WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, October 20, 2026

Committee Members Present
Frank Bigelow, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Emily Smith, CAL FIRE
Kimberly Carr, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection (virtual)
Ian Bastek, Office of Emergency Services
Michael Maguire, Land Use & Climate Innovation
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Roy Wright, Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
Nick Cammarota, California Building Industry Association (virtual)
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (virtual)
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities (virtual)
Jordan Wells, California State Association of Counties
Lisa Lien Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

Members Absent
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office
Bill Villarino, Santa Barbara County Fire
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative

CAL FIRE Attendees
Rudy Baltazar, Assistant Chief
Richard Brechbuehl, Deputy Chief
Jason Butcher, Forester II
Bryan Carter, Division Chief
Shaun Fairbanks, Deputy Chief
Shane Galvez, Assistant Chief
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director
Justin Johnson, Research Data Specialist I
Spencer Mallinger, Battalion Chief
Julie Marvich, Supervisor I
Heather McCulley, Deputy Chief
John Morgan, Assistant Deputy Director
Kyle O'Neil, Battalion Chief
Chris Ramey, Deputy Chief
Shanferd Robino, Analyst I
Mark Rosenberg, Research Data Manager
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel
Stephen Volmer, Battalion Chief

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
A quorum was not established with 9 committee members present in-person and 5 attending virtually.

C. Approval of the past meeting minutes (Motion Required) – **Frank Bigelow**

The July 21, 2026, August 18, 2026, and September 15, 2026, meeting minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

D. Approval of the October 20, 2026, meeting agenda (Motion Required) – **Frank Bigelow**

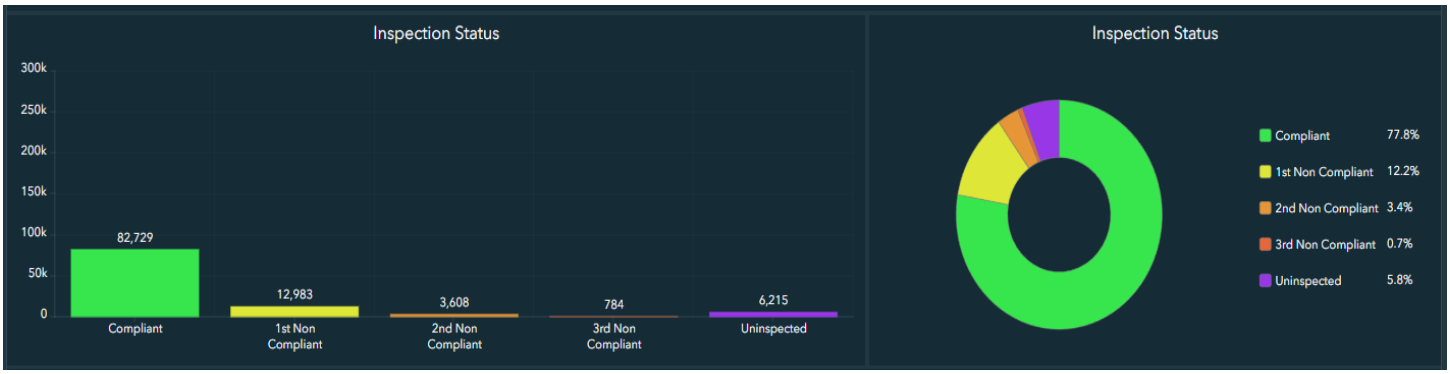
The August 18, 2026, meeting agenda was not approved as there was not a quorum.

2. PRESENTATION

A. California Optimization Bond, Case Study Demo on Napa Valley – Dr. Robin Daniels, University of Cambridge

3. UPDATES

A. Division Report
   i. Wildfire Preparedness
      1. Defensible Space
         1) State SRA total – 106,319 inspections



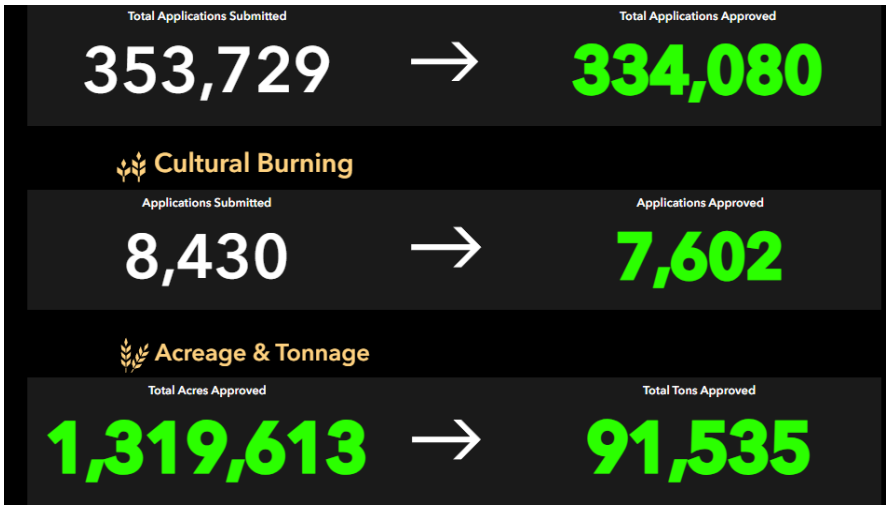
         2) Qualified Entities Training scheduled classes:
            i. Sonoma – November 5-6
            ii. Inyo – November 9-10
            iii. Alameda – December 8-9
            iv. Santa Clara – December 10-11

         3) Delivered class in San Bernardino County
            i. 25 students from fire safe councils, FireWise USA communities, resource conservation districts, local fire protection districts and fire departments, and local conservation districts.

