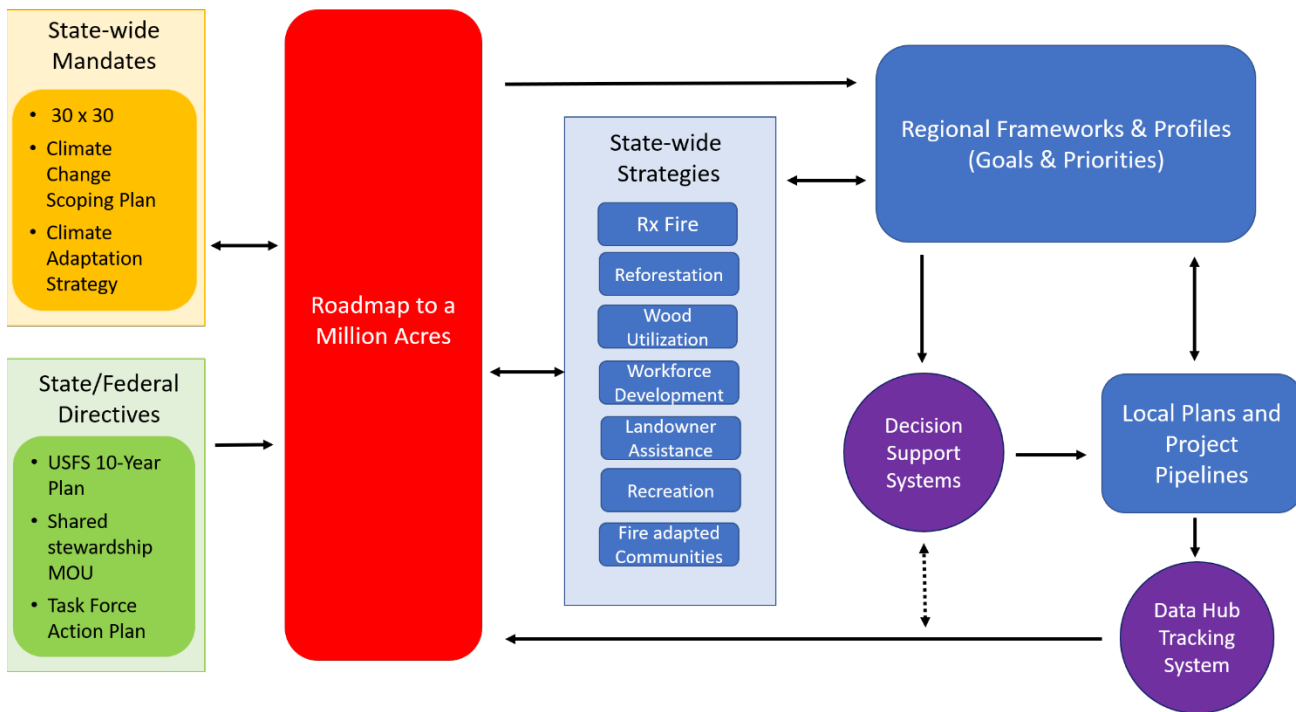




Roadmap to a Million Acres

Overview

California’s wildfire and climate crises demand that we significantly increase pace and scale in forest health and fuel reduction projects while developing infrastructure and capacity for future investments. The purpose of the Roadmap to a Million Acres (RMA) is to build capacity and momentum to accomplish the commitment by the USDA-Forest Service (USFS) and the State of California to collectively treat a minimum of 1 million acres annually by 2025. The RMA will be based on a three-tiered strategy: 1) coordination of state and federal plans, mandates, and initiatives; 2) development of regional capacity to invest in high priority projects; and 3) alignment, development, and application of data and tools to prioritize and report on acres treated and the multiple benefits of projects at the local, regional, and state level. (Figure 1).



Coordination of State and Federal Strategies

The Wildfire and Forest Resilience (WFR) Task Force is leading the development of multiple, synergistic state-wide strategies (Table 1). These strategies set aggressive but achievable targets for critical components of the [Wildfire & Forest Resilience Action Plan](#) (WFR Action Plan), and are focused on addressing logistical barriers, policy issues, and alignment efforts necessary to achieve the million acre target annually.

As described below, these strategies will be largely completed by the end of 2022, and provide a foundation for coordinating and integrating federal, state, local, and tribal efforts across a broad range of programs. In addition, the RMA will align these strategies with other federal and state-wide plans, such as the state’s Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy and Pathway to 30x30 initiatives, and the USFS 10-year plan.

