



Tree Mortality Task Force Monthly Update

APRIL 28, 2017

HIGHLIGHTS

- On April 14, the TMTF co-sponsored a well-attended workshop with California Office of Emergency Services on County Tree Mortality Mitigation Efforts. Representatives from the counties, CAL FIRE, USFS, and PG&E gave very informative presentations which can be reviewed here: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/reports##1>.
- The Public Outreach Working Group and CAL FIRE's public information office launched a landowner assistance component to the public education website: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Landowner-Assistance-0/>. The website contains resources on reforestation, grants, insurance, utilities, and county tree mortality efforts.
- The Mapping and Monitoring Working Group published a summary of current estimates of tree mortality and high hazard zones, entitled, "Tree Mortality: Facts and Figures." The mortality data is based on the U.S. Forest Service Aerial Detection Survey flown on all forested areas of the State each year. It will be updated as new information is made available. http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Facts_and_Figures_April_2017.pdf
- The Forest Health and Resilience Working Group published a white paper titled "Recommendations for Comprehensive Sierra Nevada Ecological Restoration": http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/TMTF_Comprehensive_Sierra_Ecological_Restoration_FINAL_4-5-17.pdf. The brief summarizes the working group's recommendations on what is needed to restore and maintain the health and resiliency of California's forests.
- Reforestation workshops for forest land owners and consulting RPF's have been held in Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Madera counties. These well-received workshops have shared lessons learned from other mortality events, reforestation basics, and reforestation cost share opportunities. The next workshop is scheduled for May 31 in Amador County. http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFResources/Amador_Reforestation_Workshop_5_31_17.pdf

CURRENT TREE MORTALITY CONDITIONS

- 102,000,000 dead trees since 2010

MAIN TASK FORCE REPORT

- The next Task Force meeting will be held on Monday, May 8 from 1:00-3:00 P.M.



WORKING GROUP REPORTS

Forest Health and Resilience

(Pete Cafferata/ Stewart McMorrow)

- Work on the tree mortality seed zone map continues. CAL FIRE Executive review of the February version of the map determined that the following changes were required: (1) simplify the map and make it less technical for public dissemination, (2) remove the table and revise the narrative, (3) make it consistent with the current CAL FIRE Prepare for Bark Beetle and Defensible Space campaigns (i.e., color, font), and (4) remove the region colors and calculate the seed zones by acreage of mortality using the 2012-2016 ADS data. Changes to the map are in progress. The map is intended to be used as a tool for public education, as well as for identification of target areas for conifer cone collection and subsequent reforestation planning.
- The Sierra Forest Science Coordination sub-working group has been formed to (1) identify existing interests/needs for science and management information related to tree mortality, (2) identify ongoing research and monitoring projects that address these interests, and (3) determine where gaps exist, funneling existing funding to appropriate projects. Currently 13 people from 8 organizations have volunteered to participate, primarily with conference calls, which have yet to commence.
- A draft outline has been produced for a FHRWG white paper addressing the long-term outlook for Sierra Nevada forests. A synthesis of relevant studies will be produced addressing (1) how do large scale beetle mortality events end? and (2) what are the long-term changes in forest composition that will occur? Dr. Jodi Axelson, UC Berkeley, is providing the FHRWG with information, including providing a PowerPoint presentation at the May FHRWG meeting on stand dynamics and regeneration after disturbance. Additionally, the FHRWG co-leaders are collecting relevant literature addressing how forests are expected to adapt to climate change. A draft white paper is to be completed by August 2017, with anticipated CAL FIRE-FRAP assistance.
- The FHRWG is continuing to work on developing a comprehensive reforestation strategy for non-federal forestlands in California impacted by beetle mortality and fire. Input has been provided by Joe Sherlock, USFS Regional Silviculturalist (R5) at the March FHRWG meeting. Additionally, the FHRWG co-leaders, Dr. Tom Smith, and Kevin Conway met with Dr. Steve Ostojka, Director, USDA California Climate Hub, to begin a dialogue on reforestation strategies. He is working with the USFS on co-hosting a workshop on reforestation that will address the science known and expected to interface with future California forests.

Mapping and Monitoring

(Mark Rosenberg/Carly Gibson)

- This year's Aerial Detection Survey for tree mortality is planned for July, 2017 if weather and ground conditions are favorable. Data for the High Priority Counties in the Southern and Central Sierra Nevada will be processed and released soon after it is captured, with expected release in August. CAL FIRE is working with the USFS to fund a second flight in high priority areas scheduled for the fall.



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- A process for local designation of Tier 2 High Hazard Zones is being used in Tuolumne and Shasta Counties to help pilot test the process. These designations use local evaluation of conditions based on established criteria and requires approval of the Local CAL FIRE Unit Chief and USFS Forest Supervisor. A web based application to support the process is planned.
 - The MMWG is supporting the Forest Health and Public Outreach Work Groups with a web based story map addressing education for landowners to reforest their lands using tree seedlings from appropriate seed zones.
 - The MMWG is collaborating with CALTRANS to evaluate appropriate techniques for estimating dead trees to help guide their contracting process.
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[http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Facts and Figures April 2017.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/treetaskforce/downloads/TMTFMaterials/Facts_and_Figures_April_2017.pdf)

Regulations

(Matthew Reischman)

- The RWG Insurance Subgroup will be meeting regularly via conference calls from 1:00-2:00 occurring every other Thursday, beginning on Thursday, May 4th.
- The CAL FIRE FRAP program met with the Special Information Group (SIG) to discuss the proposed insurance pilot project. SIG may be able to provide contractual support to the effort because the current FRAP workload is high and progress on the pilot has been slow. FRAP is developing a scope of work and will discuss options with SIG for involvement.
- Discussions regarding relaxing the licensing requirements between licensed timber operators (LTOs) and tree service contractors are ongoing between CAL FIRE and the California State Licensing Board. The Counties have made this request to increase the pool of available contractors for their hazard tree removal projects.

