



## Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes November 13, 2017

### 1. Opening Comments

#### a. Chairpersons –

Ken Pimlott: Fire is part of the landscape in California. The October fires bring our efforts to conduct landscape scale vegetation management projects top-of-mind. In Northern California CAL FIRE will begin to shift focus to watershed and thinning work. Fire season in Southern California is still ongoing.

Jon Moore – Cal OES' State operations center is still open, but debris removal operations are underway. The Army Corps of Engineers and CalRecycle are assisting with this work. The agency's published goal is to complete debris removal by the first of year.

#### b. Task Force Leader Gabe Schultz

- i. Status: Reported number of trees removed through October 2017. These numbers will be updated monthly as they are provided to TMTF Leadership.

<u>Area/Unit/County/Agency</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Trees Removed</u>
USFS	Sep-17	291,736
CAL FIRE	Oct-17	42,054
Caltrans	Sep-17	107,608
Priority Counties	Sep-17	13,714
PG&E	Sep-17	351,908
SCE	Sep-17	34,981
<b>Total</b>		<b>842,001</b>

- ii. Local Assistance for Tree Mortality Grants – The Procedural Guide is in CAL FIRE's "green sheet" executive review process.

### 2. Partner Updates

- a. USFS – 482,265 trees felled, 55,154 acres treated. Working with PGE and SCE on permits and focusing on how to make the biomass available for utilization. The new mortality numbers generated through the ADS flights will be released by end of November. The final flights were flown in the past couple of weeks. The number of dead trees by county requires further processing and will not be included in the initial media release.
- b. BLM – The Agency is completing a programmatic hazard tree removal program which is expected to assist in the timely completion of cultural, biological and environmental reviews. They are pilot testing this program on 2,600 acres in the Mokelumne Basin. Have just completed the Lilygap Forest and Watershed Health project in Calaveras County funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy.
- c. CCC – Crews have been heavily involved in emergency response in California, other states and Puerto Rico. Six crews continue to work on debris removal. Wrapping up first year in tree mortality projects in the southern Sierra with 15,000 trees removed and 56,000 hours invested expected by year-end—all project in collaboration with SCE, USFS CAL FIRE, fire safe



councils, cities and counties. The CCC applied 97,000 hours to the SRA program. Plan to install a mobile tent camp for work in the Rim Fire in Stanislaus by April 2018 with funding from a \$3 million GGRF Forest Health grant.

- d. PG&E -- The utility removed 127,000 trees to date with 150,000 total forecasted to be removed by year end. Under the Debris Management Program, they have signed up 8,900 customers for removal of 81,000 trees; of these they have completed 6,900 customers for 70,000 trees.
- e. SCE – As of October end, the utility has removed 26,790 trees dead from drought, and 2,024 trees dead from bark beetle. 16,101 additional trees are identified for removal.
- f. Caltrans – Phase 2 projects (those in areas that have already been treated) are set to begin next month. The agency has created a graphic outlining a nine-step responsible hazard tree removal process (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/treemortality/permission-process.html>). The steps include: 1) TMTF Collaboration, 2) Notify, 3) Assess and Map, 4) Permission to enter form, 5) Hire contractor, 6) Remove tree, 7) Dispose, 8) Recycle, 9) Track and report
- g. Resources Agency – Claire Jahns reported on [S.B. 859 Wood Products Work Group](#)

Recommendations:

- The genesis of the Working Group was Senate Bill 859 which directed the Secretary of Natural Resources to establish a working group on expanding wood product markets in California
- The group included state agencies, USFS, TMTF members, and others who developed the recommendations over 9 months focusing statewide on wood product markets, not forest management activities.
- The group established three goals that expansion of wood products markets must serve: 1) utilize material from the HHZs, 2) advance the state's forest health and carbon sequestration goals, and 3) promote rural economic development
- Recommendations will be implemented with existing funding and regulatory authority
- Working Group recommends three core strategies: 1) Remove barriers to market and create pathways for success; 2) Promote innovation; 3) Invest in human capital
- Two organizing bodies are proposed, one of which has been created, Governor's Office of Planning and Research – rural economic development (includes 3 working groups). Second proposed institute for forest products innovation.

