



After Action Report

Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association

Santa Cruz County Training Officers

Wildland Training Exercises

Fort Hunter Liggett, CA

June 28 & 30, 2014

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**Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association
Santa Cruz County Training Officers
Wildland Training Exercises - June 28 & 30, 2014**

Table of Contents

	Page
Personnel and Resources	4
Pre-Event Planning Summary	5
Pre-Event Planning	
Advertising / Registration	7
Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department	9
Range Control – Training Support Request	9
Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District	9
Media Outreach	10
Monterey Peninsula College	10
S-234 Ignitions Operations Class	11
Operational Summary	11
Daily Operations	
Daily Schedule	13
Check-In	13
Incident Action Plan	13
Overhead Personnel Briefing	14
Incident Briefing	14
Radio Communications	14

Medical / Injuries	15
Base Camp / Command Post	15
Logistics	15
Food Unit	15
Student Instruction / Live-Fire Scenarios	15
Water Supply	18
Traffic Control	18
Mop-Up Activities	18
Post Incident Briefing	18
Demobilization Plan	19
Evaluation Forms	19
Post-Event Activity	
Certificates of Participation	19
Certificates of Appreciation	20
Financial Summary	20
After Action Report	20
Recommendations	21
Attachments	
Overhead Personnel List - Final	23
Resource List - Final	24
Informational Flier	25
Financial Statement	26
Evaluation Results	28

Personnel and Resources:

June 28, 2014:

Total Participants:	48	IC:	Pat O'Connell
Total Engine Companies:	5	Safety Officer:	Mike DiTano
Water Tenders:	2	Asst. Safety	Johnny Fox
Comm. Unit:	0	Plans / PIO:	Daniel Gearhart
Agencies:		Strike Team Leader:	Deano Lindsey
Cachagua FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Dave Jensen
Scotts Valley FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Mike Conrad
Central FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Tim Theilen
Branciforte FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Jim Delucci
Aptos / La Selva Beach FPD	(1)	SOFR:	Todd Skrabak
		Agency Rep.	Jeff Minetti

Big Sur VFB (2) (Not part of Strike Team, separate training)

June 30, 2014:

Total Participants:	49	IC:	Pat O'Connell
Total Engine Companies:	8	Safety Officer:	Brad Hinckley
Water Tenders:	2	Plans / PIO:	Daniel Gearhart
Comm Unit:	1	Assistant Safety	Mike DiTano
Agencies:		Assistant Safety:	Ron Esche
ST 2175:		STL 2175:	Brett Loomis
Spreckels VFC	(1)	Instructor:	Peter Robbert
Presidio of Monterey FD	(1)	Instructor:	Todd Skrabak
Marina FD	(1)	Instructor:	Dale Williams
Central FPD	(1)	SOFR:	John Lundgren
ST 2327:		STL 2327:	Ron Rickabaugh
Aptos / La Selva FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Jason Hajduk
Branciforte FPD	(1)	Instructor:	Jed Wilson
Cal Fire - CZU	(1)	Instructor:	Mike Conrad
Scotts Valley FPD	(1)	SOFR:	Tim Theilen
		Comm Unit Leader:	Sam Klemek

Pre-Event Planning Summary:

In the early part of 2013, in-depth discussions began for exploring the possibility of expanding the current size of the wildland training exercises. The focus was to eventually move to a multi-day event similar to the previously held Wildland Fire School which spanned over the course four continuous days. The traditional Wildland Fire School was discontinued in 2011 due to extremely low pre-registrations. At the height of the Wildland Fire School, participation reached 60 engine companies with an overhead staff of about 50 personnel. Believing that reviving the Wildland Fire School was a realistic possibility, the MCFTOA designated \$60,000 from their general fund into a special Wildland Fire School account. Although believed to be a realistic goal, it was felt that a slow expansion would provide the best possibility for success.

Just prior to the Wildland Training Exercises in 2013, a discussion started between the wildland committee of the MCFTOA and representatives of the Santa Cruz County Training Officers about combining resources and participants for a joint wildland training exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett. The Santa Cruz County Training Officers hosted a similar wildland training exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett shortly before the scheduled wildland training exercises of the MCFTOA in June of 2013.

On August 8, 2013, the MCFTOA continued to discuss the possibility of reviving the traditional Wildland Fire School but recognized the challenges of identifying sufficient personnel to plan and manage the complexity of such an event. At that time, it was decided to formally establish a partnership with the Santa Cruz County Training Officers for a joint wildland training exercise in 2014.

