

# NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

## Lakeview Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Carson City Fire Department  
Nevada Division of Forestry  
Nevada Fire Safe Council  
Carson Ranger District – Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest



**Carson City, NV – July 2004:** When the National Fire Plan became effective in the fall of 2001 the Carson Ranger District took the lead in sponsoring a 1-week workshop with all stakeholders along the Sierra Front. The purpose of this workshop was to identify areas most at risk from a potential wildfire. This workshop pooled crucial information from numerous fire protection districts, homeowners, city and county managers and state and federal governments in identifying areas where fuels projects would offer the most protection.

The groups identified thirty-one focus areas along the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains from the Reno metropolitan area, south to Alpine County. It quickly became obvious that in order to be the most effective the numerous agencies needed to plan and execute these projects cooperatively.

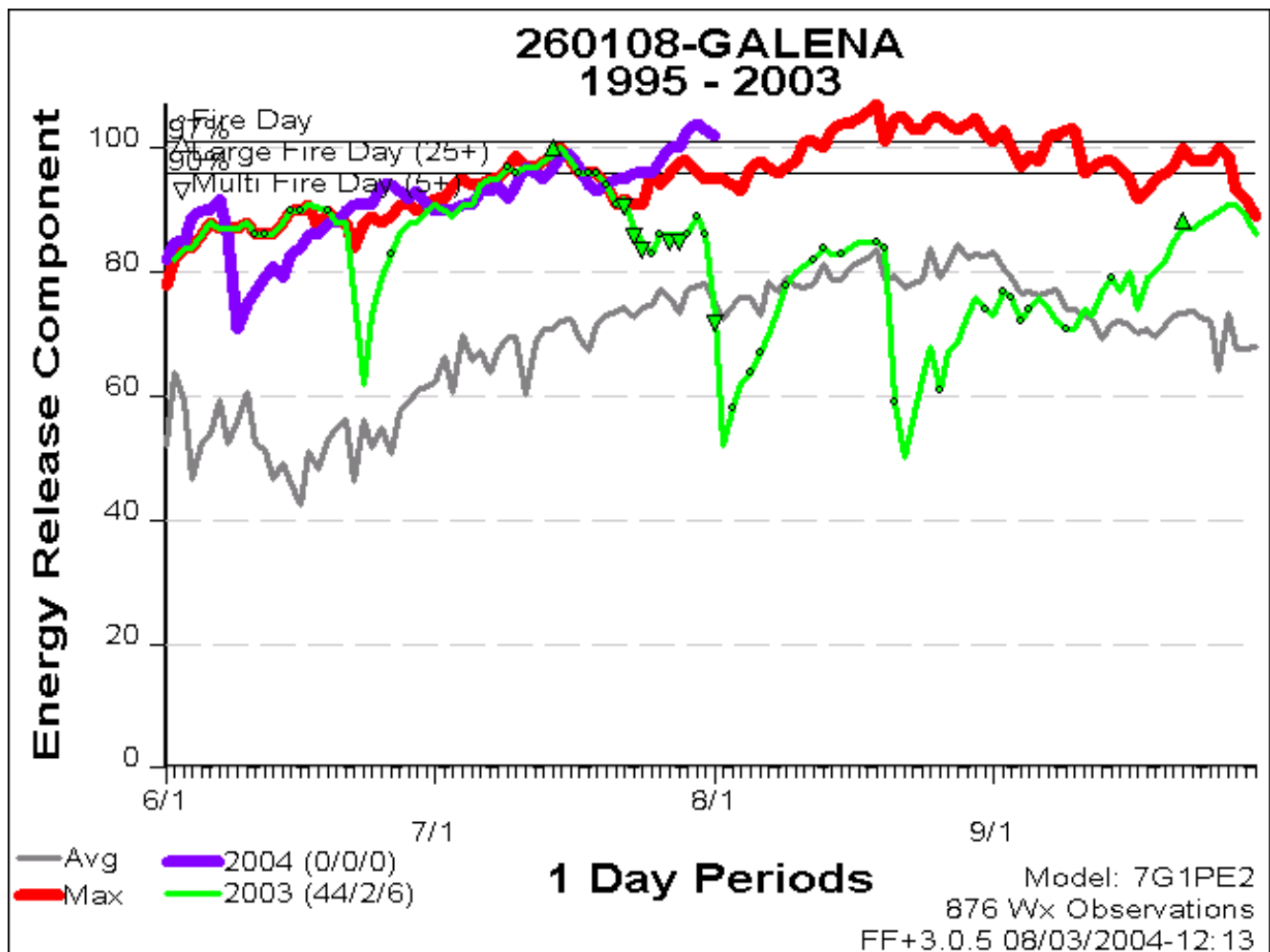
“Phase 1” was identified as a first crucial step – focus on the grassroots level of working with homeowners on their own property. The lead stakeholders here are homeowners, the local fire protection district and establishing a local Fire Safe Chapter.

