
WILDFIRE MITIGATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, May 20, 2025



Committee Members Present

Daniel Berlant, CAL FIRE, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Steve Robinson, CAL FIRE
Brian Newman Lindsay, Department of Conservation
Ben DaRosa, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
J. Lopez, State Board of Forestry & Fire Protection
Deborah Halberstadt, Insurance Commissioner's Office (virtual)
Michael McGuire, State Planning & Research
Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council
Steve Hawks, Insurance Industry
Bill Villarino, Santa Barbara County Fire (virtual)
Christopher Ochoa, California Building Industry Association
Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium (virtual)
Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing and Community Development
Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (virtual)
Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities
Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties
Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency

Members Absent

Nancy Ward, Office of Emergency Services
Lenya Quinn-Davidson, University of California Cooperative
Staci Heaton, Rural County Representatives of California
Don Hankins, Tribal Government Representative

CAL FIRE Staff in Attendance

Frank Bigelow, Deputy Director
Jim McDougald, Assistant Deputy Director (virtual)
Crystal Sujeski, Division Chief (virtual)
Randy Northup, Division Chief
Matt Damon, Staff Chief
Emily Smith, Staff Chief
Len Nielson, Staff Chief
Scott Witt, Deputy Chief (virtual)
Heather McCulley, Deputy Chief
Kara Garrett, Deputy State Fire Marshal III (virtual)
Jamie Sammut, Senior Staff Counsel
Bryan Carter, Battalion Chief
Julianna Contreras, Staff Services Analyst
Madison Nicholas, Staff Services Analyst
Carrie Lewis, Associate Governmental Program Analyst
Jillian Fisher, Staff Services Manager I
Danh Dao, Staff Services Analyst

1. CALL TO ORDER 1:05 PM

A. Welcome

Daniel Berlant

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 PM by Daniel Berlant.

B. Roll Call – Carrie Lewis

A quorum was established with 13 committee members present in-person and three attending virtually.

C. Approval of the past Meeting Minutes (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

Motion:	J. Lopez moved to accept the past meeting minutes; Catherine Freeman seconded the motion.
Action:	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

D. Approval of the May 20, 2025 Agenda (Motion Required) – Daniel Berlant

Motion:	Steve Hawks moved to accept the May 20, 2025 meeting agenda; Christopher Ochoa seconded the motion.
Action:	All members voted unanimously to approve the motion.

2. UPDATES

A. Division Report

i. Wildfire Preparedness

1. Home Hardening

- 1) Conducted the Home Ignition Zone/Defensible Space Assessor training for the California Wildfire Mitigation Program new community assessors.
- 2) Development of the Wildland Urban Interface Fire Safety Building Standards Compliance training is ongoing.
- 3) Continue to support the California Wildfire Mitigation Program with technical assistance with home hardening recommended retrofits.
- 4) Released the new California Wildfire Mitigation Program assessment application v2.0 and provided training to the assessors.

2. Defensible Space

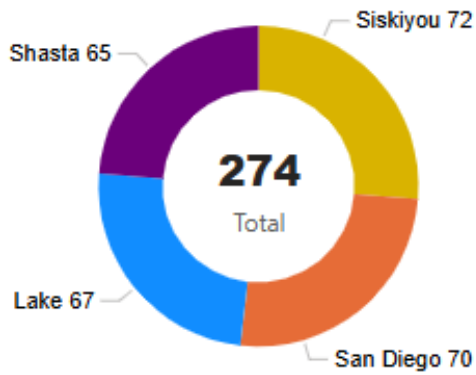
- 1) Statewide SRA total for fiscal year-to-date 2024-25:
 - i. 226,542 inspections completed, 91% of the 250,000 goal (inspection total not final)
 - ii. Qualified Entity Program training is ongoing with classes being coordinated in the following counties
 - o Tehama
 - o Glenn
 - o Santa Clara
 - iii. Qualified Entity assessment year-to-date total
 - o 925 assessments

