FIRESCOPE'S FUTURE

Executive Summary

The future of the FIRESCOPE program is clearly established in the success of the program's basic tenets. It is also understood that emergency incidents will continue into the future due to natural and manmade causes, and there remains a need for an all-risk organizational management system. The foundation of FIRESCOPE's success is based upon the following tenets that need to be maintained into the future:

- **decision making process**
- **non-agency specific organizational directive/tools**
- **all-risk incident management tool**
- **leadership in national ICS application and revisions**

There are several outstanding items that need to be finished from the original FIRESCOPE project:

- certs & quals system
- fire modeling programs
- communications links
- funding sources
- training programs
- infrared tools
- common statewide maps

The future of FIRESCOPE is composed of these strategic initiatives:

A.   Creating a Common Voice Within the California Fire Service
Unite the California Fire Service into a common voice to achieve unified goals. Establish a network system to build upon the synergy of diverse organizations and individuals.

B.   Marketing FIRESCOPE and its Products
Active marketing of FIRESCOPE and its products needs to occur to maintain its position as a leader in the emergency management arena and obtain funding. Marketing will cause technology to adapt to FIRESCOPE's needs rather than FIRESCOPE adapting to the ever-changing field of technology.

C.   Maintaining and Improving All Risk Management Systems
FIRESCOPE should never rest on its laurels and should always seek improvement. The key area toward improvement is achieving the latest technology into all-risk management systems (SEMS), safety, and prevention activities.

Study Purpose

The fundamental objective of this study is to assess and determine the direction of FIRESCOPE into the future and create strategic initiatives to act as a roadmap. This study includes a revised/updated statement of needs and requirements, identification of corresponding program activities.

Study objectives include:

- Determine FIRESCOPE accomplishments, with original program objectives
- Determine if the program objectives and requirements should be revised, particularly to support all-risk and all emergency management and to take advantage of technological advances
- Develop recommendations concerning future program sponsorship, organization, and management
- Estimate resources required to accomplish these activities and potential sources of funding
- Establish recommended schedules for accomplishing activities
- Prepare a program monitoring and evaluation plan

Table of Contents

Historical Review

Following the wildfires in 1970, Congress provided special funding to the U.S. Forest Service in 1971. This funding was used to develop a system for improving the Southern California fire service coordination on multi-jurisdictional incidents. This effort became known as "**FIRESCOPE**" (**F**irefighting **R**esources of **S**outhern **C**alifornia **O**rganized for **P**otential **E**mergencies).

Federal, state, and local fire services (USFS, CDF, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Orange Counties, and Los Angeles City) joined together to design, develop, and implement the program to serve as a prototype for national application. The success of the system has resulted in its use for all types of emergency and non-emergency events nationally and internationally.

Federal funding ended in 1981, leaving an estimated 40% of the system design incomplete, and it was put into a "maintenance mode" under the direction of OES. State OES assumed the program and has continued the system's design, development, and implementation with limited funding, but with large support of the fire service community. A key feature of the OES stewardship has been the maintenance of the FIRESCOPE decision-making process.

In general, the continued development of FIRESCOPE components was significantly impacted by the loss of major funding in 1981. Future large-scale development has been limited and innovations have been fostered by individual agencies on an informal basis. For example, OES has continued with the operations and improvement of the interagency coordination system and facility; the USFS has continued development of the wildland firespread model; the Bureau of Land Management has continued the development of the Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS); and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) has continued development of the Initial Attack Assessment Model.

The primary product of FIRESCOPE was the development of the Incident Command System (ICS) that consists of the following components:

- Common terminology
- Common organizational structure
- Modular basis for organizational development
- Written or oral action plans with objectives
- Integrated facilities
- Integrated communications

Other products produced by FIRESCOPE include:

- ❖ Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS)
- ❖ Interagency communications
- ❖ Map system
- ❖ Infrared monitoring
- ❖ Micro-weather monitoring
- ❖ Fire spread modeling
- ❖ Funding

Since FIRESCOPE was initiated, there has been a formal decision-making organizational structure with procedures. This decision-making process has been a key factor in getting change implemented by involving all levels of the fire service. The organizational structure is composed of the following increments in descending order:

- ♦ Board of Directors
- ♦ Operations Team
- ♦ Task Force
- ♦ Specialist Groups
- ♦ Working Groups

In September 1986, the decision-making process and composition of FIRESCOPE was combined with the OES Fire and Rescue Service Advisory Committee. This action brought a statewide input into FIRESCOPE products and modified the FIRESCOPE ancromym as **FI**refighting **RES**ources of **C**alifornia **O**rganized for **P**otential **E**mergencies to fit multi-disciplined emergency management throughout the state.

