



## Director's Report to the Board of Forestry



Resources Building, Auditorium  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814  
June, 2014 Board of Forestry Report

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### **Resource Management -** **Resource Protection and Improvement**

#### **State Forests:**

- The annual Caspar Creek Watershed meeting with CAL FIRE and USFS- Pacific Southwest Research Station, Redwood Sciences Lab was held on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Plans for the third phase of the study are progressing.
- Camping season has started. All Mountain Home campgrounds were full over Memorial Day weekend.
- The Korean Educational Broadcasting Company visited Mountain Home State Forest on May 20 - 23. The South Korean company is preparing a documentary series on trees and will be including an episode on giant sequoia. The program is scheduled to begin running in October 2015.
- The California Forestry Challenge is scheduled for October 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> at Mountain Home State Forest.
- The Pacific Union College and Napa County Land Trust are interested in creating a conservation easement for 600 acres to be managed as part of Las Posadas Demonstration State Forest.
- As directed by the Board's Management Committee, Soquel State Forest staff is working on the initial study for their management plan update. The Initial Study will be on the Board's Management Committee agenda for August.
- Researchers from Washington State University are continuing a study at Soquel State Forest to look at treating bay laurel trees to inhibit spouting as a technique to reduce Sudden Oak Death.
- At LaTour State Forest, a current timber harvest plan is being amended to include additional plan area, new road construction and operations proposed within the WLPZ as presented to VTAC, as per Section 936.9 (v) in the forest practice rules.
- LaTour staff are soliciting input in developing a peer reviewed study plan prior to undertaking a water monitoring study on South Cow Creek. Fourteen new "HOBO" water temperature and turbidity monitoring devices have been programmed and installed along South Cow Creek as part of an ongoing monitoring study. Trail cameras were downloaded and re-baited in May. No endangered or species of special concern were observed.

#### **Forestry Assistance Programs**

**Seed Bank:** Bids for the new seed-bank freezer have been received by CAL FIRE Tech Services and a successful bidder has been identified. Upon finalizing the award process, the installation should begin in summer 2014.

### **Forest Health:**

- The Goldspotted Oak Borer Task Force formed under the California Forest Pest Council will be holding their first meeting June 3rd to discuss needs assessment, mission and the proposed goals and objectives of this task force. Participants from many counties in Southern California will attend.
- A meeting was held in May at CDFA of concerned stakeholders dealing with the Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer. There it was decided that a new Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer Task Force would be formed for California. The Avocado Commission has volunteered to take the lead on forming the task force. Cal Fire Pest Management Staff will serve on the task force to push for forestry and urban forest issues. The Polyphagous Shot Hole Borer is a new pest to California that has a wide host range including avocado and other agricultural commodities as well as numerous hardwood tree species in both the native forest and urban environments.
- CAL FIRE Forest Pest Specialists helped plan and conduct the first-ever training course on California Forest Pests offered to industry and consulting foresters, landowners, and others. The course was held in Redding May 28 and 29, and was sponsored by the California Forest Pest Council. It was modeled after training regularly provided to CAL FIRE and USDA Forest Service personnel. Demand for the training was substantial, so additional training is planned for future years.
- Drought-related tree mortality that began to increase last year will become more evident as temperatures rise, trees fade, and tree-killing insects become more active. Bark beetles will be major agents of mortality for pines and true firs this year. A variety of pests and pest complexes will contribute to the decline and mortality of other tree species.

### **Urban and Community Forestry:**

- The 2011/2012 round of urban forestry grants are now complete. There were 54 projects in total for this period.
- James Scheid (Regional Urban Forester, Bay Area/North Coast) has been promoted to the rank for Forester I and given additional responsibilities commensurate with the promotion.
- An active 2012/2013 grant to the Climate Action Reserve to revise the urban forestry carbon protocol is nearing completion. Public comment was completed and it is scheduled to be heard by the CAR Board in June. Of note in the revision is that the single protocol has been bifurcated into two protocols. One for urban tree planting projects and one for urban forest management projects. It is hoped that the protocols will be more widely used than the first version that came out in 2007. A period of pilot testing of the protocols will help to inform if more work will be needed.
- The Urban Forestry program has a new 5 year Strategic Plan. The plan is available to view on the CAL FIRE urban forestry web page. Program staff are currently going through a process to help prioritize the strategies and actions recommended in the plan based upon the recommendation of the California Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (CUFAC). Once complete, staff will bring their prioritization to the CUFAC for review and discussion.
- The California Urban & Community Forestry Conference is typically held every other year. It is a joint effort of California ReLeaf and the California Urban Forest Council. The conference will be held in San Diego on June 24-27. This is an excellent place to meet those responsible for making urban forestry in California successful. It is also a good place to learn more about urban forestry and what is new on the cutting edge in the science, practice, and policy related to urban forests.

