

**FALLEN LEAF FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIVE YEAR PLAN
SUMMER 2010-2015**

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN:

The purpose of the Five Year Plan is three fold:

1. Review the Interim Report from the Master Plan Committee dated September 5, 2005 (2005 Interim Report) (Appendix 1)
2. Review the Fire Chief's Quick Response Regarding Implementation of the Previous Five Year Master Plan (July 4 2009 Response) (Appendix 2).
3. Describe possible changes in the Fire Department staffing and funding in the next five years that may affect this plan.
4. Identify the recommended approach for the next five years, and direct possible recommendations if changes in funding occur.

INTRODUCTION:

The Fallen Leaf Fire Department Master Plan Committee was established in the spring of 2005 to look at the issues facing the Fire Department and develop a plan for the next five years. It is now time to review the plan and see if it still applies. It is a time of change at the Fallen Leaf Fire Department with the Fire Chief's departure for other career opportunities, and economic times that could decrease the funding for the Fallen Leaf Fire Department. The Fallen Leaf Master plan Committee has reconvened to ensure the fire department's direction is well informed by professionals in the field and understood by the Fallen Leaf community.

The Mission of the Fallen Leaf Fire Department is:

To minimize the damaging effects of fire and other hazards on life, the environment and property in and around the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Services District. To serve the Fallen Leaf Lake Community with a volunteer force to the best of our ability according to budget, training and access by providing education, prevention, and initial response to fires, medical emergencies and other hazards.

A Standard Operating Plan was recommended by the 2005 Interim Master Plan Report (Appendix 1). Subsequently the Fallen Leaf Fire Department Standard Operations Manual (FLFDSOM) was completed and has since been updated by the previous Fire Chief in 2010 (Appendix 3). The FLFDSOM may need updates in response to recommendations in the 2010 Five Year Plan. In general, based on community input and Master Plan Committee recommendations, the FLFDSOM is still a valid operating document. The FLFDSOM provides the basic standards and information needed to operate the FLFD on a day-to-day basis and provide the services the Fallen Leaf Community has requested from the CSD.

FIRE PLAN COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

2010-2015 Goals of the Fallen Leaf Fire Department plan:

1. The Fallen Leaf Fire Department (FLFD) will be operational from May 15 to Oct 15 of each year. The FLFD endeavors to have one firefighter with a minimum of first responder training available in the district to respond 24 hours a day 7 days a week (24/7). The Standard for the FLFD is that at least one firefighter with First Responder training will arrive to any correctly dispatched 911 call within 6 minutes of being dispatched in the district 90% of the time.
- 2, Have one 1 ½” attack line in service and flowing water within 3 minutes of arrival of apparatus 90% of the time.
3. Provide at least 500 gpm (and preferably 1,000 gpm) of firefighting water to 90% of the structures within 1,000 feet of the lakeshore within 10 minutes of arrival of the fireboat.
4. For structure fires, there should be a minimum of 6 properly trained personnel on scene before interior operations begin. (1 engineer, 1 IC and 2 in and 2 out interior firefighters, with two hose lines charged) (Exception: When there is a known need for immediate rescue, the IC will determine if there is sufficient properly trained personnel available to attempt a rescue, if not, no rescue will be attempted)

The FLFD Priorities / Standards:

- A. Focus for all activities should be to improve the speed, durability and simplicity of our response to emergencies in the district. Speed (safely executed) is the most effective response the FLFD has to mitigation of an emergency when an emergency occurs. To shorten the time between a call for help and when help arrives was the reason for our creation and the reason for our existence.
- B. For all district roads, ensure 10 foot clearance of flammable materials on the sides of the road and 15 foot clearance above the road; this can be done in cooperation with the LVFPD chipping program. Investigate possible ways to meter access to Fallen Leaf Lake to prevent an excess amount of cars being on the road during our busiest times (from 10am to 4pm every weekend in June, early July and late August and every day from mid-July to mid-august.).
- C. The fire department will work with homeowners to improve access for fire safety (Appendix 3: PRC 4291).
- D. Continue to improve and strengthen our prevention programs both inside and outside residents' homes. The best way to respond rapidly to emergencies is to prevent them from happening in the first place.
 - Improve and increase our fire extinguisher and home safety programs
 - The goal of the next five years is for 100% compliance of homeowners with PRC 4291
 - Continued progress on improving and maintaining our 300' shaded fuel breaks