3. Burn Permits
 - 1) Statewide SRA 2024-25 year-to-date total: 89,278
 - i. Cultural Burn Permit year-to-date: 2,521
 - 2) 2025-26 year-to-date total: 35,895
 - i. Cultural Burn Permits: 866
 - ii. Burn permit re-submission has gone smoothly and has had little to no interruption for applicants.
 4. Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program
 - 1) Currently reviewing PG&E, SDG&E, and BVES 2026-28 WMP submission.
 - 2) Training coming up this week for CAL FIRE DSIs in Natomas, and OEIS in Lone on May 22, 2025.
 - 3) Completed powerline inspection maps for 2025 in MMU, LNU, and AEU Units to inspect compliance with PRC 4292 and 4293.
- i. Wildfire Planning and Statistics – [Fuels Reduction | CAL FIRE](#)
1. Fuel Reduction Projects
 - a. 685 projects, 137% of the goal
 2. Combined Fuel Reduction
 - a. 92,999.4 acres treated, 93% of the goal
 - i. Unit Projects – 34,929.1 acres
 1. Northern Region: 24,508.1 acres
 2. Southern Region: 10,420 acres
 - b. Grant Projects: 53,791 acres
 - c. CFIP Projects: 4,279.4 acres
 3. Prescribed Fire (also counted in fuel reduction)
 - a. 25,501.1 acres treated, 51% of the goal
 6. Wildlands Fuels Reduction Reporting
 - a. CalMAPPER V4 testing is underway with training scheduled for statewide implementation of CalMAPPER v4 on July 1, 2025.
 - b. CalMAPPER Managers Committee continues to discuss opportunities to utilize the departments pre-existing data collection programs to assist with the new requirements to the Annual Legislative Report (PRC4137).
 7. Pre-Fire Planning
 - a. Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Reporting (FTER) – currently updating and developing the next iteration of reporting technology. In the testing phase of the utilization of ESRI Field Maps for evaluations of fuel treatments impacted during large fires.
 - b. Vibrant Plant Platform (VPP) – known as Land Tender, is working with AEU on integrating priority project areas into the 2025 AEU Fire Plan. The San Diego Unit (SDU) has initiated a similar process. The CWPM Fire Plan program is providing guidance.

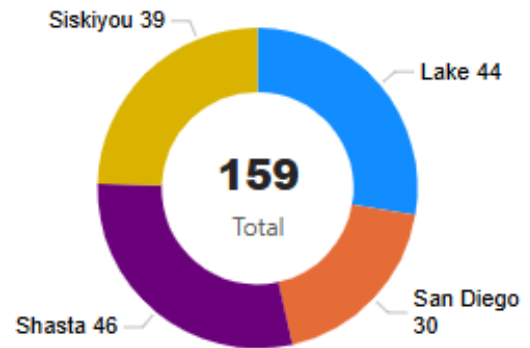
- c. Deadline for Unit Fire Plans submittal to CWPM Fire Plan program is June 13, 2025.
- 8. CalStats
 - a. The Statistics Program is hosting a series of webinars for Fire Departments across California about the transition to the National Emergency Responses Information System (NERIS). Two webinars have been completed with success.
 - b. The 2024 Redbook process is underway for validation and submission.
- ii. Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance
 - 1. Land Use Planning
 - 1) Safety elements for the cities of Los Angeles and Escondido and counties of Orange and San Luis Obispo were submitted for final review to the Board at the May RPC meeting.
 - 2) Fire Safety Surveys for the City of Palm Springs and Sacramento County were presented at the May RPC meeting.
 - 2. National Fire Protection Association Firewise USA
 - 1) Celebrated the 1000th community in California earlier this month – Table Mountain Rancheria in Fresno County.
 - i. First tribal nation to be recognized in California
 - 3. [CWMA Statewide Clearinghouse Data Center](#)
 - 1) Working on adding new information all the time!
 - 2) <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/Community-Wildfire-Preparedness-and-Mitigation/Clearinghouse-Data-Center>
 - 4. [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#)
 - 1) Working on details for open solicitation in coming weeks!
 - 2) FY2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants Award Notification on August 20, 2024
 - i. 94 awards totaling just over \$90 million
 - 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

