



Cal OES
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OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tree Mortality Task Force

Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes March 14, 2016

1. Opening Comments

a. Chairpersons

- i. Wade Crowfoot: Thanks to all the stakeholders. We're making a lot of progress – our goal is to work with the counties and help with their individual issues. Make sure you ask the questions you need to ask.
- ii. Ken Pimlott: Getting local government involved and showing leadership at the local level is the key to success. This is a long term emergency; we're dealing with the short-term now, but this issue is not going away.

2. County Updates

a. Tuolumne County (Supervisor Randy Hanvelt)

Attended a meeting with USFS that included a briefing on the bark beetle issue in Colorado between 1996 and 2008. This will not be a short-term issue. Colorado had to take an incident approach and make a coordinated effort. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO DIE. We need a community liaison.

Testified in front of Assembly; this disaster will last 10 years. Need to rebuild existing infrastructure, need to address biomass contracts (not 5 but 10 year contracts), need a federal disaster declaration because the County is going to run out of money, and need to deal with private lands issue.

Traci Riggs: Planning meeting every two weeks with stakeholders. Currently addressing the impending loss of resources due to the upcoming fire and logging season. Need to coordinate resources to help stretch dollars. PG&E has helped a lot.

Mike Albrecht: County has agreed on a pilot project plan addressing the miles of roads with parallel power lines. County-contracted arborists will mark the trees that will hit lines and roads, PG&E will cut the trees, County-contracted operators will remove logs, CAL FIRE will do slash cleanup with their equipment (mostly chipping), Caltrans will provide traffic control. Project will go for 2-3 weeks; right of entry from landowners may be an obstacle.

Wade Crowfoot: Pilot approach sounds promising. Where do the logs go?



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County has 2 sawmills, 2 biomass plants and a log shaving plant; all have plenty of room. It will be a 3 year process, the County is going to exhaust its reserve (\$2.3 million), but a presidential declaration would help stretch funding; not an easy process, but would help a great deal. Operations started in 3 subdivisions with the greatest danger to the public; trees hanging over houses.

Cal OES is working with the counties to cover CDAA portion (Tuolumne and Mariposa have filed for CDAA).

Wade Crowfoot: Will Caltrans get federal money to fell trees next to State highways?

Caltrans: Haven't worked that out yet; they've expanded their review to 100 feet from roadway to look at trees (approved by Cal OES). The goal is to create a fire break; could be reimbursed by feds for work on trees by State highways.

b. Mariposa County (Supervisor Kevin Cann)

No solution as to what to do with the logs. Working with CAL FIRE, PG&E, and Caltrans as partners; had to move ahead without possible outside funding. Reassigned public works crews work on County lands and County responsibility; can keep working for 4 more weeks. Great progress with the number of trees being taken down, but nowhere to store them; currently putting logs in roadside pullouts along County roads. Shutting down main County parks this week to take down all the trees. Very concerned about private property.

Any insurance issues? Yes - lots of responses from homeowners. People sent documentation on insurance issues. Not worrying about the funding at this point. Hosted an Assistance Fair (called it a Funding Fair, that was a mistake), and over 200 landowners showed up. Getting information out to landowners is the biggest challenge for the County. Had 7 organizations at the Fair, which worked out really well. There is also potential to work with BLM for storage.

Rosemarie Smallcombe: Working with Caltrans for sites to put logs. Caltrans concerned that these storage sites will be permanent; looking into options to utilize storage space in right-of-ways and in other counties (maybe SoCal), but transport costs could be an issue.

Any progress on permitting sites?

Kevin Cann: Working with partners, we need to ensure a sunset for storage sites to help alleviate concerns (5-8 years).



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Randy Hanvelt: Looking at leasing lands near bioenergy facilities.

Wade Crowfoot: Do you have a destination for the wood?

Kevin Cann: No, we don't have the infrastructure Tuolumne has available. There is a bioenergy plant in Merced and Modesto; they are smaller and outside the 6 counties, but they have space. Would like clarity about how to handle stakeholders that don't feel like this is a long-term project. There are also 6 companies that are interested in bio-char.

Wade Crowfoot: Talk to Evan Johnson. Can CAL FIRE provide maps to demonstrate that this is a long-term problem?

Transportation to storage facilities is a huge issue.

c. Madera County (Brittany Dyer)

PG&E, CAL FIRE, and USFS have been great. Capacity is the big issue. No equipment or funding support. Hosted many meetings to meet challenges. Need federal assistance/declaration. Not sure how to get CDAA match, don't have a budget to meet that requirement, and don't have storage for logs. The County can't leave them on the side of road because it's a fire hazard. Internal staff has been great. There are 200,000 trees in right of way, and at \$300 per tree, it's \$60 million total. The County still needs to submit a CDAA application, but doesn't know how it'll match the funds. The County will aim to submit the CDAA application this week. The County received \$70,000 from CAL FIRE from SRA funds, which have been hugely helpful, but the County needs more. Minimum 10 years for bark beetle issue. Need equipment, transport, funds, and a market.

Wade Crowfoot: Can you do a pilot project like Tuolumne is doing?

Brittany Dyer: We're trying, but without knowing the funding available, we can't move forward. We don't have the match for CDAA.

