



CALIFORNIA
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FORESTERS
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November 6, 2013

Mr. Stan Dixon, Chairman
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Board Priorities for 2014

Dear Chairman Dixon,

As the Board sets its priorities for 2014, CLFA would like to point out three important issues that are negatively impacting the state's forestlands, inhibiting RPFs ability to effectively practice forestry, and limiting landowners' ability to economically manage their lands. First, a 1-year protocol for surveying for northern spotted owls (NSO) needs to be established for, at the very least, small landowners and NTMP holders. Second, the timelines in the Forest Practice Rules regarding slash treatment should recognize that burning slash is the largest potential economic exposure facing landowners during timber operations and allow flexibility for slash to be treated during appropriate climatic windows. Lastly, the issue of criminal trespass should continue to be aggressively addressed to make the woods a safer place in which to work and to reduce the associated negative environmental impacts affecting fish, wildlife and water quality.

The 2-year NSO survey protocol creates an economic burden on small landowners and NTMP holders. Land management activities are intermittent on these parcels and mostly opportunistic in response to favorable timber markets that may not last for a two year period. Since these landowners are non-industrial in nature, many lack the economic resources to begin surveying two years in advance of uncertain future revenues. These lands produce relatively low volumes of timber, are widely dispersed throughout the state, and their responsible management is unlikely to significantly damage wildlife habitat. One of the best ways for the state to encourage continued ownership of undeveloped or lightly developed timber parcels, and provide continued NSO habitat, is for it to remain economically attractive compared to other potential land uses. Cost effective and timely access to timber markets is currently one of the best opportunities to encourage the continued responsible management of small timberland parcels throughout the state.

Strict timelines are provided for slash disposal in the hazard reduction zones, within the 150' Fire Safe Exemption and Emergency Notices. When treating slash for hazard reduction, 14 CCR 917.2(a), 937.2(a), and 957.2(a) requires that "*slash to be treated by piling and burning shall be treated not later than April 1 of the year following its creation, or within 30 days following climatic access, or as justified in the plan.*" The 150' Fire Safe Exemption, 14 CCR 1038(c)(3), states "*All surface fuels created by timber operations under the exemption which could promote the spread of wildfire...shall be chipped, burned or removed within 15 days from the start of timber operations.*" This same constraint is required in 14 CCR 1052(e). Burning is often the only efficient way to deal with the large quantities of non-merchantable material created during timber operations when no feasible biomass market exists. To minimize the risks of escapes or of exceeding air quality regulations, burning must be conducted in appropriate climatic windows after the slash has had sufficient time to dry. The April 1st deadline does not allow for slash created late in the logging season to adequately dry before treatment. Forty-five (45) days as required by 14 CCR 1038(c)(3) does not give slash adequate time to dry, or allow for the landowner to wait for an appropriate burn window. In both cases, the landowner is pushed into undertaking more costly slash disposal techniques or facing a higher risk of fire

escapes and of exceeding air quality regulations. In the interest of allowing burning to remain a viable slash treatment option while ensuring maximum public safety, CLFA would like to see reasonable flexibility built into these rules to allow time for slash to dry and for appropriate climatic conditions to develop prior to treatment.

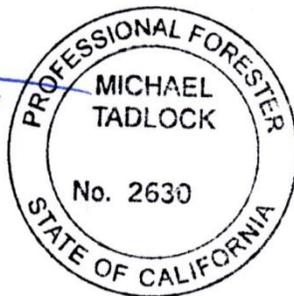
CLFA would like to thank the Board for your efforts in 2013 to study the issue of criminal trespass. The safety of foresters, loggers, and other field staff remains a fundamental concern for those of us involved in managing the State's timberlands. In addition to the safety issue, massive environmental damage can be caused by illegal water diversions, illegal herbicide and rodenticide use, unpermitted tree cutting, and the large amount of trash left in the wake of these activities. As professionals, Foresters take great pride in assisting landowners in providing clean air, clean water, and fish and wildlife habitat while assuring a sustainable supply of high quality timber products. It is disheartening that a small group of illicit drug growers can trespass on these timberlands we have so carefully tended and destroy years, or decades, of hard work in a single growing season. CLFA applauds the Board for creating the Advisory Committee on Criminal Trespass and encourages the Board to actively collaborate with relevant State agencies in combating this issue.

We realize that you have limited staff time and resources, and must therefore prioritize what issues you can realistically address in a meaningful manner in any given year. We have taken input from our members throughout the state, and narrowed down our recommendations to the three most pressing issues brought before us. We thank you in advance for considering adding these issues to your 2014 priority list.

Sincerely,



Michael Tadlock
RPF #2630
President



cc: Members, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.
Mr. Ken Pimlott, Director, CAL FIRE.
CLFA Board of Directors.

The California Licensed Foresters Association, with a membership responsible for the sustained management of millions of acres of California forestland, represents the common interests of California Registered Professional Foresters. The Association provides opportunities for continuing education and public outreach to its membership, which includes professionals affiliated with government agencies, private timber companies, consultants, the public, and the academic community. Governed by an elected Board of Directors, CLFA was established in 1980 after the passage of the landmark California Professional Foresters Law.