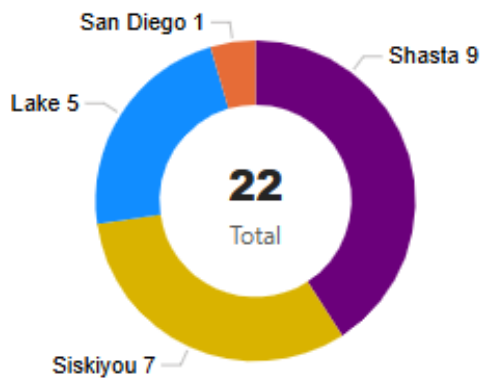
Active Applications



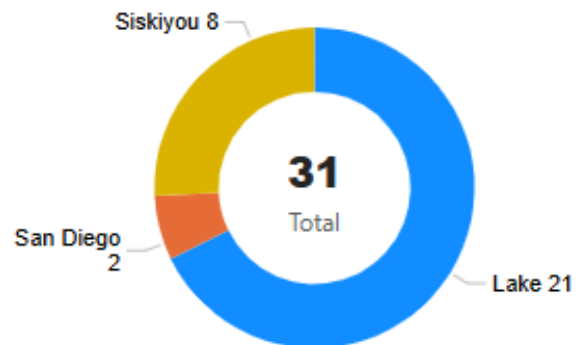
Assessments Completed

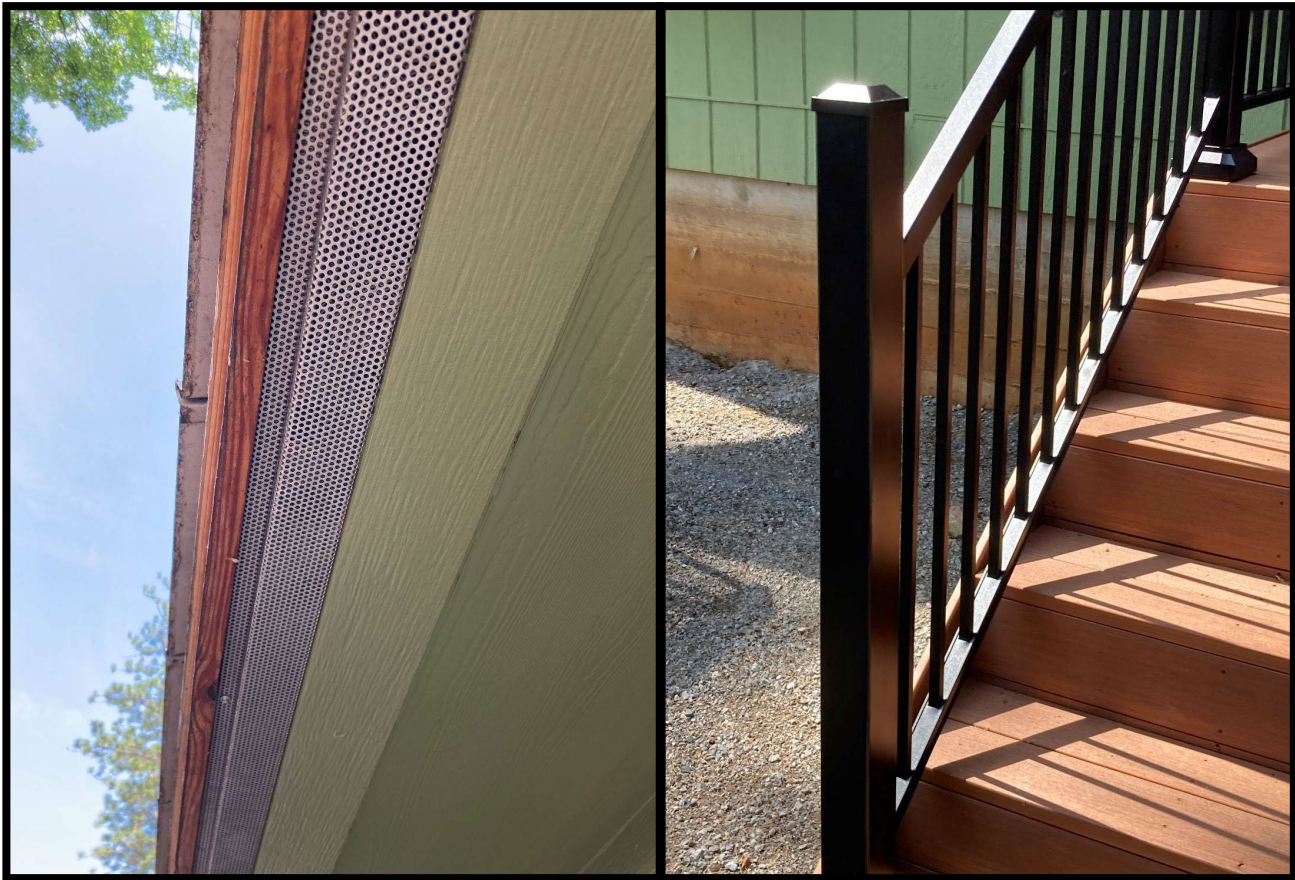


Homes in Progress



Homes Completed









3. NEW BUSINESS

A. DRAFT Charter – Neighborhood Wildfire Mitigation Validation Program Workshop

- i. Vision
 - 1. CAL FIRE led program, fill certification gap between NFPA Firewise USA and IBHS Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood.
- ii. Purpose
 - 1. Applicability specific to California
 - 2. Real impacts to local residents
 - 3. Scalable design that fits with proposed legislation
 - 4. Increased data acquisition and analysis
- iii. Authority
 - 1. Derived from WMAC
- iv. Membership
 - 1. Chair – CAL FIRE LUPP Deputy Chief
 - 2. Additional members TBD
- v. Responsibilities
 - 1. Collaborative development of program
 - 2. Meet at least monthly
 - 3. Regularly report back to WMAC

4. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Wildfire and Land Use Planning - The draft charter was distributed, and the floor was opened for discussion/comments. The goals for the day were to establish the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee and committee members. It was decided that WMAC members should email [Frank Bigelow](#) with names. Michael McGuire volunteered to help lead the effort in any way necessary. It's possible that other entities (not sitting on WMAC) may have an interest and that will be considered moving forward. Frank Bigelow to resend the charter to J. Lopez
- B. Committee member names and proposed Chair/Vice Chair will be brought to the next meeting for action

5. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Claims Fund – Len Nielson, CAL FIRE

6. ROUNDTABLE

Daniel Berlant

- A. Clay Kerchof, Department of Housing & Community Development – HCD's role is in long term disaster recovery, helping low to moderate income communities and residents recover after major disasters, including both wildfires and floods, or whenever there's a major disaster declaration. A lot of HCD's work over the past year has been focused on responding to major floods in 23-24. But since January, HCD has been very active supporting the housing and long-term recovery-built task forces pertaining to DR 4856, the Los Angeles wildfires and working with HCD's interdepartmental partners to provide technical guidance such as how to set up recovery programs and implementing some of the Governor's executive orders accelerating resilient recovery.