In 1988, Senator Campbell introduced Senate Bill 27 that required the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal to jointly establish and administer the FIRESCOPE program.

There has been significant accomplishment of the original and revised FIRESCOPE objectives in terms of satisfying the original program objectives. The FIRESCOPE program has continued its mission with limited funding to now incorporate all-risk components of ICS. The primary area that remains in a dynamic state is the technology components and their inclusion into organizational and field use.

Strategic Initiatives

The key to planning FIRESCOPE's future is to understand its history and its successes. There were three reports studied that made prior recommendations for FIRESCOPE's future: the 1987 Ryland Research report "Needs Assessment and Study of the FIRESCOPE Program," the 1991 FIRESCOPE Operation's Team "Proposed Five Year FIRESCOPE Expansion and Implementation Plan" and the 1998 FIRESCOPE "Strategic Plan." The Mission Statement and Vision Statement need to be reviewed regularly for ICS current and future applications.

Mission Statement
FIRESCOPE's mission is to provide recommendations and technical assistance to the Office of Emergency Services (OES), to maintain the FIRESCOPE "decision process," and to continue the operation, development and maintenance of the FIRESCOPE Incident Command System (ICS) and the Multi-Agency Coordination System (MACS) components.

Vision Statement
The FIRESCOPE vision is to lead the development of an all-risk management and coordination system, enhance and encourage participation in the statewide mutual aid system for the Fire Services of California and the nation.

A working group of FIRESCOPE members conducted several meetings to review prior documents and discuss FIRESCOPE's future. The following items were composed as strategic initiatives needed to guide the completion of past FIRESCOPE projects as well as direct the future of FIRESCOPE:

A.   Creating a Common Voice Within the California Fire Service

Unite the California fire service into a common voice to achieve unified goals. Establish a network system to build upon the synergy of diverse organizations and individuals.

One of the foremost ingredients to FIRESCOPE's success was the networking of its originators. This informal network began to erode barriers to communications and established **trust** within this group. By personnel simply contacting each other, people could resolve everyday and emergency operational issues. These communications and the synergy of the mixed fire service agencies working collectively proved FIRESCOPE could accomplish daunting tasks. An example of this is the formation of ICS and its impact on

national and international emergency response agencies. Those planning the future of FIRESCOPE need to remind themselves of this type achievement and its benefits.

Creating a common voice of the fire service can harness the power of diverse agencies toward unified goals. Today, the California fire service is divided up between many organizations: Metro Fire Chiefs, California Fire Chiefs, Cal Rural Fire Chiefs, Fire Districts' Association, National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Western Fire Chiefs, California State Firefighters' Association, California Professional Firefighters, League of Cities Fire Chiefs, Association of Contract Counties, local area fire chief groups, and federal/state fire agencies. The same approach toward achieving goals can be accomplished using the basic tenets that created FIRESCOPE.

B.   Marketing FIRESCOPE and its Products

FIRESCOPE needs to be marketed as a process and its products. Active marketing of FIRESCOPE and its products needs to occur to maintain its position as a leader in the emergency management arena and obtain funding. Marketing will cause technology to adapt to FIRESCOPE's needs rather than FIRESCOPE adapting to the ever-changing field of technology.

