



---

## Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update MAY 25, 2017

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Two of our working groups have filled vacant co-leader positions. Jamie Sammut from CAL FIRE has agreed to co-lead the Regulations Working Group with Matthew Reischman, and Bob Kingman from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has agreed to co-lead the Utilization-Market Development Working Group with Evan Johnson. An updated Incident Action Plan can be found here: [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TreeMortalityTaskForce\\_IAP\\_5-2017.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TreeMortalityTaskForce_IAP_5-2017.pdf)
- Reforestation workshops for forest land owners and consulting RPF's have been held in Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Madera counties. These well-received workshops have shared lessons learned from other mortality events, reforestation basics, and reforestation cost share opportunities. The next workshop is scheduled for May 31 in Amador County. [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFResources/Amador\\_Reforestation\\_Works\\_hop\\_5\\_31\\_17.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFResources/Amador_Reforestation_Works_hop_5_31_17.pdf)

### **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, June 12 from 1:00-3:00 P.M. Look for the meeting announcement and agenda to be posted Friday, June 9 on the TMTF website. TMTF members that would like to join by webinar will have to reactivate their webinar account here: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6818673419564165123>.

### **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

#### **Forest Health and Resilience**

**(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)**

- Minor changes have been proposed to CAL FIRE Executive staff for the FHRWG white paper titled "Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration" based on input received since it was distributed and posted on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The current version is posted at: [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/TMTF\\_Comprehensive\\_Sierra\\_Ecological\\_Restoration\\_FINAL\\_4-5-17.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/TMTF_Comprehensive_Sierra_Ecological_Restoration_FINAL_4-5-17.pdf)
- Emily Meriam, CAL FIRE-FRAP, has modified the tree mortality seed zone map to reflect the changes requested by CAL FIRE Executive staff. This map will be used as part of a reforestation Story Map being produced by Heather Williams, CAL FIRE Communications. A draft of this product is expected in June for FHRWG review.



- Initial work on the new FHRWG white paper addressing the long-term outlook for the Sierra Nevada has commenced. Dr. Jodi Axelson, UC Berkeley, provided a detailed PowerPoint presentation on stand dynamics and regeneration after disturbance that will be useful in writing the white paper (the presentation is posted on the TMTF website at: [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/FHRWG\\_Axelson\\_presentation\\_05-03-17\\_.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/FHRWG_Axelson_presentation_05-03-17_.pdf)). The reference papers cited in this presentation are also posted under the FHRWG's section of the TMTF website. A paper outline has been produced and TMTF co-leader direction has been provided on paper length (~10 pages) and audience (lay person or non-scientist/researcher). Limited assistance from CAL FIRE FRAP staff is anticipated. The white paper will be completed by August 2017.
- The Sierra Forest Science Coordination sub-working group will have its initial conference call on May 25<sup>th</sup>. This group has been formed to (1) identify existing interests/needs for science and management information related to tree mortality, (2) identify ongoing research and monitoring projects that address these interests, and (3) determine where gaps exist, funneling existing funding to appropriate projects. Currently 13 people from 8 organizations have volunteered to participate. Initial tasks include determining who to contact to record existing studies related to tree mortality, deciding who to query for documenting existing needs for science and management information, and establishing timelines for reporting summaries to the TMTF and FHRWG.
- Work continues on several reforestation efforts for non-federal forestlands in California impacted by beetle mortality and fire. Input for developing a reforestation strategy has been provided by Joe Sherlock, USFS Regional Silviculturalist (R5) and Dr. Steve Ostoja, Director, USDA California Climate Hub. FHRWG co-leader Stewart McMorrow will meet with Dr. Ostoja on May 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss how to best coordinate reforestation efforts for maximum efficiency. Dr. Ostoja has produced a draft agenda for a science and management symposium to be held on July 25<sup>th</sup> at McClellan titled "Lessons learned from extreme drought and tree mortality in the Sierra Nevada: How can past events inform our approach forward?"

