



## Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes

June 12, 2017

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

1. Opening Comments
  - a. Chairperson Ken Pimlott: The proposed 2017/2018 CAL FIRE budget will keep boots on ground and the agency can continue to support an effective response to tree mortality. CAL FIRE will have the ability to move resources and respond in winter to tree mortality and prescribed fire. Thank you to partners for articulating challenges you are facing. There is a proposed \$5 million line-item to restore reforestation nursery operations at the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center in Davis. Overall, the proposed budget is good for CAL FIRE.
  - b. Chairperson Jon Moore: OES has received many questions on the CDAA proposed budget. The tree mortality budget as a whole is not being cut. The \$2 million proposed is based on historical requests for reimbursement. If more is needed, the agency is hopeful to identify funds to reimburse counties for their projects.
  - c. Chairperson Saul Gomez: Proposed changes to the Executive Order addressing the LTO/tree service contractors are being drafted.
  - d. Task Force Leader Gabe Schultz:
    - i. Welcome new Working Group co-leaders Bob Kingman & Jamie Sammut
    - ii. Upcoming Workshops are posted on the TMTF website.
      - June 12-July 19, throughout California: SRA Fire Prevention Fee Grant Workshops <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/2017%20SRA%20Workshop.pdf>
      - July 19-20, Black Oak Casino, Tuolumne: 2017 Weed Committee Annual Tour combined with the Insect & Disease Committee <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Weed%20Tour%20Registration%20Flyer%202017.pdf>
      - July 25, Sacramento: Science and Management Symposium sponsored by USDA-Climate Hub, USFS, SNC, and CAL FIRE – “Lessons learned from extreme drought and tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada” [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Save-the-Date\\_Drought%20Workshop\\_FINAL\\_20170606\\_v2.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Save-the-Date_Drought%20Workshop_FINAL_20170606_v2.pdf)
    - ii. This is a good time to take a “pulse check” on the TMTF process. The TMTF leadership will be submitting a series of questions to both the Counties & the Working Group Leaders.
2. USFS Update
  - a. The agency removed 341,793 trees, treated 95,000 acres, and re-entered almost 6,000 acres.
  - b. USFS firefighters are helping to address tree mortality and in one week, felled 5,000 trees. Will do the same on other forests over next three weeks.



- c. ADS flights began last week, 10 counties and 5 national forests were flown. The snow hampered visibility, so a late season flight will be important. Saw more red fir mortality in higher elevations and increases in mortality overall. Hope to have numbers crunched by July.
  - d. A Task Force member requested that BLM/USFS/NRCS coordinate to address the obstacle of treating private land adjacent to public land. USFS just went through a process to address this and will have Forest Supervisors/representatives share the process at County TMTF meetings
3. BLM Update
  - a. There are 143,000 acres of BLM lands affected by tree mortality.
  - b. The agency is working with utility companies to streamline process for hazard tree felling.
  - c. Allocated \$750,000 to mortality in Motherload and Bakersfield offices
  - d. A stewardship program will be advertised in July for 200-acres near West Point, Calaveras county. An environmental assessment to be completed in next 10-12 months.
4. NRCS Update
  - a. Since the tree mortality disaster, the agency has expended \$35.6 million. Has over \$13 million available through EQIP.
5. PG&E Update
  - a. This year utility has identified 62,000 trees and felled 42,000.
  - b. Debris Management Program is a year old and has addressed 7,300 properties & 71,000 trees.
  - c. If there are issues with PG&E trees on the ground, contact Matt Plummer or local PG&E rep.
6. CALTRANS Update
  - a. The agency added \$3 million to routes in Shaver Lake project area.
  - b. New projects up to \$100 million over next 6 months. Revisiting some areas.
  - c. Working with TRPA inter-agency process to get multiple permits. ACRT is consultant. Lake Tahoe Regional Fire Chiefs Association presentation.
  - d. Submitting for federal reimbursement on some projects.
7. Update on the National Disaster Resilience Competition – Elliott Vander Kolk, SNC
  - a. HUD-funded program for disaster recovery and long-term community resilience; finalists competed for \$1 billion and represented areas that experienced a Presidentially-declared major disaster in 2011, 2012, and 2013.
  - b. The area of Rim Fire in Tuolumne County was one of 13 successful applicants nation-wide and the only wildfire disaster. \$70 million was awarded to Tuolumne County through Housing and Community Development and in partnership with OPR, Cal EPA, SNC, USFS, and CAL FIRE.
  - c. Three project activities: 1) forest and watershed health program – biomass removal/thinning, reforestation, widening and expanding shaded fuel breaks, noxious weed abatement, and livestock management; 2) biomass and wood products; and 3) a community resilience center.
  - d. Next steps: execute interagency grant agreements, complete NEPA/CEQA review processes, hold public meetings June 13-14 in Tuolumne County, begin work July/August 2017.



