
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Friday, February 28, 2025

Posted: TBD



Committee Members Present

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal

Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE

Tony Marino, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety

J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office

Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council

Steve Hawks, Insurance Industry

Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative

Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

Nick Cammarota, Building Industry (virtual)

Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development (virtual)

Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities (virtual)

Bill Villarino, Santa Barbara County Fire (virtual)

Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (virtual)

Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative (virtual)

Members Absent

Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties

Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California

Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts

Michael Maguire, State Planning & Research

Nancy Ward, California Office of Emergency Services

Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Deputy Director

Andrew Henning, Assistant Deputy Director

Matt Damon, Staff Chief

Shane Vargas, Deputy Chief

Jim McDougald, Assistant Deputy Director

Emily Smith, Staff Chief

Shaun Fairbanks, Deputy Chief

Gene Potkey, Assistant Chief

Anthony Massucco, Battalion Chief

Bryan Carter, Battalion Chief

Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal, Specialist

Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst

Julianna Contreras, Staff Services Analyst (Virtual)

Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I

Danh Dao, Staff Services Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Welcome

Daniel Berlant

The meeting was called to order at 1:01 PM by Daniel Berlant.

B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

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

C. Approval of November 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes (**Motion Required**) – Daniel Berlant

The November 19, 2024 meeting minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

D. Approval of January 27, 2025 Meeting Minutes (**Motion Required**) – Daniel Berlant

The January 27, 2025 meeting minutes were not approved as there was not a quorum.

E. Approval of February 28, 2025 Agenda (**Motion Required**) – Daniel Berlant

The February 28, 2025 agenda was not approved as there was not a quorum.

Chief Berlant recognized Office of the State Fire Marshal employees that were celebrating 25+ years of state service.

2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Defensible Space

1) Statewide SRA total:

- i. 181,958 inspections completed, 72% of the 250,000 goal for fiscal year 2024-25.

2) Qualified Entity Program training is ongoing with upcoming classes in:

- i. Mendocino and San Diego Counties
- ii. Qualified Entity assessment year-to-date total
 - o 475 assessments

2. Burn Permits

- 1) New updates are in process to make approval easier for unit staff
- 2) Ability to allow unit to give applicant a more transparent reason when a permit request is cancelled or modified
- 3) Ability to include multiple APNs on one permit for approval

