

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**Terrence O'Brien, CHAIR**

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# **BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES**

**SACRAMENTO, CA**

**March 11, 2026**

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

### **Present:**

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

### **Absent:**

- Elizabeth Pardi, Vice Chair
- Dawn Blake

## **BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

- Tony Andersen, Executive Officer
- Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
- Kate Cook, Senior Board Counsel
- Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
- Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
- Alex Vest, Wildfire Planning Specialist
- Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation
- Alexandra La Plante, Administrative Manager
- 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 King	Present
Member Blake	Absent
Member Delbar	Present
Member Pardi	Absent
Member Goldsworthy	Present
Member Hilburn	Present
Chairman O'Brien	Present

***Quorum established***

**Consent Calendar Items:**

**03-11-01 Member Lopez moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>King:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Present</b>
<b>Pardi:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

**MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS:**

**Report of the Chairman, Terrence O'Brien**

The Chairman reported on recent work and thanked staff for their efforts on Zone Zero. He noted that the team has reviewed the plead, considered stakeholder feedback, and is currently making revisions. A workshop is scheduled for April 23, 2026, in Calabasas, and the revised plead will be released beforehand for public review. Following the workshop, additional adjustments may be made based on the input received. The Committee intends to present a proposal at the June Board Meeting. The Chairman again thanked staff for their hard work and expressed confidence that the upcoming regulations will help make the community safer.

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

**Forest Practice Program**

**Casper Creek**

- Dr. Salli Dymond (Northern Arizona University) presented a talk titled "Forest Harvesting Effects on Hydrological Watershed Processes – Insights from the

Caspar Creek Third Experiment' at the California Forest Science Symposium on February 20, 2026. The talk summarized completed work to date associated with the third Casper Creek Paired Watershed Experiment.

### Resource Protection and Improvement Programs

#### Urban and Community Forestry

- California Arbor Week is March 7-14, 2026. There was a press conference hosted on Friday March 6, 2026, in Stockton where CAL FIRE and California ReLeaf Arbor Day Poster Contest winners were announced.
- The Program funded on Urban Wood Utilization Guide with the United States Forest Service funding and in partnership with Unified Wood Economy. This resource is meant to serve as a guide for local governments in utilizing urban wood resources. There will be a webinar hosted on March 18, 2026.

### Demonstration State Forests (DSF)

#### Jackson (JDSF)

- Clifton Environmental, CAL FIRE DSF Program staff, and JDSF staff continue preparing responses to public comments and editing the Final Draft 2026 Forest Management Plan (FMP). The JDSF website has all related FMP material and information.
- The Adaptive Management Experiment (AMEX) Timber Sale was posted on Cal eProcure. A tour for potential bidders was held February 12, 2026, with a bid date set for March 18, 2026.

#### Mountain Home

- The Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition will hold their annual meeting on March 24 and 25, 2026+ in Visalia. This meeting will conclude Staff Chief Kevin Conway's 2-year term as co-chair.

#### Soquel (SDSF)

- A summary report for the 2025 Herpetology Research and Inventory Study was received from Retired CAL FIRE Captain Lawrence Erickson. There were 11 survey days completed in 2025 to monitor the state and federally listed Central Coast Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the Foothill Yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*) that is found within SDSF. Secondary projects included egg mass counts for California Newts (*Taricha torosa*) and annual upland surveys for various reptiles and amphibians.
- Two mushroom identification workshops were held in mid-January by Fork in the Path under a Special Use Permit.

### Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Programs

#### Prescribed Fire Program

- CAL FIRE's Prescribed Fire Committee recently approved new terms to be used when working on beneficial fire opportunities with local agencies and other beneficial fire practitioners.
  - Assigned – A resource is at scene of an incident and not available to respond to a new incident without delay.
  - Assist – A resource is at scene and actively engaged in prescribed fire operations but available to respond to a new incident.
  - Stand by – A resource is at or near the scene of an ongoing incident or prescribed fire operation but is available to respond to a new incident.

