
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Monday, January 27, 2025

Posted: 2-27-25



Committee Members Present

Frank Bigelow, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE
Tony Marino for Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection
Michael McGuire, State Planning & Research
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office
Steve Hawks, Insurance Industry
Christopher Ochoa, Building Industry
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development (virtual)
Todd Lando, Fire Service Representative (virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative (virtual)
Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (virtual)
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (virtual)

Members Absent

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Nancy Ward, California Office of Emergency Services
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Deputy Director
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director
Chris Ramey, Division Chief
John Morgan, Staff Chief
Matt Damon, Staff Chief
Shane Vargas, Deputy Chief
Scott Witt, Deputy Chief
Shaun Fairbanks, Deputy Chief
Jim McDougald, Assistant Deputy Director
Emily Smith, Staff Chief (virtual)
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III Specialist
Mark Rosenberg, Research Data Manager
Anthony Massucco, Battalion Chief
Stephen Volmer, Battalion Chief
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel
Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I

Madison Nicholas, Staff Services Analyst
Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Julianna Contreras, Staff Services Analyst (Virtual)
Dan Dao, Staff Services Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome

Frank Bigelow

The meeting was called to order at 1:02 PM by Frank Bigelow

B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

A quorum was established with 13 committee members present in-person and five attending virtually.

C. Approval of November 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

The minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum attending at one time.

D. Approval of January 27, 2025 Agenda (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

The agenda was not approved as there was not a quorum attending at one time.

2. JANUARY LA WILDFIRES DISCUSSION

Frank Bigelow/All

A few days after the Governor's budget was announced the LA fires started. CAL FIRE assisted local government partners in suppressing the Palisades and Eaton fires. Damage inspection teams were sent to count the damaged/destroyed structures and both Palisades and Eaton reports have been completed. Between the two fires, of the over 11,000 single family residences destroyed, about 3,400 had a defensible space inspection done within the last 6 months and the attributes (roof, siding, vents, windows, etc.) of those homes were collected. This will provide a tremendous amount of data to compare the post-fire analysis to the pre-fire analysis to give insights as to why those home either made it or didn't and provide probability statistics about survivability. Homes built in the 40s were exponentially more susceptible to being destroyed, so the codes we are putting in place over the decades are making a difference.

How are we getting the data to the decisions makers? Any government entity (FEMA, CalOES, Red Cross, effected counties/cities) have access now. The Structure Survivability by Attribute reports has not been shared at this point. There is concern that if information is not consistently shared that this incident will be forgotten.

Regarding the water issue – the Governor has convened a group that included CalEPA, the Water Board, Department of Water Resources, CalOES, HCD, and CAL FIRE to create a report specifically about what happened at Palisades. The scope is being broadened a little to include other fires across the state.

Since 2014 when we started doing mobile data collection, we have had over 70k records of destroyed structures which we are now starting to analyze and get consistent data from.

Steve Hawks moved that Item 3 be eliminated from the agenda to allow for more time to discuss Items 2 and 5. The motion was seconded by Christopher Ochoa and carried. Due to having additional time after Items 2 and 5, Item 3 was heard out of order after the Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood presentation.

3. UPDATES (Heard out of order, after the presentation)

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Defensible Space

1) Statewide SRA total:

- i. 154,928 inspections completed, 62% of the 250,000 goal for fiscal year 2024-25.**

2) Qualified Entity Program training is ongoing with upcoming classes in:

- i. Butte, Mendocino, and San Diego counties**
- ii. Qualified Entity Assessment year-to-date total
 - o 252 assessments****

2. Burn Permits

- 1) Year-to-date – CAL FIRE issued 5,232 permits**
- 2) Since May 1, 2023 CAL FIRE has issued 148,765**
- 3) GIS has been updating the app to make the application process easier and faster for those that don't live in SRA areas**
- 4) Enabled the ability to enter multiple APN numbers on one permit**
- 5) When a permit is cancelled, the emails are more detailed for the permittee**

3. Home Hardening

- 1) CAL FIRE staff continue to support the California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) with technical assistance on recommended retrofits. Version 2.0 of the program's Minimum Quality Standards was released to pilot communities in December.**
- 2) Home hardening and defensible space work are ongoing in Lake, San Diego, and Shasta counties.**
- 3) CAL FIRE staff have begun developing the assessment application report which is the final step to rollout version 2.0 of the CWMP assessment app. The anticipated launch date for the new app is March 1.**

