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## Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update October 30, 2017

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Thank you to the first responders and all the agencies and individuals that committed their time and energies to battling the rash of fires that California experienced this month. Our thoughts are with all of those that have been impacted by this disaster.
- On October 23, California Natural Resources Agency issued recommendations aimed at utilizing dead and dying trees, promoting long-term forest health and carbon sequestration, and promoting rural economic development. The recommendations, submitted to the Legislature from the SB 859 Working Group, are contained in a report that outlines actions, policies and pilot programs to increase demand for California forest products and expand knowledge and skills needed to develop and manufacture them. You can view the full report [here](#).
- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is working to complete the Aerial Detection Survey in California for 2017. The USFS is awaiting guidance from the Department of Agriculture for release protocol, which may include a joint release with CAL FIRE. The USFS will initially release the total number of dead trees in California and the number of dead trees on USFS lands by unit. USFS and CAL FIRE will then work together to update the High Hazard Zones and the Facts and Figures document, including mortality in the 10 high priority counties.
- The CPUC adopted an Expedited Interconnection Dispute Resolution Process ([Resolution ALJ-347](#)). Among other things, it establishes an Interconnection Discussion Forum that will provide an informal monthly venue for utilities, developers, and other stakeholders to explore a wide variety of issues related to interconnection practices and policies.
- CAL FIRE's speculative seedling sowing order for the 2017/18 planting season are currently available for purchase through the [El Dorado Resource Conservation District](#).

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS and WORKSHOPS**

- The next Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, November 13 from 1:00-3:00 P.M. A meeting announcement and agenda will be posted Friday, November 10 on the TMTF website.
- The following TMTF Working Groups will be meeting in November. Contact Kristen Merrill ([Kristen.Merrill@fire.ca.gov](mailto:Kristen.Merrill@fire.ca.gov)) for locations and conference call numbers:
  - November 1, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. – Mapping and Monitoring
  - November 1, 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. – Forest Health and Resilience
  - November 6, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – Public Outreach
  - November 13, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. – Insurance Sub-group
  - November 17, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. – Regulations
  - November 20, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. – Market Development
  - November 20, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. -- Bioenergy
  - November 30, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Resource Allocation



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- Due to the Northern California fires, the County Workshops, scheduled for October 19 and 20, were postponed and will be rescheduled for a future date.
  - The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's workshop, [Using Mass Timber in New Construction Projects](#), was also postponed due to the Northern California fires.
  - The Tree Mortality Task Force is on the agenda at California Association of Resource Conservation District's annual conference November 15-18 in Sacramento. This year's conference will celebrate and highlight "[Dynamic Partnerships, Relevant Results](#)."
  - [California Forest Pest Council's Annual Meeting](#) will be held at UC Davis from November 16 to 17. This year's meeting will focus on, "Responding to Large-Scale Tree Mortality in Urban and Rural Communities."

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Forest Health and Resilience**

**(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorow)**

- The revised Reforestation Story Map is currently in the CAL FIRE Executive staff review ("green sheet") process. When approved, the Story Map will be posted on the TMTF website and be made available to the counties to post.
- Comments received following the September meeting have been incorporated in the current version of the reforestation and vegetation management strategies outline. Stewart and CA Climate Hub's Steve Ostoja, made the final changes to the document. The main subject headings are: background and foundational concepts, strategies, approaches and actions, and resources for managers. The completed outline will likely be reviewed in November by the Board of Forestry. CAL FIRE will contract with the CA Climate Hub to hire authors for the various chapters. Key goals include 1) incorporating knowledge from field practitioners to create a practical "toolkit" that is easily understood and used by landowners, with quantifiable outcomes, and 2) building an "all lands" strategy (applicable to nonindustrial, industrial, and USFS forestlands).
- The FHRWG reviewed an interim draft of a white paper synthesizing the long-term outlook for the Sierra Nevada. Kelly Larvie and Tadashi Moody displayed the beta test for the GIS analysis they conducted on the Sierra National Forest to determine areas most likely to experience type conversions from mixed conifer forest to shrub and oak/grass/woodland types. Screening factors included aspect (S, SE, SW), tree mortality (>40 trees/ac from ADS), non-industrial forestland, very high fire threat (FRAP 2015 dataset), and shallow soil depth ([UC Davis soil properties GIS layer](#)). Future iterations will consider climate water deficit (CWD) for mixed conifer species and alternate methods for looking at tree mortality (e.g., eDaRT). Dinkey Creek could be an appropriate project area for testing the model against other existing datasets developed with paired LiDAR. The goal is to model overall patterns in the southern Sierra Nevada, rather than potential type changes for a specific site.



