BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

SACRAMENTO, CA

March 5, 2025

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**

**Present:**

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

**Absent:**

* Katie Delbar

**BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
* Jeff Slaton, Senior Board Counsel
* Dan Craig, Regulations Program Manager
* Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
* Kristina Wolf, Senior Environmental Scientist
* 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
* Stew McMorrow, Staff Chief Wildfire Resilience, CAL FIRE
* Thomas Crimmel, Research Data Specialist, Fire and Resources Assessment Program, CAL FIRE

**Board Members Roll Call:**

Member Lopez Present

Member Wade Present

Member Blake Present

Member Delbar Absent

Member Forsburg-Pardi Present

Member Goldsworthy Present

Member Hilburn Present

Chairman O’Brien Present

*Quorum established*

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

Jeff Slaton, Senior Counsel for the Board, reported that during executive closed session the Board discussed the three items on the agenda and took no reportable action.

**Consent Calendar Items:**

**03-05-01 Chairman O’Brien moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

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

Chairman O’Brien highlighted Ember Resistant Zone Zero Rulemaking and the Joint Institute of Wood Products Innovation California Environmental Quality Act support for wood utilization report.

* The Board has created a new committee, the Zone Zero Defensible Space Advisory Committee, which had its first workshop yesterday with about 500 individuals participating in person and online. This is in response to the Governor’s Executive Order that has been directed by the Board to undertake and implement regulations for Zone Zero. This is the space between structures going out to five feet and the Board will have to adopt regulations per the Executive Order by December 31, 2025. The Board is tasked by the Governor’s Executive Order to produce a draft set of regulations by March 21st. The Committee will hold additional workshops in April and May with the goal of presenting proposed regulations to the Board in June. The Board wants to come up with regulations that will make California homes and businesses safer from fires. The Board is committed to developing regulations that will make the citizens of this state safer, as well as the homes they live in and in the businesses, they work from.
* The Board received from the Joint Institute for Wood Products The California Environmental Quality Act Support for Wood Utilization Report. The Board received the report back in January and will post the presentation on the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection website.

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

Director Tyler stated that 2025 has been severely devasting to our constituents in Southern California, not only in wildfire but in wildfire debris removal. It is still a critical situation to watch across the burn scars of Southern California and across all of California. Director Tyler congratulated the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection on its 140th birthday. The Board was established on March 3, 1885, by then Governor Stoneman. A few updates on movements of leadership in CAL FIRE. A new Chief Deputy Director of Administration has been added, Kerry Garcia. She will be overseeing our Management Services, Fiscal Services, and Technology Programs. Also, CAL FIRE hired a new Region Chief, Mike Van Loben Sels from the Madera Mariposa Merced Unit. Joshua Metal, Assistant Deputy Director of Fire Protection Operations will be moving from Program Position to the Assistant Region Chief in Southern Region overseeing San Luis Obispo, San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego.

Natural Resource Management

Forest Practice Program

Watershed Protection Program

* In January 2025, Watershed Emergency Response Team (WERT) activations were conducted on the Palisade, Eaton, Kenneth, Hughes, Border 2, and Hurst fires.
* Thank you to Chief Huff and Drew Coe who were instrumental in our watershed emergency response teams. Drew has moved on into vegetation management program and Chief Huff will find a predecessor to Drew Coe to help us in the future.

Resource Protection and Improvement Programs

Urban and Community Forestry

* California Arbor Week will begin with a ceremonial tree planting and press conference at 11:00 AM on March 10, 2025, at Rick Gonzales Sr. Park in Woodland.

Resource Improvement Programs

Jackson (JDSF)

* The first Jackson Advisory Group meeting of 2025 is scheduled for March 18, 2025, in Fort Bragg.
* Staff alongside the consulting team led by Clifton Environmental are processing public comments from the Forest Management Plan public outreach meetings and starting to prepare the Draft Forest Management Plan for further public review.

Mountain Home (MHDSF)

* Forest Manager Jim Kral has been attending discussions on a Good Neighbor Authority agreement between CAL FIRE and the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests to create opportunities to conduct fuel reduction work on the federal lands surrounding Mountain Home.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Programs

Prescribed Fire Program

* The Prescribed Fire Claims fund has 101 reservations with 12,551 acres of planned burning.
* A California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) workshop is planned around the topic of beneficial fire for April 4, 2025.

Cultural Resources Program

* A CNRA cultural fire workshop and round table discussion is planned for April 3, 2025, to discuss how to advance more use of cultural fire.

