



Tree Mortality Task Force Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2018

:00 – 3:00 p.m.

www.treetaskforce.org

1. Opening Comments

- a. Ken Pimlott – Forest health issues are currently top-of-mind in the California. We need to determine the best ways to use this focus to address the state’s broader goals and objectives for maintaining healthy forests throughout the state. Concerned about the lack of rain this season and its effect on fire conditions and tree mortality.
- b. Saul Gomez – The Governor proposed a forest health task force in his State of the State. The composition and structure of the Task Force is still being discussed. TMTF has set up the issue to expand to broader geographic focus. The hope is that by March we will have scope and structure of the new task force and how it will interact with, or replace the TMTF. Please email or call Saul with ideas, questions, input.
- c. Charles Rabamad — Has returned to OES and will serve in place of Jon Moore on an interim basis.
- d. Task Force Leader Gabe Schultz
 - i. Status: Reported number of trees removed through January 31, 2018. These numbers will be updated monthly as they are provided to TMTF Leadership.

<u>Area/Unit/County/Agency</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Trees Removed</u>
USFS	Dec-17	495,408
CAL FIRE	Jan-18	43,058
Caltrans	Dec-17	109,500
Priority Counties	Jan-18	26,653
PG&E	Dec-17	376,051
SCE	Dec-17	84,738
Total		1,135,408

- ii. California Climate Investments –Deadline for concept proposals is February 21, 2018 for Forest Health grants and February 26, 2018 for Urban and Community Forests grants. Fire prevention grant guidelines are still in development.
- iii. Upcoming Meetings
 - [Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program’s Summit](#), “Taking A Regional Approach to Implementing California’s Climate Goals.” March 7, 2018 in West Sacramento, CA
 - [CA Licensed Foresters Association Annual Conference](#), “Stocking Standards: Past, Present & Future.” March 17, 2018 in Anderson, CA
 - [Sierra Nevada Tree Mortality 2017 Field Season Results Workshop](#). March 12, 2018 US Forest Service Wildfire Training Center, McClellan, CA



2. Partner Updates

- a. USFS – 507,000 trees felled, 57,000 acres treated, 95,000 acres in progress. Focusing on forest health activities. Do not yet know what will be in the federal budget. Question from Mike Oliveira, Calaveras County: Is Region 5 aware of a contractor using worm casings as a bark beetle deterrent on the Stanislaus National Forest? Stephanie Gomes is not aware, but will look into it.
- b. CCC – Finalizing a Yosemite tent camp with 35 corps members in Stanislaus National Forest. Save the Sierras tree mortality project kicks off this week with 50 corps members felling trees. Bruce Saito is in Washington, DC to accept the “Project of the Year” for Save the Sierras. CCC is participating in the SB859 working group that is assessing work force potential and addressing work force development.
- c. Caltrans – Caltrans appreciates all the collaborative efforts between CAL FIRE and USFS to facilitate their tree removal work.
- d. Resources Agency – Two out of the three working groups recommended by the SB 859 Working Group met this week. The group that is reviewing regulatory and manufacturing barriers will meet next week.
- e. PG&E: Presentation – Overview of 2018 Tree Mortality Work (April Kennedy and Niel Fischer) –
 - i. 2017 Accomplishments:
 1. Enhanced inspection and mitigation – mitigated 140,000 dead/dying trees, red flag inspections, Tier 3 inspections, 1,100 poles cleared in WUI
 2. Wood management – wood managed on approx. 3,900 properties, hauled 29,000 trees, 178,500 tons of biomass delivered
 3. Fuel reduction and emergency response – 42 projects funded in 22 counties
 4. Early detection of wildfires – Approx. 250 fires detected. Estimated 20 first reports. Approx. 3,500 hours flown
 5. Public Messaging – An estimated 12 million digital impressions, estimated 250,000 emails sent
 - ii. 2018 Estimated Work:
 1. Will look to abate about 140,000 dead/dying trees,
 2. Will inspect about 50% of line miles twice in SRA and four times in the CAL FIRE “Very high” fire hazard severity zone. Will conduct a third inspection of CPUC Tier 3 areas during fire season with targeted inspections during Red Flag weather conditions.
 3. Wood removal estimated for 2018 is 3,030 locations and 7,330 trees.
 4. Continue to fund Fire Safe Council Fuel Reduction projects with \$2 million to eligible FSCs.
 5. Daily aerial smoke patrol 2018 flights will begin after April 1 and fly until end of October or as conditions determine. Flight routes will cover same areas as 2017.
 6. Public messaging – Email campaign, television, iHeart Mobile ads, radio, fact sheets, Cal Expo, pump toppers
 - iii. New in 2018: Fuel Reduction Program:
 1. Further reduce vegetation under and near distribution lines
 2. Provide access space for emergency response
 3. Maintain existing fuel breaks
 4. Fuel reduction projects will target CPUC Tier 3 areas
 5. Goal is to complete fuel reduction work in Tier 3 in 3 years
 6. Voluntary program outside of regulatory requirements. Could use help identifying partnerships, getting the message out to large landowners and customers on how this benefits the community. Planning to use herbicides. Hoping to work with agencies with interest in creating these types of fuel breaks. Width minimums are 30 feet, but all are site-specific. Streamlined permitting will be key to speed along projects and help meet the



3-year timeline. Working with USFS, BLM, Caltrans. What is goal to dispose of fuels? Masticate and mulch on site, check with landowner to determine what they would like to do with the trees. About 25% are anticipated to be dropped and removed.