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- FHRWG received a detailed demonstration of the editable web map that was developed for capturing research/monitoring data being collected in the Sierra Nevada related to tree mortality. Created by Liz van Wagtendonk, Tadashi Moody, and Kelly Larvie the web map allows researchers to delineate a polygon around the research or monitoring project area and enter information about their project. The data will be exportable to Excel for sorting and queries. Liz has produced a detailed set of instructions on how to use the web mapping tool, including definitions. Jodi Axelson and Susie Kocher have beta tested the tool. Once refined, the product will be distributed to a list of 64 contacts. It was proposed that a small sub-working group composed of Susie Kocher, Jodi Axelson, Mark Rosenberg, Chris Keithley, Tadashi Moody, and Pete Cafferata analyze preliminary data collected for this project.
  - A FHRWG sub-working group is being established to explore how to best revise the current California seed zone map (last updated in the mid-1970's). The Seed Zone Update Coordination Group has met once to discuss the need for this effort and options for moving forward. The goal of this group is to seek an appropriate update to seed zone delineation through exploration of existing and emerging technologies and science.

## **Regulations**

**(Matthew Reischman/ Jamie Sammut)**

- On October 5 RWG leaders facilitated a discussion between Caltrans and the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards to clarify the Water Board's expectations regarding regulatory coverage for the removal of hazard trees by Caltrans or its contractors. It was determined that, to the extent work proceeds under either a CAL FIRE Forest Practice Rules Exemption (FPR 1038), Emergency Notice (FPR 1052), or Conversion Exemptions (FRP 1104.1), the work qualifies for coverage under existing Timber Waivers administered by the Regional Boards. For Region 1, this work would qualify as a Category B project. For Regions 5 and 6, this work would qualify as a Category 1 project.
- The Insurance Subgroup will continue working with the FAIR Plan, CAL FIRE and the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety to discuss the development of standardized insurance risk guidelines that could lead to a tiered evaluation approach for wildfire risk. The group is also working on an "aggregator" tool designed for those seeking insurance. Homeowners can use the tool by inputting their data for review by all interested carriers (admitted and non-admitted) to solicit quotes. This may help homeowners by ameliorating the short-term pain for those now forced to undertake the daunting task of finding a new insurance provider.
- The RWG is updating the Guidelines for Tree Removal in High Hazard Zones and other guidance to reflect the Executive Order from September 1, 2017.

## **Mapping and Monitoring**

**(Mark Rosenberg/ Kayanna Warren)**

- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is working to complete the Aerial Detection Survey in California for 2017. The USFS is awaiting guidance from the Department of Agriculture for release protocol, which may include a joint release with CAL FIRE. The USFS will initially release the total number of dead trees in California and the number of dead trees on USFS lands by unit.



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USFS and CAL FIRE will then work together to update the High Hazard Zones and the Facts and Figures document, including mortality in the 10 high priority counties.

- A guide has been created for Tree Mortality Viewer to help users with a focus on getting information related to potential HHZ source material for biomass plants.
- MMWG continues to support project tracking. Agencies can submit their project data or use the secure online map application to delineate their projects and enter tabular information.
- MMWG continues to provide support to the FRWG and POWG in developing a web-based story map application focused on reforestation.

### **Utilization – Bioenergy**

**(Angie Lottes)**

- The CPUC adopted an Expedited Interconnection Dispute Resolution Process ([Resolution ALJ-347](#)). Among other things, it establishes an Interconnection Discussion Forum that will provide an informal monthly venue for utilities, developers, and other stakeholders to explore a wide variety of issues related to interconnection practices and policies. The forum is intended to meet the following objectives: 1) Foster proactive, constructive communication between utilities, developers, and other impacted stakeholders about issues related to implementation of Rule 21 and other interconnection rules; 2) Resolve informally and/or prevent interconnection disputes; and 3) Share information and best practices across utilities and developers. The first meeting of the Forum was held in San Francisco on October 26 where they reviewed the Forum's charter, discussed shared interconnection objectives, reviewed interconnection processes and timelines, and discussed current interconnection issue themes,
- The U.S. Forest Service announced that approximately \$9 million will be awarded this year to competitive wood products and wood energy projects across the country under the [2018 Wood Innovations Grants \(WIG\)](#). Applications are due by email Monday, January 22. Applicants in Region 5 are strongly encouraged to consult with Regional Coordinator Larry Swan ([lswan01@fs.fed.us](mailto:lswan01@fs.fed.us)) to develop proposals, which should align with Forest Service Regional/Area priorities and State Forest Action Plans. In past years, WIG have been used by BioMAT and biomass products campus projects to advance development and by existing companies to expand operations. Funds cannot be used to purchase equipment. National and regionally focused webinars will be announced soon.

### **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson/Bob Kingman)**

- The MDWG reviewed charter goals and mission and made minor recommendations in language to reflect the ongoing nature of the emergency. Additional people were also identified to participate in the work group expanding representation to local Resource Conservation Districts and Economic Development Councils.
- Several members of the MDWG participated in a separate workgroup convened by the California Natural Resources Agency to develop recommendations required with the passage of



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SB859. A report recently released and delivered to the Legislature includes good recommendations on how to strengthen infrastructure, workforce, and wood products markets.

