



NOVEMBER 2023

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Task Force to Host Treatment Tracking System Public Workshop: The Task Force will host a virtual public workshop from 2-3:30 p.m. on November 14 to solicit feedback from users of the [CA Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Interagency Tracking System](#). A beta version of the System was [released](#) in late August. The Task Force is gathering input to improve how data on statewide wildfire resilience treatments is accessed and displayed. [Registration is required.](#)

Upcoming Task Force Meeting and 2024 Meeting Dates:

- December 15, 2023: The meeting will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., live in the [CNRA Auditorium](#) and [via Zoom](#). The agenda will focus on Goal 2 of the [WFR Action Plan](#), "Strengthen the Protection of Communities."
- [2024 Meeting Dates:](#)
 - April 4 & 5 – Southern CA Regional
 - June 20 – Sacramento
 - September 26-27 -- Sierra Nevada Regional
 - December 13 – Sacramento

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

30x30 Becomes Law: On October 7 [Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill 337](#) establishing the statewide goal to conserve at least 30 percent of California's land and coastal waters by 2030 (30x30). This legislation establishes the goal in statute, ensuring that it will remain a commitment for future administrations through 2030. The three primary objectives of [30x30](#) are to conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change.

State Funding Enables a Historic Acquisition by California's First Black-led Land Conservation Organization: A [\\$2.27 million grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board](#) and \$750,000 from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), enabled the 40 Acre Conservation League—California's first and only Black-led conservation group—to acquire the Tahoe Forest Gateway Leidesdorff Property in Placer County. The Conservation League and SNC will restore and manage 650 acres of land for wildlife habitat, and support wildlife-oriented education and research.

Energy Safety Releases Draft 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Update Guidelines for Public Comment: On October 31, Energy Safety released its Draft 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) Update Guidelines for public comment. [Public comments](#) may be submitted no later than December 5. A virtual public workshop on the guidelines will be held on November 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The Draft 2025 WMP Update Guidelines, if adopted, would require electrical corporations to narrow the focus of their updates to five specific areas: updates to risk models; changes to approved targets, identify objectives and expenditures; establish quarterly inspection targets for 2025;



new or discontinued programs; and progress on areas for continued improvement.

CAL FIRE Announces Availability of up to \$117 Million for Wildfire Prevention; Forest Health and Research to Follow: Funding from the Department's [Wildfire Prevention Grant Program](#) will be awarded to local projects that address the risk of wildfire and reduce wildfire potential to communities. Funded activities will include hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education with an emphasis on protecting communities, improving public health and safety, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. CAL FIRE [also announced](#) a November 8 virtual workshop to explain the grant process and requirements. [Applications are due January 10, 2024.](#)

*CAL FIRE will open the solicitation for [Forest Health](#) & Post-Fire Reforestation and Regeneration grants on November 13. The [Forest Health Research](#) grant solicitation will also open later this month.

CAL FIRE and Alert California Recognized by Time Magazine for Innovation in Technology Use: TIME Magazine named ALERTCalifornia and CAL FIRE's fire detection AI program one of [TIME's Best Inventions of 2023](#). By utilizing artificial intelligence (AI), CAL FIRE can identify fires that might otherwise have burned unchecked overnight. AI can watch 1,000 cameras across California all at the same time. The program is a partnership with UC San Diego's [ALERTCalifornia](#).

FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS **Joint Economic Committee Democrats Report: Climate-Exacerbated Wildfires Cost the U.S. between \$394 to \$893 Billion Annually:** [The new report](#) found that climate-exacerbated wildfires cost the United States between \$394 to \$893 billion per year in economic costs and damages – a number much higher than existing estimates. The new estimate pulls from existing research on related costs like property damage and diminished real estate value, direct deaths and injuries, health impacts from wildfire smoke, income loss, watershed pollution, and a range of other factors.

Largest Federal Investment To-Date in America's Electric Grid Funds Wildfire Assessment and Resilience in CA: On October 18, the Department of Energy [announced \\$3.46 billion for 58 projects](#) across 44 states to strengthen electric grid resilience and reliability across America. Included in this funding is a wildfire mitigation project in California and other states, with a consortium of 39 small, rural, not-for-profit electric co-ops in high-threat areas. The project will enable members to harden their networks by deploying fire-resistant grid infrastructure, undergrounding lines, or upgrading overhead lines to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfires and to increase wildfire resilience.

PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION **The Watershed Center Partners to Build CA's Wildfire Resilience Workforce:** The Watershed Research and Training Center (The Watershed Center) is [launching a new kind of workforce development effort](#), specifically tailored to Local Conservation Corps across California. The Watershed Center piloted this approach from January 2022 to August 2023 with Conservation Corps North Bay, using funds from the California Department of Conservation's



Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program. Continued RFFC funding and a CAL FIRE Workforce Development grant are enabling The Watershed Center to scale up their efforts.

