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## **Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update**

### **February 24, 2017**

#### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- On February 16, 2017 USEPA Region 9 provided a 30 month exclusion from federal Title V air quality permitting. The exclusion will allow the ACIs to remain operating due to the tree mortality emergency. A local air district can request delegation from USEPA to enforce Title V permitting and must demonstrate an ability to enforce the regulations. An air district can demonstrate this ability by developing and adopting a similar set of regulatory rules. The RWG will evaluate this option over the next 30 months in hopes of receiving federal delegation.
- The Regulation WG minutes for the recent insurance workshop will be finalized and circulated to the TMTF. Of primary concern is to incorporate local fuel reduction and vegetation treatments into fire risk analysis. Following the workshop CDI provided a legislative concept they would like to share with the TMTF. It is based on a CDI proposal and drafted by their Legislative Counsel. The CDI has been unsuccessfully seeking an author through several meetings with legislators, but to no avail. The CDI is sympathetic to the coverage availability issues many people are experiencing, and hope to gain statutory authority to intercede on the behalf of homeowners caught in the situation where the underwriting review process is limited to a very few high-level measurements (the models' scores) and does not take into account any of the homeowner's actions to mitigate the risk i.e. fuel reduction efforts. The proposed legislative language was circulated to the RWG for review.

#### **CURRENT TREE MORTALITY CONDITIONS**

- 102,000,000 dead trees since 2010

#### **MAIN TASK FORCE REPORT**

- The next Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, March 13th from 1:00-3:00 P.M.
- Chris Fischer will depart from the TMTF and continue his functions with the USFS. In his place will be Stephanie Gomes and Joe Sherlock.
- Carly Gibson (USFS) will also replace Chris Fischer as the co-lead of the Mapping and Monitoring Work Group.



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## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **Forest Health and Resilience**

**(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)**

- We have completed work on our second white paper titled “Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration.” This document outlines the actions needed for comprehensive forest restoration across the Sierra Nevada. John Amodio and Larry Camp wrote the initial draft white paper, and it has been edited extensively by the FHRWG. At the February FHRWG meeting, we did the final edits as a group, obtaining closure on unresolved issues. The main goal is to achieve robust implementation of programs such as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Watershed Improvement Program, supported by enhanced efforts from relevant state and federal agencies. The white paper is currently under review by TMTF Leadership and when the review has been completed, the document will be released to the TMTF and posted on the TMTF website.
- A final version of the Tree Mortality Impacts on California Seed Zones map has been completed and accompanying Excel spreadsheet overlaying tree mortality areas with conifer seed zones. The map and accompanying table are intended to be used as a tool for identification of target areas for conifer cone collection and subsequent reforestation planning. They were produced by overlaying GIS data for tree seed zones, 500-foot elevation bands, and forest type vegetation maps in the 10 county high hazard area. These documents are currently being reviewed by TMTF Leadership.
- At our next FHRWG meeting, we will discuss FHRWG priorities for the remainder of 2017. One of our highest priorities, based on past work and our ICS 204 working group objectives, will be to continue to work on reforestation strategies—particularly for small nonindustrial landowners.
- At our March meeting, the FHRWG will also learn about a new effort to identify the next steps needed in understanding and coordinating Sierra Nevada forest health science and management information needs in response to tree mortality. Both the USFS and UC are very interested in moving forward with a well coordinated effort that includes implementing strategic, on-the-ground measurements of tree mortality and forest characteristics that complement remotely sensed data.



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## **Mapping and Monitoring**

**(Mark Rosenberg/Carly Gibson)**

- MMWG is working to develop a local High Hazard Zone designation process for Tier 1 and Tier 2 zones. Both processes will have evaluation criteria and we anticipate developing web based applications to facilitate each process.
- MMWG is working to update project information from CALTRANS, USFS and CAL FIRE on a monthly basis. A new process is being implemented for agencies to designate project information that is ready for public release.
- MMWG completed an analysis for El Dorado County to help identify potential locations for temporary wood storage and processing facilities.

## **Regulations**

**(Matthew Reischman/Sandy Goldberg)**

- The Regulation WG minutes for the recent insurance workshop will be finalized and circulated to the TMTF. Of primary concern is to incorporate local fuel reduction and vegetation treatments into fire risk analysis. Following the workshop CDI provided a legislative concept they would like to share with the TMTF. It is based on a CDI proposal and drafted by their Legislative Counsel. The CDI has been unsuccessfully seeking an author through several meetings with legislators, but to no avail. The CDI is sympathetic to the coverage availability issues many people are experiencing, and hope to gain statutory authority to intercede on the behalf of homeowners caught in the situation where the underwriting review process is limited to a very few high-level measurements (the models' scores) and does not take into account any of the homeowner's actions to mitigate the risk i.e. fuel reduction efforts. The proposed legislative language was circulated to the RWG for review.
- There are 14 temporary log storage sites that have been identified as active. The Mapping and Monitoring group has developed a spreadsheet that needs to be populated with new information and reconciled. The RWG will be reaching out to the counties, PG&E and CalTrans for more specific information on the sites. The RWG discussed the various types of sites being used for log storage. There are various sites representing a variety of uses and no storage site designation process exists. Many log decks are developing, especially on smaller ownerships and could represent fuel hazard issues. The RWG will re-circulate the log storage site information bulletin developed back in January 2016.
- On February 16, 2017 USEPA Region 9 provided a 30 month exclusion from federal Title V air quality permitting. The exclusion will allow the ACIs to remain operating due to the tree mortality emergency. A local air district can request delegation from USEPA to enforce Title V permitting and must demonstrate an ability to enforce the regulations. An air district can



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demonstrate this ability by developing and adopting a similar set of regulatory rules. The RWG will evaluate this option over the next 30 months in hopes of receiving federal delegation.

