
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Posted: 4/25/2023



Committee Members Present

Daniel Berlant, Office of the State Fire Marshal (Virtual)
Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Robert Troy, California Office of Emergency Services
Deborah Halberstadt, California Department of Insurance (Virtual)
Beth Hotchkiss, Office of Planning and Research
Roy Wright, Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety
Dave Winnacker, California Fire Chiefs Association (Virtual)
Chris Ochoa, Representative from the Building Industry
Lenya N. Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative Extension (Virtual)
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development (Virtual)
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (Virtual)
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties

Members Absent

Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Keali'i Bright, Department of Conservation
Anale Burlew, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Don Hankins, Professor, CSU Chico

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Assistant Deputy Director
Matt Damon, Staff Chief
Jim McDougald, Staff Chief
Dennis O'Neil, Assistant Chief
Scott Witt, Deputy Chief (Virtual)
Steve Hawks, Retired Annuitant
Wendy Collins, Assistant State Fire Marshal (Virtual)
John Morgan, Deputy Chief (Virtual)
Mark Rosenberg, Research Data Manager (Virtual)
Carmel Barnhart, Deputy Chief (Virtual)
Crystal Sujeski, Deputy State Fire Marshal Supervisor (Virtual)
Tony Andersen, Deputy Director (Virtual)
Kara Garrett, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:00 PM

A. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by Daniel Berlant.

Daniel Berlant

B. Roll Call – Kara Garrett

Quorum Established with 14 committee members present, 6 of which attending virtually.

C. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes (**Motion Required**) – Daniel Berlant

Motion: Robert Troy moved to accept the meeting minutes; J Lopez seconded the motion with the amendment of the minutes.

Action: All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Agenda Review (**Motion Required**) – Daniel Berlant

Motion: Chris Ochoa moved to accept the meeting agenda; Roy Wright seconded the motion.

Action: All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2. OLD BUSINESS

Daniel Berlant / Frank Bigelow

A. Risk Modeling –

1. Work Group Update –

- Draft Report on the workgroup’s recommendations will be shared at the June 20th WMAC meeting.
- Contacts for the workgroup are listed below:
 - Jim McDougald
 - Jim.McDougald@fire.ca.gov
 - Celeste Jovanovic
 - Celeste.Jovanovic@fire.ca.gov
- More information on the committee can be found at:
 - <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/boards-committees/risk-modeling-advisory-workgroup/>

B. Division Report –

1. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance –

- Firewise:
 - California continues to lead the nation with 666 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise USA Communities in good standing.
 - Continuing to equate to over 25% of all NFPA Firewise USA Communities nationwide.
- Wildfire Prevention Grants:
 - We are currently reviewing the applications that were submitted.
 - We received about 250 applications for \$400,000 with about \$115 million available in funding.
 - More information is coming.

2. Wildfire Planning and Statistics –

- California Incident Data & Statistics Program:

- California continues to lead the nation with 666 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise USA Communities in good standing.
- Developing contract for three new custom developments to the CALFIRS program. This will be a joint process with EMS and their ePCR (e-patient care reporting) program and the ImageTrend vendor.
- Finalizing CAL FIRE incident data for 2022 and beginning the development of the Red Book.
- Fuel Reduction Projects:
 - 420 projects, 84% of the goal.
- Combined Fuel Reduction:
 - 43,064 acres treated, 43.1% of the goal.
 - Unit Projects – 25,287 acres
 - Grant Projects – 17,777 acres
- Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction):
 - 19,341 acres treated, 38.7% of the goal.

3. Wildfire Preparedness –

- Defensible Space Inspections:
 - Inspectors have visited more than 130,000 individual properties since July 1, 2022.
 - This is nearly 65,000 more properties from the same timeframe the previous fiscal year.
- Home Hardening:
 - Home Hardening personnel have been developing minimum quality standards for home retrofits.
 - Home Hardening personnel have initiated a stakeholder group to develop a WUI Fire Safety Building Compliance training program.
- Burn Permits:
 - The newly launched online Burn Permit application system has received more than 13,725 requests and CAL FIRE has issued 13,277 permits as of this writing.
 - 96% Residential
 - 3% General
 - 1% Broadcast
 - All existing permit holders will receive an email reminding them to renew their burn permit on May 1 each year at <https://burnpermit.fire.ca.gov/>
- Damage Inspection:
 - Damage inspection personnel have been dispatched to three major flooding incidents during the winter storms in 2023.

