



Tree Mortality Task Force

Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes July 11, 2016

1. Opening Comments

- a. Chairpersons (Wade Crowfoot/Ken Pimlott/Charles Rabamad)

Wade: Tree mortality is getting worse before it gets better. This is the last meeting before fire season, so there is a need to focus more on issue at hand.

Ken: National attention, but also a political challenge. Lot of discussion going on relating to federal declaration, so it will be a challenge to deal with the start of the concurrent fire season.

Jill (State Parks) Fly over affected areas with FEMA completed to show the exigent threat. Working with FEMA to come up with solutions for government funding. Seeking avenues to procure government funding either through a PDD or through other means, such as the USFS. Seeking different avenues to acquire Federal funding and resources.

- b. Gabe: Weekly updates have now been changed to a monthly update status.

2. Fire Response Update

a. Safety Communication (Ken Pimlott) Recognizing that we are deep in fire season within a tree mortality hazard area requires certain protocols for safe operation.

- b. Tree Mortality Fire Response Framework (Ken Pimlott/Thom Porter)

Many people respond, at it imperative to know how to interact safety with the present environment. Mitigation efforts right now, but we must also engage a planning effort to deal with emergency plans – real time focus. Synthesize agency response in case of emergencies with the additional threat of tree mortality. Bring in the counties to help with preparing plans and framework.

Tree mortality briefing packet: map of high hazard areas developed to standardize safety responses for all relevant agencies. Involves a QR code. Getting information out quickly to any potential first responder.

Thom: Emphasis on getting the tools out there as quickly as possible to have the best possible outcome.

Ken: CAL FIRE reaching out into 10 counties areas and mixing with the local authorities. “Bookshelf” idea?

Question? For PG&E’s contractors, can they use these maps? Answer: Yes, it is a public document. Constrained by the number that they can print.

Question: What is the timeline on this map document? A – The original digital document is now available. I want hard copies in all fire engines in the next week.



United States Forest Service Update (Chris Fischer)

We covered a very large area of the state. Overlooked the results: which are rounded. Estimated numbers, which are just from this survey. Minimized any overlap from the previous surveys.

Wade: So this is a map of the new dead trees, or the combined aggregate?

Chris: The corresponding map shows both, the existing and the expanding mortality. This flight has focused primarily on the most affected areas, as shown by the flight lines - and does not contain all of the mortality for the state.

Question: Is there an aggregate total? Yes – 6 million, or 7 statewide. 27 across areas where we flew, but 66 million in the state total to some estimates.

Question: Are there pockets of mortality that we have not targeted? A – No, we have targeted most if not all areas where we were informed of mortality.

Q: Some counties such as Placer and El Dorado do not reflect the true tree mortality, why? A – The paper map is not as descriptive. Zooming in digitally, it can be seen better. It is also NOT a cumulative map, just for the week it was flown.

Q: What's the tempo for the next flyover? A – We are working on a calendar right now... must be soon because of fire season, so planning for the next 2-4 weeks.

Q: Where oaks detected in the tree mortality? They were, but they drop their leaves quicker and are harder to detect through remote sensing. They were not included in the map, but there is a disclaimer in the fine print stating 1.6 million dead oaks exist. There is a push to detect all species of the trees, not just pines.

Q: Number of acres ready for shovel-ready clearing projects? A – 125,000 acres. These are dispersed throughout the affected county areas. 38,000 acres of NEAPA ready projects with acute life safety risk (only in the 6 counties).

Q: Is there a price tag associated with these potential projects? A – Averages at least \$1,000 an acre. About \$40 million cost for expanded region. But there is a push to make do with whatever funding exists now or would be available in the future.

(A woman's voice) There is lots of politics involved with this fire funding issue, but we got off to a rapid start. Over 10 incident management teams employed to all over the state. We are concerned about responder and citizen safety, so that is a focus.

Q: Is there a focus on any areas in the North of the State, such as Lassen? A – Yes, definitely.

Q: Is the \$37.5 million available being spent and utilized already? A – Yes, \$30 million already devoted for specific use, and the \$7.5 million already being target for immediate use. [43:10] Just for reference, USFS spent \$500 million fighting fires in California alone last year. With that being said, politics and funding are still a major issue. We should keep working together from the local level, such as the board of supervisors to the federal level to address. We have the largest delegation in congress. Funding for an acute life safety risk should not be held up in congress. 1. California is working hard at helping Secretary Vilsack pass fire funding reform,, and 2, the funding for doing so should be available now, rather than later.

