
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Thursday, June 13, 2024

Posted: 8/13/24



Committee Members Present

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE
Brian Newman-Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure (Virtual)
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Robert Troy, California Office of Emergency Services
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development (Virtual)
Todd Lando, Fire Service Representative (Virtual)
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties
Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (Virtual)
Michael Maquire, State Planning and Research (Virtual)

Members Absent

Roy Wright, Insurance Industry
Dan Dunmoyer, Building Industry
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (Virtual)
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative (Virtual)

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Deputy Director
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director
John Morgan, Staff Chief
Shane Vargas, Deputy Chief
Matt Damon, Staff Chief
Mark Rosenberg, Research Data Manager (Virtual)
Scott Witt, Deputy Chief (Virtual)
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel (Virtual)
Madison Nicholas, Staff Services Analyst
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III
Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Julianna Contreras, Staff Services Analyst
Dahn Dao, Staff Services Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:30 PM

A. Welcome

Daniel Berlant

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM by Daniel Berlant.

B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

A quorum was not established with 11 committee members present in-person and five attending virtually.

C. Approval of April 2024 Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

The minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum in attendance.

D. Approval of May 21, 2024 Agenda (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

The agenda was not approved as there was not a quorum in attendance.

2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Home Hardening

- 1) Continued to provide technical assistance to San Diego Fire and NCO pilot communities with the initiation of defensible space treatments and home hardening retrofits for their first homes.
- 2) Assisted the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District with preparing scope of work documents for their defensible space-only project.
- 3) Conducted a meeting on June 5 with CWMP pilot community assessors to solicit feedback on the program assessment application.

2. Defensible Space

- 1) Statewide SRA Total for Fiscal Year-to Date 2023-2024:
 - i. 234,759 inspections completed, 93% of the goal 250,000 goal.
- 2) Qualified Entity Program training is ongoing
 - o Next class will reach Madera and Mariposa counties.

3. Burn Permits

- 1) Statewide SRA fiscal year-to-date 2023-2024:
 - i. 120,301 requested – 111,650 issued.
 - ii. 143,833 issued since the January 3, 2023 launch.

4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program

- 1) Training of the Defensible Space Inspectors is continuing across the state for PRC 4292/4293 inspection and safety items.

- 2) Draft decisions for SDG&E, PG&E, and SCE will be submitted this week, with published decisions scheduled for July 2.
 - 3) Multiple utilities are continuing with their PSPS exercised, both tabletop and live over the next 3 weeks.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
1. Fire Prevention Efforts FY 23/24
 - a. 747 projects, 149.4% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - a. 79,381.1 acres treated, 79.4% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 34,165.6 acres
 1. Northern Region: 22,114.7 acres
 2. Southern Region: 12,050.9 acres
 - b. Grant Projects: 39,706.0 acres
 - c. CFIP Projects: 5,509.9 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - a. 23,868.5 acres treated, 47.7% of the goal
 6. Wildlands Fuels Reduction Reporting
 - a. In the process of completing Fuel Crews 6-month CCIRTS Report due by June 12, 2024, and then finalized by Climate and Energy and due to CARB.
 - b. CalMAPPER version 3 – preparing for production push to the current version which includes numerous enhancements to the interface.
 - c. CalMAPPER version 4 – working with Technosylva and internally on developing version 4 that will include new data entry workflows.
 7. Pre-Fire Planning
 - a. Annual updates to Unit Fire Plans have been received. Unit Fire Plans should be published to the internet in July.
 - b. State Responsibility Area (SRA) 5-year review is ongoing. Unit submittals are due to region on July 26, 2024.
 - c. Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting Temporary Directive was sent out on May 2, 2024. The first training was held on June 4, 2024.
 8. CalStats
 - a. As fire departments across California become aware and prepared for the transition of National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) to National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS), they could be one of 50 departments that will beta test the new system starting in August.
 - b. CAL FIRE has requested to participate in the beta test to ensure the complex system is ready for transition.
 - c. 2023 Redbook update: continue to work with both regions and Sacramento Communications to ensure data has been reviewed and verified.

- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 - 1. Land Use Planning
 - 1) 17 safety elements are in the informal review process with staff, 46 other jurisdictions have early engagement working with staff.
 - 2) 3 safety elements will be processed and up for review by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) for the June Resource Protection Committee (RPC) meeting. Alameda, Solano counties and the City of Irvine.
 - 2. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Staff continue to meet with NFPA regularly to refine our procedures and support new applicants.
 - 2) 850 communities in good standing. Several NEW applications in the portal each week
 - 3. Land Use Planning for Wildfires Course
 - 1) State minimum Fire Safe Regulations support
 - 2) Land Use Planning for Wildfire – Future
 - i. More of the “intro” courses
 - ii. Looking at developing an “Advanced” course focusing on CWPPs, LHMPs, GP Safety Elements and plan alignment. Activity/group-based course.
 - 3) Position updates
 - 4. Subdivision Review
 - 1) Staff have completed over 2000 surveys and have been processed through the BOF.
 - 2) 99 Fire Safety surveys will be on the June RPC meeting (Chino Hills, City of Dunsmuir, San Bernadino)
 - 3) Statewide status
 - i. 45 of 58 counties complete (unincorporated)
 - ii. 80 of 191 cities complete
 - 5. Wildfire Prevention Grants Program
 - 1) Sacramento review was held on May 21, 2024, for the FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants solicitation.
 - 2) Executive Review for the FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants will be held in July with announcement of awardees to follow.
 - 3) [Grants website](#)

3. PRESENTATIONS

- A. California Wildfire Mitigation Program, Home Hardening Initiative

4. ROUNDTABLE

Daniel Berlant

- A. Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE – We are officially in fire season and fire activity has definitely gone up this year over what we’ve seen over the last two years. The last two years we did have quite a reprieve from our number of acres. Not necessarily our number of fires

but number of acres – that’s a key distinction. This year our number of acres is significantly ahead of where we have been for the last two years. We’re also seeing a lot of the effects of the last two years, not having a lot of fires and having a significant amount of rain, which we’re all very thank for, but has produced more fuel, larger grass fuels for those fires to be burning in. While we’re actively trying to meet those prescribed fuel numbers that Chief Berlant was talking about earlier, we are finding that those fires are burning quicker because other fires are breaking out. So we are obviously paying attention to that. Around mid June is when we’ll be going through peak fire season. The most southern part of the state is already in peak fire season. We are benefiting this year again from additional exclusive use aircraft. The majority of those are helicopters. We also have some helicopter coordinator platforms. The C130s are officially transitioned over to the state and we are hoping that by mid to late summer we will see the first of those 7 operationalize and begin testing, if not fully operationalized for this fire year.

- B. Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure – We have released our draft guidelines for the 10-year undergrounding distribution plans that large utilities are now eligible to submit. We’ve received the comments on those draft guidelines, and we’ll be processing those comments and then releasing either a final guidelines, or if there’s substantial changes, revised guidelines for additional comment period. Reminder that this was a new statute that was passed a couple years ago that allows large corporations to submit to our office 10-year undergrounding plans. Then, if we approve would go on to the PUC for their review and funding. In terms of wildfire mitigation plans of the next 2026-28 3-year cycle plan, we’re working through the guidelines for that and are on track to release the draft guidelines for that base year plan. It’ll be submitted next year in 2025. We are on track to release those draft guidelines in July and will be holding a public workshop on those guidelines. Also, once it’s released in July and on track to release the final versions pending comments in early November.
- C. J Lopez, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection – The fire risk reduction communities list will be available at the next week’s meeting.
- D. Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council – In the process of launching their own xxx effort to pilot communities in Southern California
- E. Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium – It’s workshop and education season, we have been getting lots of people out in the woods and doing a lot of tours. Tomorrow we are going to go look at the Lost Fire which was up in Redwood National Park and burned about 700 acres last year. Earlier this week we were at Jackson Demonstration Forest with about 70 participants as a part of our multi-age silver culture tour and got to look at a bunch of implementation of research projects that overlay prescribed fire and other different methods to deal with fuels and different treatment methods and whole bunch of other research.
- F. Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California – Caroline Thomas Jacobs will be bringing the RCRC Board meeting on July 24. All information is on the RCRC website. Also, RCRC has a plethora of affiliate organizations and JPAs that they do a lot work with other than advocacy and through that do a lot of things such as home buyers’ assistance, broadband, etc. The home buying assistance organization, Golden State Finance has just launched a new program helping with down payment assistance for people that were living in wildfire effected communities that lost their homes in either 2018 or 2020, to buy homes with no down payment. That was launched over the last few weeks. More information can be found on the RCRC [website](#).

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Berlant

A. There was no public comment.

6. UPCOMING MEETING DATE FOR 2024

Daniel Berlant

A. August 20, 2024
715 P Street, 2nd Floor, 2-221 (A/B)
Sacramento, CA 95814

7. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:00 PM

Daniel Berlant

This meeting can be viewed on [YouTube](#).