



2015 Wildland Training Exercises

Fort Hunter Liggett, CA

June 2, 4, & 6, 2015

After Action Report

Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association

Santa Cruz County Training Officers

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Wildland Training Exercise
Planning Section Chief

August 18, 2015

**Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association
Santa Cruz County Training Officers
Wildland Training Exercises – June 2, 4, & 6, 2015**

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**Wildland Training Exercise
Daily Participation Summary – June 2, 2015**

Agency Participation:

6131	Presidio of Monterey FD
5431	Marina FD
5233	North County FPD
5531	Monterey County Regional FPD
5534	Monterey County Regional FPD
2136	Boulder Creek FPD
2537	Scotts Valley FPD
3211	Santa Cruz County FD
3536	Aptos La Selva Beach FPD
2636	Branciforte FPD
371	Santa Clara County FD
387	Milpitas FD
901	Spring Valley Volunteer FD
6433	Monterey FD
1763	Cal Fire - CZU
1765	Cal Fire - CZU
Crew 3	Cal Fire - Ben Lomond
Crew 4	Cal Fire – Ben Lomond
WT 7841	Big Sur Volunteer FB
WT 5544	Monterey County Regional FD
WT 6141	Presidio of Monterey FD
WT 3450	Central FPD
WT 78	Santa Clara County FD

Overhead / Support:

1.	Mike Urquides
2.	John Owen
3.	Daniel Gearhart
4.	Mike Conrad
5.	Samuel Klemek
6.	Brett Loomis
7.	Deano Lindsey
8.	Dale Williams
9.	Dave Craddock
10.	John Lundgren
11.	Jason Hyduk
12.	Tim Theilen
13.	Todd Skrabak
14.	Larry Achen
15.	Pat O’Connell
16.	Alex Airada
17.	Matt Brown
18.	Troy Leist
19.	Ron Verga
20.	Pat Griffin
21.	Mark Bingham
22.	Jed Wilson
23.	Jason Falarski
24.	Aaron Paasch
25.	Jess Mason
26.	Michael Krakowiaic
27.	David Brenner
28.	Bill Hija
29.	Cameron Von Dollen
30.	Zack Swift
31.	Maria Garcia

Engine Companies:

Monterey County:	6
Santa Cruz County:	9
Santa Clara County:	3
Total Engines:	18

Water Tenders: 5

Total Participants: (Engines, Crews, & Water Tenders)	76
Total Overhead / Support Staff:	31
Total Personnel:	107

**Wildland Training Exercise
Daily Participation Summary – June 4, 2015**

Agency Participation:

6131	Presidio of Monterey FD
5431	Marina FD
5233	North County FPD
5531	Monterey County Regional FD
5534	Monterey County Regional FD
7834	Big Sur Volunteer FB
7831	Big Sur Volunteer FB
2537	Scotts Valley FPD
3536	Aptos La Selva Beach FPD
2632	Branciforte FPD
2136	Boulder Creek FPD
2320	Felton FPD
1763	Cal Fire - CZU
1765	Cal Fire - CZU
3438	Central FPD
357	La Honda FB
3134	Santa Cruz City FD
387	Milpitas FD
382	Santa Clara County FD
901	Spring Valley Volunteer FD
WT 7840	Big Sur Volunteer FB
WT 78	Santa Clara County
WT 3450	Central FPD
WT 5544	Monterey County Regional FD

Overhead / Support:

1. Edmond Rodriguez
2. Chris Orman
3. Daniel Gearhart
4. Mike Conrad
5. Alex Airada
6. Brett Loomis
7. Deano Lindsey
8. Eric Hanzelka
9. Chris Vaughn
10. John Lundgren
11. Jason Hyduk
12. Tim Theilen
13. Todd Skrabak
14. Larry Achen
15. Pat O'Connell
16. Mark Bingham
17. Pat Griffin
18. Jed Wilson
19. Jess Mason
20. Kendall Pearson
21. Reggie Williams
22. Jim Delucchi
23. Aaron Paasch
24. Elaney Karabetsos
25. Dave Craddock
26. Dave Jensen
27. Lisa Oberdorfer
28. Megan Dixon
29. Cameron Von Dollen
30. William Hija
31. Maria Garcia
32. Zack Linnan
33. John Wider

Engine Companies:

Monterey County:	7
Santa Cruz County:	10
Santa Clara County:	3

Total Engines: 20

Water Tenders: 4

Total Participants: (Engines & Water Tenders) 78

Total Overhead / Support Staff: 33

Total Personnel: 111

**Wildland Training Exercise
Daily Participation Summary – June 6, 2015**

Agency Participation:

6131	Presidio of Monterey FD
5431	Marina FD
5233	North County FPD
5531	Monterey County Regional FPD
7731	Cachagua FPD
7411	Mid Coast FB
3437	Central FPD
2537	Scotts Valley FPD
3536	Aptos La Selva Beach FPD
2632	Branciforte FPD
2136	Boulder Creek FPD
357	La Honda
387	Milpitas FD
362	Palo Alto FD
373	Santa Clara County FD
WT 78	Santa Clara County FD
WT 6141	Presidio of Monterey FD
WT 7840	Big Sur Volunteer FB
WT 2951	Santa Cruz County FD

Engine Companies:

Monterey County	6
Santa Cruz County	6
Santa Clara County	3

Total Engines: 15

Water Tenders: 4

Total Participants (Engines, Water Tenders) 59

Total Overhead / Support Staff: 28

Total Personnel: 87

Overhead / Support:

1. Edmond Rodriguez
2. John Owen
3. Daniel Gearhart
4. Mike Conrad
5. Rick Frawley
6. Brett Loomis
7. Deano Lindsey
8. Eric Hanzelka
9. Chris Vaughn
10. John Lundgren
11. Jason Hyduk
12. Jess Mason
13. Todd Skrabak
14. Larry Achen
15. Pat O'Connell
16. Matt Brown
17. Peter Robbert
18. Dan Grebil
19. Rob Young
20. Pat Griffin
21. Mark Bingham
22. Jed Wilson
23. Wally Finck
24. Mike Krisman
25. Melody McDonald
26. Terri Minogre
27. Daniel Mitchell
28. Cameron Von Dollen

Pre-Event Planning Summary:

Following a successful partnership between the Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association and the Santa Cruz Training Officers Association for the planning and implementation of the 2014 Wildland Training Exercises, the consensus was reached in late 2014 that the partnership should continue for the 2015 Wildland Training Exercises.

During the past few years, informal discussions at various levels occurred concerning the possibility of bringing back the full four-day Wildland Fire School. These discussions continue to remain informal and although the notion of returning to the four-day school remains a topic of discussion, serious efforts to once again offer the four-day Wildland Fire School remain elusive.

During the Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association (MCFTOA) general membership meeting on October 9, 2014, retired Chief Daniel Gearhart asked Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association (MCFCA) president Chief Brian Dempsey what the level of interest was from the Chief's Association on bringing back, and supporting, the full four-day Wildland Fire School. Chief Dempsey acknowledged that the full-four day Wildland Fire School was a major undertaking that involved a tremendous amount of planning and logistics. After considering and discussing several issues relating to the amount of individual participation needed for a full four-day Wildland Fire School, the consensus was to continue with the existing format and to strongly encourage agencies and personnel to support the ongoing efforts of providing future wildland training opportunities offered by the MCFTOA and the Santa Cruz County Training Officers (SCCTO)

On October 16, 2014, retired Chief Daniel Gearhart and MCFTOA president Captain Jason Black attended the monthly meeting of the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association. An agenda item for the meeting was an update on the MCFTOA activities that included a specific discussion on the future format of the Wildland Training Exercises. During the meeting, the direction from the Chiefs Association was to have the MCFTOA continue with offering the three single-day wildland training exercises in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Training Officers. Retired Chief Gearhart stressed the importance of needing increased participation from Monterey County agencies, both overhead personnel and engine company attendance, for the assured success of future wildland training exercises.

In early November 2014, retired Chief Daniel Gearhart, the Planning Section Chief, spoke with Assistant Chief Clinton Tolle from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. Chief Tolle stated that there had been no negative fallout, either from the Fort Hunter Liggett military command or the Fort Hunter Liggett fire department, concerning the incident on the final day of the exercises earlier in the year. Chief Tolle said that the Fort Hunter Liggett fire department fully supports continued wildland training exercises sponsored by the MCFTOA and the SCCTO. Chief Tolle stated that Training Area 12B remains available as the designated wildland training area. During the same discussion, the dates of June 2, 4, and 6, 2015 were proposed for the 2015 Wildland Training Exercises.

