BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEETING MINUTES

Sacramento, CA

July 24, 2024

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION MEMBERS**

**Present:**

* Terrence O’Brien, Chair
* Elizabeth Forsburg-Pardi, Vice-Chair
* Chris Chase
* Mike Jani
* Katie Delbar
* Rich Wade
* Dawn Blake
* Ali Jahangiri

**Absent:**

* J. Lopez

**BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

* Edith Hannigan, Executive Officer
* Dan Stapleton, Asst. Executive Officer, Foresters Registration
* Jeff Slaton, Senior Board Counsel
* Robert Roth, Board Counsel
* Dan Craig, Regulations Program Manager,
* Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator
* Andrew Lawhorn, Forestry Assistant II
* Alexandra La Plante, Administrative Unit Manager
* Katie Harrell, Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation
* Mazonika Kemp, Records Administrator
* Alexandra Vest, Wildfire Planning Specialist
* Anna Castro, Executive Assistant

**DEPARTMENTAL STAFF PRESENT:**

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

**Board Members Roll Call:**

Member Wade Present

Member Jani Present

Member Chase Present

Member Blake Present

Member Delbar Present

Member Forsburg-Pardi Present

Member Jahangiri Absent for roll call

Member Lopez Absent

Chairman O’Brien Present

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

Jeff Slaton, Senior Counsel for the Board reported that during executive closed session the Board considered the three litigation matters on the agenda. With respect to the three Litigation matters the Board discussed and took no reportable actions.

**Consent Calendar Items:**

1. Review of Rulemaking Matrix
2. Approval of May and June 2024 minutes
3. Range Management Advisory Committee
   1. Appointment of Jeremy Walker to a four-year term in a seat nominated by the Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego (i.e., an organization representing rangeland owners)
4. Effectiveness Monitoring Committee
   1. Reappointment of Sal Chinnici to a four-year term in a seat representing the Monitoring Community.
5. RPF-CRM Vital Statistics, Approval of license withdrawal requests.

**07-24-01 Member Chase moved to accept items on the Consent Calendar as presented. Member Delbar seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Jahangiri: Absent**

**Lopez: Absent**

**O’Brien Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Report of the Chairman, Terrence O’Brien:**

Chairman O’Brien stated that he visited the Jackson Demonstration State Forest along with Executive Officer, Edith Hannigan and Member Dawn Blake. He thanked CAL FIRE for providing the tour and met with members of the Jackson Advisory Group. Chairman also mentioned that he went to Lassen National Forest and took a hike through the part of the park that had been burned by the Dixie fire. He stated he saw the physical effects of a catastrophic fire and it reminded him that there is a lot more that needs to be done in the forest to help protect against catastrophic wildfire.

**Report of the Director, Joe Tyler, Director/Fire Chief, CAL FIRE:**

Director Tyler informed the Board and members of the audience that yesterday in Humboldt County, an aircraft associated with CAL FIRE’s aviation partner Amentum lost power while attempting to land. While this aircraft was not assigned to CAL FIRE or a CAL FIRE incident, it was traveling to Humboldt County with a helicopter mechanic to work on a CAL FIRE helicopter under Amentum’s contract. The aircraft crashed into the side of a mountain with a pilot and mechanic on board.  Our thoughts and sympathies are with the family of Pilot Gabe Kulp and Mechanic Thomias Smith.  The Director stated support will continue to Amentum Aviation through their tragic loss.

Resource Management

Forest Practice Program

Watershed Protection Program

* Watershed Emergency Response team (WERT) field reconnaissance have been conducted on the Sites, Point, French, and Fresno June Lightning Complex fires. A WERT will be conducted on the Lake Fire.

Forest Practice Administration

* Revised and new reports are now available on the public page of California Timber Regulations and Environmental Evaluation System (CalTREES)

Forest Practice Review Teams

* Redding and Santa Rosa are both working on reviewing new Option A submittals for two large landowners.

Resource Protection and Improvement Program

Urban and Community Forestry

* Urban and Community Forestry grant applications funded by the United States Forest Service (USFS) through the Inflation Reduction Act are being reviewed and scored. 125 applications were received requesting more than $146 million. $30.8 million is available to award.
* 20 Green Schoolyards Childcare Facilities grants were executed concluding all recommended awards and encumbering just over $27 million.

