



Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Tree Mortality Task Force

Meeting Minutes

April 10, 2017

www.treetaskforce.org

I. Opening Comments

- a. Chairpersons Ken Pimlott – The Governor's [Executive Order B-40-17](#) lifts the drought emergency in all California counties except Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Tuolumne. Discussions with administration are clear tree mortality continues to have full support and focus.
- b. Chairperson Jon Moore – Peter Crase is on a special assignment in Pasadena so for now, include Jon on any correspondence: jon.moore@caloes.ca.gov
- c. Task Force Leader Gabe Schultz, the announcements for these upcoming workshops are on TreeTaskForce.org:
 - i. April 14, Tree Mortality Mitigation, at Cal OES
 - April 27, Madera County Reforestation
 - May 24, Amador County Reforestation

II. USFS Update

- a. The agency has felled over 286,000 trees, treated almost 30,000 acres, and has 88,000 acres NEPA ready. USFS received \$5 million in federal funding for tree mortality and distributed it to projects in each of the six affected national forests.
- b. The federal government's continuing resolution expires end of April.
- c. The agency is still working on a contract for aerial detection surveys. Plans are to fly the 10 counties in June. Rest of state will be flown late July/August.

III. PG&E Update – 233,000 trees forecast, 294,000 removed to date.

IV. CALTRANS Update

- a. The agency's publication, *Milemarker*, includes an article on tree mortality. Copies were distributed at the meeting and a link to the publication is available at TreeTaskForce.org.
- b. The agency aims to work with the Public Outreach Working Group to create a flier to distribute to homeowners along affected routes that gives some general information about tree mortality but also includes specific details about the tree removal project affecting them.
- c. They are working with Mapping and Monitoring WG for guidance on appropriate standards to require from outside contractors proposing novel science/technology for identifying tree mortality.
- d. The agency is working with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) to develop a 5-year master agreement for upcoming projects in the Tahoe Basin
- e. They have removed 60,000 trees and are waiting for weather to improve to continue.



V. LTO and Tree Service Contracts – Gabe Shultz

- a. LTOs are licensed by CAL FIRE specific to commercial timber operations, sale-barter-exchange-trade, or converting timberland, requiring a permit from CALFIRE under Forest Practice Act (FPA). There are barriers for a LTO to become a tree service contractor, and vice versa.
- b. The Regulations Working Group is currently working on revising the Contractor FAQ to further clarify where each license is required.
- c. The counties would like to investigate if the Executive Order could be amended to include a waiver for this regulation similar to what was done in Southern CA in 2003.
- d. Saul Gomez said he would investigate options to amend the Executive Order.
- e. Licensed timber operator list is updated weekly and is available here:
http://calfire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestpractice_ltos

VI. Working Group Updates

- a. Mapping and Monitoring Working Group – Carly Gibson
 - i. Project updates from CAL FIRE units, counties, agencies, and utilities are being requested monthly for updating the project tracker. The WG also requests the entities identify storage and processing sites.
 - ii. Currently beta testing the identification of Tier 2 HHZ in Tuolumne County.
 - iii. Tree Mortality: Facts and Figures is completed. Copies were provided at the meeting and is available on TreeTaskForce.org.
- b. Public Outreach Working Group – Kevin Conway on behalf of the co-chairs
 - i. Will be formulating talking points and messaging for urban audiences
 - ii. An upgrade of TreeTaskForce.org is underway
 - iii. Heather Williams reviewed a new landowner assistance site <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Landowner-Assistance-0/> that includes insurance FAQs, grant opportunities, county resources, and utilities and infrastructure information. She requested task force members send her information to be added to the site: Heather.Williams@fire.ca.gov.
- c. Regulations Working Group – Kevin Conway on behalf of the co-chairs
 - i. The Insurance Subgroup is investigating options surrounding this challenging topic. Saul Gomez asked to be included on the sub group; he wants to be kept informed of this discussion as it will require different departments and entities that are outside of the Task Force. The work of this group needs to take advantage of opportunities on a timely basis and not necessarily wait for the full Task Force's input.
 - ii. Update of tree removal guidelines is in process.
 - iii. Working Group co-chair Sandy Goldberg has left the Task Force to work as an Advisor to Commissioner Rechtschaffen at the PUC. The working group has not yet identified a replacement.
 - iv. Q: Would it be possible to invite Air Board to discuss Forest Carbon Plan? A: We will include as a topic at the May meeting.