## **Public Outreach**

**(Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)**

- The POWG is continuing its work on a comprehensive review and update of the 1-Year Review Fact Sheet in advance of the November Task Force meeting to reflect the progress and work that has been done in the past year, including soliciting updates from other Task Force working group leaders to be incorporated into the document.
- The POWG is close to finalizing the urban outreach talking points for use by all TMTF members.

## **Resource Allocation**

**(John Melvin)**

- The RAWG did not meet in October, but at their September meeting members suggested it would be helpful to know which organizations were awarded SRA/Tree Mortality grants in for the 2016/17 grant cycle. CAL FIRE has published the [list of grantees](#) on their website and County staff are able contact their local grantees to find out if any of the grant money is still available for assisting landowners in removing dead trees on private property.
- The RAWG will revisit an effort to create a list of LTOs, RPFs, and tree service contractors that are interested and available to remove dead and dying trees in the affected counties. Two counties, [Amador](#) and [Tuolumne](#), have compiled their own list of local LTOs/RPFs/tree contractors and provide that information on their county tree mortality websites.

## **PARTNER UPDATES**

- Senate Bill 859 (2016), Sec. 9, required the California Natural Resources Agency to, “establish a working group on expanding wood product markets that can utilize woody biomass, especially biomass that is removed from high hazard zones” and “submit recommendations to the Legislature on actions that may be taken to encourage the development of the wood product markets, including the identification of potential pilot projects”. The S.B. 859 Wood Products Working Group first convened in September 2016 and concluded with release of its report, Recommendations to Expand Wood Products in California, in October 2017. The recommendations are geared towards facilitating increased in-state manufacturing and increasing demand for wood products, particularly those produced from woody biomass and value-added products that would lend financial support to forest management activities. Four proposed pilot projects would serve as opportunities to engage multiple strategies and produce early feedback for state and local agencies and other partners. Some of the recommendations can be accomplished using existing resources and state authorities. Others will require new investments and legislated authorities. Those activities that can begin immediately will be coordinated through a newly established Rural Economic Development Steering Committee housed at the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. The Working Group also proposes a Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation that would align California academic centers to perform product research, development, and testing; promote business innovation; and connect diverse disciplines to accelerate R&D and adoption. You can view the full report [here](#).



- At its October 26 business meeting, the Little Hoover Commission presented draft recommendations resulting from its forest management study. This was as an opportunity for Commissioners to provide direction to staff for future report writing. The recommendations fell under six topic areas: multi-agency cross-jurisdictional collaboration at the landscape level; fire policy and air quality; wood processing infrastructure development; planning, measuring success and accountability; responding to the tree mortality crisis; and education.
- Last year, CAL FIRE placed a speculative sowing order for the following species and associated seed zones and elevation bands. These seedlings are currently available to purchase through the [El Dorado Resource Conservation District](#). In a three-way partnership, CAL FIRE's L.A. Moran Reforestation Center sources the seeds, the U.S. Forest Service Placerville Nursery cultivates seedlings from these seeds, and the RCD acts as an intermediary between private landowners and the nursery to facilitate seedling distribution. Landowners should contact District Manager Mark Egbert at (530) 295-5633 or [Mark.Egbert@ca.usda.gov](mailto:Mark.Egbert@ca.usda.gov) to secure their order; seedlings will be available for planting this coming winter/spring (2018).

Species	Zone	Elev (low)	Stock	Quantity
Ponderosa Pine	525	2,500	1Styro 6	6,000.00
Ponderosa Pine	526	2,000	1Styro 6	10,000.00
Ponderosa Pine	531	2,000	1Styro 6	18,000.00
Ponderosa Pine	532	3,000	1Styro 6	18,000.00
Giant Sequoia	534	6,500	1Styro 6	3,000.00
Sugar Pine	525	2,500	1Styro 6	1,500.00
Sugar Pine	526	3,000	1Styro 6	3,500.00
Sugar Pine	521	4,000	1Styro 6	9,000.00
Sugar Pine	533	5,500	1Styro 6	9,000.00
Sugar Pine	534	5,500	1Styro 6	1,500.00
Sugar Pine USFS	533	4,000-4,500	1Styro 6	2,000.00

## **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.



## EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION

CAL FIRE Tree Mortality Equipment Allocation:											
County Name (CAL FIRE Unit)	Delivered	Kern (KRN)	Tulare (TUU)	Fresno (FKU)	Madera (MMU)	Mariposa (MMU)	Tuolumne (TCU)	Calaveras (TCU)	Amador (AEU)	El Dorado (AEU)	Placer (NEU)
<b>Burner Modules:</b>											
Air Curtain Incinerators	10		2	3	2	1		2			
1 Track Loader	6		1	1	1			1		1	1
1 Wheel Loader	4		1	1	1			1			
<b>Single Resources:</b>											
Masticator	2			1	1						
Track Chipper	12	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tow Chipper	6		1	1		1	1	1	1		
Sawmill	4		1	1	1			1			