BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

Sacramento, CA

December 7, 2022

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**:

**Present:**

* Keith Gilless, Chairman
* Chris Chase, Acting Chairman
* Rich Wade
* Mike Jani
* Elizabeth Forsburg Pardi
* J. Lopez
* Dawn Blake
* Jeremiah Hallisey

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

* Katie Delbar

**BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Edith Hannigan, Executive Officer
* Dan Stapleton, Licensing Officer
* Jeff Slaton, Senior Board Counsel
* Robert Roth, Board Counsel
* Jane Van Susteren, Senior Environmental Scientist
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forester Assistant II
* Dr. Kristina Wolf, Environmental Scientist
* Claire McCoy, Wildfire Planning Specialist
* Laura Alarcon-Stalians, Administrative Manager
* Anna Castro, Executive Assistant

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT:**

* Joe Tyler, Director, CAL FIRE
* Dennis Hall, Assistant Deputy Director, Forest Practice Program, CAL FIRE
* Eric Huff, Staff Chief, Forest Practice Program, CAL FIRE
* Stacey Stanish, Forest Practice Biologist, CAL FIRE
* Ethan Gicker, FA II, Monitoring Specialist, CAL FIRE

**AGENCY STAFF PRESENT:**

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

Jeff Slaton, Senior Board Counsel, reported that the Board discussed two items on the agenda. During closed session the Board did not take any reportable actions on those items.

**Consent Calendar Items**

1. Approval of the November 2, 2022, meeting minutes with minor edits.
2. Review of Rulemaking Matrix with edit of added J. Lopez as the Chairman for Resources Protection Committee.
3. Request for re-appointment of Jason Poburko to the Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC)
4. Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation Academic Member Positions
   1. Reappointment of Dan Sanchez, UC Berkeley.
   2. Appointment of Mikhail Gershfeld, Cal Poly Pomona, TailWood Design Institute.

**12-07-01 Chairman Gilless moves to adopt the Consent Calendar as noticed. Member Lopez seconds the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Absent**

**Hallisey: Aye**

**Lopez: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Gilless: Aye**

**Wade: Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**MONTHLY BOARD REPORTS**

**Report of the Chairman, Dr. Keith Gilless**

No report.

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

Resource Management

Forest Practice Enforcement and Timber Operator Licensing (LTO)

* Enforcement Program staff are developing a scope-of-work for contracting of personal service to respondents of the Complaints and Proposed Orders (CPO). The Program has experienced recurring difficulty with service by mail in instances where respondents have chosen to ignore or avoid receipt of CPO service by mail.
* Planning has commenced for the annual CAL FIRE 2023 Forest Practice Enforcement Training of Unit Forest Practice and Fire Prevention staff.

Resource Protection and Improvement Program.

Urban and Community Forestry

* Interdepartmental and Interagency reviews of Urban and Community Forestry Grant guidelines are being reviewed and are receiving edits prior to the release of the guidelines for public comments.
* Ongoing conversations with the USDA Forest Service will result in an advice letter for CAL FIRE to apply for a portion of the $1.5 billion Urban and Community Forestry funding through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Encumbrance, award, expenditure, and liquidation terms and requirements are pending. Staff are tracking IRA encumbrances of $3 billion to the US Environmental Protection Agency to mitigate extreme heat and $3 billion to the US Department of Transportation for access to greenspace, parks, and other topics specific to Urban and Community Forestry.

Demonstration State Forests

Jackson

* The Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) met on November 15, 2022.
* Prescribed fire has been completed on 3 units of the Parlin timber harvest plan.

Forest Entomology and Pathology

* Bark beetle activity continues to increase around the state, particularly in the central and northern Sierra counties and around Clear Lake.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection

* The State Certified Prescribed Fire Burn Boss will have its fourth class offering for the initiation of task books on December 5-12, 2022. This program continues to help increase capacity needed to reach necessary pace and scale for prescribed burning in California.
* The Governors Prescribed Fire Task Force subgroup for a training center continues to build a proposal in compliance with the AB 624 which requires the State Fire Marshal, on or before July 1, 2023, to develop a proposal to establish a prescribed fire training center. The intent of developing a training center will be to build capacity and expertise in prescribed fire across California’s diverse landscapes and communities. The Center will involve private, tribal, state and federal partners.
* The US Forest Service released their response to the 90-day prescribed fire pause from Chief Randy Moore. The Forest Service is not back to full speed for prescribed fire yet on all forests in California but are working on the implementation of recommendations from Chief Moore. The report identified 7 key recommendations to improve the USFS prescribed fire program.

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

* The program continues to solicit applications on a 2-month cycle; however, the program is awaiting the introduction of the 22/23 Fiscal year funding to continue to fund projects.

