

Subject: Implementation of Assembly Bill 1504 (Skinner, Chaptered 2010)

Project Goals: The goal has been to deliver an annual report of forest carbon stocks and trends to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) in the 4th quarter of each year, starting in 2015 and ending in 2020 (unless extended by request of the BOF). The 4th quarter was chosen to allow ample time to compile and report on forest inventory data collected in the previous year.

The Legislation: AB 1504 (Chaptered 2010) requires the BOF to ensure that forest practice rules are sufficient to meet the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) target for the forestry sector established by AB 32 (2006), set at 5 million metric tons (MMT) of CO₂e sequestered annually. This act amended Sections 4512, 4513, and 4551, and added Section 4512.5 to the Public Resources Code (PRC) relating to forest resources.

Actions Taken by the Board: Since 2010, pursuant to SB 97, the BOF has required THP preparers to address impacts to carbon sequestration in timber harvest plans. In January 2015, staff recommended the Board receive an annual report on forest carbon stocks and changes to evaluate the forest sector with respect to the 5 MMT annual sequestration rate target. The BOF assigned two Board members (Gilles and Andre) to join FRAP and the EO in a working group to guide development of a report. The BOF also suggested that the 1504 inventory report should be consistent with Forest Carbon Action Team (FCAT) efforts to develop a forest carbon inventory for the Forest Carbon Action Plan.

Actions Taken by FRAP: Working with the EO, FRAP initiated two funding agreements. One agreement was with the Spatial Informatics Group (SIG) to identify which rules may affect forest carbon sequestration and to identify methods, data and models to support a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) for forest carbon. The second agreement was with the USFS, to jointly fund a University researcher to provide expertise and capacity to conduct a study and develop a forest carbon report for the AB 1504 legislation (among other tasks). FRAP and UCB staffs are currently working with the USDA Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) to develop estimates and look at forest carbon trends using 10 year moving averages from 2001-2014. Tables will include carbon estimates for federal, private and state/local forestland ownerships and are expected to address the full suite of carbon pools including above ground live trees, above ground dead trees, understory, down wood, soil, below ground live tree, below ground roots, wood products in use, wood products post-use (in landfills) and bioenergy. Forest Management activities and disturbances acres that impact these pools will also be quantified.

Status: A report of potential methods to conduct a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) for forest carbon was received by FRAP in September, 2015. This report outlines 4 or 5 options to evaluate the forest sector carbon sequestration trends. The agreement with the USFS to add capacity and expertise from the UC Berkeley Center for Forestry is in place. Based in part upon stakeholder feedback, staff has recommended the Board first develop a Forest Carbon Inventory Report to help determine if a full Life Cycle Analysis is warranted, and what the parameters of such an analysis should encompass.

Workload: The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection received a Forester II to support this workload but has not yet filled this position. Staff suggests it is time to consider filling this position to support the Board in implementation of this legislation, including ongoing analysis, periodic scientific review and reporting.

Timeline: The goal is to provide a draft report to the BOF before the end of the calendar year 2015, and each 4th quarter thereafter through 2020.