

From: BarbC <barbc624@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 14, 2017 7:47 PM
To: CALFIRE Forest Climate Advisory Team
Subject: Forrest Carbon Plan Comments

As a Californian resident and user of our forests I have been following the Forest Carbon Plan and reading up on what needs to be done to make sure the plan actually and effectively deals with Climate change.

In 2006 California enacted Assembly Bill 32 - the California Global Warming Solutions Act which requires California to reduce greenhouse gas emission to 1990 levels by 2020. It has long been recognized that California forests will play a very important role in achieving AB 32 goals.

As proposed the plan takes one approach which is an increase in logging which will not be effective in reaching those goals. We are in a climate crisis and it cannot be business as usual any longer. Logging interests need to work with responsible forest management in order to preserve and protect our forests. Wholesale clearcutting and logging in the name of profit must be scaled back to make use of more responsible and sustainable logging practices which will contribute towards reaching AB 32 goals.

The following information addresses the issues and how the plan needs to be improved to meet those goals.

To effectively deal with climate change California forests must be managed now to protect its greatest carbon sequestration assets: larger mature trees and vegetation variety. The plan must ensure that forest harvesting and thinning combined do not turn our forests into a carbon source. Concrete carbon sequestration targets are missing from the plan as is a clear delineation of goals and timeline.

Although the plan lays out specific targets for thinning it sets no targets for controlled burns. Controlled burns are essential for fuels reduction and forest health. **Targets for controlled burns and allowing some involuntary fires to burn should be added to the plan.**

In order to manage forests so that they are resilient enough to survive climate change, periodic drought, and insects, as well as sequester as much carbon as possible the plan must require these changes to the way forests are managed.

1. Significantly reduce clearcutting and replace it with selective logging. Clearcutting creates the forest conditions that the plan now seeks to correct with thinning. A clearcut site is a net emitter of carbon dioxide for 20 - 30 years even if a plantation is installed. In addition plantations with their dense young trees of the same age and species increase fire risk. The clearcut operation reduces the ability of the soil to retain water, carbon, and nutrients and also creates a disposal problem. Disposal is less of a problem with selective logging because the amount of material to remove is less in relation to the size of the area logged so leaves and small branches can be chopped up and left to rebuild the soil.

2. Prioritize and safeguard large trees. Large trees sequester more carbon faster than smaller trees. The plan acknowledges that a 300+ year old sugar pine contains more carbon than one hundred 30 year old white firs, but sets no targets or incentives to encourage forest managers to allow trees to grow longer before harvesting them. Additionally large trees are more fire resistant than smaller trees.

3. Prioritize and increase forest diversity as it is well established that more diversity leads to greater resilience. A diverse forest has many types and ages of trees as well as other vegetation.

4. Value carbon in dead trees. The plan assumes that dead trees release carbon immediately and they are a huge fire and safety hazard. However dead trees retain carbon for as many as 100 years and are good wildlife habitat as well as replenishing the soil. Once the needles have fallen off a dead tree they are not especially fire prone. the exception is that if they are located near a structure or highway they can be a hazard.

As responsible citizens it is up to us to preserve our forests for future generations and to work to reduce the effects of climate change so that our children and grandchildren have a livable world.

Regards;

Barbara Cohn
760-637-4263