



## MAY 2024

### PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

**Wildfire Preparedness Week – Meeting the Mission Through Partnerships:** On May 5, Governor Newsom [issued a proclamation](#) declaring May 5-11, 2024, as California's "Wildfire Preparedness Week." This year's Wildfire Preparedness Week theme, *Meeting the Mission Through Partnerships*, emphasizes the importance of collaboration and collective responsibility in reducing and managing wildfire risk. California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CAL OES) and CAL FIRE will be hosting a [series of events](#) to provide valuable wildfire safety and preparedness tips in Sacramento, San Mateo, San Luis Obispo, and Orange counties. Federal partners in California, including the USFS, National Park Service, BLM, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, are [launching an online campaign](#) focused on wildland fire safety and prevention while recreating on public lands.

At the community level, Californians can make their neighborhoods safer by creating defensible space around homes, hardening homes, developing wildfire action plans, and teaming up to join Fire Safe Councils and Firewise Communities, which work to regularly assess wildfire risk and prioritize action to address it. Visit [ReadyForWildfire.org](https://ReadyForWildfire.org) to learn about steps to prepare for wildfire season and explore the Task Force's [webpage dedicated to advancing Fire Adapted Communities](#).

**38,950 Acres of Land Returned to California Native American Tribes with Support from CNRA, CAL FIRE, & Ocean Protection Council:** The California Natural Resources Agency, in partnership with CAL FIRE and the Ocean Protection Council awarded \$107.7 million to fund 33 projects and support the return of approximately 38,950 acres of land to California Native American tribes through the [Tribal Nature-Based Solutions](#) grant program. Funding will support the return of ancestral lands to tribal ownership and stewardship, planning and implementation of habitat restoration projects, protecting our coast and oceans, advancing wildfire resiliency and cultural fire, and more multi-benefit nature-based solutions projects across California.

**Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition Exceeds 2023 Goals and Plants 542,000 Trees:** The [Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition has exceeded its goals in 2023](#), its second year of large-scale collaboration. The coalition, made up of 20 partner entities, treated nearly 9,900 acres in 28 giant sequoia groves in 2023. This restoration work brings the total giant sequoia grove acres treated since the extreme 2020-21 wildfires to 14,143 out of 26,000. The coalition also planted over 294,000 native tree seedlings in severely burned areas, bringing the total to over 542,000. Other coalition accomplishments include initiating and hosting research studies by academic, government, and nonprofit organizations, reviving cultural practices, and expanding co-stewardship agreements with tribes and nonprofits.

**Karuk Tribe Partners with Researchers to Showcase Indigenous Stewardship's Role in Forest Ecosystem Resilience:** The Karuk Tribe teamed up with Oregon



State University (OSU) researchers [to create a novel computer simulation model](#) that showcases Indigenous fire stewardship's role in forest ecosystem health. The project explored the impact of cultural burning at a landscape scale, focused on 1,000 square miles of Karuk Aboriginal Territory in the western Klamath Mountains of northern California. The Karuk Tribe Department of Natural Resources and OSU scientists developed historical estimates for cultural ignition locations, frequency, and timing, which showed that cultural burning was extensive across the landscape, with an estimated 6,972 cultural ignitions occurring annually, averaging about 6.5 ignitions per year for each Indigenous fire steward.

## STATE HIGHLIGHTS

**California Accelerates Nature-Based Solutions to Achieve Climate Targets and Reduce Wildfire Risk:** [Nature-based solutions](#) (NBS) harness the power of nature to build California's resilience to future climate-driven extremes, protect communities from the climate crisis, and remove carbon from our atmosphere. On April 22, [California released its NBS climate targets](#) which sets ambitious goals for wildfire risk reduction, including scaling up the state's utilization of beneficial fire and other fuel reduction activities, as well as reducing community wildfire risks. NBS targets are tailored to California's varied and unique landscapes, with goals to promote healthy landscapes and restore historic fire regimes. NBS climate targets align with goals in [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#).

