
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, October 21, 2025



Committee Members Present

Frank Bigelow, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal (Whitmore)
Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE (Whitmore)
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation (Sacramento)
Ken DaRosa, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Sacramento)
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection (Whitmore)
Robert Troy, Office of Emergency Services (Whitmore)
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office (Sacramento)
Michael McGuire, Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation (Sacramento)
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council (virtual)
Steve Hawks, Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety (virtual)
Christopher Ochoa, California Building Industry Association (virtual)
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative (virtual)
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (virtual)
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (virtual)
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development (virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California (Whitmore)
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities (Whitmore)
Caitlin Loventhal, California State Association of Counties (Sacramento)

Members Absent

Bill Villarino, California Fire Chiefs Association
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative
Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Christine McMorrow, Deputy Director (Whitmore)
Alisha Henning, Education, Outreach & Engagement Officer (Whitmore)
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director (Sacramento)
Jim McDougald, Assistant Deputy Director (Whitmore)
Jeff Hakala, Division Chief (Whitmore)
John Morgan, Division Chief (Whitmore)
Emily Smith, Staff Chief (Whitmore)
Heather McCulley, Deputy Chief (Whitmore)
Shaun Fairbanks, Deputy Chief (Whitmore)
Chris Ramey, Deputy Chief (Whitmore)
Randy Northup, Assistant Chief (Whitmore)
Gene Potkey, Assistant Chief (Whitmore)
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel (virtual)
Stephen Volmer, Battalion Chief (virtual)
Jennifer Renner, Battalion Chief (virtual)
Brian Barkley, Battalion Chief (Whitmore)
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (virtual)
Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I (Sacramento)
Justine Grafton, Associate Governmental Program Analyst (Whitmore)
Madison Volpato, Staff Services Analyst (Sacramento)

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:01 PM

Frank Bigelow

A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 PM by Frank Bigelow.

B. Roll Call – Justine Grafton

A quorum was established with 6 committee members present in-person in Whitmore, 5 committee members present in person in Sacramento, and 7 attending virtually.

C. Approval of the August 19, 2025, Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

D. Approval of the September 16, 2025, Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

Motion:	Staci Heaton moved to accept the August 19 and September 16, 2025, meeting minutes; Sean McGlynn seconded the motion.
Action:	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

E. Approval of the October 21, 2025, Agenda (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

Motion:	Staci Heaton moved to accept the October 21, 2025, meeting agenda; J. Lopez seconded the motion.
Action:	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Defensible Space

- 1) Statewide SRA total for fiscal year-to-date 2025-26:
 - i. 92,389 inspections, 37% of the goal (250,000)
- 2) Qualified Entity assessment year-to-date total:
 - i. 1,538 assessments
- 3) Staff are assisting Home Hardening Program with Home Ignition Zone/Defensible Space Assessor training
- 4) Winter maintenance/updating will begin on the training curriculums staff teaches. Incorporating new research findings in the subjects of:
 - i. Home Ignition Zone & Defensible Space
 - ii. Damage Inspection Specialist & Manager

2. Burn Permits

- 1) 2025/26 year-to-date total: 7,390
 - i. Cultural Burn Permits: 193
 - ii. 2025 year-to-date: 64,878; Cultural Burn: 1,799
 - iii. Ongoing discussions within the program to better serve the unit personnel and the public for efficient application practices,

