



**Cal OES**  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE  
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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## Tree Mortality Task Force

### Tree Mortality Task Force Weekly Update March 4, 2016

#### 1. Highlights

- The Regulations Working Group has completed the final draft of the Regulations Guidance Document titled **Guidelines for High Hazard Zone Tree Removal**. The Guidelines can be found on the Tree Mortality Task Force website at <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/> under "What's New". A public meeting will be scheduled prior to adopting the guidelines pursuant to Directive 17 of the Emergency Proclamation. Questions regarding the guidelines should be directed to the Regulations Working Group.
- High Hazard Zones- Work has been focused on a second iteration of the High Hazard Zones which is inclusive of a larger area at risk of wildfire and/or falling trees. The draft of the second iteration is scheduled to be completed prior to March 14<sup>th</sup>.

#### 2. Main Task Force Report

- Kern County Meeting- A meeting was held with various agencies from Kern County to gather information on their respective activities and needs, as well as any issues that are hindering implementation of their tree removal efforts. The meeting was very well represented by staff from Kern County Fire Department, as well as representatives from the USFS, NRCS, BLM, PG&E, So Cal Edison, local fire safe councils, County Roads, County Parks, County Counsel, and second district Supervisor Scrivner, as well as others. Agencies presented to the group their current tree removal efforts to advance the development of a local coordination group and began discussions on the development of a tree removal plan.
- Tree Mortality Task Force representatives from Cal OES and CAL FIRE met with local CAL FIRE Unit personnel and toured impacted areas within Tuolumne County. Tree Mortality is growing throughout the county and within residential subdivisions. This poses an increased threat to public safety as well as private and public infrastructure. Local fire safe councils are partnering with CAL FIRE on the implementation of strategic fuel breaks; however, tree mortality continues within and adjacent to the fuels reduction projects. Many challenges still remain, such as dead



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trees threatening private residences, an abundance of dead and down woody material posing a substantial fire risk, and utilization of beetle killed trees. Cal OES has approved two California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) applications within Tuolumne County which will greatly assist the county and Tuolumne Utilities District with hazardous tree removal.

- CAL FIRE is in the preliminary stages of developing a resource ordering process that can be used by local Units to request overhead, crews, engines and heavy equipment. Additional CAL FIRE resources will be required in the affected Units to operate equipment and assist with the mitigation of hazardous trees and treatment of flammable forest fuels. A final draft procedure will be developed next week for review and approval by Task Force leadership.

### **3. Working Group Reports**

#### **Regulations (Matthew Reischman/Sandy Goldberg)**

- See Guidelines for High Hazard Zone Tree Removal above

#### **Mapping and Monitoring (Mark Rosenberg/Chris Fischer)**

- See development of High Hazard Zones above

#### **Resource Allocation (Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)**

- Equipment Allocation  
Training on the operation and maintenance of air curtain burners scheduled for March 8-9<sup>th</sup> will be rescheduled due to anticipated wet weather and snow in the training area.

#### **Prescribed Fire (Nick Goulette/Craig Thomas)**

- Permitting/Waiver for Air Curtain Burners  
EPA has proposed a path to allow operation of Air Curtain Incinerators that would sidestep most federal permitting requirements through 2016 and into spring of 2017. The process has yet to be fully vetted with the local air districts and normal permitting and approvals from local air districts would still apply.