
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, September 15, 2026



Committee Members Present

Frank Bigelow, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE
Forest Kaser, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
Ian Bastek, Office of Emergency Services
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection (virtual)
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office (virtual)
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council (virtual)
Todd Lando, Santa Barbara County Fire (virtual)
Michael Maguire, Land Use & Climate Innovation (virtual)
Chris Ochoa, California Building Industry Association (virtual)
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative (virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Jordan Wells, California State Association of Counties (virtual)
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative (virtual)
Lisa Lien Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

Members Absent

Steve Hawks, Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:00 PM

Frank Bigelow

- A. Welcome
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Frank Bigelow.
- B. Roll Call – Madison Volpato
A quorum was not established with 8 committee members present in-person and 9 attending virtually.
- C. Approval of the June 19, 2026, meeting minutes (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow
- D. Approval of the August 18, 2026, meeting agenda (Motion Required) – Frank Bigelow

The July 21, 2026, meeting minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

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

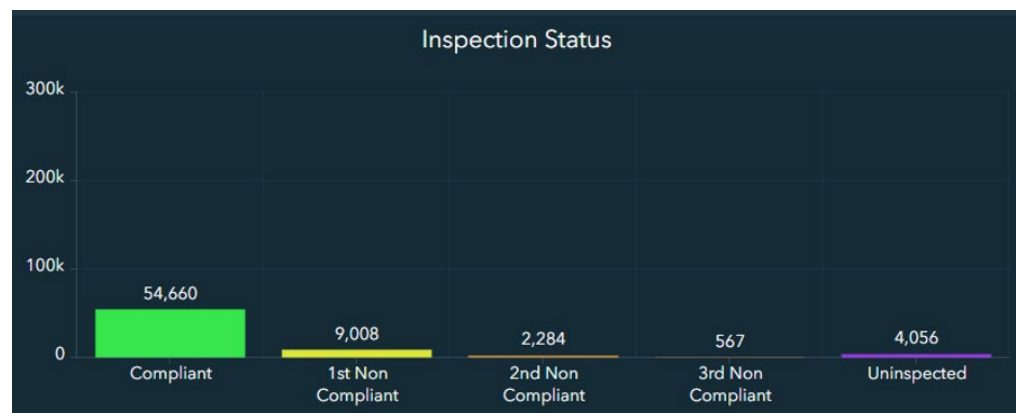
2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Defensible Space

1) Fiscal year-to-date inspections – 70,575



2) Qualified Entity training classes are scheduled in the following counties:

- San Bernardino – October 5-6
- Sonoma – November 5-6
- Inyo – November 9-10
- Alameda – December 8-9
- Santa Clara – December 10-11

REQUEST SERVICES



Model Defensible Space

The Model Defensible Space Inspection platform was created to enable local jurisdictions to build their own defensible space program. Examples of local government agencies that may apply:



Qualified Entity Training Request

A Statewide program that trains approved agencies or organizations to educate the communities they live in and around with defensible space and home hardening mitigation measures, these no cost educational assessments prepare communities against wildfire.



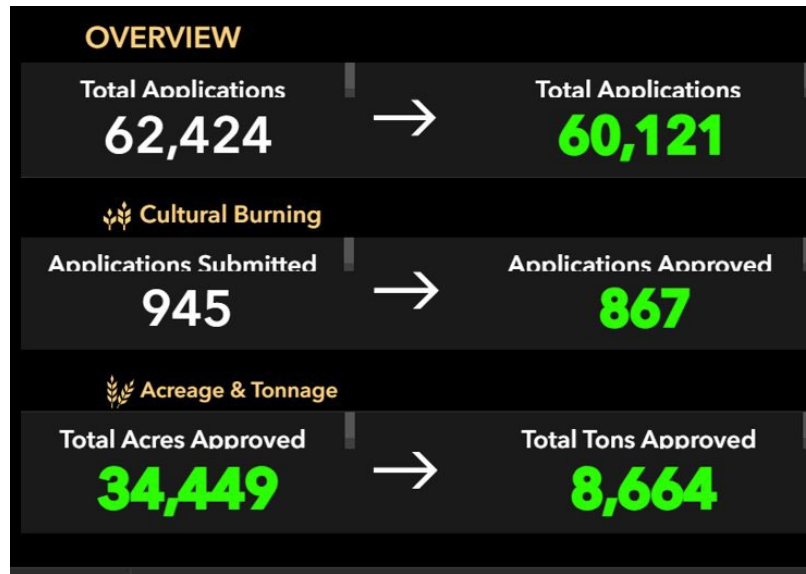
Real Estate Defensible Space Inspection

Request An Inspection

2. Home Hardening

- Prop 4 building out program structure
- Part 7 Webinar October
- SFT HIZ/DSI

3. Burn Permits



4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program

- 1) In Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) season. Southern California Edison (SCE) initiated a PSPS for the Inyo, Mono, Santa Barbara, Southern California areas on August 23 and continued for 20 days. PG&E and Liberty also initiated PSPs the week of September 10.
- 2) Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) guideline updates continue with Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (OEIS).

