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# WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, November 28, 2023**

*Posted: February 5, 2024*

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## **Committee Members Present**

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE – 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  
Michael Maguire, Office of Planning and Research (Virtual)  
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council  
Roy Wright, Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (Virtual)  
Dave Winnacker, California Fire Chiefs Association (Virtual)  
Nick Cammarota, Representative from the Building Industry  
Lenya N. Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative Extension (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  
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties  
Don Hankins, Professor, CSU Chico (Virtual)

## **Members Absent**

Mike Parkes, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Deborah Halberstadt, California Department of Insurance  
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development

## **CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance**

Frank Bigelow, Acting Deputy Director  
Jim McDougald, Staff Chief  
John Morgan, Deputy Chief  
Carmel Barnhart, Deputy Chief  
Scott Witt, Deputy Chief  
Chris Ramey, Division Chief (Virtual)  
Dennis O'Neil, Assistant Chief  
Mark Hillskotter, Battalion Chief (Virtual)  
Steven Hawks, Retired Annuitant (Virtual)  
Mark Rosenberg, Research Data Manager (Virtual)  
Justine Grafton, Associate Governmental Program Analyst (Virtual)  
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel (Virtual)  
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III

## **1. CALL TO ORDER 1:02 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 16 committee total members present, with 7 attending virtually.

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

<b>Motion:</b>	J Lopez moved to accept the meeting minutes; Catherine Freeman seconded the motion with the amendment of the minutes.
<b>Action:</b>	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

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

<b>Motion:</b>	Staci Heaton moved to accept the meeting agenda; Robert Troy seconded the motion.
<b>Action:</b>	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

**Daniel Berlant / Frank Bigelow**

A. Division Report –

i. Wildfire Preparedness –

1. Defensible Space:

a. Statewide SRA Total for Fiscal Year 2023-2024:

- i. 119,012 inspections completed, 48% of the goal (250,000 Goal)
- ii. We have visited 253,025 properties and completed 313,341 inspections which include re-inspections this year.

b. Burn Permits:

- i. 75,706 requested – 72,616 issued
- ii. 2,584 of those issued were Cultural Burning Permits.

2. Home Hardening:

- a. Siskiyou County Pilot Program Defensible Space project – First two assessments have been cleared for scope of work preparation.
- b. Shasta County Pilot Program – Conducted a Defensible Space and Zone 0 scope of work training on 10/24.
- c. Lake County Pilot Program – The communities first scope of work has been prepared reviewed and finalized. They are preparing additional scope of works for review.

3. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program:

- a. 2024 Powerline Fire Prevention Field Guide is under review.
- b. Collaboration continues with stakeholders to review the Wildfire Mitigation Plans.

- c. Working with manufacturers to review requests for equipment exemptions.
  - d. Various PSPS events in Southern California.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics –
  - 1. Fuel Reduction Projects:
    - a. 320 projects, 64% of the goal
  - 2. Combined Fuel Reduction:
    - a. 24,096.6 acres treated, 24.1% of the goal
      - i. Unit Projects – 19,078.4 acres
        - 1. Northern Region: 12,280.8 acres
        - 2. Southern Region: 6,797.5 acres
    - b. Grant Projects: 2,354.8 acres
    - c. CFIP Projects: 2,663.4 acres
  - 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction):
    - a. 16,086.4 acres treated, 32.2% of the goal
  - 4. Fire Hazard Severity Zones:
    - a. State Responsibility Area (SRA):
    - b. We have until December 15th to turn in our Final Statement of Reasons for the SRA.
    - c. More information:
      - i. [osfm.fire.ca.gov/fhsz](https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fhsz)
- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance –
  - 1. Firewise:
    - a. Currently 743 communities in good standing.
  - 2. Subdivision Review (SDR):
    - a. Fire Safety Surveys in Monterey City/County/City of Hollister October 22-25, 2023.
    - b. Continued collaboration meetings with many statewide jurisdictions.
    - c. Resource Protection Committee meeting was held November 7-8, 2023, presented Fire Safety Surveys for the following areas.
    - d. Fire Safety Surveys:
      - i. City of Monterey
      - ii. Monterey County
      - iii. City of Hollister
  - 3. Wildfire Prevention Grants:
    - a. Reviewing the new Grants Management Handbook which is anticipated to be completed and published by winter.
    - b. FY 2023-24 WP Grants November Solicitation opened on November 1st, closes on January 10, 2024.
    - c. More information:

- i. [www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/wildfire-prevention-grants](http://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/wildfire-prevention-grants)