On December 10, 2014, a wildland committee meeting was held at the MPC Public Safety Training Center. During that meeting items discussed included:

- A review of the 23 recommendations for the 2014 After Action Report.
- The establishment of June 2, 4, and 6, 2015 as the dates for the 2015 exercises.
- The need for having a radio repeater system for the command frequencies.
- Maintaining the partnership with the Santa Cruz County Training Officers.
- Reaching out to other counties, and to Cal Fire – BEU, for increased participation.
- Developing a transition plan in the event of an escape / incident.
- Increasing overhead opportunities and task book sign-offs.
- The “training to incident” situation that occurred during the 2014 exercises due to extreme fire behavior.
- The importance of having increased “in-county” overhead and agency participation.
- Providing training opportunities for “recruit” level wildland training.
- The inclusion of “Branches” for geographical areas.
- Encouraging broad-based participation from local agencies for overhead and support positions.

On January 22, 2015, Division Chief Mike Conrad started the process for completing and submitting the Training Support Request (TSR) that would ultimately need approval from Range Control at Fort Hunter Liggett. It was agreed to wait until after a scheduled meeting with the Fort Hunter Liggett fire department on February 10, 2015 to submit the TSR to the Fort Hunter Liggett Range Control.

On February 9, 2015, a detailed email notification was sent to all Monterey County agencies, and forwarded to the Santa Cruz County Training Officers, officially announcing the dates of the 2015 Wildland Training Exercises, the intent to have monthly Wildland Training Exercises planning meetings, and a request that overhead and support assistance was vitally needed.

On February 10, 2015, MCFTOA wildland committee members and the SCCTO met at Fort Hunter Liggett with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department to officially establish dates and needed responsibilities. During this meeting, the dates of June 2, 4, and 6, 2015 were proposed and agreed upon. On the same day, a site visit was conducted in Training Area 12B.

During the Wildland Training Exercise committee meeting on March 10, 2015, Chief Pat O’Connell announced that the Santa Clara County Fire Department was very interested in attending the training exercises and would most likely be able to send a Strike Team of engines along with a Strike Team Leader. Being it was likely that with the addition of Santa Clara County, there could be between 15 – 20 engines per day, it was agreed to expand the daily operation from two branches to three branches. Based on an undetermined amount of overhead availability, the decision was made to limit the exercises to three branches with a maximum of 24 engines per day. The desired amount would be between 5 – 7 engines per branch.

Additionally, Captain Sam Klemek of the Salinas Fire Department was announced as the Communications Unit Leader, Jess Mason of the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade as the Water Supply Officer, and Captain Deano Lindsey of the Monterey County Regional Fire District as the Logistics Section Chief.

During the meeting, Captain Klemek said that a portable repeater would be available for the command frequency and that Command 5390 would be participating on all three days. Also during the meeting, the dates of May 12th and 13th were announced by Chief Pat O'Connell for the off-road driving class at Fort Hunter Liggett. Additionally, Captain Aaron Young from Cal Fire BEU said that a Cal Fire Hand Crew and Helicopter 406 would like to participate in the exercises. The plan would be for the hand crew and Copter 406 to conduct an independent training exercise, within Training Area 12B and under the training exercise IAP, on one or more days during the exercises. It was agreed to allow Cal Fire BEU to conduct an independent training exercise within the designated training area.

On March 22, 2015, an informational flyer and registration form for the Wildland Training Exercises were sent to all Monterey County fire agencies and the Santa Cruz County Training Officers with a registration deadline of May 1, 2015. Contained within the email was another appeal for overhead and support personnel assistance for the training exercises.

On April 22, 2015, the Planning Section Chief and the Deputy Planning Section Chief met in Seaside, CA. to review planning up until that day.

On April 24, 2015, notification was made to the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) notifying the agency of our intent to conduct the wildland training exercises at Fort Hunter Liggett on June 2, 4, & 6, 2015. The MBUAPCD later approved the exercises and requested an updated training authorization letter from the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association, and same-day notifications on the individual burn days.

On April 25, 2015, an informational flyer and registration form was sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County agencies for an S-219 Ignition Operations class scheduled for May 18 – 22, 2015 at Fort Hunter Liggett as part of the ongoing wildland training program.

On April 27, 2015, an informational flyer and registration form was sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County agencies announcing an Off-Road Driving Skills class scheduled for May 12th or May 13th, 2015 at Fort Hunter Liggett. The class would be limited to (5) engines per day and would be free of charge.

On May 4, 2015, due to low registrations, the Off-Road Driving Skills Class was opened to all agencies.

On May 12, 2015, due to extremely low registrations, actually no registrations, the S-219 class scheduled for May 18 – 22, 2015 was cancelled.

On May 13, 2015, communication was made with Deputy Chief Tony Bowden of the Santa Clara County Fire Department. Chief Bowden was informed that due to a yet undetermined amount of available overhead personnel, the Santa Clara County Fire Department participation would be limited to (3) engines per day. Additionally, it was requested that Santa Clara County FD bring a Strike Team Leader and a water tender on each day of the training.

On May 12th and May 13th, 2015, the Off Road Driving Skills class was conducted at Fort Hunter Liggett. A full class was held with (5) engines participating on both days.

On May 14, 2015, during the regularly scheduled meeting of the wildland planning committee, Deputy William Hija from the Monterey County Sheriff's Office informed the group that the Monterey County Sheriff's Office Radio Communications Support Team will deploy a portable repeater on the top of "Peanut Hill" on the first day of the exercises. Radio Support team members will be lowered from CHP Helicopter H-70 onto the hilltop site to deploy and activate the repeater as a deployment training exercise. The Radio Support team members will be on-site all three days to ensure the activation and operation of the portable repeater. Also during the meeting, Cal Fire BEU Battalion Chief Brian Nichols stated that Cal Fire BEU would not be participating in the exercises, either as attendees or overhead personnel, due to Cal Fire's recent order to discontinue all open burning on SRA lands.

Also during this meeting, based on previous discussions, there was a desire from the MCFTOA to make the Wildland Training Exercises a Countywide Movement Drill. The concept was that Monterey County resources would be paged out each morning, meet at a predesignated rendezvous point, form up as a Strike Team, and then travel together to the training ground. Additionally, mutual aid would be requested from Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County as part of the drill. The coordination of this activity was assigned to a member of the wildland committee. However, the planned movement drill for the three training days did not occur.

On May 20, 2015, a final planning meeting and site visit was conducted at Fort Hunter Liggett. The meeting finalized operations plans and the site visit determined that the water supply and fuel conditions were adequate for conducting the wildland training exercises. During the site visit, it was noticed that CAL Fire BEU Hand crews were preparing areas within Branch 3 and 5A for a S-234 class scheduled for the following week.

On May 21, 2015, Retired Chief Daniel Gearhart and Fire Chief Pat O'Connell attended the joint meeting between the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association and the Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association in Moss Landing, CA. During that meeting, Chief O'Connell and Chief Gearhart gave a report on the upcoming wildland training exercises and a final plea for additional overhead personnel support.

On May 27, 2015, an overhead personnel and resource assignment meeting was held in Aptos, CA. During the meeting, overhead personnel were given final assignments and engine company participants were assigned to the three different branches.

On May 28, 2015, notification was sent to CAL OES Region II Assistant Chief John Clary informing him of the upcoming exercises and the anticipated agency participation.

On May 29, 2015, a final site visit in Training Area 12B was conducted by the Planning Section Chief, Retired Chief Daniel Gearhart. During the site visit it was discovered that the Cal Fire BEU S-234 class on the previously three days had burned pretty much all of Branch 5A, the southernmost portion of Branch 3, and southeast corner of Branch 3. It was determined that

the burned area would not have a significant impact on the upcoming wildland training exercises.

Also on May 29, 2015, the Incident Action Plan (IAP) for June 2, 2015, was sent to all appropriate personnel and agencies. An updated IAP was available on the morning on June 2, 2015 and distributed during the check-in process.

Pre-Event Planning

Advertising / Registration:

On March 22, 2015 notification was sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies officially announcing the 2015 wildland training exercises. The email notification contained an informational flyer and an electronic PDF “fill-in” registration form that was designed to be completed and returned via email. A registration deadline was established for May 1, 2015 at 1700 hours. Several reminder emails concerning registration were sent to all agencies prior to the deadline.