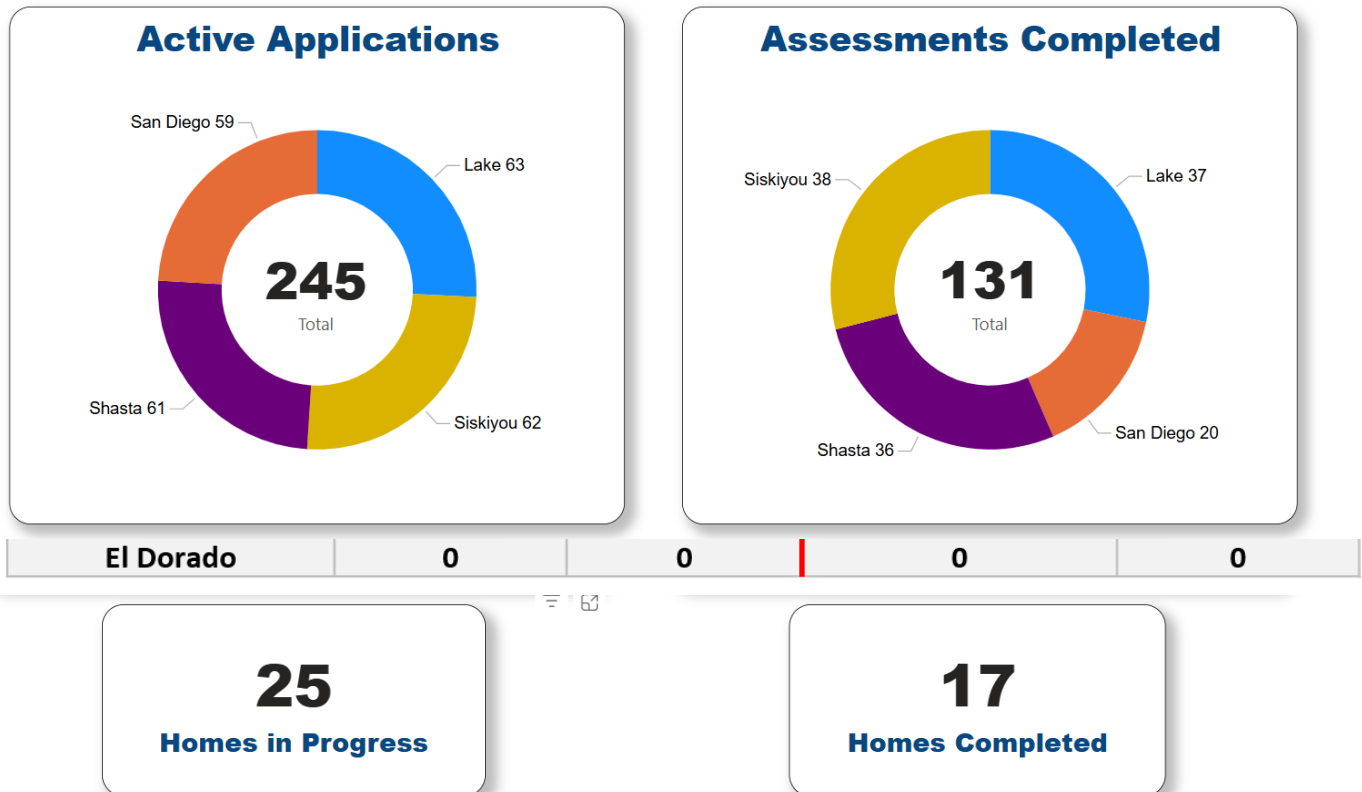
- 4) A more comprehensive list of crops to choose from
 - 5) Permits issued: fiscal year 24/25 – 42,049
 - 6) Since 5/1/23 – 131,205 permits issued
3. Home Hardening
 - 1) Developing the new v2.0 Home Hardening Assessment Application Report Summary (step closer to getting new application released).
 - 2) Creating an interactive story map to be used as training material for the WUI Building Standards Safety Compliance training.
 - 3) Training new assessors in Shasta and San Diego counties along with the new OES special projects staff this month.
 4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
 - 1) 2025 updated WMPs for Liberty and PacifiCorp are in the process of being finalized and approved.
 - 2) The 2020-28 base WMPs will begin to arrive starting March 1, 2025, and will be on a 2-week offset for each utility.
 - i. Scheduled completion for all WMPs is mid-November
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - a. 526 projects, 105.2% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - a. 55,677.4 acres treated, 55.1% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 27,677.4 acres
 1. Northern Region: 19,641.9 acres
 2. Southern Region: 8,035.5 acres
 - b. Grant Projects: 24,259.5 acres
 - c. CFIP Projects: 3,202.9 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - a. 23,775.4 acres treated, 47.6% of the goal
 4. Wildlands Fuels Reduction Reporting
 - a. CalMAPPER V4 implementation plan is set for July 2025.
 - b. Updated fiscal year reports in February

Fiscal Year	11/12/2024		2/10/2025		
	Number of Projects	Total Treated Acres	Number of Projects	Total Treated Acres	Total Acres Change
19/20	770	112,513.1	770	112,517.1	4.0
20/21	681	121,914.4	680	122,044.4	130.0
21/22	725	121,339.4	725	121,332.9	-6.5
22/23	791	116,912.3	793	117,565.4	653.1
23/24	902	131,034.4	933	138,684.5	7,650.1
24/25	469	49,627.0	526	55,139.8	5,512.8

5. Pre-Fire Planning
 - a. CWPP Tool Kit internal and external webinars were completed and successful on February 18, 2025.
 - b. 5-Year SRA Review (level 5) was presented to the BOF and the BOF will hold a hearing to accept public comments on the proposed changes to SRA boundaries on March 4, 2025.
 - c. Continue to review the CAL FIRE Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTER) Dashboard on the CAL FIRE website for additional FTERs to be added.
6. CalStats
 - a. The 2024 fire occurrence data has been uploaded into InFORM for the National Association of State Foresters.
 - b. Working on several projects for NERIS to prepare not only CAL FIRE but also other departments for transition to NERIS in January 2026.
 - c. Working with CAL FIRE units on completion of CALFIRS Reports in preparation of the 2024 Redbook completion.
- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 1. Land Use Planning
 - 1) No February Board of Forestry and Fire Protection meeting
 - 2) Staff are engaged with local jurisdictions statewide on Safety Elements, Subdivision Review and other wildfire mitigation topics
 2. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Announcement of the 1000th community in good standing will come soon!
 - i. Firewise renewals have been processed by NFPA
 - ii. Staff are engaged with several projects
 3. Land Use Planning for Wildfires Course
 - 1) Scheduled four class dates in February 2025:
 - i. 2/11/2025 - Chino
 - ii. ~~2/13/2025 - Newbury Park (Ventura Co.)~~
 - o Reschedule TBD
 - iii. 2/25/2025 – Santa Rosa
 - iv. 2/27/2025 – Chico
 - 2) Planning in progress for additional dates in October and November 2025 and into 2026.
 4. [CWMA Statewide Clearinghouse Data Center](#)
 - 1) Presentation today!
 - 2) www://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/Community-Wildfire-Preparedness-and-Mitigation/Clearinghouse-Data-Center.com
 5. [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#)
 - 1) FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants Award notification on August 20, 2024
 - i. 94 awards totaling just over \$90M

