BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

SACRAMENTO, CA

April 9, 2025

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**

**Present:**

* Terrence O’Brien, Chair
* Elizabeth Forsburg-Pardi, Vice Chair
* J. Lopez
* Rich Wade
* Katie Delbar
* Elicia Goldsworthy
* Ryan Hilburn

**Absent:**

* Dawn Blake

**BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
* Robert Roth, Board Counsel
* Dan Craig, Regulations Program Manager
* Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
* Kristina Wolf, Senior Environmental Scientist
* Alexandra La Plante, Administrative Unit Manager
* Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation, Board Staff
* Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager
* Alex Vest, Wildfire Planning Specialist
* Mazonika Kemp, Records Administrator
* Anna Castro, Executive Assistant

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT:**

* Joe Tyler, Director, CAL FIRE
* Anale Burlew, Chief Deputy Director, Forestry & Fire Protection, CAL FIRE
* Eric Huff, Assistant Deputy Director, Forest Practice, CAL FIRE

**Board Members Roll Call:**

Member Lopez Present

Member Wade Present

Member Blake Absent

Member Delbar Present

Member Forsburg-Pardi Present

Member Goldsworthy Present

Member Hilburn Present

Chairman O’Brien Present

*Quorum established*

**Announcement of Action(s) Taken in Executive Session:**

Robert Roth, Counsel for the Board, reported that during executive closed session the Board discussed the four items on the agenda and took no reportable action.

**Consent Calendar Items:**

**04-09-01 Member Lopez moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Blake: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Report of the Chairman, Terrence O’Brien:**

The Chairman stated that appointment of a Co-Chair to the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee. Asking Board members to consider if they would like to be co-chair of the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee. Chairman stated that this is a very challenging time for the Board due to the workload and the Governor’s Executive Order which directs us to act before the end of this year on Zone Zero Regulations. Also due to the current staffing of the Board we are having a difficult time meeting the workload.

**Report of the Director, Joe Tyler, Director, CAL FIRE:**

**Natural Resource Management**

Forest Practice Program

Forest Practice Enforcement and Timber Operator Licensing (LTO)

* Currently 1,428 active licenses.

Watershed Protection Program

* Staff are working on a revision of the Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) Memorandum of Understanding with the California Geological Survey Building on the significant number of WERT deployments between 2024 and 2025 to date.

Uban and Community Forestry

* Los Angeles Urban Fires: Understanding Background, Impacts, and Research Needs workshop will be hosted by the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service LA Urban Center in Pasadena on April 17, 2025. CAL FIRE’s Urban and Community Forestry Program staff are participating.

Forest Biometrics Program

* Federal funding for the 2025 Forest Inventory Assessment (FIA) program has thus far not been impacted by recent budget issues.

Demonstration State Forests

Jackson

* The Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) met on March 18, 2025. First on the agenda, they welcomed new member, Marc Jensen of the Mendocino Coast Cyclists and said goodbye to departing member Joanna Nelson, former Director of Science at Save the Redwoods League whose term expired. The JAG then reviewed and confirmed their work plan and priorities for the year before receiving updates on the Tribal Advisory Committee, Forest Management Plan review, and each of the JDSF program areas.
* The staff have been meeting regularly with Clifton Environmental consulting team to begin preparation of the Draft Forest Management Plan. The basic outline and table of contents is under development with staff and consultants being assigned to each topic. We are also preparing for the next round of public comment on the Draft Plan, likely starting September 2025. The JAG appointed a sub-group consisting of members John Anderson and Marc Jensen to provide guidance on the Draft Plan development.

LaTour, Ellen Picket, Big Bend, Miller, and Noble

* Environmental reviews are being conducted in the Miller and Noble Demonstrations State Forests to support fuel reduction projects through the California Vegetations Treatment Program (CalVTP).

Mountain Home

* 25,400 seedlings from the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center will be planted by Red Mountain Resources as soon as the snow melts, continuing the reforestation efforts from the Castle Fire and subsequent beetle activity.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Programs

* The Claims Fund currently has 112 projects with 14,110 acres in the program.

Prescribed Fire

* CAL FIRE continues to work on the goals to achieve targets for Beneficial Fire.

Vegetation Management Program (VMP)

* The new proclamation from the Governor to create a streamlined process for fuel reduction projects will be supported from CAL FIRE. Information and processes are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis through the end of April via the program’s online request form. New seedling request (to be grown in 2026) will be accepted via the normal online request process starting April 1, 2025.
* The first round of production year 2025 seedlings was sown at the end of February with the second and final round being planned for late April 2025. Total production will amount to around 250,000 seedlings.