**UCANR Provides a One-Stop-Shop for Continuing Forestry Education Through 'California Tree School':** The UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) Forest Stewardship Education (FSE) program has [been helping California's forest landowners](#) be proactive about the inevitable shifts their forestland will experience. The Forest Stewardship and Post-Fire Forest Resilience workshop programs utilize an online educational format, which guides landowners through the basics of creating forest management plans and managing post-fire landscapes. The FSE team is piloting a new program to engage a wider audience of forest landowners and community members passionate about trees. This spring, the Forest Stewardship and [UC ANR Fire Network](#) teams are holding the first [California Tree School](#), where individuals attend multiple in-person classes on forestry topics.

**Energy Safety's Public Workshop on 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Updates:** On April 25, Energy Safety [held a public workshop](#) on 2025 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Updates from Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Bear Valley Electric Service. Presentations from each electrical corporation provided an opportunity for workshop participants to ask questions and provide comments.

## FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

**120,000 Acres Added to California National Monuments:** On May 2, [President Biden signed proclamations](#) expanding the San Gabriel Mountains and Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monuments. Together, these actions will protect nearly 120,000 acres of lands in California of scientific, cultural, ecological, and historical importance. This will expand federal wildfire management programs and response to these newly added lands. 105,919 acres of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands will be added to San Gabriel Mountains



National Monument. The proclamation directs the U.S. Forest Service to develop a management plan for the expansion area that incorporates Indigenous Knowledge and community input. 13,696 acres will be added to Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The proclamation directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to explore co-stewardship of the area with Tribal Nations.

## 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 in order to help achieve the goals and key actions identified in the regional priority strategies.

**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.

**AB 2276 (Wood) Forestry: timber harvesting plans: exemptions:** Would repeal the Small Timberland Owner Exemption, rename, amend, and extend the sunset date of the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption; and extend the sunset date of the 150'-300' Defensible Space Around a Habitable Structure Exemption to January 1, 2031.

**AB 2330 (Holden) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities:** Would require the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to approve or deny a local agency's plan for wildfire preparedness activities within 90 days. This bill would also require that DFW consult with the CAL FIRE OSFM to develop maps to identify areas of critical habitat within a fire hazard severity zone.

**AB 2344 (Petrie-Norris) Fire Prevention: grant programs: reporting:** Would require the Task Force to compile and annually post on their website, starting July 1, 2024, comprehensive information pertaining to all publicly funded fire prevention projects in the State. This bill is a re-print of AB 788 from 2023.

**AB 2416 (Connolly) Residential property insurance: wildfire risk:** Would require the Department of Insurance to evaluate every three years whether to update the Safer from Wildfires regulations to include additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts, particularly installation of noncombustible construction materials, and to coordinate with Office of Emergency Services, CAL FIRE, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Office of Planning and Research to identify additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts.

**AB 2465 (Gipson) Equity: socially disadvantaged groups and organizations: nonprofit organizations: grants:** Would define the descendants of enslaved persons in the United States as a socially disadvantaged group for the purposes of receiving grant funding and would require select State entities to award



socially disadvantaged groups additional points in the grant scoring process until January 1, 2031.

**AB 2469 (Committee on Emergency Management) Emergency Management Assistance Compact: California Wildfire Mitigation Financial Assistance Program:**

Would remove the sunset dates for the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) and would extend the sunset of the California Wildfire Mitigation Program from 2025 until 2030.

**AB 2600 (Calderon) Urban forestry: school greening projects: grants:** Would establish the School Greening and Resiliency Fund within the State Treasury and direct those funds to urban forestry programs, including CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Grants program. Would also require CAL FIRE to develop a competitive grant process to support school greening projects. This bill is a re-print of AB 527 from 2023.

**AB 2639 (Patterson, Joe) Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction:** Would expand the definition of timber operations to include fuels reduction activities. Would also allow THPs to be used to meet CEQA requirements when performing fuels reduction projects, paid for in whole or in part with public funds, on timberlands.

**AB 2983 (Rodriguez) Office of Emergency Services: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: comprehensive wildfire mitigation program: impact on fire insurance:**

Would require the Joint Powers Authority between the CAL FIRE and Cal OES to assess the extent a project for the comprehensive wildfire mitigation program would increase the availability of insurance policies covering damage from fire during the review process, and then publish the assessment for each project receiving financial assistance on its internet website.