In October 2013, the MCFTOA wildland committee coordinator contacted the Fort Hunter Fire Department in preparation for the 2014 wildland training exercises and received confirmation for conducting the exercises again in 2014. Assistant Chief Clinton Tolle of the FHL Fire Department said that the entire month of June would be blocked out for the exercises in the same location as before, Training Area 12B located west of Lower Stony Creek Reservoir.

On October 19, 2013, MCFTOA wildland committee members Dan Gearhart and Pat O'Connell met with Mike Conrad, Todd Skrabak, and Tim Thelien, representing the Santa Cruz County Training Officers, in Moss Landing, CA. During that meeting, it was agreed to form a joint partnership between the two associations for conducting the wildland training exercises in 2014. As part of the exercises, it was decided to explore related training opportunities such as an S-234 Ignition Operations class and an off-road driving class.

On January 29, 2014, a meeting was conducted at the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department with Dan Gearhart and Pat O'Connell from the MCFTOA, along with Tim Theilen and Todd Skrabak from the SCCTO. At that time, tentative dates for the training exercises were established as June 3, 5, and 7, 2014. Due to the lack of rain through the fall of 2013 and early winter of 2014, alternative dates of April 22, 24, and 26, 2014, were proposed in the event that seasonal rains would not occur. If rains did not happen, this would allow for wildland training during much milder temperatures while still having good burning conditions.

In February 2014, a countywide training needs assessment was distributed to all Monterey County fire agencies along with the membership of the MCFTOA. As part of the survey, an inquiry about desired task book sign-offs was included to determine the level of interest for needed sign-offs during the upcoming wildland training exercises. Only one response to the survey was received about task book sign-offs, that being a FOBS position. Due to a lack of interest in task book sign-offs, it was decided not to pursue task book sign-off opportunities during the wildland training exercises.

During the March 13, 2014 meeting of the MCFTOA, the dates for the S-234 Ignition Operations class were announced as May 15 & 16, 2014 at Fort Hunter Liggett. A third day of class, May 17, 2014, was proposed for a practical burring session if conditions allowed. It was decided that the class would be limited to personnel from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies with a registration fee of \$75.00. The class would be limited to 25 students.

On April 4, 2014, an informational flyer and registration form for the wildland training exercises were distributed to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies. A registration deadline was established as May 16, 2014 at 1700 hours. At that time, the exercises were advertised as having no registration fee.

During the MCFTOA meeting held on April 10, 2014, a discussion ensued about MPC college registrations relating to the wildland training exercises. As with previous years, the wildland training exercises would be run through Monterey Peninsula College at the reimbursement rate of \$1.00 per hour per student. During the meeting, MPC Fire Technology Director Dave Brown stated that all MPC registrations are now accomplished through an on-line process. Paper applications were no longer being used and all participants of the wildland training exercises would need to pre-register with MPC through the on-line process. Believing it would be a challenge to capture all the participants through an on-line registration process, it was decided not to run the class through Monterey Peninsula College. In an effort to re-coup the potential lost revenue, it was decided to charge a registration fee of \$10.00 per person per day for all attendees of the wildland training exercises. Invoices would be sent to all agencies at the conclusion of the exercises.

During the same meeting, April 10, 2014, Fire Chief Martha Karstens from the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade requested that their agency be allowed to bring approximately 15 recruit volunteer firefighters on one day of the wildland training exercises. Chief Karstens said they would bring their own instructors and that they would like to utilize a separate area aside from the mobile attack training. The MCFTOA felt that providing a training area for a local fire agency to train recruit firefighters met the intent of our exercises and as such, approved the request from the Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade.

On April 25, 2014, we were notified by the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department that the military base commander had decided not to allow any outside training while military exercises were occurring which included the dates of June 3, 5, and 7, 2014. We were informed that our training could occur anytime between June 28, 2014 and July 11, 2014. Dates were eventually rescheduled for June 28, 30, and July 2, 2014 and the planning process resumed with these revised dates.

During the meeting of the MCFTOA held on May 8, 2014, it was decided to continue moving forward with the training exercises with proposed rescheduled dates of June 28, 30, and July 2, 2014. Being that the dates were much later in the year than normal, it was decided to receive approval from both the Monterey and Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association before officially announcing the rescheduled dates.

During a joint meeting of the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association and the Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association held on May 15, 2014 in Watsonville, CA., the rescheduled dates of the wildland training exercises were proposed to the two associations. Although none of the representative chiefs could fully commit to agency participation that late in the year, there was no objection with the rescheduled dates of June 28, 30, and July 2, 2014.

On May 22, 2014, a wildland training exercise planning meeting was held in Aptos which included Dan Gearhart, Mike Conrad, Todd Skrabak, and Tim Theilen.

