BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

Sacramento, CA

March 6, 2024

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**

**Present:**

* Vice Chair Elizabeth Forsburg-Pardi
* Mike Jani
* J. Lopez
* Rich Wade
* Dawn Blake
* Katie Delbar

**Absent:**

* Chris Chase

**BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
* Jeff Slaton, Senior Board Counsel
* Robert Roth, Board Counsel
* Jane Van Susteren, Senior Environmental Scientist
* Anna Castro, Executive Assistant
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
* Alexandra La Plante, Administrative Unit Manager
* Macey Yates, Staff Service Manager, Land Use Planning
* Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT:**

* Joe Tyler, Director/Fire Chief, CAL FIRE
* Anale Burlew, Chief Deputy Director, CAL FIRE
* Matthew Reischman, Deputy Director Resource Management, CAL FIRE
* Eric Huff, Assistant Deputy Director, Forest Practice Program, CAL FIRE

**Announcement of Action(s) Taken in Executive Session:**

Jeff Slaton, Senior Counsel for the Board reported that during executive closed session the Board discussed the item on the agenda, and no reportable actions were taken.

**Consent Calendar:**

**03-06-01 Vice-Chair Forsburg-Pardi moves to accept items on the Consent Calendar as noticed above. Member Delbar seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Absent**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Report of the Vice Chair, Forsburg-Pardi**

Vice-Chair thanked former Chairman Gilless for his 13 years of service on the Board.

**Report of the Director, Joe Tyler, Director, CAL FIRE**

Resource Protection and Improvement Program

Urban and Community Forestry

* The Council of Western State Foresters, Urban and Community Forestry Coordinators met at Sacramento headquarters on February 27-29, 2024.
* Urban and Community Forestry Grant Guidelines for the United States Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act funding are being completed. A solicitation for a proposal is anticipated to open by February 29, 2024, and close at the end of April 2024.

Demonstration State Forests

Jackson

* The proposed JAG meeting dates for the coming year were issued via press release on February 7, 2024, and are as follows: Thursday, March 7, 2024, Friday, May 9, 2024, Friday, July 12, 2024, Friday, September 13, 2024, Friday, November 15, 2024
* The goal is to give great notice and to find and ensure that CAL FIRE improves its transparency and community engagement during these meetings.
* The March 7, 2024, meeting has been postponed to May. The reason for the postponement is to ensure that the Board had the chance to approve two of the new nominees to the JAG, as well as working through the process of appointing a new chairperson and looking at some revisions to the charter that would delineate the responsibilities of the Department, the Director, and the Board of Forestry. Also, to make sure the JAG members have a clear understanding of Bagley-Keene and that they understand of our requirements of equal opportunity laws to avoid any issues.
* A mix of 20,000 seed grown redwood trees and 10,000 redwood clones were planted in the Chamberlain Confluence Timber Harvest Plan (THP) (1-17-140 MEN). Planting was completed by local reforestation contractor Vasquez Reforestation from January 10-24, 2024.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection

Prescribed Fire Program

* There are 83 approved reservations in the Prescribed Fire Liability Claims Fund covering 12,489 acres. This is a pilot program that will run out in 2028.

Cultural Resources Program

* The next full Certified Archaeological Surveyor class is April 15-19, 2024. Another class is scheduled for October 7-11, 2024. Both classes are full. Those interested being on the waiting list may contact the California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA)
* Archaeological Recertification classes are scheduled for April 23-24 and November 6-7, 2024. Both classes are being offered in Anderson, California.

Wildfire Resilience Program

Reforestation Services Program

* The Statewide Reforestation Coordinator is continuing efforts to establish a reforestation effectiveness monitoring program. This will be developed alongside other Resource Management programs as part of the CAL FIRE Monitoring Working Group as well as through a “huddle” led by American Forests. This huddle will include other government agency and private sector partners.
* A Seed Production Area is being established on Miller DSF to ensure a Consistent supply of low-elevation ponderosa pine seed for future reforestation needs.
* 2024 sowing has commenced at the L.A. Moran Reforestation Center (LAMRC) produce the first 160,000 of 290,000 seedlings for production in 2024. That is 40,000 seedlings above and beyond the max capacity of that existing structure.