- Statewide, CAL FIRE damage inspectors have documented (as of 3/27/2023):
 - Destroyed – 7
 - o (7 homes, 0 Commercial, 0 Other)
 - Damaged – 594
 - o (432 homes, 85 Commercial, 77 Other)
 - No Damage – 474
 - Total Inspections 1,219
 - o (Inaccessible 144)
- Utility Wildfire Mitigation:
 - Began consultation with Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety on the Investor-Owned Utility (IOU) Wildfire Mitigation Plan reviews in the areas of risk assessment, situational awareness and forecasting, vegetation management, grid operations, and grid hardening.
 - Participating in IOU PSPS planning and as an observer in PSPS full-scale exercises.
 - Created a weather station web map that includes all IOU weather station networks for use for IMT Fire Behavior Analysts (FBAN).
 - Contains over 3,000 utility weather stations that link to Mesowest.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. CAL FIRE – CAL FIRE Strategic Plan 2024 Development Presentation – Chief Phyllis Banducci

1. CAL FIRE presented on the development of the 2024 CAL FIRE Strategic Plan, discussing the strategic planning process. Chief Banducci reviewed accomplishments and internal feedback to date as well as what the plans are to collect external feedback.

- Contact:
Phyllis Banducci
CAL FIRE
Phyllis.Banducci@fire.ca.gov
(916) 516-0779

B. Rancho Mission Viejo – Wildfire Safety measures for Today’s Master Planned Communities – Mike Balsamo and Jay Bullock

1. Rancho Mission Viejo presented on their wildfire safety measures that are applied for today’s master planned communities, focusing on their efforts in Rancho Mission Viejo. During the presentation, an overview of Rancho Mission Viejo was shared along with Wildfire risks for homes located in the WUI and how Rancho Mission Viejo is mitigating wildfire risk.

- Contact:
<http://www.ranchomissionviejo.com/>
Email: ask@rmvranchlife.com

4. ROUNDTABLE

Daniel Berlant

A. Caroline Thomas Jacobs – Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety

1. Large Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans have been submitted to our office. We are actively reviewing those now.
 - There will be a public workshop where the utilities will be presenting those plans on April 27th and 28th. Everyone is welcome to participate.
 - Public comments are welcome and are due at the end of May. This year's plan is the next three-year plan for the utilities.
 - More information is available at <https://energysafety.ca.gov/what-we-do/electrical-infrastructure-safety/wildfire-mitigation-and-safety/wildfire-mitigation-plans/>.

B. Daniel Berlant – CAL FIRE - OSFM

2. Wildfire Preparedness Week will be held the first week of May.
 - More information can be found at <http://readyforwildfire.org/>.

C. Catherine Freeman – California State Association of Counties

3. Chief Berlant, thank you for joining the California State Association of Counties to assist with understanding on the Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

D. Clay Kerchof – Department of Housing and Community Development

4. HCD has been largely focused on disaster response and long-term recovery in regard to the floods this year. We still have longer term hazard mitigation activities for wildfires. We have an action plan that is under review from HUD for our CDBG Mitigation Program which provided funds for 2017 and 2018 disaster areas. Also updating our 2020 and 2021 action plans in order to update programs to support long term recovery in those communities.

E. Lenya Quinn-Davidson – University of California Cooperative Extension

5. For future meetings, possibly discuss prescribed fire claims fund as we are getting close to rolling that out.

F. Frank Bigelow – CAL FIRE - OSFM

6. Save The Date: California Wildfire Conference - Oct. 24-26, 2023!

We invite you to mark your calendar for the inaugural California Wildfire Conference October 24-26, 2023, in Ventura County at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Ventura County Wildfire Collaborative is a leader in building fire-resilient coastal communities and supported by CAL FIRE and California Climate Investments, and is proud to host experts from across the state, country, and globe to discuss and learn about the following topics:

- Inclusive, equitable planning, capacity building, and community resiliency training.
- Regional models demonstrating on-the-ground solutions for wildfire resilience and mitigating the impacts after a fire.
- Research and best practices for identifying and addressing emerging issues in wildfire management.
- Social, economic, and environmental post-fire responses.

- Funding resources for fire resilience.

To learn more about the conference, visit <https://www.coastal-quest.org/conferences/california-wildfire-conference/>

Topic Suggestions for Next Meetings – Link to Google Forms Suggestion Portal:
<https://forms.gle/Wefg6YnrnUGYS8ua9>

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Berlant

A. MJ Lee - Portola Valley Wildfire Preparedness Fair, which takes place on Saturday, April 22nd from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Portola Valley Town Center, aims to educate homeowners on the finer points of how to help protect their home from ignition during a wildfire.

Portola Valley Wildfire Preparedness Fair set for April 22
<https://inmenlo.com/2023/04/20/portola-valley-wildfire-preparedness-fair-set-for-april-22/>

6. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2023

Daniel Berlant

A. Third Tuesday of each month starting at 1 PM and ending at 3 PM.

a. May 16, 2023

i. CNRA Building, 715 P Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room 2-221 (A-C)
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Featuring presentations from:

- CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal:
 - Utility Fire Mitigation Program
 - Jeff Fuentes
- Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E):
 - Progress and Outreach Efforts Overview
 - Andy Abranches
- Community Wildfire Planning Center:
 - Land Use Planner Training Overview
 - CWPP Best Practices toolkit
 - Molly Mowery

7. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:00 PM

Daniel Berlant

Motion:	J Lopez moved to accept the meeting agenda; Robert Troy seconded the motion.
Action:	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.