



SEPTEMBER 2022

**BUDGET NEWS** **Governor Signs State Budget:** Governor Newsom [signed a budget bill](#) this week that provides more than \$1.3 billion over the next two years to accelerate forest health and wildfire resilience projects throughout the state. With these new investments, the Newsom Administration has committed more than \$2.8 billion to the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

Highlights of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Expenditure Plan include:

- \$472 million for forest health and fire prevention grants
- \$130 million for stewardship of state-owned land
- \$50 million for post-fire reforestation
- \$170 million to state conservancies for forest health projects
- \$70 million for prescribed fire and hand crews
- \$40 million for the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program
- \$30 million for workforce development
- \$25 million for assistance to small landowners

**Biden Signs Federal Inflation Reduction Act :** On August 16, President Biden [signed](#) a landmark climate change and health care bill into law. The Act includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some \$375 billion over the decade, and significant investments in wildfire and forest resilience including:

**Wildfire Resilience and Ecosystem Restoration**

- \$1.8 billion for hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System land within the wildland-urban interface
- \$200 million for vegetation management projects on National Forest System land
- \$250 million for conservation, ecosystem, & habitat restoration projects on National Park Service & Bureau of Land Management land.

**Climate-Smart Forestry for Non-Federal Forest Landowners**

- \$450 million for grants to support climate mitigation, forest resilience, and carbon sequestration and storage practices

**Urban and Community Forests**

- \$1.5 billion for competitive grants to cities, tribal nations, nonprofits, and other eligible entities

**Forest Conservation**

- \$700 million for competitive grants through Forest Legacy.

**Forest Products and Innovation**

- \$100 million for grants under the Wood Innovation Grant Program



## TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Sierra Nevada Regional Meeting:** The next [Task Force Meeting](#) is on September 27-28 in Grass Valley. Join us for special events including a resource fair, networking reception and a complimentary Wild & Scenic Film Festival the evening of September 27, and tours of local forest and wildfire resilience projects on Wednesday, September 28. Agenda highlights include:

- **Forest Resilience in the Sierra Nevada:** Learn how the Task Force's interagency science team has developed a comprehensive set of metrics and a Regional Resource Kit to help forest collaboratives measure and map wildfire resilience, biodiversity, carbon storage, watershed health, and other key priorities.
- **From Data to Decision-Making:** Forest Service leaders and their partners will discuss how they are leading the way in using new remote sensing and data visualization tools to plan and prioritize projects with their partners and communities.
- **Resources For Resilience:** Learn how the Task Force and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy are seeking to align funding to high priority landscapes.
- **Recreation Strategy Update:** State, federal, local, and tribal leaders of CALREC Vision will explain how their draft plan promotes equitable, accessible, and climate and fire-resilient outdoor recreation facilities throughout the state.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

### **CAL FIRE Announces New Vision for The Jackson Demonstration State Forest.**

Based on discussions with tribal governments and key stakeholders, the [new vision](#) will inform an update to the Jackson Management Plan with a renewed focus on climate science, restoration ecology and a new model for tribal co-management. CAL FIRE also announced that [timber harvest will resume](#) with a focus on small trees, removing slash piles, permanently protecting large trees, and enhancing protection of culturally sensitive sites.

### **\$11.4 Billion in California Climate Investments Implemented Across the State.**

The California Air Resources Board released a [mid-year data update](#) that shows California Climate Investments funded over \$1 billion in climate investments from December 2021 through the end of May 2022, bringing the cumulative total to just over \$11.4 billion. Cumulatively, 567,143 California Climate Investments projects are expected to reduce an estimated 78.6 million metric tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reductions.

**OPR Publishes Wildfire Planning Resources.** To help communities address wildfire risks, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) released [updated planning resources](#). The updated Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory is aimed at helping cities and counties address and reduce wildfire risk in their general plans. The Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Planning Guide provides specific examples and best practice case studies to communities to reference as they plan and implement wildfire solutions.

**CARB releases California Smoke Spotter 2.0.** The California Air Resources Board (CARB) has released a major update to its California Smoke Spotter mobile app to help users protect themselves from smoke during wildfire season. New features of [Smoke Spotter 2.0](#) include wildfire information and



alerts, a 24-hour wildfire smoke forecast, and Air Quality Index (AQI) data from PurpleAir sensors to provide users with real-time smoke conditions.