On May 13, 2015, after several prior informal contacts with the Santa Clara County Fire Department, the Wildland Training Exercises were officially opened for participation from the Santa Clara County Fire Department. The Santa Clara County Fire Department was advised that due to an undetermined number of available overhead personnel, participation from Santa Clara County would be limited to (3) engines per day. We also requested that the Santa Clara County Fire Department provide a Strike Team / Task Force Leader and a water tender on all the days of their participation. The Santa Clara County Fire Department agreed to the conditions and informed us that the three engines would be from three different agencies in Santa Clara County. The Santa Clara County Fire Department maintains a partnership with other neighboring agencies within Santa Clara County for wildland responses. The Santa Clara County Fire Department subsequently provided a registration form outlining the different agencies that would be attending on each of the three days.

As with the 2014 exercises, a registration fee of \$10.00 per person, per day, was established for the wildland training exercises. After the exercises were completed, invoices were sent to all agencies that had resources and personnel participating. The total amount invoiced to all agencies was \$2,830.00. (283 personnel)

Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department:

In November 2014, contact was made with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department to begin the planning process for the 2015 wildland training exercises. At that time, we were authorized to use the same training area as in 2014, Training Area 12B. The area is about 1000 acres divided into (7) sections, designated as Branches, each section separated by various dirt roads.

On February 10, 2015, a pre-event / site visit was conducted at the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. Present at the meeting were representatives from the Monterey County Fire

Training Officers, the Santa Cruz County Training Officers, and the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. During the meeting the dates of June 2, 4, and 6, 2015 were finalized, Training Area 12B was confirmed, and an agreement was reached to offer an off-road driving skills class, and a S-219 Ignition Operations class. These classes would be in conjunction with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department as part of a wildland training package available to Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies. Additionally, a site visit was conducted at Training Area 12B.

During the site visit discussions occurred that included increasing the size of the training area, an appropriate area for a command post / basecamp, and an evaluation of the water sources in the area. Concerning water supply, the attending personnel found it encouraging that Nacimiento River was flowing at near full capacity and the primary natural water source at the river for the exercises was at a full level.

On May 20, 2015, a final site visit and meeting with Fort Hunter Liggett FD personnel was held at Fort Hunter Liggett. During the site visit, the fuels and water supply at Training Area 12B were evaluated and determined to be a "Go" status for the training exercises on June 2, 4, and 6, 2015.

During the site visit, we noticed Cal Fire BEU hand crews cutting hand lines in Branch 3 and 5A. We spoke with the Hand Crew Captain who said the hand lines were in preparation for an S-234 Ignition Operations class, sponsored by Cal Fire BEU, scheduled for the following week. The Captain said that the plan for the S-234 class was to only burn in the area of Branch 5A and the southeast corner of Branch 3. While at the site, we spoke with FHL FD Assistant Chief Jeff Minetti who apologized for the miss-communication about the upcoming Cal Fire BEU S-234 class.

Training Support Request (TSR) – Fort Hunter Liggett Range Control:

In accordance with Fort Hunter Liggett Range Control procedures, a Training Support Request (TSR) was required for the wildland training exercises during the dates and location desired. The Training Support Request was initiated on January 22, 2015, and completed by the Deputy Planning Section Chief, Mike Conrad, and the Planning Section Chief, Daniel Gearhart. Once completed, the TSR was submitted to the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department for their review and submittal to Range Control on February 10, 2015.

On February 12, 2015, we received notification from Range Control that our TSR had been approved for the dates and times requested. Along with the approval, we were advised by Range Control that the dates of June 2nd and June 4th were clear but that there was a possible conflict with military training operations in Training Area 12B on June 6, 2015. Range Control advised that they would contact the military unit scheduled for training that day to determine if any conflicts are anticipated. At a later date, we were advised by Range Control that the military units would not be arriving until the evening of June 6, 2015 and that there should not be any conflict. As a precaution, Range Control requested that we agree to a Concurrent Training Agreement for the date of June 6, 2015 in the event that training activities did indeed overlap. We agreed to the request and a Concurrent Training Agreement was put in place.

On June 6, 2015, military units were noticed in the area of Branch 4 later in the day. The presence of military units in Training Area 12B on June 6, 2015, did not pose any conflicts with the wildland training exercises.

As required by Range Control, a portable radio was issued each day by Range Control and was on-site at the Command Post. Range Control was advised at the beginning of each day as the burning scenarios started, and at the conclusion of each day when the burns were ending.

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District:

On April 24, 2015, the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District was contacted and advised of our intent to conduct the wildland training exercises on June 2, 4, and 6, 2015 at Fort Hunter Liggett. The MBUAPCD was advised that the burns were strictly “fire department training burns” and that each one of our burning scenarios would remain between 2 – 3 acres in size. In a later telephone call to Bob Nunes of the MBUAPCD, the MBUAPCD approved the request under the provision of fire department training activities. The MBUAPCD requested a “same-day” notification for the three days of the training. This request was fulfilled by a phone call to the MBUAPCD office on the morning of each exercise. Information concerning the training exercises appeared on the MBUAPCD website in the “Prescribed Burn” section prior to the training.

As with the same requirement in 2014, the MBUAPCD requested an authorization letter from a “Public Officer” stating that the training was “...necessary for the instruction of public employees...” The MBUAPCD cited Rule 438, Part 2.43 “Training Burn for the Instruction of Public Employees.” The section reads as follows:

“A public officer is authorized to set or permit a fire when such fire is, in his or her opinion, necessary for the instruction of public employees in the methods of fighting fire per Health and Safety Code Section 41801(b). A training burn typically involves burning less than 40 acres of vegetation. See also Sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 above.”

In response to the request from the MBUACPD, Chief Edmond Rodriguez, president of the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association, sent a letter dated April 30, 2015 to the MBUAPCD stating that “This mission critical training is vital to the safety of our firefighters who are deployed statewide during fire season and to the communities they are to protect.” The letter satisfied the request from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District.

Media Outreach:

Over the past few years, significant efforts were placed on reaching out to local media outlets. Actual results from this outreach yielded a limited response from the media. It was felt that efforts in this area should be re-directed to planning and operational issues. It was also felt that that media may want to focus more on the potential for burns escaping and conducting wildland firefighting training burns during drought conditions, as opposed to the value and

benefit of live-fire wildland training. With that, there were no efforts to reach out to local media.

Monterey Peninsula College:

As with other Monterey County fire service agencies, the MCFTOA maintains a “Contract for Academic Services” with Monterey Peninsula College. This program provides reimbursements for agencies that run their training through MPC. Starting in 2014, Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) began phasing out paper “application for admission” forms and initiated an on-line application process. An Application for Admission is required for any specialized training class outside of the regular agency contracted hours. It was understood that in order to register the participants through MPC, all attendees would need to complete the on-line registration process through the MPC website.

The MCFTOA felt that it would be a challenge to capture all the attendees of the exercises since some of the agencies do not know who the attending personnel are until the morning of the exercises. Registering of the morning of the exercises would be difficult and it was believed that an appreciable number of attendees may be excluded from the registration process. With these considerations, the decision was made to not process the training exercises through Monterey Peninsula College. Without the MCFTOA running the class through Monterey Peninsula College, local agencies would be free to submit the hours to MPC as part of their own “Contract for Academic Services.”

S-219 Ignition Operations Class:

As a lead-in to the Wildland Training Exercises, an S-219 Ignition Operations class was scheduled for May 18 - 22, 2015 at Fort Hunter Liggett. The class would be taught by instructors from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department and the cost of the class would be \$75.00 per person. The class was to be open to fire service employees from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties.

On April 25, 2015, an informational flyer and registration instructions were delivered to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies. Prospective students were advised to email the registration form to the email address of the MCFTOA, mcftoa@gamil.com, and to pay for the class registration fee on the MCFTOA website using either PayPal or a credit card.

Once students submitted the class registration forms, they were to be provided with instructions for the pre-course work.

As of May 4, 2015, there were (0) registrations for the S-219 class. With that, the decision was made to allow open registration for the class. On the same day, the S-219 informational flyer and registration were posted on the MCFTOA website as open registration. Additionally, the class flyer was sent to the Northern California Training Officers Association for wide distribution.

On May 12, 2015, with (0) registrations received, the decision was made to cancel the S-219 class.

