278 Btu/ft/s.

B. Education:

Fire protection projects, such as fuel breaks, most often involves the need to create the fuel break on private lands which, creates a situation where communities become directly involved with public agency sponsored projects. During the cooperative process between agency and community an education process occurs. There

becomes an awareness of the need for private landowners to participate in wildfire protection projects. Landowners are in direct contact with agency representatives who explain first hand, the why and how projects, such as fire defense projects are implemented. Landowners will become informed regarding wildfire behavior, land use planning concerns, and environmental protection issues. The education will occur resulting from public presentations and participation solicitation. Brochures, interpretive demonstration sites, newsletters and other activities will be a part of the education process which, will result in a better understanding of fuel break projects.

C. Protection of Natural Resources:

Fuel break lands create habitat edge effects which, benefit species that rely on edge and open canopy habitats. The fuel break will allow firefighting resources to quickly extinguish fires spreading from structural improvements to the wildlands, thus protecting the balance of ASRA lands from devastating fire. When fire does burn fuel break areas, the fuels consumed involve ground fuels such as grass, low lying brush and duff. In turn, the tree species remain with a very low mortality. Without fuels reduction, all of the vegetation on site becomes available to burn, in short, all vegetation on site is destroyed. With the resulting fuel load reduction, water yields on fuel break lands will increase by 35% assuming an average annual rainfall of 35" (USFS, Faust 1979). Plant species diversity and recruitment of new growth will be promoted by fuel break development.

D. Protection of Cultural Resources:

During fuel break establishment, cultural resources will be identified and recorded. On fuel break lands cultural resources can be protected as a result of less severe fire intensity. Fuel break lands encounter lower burn duration, resulting in cultural resources encountering less fire. Additionally, if circumstances permit, cultural resources can be protected by retaining vegetation as barriers.

E. Conduct Cost Effective Maintenance of Features and Facilities:

Once fuel loads are reduced on fuel break lands, the maintenance of those lands becomes less costly than the initial establishment. Costs may average $400.00 per acre to treat whereas costs may involve approximately $200.00 per acre to maintain (Handcrew estimates). Additionally, the improvements within the area will be protected thus resulting in maintenance costs rather that replacement costs in event of wildfire impingement. Existing parking areas, roads, canals, trails and other such features will be incorporated into the fuel break planning process in order to reduce costs and be more efficient.