

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE AWARDS NEW FUNDING FOR WORKFORCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Sacramento – The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Wood Products and Bioenergy Team awarded \$6.4 million in new grant agreements. These projects will increase California's capacity to establish healthy, resilient forests through workforce and business development. In addition, they advance new technologies for forest operations and utilization of forest fuels for lumber, energy, and other useful products.

The [nine new grantees](#) include non-profits, family businesses, start-ups, a university and a community college. These partners are building the infrastructure and capacity to sustainably manage California's forests as outlined in [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#).

Three workforce development projects provide job training in fuel treatments, prescribed fire, and project management. The Watershed Research and Training Center will give hands-on support to members of Local Conservation Corps to pursue careers in forestry. The Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance will implement a fuel management and lands stewardship training program for Tribal members in Lake County. The Forest Business Alliance will offer training in grant writing, peer learning and project management to developing forestry businesses.

Four business projects will increase the pace and scale of forest restoration. Del Logging will add a biomass operation to their business that will expand their capacity on forest health projects. The Auberry Sawmill will add machinery to utilize logs from local fire rehabilitation activities and fuels-reduction projects. A start-up in Sonora, Kodama Systems, will create internet connectivity at forest operation sites and advance remote operation of heavy equipment. West Forest will study the feasibility of manufacturing construction materials like oriented strand board (OSB). Currently, 100% of oriented strand board sold in California is imported from other states.

Two research awards seek key information for future forestry policy. One effort expands an assessment of the economic and carbon impacts of recent megafires to include California. Cal Poly Humboldt will develop a framework for new projects to measure the carbon benefits of utilizing forest biomass as compared to leaving it in the forest or burning it in open piles.

Since January, \$40 million has been awarded through this new grant program. "Our Workforce Development award from CAL FIRE enables us to offer the Forestry Challenge program free of charge to high school students throughout the state," said Diane Dealey Neill, Executive Director of Forestry Educators, Inc. "Removing this barrier to participation has increased our student numbers and will provide technical training and career awareness to over 500 students each year."

Most of the funded projects benefit disadvantaged or low-income communities as defined by CalEnviroScreen 4.0. The economic opportunities provided by these investments are in addition to the expected benefits from avoided wildfire emissions and carbon storage in wood products.

CAL FIRE's workforce and business development grant awards are funded with State of California General Funds. The solicitation remains open to new grant applications. Please visit [CAL FIRE's Wood Products and Bioenergy webpage](#) for details.

Residents are asked to be READY: Create and maintain defensible space and harden your home against flying embers. Get SET: Prepare your family and home ahead of time for the possibility of having to evacuate. Be ready to GO! Take the evacuation steps necessary to give your family and home the best chance of surviving a wildfire. Visit www.readyforwildfire.org for more information.

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