Defining these terms is consistent with recent direction from the Governor's Beneficial Fire Executive order (N-35-25) and makes it easier for CAL FIRE resources to work more actively with cooperators on projects.

#### Wildfire Resilience Programs

##### Reforestation Services (RSP)

- To date, RSP has grown 192,172 seedlings and distributed 145,000 seedlings during the 2025 growing season. All seedling orders are in for the next growing cycle and are being prepared for sowing.

#### Climate and Energy Programs

##### Wood Products & Bioenergy

- The 2026 Business and Workforce Development grant solicitation opened on February 25, 2026, with \$10 million available from Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding.
- Attended Siskiyou/Modoc Regional Wood Utilization Workshop on January 28, 2026, a convening of businesses and community members focused on expanding wood utilization.

##### Forest Health

- Forest Health opened the FY2025-2026 grant solicitation on March 2, 2026. The program runs two parallel solicitations-one for GGRF and one for Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding. Concept proposals will be due March 30, 2026, and invited full applications will be due June 8, 2026. Approximately \$120 million is expected to be awarded.
- CAL FIRE is soliciting public feedback through April 13, 2026, on draft guidelines under the new Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Grant Program. The California Legislature appropriated \$30 million from the 2024 Climate Bond (Proposition 4) to CAL FIRE to fund regional projects to "improve local fire prevention capacity, improve forest health and resilience, and reduce the risk of wildfire spreading into populated areas from wildlands". CAL FIRE has drafted the Regional Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Grant (Regional Grant) Guidelines to award these funds.

##### Climate Change

- Staff participated in the California Natural Resources Agency's first Nature-Based Solutions Summit on January 28, 2026.

##### Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

- The next Task Force meeting is the Sierra Nevada Regional Meeting, March 19, 2026, in Tuolumne County. The agenda will include an in-depth discussion on the 2026 Action Plan and ongoing efforts across the Sierra Nevada focused on achieving, sustaining, and financing wildfire and landscape resilience. Participants will gain insight into regional coordination efforts, key investments into workforce and infrastructure, and innovative financing approaches that support long-term resilience outcomes. Tour options on March 20, 2026, include destinations in Yosemite National Park, Calaveras Big Trees State Park, and other locations in Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, and Mariposa counties.

##### Research & Monitoring

- FRAP, in conjunction with UC Berkeley and University of Arizona Tree-Ring laboratory are in the process of conduction and analysis based on a full cross section of an old growth giant sequoia from the Mountain Home State Forest grove that was killed by the 2020 Castle Fire. The tree-ring analysis will highlight the long fire history contained in the sample as well as information on the fire ecology of these majestic trees and the current management context posing risk and opportunity for their continued persistence on the landscape.
- A new manuscript featuring FRAP's dataset from prescribed fire monitoring between 2019 and 2024 was recently published in peer-reviewed journals.

#### Forest and Rangeland Assessment

- FRAP staff will coordinate with Board staff to arrange a briefing on findings from the Forest and Range Assessment report at a future Board meeting.

#### GIS – Data Analytics

- FRAP staff have been providing support for CAL FIRE's Resource Capabilities and Standards of Coverage working group (RCSC). This work includes developing a geospatial web viewer to explore response workload, wildfire hazard, watershed protection needs, and community characteristics for Schedule A, Schedule B, and Contract County fire stations across the state. Research was conducted to add information on the frequency of fire weather days for each CAL FIRE Unit (2013-2025).

#### Fire Protection Program

- Statewide Firefighter hiring and training in preparation for fire season commencing on March 16, 2026.

#### Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

- CAL FIRE peace officers have made 19 arrests and issued 58 citations through February 2026.
  - 8 of those arrests are for arson.

#### Fire Protection Operations

- Hosting annual CAL FIRE Incident Management Team Conference March 23-26, 2026, in Riverside California. Contract County, California Wildfire Coordinating Group and Cal OES representatives will also be participating. This year's focus is on innovation and information technology and the application for complex incident management teams.