CalRecycle indicated ACIs are considered a transformation facility and subject to their permitting authority. The RWG discussed ACI waste products and how they apply to Cal Recycle regulation. Cal Recycle and Cal EPA will continue the discussion to determine the permitting requirements.

- There has also been a growing volume of question regarding LTO and Contractor licenses. Many of these question may be answered in the FAQs document provided along these issues and located on these weblinks -
  - It has been posted under the “Task Force Materials” heading on the TMTF Reports and Deliverables webpage. <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/reports>
  - Also included as a link to this document in the “Is a licensed tree contractor needed?” heading on the Public Education page. <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Dead-Tree-Removal/>

#### **Utilization – Bioenergy**

**(Angie Lottes/Sandy Goldberg)**

- BioMAT Program Changes (Order 9): Changes to the BioMAT, intended to increase participation in the Program and decrease the amount of time until Power Purchase Agreements can be executed, became effective on February 1. Market depth, or a minimum number of participants needed to trigger the pricing mechanism, has not been achieved despite the changes.
- Interconnection of new bioenergy facilities (Order 10): Plans to hold a subgroup meeting to discuss grid interconnection costs are ongoing.

#### **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson)**

- The working group will receive a final draft of the Beck Group research report on excess biomass utilization opportunities in the last week of February. Following delivery of the report, the working group will work with the Beck group and utilize its network of forestry and forest products industry contacts to assist in identifying entrepreneurs/developers that are interested in pursuing the opportunities identified in the research phase of the project. The group will reach out member counties of the Tree Mortality Task Force as part of this process.



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## **Public Outreach**

**(Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)**

- The Public Outreach Working Group continues to make progress on the urban outreach and education effort, and is aggregating information from working group members on upcoming outreach opportunities. The group also is working to identify potential opportunities to leverage partnerships outside of the TMTF to help disseminate information both on the urban outreach effort and the expanded “Remove Your Dead Trees” effort. The group continues to work with the FHRWG to identify current landowner assistance programs and strategize efforts to educate the public on the programs and services available.

## **Resource Allocation**

**(Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)**

- The RAWG has discussed to some extent the possibility of mitigation funding with FEMA. Unfortunately the agency cannot really react to Tree Mortality as it is not within the scope of existing authorities FEMA has been given via the Stafford Act. While FEMA did internally start to consider the issue of pre-disaster mitigation where evidence potentially points averting far greater costs after a disaster happens as a policy shift, now such discussions are on hold pending further direction from the new federal Administration.
- The RAWG continues to receive reporting on equipment usage air burner placement along with coordination of information for the RWG’s work on permitting via the USEPA.
- Had some informal discussions with CCC regarding their crews usage of GGRF funds for Tree Mortality purposes. No commitment, probing of thoughts on CCCs part.

## **APPROVED CALIFORNIA DISASTER ACT FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

- **Approved CDAA Applications:** El Dorado County, Fresno County, Madera County, Mariposa County, Tulare County, Tuolumne County, Big Creek School District, Chawanakee Unified School District, Curtis Creek School District, Tuolumne Utilities District, Twain Harte Community Services District, Columbia Public Cemetery District, Pine Ridge Elementary School District, Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District, Amador County, Placer County, Calaveras County, Halcumb Cemetery District, Amador County Water Agency
- **Submitted CDAA Applications:** Calaveras Public Utility District, El Dorado Irrigation District, & Belleview Elementary School District.



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## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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

## **TREE MORTALITY RESPONSE FUNDING**

On Monday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, Governor Brown signed the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year (FY) Budget. The 16-17 FY Budget includes a one-time increase of \$11 million General Fund dollars for CAL FIRE to assist in the removal and disposal of trees in high hazard areas. This includes:

- \$6 million for the California Conservation Corps and grants to local entities, including local government, fire districts, local conservation corps, tribal entities, and fire safe councils, to provide support to local efforts to remove hazardous trees that pose a threat to public health and safety.
- \$5 million to support additional miscellaneous equipment, personnel overtime for foresters, hand crews, engine companies, and heavy equipment operators, for hazardous tree removal and fuels reduction efforts.

The 16-17 FY Budget also includes:

- \$10 million one-time funding in grants from the State Responsibility Area fund, with \$5 million of that being dedicated for tree mortality related work.
- The Budget also includes \$31.6 million for the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide assistance to counties through the California Disaster Assistance Act.



## EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION AND TRAINING

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)	Eldorado (AEU)	Placer (NEU)
<b>Burner Module A (2):</b>											
3 Fire Box (burners)	6			3	3						
1 Track Loader	2			1	1						
1 Wheel Loader	2			1	1						
<b>Burner Module B (2):</b>											
2 Fire Box (burners)	4		2				2				
1 Track Loader	2		1				1				
1 Wheel Loader	2		1				1				
<b>Single Resources:</b>											
Masticator (2)	2			1	1						
Track Chipper (10)	10	1	2	2	1	1	2		1		
Tow Chipper (6)	6		1	1		1	2		1		
Sawmill (5)	5		1	1	1		1		1		

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- The next full Tree Mortality Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, March 13<sup>th</sup> from 1:00-3:00 P.M.

### TREE MORTALITY RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

California's Tree Mortality Information Clearinghouse for Stakeholders

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

California's Tree Mortality Information Clearinghouse for the Public

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

California's Tree Mortality Viewer

[egis.fire.ca.gov/TreeMortalityViewer/](http://egis.fire.ca.gov/TreeMortalityViewer/)

United States Forest Service-California Tree Mortality Information

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/CATreeMortality>