



Tree Mortality Task Force Forest Health and Resilience Working Group Minutes

February 1, 2017

CAL FIRE FRAP Office, 1300 U Street, Sacramento, CA

- I. **FHRWG Member Roll Call:** Stewart McMorrow (CAL FIRE), Dr. Chris Fettig (USFS-PSW), Paul Mason (PFT), Cedric Twight (SPI), Margarita Gordus (DFW), John Amodio (YSS), Larry Camp (FLOC), Rich Wade (BOF), Dr. Chris Keithley (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Susie Kocher (UCCE), Staci Heaton (RCRC), Neil Pilegard (Tulare Co.), Clair Jahns (CNRA), David Pegos (CDFA), Dr. Tom Smith (CAL FIRE), and Pete Cafferata (CAL FIRE).

FHRWG Participants: Coreen Francis (BLM), Tadashi Moody (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Kelly Larvie (CAL FIRE-FRAP), Eric Huff (CAL FIRE), Heather Williams (CAL FIRE), Dr. Russ Henly (CNRA), Liz van Wagtendonk (SNC), Dr. Jodi Axelson (UC Berkeley), Chris Fischer (USFS), and James Savage (BLM).

- II. **Approval of January 2017 Meeting Minutes:** All concurred to approve the January meeting minutes. Minutes from past FHRWG meetings are posted on the TMTF website: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/workinggroups>

- III. **Continued Discussion on the Draft “Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration” Document**

John Amodio began the discussion on the draft white paper he and Larry Camp wrote titled “Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration” by thanking everyone who participated in the review process. He stated that (1) the main purpose is to get the word out to the Governor that the Sierra Nevada needs rapid assistance, (2) it aligns well with the draft California Forest Carbon Plan, and (3) a key value of the paper is to have agreement from the broad array of stakeholders represented on the FHRWG. He stressed that it is imperative to move forward by “finding a sweet spot” that all can agree with for the document.

With that introduction, the group began to edit the document page by page, seeking closure on unresolved concerns. Some of the key issues that were discussed included:

- The SNC’s Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) is only a framework without a mechanism to prioritize activities. There was broad agreement that the WIP is a good starting point, but not the total answer. The language in the document was modified to reflect this concern.
- At Chris Fettig’s suggestion, language was modified to state that the Sierra Nevada is at risk of not providing the same ecological goods and services that we have come to expect, rather than saying it is on a trajectory that is ecologically unsustainable.



Additionally, Chris suggested adding a sentence stating that fuel reduction treatments are typically accomplished with few unintended ecological consequences.

- Tadashi Moody agreed to supply language to add on the cost of fighting mega-fires.
- We modified the document to correctly state that lack of funding and staff have made reforestation difficult, except on private timberlands, where it is rapidly completed.
- We corrected the number of days the fire season has been expanded in the Sierra Nevada (75 days instead of 105 days).
- Language was added indicating that an improved capability to forecast air quality conditions would support an increased pace and scale of prescribed fire use in the Sierra Nevada.
- We added references where they were missing from the document, many of which were supplied by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Brittany Covich.
- The group agreed to split the references into those actually cited in the document, and those that supply additional information on the forest health and ecological restoration topics discussed in the paper.

The FHRWG co-leaders agreed to make all the changes discussed at this meeting, send the revised draft to John Amodio and Larry Camp for their concurrence, distribute the new draft as a pdf file to the FHRWG for their review (without further comments), and send it to the TMTF co-leaders, Gabe Schultz and Rick Carr, for their determination if a CAL FIRE green sheet review is required prior to release to the TMTF. If a minority report is determined to be required by FHRWG members, it must be submitted to the TMTF co-leaders by February 10, 2017.

IV. **Continued Discussion on the Tree Mortality Seed Zone Mapping Project**

Due to the limited meeting time remaining, there was very little discussion of the Tree Mortality Seed Zone Mapping Project. The FHRWG co-leaders sent the final draft product produced by Emily Meriam to the TMTF co-leaders for their review and approval prior to release to the TMTF. Gabe Schultz and Rick Carr requested:

- A different title: "Tree Mortality Impacts on California Seed Zones" (instead of "California Tree Seed Zones Tree Mortality 2012-2016").
- Additional verbiage clarifying what the map and table displays, and why it is useful to resource professionals and others.
- Clarification on whether the 2012-2016 ADS information includes all of the 2016 data that was released in mid-November 2016.

The FHRWG co-leaders will make these changes and resubmit it to the TMTF co-leaders, so that it can be released widely in a timely manner.



V. **New Business**

Stewart McMorrow stated that a key agenda item for the March FHRWG meeting will be to plan what the group wants to work on for the remainder of 2017.

John Amodio asked if the FHRWG co-leaders could ask Gabe Schultz and Rick Carr to attend the March meeting to provide an update on all the TMTF activities occurring with the seven working groups, and to help plan future FHRWG work projects.

Kelly Larvie, CAL FIRE-FRAP, stated that she would convene an Emerging Remote Sensing Technologies sub-working group meeting in the first two weeks of February. Susie Kocher and Larry Camp are the FHRWG participants.

The Little Hoover Commission met on January 26th at the State Capital to learn about California's response to the tree mortality crisis in the Sierra Nevada, including considerable discussion about the TMTF and its working groups. Speakers included Dr. Scott Stephens, UC Berkeley; Director Ken Pimlott, CAL FIRE; Director Mark Ghilarducci, Cal OES; Deputy Secretary Ashely Conrad-Saydah, Cal EPA; Director Malcolm Dougherty, Caltrans; Executive Officer Jim Branham, SNC; and Executive Director Karen Buhr, CARCD. FHRWG member Paul Mason provided input to the Commission during the public comment period.

For additional information on this hearing, see:

<http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/activestudies/forestmanagement/forestmanagement.html>

The agenda, with links to each speaker's written testimony, is posted at: <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/studies/agendas/Jan17.html>

A video recording of the hearing is posted at:

http://calchannel.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=7&clip_id=4097

VI. **Next FHRWG Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on March 1st at 2:00 p.m. at the CAL FIRE FRAP office.