Utilization – Bioenergy

(Angie Lottes)

- BioMAT Interconnection (Order 10): PG&E employees met with representatives for 7 BioMAT category 3 projects to discuss information presented in each project's System Impact Study, a document that estimates costs to the project for upgrading the electric grid to be able to accept power from the project. Problems were identified and the utility is forming responses to the questions to be presented in a later meeting. This work is being done to reduce total cost of upgrades. The group is also considering changes that would change the responsible party for covering upgrade costs.



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- Sacramento will be hosting sustainable forest biomass researchers and community-scale project representatives from across California and the Western US May 16 - 17th at the Embassy Suites on Capitol Mall in Sacramento. This program has brought together two free annual events, the Sierra Institute's [Rural Community Development Initiative](#) featuring community scale wood products developments and Humboldt State University's [Waste to Wisdom](#) annual research meeting, in one place. You are invited to learn about these efforts and participate in dialogue about sustainable biomass harvest, use, impacts, and opportunities in California. The links below will take you to the agenda for each event.
[Rural Community Development Initiative Registration, May 16 - 17](#)
[Waste to Wisdom Registration, May 17](#)

Utilization – Market Development **(Evan Johnson)**

- The Beck report has been returned to the Beck Group to clean up formatting issues. Once that is complete, a remote presentation by the authors will be scheduled. The Market Development Working Group will then generate a brief white paper summarizing and building upon the recommendations contained in this report.

Public Outreach **(Daniel Berlant/Staci Heaton)**

- The Public Outreach Working Group and CAL FIRE's public information office launched a landowner assistance component to the public education website: <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/Landowner-Assistance-0/>. The website contains resources on reforestation, grants, insurance, utilities, and county tree mortality efforts.
- The Landowner Assistance Sub-Working Group has completed its county needs assessment survey to identify unmet needs in their hazard tree mitigation programs. The group is working on identifying key gaps from this assessment and determining ways to best provide support to address these gaps.

Resource Allocation **(Thom Porter/Tom Lutzenberger)**

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- An air curtain incinerator (ACI) has been transferred from CAL FIRE to the County of Calaveras to support disposal of material from hazard tree removal projects. The ACI will be located at the Red Hill Landfill and will be operated and maintained by the County for the term of the lease. A ceremonial transfer of keys and operational display of the equipment will occur at the Red Hill landfill on May 10 at 1:00 PM. This is the first transfer of tree mortality task force equipment to a County.

APPROVED CALIFORNIA DISASTER ACT FUNDING APPLICATIONS

- **Approved CDAA Applications:** El Dorado County, Fresno County, Madera County, Mariposa County, Tulare County, Tuolumne County, Big Creek School District, Chawanakee Unified School District, Curtis Creek School District, Tuolumne Utilities District, Twain Harte Community Services District, Columbia Public Cemetery District, Pine Ridge Elementary School District, Tehachapi Valley Recreation and Park District, Amador County, Placer County, Calaveras County, Halcumb Cemetery District, Amador County Water Agency
- **Submitted CDAA Applications:** Calaveras Public Utility District, El Dorado Irrigation District, & Belleview Elementary School District.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Placer, Tulare, Tuolumne, Nevada County.
- **County Tree Mortality Task Forces:** Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Placer, Tulare, Tuolumne.

TREE MORTALITY RESPONSE FUNDING

On Monday, June 27th, Governor Brown signed the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year (FY) Budget. The 16-17 FY Budget includes a one-time increase of \$11 million General Fund dollars for CAL FIRE to assist in the removal and disposal of trees in high hazard areas. This includes:

- \$6 million for the California Conservation Corps and grants to local entities, including local government, fire districts, local conservation corps, tribal entities, and fire safe councils, to provide support to local efforts to remove hazardous trees that pose a threat to public health and safety.
- \$5 million to support additional miscellaneous equipment, personnel overtime for foresters, hand crews, engine companies, and heavy equipment operators, for hazardous tree removal and fuels reduction efforts.



The 16-17 FY Budget also includes:

- \$10 million one-time funding in grants from the State Responsibility Area fund, with \$5 million of that being dedicated for tree mortality related work.
- The Budget also includes \$31.6 million for the Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to provide assistance to counties through the California Disaster Assistance Act.

EQUIPMENT ALLOCATION AND TRAINING

CAL FIRE Tree Mortality Equipment Allocation:											
County Name (CAL FIRE Uni)	Delivered	Kern (KRN)	Tulare (TUU)	Fresno (FKU)	Madera (MMU)	Mariposa (MMU)	Tuolumne (TCU)	Calaveras (TCU)	Amador (AEU)	El Dorado (AEU)	Placer (NEU)
Burner Module A (2):											
3 Fire Box (burners)	6			3	2	1					
1 Track Loader	2			1	1						
1 Wheel Loader	2			1	1						
Burner Module B (2):											
2 Fire Box (burners)	4		2					2			
1 Track Loader	2		1					1			
1 Wheel Loader	2		1					1			
Single Resources:											
Masticator (2)	2			1	1						
Track Chipper (10)	10	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1		
Tow Chipper (6)	6		1	1		1	1	1	1		
Sawmill (5)	4		1	1	1			1			

TREE MORTALITY RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

California's Tree Mortality Information Clearinghouse for Stakeholders

www.treetaskforce.org

California's Tree Mortality Information Clearinghouse for the Public

www.prepareforbarkbeetle.org

California's Tree Mortality Viewer

egis.fire.ca.gov/TreeMortalityViewer/

United States Forest Service-California Tree Mortality Information

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/CATreeMortality>