

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Terrence O'Brien, CHAIR

Wade Crowfoot, *Secretary*

Gavin Newsom, *Governor*

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BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

SACRAMENTO, CA

May 14, 2026

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS

Present:

- Terrence O'Brien, Chair
- Elizabeth Pardi, Vice Chair
- Dawn Blake
- J. Lopez
- Joe King
- Rhys Williams

Absent:

- Katie Delbar
- Elicia Goldsworthy
- Ryan Hilburn

BOARD STAFF PRESENT:

- Tony Andersen, Executive Officer
- Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
- Kate Cook, Senior Board Counsel
- Delia Rojas, Board Counsel
- Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
- Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
- Marcie Yates, Land Use Planning Manager
- 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:

- Daniel Berlant, California State Fire Marshal, CAL FIRE
- John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Resource Protection & Improvement, CAL FIRE

Board Members Roll Call:

Member Lopez	Present
Member King	Present
Member Blake	Present
Member Delbar	Absent
Member Pardi	Present
Member Goldsworthy	Absent
Member Hilburn	Absent
Member Williams	Present
Chairman O'Brien	Present

Quorum established

Consent Calendar Items:

05-14-01 Member King moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Lopez seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Blake:	Aye
Delbar:	Absent
Pardi:	Aye
Goldsworthy:	Absent
Hilburn:	Absent
Williams:	Aye
Lopez:	Aye
King:	Aye
O'Brien:	Aye

Motion passed.

MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS:

Report of the Chairman, Terrence O'Brien

The Chair noted that on May 7, Secretary Wade Crowfoot issued a letter addressing the need to evaluate biomass from a statewide perspective. He will represent the Board as part of an interagency statewide coalition formed to examine this issue. He also emphasized that the state is currently more vulnerable than in past years and expressed hope that the upcoming fire season will not be as severe as previous one.

Report of the Director, Daniel Berlant, California State Fire Marshal, CAL FIRE: Natural Resource Management

State Fire Marshal Berlant summarized the Director's Report to the Board.

- He stated that CAL FIRE reported statewide activities during Wildfire Preparedness Week, highlighting coordination with local, state, federal, tribal, and nonprofit partners and emphasizing both agency readiness and the importance of homeowner preparedness.

- He noted that the Governor’s May Revise and the Legislative appropriations deadline also occur today.
- Due to minimal Sierra snowpack, early spring conditions, and record heat in March, drought monitors now show normal, dry conditions across much of the state, raising concerns for the upcoming fire season. CAL FIRE projects above-normal significant fire potential through summer. To date, more than 120,000 wildfires have burned over 18,000 acres statewide, through this remains below the five-year average.

Aviation Management Unit (AMU)/Tactical Air Operations (TAO)

- All CAL FIRE engines, dozers, crews, and aircraft are fully staffed and available. Hand crews recently completed their annual readiness certification as Type 1 crews. The department continues modernizing its aviation fleet, with four C-130 retrofits now operational and all 16 Fire Hawks in service.
- In addition to ongoing fire response and preparedness efforts, CAL FIRE emphasized that its focus on fuel reduction remains strong. This fiscal year, the department has completed work on more than 700 fuel-reduction projects, exceeding its goal by 11%. To date, over 75,000 acres have been treated statewide, representing a 13% increase compared to last year.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Wildfire Risk Reduction and Preparedness

Defensible Space

- Chief Berlant reported that defensible space efforts continue to progress successfully.
- Over 234,000 inspections have been completed to date, representing 97 percent of the annual goal.
- These inspections, along with acres treated, remain key workload metrics that reflect both staff effort and program effectiveness.
- The program is also working to better communicate the broader benefits of fuels treatments. Since tracking began, more than 130 instances have been documented where completed fuel reduction projects had a positive impact during wildfire events, including assisting firefighters in holding control lines and reducing fire severity. This demonstrates that treated acres are not only meeting numerical targets but also delivering meaningful community benefits.
- This work is being coordinated through the Wildfire Resilience Taskforce.
 - The next Taskforce meeting is scheduled for June 5, 2026, during which the 2026 Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan will be introduced.
 - The Governor announced that \$70 million is available in Wildfire Prevention Grants. This is for fuel reduction in and around communities, emergency planning and public education. The program will be accepting applications through the beginning of June.

Forest Health

- Forest Health is currently in the middle of its FY 2025/2026 grant solicitation, utilizing both CCI and Proposition 4 funding. The program received 238 concept proposals and will invite the most competitive applicants to submit full applications on May 18, 2026.

