



# Director's Report to the Board of Forestry



Resources Building, Auditorium  
1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, California 95814

April 2014 Board of Forestry Report

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## Resource Management

- **Forest Practice Program:**

**Redding Pilot Program Update.** The one-year timeframe for the Redding Pilot project ended on March 21, 2013; the final draft report was forwarded to the Natural Resources Agency. The Natural Resource Agency has forwarded the report to the legislature for review. CAL FIRE Redding review team staff compared the review timelines for Redding Pilot Project plans with 2011-12 plans submitted one year earlier within the same geographic Pilot Project area. This comparison was aimed at identifying any process improvements associated with the Redding Pilot Project. The review process is completed for all plan and substantial deviations in the study (e.g., approved, accepted, or withdrawn). The updated draft report was submitted to the Department for Review on March 7, 2014 for finalization and will be forwarded to Agency before the end of the month.

**THP submissions in 2014** have increased significantly over last year. In Redding, submissions of THPs are up 42% from 11 to 19, year to date; in Fresno THP submissions are up 77% from 2 to 9, year to date. Emergency Notice submissions are down significantly. Redding submissions of Emergency Notices are down 75% from 33 year to date in 2013 to 8 submitted in 2014. Fresno submissions of Emergency Notices are down 94% from 17 year to date in 2013 to 1 submitted in 2014. Emergency Notice submissions are up significantly in Redding and down significantly in Fresno. Redding submissions of Exemption Notices are up 16% from 225 year to date in 2013 and 261 submitted in 2014. Fresno submissions of Emergency Notices are down 76% from 241 year to date in 2013 and 58 submitted in 2014. The main reason for the decline in both Emergency Notice and Exemption Notice submissions in Fresno is the conclusion of the Forest Care Program in San Bernardino County at the end of 2013.

**2012 Fire Salvage/Emergency Notices:** Some salvage operations on non-industrial parcels affected by the Ponderosa Fire (Tehama & Shasta Counties) continues. The salvage operation on Sierra Pacific Industries lands related to the Ponderosa fire are completed. The salvage operation on the Bagley Fire (Shasta County) is about 95% completed. SPI has logged over 115 MM board feet of timber to date (SPI's estimate was that they lost about 125 MM board feet of timber in the Bagley Fire). SPI continues to submit Emergency Notices on their lands burned over in the Bagley Fire with two additional notices submitted in March for 46 Notices submitted in 2012 through 2014 to date. Collins Timber Company is about 95% completed with salvage on their property burned in the Barry Point Fire (Modoc County) with one additional Emergency Notices submitted in December for a total of 27 Notice submitted in 2012 through 2014 to date.

**2013 Fire Salvage/Emergency Notices:** For the 2013 fires, 20 Emergency Notices have been received at Redding Review Team to date: Thirteen Emergency Notices have been received for the American Fire (Placer County). The primary industrial timberland owners affected by the American Fire are Simorg West Forests, LLC (8 EMs for 1665 acres) and

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SPI (one EM for 460 acres.). Six Emergency Notices totaling 904 acres were submitted on small non-industrial landowners property to date. Additionally, two EMs were submitted on the Hough Complex (both from Chy Co. in Plumas County ), one on the Windy Fire (Tehama Co.), one on the Cheney Fire (Lassen Co.), one on the Allegany Fire (Sierra Co.), two on the Panther Fire (Tehama Co.) and one on the Smith Fire (Shasta Co.).

On 10/24/13, the Rim Fire in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties burned over 257,000 acres. The Rim Fire has burned more than 15,000 acres of State Responsibility Area (SRA) lands. The Fresno Review Team has 23 Emergency Notices, in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties to date. Of these 23 notices, SPI has nine totaling 16,320 acres (SPI is the largest private landowner affected by the Rim Fire with about 90% of the SRA land.). The other 14 Emergency Notices are on non-industrial ownerships totaling 2,137 acres.

Additionally, on the Rim Fire affected private land, the Department has accepted 23 Utility Exemptions to removed burned / felled timber from power line rights-of-ways on industrial and non-industrial ownerships.

**Redding/Fresno Personnel Issues:** New Review Team Chairs have come to work for the Department in March. Nick Kent is the new Review Team Chair replacing Brook Darley who transferred into a Forestry Assistance Specialist position in Redding. Prior to coming to work for CAL FIRE, Nick was a private consultant in Sonoma County. John Ramaley is the new Environmental Review Specialist/Law Enforcement Coordinator in Fresno, replacing Bill Solinsky who promoted to the Forester III-THP Administration position at Sacramento Headquarters. Additionally the Assistant Review Team Chair in Fresno has also promoted to Review Team Chair in Santa Rosa.