## **Environmental Protection**

### **CFSC VTP EIR Peer Review:**

- The California Fire Science Consortium (CFSC) completed a field visit in the Auburn area on May 29, 2014. A stakeholders meeting was also held at NEU Headquarters. The scientists reviewed a variety of WUI projects in the Foresthill, Mt. Howe and Meadow Vista areas of the County. The stakeholder meeting included five members of the public representing Fire Safe Councils, the Placer County Ag Commissioner, and endangered species protection advocates. The CFSC expects to begin consolidating information on the science used in the VTP EIR and are expecting to deliver a report to the BOF by June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Department is working with Board staff to define grant criteria in the event the Budget Bill includes a SRA-fee grant program provision pursuant to PRC 4214(e).

### **Archaeology and Cultural Resources:**

- Staff is preparing to renew archeological service contracts with California State University (CSUS) Sonoma and CSUS Stanislaus and enter into a new agreement with DGS. 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. Staffing vacancies continue to adversely affect staff in completing projects in timely manner. The new contracts are being proposed to Executive for consideration as a short-term solution to meet program needs.
- Statewide Archeological staff meeting -- CAL FIRE Arch Staff met in early May to discuss the Program. Central to the discussion was review of the Program staffing needs to ensure effective, efficient, and compliant Program delivery given current staffing storages. CAL FIRE HR briefed the staff on a pending proposal to establish a new Heritage Scientist classification, which may in the next 18 months allow CAL FIRE to fill vacant positions.
- Disposal of the 40-acre Digger Butte Lookout parcel in TGU was delayed due to the presence of a suspected gravesite. To address the issue, CAL FIRE staff archaeologists recently investigated the feature and determined it to be the remains of a large dog buried there sometime after abandonment of the lookout circa 1988. DGS is now moving forward with the disposal.

**CEQA:** Staff has completed five Unit level CEQA trainings and is planning additional training in June 2014. To date over 120 employees have participated in the training conducted by our CEQA program manager, Chief Chris Browder and other staff.

## **Forest Practice Program**

**Redding Pilot Program-Supplemental Report Update:** The one-year timeframe for the Redding Pilot project ended on March 21, 2013. The review process is completed (all plans have been approved, accepted or withdrawn) for all plans and substantial deviations in the study. The supplemental report is being reviewed and the report will be submitted to the Board for review at the scheduled June Board meeting. A report on lessons learned will also be presented at the Board meeting.

### **THP submissions:**

- **THP submissions in 2014** are up significantly over last year in all area offices. In Santa Rosa, submissions of THPs are up 23% over 2013 (from 47 to 58 year-to-date). In Redding, submissions of THPs are up 36% over 2013 (from 21 to 33 year-to-date); in Fresno THP submissions are up 55% over 2013 (from 5 to 11 year-to-date). Overall, Emergency Notice submissions are down significantly compared to last year. Santa Rosa submissions of Emergency Notices are down to zero year-to-date. Redding submissions of Emergency

Notices are down 79% (from 56 to 12 year-to-date). One of the Emergency Notices was for Fuel Hazard reduction in Shasta County. Fresno submissions of Emergency Notices are also down 79% (from 28 to 6 year-to-date). Four of the six Emergency Notices submitted to Fresno in 2014 are associated with emergency harvests associated with the Rim Fire. Santa Rosa submissions of Exemption Notices are up 24% (from 126 to 156 year-to-date). Redding submissions of Exemption Notices are up 9% (from 446 to 487 year-to-date). Fresno submissions of Exemption Notices are down 68% (from 421 to 133 year-to-date). The primary reason for the decline in Exemption Notice submissions in Fresno is the conclusion of the Forest Care Program in San Bernardino County at the end of 2013.

### **2013 Fire Salvage/Emergency Notices:**

For the 2013 fires, twenty-two Emergency Notices (EMs) have been received at Redding Review Team to date:

- Thirteen EMs 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 SPI (one EM for 460 acres.), 6 EMs totaling 904 acres were submitted on small non-industrial landowners property to date.
- Two EMs were submitted on the Hough Complex (both from Chy Co. in Plumas County)
- One EM was submitted on the Windy Fire (Tehama Co.)
- One EM was submitted on the Cheney Fire (Lassen Co.)
- One EM was submitted on the Allegany Fire (Sierra Co.)
- Two EMs were submitted on the Panther Fire (Tehama Co.)
- One EM was submitted on the Smith Fire (Shasta Co.)
- One EM was submitted on the Cole Fire (Tehama Co.).

All Emergency Notices submitted to Redding were processed in less than 3 working days; most processed the day they were received.

The Rim Fire in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties burned over 257,000 acres mostly on US Forest Service and US Park Service managed lands; although greater than 18,000 acres of SRA land was burned. The Fresno Review Team has accepted twenty-six Emergency Notices, in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties to date. Of these 26 EMs, SPI has 9 covering 16,320 acres (SPI is the largest private landowner affected by the Rim Fire, with about 90% of the SRA land). The other 17 EMs are on non-industrial ownerships totaling 2,228 acres.

