

Policy Subcommittee Chair's Report to Forest Carbon Action Team

June 15, 2015

The Policy Subcommittee met on May 29 with 13 participants. Below is a summary of the meeting agenda, the discussion, and one item for FCAT action.

1. Discussion of Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund investment on forestlands

A. CALFIRE plans for FY 2015-16 (Shintaku/Eng)

CALFIRE described the “forest health” construct that they will use for their GGRF program in the next fiscal year. CALFIRE also has requested trailer bill language to provide them with more flexibility in entering into grants or other agreements with the funds. They plan to use an approach that targets areas of high opportunity for treatments to increase carbon sequestration and/or reduce GHG emissions. CALFIRE may take a more direct role in calculating the GHG benefits of projects, thus reducing the burden on applicants.

B. Update on GGRF Triennial Investment Plan update process (Chang and Conrad-Saydah)

ARB is working on a concept document for public release in advance of a series of public workshops to be held late June to early July. The Investment Plan eventually gets linked to the budgets for FYs 2016-17 through 2018-19. Effort should be made to ensure that the new Investment Plan, Scoping Plan Update, and Forest Carbon Plan are linked for setting goals, targeting priority areas, and identifying actions.

C. General discussion of future investment opportunities (all)

a. Federal lands

Discussed potential to use GGRF for GHG-beneficial projects on federal lands on a cost-share basis, helping to leverage federal action and funds. Region 5 Forest Service and USDA Undersecretary Robert Bonnie have reacted favorably to this kind of approach.

b. Forest biomass/biomass energy

c. Mechanism for addressing rural community needs, e.g., potential set-aside program.

d. FCAT role in contributing to Investment Plan update

ARB indicated that FCAT input on the Investment Plan would be welcome.

Action item for FCAT approval: Policy Subcommittee to develop recommendations for new GGRF Investment Plan and bring them to FCAT for approval at their August meeting.

2. ARB White Paper and Process on Short-Lived Carbon Pollutants–Black Carbon (Jahns)

In response to requirements of SB 605 (Lara), ARB recently issued a concept paper on the [Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy](#). Two pollutant types are most relevant for forests: methane (as a product of wood decomposition) and black carbon (as a product of the combustion of wood). The concept paper looks to the forthcoming Forest Carbon Plan as the primary strategy for addressing black carbon from forests. CALFIRE and the Natural Resources Agency have been in discussions with ARB and CalEPA about the development of the strategy. ARB expects to release a draft Strategy for public review this summer and will hold public workshops. Action by the Air Resources Board to approve the strategy is anticipated in spring 2016. The Policy Subcommittee will stay engaged to make sure that there is good communication between the ARB team working on short-lived climate pollutants and the developers of the Forest Carbon Plan.

3. Update on work planning for Forest Carbon Plan and coordination of work across subcommittees (Henly)

CALFIRE has been working to prepare a Work Plan and an Analysis Guide for the development of the Forest Carbon Plan. The discussion served as an early warning to the subcommittee that it will receive writing assignments as a part of this process.

4. Update on Resource Economics Study (Henly)

The Natural Resources Agency is entering into an interagency agreement with the University of California, Berkeley, for the development of the Resource Economics Study. CALFIRE's Chris Keithley will be the lead for the state and Matthew Potts, Professor of Forest Management, will be the Principle Investigator. The agreement should be fully executed by June 31. Dean Keith Gilless was very helpful in making the connections on campus that led to the Principle Investigator and research team.

Respectfully submitted,

Russ Henly, Chair
FCAT Policy Subcommittee