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# WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

## Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, August 16, 2022

Posted on August 31, 2022

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### Committee Members Present

Curtis Brown, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Mike Richwine, Office of the State Fire Marshal  
Caroline Thomas Jacobs, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety  
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Robert Troy, California Office of Emergency Services  
Mike Peterson, California Department of Insurance (Virtual)  
Neil Matouka, Office of Planning and Research  
Jessica Martinez, California Fire Safe Council (Virtual)  
Roy Wright, Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety  
Dave Winnacker, California Fire Chiefs Association (Virtual)  
Christopher Ochoa, Representative from the Building Industry  
Lenya N. Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative Extension (Virtual)  
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (Virtual)  
Maziar Movassaghi, Department of Housing and Community Development (Virtual)  
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California  
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (Virtual)  
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities  
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties  
Don Hankins, Professor, CSU Chico (Virtual)

### Members Absent

Department of Conservation

### CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Daniel Berlant, Deputy Director  
Wendy Collins, Assistant State Fire Marshal (Virtual)  
Steve Hawks, Assistant Deputy Director  
Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director  
Frank Bigelow, Staff Chief  
Jim McDougald, Staff Chief  
John Morgan, Deputy Chief  
Jeff Fuentes, Utility Fire Mitigation Battalion Chief  
Jamie Sammut, Staff Counsel (Virtual)  
Tristan Howard, GIS Analyst (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 Mike Richwine.

**Mike Richwine**

#### B. Roll Call – Kara Garrett

Quorum Established with nineteen committee members present, eight of which attending virtually.

C. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes (**Motion Required**) – Mike Richwine

<b>Motion:</b>	Robert Troy moved to accept the meeting minutes; Sean McGlynn seconded the motion.
<b>Action:</b>	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Agenda Review (**Motion Required**) – Mike Richwine

<b>Motion:</b>	Roy Wright moved to accept the meeting agenda; Caroline Thomas Jacobs seconded the motion.
<b>Action:</b>	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**Daniel Berlant / Steve Hawks**

A. Risk Modeling – Daniel Berlant / Steve Hawks

1. Work Group Update

- All members met for the first time August 15<sup>th</sup>. Will meet monthly on the Monday before the WMAC meetings.
  - Question Caroline Thomas Jacobs: For the objectives, what is the process for the committee? Did we approve the charter? Not approved yet, reviewing next meeting and have it approved by then. The group is working on reviewing the charter and clearing up and refining the focus and developing definitions of key terms.
  - Risk Modeling Workgroup's question is what does success look like and who are the clients? The group is working on this answer. Job is to ID the components of the risk model and the mitigations that go with that.
  - Roy Wright: keeping group on task is the goal. The only way to keep them going towards the goal, they need to stay in line with the focus.

B. Division Report – Daniel Berlant / Steve Hawks

1. Defensible Space:

- 2022 to-date we have completed more than 120,000 Defensible Space inspections. This is up by more than 22,900 for the same timeframe last year.
- For the first time in our program history, we met and exceeded the CAL FIRE goal of 250,000 defensible space inspections within the fiscal year! The program completed 289,255 inspections between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022.

2. Home Hardening:

- Established a JPA with Cal OES designed to develop a state home hardening initiative (California Wildfire Mitigation Program) to retrofit, harden,

and create defensible space for homes at high risk to wildfires, focusing on high socially vulnerable communities and providing financial assistance for low- and moderate-income households.

- Successfully developed training curriculum and reference material for home hardening assessors to use in the evaluation of applicant properties of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program.
- Conducting Home Hardening Assessor Training today through Thursday in Lake County for home hardening assessors with new app updates. More training sessions will be planned as additional counties are accepted into the program.

### 3. Damage Inspections:

- Structures Destroyed: 299 single family residences, 5 commercial buildings, and 152 other minor structures.
- Structures Damaged: 30 single family residences and 17 other minor structures.
- Non-Damaged: 604 single family residences, 3 multi-family residences, 28 commercial, 1 mixed residential/commercial, 8 infrastructure, and 229 other minor structures.

### 4. Burn Permits:

- The new automated online application is in beta testing now and is expected to be released in early 2023.

### 5. Utility Wildfire Mitigation:

- Continue to assist the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) in the review of the 2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) reviews for the Investor-Owned Utilities.
- Updates for August:
  - 7/5 Energy Safety approved San Diego Gas & Electric's 2022 WMP.
  - 7/20 Energy Safety approved Southern California Edison's 2022 WMP.
  - 7/22 Energy Safety issued revision notice for Bear Valley Electric Service.
  - 7/28 Draft Decision was released for public comment for Independent Transmission Operators Transbay Cable and Horizon West.
- Review of Pacific Gas & Electric, PacifiCorp, and Liberty utilities WMP's continues.
- Working on filling a Battalion Chief vacancy within the program.
- CAL FIRE leadership participated on the dais for the Public Safety Power Shutoff Pre-Season Preparedness Briefings with CPUC commissioners and executives from CalOES, Energy Safety, and the utilities.

