BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

Sacramento, CA

March 3, 2021

# **BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**:

## **Present**:

* Keith Gilless, Chair
* Katie Delbar
* Rich Wade
* Marc Los Huertos
* Darcy Wheeles
* Chris Chase
* Susan Husari
* Mike Jani

# **BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Matt Dias, Executive Officer
* Eric Hedge, Regulations Program Manager
* Dan Stapleton, Licensing Officer
* Jeff Slaton, Board Counsel
* Deniele Cade, Staff Analyst, Licensing
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
* Edith Hannigan, Land Use Planning Program Manager
* Robert Roth, Attorney IV­­­­
* Claire McCoy, Environmental Planner
* Sara Walter, AGPA
* Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation
* Laura Alarcon-Stalians, Administrative Manager
* Linda Cano, Executive Assistant

# **DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT**:

* Helge Eng, Deputy Director, CAL FIRE
* Dennis Hall, Assistant Deputy Director, Forest Practice
* Eric Huff, Staff Chief, Forest Practice Program
* Bill Solinsky, Forester III, THP Administration
* Tom Smith, Sr. Plant Pathologist, Resource Management
* Matt Damon, Battalion Chief, AVL Project Manager, CAL FIRE

# **Announcement of Action(s) Taken in Executive Session**:

Jeff Slaton, Board Counsel, reported that the Board discussed the items on the agenda during Executive session.

* California Chaparral Institute, *et al*., vs. California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Case No. 37-2020-00005203)

No reportable actions were taken.

# Consent Calendar Items

* Approval of the January 2021 Board Meeting Minutes (with minor edits if requested by members of the Board); Deferred to future meeting.
* Legislative Update;
* Review of Rulemaking Matrix;
* Appointment of Dan Adler and Steve Wilensky to the Advisory Council of the Joint Institute for Wood Product Innovation;
* Board approval of RPF License Withdrawal for RPF #2533, Jose Martinez.

**Member Gilless moved to approve the items on the Consent Calendar, with the exception of the January Meeting Minutes. Member Chase seconded.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade aye**

**Husari aye**

**Jani aye**

**Delbar aye**

**Wheeles aye**

**Los Huertos absent**

**Chase aye**

**Gilless aye**

**The motion passed.**

# MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS

## **Report of the Chairman, Dr. Keith Gilless:**

## Chair Gilless thanked Board members and staff for their work on the Fire Safe Regulation revisions. He also thanked stakeholders for attending the Fire Safe Regulation workshops and for their input.

## Report of the Executive Officer, Matt Dias:

* Staffing Update – Mr. Dias introduced Kristina Wolf, Environmental Scientist, and gave an update on the pending appointment of a Regulations Coordinator.
* Provided a Legislative update.
* Discussion of development of a Work Plan to accomplish goals set forth in the California’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

## Report of the Director, Helge Eng, Deputy Director, CAL FIRE:

### Fire Season Outlook

* 99% of California is abnormally dry. The U.S. drought monitor indicates that 85% of the state is in some level of drought. Snow pack is at 61% of normal. California has already had 558 fires which burned 1,858 acres. This is twice the 5-year average of 281 fires and 225 acres burned for this date.

### Aviation

* Work on the C-130 Airtankers continues. The department will receive a total of seven retrofitted aircraft from the U.S. Air Force. Three are currently painted in CAL FIRE colors. Retardant delivery systems will be installed and the aircraft should be ready for the 2023 fire season.
* The department is also taking delivery of 12 Blackhawk helicopters. Three are in service and ready to fight fire. Two are deployed to the Mina and Columbia airbases. The third is at the Air Management Unit at McClellan as a reserved aircraft.

**Fire Crews**

* There are 23 staffed CDCR Type-1 fire crews of 152 funded. There are 14 staffed CCC Type-1 crews of 16 funded.
* Covid continues to impact the camp program. Six camps are currently quarantined.
* The department is continuing to utilize California National Guard crews for fuel reduction and fire response. 10 crews are funded out of Title 32 federal funding through September. Cal Fire is working with the National Guard to add 3 additional crews for the 2021 fire season for a total of 13 crews.

**Climate and Energy**

* The department anticipates additional funding to supplement what is available from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction fund. Monitoring and reporting are critical for accountability and adaptive management. The department is intensifying sampling of the federal Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plots. Frequency of measurement of FIA plots will be increased to every five years from every 10 years. Last summer 70 plots were sampled. This summer 635 plots will be sampled. The department is working in cooperation with the contractor and Pacific Northwest research station of the Forest Service.

**Grant Programs**

* Solicitation for grants for both forest health and fire prevention started March 10. Time extensions have been given to numerous existing grants due to the pandemic. Cal Fire is working with the Forest Service on the Annual Forest Service cooperative fire and forestry grants. The 5-year review of the program is starting this spring.

**Watershed Protection Program**

* The Watershed Emergency Response teams held an after action close out meeting in February with other agencies. Training workshops are planned for state and local agency personnel in April and May to increase the number of participants.

