

THE BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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Management Committee (Committee)..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Mission

The mission of the Board is to lead California in developing policies and programs that serve the public interest in environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management of forest and rangelands and a fire protection system that protects and serves the people of the state.

Board Background and Organization

The California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) is a Governor-appointed body within the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Members are appointed on the basis of their professional and educational qualification and their general knowledge or interest in problems that relate to watershed management, forest management, wildland fire management, fish and wildlife, range improvement, forest economics, or land use policy. Of its nine members, five are chosen from the public, three from the forest products industry, and one from the range-livestock industry.

The Board is responsible for developing the general forest policy for the State, determining the guidance policies of CAL FIRE, and representing the State's interests in federal land located within California. Together, the Board and CAL FIRE work to carry out the California Legislature's mandate to protect and enhance the State's unique forest and wildland resources.

Committees of the Board

Committees Required by Statute

*Range Management Advisory Committee
Professional Foresters Examining Committee
Soquel Advisory Committee*

Internal Standing Committees

- 1. Forest Practice: The mission of the Forest Practice Committee is to evaluate and promote an effective regulatory system which ensures the continuous growth and harvest of commercial forests and protects soil, air, fish, wildlands, and water resources.*
- 2. Resource Protection: The mission of the Resource Protection Committee is to develop and promote a policy and regulatory program that implements fire safe land use planning and effective vegetation management, pursues a fire prevention program in alignment with the State Fire Plan, and improves forest and rangeland health in California.*

3. *Management*: The mission of the Management Committee is to evaluate and promote long-term, landscape-level planning approaches to support natural resource management on California's non-federal forests and rangelands and to evaluate State Forest management plans.

External Advisory Committees

1. Effectiveness Monitoring Committee
2. California Forest Pest Council and the California Oak Mortality Task Force
3. Jackson Advisory Group
4. Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation

Committee Updates

Range Management Advisory Committee

The work of the Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) was severely curtailed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as multiple major fires affecting rangeland. Due to these emergencies, most Committee meetings this year did not reach a quorum of members, so forward action in 2020 was minimal. In November, RMAC successfully hosted a series of three virtual workshops on grazing for fire prevention – “Using Grazing to Help Keep Communities Safe.” The workshop topics were: Wildland Fuels: A Primer for Concerned Citizens & Grazers; Using Grazing for Fuels Management 101: Practices & Strategies; Organizing Community-Based Wildland Fuels Management Projects: Approaches and Examples. Over 150 people attended each workshop.

Professional Foresters Examining Committee

In 2020, the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) and the Office of Professional Foresters Registration began review of and updates to several documents including the 2013 guidance document Role of the Registered Professional Forester and the 2007 PFEC Policy documents. The April 2020 Registered Professional Forester (RPF) and Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) examinations were canceled due to COVID-19. The October RPF and CRM exams were carried out at seven different locations and employed CDC and State Guidelines for preventing COVID transmission. Forty-seven RPF applicants and one CRM applicant sat for this exam. The completion of grading and presentation of exam results will occur in January 2021.

- “Licensing Fee Amendments, 2020” went into effect in April 2020 increasing the biennial renewal fee for RPFs from \$190 to \$350 and for Certified Specialists from \$70 to \$130. To address RPF retirements and incentivize RPF license retention, the new discounted biannual fee of

\$250 was implemented for RPFs with 30 years or more in the registry.

- The Executive Officer for Professional Foresters Registration continues to perform outreach to increase awareness of careers in forestry in California and the licensing requirements for foresters. Outreach in the first part of 2020 required travel throughout the state to universities, community colleges, high schools, and California Conservation Corps. field offices to inform young people about the opportunities that exist in the California forestry sector. Later in the year these outreach efforts were conducted online utilizing zoom meeting and Go-To Webinar.

Effectiveness Monitoring Committee

The Board formed the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC) in 2014 to develop and implement a monitoring program to address both watershed and wildlife concerns and to provide a more effective feedback loop to policymakers, managers, agencies, and the public. Effectiveness monitoring is necessary to assess whether management practices are achieving the resource goals and objectives set forth in the California Forest Practice Rules (FPRs) and other natural resource protection statutes and regulations. This kind of monitoring is a key component of adaptive management. Effectiveness monitoring is also a crucial component for complying with the “ecological performance” reporting requirements outlined in AB 1492 (2012). The EMC and the Board developed a suite of critical monitoring questions based on input from a variety of stakeholders and organized them into 11 themes. The EMC uses these themes and critical questions as guidance to solicit and evaluate monitoring projects with the goal of developing a process-based understanding of the effectiveness of the FPRs and associated regulations in maintaining and enhancing water quality and aquatic and wildlife habitats.

No new projects were funded in 2020, but all ongoing projects received allocations as planned. EMC meetings continued to be held quarterly. The following is a summary of EMC activities and progress made in 2020.

- The EMC charter was updated by the committee and approved by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board).
- Strategic Plan themes and critical questions for 2019 were reviewed and retained. No additions or alterations were made to the priorities for 2020. The EMC committed to examining the research already funded and setting priorities by themes and critical questions in 2021.
- The EMC received an allocation of \$425,000 for the 2020/21 fiscal year from the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund for ongoing projects, of which \$267,841 had been previously applied to funded

projects. The remaining balance of \$157,159 was not applied to any future project during FY 19/20 at the request of CNRA.

- The EMC recommended that a grant program be considered as a means of distributing funding for future projects, and the Board approved a recommendation to ask Board staff to explore this option.

Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation

The Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation (Institute) was established in response to SB 859 (2016) and the California Forest Carbon Plan. The first meeting of the Institute was held April 24, 2019.

The first project undertaken by the Institute was a “Literature Review and Evaluation of Research Gaps to Support Wood Product Innovation,” which was approved by the Board in January 2020 and submitted for a Governor’s Office Action Request in March. Findings from the report included the identification of numerous innovative wood products with sufficient commercial and technical readiness as well as potential market size.

The Institute funded two contracts. The first was “Cross-Laminated Timber Layup Tests Using Western Wood Products Association White Fir Species Group.” Results will help inform industry as to how white fir species in California will fare as a mass timber commodity. The second was “Opportunities for Low-carbon and Carbon-negative Fuels from Non-merchantable Forest Biomass in California.” This contract will identify biofuels research gaps and it will convene key stakeholders to explore the potential for a low-carbon and carbon-negative fuels industry in California that includes the use of non-merchantable forest biomass.

At the request of the Forest Management Task Force, the Institute also developed “[Joint Institute Recommendations to Expand Wood and Biomass Utilization in California.](#)” It was approved by the Board in November 2020 and provided to the Forest Management Task Force.

Chaptered Legislation with Future Regulatory Action by the Board

AB 3074: Fire prevention: wildfire risk: defensible space: ember-resistant zones.

Existing law requires the Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to identify areas in the state as very high fire hazard severity zones based on specified criteria and the severity of the fire hazard. Existing

law requires a person who owns, leases, controls, operates, or maintains an occupied dwelling or structure in, upon, or adjoining a mountainous area, forest-covered land, brush-covered land, grass-covered land, or land that is covered with flammable material that is within a very high fire hazard severity zone, as designated by a local agency, or a building or structure in, upon, or adjoining those areas or lands within a state responsibility area, to maintain a defensible space of 100 feet from each side and from the front and rear of the structure, as specified. This statute mandates more intense fuel reductions between 5 and 30 feet around the structure, including an ember-resistant zone within 5 feet of the structure, as provided. Work will not begin on this effort until a legislative appropriation occurs to support the Board's efforts in the development of these regulations. The statute also transfers primary responsibility for a guidance document pertaining to these defensive space guidelines from CAL FIRE to the Board, including a requirement to update the guidance document by January 1, 2023, to include suggestions for the new ember-resistant zone. Both of these requirements are contingent on the Legislature making a legislative appropriation to the Board for these purposes.

Forest Health Trends

Monitoring Efforts

Monitoring of the Forest Practice Rules (FPRs) on private and public forestlands has shown generally high compliance with water-quality related rules, and that those rules are generally effective in preventing erosion and sedimentation when properly implemented (FORPRIEM, 2014). Additionally, since the passage of SB 901 in 2018, CAL FIRE has been engaged in the monitoring and reporting-on of ministerial Exemptions and Emergency Notices. Reporting from 2018 was published on May 7, 2019 ([Olsen et al., 2019](#)), and the results from 2019 were approved by the Board on December 30, 2019, however impacts related to COVID-19 and the fire-siege of 2020 delayed such efforts for the 2020 calendar year.

Pest Conditions

The following is a summary of notable insect, disease, and forest health issues that continue to threaten and alter urban and wildland forests in California in 2020. Forest pest conditions can change dramatically from year to year. For a summary of forest pests and diseases, see the [2019 California Forest Pest Conditions Report](#). The 2020 California Forest Pest Conditions Report will be available on the [California Forest Pest Council website](#) in early 2021.

Invasive Shot Hole Borer (ISHB)

Polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB) is established in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura Counties. Kuroshio shot hole borer (KSHB) is established in Los Angeles, Orange, Santa Barbara, San Diego, and Riverside Counties. Previously KSHB was found in a San Luis Obispo County trap. While no infestations have been found in the landscape there to date, it is suspected to be present. A previous trap find in Santa Cruz County has never been confirmed and no infestations found. PSHB and KSHB are found associated with several fungi, including species of *Fusarium*, which are known plant pathogens. Extensive damage has occurred in parks, urban trees, and riparian areas. An ISHB zone of infestation (ZOI) was approved by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in counties impacted by the beetles in areas with known reproductive host trees, which support beetle reproduction. The ZOI includes all of San Diego, Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties as well as portions of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

Goldspotted Oak Borer (GSOB)

GSOB continued to spread in southern California through localized beetle flight as well as firewood movement. It is now found in extensive areas of San Diego, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. It attacks and can kill California black oak, coast live oak, and, to a lesser extent, canyon live oak, preferring larger diameter and older trees. The continued spread resulted in the expansion of the GSOB ZOI to include all susceptible hosts within the impacted counties. No new sites have been detected outside of the five-county area.

Bark Beetles

Conifer-killing bark and engraver beetle populations remained low in California. Small pockets of pine bark beetles and fir engraver beetles were found throughout the state, particularly at higher elevations. Bark beetle activity was increasing in some areas due to a return to drought conditions but remain low compared to the recent years of epidemic outbreaks.

Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB)

The valley oak wilt of 2019 was determined to be caused by the non-native MOB ambrosia beetle (*Xyloborus monographus*) and its associated fungi. The pest complex has killed valley and blue oaks throughout Napa, Sonoma, and Lake Counties. In 2020, a separate infestation was found in Sacramento County around the community of Citrus Heights. All indications

are the pest complex has been in California for 5 - 10 years. Surveys and trapping are ongoing to determine the extent of the infestation, in addition to research on trapping methods, lures, fungal associates/host pathogenicity, control options, spread rates, and overall tree impacts.

Sudden Oak Death (SOD)

SOD (caused by the plant pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*) was officially confirmed in Del Norte County for the first time. Genotyping confirmed the European strain (EU1) of the pathogen instead of the North American strain (NA1) - the only strain previously found in infested natural areas of the state. The nearest known EU1 forest infestation is in Curry County, Oregon, around 35 miles to the north. Management is ongoing to slow the potential spread of the EU1 strain in California.

In other areas of the state, SOD-related mortality varied by region. Mortality levels were high around the Santa Cruz/Santa Clara County line and there were new expansions of the disease in Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. Infestations appeared to be increasing in more inland sites in many areas, with less activity in coastal zones.

Incense Cedar Dieback

High levels of incense cedar mortality were observed throughout the state. Often a few branches would fade and die, and sometimes the entire tree would exhibit thinning and discolored foliage and then die. Dieback tended to start at the tops of the trees then progress downward. A species of *Cytospora* fungus was often recovered from cankers in impacted trees, but not consistently. Studies are ongoing to determine the species and potential pathogenicity of the fungus. Many of the trees were also impacted by drought years with reduced fine feeder roots, so an abiotic cause of mortality remains a possibility.