- Finalized the Powerline Fire Prevention Field Guide Equipment Identification Pocket Guide updates through a working group and the pocket guides are currently in the printing phase. Will be distributing the pocket guides to all CAL FIRE Units.
  - Pocket guide is on the website.
    - Caroline Thomas Jacobs: Are we planning on putting this in an app?
      - Jeff Fuentes: You can go on the website on a tablet and the link will take you to the sources. The app is currently for the CAL FIRE staff, not a standalone app.
        1. Caroline: Possible future item to get an app that would get updates real time on updated documents.

#### 6. Pre-Fire Planning:

- 2022 Annual Unit Fire Plans were posted to our public website on August 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/community-wildfire-preparedness-and-mitigation/fire-plan/>
- Fire Hazard Severity Zone SRA map review training and Unit/Contract County review started on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and will be completed September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- CalMAPPER Quality Assurance/Quality Control is underway with Units and Programs and will be completed October 1<sup>st</sup> for fiscal year 2021/22.
- CAL FIRE recently launched a new online interactive fuels reduction viewer, which provides a look at completed fuels reduction projects over the last two fiscal years (20/21 and 21/22).
  - The viewer can be found on the new webpage:
    - [www.fire.ca.gov/fuels-reduction/](http://www.fire.ca.gov/fuels-reduction/)

#### 7. California Incident Data & Statistics:

- National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS):
  - Implementing NFIRS Quality Assurance reports using the eNFIRS analytics tools to improve the timeliness, validity, and consistency of California NFIRS reporting.
  - Uploaded all of California's 2021 NFIRS data to the national database.
  - California has now fully transitioned to the new eNFIRS importing process.
- 2021 Redbook Review:
  - Currently in Department's Green Sheet Approval Process.

#### 8. Land Use Planning / Safety Elements:

- Numerous Safety Element Assessments (SEAs) moving forward statewide. Many SEAs will likely to be presented at August Resource Protection Committee meeting.

#### 9. Fire Safe Regulations:

- The “State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations, 2021” will be heard at the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection meeting held tomorrow.
- The “State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations, 2021” will consider the adoption of the rule text and approval of the Final Statement of Reasons.

#### 10. Subdivision Review:

- San Diego County and incorporated cities subdivision review reports are being heard at the Board’s Resource Protection Committee occurring today.
- Working with the counties of Sonoma, Marin, Lassen, Modoc, El Dorado, Nevada, and Riverside.

#### 11. Firewise USA:

- 542 communities in good standing, with more than 290 in progress.

#### 12. Wildfire Prevention Grants Update:

- The CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants Program anticipates opening its next open solicitation period in October. Visit the Wildfire Prevention Grants webpage for updates on grant opportunities and sign up for our CAL FIRE Grants email service.
  - <https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/wildfire-prevention/>
- The Program is planning to hold a workshop prior to the next solicitation to get feedback from stakeholders on potential improvements to the Program.

#### 13. Additional Updates:

- Staff traveled to the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) to participate in one of the experiments that is part of the [Structure Separation Experiment](#) (SSE) being funded by CAL FIRE. The SSE is being conducted in three phases and looks at the complex relationship of structure-to-structure fire spread. The experiment we witnessed at IBHS’s facility went very well.
- While at the IBHS facility, IBHS performed an experiment to demonstrate the science behind a noncombustible Zone 0.
- Headwaters Economics in collaboration with IBHS released a new report called [Construction Costs for a Wildfire-Resistant Home: California Edition](#). This is a follow up report to the [Building a Wildfire-Resistant Home: Codes and Costs](#) report released in 2018. The California Edition report compares the cost of constructing a home to three different levels of wildfire resistance in Redding and Los Angeles, California.
  - Baseline home compliant with the minimum requirements of Chapter 7A.
  - Enhanced home augmenting Chapter 7A with a vertical under-deck enclosure around the perimeter of the deck and a noncombustible Zone 0, including under and around decks. \$3K added cost.

- Optimum home constructed to the most stringent, noncombustible materials, or in some cases, a “code plus” option based on research and best judgement. \$18 - \$27K added cost.
  - Construction Costs for a Wildfire-Resistant Home: California Edition <https://headwaterseconomics.org/natural-hazards/wildfire-resistant-costs-california/>
- There are currently multiple bills in process and we are very involved in reviewing legislation going through the process. There are about three dozen bills that are still alive related to Wildfire Mitigation. Will likely report back to the group at the September meeting on what bills get passed relating to Wildfire Mitigation. With that, we are waiting an additional budget bill that relates to the greenhouse gas reduction fund allocation for wildfires, much of the funding for our grant program and other mitigation programs are funded out of the greenhouse gas reduction fund are yet to be appropriated. Should come out any day now. We will get a second budget bill and we will have additional information on this soon.