Forest Entomology and Pathology Program

* There is increasing mortality of various conifer species in the northern Sierra Nevada and Cascade Ranges related to drought, heat and continuing stress conditions.

Demonstration State Forests

Jackson

* On June 18, 2024, an updated proposed Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) meeting schedule was released, with the remaining 2024 meeting dates being July 19, October 4, and November 15 (all Fridays). The updated JAG Charter approved by CAL FIRE and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board), at the Board’s public meeting in Sacramento on June 19, 2024, has been distributed to JAG members and posted to the JDSF website.
* The consultant contract for putting together the Forest Management Plan is going through the process of being executed. The successful supplier is Estelle Clifton of Clifton Environmental out of Ukah, California.
* On June 6, 2024, California State Parks (SP) assisted with the removal of a log-stringer bridge, part of an illegal trail remediation effort. The bridge was located on Jackson, adjacent to SP lands with an illegal trail that tied in with the Russian Gulch Falls Loop Trail.
* North Coast field biologists continue to survey for northern spotted owl (NSO) and marbled murrelet (MAMU). Approximately 1150 station surveys have been completed since March. The following species have been detected at night (number detections at survey stations): western screech-owl (59), barred owl (44), northern saw-whet owl (31), northern spotted owl (9), spotted-barred owl hybrid (9), and northern pygmy owl (1). The majority of barred owl and hybrid detections were from individuals that were subsequently removed by the University of Wisconsin. Twenty-three daytime surveys (7 follow-ups, 16 site visits) have been conducted thus far this season. NSOs have only been detected during the day at two locations this year.

Prescribed Fire and Environmental Protection Program

Prescribed Fire Program

* The Prescribed Fire Liability Claims Fund Pilot Program completed its first fiscal year with 104 applications successfully enrolled. Burn Bosses are required to fill out the completion report on the Claims Fund Pilot Program (SB 926) website where they will have an option to re-enroll for FY 24-25 or submit a new application. Fiscal year 23-24 projects are no longer currently enrolled. The completion report will provide valuable feedback and summarize projects enabled by the claims fund.

Wildfire Resilience Program

Reforestation Services Program

* Cone survey season is underway. Field staff are conducting cone surveys across the state in areas identified as a high need based on our updated Seed Assessment of Needs and on ownerships that have signed up through the program’s “Reforestation Because of You” initiative. Preliminary surveys suggest a better cone year than last year for many species.
* Cone Camps are occurring at locations throughout the State. These are led by American Forests in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS) Region 5 and CAL FIRE. Cone Camps aim to expand the workforce available to conduct cone surveys and collections, with the ultimate goal of bringing in more seeds from across more seed zones.

California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

* New funding includes an ongoing appropriation of $2.5 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds for CFIP. This funding will be available in mid-September 2024.
* When existing and new funding is made available, CFIP will resume offering landowner assistance grants to private landowners on a rolling quarterly basis.

Forest Stewardship

* Wildfire and Forest Resilience Block Grants –Program solicited and then tried to award four new block grants, however only two were executed and encumbered prior to General Fund spending freeze. Now that the budget is passed, we will have to wait for budget rollovers of previously existing funding to be performed before we can continue with the grant agreement developments.
* Forest Stewardship Program tried to execute seven new Joint Forest Stewardship Committee mini grants; however, two grants were affected by the budget freeze and did not get executed. Now that the budget is passed, those agreements will have to wait for budget rollovers before we can continue with the grant agreement developments.

Forest Legacy Program (FLP)

* The 2024 FLP grant solicitation is still on hold until funds are appropriated in the new budget. If the solicitation moves forward, nine applicants will be invited to submit a full application to compete for up to $10 million.

Climate and Energy Program

Wood Products & Bioenergy

* Staff, in partnership with the Grants Management Unit, successfully executed all twenty Business & Workforce Development grant agreements that had been announced on May 29, 2024.

Forest Health

* Forest Health is preparing to close out over 60 grants by March 2025.
* Forest Health is preparing to execute grant agreements for FY23-24 Forest Health and Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration awards.

Tribal Wildfire Resilience

* Staff are moving previously announced Tribal Wildfire Resilience grant agreements for signature.
* Held a welcome meeting with five grantees that CAL FIRE Tribal Wildfire Resilience is funding through CNRA’s Tribal Nature-Based Solutions program. They are now working on a final application documents and translating their budgets to CAL FIRE formats.
* The next solicitation was postponed due to the State budget uncertainty. The next solicitation is tentatively planned for fall 2024.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force

* The Task Force met in Sacramento on July 12, 2024. The agenda focused on aligning federal, state, and private investments with regional landscape health and wildfire prevention priorities.
* The next regional meeting of the Task Force has been announced for October 10-11, 2024, in South Lake Tahoe. Information will be available soon on the Task Force website.

Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP)

Forest Health Research Grants

* 13 new grants totaling $4.4 million awarded in June 2024 for scientific studies on forest health and wildfire management issues. The full list of awards for FY 23-24 can be found on the FRAP website.

Fire Protection

Fire Protection Program

Law Enforcement/Civil Cost Recovery

* Through June 2024, CAL FIRE Law Enforcement Officers have made 93 arrests and issued 244 citations.
  + 54 of those arrests are for Arson.
* Thirty new officers have been hired and are currently in training.
* In FY 23-24, approximately $192.1 million in suppression costs has been collected by the Civil Cost Recovery.

Fire Protection Operations

* All six CAL FIRE Incident Management Teams have been deployed throughout the state on various fires in Los Angeles, Calaveras, Colusa, Sonoma, Fresno, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Kern and Santa Barbara Counties. This continues to be an active start to the fire season with many more deployments anticipated.
* Sacramento Command Center has been processing hired equipment support for all the fires. In June of 2024 they filled 351 requests for hired equipment resources. In 2023 they filled 325 requests in totality across the whole year not just the month.

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

* A recent accident in Canada with a Bell 212 raised airworthiness concerns regarding main rotor head components installed on all variants of Bell 212, 205 and UH1 helicopters. On July 1, 2024, CAL FIRE joined our Federal and Local partners in a tactical pause to verify operational safety of identified aircraft. Impact to CAL FIRE assets were minimal, affecting five aircraft that were all returned to operational status several days later.

Mobile Equipment Program

* Burton Fire Apparatus provided a Rosenbauer Electric Fire Engine for demonstration and review as part of CAL FIRE’s research into a new fleet technologies.
* In process of retrofitting front seats of fire engines with Rol-Tek seats. These seats combine side airbag protection with the latest advancements in seat belt protection and are customed engineered to significantly reduce the potential for serious injury or death in a rollover. New fire engine acquisitions will already include this technology.

State/Federal Programs

* The agreement renewal between CAL FIRE and the California Department of Parks and Recreation for fire protection has been finalized and approved. The updated agreement moved from a contract to a Memorandum of Understanding to better meet the needs of both agencies.
* The Wipfelfeuer Symposium was June 15, 2024, in Wallenhorst, Germany. This International event included presentations from CAL FIRE’s Chief Brian Estes and David Sapsis. The receiving agency was extremely impressed by the presentations and value to partnership. A cooperative needs assessment is taking place with a complete After-Action Reivew (AAR) summary expected by the end of July 2024.
* Members of Pakistan Emergency Management will be visiting the United States.

Hand Crew Program

* As of July 10, 2024, 144 Hand Crews are Type I and available for statewide response.
  + 63 of 152 CDCR Crews are Type I and available for statewide response.
  + 29 of 32 CCC Crews are Type I and available for statewide response.
  + 38 of 38 FFI Crews are available for statewide response.
  + 14 of 14 are military hand crews.
* Continuing to build on our Hand Crew capacity and are thankful to the Legislature and Administration for this finalized budget. We just received permanent funding for 5 of those fire fighters hand crews that we would have lost funding on June 30, 2024.

Safety/EMS Program

Safety Program

* The Workplace Violence Prevention and Security Plan has been updated and distributed to reflect new regulations and laws that went into effect July 1, 2024.

Training Program

Statewide Training

* CAL FIRE Training Program hosted a 3-day Pilot National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) course at Natomas Training Center, June 25-27, 2024. It was comprised of personnel representing Federal, State, Tribal and local departments from across the nation. This class is part of the NWCG Complex Incident Management (CIM) platform.
* The Natomas Training Center Phase 2 lease construction is in the bid stages with Department of General Services (DGS). This will expand the current footprint and increase the instructional capabilities and number of course offering per week.

Office of the State Fire Marshal

Wildfire Risk Reduction

* Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee
  + The Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee was held on July 16, 2024, where the Committee received a presentation from the County Coordinator Program, California Fire State Council, and the California Wildfire Mitigation Program Update.
  + The next Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee meeting will be held on August 20, 2024.