Climate and Energy

Climate Change

* Staff have started gathering information in preparation for required semi-annual reporting due to the Air Resources Board at the end of December 2022.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

* The November 21st meeting was cancelled. The next meeting will be held in Calabasas, February 2-3, 2023. Dates and locations for all 2023 Task Force meetings are available on the Task Force website.

Forest Health

* The next Forest Health grant solicitation will open on December 15, 2022. It will include funding for 4 project types: Forest Health, Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration, Tribal Wildfire Resilience Implementation, and Tribal Wildfire Resilience Planning. Draft grant guidelines have been released to the public for a 30-day public comment period and formal consultation with tribes has been requested.

Wood Products and Bioenergy

* Program announced new awards of $14 million to business and workforce development projects, including $3 million to Sierra Pacific Industries to help develop a new seedling nursery in Siskiyou County that will produce up to 25 million trees annually.

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

* The model for Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) will be rolled out in 2023 for both SRA regulation and LRA recommendation. The updated and improved hazard assessment model considers local climate to describe specific fire weather scenarios and probabilities.
* FHSZ modeling has been completed for SRA lands and the data and maps are currently in the process of Regulation Approval by the Office of Administrative Law. Public Hearings for the regulation have been scheduled in all 56 counties that contain SRA and will be completed by mid-January. We anticipate FHSZ approval sometime in early 2023.

Fire Protection Operations

* Due to current and predicted weather and fuel conditions, on November 21, 2022, CAL FIRE down-staffed statewide from Peak Staffing Level (356 engines) to Transitional Staffing Level (243 engines-1 engine per station). In total 113 engines were down staffed.

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

* CAL FIRE S70i #11 is being accepted the week of December 12-16, 2022. CAL FIRE #12 is scheduled to be accepted in the late 2nd quarter of 2023. There are for additional that have been ordered, for a total of 16 S70i, helicopters that we might see by the end of next year. The 4 additional helicopters are not to be used on a day-to-day operational basis but to be able to rotate the helicopters in and out, so they are available with the in state long term vision of 24/7/365.
* The next C-130 Retardant Delivery System (RDS) Executive Steering Committee (ESC) occurred on November 30, 2022. Staff continue to hold ongoing discussions with the USAF to move the RDS modification from Lockheed Martin Greenville, SC to CAL FIRE AMU. The USAF, Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) who ensures the integrity of the contract requirements are being met in the new proposal conducted a site survey of CAL FIRE AMU facilities during November 29 through December 1, 2022. The first C-130H RDS completion is estimated for 1st quarter of 2024.
* Continue to work with our Military partners and Coast Guard partners out of Alameda to offer opportunities to train them in incident command system.

Cooperative Fire Protection

Cooperative Fire Programs

* The 2023-2024 California Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (CFMA) meetings continue. The current agreement will expire in March of 2023 and an extension has been put in place to ensure problems will not arise if the deadline is not met.
* Continuity of Operations was sent out to Program/Regions/Units. The Continuity of Operations allows CAL FIRE to ensure that Primary Mission Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies.
* California Wildland Fire Coordinating Group (CWCG) Direct Protection Area (DPA) Annual Review reminder was sent out to the Regions and Units. DPA changes are due December 1, 2022, from the Units. Any negotiated changes between agencies will need to be submitted through the DPA Data Steward on January 6, 2023.

Local Government Program

* The Local Government Program has two outstanding cooperative agreements which are going through the renewal process.
* The Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians has submitted a termination notice. With a one-year notice that would be in or about July 2023.

Camps and Crews Program

* The largest impact on hand crews is the injunction lifted by the City of Susanville on the closure of the California Correctional Center (CCC), next to High Desert State Prison.
* CDCR has completed the transfer of all inmates from CCC to Sierra Conservation Center (SCC). SCC is now the primary training center of inmate firefighters for 27 of the 30 Conservation Camps throughout the state with the closure of CCC.

Training Program

* Former Statewide Training Program Chief, Catherine Frazer, will retain CAL FIRE Training Centers oversight and responsibilities.
* Greg Belk has been selected as the Forestry and Fire Protection Administrator (Staff Chief) for Statewide Training effective November 1, 2022.

Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division

* California continues to lead the nation with 600 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise USA Communities in good standing, equating to over 25% of all Firewise USA Communities nationwide.

Wildfire Prevention Grants

* We anticipate opening the next solicitation period on December 14, 2022, with a close date of March 15, 2023.

Pre-Fire Planning

* The SRA FHSZ map public hearings in the 56 counties with SRA will start in December 2022, and conclude in January/February 2023, as required by Public Resources Code Section 4203.