On May 24, 2014, a revised informational flyer and registration form were sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies. The revised flyer included the new dates of June 28, 30, and July 2, 2014, a registration deadline of June 13, 2014, and that there would be a registration fee of \$10.00 per person per day.

During the June 12, 2014 meeting of the MCFTOA, it was decided that the training exercises would be considered a countywide "Movement Drill." The plan was to page out agencies on the morning of each exercise, meet at a pre-determined location, and request mutual aid from Santa Cruz County on behalf of the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. As it was, due to low agency participation, the movement drill portion of the exercises was cancelled.

On June 25, 2014, a final planning meeting between the Planning Section Chief and the Deputy Planning Section Chief was held in Aptos, CA. At that time, Strike Team and overhead assignments were determined based on agency registrations overhead personnel availability.

Pre-Event Planning

Advertising / Registration:

On April 4, 2014, notification was sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies announcing the original dates of the training exercises. A registration deadline was established for May 17, 2014 at 1700 hours. Several reminder emails were sent to all agencies prior to the deadline. The email notification contained an informational flier and an electronic PDF "fill-in" registration form that was designed to be completed and returned via email.

During the initial registration process, the exercises were advertised as "no charge" to the participating engine companies. After the decision was made by the MCFTOA on April 10, 2014 to not process the exercises through Monterey Peninsula College for reimbursement, a registration fee of \$10.00 per person per day was established in an effort to recoup the revenue anticipated from the MPC reimbursement. The \$10.00 registration fee was included on the

revised informational flyer distributed on May 24, 2014. On July 17, 2014, all attending Monterey County agencies and the Santa Cruz County Training Officers were sent registration fee invoices based on actual participation.

After receiving notice on April 25, 2014 from the Fort Hunter Liggett fire department that the proposed dates of June 3, 5, and 7, were unavailable, the registration process was placed on hold until new dates could be re-established. After approval from the Monterey and Santa Cruz County Fire Chiefs Association on May 15, 2014, notification was sent to all agencies of the revised dates. On May 24, 2014, a revised informational flyer and registration form were sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies which included a revised informational flyer and registration form with a registration deadline of June 13, 2014. Due to low registrations, the registration deadline was waived and all agencies that requested participation were accepted.

As with last year, registrations forms were a PDF “fill-in” document. The needed information could be typed in and then returned via email in the same format.

By June 24, 2014, a total of 26 engine companies from the two counties had agreed to participate in the 3-day training exercise. This was an average of 8.66 engines per day. Our initial goal was to have a minimum of 10 engines per day, which would provide for two Strike Teams of 5 engines each. Due to various reasons, actual attendance was lower than pre-registrations. Total participation for the two days was 13 engine companies with 5 engine companies on June 28th and 8 engine companies on the June 30th. Due to the low number of participants, only (1) strike team of 5 engines was formed on June 28th, and two strike teams with (4) engines each were formed on June 30th.

The following graph illustrates **engine company pre-registrations** just prior to the start of the exercises:

	June 28 th	June 30 th	July 2 nd
Monterey County:	2	3	3
Santa Cruz County:	6	5	7

The following graph illustrates **actual engine company participation** during the training exercises. The difference is due to last minute agency cancellations and the cancelling of the July 2nd, exercise:

	June 28 th	June 30 th
Monterey County:	1	3
Santa Cruz County:	4	5

Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department:

In October 2013, contact was made with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department to begin the planning process for the 2014 wildland training exercises. At that time, we were authorized to use the same training area as in 2013, Training Area 12B. The area is about 1000 acres divided into (6) sections, each section separated by dirt roads.

On January 29, 2014, MCFTOA wildland committee members and the SCCTO met with the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department to establish agreed upon dates and needed responsibilities. During this meeting, the dates of June 3, 5, and 7, 2014 were proposed. Due to the lack of rain, and the uncertainty if any rain was actually going to occur, alternate dates of April 22, 24, 26, 2014 were established. If rains did not occur, the grasses would still be suitable for burning and the temperatures would be far milder than later in the year.

On April 25, 2014, the Planning Section Chief of the wildland training exercises received a telephone call from Assistant Chief Clinton Tolle from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department concerning the planned dates of the exercises. Joining the call were FHL Fire Chief Chris McGuire and Assistant Chief Jeff Minetti. Chief Tolle said that they were just informed by the Base Commander that any outside training would not be allowed to occur during military training exercises, which would include the planned dates of June 3, 5, and 7, 2014. Chief McGuire said they lobbied on our behalf but that the Base Commander was firm on her decision. Chief Tolle said that the only time available would be between June 28th and July 11, 2014. Chief Tolle said that the wildland training could occur during that time frame.