- ii. Grant agreements have been signed with a small handful finishing up some technical items
- iii. Info is posted on the Wildfire Prevention Grants website, and the CA State Library Grants Portal.

B. California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update



3. OLD BUSINESS – LA Fires Recovery Update

- A. CAL FIRE has concluded the effort directed by the Governor of working with the California Natural Resources Agency and other departments in a water availability review in Pacific Palisades. HCD led a report permitting streamlining for rebuilding. Proposals were sent back to the Governor but decisions/recommendations or public distribution has not occurred yet. Looking at the potential waiving of certain building code elements, which has brought a lot of concern for some people. There have been no decisions yet but the Governor has been clear that the fire and life safety elements will not be waived. Chapter 7a will still apply as will other structural safety and wildfire safety elements like residential sprinklers, etc.

The Governor issued an executive order early in February 2025 containing two key items for the Office of the State Fire Marshal, including the release of the local fire hazard severity zone maps. We are currently in the middle of phase II which includes a website hub that was created for local jurisdictions to interact with the CAL FIRE team. Team

members are assigned to the fire hazard severity zone process and also to a jurisdictional responsibility.

The other component of the executive order was a charge to complete the Zone Zero regulations by the end of the year. The Board of Forestry & Fire Protection is focused on moving the process forward – there's a workshop on March 4, 2025 and there's a landing page on the [Board's website](#) with an [FAQ document](#).

4. PRESENTATIONS

- A. [CWMA Clearinghouse](#) – Battalion Chiefs Bryan Carter and Anthony Massucco, CAL FIRE
- B. [Vegetation and Fuels Treatment in the Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones](#) – Jan Van Susteren, California Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

5. ROUNDTABLE

Daniel Berlant

- A. Anale Burlew, CAL FIRE – Attended the graduation of 39 company officers with another 18 graduations scheduled for 2025. Mainly focused around the health and wellness of employees as the 66-hr work week continues to be implemented. Seeing more people from other agencies start to come to CAL FIRE, so it's nice to see the diverse backgrounds. The one executive order that was not discussed earlier is direction to CAL FIRE and CalOES to work with Firescope to look at the resource and nationwide ordering systems that are used for IROC for how we mobilize resources and to come together to determine if there are efficiencies that can happen or ways to improve the ordering system to get resources out to incidents more quickly. Bringing a team of state, federal and local partners into a workgroup for this.
- B. Daniel Berlant, Office of the State Fire Marshal – Our team was in front of the California Building Standards Commission this week and out of the hundreds of building, residential and fire code amendments that we are proposing, a very important one was on the agenda and adopted by the Commission – the creation of a new code, CWUI, the California Wildland Urban Interface Code. This consolidates a number of chapters that are related to wildfire standards within the building code. The building code incorporates about a dozen different codes, including electric, plumbing and fire codes and consolidates those chapters. Chapter 7A is the building code that has a sister component, the residential chapter 337, which is identical to 7A but is for residential. Chapter 49, which involves vegetation and landscaping for wildfires is in the fire code. The new CWUI code consolidates these chapters into one place. CAL FIRE has been working to make it easier and streamlined for local building and fire officials to have all mitigations in one place. The Fire Marshal's Office does not have authority for some of those mitigations such as defensible space and the fire safety minimum regulations that are that of the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection. What we've done, through this code, is reprinted their requirements with pointers to Title 14. The problem is that once the Board updates it, the code is out of date. Chapter 7A is a chapter within the California Building Code but there was an empty code. Code 7 was a code previously for elevators that was vacant, so we put everything into its own code. We will stop referring to chapter 7A and start referring to part 7 or the CWUI code. This completely reorganizes the codes. We will maintain a CWUI Workgroup that will continue to make recommendations which will go to the Building Standards Commission to maintain the code. This will be in effect as of January 1, 2026 and will apply to the State Responsibility Area and the Local Fire Hazard Severity Zones, as dictated by legislature.