Off-Road Driving Skills Class:

As part of the wildland training program for 2015, an Off-Road Driving Skills Class was developed by the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. The class was designed for Type III engines. The majority of the class would be a 50 mile challenging off-road driving course on the property of Fort Hunter Liggett. The training would entail a brief classroom session in the morning and then the Type III engines would be escorted on the course by Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department personnel. The class was scheduled as two separate sessions, May 12th and May 13th, 2015.

The class was limited to (5) Type III engines per day, with a maximum of (3) persons assigned to each engine. There was no cost for the class and agencies / personnel would supply their own fuel, meals, and beverages. The class was originally open to agencies from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies.

On April 27, 2015, an Off-Road Driving Skills Class information flyer / registration form was sent to all agencies in Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. On May 4, 2015, due to open slots still being available, the class was made available to all agencies.

The class was conducted on May 12th and May 13th at Fort Hunter Liggett. The class had (5) engines both days. After a short classroom session, the attending engines were escorted on a 50 mile off-road course that was progressively more challenging as the day continued. Due to the success and popularity of the class, plans are being developed to offer the class again prior to the end of the calendar year with regular future classes a distinct possibility.

Operational Summary:

The goal of the Wildland Training Exercises was to provide (3) single-day wildland firefighting training opportunities for personnel from Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Santa Clara County fire agencies. The three-day format was selected to provide training opportunities on three different shift days of the 48 / 96 work schedule. This format would allow agencies the opportunity to send on-duty personnel from each of the three shifts, in addition to the flexibility of deploying resources and personnel based on the needs and abilities of the agency.

The overall goal of the training exercises was to provide live-fire advanced wildland firefighting training under realistic conditions. This goal was indeed met by repeated live-fire mobile attack scenarios presented to the engine companies during each day of instruction.

The exercises were designed as advanced live-fire wildland firefighting training. Agencies were strongly advised to have participating personnel already trained in wildland safety procedures, wildland firefighting tactics and operations, wildland firefighting tools and equipment, wildland fire weather, and fire shelter deployment. Having this accomplished prior to the exercises allowed for the maximum time available dedicated to live-fire training.

Overhead personnel and instructional staff were recruited from various Monterey and Santa Cruz County fire agencies and repeated reminder notices were sent to all agencies asking for overhead personnel support. The minimum operational overhead staffing needed to support three branches were established as (1) Incident Commander, (1- 2) Safety Officers, (3) Branch Directors, (3) Strike Team Leaders, (3) SOFR's and (9) Branch Instructors. Additionally, a minimum standard of (1) water tender per branch was established.

Prior to the exercises, a participation goal was established at between 15 – 21 engine companies, with a maximum of (24) engines per day. This would allow for (3) Strike Teams, with between 5 – 7 engine companies per Strike Team, each operating in a designated branch. A total of (7) branches were available within the designated training area. Total engine company participation was ultimately determined by the amount of overhead personnel available to support each day of training.

During the exercises the span of control remained at a reasonable level based on the amount of overhead personnel and student participation. Additional student participation would have required an increase in overhead personnel and logistical support from the Monterey and Santa Cruz County fire agencies.

As initiated in 2013, and utilized since then, participating engines were formed into Strike Teams with a designated Strike Team Leader. Specific geographical areas were designated as Branches in order to identify the specific training area. Each branch was assigned a Branch Director that coordinated all activities within the respective branch. If unfavorable burning conditions were encountered within a branch, Branch Directors had the ability to move to a different branch.

In order to provide more flexibility for moving groups to different areas if needed, and to remain consistent with current out-of-county or in-county deployments, the grouping designations used were Strike Teams with corresponding identifiers of XMY 2175C for Monterey County, XCZ 2327C for Santa Cruz County, and XSC 2314C for Santa Clara County. If the need arose, and a ST operating in Branch 2 required relocation to Branch 4, it was a simple process of re-assigning the ST to Branch 4. This allowed the group to retain the ST designator regardless of where the group was operating.

The use of "Division" designators was considered for identifying a specific training area but was determined that this could lead to confusion when scenario Incident Commanders would identify locations within their scenario as Divisions such as Division Alpha and Division Zebra. All things considered, the use of Strike Team designators for grouping engines, and assigning those Strike Teams to a specific branch was the most effective method considered and utilized for the 2015 format.

Based on the desired outcome, the overall goal of providing high-quality advanced live-fire wildland firefighting training for Monterey, Santa Cruz, San Benito, and Santa Clara County fire agencies was unquestionably achieved. Participating engine companies were able to form up in Strike Teams, with a Strike Team Leader, respond to an assigned branch, and engage in multiple live-fire wildland firefighting training scenarios under extremely realistic conditions. Engine

companies were encouraged to practice techniques based on their agency's policies and procedures. Additional training opportunities included a check-in process, incident briefing, review of the IAP, safety briefing, vehicle inspection, radio communications, mobile fire attack, incident command principles, firing operations, working with other agencies, size-up, resource deployment, fire behavior and weather monitoring, drafting procedures, off-road driving, fire extinguishment techniques, crew leadership, base camp operations, ICS 214 usage, mop-up procedures, and a demobilization process.

Daily Summaries:

June 2, 2015 – Daily Summary:

The first day of the exercises, June 2, 2015, began with a slow start due to an unforeseen bicycle event that significantly impacted traffic on Jolon Road prior to entering the military installation. A bicycle event, that included about 5,000 bicyclists, was traveling south along Jolon Road as fire apparatus and resources were using the same road to access the training area. Consequently, speed along Jolon Road was significantly reduced and several resources were delayed in arriving at the staging area. This situation accounted for about an hour delay in the start of the burning scenarios. Additionally, check-in took longer than expected along with an unanticipated need for numerous radios that needed to be cloned. Although that was a late start, an overhead briefing was conducted, along with an overall briefing.

During the overhead briefing, a contingency strike team was established in the event there was an off-site incident or the FHL FD needed assistance with their simultaneous burning operations at another location. The contingency strike included STL 1708, Battalion Chief Jed Wilson, and engines 5233, 5531, 2537, 1765, 1763, WT 5544, and Crew 4.

Prior to starting burning operations, a black line was established around the command post and staging area by Santa Cruz County agencies.

Range Control was advised via radio that firing operations would begin at about 1115 hours. Branch 2 ignited the first fire at 1134 hours, Branch 3 at 1135 hours, and Branch 4 at 1228 hours. Burning scenarios then continued for the remainder of the day until burning was discontinued at 1536 hours.

At about 1209 hours, an unknown metal object was located about 100 yards south of the command post in a burned area. The object was determined to be an inert piece of metal that posed no threat to participants.

At about 1330 hours, the Planning Section Chief, Incident Commander, and Safety Officer met at the Command Post to discuss plans for an "off-site" live-fire exercise in Stony Valley for one of the branch resources. It was agreed to conduct the off-site exercise, with the assistance of FHL FD, but that the contingency strike team would be used rather than all the resources of an entire branch.

At about 1343 hours, upon the request of the Incident Commander, the incident name was changed from “Stony IC” and “Stony Communications” to “School IC” and “School Communications” due to the Fort Hunter Liggett FD conducting separate burning operations in the nearby Stony Valley.

At 1441 hours, the contingency strike team was dispatched to an “off-site” location for a vegetation fire with the meeting point being at DP4. Once all resources were at DP4, Plans provided additional information for STL 1708 to respond to the western end of Stony Valley for an “off-site” incident.

STL 1708 was assigned a separate tactical frequency. At 1512 hours, the contingency strike team arrived on scene and encountered a vegetation fire burning on the southern inclines of Stony Valley approximately 2.28 miles west of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. Once on scene, STL 1708 deployed engines for a direct attack operation. At 1519 hours, the fire was declared contained by STL 1708. Once the fire was contained, the contingency strike team returned to DP4 for an after incident review, and then to the Command Post for demobilization.

At 1536 hours, the Planning Section Chief advises all branches to discontinue starting any new fires and to perform mop-up operations. Once mop-up was completed in the various branches, units were cleared to begin the demobilization process. The demobilization process started at about 1620 hours and was completed at about 1730 hours. The Planning Section was the last unit to leave the training area at about 1815 hours.