Wildfire Resilience Programs

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

* In January, CFIP awarded 14 new grants with a total cost share of $2.2 million. We are currently planning to continue with our remaining three quarterly solicitations for calendar year 2025.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

* FLP has seven open State funded Forest Legacy grants for conservation easements and fee title acquisitions which when completed will conserve nearly 10,000 acres of forestland throughout the State. The projects are in Humboldt, Santa Cruz, Plumas, Placer, and Mendocino counties.
* FLP has five open conservation easement projects funded through the Federal Forest Legacy Program which account for over $20 million in Federal funding and total just under 50,000 acres of forestland. The projects are in Trinity, Siskiyou, Mendocino, and San Bernardino counties.

Climate and Energy Programs

Wood Products & Bioenergy

* On February 26, 2025, a new solicitation for Business and Workforce Development Grants was opened. Applications will be accepted until April 25, 2025. Up to $5 million in funds is available to award.

Forest Health

* Forest Health Program closed their FY2024-25 Forest Health grant solicitation on January 15, 2025, with up to $70 million available for grant projects. A total of 62 applications were received for a total request of $338 million. Awards are scheduled to be announced in Spring 2025. For more information, please visit the Forest Health grant website at [www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/forest-health](http://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/forest-health)

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

* Registration is open and the agenda is posted for March 26-28, 2025 Task Force Regional Meeting in San Rafael, CA. New for this year is a reception and keynote address on the evening of March 26, 2025. Dr. Daniel Swain, a climate scientist from UCLA, will present his research on climate and wildfire with a special emphasis on what we can learn from the recent Los Angeles fires.
* Future Task Force 2025 Meeting Dates:
	+ June 6, 2025, Sacramento, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
	+ September 4-5, 2025, regional Meeting TBD
	+ December 12, 2025, Sacramento, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

Research & Monitoring

* Two of three Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data collection contracts have been extended through 2027. The third is in DGS review for extension.
* Under the Biden administration, a federal ban on seasonal hiring for 2025 impacted potential FIA data collection this year. Attempts to use unspent CAL FIRE funds within the existing collection agreement with the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station (USFS-PNW) to support 1039 temporary seasonal FIA crews in 2025 have been unsuccessful due to federal hiring issues.

Wildfire Hazard and Risk

* Phase 2 of the Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps (covering NW California) were released on February 23, 2025. Phase 3 (Central Coast and Sierra Nevada regions) will be released March 10, and the final phase (Southern California and desert) will go out March 24, 2025.

Fire Protection

Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

* In January 2025, Law Enforcement officers made 10 arson arrests.

Fire Protection Operations

* For 2024, of the 7550 fires in the State Responsibility Area, 1668 AI detections were processed from Alert California cameras (not including Contract Counties) 370 of these AI detections were received before the fire was reported by the public.

Hand Crew Program

* Hand Crew Strength: CAL FIRE continues to experience a fluctuating number of available CAL FIRE Type I Hand Crews statewide. As of February 26, 2025, CAL FIRE can staff 108 of 236 Hand Crews available for statewide response. The number of Hand Crews available significantly impacts wildland fire suppression, conservation work, prescribed fire activities, and fuels reduction work. The current staffing includes the following four models under the Hand Crew program:
	+ 57 of 152 authorized California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Incarcerated Persons crews
	+ 21 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

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Wildfire Preparedness

Defensible Space

* Qualified Entity classes are scheduled in Mendicino and San Diego Counties. The February class in Butte County had 21 students comprised mainly of fire Safe Councils and Firewise USA Communities.
* Public Defensible Space Inspection Dashboard is live and notes inspection totals, total by county, inspection density within 5 squire mile areas.
* Burn Permits
	+ The permit website was updated to warn the permittee that their property is not in SRA. This saves the permittee from having to fill out the application and find out the permit is not allowed in their area.

Utility Wildfire Mitigation

* Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) submissions will begin in the next 2 weeks for 2026-2028. Still waiting on late 2024 updates (pending final review estimated completion April).

Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

Land Use Planning

* Announcement and more information on the 1000th community will be forthcoming.

Wildfire Prevention Grants

* FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants Award Notification on August 20, 2024.
	+ 94 Awards totaling just over $90 million
	+ Virtually all grant agreements have been signed.

Year to Date Wildfire Statistics (State and Federal)

Updated February 24, 2025

* Statistics reflect where we have been and where we are. More fires in 2025 than our 5-year average and significantly more acres than our 5-year average due to the fires in Southern California.