“Phase 2” identified common areas that extended beyond just private property and focused on the defense zone regardless of ownership. The lead stakeholders here are the local fire protection districts and homeowner associations with the Forest Service playing a minor role.

“Phase 3” identifies the larger landscape projects that focuses on the threat and defense zones – the lead stakeholder here is US Forest Service working directly with the local citizens to see projects through planning and successful implementation.

Any or all of these “phases” could be accomplished concurrently or independently. In 2002 the Carson City Fire Department under the leadership of the Assistant Fire Chief Steve Mihelic secured funding from the Nevada Division of Forestry to obtain grant funding to begin the process of working with local homeowners to remove, chip and burn hazardous fuels on private property. The Nevada Fire Safe Council under the leadership of Elwood Miller helped the Lakeview property owners establish a Fire Safe Council. During 2003 and the spring of 2004 the Carson Ranger District began to implement hazardous fuels reduction on NFS lands adjacent to private homes in the defense zone. A fuel break was constructed on NFS lands by cutting, piling and prescribed burning understory brush and small trees. Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Lakeview project was completed by the spring of 2004.

The Waterfall fire began on July 14<sup>th</sup> as an escaped campfire. Given the extreme drought conditions the Sierra Front has experienced over the last four years there was a high degree of likelihood that this particular fire might reach several subdivisions in 1 or 2 days. Fire Danger indices were at all time record highs, See **Figure 1**, next page.



**Figure 1**, Energy Release Components were at the 98 percentile, predicting the volatile conditions firefighters would experience on the Waterfall Fire.

The Carson City Fire Department and the Nevada Division of Forestry have been hard at work over the last 2 years on private and City property within the city limits of Carson City widening fuel breaks along roads and behind subdivisions. Of particular note was the work that was completed in the Lakeview subdivision. On the second day of the Waterfall Fire, the fire moved rapidly into the Timberline and Lakeview subdivisions. When the fire reached the Lakeview subdivision fire fighters were able to burnout from behind the homes to keep it from making a major run into the homes. Due to the fuels reduction work that was completed in this subdivision the fire fighters were able to safely take a stance to defend the homes. This also provided an area clear of heavy brush and thick timber, which greatly reduced the wildfires intensity. Consequently, no homes were lost in the Lakeview subdivision, due to the heroic efforts on the part of multiple fire fighting agencies and the fact that homeowners took action to reduce fuels on their own property.

On the following pages are pictures of the fuels work that was completed, along with some before and after pictures.



March 2004, Fire Crews work to complete the Lakeview project by burning piles and chipping near roads



After the trees and brush were thinned fires crews took measures to protect the remaining residual stands of timber from scorch.





On July 15<sup>th</sup> the Waterfall fire made a significant run into the Lakeview subdivision. From here fire crews were able to burnout from behind the homes to reduce the fire intensity and were able to safely take a stand to protect homes.



Post-fire view of the Lakeview subdivision





Post-fuels treatment. Looking from the top of the proposed fuels treatment towards the homes on the west side of Lakeview.



Post-treatment and post-fire. Note the burned crowns in the right hand corner of the photo and the smaller live green trees in the foreground that indicate a low intensity fire.