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program (CWMP) Report –

i. CWMP Framework:

1. In coordination with state and local partners, the program establishes a community wildfire home hardening framework and process that can be modeled statewide.

ii. Communities Update:

1. Communities in Shasta County:
  - a. Engaging with property owners (13 Assessments and 3 SOW completed) and building prequalified contractor list for the development of Master Agreement.
  - b. Community is hosting a defensible space contractor walk thru at a no issue property on November 30th. Cal OES and CAL FIRE staff to attend.
2. Communities in San Diego County:
  - a. Expanded property owner outreach.
  - b. Engaging with property owners (13 Assessments and 8 SOW completed).
  - c. 4 properties went to EHP Phase II vendor for further review.
  - d. 1 property is on the no-issue list and not further EHP is required.
3. Communities in Lake County:
  - a. Engaging with property owners (15 Assessments and 1 SOW completed).
  - b. Completed the initial walkthrough with their first homeowner to review proposed mitigation measures.
4. Communities in Tuolumne County:
  - a. Bid for EHP Phase 1 work has been selected and should be authorized by the County Board of Supervisors.
5. Communities in El Dorado County:
  - a. Procurement process for the EHP Phase I vendor.
6. Communities in Siskiyou County:
  - a. 2 Assessments Complete and SOW Procedures in Development.
  - b. RFQ/Contractor Procurement in Development.
  - c. Scope of Work Procedures in Development.

C. Board of Forestry Update –

i. Presentation to the Board:

California Forest Biomass Pile Data Collection, Draft Report

1. To meet the challenge of declining forest health conditions and increasing frequency and severity of wildfire over the last decade, California and the USFS have set a goal of treating one million acres of wildland per year by 2025.
- ii. To meet the challenge of declining forest health conditions and increasing frequency and severity of wildfire over the last decade, California and the

USFS have set a goal of treating one million acres of wildland per year by 2025.

1. This goal will require removal and subsequent disposal of an estimated 5 – 15 million bone dry tons of forest biomass waste annually from a range of vegetation management projects for forest restoration, as estimated by the Wood Utilization Work Group of the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.
- iii. California Forest Biomass Pile Data Collection, Draft Report
  1. This report also aims to determine the number of forest biomass pile burn permits issued by California air districts from 2018 – 2021 to provide information about intentional anthropogenic burning, including open pile burning as a waste disposal method, prescribed burning, and the total acreage and tonnage of burn piles in California.
    - a. [California Forest Biomass Pile Data Collection](#)
    - b. [California Forest Biomass Pile Data Collection Appendices Draft.11.8.23](#)
- iv. Management Committee:
  1. Consideration of Rulemaking for “Wet Areas, Meadows, and Restoration Activities.
- v. Forest Practice Committee:
  1. Approved Watercourse Crossings, Significant Existing and Potential Erosion Sites, and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Requirements.
- vi. Resource Protection Committee:
  1. Land Use Planning Program Update
  2. Subdivision Review Program Update (3)
  3. Safety Element Reviews (1)
  4. Vegetation and Fuels Treatment in the WLPZ follow up. Don Hankins and BOF&FP Regulations Coordinator.
  5. Next Board Meeting: December 5 & 6

### 3. NEW BUSINESS

- A. National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) presented on the ESCAPE document that takes the lessons from Camp 4 and packages them for a small and intermediate size communities, specifically to help them develop their evacuation plans.
  1. More information can be found at:
    - a. <https://www.nist.gov/el/fire-research-division-73300/wildland-urban-interface-fire-73305/escape-evacuation-and-sheltering>

### 4. ROUNDTABLE

**Daniel Berlant**

- A. Don Hankins – Tribal Representative:
  - i. Finished up with the stewardship search for a Network Director.
  - ii. Happy to see the report on cultural burning.
    1. Next week Association for Fire Ecology Conference will be held in Monterey, there will be four sessions on indigenous fire.
- B. Catherine Freeman – California State Association of Counties (CSAC):