**CAL FIRE Demonstration State Forest System Adds 2,500 Acres.** CAL FIRE [acquired two properties](#) through donation from PG&E and will manage them for research, forest restoration, and public recreation. The two new properties include 2,246 acres along South Cow Creek in Shasta County and 267 acres in the headwaters of the Bear River in Nevada and Placer counties, bringing the total acreage of CAL FIRE'S demonstration state forest system to over 84,000 acres statewide.

**Energy Safety Releases 2022 Safety Certification Guidelines.** The California Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety released [guidelines](#) electrical corporations must meet to be issued safety certifications. Certifications are designed to encourage electrical corporations to invest in safety and to improve safety culture to limit wildfire risks and reduce costs.

## FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Update on USFS' Prescribed Fire Pause.** In a [statement](#) announced on September 8, USFS Chief Randy Moore has decided – based on a thorough review, findings, and recommendations provided by its National Review Team – to conditionally resume the USFS's prescribed fire program nationwide. The conditions include a requirement that all USFS units immediately follow all seven tactical recommendations identified in the [National Prescribed Fire Program Review](#). These actions will ensure prescribed fire plans are up to date with the most recent science, that key factors and conditions are closely evaluated the day of a prescribed burn, and that decisionmakers are engaged in those burns in real time to determine whether a prescribed burn should be implemented.

**U.S. Economic Development Administration Awards \$21.5 Million for Workforce Training in Forest Health and Fire Safety.** Through its proposed [CA Resilient Careers in Forestry](#) program, the Foundation for California Community Colleges (FCCC) will partner with employers, educational institutions, and local community-based organizations to build a state-wide infrastructure for training in forest health and fire safety, while simultaneously diversifying the field.

**Application Assistance for Community Wildfire Defense Grants.** The Fire Adapted Communities Network and Headwaters Economics have created [a primer](#) designed to help communities navigate the U.S. Forest Service's recently launched [Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program](#). The grants are funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and prioritize at-risk communities in areas identified as having high or very high wildfire hazard potential, are low-income, and/or have been impacted by a severe disaster.

### Reports from the National Forests:

- **Sequoia National Forest:** The Sequoia National Forest is making progress toward achieving the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response (GSER) goals. To date, 345 monarch Giant Sequoias have been protected in 6 groves covering 43 acres. The USFS has also begun work, with funding



from CAL FIRE on 1,340 acres of an approximately 4,900-acre restoration project in the footprint of the 2015 Rough Fire.

- **Mendocino National Forest:** Land managers are making progress on 795 Acres of fuels reduction on the Mendocino National Forest. [Projects like these](#) are examples of the kind of work and partnerships that the Mendocino National Forest will be building on to meet USFS' ambitious plan to treat millions of acres over the next 10 years.
- **Sierra National Forest:** The Sierra National Forest [announced](#) a project to reduce the hazardous fuels and wildfire risk that currently threatens the grove of giant sequoia in the Nelder Grove Historic Area.

## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

**CARCD Distributes USFS Post-Fire Disaster Recovery Grant Funds.** With funding from a \$3 million [Post-Fire Disaster Recovery Agreement](#) from the USFS the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) awarded six resource conservation districts (RCDs) grants for forest post-fire recovery work within the footprints of 2019-2021 wildfires. The funded projects will help establish Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs), as per Action Item 1.14 of the CA Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

**Building Leadership, Trust, and Capacity for Cultural Burning:** The Karuk Tribe, in partnership with CAL FIRE, recently hosted [a day long workshop](#) in Orleans that included presentations from Karuk and Yurok tribal members. By building relationships with tribal practitioners, CAL FIRE staff are gaining new insights into fire management and finding new ways to support tribal fire management practices.

**The University of California Cooperative Extension (UC ANR) is hosting the following landowner workshops:**

- **Forest Stewardship Workshops:** These [workshops](#) will be held in various locations throughout the state to help landowners develop management plans. Upcoming locations include Butte/Yuba and Napa counties.
- **Small Forest Landowners' Field Day:** UC ANR, My Sierra Woods and partners are hosting a [Small Forest Landowners Field Day](#) on September 18 in Twain Harte. Fuel reduction projects, technical and financial assistance programs for private forest landowners, and the My Sierra Woods programs will be highlighted.
- **Post-fire Forest Resilience Workshops:** UC ANR is hosting a new [post-fire workshop series](#) this fall aimed at assisting private landowners the northern and Central Sierra Nevada affected by the 2021 Dixie, Caldor and Tamarack fires.