Being it was the first day of the exercises, there were a few glitches that were overcome. Burning conditions, however, were not ideal and firing officers were having difficulty igniting fires that maintained consistent spread and intensity. Fuel moistures were higher than anticipated and RH levels remained elevated for the majority of the day. Even with these less than ideal conditions, each branch was able to provide an adequate number of burn scenarios allowing for sufficient opportunities live-fire mobile attack. Temperatures for the day averaged in the 80’s and RH levels started at nearly 50% in the morning and lowered to around 25% later in the day.

June 4, 2015 – Daily Summary:

On June 3, 2015, in an effort to speed up the check-in process for the following day, Apparatus / Personnel Check-In Rosters, and Statement of Insurance / Hold Harmless Agreements were emailed to all participating agencies and known overhead personnel. This effort assisted greatly in improving the check-in process on the morning of June 4, 2015.

On June 4, 2015, following check-in, an overhead briefing was conducted with all appropriate overhead personnel. During the overhead briefing, a contingency strike team was established for off-site assistance as needed. The contingency strike team consisted STL 5592, Captain Alex Airada, with engine companies 7854, 5431, 5233, 6131, 5531, and WT 5544.

Following the overhead briefing, a general briefing was conducted with all personnel present. The general briefing included a review of the IAP, Safety Message, addition information on

military ordnance, and other relevant information. Following the general briefing, breakout sessions were conducted by the three Branch Directors. After the breakout sessions, the communications unit went operational at 1030 hours with Command Unit 5390. Engines formed into their respective strike teams and reported to their assigned branches. Branch 3's first fire of the day was at 1031 hours, Branch 1 started at 1044 hours, and Branch 2 also began operations at 1044 hours. Branch scenarios then continued for the remainder of the day. Morning weather readings showed temperatures in the 70's and high 60's with RH levels starting at about 50% and dropping slightly during the remainder of the morning.

At 1211 hours, the Planning Section Chief reported a large fog bank hovering on the mountain ridges to the south. Following the presence of the fog bank, temperatures remained in the low 70's to mid 60's, RH levels stayed between 30% and 50%, and winds remained steady between 3 – 10 mph from the south.

Due to increased winds coming from the south pushing a burning scenario towards Nacimiento-Fergusson Road (NF Road) in Branch 2, the Branch 2 Director declared a Level 1 Incident in Branch 2 at 1227 hours. Additionally, Branch 2 requested additional resources for fire containment along NF Road. At 1229 hours, the Planning Section Chief directed the other two branches to cease burning operations and then reports to Command 5390 to assist with notifications and resource coordination. At 1239 hours, NF Road was closed to civilian traffic at the Command Post. At 1242 hours, the Fort Hunter Liggett FD was notified and advised of the situation. No resources were requested from the FHL FD at this time.

The main strategy during the Level 1 Incident was to hold the fire at NF Road. With the addition of several resources from the other two branches, and the containment tactics employed, the fire was contained to the south side of NF Road.

At 1253 hours, Branch 2 reported that the forward progress of the fire was been stopped and resources are working on full containment. At 1301 hours, Branch 2 reported the fire contained and rescinded the Level 1 Incident declaration. Assisting resources were then released back to their respective branches. At 1305 hours, the FHL FD was notified of the fire's containment and that there was no longer a need to be on standby. At 1308 hours, all branches were advised they could resume their training scenarios.

At 1413 hours, the Planning Section Chief and the Safety Officer evaluated a debris field in the southern portion of Branch 2 that could pose a safety risk to personnel and apparatus in that area. After an evaluation of the debris field, it was determined that the area would be declared off-limits to all personnel and apparatus due to the potential for injury to personnel and damage to vehicles. The Safety Officer stated he would generate a Safety Notice to be included in the IAP for June 6, 2015 advising the area to be off-limits. The Safety Notice was developed and included in the IAP for June 6, 2015.

At 1441 hours, the Safety Officer reported heavy smoke across NF Road in the area of Branch 2 and requested closing the road at the Command Post. Upon the request, 1Tom10 closed westbound traffic on NF Road at the Command Post.

At 1511 hours, due to increased and erratic southern winds, and after consultation with the Incident Commander, Operations Section Chief, Safety Officer, and Planning Section Chief, all branches were advised by the Safety Officer to cease all firing operations for the day and that actions should now be directed towards fire extinguishment and mop-up operations.

At about 1530 hours, and due to suppression challenges in Branch 2 along NF Road and near the Command Post, available resources were re-assigned to Branch 2 to assist with suppression efforts. At 1604 hours, 1Tom10 was advised to re-open NF Road at the Command Post.

At about 1630 hours, cleared resources began the demobilization process which continued until about 1800 hours.

At 1657 hours, a firefighter was reported injured in Branch 2 that was being brought to the Command Post for further evaluation. At about 1705 hours, the injured firefighter was treated at the Command Post by Medic 1 and subsequently released to the firefighter's employing agency.

At 1708 hours, the repeaters were shut down for the day by the MCSO Radio Communications Support Team and the Communications Unit discontinued operations at 1726 hours.

All resources completed the demobilization process by 1804 hours and the training ground was cleared of all personnel and resources, with the Planning Section Chief leaving the area at about 1845 hours.

June 6, 2015 – Daily Summary:

On the morning of June 6, 2015, we were immediately faced with two issues that would have a direct impact on the day's operation. First, we were notified during check-in that Command 5390 would not be available for the day. And second, (3) engine companies, of the (18) that were scheduled for the day, and (1) water tender of the (5) scheduled, would not be attending. Concerning engine companies, that left a total of (15) engine companies distributed among the three branches.

During the overhead briefing, the issue of both the reduction of engine companies and the lack of a communications vehicle were thoroughly discussed and evaluated.

After input from members of the overhead staff, it was decided to continue with the training exercise for the day with modifications to the deployment of engines and the communications plan.

Concerning the deployment of engines, it was agreed that we would combine the (15) engine companies into two branches rather than having three branches with (5) engines in each branch. This decision was based on the belief that having (5) engines in a branch was less than the desired amount and could have a potential impact on firefighter safety. It was felt that having two branches, one with (7) engines and one with (8) engines, plus an increase in overhead personnel was a more effective use of the resources and an improvement in

firefighter safety. With that, the decision was made to disband Branch 5 and to combine the remaining resources into Branch 1 and Branch 2. Additionally, overhead personnel from Branch 5 would be blended into the two other Branches. It was also felt the loss of one water tender would not have an impact on operation since there were still four remaining water tenders and that our water source was still effective and plentiful.

Concerning the lack of a communications unit, the decision was made to continue with the operation without the resource. The portable repeater for the two command frequencies was still in operation and being maintained separately by the MCSO Radio Communications Support Team with two personnel on-site. Additionally, the two Netcomm Dispatchers agreed to stay and support the operation using portable radios, a shaded exterior location, and hand generated 214's. With the lack of a communications unit, localized cell phone service, Wi-Fi, a continuous weather station, and a cache of extra portable radios were not available.

As with the previous two days of training, a contingency strike team was established in the event there was the need for off-site assistance. The contingency strike team was established as XMY 2175 with the STL being Captain Deano Lindsey. The assigned resources included engines 5431, 5233, 6131, 5531, 7731, and WT 6141.

Following the overhead briefing, a general briefing was conducted with all personnel. During the briefing, the IAP was reviewed, the safety message was covered, and the plan to combine the three branches into two branches was conveyed. Following the general briefing, breakout sessions were conducted by the two branches.

Prior to the resources being deployed into the field, a makeshift communication center was established at the command post. The two Netcomm Dispatchers, with the assistance of the Planning Section Chief and the Deputy Planning Section Chief, effectively managed radio communications under less than ideal conditions.

The first fire of the day was started by Branch 2 at 1035 hours followed by Branch 1 at 1042 hours.

Weather for the day saw temperatures in the mid 80's with RH levels starting at about 50% in the morning and then dropping to about 30% later in the afternoon.

At about 1107 hours, Branch 2 reported an unknown object on the ground within the area of Branch 2, (35 57.717N, 121 18.467W). Branch 2 requested an evaluation by the SOF. The SOF evaluated the object and requested a Range Control Safety Officer for further evaluation. At 1150 hours, the SOF and the Range Control Safety Officer went to Branch 2 to investigate the object. At 1217 hours, after a field evaluation, the Range Safety Officer determined that although the object was not a threat to personnel, the Officer requested that personnel stay away from the area and determined the object would need further evaluation at a later date.

