



## Tree Mortality Task Force Forest Health and Resilience Working Group Minutes

September 6, 2017

CAL FIRE FRAP Office, 1300 U Street  
Sacramento, CA

- I. **FHRWG Member Roll Call:** Stewart McMorrow (CAL FIRE), Dr. Chris Keithley (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Dr. Tom Smith (CAL FIRE), Larry Camp (FLOC), Rick Carr (CAL FIRE), Rich Wade (BOF), Tadashi Moody (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Kelly Larvie (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Heather Williams (CAL FIRE), Dr. Jodi Axelson (UCB), Nick Goulette (WRTC), Kevin Conway (CAL FIRE), Margarita Gordus (DFW), Joe Sherlock (USFS), Chris Fischer (USFS), Cedric Twilight (SPI), Craig Thomas (SFL), and Pete Cafferata (CAL FIRE).

**FHRWG Participants:** Dr. Helge Eng (CAL FIRE), Emily Meriam (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Dave Passovoy (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Liz van Wagendonk (SNC), Kristen Merrill (CAL FIRE), Coreen Francis (BLM), Dr. Steve Ostoja (CA Climate Hub), Sarah Campe (SNC), and Anthony Lukacic (CAL FIRE).

- II. **Approval of August 2017 Meeting Minutes:** The August meeting minutes were approved. Minutes from past FHRWG meetings are posted on the TMTF website: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/workinggroups>

- III. **Discussion on Development of a Reforestation Strategy for California**  
Stewart McMorrow led a discussion on the revised draft outline (version 3.0) titled "Reforestation and Vegetation Management Strategies for Impacted Forestlands in the Sierra Nevada Mountains." The current version of the outline reflects comments received from four FHRWG participants, as well as considerable input from Dr. Steve Ostoja. The main subject headings are: background and foundational concepts, strategies, approaches and actions, and resources for managers. The vision is to create a "toolkit" that is easily understood and used by landowners, with quantifiable outcomes. An example of an existing document utilizing this approach is "Forest Management Guidebook: An Outcome Based Approach for Water Quality Protection (see: [http://www.ierstahoe.com/pdf/research/forest\\_management\\_guidebook.pdf](http://www.ierstahoe.com/pdf/research/forest_management_guidebook.pdf)).

**The draft outline has been placed on Google Docs for further review and input by the FHRWG, to be finished by September 15<sup>th</sup>.** Following the completion of the outline, Steve Ostoja and CAL FIRE staff will draft a contract with the California Climate Hub for writing this document and start the process of finding authors. Once the document is divided up by authorship, the FHRWG will review the individual outlines for each section and provide input.



#### IV. Update on the FHRWG Tree Mortality Seed Zone Map/Reforestation Story Map

Emily Meriam and Heather Williams presented a revised version of the draft Reforestation Story Map, which consists of 16 slides, as well as supporting videos, weblinks, and concise verbiage. Main topics include drought information, the bark beetle epidemic/increased fire risk, TMTF information, seed zone information, reforestation, and resources available to landowners. Suggested edits were received from 16 people and were incorporated into the current version. In addition to the FHRWG, the TMTF Public Outreach Working Group is reviewing the Story Map.

Emily and Heather reviewed the Story Map, explaining where changes were made. **They stated that further edits can only be submitted up to Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>**, since Heather plans to show the latest draft to the full TMTF at the Capital on September 11<sup>th</sup>. When completed, it will be available to posted on all the impacted counties' websites, as well as the TMTF website. Specific items discussed at this meeting included: (1) replacing the photo of San Luis Reservoir with one in a forested area under drought conditions, (2) cropping the photo in slide 8 to eliminate PPE issues, (3) removing "arborist" from slide 9, (4) adding an improved photo for site preparation in slide 13 and changing the caption to "preparing the site", (5) adding verbiage regarding the Governor's Executive Order allowing LTOs to perform tree removal work for dead or dying trees in high hazard zones without having a tree service contractor's license (C-61/D49 classification) (and vice versa), (6) finding fuel reduction photos for the Great Basin and Central Valley regions, and (7) making needed grammatical corrections.

#### V. Prescribed Burning Training Opportunities Presentation

Nick Goulette, Executive Director, Watershed Research and Training Center, provided a presentation on two upcoming prescribed fire training opportunities that will take place in Calaveras and Butte counties this fall. As background information, Nick stated that we need to continue to build our capacity for implementing prescribed fire projects in California and the western United States. The Nature Conservancy developed a module training program for the US Forest Service in 2008, denoted as the Prescribed Fire TRaining EXchange (or TREX) that allows this to occur. The goal of these sessions is to allow people to obtain the professional qualifications required for this work, as well as implement prescribed fire treatments in high priority areas. They consist of 10-14 days of intensive training for 20-30 people, and they have been conducted in several western states (typically 1-2 events take place per year in the US). TREX events have occurred on the North Coast for four years, but have not been held in the Sierra Nevada before 2017. CAL FIRE and the USFS have provided funding and sponsored these two events: Butte TREX—October 18-31, and Calaveras TREX—November 1-13. CAL-TREX training sessions are limited to 25 trainees, with a registration fee of \$300. **Both training events still have openings, but the closing date for registration is September 15<sup>th</sup>**. Craig Thomas added that building fire



MOU partnerships is critical, and getting the Butte and Eldorado Air Pollution Control Districts (APCDs) to be collaborators is very helpful.

VI. **Update on FHRWG White Paper Synthesis on the Long-Term Sierra Outlook**

Pete Cafferata briefly reviewed the status of the third FHRWG white paper synthesis on the long-term outlook for the Sierra Nevada. A working draft of the document dated September 1<sup>st</sup> was sent to the FHRWG for review prior to the meeting. It was largely assembled using the information provided by Dr. Jodi Axelson at the May FHRWG meeting, the papers referenced in her PowerPoint, the presentations provided at the July 25<sup>th</sup> California Drought and Tree Mortality Symposium, FRAP GIS analysis work, and FRAP-sponsored climate change reports. Information is provided on landownership categories in the mortality areas of the 10 high hazard counties, projected impacts from climate change, and lessons learned from other locations. Still to be completed is a GIS analysis to determine areas most likely to experience type conversions from mixed conifer forest to shrub and oak/grass/woodland types. **FHRWG were requested to supply comments on the first draft by September 20<sup>th</sup> to Pete Cafferata.** The goal is to have a complete draft ready for further review completed prior to the October FHRWG meeting. Detailed input to date has only been received from Larry Camp.

VII. **Update on Sierra Forest Science Coordination Group**

Kelly Larvie and Liz van Wagentendonk provided an update and demonstration of the editable web map they have developed for capturing research and monitoring data being collected in the Sierra Nevada related to tree mortality. The web map allows the researcher to delineate a polygon around the research or monitoring project area; that person is then prompted to enter information about the project. The data can then be exported to an Excel spreadsheet table from the ArcGIS web map. Liz has produced a detailed set of instructions on how to use the web mapping tool. **Jodi Axelson and Susie Kocher are beta testing the tool prior to sending it to our contact list with 64 people.** We are looking for information on ease of use, whether the necessary information is being provided, whether the categories are adequately described, and whether the reference GIS layers provided are sufficient for use.

VIII. **New Business**

Stewart McMorrow introduced Anthony Lukacic, who is the new L.A. Moran Reforestation Center Manager. Stewart also stated that he has assembled a small group to explore how to best revise the current California seed zone map (last updated in the mid-1970's).

IX. **Next FHRWG Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **October 4<sup>th</sup>**, 2:00 p.m., at the CAL FIRE FRAP office in Sacramento.