



2008 FIRE SUMMARY

CAL FIRE's firefighters, fire engines and aircraft respond to over 5,600 wildland fires and answer nearly 200,000 calls for other emergencies each year. During 2008, CAL FIRE responded to 3,593 wildfires within its Direct Protection Area. This represents a decrease of less than .5 percent below last year and 33 percent below the five year average. These fires burned 380,310 acres which is 12 percent below last year and 129 percent above the five year average.

Under an Executive Order from Governor Schwarzenegger, state firefighters increased their readiness for fire season earlier, following two years of minimum rainfall and drought like conditions. As April and May came, vegetation across the state had already begun to dry out.

On June 20, 2008, a severe thunderstorm system moved through northern and central California resulting in over six thousand total lightning strikes in 26 counties. The overwhelming number of lightning strikes, along with record dry conditions sparked over two thousand lightning fires. A combination of aggressive firefighting efforts from CAL FIRE and the US Forest Service, including over twenty-one thousand firefighting personnel from across the state, nation and the world, strategically tackled the suppression of these incidents. Most of the fires occurred in Northern California particularly Butte, Mendocino and Shasta counties. As one of the more severe wildland fire seasons, these fires have taken fifteen lives and destroyed a total of 511 structures.

In late November, a number of wildfires sparked across Southern California in Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and Orange Counties. These fires were extremely destructive destroying hundreds of homes and structures.

The top five fires in acreage burned that started in CAL FIRE'S direct protection area

FIRE	COUNTY	START DATE	ACRES BURNED	FIRE CAUSE	STRUCTURES DESTROYED
CAMP	BUTTE	08/13/08	47,647	LIGHTNING	117
TELEGRAPH	MARIPOSA	07/25/08	34,091	MISC.	133
FREEWAY	RIVERSIDE	11/15/08	30,305	STRUCTURE	245
LAKEHEAD	SHASTA	06/21/08	27,936	LIGHTNING	12
HUMBOLDT	BUTTE	06/11/08	23,344	ARSON	351

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(continued)

DIRECT PROTECTION AREA OF:	WILDFIRES	ACRES BURNED
CAL FIRE -----	3,593	380,310
UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE -----	1,681	1,099,561
CONTRACT COUNTIES -----	459	59,407
US BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT -----	124	26,938
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE -----	110	23,840
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS -----	288	3,634
2008 TOTAL	6,255	1,593,690
5-YEAR AVERAGE (2003-2007)	7,464	757,986