



## FEBRUARY 2023

TASK FORCE  
HIGHLIGHTS

**Southern California Regional Task Force Meeting:** Nearly 350 people gathered at the King Gillette Ranch in Calabasas on February 2 for an [agenda](#) focused on balancing the protection of the region's forests and shrublands with community protection from the increased threat of wildfires. Thank you to our hosts Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority. Session descriptions and recordings are available on the [Task Force website](#).

**Regional Investment Strategy:** A highlight of the February 2 meeting was the [announcement](#) of a multi-agency, \$70 million investment in Southern California to support regional landscape and community protection programs. Investments include:

- Approximately \$30 million through a new partnership between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the National Forest Foundation
- \$20 million from the California Department of Conservation's Regional Fire and Forest Capacity Program
- \$10 million from the USFS Wildfire Crisis Strategy
- \$10 million from CAL FIRE's Forest Health Grant Program

The new funding supplements state and federal investments of more than \$500 million in Southern California during the last three years.

**Regional Resource Kits & Regional Profiles:** The Task Force's Science Advisory Panel has completed [Regional Resource Kits & Profiles](#) for both Southern California and the Sierra Nevada. Resource Kits are sets of tools and data created to accelerate the work by regional partners to reduce wildfire hazard and improve the conditions of forested and shrub landscapes.

**Task Force Analyst Position is Open:** [CAL FIRE's Climate & Energy Program is hiring](#) an Analyst to assist in overall program coordination and administration of the Task Force. Duties include communication, budgeting, and reporting.

FEDERAL  
HIGHLIGHTS

**USFS Announces Major Investments to Reduce CA Wildfire Risk:** On January 19, the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's announced](#) an investment of \$490 million to expand efforts to reduce wildfire risk across the Western United States in 11 high risk landscapes. Five of the new projects are in California, covering nearly 19 million acres, including:

- Klamath River Basin in California and Oregon – 10 million acres
- Southern California Fireshed Risk Reduction Strategy – 4 million acres
- Sierra & Elko Fronts in Nevada and California – 3.4 million acres
- Trinity Forest Health & Fire-Resilient Rural Communities – 910,000 acres
- Plumas Community Protection – 285,000 acres

**Survey Detects 36 Million Dead Trees in California:** On February 7, the USFS published the [2022 Aerial Detection Survey report](#) providing an annual estimate of tree mortality. The [2022 survey](#) revealed about 36.3 million trees



across 2.6 million acres of federal, state and private land died in California. The central Sierra Nevada Range and areas further north showed the highest mortality rates with true firs being the most impacted.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

### Opportunities to Host Volunteers and Invest in Workforce Development:

- **California Climate Action Corps:** The Office of the Governor has offered to public agencies, Tribes, nonprofits, and educational institutions the opportunity to host fellows from the [California Climate Action Corps](#). Fellows may engage on policy, implementation, and/or education service projects focused on urban greening, organic waste and edible food recovery, and wildfire resiliency.
- **GrizzlyCorps:** Applications are open for [GrizzlyCorps](#), a new AmeriCorps program at UC Berkeley's Center for Law, Energy & the Environment in partnership with California Volunteers. Fellows are recent college graduates with relevant backgrounds (e.g. agriculture and forestry, planning, policy, community development) who will implement community resilience and capacity-building projects.

**Comment Period Extended for Updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map:** CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal added an additional 60-day [public comment period](#) for the regulatory adoption of State Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The public comment period now closes on April 4, 2023. 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.

**DOC Awards Grants for Forest Biomass Projects:** The Department of Conservation (DOC) awarded eight entities grants of \$500,000 each under the first phase of the [Forest Biomass to Carbon-Negative Biofuels Pilot Program](#). Funded projects support technology demonstration and planning activities that simultaneously manage catastrophic wildfire risks, address rural economic development, and develop carbon negative fuels.

**Climate Benefits of CAL FIRE's Forest Health Program:** CAL FIRE's Climate and Energy program recently released a [Storymap highlighting the climate benefits](#) of its [Forest Health grant program](#). The story graphically depicts how the Forest Health fuels treatment, restoration, reforestation, and prescribed fire projects are contributing to the health and resilience of California forests and making a significant, quantifiable contribution toward the state's efforts to combat climate change.

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Reflects on 2022:** In their [2022 Annual Report](#) Sierra Nevada Conservancy reflects on their efforts to deliver \$34 million in grants for forest resilience, land conservation, and recreation access; expand tribal relationships and take necessary steps to embed equity across their programs; and align funding with regional goals.

## LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

**RCD County Coordinator Grant Awards:** California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) awarded \$2.975 million to 17 counties across California for the purpose of developing county-wide collaboration and coordination among various wildfire



mitigation groups. CFSC's [County Coordinator Program](#) is a California Climate Investment through CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Program.

## LEGISLATION WATCH

**AB 287 (Garcia) California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund** Would create a number of new requirements for State agencies that administer grant programs funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, including a requirement for grant solicitation periods to remain open at least three months.