ii. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)

Fire Prevention Efforts FY 26/27

1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - 1) 110 projects, 22% of the goal
2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - 1) 3,068.7 acres treated, 3.1% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 3,041.2 acres
 - a) Northern Region: 1,557.6 acres
 - b) Southern Region: 1,483.6 acres
 - 2) Grant Projects: 0 acres
 - 3) CFIP Projects: 27.5 acres
3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - 1) 2,054.4 acres treated, 4.1% of the goal
4. Wildland Fuels
 - 1) The team continues to work with programs, regions, and units through the CAL MAPPER V4 implementation with positive feedback.
5. Pre-Fire Planning
 - 1) Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reports (FTER): Since 2024, 161 positive impacts have been documented. For 2026 we have recorded 32 positive impacts to date, with additional reports pending approval.
 - 2) Vibrant Planet Platform (VPP): Statewide deployment remains on schedule. Phase 1 training is complete for 6 units and one contract

county. Phase 2 training is now underway for additional units and contract counties.

- 3) Unit/Contract County Fire Plans: Updates to the 2027 Unit and Contract County Fire Plans will incorporate Strategic Project Areas generated through the Vibrant Planet Platform.
- 4) CWPP coordination: Collaboration with the California Fire Safe Council's County Coordinator Program continues. A new tool for collecting Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) boundaries and associated attributes is now being rolled out to support statewide data collection.

6. CalStats

- 1) In accordance with Health & Safety Code Section 13110.7, CalStats has compiled its first set of burn injury and fatality statistics for the first half of 2026. The data has been published on the CAL FIRE/OSFM website.
- 2) To improve the accuracy of Contract County State Responsibility Area (SRA) wildland fire activity used for Redbook reporting, CalStats developed a new Contract County SRA Wildfires dashboard. The dashboard refreshes each day automatically at 7:00am and supports ongoing data review and validation.

ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

1. Intro to [Land Use Planning for Wildfire](#)
 - 1) Classes bring together local planners, building officials, Fire Marshals and other stakeholders to learn fundamentals of wildfire mitigation.
 - 2) New class dates just added
 - i. October 27 – Chino Hills
 - ii. October 29 - Escondido
2. National Fire Protection Association, Firewise USA
 - 1) Currently 1,745 communities are in good standing
 - i. More applications in the queue
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 is underway

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update (as of September 11, 2026)

Sites Assessed 479 Total	Sites in Progress 30 Total	Sites Completed 190 Total
Sites Completed in 2024 11	Sites Completed in 2025 107	Sites Completed in 2026 72

- 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



3. ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

- A. California Fire Safe Council – Jacy Hyde

4. NEW BUSINESS

- A. No new business

5. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Neighborhood Wildfire Mitigation Validation Program Workgroup

This program is intended to take a deep dive into what a program might look like that would offer the opportunity for homeowners to be recognized for the great mitigation efforts they're putting into parcel-level projects. Individuals would be doing defensible space and home hardening mitigations on their home. The program is working toward building a base framework for a scalable program that could be implemented at the local level or on a larger scale.
- B. Land Use Planning Workgroup

Last month we had a presentation from Dr. Matthew Malachi from Texas A&M University who presented on the IPERS Scorecard for wildfire. It's a great opportunity to evaluate where planning gaps are statewide, whether we are looking at community wildfire protection plans, general plan safety elements, general plan housing elements, seeing where these different plans interact, overlap, and where there are gaps in wildfire policy. The next meeting will be on October 20.

4. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Parcel Level Mitigations Matched to Mechanism of Ignition and the Minimum Collective Action Required to Achieve Wildfire Adaptation Thresholds – Dave Winnacker, Xyloplan
- B. 5-Year Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Action Plan – Patrick Wright, Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force

5. ROUNDTABLE

- A. Forest Kaser – The guidelines for the next round of Wildfire Mitigation Plans that utilities have to submit were released recently. The plans will be submitted in early 2027 on a staggered schedule for plans that are aligned with the utility's general rate cases. Working closely with the CPUC to figure out how to align those processes to make them as streamlined as possible. Some utility annual reviews are coming out in September.
- B. Lisa Lien-Mager – Continuing to report on the streamlining process put into place under the Governor's State of Emergency Proclamation last year. This is about fast-tracking fuels reduction projects. Last week, more than 500 projects have been approved so far including everything from defensible space for communities to thinning and some prescribed fire. Among the bills that are awaiting approval from the Governor, there is legislation that would seek to codify this streamlining process for a short period of time while setting on a path through the Board of Forestry for a more durable way to think about streamlining projects.
- C. Jacy Hyde – SB 973 is on the Governor's desk for approval. This bill codifies the County Coordinator Program, expands some of their roles, and creates some risk modeling tools from CAL FIRE to be used locally to create some of the more data-driven mitigation plans.
- D. Anale Burlew – Experiencing a more moderate fire year this year and while we are experiencing that, have had a lot of success with initial attack and night flying resources. The 5th of the C-130s is just down the runway going through its final testing and will likely be heading to Paso Robles as the airbase it will be assigned to. Much of the rest of the country has been experiencing quite a severe fire year. We've been able to send resources out of state to support our out-of-state partners, and we are very reliant on other states and countries to come to our aid in our time of need. We've been able to support Colorado, Texas, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, New Mexico and others, and we still have resources in Texas right now. In state, as many of our federal partners have been dealing with fires out of state, on federal lands, we have been providing a lot of initial attacks and incident command team support. With the more moderate weather and rain showers last week we were able to ramp up our fuels mitigation work and have already started prescribed fire, which is earlier than normal, for much of the state.
- E. Ian Bastik – There have been a lot of opportunities this summer to share our bountiful resources here in California with other states because a lot of them have come to our assistance in the past years.
- F. Stacy Heaton – RCRC is having their Annual Meeting in Santa Barbara County and it's not too late to register. The conference runs on Wednesday and Thursday with a keynote on Thursday by Dr. Temple Grandin who is a pioneer in agriculture and livestock operations. We will also be giving the RCRC President's award to Yana Valachovic.
- G. Yana Valachovic – It's a real honor to be recognized by such an esteemed group that does such important work. We've been working on our [website](#) and it looks very different so if you haven't checked out the resources available, please do so. We have a number of upcoming events including a webinar in September about the mountain forests work in Southern California. We've been doing a lot of training around prescribed fire and building a high-quality team of people. Want to acknowledge and appreciate everyone contributing to the Board of Forestry's work around Zone Zero.
- H. Deborah Halberstadt – The Governor signed AB 1795 today, which is the Smoke Damage Recovery Act. This is a piece of legislation that was authored by Assemblymember Gibson and sponsored by Insurance Commissioner Lara. It establishes the nation's first enforceable standards for investigating, testing, and restoring smoke-damaged homes.

- I. Don Hankins – Back in August, the Indigenous Stewardship Network had their first annual convening in person since the formation of the organization. There were approximately 150 participants for 2 days and then a day of field trips and a workshop on SB 310 agreements. It was a really great event. I believe we'll see more people interested in building the capacity around cultural fire, which was one of the intents of having the event. There have been a lot of tribes up north, particularly along the Klamath, with the Cultural Fire Management Council and the Crook Tribe, in particular, which have been able to maintain their burning throughout the season. There's a lot of planning going forward for optimizing burning going into the next season.
- J. J. Lopez – The Board of Forestry moved the Zone Zero regulations to the Office of Administrative Law, which currently has the regulations in their hands. We'll wait to hear from them on next steps. Zone Zero was lined up with several other issues like very high fire severity zones.
- K. Lenya Quinn-Davidson – We are hosting our annual [Good Fire Fair](#) in the Santa Cruz area on October 10 at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. [The Beneficial Fire Summit](#) is coming the week of December 10 in San Diego. There were about 50 special session requests for proposals from across the state and the Western US. Starting to pull together a CARX class for the winter that will be on the north coast in late January or February.
- L. Michael Maguire – Doing a lot of prep work for the [Resilient California Summit](#) coming in October designed to look at some of these states' leading and cutting-edge research in climate science. Looking at the state's 5th climate assessment that our office is leading in partnership with the Natural Resources Agency, among other agency partners and contributors. It's also an opportunity to get the latest updates on some of the projects that are being done statewide that are helping our state mitigate and adapt to climate change. We've been closely following AB 706 and AB 1666, two bills around biomass market development. There is a lot of interest in biomass utilization coming from the Wildfire Task Force so our interest in supporting that legislation is key. We want to continue to support the development of biomass markets whether it be through legislation or other initiatives statewide.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. There was no public comment.

7. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2026

- A. October 20, 2026
CAL FIRE Aviation Training Center

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 2:51 PM