

California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP)



Draft Program EIR

Public Information Webinar
July 11, 2019

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Presentation Objectives



- ▲ Provide information on the proposed California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP)
- ▲ Provide information on the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and CEQA review process for the CalVTP
 - Content and key conclusions
 - Intended uses of the PEIR
 - Project-Specific Analysis (PSA) approach

Background



- ▲ State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is proposing the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP).
- ▲ CAL FIRE will implement the CalVTP to reduce wildfire risks and avoid or diminish the harmful effects of wildfire on the people, property, and natural resources in the State of California.
- ▲ The Board released the Draft Program EIR on June 24, 2019
 - 45-day public review period ends August 9, 2019
- ▲ The CalVTP PEIR supersedes and replaces the previous Draft PEIR associated with the 2017 VTP

CalVTP: Program vs PEIR



- ▲ The CalVTP would treat approximately 250,000 acres annually of nonfederal land to reduce wildfire risk and establish more natural fire regimes
- ▲ The CalVTP PEIR contains an analysis of the physical environmental impacts of implementing the vegetation treatments proposed in the CalVTP
- ▲ The CalVTP with its CEQA streamlining is one tool intended to help implement Governor Brown's Executive Order B-52-18 mandating an increase in the pace and scale of fire fuel treatment programs to reduce wildfire risk
- ▲ Defensible space, building codes, land use decisions, timber harvesting, and other fire prevention programs work together with the CalVTP to create a more fire safe California, but are not addressed in this PEIR

CalVTP Program Area



Treatments would occur within the "Treatable Landscape"

- ▲ Defined as the portion of the SRA considered suitable for vegetation treatments
- ▲ 20.3 million acres
- ▲ Vegetation formations appropriate for treatment were identified within the SRA, then CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) modeled the areas where each of the treatment types could be implemented within those vegetation formations



CalVTP Program Description



Proposed Treatment Types :

- ▲ **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) fuel reduction** - focused in WUI-designated areas and generally consist of treatments to reduce fuel loads and slow or prevent the spread of fire between wildlands and structures, and vice versa;
- ▲ **Fuel breaks** - are strategically placed vegetation treatment areas that actively support fire-control activities; and
- ▲ **Ecological restoration projects** - generally occur outside the WUI in areas that have departed from the natural fire regime as a result of fire exclusion, and would focus on restoring ecosystem processes, conditions, and resiliency.

CalVTP Program Description 

Proposed Treatment Activities :

- ▲ Prescribed burning
- ▲ Manual vegetation treatment
- ▲ Mechanical vegetation treatment
- ▲ Prescribed herbivory (beneficial grazing or browsing)
- ▲ Targeted ground application of herbicides

CalVTP Program Description 

Standard Project Requirements (SPRs):

- ▲ Part of the proposed program to avoid and minimize environmental impacts and comply with applicable laws and regulations
- ▲ Will be incorporated into later vegetation treatments under the CalVTP as a standard part of treatment design and implementation
- ▲ The product of coordinated interagency efforts to integrate environmental protection into a comprehensive approach to reduce wildfire risk statewide through vegetation treatment

Purpose of an EIR 

- ▲ Required by CEQA for a proposed project that may result in a significant impact on the environment
- ▲ Identifies potential environmental impacts of a proposed project
 - A substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in the environment
- ▲ Identifies mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts
- ▲ Identifies alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen any significant impacts

Program EIR

- ▲ Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines allows for use of a Program EIR for a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related to a continuing program
- ▲ A PEIR provides streamlined CEQA review of site-specific, later vegetation treatment projects consistent with the PEIR
- ▲ Designed for use by many agencies
 - "Project Proponent": CAL FIRE or another public agency funded by CAL FIRE grants or with land ownership and/or management responsibilities in the treatable landscape that is seeking to implement vegetation treatments consistent with the CalVTP, using the PEIR for CEQA compliance
 - Extensive interagency coordination – CDFW, CARB, Coastal Commission
- ▲ A project proponent must incorporate all standard project requirements relevant to the proposed activity and all feasible mitigation measures from the PEIR into the later activity, as needed, to address potentially significant effects

Intended Use of the CalVTP Program EIR

- ▲ Evaluate the later vegetation treatment project to determine whether the project is consistent with the activities in the CalVTP and would have effects that were analyzed in the PEIR
 - Evaluation documented in Project-specific Analysis
- ▲ If the later activities are found to be "within the scope" of the CalVTP PEIR, no additional CEQA document need be prepared or circulated to the public
 - An NOD will be filed if the project is approved
- ▲ Where later activities do not qualify for a "within the scope" finding, the PEIR can be used to focus only on the significant impacts that are new or substantially more severe in site-specific mitigated negative declarations or focused EIRs
- ▲ This CEQA streamlining will facilitate an increase in pace and scale

Topics Addressed in the PEIR (Full-scope EIR)

▲ Aesthetics and Visual resources	▲ Hydrology and Water Quality
▲ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	▲ Land Use and Planning, Population and Housing
▲ Air Quality	▲ Noise
▲ Archeological, Historic, and Tribal Cultural Resources	▲ Recreation
▲ Biological Resources	▲ Transportation
▲ Geology, Soils, and Mineral Resources	▲ Public Services, Utilities and Service Systems
▲ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	▲ Wildfire
▲ Energy Resources	▲ Cumulative Effects
▲ Hazardous Materials, Public Health and Safety	

Potential Impacts Identified in the PEIR

- ▲ Impacts forecasted to be significant and unavoidable:
 - Aesthetics (non-shaded fuel breaks)
 - Cultural Resources (archeological and subsurface historical resources)
- ▲ Impacts forecasted to be less than significant or beneficial, but noted as potentially significant and unavoidable because of future uncertainties:
 - Air Quality (emissions from prescribed burning)
 - Biological Resources (special-status bumble bees)
 - Cultural Resources (tribal cultural resources)
 - Greenhouse Gas Emissions (emissions during treatment)
 - Transportation (increase in vehicle miles traveled)
 - Utilities and Service Systems (potential capacity exceedance from biomass)

Alternatives

- ▲ Alternatives Evaluated in the Draft PEIR:
 - No Program Alternative
 - Alternative A: Reduced Scale of Treatments
 - Alternative B: WUI Fuel Reduction Only
 - Alternative C: Modified WUI Fuel Reduction and Fuel Breaks
 - Alternative D: No Prescribed Burning Treatments
 - Alternative E: No Herbicide Treatments
- ▲ Environmentally Superior Alternative
 - None of the alternatives clearly stands out as environmentally superior
 - Alternative D avoids significant and unavoidable impacts related to human health, but would not achieve basic program objectives

Schedule

- ▲ NOP 30-day Public Review Period** — January 30 – March 1, 2019
- ▲ Draft PEIR Released (45-day Public Review Period)** — June 24, 2019
- ▲ Public Information Webinar — July 11, 2019
- ▲ Draft PEIR Public Review Period ends** — August 9, 2019
- ▲ Final PEIR Released — November 2019
- ▲ PEIR Certified** — December 2019

** Opportunities for Public Input

How to Submit Comments 

Written Comments

- ▲ Accepted by mail:
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attention: Edith Hannigan, Land Use Planning Program Manager
Mail: PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460
- ▲ Accepted by email:
Email: CalVTP@bof.ca.gov

Comment period closes on August 9

Thank you! 

Written Comments

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