      2. Home Hardening
         1) Assisting with BCPs for CA legislative bills that support wildfire mitigation.
         2) Coordinating with CalOES to finalize program details for Prop 4 Home Hardening Grant Program.

3) Two CALBO trainings in October on WUI Part 7.
4) Providing CWMP with technical recommendations for home hardening retrofits.

3. Burn Permits



4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
    1) Public Safety Power Shutoffs continue to be initiated by utilities due to current weather patterns.
    2) Finishing Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) guideline updates with the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety for next year's WMP submissions.

ii. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE
Fire Prevention Efforts FY 26/27

1. Fuel Reduction Projects
    1) 191 projects, 38.2% of the goal

2. Combined Fuel Reduction
    1) 8.115.8 acres treated, 8.1% of the goal
        i. Unit Projects – 7,621.5 acres
            a) Northern Region: 4,761 acres
            b) Southern Region: 2,860.5 acres
    2) Grant Projects: 429.8 acres
    3) CFIP Projects: 64.5 acres

3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
    1) 5,694.7 acres treated, 11.4% of the goal

5. Pre-Fire Planning
    1) Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reports (FTER): Since 2024, 170 positive impacts have been documented. For 2026 we have recorded 41 positive impacts to date, with additional reports pending approval.
    2) Vibrant Planet Platform (VPP): Statewide deployment remains on schedule. Phase 1 and 2 training is complete for 15 units and 3 contract counties. Final Phase 3 training is now underway for the remaining 6 units and 3 contract counties.

3) Annual DPA review kicked off October 1 which is the deadline for all units and contract counties to submit recommended DPA changes.
4) Fire Plan is hosting the 2nd Annual Fundamentals of the Fire Plan Program Workshop in Natomas, November 2-6. This workshop is designed for newer Fire Plan staff from the units and contract counties who have less than 18 months of experience.

6. CalStats
   1) NERIS secondary schemas are expected to become available in CAL FIRE's First Due system this week, enabling personnel to complete the remaining fire reporting fields for 2026 incidents.
   2) CalStats is working with contract counties to review and validate 2026 SRA wildland fire activity using the new Contract County Wildfire Dashboard.
   3) CalStats is providing historical fire incident data to support law enforcement's project with USC, using AI and ALERTCalifornia camera imagery to identify probable wildfire ignition areas and validate the approach.

ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
   1. Intro to Land Use Planning for Wildfire
      1) These are free, all-day, in-person trainings that are open to land use planners, fire marshals, fire chiefs, fire mitigation specialists, building officials, and other professionals from government agencies and the private sector who engage in planning, policy development review and/or approval activities in California.
         i. October 27 – Chino Hills
         ii. October 29 - Escondido
   2. National Fire Protection Association, Firewise USA
      1) Currently 1,792 communities in good standing
         i. More applications in the queue.
         ii. The renewal process has begun and will continue to the first part of the new year.
   3. Wildfire Prevention Grants Program
      1) Fiscal year 2025-26 grant solicitation
         i. $70 million in grant funding for community-focused wildfire prevention and resilience projects.
            a) Funding via Proposition 4 California Climate Bond
            b) Eligible projects include hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire education and planning
      2) Local unit and region review has been completed, Sacramento-level review is underway.

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update (as of October 15, 2026)



Figures are reported by Local Program Partners

C. California Department of Insurance
    i. Safer From Wildfire benefits to CWMP program participants

D. Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
    i. Wildfire Prepared Home designation to CWMP program participants

E. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Report



F. FEMA Period of Performance Extensions Expirations
    i. Shasta County Fire Safe Council – August 28, 2026
    ii. North Coast Opportunities:
        1. Lake County – February 1, 2027
        2. Tuolumne County – February 1, 2027
        3. El Dorado County – February 1, 2027
    iii. San Diego County Fire Protection District – July 11, 2027

3. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

A. California Association of Resource Conservation Districts – Sophia Lemmo

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. No new business

5. OLD BUSINESS

A. Neighborhood Wildfire Mitigation Validation Program Workgroup
With all the new legislation signed by the Governor and the flurry of activity around what all that means, there's been a pause on the monthly workgroup meetings until after the first of the year.

