

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Terrence O'Brien, CHAIR

Wade Crowfoot, *Secretary*

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BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

SACRAMENTO, CA

December 10, 2025

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS

Present:

- Terrence O'Brien, Chair
- J. Lopez
- Rich Wade
- Elicia Goldsworthy
- Ryan Hilburn
- Katie Delbar

Absent:

- Elizabeth Forsburg-Pardi, Vice Chair
- Dawn Blake

BOARD STAFF PRESENT:

- Tony Andersen, Executive Officer
- Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
- Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
- Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
- Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation, Board Staff
- Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager
- Alex Vest, Wildfire Planning Specialist
- Mazonika Kemp, Records Administrator
- Anna Castro, Executive Assistant

DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT:

- Eric Huff, Deputy Director Resource Management, CAL FIRE
- John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Resource Protection and Improvement, CAL FIRE

Board Members Roll Call:

Member Lopez	Present
Member Wade	Present
Member Blake	Absent
Member Delbar	Present
Member Forsburg-Pardi	Absent
Member Goldsworthy	Present
Member Hilburn	Present
Chairman O'Brien	Present

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

Debra Wordham Interim Counsel for the Board reported that during executive closed session the Board discussed one item on the agenda. No reportable action taken.

Consent Calendar Items:

12-10-01 Chair O'Brien moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Lopez seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Goldsworthy:	Aye
Hilburn:	Aye
Lopez:	Aye
Wade:	Aye
Blake:	Absent
Delbar:	Present
Forsburg-Pardi:	Absent
O'Brien:	Aye

Motion passed.

MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS:

Report of the Director, John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Resource Protection and Improvement, CAL FIRE:

Natural Resource Management

Resource Protection and Improvement Programs

Forest Entomology and Pathology Program

- New mortality and infestation sites due to non-native Mediterranean oak borer (MOB) continued to be found in 10 counties in 2025. Throughout this last year, the program has provided multiple educational trainings, outreach at county board meetings, conferences, and other public events. Program staff are working with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and county agricultural commissioners with trapping to assess phenology and distribution, and to provide tree health assessments of infested trees.
- The program continues to support tribal partners. Staff successfully completed fieldwork to detect *Armillaria* occurrence on four large oak woodland plots in Karuk tribal territory (Northern California) where treatments for removal of encroaching conifers are planned for future years. This involved burial (for one year), retrieval, and dissection/examination/scoring of 160 woody baits in the soil near legacy black oak trees.

Demonstration State Forests

Jackson

- The final two Forest Management Plan public comment meetings were hosted in Ukiah and Sacramento on the first two Mondays in November 2025. The public comment period for the Draft Plan is open through December 12, 2025. The [Forest Management Plan website](#) has all related material and information.
- The Adaptive Management Experiment (AMEX) Timber Harvesting Plan was recommended for approval on November 7, 2025. Staff are working on the contract requirements for implementation with the research team at the University of Nevada, Reno.
- The Caspar Creek Experimental Watershed fish ladders have been opened for winter salmonid spawning season.

Soquel

- California Conservation Corps Fire Crews from the Monterey Bay Fire Center installed control lines and modified fuel in and around the next series of prescribed burn units along Sulphur Ridge.

LaTour

- The “Senapol 26” Timber Sale has been advertised with a bid opening date of January 8, 2026. The sale includes selection harvesting, fuel break construction, and road improvements on approximately 637 acres.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Programs

Prescribed Fire Program

- On October 29, 2025, Governor Newsom signed Executive Order N-35-25 to support expanded use of beneficial fire. Several of the actions identified within the Executive Order direct CAL FIRE to increase the use of Beneficial Fire by reducing barriers and improving the ability to cooperate with the public and state

agencies. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) will host a webinar on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 pm to provide updates and progress on the Executive Order.

Wildfire Resilience Programs

Reforestation Services

- Seed requests are being accepted [online](#) for customers who have identified an external nursery to sow and grow them.
- Excess seedlings from overages in the State Nursery's 2025 production year are available in select seed lots on a first come-first served basis and can be requested via an [online interest form](#).

