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## Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update January 2018

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- With the support and assistance of over 35 State, local and private entities, the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) received a \$10 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Grant from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The RCPP grant will provide funding to private landowners in the 10 priority counties to remove dead and dying trees from their property. The \$10 million will be split with \$5 million distributed by the NRCS through EQIP and \$5 million distributed through grants from local RCDs. This grant fills an essential funding gap identified by TMTF and its partner agencies.
- The table below depicts the number of trees removed through December 31, 2017.

<b><u>Area/Unit/County/Agency</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Trees Removed</u></b>
USFS	Dec-17	495,408
CAL FIRE	Dec-17	42,824
Caltrans	Dec-17	109,500
Priority Counties	Dec-17	19,124
PG&E	Dec-17	376,051
SCE	Dec-17	84,738
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,127,645</b>

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS and WORKSHOPS**

- The next Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, February 12 from 1:00-3:00 P.M. A meeting announcement and agenda will be posted no later than Friday, February 9 on the TMTF website.
- The following TMTF Working Groups will be meeting in February. Contact [Kristen Merrill](#) for locations and conference call numbers:
  - February 5, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – Public Outreach
  - February 7, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. – Mapping and Monitoring
  - February 14, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. – Forest Health and Resilience
  - February 12, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. – Insurance Sub-group
  - February 16, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. – Regulations
  - February 20, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Market Development
  - February 20, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. – Bioenergy



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- The Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program's Summit will be held March 7. This year's Summit, "[Taking A Regional Approach to Implementing California's Climate Goals](#)" will focus on how the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program is working to retain Sierra Nevada forests as a carbon sink for California.

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Forest Health and Resilience**

**(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)**

- The revised Reforestation Story Map has been approved by CAL FIRE Executive staff and updated with the current tree mortality data released by the USFS in December. Main topics include drought information, the bark beetle epidemic/increased fire risk, TMTF information, seed zone information, reforestation, and resources available to landowners. It will be made available for posting on all the impacted counties' websites, as well as the TMTF website.
- Dr. Steve Ostoja, California Climate Hub, has submitted a revised scope of work and budget for a more focused version of the reforestation strategies document. The new version places strong emphasis on incorporating knowledge from field practitioners to create a practical "toolkit" that is easily understood and used by landowners, with quantifiable outcomes. Additionally, the new scope of work includes assembling existing reforestation information and making it rapidly accessible to landowners. CAL FIRE Executive staff is reviewing the proposal and considering funding options.
- The Seed Zone Update Coordination Group, a FHRWG sub-working group, continues to meet and discuss how to best revise the current California seed zone map. The group has received a revised UC Davis/USFS scope of work and budget for a project to develop climate-based seed transfer guidelines. This contract will inform strategic planning and decisions with regard to updating the seed zone framework for the collection, curation, propagation and planting of tree species in California.
- Work continues on FHRWG's third white paper addressing the long-term outlook for Sierra Nevada forests following the current bark beetle epidemic. The intent of the paper is to provide a synthesis of current scientific understanding in terms of potential changes in tree species composition, forest structure and extent after the drought and under climate change. The current working draft is dated January 26, 2018. Tadashi Moody and Kelly Larvie, CAL FIRE-FRAP, are continuing their modeling work to determine areas most likely to experience type conversions from mixed-conifer forest to shrub and oak/grass/woodland types without active reforestation efforts. The result of the GIS modeling will inform landowners regarding the general locations where successful reforestation will be most challenging.
- The Sierra Nevada Science Coordination Group, a FHRWG sub-working group, continues to collect data with its online geodatabase developed to document research and monitoring efforts being undertaken in the Sierra Nevada related to tree mortality. A detailed email requesting input was sent to approximately 60 researchers last fall. The goal of this effort is to catalog all current research efforts to identify knowledge gaps and future research needs. To improve our



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response rate and ease of use, the group has (1) made a number of updates to the web mapping application to make it as streamlined as possible, (2) produced a second project area delineation option for “regional research projects” (vs local project delineation), (3) worked on producing a brief video to demonstrate the ease of use of the tool, and (4) generated a second large group email message that we will send shortly asking questions to gage researcher interest in the project.