Resource Protection and Improvement Programs
Urban and Community Forestry

- The Aliso Canyon Green Schoolyards grant solicitation will remain open until May 29, 2026.
- The public comment period closed April 30, 2026, for the Urban Forest Canopy Plan for California: Greening the Golden State. A final draft will be prepared for delivery to the California Legislature on or before June 30, 2026.

NFPA Firewise USA

- The Fire Marshal's Office continues to support local neighborhoods and communities getting recognized as Firewise communities.
- There are currently 1633 Firewise Communities in good standing.
- CAL FIRE will be celebrating Woodfords Firewise Community in Alpine County as the 1500th Firewise Community in California on May 19, 2026, at 9:00 am in Markleeville.

Report of the Executive Officer, Tony Andersen:

Executive Officer Andersen highlighted Wildfire Preparedness Week, noting the impressive growth of the program and the positive attention it brings to CAL FIRE's work. He also recognized a recent event in El Dorado County, where assistance was provided to a resident in creating defensible space around his home, describing it as inspiring. He expressed appreciation for the strong partnership demonstrated through the Zone Zero process.

For the Board's awareness the Taskforce Action Plan presentation will be heard at the next month's Board meeting. At the June 5th Taskforce Meeting, the Executive Officer noted he looks forward to presenting with Chief Berlant and others on the Zone Zero process.

The Executive Officer thanked everyone for participating in yesterday's tour of the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center and expressed appreciation to Chief Melvin and his team for hosting the Board. He reported that the Board is closely tracking CAL FIRE's Budget and any impacts stemming from the May Revise as they relate to the Board operations. Board staff will begin an inventory and assessment of the Board's committee structure. This will include stakeholder discussions to review past practices and statutory requirements. Executive Officer Andersen stated he looks forward to bringing recommendations to the Board as part of efforts to ensure continued efficiency. Lastly, the California Natural Resources Agency will host a workshop tomorrow from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. at the CNRA Building.

Report of the Regulations Coordinator, Jane Van Susteren:

The Regulations Coordinator brought before the Board today a review of the Rulemaking Matrix. Also, the approval of the Initial Statement of Reasons for the Overlapping Harvest Plans. This was approved by the Board in July 2025 but the ISOR was not complete. The ISOR has been updated to be complete and ready for noticing the Rule Text is unchanged from the previous time.

Approval of Initial Statement of Reasons for Overlapping Harvest Documents (related to amendments to Sections 1038 and 1038.1 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations) (note: the Board previously approved the draft rule text at July 2025 meeting):

05-14-02 Member King moves to approve the initial statement of Reasons for Overlapping Harvest Documents, and direct staff to move forward with the noticing requirements for the rulemaking process and take all appropriate actions consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act to advance this rulemaking package. Member Williams seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Blake:	Aye
Delbar:	Absent
Pardi:	Aye
Goldsworthy:	Absent
Hilburn:	Absent
Williams:	Aye
Lopez:	Aye
King:	Aye
O'Brien:	Aye

Motion passed.

Report of The Standing Committees:

Forest Practice Committee, Member King

The Forest Practice Committee met yesterday and discussed the following.

- The Presentation on Maximum Sustained Production and Sustained Yield Plan was co-presented by Forest Practice Staff Chief John Ramaley and Northern Region Review Team Chair, Jon Woessner.
- Discussed the Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Board Consideration of Silviculture Amendments under 14 CA Code of Regulations 913 (933, 953): Site I Young Pine Stands and Sampling in Variable Retention Prescriptions. This will be revisited next month.
- Discussed Draft Rule Text for License Timer Operator Operational Areas and Responsibilities.
- Discussed the Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Board Consideration for Points of Light. There were minor edits to the rule text and will be bring that back next month.

Management Committee, Liz Pardi, Chair

The Management Committee met on Tuesday and discussed the following agenda items:

- Presentation on the Timberland Viewer which provided great data for the committee to consider and review about where timberland is located in the State of California.
- Discussed the Definition of Timberland pursuant to Public Resources Code § 4526.

- Discussed potential changes to the definition of Timberland and decided it would be a part of the Management Committee’s agenda moving forward throughout the summer.
- Discussed the Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Noticing Processes and Rules Specific to the Southern Subdistrict and Santa Cruz County. The committee approved moving that Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons to the full Board for Consideration which will occur on our June Board meeting.
- Discussed the Draft Rule Text on Uneven-aged Management which discussions will continue through the summer. Also, had an open public forum for discussion.

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

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

- Committee received an update from the Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program (CWMAP)/Subdivision Review Program. They review safety elements with all the local government and they perform fire safety surveys.
- CWMAP is key to keeping the communities engaged and understanding what their new duties are as those fire hazards severity zones extend to those areas.
- Firewise Program has 1633 communities.
- Reviewed the safety element for the City of Oceanside.

