POLICY NUMBER 11: Guidance on the Practice of Forestry as it Relates to Other Professions

Introduction

The Professional Foresters Law, Public Resources Code §750, *et seq.* provides that a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) must be involved in projects that require the application of forestry principles and techniques for managing forested landscapes. Forested landscapes are those upon which are growing or naturally capable of growing in perpetuity significant stands of native conifer and/or hardwood trees and their associated vegetation types. These landscapes are typically tree dominated and not devoted to non-forestry commercial, urban or farming uses (Public Resources Code §754).

The Professional Foresters Law provides that a professional forester may only perform forestry services in those areas of expertise for which the person has achieved competency through training or experience. When a professional forester's expertise is exceeded in a particular activity, the forester is compelled to utilize the services of other qualified experts including but not limited to arborists, archaeologists, botanists, civil engineers, ecologists, fisheries biologists, geologists, hydrologists, land surveyors, landscape architects, range scientists, soil scientists, or wildlife biologists. The Professional Foresters Law does not preclude these other environmental professionals from the application of their knowledge and expertise outside of the practice of forestry.

Statement I:

The Board recognizes consistent with the Professional Foresters Law, Public Resources Code §752(b), that there are other environmental professionals capable of supplying technical information relative to particular features of a forested landscape setting by virtue of education, training and experience.

The Board endorses an interdisciplinary approach in the management and treatment of natural landscapes. Just as the Professional Foresters Law requires that an RPF interact with other qualified experts when the RPF's expertise is exceeded in the context of a particular activity, the Board finds that other qualified experts should likewise interact with RPF's as appropriate to the environmental setting.

Statement II:

The Board recognizes that forested landscapes may be identified using a variety of vegetation classification systems including but not limited to the California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System (see the California Department of Fish and Game website link to the CWHR System (https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CWHR) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection-Fire and Resources Assessment Program link to CWHR map layers (http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/data/frapgismaps/select.asp)); A Manual of California Vegetation by Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf; CDFG's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP); various California Native Plant Society (CNPS) publications; and Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California by R.F. Holland (updated 1996).

Statement III:

The Professional Foresters Law provides that the practice of forestry and rangeland management on forested landscapes includes among other things actions directed toward fuels management, forest protection, grazing on forested rangelands, timber growing and utilization, forest inventory, forest economics, forest valuation and finance, and the evaluation and mitigation of impacts from forestry activities on watershed and scenic values. Tasks associated with the practice of forestry and rangeland management include but are not limited to the following:

- Development of fuel hazard reduction prescriptions. Participation in the

interdisciplinary development of technical aspects of wildfire protection plans.

- Evaluation of fire hazard, pest conditions (insects and disease), and the effects of damaging agents on the overall health of forests and woodlands. Development of treatments for the prevention and control of damage to forests and woodlands.
- Management planning and prescription development in support of wood product utilization.
- The determination of diameter, height, form, weight, growth rate, volume, or age of individual or groups of trees; or interpretation of such determinations to support forest management actions or the treatment of forest cover in general.
- The determination of economic value of a particular forest or woodland.
- Quantification or modeling of past, present, and future forest carbon stocks ~~or emissions~~ on forested landscapes for the purpose of ~~forest carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas reduction, or carbon stock accounting; or interpretation of such accounting to support the management of forested landscapes or the~~ monetization of various forest carbon pools.
- The evaluation of forest/woodland conditions in response to past management actions and the development of mitigation measures for remediation or control of potentially deleterious effects.
- Recommendations regarding prescriptive grazing on forested rangelands.

Statement III (Continued):
The Board recognizes that performance of the following tasks does not constitute the practice of forestry or rangeland management unless the tasks are exclusively directed toward the management and treatment of forests and woodlands:

- Providing retention or removal recommendations for trees associated with specific development improvements.
- Classification of vegetative or habitat types as indicated in item II above.
- Collection of tree species data (i.e. number of trees per acre, tree diameters, heights, etc.)
- Characterization of individual tree condition (i.e. pathology, injury assessment, health and vigor rating, etc.)
- Valuation or appraisal of individual tree(s) value, or loss as landscape elements, for trees associated with development.
- Preparation of tree protection plans pursuant to jurisdictional requirements if it is concluded by the Lead Agency that individual or groups of trees shall be retained on site in proximity to construction activities.
- Mapping, acreage/canopy cover determination or other site evaluations through photogrammetry, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and/or surveyed location of individual or stands of trees.
- Mitigating or recommending mitigation of impacts from previous or proposed land use activities by other environmental experts within their field of expertise.
- Determinations of significance under CEQA.

Statement IV:
The Board acknowledges that pursuant to 14 CCR §15149(b) a CEQA document such as an EIR is not a technical document that must be prepared solely by state registered professionals. CEQA documents are intended to disclose for public benefit and agency review the potential adverse effects of a proposed project on the environment and to identify ways to reduce or mitigate such potential adverse effects. The extent to which full and accurate disclosure of potential adverse effects and mitigations necessitates the preparation of technical studies by state licensed professionals is at the discretion of the lead agency consistent with Professional Foresters Code and State Laws.