**California Arbor Week**

* California Arbor Week is March 7-14 and this year’s theme is “Trees Invite Me Outside.” The traditional poster contest for school children, ages 5 to 12 years old was held. A press conference was held on March 8, to recognize the winner.

**Burn Permits**

* The department is working on an online burn permit to streamline the process. CAL FIRE is collaborating with the Air Resources Board. The roll out is expected to be June 30, 2021.

**Timber Sales**

* Timber sales are moving forward, primarily on the Jackson State Forest. The department is delaying timber sales on the La Tour and So Cal State Forests, due to lower timber prices. Redwood prices are holding at a high level, at almost $900 per thousand board feet.

**Forest Pest Management**

* Staff is considering studies to investigate the relationship between the large fire events of last year and a variety of pests including mistletoe, Gold Spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) and others. The 2020 Pest Conditions Report is close to completion and there will be a report to the board when it is ready.

**Training Center**

* The CAL FIRE Training Center has reduced class sizes and limited the number of classes due to Covid-19. Despite these challenges the center had the highest number graduates for multi-firefighter and company officer academies in CAL FIRE’s history. Assistant Deputy Eng gave kudos to the training center for adapting to the challenges faced during the pandemic. Training priorities continue to be the core classes related to fire protection, law enforcement and resource management.

**Fire Mitigation Plans**

* CAL FIRE staff are engaged in reviewing the fire mitigation plans submitted by the Electrical Corporation Utilities and providing comments to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) on those plans.

***Report of the Regulations Program Manager:***

* Update on Pending Re-adoption of Finding of Emergency for Fire Safe Regulations- Edith Hannigan- Land Use Planning Program Manager.
* Update on Permanent Rulemaking for the Fire Safe Regulations – Edith Hannigan – Land Use Planning Program Manager.

**Public Comment:**

* Stephanie Raugust,
* Paula Daneluk, Director of Development Services, Butte Co.
* Paia Levine, Deputy Director of the Planning Department, Santa Cruz
* Mike Garabedian, no affiliation stated
* Marylee Guinon, no affiliation stated
* Kevin Reinertson, Riverside County Fire
* KA Macfarlane, public member
* Joshua Costello, Los Angeles County Fire Department
* John Janeski
* Edward Kiernan, Siskiyou County Counsel
* Deborah Eppstein, no affiliation stated
* Dave Reid, County of Santa Cruz - Office of Resilience, Recovery and Response
* Bob Berlage, Big Creek Lumber Co.
* Yana Valachovic,
* Becky Steinbruner, public member
* Arthur Wylene, Rural County Representatives of California

***Report of the Standing Committees:***

**Forest Practice Committee, Rich Wade, Chair**

Chair Wade reported on the items discussed by the committee which included:

* Botanical Issues within the Timber Harvest Process;
* Review of DRAFT letter to Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding membership to CNDDB;
* Update on interagency discussions addressing problem statements and the potential development of a Board Guidance Memorandum outlining process on scoping, assessment and protection of botanical resources to be addressed in the Plan process; and
* Potential regulatory amendments to the Prohibition of Broadcast Burning for Slash Treatment in the Southern Subdistrict of the Coast Forest District – 14 CCR §§ 917.3 – 917.4.

**Management Committee, Chris Chase, Chair**

Chair Chase reported on the issues discussed by the committee which included:

* Staff update on potential amendments to Less Than 3 Acre Conversions Exemption - 14 CCR § 1104.1 *et seq*; and
* Staff update on potential amendments to Utility Right of Way Conversion Exemptions - 14 CCR § 1104.1 *et seq.*

**Resource Protection, Darcy Wheeles, Chair**

Chair Wheeles reported on the issues discussed by the committee which included:

* Land Use Planning Program Update;
* A review of the City of Auburn Safety Element;
* Discussion of DRAFT Fire Risk Reduction Communities Rule Plead - 14 CCR § 1268 *et. seq.;* and
* Provided update on Permanent Rulemaking and discussion of February 8th DRAFT Fire Safe Regulations Rule Plead.

***Report of Board’s Advisory Committees:***

* Effectiveness Monitoring Committee – Sue Husari, Co-Chair

Board Consideration of Annual Report and Workplan was deferred to future meeting.

* Range Management Advisory Committee – Edith Hannigan - Land Use Planning Program Manager.

# Special Board Hearing and Reports

**Presentation:** **Accelerate Firewise Development - Leverage the Green Building Community - U.S. Green Building Council, Los Angeles, Discussion of June 17th Statewide Mini-Conference; Firewise Property Tours, and Education Programs**: Ben Stapleton, Executive Director, USGBC-LA and Cassy Aoyagi, President

**Annual Forest Carbon Updates**

* **PRESENTATION: 2019 Update on Forest Carbon Accounting Reporting –** Nadia Tase, Senior Environmental Scientist, CALFIRE FRAP
* **PRESENTATION:** Effects of Forest Management & Wood Utilization on Carbon Sequestration & Storage in California  - Kendall DeLyser, Senior Manager of Forests and Climate, American Forests

# CONCLUSION

## Public Forum

No public comments were offered.

## Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Signature of Matt Dias, Executive Officer

Matthew Dias

Executive Officer

Keith Gilless

Chair