B. Land Use Planning Workgroup
Last month's meeting was postponed but will be meeting today. We had a presentation discussion the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard at the August meeting which was developed by researchers at Texas A&M University and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The discussion was led by Professor Matthew Malecha from Texas A&M. This is a method that

facilitates systemic and spatial evaluation of the community's network and plans to assess the potential effects of existing policies on hazard vulnerability. This focused methodology expands the core diverse methodology to help local public officials prepare more effectively for wildfire and urban conflagration events by analyzing plans and policies for hazard perspective while reviewing potential conflicts and opportunities to adjust policies based on the latest scientific understanding in order to strengthen community-wide wildfire resilience. Today we will have a presentation led by Anne Crealock who is a planning and program manager at MWPA. Anne will provide a general overview on MWPA including items such as their governance structure, their service area, as well as goals, projects, grant programs, and services provided to the public such as home hardening, defensible space grants, and vegetation management on public land, parcel inspections and evaluation metrics.

4. PRESENTATION

A. California Utilities Emergency Association (CUEA), The Work They Do & Their Role – Dana Moore, CUEA

5. ROUNDTABLE

A. Steve Hawks – Happy to report that the first house in Lake County has received the Wildfire Prepared Home designation in addition to completing the CADNP program and we're hoping there are many more to come.
B. Kimberly Carr – The Wildfire Mitigation Plan Guidelines are being updated. They will be released in the next couple months and will guide the 2028 plans.
C. Jordan Wells – From November 30 to December 4, CSAC will be having their annual meeting in Chula Vista, and the Agriculture, Environment, and National Resources Policy Committee will be holding a session focused on wildfire mitigation with a particular emphasis on insurance. Thank you to J. Lopez who is a confirmed speaker as well as representatives from the Board of Forestry and the Department of Insurance. Registration is open for anyone interested in attending.
D. Michael Maguire – The Resilient California Summit begins today at the Sacramento Convention Center and it's not too late to register. Would like to highlight the state's efforts over this administration to invest in climate resilient infrastructure and there are several sessions on wildfire and wildfire prevention and mitigation.
E. Ian Bastik – Received a FEMA declaration for the North Fire so that was positive news for the recovery. CalOES is submitting an appeal to FEMA to reconsider their denial of the HMGP post fire. They have not approved any HMGP post fire funding since the new administration took office in January of 2025 so there's been no real policy or regulation changes, and no communication on that. FEMA did obligate public assistance in the hazard mitigation grants for the first time since October 2025 and July 2025 respectively. Hopefully this means more grant funding is going to start flowing soon. The state Hazard Mitigation Plan 2028 Advisory Committee kickoff meeting is scheduled for November 4 where we will be reviewing hazard mitigation assessments and looking forward to working with interagency partners to review and provide feedback on hazard-specific risk assessments, including wildfire. Robyn Fennig just sent out the final draft of the 2026 Adaptation Planning Guide for final agency comments yesterday.
F. Jacy Hyde – CFSC is hosting the annual community coordinator meeting next week. Currently there are 51 community coordinators that will start doing planning for the upcoming year through education and knowledge exchange. The program has now been put in statute as of the end of last month so there's a lot of thought around the legislation and how to evolve the program over the next couple years
G. J. Lopez – The ember resistant zone regulation is being looked at by the Office of Administrative Law with the staff at the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and working out the details that need to be completed for finalization. The goal is to get it to the Board in November and have it completed in December.

H. Yana Valchovic – There is an upcoming webinar called *Fast Fires, Big Data and the Future of Wildfire Risk* on November 5 with Dr. Jennifer Balch with the University of Colorado. We are co-sponsoring an event with many other organizations including the Association for Fire Ecology and hosting the Beneficial Fire Summit in San Diego - registration is still open.
I. Sophia Lemmo – The CARCD Annual Conference is coming up November 17-19 in Sacramento.
J. Sean McGlynn – Currently at the International City/County Managers Association Annual Conference where we reaffirmed out policy position around making sure that federal grants continue to follow the pathway that they have traditionally followed, especially around hazard mitigation grants.
K. Emily Smith – Fire activity increased over the weekend due to the wind events with the North Fire being at 90% containment and the Cooley incidents at 57% containment in Escondido County. Overall, there's been moderate activity across both regions as we enter the fall season within the peak fire year. We've had no CAL FIRE INT deployments since August, which is not normal. We are working with our partners across the state in preparation for the predicted El Nino events. San Bernardino/Monterey just named their new Unit Chief, Mark Pimentel, and the new Deputy Director of Fire Protection, Aviation, and Mobile Unit is Brian Renner, and Josh Nettles, who was serving as the Assistant Region Chief in the Southern Region, has taken an intern to the Deputy Director of Co-op Fire and Matt Soley, who was serving as the Deputy Director of Co-op Fire has taken an intern to the Northern Region Chief. And, I have recently taken a new position in Fire Protection as the Staff Chief of Operations.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

A. There was no public comment.

7. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026

A. November 17, 2026
3237 Peace Keeper Way
Banning Conference Room
McClellan, CA 95652

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 2:54 PM