Report of Board’s Advisory Committees:

Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC), Andrew Lawhorn, Board Staff

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee presented the following updates to the Board:

- The EMC’s next meeting is June 8, 2026, and will review the initial concept proposals for the EMC grant program. Proposals are due May 18, 2026.

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

- Dr. Horney reported that the Draft Wildfire Resilience Action Plan is currently being reviewed by the Governor’s office and after feedback is received a public draft will be released. The final version is expected to be released in the fall of this year.
- RMAC produced a draft of the local Regional Grazing Guidance in accordance with the Senate Bill 675 mandates assigned to the RMAC. Public comment was opened from October 8 – November 7, 2025.
- RMAC and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection approved the Final Draft of the local regional Grazing Guidance on December 10, 2025.
- RMAC will continue to develop the Regional Grazing Guidelines which will include a prescribe grazing training and eligible outreach and education activity in the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program.

Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation (JIWPI), Katie Harrell, Board Staff

The Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovations had the following updates:

- JIWPI has finally received approval for their last two grants.
- There will be a Mass Timber Coalition Founding Meeting next week
- On May 20th there will be a Mass Timber Symposium at the Richmond Field Station.

- JIWPI is working on supporting the Sonoma Ecology Center for applying to US Endowment for Forestry Grant for \$5 million.
- There is a tentative Bio Char Symposium on November 5, 2026, here in Sacramento.

Professional Foresters Examination Committee (PFEC), Dan Stapleton, Assistant Executive Officer

The Professional Foresters Examination Committee discussed exam fee amendments pursuant to PRC 759 the Board is authorized to adopt rules and regulations to effect the provisions of the Professional Foresters Law including the regulation of a person who practices the profession of Forestry and whose activities have an impact on the ecology of forested landscapes and the quality of the forest environment (PRC 751).

- PFEC presented to the Board approval of the Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Professional Forester Examination Fee Amendments 2026. Related to amendments to Sections 1065 and following of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations.

Approval of Draft Rule Text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Professional Forester Examination Fee Amendments 2026 (related to amendments to Sections 1065 and following Title 14 of the California Code Regulations):

05-14-03 Chair O’Brien move to approve the draft rule text and Initial Statement of Reasons for Professional Forester Examination Fee Amendments 2026, and direct staff to move forward with noticing requirements for the rulemaking process and take all appropriate actions consistent with the Administrative Procedure Act to advance this rulemaking package. Member Lopez seconds the motion.

Roll Call:

Blake:	Aye
Delbar:	Absent
Pardi:	Aye
Goldsworthy:	Absent
Hilburn:	Absent
Williams:	Aye
Lopez:	Aye
King:	Aye
O’Brien:	Aye

Motion passed.

Zone Zero Regulatory Advisory Committee, Terrence O’Brien, Chair

The Zone Zero Committee held a meeting on April 23rd in Calabasas, there were about 100 people in attendance. Prior to the meeting the committee posted a revised rule plead and received comments at the workshop. Member Lopez will be attending a Townhall Workshop in the Echo Park neighborhood of Los Angeles and will be hearing

from residence regarding the new plea. The comments that the committee has received reflect a range of opinions from support to opposition as well as suggestions for changes. The committee recognizes the final plea that will be presented to the Board will not be universally embraced by all stakeholders. Our goal has been and remains to thread the needle considering multiplicity of issues and predominately the need to reduce the vulnerability of our community's wildfire. Also, considering issues such as affordability, public acceptance and issues of clarity regarding enforcement. After reviewing all comments, the committee will issue a plead which will highlight any new changes. At this time the committee hopes that the Board will consider adopting Zone Zero Regulations at the August Board meeting in Sacramento; noting that the Board will be meeting in Santa Cruz in July.

PRESENTATIONS:

- Update on the Jackson Demonstration State Forest Caspar Creek Paired Watershed Studies, Joe Wagenbrenner, USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, Research Hydrologist, Arcata.
- California Forest Pest Council "2025 California Forest Pest Conditions Report," Kevin Conway, Staff Chief, Resource Protection & Improvement, CAL FIRE

CONCLUSION

Public Forum

Public Comments:

- Richard Gienger commented that he liked hearing about the science and the history of the Casper. Also, he wanted to share to change the mandate of the Demonstration State Forest including Jackson this should not jeopardize continue application of science and understanding of how the forest works.
- Craig Thomas, Fire Restoration Group, (non-profit) shared his thoughts on ecological reforestation to the Board.

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,
ATTEST:



Tony Andersen
Executive Officer
ATTEST:



Terrence O'Brien
Chairman