3. **Presentation: 2-Year Review: Accomplishments of the Tree Mortality Task Force**

Gabe Schultz and Rick Carr, CAL FIRE's Task Force Leaders, reviewed progress made on addressing the 19 Directives that were outlined in the Governor's original Executive Order, highlighting those directives on which the status has changed. Directives 2, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 18, and 19 have all been upgraded since the 1-year review to reflect the progress made since that time.

A comment was made that Directive #11, relating to CEC's grant funding from the EPIC program should be kept in an "on-going" status as long as there is an Emergency Order.



#### 4. Working Group Updates

Each Working Group outlined progress made over the past two years. Some of those are highlighted below:

- a. Mapping and Monitoring –
  - i. Mapped [Tier 1 and Tier 2 High Hazard Zones](#) throughout the state & in the 10 high-priority counties.
  - ii. Published a "[Facts and Figures](#)" report that provides current estimates of mortality and high hazard zones.
  - iii. Created a process for [local designation of Tier 2 High Hazard Zones](#) that was successfully used by counties.
  - iv. Mapped [active wood storage and processing facilities](#), including contact information and hours of operation.
- b. Public Outreach –
  - i. Launched a website [PrepareforBarkBeetle.org](#).
  - ii. Created a [Landowners Assistance webpage](#), to assist private landowners with tree mortality mitigation.
  - iii. Hosted a [webinar](#) focused on the public education resources available by the various Task Force members.
  - iv. Coordinated with agencies on legislative tours.
  - v. Summarized TMTF progress with a [Two-Year Review](#).
- c. Regulations –
  - i. Completed a regulations guidance document titled, "[Guidelines for High Hazard Zone Tree Removal](#)."
  - ii. Created an FAQ on the subject of "[Contracting for Tree Removal](#)."
  - iii. Coordinated with the Office of the State Fire Marshal, Codes and Regulations to develop a [guidance document \(Information Bulletin 16-003\) on log storage areas](#).
  - iv. Sponsored a [homeowner's insurance workshop](#).
- d. Bioenergy –
  - i. Meetings between PG&E system protection engineers and forest biomass BioMAT power plant projects produced a reduction of estimated interconnection upgrade costs by millions of dollars in total.
  - ii. The Governor appointed a [CPUC Interconnection Ombudsman](#) to mediate disputes in the interconnection agreement process.
  - iii. [CEC awarded a total of \\$20.7 million](#) to fund four community-scale forest bioenergy power plant demonstration projects, in Yuba and Mariposa Counties.
  - iv. CPUC passed [Resolution E-4770](#) in March 2016. It required Investor Owned Utilities to hold a solicitation for existing facilities that utilize biofuel from high hazard zones and allows them to extend contracts with facilities that were already contracted as part of their 2015 Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- e. Resource Allocation –
  - i. Purchased and distributed to counties 10 air curtain burners, 6 track loaders, 4 wheel loaders, 2 masticators, 12 track chippers, 6 tow chippers, & 4 portable sawmills.
  - ii. Transferred an air curtain incinerator (ACI) from CAL FIRE to the County of Calaveras.



- iii. Resource fairs were held in Madera and Mariposa counties. Tuolumne County held community tree mortality workshops.
- iv. Developed a [list of available grants](#) from foundations and agencies with giving interests that match those related to the tree mortality issue.
- f. Forest Health and Resilience –
  - i. Published white papers: "[Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration](#)" and "[Achieving Long-Term Forest Health and Resilience in California.](#)"
  - ii. Project outline draft in review, with the expectation to contract with the CA Climate Hub to draft "Reforestation and Vegetation Management Strategies for Impacted Forestlands in the Sierra Nevada Mountains."
  - iii. Mapped [Sierra Nevada seed zones](#) located within the 10 High Priority Counties.
  - iv. Placed a seedling sowing order to make seedlings available for sale to private landowners in 2018.
- g. Market Development –
  - i. Funded a [study by the Beck Group](#) on options for woody biomass utilization.
  - ii. Worked with Caltrans to explore opportunities of using pine for sign and guardrail posts.
  - iii. Interviewed affected counties to understand business development opportunities/barriers.
  - iv. Coordinated with Resources Agency working group focused on expanding wood product markets that utilize woody biomass.