Caltrans Update:



Question (Man): Caltrans spent 48 million, or more in the 6 county area. Is this duplicating in the cost? A – Referred to the color of money spreadsheet. State roads that cut through USFS lands present a right of way issue, and hence make it a national parks issue.

Wade: What progress has Caltrans made so far? We are addressing all major corridors within the 6 county area, and estimating a cost of around \$45-46 million, working on right of way concerns. Contracts are slow to get moving, due to many of the trees being off of the 'right of way'. 1500 trees down so far out of all possible. Less than 10% so far.

Questions from Counties to Caltrans: Timeline for beginning work in each county? Fresno, Tuolumne started, Mariposa beginning on August 1st, and others counties all have something planned.

Biomass Update:

Wade: Can you give me an update for the biomass side of things, specifically the tree felling process on peoples' properties if they are willing to have that done? Biomass dude: Have electronic RAVS? Ready to disseminate, the final version. Big update, PNJ?, disposal firm now involved. Worked for large incidents such as Katrina, etc. Looking at July 18 as the starting date for operating sorting sites. By August, hope to have a site in each county operational. A push to begin a tree clearing process within each county exists, including a planned webinar for more ideas and focus. Developing a program which would use "temporary sorting facilities" where people can sort, categorize, and sell trees.

Question: From Wade – For those landowners who missed out on getting their trees removed the first time, is there going to be another chance for them? A – Yes, there will along with more outreach on the local level.

Question (Lady) : How far back can cut down trees be backdated, or accepted? A (Biomass Dude) – According to a forester, if it was within 1 year.

Question(Man): Can PG&E cut down trees on private property starting on the 18th, and will there be a charge for the landowner regarding the tree's removal? A – Yes, they can be cut down, but no, there will be no cost to the land owner - PG&E will utilize their contractors at their own cost to remove the trees.

3. County Specific Topics of Concern (?)

a. Federal Declaration Update (Cal OES)

Wade: Last meeting we were talking about aggregating the amount of funds spent, trying to get over the \$63? \$53? million threshold to make the case for funding for the crisis. Are we still marching down that route to make our case?

A (Lady) – Our plan of action is to relay to the Federal government that our efforts are beyond current capabilities. What we have to do is show all of the effort we have put in, and say "now we need your help". Therefore, the more money we spend, the better our case is. Collectively demonstrate what we are spending, and planning to spend makes us look more viable to receive



funding. Additionally, we are working with the FEMA administrator to receive feedback on how best to structure our funding to be successful.

Wade Question: Are we still on track to complete the request with input from all levels of involvement, including navigating the fine line between FEMA funding and the USFS? A – We will be all coordinated to avoid these pitfalls, and so it will take time to prepare a number to present. Keep in mind that FEMA has never before given money for such situations.

Wade: Let's set a goal to get this done in the next month and a half, and hopefully sooner. If it doesn't detract from our partnership with Dept. of Agriculture, we should do it. Another huge issue is that the Stafford Act, the federal funding legislation totally excludes fire. Fire has its own different structure, so we have to work under this limitation.

4. County reports on additional items for TMTF to address

Wade: Any points of progress or concern to report? Wade: Any issues within the counties dealing with the CDA (California Disaster Acts) packets when finding a match? Anything process-wise?

County: (Man): We are trying to keep the momentum going. Issue with the biomass plant, which is currently non-operational. Also looking ahead to grants to utilize in the community.

Mariposa County: Has created a full-time coordinator to address this crisis, as it is taxing on resources. Another issue is the debate on whether or not to extend the easement from 100 to 200 ft. Perhaps reach out and consult with PG&E representatives. Also, a list of issues in regarding to tree removal on private property.

Kern County: Has begun a project in Deer Creek in conjunction with USFS to remove trees. Marked potential trees 15 ft of the side of road as well as resolving a monument issue. Target local and CDAA funds.

Calaveras County: Unique problem, private owners have taken down trees, but have no means of getting the trees to designated sorting areas due to lack of transportation funds. PG&E has been helpful though. Question is that can there be a staging area at the local area for the landowners to use, instead of the single designated areas in the county, as some counties are quite large and are stretched for resources. Multiple stockpiles available?