**AB 297 (Fong) Wildfires: local assistance grant program: advance payments** Would extend the sunset date for advance payments of Wildfire Prevention grant awards from 2024 until 2034.

**AB 338 (Aguiar-Curry) Public works: definition**

Would make fuel reduction work done as part of a fire mitigation project subject to prevailing wages, as stipulated.

**SB 310 (Dodd) Prescribed fire: civil liability: cultural burns**

Would clarify that "burn boss" as it is used in the Civil Code means the same as "burn boss" as it is defined in the Public Resources Code. Would also clarify existing law to state that only the governing body of a California Native American Tribe can approve a prescribed burn project.

**ACA 2 (Alanis) Public resources: Water and Wildfire Resiliency Act of 2023**

Would establish the Water and Wildfire Resiliency Fund (Fund) and require that 3% of California's total annual revenue be transferred to the Fund, which would be used for water and forest maintenance projects. 50% of the revenue provided to the Fund would be for forest health and maintenance projects and fuel reduction projects.

## PRESS BOX

**Inside the water crisis: A journey across the Colorado River Basin.** [Los Angeles Times, January 26, 2023.](#)

**What 5,000-year-old skeletons tell us about living with climate change.** [The Grist, January 23, 2023.](#)

**California's redwood parks are taking a beating from storms.** [San Francisco Chronicle, January 10, 2023.](#) (\$)

**2022 fire season: a break from fire & smoke, but not from risk.** [Sierra Nevada Conservancy, January 19, 2023.](#)

**Updates from the Region 5 Public Affairs:**

- **Innovative Forestry: New Equipment, Big Data Potential:** The forest products industry has long worked together with the U.S. Forest Service to reduce wildfire risk across the landscape. [Recent innovations in timber harvesting machinery](#) are mitigating the hurdle of operating in difficult terrain.



- **Pile Burning on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest:** [Photo essay](#) of pile burn operations conducted on the Shasta–Trinity National Forest near Weaverville, California.
- **A Career in the Fire Service:** [Cancer survivor](#) shares US Forest Service experience, encourages others to attend hiring events.

## SCIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Tribal Co-Management of California Forestlands: A Review.** [Sollfrank, 2023: American Bar Association.](#)

**High-severity burned area and proportion exceed historic conditions in Sierra Nevada, California, and adjacent ranges.** [Safford et al., 2023: Ecosphere, Vol. 14, Issue 1.](#)

**Greenhouse gas emissions and removals from forest land, woodlands, urban trees, and harvested wood products in the United States, 1990–2020.** [Domke et al., 2022: Resource Update FS–382. USDA-Forest Service, Northern Research Station.](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**CAL FIRE Grant Solicitations Open Now:** Details on [CAL FIRE Grants website.](#)

- [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.
- [Tribal Wildfire Resilience:](#) Up to \$19 million for grants to Native American tribes located within California for wildfire resilience implementation and planning projects. Applications are due February 28, 2023.
- [Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration:](#) Up to \$50 million through the Forest Health Program for reforestation treatments including site preparation and post-planting maintenance. Applications are due February 28, 2023.

**30x30 Virtual Expo Series:** California Natural Resources Agency recorded a [series of panel discussions](#) on programs, funding, and resources available to support California's 30x30 Initiative.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Task Force Meetings:** The next meeting of the Task Force will take be held in person in Sacramento and virtually via Zoom on March 30, 2023. Join us for a look back at accomplishments in 2022 and a look forward at deliverables and opportunities in 2023. Dates and locations for all [2023 Task Force meetings](#) are available on the Task Force website.

**2023 WIP Summit:** Sierra Nevada's [Watershed Improvement Program Summit](#) will be held March 1 in Sacramento. The agenda will feature reflections from regional leaders on the trajectory of the Sierra-Cascade region, their work, and how they envision its future.



**CARCD Virtual Conference:** The California Association of Conservation Districts (CARCD) is hosting a [virtual conference](#) organized into four tracks that will be held once a week for four weeks between March 6 and 30. Focus of the tracks include: RCD growth and partnerships; forest and fire resilience; agriculture and watersheds; building tribal partnerships; pollinators and wildlife habitat; and sustainable cannabis farming.

**Upcoming Webinars from [CalPoly's Fuels Management Training Program](#):**

- March 16: Targeted Grazing for Fuel Reduction: Case studies from East Bay Regional Park District.
- March 24: Discussion about ecological stewardship and intentional fire
- April 6: Environmental review pathways to long-term success: Rx fire
- April 13: CalVTP Training: Healdsburg Open Space/Community Fuels Reduction Project

**International Mass Timber Conference 2023:** The International Mass Timber Conference will be held March 27–29 in Portland, Oregon. Explore cross-laminated timber (CLT), nail-laminated timber, glulam, mass plywood panels, dowel-laminated timber, and laminated veneer lumber; and the opportunities and obstacles in global design, construction, development, manufacturing, and more.

**California Forest Pest Council Annual Tour:** Save the date for the Pest Council's [Annual Weed Committee Tour](#). June 21-22 in Humboldt County.

