



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tree Mortality Task Force

Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes June 13, 2016

1. Opening Comments

- a. Chairpersons (Wade Crowfoot/Ken Pimlott/Charles Rabamad)
Opening comments made by Wade Crowfoot and Director Pimlott.
- b. Deputy Task Force Leader (Chris Anthony)
 - i. Welcomed Madera County Supervisor Tom Wheeler to the meeting and recognized the efforts of his chief of staff, Brittany Dyer.

a. Leisure Pines Pilot Project (Tracie Riggs, Mike Albrecht, Corey Peters)

This pilot project was conducted in Tuolumne County with the County, CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and PG&E. Each entity completed a certain component of the work needed. The pilot project has so far been successful, and there will be another tour on Friday, June 17th. KCRA 3 is also compiling a report on the project.

- How much did it cost the County and where did the funding come from? \$186,000, but 75% will get reimbursed by CDAA.
- Are you tracking how much material is coming in? The material is being weighed as it is sent out of the lumber yard.
- Wade: Have you coordinated with CalTrans? We will probably coordinate on some tree removal, but not necessarily with this project. This project does not address trees on private property because they don't qualify for CDAA reimbursement. The trees must either be along roadways or threatening infrastructure.
- Wade: How did you prioritize this community? This was the origin point of tree mortality in the area, it's very well-known in the County, and the extent of the mortality was significant.
- The County has also implemented a Tree Mortality Assistance Program that has been beneficial to educating private landowners and reducing workload for County staff.

b. Presidential Disaster Declaration Update (Wade Crowfoot)

A presidential disaster declaration has never been granted for tree mortality, but we're trying.



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Charles Rabamad: CalOES is working on the draft. We are waiting for costs, but we don't think it's the right time to submit the application for the declaration. It's a very complicated issue, and we want to make sure we have a strong argument.

Wade: You've given a tour to FEMA?

Charles: No, I don't think we have yet. We're waiting until after July 1st. \$53 million is the State threshold. The County threshold is \$1.30 multiplied by the population of the County. We do believe our costs exceed the threshold.

Chris Anthony: We are also looking to update the mortality numbers from the USFS aerial detection survey that was recently completed, as the data we are currently using is from data collected in October of 2015.

c. Governor's Budget Update (Ken Pimlott)

The budget has made it through conference committee. CalOES is slated to receive an additional \$30 million for CDAA, and CAL FIRE is slated to receive \$11 million, half directly funding CAL FIRE for tree mortality efforts, and the other half will be for grants to entities. Also \$10 million is slated for SRA grants, with \$5 million to go to high hazard priority counties. CAL FIRE will administer a grant program to distribute the \$5 million.

We need to be careful about funding distribution, because we may be taxing existing resources. Maybe the Resource Allocation Group can work on how to best distribute the funding without exhausting personnel and equipment resources.

d. Congressman Costa Workshop Update (Ken Pimlott)

Congressman Costa hosted a workshop in Clovis on June 2 regarding tree mortality. Many entities were able to participate, and Congressman Costa plans to take the information back to Congress.

Wade Crowfoot: We've had conversations with US Senators regarding this issue as well. Governor Brown has spoken to Secretary Vilsack, head of USDA. We are increasing our advocacy in order to increase funding and support for USFS.

Staci Heaton traveled to Washington last week and spoke to many congressmen about tree mortality. Congressman Costa also wants to have a hearing on this topic.

e. CAL FIRE Incident Management Team (Ken Pimlott)

CAL FIRE deployed one of our Incident Management Teams to Fresno in order to compile existing work and information into a set of documents for firefighters and counties when there are fires in affected counties.



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

f. PG&E Update

- a. Debris Removal Program Update (Eric Back): We have felled more trees in the last five months than we have in the last two years. We have felled over 60,000 trees, and are expecting an additional 160,000. CAL FIRE grants may be helpful if we can apply them to homeowners in conjunction with PG&E work.

Wade: Confirming that PG&E will remove logs from a homeowner's property if the homeowner completes a form requesting it?

PG&E- This process is retroactive – if PG&E has felled the tree, they will come back to remove the logs. We are developing a brochure to help educate homeowners about this process.