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

### **Review Team Personnel Issues:**

- In Redding/Fresno, new Review Team Chair Nick Kent (Redding) and Environmental Review Specialist (aka Review Team Chair) John Ramaley (Fresno) have completed basic firefighter training (67 hour) and have returned to their regular duties. An LT Review Team Chair position for Redding was advertised last month and the Department is hopeful it can be filled in the next month. Additionally, the Assistant Environmental Review Specialist position (aka Assistant Review Team Chair) in Fresno was tentatively offered to a candidate pending passing the RPP physical. The Department is hopeful this position can be filled in the next month.
- Santa Rosa staffing is deficit a Forester II and Forester I; each position has recently been advertised. Review Team Chair Peter Leuzinger has completed both Fire Fighter and Company Officer academies. Forest Practice Officer Daniel Sooy has started training for fire academy by taking some available on-line courses, and is slated for the academy in November and January, respectively

**Forest Practice Civil Prosecution Update:** There have been no new cases since the last Board meeting. There are 4 civil prosecution cases submitted in 2014. All Complaint and Proposed Orders (CPOs) have been mailed out to respondents except for one, which has been written and is waiting for signature. There are approximately 12 cases that are in need of Judgments and 5 that are in default. Our Legal Department is assisting in processing the Judgments. There are 4 cases that have requested hearings and hearings are being scheduled. One hearing was held and completed this month. Seven cases have been mailed out waiting to hear back from respondents. 8 cases are waiting for payment. The remaining 14 cases are open cases in process either waiting for settlement agreements to be returned, in court, waiting for remediation to be completed, or on probation. There are 51 open civil prosecution cases.

**Timber Operators Licensing Program Update:**

- All correctly completed insurance certificates received to date have been entered into the Forest Practice System (FPS) database. Approximately 20 were incomplete and need further information before they can be processed (e.g., missing LBFPD coverage, expiration dates). Most agents and/or LTOs have been contacted about those and we are awaiting a response.
- 4 previously submitted applications for license renewals were received that are missing critical information in order to issue the license. Most applicants have been contacted and the license cannot be further processed without a response.
- 4 payments were received without the required original signed application. Most applicants have been contacted and the license cannot be further processed without a response.
- 8 previously submitted applications for new licenses were received that are missing critical information in order to issue the license. Most applicants have been contacted and the license cannot be further processed without a response.
- 13 previously submitted applications were received without valid insurance. Most applicants have been contacted and the license cannot be further processed without a response.
- 30 applications have been received within the last week and are currently being reviewed; most are new applicants but some are renewals.

**Fire Protection and Prevention**

**Fire Protection**

- We continue experiencing unprecedented fire activity and fire danger for this time of year.
- Post Southern CA fire activity "lessons learned" conference call held with all Unit Chiefs and ECCs giving the opportunity to discuss challenges, suggestions to improve, and further increase efficiency in command and control.
- Law Enforcement Officers affected four arrests and issued 42 non-4291 citations.
- Civil Cost Recovery closed eight cost recovery cases, with recoveries totaling \$254,738.14.
- LAT went on contract Sunday, and is administratively based in Paso.

**Conservation Camps Program:** Gradual inmate population increases continue. CDCR and CAL FIRE are working to re-open Ventura Camp; a former youth based (DJJ) Conservation Camp. Both agencies have been engaged with Ventura County Government agencies and a community outreach meeting is scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup> at the Camp, located in Camarillo.

**State-Federal Program:** Program continues to work with the Contract Counties to execute all six three-year contract renewals as well as complete and agree to the terms of the 2014 Annual Operating Plans. We expect all agreements to be executed by the end of the month.

## **OSFM**

**SRA Fees:** Mailing of the fee bills by the Board of Equalization for 2013-14 has been completed.

Numbers on fees for week ending 6/13/14

Total Calls 13/13 billing 44,940

Total Petitions 13/14 – 10,780; 8849 declined

Total Bills mailed 13/14 – 585-923

Total Fees collected (13/14) as of May 31, 2104 - \$47,138,262

## **Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering**

Defensible Space Inspections reported through April 2014 – Cal Fire Units and Contract Counties (combined):

Northern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals:

Defensible Space Inspections - 10896

Number of 4291 violations - 1583

Number of 4291 citations - 0

Number of hours of fire prevention education – 12398

Southern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals

Defensible Space Inspections – 47,530

Number of 4291 violations - 3327

Number of 4291 citations - 128

Number of hours of fire prevention education – 11,548

Northern Region – Forestry Aides Totals:

Defensible Space Inspections - 6404

Number of 4291 violations - 1476

Number of 4291 citations - 0

Number of hours of public contact hours – 1970

Southern Region – Forestry Aides Totals:

Defensible Space Inspections – 11,132

Number of 4291 violations - 1690

Number of 4291 citations - 0

Number of hours of public contact hours – 1,246

## **Fire Plan/SB 1241 Implementation**

- SB 1241 Deputy Chief position has been filled by Pete Munoa
- CAL FIRE Regions in process of filling Battalion Chiefs and Fire Captains for SB 1241 implementation