The marketing success of FIRESCOPE has been remarkable considering it was performed via word of mouth and by actual demonstrations. The originators of FIRESCOPE professed its merits to obtain financial support and then directed their own agencies to use its tenets. Actual use of ICS on emergency incidents finally put the writing into action where the system was tested and refined for operational efficiency. The success of ICS and FIRESCOPE proves itself as a national model and is now the exclusive organizational management system being instructed at the National Fire Academy. While ICS has been used since 1981, there remains a large group of emergency management agencies that do not use a common management system and is impacted by the same issues that caused FIRESCOPE to be created.

Marketing is essential to maintain the FIRESCOPE process and its products. Vendors and other fire service groups continue to modify ICS and unless maintained, ICS may fall victim to a dilution of its basic tenets. Marketing does not prevent ICS modifications; it only channels modifications through a decision-making process established by FIRESCOPE.

C. Maintain and Improve All-Risk Management Systems

FIRESCOPE should never rest on its laurels and should always seek improvement. The key area toward improvement is adopting the latest technology into all-risk management systems, safety, and prevention activities.

It is paramount that FIRESCOPE dedicate energy toward the on-going maintenance and improvement of its all-risk management systems. ICS, MACS and other FIRESCOPE products need to be constantly reviewed for system improvements to meet the needs of various emergency and non-emergency events and multi-disciplined agencies.

Technology is the key area that needs to be endorsed and utilized. All areas of FIRESCOPE can benefit from the latest technologies and data sharing, but the challenge is to try and keep up with changing technology. The thought then becomes if FIRESCOPE can drive the technology market by establishing standards and formats and let the technology market develop their products around them. This direction will allow those agencies that can afford to use the latest technology to still share basic data with other agencies.

Mutual aid agreements within California have proven themselves as a model for the nation. Mutual aid philosophies need to be reinforced as they create an actual regionalized fire service, which is quite cost effective for all taxpayers.

The California fire service needs to also value the diversity of the people and organizations in the FIRESCOPE decision-making process and the all-risk management tool maintenance and development. Diversity has been proven by the 1986 inclusion of the OES Advisory Committee into FIRESCOPE and the January 2001, "Swiftwater/Flood Search & Rescue, ICS US&R 120-2, and the Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan (SAR) Annex." We should continue to seek other diverse interests within the fire service and multi-disciplines in the future.

Objectives

A. Creating a Common Fire Service Voice

Objectives:

♦ Improve and maintain emergency management leadership through interagency cooperation.
♦ Promote participation for all agencies within California in the Mutual Aid System and provide assistance to these agencies to prepare and participate in planned or unplanned events.
♦ Promote MACS training and exercises.
♦ Create common public safety prevention and response strategies.

B. Marketing FIRESCOPE and Its Products

Objectives:

♦ Establish a FIRESCOPE Board of Directors group to develop mechanisms to promote awareness of the FIRESCOPE philosophy.
♦ Develop the Board of Directors as the focal point to identify other organizations that may influence FIRESCOPE and promote FIRESCOPE philosophies with these organizations.
♦ Charge the Board of Directors to develop a business and financial plan to support the administrative support of FIRESCOPE.
♦ Utilize fire service public education as a marketing tool.

C. Maintaining and Improving All-Risk Management Systems

Objectives:

♦ Support multi-agency training on FIRESCOPE developed components and products.
♦ Develop statewide certification and qualifications standards.
♦ Provide training regarding new technology.
♦ Continue to evaluate and refine FIRESCOPE products.
♦ Research potential and/or improved methods of forecasting fire behavior and weather patterns.
♦ Initiate a working group to research and participate in development of technologies to improve on prevention, safety, and on-scene incident command needs.

- Provide improved incident information and intelligence mechanisms for media and regional command purposes.
- Maintain and improve methods for coordinating multi-disciplined agency resources for planned and unplanned events.
- Coordinate with Regional Emergency Operations Centers (REOC) for improving multi-agency coordination.
- Provide a system that assists Emergency Operations Centers and SEMS to interface.
- Improve methods of multi-agency communications by using new technologies.
- Promote the need to develop an interstate communications system.
- Maintain and explore new mutual aid options.
- Maintain the California Fire Service Mutual Aid Communications agreement.
- Implement a common statewide mapping system.
- Review and update standard terminology for improving incident management.
- Create common data standards and formats to drive new technology.