Tribal Affairs Program

Tribal Wildfire Resilience

* Grant applications are now open. Applications are due by March 28, 2025. There will be up to $5 million total available for tribes and tribal non-profits to plan or implement wildfire resilience projects. Additional information can be found on the Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants website. <https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/tribal-wildfire-resilience>

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

The Board of Forestry’s Annual Report has been completed.

**2024 Annual Report:**

**03-05-02 Chairman O’Brien moves to approve the 2024 Annual Report. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Report of the Regulations Coordinator, Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator**

The Board’s Regulations Department has five items before you:

* Consideration of the final rule text and Final Statement of Reason for the Rulemaking titled “Apprentice Professional Foresters Education Program Proposal, 2024”,
* Consideration of final rule text and Final Statement of Reasons for the Rulemaking titled “Watercourse Crossing and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Amendments 2024”,
* Consideration of final rule text and Final Statement of Reasons for the Rulemaking titled “2025 Fire Risk reduction Community List”,
* Consideration of final rule text and Final Statement of Reasons for the Rulemaking titled “Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Amendments, 2024”,
* Discussion of Utility and Public Agency Right of Way Economic and Fiscal Analysis Update.

**Final Statement of Reasons and draft regulatory text for Apprentice Professional Foresters Education Program Proposal, 2024.**

**03-05-03 Member Wade moves to approve the Final Statement of Reasons for the Rulemaking entitled “Apprentice Professional Foresters Education Program Proposal, 2024”. Member Hilburn seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**03-05-04 Member Wade moves to adopt the draft regulatory text for the rulemaking entitled “Apprentice Professional Forester Education Program Proposal, 2024 and authorize staff to take all actions reasonably necessary to have the adopted regulations go into effect including making appropriate non-substantive changes and any changes to facilitate OAL review and approval. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Final Statement of Reasons and draft regulatory text for Watercourse Crossings and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Amendments, 2024.**

**03-05-05 Member Wade move to approve the Final Statement of Reasons for the rulemaking entitled “Watercourse Crossings and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Amendments, 2024”. Member Hilburn seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**03-05-06 Member Wade move to adopt the draft regulatory text for the rulemaking entitled “Watercourse Crossings and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Amendments, 2024” and authorize staff to take all actions reasonably necessary to have the adopted regulations go into effect including making appropriate non-substantive changes and any changes to facilitate OAL review and approval. Chairman O’Brien seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Final Statement of Reasons and draft regulatory text for 2025 Fire Risk Reduction Community List.**

**03-05-07 Member Lopez move to approve the Final Statement of Reason for the rulemaking entitled “2025 Fire Risk Reduction Community List”. Member Wade seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**03-05-08 Member Lopez move to adopt the draft regulatory text for the rulemaking entitled “2025 Fire Risk Reduction Community List” and -authorize staff to take all actions reasonably necessary to have the adopted regulations go into effect including making appropriate non-substantive changes and any changes to facilitate OAL review and approval. Chairman O’Brien seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Final Statement of Reasons and draft regulatory text for Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Amendments, 2024.**

**03-05-09 Member Lopez move to approve the Final Statement of Reasons for the rulemaking entitled “Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Amendments, 2024”. Member Wade seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**03-05-10 Member Lopez move to adopt the draft regulatory text for the rulemaking entitled “Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone Amendments 2024” and authorize staff to take all actions reasonably necessary to have the adopted regulations go into effect, including making appropriate non-substantive changes and any changes to facilitate OAL review and approval. Member Wade seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

* Discussed the Utility and Public Agency Right of Way Economic and Fiscal Analysis Update. It has been decided due to the vacancy of the Executive Officer that this will be paused until the position has been filled.

**Report of the Standing Committees:**

**Joint Forest Practice/Management Committee, Rich Wade and Liz Forsburg-Pardi, Chair**

The Forest Practice and Management Committee met in a joint session yesterday. Forest Practice Committee discussed the following:

* Forest Practice Committee considered the (ISOR) Initial Statements of Reasons for a rule package that the Forest Practice Committee had worked on pertaining to removal of fuels and water course lake protection zone. This has been held over until the next meeting to go over in more detail.
* Eric Kanpp from Pacific Southwest Research Station gave a presentation to the committee on Forest Resilience.
* Discussed the Permanent Rulemaking for the Forest Resilience Exemption.
* Discussed the issue of geographically overlapping exemptions on active plans.

The Management Committee had two agenda items that were discussed yesterday.

* Discussed the Permanent Rulemaking for the Oak Woodland Exemption. Discussed how department can enforce the potential rulemaking and discuss additional metrics on measurements at the next meeting.
* There was an update on the Joint Statement on Hardwoods. The committee reviewed the Joint Statement on Hardwoods and discussed having a presentation on research related to mature Tan Oaks at one of our next future meetings.