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety – Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans Presentation: Caroline Thomas Jacobs

1. Question Roy Wright: In what way do you take actual events and walk them back against the plan? For example, a utility ignited fire, in what ways are you taking that event and cross walking that into a plan?
  - Caroline Thomas Jacobs: There is risk modeling that looks at ignitions and incorporates past ignitions, they always have a “lessons learned” section and incorporate that in. Looking at past behavior does not project reducing that risk in the future. The next fire would happen a different way, this is not the only way we are looking at what the future would hold.
2. Question Don Hankins: Does the requirement for planning apply to PG&E lands needing to tend to their lands?
  - Caroline Thomas Jacobs: In a high fire area, they are to articulate all of the wildfire mitigation efforts within those boundaries and articulate the initiatives that they are doing based on the risk identified in the area.
3. Question: Neil Matouka: For the collaboration of best practices for risk modeling the CPUC and the energy commission are both working on projects like this, are they aligned?
  - Caroline Thomas Jacobs: Yes, working closely with them. Aware of the scoping meetings and they are a part of the scoping meetings as well.
4. Question, Mike Richwine: how are we collaborating in the two risk modeling work groups?
  - Caroline Thomas Jacobs: Our designee on the OSFM Risk Modeling workgroup oversees the work being done on their workgroup.

B. Office of the State Fire Marshal – SB 190 Model Defensible Space Presentation:  
Frank Bigelow and John Morgan

1. Question: Roy Wright: Is there instruction on the frequency when the inspections should occur? Did not find anything on what a normal cycle would be?
  - John Morgan: You always have to follow this, there is no frequency. Defensible space in this is required at all times. The expectation is to maintain defensible space. This is the type of comment we are hoping to get back from the committee for over the next month and in about two months come back and review the comments.
2. Question: Yana Valachovic: Have you thought about your own program in CAL FIRE's system might learn how local cities might be interpreting this. Do we spend more time with first time inspections, or do we keep inspecting the same people?
  - John Morgan: It is always good to know that there is an option for reinspection. Of any jurisdiction and CAL FIRE's stance is that we want to get out to as many properties as we can. Year after year inspections is a good thing but we might not visit the entire jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions already strive to meet every homeowner in their jurisdiction or even ne third of the homeowners with reinspection every three to four years. The goal is to visit more properties.
3. Question: Sean McGlynn: How is this going to be presented? Is it going to be a toolkit of our recommendations in the ordinance? Would suspect that we would provide guidance.
  - John Morgan: All of the input and comments that we can get to incorporate into the program the better. At the end of the day, it will be located as a document that local jurisdictions can use for themselves to either take from our website or request from us directly, they can also modify. This is a template for them to start. This will be useful with the Fire Hazard Severity Zones as there might be additional jurisdictions that would then require AB 38 inspections with home sales. There are also things that we are not thinking about for delivery. Every City is different, and we are looking into what the best plan would be.
4. Yana Valachovic: we are also adding another defensible space zone, and this means that local jurisdictions could add this to their inspection process.
  - John Morgan: Is this being passed around to the Fire Marshals and local jurisdictions? We are doing training with Fire Prevention Officers in September and if there are other avenues, feel free to share the document. The hope is to get comments from the committee for an internal review first and then send it out to public review.
5. Question: J. Lopez: the success of the inspection program relies on the Inspectors themselves, will there be an annual training for Inspectors? There needs to be consistency across the state.

- John Morgan: In this document, an appendix goes through the training in its basic form. State Fire Training has been working on a training to train agencies on this program. State Fire Training has done at least two pilot trainings for this. One in the Bay Area and the second was hosted by Truckee Fire as an FSTEP (Fire Service Training and Education) class that was attended by fire service personnel as well as members of HOAs in the Truckee area. The third offering was in San Mateo county at Woodside Fire. The third step to that would be to deliver to other qualified nonprofit entity delivery but that is further down the road.

6. Use track changes in the Word document file sent with meeting minutes, also located online, and send back to Chief John Morgan at [John.Morgan@fire.ca.gov](mailto:John.Morgan@fire.ca.gov).

**4. ROUNDTABLE**

**Mike Richwine**

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

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mike Richwine**

- A. No public comment.

**6. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2022**

**Mike Richwine**

- A. Third Tuesday of each month starting at 1 PM and ending at 3 PM.
  1. Next meeting is September 20, 2022 at a new location.  
CAL FIRE Aviation Management Unit  
Helicopter Training Classroom  
5411 Luce Avenue, McClellan CA 95652

**7. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:01 PM**

**Mike Richwine**