**Forest Practice Civil Prosecutions Update:** There have been 3 new civil prosecution cases submitted in 2014. There were 24 civil prosecution cases for the year 2013, with 13 of these cases related to illegal conversion of timberland for the purpose of marijuana cultivation. Of these 24 cases, 9 have been closed, 5 have been settled, or the settlement agreements have been mailed for signature. Nine have had the Complaint and Proposed Order (CPO) signed and mailed. One case is under review and being prepared. There were 32 civil prosecution cases for 2012. Of these 32, twenty-three have been closed, three have default judgments, 3 have requested hearings and two have settled, and one has been served. There are 18 civil prosecution cases prior to 2012 that are in default needing judgments, or penalties are outstanding and due.

- **Resource Protection and Improvement**

**State Forests:** LaTour and Mountain Home Demonstration State Forests are normally inaccessible due to snow this time of year. This year, both Forests are accessible, with little to no snow present at this time.

Stumpage prices for redwood on State Forest timber sales are showing signs of improvement, in line with the general slow economic recovery.

Soquel State Forest staff are working on an initial study for the update of the Forest's management plan. The initial study will be presented to the Board in May for their decision on the proper CEQA document.

The draft Jackson State Forest research plan is complete, and is ready to go to an outside expert panel for their input. We are working with Rick Standiford at UC Extension to finalize an interagency agreement for that project.

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## **Forestry Assistance Programs**

**Seed Bank:** Staff is reviewing applications for two Forestry Aide positions for 2014.

CAL FIRE met with other partners to review a seedling production concept proposed by Eldorado County Resource Conservation District (EDC RCD). The proposal would include EDC RCD contracting with the USFS nursery in Placerville to grow seedlings, and EDC RCD to offer sale of these seedlings to small landowners. This production concept envisions EDC RCD purchasing their seed from CAL FIRE's seed bank. The advantage of this proposal is that it provides a central contact for small landowners to ensure that they can get their seedling needs met in a timely and professional manner. In addition, EDC RCD consolidates orders to provide more cost efficient seedling production. The proposal would not exclude or provide preferential treatment for landowners to use the networks of private nurseries identified as having interest in providing small landowners contract seedlings. The arrangement may become operational in 2014.

CAL FIRE is conducting early Cap and Trade Reforestation grant program planning. Staff is working with the State of California RCD to assess opportunities for local RCDs to administer reforestation cost share agreements for small landowners using the CFIP model, make available Registered Professional Foresters to provide technical assistance to landowners, recruit clients, and administer the field aspects of the grant.

**Forest Health:** The California Department of Food and Agriculture announced a plant movement restriction in Trinity County due to a confirmed detection of Sudden Oak Death. CAL FIRE will be working to propose a Zone of Infestation designation to the Board.

A significant bark beetle outbreak has been detected near Tehachapi, Kern County. The area is overstocked and infected with mistletoe. The area is at the edge of the range for the tree species present. There are often high winds in this area, with many large trees on the ground. Approximately 7,000 acres are being affected in a checkerboard pattern in Tehachapi, Bear Valley, Alta Sierra, Frazier Park and Breckenridge, Tejon Ranch and Lake Isabel. Public information is being provided to landowners in the area. Possible actions such as sanitation, salvage, and hazard reduction are being assessed.

At the Strategic Planning Meeting of the CA Firewood Task Force, US Forest Service Ecologist Matthew Bokach was unanimously approved to officially become the new Chairman. He takes over for CAL FIRE's Don Owen who will be retiring in 2015.

The Western Forest Insect Work Conference will be held in Sacramento, March 31-April 3.

Staff is preparing an Interagency Agreement with the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Experiment Station to continue to provide Forest Health Public Information Officer Services for CALFIRE and the Board. The proposals would secure the services from July 2014 to July 2016.

Staff is modifying an existing Interagency Agreement with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo to continue use of their school laboratory facilities for plant pathology evaluations. The Interagency Agreement is being modified to retain access to labs and supplies, and removing personnel cost payments now that Kim Corrella has been formally hired by CAL FIRE as the CSR Forest Pest Specialist.

The Pitch Canker Task Force Meeting was held recently at UC Davis. The meeting covered new ideas about partnering with the Western Chapter of the International Arboriculture Society and the CAL FIRE urban forestry to host and participate in joint meetings and trainings. Tom Gordon's lab presented news and research on pitch canker.

**Forest Legacy Program:** The transfer of the conservation easement on the Usal Redwood Forest (49,576 acres) from The Conservation Fund to CAL FIRE has been reviewed by DGS, but deliberations at the WCB have stalled the approval of the easement transfer.

- **Environmental Protection**

**Vegetation Treatment Program:**

**SRA Fee Projects:** Units provided SRA Fee project proposals as requested by the Director's memo. Out of over 200 projects submitted, 140 are being recommended by Region Chiefs. Projects cover fuel reduction and public education.