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

* The CFIP program continues to accept applications for new projects on a rolling quarterly basis, encumbering approximately $1.5 million at each selection period. Funding is expected to last at this pace through the end of 2025 calendar year.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

* The Forest Legacy Program completed the Estrada Ranch Conservation Easement Project. The project permanently projects the 1,205-acre Estrada Ranch in Santa Cruz County with a conservation easement held by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. The conservation easement ensures sustainable forest and rangeland management and prevents forest fragmentation and conversion to non-forest uses.

Wood Products & Bioenergy

* Hosted a Workforce Working Group on March 19, 2025, in Sacramento to identify new ideas for creating career pathways into CAL FIRE. The group included two CAL FIRE programs, the California Workforce Development Board, and the non-profits Forestry and Fire Recruitment Program and Future Fire Academy.

Forest Health

* The Forest Health Program is currently reviewing grant applications for FY24/25. A total of 62 applications requesting $338 million were received. Approximately $70 million will be awarded to grant projects with announcements expected later this spring.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

* On March 24, 2025, the Governor announced the Task Force’s list of 25 key deliverables. The deliverables outline the highest priority actions underway this year to achieve the commitments in the 2021 Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and to advance key new initiatives that will be highlighted in the forthcoming update of the Action Plan to be released later this year.
* The Task Force held its Spring Regional Meeting in San Rafael, CA on March 27, 2025. Meeting was hosted by Marin County. The recording will soon be available on Meetings page of the Task Force website. [www.wildfiretaskforce.org/meetings](http://www.wildfiretaskforce.org/meetings)
* Next Task Force meeting will be in Sacramento on June 6 at 9:00 a.m.

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

Forest Health Research and Monitoring

* 30 of 33 Forest Health Research Grants 24/25 solicitation applicants submitted full proposals on March 14, 2025. Proposal reviews are underway and will be completed by April 16, 2025. Two of the applicants that were invited back did not submit full proposals due to the uncertainty in federal staffing and funding.

Wildfire Science

* On March 24, 2025, the final Phase of Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps and data went out to local government and public, along with a comprehensive data package of modeling intermediary products designed to provide documentation for methods and processes of the model development. FRAP continues to support all inquiries into the technical mechanics of the model from local government, the media, and the public.
* Early planning continues for development of Potential Operational Delineations (PODS) maps for larger-scale prescribed fire planning, as required under SB 1101. Initial development will likely focus on two pilot CAL FIRE units, and be done in coordination with unit staff, federal partners, and others. As part of the SAF symposium, FRAP invited Dr. Christopher Dunn of Oregon State University, who presented on his extensive work developing PODS in the western US.

Fire Protection

Fire Protection Program

* CAL FIRE has provided $10.4 million dollars to UC San Diego to continue providing LIDAR work over territories in areas of California that have not had previous LIDAR.

Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

* Through February 2025, Law Enforcement officers have made 22 Arson arrests.

Fire Protection Operations

* The 2025Incident Management Team Conference was held March 24-27, 2025. Full team rosters were present, and the conference focused on Incident Command System training and task book standards for the Department. Representatives from California Wildland Coordination Group and Contract Counties were present with good discussions and updates presented from all parties.

Aviation Management Unit (AMUI)/Tactical Air Operations (TAO)

* CAL FIRE’s second C-130 air tanker, T-121, has been fully retrofitted with a Retardant Aerial Delivery System and is in the final stages of operational testing. T-121 will join our operational fleet in the coming days and be assigned to the Fresno Air Attack Base in the coming months.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Hand Crew Program

* As of March 26, 2025, 123 of 236 Hand Crews are staffed and available for statewide response. The current staffing includes the following four models under the Hand Crew program:
	+ 69 of 152 authorized California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Incarcerated Persons crews
	+ 25 of 32 California Conservation Corps crews
	+ 14 of 14 California Military Department Joint Taskforce Rattlesnake crews
	+ 15 of 38 CAL FIRE Firefighter I (FFI) crews

Statewide Training Program

* The 4039 Incident Command System-Position Management System rewrite is currently underway, with progress being made in conjunction with the Incident Management Team Conference held the week of March 24, 2025.

Academy Training Program

* The CAL Fire Peace Officer Regular Basic Course is over halfway completed at 13 of 22 weeks.
* The Atwater Training Center continues to hire onboard train personnel, as well as work through the procurement contracting and lease process in preparation to begin hosting classes by July 7, 2025.

**Office of the State Fire Marshal**

Wildfire Preparedness

Defensible Space

* Qualified Entity classes are scheduled in Butte and San Diego counties this month.
* Number of Defensible Space Inspections
	+ FY 24/25 is 184,189

Home Hardening

* CWMP has significantly expanded home hardening and defensible space education through a variety of events, including live-streamed and recorded board meetings , local community meetings where people can get hands-on-with materials, and town hall meetings that feature presentations followed by Q & A sessions.

Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

Land Use Planning

* National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise USA
	+ Currently 1150 communities in California
	+ Several new applications in review

Communications

Statistics

Year to Date Wildfire Statistics (State and Federal) Updated March 31, 2025

* 2025 Combined YTD (CAL FIRE & Federal)
	+ 610 Fires
	+ 59,176 Acres

Tribal Affairs Program

* On March 25, 2025, CAL FIRE hosted the annual Director’s Awards in Riverside, CA. The CAL FIRE Executive Team was pleased to present an award to YTT Tribe Cultural Fire Practitioners Becca Lucas and Kelsey Shaffer partnered with Lucia Pohlman and Freddy Otte of the City of San Luis Obispo Natural Resources Team.
* On April 1, 2025, Director Joe Tyler Participated in a virtual panel discussion hosted by CNRA and the Karuk Tribe to discuss SB 310 and the announcement of the Cultural Burning MOU between CNRA and the Karuk Tribe.

Tribal Wildfire Resilience

* The most recent solicitation for the Tribal Wildfire Resilience grants closed on March 28. Up to $5 million total is available for tribes and tribal non-profits to plan or implement wildfire resilience projects. Initial screening shows the program received 48 applications requesting a total of $50 million.

**Executive Officer Report, Dan Stapleton, Assistant Executive Officer:**

* Dan Stapleton reported that Ali Jahangiri has resigned his position on the Board and the Resource Protection Committee. Member Ryan Hilburn has volunteered to take Ali Jahangiri’s place on the Resource Protection Committee.
* There were 53 RPF applicants and 1 CRM applicant since last Friday for the respective exams. Paperwork for the replacement of the Executive Officer position was submitted several weeks ago with the submission that the Board requested a salary increase. This is being reviewed for approval and we should have an Executive Officer position to post on CAL Careers website soon.

**Report of the Standing Committees:**

**Forest Practice Committee, Rich Wade, Chair**

The Forest Practice Committee met yesterday and have an actionable item to bring in front of the Board today. The Committee discussed the following 2 items from the agenda:

* Discussed Permanent Rulemaking for the Forest Resilience Exemption.
* Discussed language pertaining to Geographically Overlapping Exemptions on Active Plans.
* Discussed the Rulemaking for Vegetation Treatment in the Watercourse and Lake Protection Zone. The committee has the Final Rule Language and the Initial Statement of Reasons that have been reviewed and is ready for the Board.

**Authorization to submit rulemaking regarding “ Vegetation and Fuels in the WLPZ” for noticing of the 45-day Comment Period:**

**04-09-02 Member Wade move to authorize Board staff to submit the rulemaking entitled “Vegetation and Fuels in the WLPZ” for noticing of the 45-day Comment Period and take all appropriate actions consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act for this purpose, including preparation and submission of the Notice of Proposed Action and Initial Statement of Reasons. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Blake: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Management Committee, Liz Forsburg-Pardi, Chair**

The Management Committee discussed the following two agenda items:

* The Committee discussed the Rule Making for Oak Woodland Exemption. There is additional information that is being gathered to help Committee’s consideration on using Stump Diameter vs Diameter of a tree at breast height.
* The Committee discussed the Noticing Processes within the Forest Practice Rules. This item will be brought back next month for further discussion and review CEQA framework for consistency within the procedures in noticing.

**Resource Protection Committee, J. Lopez, Chair**

The Resource Protection Committee discussed the following:

* Deputy Chief Shane Vargas updated Committee on the Land Use Planning Program
	+ There was one Safety Element Review done on the City of Santa Rosa.
* Committee was updated on the Firewise Communities that there are 1,100 Firewise Communities in California.
* Land Use has had three Wildfire Trainings this year and continues to plan more this year.

**Report of the Board’s Advisory Committees:**

**Zone Zero Regulation Advisory Committee, Terrence O’Brien, Chair**

The Zone Zero Regulation Advisory Committee held a public workshop on Monday, April 7, 2025. There were over 160 people that participated online who shared their comments to the Committee in response to the draft of the Committee Plea which included concerns about impacts on vegetation fences, the transition from zone zero to zone one. The committee takes all comments seriously and is committed to draft regulations that can be brought to the Board that will respond to the serious emergency we are facing in response to the Governor’s Order. The committee is working on the most effective set of regulations in balancing all issues. Next Committee workshop will be on May 12, 2025, to discuss the revised plea.

**Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation (JIWPI), Katie Harrell, Board Staff**

The Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation updated the Board on the following:

* JIWPI was awarded a second contract for 24/25 Fiscal Year and one remaining at DGS (Department of General Services).
* The Joint Institute will be transitioning to a grant base program. The grant guidelines are with the JIWPI Members for their final review.
* JIWPI has had two public meetings and have one left supporting ARB Department of Conservation Project looking at the biomass chain of custody.
* JIWPI is forming a mass timber subcommittee.

**Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC), Liz Forsburg-Pardi, Co-Chair**

Kristina Wolf, Senior Environmentalist Scientist, Board of Forestry and updated the Board on the following:

* The following roles are available for professionals focused on monitoring forested ecosystems to serve on the EMC. There is one member broadly representing the Effectiveness Monitoring and Research community and three agency representatives. One from CAL FIRE, one from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and one from the US Forest Service.
* EMC is seeking to fill two co-chair roles. One of which will be appointed from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Membership and one from the remaining membership of the EMC.
* The EMC request for proposals and grant guidelines for research was released on March 17, this is an Effectiveness Monitoring Program that solicits scientific research that addresses the effectiveness of applicable laws in real life regulations including the Forest Practice Rules. Funding available for new projects is anticipated to be a sum of $928,334.00 dollars over a three-year fiscal year beginning in 2025/2026 fiscal year. Comprising of $188,202 dollars in the first fiscal year, 2025, $315, 132.00 in 2026/2027 and $425,000 in 2027/2028. Applications are due May 19, 2025, and information is available on the EMC’s website.
* The EMC will be leading a field tour showcasing EMC’s supported research on April 30, in the San Vicente Redwoods with researchers sharing information on post-fire impacts on Redwoods and accelerated wood recruitment. Currently registration for this event is combined with the EMC’s morning business meeting and can be found on the EMC’s website.
* The EMC recently updated its charter and strategic plan which are available on the EMC’s website.
* The 2024 Annual Report and Workplan is anticipated to come before the Board at its May meeting.

**Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC), Dr. Marc Horney, Chair**

Dr. Marc Horney Chair of the Range Management Advisory Committee updated the Board on the following three items:

* The RMAC is currently seeking one new nominee to the Committee. This member must be nominated by an organization representing range landowners.
* The RMAC has recently finalized the State Lands Grazing Packet. This includes guidance for the development of two document templates. This is a grazing agreement or license sample template which is being approved by the Department of General Services. Also, a management action plan sample template to assist in the development of site-specific grazing and land management plans for areas being proposed for treatments under this practice.
* The RMAC is presently in the process of implementing the requirements of Senate Bill 675 that was authored by Senate in 2023.
* Dr. Stephanie Larsen, Vice-Chair of the RMAC, is leading the efforts to develop local and regional grazing guidance around the use of Prescribed Grazing for Fuel Management . RMAC has set up a virtual statewide kick off meeting for this process on April 28th, from 2-4 pm.

**California Forest Pest Council, Katie Harrell, Board Staff**

Katie Harrell introduced Tom Smith who presented to the Board the 2024 California Forest Pest Conditions Report.

**Consideration of State Responsibility Area Land Classification 5 Year Review, Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager**

Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection presented Consideration of the State Responsibility Area Land Classification 5-year Review to the Board.

**04-09-03 Chairman O’Brien move to adopt, in accordance with Public Resources Code section 4125, the boundaries of State Responsibility Area lands, as set forth in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) 2025 Five-Year Review Presented by CAL FIRE at the Board’s January 22, 2025, meeting, with these revised boundaries taking effect 90 days from the date of this adoption. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Blake: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**RMAC Presentation- State Lands’ Grazing License and Land Management subcommittee State Lands Grazing Packet: Guidebook, Grazing Agreement, and Management Action Plan, Dr. Larry Ford, Bart Creamers, Dr. Marc Horney**

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

**Public Comments:**

* Kimberly from Somona County that the Board for their time and dedication. Also, she stated she is a fan of Home Hardening and Defensible Space and appreciates all efforts that focus on helping the public protect their homes. She believes that fire safe houses save forests. She shared that she is not against cutting trees under PG&E lines and feels that most of the focus should be there rather than out in the hinterlands. She also shared that she does not agree with the Vegetation Management Exemption that they can cut up to 400 acres of trees and sell it without a THP.
* Richard Gienger, Forest Forever, shared he is concerned with all the different exemptions going on now. He feels it is a difficult line to balance between what is adequate in dealing with fuel hazard and fire.
* Larry Hansen commented on the Forest Resilience Exemption. Will this exemption be like the Salvage Logging Exemption where many trees are logged and taken out in truckloads.

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Dan Stapleton Terrence O’Brien

Assistant Executive Officer Chairman