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

* In January 2023, CFIP awarded ten new agreements totaling $1.4 million for reforestation and forest health projects on 775 acres. Grant agreements are being completed now.

Forest Stewardship

* A new solicitation to award $8 million in Wildfire Resilience Block Grants opened January 29, 2024, and closed February 26, 2024. Applications are under review. Preliminary review of proposals received shows an impressive level of interest with 33 proposals for this opportunity.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

* The program is planning a state funding solicitation for the spring of 2024. Approximately $10 million in funding will be made available.

Climate and Energy Program

Wood Products & Bioenergy

* Hosted an applicant workshop for the Business and Workforce Development grant solicitation on February 6, 2024, with approximately 100 attendees.

Forest Health

* Forest Health and Post-Fire Reforestation & Regeneration grant solicitation closed on January 15, 2024. Application review is underway and expected to make award decisions late March 2024.
* Forest Health and Wood Products presented at the Sierra Cascade Logging Conference on February 9, 2024. Topics included the status of the grant solicitations and a brief overview of the Interagency Treatment Dashboard.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

* The next Task Force meeting is the Southern California Regional Meeting, Thursday, April 4, 2024, at San Diego Zoo Wild Animal Park in Escondido with field tours on Friday, April 5, 2024. Registration will open the first week of March 2024.

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

* Forest Health Research Grant program was open in January 2024, and received 85 concept proposals requesting a total of $42 million. Concepts are under review by an interagency technical review panel, and a subset will be invited back in March 2024 to submit a full proposal. We intend to award approximately 11 awards for scientific research projects addressing wildfire and forest management for $4.5 million.

Fire Protection Program

Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

* CAL FIRE Law Enforcement officers have received training on and have been issued body-worn cameras.

Fire Protection Operations

* The University of Washington, which received a CAL FIRE grant to process LIDAR data down to the tree approximate object level, has given CAL FIRE data on most of the forested areas of the entire state from 2019. This will be used as a baseline to show the effects of the 2020 fire season.
* CAL FIRE Hired Equipment program is working with the USFS VIPR (Virtual Incident Procurement) program to make it easier the USFS to utilize vendors hired under a CAL FIRE agreement.

Aviation Management Unit (AMU)/Tactical Air Operations (TAO)

* AMU is in the process of retrofitting the first of seven C-130H Air Tankers with the Retardant Delivery System.
* AMU is working with Business Service Office to secure 2024 Fire Season Exclusive Use aerial asses by March 2024.
* All five 24-hour bases will be available for night response this fire season. All 10 of the bases will be trained but 5 will be staffed because they have been funded for their staffing.
* Night flight training is done over the Folsom Lake area.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Local Government Program

* The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) met on January 25, 2024. Agenda items include paramedic training and retention, employee benefit rate projections, and the 2024 Local Government Workshop (Virtual). A sub-committee was added under LGAC for Paramedic Training and Retention.

State/Federal Programs

* Relationships with other countries like Portugal, Japan, Costa Rica, Chile, and Spain continue to build.

Hand Crews

* CAL FIRE currently has 106 of the 236 allocated Type I Hand Crews staffed.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Wildfire Risk Reduction

Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee:

* Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee is meeting again on March 19, 2024, where the Committee will receive a presentation from Pacific Gas & Electric, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Southern California Edison on ignition trends and an update on wildfire mitigation efforts.
* For information on this monthly meeting, visit their website at: <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/boards-committees/wildfire-mitigation-advisory-committee/>

Wildfire Planning and Statistics

Fire Hazard Severity Zones:

* The State Responsibility Areas (SRA) regulation was approved by the Office of Administrative Law on January 31, 2024, and will become effective April 1, 2024.

Pre-Fire Planning

* 5-year SRA review will begin spring 2024, to be concluded June 2025. Expect rollout early to Units & Contact Counties this spring.

Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

* Currently 784 communities in good standing. This number may fluctuate over the next few weeks as we work with NFPA to finalize the yearly renewals.

Wildfire Prevention Grants Program (Burke)

* FY 2023-24 Wildfire Prevention Grants closed on January 10, 2024.
* Received 224 applications requesting $254,242,614.85 in funding.
* Unite reviews are underway as of February 20, 2024.