LEGISLATION WATCH **AB 388 (Connolly) Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan: implementation strategies: roadmap:** Would require the Department of Conservation to establish guidelines funding the implementation and regional investment strategies for creating fire adapted communities and landscapes by January 1, 2025. Would authorize all conservancies and departments within CNRA to directly award regional block grants to help achieve the goals and key actions identified in the regional priority strategies. (This is now a 2-year bill)

AB 692 (Patterson) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety: Would create a CEQA exemption for egress route projects undertaken by a public agency in fire-prone subdivisions that have been identified by the BOF as lacking in sufficient egress routes. This exemption would expire on 1/1/2030. (This is now a 2-year bill)

AB 788 (Petrie-Norris) Fire Prevention: grant programs: reporting: Would require the Task Force to compile and annually post on their website, starting July 1, 2024, information pertaining to all grant programs managed by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. (This is now a 2-year bill)

AB 824 (Calderon) Highway greening: statewide strategic plan: Would require Caltrans to consult with CAL FIRE to complete a Statewide strategic plan for the achievement of at least a 10 percent increase of green highways in specified urban areas by 2035. (This is now a 2-year bill)

AB 1573 (Friedman) Water conservation: landscape design: model ordinance: would make changes to the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO), developed by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), to increase the use of native plants and restrict the use of nonfunctional turf in new or renovated commercial and industrial areas. (This is now a 2-year bill)

SB 310 (Dodd) Prescribed Fire: civil liability: cultural burns: Would extend civil liability protections to burn bosses who are not certified by the OSFM. Would give Native American tribes the authority to grant themselves permission to conduct cultural burns, and to do so without a burn plan or proper risk mitigation if they are within “ancestral territory,” as defined. Would allow the CNRA Secretary to enter into agreements with tribes in support of tribal sovereignty for cultural burning and create a Cultural Burn Working Group. (This is now a 2-year bill)

SB 504 (Dodd) Wildfires: defensible space: grant programs: local governments: Would require CAL FIRE to give priority to a qualified local government entity located within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) or High FHSZ who is applying for a wildfire prevention grant, that provides Defensible Space Assessment data to CAL FIRE using a required common reporting platform. This bill would also require people who own a building or structure in fire-prone areas to maintain and space vegetation in



a condition so that a wildfire would be unlikely to ignite the structure. (This is now a 2-year bill)

SB 675 (Limón) Prescribed Grazing: local assistance grant program: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program: Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force:

Would require CAL FIRE to prioritize outreach and fire prevention projects that include prescribed grazing while eliminating the sunset date for advance payment authority. Would also require the Task Force to consult Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) to develop a strategic action plan by June 30, 2025, to expand local/regional prescribed grazing plans to support state efforts to increase wildfire and forest resilience activities. Would also require CAL FIRE to consult with the RMAC to increase prescribed grazing opportunities within the Wildfire Prevention Grants program, while expanding the program to fund prescribed grazing infrastructure. (This is now a 2-year bill)

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

Would establish the Water and Wildfire Resiliency Fund and require that 3% of California's total annual revenue be transferred to the Fund. 50% of the revenue provided to the Fund would be for forest health and maintenance projects and fuel reduction projects. (May be considered in 2024)

PRESS BOX

Forestland Steward: reforestation resources for private landowners, cultural fire, and Emergency Forest Restoration Teams. [Summer 2023.](#)

Climate change is turning swaths of California's mountains into 'zombie forests'. [Los Angeles Times, November 2, 2023.](#)

Why many scientists are now saying climate change is an all-out 'emergency'. [The Washington Post, October 30, 2023.](#)

Fire, other ravages jeopardize California's prized forests. [Associated Press, October 26, 2023.](#)

California wants to limit the vegetation within 5 feet of a house to reduce fire risk. [NPR, October 25, 2023.](#)

Best Inventions of 2023: AlertCalifornia and CAL FIRE AI Wildfire Detector. [Time, October 24, 2023.](#)

'There's still beauty': a national park bounces back after California's biggest single fire. [The Guardian, October 23, 2023.](#)

Cultural fire is good fire, and California needs more of it. [High County News, October 23, 2023.](#)

With wildfires growing, California writes new rules on where to plant shrubs. [NPR, October 20, 2023.](#)

US announces \$3.5B for projects nationwide to strengthen electric grid, bolster resilience. [Associated Press, October 18, 2023.](#)



Wildfires are dealing a massive blow to US real estate and homeownership, congressional report finds. [CNN, October 16, 2023.](#)

How megafires are remaking the world. [New York Times, October 15, 2023.](#) \$

California State Parks 'reintroducing fire' with prescribed burns at Santa Cruz County. [Mercury News, October 12, 2023.](#)

This was a good year for prescribed burns. Why didn't California do more? [KQED, October 10, 2023.](#)

California wildfire task force in the Northstate: Aiming for more fire resilient communities. [KRCR, October 6, 2023.](#)

LATEST IN SCIENCE

Advancing the community health vulnerability index for wildland fire smoke exposure. [Jung et al., Science of The Total Environment \(2023\): 167834.](#)

Consistently heterogeneous structures observed at multiple spatial scales across fire-intact reference sites. [Chamberlain et al., Forest Ecology and Management 550 \(2023\): 121478.](#)

Fuels reduction can directly improve spotted owl foraging habitat in the Sierra Nevada. [Wright et al., Forest Ecology and Management 549 \(2023\): 121430.](#)