4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program

- 1) Concluded PSPS events over the weekend in Southern California with SCE, PG&E, and SDG&E. Height of the event potentially effecting 400,000 customers. There were 33 PSPS events in 2024 and we have had activated PSPSs since January 1.**
- 2) Working on OEIS on finalizing list for Independent Evaluators (IE) for utilities to choose an IE to review their wildfire mitigation plans. Five out of six applicants qualified for the list.**

- 3) Getting ready for WMP review to start with new 3-year plans being submitted in February.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
 1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - a. 469 projects, 93.8% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - a. 49,627 acres treated, 49.6% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 28,427.3 acres
 1. Northern Region: 18,745.3 acres
 2. Southern Region: 9,682 acres
 - b. Grant Projects: 18,887.1 acres
 - c. CFIP Projects: 2,312.5.2 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - a. 24,224.2 acres treated, 48.4% of the goal
 4. Wildlands Fuels Reduction Reporting
 - a. Continue to work on the CalMAPPER V4 implementation plan set for release in July 2025.
 - b. With the start of the new year, staff are working with CAL FIRE units and regions on the quarterly QA/QC.
 5. Pre-Fire Planning
 - a. CWPP Tool Kit webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025. An outreach campaign has started including a press release and social media posts on OSFM platforms.
 - b. 5-year SRA Review (Level 5) was presented to the Board of Forestry on January 22, 2025.
 - c. Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTER) continues to be successful with collection on the Eaton and Palisades fires.
 6. CalStats
 - a. Collaborating with Image Trend to ensure continuity in incident reporting following successful integration of ePCR with CALFIRS in October 2024.
 - b. Staff attending the first State Fire Marshal NERIS Training at the National Fire Academy.
 - c. CAL FIRE has been approved as one of 165 departments nationwide to serve as Early Adopters of NERIS.
 - ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 1. Land Use Planning
 - a. Safety Element Assessments
 - i. Two Safety Elements were presented to RPC at the January meeting. Cities of:
 - Red Bluff
 - Glendale

2. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Announcement of the 1000th community in good standing will come soon!
 - i. Firewise renewals took place the first week of December
 - ii. Team processed over 800 renewals

3. Land Use Planning for Wildfires Course
 - 1) Scheduled 4 class dates in February 2025:
 - i. 2/11/2025 - Chino
 - ii. ~~2/13/2025 - Newbury Park (Ventura Co.)~~
 - o Reschedule TBD
 - iii. 2/25/2025 - Santa Rosa
 - iv. 2/27/2025 - Chico

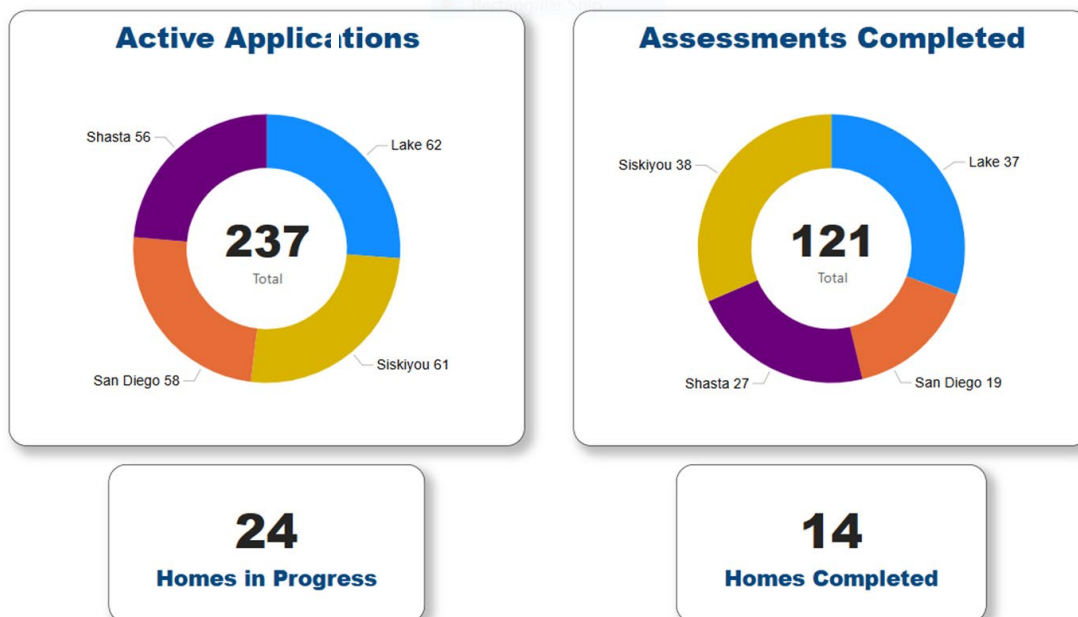
 - 2) Planning in progress for additional dates in 2025 and into 2026.