Communications

* California Arbor Week is March 7-14, 2024. CAL FIRE will partner with California ReLeaf to celebrate trees with a press conference in Los Angeles where the winners of a statewide youth art contest will be announced. A video featuring the art contest winners and a video showing how to plant a tree will be released.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program (DEI)

* To celebrate Black History Month, CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit Chief, Baraka Carter, participated in the Secretary Speakers series alongside other Agency leaders on February 27, 2024. The Session dove into the profound history and impactful contributions of the Black community, heritage, and the continuous pursuit of equity.
* CNRA has actively collaborated with Equity Leads and is nearing completion of the 2023 Draft Equity Year in Review. This document underscores the praiseworthy endeavors of the organizations under the Agency umbrella in promoting equity, environmental justice and tribal affairs across California. It also features the noteworthy accomplishments of the department in 2023.
* In response to California's budget deficit, the department has faced the challenging necessity of delaying the 2024 Camp Cinder (CAL FIRE’s free firefighter camp for young women aged 16-18). Despite this setback, the Department’s commitment to the Camp Cinder program remains steadfast and we express gratitude for the efforts already invested in preparing for the 2024 camps.
* CAL FIRE as of December of 2023 only had 5.16% of our department were women in Safety Classifications that include firefighters and registered Professional Foresters.

**Board Comments:**

* Vice Chair Pardi thanked Director Tyler for his report.
* Member Lopez asked if the process against the infestation of the Gold Spotted Oak Borer has started.
  + Director stated that he has faith in working with the county and CAL FIRE to do our best to contain the infestation.

**Public Comment:**

* George Gentry, CalForests, commented on the VIPR Program, if there will be a California specific agreement and what kind of timelines. George asked if there is more in details that director could share.
  + Director stated that the biggest challenge of the VIPR Program is that it’s a national contracting program vs a State contracting program. What we recognized is when we have VIPR resources that are hired under VIPR that meet the expectation and need of California but what was happening before was the resources were getting demobilized from the incident and then immediately getting remobilized into State incidents. So, by changing our own obstacles and policies we can just transition them more cleanly across. This is still work in progress with transitioning HEMS resources or Hired Equipment Management Systems, State contracting hire equipment management system into VIPR.
* Larry Aguilar, Save Jackson Coalition, shared that he sent out a letter to the Board for review regarding his coalition being against cutting trees.
* Edwina Lincoln shared regarding the Jackson Demonstration Forest. She stated that there have been several issues in native country. Stated she has been working with her tribal government to be able to get a representative to bring all the tribes together to try to get an agreement on a management plan.
* Karen Pitts stated she shares Edwina Lincoln’s views. She wants to know how the Jackson Forest is going to be managed. She feels that there is a violation in the AB 52 as well as other laws under her tribal government.
* John Armstrong shared his view on the forest plantations.
* Richard Gienger asked if the consulting positions have been filled. Also, he shared his views on JAG’s appointments and other issues that have not been resolved.
* Karen Pickett commented on the Jackson Demonstration State Forest regarding JAG to reach decision by consensus and therefore improper for the Board to decide on the Camp One THP. Also commented that there must be a co-management agreement with the tribes in place before any new Timber Harvest Plans are approved and a new management plan is in place.

**Executive Officer Report, Edith Hannigan, Executive Officer**

* Staffing Update
  + There is a new Wildfire Planning Specialist starting April 1, 2024, to assist Marcie Yates in the Land Use Planning Program.
* Annual Report
  + The report is still in progress.
* Legislative Report
  + The new Legislative report is in the Board members binders. Updated for the new Legislative session.

**Report of the Regulations Coordinator, Jane Van Susteren**

The Board wrote a letter to CNDDB concerning the cost of CNDDB for small landowners. The Board directed this item to the Forest Practice Committee for further consideration.

**Board Comments:**

* Member Jani commented on how 1492 funds can be utilized. He stated this is why 1492 was created.
  + Executive Officer stated that it is one of the things that will be discussed in the meeting.