**Workforce Developments:** Local Community Colleges are offering opportunities to grow and strengthen California's forest sector workforce. he

- **The Tahoe Fund** is awarding a \$1,000 scholarship to every student in the inaugural year of [Lake Tahoe Community College](#)'s new Forestry Education & Job Placement Program.
- **Shasta College** received 3.3M from the Foundation for California Communication Colleges to expand [forestry and fire-safety training](#) programs.



- **Feather River College** is offering an [annual \\$1,000 incentive](#) to any employee that holds a Wildland Firefighter Certification

## PRESS BOX

**Does Wildfire Smoke Cause Lung Cancer?** [New York Times, August 9, 2022](#) (\$)

**New Sierra Hiking Trail Aims to Revive Mountain Towns.** [LA Times, August 14, 2022](#) (\$)

**'A real success story': Fuels Reduction Work Limited Placer County Fire's Spread.** [KCRA3 News, August 15, 2022](#)

**California's Giant Sequoias Are Burning Up. Will Logging Save Them?** [Washington Post, August 16, 2022](#) (\$)

**To Fight Wildfire, California Gets a Surprising Solution: A New Sawmill.** [Bloomberg, August 22, 2022.](#)

**USFS is Overstating its Wildfire Prevention Progress.** [NBC News, August 9, 2022](#)

## LEGISLATION WATCH

**SB 926 (Dodd) Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program: Prescribed Fire Claims Fund.** Requires CAL FIRE to establish the Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program, pursuant to SB 170 (Skinner), and to establish a Prescribed Fire Claims Fund, to be administered by CAL FIRE, CIGA, or another third-party administrator.

**AB 522 (Fong) Forestry: Forest Fire Prevention Exemption.** Amends the Forest Fire Prevention Pilot Project Exemption in PRC 4584 to extend the sunset date to January 1, 2026.

**AB 1717 (Aguiar-Curry) Public works: definition.** Expands the definition of public works to include fuels reduction work as part of wildfire mitigation projects done under contract and thus require the payment of prevailing wage for such projects.

**AB 2251 (Calderon, Ch. 186, Stats. 2022) Urban forestry: statewide strategic plan: statewide map.** Requires CAL FIRE to develop a statewide strategic plan by 2025 to increase tree canopy coverage in urban areas by 10 percent by 2035.

## SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Post Fire Restoration Symposium Recording Available:** The California Fire Science Consortium's [virtual symposium](#) focused on how monitoring and research in the southern Sierra Nevada can support post fire restoration planning and help to inform adaptive management.

**Counteracting Wildfire Misinformation:** Jones, et al., 2022; [Frontiers of Ecology and Environment.](#)

**State Climate Policy and Nature-based Solutions: A Match that Provides Multiple Benefits for Climate, Water, and More:** Marcus, 2022; [Water in the West, Stanford.](#)



**High Roads to Resilience: Building Equitable Forest Restoration Economies in California and Beyond:** Nelson et al., 2022; [Climate + Community Project, University of British Columbia, Centre for Climate Justice](#)

**Wildfire Smoke: Behavior Matters, But How to Best Influence It?** [Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment, August 2022.](#)

**Severity Patterns of the 2021 Dixie Fire Exemplify the Need To Increase Low-Severity Fire Treatments In California's Forests:** Taylor et al., 2022: [Environmental Research Letters.](#)

**Evidence for Widespread Changes in the Structure, Composition, and Fire Regimes of Western North American Forest Landscapes:** Hagman and Waltz, 2022; [ERI Working Paper No. 45. Ecological Restoration Institute, Northern Arizona University.](#)

**California's Forest Carbon Offsets Buffer Pool Is Severely Undercapitalized:** Badgley et al., 2022; [Front. For. Glob. Change 5:930426](#)

## LOOKING AHEAD

**CAL FIRE's Forest and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) Webinar:** On [September 9, 2022](#) two CAL FIRE Forest Health Research Program grantees, Dr. Susan Prichard and Dr. Keala Hagmann will present, "Climate change and wildfires in western North American forests: a review of ecological departures and adaptation strategies."

**30 x 30 Partnership Kick-Off:** [On September 28, 2022](#), the California Natural Resources Agency will kick off collaboration and community engagement around the [30x30 Initiative](#).