At about 1515 hours, we were contacted by FHL FD Assistant Chief Jeff Minetti in the training area. Chief Minetti said that military operations were being planned for the Branch 3 area and he requested that we conduct a control burn of all the vegetation within the boundaries of

Branch 3. At about 1520 hours, the Planning Section Chief, the Incident Commander, and the Branch 2 Director, met with Chief Minetti at DP4, the northeast corner of Branch 3. Chief Minetti stated that military units were planning on using tracer rounds in the eastern portion on Branch 3 to the west of San Miguelito Loop Road. He requested that we conduct a control burn of all possible vegetation within Branch 3. At 1525 hours, the agreement was made to conduct the burning operation as requested and San Miguelito IC was established.

At 1530 hours, all units on the training ground were advised of the controlled burn operation and given assignments. Chief Loomis was assigned as IC, Captain Lindsey as Division B on NF Road, Chief Wilson as Division D, Chief O'Connell as Division C, and Captain Vaughn as Division A along San Miguelito Loop road. The plan was to start a firing operation along the perimeter of the branch and allow the fire to burn in towards the middle of the branch. Suppression efforts would be limited to maintaining the established perimeter of the operation.

At about 1600 hours, firing operations began in branch 3 at DP4. To assist with the burning operation, at about 1650 hours, the FHL FD arrived with a mobile terra torch which started firing operations in Division D. Due to a mechanical issue, the unit had to disengage from the operation.

At about 1709 hours, with firing operations completed along the perimeter, the portable repeater was shut down for the day.

At about 1725 hours, the fire was allowed to burn within the boundaries of Branch 3 and resources were directed to begin the demobilization process. All resources completed the demobilization process by 1815 hours. After the training area was surveyed, and all training fires were determined to be suppressed, the training area was cleared at 1845 hours by the Planning Section Chief.

Daily Operations:

Participation:

During the three days of the exercises, a total of 53 engine companies participated with an average of 17.66 engine companies per day. Our initial goal was to have a between 15 – 21 engine companies per day, with a maximum 24 engine companies, distributed between three branches. Each day, the engines company were assigned to one of three Strike Teams, each with a STL, and then assigned to a specific geographical area designated as a branch. Three branches operated on both June 2nd and June 4th, and due to several engines companies withdrawing on June 6th, three branches were combined into two on the final day.

The following graph illustrates the engine company participation for the three days:

	June 2 nd	June 4 th	June 6 th
Monterey County:	6	7	6
Santa Cruz County:	9	10	6
Santa Clara County:	3	3	3
Total engines per day:	18	20	15

Daily Schedule:

0830-0900	Resource Check-In
0900-0920	Overhead / Support Personnel Briefing
0920-0950	Incident Briefing
0950-1005	Branch Break-Out Sessions
1005-1030	Instruction / Additional Safety Review
1030-1230	Firing Operations / Live-Fire Scenarios
1230-1330	Lunch (Actual times varied between the branches)
1330-1530	Firing Operations / Live-Fire Scenarios
1530-1730	Branch Level De-Briefing / Mop-up
1600-1730	Demobilization

Check-In:

Resource and personnel check-in occurred each day from 0830 - 0900 hours. All resources and personnel, including overhead, were accounted for on the Apparatus / Personnel Check-In Rosters and the Overhead Personnel Check-in Form. Liability waiver forms were completed and received from 100% of the attendees. Each engine company was given an Incident Action Plan during check-in.

Hoping to speed up the check-in process, Apparatus Check-In Rosters and Liability waivers were emailed to participating agencies on June 3, 2015. Several engine companies arrived with completed forms on June 4 & 6, 2015 which improved the morning check-in process.

Incident Action Plan:

A comprehensive and updated Incident Action Plan was developed for each day of the exercises. Each engine company and overhead personnel received an IAP at check-in. IAP's were updated specific to each day. Included in the Incident Action Plan was a blank ICS-214 form that all engine companies and overhead personnel were encouraged to complete.

Overhead Personnel Briefing:

An overhead personnel briefing led by the Planning Section Chief was conducted each day prior to the general incident briefing. During this briefing, a complete review of the IAP was performed and daily training objectives were agreed upon.

Incident Briefing:

Following the overhead personnel briefing, and prior to the start of the daily training, an incident briefing was conducted and attended by all personnel. During the incident briefing the IAP was reviewed, the safety message was covered by the Safety Officer, the training expectations were conveyed, and the daily schedule was provided.

Radio Communications:

During the pre-exercise planning process, a formal communications unit was established. Battalion Chief Sam Klemek from the Salinas Fire Department served as the Communications Unit Leader. Radio communications for the exercises utilized the standard fire service radio communication system. Being that there were agencies and personnel from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara Counties, utilized frequencies were common to resources in all three counties. The command frequencies were V-Tac 36 and V-Tac 37. Tactical frequencies were MoCo Tac 1, 2, VFire 23, X CZ Orange. On June 4th and 6th, an addition tactical of VFire 22 was added. Additionally, the communications plan CALCORD, County Fire 16, BEU Local, CDF A/G.

A significant improvement to the communication network for 2015 from previous exercises was having the command frequencies on a repeater system. The repeater system was deployed and maintained by members of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Radio Communications Support Team. Team members utilized the opportunity of the wildland training exercises as a Portable Repeater Deployment Training Exercise. Prior contact was made with CHP Helicopter H-70 by Team Leader Deputy William Hija for movement of Radio Support Team personnel from a pre-determined location at Fort Hunter Liggett to a hilltop position near Training Area 12B known as "Peanut Hill."

The Portable Repeater Deployment Training Exercise called for CHP H-70 to pick up two team members, hover over the portable repeater location, and then allow the team members to repel down from the helicopter to the hilltop repeater location. The designated repeater location was directly north of the Command Post on a ridgeline identified as "Peanut Hill." Once on the ground, the team members deployed and activated the portable repeater for the two command frequencies. Team members remained on site during all three days of the exercises to maintain the operation of the repeater and to support the communications unit at the Incident Command Post. Radio Support Team Members also assisted with traffic control along Nacimiento-Fergusson Road as needed. The addition of the portable repeater provided by the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, and the personnel from the MCSO Radio Communications Support Team was extremely beneficial to the daily operation and success of the exercises.

Command / Communication Unit 5390 from the Salinas Fire Department was present and in operation for the first two days of the exercises. Due to an internal staffing situation, 5390 was unable to participate on June 6th. On the days available, Command 5390 provided a valuable resource in that the unit was able to establish a reliable radio communication link with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Dispatch, provided a “cell site” for Verizon cell phone users which greatly increased our ability to have cell phone coverage, offered a Wi-Fi signal for Internet access, had an elevated camera to monitor activities which could be streamed to a remote site, constantly monitored and recorded the localized weather, had the ability to maintain an ICS 214 log of all daily activities, and provided a facility for dispatchers to operate while dispatching and managing communication functions.

On all three days of the exercises, two dispatchers from Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 (Netcomm) served as incident dispatchers. The dispatchers managed radio communications, dispatched units, relayed needed information, and maintained an ICS 214 log. Additionally, when available, the dispatchers assisted with check-in procedures and the demobilization process. The Santa Cruz Regional 9-1-1 dispatchers were a vital resource that contributed to the significant improvement of the radio communications network and support functions of the exercises.

Medical Incidents / Injuries:

During the exercises, there was (1) reported injury. On June 4, 2015, a firefighter sustained a possible sprained ankle while operating around a fire engine. The firefighter was evaluated in the field, transported to the command post, and treated by the incident paramedic. After treatment, the firefighter was released back to the employing agency.

In an effort to prevent heat related injuries and illnesses, the MCFTOA Wildland Firefighting Training – Heat Illness Prevention Program was in place during all three days of the training exercises.

Basecamp / Command Post:

A Basecamp and Incident Command Post were established just off of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road about 1.2 miles west of Lower Stony Creek Reservoir. This area also served as the apparatus staging area and check-in location. The Command Post contained four portable toilets and a hand washing unit that were contracted from A&G Pumping. The Communications Unit, Command 5390, was also located at the Command Post.

Logistics:

For the 2015 Wildland Training Exercises, Captain Deano Lindsey from the Monterey County Regional Fire District served as the Logistics Section Chief. In early 2015, the MCFTOA purchased a “newer” and larger mobile storage trailer replacing a trailer that had been in service for over 25 years. The trailer was purchased using funds from a grant by the California American Water Company. Prior to the exercises, the trailer was placed in service and operationally ready for the exercises.