- More pressure should be applied to the USFS LTBMU to reduce forest fuels in the areas around our 100+ recreation residence properties in the District
 - Continue to enforce the California Fire Code in the District
 - Plan for the most likely events (rehearse exactly what to do for “standard” responses). Follow the list in FLFDSOM page 12 (Appendix 3).
- E. The goal of the FLFD response to medical emergencies is to rapidly and effectively assess, stabilize and package the patient to eliminate any delay in transport and to facilitate helicopter transport if that is needed. (i.e. get the patient out of Fallen Leaf and to more definitive care as quickly as possible.
- By spring of 2011
- Ensure the minimum level of medical training for all FLFD volunteers/staff is 1st Responder.
 - Paid staff will be EMT or higher
 - The Chief will be EMT or higher
- F. Professional oversight, direction and training of the responders, so they meet minimum safety standards
- G. Per community desire, work to maintain local control of Fire Dept activities
- H. Plan for sustainable budget level not to exceed \$660 (inflation adjusted) per parcel tax in the next 5 years.
- I. Increased community and volunteer involvement of the department, (Community Emergency Response Team, etc.)
- J. Maintain the ability to provide some kind of response (though delayed) to emergencies in the spring, fall, and winter seasons.
- K. Participate in Mutual Aid in our operational area (Tahoe basin).
- L. Cooperate with our neighbors
- M. Strive to maintain and/or improve our current ISO rating

Fire Department Staffing Objectives

- Hire a new Fire Chief to provide the professional experience and leadership to implement the master plan. Continue 24/7 EMT/First Responder capability during the fire season. Make certain the community understands the ability level of an EMT, **and first responder**
- During the fire season, the minimum paid staff coverage will be 0800-2000 12 hours /7days a week (paid seasonal firefighter/EMTs).
Evening EMT or First Responder coverage shall be provided on a volunteer basis. The paid seasonal firefighters are not available for this duty as it violates Fair Labor Standard Act (FLSA). Evening coverage volunteers to be scheduled by Fire Chief who will be the “default” coverage person. The goal is to be budget neutral (with 2009 community approved level of funds)

Training

- Drill with volunteers to increase speed and competence in performing basic response to improve EMS patient assessments and packaging, deployment of 1 ½” hose line from engine, and provide a water supply.
- Ensure that volunteer training records are up to date.
Meet minimum requirements, and spend more time on improving knowledge and skill in performing emergency scene activities.

Fire Department Apparatus Objectives

Seek funding for the design, bid and purchase of a new fireboat capable of safer and less labor intensive/time consuming year round operation, especially during wind/wave storms and floods. It should be able to rapidly prime and pump 1000 gpm with as little “set-up” as possible

- Look into the possibility of an updated quick response vehicle capable of 250 gpm or better, designed for rapid response, in ease of operation and maintenance.
- Continue to look for a west side garage location.

Equipment

- Make sure the existing fire fighting equipment, PPE and communication equipment for volunteers continues to be maintained and replaced at the current level.

Budget Recommendations

- Continue to seek grant funding for department needs by applying for Assistance to Firefighters Grant, CALFIRE grant and other grants. Look into using the USFA prevention grant for purchase of fire extinguishers, 4291 inspections and fuel reduction activities in our district.
- The District will need to get approval from 2/3 of the registered voters to continue the tax at the current level (up to \$660 (inflation adjusted) / improved parcel)
- Actively pursue other funding options for the district including, but not limited to funding from the community area operations, charging for services to non-residents, mutual aid reimbursements.
- Streamline and reduce expenditures with the overall goal to make the \$660 per parcel last until 2015.

See Fallen Leaf Fire Department Budget comparison for Different Community Tax Rates

APPENDIX 1
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2005 INTERIM REPORT

(Committee member and Fire Chief Comments in italics)

1. Approve a Standard Operating Plan for the Fallen Leaf Fire Department beginning with the 2006 season that includes 24/7 coverage for the entire fire season plus coverage at the discretion of the Fire Chief during significant holiday periods with five or possibly six apparatus and twenty volunteers;

The department achieved this recommendation during seasons 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. The FLFD operated according to the FLFDSOM and provided 24/7 coverage for each fire season. In 2009, there were six apparatus and 18 volunteers, 1 chief and 3 paid seasonal firefighters. The FLFD responded to 35 911 calls for service during the 2009 fire season.

2. Approve a Fire Department Budget for the 2006 season that allows the Fire Department to operate legally and in accordance with the approved Standard Operating Plan.

This recommendation was achieved in 2006, see #1 above.

3. Use CSD reserves or borrowing authority to fund shortfall in Fire Department budget during the 2006 season while permanent funding is secured; concurrently move to raise taxes by \$520 per parcel per year. (Note: Should continued supplemental County funding become **assured**, this could be reduced by \$150 per parcel per year.)

This recommendation was not required/was accomplished as supplemental county funding continued through fiscal year 2009-2010. The community also passed a benefit assessment increase from \$180 to a maximum of \$660 per improved parcel with the authority given to the CSD board to set the rate each year at the July 4th meeting. The rate for the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 Fiscal Years were \$395.

4. Actively pursue a Fire Department garage on the West Side of Fallen Leaf Lake. *The Fire Chief unsuccessfully pursued this recommendation for several years. Individual West Side residents and the USFS are resistant to a garage and more construction on Federal Land. Private property owners on the West Side are the only persons who could make this recommendation a reality.*

5. Move to modify the New Store Building in the Community Area to allow for separate metering of the Fire Department apartment and to allow the Fire Department apartment to be occupied when the rest of the store building is drained and shut down; seek a rent-free mooring solution for the Fire Boat.