Wildfire Preparedness

* Burn permits
  + The program is working smoothly with additional air quality districts joining the program to streamline the permit process.

Utility Wildfire Mitigation Program

* Multiple Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS) events have already been initiated by Southern California Edison (SCE) and Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) due to red flag warnings.

Wildfire Planning and Statistics

* Pre-Fire Planning
  + Annual updates to Unit Fire Plans have been completed and Unit Fire Plans have been posted to the internet.
* Wildland Fuels Reduction Reporting
  + June 2024 Fuels Reduction and Accomplishment Report was sent out on July 10, 2024. With the end of the Fiscal Year (FY), we will begin a QA/QC with Region and Units to work towards finalizing numbers for FY 2023-24.
* CalStats
  + 2023 Redbook validation in the final state with anticipation of submitting the green sheet process in late July 2024.

Community Wildfire Mitigation Assistance

* Wildfire Prevention Grants Program
  + Awardees for this solicitation will be announced in early September 2024.

Communications

Statistics

* We have had just under 4,000 fires to date. It is higher than the five-year average and it is still higher than 2023.
* The acres have significantly changed. It is double the acres from the five-year average at this point.

Education and Safety Messaging

* CAL FIRE and partner agency staff have been at Camp Smokey at the California State Fair since July 12, 2024. CAL FIRE is responsible for the “Yellow House” which features kitchen safety messaging. This year, Camp Smokey also features a new display that highlights various home hardening measures the public can take to increase the chance of their house surviving a wildfire.
* Summer fire prevention and safety messaging continues into August 2024.

Program and Project Messaging

* The CAL FIRE Incidents page continue to see an increase in traffic as wildfire activity increases. The website is being updated in near real time. You can also follow CAL FIRE’s aircraft to see where they are flying across the State. In June 2024, the incident page had 5.7 million views and 1.5 million new users.

**Board Comments:**

* Chairman O’Brien stated he and the Board send their condolences to the families of the two individuals who tragically were killed yesterday in the aircraft crash. Also, commented that he thinks the Cone Camps are great and would like to encourage CAL FIRE to continue with their work in reforestation.
* Member Chase commented on the requests for hired equipment in the month of June which exceeded the total number last year. Is this driven solely by fire activity in the month of June? Or are there other factors that are in play?
  + Director stated that the process has not changed in the last two years. But three years ago, it was changed by removing the hired equipment processes out of the local emergency command centers and moved it to Sacramento. The concerns from the vendors were that the hub in Sacramento would not know or understand the local vendors and local conditions. But we used it as a support function to be able to concentrate on hired hiring equipment.
* Member Chase also asked how concerned CAL FIRE is about Forest Service’s capacity to respond as we go into late July, August with all these fires throughout the nation.
  + Director stated that the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) out of Boise, Idaho, has a lot more control over the federal resources across the western states. But we communicate our concerns to them. Many of the states in the nation in our years have come to assist us during our devastating fires. So, we have a responsibility to reciprocate that effort back to them.
* Member Wade commented on the role and capabilities that the Intel Aircraft has.
  + Director stated that they worked with UC San Diego and took one of the administrative aircraft and placed sensor packages on the King Aircraft. This enable the aircraft to collect real time updates and activities that are going on. It is staffed during daytime hours, seven days a week, located at McClellan Air Tanker Base and can be deployed at night if necessary.
* Member Jahangiri commented on the international work on how and what goes on.
  + Director Tyler stated the international work didn’t really have a home before but now it has been included with the Cooperative Fire Protection Program.
* Member Jahangiri asked what is causing the trucks to roll.
  + Director Tyler stated that there are a variety of factors that cause the trucks to roll.
* Member Blake commented that she is excited to hear about the electric fire engine.

**Public Comments:**

* Richard Gienger acknowledges the incredible amount of work the Director covers each month. Condolences to the families of the aircraft that went down. He voiced his concerns regarding how Jackson State Forest is being managed.

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

Executive Officer Hannigan reported the following to the Board.

* Legislative Report
  + The Legislature is in summer recess and they will reconvene in August for about a month before adjournment for fall recess and election season.
* FY 24-25 Budget Update
  + The budget includes a 7.95% reduction in budgets for state agencies. At this time the specifics as to what funds are subject to that decrease will be determined by late August or September when the budget is actually loaded into our accounts.
* On August 19th there is a public kickoff meeting regarding California’s timber harvest permit process evaluating program effectiveness and identifying efficiencies. It will take place from 1:00 to 3:00 pm in this building or online.