- B. Michael Maguire, State Planning & Research – The primary work in this space has been engaging with HCD, OES, FEMA, etc. on the community planning capacity building recovery support function, which is part of the California Disaster Recovery framework. There's a long-term recovery task force at the county level in Los Angeles County that's working on the recovery from the Eaton and Palisades fires. We have been working on a recovery needs assessment, recovery support strategy, which will be coming out soon and advising the county on their long-term recovery plan development efforts. They are proud of the work that's been done on the planning team with a variety of technical advisory series that have been completed such as the Evacuation Planning TA Guidelines that recently came out for public comment. They have the 4-Sector Market Development Grant Program under the Wildfire Task Force for creating sustainable wood products market. Created six new joint powers, authorities to operate as biomass brokers.
- C. Jacy Hyde, California Fire Safe Council – The County Coordinators Program officially relaunched for phase II. The awards are out and the county coordinators are moving forward on their project and coordination work. This is currently funded through late 2026. Working on some hopefully longer-term funding mechanisms and hoping to make that a more consistent and reliable source long term. Launched the Fire Safe Vendor List which is meant to be a resource for communities and homeowners to find vendors who will work in the wildfire space. There are several categories on the list ranging from services that organizations doing welfare work would need like environmental review project oriented to products and services contractors who are doing that work such as landscapers, etc. The first iteration includes 80 vendors. There is an open call for vendors now and there will be a midyear update this summer and will continue to update

the list annually with the hope that it'll be a regional list. Some vendors elected to participate in the [Virtual Expo](#) series. Over the course of 5 expo days that give people the opportunity to vet vendors, considered a pre-step for procurement. The next one is next week.