## 5. County Updates

- a. Amador – Thank you to Governor's office, Cal OES, CAL FIRE for help in this process. PG&E saved Amador County money by removing about 19,000 trees some of which were in the county's right-of-way. Amador Water Agency has 250 trees to be removed. SPI has removed 87,000 trees.
- b. Calaveras – Hired a new OES director, Will Downs, who will take over the county's tree mortality program
- c. El Dorado – Removed about 400 trees. Very interested in the SB 859 Working Group's recommendation for investing in human capital.
- d. Fresno – In two years, 225,000 trees have been removed in the county across all agencies. SRA projects are in progress. Auberry project has 21,000 trees that will be removed. The Tree Mortality map has been added to [county's website](#).
- e. Kern – The county has thus far focused on removing dead trees on private lands with SRA funds, but will soon initiate the CDAA process for tree removal on county lands.
- f. Madera – Is anticipating the CAL FIRE Local Assistance for Tree Mortality grants program. The county provided \$1 million community funds for tree mortality through a 501(c)(3). The SRA guidelines that prevent non-profits from receiving advancements will be a challenge for new and existing applicants.
- g. Mariposa – CalRecycle cleaned 107 sites from Detwiler Fire in 8 weeks at a massive cost. That is a program that serves this State well. The upcoming Local Assistance for Tree Mortality grant program will be a "game changer" in addressing tree mortality. County partners are concerned



that the SRA program will no longer allow cash advances; this will severely handicap the amount of work they are able to do.

- h. Placer – Initiating a Foresthill tree removal pilot project that will be completed over the next two to four months. The Insurance sub-group will be meeting to discuss the following topics: Chris McCloy from Yapacopia will likely call in with very initial stats on the performance of [www.sierrainsurancefinder.com](http://www.sierrainsurancefinder.com); Tom Pratt from Delos Insurance Solutions will brief on their planned approach using higher resolution imagery in the RM/UW analysis; Jim Steele will present a Lake County Model/Insurance Incentives Program; and Dave Shew and Steve Quarles will brief on the development of a Tiered Risk Management Model.
- i. Tulare – The county was a year late with initiating tree removal projects but has found it to be very helpful to follow those counties that were pioneers. The TMTF staff has been very responsive. Still working with USFS to determine how to remove trees from remote areas.
- j. Tuolumne – The County has completed about 25 projects, felling over 35,000 trees. Will have to triple or quadruple the number of projects we are completing if we are to utilize funds that CAL FIRE is promising in the Local Assistance for Tree Mortality grant program. Greater Valley CCC crews hires local 18-24-year-olds, trains and provides equipment, and helps the youth secure a high school diploma. Thoughts on the TMTF: This complex, multi-agency, public/private sector Task Force has been a wonderful partnership. This has been the most successful group effort that we have been involved in. Give credit to the Governor, CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and all the partners. Thrilled with where we are but we need to focus on challenges like biomass utilization and forest health. We cannot relax, because this problem is not going away.

## 6. Closing Comments

- i. Ken Pimlott: Regardless of how the structure of the Task Force changes in the future, the issues we are working on are foundational and will live on beyond the Task Force. Other programs will embrace the issues raised up by the TMTF. The Task Force has been a functional, working entity which has tackled what seemed an insurmountable challenge.
- ii. Saul Gomez: What was most telling about this process is that the coordination seen at the statewide task force extends to the on-the-ground projects with all those involved focused on the public safety of those that live, work, and recreate in the HHZs.