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

The Resource Protection Committee discussed the following:

* Discussed updates on Land Use Planning Program from Deputy Chief Shane Vargas.
* Discussed the Safety element Review for the City of Hesperia.
* The Land Use Planning for Wildfire Trainings have conducted 3 events so far.
* Discussed the upcoming Fire Risk Reduction Community List public webinar on March 26, at 10:00 am and April 1 at 1:00 pm.

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

The Zone Zero Regulation Committee discussed the next two committee workshops on April 7, and May12, 2025.

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

Forest Pest Council requests for Extension of the Zone of Infestations on Sudden Oak Death and an Update on a New Species of Invasive Shot Hole Borer in California by Tom Smith, CAL Fire.

**03-05-11 Chairman O’Brien move to approve the expansion of the Sudden Oak Death of Zone of Infestation to include the county of Del Norte. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Goldsworthy: Aye**

**Hilburn: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**O’Brien: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

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

“Development of a Life Cycle Accounting Model for Biofuel Production from Forest Biomass Waste in California” draft final project, Kevin Fingerman, Cal Poly Humboldt, and Brent Riffel, Riffel Consulting

Scaled manufacturing and project delivery of locally sourced timber building solutions in Redding, CA, Scott Ehlert, Fabric Mass Timber

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

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee discussed two new EMC’s support projects that were encumbered for research and began this year.

* The EMC 2024-001 balancing fuel considerations and rare carbon habitat.
* The EMC 2024-004 establishing a protocol for Marbled murrelet using passive acoustic technology.
* EMC has 5 seats currently opened on the EMC.
* EMC’s next meeting will be April 30, 2025, and will include an afternoon field visit to Santa Cruz to tour one of the EMC’s funded projects.

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

The RMAC shared the following updates.

* There is a project on developing grazing agreements to be used with prescribed grazing on state lands. The sub-committee has completed the guidance packet to facilitate the use of prescribed grazing for fuel treatments, habitat improvements, weed suppression and so forth on State lands. The packet includes a grazing agreement template, a management action plan template to guide grazing management planning and an associated guidebook to walk users through the development of grazing agreements on State managed lands. This guidebook was identified as a need for many State agencies that lack personnel with grazing management expertise and grazing operators as additional support in navigating in the whole state agreement process. The committee anticipates bringing these drafts before the Board in April or May of this year.
* The RMAC is actively working to address the mandates of Bill 675 which was passed this last year. This includes guidance with the prescribed grazing local assistance grant program and supporting planning under the Wildfire Resilience Taskforce.
* RMAC is continuing to develop plans for an annual public education series.
* The 2015 Prescribed Herbivory White Paper by RMAC is in the final stages of revision and the final draft is expected to be brought before the Board by this summer.
* RMAC is seeking partners in the forest industry to develop a joint certified Range Management and Register Professional Foresters Oak Woodland Vegetation Management Workshop.
* The RMAC staff and committee members provided a poster at the February 18th Rustici Rangeland symposium at UC Davis. On RMAC’s work around prescribed grazing and fuels management.
* The Board Staff and the RMAC will provide presentation on prescribed grazing for fuels management at the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee at its April 15th meeting.
* All seats of the RMAC are now filled as of its January 28th meeting.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**Reforestation Updates on statewide Cooperation and Implementation,** Stew McMorrow, Staff Chief Wildfire Resilience, CAL FIRE, Shelley Villalobos, Manager, California Reforestation Pipeline Partnership, American Forests, Jimi Scheid, Reforestation Services Program Manager, CAL FIRE, Sophia Lemmo, Forestry and Fire Director, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

**“California Vegetation Treatment Program Digital Submission Tools Introduction”** Thomas Crimmel, Research Data Specialist, Fire and Resource Assessment Program, CAL FIRE

**HEARINGS:**

**SRA Five Year Review,** Public hearing for comments on the proposed 2025 changes to the State Responsibility Area Boundaries, Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

**Public Comments:**

* Susie Line is here to speak on behalf of her community in Cohasset. She is calling for a cumulative impact report and an environmental impact report be done on the Cohasset Ridge. She shared her concerns for the community’s water supply and dying trees.
* Richard Gienger shared he feels that it will be difficult for California to really make the cultural changes needed to make up for the lack of carrying capacity and the adverse impacts.

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Dan Stapleton Terrence O’Brien

Assistant Executive Officer Chairman