Higher burn severity stimulates postfire vegetation and carbon recovery in California. [Qui et al., Agricultural and Forest Meteorology 342 \(2023\): 109750.](#)

Increasing wildfires and changing sociodemographics in communities across California, USA. [Yadav et al., International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction \(2023\): 104065.](#)

Interventions to restore wildfire-altered forests in California. [Long et al., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station \(2023\)](#)

Patterns and drivers of early conifer regeneration following stand-replacing wildfire in Pacific Northwest (USA) temperate maritime forests. [Laughlin et al., Forest Ecology and Management 549 \(2023\): 121491.](#)

Satellite detection of canopy-scale tree mortality and survival from California wildfires with spatio-temporal deep learning. [Dixon et al., Remote Sensing of Environment 298 \(2023\): 113842.](#)

The burden of wildfire smoke on respiratory health in California at the zip code level: uncovering the disproportionate impacts of differential fine particle composition. [Darling et al., GeoHealth 7.10 \(2023\): e2023GH000884.](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Wood Innovations, Community Wood, and Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grants: Nearly \$50 million in USFS grant funding is available in



[Wood Innovations, Community Wood, and Wood Products Infrastructure Assistance Grants](#). The U.S. Forest Service is seeking proposals that support crucial links between resilient, healthy forests, strong rural economies, and jobs in the forestry sector. Applications are due December 15.

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Landscape Restoration Grants: The 2024 Landscape Scale Restoration Grants proposal period is [now open](#) and will close on November 17. Grants are intended to support high impact projects that promote collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes, leverage public and private resources, and advance priorities identified in a State Forest Action Plan or other restoration strategy.

CNRA Urban Greening Program: California Natural Resources Agency's [Urban Greening Grant Program](#) is accepting proposals for urban greening projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the effects of extreme heat, and provide additional multiple benefits. This program gives priority consideration to projects located within and benefitting disadvantaged communities. Approximately \$23.7 million in specified General Fund dollars are available for awards this cycle. Applications due November 20.

Community Wildfire Defense Tribal Grants: The USFS Landscape Scale Restoration Grant Program for Federally Recognized Tribes is [now open](#). The program funds collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes on tribal lands. The deadline is December 15.

USFS Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program: [This program](#) supports the establishment of community forests through fee simple acquisition of private forest land to protect it from conversion to non-forest uses and provide community benefits. Applications due January 12, 2024.

CAL FIRE Green Schoolyards for Nonprofit Child Care Facilities: [Green Schoolyards grant](#) projects include the planting of trees and other vegetation, converting pavement to green spaces, and other activities at California nonprofit child care facilities to help alleviate extreme heat, improve the immediate environment for students, and improve accessibility to nature and nature-based learning for the youngest population in the state. [The Schoolyard Greening application portal](#) is open now with an application deadline of December 1, 2023.

LOOKING AHEAD

November 6-8: California Forestry Workforce Summit: At this summit sponsored by the [Foundation of California Community Colleges' Resilient Careers in Forestry Program](#), federal and state leaders will identify challenges and resources for effective, equitable workforce development in forestry and wildfire management to help Californians prepare for and secure good jobs in this vital sector.

November 8-28: Mendocino National Forest Post-Wildfire Recovery Community Sessions: Mendocino National Forest, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest and Southwest Research Stations, will host [a series of community sessions](#) to ask the question: what does a healthy,



vibrant forest mean to you? The four sessions are located in Chico (Nov. 8), Red Bluff (Nov. 9), Upper Lake, and Covelo.

November 8 & 15: Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative (TCSI) Webinar Series: TCSI is holding a [webinar series](#) to learn about science-based tools and products that can be used to guide forest restoration and management.

- **November 8:** 11:00-12:00 PST – [Planning for Change, Integrating Climate Modeling into Forest Management](#)
- **November 15:** 11:00-12:00 PST – [Case Study on Smoke and Health Impacts from Wildfire and Prescribed Fire](#)

November 14-15: California Forest Pest Council Meeting on Fostering Resilience Toward Healthy Forests: During their 72nd annual meeting in Davis, the California Forest Pest Council will be covering: 2023 forest pest observations from around California; speaking panels on climate and forest resilience, mega-disturbance in California forests, the latest on non-native forest pests in California; and a visit to UC Davis's Bohart Museum of Entomology. [Registration now open.](#)

December 4-8: 10th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress: The 10th International Fire Ecology and Management Congress [will be held in Monterey](#), California December 4-8, 2023. This event will include workshops, field trips, and 3 full days of presentations, discussion groups, and networking opportunities around the theme, [Igniting Connections: Celebrating our fire family across generations, cultures, and disciplines.](#)

December 7: Using the CalVTP: New Implementation Tools and Lessons : Cal Poly is hosting [Using the CalVTP: New Implementation Tools and Lessons](#). This webinar will share insights about the latest trends, tips, and practices for agencies, fire safe councils, and landowners seeking to use the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) to implement vegetation treatments.

December 13-15: CA Resource Conservation Districts 78th Annual Conference: [Sacramento.](#)