Black Acacia Dieback and Mortality

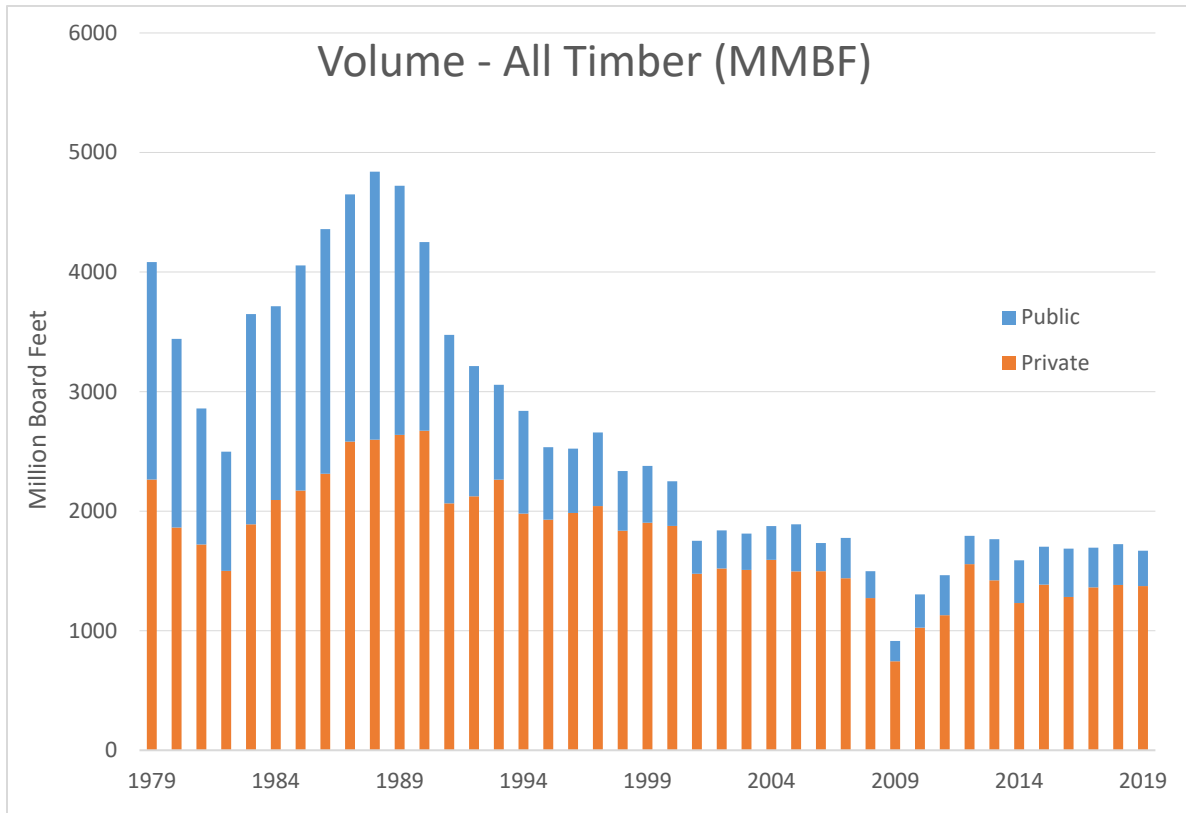
Black acacia trees (*Acacia melanoxylon*) are dying in Oakland and surrounding parts of the Bay Area down to the coast in Half Moon Bay. Some individual trees are showing dieback and in other areas entire hillsides are dying. The trees show indications of dieback, cankering, and mortality. The cause is currently unknown. Several possible fungi are being investigated, including one that is invasive to California and previously caused dieback of lemonade berry shrubs in San Diego County.

Forest Products Trends

In-State Harvest and Production

About 80 percent of lumber and 90 percent of all wood products used in the state of California are imported. As of 2012, there were 52,000 workers in the forest products sector with total earnings of over \$3.3 billion annually. There has been a major decline in timber harvesting that has resulted in a 72% decrease in volume since 1955. Sawmills have seen a similar decline in response to lower harvest volumes as well as improvements in technology and automation (about 675 sawmills were in operation in 1956 versus 28 in 2018). Softwood sawmill capacity in California has somewhat stabilized over the last several years after decades of constriction. In response to this decline in processing facilities, the state has shown growth in diversified markets for wood products. However, that diversification is not necessarily equivalent to the historic economic benefits of softwood sawmills ([FRAP, 2017](#)). Generally, the volume of timber harvested has declined steadily from a high in 1988. It has recently started to level out after a significant drop in 2009 likely attributed to the housing market crash of 2008. Figure 1 below illustrates the changes in harvest levels for public and private lands, indicating that recently more volume has been harvested from private lands by a wide margin. In 2018 (not shown), approximately 1,670 million board feet (MMBF) were harvested, in line with the previous five years' approximate totals (CDTFA, 2020). Approximately 82 percent came from private land, and 18 percent from public land, again keeping with recent trends. The leading counties were Shasta with 219 MMBF, Humboldt with 216, Siskiyou with 206, and Mendocino with 120. These four counties accounted for just over half of all timber harvested in California in 2020.

Figure 1. Annual Volume of Timber Harvested in California (FRAP)



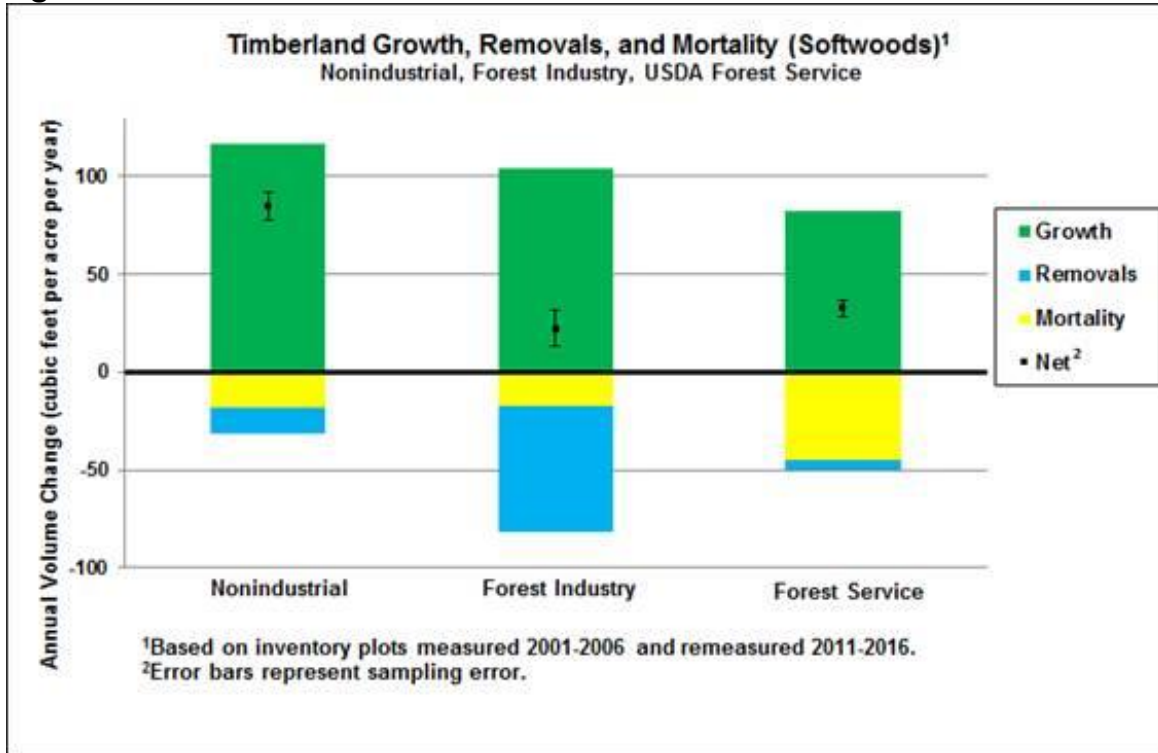
Note: PUBLIC refers to timber removed from local, state, and federal government lands. It does not include timber removed from tribal lands.

California has also been experiencing a fluctuating export market over the past few years, with logs being shipped via container to Asia. This is a very volatile market with demand ebbing and flowing dramatically from one year to another and even from month to month.

For managed timberlands, net growth of softwoods (commercial conifer species) provides a measure of whether harvest levels can be sustained. In California, commercial forest management is regulated under the Forest Practice Act and the Forest Practice Rules, which require maximum sustained production of high-quality timber products. A recent USFS Forest Inventory Analysis (USFS, 2017) of the re-measurement period between 2001-2006 and 2011-2016 produced key findings pertaining to net growth of softwoods. On industry-owned timberlands, the most actively managed timberlands within California, growth exceeded harvest and mortality by an average of 22 ft³/acre/year over the re-measurement period. On nonindustrial timberlands, a portion of which are actively managed, growth exceeded harvest and mortality by an average of over 85 ft³/acre/year. On Forest Service managed (i.e., non-wilderness) timberlands, which are managed for multiple objectives including ecosystem services, growth

exceeded harvest and mortality by an average of over 33 ft³/acre/year. These values are shown in Figure 2 (FRAP, 2017).

Figure 2. Net Softwood Timberland Growth



Of the approximately 33 million forested acres in California, about 57 percent are owned and managed by federal agencies, 3 percent by state and local agencies, and 40 percent by families or individuals, Native American tribes, and companies. Industrial timber companies own 14 percent of the total forested acres in California. 9 million acres are owned by individuals, with nearly 90 percent of these owners having less than 50 acres of forest land. (UCANR, 2019a). Ownership patterns have changed for large industrial forest landowners within California. All industrial ownerships are now privately held firms, in contrast with 1970 when 56 percent were publicly traded firms.

The use of exemptions, as allowed for under PRC § 4584 and 14 CCR § 1038, decreased slightly in acreage, but increased in number (Figure 3).

Emergency Notices provided for under 14 CCR § 1052.1 decreased in number and in acreage (Figure 4). The Board and CAL FIRE recently completed the Exemption-Emergency Notice Pilot study. The study gathered data on the use of exemptions and emergency notices and a variety of environmental indicators to begin to determine how the use of exemptions impacts public trust resources. An initial report was published in May, 2019 (Olsen et al., 2019).

Individual Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) decreased slightly in number and increased in acreage in Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (Figure 5). The number of Non-Industrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs) remained nearly the same, but acreage was almost doubled (Figure 6). The first Working Forest Management Plan (WFMP) was approved in 2019 (Figure 7).

Figure 3. Exemption Statistics for Fiscal Years 14/15-19/20

Fiscal Year	Harvest Document Type	Number of Notifications	Acres	Total Acres
2014/15	1038(b) Exemptions	781	2,884,982	
	All other Exemptions	1,009	41,563	
	Total Exemptions	1,790		2,926,545
2015/16	1038(b) Exemptions	697	2,589,358	
	1038(k) Exemptions	776	110,224	
	All other Exemptions	1,003	27,433	
	Total Exemptions	2,476		2,721,015
2016/17	1038(b) Exemptions	522	2,592,252	
	1038(k) Exemptions	956	10,358	
	All other Exemptions	1,032	208,111	
	Total Exemptions	2,510		2,910,721
2017/18	1038(b) Exemptions	554	2,933,286	
	1038(k) Exemptions	414	44,357	
	All other Exemptions	1,042	482,206	
	Total Exemptions	2,010		3,459,849
2018/19	1038(a) & 1038(b) Exemptions (prior to 3/1/19)	320	1,310,933	
	1038(b) Exemptions (after 3/1/19)	131	999,762	

	1038(f) Exemptions (after 3/1/19)	3	112	
	1038(k) Exemptions	94	7,464	
2018/19 (continued)	1038.3 Exemptions (after 3/1/19)	15	1,892	
	All other Exemptions	1,605	454,582	
	Total Exemptions	2,168		2,774,745
2019/20	1038.3	48	5,447	
	1038(b)	463	2,281,985	
	1038(f)	8	165	
	1038(g)	0	0	
	All other Exemptions	2,246	733,933	
	Total Exemptions	2,765		2,706,977

Figure 4. Emergency Notice Statistics for Fiscal Years 14/15-19/20.

Fiscal Year	Harvest Document Type	Number of Notifications	Total Acres
2014/15	Emergency Notice	266	66,735
2015/16	Emergency Notice	231	28,921
2016/17	Emergency Notice	81	15,123
2017/18	Emergency Notice	189	14,133
2018/19	Emergency Notice	289	42,247
2019/20	Emergency Notice	158	16,056

Note: Calculated as Emergency Notices validated by CAL FIRE review team between July 1 and June 30 of each FY.

Figure 5. THP Statistics for Fiscal Years 11/12-19/20

Fiscal Year	Harvest Document Type	Number of Plans	Acres
2011-12	THP	270	139,553
2012-13	THP	243	107,051
2013-14	THP	278	146,384
2014-15	THP	260	128,644
2015-16	THP	249	99,271
2016-17	THP	219	91,067
2017-18	THP	266	105,433
2018-19	THP	244	100,888
2019-20	THP	234	122,586

Note: Calculated as Timber Harvest Plans validated by CAL FIRE review team between July 1 and June 30 of each FY.

Figure 6. NTMP Statistics for Fiscal Years 11/12-19/20

Fiscal Year	Harvest Document Type	Number of Plans	Acres
2011-12	NTMP	14	10,932
2012-13	NTMP	12	7,365
2013-14	NTMP	10	4,126
2014-15	NTMP	12	3,367
2015-16	NTMP	17	8,100
2016-17	NTMP	23	5,105
2017-18	NTMP	14	4,448

18			
2018-19	NTMP	14	2,410
2019-20	NTMP	13	4,215

Note: Calculated as Nonindustrial Timber Management Plans validated by CAL FIRE review team between July 1 and June 30 of each FY.

Figure 7. WFMP Statistics for Fiscal Year 19/20

Fiscal Year	Harvest Document Type	Number of Plans	Acres
2019-20	WFMP	1	4,470

Biomass and other Wood Product Innovation

Biomass utilization is recognized by many stakeholders as a carbon-neutral opportunity to facilitate management of California's forested ecosystems. The expenses of forest restoration and sustainable management on both public and private lands can be supported through the sale of biomass and forest products. However, for sales to be profitable there is a need for increased biomass processing capacity to handle dead trees and other traditionally unmerchantable vegetative material removed for hazard control (FCAT, 2018). In addition to producing electricity, biomass can also be used to produce other innovative short- and long-lived wood products with varying carbon benefits.

The forest products biomass market remains narrow. Challenges to biomass energy expansion include short-term contracts between energy producers and purchasers, fluctuating energy values, lack of energy sector subsidies, competition with other forms of renewable energy, and the economics involved in the treatment, handling, and transportation of forest material (FCAT, 2018).

Biomass facilities across the state have been closing for many years. The retention of the remaining biomass facilities has been a priority for the Legislature, largely due to high numbers of drought-killed trees and to the amount of biomass created by fuels reduction treatments. Thus, SB 859 (2016) was passed by the Legislature and ultimately chaptered by the Brown Administration. The bill, in part, calls on electricity retailers to enter into five-year contracts for 125 megawatts of biomass power from facilities that have the ability to generate energy from wood harvested from high fire

hazard zones, as identified by the Tree Mortality Task Force. SB 901 (2018) both expanded the fuels and feedstocks which are eligible to meet those wildfire risk reduction requirements and requires that any organization which currently has an active contract for electricity generated from biomass expiring on or before December 31, 2023 seek to extend that contract for 5 additional years (FCAT, 2018).