**Public Comment:**

* Larwence Camp, Register Professional Forester, landowner, stated he is not happy with the response time from the Board and stated his frustration with the lack of information from the department.

**Report of the Standing Committees**

**Forest Practice Committee, Rich Wade, Chair**

The Forest Practice Committee met yesterday and discussed the five items on the agenda.

**Management Committee, Elizabeth Forsburg Pardi, member**

The Management Committee met yesterday and discussed the three matters on the agenda.

**Resources Protection Committee, J. Lopez, Chair**

The Resource Protection Committee met yesterday and had presentation from the land use planning program and update from Deputy Chief Carmel Barnhart.

**Public Comment:**

* Richard Gienger stated he missed the Management Report due to not being able to hear what was being said and ask for a recap.
  + Vice Chair Pardi gave Richard a recap of what was said.

**Report of the Board’s Advisory Committee**

**Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, Liz Forsburg-Pardi, Co-Chair**

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee still has open seats on the EMC. Information on nominating potential members is on the Board website.

* This year the EMC voted to recommended two proposals for funding for this fiscal year. The first proposal was focused on pre- and post-harvest fuel breaks. The second proposal was focused on Fire Hazard Risk Areas.
* In January’s meeting the EMC voted to prioritize four monitoring questions for next year request for proposals.
* The next EMC meeting will be held on Monday, June 17, 2024.

**Range Management Advisory Committee, Dr. Marc Horney, Co-Chair**

* The Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) would like the Board’s approval for a one-page guide to using grazing for fine fuels reduction developed by the RMAC and California Wool Growers Association to accompany a CAL FIRE fuels reduction guide for property owners.

**03-06-02 Member Delbar moves to approve the Prescribed Herbivory Informational Sheet as presented. Member Jani seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Absent**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Jackson Advisory Group, Edith Hannigan, Executive Officer**

Executive Officer Hannigan introduced the agenda request to approve resolution 2024-01 approving appointments by CAL FIRE Director of Jackson Advisory Group members.

**Public Comment:**

* Larry Aguilar made a comment as to why the same people are being appointed that have been running it when it doesn’t seem to be working.
* Karen Pitts shared that the tribes are underrepresented on the JAG.
* Edwina Lincoln stated that she feels we need to go back and focus on the JAG Board and for the tribes to have that representation. She stated that the tribes are not being contacted.
* Richard Gienger shared his view on Director’s appointments on the JAG. He shared that he feels that JAG and Jackson should be on the Management committee in April.
* Karen Pickett shared her view on the conflict of interest with John Anderson being re-appointed because he had a lawsuit against CAL FIRE over delays to his company’s logging plan. She also stated it’s time for new leadership at the JAG.

**Board Comment:**

* Member Jani commented that he agrees that a tribal representative should be on the JAG.
  + Executive Officer stated that the JAG charter consists of 6 to 13 members, and they are currently not at full capacity. There is room for further appointments to increase the number of active JAG members.

**03-06-03 Member Wade move to approve Board Resolution 2024-01 approving the appointments by the Director of CAL FIRE of George Hollister and John Anderson to the Jackson Advisory Group for three-year terms. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Absent**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**PRESENTATION**

* CAL FIRE Strategic Plan, Phyllis Banducci, CAL FIRE

**Public Comments:**

* Dominic Moreno, Sutter Creek Fire Protection District, commented on the CAL FIRE Strategic Plan that there are a few things it’s missing. For example, there is no fire prevention goal or management increase.

**PRESENTATION**

* Pacific Coast Regional Carbon report and AB 1504 carbon update, Nadia Tase, Climate Change & Forest Inventory Specialist, Fire & Resource Assessment Program, CAL FIRE

**Public Comments:**

* Dominic Moreno, Sutter Creek Fire Protection District commented on the Pacific Coast Regional Carbon report and AB 1504 carbon update.

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

* Dominic Moreno presented the Board with information on fire protection he has complied on the work his department provides.
* George Gentry, CalForests, commented on the Board’s history and purpose based on his years of experience with the Board.
* Richard Gienger, Forests Forever, agreed with George Gentry’s comments regarding the responsibility of the Board.

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Edith Hannigan Liz Forsburg-Pardi

Executive Officer Vice Chair