Based on that information, notifications were sent to all Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies that the wildland training exercises scheduled for June 3, 5, and 7, 2014 were cancelled with the possibility of re-scheduling the training at a later date.

Range Control – Training Support Request:

Per the Fort Hunter Liggett Range Control, a Training Support Request (TSR) was required for the wildland training exercises during the dates and location desired. The Training Support Request was completed by the Deputy Planning Section Chief, Mike Conrad, and the Planning Section Chief, Dan Gearhart. Once completed, the TSR was submitted to the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department for review on June 6, 2014. On June 13, 2014, we received notification from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department that Range Control had officially approved our Training Support Request for the dates and location requested.

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District:

Prior to the exercises, the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District was contacted both by verbal notification and a follow-up email. The MBUAPCD requested a “same-day” notification for the three days of 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.

Prior to the exercises, the MBUAPCD inquired as to what public official was requiring the wildland fire training. The MBUAPCD cited Rule 438, Part 2.43 “Training Burn for the Instruction of Public Employees.” The section is 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 Brian Dempsey, president of the Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association sent a memorandum to the MBUAPCD stating that the “... training is vital to the safety of our firefighters who are deployed Statewide during fire season...” The memorandum 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 limited response from the media. It was felt that efforts in this area should be re-directed to planning and operational issues. Additionally, a 1000 acre accidental vegetation fire, due to military training exercises, occurred on the base very near to our designated training area just a week prior to the scheduled exercises. It was felt that that media may want to focus on the potential for burns escaping and conducting 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. Applications for Admission forms are required for any specialized training class outside of the regular agency contracted hours. During the planning process, we were informed 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 general feeling of the MCFTOA was that it would be a challenge to capture all the attendees since some of the agencies do not know who the attending personnel are until the morning of the exercises. Registering 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. The desire is to hopefully get to a point where we could have confidence that nearly all, if not all, participants could be captured in the MPC on-line pre-registration process.

S-234 Ignition Operations Class:

As part of the wildland training exercises, an S-234 Ignition Operations class was held on May 15 – 16, 2014 at Fort Hunter Liggett. A third day of practical training was scheduled for May 17, 2014 but was cancelled due to unfavorable burning conditions.

The 16 hour class was open to fire service employees from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties. Instructors for the class were Dan Freeh and Chris Williams, both members of the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department. Initially, (16) students had signed-up for the class. Due to out-of-county deployments the day before the class that affected students from both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, (6) students did not attend. A total of ten students completed the class and were issued NWCG course completion certificates.

Students registered by mailing in a registration form to Captain Pat O’Connell at the Salinas Fire Department. The registration fee was \$75.00 which could be paid by check or on-line using Pay Pal or a credit card through the MCFTOA website.

Once students submitted the class registration forms, they were provided with instructions for the pre-course work. Additionally, students were provided with instructions, which included a unique PIN, for registering with Monterey Peninsula College through the on-line registration process.

Operational Summary:

The goal of the wildland training exercises was to provide at least three single-day wildland firefighting training opportunities for personnel from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito 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 notices were sent to all agencies asking for overhead personnel support. The minimum operational overhead staffing needed to support a single Strike Team, (5-7 engines) was established as (1) Incident Commander, (1) Safety Officer, (1) Strike Team Leader, and (3) Instructors. Additionally, a minimum standard of (1) water tender per strike team was also established.

Prior to the exercises, a participation goal was established at between 10 - 14 engine companies per day. This would allow for (2) Strike Teams, with between 5 – 7 engine companies per Strike Team, each operating in one of the 6 available branches. Total 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 it was, overall agency participation was lower than anticipated. With the lower participation, a single Strike Team was formed on June 28th, and (2) Strike Teams were formed on June 30th.

As initiated in 2013, participating engines were formed into Strike Teams as opposed to Branches. Specific geographical areas were designated as Branches in order to identify the specific training area. Previous groupings of engines would be designated as “Branches” operating at locations also referred to as a “Branch.” As an example, Branch 1, with a Branch Director, would operate in a designated area also identified as “Branch 1.” This limited flexibility if the need arose to move a Branch, such as Branch 2 to a different area known as Branch 4. This would cause confusion since Branch 2 was now in Branch 4 but would need to maintain the designator of Branch 2. In previous Wildland Fire Schools an assigned Branch would typically remain within their assigned areas and relocation of Branches was uncommon.

In order to provide more flexibility for moving groups to different areas, and to remain consistent with current out-of-county or in-county deployments, the grouping designations used were Strike Teams with corresponding identifiers of STL 2175 and ST 2327. If the need arose, and a ST was operating in Branch 2 and 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 also 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 was the most effective method considered and utilized for the 2014 format.