The Forest Carbon Plan recommends building out the 50MW small scale wood-fired bioenergy facilities that were mandated through SB 1122 (2012). The California Energy Commission's Electric Program Investment Charge will continue public investment in this build out. Additionally, there will be an effort to expedite the siting and establishment of facilities fueled by biomass from tree mortality High Hazard Zones (FCAT, 2018).

There are also numerous innovative products with sufficient commercial and technical readiness, and potential market size, to justify increased public and private investments in their development. Earlier this year, under the oversight of the Board, the California Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation (Institute) produced a review of forest product innovation literature, gaps in forest product innovation research, potential strategic partnerships, and recommendations for near-term priorities to support the expansion of the innovative wood products sector in California (Sanchez et al. 2020). The most promising classes of innovative wood products identified by the Institute include: Mass timber; liquid and gaseous transportation fuels; and chemically and thermally treated wood.

The Institute's priority recommendations include: (1) Aligning State incentives to better account for the climate benefits of forest products; (2) Promoting infrastructure development for innovative wood product processing and; (3) Funding research to further innovation in wood products, including development of product layouts for mass timber panels from California feedstock, identifying scalable structural wood products from small-diameter and non-merchantable biomass and investigating subsidy design for mobilization of nonmerchantable biomass to best serve California's climate change goals.

Fire Protection Trends

Weather Patterns

The entire state of California emerged from drought status for a portion of 2019. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, in the second full week of March 2019, "California emerged from drought conditions for the first week since December 11, 2011, breaking its 376-week streak," ([USDM](#), March 19,

2019). However, as illustrated in Figure 8, nearly all of California was ranging from near average to record driest precipitation for calendar year 2020, especially near the northern Sacramento Valley ([NOAA, 2020](#)). Precipitation was also significantly below average for the water year (Figure 9), possibly reflecting a slightly shorter or later than average start to winter precipitation in 2019 ([NOAA, 2020](#)). Temperatures have generally been much above average for majority of the state, with greater departures in the Bay Area, and the San Joaquin Valley; (Figure 10) ([NOAA, 2020](#)).

The California Department of Water Resources reported smaller snowpack conditions going into 2020, with snow water equivalent on April 1 between 53 and 66 percent of average levels for that date ([DWR, 2019a](#)). A lack of snow accumulation from reporting stations in the Southern and Central Sierra regions lasted through at least May 15 and remained in the Northern Sierra/Trinity region through May 31. Snowpack water content was average for the 2019-20 winter, but falling significantly short of 2018-19 (Figure 11) ([DWR, 2020b](#)). Snowpack is incredibly important in California's Mediterranean climate as it typically predicts how much water will reach streams and reservoirs in summer months. Snowpack provides about one-third of the water used by cities and farms in the state as it melts during the summer months. Thanks largely to the average snowpack, the state began the new water year on October 1 with reservoir storage at 95 percent of average for that date ([DWR, 2019c](#)).

Figure 8. Precipitation Rankings for January-October 2020 When Compared with Local Averages from 1895-2019. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information.

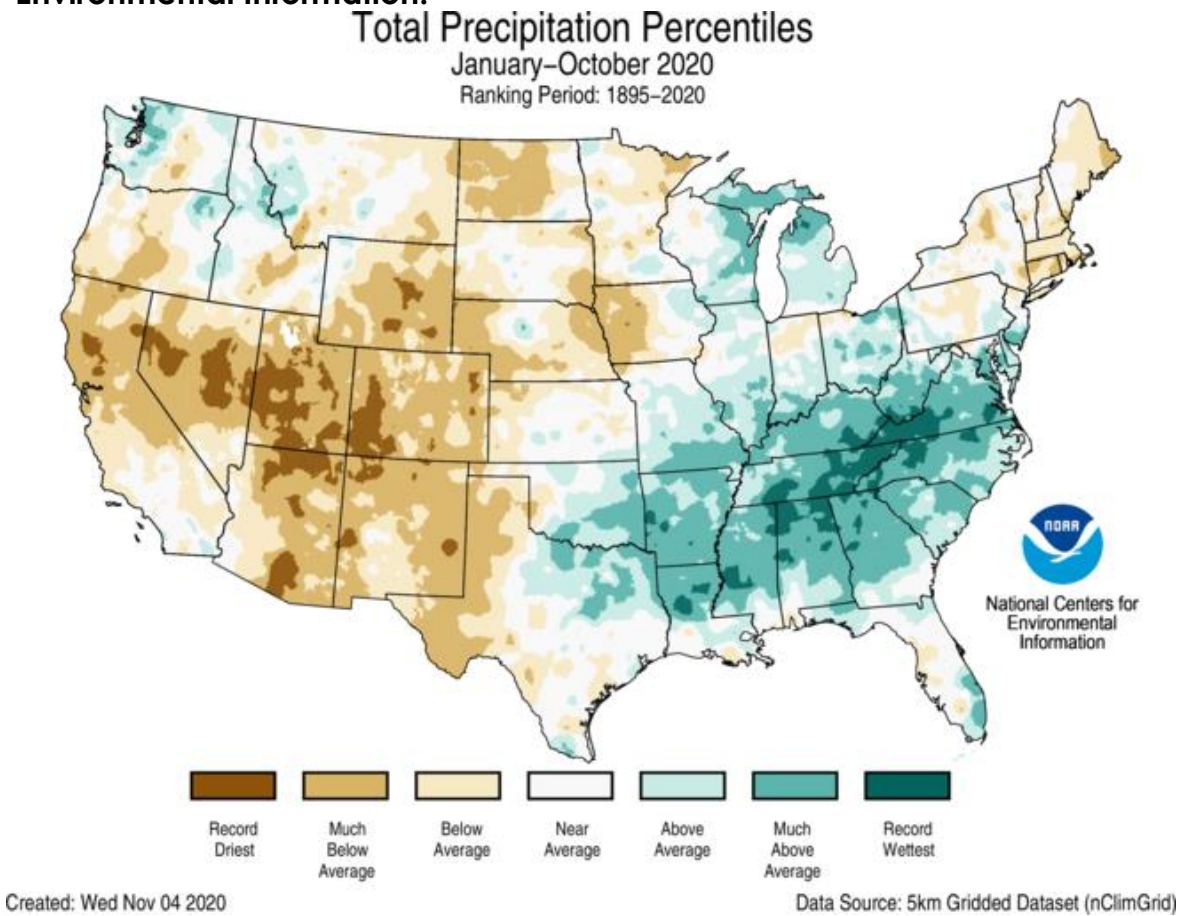
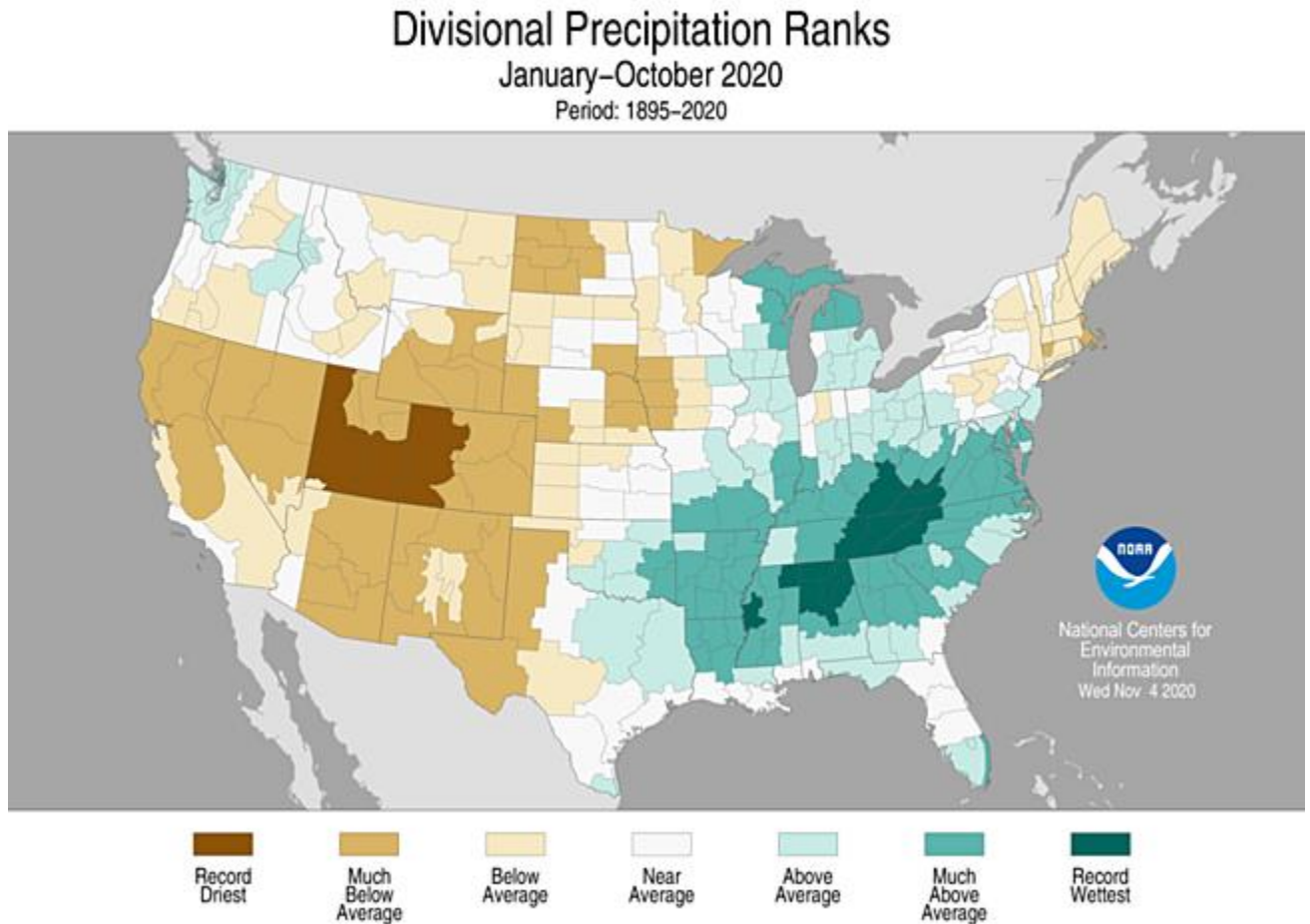


Figure 9. Precipitation Rankings for January - October 2020 When Compared with Local Averages from 1895-2019. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information.¹



¹ Note: Data for this period were not found presented at the same fine scale used for the annual data, Figures 9 and 11.

Figure 10. Temperature Rankings for January-October 2020 When Compared with Local Averages from 1895-2019. NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information.

