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## Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update May 2018

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- A Forest Management Task Force (FMTF) is being developed based on the model of the Tree Mortality Task Force. The FMTF will be guided by the [Governor's Executive Order of May 10, 2018](#), the [Forest Carbon Plan](#) and the [Strategic Fire Plan](#). It will be led and convened by the Governor's Office, the Natural Resources Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The FMTF will also seek the active engagement of representatives from relevant state, federal and local agencies and Native American tribes, as well as forestry scientists and researchers, relevant industries and other non-governmental stakeholders. The first meeting of the FMTF will be on Monday June 11, 2018 in the Governor's Office Council Room.

The work established under the Tree Mortality Task Force will continue under the new Forest Management Task Force. A working group under the new FMTF will be specifically dedicated to tree mortality issues, and all Tree Mortality Task Force members are invited to participate in the new FMTF.

- The table below depicts the number of trees removed through May 31, 2018.

| <b><u>Area/Unit/County/Agency</u></b> | <b><u>Date</u></b> | <b><u>Trees Removed</u></b> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| USFS                                  | May-18             | 570,825                     |
| CAL FIRE                              | May-18             | 44,398                      |
| Caltrans                              | May-18             | 111,233                     |
| Priority Counties                     | May-18             | 35,388                      |
| PG&E                                  | May-18             | 407,054                     |
| SCE                                   | Mar-18             | 106,765                     |
| <b>Total</b>                          |                    | <b>1,275,663</b>            |

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS and WORKSHOPS**

- The next meeting of the Forest Management Task Force (FMTF) will be held from 1 to 3 p.m. on Monday, June 11. To register for the webinar visit: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/140200217647235587>.
- A regional public meeting on the California Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan will be held Friday, June 8 in Auburn, CA. Hosted by Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Natural Resources Agency, California Air Resources Board, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and California Environmental Protection Agency, the regional meetings will help these agencies gain feedback on conservation priorities and the draft acreage targets for conservation, management, and restoration practices to be included in the



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final Natural and Working Lands Climate Change Implementation Plan. To reserve a seat at the meeting, RSVP [here](#).

- On June 8 and 9, USFS, CAL FIRE, and Sierra Pacific Industries, in conjunction with the UC Cooperative Extension, are sponsoring a [hazardous fuels treatment demonstration](#) focused on conventional and innovative technologies capable of operating on steep terrain (30% plus slope). The demo will be held on Sierra Pacific Industries managed lands near Ice House, California. The target audience includes fire agencies, natural resource managers, electric utilities, water conservation districts, homeowner associations, fire safe councils, county and city planning departments, fuels treatment contractors, and other stakeholders.

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Forest Health and Resilience**

**(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)**

- The FHRWG is finalizing its third white paper titled, “Synthesis of Relevant Studies Exploring the Long-Term Outlook for Sierra Nevada Forests following the Current Bark Beetle Epidemic.” Kelly Larvie and Tadashi Moody modeled those areas in the Sierra National Forest that are most likely to experience type conversions from mixed-conifer forest to shrub lands. They will expand this model to the 10 high hazard counties for inclusion into the final draft, which is expected to be released by the June 11 TMTF meeting.
- The Mapping and Monitoring Work Group has updated the “Facts and Figures” document that provides current estimates of mortality and high hazard zones. The document is being reviewed by CAL FIRE leadership and should be available on the TMTF website within the month.
- The reforestation strategy has been revised and submitted for review to TMTF leadership. It includes the production of a Forest Restoration Guidebook directed at Sierra Nevada forestland owners interested in implementing reforestation and management projects. Included in this proposal is 40 to 50-page user-friendly handbook, a tri-fold summary of the guidebook, and a 2-page summary for basic forest inventory/assessment methods.
- The Seed Zone Map Update Group met in Davis on May 29. Dr. Sarah Bisbing, Univ. of Nevada, reviewed her recently funded project with CAL FIRE, and Drs. Jessica Wright and Jim Thorne discussed their project to create provisional climate-based seed transfer guidelines. There was also a discussion on the coming cone season and efforts to coordinate data collection and storage between the USFS and CAL FIRE seed banks.
- The Sierra Nevada Forest Science Coordination Group (SNSCG) continues to identify ongoing research and focused monitoring projects related to tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada. The web-based survey tool allows researchers to delineate a polygon(s) around their research/monitoring project area. Currently 25 researchers have input data on 110 polygons. When the SNFSCG determines that sufficient data have been received, the subcommittee will work to identify additional research needs/gaps, and determine how to best summarize the data to benefit current field research.



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## **Regulations**

**(Matthew Reischman/ Jamie Sammut)**

- The RWG continues to work with Caltrans and USFS regarding permitting of hazard tree removal projects along roads and highways. Caltrans has requested clarification and standardization in permit acquisition.
- The RWG discussed options involved with facilitating biomass removal to support biomass facilities. The RWG will consult the Bioenergy Working Group on the issues.

## **Utilization – Bioenergy**

**(Angie Lottes)**

- On May 18, the CPUC, PG&E and other Bioenergy Working Group members interviewed two potential candidates for the High Hazard Zone (HHZ) Fuel Availability Study. The study is meant to reveal HHZ material disposal options and fuel availability as it pertains BioRAM to facilities. Further information requested from the consultants is due on June 1 and contractor selection will occur shortly following review.

## **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson/Bob Kingman)**

- The Utilization and Market Development workgroup reviewed a proposal to suspend regular meetings because of duplicate efforts involving many of the same workgroup participants. The proposal recommends a transitional role for several members of the workgroup to support the ongoing work of the SB859 workgroups and efforts resulting from the Governor's references in his State of the State address, and recent Executive Order. A "lessons learned" document is being prepared to provide helpful information for future related efforts.

## **Partner Updates**

- The Sierra Nevada Conservancy distributes a monthly "Funding Research Memo" that includes grant opportunities for fuel reduction, parks and trails, habitat preservation, environmental education, and other program areas. The [SNC funding opportunities webpage](#) includes a sign-up for this monthly newsletter, as well as information on grant writing workshops and grant research memos.
- PG&E opened a Wildfire Safety Operations Center in preparation for the 2018 wildfire season. The center will be staffed 24/7 and will monitor potential fire threats across PG&E's service area. The Wildfire Safety Operations Center is part of PG&E's Community Wildfire Safety Program launched this March.
- On May 16, the USFS announced the award of almost \$8 million in Wood Innovation Grants to expand and accelerate wood products and wood energy markets. The grants will help stimulate the removal of hazardous fuels from national forests and other forest lands to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, promote forest health, and reduce the cost of forest management.



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The investment of federal funds will leverage over \$13 million in matching funds from 33 business, university, nonprofit, and tribal partners in 20 states for a total investment of over \$21 million. Grants awarded for projects in California are:

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| Biomass Heating Projects at Minimum Security Conservation Camps in California    | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection |
| Feller-Buncher Equipment Lease to Facilitate Removal of High Wildfire Risk Fuels | H.L. Power Company, LP                                |
| Building California's Biochar Market to Foster and Grow Bioenergy                | Phoenix Energy  |
| Rio Bravo Rocklin Biomass Power Plant, High Fire Hazard Fuel Handling Project    | Rio Bravo Rocklin                                     |