

Finding

The Forestry Bureau will soon have the capacity for introducing additional scientific management techniques to fire suppression in the chaparral.

Discussion

Early on, Forestry management identified the value of research designed to discover alternatives which would reduce the fire hazard presented by the local chaparral. The bureau pioneered work on developing fire retardant plants with low volume fuel. These plants, although not fireproof, introduce low growing vegetation that put out less fuel for fire. Another research project shows even greater promise. Forestry has plotted the history of fires in the Santa Monica Mountains over the last 70 years. This research makes it possible to develop confident limits on the probability of fires starting in a given area and the path a fire will follow. Information of this type will enhance the scientific management of wildland fires because their start, spread, and intensity can be predicted.

Finally, Forestry is presently working on a project that will enable the department to plot-- on a microfiche viewer-- the topography of a fire area, the deployment of personnel and equipment, and the movement of a fire. This project will also provide firefighters with an immediate history of fires in the area, the age of chaparral regrowth, and a description of the surrounding topography.

Recommendation

83. Establish the completion of the Forestry Bureau's scientific management/fire suppression projects as a departmental priority.