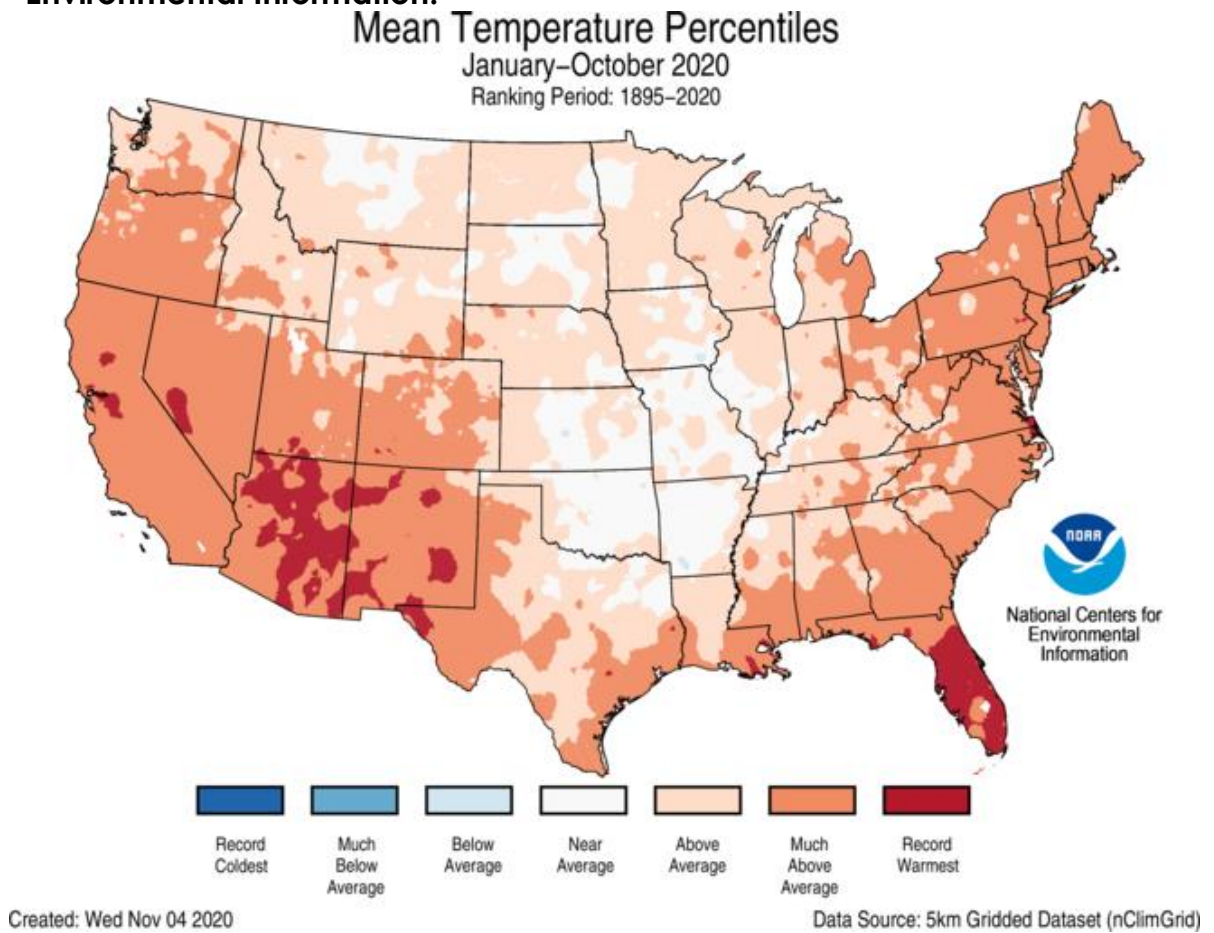
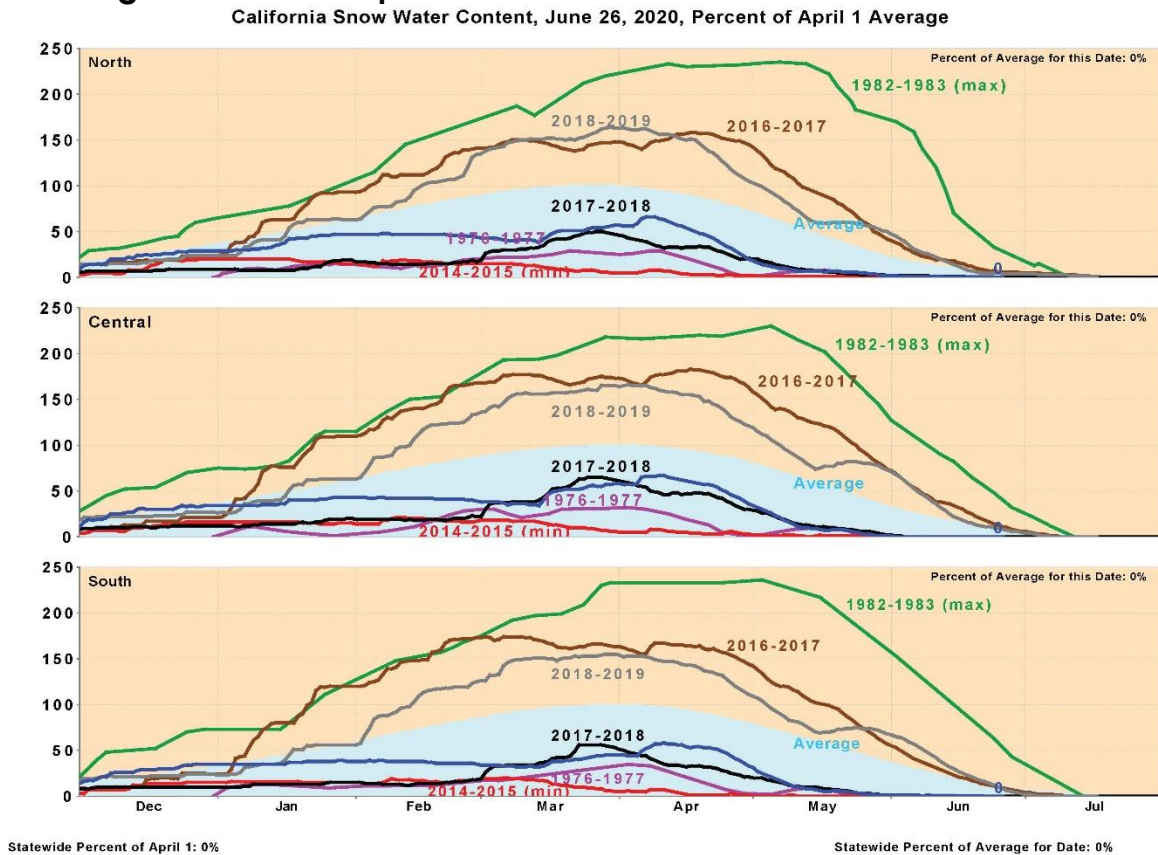


Figure 11. California Snow Water Content,² June 26, 2020, Percent of April 1 Average. California Department of Water Resources.



Prescribed Fire and Fuel Reduction Efforts

As fire size and severity have worsened over the past decade, mandates to focus on fuels reduction treatments have arisen. In 2018, Executive Order B-52-18 from then-governor Brown ordered the doubling of forest acres treated per year from 250,000 to 500,000 statewide within five years. The expanded use of fuels treatments to prevent catastrophic wildfire continues to be a high priority for the Board and CAL FIRE. Fuel treatments are intended to reduce the amount of surface and ladder fuels and thereby reduce the risk of catastrophic fires that burn longer, further, and hotter. The modification of fire behavior because of fuel reduction efforts may prevent loss of life, reduce fire suppression costs, reduce property losses, and protect natural resources. Fuel treatments utilized by CAL FIRE include, but are not limited to, prescribed fire, mechanical clearing, cooperative fuel reduction grants, and encouraging

² The Y-axis of the figure is percent of April 1st average Snow Water Content, which refers to the depth of liquid that would result over the same land area if the entire snowpack were to be melted instantaneously.

stand management by timber owners through application of the FPRs. EO B-52-18 also encouraged the use of prescribed fire as a management tool.

CAL FIRE's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) is a cost-sharing program that encourages fuel reduction in state responsibility area lands (SRA) and focuses on prescribed fire. The use of fire mimics natural processes, enables fuel reduction, and restores fire to its historic role in wildland ecosystems, which may improve native communities. The VMP can be utilized by private landowners to accomplish fuel reduction goals on their property using prescribed fire and other fuel management techniques. Figures 12 and 13 below illustrate the acreage goals and number of acres treated in the three most recent fiscal years.

Figure 12. Broadcast/Prescribed Burn Targets and Acres Completed.
***FY 2020/21 is through December 31, 2020**

Fiscal Year	Target	Completed	% Completed
2017/2018	20,000	19,413	97.07%
2018/2019	25,000	31,305	125.22%
2019/2020*	25,000	13,450	53.80%
2020/2021	25,000	27,143	108.57%

Figure 13. All Other Fuel Reduction Method Targets and Acres Completed.
***FY 2020/21 is through December 31, 2020**

Fiscal Year	Target	Completed	% Completed
2017/2018	20,000	13,344	66.70%
2018/2019	20,000	15,331	76.66%
2019/2020*	20,000	13,730	68.65%
2020/2021	20,000	28,033	140.17%

Defensible space is managed space around a structure or other site of importance designed to reduce the risk of a fire spreading into adjoining wildland, and vice versa. Reduced natural fuel loads, decreased continuity of fuels, the removal of flammable materials from near structures, and the use of fire-resistant materials in landscaping and home construction are just some of the techniques that contribute to defensible space. These techniques reduce the chances of a structure igniting during a wildfire and increase firefighter safety during structure defense operations. Defensible space and the management of fuels, particularly around homes and public buildings, have become increasingly important as the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) continues to expand and more severe fires threaten WUI areas. CAL FIRE

recently updated the Defensible Space Collector App to make inspections more efficient and accurate. Figure 14 illustrates the goals for defensible space inspections and how many were accomplished within the three most recent fiscal years.

Figure 14. Defensible Space Inspections Completed.

Fiscal Year	Target	Completed	% Completed
2017/2018	250,000	217,666	87.07%
2018/2019	250,000	204,341	81.74%
2019/2020	250,000	222,040	88.82%

CAL FIRE also sponsors several grant opportunities which focus on fuels reduction and forest health. The California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) can be used by small landowners for reimbursement of forestry practices that improve the health and resilience of their lands. These activities may include fuels reduction practices. Additionally, CAL FIRE sponsors the Forest Health, Urban and Community Forestry, and Fire Prevention grants, which are funded through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. Part of their overarching goal is improving carbon sequestration by reducing the risk of intense wildfires and improving general forest health.

Finally, CAL FIRE has developed designated fuels reduction crews. Previously, fuels reduction was often completed by local CAL FIRE teams when they were not fighting fire. The development of designated crews for fuels reduction is anticipated to increase prescribed fire and manual fuels treatment numbers in the coming years. Five crews are headquartered in the Northern Region and five in the Southern Region. CAL FIRE approved 318 applicants to take the most recent Forestry Technician exam. The new members of these crews are currently rotating between their required trainings and working in the field.

California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP)

On December 30, 2019, the Board certified a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and approved the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting program. This CalVTP and PEIR will streamline California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance for CAL FIRE and other state and local public agencies' vegetation management projects. The CalVTP PEIR is intended for vegetation management activities that lower the risk of catastrophic wildfires on non-federal lands by managing vegetation to modify or reduce hazardous fuels. There are currently 13 proposed projects and 5 which have been certified for

implementation (see Figure 15 below).

Figure 15. Vegetation Treatment Projects Certified under the CalVTP.

Project ID	Acres Treated	Treatment Type
2020-9	398	Broadcast burning; pile burning
2020-12	100	Manual treatment; pile burning
2020-13	1,630	Broadcast burning; pile burning; Manual treatment; Mechanical treatment; Herbicide Application
2020-10	90	Broadcast burning; Pile burning; Mechanical treatment
2020-1	1,012	Broadcast burning
Sum	3,230	

Wildfire Activity

The 2020 fire season, like much of the year, ravaged the state. A significant dry lightning storm that began on August 15th produced over 14,000 strikes that sparked more than 900 fires. With minimal precipitation and extreme weather experienced throughout the state over the course of the year, the conditions made the potential for significant fire behavior a reality.

In mid-August, 96% of CAL FIRE's engines were committed to wildfires. At peak, all 6 CAL FIRE Incident Management Teams (IMT) were activated, and more than 19,000 firefighters from nearly a dozen states across the nation were assigned to emergency incidents.

The magnitude and severity of wildfires CAL FIRE responded to was historic, surpassing previous years. This year, CAL FIRE experienced more than 7,600 fires that burned over 2,100,000 acres in CAL FIRE jurisdiction, compared to the 1,063,414 acres burned in 2018. Nearly 4.8 million acres have been scorched across state and federal jurisdictional lands in California, destroying over 9,400 structures and killing 35 individuals.

Figure 16. Most Destructive Incidents, 2020

Name (Unit or Contract County Abbreviation)	Acreage	Structures Destroyed	Fatalities
August Complex	1,032,648	935	0
SCU Lightning Complex	396,624	222	0
Creek Fire	379,895	853	0
LNU Lightning Complex	363,220	1,491	5
North Complex	318,935	2,352	15
SQF Complex	174,178	228	0

*These are the Top 20 regardless of whether they were state, federal, or local responsibility.

Figure 17. Lightning Siege Comparison

	2020*	2008	1987
Lightning Strikes	nearly 14,000	5,000	11,000
Number of Wildfires	900+	1,459	1,100
Acres Burned	nearly 2.8 million	245,000	640,000
Personnel Committed	over 14,000	18,457	14,000
Engines Assigned	over 1,250	1,399	NA
Structures Destroyed	Over 6,900	8,400	40
Fatalities	26	42	11

* The 2020 Lightning Siege spanned from August 15 through August 30.

Note: Unless noted otherwise, these values tabulate wildfires responded to by CAL FIRE in SRA and LRA regions under contract with CAL FIRE.

Accomplishments 2020 – Regulatory

Appeal Amendments, 2019

Within the Professional Foresters Law, PRC § 765 provides that an applicant for registration as a professional forester or certified specialist who believes that they have been aggrieved by the PFEC with respect to their qualifications may appeal to the Board in accordance with regulations. These amendments provided additional clarity to both the applicant and those administering the appeals procedure and eliminated unnecessary and potentially burdensome aspects of the appeal procedures. Additionally, the amendments created a \$100 fee for appellants to cover administrative costs of appeals. The amendments became effective November 1, 2020.

Southern Subdistrict and Marin County Stocking Amendments, 2020

These amendments addressed certain forest health and ecological goals to provide for increased forest resilience and suitable resource conservation within the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District by adjusting point count standards within the Subdistrict to a level that reduces competition between trees for the essential resources of sunlight, water and nutrients needed for photosynthesis and requisite for forest resilience to natural stressors. The amendments additionally made point-count stocking standard requirements consistent throughout the coast forest district, eliminated provisions related to the even-aged management of eucalyptus, and generally improved the clarity of the regulations. These amendments are effective January 1, 2021.

Fuel Hazard Reduction Amendments, 2020

These amendments made permanent those emergency regulations adopted in 2019 which were intended to increase the utilization of the regulatory permitting process of the Emergency Notice for Fuel Hazard Reduction of 14 CCR § 1052.4 in order to address the hazardous conditions across forested lands throughout the state, as well as to improve the efficacy of vegetative treatments in addressing the existing problem of hazardous fuel conditions within this process. The permanent regulations are effective January 1, 2021.

Camping Fee Amendments, 2020

These amendments resulted in modest increases to overnight camping fees within Demonstration State Forests, as well as a simplification of those fee structures. It is anticipated that the regulations are effective January 1, 2021.

Licensed Timber Operator Education and Limited License Timber Operator

These amendments improved the clarity and consistency of the existing

regulations surrounding timber operator licenses, including making educational requirements of applicants consistent across all types of timber operator licenses. The amendments also limited the activities permitted under a limited timber operator license to avoid excessive risk, given the lack of insurance obligations. Finally, the amendments clearly implement existing conditional requirements within PRC § 4572. These regulations are effective January 1, 2021.

Tethered Operation Amendments, 2020

These regulations provided for the implementation of specific tethered logging systems for in use timber operations and to clarify what manner of system is intended for such use in those operations. The rule package additionally improved the clarity and consistency of certain existing regulations related to harvesting practices and erosion control by using modern and defined terminology and regulations, eliminated redundancy within existing regulations, and provided for appropriate disclosure in order to support the enforcement of those purposes described above. These regulations are effective January 1, 2021.