- D. Steve Hawks, IBHS – The new [Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood Standard](#) was released in March. Held a media event in March in Escondido as KB Homes launched their Dixon Trails community development and received the first provisional designation of the IBHS Wildfire Prepared Neighborhood Standard. They are just into phase II and will complete the development early next year. Once they finish, they will receive the full designation. Working with some additional large builders and piloting new additional program or communities through California and Oregon, existing communities and how they can from where they are to achieving Wildfire Prepared Neighborhoods. Two weeks ago, during Wildfire Preparedness Week partnered with CAL FIRE and had a wildfire demonstration burn in San Diego that showcased the importance of wildfire mitigation, Zone 0, the building materials that home are made of and why that's critically important as they continue to work on this problem.
- E. Christopher Ochoa, California Building Industry Association – gearing up for the [65th Annual Pacific Coast Builders Conference](#) in Anaheim from June 9-12 with a very strong wildfire theme. IBHS will partner with them again this year to do an IBHS burn demo which will be Tuesday, June 10 at the Anaheim Fire Training Center. Wednesday and Thursday will be an education program with the wildfire theme with an expo and displays. There will also be a Zone 0 display in the plaza in front of the convention center. Contact Chris Ochoa for complimentary passes for either the entire convention or just the burn down.
- F. Catherine Freeman, California State Association of Counties – finished their conferences and are working through the bills.
- G. Ken DaRosa, Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety – Continuing to do work on wildfire mitigation plans. The second round of WMP review is going to start next month with Liberty Pacific and the transmission owners. Earlier this year they conducted the sustainable vegetation management audits of utilities 2023. Received the audit responses and are expecting to publish the audits by the end of the month which is part of the 2023 Annual Compliance Reports. Heading to Lone sometime in June to watch the CAL FIRE training on electrical equipment.
- H. Sean McGlynn, League of California Cities – Not part of the staff of the Leagues of California Cities, just a representative for them. The organization represents 476 of the 482 cities and is driven on local control.
- I. J. Lopez, California Board of Forestry & Fire Protection – Assembly Bill 441, which makes the California Wildfire Mitigation Program Authority permanent. This allows them to get state funds to leverage federal funds for community wide level wildfire mitigation home hardening and defensible space. Started working on the pilot program with IBHS to have a wildfire prepared home designation on the homes they are working on if they qualify. IBHS is helping to get those designation for free for the property owner and will be up to the owner to maintain it in the future. This will guarantee that the property owner will stay invested. Related to the Board of Forestry, the main issue is Zone 0. They have conducted three workshops and are working on the language of the rule. The goal is to get the rule finalized by June so they can fulfill the Governor's order to have it completed by the end of the year and started for new construction the following year. And due to SB 504, existing structures will be three years later.

- J. Steve Robinson, CAL FIRE – Last 3-4 weeks they have been conducting crew readiness drills across the state to get all the hand crews ready and typed out for the summer. Intel aircraft all came online and now available 7 days a week as of May 1, 2025. This week conducting annual training with the Military Dept. to get them up to speed and make sure everyone is working the same. This week also finishing up the transition of the last two helo bases. Neland and Beaver will be transitioning to the CAL FIRE Hawk and will no longer have the hueys out in the field. They will now be at McClellan for burn operations.
- K. Lisa Lien-Mager, California Natural Resources Agency – Working on implementing the Governor’s emergency proclamation from March 1, 2025, which set several things in motion but first and foremost is the goal to fast-track dual production projects around the state. Moving quickly to establish a process for people to submit requests for this fast tracking which allows the Secretary for CalEPA and CNRA to suspend certain statutes and regulations on these projects. CAL FIRE has helped in building the infrastructure for the requests to be submitted online and have been figuring out how to review and move these through the process. Have committed to processing the requests within 30 days. So far there are 11 projects through the pipeline that have been approved and are underway. Will be tracking to see when the projects are completed.
- L. Sophia Lemmo, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts – Supports the state’s 95 resource conservation districts and all the work they do. November 18-20 will be their Annual Conference and the call for proposals is open and are due by June 15.
- M. Yana Valachovic, California Fire Science Consortium – The Consortium is a network of scientists and managers that attempt to try and accelerate understanding of science related to fire and other forest and landscape management issues. They are divided into five regions, geographically split with Sierra Nevada Central and Southern California, Northern California, Mojave and the Sonoran Desert. There’s a module specifically focused on the WUI. There is a survey out now trying to get more feedback around issues, research topics and other activities that could be helpful for constituents as they think about science accessibility and applicability. There is an event coming up to help people learn how to use Behave 7 on May 22, 2025, at 10am, specifically focused on those who are trying to do prescribed fire planning and gain more skills and experience using Behave 7.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Berlant

- A. There was no public comment.

8. UPCOMING MEETING DATES FOR 2025

Daniel Berlant

- A. June 17, 2025
715 P Street, 2nd Floor, 2-221 (A/B)
Sacramento, CA 95814

8. MEETING ADJOURNED 3:05 PM

Daniel Berlant