**VTP Workshop** – CAL FIRE staff completed the Vegetation Treatment Program Workshop on March 11-13. Over 60 staff attended. Foresters and Pre-fire Engineers attended to discuss the development and implementation of vegetation treatment projects with focus on SRA Fee projects.

**VTP EIR** – The VTP EIR contractor (BBW) is working on public comment responses, a GHG calculator, and an EIR checklist. FRAP is evaluating additional fire science literature for inclusion into the EIR as requested by public comments.

**California Fire Science Consortium VTP EIR Peer Review** – the Peer Review contract was signed by UC Berkeley in late March. Project Administrator, Bill Stewart is in the process of planning field trips and stakeholder workshops in southern California in the near future.

**Biomass Utilization - Conceptual** agreement has been made with the Nevada Irrigation District (NID) to modify their federally funded CAL FIRE grant to reduce project accomplishments in about half due the high cost of bids received for fuel reduction projects with biomass utilization in the Nevada City/Scotts Reservoir area. Official contract modifications will be made following NID negotiations with contract bidders

**Proposition 40 Fuel Reduction Grant Programs** -- Fieldwork on the Proposition 40 funded Community Assistance Grants and Prop 40 Fuel Reduction Cost Share Agreement program (administered by Sierra Coordinated Resource Management Council) is now completed. Final billings and documentation will occur over the next two months. Nearly 200 projects and approximately \$5 million of project work were completed since November 2011.

**Cultural:** Staff is preparing to renew archeological service contracts with California State University Sonoma and CSU Stanislaus. These service contracts are used to assist staff to support archeological assessment for CAL FIRE projects. The services provided are for vegetation treatment projects, fire suppression emergencies site assessment/damage repair, and Forest Practices review.

Archeological Certification Training for 2014:

Full Certification Class –

Dates: October 27th – 31st

Location: Holiday Inn – 2810 Main Street, Red Bluff, CA

Set-up: Three days class room – two field days

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## Refresher Trainings –

Dates: May 6th– May 7th  
Location: Granzella's, Williams  
Dates: November 13th & 14th  
Location: Granzella's, Williams

**CEQA:** Staff has completed Unit level CEQA training and is preparing for four other regional training sessions for field staff in April and June.

## Fire Protection and Prevention

- Preparing for Annual Operating Plan meetings and renewals of all six, three year agreements, with the contract counties.
- Preliminary work has begun on renewal of cooperative agreement with the California Military Department (National Guard), which expires in June of 2015.
- National Guard helicopter training, held on April 4-5 went very well.
- Continuing to work cooperatively with CDCR to examine potential expansion of the Camps Program linked to predicted increases in county inmates entering the program through CDCR-County contracting process.
- The EMS program is conducting an intensive Bill Analysis of AB 1621, what could require the Department to replace its current statewide all incident reporting system (CAIRS) with Federal compliance requirements that would require electronic field reporting.
- The wear trial of prototype wildland firefighting protective garments has concluded. This was a 3 ½ year collaborative project with the Federal Department of Homeland Security, federal, state, and local government fire agencies in California that involved over 1,000 firefighters, 363 of which were CAL FIRE. A final report, inclusive of wear trial participant survey results, is in the final review phase and anticipated to be released in early May.
- The Academy has two COA and one FFA courses running. Class sizes increased to 46 for each class.
- Helicopter replacement project is moving forward an on-schedule.
- "All-Risk" IMT training exercise planned for last week of April for Command & General staff.
- For March, CAL FIRE Civil Cost Recovery closed three civil cost recovery cases (with recoveries totaling \$29,650) and Law Enforcement Officers affected nine arrests and issued 30 citations (non- 4291).

## OSFM

### **SRA Fees**

For week of April 7, bills scheduled to go to owners of habitable structures in Counties of Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Napa and Nevada

So far, for billing period 2013-14, 883 Petitions processed

**Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering**

LE-66 Training: Webinar training with the field personnel is ongoing; prevention staff training is complete.

Forestry Aide Inspector Training: Training was conducted at Lone Academy on April 3, 2014. Included was lecture and scenario based curriculum on PRC 4291, SRA Prevention Fee and Drought awareness.

Fire Prevention Activities to date for FY 2013/2014 for CAL FIRE Units and Contract Counties (combined):

Northern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals:

Defensible Space Inspections - 7112

Number of 4291 violations - 1089

Number of 4291 citations - 0

Number of hours of fire prevention education - 9374

Southern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals

Defensible Space Inspections - 35,763

Number of 4291 violations - 2659

Number of 4291 citations - 101

Number of hours of fire prevention education - 9692