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) & Forest Stewardship Agreements

- Summary of accomplishments for 2025:
 - Amount of funding encumbered in 2025: \$8,529,176.36.
 - Acres of treatments by type:
 - 3,089.2 total treatment acres
 - 1,624.2 acres of Forest Health treatment
 - 941 acres of Reforestation
 - 512 acres of combined Forest Health/Reforestation
 - There was one 12-acre project that was a combination of Forest Health/Habitat Improvement.
 - Number of agreements signed:
 - 54 agreements signed in 2025

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

- The Forest Legacy Program is working on closing three working forest conservation projects within the next two months.
 - The first phase of the Big Grizzly Creek Corridor fee title and conservation easement acquisition covering 1,025 acres in Plumas County is expected to close escrow by mid-December 2025.
 - The Lindsay Creek Conservation Easement project covering 2,815 acres in Humboldt County is expected to close by the end of 2026.

Forest Health

- The Forest Health Program anticipates releasing draft grant guidelines for public comment in January 2026, with formal solicitations to follow in Spring 2026. These solicitations will be supported by both the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) and Proposition 4 California Climate Bond funding. Grant awards from the Spring solicitation are expected to be announced in Fall 2026. The Program plans to conduct two parallel Forest Health grant solicitations-one for GGRF and one for Proposition 4-and aims to run both on an aligned timeline and application process to ensure consistency and ease of participation.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

- In October 2025, the Task Force distributed a preliminary working draft of its 2026 Action Plan to its partner agencies and organizations. The Task Force will take the month of December 2025, to integrate that feedback into a draft that will be distributed for Executive review in January 2026. The December 12, 2025, Task Force meeting will preview key Action Plan findings and proposed actions. A public draft of the Action Plan is expected to be released in early 2026.

- Task Force's upcoming meetings are listed here and posted on the Task Force website at: www.wildfiretaskforce.org/meetings

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

Research and Monitoring

- CAL FIRE intensification of Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) data collection field season was extended to November 15, 2025. The project is on track to sample 79% of its 2025 field season plots this season.

Wildfire Hazard & Risk

- FRAP staff continue to support SB1101 requirements for burn severity mapping and Potential Operational Delineations (POD's)

Forest and Rangeland Assessment

- The Forest and Rangeland Assessment has made recent progress with 10 of 13 chapters now through internal and external review. The three remaining chapters have completed drafts and are in different stages of review. We anticipate having a pre-release version of the Forest and Rangeland Assessment report by the middle of February 2026.

Fire Protection Program

Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

- CAL FIRE peace officers have made 230 arrest and have issued 449 citations through October 2025.
 - 142 of those arrests are from Arson.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Local Government Program

The Local Government Program has completed 58 Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement renewals for FY 25/26, with the remaining agreements actively being finalized. In these agreements, CAL FIRE provides fire protection services to over 100 counties, cities, fire districts, special districts and services to over 100 countries, cities, fire districts, special districts and service areas throughout California. From Local Government Stations on Local Government-owned equipment, CAL FIRE employees respond to a variety of incidents, including wildland fires, structure fires, floods, hazardous-material spills, swift water rescues, civil disturbances, earthquakes, and medical emergencies of all kinds.

International Program

- The Program hosted delegations from Costa Rica, Saudi Arabia, and Japan in the month of November. The program continues to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting CAL FIRE's leadership in international fire services collaboration, which continues to strengthen our partnerships. These engagements are part of CAL FIRE's strategy to expand international cooperation and exchange best practices in wildfire management.

Safety Program

- Discussion and progress on the topic of wildland respiratory protection continues.
- Safety Program staff were subject matter discussions on the topic at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Standing Committee on Personal Protective Equipment for Workplace Safety and Health. The committee is sponsored by the National Institute of Health. The committee is sponsored by the

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH's) National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)
Statewide Training Program (Statewide Training)

- As of November 25, 2025, Statewide Training hosted over 3,500 students in 2025.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Defensible Space

- Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Inspections
 - 143,569
- Year-to-Date Inspections
 - 298,674

Home Hardening

- California Wildfire Mitigation Program
 - In-person field assessment training with El Dorado County with home hardening 2.0 assessment app.

Burn Permits

- Executive Order N-35-25 created a Temporary Directive that allows Fire Boss and Cultural Burners to be approved when a permit is requested. This runs smoothly, with continued input from the local unit.
- Burn Permit Year to Date totals:
 - Issued 89,913
 - Cultural Burn: 2,248

Utility Wildfire Mitigation

- Reviewing applications for independent Evaluations with OEIS on December 5, 2026.