Table 1: Strategies under development as part of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

Strategy/Workgroup	Lead Agencies	Facilitator	Timeframe
Prescribed Fire	CAL FIRE/USFS	Shute Mihaly, LLP	Final Draft Completed
Landowner Assistance	CAL FIRE/NRCS	The Watershed Center	Draft in January
Reforestation	CAL FIRE/USFS	American Forests	Draft in March
Workforce Development	CAL FIRE/CA Community Colleges	CA Community Colleges	Draft in March
Recreation	USFS/SNC	High Bar Consulting	Draft in May
Wood Utilization	OPR	Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation	2022
Fire Adapted Communities	CAL FIRE/OPR	Watershed Center	2022
Regulatory Streamlining	SWRCB/CalForests	CalForests	Work Plan in January 2022

2. Enhancement of Regional Capacity

As described in the WFR Action Plan, the Task Force will seek to expand and strengthen the growing network of regional collaboratives to help build the state’s capacity to treat a million acres annually. This effort builds upon both the USFS recent shift towards using “zones” of four to six national forests to scale up its efforts, and the state’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program, which seeks to create a network of forest resilience plans across regions throughout the state. The Task Force will help build this capacity at three geographic scales: multi-region, region, and local (Figure 2).

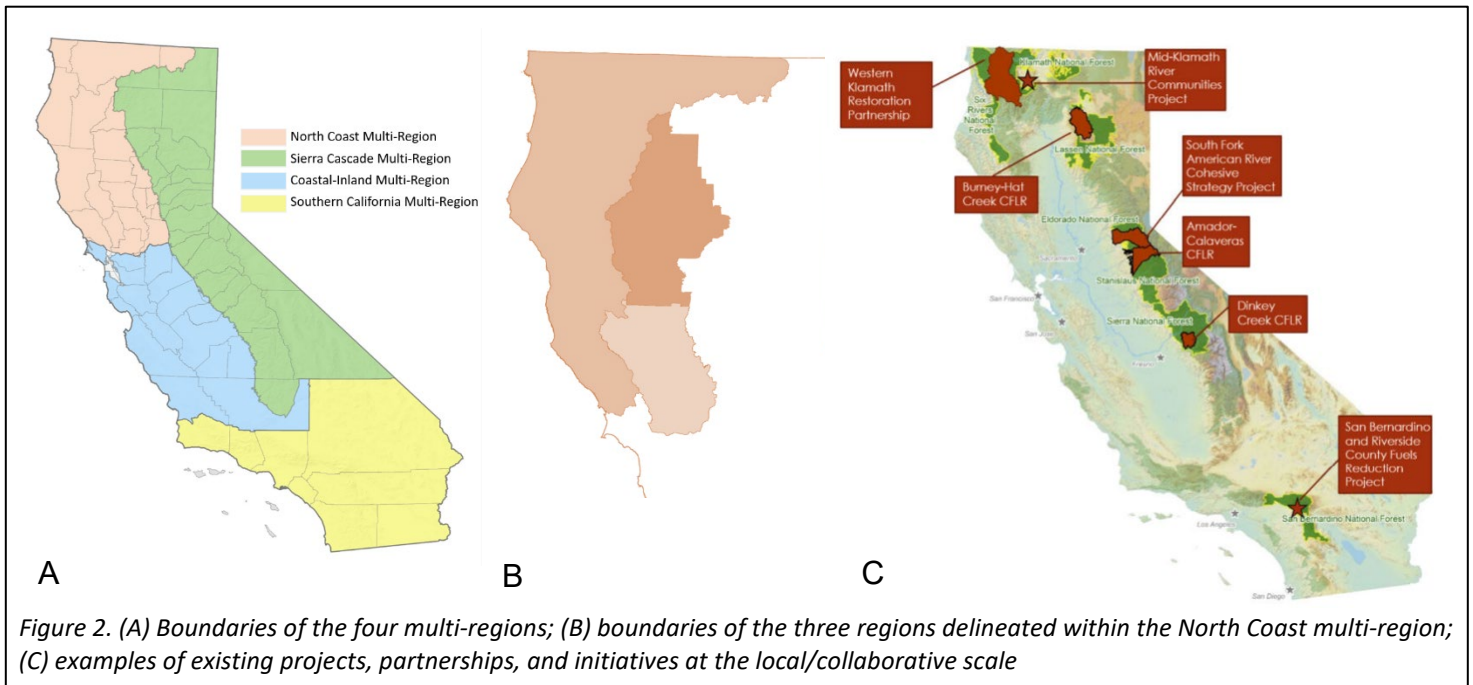


Figure 2. (A) Boundaries of the four multi-regions; (B) boundaries of the three regions delineated within the North Coast multi-region; (C) examples of existing projects, partnerships, and initiatives at the local/collaborative scale

Multi-region

In close collaboration with each of the multi-regions (Northern, Sierra Cascade, Coastal-Inland, and Southern California), the Task Force will:

- Develop forest management profiles that summarize the key priorities, risks, interdependencies, and opportunities in achieving resilient forests, chaparral, and community protection.
- Identify multi region-specific limitations and constraints, such as data gaps and capacities for wood processing or applying prescribed fire.
- Provide spatially explicit summaries of existing and desired forest health conditions, and treatment-specific (e.g., mechanical thinning, reforestation) summaries of opportunities to significantly improve the health and resilience of the multi-region's forests and chaparral. These summaries will be informed by and revised to meet the needs of the constituents and stakeholders of the multi-region. Through the USFS-led ACCEL project, this effort will be completed for the Sierra Nevada by the fall of 2022.
- Organize regional forums, where federal, state, local, and tribal groups and leaders can exchange information and seek to integrate their efforts where feasible.