Whitney: Can you please provide the brochure electronically to either myself or the public outreach group in order to help educate homeowners? What is the timeline for the brochure?

PG&E- We can finish it next week and send it to Whitney Bray for distribution in the counties.

- a. Tier 4 Compliance Considerations

PG&E would like to work with CARB and the Regulations Working Group on developing an exemption that would allow PG&E to bring in out of state resources to assist with hazardous tree removal. This work is on-going.

b. CalTrans Update

CalTrans is currently working on 9 projects consisting of approximately 12,000 trees. Costs are about \$31 million in contracts, \$41 million total.

Wade: Are the local counties involved with these 9 projects?

Caltrans: Yes, we are sharing information with the counties.

c. United States Forest Service Update

We are currently in fire season. We staffed early this year, and have a lot of resources available for fire suppression. We are using some crews to fell trees, and have felled 77,000 trees in the six affected counties. Over 27 million board feet has been felled, but we are struggling with utilization. We requested assistance from our national office to help deal with the utilization issue. We would like the bioenergy plants and sawmills to stay in business, and this was part of our pitch in DC last week. We are working with counties to prioritize areas and roads essential



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

for ingress and egress, plus placing priority on recreational sites. Not all recreational sites are open, but we have made great strides to remove hazard trees from campgrounds. We are also working on obtaining emergency permits/exemptions to remove hazard trees in the national forests.

Julia Levin: You should consider the Federal Investment Tax Credit.

d. Transitional County Status (Ken Pimlott)

We would like to bring on the four additional counties as priority counties (Calaveras, Amador, El Dorado, and Placer). Luckily the progression hasn't been as fast as originally anticipated in the North. We need to work with the Resource Allocation Group on allocating resources later in the summer and the fall in order to assist all ten counties.

e. Working Group Highlights (as time permits)

a. Mapping and Monitoring (Mark Rosenberg/Chris Fischer)

- a. Project Mapper Update: We recommend designating a GIS specialist in each county to receive training from CAL FIRE about how to use the project mapper.
- b. Aerial Detection Survey Status: We conducted the aerial survey last week. The data is not available yet, but the numbers should be available later this week.
Ken: It's important that we are all using the same number regarding the number of dead trees in the State.

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

We are looking at the Salton Sea as a possibility. There is a chance that wood chunks may help with dust abatement and erosion. We are looking into a pilot project, possibly in a lab environment, to test this alternative for effectiveness and costs.

c. Resource Allocation (Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)

The last of the purchased equipment was delivered last week. There will be continued training on the use of the equipment. Some of the equipment already needs maintenance and repairs because it's being used so much. The Group is working on creating both short-term and long-term priorities regarding resources.

d. Public Outreach (Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)

We held a webinar last week with all 10 counties that recaps all existing information, and the webinar is available on the Tree Mortality Task Force website. PG&E is also creating a brochure regarding tree removal safety. This information should be released in July.

e. Utilization – Bioenergy (Kim Carr/Angie Lottes)

Seven facilities have price agreements that are expiring in the next two months; one of these facilities is already offline. We have facilitated many meetings with stakeholders and the utilities have provided information regarding how to meet the requirements for



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

new price agreements. Some of the facilities have found the requirements challenging, and are unable to meet the requirements. The decision is currently with the CPUC Energy Division.

- f. Regulations (Matthew Reischman/Sandy Goldberg)
The Group completed a series of FAQs regarding insurance, hiring a contractor, and the timber tax/BOE. We continue to work on issues pertaining to the air curtain burners and the use of public funds. We are also looking into the issues regarding the use of out-of-state equipment.
- g. Forest Health and Resilience (Chris Keithley/Tom Smith)
We have a draft landowner guidance document, and are reviewing some of the forest health indicators. We have also started discussions about longer-term monitoring. We will provide all deliverables to the Task Force.

f. Closing Comments

Ken Pimlott: We are transitioning Task Force leadership duties to Gabe Schultz and Rick Carr. Whitney Bray will remain on the leadership team. Glenn Barley and Chris Anthony will act in a liaison capacity. Gabe and Rick will both take a greater role in future meetings.