The MCFTOA training trailer was delivered to the training area by Captain Lindsey and remained at the site for the extent of the exercises. At night, the trailer was moved from the Command Post to a military training village located along San Miguelito Loop Road, still within our training area. Having the training trailer available at the site greatly increased the convenience of storing equipment in between training days. Items used from the trailer included two “easy up” canopies, several ice chests, trash containers, traffic cones, barricades, “Drop Point” signs, tables, chairs, (2) “Fire Department Training Ahead” signs, and other miscellaneous equipment.

Being the trailer was fashioned with a built-in awning, the trailer was used as the check-in and demobilization location. At the conclusion of the exercises on June 6, 2015, the training trailer was returned to the MCRFD Carmel Village station by Captain Lindsey.

Food Unit:

All resources and personnel were advised to provide their own food supplies for the exercises. The MCFTOA provided cold drinking water and sport beverages along with various snacks available for all attending personnel.

Student Instruction / Live-Fire Scenarios:

Following the morning incident briefing, all engine companies and overhead personnel conducted a radio check on the assigned frequencies. Participants then assembled into their pre-determined Strike Teams and moved to their assigned Branch training areas. Prior to the live-fire operations, the assigned Instructors provided verbal instruction on the training expectations, scenario parameters, mobile attack extinguishing techniques, and further safety considerations.

The live-fire portion of instruction was dedicated to engine company mobile attack operations. Mobile attack scenarios were designed by the Branch Directors, Strike Team Leaders and Branch Instructors. Branch Instructors also served as Firing Officers and carried out the scenario firing plan. Each live-fire scenario was limited in size to between 1 and 3 acres. All participants were given multiple opportunities for live-fire mobile attack, initial size-up, incident command, and radio communications. During the live-fire scenarios, Branch Instructors monitored student performance and provided feedback as needed.

Prior to each live-fire scenario, a weather reading was obtained to ensure conditions did not exceed the established burning prescription. Hourly weather readings were also taken and recorded to ensure continued adherence to the burn prescription.

On all three days of the exercises, firing officers were having difficulties in finding and igniting vegetation that would sustain a burn for the time needed for an effective mobile attack response. Areas of green vegetation were interspersed among drier vegetation. Fires would move quickly, slow down, and some would self-extinguish. Fire intensity remained low throughout all the branches. There were areas that did burn rapidly based on types of terrain

and fuel moisture. It was felt that about 14 more days was needed to completely dry out the available fuels.

Water Supply:

During several pre-exercise site visits to Training Area 12B, the available natural water sources were evaluated. Three different natural water sources were identified based on previous experience and familiarity with the training area. Natural water sources were identified in Branch 4, Branch 3, and Branch 1 / 2. Two of the water sources, the sources in Branch 3 and at Branch 1 / 2, were fed by the Nacimiento River. The water source in Branch 4 was fed by a seasonal spring /creek drainage had an available and reliable amount of water. An alternative water source was an overhead fill station located near the main gate compound entry gate of Fort Hunter Liggett. Travel time from Training Area 12B to this water source was approximately 15 -20 minutes.

Being Nacimiento River was maintaining a constant flow, the natural water source at the south end of Branch 3 was the primary water fill location. This location provided easy access for the water tenders since a pond had formed in the river at a road crossing. A portable pump, provided by the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade, was placed in the pond and water was drafted into the tenders.

For the training exercises, Jess Mason served as the Water Supply Officer. Water Supply Officer Mason coordinated the placement and distribution of portable tanks, water distribution to Branches, and the pumping operation at the primary water source.

With the adequate amount of water tenders, having a dedicated Water Supply Officer, and three reliable natural water sources within in the training area, the turnaround time for water for the participating engines was minimal and allowed for very efficient refilling operations.

Below is a matrix for the participating water tenders:

June 2, 2015:	June 4, 2015:	June 6, 2015:
BSVFB WT 7841	BSVFB WT 7840	BSVFB WT 7841
SCCFD WT 78	SCCFD WT 78	SCCFD 78
POM FD 6141	CFD WT 3450	POM FD 6141
CFD WT 3450	MCRFD WT 5544	Santa Cruz Co. WT 2951
MCRFD WT 5544		

Traffic Control:

Prior to burning operations, “Fire Department Training Ahead” traffic signs were placed on Nacimiento-Fergusson Road on the east and west ends of the assigned training areas. Additionally, when smoke conditions obscured visibility on Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, traffic control measures were instituted to ensure safe passage by private vehicles on the public road.

On June 4th and June 6th, during late afternoon firing operations, smoke conditions, and the presence of emergency vehicles on the roadway necessitated the temporary closing of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. Both closures were brief and the impact to civilian traffic on the roadway was minimal.

Mop-Up Activities:

Mop-Up activities were conducted at the conclusion of each training day. Mop-up was performed based on the established criteria of completely extinguishing all material 100 feet in from the roadways.

Post-Incident Briefing:

Post incident briefings were conducted with all personnel within each branch. Following the branch level briefings, resources began the demobilization process and ultimate release from the exercises.

Demobilization Plan:

For the 2015 exercises, a formal demobilization process was instituted. All resources and overhead / support personnel were required to complete the demobilization process prior to being released from the exercises. Demobilization forms were included in the Incident Action Plan. The demobilization process was initiated at the branch level and resources completed the process at the Incident Command Post where they were released from the exercises.

Evaluations:

During the demobilization process, all personnel were provided with evaluation forms asking for feedback on their daily experience. Over the course of the three days, a total of 211 completed evaluations were returned with generally positive overall ratings and comments. On the evaluation form, eight specific questions were asked relating to the wildland training exercises. The rating scale ranged from 1 – 10, with 10 being the best experience and 1 being the worst experience. The average rating for each question is listed below.

	Questions	2nd	4th	6th	Average
1.	The Wildland Training Exercises were well organized:	9.27	9.19	9.55	9.33
2.	The training exercises met our / my expectations:	9.01	9.26	9.49	9.25
3.	We were given sufficient opportunities for mobile attack:	9.18	9.19	9.71	9.36
4.	The instructors / leaders communicated well:	9.76	9.44	9.58	9.59

5.	The overhead personnel appeared qualified for their position:	9.80	9.53	9.85	9.72
6.	The training area was appropriate for the exercises:	9.63	9.75	9.88	9.75
7.	We / I would look forward to returning next year:	9.74	9.61	9.92	9.75
8.	How would rate your overall experience:	9.38	9.26	9.58	9.40
	Total Averages:	9.47	9.40	9.69	9.51

Post-Event Activity:

Certificates of Participation:

All personnel who attended the training exercises were provided with a Certificate of Participation indicating the date, amount of hours, and a brief description of the training.

Certificates of Appreciation:

All overhead and support personnel were provided with a Certificate of Appreciation from the MCFTOA. Additionally, agencies that provided support or supplies were provided with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Financial Summary:

A financial summary is provided below. A detailed Financial Statement is provided in the attachment section of this report.

Expenses:

Logistical Supplies: 887.01

Administration: 252.07

Total Expenses: 1139.08

Revenue:

Registrations: 2830.00

Total Revenue: 2830.00

Total Overall Income: \$1690.92

After Action Report:

Within 60 days from the conclusion of the Wildland Training Exercises, the Planning Section Chief will submit a comprehensive draft After Action Report to the MCFTOA and the SCCTO for review. Within 90 days, a finalized After Action Report will be submitted to the MCFTOA and the SCCTO's.

Recommendations / Procedures:

The following recommendations / procedures are based on situations occurring during the 2015 wildland training exercises, along with previous exercises occurring in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014. Additional recommendations / procedures may be presented as discussions and planning begins for future training exercises. Some of the recommendations / procedures from 2014 have been omitted from this list since they have already been incorporated into the written documents.

1. A minimum of 5 engines should be required for a Strike Team. More than 5 engines, 6 – 9, should remain as part of a single Strike Team.
2. A line safety officer (SOFR) should be required for each Strike Team.
3. A minimum of 3 Instructors should be assigned to each Strike Team.
4. A “Training to Actual Incident Transition Plan” should remain in place which contains specific assignments during an event that requires all training resources. (Planning Section Chief to report to the Communications Vehicle and assist with communications functions)
5. A command / communications vehicle should be required on every training day to ensure effective communications with outside resources and internal communication reliability. The unit should be staffed with no less than two personnel.
6. A portable repeater system should be deployed to ensure effective ground level communications between resources and the communication unit.
7. A representative from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department should be present during the exercises, including the morning briefings, and assigned to the overhead staff.
8. A “black line” should be established on the North side of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road at a width of no less than 50 feet. The 50 foot width may include the width of an immediately adjacent dirt road.
9. A minimum of (1) water tender should be assigned to each Branch / Strike Team.
10. A formal demobilization plan should be developed and implemented.