3. Home Hardening

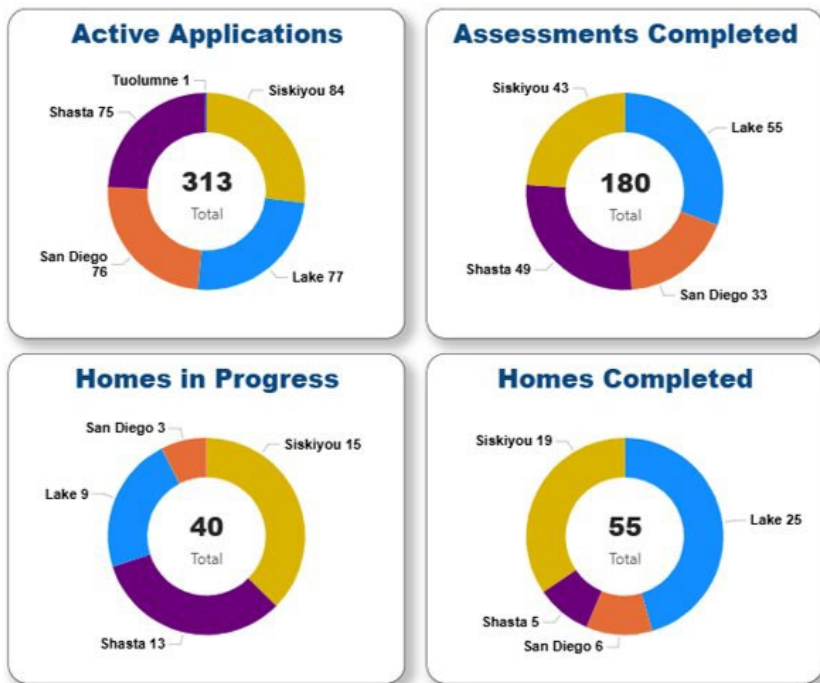
- 1) Staffed a Home Hardening table at the Department of Water Resources Emergency Preparedness event.
- 2) Conducted a CWMP Home Ignition Zone/Defensible Space Assessor and in-person Assessor Application training with El Dorado and Tuolumne Counties.

- 3) Supported CWMP with a technical assistant for home hardening recommended retrofits.
4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
 - 1) Finished our review of PG&E, SDG&E, SCE, PacifiCorp, Liberty, and the three ITOs Trans Bay Cable, Horizon West, and LS Power's 2026-28 WMP submissions.
 - 2) PSPS events occurring with Fall wind events.
 - 3) Conducted multiple Powerline Equipment and PRC 4292-4293 trainings. Completed one in SHU Unit, contract counties DSIs in Natomas and one planned in early December for OEIS at the Lone Training Center.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
 1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - 1) 232 projects, 46.4% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - 1) 8,413.1 acres treated, 8.4% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 6,933.1 acres
 - a) Northern Region: 5,952.5 acres
 - b) Southern Region: 980.6 acres
 - 2) Grant Projects: 836.9 acres
 - 3) CFIP Projects: 643.2 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - 1) 4,468 acres treated, 8.9% of the goal
 4. Wildlands Fuels
 - 1) Completed the fiscal year (FY) QA/QC on October 10 to assist with meeting the Annual Legislation Report (4137 Report).
 - 2) Continue to meet with Technosylvia on CalMAPPER V4 development and implementation.
 - 3) CalMAPPER Steering Committee met to finalize portions of the 4137 Report.
 5. Pre-Fire Planning
 - 1) Pre-Fire Engineers (PFEs) assisting Region and Units with the 2026 Annual Direct Protection Area (DPA) Review.
 - 2) PFE Orientation training will be held in Sacramento the week of November 2.
 - 3) Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTER) continues with a deployment to the Garnett Fire in Fresno-Kings Unit (FKU).
 6. CalStats
 - 1) Working with ImageTrend on updates to the program to create ease for the end user.
 - 2) Hosting webinars and working with NERIS as we prepare for transition in January 2026.
- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 1. Land Use Planning