Wildfire Planning and Statistics

Wildland Fuels

- Continued development of CalMAPPER V4 with implementation date to the field on July 13, 2026.'

Statistics

- Preparing for the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) transfer on January 1, 2026. Staff is working with Region and Units to complete any outstanding reports for 2025.
- Staff have been working with Department in preparation for NERIS transfer and assisting with onboarding to this new program.

Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

Land Use Planning (LUPP)

- There are seven Safety Element Formal Reviews on the RPC agenda for the Cities of Aliso Viejo, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Clemente, Malibu, Pacific Grove, Monte Sereno, and Trinity County.

Subdivision Review

- There are six Fire Safety Surveys on the RPC agenda for the Cities of Sierra Madre, Pasadena, La Habra Heights, Banning, Beaumont, and Grizzly Flats.

NFPA Firewise USA

- There are 1,477 Firewise Communities in Good Standing with 37 applications pending our review. We are starting to evaluate the potential 1500th Community for recognition.

Land Use Planning for Wildfire in California Class

- CAL FIRE and the Community Wildfire Planning Center were recently honored with the American Planning Association's 2025 Resiliency & Sustainability Award in recognition of this training program. This national award is a competitive juried process and is in the highest level of recognition bestowed by APA that recognizes exemplary planning topics and activities. Each year, APA's National Planning Awards honor planning efforts and initiatives working to make safer, stronger, and more just communities for all.

Wildfire Prevention Grants

- Executive review was completed on December 1, 2025.
 - Received 401 applications, requesting \$282,998,354.54
 - Awards announcement will be Friday, December 12, 2025.

Communications

- On Friday, December 5, 2025, the Communications Program assisted with a Legislative Open House event at CAL FIRE's Aviation Headquarters in McClellan. This two-hour Open House provided legislative support staff a deeper understanding of CAL FIRE-its diverse mission, capabilities, and the full scope of its work beyond emergency response.

Tribal Affairs Program

- CAL FIRE continues to support the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Tribal Affairs Program on the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CALVTP) update and provides consultation guidance to the Board of Forestry. To date, CNRA and the Board of Forestry are consulting with several tribes.
- CAL FIRE has integrated Government-to-Government Consultation and Cultural Humility courses into its training curriculum where executive and high-level management leaders are required to take tribal consultation training by December 31, 2025.

Tribal Wildfire Resilience

- Tribal Wildfire Resilience is currently working with FY 24/25 grant awardees to develop grant agreements with the goal of having them completed by the end of the year.

Public Comment:

- Richard Gienger commented that the new Jackson Management draft plan is the same as the old plan. He shared that this plan lacks vision. Also, shared that CAL FIRE has interacted with the indigenous communities in a positive way.

Report of the Executive Officer, Tony Andersen:

Tony Andersen, Executive Officer, introduced Debra Wordham from the Attorney General's Office, she is our interim Lead Counsel into January as we hire a new Lead Counsel for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. Also, congratulations to Jane Van Susteren for being nominated and receiving an Organizational Enhancement Award as part of CAL FIRE's Annual Director's Awards.

Report of The Standing Committees:**Joint Forest Practice and Management Committee, Rich Wade, Chair and Ryan Hilburn, Member**

The Joint Forest Practice and Management Committee met yesterday to discuss the committee's joint issues.

- Discussed the consideration of comments received in the Board's Annual Call for Regulatory Review where we solicited comments from stakeholders and agencies to comment on issues that they would like to have the Board consider.
- Committee went over the numerous issues that were brought forward and tentatively assigned topics to the respective committees. Discussions will continue next month in terms of ranking these with prioritization of the urgency of the issue to be addressed.
- Discussed the Noticing Processes of Harvest documents and Timber Harvest Plans.
- Discussed the Consideration of "Plan Area" definition within the Forest Practice Rules. This discussion will continue next month.
- Discussed the rule package that had been in Forest Practice Committee which is further defining in harvest documents the roles and responsibilities for License Timber Operators.
- Considered Rule Package Points of Light that had been prepared by Board staff. This clarifies language that was obsolete to current definitions in the rules. Further action was deferred till January.