- f. Little Hoover Commission: Presentation – [Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada](#) (Terri Hardy, acting executive director, and Pedro Nava, Chairman) –
- i. Process: independent, bipartisan commission, review efficiency and effectiveness of government, made up of volunteer and appointed individuals
 - ii. Determined we needed to look beyond the Emergency Proclamation and look at longer-term forest health. Three public meetings, several field trips. Applaud the efforts of the Tree Mortality Task Force, the commitment the agencies have shown, and public service the Task Force is doing for the people of California. Public awareness was generated because of the tree mortality crisis and catastrophic wildfires. People have begun to understand the consequences of super fires as lives have been changed forever. The most important recommendations are prescribed burning and public education. The education component is how we will get people to think differently about what we do. We need to respect our forests with same reverence as we respect our seashores. People who live in forested areas have been overlooked for a long time. We highlighted collaboration. That should be a part of the Governor's larger forest health task force so that all interests are taken into consideration. It also makes sense for stakeholders to talk about permitting. How best bring in legislators from non-forested regions? Use community-based organizations that are working with impacted communities. Look for populations that are vulnerable when forests are not managed properly. Think about what organizations that would have some influence on policy makers. Marketing. Timeline for implementation of LHC's recommendations will be based on what Administration is willing to support, how much they are willing to support it, and how soon.
 - iii. Saul: Thank you for the LHC for the report. The TMTF's experience in working with the LHC over the year has been positive. Helped create pathway on how to deal with these issues. What we are looking for now is action.

3. Working Group Updates

- a. Mapping and Monitoring – [Reforestation Story Map](#) presentation by Emily Meriam, CAL FIRE-FRAP and Heather Williams, CAL FIRE. This product is available to be embedded in our TMTF partners' public facing websites. The Working Group is currently addressing HHZ updates with new asset data, then will update Facts and Figures document, finally will complete local validation process for HHZ Tier One.
- b. Public Outreach – Wildfire Awareness week is coming up. Send helpful resources for addition to the Reforestation Story Map to Staci Heaton and Daniel Berlant. Working with Caltrans to develop workshop materials for counties that have not been identified as high priority counties.
- c. Regulations – Have updated the Tree Removal guidelines; will be posted on TMTF website by end of week. Sub-Insurance working group will meet 3:15-4:15 and will include presentation by Dave Shew, CAL FIRE, on effectiveness of defensible space.
- d. Bioenergy – The BioMat stakeholders continue to await guidance from CPUC. CPUC did not have public information to share for this meeting. Interconnection cost meetings occurring now. Update on the high hazard fuel availability study: It was intent of group to complete this quickly, but CAL FIRE determined that having contract held by a third party would not be feasible. Current option is CAL FIRE holding contract; currently looking to identify source of funds. Farmers are looking for facilities to take ag waste.
- e. Forest Health and Resilience – Meeting February 14, 2018. 87,000 of seedlings speculatively sown last year are to be delivered. The purchase of the seedlings was donated by [One Tree Planted](#). The same organization is willing to pay for more seedlings for projects that need them. If projects that need to be



paid for. One Tree Planted is willing to pay for more. Will be awarding a contract to write Seed Transfer Guidelines.

- f. Market Development – The first all CLT building in California has been constructed in Quincy. This small building houses the County’s HHS building in Quincy ([YouTube video](#)). Developing new markets is a bigger job than we thought. While there is interest, you are dealing with the issues relevant to private companies including secrecy, competition, intellectual property rights, etc. Work that we are doing overlaps with the Biomass WG and SB 859 working groups; hopefully not embarking on parallel efforts. The [International Mass Timber Conference](#) will be held in Portland, OR in March.

4. County Updates

- a. Calaveras – 80% of trees have been marked.
- b. El Dorado – 600 trees in southern part of county have been removed. Starting right-of-way process in north county
- c. Fresno – Substantial progress made on SRA grants in 13 zones; over 9,700 trees felled with average cost per tree at \$336. Tree Mortality GIS map added to [County website](#). Substantial prescribed burning projects by CAL FIRE and SCE have been completed.
- d. Madera – LATM funds have created political pressure for county that has only one or two supervisors in tree mortality areas. Let RFP for tree mortality project manager.
- e. Mariposa – Contracts completed for tree mortality trees, underway and upcoming. Excited about the progress. May be able to complete 50% of all necessary work completed with LATM and CDAA funding. UC system may play a large role in wood utilization research projects.
- f. Placer – Tree count is being finalized. Should be able to start with removal projects in mid-March.
- g. Tulare – Thank you for LATM program; submitted application today.
- h. Tuolumne –The county has perfected their process for dealing with the tree mortality emergency. Unfortunately, RPFs have observed new beetle activity.

5. Closing Comments

Pimlott – Thank you to Chairman Nava, the LHC’s third party evaluation has raised the visibility of this issue. In the recent Thomas fire 500 engines were required to protect three communities, that were not in the forest, but in the urban interface. The cost of this fire was huge. Prescribed fire is a tool but not the panacea. The Department will continue to use the LHC and all other reports to support active forest management. Have been in direct communication with Governor to discuss proposed forest health task force. Coordination that has been established at TMTF will continue. Broader task force will look statewide. While TMTF addressed issues specific to 10 high priority counties. TMTF has been response to a crisis, the new task force will be how to prevent this from happening in the future.