Based on the desired outcome, the overall goal of providing high-quality advanced live-fire wildland firefighting training for Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito County fire agencies was unquestionably achieved. Participating engine companies were able to form up in Strike Teams, with a Strike Team Leader, 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, 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, and mop-up procedures.

Daily Operations:

Daily Schedule:

0830-0900	Check-In
0900-0915	Overhead Personnel Briefing
0920-0940	Incident Briefing
0950-1030	Instruction / Additional Safety Review
1030-1230	Firing Operations / Live-Fire Scenarios
1230-1330	Lunch
1330-1630	Firing Operations / Live-Fire Scenarios
1630-1700	Mop-up
1700-1730	Post Incident Briefing

Check-In:

Resource and personnel check-in occurred each day from 0830 - 0900 hours. All resources and personnel were accounted for on the Apparatus / Personnel Check-In Rosters and the Overall 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.

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:

Radio communications for the exercises utilized the standard fire service communication system. Being that there were agencies and personnel from both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties, utilized frequencies were common to resources in both counties. The command frequency was V-Fire 22 and tactical frequencies were V-TAC 11, 12, 13, 14. Two tactical frequencies were available for each Strike Team. Since these frequencies are non-repeated, communications was limited to line-of-site. Regardless of using either mobile or portable radios, range using these frequencies was very limited which created several radio communications breakdowns. Additionally, although on the same frequency, several radios could not communicate with one another. This did create a challenge since on the first day of the exercises additional portable radios from the communications vehicle were not available. It is believed that the communications issues, as far as radios not to able to communicate with one another, were due to incompatible programming.

Command / Communication Unit 5390 from the Salinas Fire Department was present and in operation on the second day of the exercises. The operator of Command 5390 served as the Communications Unit Leader. 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, and constantly monitored and recorded the localized weather. Additionally, the Communication Unit Leader was able to problem solve radio communications issues and provide technical expertise. Command 5390 also had a cache of portable radios that were available for use as needed.

During the live-fire scenario that required assistance from outside agencies, the Communications Unit Leader assumed the role of managing a mobile dispatch center. Under the circumstances, the Communication Unit Leader, Captain Sam Klemek, performed extremely well as a single personnel resource.

Medical Incidents / Injuries:

During the exercises, there were no reported injuries or illnesses. In an effort to prevent heat related injuries and illnesses, the MCFTOA Wildland Firefighting Training – Heat Illness Prevention Program was implemented.

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 the check-in location. The Basecamp contained two portable toilets and a hand washing unit that were contracted from A&G Pumping. Also located at the Basecamp was the Communications / Command Unit.

Logistics:

The MCFTOA wildland trailer was delivered to the training area by personnel from the Monterey County Regional Fire District and remained at the site for the extent of the exercises. At night, the trailer was moved from near the roadway to an area behind the portable toilets. Having the trailer available at the site greatly increased the convenience of storage 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, and chairs. The Seaside Fire Department provided (2) “Fire Department Training Ahead” signs that were placed on east and west ends of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. At the conclusion of the exercises on June 30th, the wildland trailer was returned to the MCRFD Toro Station by MCRFD personnel.

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 and fruit available for all attending personnel. Surplus perishable snack items were donated to Hope Services in Salinas, CA. at the conclusion of the exercises.

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 formed into Strike Teams and moved to their assigned training area. 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 the instruction was dedicated to engine company mobile attack operations. Mobile attack scenarios were designed by the Strike Team Leaders and Strike Team Instructors. Strike Team 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, Strike Team 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 June 30, 2014 the second day of the exercises, a live-fire scenario expanded into a situation that required the suppression efforts of all participating resources, the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department, the local resources of the U.S. Forest Service, and resources from the Monterey Fire Department that was conducting a separate nearby wildland training exercise.

At about 1330 hours, a live-fire scenario being conducted in the eastern portion of Branch 2 by units assigned to ST 2327 crossed a dirt road and began burning into the western portion of Branch 3. ST 2175 was operating in Branch 3 at the time. When the fire crossed the road, the Planning Section Chief notified STL 2175 operating in Branch 3 that an unexpected fire was now burning within Branch 3. STL 2175 acknowledged the notification and advised that a burning scenario was just starting in Branch 3. From an observation hilltop in Branch 2, the Planning Section Chief, STL 2327, a ST 2327 Instructor, and the Incident Commander, could observe current burning activities in both Branch 2 and 3. Within about 5 minutes after the fire from Branch 2 crossed the road and started burning into Branch 3, resources from ST 2723 completely controlled and extinguished the fire extending into Branch 3. Up until this point, winds were consistently coming from the west. As the fire that crossed into Branch 3 was being suppressed, wind speed began to increase and wind direction changed to now coming from the south.