- i. Held their annual meeting a couple of weeks ago, John Morgan was in attendance.
  - ii. FEMA questions, would like to look into future presentation for 2024.
    - 1. More information: <https://www.counties.org/>
- C. Sophia Lemmo – California Association of Resource Conservation Districts:
  - i. Updating second version of the RCD Post-Fire Playbook.
  - ii. Recently received a prescribed fire grant.
    - 1. More information: <https://carcd.org/>
- D. Staci Heaton – Rural County Representatives of California:
  - i. Went through 6-month ADHOC committees discussing property insurance.
  - ii. A couple of weeks ago, met with various stakeholders to discuss opinions regarding the state and insurance policies.
  - iii. Would like to see a presentation on the CDI Framework program with insurance companies.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://www.rcrcnet.org/>
- E. Yana Valachovic – Fire Science Consortium:
  - i. The 10th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress held December 4-8.
  - ii. California Chaparral Symposium IV: Integrating science and stewardship to promote human and ecosystem resilience will be held May 7-9.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://www.cafirescience.org/>
- F. Lenya Quinn-Davidson – University of California Cooperative Extension:
  - i. Hired a new Humboldt/Del Norte Fire Advisor that is starting soon.
  - ii. Hiring Beneficial Burning and Tribal Land Stewardship Advisor.
    - 1. <https://recruit.ucanr.edu/JPF00240>
    - 2. More information:
      - a. <https://ucanr.edu/>
- G. Nick Cammarota – California Building Industry Association
  - i. Reviewing Office of Planning and Research’s Technical Advisory and hoping to add some comments in.
  - ii. OPR WUI Evac Guidance Comment Deadline is 12/29/2023.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://cbia.org/>
- H. Roy Wright – Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
  - i. Looking to present on both in 2024:
    - 1. Paper on conflagration data.
    - 2. Lahaina Report on surviving homes.
    - 3. More information:
      - a. <https://ibhs.org/>
- I. Jacy Hyde – California Fire Safe Council:
  - i. Have a funding opportunity from the US Forest Service on Grants for Defensible Space type projects.
  - ii. Finalizing County Coordinator grants for next year.
  - iii. Looking to present on the County Coordinators in 2024.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://cafiresafecouncil.org/>

- J. Michael Maguire – Office of Planning and Research:
  - i. Working to launch beta version for the digital marketplace for Forest biomass.
  - ii. Governor’s Office is conducting a study on California Insurance in collaboration with the Resource Conservation Districts.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://opr.ca.gov/>
      - b. <https://northcoastresourcepartnership.org/ncrp-woody-feedstock-initiative/#:~:text=The%20North%20Coast%20Forest%20Biomass,benefit%20alternatives%20to%20open%20pile>
- K. Robert Troy – Cal OES:
  - i. Received a response from FEMA for a declaration for Tropical Storm Hilary and public assistance was granted to five counties.
  - ii. Working with Roy Wright on sharing the State facilitated safety assessment from Lahaina.
- L. Caroline Thomas Jacobs – Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety:
  - i. The second 3-year plan came in this year.
    - 1. PG&E’s draft decision is out for comment.
    - 2. Remaining five will be coming out through the end of this year and early 2024.
  - ii. This year are implementing Senate Bill 884, which is the 10-year undergrounding plan that is voluntary for large corporations that want to submit a 10-year undergrounding plan. Working with public utilities commission.
    - 1. Working to develop the guidelines for that plan for submission for those plans.
    - 2. If interested in contributing, contact Caroline.
    - 3. Guidelines will be available at the end of the first quarter of next year.
  - iii. Kicking off the development of the guidelines for the third 3-year Wildfire Mitigation Plan, which would be submitted in 2025.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://energysafety.ca.gov/>
- M. Frank Bigelow – CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal:
  - i. Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce meets monthly and is meeting again on December 15, 2023, in the California Natural Resources Building in Sacramento from 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM. You can also attend online.
    - 1. More information:
      - a. <https://wildfiretaskforce.org/>

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Daniel Berlant**

- A. Sasha Sabaratnam:
  - i. Thank you to NIST for the presentation.
- B. Larry Williams – Ventura County:
  - i. Would like to follow up on a discussion for information on creeks and the repair in areas. There is a joint policy with the Fish and Game Commission and the Board of Forestry. Would like that updated and would like to get Defensible Space efforts completed. Looking to J Lopez to provide update at the January 2024 meeting or to point us in the right direction to see if we can receive a presentation on this topic.

## 6. UPCOMING MEETING DATE FOR 2023

Daniel Berlant

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

~~a. January 16, 2024~~ January 5, 2024

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

1. American Property Casualty Insurance Association:

a. The current state of the insurance market, regulations, and what  
can be done.

ii. Topic Suggestions for 2024 Meetings:

1. <https://forms.gle/Wefg6YnrnUGYS8ua9>

## 7. MEETING ADJOURNED 2:54 PM

Daniel Berlant

**Motion:** Jacy Hyde moved to adjourn the meeting; Caroline Thomas  
Jacobs seconded the motion.

**Action:** All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

If you would like to watch the recording of this meeting, please visit the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93nK8lxtZOE>