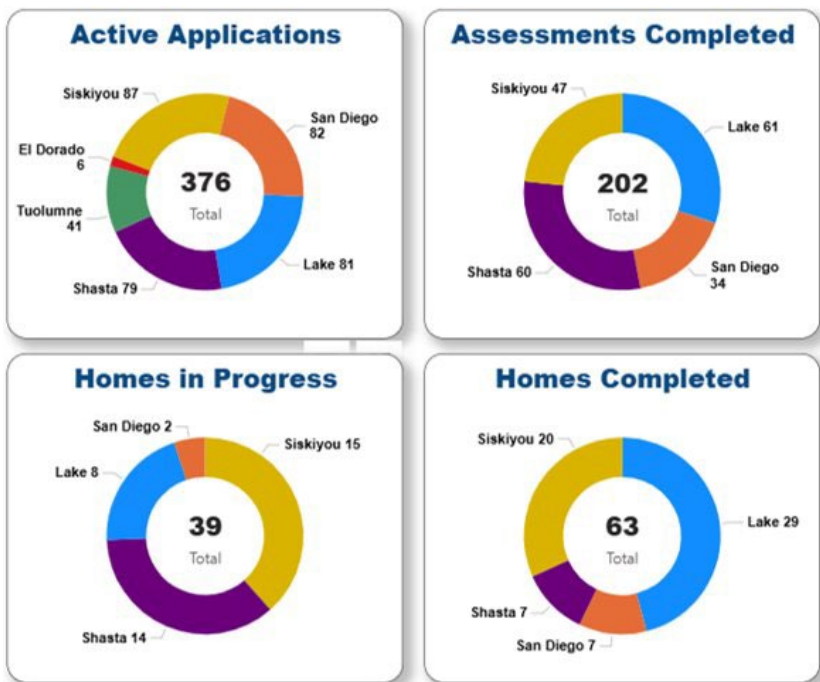
- 1) Program staff recently conducted fire safety surveys in LA County, and the cities of Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Glendale, La Habra Heights, and La Verne, reviewing approximately 70 identified polygons.
 - i. 14 cities still to be reviewed, and the SDR Team is on track to finish by the end of the year.
2. Intro to Land Use Planning for Wildfire
 - 1) Sign up now for classes in the fall:
 - i. October 21, 2025 – Calabasas
 - ii. October 23, 2025 – Riverside
 - iii. November 18, 2025 – El Dorado Hills
 - iv. November 20, 2025 – Fresno
 - 2) Sign-ups and more information on [Land Use Planning website](#) and at <https://communitywildfire.org/land-use-planning-for-wildfires-trainings-california/>
 - 3) More details about 2026 classes coming soon!
3. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Currently 1423 communities in good standing
 - i. Numerous applications pending review
 - ii. Planning is underway for the weeklong annual renewal review in early December
4. [CWMA Statewide Clearinghouse Data Center](#)
 - 1) Adding new information all the time!
 - 2) Currently working on new procedures for notification to Constant Contact subscriber list.
5. [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#)
 - 1) Open solicitation began on July 2, 2025, and closed August 6, 2025.
 - i. Received over 400 applications
 - ii. Reviews have been completed by Units and Regions
 - iii. Sacramento program reviews will take place next week

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update

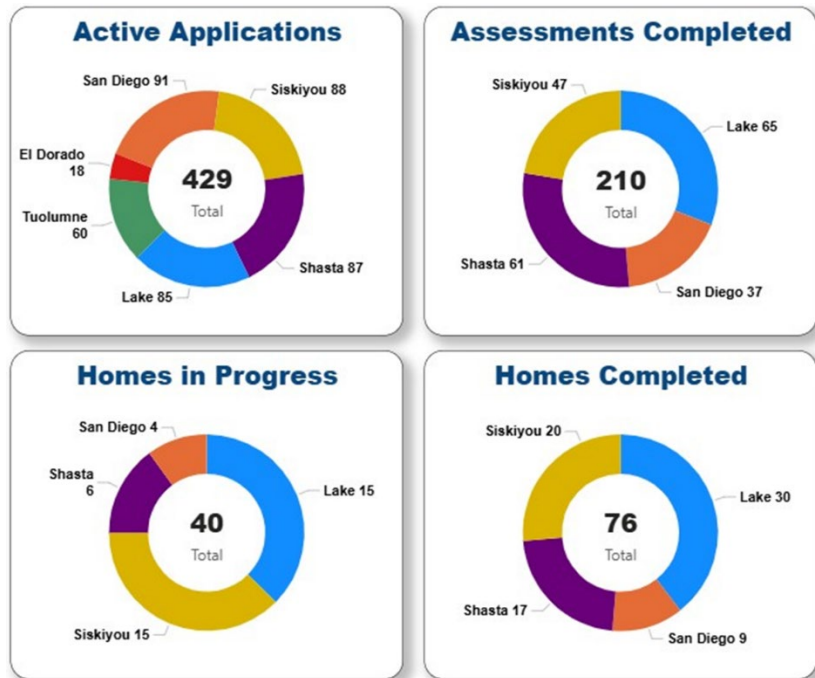
i. August 19, 2025



ii. September 16, 2025



iii. October 17, 2025



iv. Media Event and WMAC Meeting
October 21, 2025
Whitmore, CA, Shasta County



3. MEMBER ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

- A. [Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California](#)

4. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Land Use Planning Workgroup – Held the sixth Land Use Planning Workgroup meeting in September. Had a great discussion on the monthly discussion topic of Fire-Resistant Earthen Building Materials study in implementing nature-based solutions for housing, fire resilience, and climate co-benefits. This discussion was led by Chris Fino of the Governor's Office of Climate Innovation and Justine Massey from the Strategic Growth Council. Our seventh meeting will be held today after WMAC with a virtual option and the offsite location. We will have our fifth monthly discussion topic where we will have an overview of a paper from Earth Economics, California's Home Hardening Economy, Investing in a Resilient Future. The presentation will be led by Carson Risner and Glen Delaney from Earth Economics.

