Blocking and Tackling

Administrator and CEO Mark A. Gabriel
Western Area Power Administration
Who WAPA is

- Serve 40 million Americans
- 15-state footprint
- 1.4 million square miles
- 49 offices
- ~700 customers
- Top 10 largest transmission utility in country
What WAPA manages

- $4.3 billion in assets
- 114,863 structures
- 17,236 miles of transmission line
- 324 substations
- 291 transformers
- 661 buildings
- 489 communication sites
## California wildfires 5-year overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acres Burned</th>
<th>Number of Fires</th>
<th>Loss of Life</th>
<th>Structures Damaged or Destroyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020 (as of Oct. 7)</td>
<td>4,040,935</td>
<td>8,320</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8,687</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>259,823</td>
<td>7,860</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>732</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1,963,101</td>
<td>7,639</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>24,226</td>
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<td>2017</td>
<td>1,548,429</td>
<td>9,270</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>10,280</td>
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<td>2016</td>
<td>669,534</td>
<td>6,954</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1,274</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>880,899</td>
<td>8,283</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3,159</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2018 Carr Fire
Impact on WAPA
WAPA’s wildfire mitigation plan

• Prevent, combat and respond to wildfires
• Minimize probability of being the origin or contributing source
• Communication protocols regarding potential de-energization of lines
• Details operation and maintenance procedures to mitigate wildfires

Paradise, CA, destruction from 2018 Camp Fire
Photo courtesy of NBC News
Regional implementation

• Integrated vegetation management
• 2 line inspections annually – 5 in California
• Lands, Environment and GIS
• Remote-sensing technologies
• Discuss and share BMPs

• Unique to California
  • Dedicated patrolman
  • 4 certified utility arborists
  • 14 line-clearance tree trimmers
Importance of vegetation management

Before

After
ROW reclamation - California

- Removing incompatible species
- Promoting low-growing, fire-resistant plant communities
Leveraging partnerships – Rocky Mountain, Summer/Fall 2020

- Worked with Forest Service to mechanically remove vegetation for first time in over a decade in Colorado, Utah and Nevada.
ROW expansion – California

• Partnering with Trinity Public Utilities District to evaluate environmental impact of expanding ROW for 17.5 miles of WAPA transmission line & 216.8 miles of Trinity transmission and distribution line.
September 2020 Sears Fire – Arizona

- 4.5 miles under two lines burned.
- Integrated vegetation management performed
- No relay events
- Nominal damage
October 2020 Coral Fire – Arizona
Accidental ignition – Sept. 29, 2020

- Contractor for neighboring utility was conducting drone work in a van.
- 40-foot antenna struck two conductors outside our substation
- Ignited small grass fire
Lessons learned

• Develop relationships with other organizations before you need them.
• Be up-to-speed on NIMS.
• Have excess inventory and MOUs on hand and be flexible with restoration.
• Have agreements ready to go for fire retardant services.
• Develop contacts to allow your crews to access restricted areas to perform critical work.
• Recognize fire department’s leadership role in restoration; it requires significant coordination with them.
• Offer ROWs as fire breaks.
• Proactive vegetation management today will save lives and possibly lives in the future.
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New permanent structures after Carr Fire