

**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**

**January 14, 2026**

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

### **Present:**

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

**Board Members Roll Call:**

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

***Quorum established***

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

No Executive Session this meeting.

**Consent Calendar Items:**

**01-14-01 Member Lopez moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Wade:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Forsburg-Pardi:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

## **MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS:**

### **Report of the Director, Eric Huff, Deputy Director Resource Management, CAL FIRE: Natural Resource Management**

#### Forest Practice Program

- Three Forest Practice staff have received the Directors award for superior accomplishment:
  - Adam Deem for work at the Magalia CCC Camp to get the area ready for improvements.
  - Manuel Cacho and Sean Arrant for their work on moving CalTREES database to the cloud for long term-improved service and capacity.

#### Forest Practice Science and Monitoring Program

- The Monitoring program is finalizing a draft California Forestry Report on field sampling of the “Harvesting dead, Dying Trees or Diseased Trees, fuelwood or split products in response to drought related stress...” Exemption (Forest Practice Rule Section 1038(d)). The goal is to have the final draft completed by early spring.

#### Forest Practice Review Teams

- A draft “Cumulative Impacts Assessment form” created by the Santa Rosa Review Team is in internal review.

#### Forest Practice Administration

- 2024 Forest Practice Rulebooks are ready to publish – staff has been waiting for the final Office of Administrative Law (OAL) review of the permanent Forest Resilience Exemption regulations. Draft language from the submitted rule is already included in the working draft so any potential changes can be made rapidly and sent to the publisher once the regulation is approved.

#### Resource Protection and Improvement Programs

##### Urban and Community Forestry

- California first Nature-Based Solutions Summit will be held January 29, 2026, at California Natural Resources Agency Headquarters, 715 P Street, Sacramento from 9:00 – 4:00.

##### Forest Entomology and Pathology Program

- Gold-spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) continues to be an important issue in Southern California. In December, Forest Entomology and Pathology staff presented during a virtual symposium with over 260 attendees on GSOB biology and the new GSOB Blitz for 2026.

#### Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Programs

##### Prescribed Fire Program

- The Program continues to work toward completion of the tasks assigned to CAL FIRE in the Governor’s Beneficial Fire Executive Order N-35-25.

##### Environmental Protection

- CAL FIRE staff continue to review the Governor’s State of Emergency Environmental Protection Plan projects (administered by the California Natural Resource Agency) to streamline critical fuel reduction projects, this review process was scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2025, but has been extended until May 1, 2026.

## Climate and Energy Programs

### 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.

### Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

#### Forest & Monitoring

- Final plot sampling results for the 2025 fields season (698 total plots).
  - Sampled plots: 521 (74.6%)
  - Non-sampled, hazardous: 12 (1.7%)
  - Non-sampled, access denied: 84 (12.0%)
  - Carryover to 2026: 81 (11.6%)
- Pre-field review is complete for the 2026 field season. The United States Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station (PNW) is generating plot lists.

#### Forest and Rangeland Assessment

- FRAP staff provided a briefing on January 6, 2026, to the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) on the upcoming Forest and Rangeland Assessment. Final drafts are complete for 11 of 13 chapters, and revisions to the last two chapters are underway. A complete draft report is anticipated by the end of the month, with public release expected thereafter.

#### GIS-Data Analytics

- The vegetation burn severity viewer has been updated with the most recent year of data to include wildfires from 2015 through 2024, and Southern California January 2025 fires.

#### Fire Protection

##### Fire Protection Program

#### Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

- CAL FIRE peace officers have made 243 arrests and issue 506 citations through December 2025.
  - 151 of those arrests are for arson.
- Approximately \$21 million in fire suppression cost recovery has been received this fiscal year.

#### Cooperative Fire Protection

##### Local Government Program

- Contract County Program: The Contract County Program, in coordination of the Association of Contract County's, hosted the 2025 Fall ACC meeting December 3-4 in Ventura, CA. Topics included DPA review, Tribal relations, and CAD integration/reporting. In addition, the new Deputy Chief of the Contract County Program, Patrick Aguada, was introduced behind Deputy Chief Brook Spelman.

##### State/Federal Program

- On December 11, 2025, after a three-year rewrite by the committee, the California Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (CFMA) was finalized and approved. The CFMA is a foundational

interagency agreement that enables coordinated wildfire response and fuels mitigation efforts across jurisdictional boundaries in California.