**AB 3023 (Papan) Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force: watershed restoration plans: forest resilience actions:**

Would require the Task Force, in future developments of implementation strategy for the Action Plan, to coordinate State boards, departments, and other stakeholders to incorporate planning for permanent conservation into forest and watershed restoration actions. Would require CNRA and other relevant State agencies to align grant guidelines of climate change, forest, fire, and watershed restoration programs at State boards and departments to promote greater program coordination and more integrated planning outcomes.

**AB 3150 (Quirk-Silva) Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: defensible space:**

**State Fire Marshal:** Among other things, this bill would transfer the authority to develop the State Fire Safe Regulations, defensible space regulations, and the Fire Risk Reduction Community List from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) to OSFM.

**SB 1402 (Min) 30x30 goal: state agencies: adoption, revision, or establishment of plans, policies, and regulations:**

Would require all State agencies, departments, boards, offices, commissions, and conservancies to consider the 30x30 goal when adopting, revising, or establishing plans, policies, and regulations.



**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.

**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 to develop a strategic action plan by June 30, 2025, for expanding local/regional prescribed grazing plans to support the state’s efforts to increase wildfire and forest resilience activities.

**SB 945 (Alvarado-Gil) The Wildfire Smoke and Health Outcomes Data Act:** Would require CAL FIRE to coordinate with CDPH, the Task Force, and CARB to create, operate, and maintain a Statewide wildfire smoke and health data platform; require CAL FIRE to consult with those same entities to develop protocols for sharing, documenting, quality control, and promotion of open-source platforms and decision support tools related to wildfire smoke and health data, as specified; create the Wildfire Smoke and Health Administration Fund, which would make funding available upon appropriation for the collection, management, and improvement of wildfire smoke data.

**SB 946 (McGuire) Personal Income Tax Law: Corporation Tax Law: exclusions: wildfire mitigation payments:** Would exclude payments received from the California Wildfire Mitigation Program as taxable income from taxable years between January 1, 2024, and January 1, 2029.

**SB 1003 (Dodd) Electrical corporations: wildfire mitigation plans:** Would require electrical corporations to accelerate the implementation of their wildfire mitigation plans and would revise the requirements of those plans to include a description of how the implementation timelines for different elements of those plans could impact wildfire risk.

**SB 1014 (Dodd) Wildfire safety: The California Wildfire Mitigation Strategic Planning Act:** Would require CAL FIRE’s Deputy Director of Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation within OSFM to prepare a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Planning Framework, Wildfire Risk Baseline and Forecast, and Wildfire Mitigation Scenarios Report, and to update each report over regular intervals. The Deputy Director would then submit a copy of these reports to the Legislature, as well as the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety, and the Public Utilities Commission for review and consideration.

**SB 1088 (Alvarado-Gil) Office of Emergency Services: state matching funds: water system infrastructure improvements:** Would, contingent on funding





through a bond act, establish the Rural and Small Community Fire Resilience Program within the Cal OES to distribute state matching funds to communities within the Wildland Urban Interface for the purpose of improving aging water delivery infrastructure. The bill requires Cal OES to work with DWR, the State Water Resources Control Board, the OSFM, and other State entities to achieve the purposes of the program.

**SB 1101 (Limon) Fire prevention: prescribed fire: state contracts: maps:** Would exempt CAL FIRE from State contracting rules for activities that provide logistical support to large-scale prescribed fire operations, including meals, lodging, hired equipment, and land use agreements, or any related subcontract. Would also require CAL FIRE to coordinate with the USFS and other entities to identify and map potential operational delineations to be used for strategic wildfire response or the proactive use of prescribed fire. This bill would also require CAL FIRE to develop maps of the severity of impacts from wildfires across all land ownerships in the State.

**SB 1159 (Dodd) California Environmental Quality Act: roadside wildfire risk reduction projects:** Would require the OPR, in consultation with CAL FIRE, DFW, the State Water Board and other relevant agencies, to evaluate a categorical exemption for roadside projects undertaken for wildfire risk reduction within five miles of a municipality of census-designated area.