#### Cooperative Fire Protection

#### Local Government Program

- CAL FIRE's Local Government program, in cooperation with CAL FIRE Training and Talent Acquisition and Outreach programs, will host its second Career Exploration Field Trip at Lone Training Center this spring and continue its partnership with the Torlakson Whole Child Institute.

### Contract Counties Program

- The Contract County Program is supporting a joint one-day workshop in May 2026 focusing on fire investigation requirements and civil cost recovery processes. The workshop audience will include Contract County Operations Chiefs, Fire Prevention staff, and the CAL FIRE Units that work closely with each Contract Counties enhancing collaboration on fire investigations and civil cost recovery efforts.

### State/Federal/Programs

- The State/Federal Program will begin hosting joint Town Hall meetings with federal partners and CAL FIRE personnel for the recently approved California Fire Management Agreement (CFMA) throughout the state in March. The next Town Hall meeting will be held in Sacramento on March 19<sup>th</sup>.
- These meetings will provide clarity on operational changes within the recently renewed Cooperative Fire Management Agreement (CFMA). Including jurisdictional coordination, resource ordering, and cost-share arrangements. The goal is to ensure alignment, transparency, and smooth implementation while strengthening interagency wildfire response.

### International Program

- CAL FIRE's International Program is coordinating a delegation of four personnel to travel to Costa Rica in March 2026. This week-long visit aims to strengthen operational capabilities and foster cooperation, while promoting best practices in Fire intelligence and Command and Control, and assisting with the implementation of the incident command structure in the Costa Rican Bombero's incident management systems.
- Five CAL FIRE personnel will also travel to Hilo, HI in March 2026 to participate in the Northwest Wildland Firefighting Compact's (NW Compact) annual meeting. CAL FIRE joined the NW Compact in the Fall 2025. By partnering in this Compact, along with seven other western states and five Canadian provinces, CAL FIRE collaborates on best practices in wildland fire prevention and operations, as well as more streamlined state-to-state assistance in response to large fire events when California's response resources are at a critical draw-down levels.

### Hand Crew Program

- As of February 25, 2026, 101 of the 136 CAL FIRE Hand Crews are staffed and available for statewide response. The number of Hand Crews are available significantly impacts wildland fire suppression, conservation work, prescribed fire activities, and fuel reduction work. Hand crew numbers may fluctuate due to staffing periods and crew typing certifications.

### Statewide Training Program (Statewide Training)

- As of February 26, 2026, the current Statewide Training courses student attendance (including Aviation, Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC) courses are 948.

### Academy Training Program (Training Center)

- The first Company Officer Academy graduation of 2026 will be on March 13, 2026, at the Italian Picnic Grounds in Sutter Creek.

## Office of the State Fire Marshal

### Wildfire Risk Reduction and Preparedness

- 36<sup>th</sup> Annual NASFM Fire Prevention & Safety Symposium will be hosted by CAL FIRE in Orange County in August 2026.

### Defensible Space

- Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Inspections
  - 188,858
- Year to Date 2026
  - 19,573

### Burn Permits

- Since Executive Order N-35-25 was implemented, suspending the requirement to conduct a site visit or inspection before issuing a state burn permit for projects undertaken by State-Certified Prescribed Fire Burn Bosses or Cultural Fire Practitioners, the system has processed:
  - 23 Applications (approved: 21)

### Wildfire Planning and Statistics

#### Fire Plan

- Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTERs), 67 positive impacts reported for 2025. Count of 117 positive impacts reported since June 2024

### Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

#### Land Use Planning for Wildfire in California Class

- These are free, all-day, in person training that are open to land use planners, fire marshals, fire chiefs, fire mitigation specialists, building officials, and other professionals from government agencies and the private sector who engage in planning, policy development review and/or approval activities in California.
  - More information is available on CWPM website and at:  
<https://www.communitywildfire.org/trainings>

#### Wildfire Prevention Grants

- Awards were announced on December 12, 2025:
  - Received 401 applications, requesting \$282,998,354.54
  - 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 disadvantage communities.
- Program staff are planning for the next solicitation later this spring.