Emergency Fire Safe Regulations Applicability

These emergency regulations provided clarity regarding the scope and application of the SRA Fire Safe Regulations and reduced overly burdensome requirements inhibiting increases in affordable housing and increasing housing supply generally in the state. These emergency regulations became effective July 27, 2020, and, unless further action is taken by the Board to adopt permanent regulations, will expire May 26, 2021.

Local Government

General Plan Safety Elements

Under Government Code § 65302.5, the Board is required to review the General Plan Safety Elements for jurisdictions with SRA or very high fire hazard severity zones (VHFHSZ). Utilizing staff from CAL FIRE's Land Use Planning team, the Board established a standardized method to review the safety element of general plans. The methodology includes:

- 1) Reviewing the safety element for the requirements in Government Code §65302, subdivision (g)(3)(A),
- 2) Examining the safety element for goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures that mitigate the wildfire risk in the planning area (Gov. Code, § 65302, subd. (g)(3)(B) & (C)), and
- 3) Making recommendations for methods and strategies that would

reduce the risk of wildfires (Gov. Code, § 65302.5, subd. (b)(3)(B)).

Once completed, the Safety Element Assessment should provide clear guidance to a city or county regarding any areas of deficiency in the safety element as well as specific goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures the Board recommends adopting to mitigate or reduce the wildfire threat in the planning area. The Board does not have the authority to approve safety elements, but rather offers recommendations to improve fire hazard planning in the planning area. If jurisdictions choose not to implement the Board's recommendations, they must respond in writing to the Board discussing the reasons why not. SB 1260 (2018) now allows the Board to request a consultation with local jurisdictions who choose not to adopt the Board's recommendations and prevents the jurisdiction from approving the draft element or amendment until the requested consultation occurs. These changes will improve communication between the Board and local jurisdictions and enable further dialogue to better protect citizens. Regulations to implement this consultation process became effective January 1, 2020.

Figure 18. General Plan Safety Elements Reviewed by the Board November 2019-December 2020

Region	Type	Jurisdiction	Received	Reviewer	Board Review
CSR	City	Cathedral City	11/22/19	Marcus Hernandez	12/11/2019
CSR	City	Sonora	10/15/19	Kevin Lindo	12/11/2019
CNR	City	Willits	10/28/19	Rudy Baltazar	12/11/2019
CSR	City	Corona	1/2/20	Melissa Curtis	1/22/2020
CNR	County	Lassen	3/18/20	Shane Vargas	4/8/2020
CNR	City	Novato	3/2/20	Jeff Hakala	4/8/2020
CNR	City	Dunsmuir	4/16/20	Shane Vargas	6/10/2020
CSR	City	Murrieta	5/18/20	Marcus Hernandez	6/10/2020
CNR	City	Hercules	6/23/20	No VHFHSZ	
CSR	County	Ventura		Gene Potkey	7/14/2020
CSR	County	Orange	6/8/2020	Marcus Hernandez	
CNR	City	Etna	4/16/20	Shane Vargas	7/14/2020
CNR	City	Dorris	4/16/20	No VHFHSZ	
CSR	County	San Bernardino	7/14/20	Melissa Curtis	8/18/2020
CNR	City	Auburn	10/26/20	Carmel Barnhart	12/8/2020

Board Resolution 2020-2: Fire Safe Regulations – Temporary Suspension of Local Ordinance Certification Process

The Board is responsible for adopting the Fire Safe Regulations (FSR), which implement minimum fire safety standards in the SRA and LRA VHFHSZ. The FSRs do not supersede a local ordinance that equals or exceeds those minimum standards and 14 CCR § 1270.04 establishes a process by which the Board may certify a local ordinance as satisfying that standard. SB 901 (2018) requires the Board to adopt additional FSRs by July 1, 2021, and those regulations will invalidate any then-existing Board certifications as a matter of law. In order to avoid administrative inefficiencies for the Board and local jurisdictions, the Board adopted Resolution 2020-2 on November 4, 2020. The [resolution](#) temporarily suspends Board consideration of local ordinances for certification pending adoption of those statutorily-required revisions to the FSRs.

Appointment of Authorized Designees for Less Than Three Acre Conversions

The Board has been working on issues of conversion of timberland to cannabis cultivation for the past several years. The conversion of timberland to a use other than growing timber requires, prior to conversion, a Timberland Conversion Permit (or its equivalent) to be approved by CAL FIRE or, if eligible, a Less Than 3 Acre Conversion Exemption to be accepted by CAL FIRE. In the context of cooperation with local entities, the Board, pursuant to § 1104.1(a)(1)(D) of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (14 CCR), gives the county the opportunity to determine if proposed timberland conversions are in conformance with all county regulatory requirements through the incorporation of a signed and dated statement from an authorized designee of the County Board of Supervisors.

When a county does not have an authorized designee, the authority falls to the RPF preparing the Exemption to certify that the county has been contacted and the conversion is in conformance with county regulatory requirements. RPFs have communicated that this determination can be challenging if they work in multiple counties, each of which may have different regulatory requirements. Consequently, the Board communicated with County Boards of Supervisors to encourage them, if they have not already done so, to appoint an authorized designee to ensure land uses conform to county regulatory requirements. Figure 20 below indicates the response to the Board's request for counties to appoint an Authorized Designee to determine if conversions are following county regulatory requirements. These efforts have been successful since their inception, with many counties appointing Authorized Designees. In 2020, the Board continued outreach and policy related to Less Than 3 Acre Conversions.

AB 1504 California Forest Ecosystem and Harvested Wood Product Carbon Inventory

California has set a net carbon sequestration target for the forest sector of five million metric tons (MMT) of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) annually until 2020. The Board is required to analyze above ground and below ground carbon stocks within all forested landscapes in California (AB 1504, 2010). In response, the Board publishes annual reports which discuss several elements of the State's effort to meet these greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets.

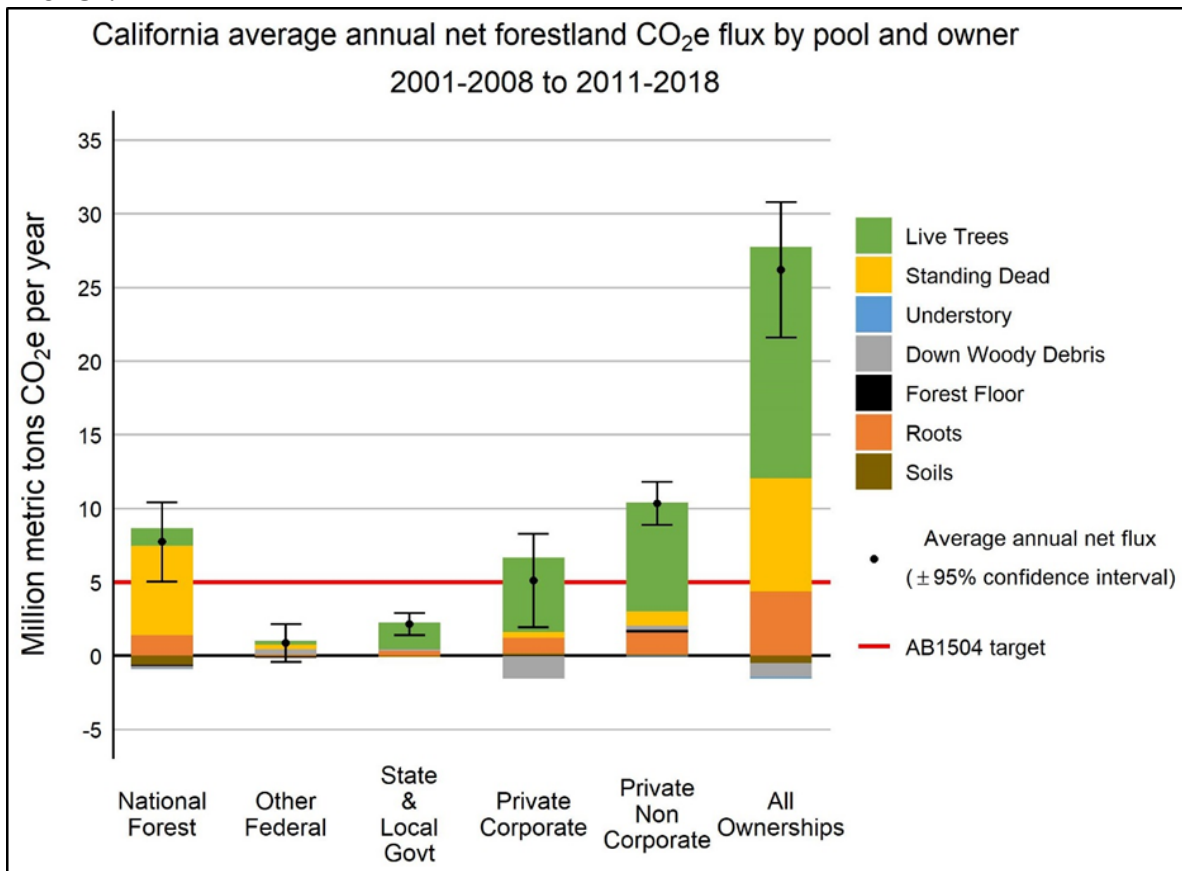
In September of 2020, the Board released an AB 1504 [California Forest Ecosystem and Harvested Wood Product Carbon Inventory](#) data update for the 2018 reporting period. The report indicates that California's forests are sequestering carbon at a rate of 24.9 MMT CO₂e per year, down slightly from the 2017 reporting period which estimated 27.9 MMT CO₂e per year. This value includes changes in forest ecosystem pools (26.2 MMT CO₂e per year), harvested wood product pools (0.7 MMT CO₂e per year), non-CO₂ emissions from wildfires (-0.6 MMT CO₂e per year), and forest land conversions (-1.5 MMT CO₂e per year).

In this report there was a revision of soil organic carbon stock and flux estimates based on refinements in the Digital General Soil Map of the United States (STATSGO2) dataset. Minor revisions of harvested wood product carbon stock and flux estimates also occurred following the discovery of errors in a couple input parameters and errors in the model code that resulted in an average of approximately 1% of the initial harvested carbon to disappear from storage pools and remain unaccounted for in emission categories. Model code was corrected through re-coding the model using R-script through an agreement between Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State University, and Groom Analytics, LLC. A remaining error that resulted in narrower confidences intervals than expected based on the parameters set for Monte Carlo Uncertainty Analysis will be corrected in the 2019 data update expected by the end of the calendar year.

A new agreement with the Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNW) to complete the full 10-year measurement cycle carbon report following completion of data collection in 2020 was executed this year. Collaboration with the states of Oregon and Washington, British Columbia, PNW, and academia have been ongoing through the Pacific Coast Carbon Initiative led by PNW. The Oregon Board of Forestry has released a forest ecosystem and harvested wood product carbon inventory that mirrors California's AB 1504 inventory and the Washington inventory is in final stages of review. A new agreement was also established with PNW to complete a

Pacific Coast Temperate Forest and Harvested Wood Product regional report that will incorporate results from the California, Oregon, and Washington forest carbon inventories as well as relevant data from BC. This report will also include a timber (i.e., log and chip) and finished wood product flow analysis of material within and beyond this region, funded by PNW.

Figure 19. California forest land statewide estimate of average annual carbon flux (MMT CO₂/year) by pool and ownership, 2001-2008 to 2011-2018*.



*Excludes contributions from forest land-use changes, non-CO₂ GHG from fire, and HWP C.

State Forests

The Board has changed the review periods for Initial State Forest Management Plans from five to ten years. This change was made following concerns expressed by forest managers, citing limited staffing, and increasing workload. The longer period will allow the plans to be broader, encompass longer-term changes and trends, and reduce pressures on staff. Figure 23 (below) outlines the proposed schedule for management plan

updates.

Figure 20. Proposed Management Plan Update Schedule

Demonstration State Forest	Management Plan Update (Year)	Management Plan Status
LaTour	2022	Approved 2013
Soquel	2024	Approved 2014
Jackson	2026	Approved 2016
Boggs Mountain	2028	Approved 2018
Mountain Home	2020	Approved 2020

Stewardship Lands

The Stewardship Council Board has recommended fee title transfer of lands within the North Fork Mokelumne River, Pit River, Tunnel Reservoir, Battle Creek, Cow Creek, Lake Spaulding, and Bear River planning units to CAL FIRE. These future acquisitions added to the Demonstration State Forest system will ultimately require Board-approved forest management plans. With the Stewardship Council Board recommendation for transfer of lands to CAL FIRE at Bear River in November 2018, fee title recommendations have been completed. In 2018, the Stewardship Council Board approved final Land Conservation and Conveyance Plans (conservation easements and agreements known also as LCCPs) for North Fork Mokelumne River, Pit River, and Tunnel Reservoir. The Stewardship Council continued to develop the final LCCPs for the remaining projects during 2020.

The Department of General Services and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) have developed the final form and content for each of the transaction documents, which will be utilized to construct documents for each of the transactions going forward. The California Natural Resources Agency has also participated in these discussions and is working to bring along associated transactions with State Parks. CAL FIRE and PG&E signed the Property Acquisition Agreement for the North Fork Mokelumne property in 2019 and received subsequent approval from the California Public Utilities Commission on October 7, 2019, to proceed with closing the transaction.

The acquisition was approved by the Public Works Board in December 2019 and CAL FIRE took fee title to 1,052 acres prior to the end of the year.