**SB 1176 (Niello) Wildfires: workgroup: toxic heavy metals:** Would require CAL FIRE, Cal OES, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control to form a workgroup related to exposure of toxic heavy metals after a wildfire to establish best practices, recommendations for impacted communities and first responders, and methods of mitigation and prevention of exposure. The workgroup would be required to submit a report to the Legislature of their findings on or before January 1, 2026.

**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. 50% of the revenue provided to the Fund would be for forest health and maintenance projects and fuel reduction projects.

## PRESS BOX

**Californians are protecting themselves from wildfire. Why is there still an insurance crisis?** [CalMatters, May 1, 2024.](#)

**Fewer wildfires, great biodiversity: what is the secret to the success of Mexico's forests?** [The Guardian, May 1, 2024.](#)

**A look at beavers' important role in California's wildfire resistance.** [CBS Sacramento, April 30, 2024.](#)

**The CZU fire burned 911 homes. A huge new project aims to reduce the risk of the next one.** [Mercury News, April 30, 2024.](#)



California's plans for slowing climate change through nature-based solutions. [KQED, April 26, 2024.](#)

California's oldest state park, ravaged by fire, still lacks services. That's about to change. [San Francisco Chronicle, April 26, 2024.](#) \$

California residents issued dire warning about insurance rate rises. [Newsweek, April 26, 2024.](#)

Major insurer vows increase in California home policies if risk estimation rules change. [Sacramento Bee, April 25, 2024.](#) \$

California FAIR Plan could see 'substantial' home insurance rate increase. [San Francisco Chronicle, April 25, 2024.](#) \$

California bill that could change how companies insure, renew policies moves forward. [Sacramento Bee, April 24, 2024.](#) \$

Understanding different fire. [USFS Forestcast, April 24, 2024.](#)

Climate change supercharged a heat dome, intensifying 2021 fire season, study finds. [Los Angeles Times, April 22, 2024.](#) \$

Research showcases Indigenous stewardship's role in forest ecosystem resilience. [OSU Newsroom, April 22, 2024.](#)

Biomass is a biomass. [Politico, April 22, 2024.](#)

See what this Nevada County homeowner is doing to get a wildfire insurance discount. [Sacramento Bee, April 18, 2024.](#) \$

Fighting every wildfire makes big fires more extreme. [Governing, April 18, 2024.](#)

California spent \$3.7 billion reducing wildfire fuel. Bill would make insurers factor that into coverage. [Mercury News, April 16, 2024.](#)

Avian ambassadors and tribal perspectives: a bird's eye view of prescribed fire. [Pacific Southwest Research Station News, April 9, 2024.](#)

## LATEST IN SCIENCE

Blending Indigenous and western science: Quantifying cultural burning impacts in Karuk Aboriginal Territory. [Greenler, Skye M., et al. \*Ecological Applications\* \(2024\): e2973.](#)

Contemporary Wildfires Not More Severe Than Historically: More Fire of All Severities Needed to Sustain and Adapt Western US Dry Forests as Climate Changes. [Baker, William L. \*Sustainability\* 16.8 \(2024\): 3270.](#)

Enhanced future vegetation growth with elevated carbon dioxide concentrations could increase fire activity. [Allen, R. J., Gomez, J., Horowitz, L. W., & Shevliakova, E. \*Communications Earth & Environment\* 5.1 \(2024\): 54.](#)



**Keeping up with the landscapes: promoting resilience in dynamic social-ecological systems.** [Manley, P. N., Long, J. W., & Scheller, R. M. \*Ecology and Society\*, 29\(1\).](#)

**Mortality burden from wildfire smoke under climate change.** [Qiu, Minghao, et al. \*National Bureau of Economic Research\*, \(2024\): No. w32307.](#)

**Record-breaking fire weather in North America in 2021 was initiated by the Pacific northwest heat dome.** [Jain, Piyush, et al. \*Communications Earth & Environment\* 5.1 \(2024\): 202.](#)

**Valuation of forest-management and wildfire disturbance on water and carbon fluxes in mountain headwaters.** [Chung, Min Gon, et al. \*Ecohydrology\* \(2024\): e2642.](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**CAL FIRE Grant Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program:** CAL FIRE's Urban and Community Forestry Program is [administering \\$30.8 million](#) available through the federal Inflation Reduction Act. Available grants include Forest Expansion and Improvement, Urban Forest Management Activities, Urban Forestry Education and Workforce Development, Urban Forestry Regional or Statewide Impact, Urban Forest Equity Capacity Building, and Green Schoolyards. View the grant guidelines [here](#). Applications are due May 30, 2024.