### **Regulations** **(Matthew Reischman/ Jamie Sammut)**

- Caltrans, USFS, CALFIRE will meet on February 7 to discuss what is required to streamline Caltrans permitting of hazardous tree removal along highways on USFS parcels. The agencies are seeking to establish standard operating procedures and tracking/reporting requirements.
- The Insurance Subgroup continues to engage with the insurance industry on long term solutions to stabilizing the insurance market in the wildland areas of the state.

### **Mapping and Monitoring** **(Mark Rosenberg/ Kayanna Warren)**

- 2017 Aerial Detection Survey (ADS) data has been posted to the TMTF Viewer. Users can turn all years on, or selectively turn on and off individual years.
- CAL FIRE Staff are working with ADS data to update the High Hazard Zones (HHZ Tier I & HHZ Tier 2) and anticipate having the updates posted to the TMTF Viewer by mid-February. Once this is complete, CAL FIRE staff will work to finalize the HHZ tier 1 local designation process and software, with an anticipated completion by end of March.
- CAL FIRE staff are working to compile and post updated information on dead tree removal projects conducted by CAL FIRE, Caltrans, USFS and County stakeholders on the Mortality Project Mapper (MPM). CAL FIRE staff are providing training support to Mariposa County in using the MPM for their California Climate Investment grant proposals.

### **Utilization – Bioenergy** **(Angie Lottes)**

- The Bioenergy Working Group continues to pursue a study of High Hazard Zone fuel availability as it pertains to BioRAM facilities.
- The BioMAT Program is in flux following a court order on a similar Program. Despite this, the Working Group continues to support BioMAT projects through interconnection cost scrutiny and fuel security.
- Two of [CAL FIRE’s California Climate Investments Programs](#) are accepting applications through the third week of February. A portion of \$200 million will be awarded to Forest Health projects, which are encouraged to include a biomass utilization component for handling any fuels created as a result.



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## **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson/Bob Kingman)**

- The Market Development Working Group received a presentation from the Motherlode Workforce Development Board and the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board about a proposal to develop a Central Valley Forestry Corps to aggressively recruit and train forest workers to address current needs related to tree mortality. Several comments and suggestions about localized needs and conditions were offered by the group to improve the proposal. A near term focus on addressing the lack of needed transportation resources and impediments to exporting logs were discussed by the group. Future meetings will continue to highlight regional examples of successful replicable utilization ventures and upcoming efforts to address transportation and exporting.

## **Public Outreach**

**(Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)**

- On January 18, the POWG issued a [press release](#) promoting CAL FIRE's Local Assistance for Tree Mortality Grant Programs. Madera County Supervisor Tom Wheeler is quoted in the piece, stating: "We have been trying to find creative ways to deal with tree mortality issues on a local level but funding has truly been a restraint. By contributing the match for CDAA funds, each of the counties is able to move forward with a number of priority projects that help to keep the public safe."
- The Central Sierra Historical Society has developed a new website [AForestWithoutTrees.com](http://AForestWithoutTrees.com) focused on tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada. The website includes videoed interviews with Fresno County Supervisor, Nathan Magsig; UC Berkeley Professor of Forestry, Dr. Rob York; USFS Fire Behavior Specialist, Carolyn Ballard; and others who give their take on the tree mortality event and what can be done for the future of our forests. The site also includes an image gallery, an archive of published articles over the past four years, and a page dedicated to curriculum related to bark beetles and forest management that teachers can use as a guide.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Placer, Tulare, Tuolumne, Nevada, Siskiyou.
- **County Tree Mortality Task Forces:** Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Placer, Tulare, Tuolumne.