#### Communications

- CAL FIRE's statewide Forest Health and Fuels Reduction Campaign launched in mid-February 2026 with the message, "Fighting fire with fire to keep forest healthy."

#### Tribal Affairs Program

- CAL FIRE has come into compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). CAL FIRE sent 689 letters with detailed inventories to 185 federally and non-federally recognized tribes inviting them to consult. To date, government-to-government consultations are underway with additional consultations scheduled throughout 2026.

## Tribal Wildfire Resilience

- The next Tribal Wildfire Resilience grant solicitation is expected to open in late spring 2026. This is tentatively \$10 million of Climate Bond (Prop 4) funds.

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

The Executive Officer thanked Chief Huff for his report and provided staffing and administrative updates. He reported that the Board is in a rebuilding phase following several vacancies and noted progress on hiring an Attorney III, with re-recruitment for the Forester III, Regulations Program Manager position to begin shortly. He expressed appreciation for staff support during the vacancy period, with special acknowledgment to Jane Van Susteren for assuming additional responsibilities.

Executive Officer reviewed upcoming Board meeting logistics:

- May 12-14 meeting in Sacramento, including a tour of the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center.
- July 21-23 meeting, with travel destination to be determined
- September 22-24 meeting, with travel destination to be determined.

Weekly legislative updates will continue for Board member and staff.

Finally, he highlighted Katie Harrell's work on developing a Mass Timber coalition and noted that both he and Ms. Harrell will attend the International Mass Timber Conference in Portland at the end of the month.

### **Presentation:**

Lean Six Sigma Assessment: California Timber Harvest Plan Workflows and Process, Independent Evaluation of Program Performance – Jeannette Kamalski (Strategic Advisor and Senior Consultant for NiVACK), Loretta Moreno (Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund – Environmental Program Manager, CA Natural Resources Agency)

### **Report of the Regulations Coordinator, Jane Van Susteren:**

Ms. Van Susteren presented to the Board the Draft Annual Report and the Rule Making Matrix for review and feedback.

### **Report of The Standing Committees:**

#### **Joint Forest Practice and Management Committee, Elicia Goldsworthy and Liz Pardi, Chairs**

The Joint Forest Practice and Management Committee met yesterday and discussed the following.

- Committee received a presentation on La Tour Demonstration State Forest Management Plan, which reviewed edits and updates since the last Management Plan in 2013. The plan will be brought to the Full Board in April for approval.
- The Draft Rule Text was reviewed and Initial Statement of Reasons for Board Consideration of the Forest Legacy Program Updates 2026.
- Committee worked on minor Silviculture edits. These updates will likely come to the full Board at the April meeting.
- Discussed the silviculture amendments that will be worked on in both Management and Forest Practice Committees.

- Discussed Draft Rule Text for the License Timber Operator Operational Areas is ongoing.
- Priorities have been completed for each committee to help guide the work for the balance of the year.

**Approval of Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for the Urban Forestry and Community Forestry Program Procedures 2026:**

**03-11-02 Member Goldsworthy move to approve the draft rule text and Initial Statement of Reasons for the Urban Forestry and Community Forestry Program Procedures. Member Hilburn seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>King:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Pardi:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

**Approval of Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for the Forestry Legacy Program Updates 2026:**

**03-11-03 Member Goldsworthy move to approve the draft rule text and Initial Statement of Reasons for the Urban Forestry Legacy Program Updates. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>King:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Pardi:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

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

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

- The Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistant Program provided an update on formally known as "Land Use Planning Program."

- The Land Use Planning for Wildfire Training still has three classes available:
  - March 12, 2026 – Ukiah
  - May 12, 2026 – Tahoe
  - May 14, 2026 – Chico
- There are 1,558 Firewise Communities in good standing.
- Reviewed the Safety Elements of the City of Agoura Hills, City of Sonora, and City of Hollister.