4. Subdivision Review
 - 1) Recently completed 4 Fire Safety surveys the city of Palm Springs and were accepted and the January RPC meeting.
 - 2) Staff are engaged with several jurisdictions statewide.

5. [CWMA Statewide Clearinghouse Data Center](#)
 - 1) Hosts a wide array of documents, research articles, best practices, and other critical resources.
 - 2) Each submission has undergone thorough review to ensure its relevance and value to wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and risk reduction.

6. [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#)
 - 1) FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants Award notification on August 20, 2024
 - i. 94 awards totaling just over \$90M
 - ii. Info is posted on the Wildfire Prevention Grants website, and the CA State Library Grants portal.

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update



4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Land Use Planning Workgroup

Feeling a renewed sense of urgency to address the challenges associated with any catastrophic wildfire and enhancing planning resources to improve adaptation to community resilience and advancing future incidents. Under this working group it is planned to strongly address the challenges of affordable housing and defensible space in urban environments and suburbs that may not traditionally be considered communities at significant risk of wildfire.

Two items on the agenda are to confirm that the roster is finalized and to propose the first meeting date.

5. PRESENTATIONS

A. Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood – A Mitigation Standard for Neighborhood Scale Wildfire Resilience, IBHS

6. ROUNDTABLE

Frank Bigelow

- A. Catherine Freeman – Trying to gather information about what counties need right now so they can petition the state and federal government for help.
- B. Deborah Halberstadt - Department of insurance has been engaged in working with individuals who have suffered losses. There's an enforcement branch in Los Angeles helping to prevent fraud and to look at insurance laws to make sure adjusters and brokers are complying with those laws to protect consumers, to provide clarity on where to get information, and work with disaster responders. Looking at future insurability.
- C. Michael Maguire – Grants meeting included Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning put together an integrated wildfire safety program. Under this project they completed a general safety element update, developed a wildfire risk assessment, unified land use plan, wildfire protection plan.
- D. Anale Burlew – Activated four CAL FIRE incident management teams and a CalOES team to assist with the watershed protection taskforce. That team is working closely with the CA Conservation Corps that is doing much of that work on the ground to ensure that as rain is occurring that contaminants are not getting into the water system. The budget was released, CAL FIRE was not included in any of the budget reductions.
- E. Jacy Hyde – Local Fire Safe Council is in LA to determine needs and working on a support plan. Closed out round 2 of the County Coordinator Program and are in the process of getting ready to launch round 3.
- F. Tony Marino – Utilities Wildfire Mitigation Plan was published this morning. Published a schedule for the 2026-28 Wildfire Mitigation Plans submission which start coming in in April. Working on vegetation management audits, and continuing asset vegetation management inspections. Regarding the Underground Safety Board, The Underground Infrastructure Director is looking in dig alerts to understand the hazards of the clean-up efforts and potentially hitting gas lines in that area.
- G. Lisa Lien-Mager – Have been updating the Wildfire Forest Resilience Task Force website with a lot of information regarding the LA fires including the Top 5 Things to Know About California's Efforts on Wildfire Resilience and Reduction. The Secretary Speaker Series will focus on the LA fires.
- H. Yana Valachovic – Aligned on outreach and educational efforts to help those who have been impacted by smoke and ash. Lots of educational programs beginning to roll out including a seminar series.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Frank Bigelow

A. There was no public comment.

8. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2024

Frank Bigelow

A. Every third Tuesday of the month, 1:00-3:00pm

B. March 19, 2025

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:01 PM

Frank Bigelow