11. Consideration should be given to expanding the exercise attendees to agencies beyond Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties to ensure adequate on-site resources.
12. Consider developing a Wildland Training Exercise Management Team utilizing personnel from Monterey and Santa Cruz County fire agencies.
13. Once engine company resources reach (24) engines per day, a paramedic ambulance should be assigned to the training site.
14. If a paramedic ambulance is assigned to the training site, a physical dedicated medical aid station should be established. The station should be a minimum 10' x 10' tent with sides, or other appropriate portable structure, with provided air conditioning.
15. Consider incorporating other types of practical wildland training into the training curriculum such as structure protection, rapid escape, and mobile attack to progressive hose lay transition.
16. Continue to explore the possibility of implementing a Task Book sign-off program.
17. Consider re-implementing the Monterey Peninsula College reimbursement program for the training exercises.
18. Consider utilizing the wildland training exercises as an operational area, and adjoining operational area, movement drill.
19. Remain open for allowing agencies the ability to conduct separate basic wildland firefighting training separate from the advanced mobile attack training in a separate area but operating under the same Incident Action Plan.
20. Future wildland training exercises should not occur beyond the first full week in June of a given year unless predicted weather patterns allow for favorable burning conditions which would include increased RH levels and decreased air temperatures. This could also include exercises later in the year including late fall and early winter depending upon on fuel moisture content.
21. Continue discussions and planning for transitioning the current wildland training exercises into the Traditional Wildland Fire School.

**Wildland Training Exercises
June 2, 4, 6, 2015 - Resource List – Final**

June 2, 2015	June 4, 2015	June 6, 2015
Branch 2	Branch 2	Branch 2
XMY 2175C	XMY 2175C	XMY 2175C
6131	7854	7411
5431	7831	7731
5233	5431	5431
5534	5232	5233
5531	5531	5531
Crew 4	5534	6131
WT 7841	6131	2136
WT 5544	WT 5544	2537
		WT 7840
Branch 4	Branch 3	WT 6141
XCZ 2327C	XCZ 2327C	Branch 1
2136	2136	XCZ 2314C
2537	2537	
3211	2320	373
3536	3438	387
2636	3536	362
Crew 3	2632	357
WT 3450	3134	3437
WT 6141	WT 3450	3536
	WT 7841	2632
		WT 2951
Branch 3	Branch 1	WT 78
XSC 2314C	XSC 2314C	
371	382	
387	387	
901	901	
6433	357	
1765	1765	
1763	1769	
WT 78	WT 78	

**Wildland Training Exercise – June 2, 4, 6, 2015
Overhead / Support Personnel List**

	June 2nd	June 4th	June 6th
IC Operations	M. Urquides	C. Orman E. Rodriguez	E. Rodriguez
SOF	J. Owen	T. Skrabak	J. Owen
Asst. SOF	T. Leist		T. Skrabak
Asst. SOF	M. Brown		M. Brown
Asst. SOF	K. Santiago		R. Frawley
Plans / PIO	D. Gearhart	D. Gearhart	D. Gearhart
XMY Branch:	Branch 2	Branch 2	Branch 2
XMY Branch Dir.	B. Loomis	B. Loomis	B. Loomis
XMY STL	D. Lindsey	A. Airada	D. Lindsey
XMY Instructor	D. Williams	D. Craddock	E. Hanzelka
XMY Instructor	D. Craddock	D. Jensen	P. Robbert
XMY Instructor	J. Lundgren	C. Vaughn	C. Vaughn
XMY SOFR	A. Airada	D. Lindsey	J. Lundgren
XCZ Branch:	Branch 4	Branch 3	Branch 5
XCZ Branch Dir.	M. Conrad	M. Conrad	D. Grebil
XCZ STL	J. Hyduk	J. Delucchi	R. Young
XCZ Instructor	T. Theilen	J. Hyduk	J. Hyduk
XCZ Instructor	T. Skrabak	T. Thielen	M. Conrad
XCZ Instructor		J. Lundgren	
XZC SOFR	L. Achen	L. Achen	L. Achen
XSC Branch:	Branch 3	Branch 1	Branch 1
XSC Branch Dir.	P. O'Connell	P. O'Connell	P. O'Connell
XSC STL	R. Vega	K. Pearson	M. Krisman
XSC STL Trainee	J. Falarski	R. Williams	W. Finck
XSC Instructor	P. Griffin	M. Bingham	J. Wilson
XSC Instructor	M. Bingham	J. Wilson	P. Griffin
XSC SOFR	J. Wilson	P. Griffin	M. Bingham
Support:			
Comm. Unit Leader:	S. Klemek	Aaron Paasch	S. Klemek
Water Supply Officer:	J. Mason	J. Mason	J. Mason
Line Medic:		L. Karabetsos	
Agency Rep.:	C. Tolle	M. Hewston	J. Minetti

The Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association and the Santa Cruz County Training Officers are pleased to once again offer:

Wildland Firefighting Training



**For all agencies within Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties
June 2, 4, and 6, 2015**

0900-1700 each day – Check In: 0900 hrs.

Fort Hunter Liggett Military Installation

(Staging area: Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, 1.2 miles west of Lower Stony Creek Reservoir)

- *Three Separate Days of Advanced Wildland Firefighting Training*
- *Live-Fire Scenarios Focusing on Mobile Attack*
- *Incident Command and Firing Opportunities*
- *Beverages and Snacks Provided – Bring your own lunch*
- *Certificate of Participation*

Cost: \$10.00 per person / per day (Agencies will be invoiced based on total agency personnel participation)

The registration deadline for Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County Fire Agencies is **Friday, May 1, 2015 at 1700 hrs.** After that date, open registration may occur depending on space availability. Please register ASAP so we can plan accordingly.

For agencies wishing to participate, complete the registration form and email to:

Monterey County / San Benito County agencies: mcftoa@gmail.com

Santa Cruz County agencies: mikec@aptosfire.com

These training exercises are designed as engine-company based advanced wildland firefighting operations for Type 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 engine companies as per ICS 020-1. Only personnel assigned to an agency engine company will be allowed to participate. By participating, agencies are assuring that assigned personnel are authorized to attend, are covered by workers' compensation insurance, have been provided appropriate wildland PPE and are trained in the use of such PPE, are physically fit to participate in strenuous live-fire wildland firefighting training, and have received recent training in fire shelter deployment, LCES, the 10 standard fire orders, the 18 watch-out situations, wildland fire behavior, wildland firefighting tactics & strategy, wildland fire weather, wildland firefighting safety procedures, wildland firefighting tools and equipment, and any other appropriate wildland firefighting training that would prepare the attendee for participating in strenuous and advanced live-fire wildland firefighting training that includes mobile fire attack. Participating agencies are also assuring that fire apparatus drivers attending are properly trained in fire apparatus operations, both on and off-road, and have the appropriate license as required by the California Department of Motor Vehicles.

2015 Wildland Training Exercises Financial Statement

Expenses:

Logistical Supplies:

Copy paper, folding chairs, cable ties, duct tape, beverages, snacks, ice, etc.	344.38
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Gasoline	142.63
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Portable Toilets	400.00
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Administrative Supplies:

Certificates, mailers, expandable folders, flash drives.	165.58
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Certificate mailing	86.49
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Total Expenses:	\$ 1139.08
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Revenue:

Participant Fees:

Spring Valley FD	100.00
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Seaside FD	10.00
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Santa Cruz County Training Officers	1180.00
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Santa Clara County FD	240.00
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San Jose FD	10.00
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Salinas FD	80.00
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Presidio of Monterey FD	120.00
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Palo Alto FD	30.00
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North County FPD	110.00
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Monterey FD	40.00
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Milpitas FD	100.00
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Mid Coast Fire Brigade	40.00
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Monterey County Regional FD	380.00
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Marina FD	120.00
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La Honda Fire Brigade	80.00
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Cachagua FPD	40.00
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Big Sur Fire Brigade	150.00
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Total Participant Fees:	2830.00
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Total Revenue:	\$ 2830.00
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Total Income:	\$ 1690.92
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