8. Working Group Updates
  - a. Mapping and Monitoring Working Group – Carly Gibson
    - i. Loaded more data into project tracker from USFS and CAL FIRE
    - ii. Completed validation process for wood storage and processing facilities. Final product will include location, contact info, hours of operation, type of materials accepted.
    - iii. Local identification of Tier 2 HHZ process is nearing finalization. Two watersheds in Tuolumne county have completed the process.
  - b. Public Outreach Working Group – Daniel Berlant
    - i. CA State Fair exhibits expected to reach 700,000-800,000 people—mostly urban residents with little awareness of tree mortality. Camp Smoky display will include education materials on fire preparedness, bark beetle, and TMTF.
  - c. Regulations Working Group Update – Jamie Sammut
    - i. RWG is now meeting once a month.
    - ii. Tree removal guidelines to be finalized when LTO/tree removal contractor issue is settled.
    - iii. A scope of work for pilot insurance project has been drafted.
  - d. Resource Allocation Working Group – Tom Lutzenberger
    - i. A spreadsheet with 100+ grants and funding sources is nearing completion and will soon be posted to the TMTF website.
  - e. Forest Health and Resilience Working Group – Pete Cafferata
    - i. Seed Zone map was simplified and a new color scheme chosen. Will soon be routed through the “green sheet” process for CAL FIRE executive approval.
    - ii. Story Map depicting drought, bark beetle, and reforestation opportunities is being finalized. Aiming to complete by July’s TMTF meeting
    - iii. Derek Young, Ph.D. candidate, presented on “Climate and Competition Explain Regional Forest Mortality Patterns Under Extreme Drought.” Will be posted to TMTF website.\
    - iv. Continuing work on a reforestation strategy for non-federal lands. Partnering with Steve Ostoja of the California Climate Hub to hire a postdoc to lead the effort.
  - f. Market Development Working Group -- Evan Johnson
    - i. Beck Group report is available on TMTF website at: [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/WorkingGroup/Beck\\_Group\\_Report\\_5-1-17%20.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/WorkingGroup/Beck_Group_Report_5-1-17%20.pdf). The Work Group is organizing from it a priority list of actions to guide conversations with the Counties representatives/economic development coordinators.
9. County Updates
  - a. Amador
    - i. Finished first project, 8 more lined up. Trying to combine projects since it is hard to attract contractors for individual small projects.



- b. Calaveras
    - i. Thank you to Caltrans and PG&E for continuing efforts
  - c. El Dorado
    - i. Tree mortality, logging truck damage to roads, and road damage from winter storms has created problems for the counties.
    - ii. Logging trucks and private citizens using small, mountain roads is hazardous.
    - iii. Ongoing concerns with both homeowner insurance issues and lack of funding for private landowners for tree removal.
    - iv. Two pilot programs underway (will soon be in project tracker) a third is going out for landowner notification .
  - d. Fresno
    - i. County has recently hosted SNC board meeting/tour and the Little Hoover Commission.
    - ii. Dropped 2,000 trees in the SRA and 5,000 trees in another area. Currently initiating landowner right-of-way notification for Auberry Road.
  - e. Kern
    - i. Caltrans is working on Hwy 155; SCE doing work; LTO starting on SRA projects.
  - f. Madera
    - i. Thank you for all that the TMFT has accomplished.
    - ii. Will be disappointed if counties can't get relief from 25% match for CDAA funds.
  - g. Mariposa
    - i. Appreciation for the work of partnerships under the TMTF.
    - ii. Concerned about burden of road damage repairs and tree mortality on the counties.
  - h. Placer
    - i. CDAA funding and roads are of concern.
    - ii. In process of hiring a tree mortality contractor/coordinator.
  - i. Tulare
    - i. CAL FIRE operated air curtain burners round the clock and cut four times as many trees as expected. The county is not allowed to take the dead trees off the monument, so they placed air curtain burners at a waste transfer station and burned the felled trees.
  - j. Tuolumne
    - i. Concerns remain on insurance, road damage, private landowners funding, lack of FEMA funding, outreach to urban audiences. Kudos to CAL FIRE, Cal OES, Caltrans, PG&E.
10. Closing Comments
- a. Saul Gomez – CDAA match issue has not been dismissed by Administration, it is still under discussion.
  - b. Ken Pimlott – Thank you to BLM for participating. The TMTF has done an amazing amount of work.
  - c. Jon Moore: Cal OES has heard the counties concern regarding CDAA funding. Any questions can be addressed by Jon and/or Peter Crase.