



JANUARY 2023

TASK FORCE
HIGHLIGHTS

Southern California Regional Task Force Meeting, February 2-3, 2023: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority are hosting the Southern California Regional Meeting of the Task Force, in person at the historic [King Gillette Ranch](#) in Calabasas and online via [livestream](#). The February 2 meeting will open with a Resource Fair to showcase organizations at work in Southern California. Field Tours will take place on February 3.

- [Registration is required](#) for in-person attendance, as space is limited. Same day, in-person registration is not available.
- Visit the [Regional Meeting page](#) for all relevant information including the event calendar, tour descriptions, livestream registration, lodging and directions.

Task Force Leadership Videos: If you follow the Task Force social media channels, you've likely seen the series of short videos featuring Patrick Wright, Wade Crowfoot and Jennifer Eberlien. If not, subscribe and follow along on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and look for more coming soon.

STATE
HIGHLIGHTS

Updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Available for Public Comment: The [new map](#) from CAL FIRE reflects changes in fire hazard in rural, unincorporated state and local responses areas, as reported over the past five years. CAL FIRE is hosting 57 [public hearings](#) in January; the public comment period closes February 3.

600th Community in California Designated 'Firewise': California accomplished a new record of designated Firewise USA communities with the recognition of Rancho/Middle Canyon in [Monterey County as the 600th Firewise Community in the state](#). The recognition by the National Fire Protection Association highlights the fact the community has taken steps to ensure that wildfire risk is reduced in their area. Earlier this year CAL FIRE established a new division to further focus on community wildfire preparedness efforts, including the Firewise USA recognition process.

Wildfire and Forest Resilience Funding on the Ground:

- **Sierra Pacific Industries will grow 25 million seedlings:** CAL FIRE [awarded Sierra Pacific Industries a \\$3 million business development grant](#) to create a state-of-the-art 25-million seedling per-year tree nursery in Gazelle, Siskiyou County. The nursery, which will be fully operational in 2026, will specialize in production of native conifer seedlings for forest restoration, research, and conservation projects.
- **The Central Valley Forestry Corps will recruit and train forestry staff:** The Central Valley Forestry Corps was [awarded a \\$1.9 million grant from CAL FIRE's Workforce and Business Development program](#) engage underserved and underrepresented local residents in work-based learning and paid work experience in the forestry sector.



- **The Washoe Tribe will improve forest, watershed, and wildfire resilience:** The [California Tahoe Conservancy awarded a \\$305,000 grant](#) to increase the Washoe Tribe's capacity to participate in forest, watershed, and wildfire resilience projects in the Lake Tahoe basin, as well as advance the use of cultural prescribed burning and cultivate culturally significant native plants. Grant funding came from the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.
- **The Tubatulabal Tribe in Kern County will assume stewardship of culturally significant land:** SNC approved roughly \$5.2 million in Sierra Nevada [Watershed Improvement Program](#) grants to strategic land conservation projects. The largest was a \$1 million grant to the Western Rivers Conservancy to purchase 2,274 acres of Fay Creek Ranch and transfer a portion to the Tubatulabal Tribe for long-term stewardship as a working ranch, the first time a culturally significant land has been returned to the Tribe.
- **The Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship will help revitalize tourism in the Lost Sierra:** SNC approved nearly \$5.2 million in [Watershed Improvement Program](#) funding for recreation and tourism grants. Nearly \$800,000 was awarded to Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship to advance trail network development as part of the larger [Connected Communities project](#).
- **Placer County will develop a biomass facility in the North Tahoe Region:** A [\\$2 million grant from CAL FIRE](#) will enable the County to develop the Cabin Creek biomass facility near Truckee.

Updates from Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety:

- **2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plans:** Energy Safety has [issued final approvals](#) for all eight of California's electrical corporations' 2022 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) Updates. California's electrical corporations are required to submit three-year WMPs and update them annually.
- **2020 WMP Annual Reports on Compliance:** Energy Safety's final versions of [Annual Reports on Compliance](#) (ARC) have been released for Southern California Edison, Horizon West Transmission, and Trans Bay Cable. ARCs are an assessment of each electrical corporation's implementation of their approved 2020 WMPs.
- **Safety Certifications:** Energy Safety has issued [safety certifications](#) to Pacific Gas and Electric, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Bear Valley Electric Service. An electrical corporation granted a safety certification is presumed to have acted reasonably in proceedings before the CPUC to recover costs of a utility-caused wildfire unless it is demonstrated otherwise.

California Takes Action to Protect Biodiversity at U.N. Negotiations: California's delegation of over 50 leaders including state elected officials, tribal leaders, scientists, NGOs and philanthropic groups urged leaders from around the world at United Nations' COP 15 to support an ambitious [new global biodiversity framework](#) to protect life on earth. Over 200 signed the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, a 10-year agreement that sets targets in 22 areas, including protecting 30 percent of the planet by 2030.



FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

EPA Proposes to Strengthen Air Quality Standards to Protect the Public from Harmful Effects of Soot: The U.S. EPA [announced a proposal](#) to strengthen the primary health-based national air quality standard for fine particulate matter. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) [issued a statement](#) in support of EPA's proposal and will work closely with EPA, local air districts, the Task Force and its partners to help California balance air quality protection with fire protection and land management goals.