There is lots of legislation related to wildfire mitigation. We are analyzing dozens of important legislation that may task CAL FIRE with some important things so we are actively following 30 bills.

We are in the midst of budget season and a number of departments have participated in a budget variance. The big item for CAL FIRE is the budget proposal for the Climate Bond from Proposition 4 which incorporates a significant amount of funding for much of the work that we do in WMAC. Our Wildfire Prevention Grant Program and Forced Health Grant, and the work we do with CalOES on home hardening all have dollars. There's a new pot of money that is being proposed for financial assistance on defensible space for vulnerable California homeowners to do defensible space work, particularly in the Zone Zero.

- C. Tony Marino, Office of Energy Infrastructure – Adopted the 10-year undergrounding plan guidelines for large electric utilities to submit undergrounding plans which will be reviewed for benefits and strengths and they then go to the Public Utilities Commission for the rate discussion. Wildfire Mitigation Plan guidelines were adopted earlier this month. A lot of it was streamlined from prior versions but there is one new piece which is a partnership section under education management chapter where utilities are expected to demonstrate how they are partnering with different groups. In vegetation management there's been a lot of discussion about the transmission corridor they undertook. Starting to roll out substantial vegetation management audits from 2023 compliance year and are getting a good picture of what utilities are good at and what they still need work on. Will be looking at this more in the wildfire communications plan to start in April.
- D. J Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection – Regarding Zone Zero, please visit the [webpage](#) and sign up to attend the meeting on Tuesday either in person or online.
- E. Deborah Halberstadt, Department of Insurance – the Insurance Commissioner has been busy responding to all the wildfire insurance issues as a result of the LA wildfires. A lot of those announcements are available on the [website](#).
- F. Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council – Working with CAL FIRE to reissue the Community Coordinator Grant. Phase two of the County Coordinator Program should launch later in February with reissues of awards to the County Coordinators Program. Closing out the original grant now so should have some updated metrics and would be happy to share those.
- G. Steve Hawks, Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety – Concerned about the potential for the rollback of regulations around rebuilding in LA so working with a number of interested stakeholders from WMAC to offer a letter to support rebuilding with resilience in mind and that helps people return to a house from a future wildfire as well as with insurance issues potentially. The letter was delivered to Governor Newsom and Mayor Bass in LA and other state and local officials just to support rebuilding with Chapter 7A and the implementation of defensible space particularly in Zone Zero.
- H. Lenya Quinn Davidson, UC Cooperative Extension/California Fire Science Consortium – The Fire Science Consortium is funded through a federal joint fire science program and received word last week that the funding for this program is frozen until the various consortia around the country can come into alignment with President Trump's executive orders. However, there's funding from CAL FIRE that is really filling an essential gap while we're under the stop work order from the federal side. On the UC side, in regards to the LA fires, developed a few fact sheets that will be available on backyard gardening issues related to post fire – soil issues, backyard chickens and egg safety, home

gardening and fruit trees. Community members are asking if these things are still safe after the fire. Those will be available on the [website](#).

- I. Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development – Still working toward having the inaugural meeting of the Land Use Planning Workgroup. We are still trying to nail down a consistent schedule for these meetings and since Bagley-Keene rules do apply there will need to be a quorum. We have about 14 people and the plan is to have the workgroup on the same days as WMAC so people don't have to travel to another meeting. The plan is to go with a morning meeting or immediately after WMAC. Michael Maguire sent a Doodle Poll to schedule the first meeting which will be separate from the next WMAC meeting. Hoping to have the next meeting in late March. Made some revisions to the charter which will come to this group for approval.
- J. Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative – There have been a lot of great trainings across the state in terms of tribal burning and planning workshops. We have integrated burning and prescribed burning. Cultural burning has been recognized under SB 332 and EDC 42 which was brought into law this year. The group tribe worked with the state to develop language around SB 310 which was brought into law this year. The language of the federally recognized tribes needs improvement. The state does not have all tribal members fully recognized.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Berlant

- A. There was no public comment.

7. UPCOMING MEETING

Daniel Berlant

- A. March 19, 2025
- B. 2025 Meetings:
Every third Tuesday of the month, 1:00-3:00pm

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 2:46 PM

Daniel Berlant