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

**Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC), Ryan Hilburn, Co-Chair**

Co-Chair Hilburn reported that all seats on the Effectiveness Monitoring Committee are now filled. The 2026–2027 Effectiveness Monitoring Program Grant Guidelines and request for proposals will be released on Monday and posted on the EMC website. The next EMC meeting is scheduled for June 8th and will include review of initial concept proposals for the grants program. Additionally, the EMC is planning upcoming field tours and welcomes suggestions for locations or speakers; interested individuals should contact Board staff.

**Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC), Presented by Kristina Wolf (Environmental Scientist), on behalf of Dr. Marc Horney, RMAC Chair.**

Kristina Wolf reported on behalf of Dr. Marc Horney. Four of RMAC’s eleven voting seats will be vacant by the end of March, and the committee is seeking nominations for three rangeland owner seats and one Resource Conservation District representative. These vacancies, along with reduced staff support, have made it difficult to achieve a quorum and have limited progress on the 2025 work plan despite increasing demand for RMAC’s work.

RMAC will still attempt to deliver its annual educational program by using external resources. Members and staff contributed to the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force’s Strategic Action Plan Draft, specifically the prescribed grazing section. RMAC also reminds stakeholders of its livestock grazing management resources webpage. The committee will meet next on March 26, 2026.

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

Ms. Harrell informed the Board about an upcoming Mass Timber Collaboration meeting on March 18, which will bring together interested stakeholders to explore forming a statewide coalition. She also noted that both the Joint Institute and the Board will attend the International Mass Timber Conference in Portland for the first time, offering valuable training insights and networking opportunities. In addition, the Joint Institute has begun early work on developing a statewide Bio-energy Action Plan.

**Presentations:**

- Draft “Forest Industry Infrastructure Capacity Assessment and Needs Analysis by CALVEG Sub-Region” Joint Institute final report, Tim Robards. TYLD Corp
- Draft “Mountain Community Affordable Workforce Housing with Mass Timber Components” Joint Institute Final project – Paul Mayencourt, UC Berkeley

**Professional Forester Examining Committee, Dan Stapleton, Licensing Officer, Assistant Executive Officer, Board of Forestry**

Dan Stapleton presented an overview of the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) licensing process and a 10-year historical trend. Applicants must have seven years of qualifying forestry work experience to sit for the RPF exam, with the option to substitute education for a portion of that requirement. A forestry degree provides four years of credit, while a related degree provides two; applicants may also qualify solely through work experience. Dan noted that although the total number of RPFs had been declining for several years, recent changes have led to an increase in licensed RPF's. The program currently averages 32 new RPF's per year, with a 42% average exam pass rate.

**Presentation:**

- Expansion of the Gold-spotted Oak Borer (GSOB) and Invasive Shothole Borer (ISHB) Zones of infestation (ZOIs), Kim Corella and Adrian Poloni, CAL FIRE

**Expansion of the Gold-spotted Oak Borer and the Invasive Shothole Borer Zones of Infestation:**

**03-11-04 Chairman O'Brien moves to approve the expansion of the Zone of Infestation of the Gold-spotted Oak Borer to Ventura County and the Zone of Infestation of the Invasive Shothole Borer to Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties, as present in the reports. Member Goldsworthy seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

<b>Lopez:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>King:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Blake:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Delbar:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Pardi:</b>	<b>Absent</b>
<b>Goldsworthy:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>Hilburn:</b>	<b>Aye</b>
<b>O'Brien:</b>	<b>Aye</b>

**Motion passed.**

**CONCLUSION**  
**Public Forum**

**Public Comments:**

- Craig Thomas, Fire Restoration Group, (non-profit) shared his views on reforestation with the Board. He stated he would like to have a conversation on how to get to a more ecologically resilient outcome.
- Richard Gienger shared his view on AB 1492.

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,  
ATTEST:



Tony Andersen  
Executive Officer  
ATTEST:



Terrence O'Brien  
Chairman