Charter and Operation Guides for the
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Native American Advisory Council

Revised Date: January 10, 2018

The Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) authorizes the creation of a Native American Advisory Council (NAAC) to advise the Director and Department on Native American issues. This charter and policy statement provides the NAAC with its purpose and operational guidelines.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Native American Advisory Council is to assist the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in establishing a cooperative and meaningful relationship with California Native American tribes. A positive relationship will facilitate the Department’s work toward achieving its goals and objectives while protecting places of significance to California Native American tribes and actively involving tribes in all aspects of the Department’s responsibilities that affect California Native Americans.

Membership:

The NAAC shall consist of nine appointed voting members plus two non-voting agency officials. The agency officials or their designees shall attend NAAC meetings to provide support, information, and policy direction. The nine appointed members shall be Native Americans and shall represent Native American interests statewide. These members shall be appointed by the CAL FIRE Director to serve at his or her pleasure for a term not to exceed four years. A member may be re-appointed at the end of the four-year term.

CAL FIRE shall attempt to appoint members from within several different geographical areas across the state. CAL FIRE considers other types of representation by including members from federally recognized as well as non-recognized tribes to ensure statewide representation. CAL FIRE shall attempt to recruit members from key Native American groups known to have an interest in the Department’s programs, which might have members interested in serving on the council.

If an appointed member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, he or she shall designate an alternate to attend and shall notify CAL FIRE of the name of the alternate that will be attending the meeting. The alternate shall have the authority to vote. The two non-voting members shall include the Executive Secretary of the Native American Heritage Commission and the CAL FIRE Deputy Director for Resource Management. These agency officials may appoint designees to attend meetings in their absence.
Membership Expectations:

Appointed members of the NAAC are expected to make every effort to attend the scheduled meetings and participate in the actions that follow. Members that must miss a scheduled meeting are encouraged to select a designee to attend a meeting in the member’s absence. Members are expected to provide CAL FIRE with their current email address and telephone numbers to use for communications and to promptly notify CAL FIRE if these addresses or numbers change. CAL FIRE expects members to promptly respond to email and telephone communications from CAL FIRE and the NAAC chairperson.

Members are also expected to make efforts to communicate with other Native American groups and individuals throughout the geographic or demographic area the member represents. This communication shall notify Native American communities about the existence of the NAAC, shall collect information from them to bring to meetings, and shall report back following meetings. The nine NAAC members are intended to represent Native American interests throughout the State, not just within their own tribal group.

Chairperson and Vice Chairperson:

The NAAC, in consultation with CAL FIRE, shall designate a chairperson and vice-chairperson from the nine voting members to develop meeting agendas and preside over the meetings. The chairperson may appoint ad hoc committees to assist in the council’s work product and reports.

Meeting Frequency:

The NAAC shall meet as often as necessary, but at least twice per year. The optimum schedule is to hold at least three face-to-face meetings per year. Conference calls between NAAC members and CAL FIRE staff may occur to develop meeting agendas, assign tasks, and coordinate schedules for deliverables. Early in the calendar year, the NAAC shall schedule the entire year’s meeting dates in advance to enable members of the public to plan to attend.

Meeting Time and Location:

Some of the meetings shall be held at CAL FIRE’s Sacramento Headquarters, since this is a central location and meeting rooms are easily obtained at little or no cost. The NAAC will hold periodic meetings at locations throughout the State to encourage attendance from local Native American communities. Any meetings involving field visits or evaluations shall have prior approval of the CAL FIRE Director.

Public Notice:

NAAC meetings are not subject to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act (Government §Code § 11120-11132).
Rules of Order:

The chairperson shall conduct the meetings in accordance with this charter and with Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure. Where conflicts exist between the two, the charter presides.

Quorum:

A quorum shall consist of a minimum of five voting members. If the meeting location has facilities to support members participating through telephone, a member participating by telephone may count in an assessment of quorum, as long as that member remains on the line.

Agenda:

The NAAC chairperson shall develop the agenda for meetings in consultation with CAL FIRE staff. The chairperson shall have final approval of meeting dates and agenda items.

Travel Expenses:

CAL FIRE staff shall prepare travel expense claims after each meeting based upon information provided by NAAC members and shall ensure travel reimbursement checks are mailed to members after they are issued. NAAC members shall consult with CAL FIRE to obtain the necessary guidance regarding travel reimbursement procedures.

Funding:

CAL FIRE shall establish an account to reimburse NAAC members for travel expenses within the per diem rates currently set for State employees. The total cost of these travel reimbursements shall not exceed the total account encumbered for NAAC travel expenses, unless authorized in advance by the CAL FIRE Director. CAL FIRE shall provide operating expenses for the conduct of meetings within the guidelines of the State Administrative Manual and applicable laws and regulations.

Council Goals and Objectives:

At the beginning of each calendar year, the NAAC shall develop a list of goals and objectives it seeks to accomplish during the year. This list shall be submitted to the CAL FIRE Director by March 1 of each year.

Council Staffing:

CAL FIRE will provide staffing assistance within the resources available to provide recording of minutes, with copies to the members, and to complete other administrative work needed to support the council. CAL FIRE staff shall contact NAAC members to mail the notice and agenda, and make arrangements to secure an appropriate meeting site.
Reporting:

The CAL FIRE Deputy Director of Resource Management or representative attending the meetings shall report issues, findings, and recommendations to the CAL FIRE Director. The NAAC shall submit an annual report to the Director that describes the accomplishments specified in the list of goals and objectives submitted earlier in the year. The annual report is due by January 30 of the following year. The NAAC may deliver periodic reports to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, as requested by the Director.

Approved by:

Ken Pimlott, Director
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Approval date: 1/12/18