The burning scenario in Branch 3 was allowed to progress and was being monitored at ground level by the ST 2175 Instructors, the ST 2175 SOFR, and STL 2175. As the burning scenario grew to a point where resources were about to be called in to make an attack, the Planning Section Chief, observing from a position on a hilltop in Branch 2, noticed 1 – 2 spot fires occurring about 100 to 150 yards beyond the head of the training fire in Branch 3. The Planning Section Chief mentioned this to the IC and STL 2327 who were standing nearby and they noticed the same situation. STL 2175 was then immediately notified of the spot fires occurring beyond the head of the training burn in Branch 3.

Realizing that this situation would create suppression efforts beyond the capabilities of the ST 2175 resources, the IC took command of the incident and directed all resources to suppression activities in Branch 3. Due to the spot fires occurring well beyond the head of the fire, and the fire now rapidly moving to the north towards Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, available resources were directed to the corner of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road and San Miguelito Loop Road in an effort to prevent the fire from crossing Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. Additionally, resources

were requested from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department, who in turn requested assistance from the U.S. Forest Service stationed at Fort Hunter Liggett. Also, the Monterey Fire Department, which was conducting separate wildland training to the southeast of Branch 3, was requested to assist. After being requested, the Monterey Fire Department units conducted control and suppression efforts along San Miguelito Loop Road.

The fire was named as the “Loop Fire” and all efforts were focused on maintaining the fire to the south of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. Once sufficient resources were positioned along Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, a back fire operation was initiated along the road moving from San Miguelito Loop Road to the west towards the base camp. The backfire operation was effective in keeping the full force of the fire from reaching Nacimiento-Fergusson Road. As it was, a spot fire did occur on the north side of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road that was suppressed by on-scene resources. Due to extreme smoke conditions and numerous emergency vehicles along Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, the roadway was closed to public vehicular traffic for approximately one hour.

At about 1403 hours, Chief 8800 assumed control of the incident and set preparations in place to conduct a controlled burn on the north side of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road in an effort to create an additional buffer space for our planned third day of training. The controlled burn operation was performed under the management of the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department with assistance from resources that had been assigned to the training exercise. Outside of the small spot fire that occurred to the north of Nacimiento-Fergusson Road, the expansion of the original training burn remained within the boundaries of Branch 3. The fire was allowed to burn within the boundaries of Branch 3 with limited suppression efforts on the western flank of the fire. The western flank was allowed to burn until conditions allowed for a safe suppression effort. At about 1445 hours, the original fire within Branch 3 was declared contained. At about 1556 hours, the “Loop Fire” was declared under control.

The original expansion of the fire in Branch 3 was estimated at about 80 acres or less. However, it should be noted that the fire was allowed to burn within the Branch with limited direct suppression efforts to control the size of the fire. Control efforts were focused at maintaining the fire within the confines of Branch 3.

Once the “Loop Fire” was under control, the Planning Section Chief called for a meeting of all overhead personnel at the Base Camp. The specific topic of the meeting was to determine if the scheduled third day of the training exercises, planned for July 2, 2014, should occur based upon the potential for expected extreme fire conditions. All overhead personnel were asked for their input on continuing with a third day of training based on the weather and burning conditions witnessed earlier in the day which contributed to the extreme fire behavior and the rapid expansion of the fire in Branch 3. After all overhead personnel had the opportunity to provide input; the majority opinion was that the weather and extreme fire behavior would likely remain present over the next several days. With that, and considering personnel safety and the likelihood that training would most likely be stopped due to unfavorable burning conditions, the decision was made to cancel the third day of training scheduled for July 2, 2014.

Although the fire weather report for June 30, 2014 indicated "... Light winds becoming southwest around 5 MPH in the afternoon," and the local area knowledge that winds do increase and change direction in the afternoon, which was conveyed to all personnel during the incident briefing, the intensity of the winds from the southwest in the early afternoon was not completely anticipated. It was later discovered that a strong marine influence pushed in from the southwest from the Pacific Ocean in the early afternoon which most likely contributed to the increased local wind velocity in the early afternoon.

Water Supply:

Water supply was provided by (2) agency water tenders each day. The Big Sur Volunteer Fire Brigade provided a tender on both days. A water tender from Santa Cruz County Fire was present on June 28th, and a water tender from the Central Fire District was present on June 30th. Water was drafted from the nearby Nacimiento River for re-filling the water tenders. A portable "fold-a-tank" was placed near the river water spot to increase the availability of water. The water level at the road crossing of the river where the drafting occurred was very low but did provide sufficient water for fire suppression activities.