#### Hand Crew Program

- As of December 31, 2025, 104 of the 236 CAL FIRE Hand Crews are staffed and available for statewide response. The number of Hand Crews available significantly impacts wildland fire suppression, conservation work, prescribed fires activities, and fuels reduction work. Hand crew numbers may fluctuate due to staffing periods and crew typing certifications. The current staffing includes the following four models under the Hand Crew program:
  - As of January 7, 64 of 151 authorized California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Incarcerated Persons Hand Crews
  - 32 of 33 California Conservation Corps Hand Crews
  - 9 of 38 CAL FIRE Firefighter I Hand Crews

#### Wildfire Risk Reduction and Preparedness

##### Defensible Space

- Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Inspections
  - 162,253
- 2025 Calendar Year Inspection
  - 326,000
  - Increase from the 2024 Calendar Year of 27,000 inspections

##### Burn Permits

- 2025 YTD – Approved applications 98,998 – Cultural Burning – 2,149

#### Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

##### Land Use Planning (LUPP)

- Program staff are engaged with numerous jurisdictions statewide in assisting with mandatory submittal of local Safety Elements of General Plans

##### Wildfire Prevention Grants

- Awards were announced on December 12
  - Received 401 applications, requesting \$282,998,354.54
  - In total, CAL FIRE awarded more than \$62.6 million in funding for 84 local wildfire prevention projects across California, including 41 projects in low-income and disadvantaged communities.

##### Communications

- CAL FIRE will host two Director's Awards Ceremonies in January. The Southern Region awards will take place in the CNRA auditorium on January 26, 2026. The awards recognize programs, partnership and individuals who have innovated, enhanced, and gone above and beyond over the last year.

##### Tribal Affairs Program

- The Tribal Affairs Program, Cultural Resources Program, Sonoma State University, Stanislaus State University and Chico State University continue to jointly consult with five Tribes regarding the repatriation of collection items held by CAL FIRE and housed at these universities, in accordance with the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (CaINAGRPRRA).

##### Tribal Wildfire Resilience

- Tribal Wildfire Resilience has executed all grant agreements for the 2025 solicitation.

**Report of the Executive Officer, Tony Andersen:**

The Executive Officer introduced our new Senior Counsel for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, Katherine Cook.

**Report of The Standing Committees:**

**Joint Forest Practice and Management Committee, Rich Wade, Chair and Liz Pardi, Member**

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

- Discussed the noticing processes and rules specific to the southern subdistrict and counties within the southern subdistrict.
- Discussed the "Plan Area" Definition within the Forest Practice Rules. It was determined that more time is needed and will discuss further in March.
- Discussed Roles and Responsibilities of Licensed Timber Operators.

**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.
- Discussed the Subdivision Review Program update.
- Reviewed 5 Safety Elements.
- Firewise Community has reached close to 1,500 communities.

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

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

- Presentation Draft State Claims Fund for Long-Term Forest Residue Supply Contracts Final Report, Dave Jones, Climate Risk Initiative, Center for Law, Energy & Environment, UC Berkeley, and Christiana Darlington, Esq., CLERE Inc.

**Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) announcement of passing candidates of the October 2025 RPF exam.**

**The following individuals are recommended for licensing as Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) by the PFEC.**

Applicant 8265 – James DiPasquale  
Applicant 8267 – Alex Vice  
Applicant 8271 – Devin Eastman  
Applicant 8306 – Hunter Harrill  
Applicant 8308 – Gavin Williams  
Applicant 8309 – Benjamin Blom  
Applicant 8311 – Zachary Barber  
Applicant 8315 – Justin Barker  
Applicant 8319 – Brian Kelly

**Board Consideration of Certification of successful exam applicants for Registered Professional Foresters and Certified Rangeland Managers:**

**01-14-02 Member Goldsworthy moves to certify as licensed Registered Professional Foresters and Certified Rangeland Managers those individuals recommended by the Professional Foresters Examining Committee as fulfilling all qualifications required under the Professional Foresters Law. Member Delbar seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Wade:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Forsburg-Pardi:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

**Presentations:**

El Dorado Forestry Challenge update, Diane Dealey Neill, Executive Director, Forestry Educators Incorporated

California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) background and process update, Dan Stapleton, Assistant Executive Officer

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,  
ATTEST:



Tony Andersen  
Executive Officer  
ATTEST:



Terrence O'Brien  
Chairman