The estimate of costs to modify the Fire Dept apartment for occupation and separate metering was more \$10K, so was abandoned as not fiscally feasible at the time. From summer of 2006, the concessionaire for the marina provided free mooring for the fire boat.

6. Look at the Community Area as a possible source of funding for the Fire Department in four years when the current operations contract expires.

The department is in the process of exploring this recommendation during the 2009-2010 FY.

Recommendations of the 2005 Interim Report continued

7. Consider the possibility of having a CSD General Manager who is responsible for all of the assets of the District.

The CSD hired an interim/volunteer General Manager in 2007 and hired an interim/paid General Manager in the spring of 2009. There is currently a CSD General Manager who is responsible for all assets of the District.

8. Precede any general ballot tax measure (which goes to registered voters) by a straw vote ballot submitted to property owners, and only submit to the registered voters those ballot measures that have the approval of the property owners.

This was done and the vote was overwhelmingly positive for putting an increase to the benefit assessment on the ballot. This was done and was passed by over 75% of the registered voters of the district, an unheard of majority.

APPENDIX 2

SUMMARY OF JULY 4, 2009 FIRE CHIEF EVALUATION OF FALLEN LEAF FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARD OPERATING MANUAL

Baseline Information

- The narrow, clogged roads and high population in the summer time slows the response of the closest fire engine and ambulance to anywhere from 10 to 15 to 20 to even 30 minutes depending on where they are going in the community. 20 minutes is the generally acceptable response time for a fire engine or an ambulance. The Fallen Leaf Community decided in 1982 that 20 minutes is too long, so the Fallen Leaf Community Services District (CSD) gained its own Fire Powers. The primary purpose for the Fire Department is to shorten the length of response time in an emergency.
- The \$5,000 per year paid to the City of South Lake Tahoe to respond automatically is one of the CSD's best annual investments.
- There is a very well defined six-month time period when the FLFD is needed. Our busiest month is July with June and August close behind; the call volume drops significantly in May, September and October with almost no calls the rest of the year.
- Even in our busiest year, during our busiest month, we rarely had more than 2 calls per week. We also have very few calls at night between 8pm and 8am and even fewer calls between the hours of 10pm and 6am with the largest number of calls happening between 10am and 6pm.

Recommended focus:

- Speed, durability and simplicity of the entire program (Training, Equipment, Response and Operations)
- Enforce fire code width when there is new construction (45 feet of property is 10 feet wide turnouts) and brush clearing width (10 feet) and height (15 feet) throughout the road
- Prevention (inside and outside) and mitigation of hazards (solve problem before it becomes a problem)
- Pre-planning of the most likely events (rehearse exactly what to do for "standard" responses)
- 1 (prefer 2) trained Fire Fighters arriving in less than 6 minutes (prefer one is an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) or better yet a Paramedic)
- Provide water supply of at least 500 gpm (preferably 1000 gpm)

Staff Reduction Possibilities

- Ensure that all staff at the Community Area and other community groups and members and who work as security guards are also cross-trained as 1st Responders for the fire department.
- Reduce and simplify the department focus and expenditures. Minimum safety and training standards and professional response needs to be maintained, but the scope of what we spend time on can be adjusted based on our call history. (i.e. focus on medical and wild land response and less on structure)
- Make sure program is generic and not based on a single individual needing to be present to work.

Other Recommendations

- Simplify our response fleet. There are too many vehicles to take care of and many are old and unreliable.
- Design and purchase a new fire boat that is quicker to pump, has increased gpm flow, winter ease of use
- Design and purchase two new vehicles that are easy to drive, use and maintain.
- Focus our daily summer activities on prevention: keep the district roads unblocked and as uncongested as possible, 4291 inspections and compliance, chipping program, fuel reduction programs, fire extinguisher programs.
- Drill with volunteers to increase speed and competence in performing basic response to improve EMS patient assessments and packaging, deployment of 1 ½” hose line from engine, providing a water supply from the fire boat, etc.

Some of our most effective programs / activities

- Community Wildfire Prevention Plan (CWPP) creation and implementation; Fuel Reduction defense zones on private property
- 4291 defensible space inspections and homeowner compliance
- Passage of the fire code allowing the department to enforce state standards for fire safety
- Ability to respond rapidly to emergencies with at least two people
- Volunteer physicals every other year
- Volunteer training in 1st Responder activities (unofficial)
- Volunteer training for wild land fire response
- Apparatus and equipment upgrades (Structure and Wild land PPE for volunteers, new/upgraded P9, B9 and B209)

Some of our least effective programs

- CWPP implementation (fuel reduction) on USFS land
- Volunteer physical fitness and physical agility training (would like a weekly program)
- Volunteer training in interior structure firefighting
- Volunteer training in 1st Responder or EMT activities (official certification)
- Apparatus and equipment upgrades