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.

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:

Following each day of training, and prior to units being released, a post incident briefing was conducted with all personnel. A review of the daily activities was conducted along with an advisement given to engine companies to perform a vehicle inspection prior to leaving the training area and to drive with caution when returning to their home bases.

Demobilization Plan:

On June 30, 2014, demobilization forms were provided to all resources. Units were released by the Incident Commander or the Strike Team Leaders as indicated on the form and directed to the base camp for final demobilization clearance.

Evaluation Forms:

On June 30, 2014, all resources were given evaluation forms to complete based upon their experiences during the training exercises. Additionally, evaluations forms were emailed to all participants at the conclusion of the exercises. A total of 16 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. Addition comments contained on the evaluations forms are found in the attachment section of this report.

	Questions	Average Rating
1.	The Wildland Training Exercises were well organized:	9.00
2.	The training exercises met our / my expectations:	9.43
3.	We were given sufficient opportunities for mobile attack:	8.91
4.	The instructors / leaders communicated well:	8.96
5.	The overhead personnel appeared qualified for their position:	9.07
6.	The training area was appropriate for the exercises:	9.43
7.	We / I would look forward to returning next year:	9.93
8.	How would rate your overall experience:	9.12

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 will be 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:

Food Supplies:	283.56	
Logistical Supplies:	597.75	
Fuel:	115.24	
Administration:	61.82	
Total Expenses:		1056.37

Revenue:

Registrations:	940.00	
Total Revenue:		940.00
Total Overall Cost:		118.37

After Action Report:

Within 60 days from the conclusion of the Wildland Training Exercises, the Planning Section Chief will submit a comprehensive After Action Report to the MCFTOA and the SCCTO.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are based on situations occurring during the 2014 wildland training exercises, along with previous exercises occurring in 2011, 2012, and 2013. Additional recommendations may be presented as discussions and planning begins for future training exercises.

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. The Live Fire Prescription should be adjusted so that when two of the three criteria are met, burning will be stopped.
5. A “Training to Actual Incident Transition Plan” should be developed and implemented that 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)
6. 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.
7. A portable repeater system should be deployed to ensure effective ground level communications between resources and the communication unit.
8. A representative from the Fort Hunter Liggett Fire Department should be present during the exercises and assigned to the overhead staff.
9. 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.
10. A minimum of (1) water tender should be assigned to each Strike Team.
11. A formal demobilization plan should be developed and implemented.
12. Consideration should be given to expanding the exercise attendees to agencies beyond Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties to ensure adequate on-site resources.
13. Consider developing a Wildland Training Exercise Management Team utilizing personnel from Monterey and Santa Cruz County fire agencies.

14. Firing scenarios between Branches should not occur at the same time. Scenarios should alternate so that all resources are not engaged in fire attack at the same time.
15. Once resources reach more than 10 engines per day, a paramedic ambulance should be assigned to the training site.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Continue to explore the possibility of implementing a Task Book sign-off program.
19. Consider re-implementing the Monterey Peninsula College reimbursement program for the training exercises.
20. Consider utilizing the wildland training exercises as an operational area, and adjoining operational area, movement drill.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. Continue discussions and planning for transitioning the current wildland training exercises into the Traditional Wildland Fire School.

**Wildland Training Exercise - June 28, 30, July 2, 2014
Overhead Personnel List - Final**

	June 28th	June 30th	July 2nd Canceled
Incident Commander:	Pat O'Connell	Pat O'Connell	Pat O'Connell
PIO:	Dan Gearhart	Dan Gearhart	Dan Gearhart
Planning Section Chief:	Dan Gearhart	Dan Gearhart	Dan Gearhart
Operations:			Jim Delucci
Safety Officer:	Mike Ditano	Brad Hinckley	Todd Skrabak
Assistant Safety:	Johnny Fox	Mike Ditano	
Strike Team Leader:	Deano Lindsey	Brett Loomis	Brett Loomis
Strike Team Leader:		Ron Rickabaugh	Jason Hyjduk
Instructor	Mike Conrad	Dale Williams	Peter Robbert
Instructor:	Dave Jensen	Peter Robbert	John Lundgren
Instructor:	Tim Theilen	Mike Conrad	Dave Jensen
Instructor:	Jim Delucci	Jason Hajduk	Mike Conrad
Instructor:	Mike Venezia	Jed Wilson	Jed Wilson
Instructor:			Tim Theilen
Instructor:			MacDonald
Instructor:			Dale Williams
SOFR:	Todd Skrabak	John Lundgren	Todd Korver
SOFR:		Tim Theilen	Brad Hinckley
Comm Unit Leader:		Sam Klemek	Sam Klemek
Agency Rep:	Clinton Tolle	Clinton Tolle	Clinton Tolle