Wildfire Preparedness

Burn Permits

* The online burn permit continues to progress and will go live on January 1, 2023. Unit training will start on November 28 and last through the month of December.

California Incident Data and Statistics (CalStats)

* The 2021 Redbook is now final and can be located on the CAL FIRE Stats and Events internet page.

Home Hardening and Defensible Space

* CAL FIRE has completed just over 200,000 inspections to date for the calendar year which is 51,395 more than the same time last year.

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

* Our Equal Employment Opportunity for now under Deputy Director Serena Ortega. She is working closely to make sure that the department is well engaged with our tribal partners and making sure that we are present.
* CAL FIRE is trying to fill a Deputy Director in tribal relations.

**Public Comments**

* Richard Gienger stated he is impressed with the director’s report. But he feels that Jackson is not accurately portrayed in the report. He feels that there are still issues in Jackson and those issues are not being addressed. States there is a lack of transparency.

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

Executive Officer has the following 4 items.

* Scheduling our field tours for our May, July, and September Meetings of next year. Will take suggestions from Board members or the public for spots the Board should visit.
* Scheduling a joint field tour with the Coastal Commission in mid-February. There will be a pre-tour virtual workshop/meeting on February 15th and then the tour will be either February 22 or 23. Locations are not specific yet but going to visit Humboldt County.
* The Board is working on staffing our Forester III position and our Senior Environmental Planner position. Hoping to fly those positions soon and get those filled in the next couple of months.
* Laura Alarcon-Stalians is retiring at the end of this year. She has spent over 20 years with the Board and 30 years with CAL FIRE in total. Congratulations on your retirement.

**Public Comments:**

* Matt Dias, President of California Forestry Association-wished Laura Alarcon-Stalians a happy retirement.
* George Gentry, California Forestry Association, congratulated Laura Alarcon-Stalians on the longest Board staff of all time. Thank you, Laura, for your service with the Board. Happy Retirement.
* Eric Huff, Staff Chief Forest Practice, thanked Laura and congratulated her on her retirement.

**Report of the Standing Committees**

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

Forest Practice Committee have two agenda items. There will be no actionable items out of yesterday’s committee meeting.

**Management Committee, Chris Chase, Chair**

Management Committee had two items on the agenda. There will be no actionable items out of yesterday’s committee meeting.

**Resource Protection Committee Meeting, J. Lopez, Chair**

Resource Protection Committee had two items on the agenda. There will be no actionable items out of yesterday’s committee meeting.

**Public Comment**

* Richard Gienger asked if all information and discussions for the committee will be released with the draft final priority list for 2023 in January.

**Report of Board’s Advisory Committees**

**Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, Dr. Elizabeth Forsburg Pardi, Co-Chair**

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee discussed updating the critical monitoring questions. EMC is considering how to incorporate climate resilience in our research themes. The questions will be ready for review at the Board’s March meeting along with the 2023 request for research proposals.

**Presentations**

Presentation of the Francis H. Raymond Award to co-recipients Fresno Country Tree Mortality Task Force and Darin W. Quigley.

Forest Fire Prevention Exemption Monitoring Report, Findings and Recommendations; Drew Coe and Will Olsen, CAL FIRE Watershed Protection Program.

**Board Comment**

* Member Chase stated terrific work on this and especially recommendation 6 and 7.
* Chairman Gilless thought it was very encouraging presentation. Feels the application is quite robust relative to our objectives.
* Chairman Gilless stated report should be finalized with your collaborators. This directly addresses a lot of issues that the Board is struggling with and hearing commentary on.

**Public Comment**

* Eric Huff, CAL FIRE, stated it was a fantastic report. Just a reminder that this is the Board’s and the Department’s report. We followed the process in reports past is that we look for formal Board action to accept the report so that we can move it to the Governor’s Office action request process.
* Dennis Hall, CAL FIRE, this report showed information about canopy closures, stan density, those things that will change over time. My goal is to push it long term so we can go back and visit some of those sites over time to see if it’s effective.
* George Gentry, California Forestry Association, states this is the kind of program that the board and the department are really excelling at. This is how we adapt rules and move them forward to make them more efficient and better used in the State.
* Richard Giegner would like to see this program go further in standard for forestry down the line. Feels that there should be a process that will not allow what happened in 50 and 60’s ever happen again.

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

* John Armstrong, Daly City homeowner, What is going to happen with the Home Hardening Pilot?
* Chairman Gilless cannot discuss or take action on any matter raised during the public forum period. Information can be found in the Director’s report.
* Richard Gienger recommended a couple of reading materials that might be of interest to the Board.

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:





Edith Hannigan J. Keith Gilless

Executive Officer Chairman