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

Consideration of adoption of final rule text and approval of the Final Statement of Reasons for the Rulemaking titled “Wet Areas, Meadows, and Restoration Activities, 2024”.

**07-24-02 Member Chase moved to approve the Final Statement of Reasons for the rulemaking entitled “Wet Areas, Meadows, and Restoration Activities, 2024”. Member Forsburg-Pardi seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Jahangiri: Aye**

**Lopez: Absent**

**O’Brien Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**07-24-03 Member Jani moved to adopt the draft regulatory text for the rulemaking entitled “Wet Areas, Meadows, and Restoration Activities, 2024”, and authorize staff to take all actions reasonably necessary to have the adopted regulations go into effect, including making appropriate non-substantive changes and any changes to facilitate OAL review and approval. Member Blake seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Aye**

**Chase: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Jahangiri: Aye**

**Lopez: Absent**

**O’Brien Aye**

**Motion passed.**

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

**Professional Foresters Examining Committee, review and approval of the April 2024 RPF and CRM licensing exam results. Dan Stapleton, Assistant Executive Officer**

* The results for the examination on April 5, 2024, were low scoring compared to the exam that was held in October 2023 that had a 63% pass rate with a 75% average. This exam had a 24% pass rate with a 67% average.
* Professional Foresters Examining Committee request the Board to approve the April 2024 RPF and CRM Licensing exam results.

**Board Comments:**

* Chairman O’Brien comment that the proposed Apprentice Professional Forester Program that was mentioned last month might help.
  + Dan Stapleton agreed that the purpose of the Apprentice Program is to provide a mentorship and more people with experience and knowledge in those areas.
* Executive Officer Hannigan wanted clarification regarding where in the rulemaking process the APF proposal is, since it has not been adopted yet.
  + Jane Van Susteren stated that the 399 submission is being worked on because there are some economic components and it needs to be submitted to the agency for review. Then it will go to OAL.
* Member Jahangiri asked what the relevancy the exam has on the bigger picture of concerns. Asked who takes the exam and why.
  + Dan Stapleton stated that the requirements to qualify for the exam are to have at least seven years of qualifying forestry work experience or a combination of qualifying work experience with substitutable education. Everyone that takes the exam has to be evaluated as to whether or not they have met the criteria. In addition, three of the years have to be worked under the supervision of a Registered Professional Forester or qualified exempt supervisor.

**07-24-04 Member Delbar moved to approve the April 2024 RPF and CRM Licensing exam results as presented. Member Wade seconded the motion.**

**Roll Call:**

**Wade: Aye**

**Jani: Absent**

**Chase: Aye**

**Blake: Aye**

**Delbar: Aye**

**Forsburg-Pardi: Aye**

**Jahangiri: Aye**

**Lopez: Absent**

**O’Brien Aye**

**Motion passed.**

**Report of the Standing Committees:**

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

Forest Practice Committee met yesterday and discussed three agenda items.

* The first item was a continuing discussion of the potential standard rule to provide for the use of heavy equipment in water course and lake protection zones with the purpose of reducing wildfire impacts in those zones by allowing harvest to modify the vertical and horizontal configuration of the fuels. The discussion was based on a letter provided by the Resource Agency representatives that highlighted several of issues.
* The second item discussed was overlapping harvest documents, particularly the use of exemptions on areas where there were other harvest documents already established and some of the administrative issues that it creates for CAL FIRE. There is a discussion between Board staff and representatives of CAL FIRE to draft language that would address that from a regulatory standpoint. That will be presented at next month’s meeting.
* Lastly, the committee is interested in examining harvest documents that are not frequently used and why they are not being used. We discussed the modified THP for Fuel Hazard reduction and the emergency notice for Fuel Hazard Reduction. Committee will continue discussions next month.

**Management Committee, Chris Chase, Chair**

The Management Committee met yesterday and discussed two items on the agenda:

* The first item discussed was Public Agency and Utility Right Away Exemptions. The committee elected not to bring it up to the Board at this time.
* The second item was the definitions of “Minor Deviation” and “Substantial Deviation” as a result of a letter that was received two years ago in the Call for Regulatory Review. The committee concluded after discussion that there is no action that this Board needs to take on this issue.