## **Mapping and Monitoring**

**(Mark Rosenberg/Carly Gibson)**

- MMWG is putting the final touches on a local designation process for Tier 2 High Hazard zones before moving it forward to the TMTF website. These designations use local evaluation of watershed conditions based on established criteria and requires approval of the Local CAL FIRE Unit Chief and USFS Forest Supervisor. The workgroup and is committed to approving signed applications within 14 days upon receipt and recently processed and approved applications for two watersheds in Tuolumne County: [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/HHZ-2\\_Approval\\_Tuolumne\\_2017-05.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/HHZ-2_Approval_Tuolumne_2017-05.pdf)
- MMWG has finished validating locations and contact information for 15 wood processing and storage sites being utilized to support removal of dead trees under the Governors Emergency Proclamation. Staff are developing a contact sheet and map for those facilities to post on the TMTF website. Only one operator of storage sites requested their information be left off the



---

contact sheet because they are not a public site, but agreed we could show those locations on a Map.

- The MMWG continues to request updates to project information in the Mortality Project Tracker applications. Updates were received in May from CAL FIRE, USFS and CALTRANS.

### **Regulations**

**(Matthew Reischman/Jamie Sammut)**

- The RWG Insurance Subgroup continues to discuss opportunities to improve fire risk evaluation by inclusion of local mitigation factors into the process. The group has reached out to Insurance Industry representatives to explain the interest and gain industry feedback. United Policy Holders completed an insurance survey of homeowners and the group had an initial discussion of the results with insurance industry members.
- The RWG has updated and will finalize the Guidelines for Tree Removal in High Hazard Zones, additional language was included to provide more clarification on commercial versus noncommercial timber operations and when California Forest Practice Rule compliance is necessary for projects. Once finalized and the guidelines will be reposted to the TMTF website.

### **Utilization – Bioenergy**

**(Angie Lottes)**

- Sacramento hosted sustainable forest biomass researchers and community-scale project representatives from across California and the Western US May 16 - 17<sup>th</sup> in two events. Bioenergy Working Group members represented the Tree Mortality Task Force on a panel at the Sierra Institute's [Rural Community Development Initiative](#). On the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup> the Sierra Institute joined the [Waste to Wisdom](#) public workshop to explore market opportunities for biochar, torrefied biomass, and biomass briquettes.
- On May 23, another technical conference call was held, this time between electrical engineers for Celestial Valley, Burney Hat Creek and Collins Pine and electrical engineers from PG&E. The intent was to identify parts of the System Impact Studies that could be addressed differently to minimize interconnection costs. The facilities submitted questions to PG&E in advance.

### **Utilization – Market Development**

**(Evan Johnson/Bob Kingman)**

- The Beck Group has completed their Dead Tree Utilization Assessment, and it and the associated webinar are now online: [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) and [http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Beck\\_Report\\_Webinar\\_5-18-17.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Beck_Report_Webinar_5-18-17.pdf) The report provides insight into the viability of wood utilization opportunities and markets and an assessment of some of the high-level barriers to further market development. The Working Group is currently developing a supporting document to help guide further conversations regarding on-the-ground needs in support of market development.
- The Forest Service reported that its research branch is working with a local biochar producer (Phoenix Energy) to obtain about 200 tons of biochar for a forestry research site on the Stanislaus National Forest, using dead trees from the research plot area to study impacts of



---

biochar on forest productivity. The biochar will be applied this fall using a spreader mounted on a forwarder. The biochar industry reports that the 200-ton purchase may be the largest order to date in the Western U.S.

### **Public Outreach**

**(Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)**

- The Public Outreach Working Group continues to make progress towards updating talking points related to continued tree mortality despite the end to the drought. The Working Group has also been continuing its efforts to develop messaging for urban residents.

### **Resource Allocation**

**(Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)**

- CAL FIRE's Amador-El Dorado and Nevada Yuba Placer Units have each received a tracked chipper and a skid steer with a grapple, brush bucket, and masticator attachment to support their tree mortality projects.
- The RAWG is developing a list of grants made by non-profit and corporate foundations and state/federal agencies with giving interests that match those related to the tree mortality issue: reforestation, forest and watershed health, disaster relief, aid to seniors, community impacts, fire prevention, etc.

### **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.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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

### **TREE MORTALITY RESPONSE FUNDING**

On Monday, June 27, 2016, 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 Uni)	Delivered	Kern (KRN)	Tulare (TUU)	Fresno (FKU)	Madera (MMU)	Mariposa (MMU)	Tuolumne (TCU)	Calaveras (TCU)	Amador (AEU)	El Dorado (AEU)	Placer (NEU)
<b>Burner Module A (2):</b>											
3 Fire Box (burners)	6			3	2	1					
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	1	1	1		
Tow Chipper (6)	6		1	1		1	1	1	1		
Sawmill (5)	4		1	1	1			1			

### **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>