Conservation easement holders for each of the properties have been recommended by the Stewardship Council Board and include: Shasta Land Trust (Pit River, Tunnel Reservoir, Cow Creek), Western Shasta Resource Conservation District (Battle Creek), Mother Lode Land Trust (North Fork Mokelumne River), Placer Land Trust (Lake Spaulding), and Bear, Yuba, and Placer Land Trusts (Bear River). As currently written, CAL FIRE has successfully negotiated identical or very similar terms with each of the conservation easement holders to reduce the number of unique restrictions on any property. CAL FIRE has been on site to document baseline conditions and discuss the intended management with each of the conservation easement holders.

It is expected that the Pitt River, Tunnel Reservoir, Lake Spaulding, and Bear River planning units will close in late 2021.

Professional Licensing and Forest Practice Enforcement

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code (PRC) § 750 *et seq.*, the Board is authorized to grant licenses to Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) and specialty certificates for Certified Rangeland Managers (CRMs). Earning either license is contingent upon meeting educational and work experience standards and ultimately passing an examination specific to the license or specialty.

The term “Professional Forester” is defined in PRC § 752 and refers to a person who, by reason of his or her knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics, and the principles of forestry, acquired by forestry education and experience, performs services, including, but not limited to, consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, or responsible supervision of forestry activities when those professional services require the application of forestry principles and techniques. The CRM certification is the only “Certified Specialist” credential bestowed and recognized by the Board. A CRM is defined in 14 CCR § 1651 as “... a person who provides services pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1602, at the request of the landowner or hiring agent, relating to the application of scientific principles to the art and science of managing rangelands and range.”

Figure 22. Board Licensed Professionals and Certified Specialists

Year	RPFs	CRMs
2016	1194	85
2017	1161	84
2018	1132	88
2019	1126	89
2020	1105	86

Professional Discipline

Most professional disciplinary matters are confidential in nature. They are handled administratively and generally do not culminate in a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge and/or the Board. In 2020, the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) received no complaints.

Enforcement

PRC § 4601 *et seq.* authorizes the Board to investigate and discipline, “Any person who willfully violates any provision of this chapter or rule or regulation of the Board....” These civil penalties are identified, investigated, and pursued by CAL FIRE, with final adjudicative authority on these matters residing with the Board. During the 2020 calendar year, the Board deliberated and acted on seven civil penalties for non-compliance with the Forest Practice Act and/or the Forest Practice Rules.

Acronyms:

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used in this document:

APA: Administrative Procedure Act

Board: California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

CalEPA: California Environmental Protection Agency

CAL FIRE: California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

CalVTP: California Vegetation Treatment Program

CDTFA: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

CFIP: California Forest Improvement Program

CLFA: California Licensed Foresters Association

CRM: Certified Rangeland Manager

DWR: California Department of Water Resources

EMC: Effectiveness Monitoring Committee

FCAT: Forest Climate Action Team

FPA: Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973

FPRs: Forest Practice Rules

FRAP: Fire and Resource Assessment Program

FRID: Fire Return Interval Departure

LRA: Local Responsibility Area

NTMP: Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan

OAL: Office of Administrative Law

PG&E: Pacific Gas & Electric

PEIR: Program Environmental Impact Report

PFEC: Professional Foresters Examining Committee

RMAC: Range Management Advisory Committee

RPF: Registered Professional Forester

SRA: State Responsibility Area

SYP: Sustained Yield Plan

UCANR: University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

USDAM: United States Drought Monitor

USFS: United States Forest Service

VHFHSZ: Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

WFMP: Working Forest Management Plan

WUI: Wildland-Urban Interface

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APPENDIX A: 2020 Standing Committee Accomplishments and 2021 Priorities

Forest Practice Committee (FPC)

The mission of the FPC is to evaluate and promote an effective regulatory system to assure the continuous growth and harvesting of commercial forests and to protect soil, air, fish and wildland, and water resources.

January 20, 2021

COMPLETED OR SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED IN 2020:

1. Report on Exemptions and Emergencies as Required by Public Resources Code (PRC) § 4589:

Status: *The Exemption-Emergency Notice pilot monitoring project was recently completed, and the initial draft report was completed in May 2019. The Forest Practice Committee reviewed the draft report and provided a venue for both public and agency comment on the draft report. The report was approved by the Board but was not submitted to the legislature due to revisions of legislative reporting dates provided in PRC § 4589 by SB 901.*

A second iteration draft report that provided findings associated with data collected on Emergency Notices was provided to the Forest Practice Committee in November 2019. The Forest Practice Committee reviewed the draft report and provided a venue for both public and agency comment on the draft report. Several revisions to the draft report were made based on input received from the Forest Practice Committee and other stakeholders. This iteration of the report was approved by the Board on December 30, 2019 and will be submitted to the legislature as required by PRC § 4589.

2. Fuel Hazard Reduction Emergency Notice

Objective: *Review the regulations for the Emergency Notice for Fuels Hazard Reduction. Specifically, address the issues of canopy closure, surface fuels, and allowable geographic locations with respect to fuels reduction and fire prevention efforts. Address how to improve clarity related to canopy standards, clearance standards, and QMD standards.*

Status: *Permanent regulations titled “Fuel Hazard Reduction Amendments, 2020” were adopted by the Board on July 15, 2020 which were intended to increase the utilization of the regulatory permitting process of the Emergency Notice for Fuel Hazard Reduction of 14 CCR § 1052.4 in order to address the hazardous conditions across forested lands throughout the state, as well as to improve the efficacy of vegetative treatments in addressing the existing problem of hazardous fuel conditions within this process. The regulations were submitted to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) on July 23, 2020. The regulations were approved by OAL on September 17, 2020 and will become effective January 1, 2021.*

3. Tethered Operations

Objective: Evaluate the use of mechanized steep slope harvesting equipment and the interface of this equipment and existing forest practice regulation. Assess uses and potential limitations of the equipment and the role it may play in the future of timber harvesting throughout the state.

Status: The Board adopted permanent regulations titled “Tethered Operation Amendments, 2020” on September 23, 2020 which were intended to provide for the implementation of specific tethered logging systems for in use timber operations and to clarify what manner of system is intended for such use in those operations. The rule package additionally improved the clarity and consistency of certain existing regulations related to harvesting practices and erosion control by using modern and defined terminology and regulations, eliminated redundancy within existing regulations, and provided for appropriate disclosure in order to support the enforcement of those purposes described above. The regulations were submitted to OAL on September 29, 2020, approved on November 10, 2020, and will become effective January 1, 2021.

4. Expanded Allowance for Use of Ground-Based Harvest Equipment:

Objective: Review existing Forest Practice Rules related to limitations on the use of ground-based log yarding equipment to improve antiquated language and allow the rules to be more responsive to recent developments in technology. Address code sections for potential amendments; these sections may include, but are not limited to:

- 14 CCR § 913.1 (a) (2) – tractor yarding acreage limitations.
- 14 CCR § 914.3 (e) – tractor use limitation in cable yarding areas
- 14 CCR § 916.5 – reduced WLPZ widths for cable yarding

Status: The Committee developed a white paper titled “Partial Harvest in Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones Using Low Ground Pressure Zones Using Low Ground Pressure Equipment to Support Fire Resilient, Ecologically Diverse Stands and Associated Ecosystem Services” in order to provide guidance to land managers and review agencies to present the scientific basis for allowing harvest using low ground pressure equipment in WLPZs under appropriate site conditions and with best management practices applies. The Board approved of the document in early 2020 and the white paper has been distributed to those relevant parties.

Priority 1 for 2020:

1. Review of Forest Practice Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) Rules:

Objective: The FPC recommended publication of a 45 Day Notice of Rulemaking for the “Activity Center Definition” rule proposal in 2013. The Board subsequently authorized the publication of the 45 Day Notice. However, publication was postponed as the Fish

and Game Commission considered a petition requesting in state listing of NSO. The Commission accepted the petition and has determined that state listing for the NSO is warranted.

Currently, CAL FIRE, CDFW, and USFWS are developing tools to assist timberland owners with conserving NSO and their habitat. The Forest Management Task Force's "California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan" requires the Board to assist in this effort through the development of a strategy to incorporate the management of barred owl intrusion into spotted owl habitat.

Status: The FPC discussed the issue of NSO extensively during the second half of 2018. The Committee received presentations from a variety of individuals such as Ken Hoffman (USFWS) who spoke about NSO biology, and Mandy Culpepper (CDFW) who spoke about scoping sessions that CDFW has performed with affected landowners. Additionally, the Board held its September meeting in Yreka, CA with the specific intent of seeing NSO issues first hand via a field tour of NSO habitat areas on industrial and non-industrial lands. Many issues were raised by industrial landowners, non-industrial landowners, Board members, and members of the public. Staff Biologists from CDFW and the USFWS helped answer questions and facilitate the discussion during the tour of a variety of Siskiyou County timberlands. These discussions have culminated in an attempt to develop a well-defined problem statement related to NSO and possible courses of action to address this problem statement.

In 2019 the USFWS has engaged in revising Attachments to the No-Take Guidelines for NSO and is also working on developing a Safe Harbor Agreement for NSO. CAL FIRE and CDFW are also working on the development of a Spotted Owl Resource Plan for a geographically distinct portion of northern California. Upon the completion of these projects, the Board will continue discussions of NSO and contemplate updating regulations to reference new management opportunities.

The Board continues to gather information related to this issue but has not begun to address barred owl intrusion as of 2021.

2. 14 CCR § 1034, Contents of Plan:

Objectives:

- 14 CCR § 1034(r): How are the requirements of 14 CCR § 1032.7(f) to be met? The reference to 1032.7(f) is obsolete, since it refers to the past requirement that the RPF distributes and publishes a copy of the NOI.
- 14 CCR § 1034(x)(7): On a plan map, show the location of all crossings of classified watercourses except temporary crossings of Class III watercourses without flowing water during timber operations. The Board should consider

revising 1034 to make Class III watercourse crossings a required mapping feature within a Plan.

- *The Board should consider amending 14 CCR § 1034 when it adopts or amends any rule that adds elements that are considered a required portion of a harvesting plan. This ensures a central location where the RPF can find essential information that must be included in a harvesting document. The Board may want to consider a rule package that consolidates all required plan contents under 14 CCR §§ 1034, 1051, 1090.5, and 1092.09.*
- *The Board received a comment in response to its Annual Call for Regulatory Review that expresses concern over a lack of proper proof of ownership on Timber Harvest Plans or other harvesting permits. Parcel numbers or other proofs of ownership are not generally required but may assist in long-term tracking of ownerships, as well as inspection and enforcement.*
- *The Board should consider adopting regulatory standards for digital mapping submission requirements in timber harvesting documents, including geospatial data, LiDAR, or other remote sensing systems.*

Status: *The Committee began discussion on this item in January 2020, but logistical demands imposed by the COVID-19 situation saw the item removed from further agendas.*

3. Watercourse and Lake Protection Rule Review (14 CCR § 916):

Objectives:

- *Mapping of Class III Watercourse crossings. Language in 14 CCR §§1034(x)(7) and 916.4 [936.4,956.4] needs to be considered and potentially reconciled for purposes of consistency.*
- *Review the necessity and utility of assessing and mapping standards of 14 CCR § 916.4 for spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous salmonids.*
- *Consider revision of 14 CCR § 9 watershed restoration standards.*

Status: *No reportable action in 2020.*

4. RPF Responsibilities on Emergency Notices

Objective: *Current Forest Practice Rules explicitly address RPF responsibilities for certain types of harvest documents, such as THPs in 14 CCR § 1035.1, NTMPs in 14 CCR § 1090.10, PIERs and PTHPs in 14 CCR § 1092.12, and WFMPs in 14 CCR § 1094.11, but do not address RPF responsibility related to Emergency Notices. In 2019, the draft CAL FIRE Report on Exemptions and Emergency Notices identified lack of*

adequate RPF involvement as one of the causes of observed environmental and compliance issues described within the report. Making the responsibilities of the RPF explicit for emergency notices may address this issue.

Status: *The committee has not begun to evaluate this issue.*

5. Addition of Botanical Resource Considerations to the Forest Practice Rules

Objective: *CDFW requests that the Board prioritize strengthening the Forest Practice Rules to include specific rules for botanical resources. CDFW initially made this request to the Board in November 2018, and it was further supported by a related presentation at the May 2019 Board meeting in Chico.*

The Forest Practice Rules contain no botany-specific regulations. Instead, the timber harvesting process relies on guidance documents written by CDFW and CAL FIRE to fill in the regulatory gaps. The omission of scoping, mitigation, and management practices for botanical resources creates regulatory uncertainty and results in avoidable impacts to these resources. Augmenting the Forest Practice Rules would provide clear direction to applicants prior to plan submittal, reduce plan review time, and lead to more flexible management strategies for these resources. CDFW is ready to collaborate with the Board and stakeholders to develop rules for the disclosure and protection of California's botanical resources.

Status: *The Committee began exploration of this topic and is in the process of refining the problem statement on the issue. The Committee will continue work on the issue into 2021.*

6. Clarification of apparent conflict between Emergency Notice lifespan and slash treatment deadlines in 14 CCR 1052(e) and 1052.4(d)(5)

Objectives: *The Emergency Notice for Fuel Hazard Reduction allows for Timber Operations to occur for only 1 year from the date of acceptances, notwithstanding the allowance for burning operations to occur by April 1 of the year following creation.*

However, 14 CCR 1052.4(d)(5) states in part, "Fuel treatments...shall be accomplished within one (1) year from the start of operations..." This language appears to indicate, at least where slash treatment is concerned, the lifespan of an Emergency Notice is 12 months from the start of operations rather than 12 months from the date it is accepted by the Director.