Public Comment:

- Richard Gienger commented that he wondered if the committee was going to address the issue of Geospatial. He shared his thoughts on the Plan Area, and he is in support of the California Geological Survey proposals related to mass wasting and exemptions.
 - Member Wade stated that the committee did not specifically discuss the Geospatial issue.

Resource Protection Committee (RPC), J. Lopez, Chair

The RPC met yesterday and discussed the following items on the agenda:

- Land Use Planning Program update was given by Deputy Chief Shane Vargas.
- Firewise USA is at 1,477 communities.
- Four Wildfire Trainings have been conducted for planners and fire officials.
- Discussed subdivision review of 6 areas.
- Review of 7 Safety Elements

Report of Board's Advisory Committees:**Zone Zero Regulations Advisory Committee, Terrence O'Brien, Chair**

- The Zone Zero Regulations Committee held a workshop on Monday, December 8, 2025. Landscape Architects and other individuals from Southern California presented to the Committee. Their objective was to make the Board aware of issues pertaining to natural vegetation and burning.

- Also, CAL FIRE reported on mapping issues regarding the designation of very high fire hazard zones.
- The Committee has received input from individuals, especially in the Southern California Area, who are concerned about the most recent plea and potential impact on vegetation. The Committee has directed staff to gather information on affordability issues which are tied to the issue of implementation within the next couple of months.
- The Committee has decided not to hold a workshop in January.
- In November a few of us from the Board and Board Staff visited several communities to obtain additional information regarding Zone Zero potential impacts. We visited Berkely and Santa Rosa.
- Chair O'Brien stated the Zone Zero Regulations will be very important in helping to make our communities safer. It is important that whatever the Committee recommends, and the Board eventually adopts, helps move the ball forward significantly to make our communities safer.

Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, Ryan Hilburn, Co-Chair

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee hosted a tour at Blodgett Forestry Resource Station in October. The tour was extremely successful with over 75 attendees. We looked at a variety of Silviculture experiments and reforestation experiments. Our next meeting is scheduled for February 4, 2026.

Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC), Dr. Marc Horney, Chair

The chair of RMAC, the Board of Forestry staffer and I met with the Board of Forestry Executive Officer, Tony Andersen on November 25. It was great to meet with Tony to review RMAC's working objectives, management of the Committee's Annual Workplan and the progress on Senate Bill 675.

- At the present time, we are working through the requirement of Senate Bill 675 for the Range Management Advisory Committee to develop local and regional grazing guidance. They are working on a document, public review had opened and ran from October 8 – November 7, 2025. Those comments were closed and addressed and incorporated into the final guidance document which the Board approved today.
- RMAC continues to work on developing opportunities for funding sources to support prescribed grazing projects around the State.
- The next RMAC meeting will be held January 22, 2026, from 9:30 am – 1:00 pm,

Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation, Katie Harrell, Board Staff

Katie Harrell presented to the Board a recap presentation on the Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation.

Presentation:

SB 675 Implementation: Local-Regional Grazing Guidance, Dr. Marc Horney, Professor of Animal Science at CPSLO, RMAC Chair.

CONCLUSION

Public Forum

Public Comments:

- Richard Gienger stated he wanted to share some documents with the Executive Officer. Richard shared his thoughts regarding these documents to the Board.
- George Gentry stated he was invoking public resources code 740 which to summarize says that this Board is responsible for the State's Forest Policy. Not the Governor's Office, not the agency this Board is specifically in Statue responsible. He shared the closer of the Roseburg Mill in Weed, California is a stark reminder that California's Forest Policy is in separable from the civility of forest dependent communities. This decision will ripple far beyond the mill gates. It harms local jobs, small businesses that supply the operation and the broader competitive landscape as one less purchaser further tightens landowners and operators. The Board also has the responsibility to ensure the regulatory framework you oversee is not only environmentally sound but also workable, timely and predictable in practice. With permanent timelines operational uncertainty and compliance complexity compound the result is few operating mills. This is undermining the very capacity we need to accomplish fuels reduction, Forest Health and Wildfire Resilience. I urge the Board to treat mill infrastructure and market capacity as essential components of Forest Policy. Priorities clear and consistent rules, faster and more reliable review processes and policies that keep responsible operators working. As of last week, we lost 5% of our milling capacity in California and we need to think of that going forward.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
ATTEST:



Tony Andersen
Executive Officer
ATTEST:



Terrence O'Brien
Chairman