Region

State, federal, regional, and local partners will continue to work across jurisdictions to develop “all-lands” regional plans. These plans will contain assessments of the risks, priorities, and goals in each region, priority lists of projects, wood utilization and workforce development strategies, demonstrations of community support, reporting mechanisms, and other elements necessary to guide investments and increase the pace and scale of projects in each region. The Task Force will develop this all-lands shared vision as an actionable plan that downscales and integrates federal and state priorities while reflecting local objectives, projects, and strategies.

Approach: Initially, most of these regional plans may be focused on two or three key priorities, such as forest and community fire resilience and watershed protection. As a result, funding to implement the priority lists of projects in regional plans will largely be provided by the USFS, CAL FIRE, and the state conservancies. Over time, however, these plans will be expanded to include a broader range of regional natural resource and economic priorities, including climate adaptation, biodiversity, and recreation. This approach will enable regions to attract funding from several agencies and help facilitate alignment and integration of state and federal mandates at the regional level.

Regional Toolkits: To facilitate rapid development and implementation of regional plans in the near term, the Task Force will contribute products, support, and direction toward the development of integrated mapping products, synthesis descriptions of forest conditions, use of decision support systems and other tools to assess opportunities and trade-offs, and to quantify the benefits of improving resilience through forest treatments. The Task Force will work closely with regional partners to understand what data, information, analysis tools and models are already in existence to integrate local and regional knowledge and avoid duplication.

Funding: The regional plans will enable lead entities to be eligible for block grants that provide several years of funding for implementation of their highest priority projects. This will be essential to build the capacity and workforce at the regional level and to sustain and scale up their efforts. The USFS, CAL FIRE, and the state conservancies will develop a proposal to allocate block grant funding for implementation of shovel-ready projects and other key activities in several all-lands plans in high priority areas.

Local entities/Collaboratives

At the local level, the agencies and collaboratives will be focused on accelerating the development of shovel-ready projects, and rapidly completing the planning and permitting processes necessary to implement a sustainable pipeline of

projects. In the portions of regions not served by collaboratives, the USFS, CAL FIRE, State Parks, Caltrans, utilities, and other local and regional entities will also continue to plan and implement projects. These projects will be supported, and their accomplishments reported as part of the regional plans described above.

3. Development and Alignment of Data and Tools

A public repository of high quality and well-organized data is essential to meeting the million-acre goal. State and federal agencies have inconsistent accounting and tracking systems, and there is no central location for sharing data, assessments, tools, and other information. Federal and state agencies need aligned data and tools to share information, identify targets, evaluate impacts, and report on progress

The Task Force Monitoring, Reporting, and Assessment workgroup is developing a Forest Data Hub to coordinate and integrate reporting on forest management and carbon accounting programs on all lands. The Data Hub will include:

- An interagency accounting system for tracking activities and annual accomplishments toward the goal of 1 million acres of treatment per year;
- An inventory of completed and planned treatments by landowner, region and subregion throughout the state;
- A repository of scenario planning and data management efforts (e.g., the California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan Update, the CA Fifth Climate Change Assessment, Pathway to 30x30);
- Centralized access to a broad range of agency and local databases (e.g., zoning, building restrictions, impaired waterbodies);
- A statewide needs assessment and evaluation of natural and built assets, disturbances and hazards, and expected changes to current resource conditions from climate change; and
- Other data and scientific information that can be rapidly and reliably made available to land managers and decision-makers, informed by local needs and integrating local and regional datasets that align with state and federal standards.

Next Steps

The Task Force will oversee the following activities to implement the RMA. By April of 2022, under the leadership of the USFS, CAL FIRE, and the Science Advisory Panel, the Task Force will develop:

- A state-wide inventory, by region, of all recently completed, planned, and shovel-ready projects;
- An interagency project tracking system to guide future reporting and accounting;
- An all-lands regional framework for development and implementation of future pipelines of projects;
- A work plan to accomplish and align the other key elements of the RMA, including development of regional assessments and targets, metrics to track and evaluate project benefits, and progress towards meeting the million-acre target and goals of the USFS ten-year plan; and
- A draft communications strategy to showcase these efforts and highlight success stories.