5. ROUNDTABLE

- A. **J. Lopez** – The Ember Resistant Zone Workshop is October 23, 2025, and another one is scheduled for November 3, 2025. Hoping to have something for the Board to vote on at the November meeting. The original passing of AB 1455 changed things a bit.
- B. **Sean McGlynn** – Katie Holmes and CAL FIRE hosted a get together with the Insurance Commissioner. It was a good conversation with some Assembly and Senate folks about this unique project and the impact it's already having, being able to draw the line about the insurance rate differential that a lot of folks are facing and the attractiveness, even as the market cools. This neighborhood is selling in a marketplace that's seeing cooling off of the market because people are looking at \$1,200 insurance rates instead of \$9,000 insurance rates, which is a significant gap. I think that was the headliner – that you can have a great project and it can service multi-functions for a community as it sits in a very high wildfire severity zone, and it's a buffer and a staging location but it's very safe.
- C. **Anale Burlew** – Thankful for a milder fire summer and fingers crossed that it continues as we're starting to see rain, not only in Northern California but across the state. Just for perspective, this year we're at about 7,500 vegetation fires, this year our historical average is about 6,600. We have more vegetation fires, about a thousand more this year than the 5-year average, but we're only at just about 522,000 acres where the historical average would be 1.3 million. Half the acres for a thousand more fires and I think that really speaks to initial attack capacity and aggressive initial attack. We're also very fortunate in the budget this year to have the exclusive-use aircraft continued. There's exclusive use aircraft for another two years of funding. Just completed the third C130 air tanker retrofit, so we now have three available statewide. The second one for now is staying at McClellan. It was initially slated to go to Ramona, but we are in the process of doing an upgrade at that base to allow for the reloading to be easier. There is also an air tanker in Fresno - all three can move quickly around the state and be prepositioned as needed for instant activity. The other thing that came out of the budget this year, with the 66-hour workweek (on year 2 of that) that has moved us to a 9-month funding for peak staffing levels and 3 months at base. We have received an additional allocation of funding so we can perm up some of the firefighter I, seasonal firefighters, to a firefighter II classification. Working with the Dept. of Finance to see what those classifications look like in terms of PY. When we're not doing initial attack fire suppression work, we'll be busy doing fuels and defensible space work, inspections, and prescribed fire. We saw a record for our last year in terms of the number of prescribed fire acres as well as fuel treatment acres that we did last year. Recently signed a Good Neighbor Authority Agreement with the US Forest Services which covers all 18 of the forests

in the state of California and will allow us to do a lot of continuity of projects that we haven't been able to do in the past, and also projects around community resilience. There will be some retirements this year in terms of Unit Chiefs so there will be new Unit Chiefs at the start of the year in Riverside, Amador/El Dorado, and Lassen/MODOC units. We are actively in the process of hiring for those positions so we can do some transition time with the current Unit Chiefs in those units.

