



FAST is a coalition of state, federal, tribal, and local agencies, and community organizations and private citizens.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Executive Summary

MISSION:

To promote the protection of life and property and health of our forests, wildlands, and urban-interface lands through collaborative efforts

VISION:

FAST is the regional planning task force for management of wildfire risk and mitigation, and citizen education in San Diego County

VALUE:

Promote fire safe communities and healthy ecosystems

OBJECTIVES:

Regional planning, fuel reduction, forest restoration, evacuation planning, maintenance of treated lands, outreach and education

STRATEGIES:

Promotion, education, coordination

FAST Geographic Area:



5/12/2008



Strategic Plan

MISSION

The mission of FAST is to promote the protection of life and property and health of our forests, wildlands, and urban-interface lands through collaborative efforts.

VISION

FAST is the regional planning task force for management of wildfire risk and mitigation and citizen education in San Diego County.

VALUE

Promote fire safe communities and healthy ecosystems.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of FAST include regional planning, fuel reduction, forest restoration, evacuation planning, maintenance of treated lands, and outreach and education.

HISTORY

Beginning in the year 2000, forested areas in the mountains of San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego counties were in a visible state of decline from tree and shrub mortality associated with long-term drought and associated bark beetle infestations. By March 2002, forest health conditions had deteriorated to a point where tree mortality in San Bernardino and Riverside counties had increased to as high as 80% and in San Diego County, as high as 50%.

At this point in time, there was considerable tree mortality in the eastern mountains of San Diego County. Most of the tree mortality in pines was related to the combined effects of drought and bark beetle infestations. Mortality of white fir, incense cedar and various oak species was attributed to long-term drought. The Governor of California declared each of the three counties to be in a state of emergency due to the threat to human life from increased wildfire risk caused by the presence of massive numbers of dead trees and acres of dead chaparral.

On May 14, 2002, an interagency meeting occurred at the Yuima Water District office facility in Valley Center related to tree mortality issues with a focus on Palomar Mountain and the ongoing dead tree removal being done along the power distribution system operated by San Diego Gas and Electric, a division of Sempra Energy. A few weeks later, a community meeting occurred regarding the dead tree issue and the San Diego Gas and Electric project on Palomar Mountain. The wildfire threat to the Palomar Mountain community was discussed in detail.



With many agencies and groups now focusing on the dead trees and the growing wildfire threat to mountain communities, a second interagency meeting was held on June 19, 2003. The group decided to name themselves the Forest Area Safety Taskforce (FAST). After the first few meetings, it was obvious that mechanisms needed to be developed for dead tree removal on both public and private lands. After the major fires of October 2003, USDA funds of nearly \$38,000,000 and San Diego County funds of \$5,000,000 were made available to finance key activities in the eastern part of the county. FAST was organized in a manner to help prioritize and implement the work and to educate the public on community safety and forest health issues. A core group of state, federal and local agencies within FAST set priorities and provided direction, and functional committees accomplished key planning, reporting, and education needs.

During the period of 2004 through 2007, fire safe councils in San Diego County received nearly \$2,500,000 in USDA and USDI grants and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) received \$4,000,000 in matching fund USDA grants. Much of this work financed by these funds targeted the mountain communities. In addition, the state provided key labor available through CAL FIRE, specifically to work in Rancho Cuyamaca and Palomar State Parks.

Key projects that were planned and later implemented included the clearing of dead trees along 144 miles of state and county roads related to maintenance of evacuation routes, the removal of hundreds of thousands of dead trees on private property near residential areas, and the removal of dead trees and chaparral from public recreation areas. The FAST group evolved into a broad coalition of state, federal, tribal and local agencies as well as community groups such as fire safe councils, educational groups and private citizens and entities.

Just after the funding dried up in the spring of 2007, the coalition decided to continue their work and agreed to expand the portion of the county FAST would focus on. The October of 2007 fires then occurred, and in the aftermath, significant funding has been promised. The FAST Core Group is working on the prioritization of work associated with current and future funds to ensure the highest priority work is accomplished.

ORGANIZATION

FAST is organized after the Incident Command System (ICS), the international organization standard for incident management, originating from southern California in the mid-1970s. The key ICS components in the FAST organization is the use of a Core Group of the key government agencies involved and the use of Agency Representatives that gives state, federal, tribal, and local agencies a voice at FAST meetings along with community and education based groups and private citizens.

Components of FAST operations are covered by committees organized around three strategies designed to achieve the FAST mission. Each committee covers a functional area related either to project planning and implementation, reporting information or natural resource and fire education. Groups are formed within the committees to accommodate specific tasks and projects.



STRATEGIES

The strategies employed by FAST have evolved to meet the organization’s new and expanded mission, vision, objectives and geographic area. The vision statement can be viewed in Appendix A. The committee structure of the FAST is organized to align with the new mission. The promotion, education and coordination strategies represent the three arms of action, needed to meet the mission, “to promote the protection of life and property and health of our forests, wildlands, and urban-interface lands through collaborative efforts”. Key roles within the committees are outlined below.

Promotion	Education	Coordination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not solicit funds directly for FAST, but instead will assist FAST agencies in procuring funds for work in the FAST area • Create promotional packets highlighting FAST accomplishments and activities • Publicize FAST to legislators, residents, and visitors • Coordinate media messages • Inform the public of current projects (e.g. placemats in restaurants) • Recommend legislation changes (coordinate efforts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical assistance to groups and landowners • Develop a telephone hotline for questions from citizenry • Create an informative website with knowledge, current conditions, and suggestions for what landowners should do to reduce the threat of wildfire • Host workshops for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate CPEPs and CWPPs • Coordinate multiple agencies helping on individual projects • Identify fuel treatments and prioritize work • Streamline permits • Establish an infrastructure for utilizing vegetation material • Author area-wide management plans • Track efforts and accomplishments through common regional reporting system • Coordinate with other regional fuels and resource management efforts

Coordination among the committees will occur as well as reporting to the larger FAST group. Operating Plans for each committee may be produced by the committees after deliberation. Many of the aspects of the vision will be realized through the construction of a new, interactive FAST website. And just as the website will be the cornerstone of the FAST program, FAST will also look to the fire safe councils to both disseminate information and do much of the planned work. This new combination effectively melds FAST and the fire safe council programs. The San Diego Regional Urban Forest Council may be integrated into FAST in the future.