USFS Awards CALREC Vision Partnership of the Year: The USFS-Pacific Southwestern Region awarded the [Regional Forester's Honor Award for Partnership of the Year \(2022\)](#) to the Leadership Team of the Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group (SRCRV). The award recognizes the Leadership Team's efforts to develop *California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience* for California's Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force.

BLM Seeks Public Input on Expansive Plan to Reduce Wildfire Risks Near Communities: [The Bureau of Land Management \(BLM\) is seeking public comments](#) on a plan to expedite fuels reduction treatments and fire protection efforts near high fire-risk areas on public lands in 44 counties throughout California and northwest Nevada. The statewide Wildland-Urban Interface fuels treatments programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) aims to facilitate projects on approximately 900,000 acres of public land near rural communities.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

RCDs Are Catalyzing Restoration: The [California Society for Ecological Restoration Quarterly News Journal](#) has shared their Fall 2022 journal Volume 32, Issue 3: How Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are Catalyzing Restoration across California. This journal also features projects and programs from [Marin RCD](#), [Mendocino RCD](#), and [RCD of Greater San Diego County](#).

PRESS BOX

A huge effort is underway to save California's giant sequoias from future fires. Here's how it's going. [San Francisco Chronicle, December 15, 2022](#)

Americans Are Flocking to Wildfire: U.S. Migration Study. [University of Vermont, Gund Institute for Environment, December 8, 2022](#)

Wildfire smoke can slash California solar power output by nearly a third: [Long Beach Press Telegram, December 8, 2022](#)

New wildfire risk map suggests California communities increasingly vulnerable: [CapRadio, December 15, 2022](#)

Could Yosemite and Kings Canyon parks be linked? Bill calls for creation of new national monument: [San Francisco Chronicle, December 15, 2022](#)

EPA proposes new standards for most dangerous types of air pollution: [LA Times, January 6, 2023](#)



Could Yosemite and Kings Canyon parks be linked? Bill calls for creation of new national monument. [San Francisco Chronicle, December 15, 2022](#)

SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Flocking to fire: How climate and natural hazards shape human migration across the United States. Clark et al., 2022: [Frontiers in Human Dynamics 10:3389](#)

Indigenous fire management and cross-scale fire-climate relationships in the Southwest United States: Roos et al., 2022: [Science Advances Vol. 8, No. 49](#)

Climate Change and Recreation in The Western United States: Effects and Opportunities for Adaptation. Miller et al., 2022: Journal of Forestry, 120(4)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Up to \$19 million is available for Tribal Wildfire Resilience: [CAL FIRE's Forest Health Grant program](#) will award competitive grants to Native American tribes located within California. Of the \$19 million, up to \$15 million is available for wildfire resilience implementation projects. [The Forest Health grant guidelines](#) address this new opportunity and Forest Health staff hosted a [Tribal Wildfire Resilience Roundtable](#) explaining this opportunity. Applications are due February 28, 2023.

CAL FIRE Announces Availability of up to \$290 million for Wildfire Prevention, Forest Health, and Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration Projects:

- [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#): Up to \$120 million for local projects in and near fire threatened communities that focus on increasing the protection of people, structures, and communities. Applications are due March 15, 2023.
- [Forest Health Grant Program](#): Up to \$120 million for landscape scale forest restoration projects that restore forest resilience to catastrophic disturbance. Applications are due February 28, 2023.
- [Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration](#): Up to \$50 million will be awarded through the Forest Health Program for reforestation treatments including site preparation and post-planting maintenance that is directly related to reforestation.

Historic Green Schoolyards Grant Guidelines Available for Public Review: For the first time in state history [CAL FIRE is designating funding](#) to improve tree canopy cover on California K-12 public school campuses and nonprofit childcare facilities. Under CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program \$117 million will be available for Green Schoolyard grants in 2023. The Green Schoolyard grant guidelines are now open for public comment through January 13, 2023.

Business and Workforce Development Grant Guidelines Released: [CAL FIRE Wood Products and Bioenergy](#) anticipates up to \$7.5 million available for 2023 Quarter 1 Wood Products project awards. Additionally, up to \$5 million available for Biomass Transportation Subsidy projects.

LOOKING AHEAD

Wildfire Prevention Grants for Prescribed Grazing: The [January 18 webinar](#) will train on utilizing CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program specifically for



seasonal/temporary prescribed grazing for wildfire fuel mitigation. Topics include how to connect applicants to graziers, and how to decide if prescribed grazing fits vegetation management goals.

California Reforestation Pipeline Cooperative Gathering: The mission of the CA Reforestation Pipeline Cooperative is to provide a platform upon which diverse stakeholders can work together to accelerate timely, effective, climate-informed reforestation practices across all lands. Register for the [January 26](#) gathering.

Wildfire Resilient Structures (WiReS) Conference: The inaugural [Wildfire Resilient Structures Conference and Tradeshow](#) will be held in San Diego, February 7-10, 2023. Hosted by UC Davis, the conference aims to address the WUI fire risk problems inherent to the built environment to support resilient and equitable communities.

Upcoming Task Force Meetings: Dates and locations for [2023 Task Force meetings](#) are available on the Task Force website.