- D. **Robert Troy** – Conducted in-person damage assessments with the SBA last month in Tuolumne County for the TCU complex. Started with the CAL FIRE because the data fits the gold standard. SBA likes to go to the field directly whenever FEMA is not involved so it's still a great starting point. We were able to get a physical declaration from the SBA which includes 12 new as well as all the contiguous counties for homeowners whose home was damaged or destroyed, to \$500,000 for repairing their homes and up to \$100,000 for personal property. Those are loans but their no interest or as low as 3% interest so it's still a pretty important building block necessary for recovery. Businesses are eligible for up to \$2M and then also economic injury disaster loans for businesses that were not physically damaged but did have economic losses related to the disaster. For the physical disaster loans, there is an additional 20% for mitigation. So even the work that goes on through the CWMP hopefully helps to carry over and provide visibility on best practices and access to those types of technical assistance that can help people who have been affected by the disasters. Tuolumne is definitely deserving of our support.
- E. **Brian Newman Lindsay** – This month the team has mostly been working on Prop 4 guidelines development and rollout process. Working internally with some of the CNRA partners with the existing network of block grantees. There should be more public information in December about where we're going with our programs, particularly regional work capacity and the Biodiversity Education Program. This month we will be releasing a Regional Priority Plan explorer tool that will be published on our website by the end of this month. This will be a basic version, but it is intended to let the public and external partners look at our network of block grantees where they're creating regional priority plans that show where they cover, contact information, etc. This has been going on for a couple years and we're expecting to further update and develop the tool adding additional features to get concise information about what those plans are doing and not doing as well as get more information about where those regional priority plans are overlapping. One of our regional block grantees, North Coast Resource Partnership, has just authorized a new wildfire capacity building program. They are our second largest grantee, covering 9 rural counties. Using some of our earlier funding, they've created a successful pilot in Humboldt working with tribes and fire districts to establish a full life cycle fire capacity program. We established a regional capacity program which was approved through their Board meeting last week. They're going to have \$79M over the next few years to support capacity building efforts in those 9 counties.
- F. **Caroline Thomas Jacobs** – Today we released our compliance guidelines which have been rebranded as [Performance Oversight Guidelines](#) per Senate Bill 254 and they are now out for public comment for the next 30 days. The updated guidelines are for how we will oversee and ensure utilities are implementing their wildfire mitigation plans. Encourage rural counties or anyone who has a direct impact on wildfire to comment. Continuing to work our way through the 2026-28 base plans for all utilities this year and with the most recent update we released our revision notice to Liberty Utility today, they will have 30 days to respond to the revision notice to continue to work through the evaluation of their plan.
- G. **Deborah Halberstadt** – AB 495 by Senator Allen provides that if a homeowner suffers a total loss from a fire, they can receive up to 60% of their personal property insurance limit to \$350,000 without going through the itemization process. This is a way to decrease the burden on people who have suffered tremendous loss and are experiencing huge amounts of stress. The second bill is AB 888 by Senator Calderon which creates a grant program

within the state that will provide funding to low-income homeowners to replace their outdated roofs and with Class A fire-safe roofs, and to fund a defensible space vegetation clearing. This is really getting at the risk reduction side of fire safety and emulating a successful program that has existed in Alabama for a long time to replace roofs. These two bills represent a step forward in how the state is addressing fire safety and insurance.

- H. **Michael Maguire** – Announcing the first development of a JPA, the Northeast Biomass Authority. It's the first JPA to be created under our Biomass Aggregation pilot program, that was called for under the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, under key action 3.10. In addition, we had an agency briefing on September 19 where we detailed the results and outcomes of the program. The program will be sunsetting, at least in its first iteration, on March 31, 2026. Between now and then we plan to be piloting a digital marketplace for forest biomass in partnership with Placer County. Excited to have this digital platform, designed with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Davis, and Cal Poly Humboldt, up and running. It's currently live and is essentially a digital exchange to facilitate the trading, sales, and distribution of biomass online.
- I. **Steve Hawks** – Last week we released [a report that we worked on with Headwaters Economics](#) which was a cost study to rebuild a home in Altadena, post-Easton Fire. Altadena is a unique area because in some areas of the fire perimeter, homes are required to be built to Chapter 7A, and in other areas that fall outside of the fire hazard severity zone there is no requirement. We did an evaluation of a 1,750 sq. ft. home that, with certain assumptions, compared to a traditional or a non-wildfire prepared home program and found that Chapter 7A adds about \$13,000 to the construction cost of a traditional home in that area and that building to wildfire prepared home plus adds an additional \$2,000. Building to a high level of resilience is both achievable and affordable, and hopefully this information gets to those that are in the process of rebuilding and that they're able to make the right decisions with that.
- J. **Caitlin Loventhal** – Hosting their [Annual Meeting](#) from December 1-5 in Santa Clara County. Planning to have one session specifically dedicated to fire. More details will follow.
- K. **Sophia Lemmo** – CRCD's Annual Conference in Sacramento is being held November 18-20 with a whole session on wildfire. There's still time to register either for a day or for the whole conference. CRCD just wrapped up their second Annual Reforestation camp offered to RCDs and nonprofits around tribes in the Sierra Nevada to learn climate informed and resilient reforestation practices. This will be my last meeting as I'm heading off to maternity leave for a while.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank Bigelow

- A. There was no public comment

7. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2025

Frank Bigelow

- B. November 18, 2025
Natural Resources Building, Room 2-221
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:02 PM

Frank Bigelow