Mark Ghilarducci: If you need help, let us know.

Ken Pimlott: Please keep up the working group participation, especially in the Resource Allocation group.

The County will have a Resources Fair on April 2.



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d. Fresno County (David Pomaville)

Workgroup meetings are the Fridays before this meeting. Agencies are concerned about the lack of understanding with property owners. The landowners need to be more proactive; trying to help them address their fiscal concerns. Need to make sure their summer camps for children are trained to address fire hazards, escape routes from wildfire due to tree mortality. The 4 CAL FIRE SRA grants have come in and will help with fire breaks. CAL FIRE has been wonderful in helping to assess how many trees need to be removed (roads, infrastructure, ingress/egress); 1100 miles/50,000 acres affected. USFS working to clear roadways; worried that will be tough around campgrounds. Will cost \$12 million, which is 6 days of costs for Rough Fire- to put it in perspective. Additional grants will be a very good use of money. The County is working on its CDAA application; they are concerned about the match, but have enough information to start the application. The CCC crews have been great. Need to keep bioenergy facility running to get rid of the material being removed. Looking for aerial photos of impacted areas to help assess the severity of the situation. Good neighbor policies have been helpful to coordinate projects. No place to take wood; priority has been to take down high hazard trees. Need to do more outreach to private property owners.

e. Tulare County (Steve Worthley)

Still gathering data, have rough draft of CDAA application, next step is to coordinate with utility companies and look at roads. Need to get a count of trees, want to work with Mountain Home State Forest.

3. Working Group Highlights

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

- i. HHZ Update: Working on Statewide maps; maps will be reviewed every five years.
- ii. Update provided by Glenn Barley and Mark Rosenberg on delineation of tier 2 HHZ's. PowerPoint presentation will be posted to the TMTF website.

Julia Levin: Worried that the timing on these maps will impact the CPUC extending bioenergy contracts.

b. Regulations (Matthew Reischman/Sandy Goldberg)

- i. Regulations Guidance Document

Guidelines for hazard tree removal were posted last week. There is also a subgroup to address storage sites related to regulatory issues currently compiling a storage



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site location list. Developed contacts list for people who want to conduct projects for various counties, hoping to post at the end of the week.

- ii. Air curtain burner updates: can use burners for a 14-month period before needing a permit, but counties should still work with local air districts early and often. Land managers using devices will have one year to turn in an application for a permit.

Janet Barentson: Department of Industrial Relations sets minimum wage guidelines.

Glenn Barley: We will work on providing information more publically.

Matthew Reischman: Working on public education fact sheet to help landowners understand the requirements for using air curtain burners and local air districts.

c. Resource Allocation (Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)

- i. Caltrans FHWA ER: Notice of intent has been filed with FHWA. When doing tree removal, need to provide DBH, height of tree, and where the tree went. Be sure to collect that data because you'll need it for reimbursement. Resource allocation matrix is up to date on website.
- ii. Thom Porter: We've ordered excavators, air curtain burners, masticators, etc. The air curtain burners have been delivered; training is next week.

Glenn Barley: There is a permitting issue, so we're holding off on training right now until it's resolved; don't want to start the clock ticking prematurely. 3 track chippers are arriving this week. Excavators and loaders have to be manufactured, but they are in the queue; won't arrive before April. Each of the 6 counties have equipment allocated based on needs; been working with DGS and Caltrans for equipment needs for the counties. Resources allocation group is working on a letter to access federal excess equipment.

d. Public Outreach (Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)

- i. Tree Mortality Legislative Tour: Tour is April 15th, and invitations went out early last week. Currently working out route details, and PG&E is probably providing an optional aerial component. A subgroup focusing on the tour has been established, and there will be a call next week.
- ii. The group has created several new handouts and fact sheets for landowners and resource fairs; currently reviewing and combining all public education information in one place and hosting a webinar at the end of the month.



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CAL FIRE's defensible space ads including tree removal recommendations.

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

- i. Two resolutions moving through CPUC: one for new and existing facilities for renewable auction mechanism (should be voted on/adopted on Thursday) and one for a BioMat for new facilities of 3 megawatts or less (facilities can take material from tree mortality).

Wade Crowfoot: Are there concerns about the lack of contract extensions and certain criteria related to the auction mechanism?

Kim Carr: Yes, and the fuel requirement. 6 facilities are facing closure in July. 250 megawatts could potentially be lost.

CPUC: The resolution on the agenda this week is to enable companies to do bilateral contracts, and includes the change in percentage; focusing on addressing the high hazard fuels.

What about interconnection? It's a critical barrier for new projects.

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

- i. The group is currently identifying business opportunities for wood coming out of forests, looking at the National Forest Foundation, and targeting the type of wood coming out of the forests to identify business opportunities. There is potential outreach through workshops within the counties. The group is also partnering with resource fairs, working with local county networks for entrepreneurs who want to step up, and contacting well-networked people in wood industry outside of the State.

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

- i. The group is focusing primarily on creating a guidance document pertaining to longer term effectiveness; a working draft will be sent to the task force. Future meetings will focus on analyzing forest health data.

4. Closing Comments

a. Task Force Leader (Glenn Barley)

The next Task Force meeting will be on April 11th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.