**Resource Protection Committee Meeting, Ali Jahangiri, member**

The Resource Protection Committee met yesterday. Board Member J Lopez could not attend this month’s meetings. The following items were discussed:

* Shane Vargas promoted to Deputy Chief Land Use Planning Program, Office of the State Fire Marshal.
* Subdivision Review Program update, Lassen County was reviewed.
* Final review of the updated Safety Elements of four jurisdictions.

**Report of the Board’s Advisory Committees:**

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

* The EMC still has three open seats: two on the monitoring committee and one agency representative for the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
* The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee will meet on August 29th and will review the full project proposals that are due at 5:00 pm today. Full project proposals were requested after reviewing seven initial concept proposals in the June meeting. The EMC will forward its recommendations for funding to the Board at its September meeting.
* The EMC will review a nominee for the open seat in the Monitoring community, approve the 2023 annual report and Work Plan, and review proposed updates to the EMC charter.

**Range Management Advisory Committee, Kristina Wolf, Board Staff**

* The RMAC has met four times in 2024, most recently this past week. The committee is currently working on an educational workshop at the Van Black Ranch and the Deer Creek Hills. Dates have not been finalized. This workshop will be focusing on the effects of livestock grazing on native flora as part of the annual ongoing educational series for the public and professionals.
* There is still an open seat on the RMAC for a member nominated by an organization representing range landowners.

**Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation Updates, Katie Harrell, Board Staff**

The Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation had the following updates:

* Chair Terry O’Brien has joined the Joint Institute for Wood Products as Co-Chair.
* The Institute has two new contracts that were approved with UC Berkeley and TYLD Corp.
* The Institute is working with FRAP to create an infrastructure map. This will include roads, pipelines and rail, as well as other features.
* There are three scopes of work that the Institute will be pursuing for this fiscal year. All three are biomass related.

**Board Comments:**

* Member Wade asked what the approximate timelines for the two new projects are that the Joint Institute is funding.
  + Katie Harrell stated they have just started now and the funding was issued July 1, 2024. The hope is to get it done within a year and a half but have been given two years to get the work done.

**Presentations:**

**Update on Unit Fire Plans, Emily Smith, Staff Chief and Scott Witt, Deputy Chief, CAL FIRE**

**Hearings:**

**Public Hearing “Drought Mortality and Forest Fire Prevention Exemption Amendments”**

The proposed action limits the use of the Drought Mortality Exemption to 500 acres, adjusts the canopy requirements for the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption, and makes other organizational changes to the regulations related to those exemptions.

**Agency Comment:**

* John Ramaley, CAL FIRE, thanked the Board for the drought mortality acreage restriction. He stated this is going to result in better planning projects and it will focus on areas where the drought mortality is actually at its worst and allowing the people to salvage and capture that mortality.

**Public Hearing “Less than 3-acre Conversion Exemption Amendments”**

The proposed action allows for multiple uses of a Less than 3-acre Conversion Exemption, provided that the total converted area is less than three acres. In addition, it updates the 3-acre conversion process to reflect changes to the notification and reporting process for exemptions.

**Agency Comments:**

* John Ramaley, CAL FIRE thanked the Board for the changes in the Less than 3-acre Conversion Exemption. He stated that this will lead to more compliance, especially as people are able to build out their property and do more than one conversion exemption over time. He requested the Board to consider one minor change and apologized for this after giving support and do support. Requesting that on page 15 of the text strip out the contiguous land ownership requirement of that piece and make it its own separate exemptions. This way under that exemption for a land contiguity you could continue to keep letters A and D under the five-year limitation. However, if you look at page 15 and 16 under the waiver for the five-year limitations letters B & C actually referred only to the five-year limitation and they actually don’t apply to the contiguity issue. This might lead to some confusion in our review team and to the public.

**Board Comment:**

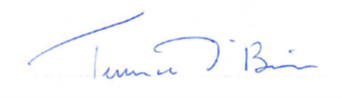
* Member Chase commented that it seems no fundamental changes are to be made. It is just reordering it to improve clarity. So, this minor change could be potentially done with a 15-day Notice.
* Jane Van Susteren, Regulations Coordinator, stated that a Supplemental Statement of Reasons and an amended rule text can be brought before the committee in August.

**CONCLUSION**

**Public Forum**

**Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Edith Hannigan Terrence O’Brien

Executive Officer Chairman