Status: *The Committee has not begun deliberation on this item.*

PRIORITY 2 FOR 2021:

1. Review the Regulatory History, Implementation, and Future of 14 CCR § 916.11; Monitoring for Adaptive Management in Watersheds with Coho Salmon:

Objective: *The Rule requires the Board to develop a monitoring and adaptive management program for timber harvesting operations in watersheds with coho salmon. Multiple purposes for this program are stated within the Rule. The Board has since established a new science-based, multi-stakeholder, and multi-disciplinary Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC) for the purpose of reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Board's Forest Practice Rules relative to forestry and environmental protection, including the protection of watershed resources critical to listed species such as coho salmon. The FPC will review the history and requirements of 14 CCR § 916.11 to ensure the mission and activities of the EMC adequately address the purposes stated for this Rule and will determine if any additional specific Board action is necessary.*

Status: *No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2020.*

2. Issues of Basal Area and Retention within Existing Silvicultural Standards:

Objective: *Several questions have been raised regarding the suitability of the existing forest practice rules addressing current empirical understanding of various elements, including the relationship between forest spatial arrangement, or temporal variables and various aspects of forest health and other ecological systems. Regarding Variable Retention: (1) Should the Variable Retention regulation specify a minimum re-entry period for designated retention areas?; (2) Should the current regulation require a minimum stand age necessary for harvest to occur in order to demonstrate maximum sustained production (MSP) as is required for even-age silviculture under 14 CCR § 913.11(c)?; and (3) Are the minimum stocking requirements of CCR § 913.4 (d)(3)(H) relative to aggregate versus dispersed retention clear enough for consistent application and enforcement? Additionally, it has been reported that CAL FIRE does not allow use of the Transition silviculture method in timber stands which were most previously harvested utilizing the Selection method. This 'policy' is not consistent with 14 CCR § 913.2(b) or (b) (2). A THP was returned on this issue without being evaluated through PHI to support the determination.*

Status: *A working group was convened in to examine these various issues and is currently collecting information on the topics for the development of a future problem statement.*

3. Consideration of Repeal of 14 CCR 917.4(d) Prohibition of Broadcast Burning for Slash Treatment in the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District and Amendment of 917.3

Objectives: *Broadcast burning of logging slash can be a useful treatment option for reduction of slash and associated fire hazard. It is prohibited in the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District but is an allowable practice throughout much of the rest of*

the state. Prescribed broadcast burning would otherwise be allowable in the Southern Subdistrict under the CalVTP EIR outside of timber harvesting operations. The intensity of the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex that burned in portions of San Mateo and Santa Cruz within the Southern Subdistrict has forestry practitioners there discussing whether broadcast burning prior to the wildfire could have reduced fuel loads sufficiently to significantly moderate the intensity and impact of that fire.

Status: *The Committee has not begun deliberation on this item.*

4. Consistency Between Sections 1080 and 913.8

Objectives: *Between these two provisions (14 CCR §§ 895.1 and 913.8), there exists an issue of clarity and consistency regarding what stocking requirements apply on Substantially Damaged Timberlands within the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District. Special Harvesting Methods in the Southern Subdistrict includes an exclusive list of stocking requirements, however the definition for and provisions of Substantially Damaged Timberland allow for stocking standards which are not included within the exclusive list in 14 CCR § 913.8*

Status: *The committee has not begun deliberation on this item.*

5. Challenges Associated with Discretionary Elements in Ministerial Projects

Objective: *Exemptions and Emergency Notices are ministerial notices accepted by the Department that are bound by prescriptive standards for protection of natural and cultural resources. The Department has a short timeframe in which to conduct a ministerial review of the notices and determine whether or not to accept them. Despite their ministerial nature however, not every notice is devoid entirely of a discretionary element. In certain instances, there are also rule standards for these notices that direct or imply discretion by the Department.*

Status: *The Committee has not begun deliberation on this item.*

PRIORITY 3 FOR 2020:

1. 14 CCR § 1032.7(d) and 14 CCR § 1092.04(d) [in part]:

“A Notice of Intent shall include the following information:

- (4). The acres proposed to be harvested.*
- (5). The regeneration methods and intermediate treatments to be used.”*

Objectives:

(4) The Board should amend this paragraph to include all acres where timber operations will occur, not just the area where timber will be harvested. In doing so, the Board

should consider the current definition of logging area and the lack of a definition of plan area. (5) Requires stating the regeneration methods and intermediate treatments to be used. This paragraph may not capture all possible treatments that may occur, e.g., special prescriptions and other types of associated timber harvesting, such as road right-of-way or timberland conversion.

Status: This item was initially addressed by the Management Committee in 2010 in the form of a rule proposal to amend the NTMP NTO requirements. The item was remanded to the Management Committee following publication of a 45-day Notice of Rulemaking in December 2010 and initial hearing in February 2011. No further action was subsequently taken. No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2020.

2. Regulatory Amendments to 14 CCR § 1032.10 – Request for Domestic Water

Supplies:

“The THP submitter shall provide notice by letter to all other landowners within 1,000 feet downstream of the THP boundary whose ownership adjoins or includes a Class I, II, or IV watercourse(s) which receives surface drainage from the proposed timber operations. The notice shall...”

Objectives: CAL FIRE has requested the following items be potentially addressed regarding Notice of Timber Operations:

- *Overland flow or channel flow.*
- *Publication may need to be given in a newspaper of general circulation. CAL FIRE assumes this requires notification as defined in Government Code §§ 6000-6027.*
- *A tie should be made with the requirement to provide protection to domestic water supplies, as required per 14 CCR § 916.10 [936.10, 956.10].*
- *Require more current notification in which the post-marked date is no more than one year prior to submittal of the plan.*
- *Does a plan have to be returned if the RPF requests an exemption from one of the noticing requirements and CAL FIRE does not accept the request? The rule requires at least ten days passing after notification before submission of the plan.*

Status: No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2020.

3. Review of Regulations pertaining to Archaeological Training, Identification and Protection of Sites (14 CCR § 929 et seq.)

Objective: CAL FIRE indicates that existing Board regulations are not clear in terms of when a 5-year refresher training course for identification and protection of archaeological resources must be completed. It is recommended to review the existing rules to determine if further regulatory clarity or protection of these resources could be achieved.

Additionally, CAL FIRE has archaeological or historical sites along appurtenant roads that are not specifically associated with the commercial harvesting of forest products, but are associated with operations such as road construction, re-construction or maintenance. Considering these findings, CAL FIRE has requested a review of the definitions of Site Survey Area and Logging Area, balanced against the definition of timber operations in PRC § 4527, to address the issue of potential impacts to archaeological resources located along appurtenant roads where commercial harvesting is not occurring.

Status: No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2020.

4. Board Policy Review:

Objective: The Board currently has many policies in place, some dating back decades. The Board aspires to review and contemporize all policies and make them available to the public via the Board's website. Board policies cover a myriad of topics; committee assignment of this ongoing policy review will be based upon the subject matter of the individual policy under review.

Status: Continuously ongoing.

Resource Protection Committee (RPC)

The mission of the Resource Protection Committee is to develop and promote a policy and regulatory program that implements fire safe land use planning and effective vegetation management, pursues a fire prevention program in alignment with the State Fire Plan, and improves forest and rangeland health in California.

January 20, 2021

COMPLETED OR SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED IN 2020

1. Regulations Development

Objective: Clarify, interpret, or make specific new legislation from 2018 (AB 2911, SB 1260, SB 901) via regulation, as necessary.

Status: “Subdivision Map Findings, 2019,” “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Adoption, 2019,” and “Fire Safety Survey, 2019” regulations were all made operable April 1, 2020.

2. Fire Safe Development Regulations Certification

Objective: Review and certify local county ordinances submitted for certification under 14 CCR §1270.03.

Status: Temporarily suspended pursuant to resolution adopted by the Board at its November 4, 2020 meeting to suspend certifications until amendments to the Fire Safe Regulations in accordance with PRC § 4290 are adopted and take effect.

3. Fire Safe Development Regulations Emergency Rulemaking

Objective: Address concerns regarding the scope and applicability of the Fire Safe Regulations in light of the ongoing wildfire and housing crises in the State.

Status: Emergency regulations approved by OAL and made effective on July 27, 2020. Without further action, these emergency regulations will expire on May 26, 2021, due to the Governor’s Executive Orders N-40-20 and N-66-20.

ANNUAL ONGOING ITEMS

1. Safety Element Review (all counties with SRA; cities with VHFHSZ)

Objective: Review General Plan Safety Elements of all counties with SRA and cities with Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

Status: Review of safety elements ongoing.

2. Forest Pest Council

Objective: *Ongoing monitoring, management, and education and outreach (for professionals and lay people) regarding invasive pests and pathogens of concern in California's urban and wildland forests.*

Ongoing effort to offer relevant, practical information on tree dieoff as well as native and invasive pests and pathogens affecting California's urban and wildland forests.

Ongoing effort to further advance the CA Firewood Task Force 'Buy It Where You Burn It' message as well as the risks associated with spread of invasive species through the long-distance movement of firewood.

Status: *Ongoing review.*

PRIORITIES FOR 2020

1. Utility Right of Way Exemptions

Objective: *Review existing utility vegetation clearance exemptions in 14 CCR § 1250 et seq for areas of conflict or inconsistency with utility clearance requirements established by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).*

Status: *Draft revisions to Title 14, Division 1.5, Chapter 7, Article 4 complete; Standardized Regulatory Impact Assessment (SRIA) process ongoing. Awaiting Governor's approval for CNRA Assistant Secretary for Finance to sign the Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis since January 27, 2020.*

2. Fire Safety Survey

Objective: *With the Office of the State Fire Marshal, by July 1, 2021 survey existing subdivisions of 30 or more residential structures without secondary access at high fire risk, and develop recommendations to improve those subdivisions' fire safety.*

Status: *Finalizing implementation plan and progress reporting process with CAL FIRE subdivision review and land use planning program. Surveys to be conducted in earnest in the first two quarters of 2021.*

3. Fire Safe Regulations Update

Objective: *Clarify, interpret, or make specific new legislation from 2018 (AB 2911, SB 1260, SB 901) via regulation, as necessary. By July 1, 2021, update the 14 CCR 1270 regulations to apply to LRA, to establish requirements for greenbelts around communities, and to protect undeveloped ridgelines.*

Status: *Technical consultants and Board staff in final stages of developing draft regulations. Anticipated 45-day Notice to be approved by the Board in January 2021.*

4. 14 CCR 1299 Defensible Space Revisions

Objective: *Develop regulations in accordance with changes to PRC 4291 enacted by AB 3074, including new requirement for a zero to five-foot ember resistant zone around structures within the SRA and VHFHSZ in LRA. CAL FIRE and the Board will also develop and implement a widespread public information campaign and update the Ready for Wildfire program to explain the updated requirements.*

Status: *Budget Change Proposal for staff augmentation and technical consultants in approval process.*

5. CalVTP Implementation

Objective: *The Board will provide statewide web-based training on utilizing the CalVTP and other permitting processes. Working collaboratively with the Coastal Commission and the Water Board, the Board will also identify additional permitting processes that may need to be incorporated into the CalVTP process. To ensure consistent execution of CalVTP, the Board will oversee the first round of Project specific Analysis in various landscapes and geographies to ensure future projects have a consistent and high-quality template to follow.* **Status:** *The Board has selected to assume lead agency authority for two Project Specific Analysis (PSA) tiered from the CAL VTP. Project collaborators include UC Regents and Mid-Peninsula Open Space District. These two PSAs will be relied upon to develop statewide online training that will be made available in the first quarter of 2021. The focus the training will be to inform interested stakeholders and partners on how to rely upon the CAL VTP to assist efforts focused on increasing pace and scale of vegetation management activities for the purposes of fire prevention. Statewide web-based training is anticipated to become available in the first quarter of 2021.*

6. Fire Risk Reduction Communities List

Objective: *Clarify, interpret, or make specific new legislation from 2018 (AB 2911, SB 1260, SB 901) via regulation, as necessary. By July 1, 2022, develop a list of local agencies taking fire risk reduction activities.*

Status: *Draft rule text to be presented at the Board's December 8, 2020 Joint Committee meeting. Anticipated effective date of July 1, 2021.*

Management Committee (Committee)

The mission of the Management Committee is to evaluate and promote long-term, landscape level planning approaches to support natural resource management on California's non-federal forest and rangelands.

January 20, 2021

COMPLETED OR SUBSTANTIALLY COMPLETED IN 2020:

1. Southern Subdistrict and Marin Co Stocking Amendments

Objective: *Stocking standards within the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District, and further requirements within the County of Marin, of the Forest Practice Rules have been deemed to no longer represent the current state of forest management and climate. Specifically, seedling survival has improved, and the threat of drought and fire associated with climate change has increased, and the existing standards tend to result in overstocked forests with greater competition for resources, especially water. The objective of these stocking amendments is to lower point count requirements to make forests more resilient to drought, disease, and fire, to reduce costs associated with forest management, and to improve tree survival and carbon sequestration over the long term.*

Status: *The Board adopted permanent regulations titled "Southern Subdistrict and Marin Co. Stocking Amendments, 2020" on January 22, 2020 which addressed certain forest health and ecological goals to provide for increased forest resilience and suitable resource conservation within the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District by adjusting point count standards within the Subdistrict to a level that reduces competition between trees for the essential resources of sunlight, water and nutrients needed for photosynthesis and requisite for forest resilience to natural stressors. The amendments additionally made point-count stocking standard requirements consistent throughout the coast forest district, eliminated provisions related to the even-aged management of eucalyptus, and generally improved the clarity of the regulations. The regulations were submitted to OAL on April 20, 2020, approved on June 4, 2020, and become effective January 1, 2021.*

2. Limited Timber Operators License & Timber Operator Education:

Objective: *CAL FIRE has indicated that education for Limited Timber Operators is not equal to the education and insurance requirements for Full Licensed Timber Operators. However, the current regulations do not clearly identify the tasks that a Limited Timber Operator may not complete. This may result in unintended impacts to the landscape. CAL FIRE requests that the Board clarify the regulatory language to identify which tasks may be performed, pursuant to the necessary education and insurance for each type of license.*

Status: The Board adopted permanent regulations titled “LTO Education and Limited LTO Amendments” on July 15, 2020 which were intended to improve the clarity and consistency of the existing regulations surrounding timber operator licenses, including making educational requirements of applicants consistent across all types of timber operator licenses. The amendments also limited the activities permitted under a limited timber operator license to avoid excessive risk, given the lack of insurance obligations. Finally, the amendments clearly implement existing conditional requirements within PRC § 4572. The regulations were submitted to OAL on July 24, 2020, approved on September 3, 2020, and will become effective January 1, 2021.

3. Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest (MHDSF) Management Plan:

Objective: Continue to review the management of Mountain Home Demonstration State Forest pursuant to Board Policy 0351.10.

Status: Revisions to the Management Plan and Initial Study began in 2017. In the summer of 2017, Board staff toured the state forest and were made aware of significant work that had been done on the forest that would result in the need for a substantial update to the Management Plan. MHDSF staff attended a Committee meeting in late 2017 and presented their initial assessment of the required workload for the Management Plan update. During this meeting, it became clear that the update would require substantial work, and the current MHDSF staff did not have sufficient time or resources to complete the update by the expected deadline. Due to these extenuating circumstances, the Committee voted to extend the deadline until 2020, and the Board approved this decision. The Committee considered revisions to the management plan through April and May and ultimately approved the management plan in June of 2020.

4. Camping Fees at Demonstration State Forests

Objective: CAL FIRE approached the Board requesting amendments to the regulatory camping fees of the Demonstration State Forests, specifically a modest increase in fees and a simplification of the fee structure.

Status: The Board adopted permanent regulations titled “Camping Fee Amendments, 2020” on August 19, 2020. The rules were submitted to OAL on October 16, 2020, and are likely to become effective January 1, 2021.

PRIORITY 1 FOR 2021:

1. Issues Pertaining to Conversion of Timberland:

- Regulatory amendments to 14 CCR § 1100(g)(2) - Definition of Timberland Conversion - Existing Board regulations are currently inconsistent with PRC § 462.1 as it applies to conversion of timberland. Current Board regulations address proposed conversions in the Timber Production Zone (TPZ) where an immediate

re-zone out of TPZ has been approved. State law does not recognize zoning as a controlling factor in the conversion of timberland. CAL FIRE has requested that the Board bring the current definition of conversion into conformance with State law to recognize all timberland conversions regardless of zoning status.

- Additionally, timberland conversion on non-TPZ land in 14 CCR § 1101(g)(1) is identified as transforming timberland to a non-timber use where “(A) Future timber harvests will be prevented or infeasible because of land occupancy and activities thereon”, among other conditions. However, on TPZ lands, timberland conversion is identified as “...the immediate rezoning of TPZ lands,” but conversion exemptions pursuant to 14 CCR § 1104.1 are excepted from this requirement of immediate rezoning. This presents a potential issue with the regulations where the filing of a conversion exemption on TPZ land simply becomes a *de jure* conversion even when there is no “conversion” of the land, as defined by plain English or other Board regulations or statute.
- Regulatory amendments to 14 CCR § 895.1 – “Crop of Trees, Available for, and Capable of...” – CAL FIRE has made the request to address the definition of “crop of trees” to aid CAL FIRE in identification of timberland. The Committee has received briefings from Board staff and CAL FIRE on potential options to address this issue.
- Currently, an individual who obtains a <3 acre conversion exemption pursuant to 14 CCR § 1104.1(a) is prohibited from future conversion on that property, even within the same footprint of the initial conversion, presenting a potential hardship for those who may have been unable to fully effectuate a conversion. Allowing future conversion exemptions to occur within the footprint of a previously accepted exemption may provide relief for these individuals without providing for “additional”, or serialized, conversion of timberland acres.

Status: The Board began evaluating conversion exemptions within 14 CCR § 1104.1 in September 2020 and will continue to work through these issues into 2021.

2. Utility ROW Operations

Objective: Existing regulations related to the exemptions from portions of the Forest Practice Act for construction and maintenance of right-of-way’s within 14 CCR § 1104.1(b) and (c) lack significant clarity related to the submission of notices, general application, mapping, and other requirements.

Status: The Committee began a regulatory effort to address this issue in June of 2020 and continues to work diligently to complete the work. It is anticipated that a rule text will be noticed in the first quarter of 2021.

3. Research Plan (PRC § 4789.6):

Objective: *The Board, assisted by the Director, shall biennially determine state needs for forest management research and recommend the conduct of needed projects to the Governor and the Legislature.*

Additionally, the Forest Management Task Force’s “California’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan” identifies that, in coordination with the Science Advisory Panel of the Task Force and other leading scientists, the Board and CAL FIRE’s Forest and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) will develop and issue an applied research plan by June 2021.

Status: *Previously, during review of Demonstration State Forest Management Plans the Committee has requested improvements in the documentation and distribution of forest management, wildlife, fisheries, botanical and watershed research conducted on each forest or by CAL FIRE. The Committee intends to continue to work with each State Forest and CAL FIRE to better document and catalog results of these research efforts and seek improvements in the distribution of research reports through either CAL FIRE or the Board’s website(s). The Committee also intends to review a draft Research Plan in the near future. The Board will address this issue in 2021.*

4. Maximum Sustained Production (MSP) 14 CCR § 913.11(a) [933.11(a), 953.11(a)]:

Objective: *Review performance of existing MSP rules since Board adoption. The Committee may consider the following actions for MSP review:*

- *Consider forming a technical working group to consider changes to existing MSP rules to provide more concrete standards for the MSP demonstration per 14 CCR § 913.11(a) [933.11(a), 953.11(a)].*
- *Consider implications for carbon forest health, including resiliency.*

Status: *The Committee reviewed the MSP rules in February of 2011 and found no further action necessary. CAL FIRE has resubmitted the issue in 2015, and industry stakeholders expressed concern over the effective period of the SYP in 2017. The Board may begin to address this issue in 2021.*

PRIORITY 2 FOR 2020:

1. Review of Required Post-Harvest Stocking Standards (14 § CCR 913; 14 CCR § 1071), Pursuant to Assembly Bills (AB) 2082 (2014) and 417 (2015), Affecting Public Resource Code (PRC) 4561:

Objective: *The request has been made to investigate the current stocking standards as they relate to various regeneration methods and forest health, including fuel hazard reduction, within certain forest types.*

Status: *Recent legislative mandates (AB 2082, 2014 and AB 417, 2015) were chaptered by the Brown Administration and grant the Board the authority to review required minimum stocking standards pursuant to PRC § 4561. The FPC discussed this topic periodically throughout 2018, but due to a large workload this issue was moved to the Committee for further action. The Stocking and Silvicultural Amendments were adopted by the Board in September of 2019, which took effect on January 1, 2020. Since that time, an “uneven-aged working group” has been formed to address this issue related to those basal area stocking requirements within the rules. The group met periodically through 2020 and is anticipated to continue its efforts into 2021.*

2. Board Policy Review:

Objective: *The Board currently has many policies in place, some dating back decades. The Board aspires to review and contemporize all policies and make them available to the public via the Board’s website. Board policies cover a myriad of topics; committee assignment will be based upon the subject matter of the individual policy under review. Particular focus will be paid by the Management Committee in 2020 to the Board’s Policy 0356, Vegetation Management Program.*

Status: *It is anticipated that the Committee will be presented with, and may vote to approve and refer to the full Board, an updated version of Policy 0356 that reflects modern environmental priorities, updated understandings of ecology and management, and recent and current fire prevention programs.*

3. Review Commercial Species Group B Designation for Monterey Pine, Eucalyptus, and Other Species

Objective: *The Board had an opportunity during its meeting in San Luis Obispo in the summer of 2019 to visit various fuel hazard reduction projects in the Coastal Zone. Among these projects was a Monterey pine thinning implemented by the CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo Administrative Unit to create a shaded fuel break in proximity to the community of Cambria. Permitting of the fuel break was achieved through completion of a Mitigated Negative Declaration and Minor Use Permit approved by the Coastal Commission because Monterey pine is no longer a Group A Commercial Species and therefore cannot be managed by itself under permitting authority of the Forest Practice Act and Rules.*

It is understood that prior to its placement on the Group B Commercial Species list for each of the Forest Districts, Monterey pine was seldom harvested for commercial purpose in California. However, it is in fact a dominant commercial species

internationally and does have a history of commercialization in the state. It is a particularly important tree species in the context of fuel hazard reduction on the central coast of California and certainly factors into the protection of coastal communities.

Limited opportunities exist for communities attempting to reduce heavy fuel loading in Monterey pine forests within the Coastal Zone because it is on the Group B species list in an area without Group A species. A possible minor fix for this management problem would be to place Monterey pine back on the Group A Commercial Species list for all or a portion of the Forest Districts in the state.

CAL FIRE has requested the above change. Various stakeholders have also requested that the designation of other Group B species, including but not limited to eucalyptus and giant sequoia, be reevaluated.

Status: *The Committee began work on this issue in early 2020, but the item was dropped due to logistical considerations associated with the ongoing COVID-19 situation. The Committee may take this item up again in 2021.*

4. “Cutover Land”, “Meadows and Wet Areas” and “Wet Meadows and Other Wet Areas

Objective: *The term “Cutover Land” has no basis in statute or regulation and its continued use in the rules is unclear. Additionally, due to various amendments the Board maintains separate but identical definitions for “Meadows and Wet Areas” for the Northern and Southern Forest Districts, as well as a separate definition for “Wet Meadows and Other Wet Areas”, which is reliant upon the unclear “Cutover Land”. These terms should be made consistent across forest districts and use of the term “Cutover Land” eliminated from the rules.*

Status: *The Committee may consider this item in 2021.*

5. Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) for Carbon Sequestration and Fuel Reduction Program:

Objective: *AB 862, chaptered by the Brown Administration in 2014, directs the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop regulations, guidelines or publications to facilitate a grant program that allots funding for the development of PTEIRs that promote carbon sequestration and fuel hazard reduction on state or private lands. The grant program is to be administered by CAL FIRE.*

Status: *The PTEIR was briefly discussed at the beginning of the year, and was reported to the full Board in February. After Board discussion, it was agreed that it would be prudent for Chair Gilles and Vice-Chair Andre to draft a letter to the State of California Assembly Committee on Natural Resources to recommend possible*

legislative actions that could address issues that have been plaguing the PTEIR's use. No action has resulted from the recommendations.

PRIORITY 3 FOR 2021:

1. Site Index for Major Young-Growth Forest Woodland Species in Northern California - Discussion of Update to 14 CCR § 1060 Site Classification:

Objective: *FPC completed initial review of this topic in April-June of 2010 and deferred additional review until completion of the Road Rules. The Committee will continue review of the issue when sufficient Committee time is available.*

Status: *No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2019.*

2. Development of Pilot Programs for SERM Option (v) Projects:

Objective: *CAL FIRE has formed a Technical Advisory Committee (VTAC) to develop and provide advice on pilot programs to implement option (v) projects under the Anadromous Salmonid Protection Rules (ASP).*

Status: *No reportable actions were made on this topic in 2019.*

3. Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council:

Objective: *The Board approved CAL FIRE's effort to acquire lands in the Stewardship Council planning units of "Pit River," "Battle Creek," "Cow Creek," "Burney Gardens," "Lake Spaulding," "Bear River," "North Fork Mokelumne River," and "Lyons Reservoir" that would be suitable for inclusion in CAL FIRE's Demonstration State Forest Program. Substantial work is required of CAL FIRE for the acquisition of these lands and the Board must approve management plans for each parcel.*

Status: *The Stewardship Council Board has recommended fee title transfer of lands within the North Fork Mokelumne River, Pit River, Tunnel Reservoir, Battle Creek, Cow Creek, Lake Spaulding, and Bear River planning units to CAL FIRE. With the Stewardship Council Board recommendation for transfer of lands to CAL FIRE at Bear River in November 2018, fee title recommendations have been completed. In 2018, the Stewardship Council Board approved final Land Conservation and Conveyance Plans (conservation easements and agreements known also as LCCPs) for North Fork Mokelumne River, Pit River, and Tunnel Reservoir. The Stewardship Council continued to develop the final LCCPs for the remaining projects during 2019.*

The Department of General Services and Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) have developed the final form and content for each of the transaction documents, which will be utilized to construct documents for each of the transactions going forward. The California Natural Resources Agency has also participated in these discussions and is

working to bring along associated transactions with State Parks. CAL FIRE and PG&E signed the Property Acquisition Agreement for the North Fork Mokelumne property in 2019 and received subsequent approval from the California Public Utilities Commission on October 7, 2019 to proceed with closing the transaction. It went to the Public Works Board in December of 2019 and received final State approval allowing for the close of escrow.

Conservation easement holders for each of the properties have been recommended by the Stewardship Council Board and include: Shasta Land Trust (Pitt River, Tunnel Reservoir, Cow Creek), Western Shasta Resource Conservation District (Battle Creek), Mother Lode Land Trust (North Fork Mokelumne River), Placer Land Trust (Lake Spaulding), and Bear, Yuba, and Placer Land Trusts (Bear River). As currently written, CAL FIRE has successfully negotiated identical or very similar terms with each of the conservation easement holders to reduce the number of unique restrictions on any property. CAL FIRE has been on site to document baseline conditions and discuss the intended management with each of the conservation easement holders.

It is expected that the Pitt River, Tunnel Reservoir, Lake Spaulding, and Bear River planning units will close in late 2020. The Committee looks forward to reviewing any management plans which are developed for any future land acquisition.