- d. Bioenergy Working Group Update – Angie Lottes
 - i. Sandy Goldberg has stepped down as co-chair. A replacement will be identified.
 - ii. \$10 million in CEC-EPIC grants have been awarded to two new forest biomass power plants in Mariposa and Yuba counties. Each plant has approximately 2MW of capacity. Seven proposals were submitted, of which 5 passed and 2 were awarded; all projects proposed to use HHZ material. The three remaining projects total \$13 million and CEC is being encouraged to find the funding.
 - iii. BioRAM2: The CPUC approved the Power Purchase Agreement and price extension between PG&E and Wheelabrator Shasta Energy Company.
 - iv. BioRAM meter testing is coming up for Rio Bravo on April 24. Hoping to come on line in early May.
 - v. BioMap Interconnection Meeting is scheduled for 4/24/17 (time TBD). Cost of interconnection is primary barrier for construction for these facilities.
- e. Resource Allocation Working Group – Thom Porter
 - i. All 10 counties have CALFIRE-Tree Mortality Task Force equipment and personnel
 - ii. CALFIRE just finished early up-staffing; 97 firefighters were hired and more are scheduled to be hired next week. Each unit will receive 10-15 additional firefighters focused on tree removal, fuels reduction, and defensible space inspections.
 - iii. Of the 10 air curtain burners, 7 are running and 3 are in the process of being sited or awaiting optimal soil moisture conditions.
 - iv. Funding opportunities and inter-agency partnership – more to report at next meeting
 - v. DOT would be interested in working with CCCs crews to do second-round work. Work with CALFIRE and report back next meeting.
- f. Forest Health and Resilience Working Group – Stewart McMorrow
 - i. *Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration* was provided at the meeting and is available on TreeTaskForce.org. The brief summarizes the working group's recommendations on what is to restore and maintain the health and resiliency of California's forests.
 - ii. A comprehensive seed-zone map was drafted and put to immediate use for seedlings orders; 130,000 seedlings will be ready next year for the affected counties. The seed zone map will now be broken into two projects—a web-based story map and a simple map handout.
 - iii. The subgroup, Sierra Nevada Forest Science Coordination Group, will address Sierra Nevada health science and management information related to tree mortality including identifying current research and monitoring projects, gaps in needed science, and priorities for funding.
 - iv. At recent work group meeting, Joe Sherlock, Regional Silviculturalist for USFS Region 5, presented on "A Modern-Era Reforestation Response to Stand-Replacement Disturbance." His strategy for reforestation will give the Working Group a starting point for developing a state-wide reforestation plan.



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- v. The reforestation workshops have been successful. Workshops El Dorado and Placer counties are planned. CFIP has \$2.40 million for eligible projects.
- vi. The work group has been tasked with synthesizing long-term studies on tree mortality incidents and aim to have a draft by June. While there are other examples, Sierra forests are unique in that they are not energy-limited systems.
- vii. The first draft of a reforestation handbook for is expected by the end of April; the previous edition of this handbook was completed in 1970.
- viii. Q: When is rate of mortality expected to slow? A: It is safe to assume that beetles will continue attacking trees for the next few years. Recent precipitation has helped. Mortality is likely going to increase until late summer and then there may be some slight leveling.
- ix. The Task Force needs to work with Public Outreach Working Group to recognize the end of drought conditions but continue to raise awareness of the public safety hazards associated with dead trees to keep social and political support for continuing mitigation efforts.
- g. Market Development Working Group (Evan Johnson)
 - i. This month the working group stepped back to reevaluate goals for the rest of the year; they will report back once they've completed this exercise.
 - ii. The Beck Report is completed but not yet finalized. The working group will determine how best to roll out and use the report's recommendations.

VII. County Updates

- The counties signed a letter this morning inviting the California State Senate and Assembly to collaborate on productive solutions regarding natural resource and public safety threats resulting from tree mortality.
 - Counties are determining what can be done over the long-term and need to utilize this crisis to manage the social and political will to manage our forests. A related need is to building awareness of tree mortality among urban residents.
 - AB 1066 currently under discussion at the legislature would impact counties' response efforts by making tree removal a public works project.
- a. Amador – Four projects currently under development or going out for bid.
 - b. Calaveras
 - i. Last week a contractor working on the Butte fire recovery died after being hit by a falling tree.
 - ii. Private enterprise is looking at a site in the county for the manufacture and marketing of wood pellets from bark beetle trees.
 - iii. ACIs are up and running
 - c. El Dorado
 - i. Match issue required by the CDAA funding is still a challenge for the county
 - ii. 6 projects have been identified, 2 of them are in operation.



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- d. Fresno – Starting outreach education programs for wildfire season.
- e. Kern –Working on four projects; three others awaiting right-of-entry.
- f. Madera –Losing drought funding has some immediate impacts on tree mortality work.
- g. Mariposa
 - i. Excited to have an ACI at a county landfill processing county and public tree mortality waste.
 - ii. The county sent individual letters to the author of AB 1066.
 - iii. Had very successful reforestation workshop in March
- h. Placer –Will be working to get ACI up and running.
- i. Tulare
 - i. Three projects going now. ACI has just been sited.
 - ii. Challenged with getting logs moved off monument and wilderness lands as 80%+ of tree mortality is on USFS lands. USFS can fell the trees, but don't have NEPA to remove them. Felled trees are a residual fuel hazard. Tulare has contactor that is willing take 500 tons of debris for free and transport them should this material become available.
- j. Tuolumne – Concerns over lack of public awareness and constraints on available workforce due to LTO/tree contractor licensing issues.

VIII. Closing Comments

- a. Saul Gomez
 - i. To dos: Get LTO issue resolved, work with insurance sub-group, work with public outreach on how to best message public expectations beyond the drought, determine how best to bring in CAISO to TMTF meetings.
 - ii. Suggested TMTF is not a forum to discuss legislation. Invited members to lobby him directly on legislation.
- b. Ken Pimlott
 - i. Public outreach is number one focus starting with wildfire awareness week in May.
 - ii. Governor's budget currently includes funding to restore reforestation nursery operations at the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center in Davis.
- c. Jon Moore – no closing comments.