



## Tree Mortality Task Force Agenda

### Meeting Minutes

September 11, 2017

[www.treetaskforce.org](http://www.treetaskforce.org)

1. Opening Comments
  - a. Chairperson Ken Pimlott – Our country has responded to multiple natural disasters in the past few weeks – from fires in the West to floods in the South and Southeast; as a result, resources are at a premium. Today is Patriot’s Day, a time for reflection. The Netflix docuseries, “Fire Chasers,” featuring CAL FIRE and the TMTF is available for viewing:  
<https://www.netflix.com/title/80117902>
  - b. Task Force Leader Gabe Schultz
    - i. Two County Tree Mortality Workshops are tentatively scheduled for October 19 in Clovis and October 20 in Inyo. The intent of these meetings is for county employees and local tree mortality representatives to exchange information, discuss challenges and identify solutions.
    - ii. October’s task force meeting coincides with Columbus Day, a federal holiday. The consensus was to cancel the meeting and prepare for a second anniversary meeting in November.
2. Partner Updates
  - a. USFS—The agency has felled 380,000 trees, treated 45,000 acres, and has an additional 82,000 acres underway. The Pier Fire is in an area that hasn’t burned since the 1870s and is being fueled by tree mortality. A fire behavior assessment team on the fire is completing a video and report of fire behavior in the tree mortality area. The ADS flight has been delayed due to fires, but the intent is still to report out in October.
  - b. BLM – BLM’s new Fire Mitigation Specialist, Miriam Morril, was introduced. Contract solicitation has gone out for the Lily Gap project, a 200-acre mortality salvage project near West Point in Calaveras County. A joint field tour with CAL FIRE is scheduled for week of 9/18 to visit a 700-acre collaborative mortality salvage and restoration project straddling Mountain Home State Forest and BLM’s Case Mountain. Special thanks to CAL FIRE for sharing a Redding-based forester who will be helping with a mortality salvage assessment on the Helena Fire near Weaverville.
  - c. CCC – CCC has 37 crews currently supporting 30 fires statewide, other crews recently returned from 9 different fires in Montana and Southern Oregon, and still others are working on Med Fly Eradication in Southern California. CCC AmeriCorps fuels and tree mortality work continues in Stanislaus and Shaver Lake Regions. The agency is developing 2017-18 SRA (\$5M) and GGRF (\$5M) project work that will begin as fire season phases out. In development stages of GGRF-funded Tent Camp project work in the Sequoia Forest; approximately 50 cm’s will provide Healthy Forest work to the region.
  - d. PG&E – the utility has identified 87,000 trees, removed 65,000, and forecasts 158,000 for the year. The PG&E disposal program has disposed of 78,000 trees; 69% of applications have been completed, 25% have been logged in system, and the backlog is at 1%. A centralized complaint



center is being developed. PG&E has a new \$1 million grant program which will fund \$250,000 a year over 5 years. One of the first grants was to UC Merced to increase the pace and scale of tree removal in Calaveras county.

- e. Caltrans – The agency anticipated the emergency proclamation would streamline processes, but there are still a lot of hurdles in the form of required regulations/permissions; Caltrans is using multi-agency collaboration to address these hurdles. Crews have seen an increase in mortality in the northern Sierra. An estimated 52,016 trees will be felled this year, 3,184 in the Tahoe basin. The TRPA Board gave unanimous approval to Caltrans to proceed with a Basin-wide tree removal plan. In response to new Executive Order, how do we sure that D49 and C61 contractors are following forest practice rules? Caltrans is working with 8 USFS forests and is seeking standardization and a special use permit. Will work within the Regulations Working Group on water quality permitting issues.

- 3. Presentation: Lessons learned from past bark beetle outbreaks. – Jodi Axelson, PhD, UC Cooperative Extension –

[http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/TMTF\\_Axelson\\_Sept1117.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/TMTF_Axelson_Sept1117.pdf)

- 4. Working Group Updates

- a. Mapping and Monitoring – Continues to input tree removal projects into tree mortality viewer. Providing Bioenergy Working Group with instructions on how to use TM mortality viewer to pair biomass projects with source material. Adding temporary wood storage locations on the viewer. Completing a storage site suitability assessment for Placer County. Coordinating with the Public Outreach Working Group on the reforestation story map.
- b. Public Outreach – Continuing to refine urban outreach talking points and providing input to CAL FIRE on a social media effort targeting Los Angeles-area residents.
- c. Regulations – Tree removal guidelines and FAQs for contracting for tree removal will be updated in response to new Executive Order. Will develop a guidance document in response to the new EO. The Insurance Sub-group is convening Dave Shew, Cal FIRE and Steve Quarles, IBHS to outline a proposed tiered risk management model.
- d. Bioenergy – The PUC has appointed a special advisor for interconnection and is leading a sub-group through a proposed solution that was brought up at the interconnection policy meeting to reduce transmission upgrade costs for BioMAT small-scale projects. In response to the facilities' concern that there isn't enough HHZ fuel to meet contractual amounts a proposal was drafted to hire a third party to investigate the issue. Two new BioRAM contracted plants will go online next year. Angie Lottes represented the Bioenergy Working Group at a bioenergy conversation sponsored by the Little Hoover Commission; the Commission encouraged engaging environmental groups and urban audiences.
- e. Resource Allocation – Work continues to reorganize a funding spreadsheet.
- f. Forest Health and Resilience – Produced a working draft of a white paper on long-term outlook for the Sierra Nevada. FRAP staff completed more GIS analyses on type conversions in response to climate change. Nick Goulette of the Watershed Research and Training Center, provided a presentation on two upcoming prescribed fire training opportunities that will take place in Calaveras and Butte counties this fall. Beta-testing an editable web map that FRAP and



SNC staff developed for capturing research and monitoring data being collected in the Sierra Nevada related to tree mortality. The reforestation strategy is out for final review and a contract will soon be developed. The reforestation story map is out for final comments and then will be routed to CAL FIRE executive staff for final review.

- g. Market Development – On 9/13 the MDWG will host the second of two open conference calls seeking input from the counties on the opportunities and barriers to utilizing excess woody biomass related to the tree mortality crisis. The MDWG will be using information gathered in these calls to help direct its efforts in the coming year.

5. County Update

- a. Amador – The county has completed four out of eight total identified projects. Gathering rights of entries from landowners has slowed progress.
- b. Calaveras – The county has hired a tree mortality contractor.
- c. Fresno – Actively working on SRA-funded projects including marking trees around Shaver Lake; contracts with LTOs are being initiated. Have seen an increase effort by private property owners to undertake work on their own land utilizing CFIP.
- d. Madera –Recent fires are opportunities to educate urban audiences.
- e. Mariposa – The Detwiler and Railroad fires did not encroach much in tree mortality areas. Working on recovery. Air quality is a big issue. Opportunity for education; need to communicate the importance of fuel breaks. A local biomass project is in the permitting process.
- f. Placer – A contract with Mountain G Enterprises is confirmed and mapping, marking and identifying dead trees will soon begin; estimate it will be a 4-month process.
- g. Tulare – 1700 firefighters are tackling the Pier Fire.
- h. Tuolumne – County OES is about to transition to electronic signatures for right-of-entry in a partnership with Caltrans.

6. Closing Comments – Ken Pimlott

- a. In November’s TMTF meeting we will look back on the two years since the Task Force was initiated to identify what we have accomplished and where we need to focus our efforts. Managing for healthy forests and the related issues of biomass/bioenergy/market development are long-term challenges. Encourage we all continue to use the relationships we have built within the Task Force to discuss these challenges.