Wildland Training Exercises
June 28, 30, July 2, 2014
Resource List - Final

June 28, 2014

ST 2175

7731

3536

2537

2636

3438

June 30, 2014

ST 2175

5611

6131

5431

3438

WT 7840

July 2, 2014

Canceled

ST 2175

5611

7831

7832

1766

1760

WT 5544

WT 7840

WT 7840

WT 2951

* 7832

* 7834

ST 2327

3536

2636

2537

1774

WT 3450

ST 2327

3536

2636

2537

3438

2736

WT 3450

C5390

C5390

*Separate training activity. Not part of the advanced mobile attack training.

Highlighted areas indicate Santa Cruz County resources.

Revised: May 24, 2014

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

Wildland Firefighting Training



**For Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito, County Fire Agencies
June 28, 30, July 2, 2014**

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, June 13, 2014 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@att.net

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.

**Monterey County Fire Training Officers Association
Wildland Training Exercises – June 28 & 30, 2014**

Financial Statement

Expenses:

Food Supplies:

June 27, 2014	Water, Sport Beverages, Snacks	291.39	
June 28, 2014	Ice, Trash Bags	42.87	
June 30, 2014	Snacks	20.97	
June 30, 2014	Ice	32.32	
July 2, 2014	Returned Food Supplies	- (103.99)	
	Total Food Supplies:		283.56

Logistical Supplies:

June 26, 2014	(6) 6' Folding Tables	323.94	
June 26, 2014	Tent Spikes, Recyclable Containers	73.81	
July 1, 2014	Portable Toilets	200.00	
	Total Logistical Supplies:		597.75

Fuel:

June 28, 2014	Gasoline	59.08	
June 30, 2014	Gasoline	56.16	
	Total Fuel:		115.24

Administration:

July 19, 2014	Certificates, Mailers	42.08	
July 21, 2014	Certificate Mailing	19.74	
	Total Administration:		61.82

Total Expenses: \$ 1058.37

Wildland Training Exercises June 28 & 30, 2014

Evaluation Results

The following are results from the returned evaluation forms. There were a total of 16 returned evaluations.

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	Average Rating
1.	The Wildland Training Exercises were well organized:	9.00
2.	The training exercises met our / my expectations:	9.43
3.	We were given sufficient opportunities for mobile attack:	8.91
4.	The instructors / leaders communicated well:	8.96
5.	The overhead personnel appeared qualified for their position:	9.07
6.	The training area was appropriate for the exercises:	9.43
7.	We / I would look forward to returning next year:	9.93
8.	How would rate your overall experience:	9.12

Two questions were asked concerning the training exercises. The specific answers are listed below.

The best part of the training exercise were:

“Watching the switch from a school operating mode to a live fire mode.”

“Live burns.”

“The ability for myself to participate in an overhead position and experience the training from a different perspective.”

“Being able to have our branch. This allowed for all the new volunteers to work at and experience fire in a controlled environment at their own pace.”

“Live fire environment.”

“Be able to provide live fire training for the employees who were newer to our Unit and department.”

“Mobile attack. Good valley to practice this skill.”

“The escape. Seeing what the incident looked like at the very edge of the prescription. I’m not sure if any overhead had seen that before.”

“Escaped fire.”

“Coordinating a fire attack with Branch 2 and overhead.”

“Live fire.”

“The multiple burns.”

“Live fire!!”

“Learning occurs at every level.”

Something that didn’t go so well was:

“Hunter Liggett choosing to conduct their burn at that time and location.”

“Prescription was not met in 3 phases and the fire got away.”

“Nothing from my position.”

“Communications / radio programming issues – lack of overhead personnel assigned to ICP.”

“The transition between normal operations and escape were clunky and could have been smoother with a little pre-planning prior to burning, it worked out.”

“Wind shifted as the last fire was lit. Caused problems and extra work for everyone.”

“The escape and the limited resources. In the future we need to have a command plan for knowing exactly who is going to be in charge of what. For less than (10) resources, we should consider one branch or altering firing so that contingencies are in place.”

“Transition from training to active fire.”

“Communications were difficult one fire was live.”

“Bent bumper.”

“Watching fire crew start drip torch operation without resources available to ensure line jump.”

“Losing the last fire on Branch III.”

“Branch 3 was a difficult parcel to work with. It had 2 hills, multiple gullies, and very rutted terrain. It think that it would work well in a multi-day class but was too rough for good mobile attack with new crews. Branch 2 is more appropriate for the 1 day class.”