Answer: Resource Allocation group is working on it. List of potential sites for storage exists, but has been still held confidential pending approval of private landowners. If need be, helping county with legal and regulatory problems.

Some other County (Man): Huge real estate losses due to tree mortality, so another effect.

Another County (Lady): Tree mortality problem is getting progressively worse. Noticeable color changes reported by constituents. Additional issue is working on getting a contract between the



county and CAL FIRE in regards to hired equipment, which needs to be done soon to address mortality.

Placer County: Constituent concerns regarding the role of insurance with tree mortality. Veriplan? is more expensive, and this is harming the local real estate market. Is there a way to address this? Any way to leverage our efforts here to minimize insurance risk? A – We will work with Department of Insurance to address these concerns. Working on regulations with their help. If there is a specific problem or concern, we urge people to contact Department of Insurance and file a complaint.

Amador County: Private meeting will be held with insurance companies in regards to this issue. We'll let you know how it comes out.

Private Property Sub-Working Group: (of Resource Allocation)

Gabe: Made up of local entities that focuses on the best possible ways for private landowners to treat the tree mortality problem on their lands and remove trees. Utilizes the same structure that SRA or CDAA uses. Trying to look for funding sources to accomplish this. Entities involved: CAL FIRE, PG&E, USFS. Exploring options available.

5. Working Group Highlights (as time permits)

- a. Resource Allocation (Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)
Will be providing the update on private landowner funding for removal in regards to the sub-working group. Requesting all participants in the task force to provide number for the resource allocation, so that the group can get off the ground. Idea is to put in one place all the funding and resources as to bring all tools to the table to be more effective. Governor's budget allocated money for grants related to mortality. Figuring out how best to use this funding and to stretch it the best way possible. Update on equipment: agreements should be done by the end of the month for more, but 41 pieces of equipment have been received and in designated counties that need to be picked up by responsible entities. As for other items, we are slow on sawmilling operation, as they require intensive training.
- b. Mapping and Monitoring (Mark Rosenberg/Chris Fischer)
 - a. Project Mapper Update: Rolling out the tool with the help of two teams, one in the North and one in the South. Will attend TMTF meetings throughout state and show how to use tool.
Question: What is the benefit of the tool to the county? A – Allows to identify location of the project, relates how it may be used, ex: Utilization, and coordinates counties with partners who are also doing the same projects. A good way to validate our work. Also, reaching out to each county in attempts to have a representative on the Mapping and Monitoring Workgroup.
- c. Utilization – Bioenergy (Kim Carr/Angie Lottes)
Price agreements with biomass facilities are expiring this year. 190 megawatts online from 7 facilities that have expiring pricing agreements over the next few months and 2 facilities have been extended. CPUC's requirement that the 3 IOUs purchase a minimum amount of



biomass energy and solicitations have been moving from the IOUs. Bids are due from the IOUs to the facilities by July 28th. CPUC is still going to take until Oct or Nov until process is approved. There are issues however that may delay contracting until a further date. Trailer bill language being put together to address them. ALJ? Deeper dive into this issue in the coming days with key representatives in the working group.

d. Regulations (Matthew Reischman/Sandy Goldberg)

2 things. 1. Following a meeting with US EPA on behalf of air districts, there may be a potential federal exemption for the use of air curtain burners. Putting together a draft letter to governor to consider sending a request up the chain to US EPA. 2. Dealing with private entry issues, and where liability lies with tree falls.

e. Public Outreach (Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)

Added respondent briefs to the Task Force website. All 6 of the units and for all 10 counties.

f. Utilization – Market Development (Evan Johnson/Kim Carr)

Lots of demand from people to sell their energy conversion technology to the state. Both viable and unviable options. Perhaps look into evaluating whether or not some of these options are worthwhile. Additionally, we will start using a consultant to see where we can start up projects more quickly, as well as integrate this process with the counties. Question: do you want counties to contact you directly? No, not yet. Later in September.

g. Forest Health and Resilience (Chris Keithley/Tom Smith)

Will be holding a meeting shortly with a focus on reforestation efforts that will deal with the consequences of tree mortality.

6. Closing Comments

Wade: Different person sitting here next month. Stepping down due to other prescient issues, Cliff or my replacement will be carrying on in the same capacity.