### USFS Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support Grants:

- **Underserved and Small-Acreage Landowner Participation in Emerging Private Markets:** [USFS is seeking proposals](#) to support the participation of underserved landowners and landowners owning less than 2,500 acres in emerging private markets for climate mitigation or forest resilience. Deadline is August 21, 2024.
- **Tribal Access to Emerging Private Markets for Climate Mitigation and Forest Resilience:** [USFS is providing](#) at least \$20 million in competitive funds to federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native corporations and villages to support tribal participation in emerging private markets for climate mitigation or forest resilience. Examples of emerging markets may include markets for water quality and quantity, carbon, biodiversity, and wetland restoration. Deadline is August 21, 2024.

**OPR Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program Grant Program:** [This grant program](#) provides funding to help fill local, regional, and tribal adaptation planning needs, provides communities the resources to identify climate-resilience priorities, and supports the development of a pipeline of climate-resilient-infrastructure projects across the state. Deadline is May 20, 2024.

**First Nations Development Institute: Advancing Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Grant:** [This grant](#) supports climate action that addresses adaptation and disaster preparation through projects that aim to grow tribal capacity and programs, such as cultural burning and beaver restoration. Deadline is May 22, 2024.





**Coalitions & Collaboratives Community Catalyst Fund:** [The Community Catalyst Fund](#) is intended to build community-serving organizational capacity towards climate resilience through access to funding and partnerships with USFS. Awards range from \$10,000-\$150,000 and currently run on an 11-month timeline. Deadline is June 6, 2024.

**WCB Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program:** [This program](#) funds projects that provide climate adaptation and resilience on California's natural and working lands. Rolling application.

## LOOKING AHEAD

**Task Force 2024 Meeting Dates:** The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force will be holding meetings on the following [dates](#):

- July 12 – Sacramento – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- October 10-11 – Sierra Nevada Regional Meeting, South Lake Tahoe
- December 13 – Sacramento – 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**May 7-9: California Chaparral Symposium:** The [4th California Chaparral Symposium](#) will focus on the resilience of chaparral ecosystems and the societies and assets that exist within and adjacent to them. Scientists, managers, and stakeholders will work together to assess and address the costs and benefits of management action, and inaction, in the face of a rapidly warming climate, increasing wildfire risk, and growing threats to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.

**May 9: CARCD Private Forest Landowner Assistance Workshop:** The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts is [hosting a virtual workshop](#) on 2024 updates to financial and technical assistance programs available to non-industrial private landowners.

**May 9: Incorporating Climate and Environmental Justice into Research and Resource Management Webinar Series:** The National Climate Adaptation Science Center is hosting a [webinar series](#) on how to integrate principles around climate and environmental justice into research and resource management.

**May 15: R5 Climate Change Integration Team 2024 Webinar Series: Climate-Informed Design for Transportation Infrastructure:** This [webinar](#) will be held at 10 a.m. and will discuss improving the resiliency of road networks and other transportation infrastructure to climate change and wildfire-related impacts.

**May 20 – June 14: Cal Poly Fuels Management Training Program Offerings:**

- May 20: Planning for Fire Resilience in the Coastal Zone: [This field workshop](#) will provide an opportunity to learn about coastal fire resilience planning through a case study of Marin County.
- June 8: Forest Health and Fire Resiliency on the Jenner Headlands: [This field workshop](#) will provide an overview of vegetation management and fuels reduction for landowners and communities.
- June 10-14: [CA State-Certified Prescribed Burn Boss Training](#): A 40-hour classroom-based course to develop the skills required for planning and managing prescribed fire on state or private lands.

