



June 2024

STATE HIGHLIGHTS **CAL FIRE Invests in Landscape Level Forest Resilience & Wood Products**

Infrastructure: CAL FIRE recently awarded [Forest Health Grants](#) to assist local and regional partners implement projects that span landscapes affected by eight catastrophic fires in the past decade. In addition to ecological resilience benefits, these investments provide jobs and private landowner support, predominantly to rural communities that have been most affected by wildfire. CAL FIRE highlighted a \$5 million grant to [San Mateo Resource Conservation District](#) to increase forest resilience and ecosystem diversity in both Pescadero Creek County Park and Jones Gulch YMCA Camp.

CAL FIRE is also supporting the wood products infrastructure to bolster future forest resilience efforts. On June 6, CAL FIRE announced \$17 million in [Business and Workforce Development](#) grant awards to [20 projects](#) to increase capacity for utilizing forest biomass, workforce development and research into new uses for forest biomass. These projects will increase the capacity for fuels treatments, helping the State to reach its forest management objectives.

California Leads Nation with Establishment of 800th Firewise USA Community: On May 18, KenCrest Ridge community in Ventura County [became California's 800th Firewise USA community](#). Reaching the 800th Firewise community within one year of the 700th community is a major accomplishment statewide, demonstrating the pace California is taking to create more fire-adapted communities. The [National Fire Protection Association's](#) recognition highlights community wildfire risk and residential preparedness. The KenCrest Ridge community worked closely with CAL FIRE, Ventura County Fire Department, and Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council to reach this recognition.

California Provides One-Stop-Shop for Californians to Prepare for Wildfires & Other Emergencies: On May 24, Governor Gavin Newsom visited the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) to [announce](#) the launch of [ready.ca.gov](#). The new website is part of Listos California, which is a state effort that connects communities with resources before, during and after emergencies. The website offers resources and alerts for wildfire and wildfire smoke risks.

CAL FIRE's Newly Updated FirePLANNER Helps Residents Prepare for Wildfire: [FirePLANNER](#) is a web-based platform that assists residents develop customized readiness plans to prepare for wildfire and other emergencies. Available in both English and Spanish, FirePLANNER provides information on preparing homes and property for wildfire; creating an evacuation plan; planning for evacuation of pets and livestock; and special considerations to keep in mind during a wildfire. Users can also access information on active California wildfires.

Public Transit to Big Basin Redwoods State Park Increases Equity and Access to Post-Wildfire Education and Recreation: In the aftermath of the CZU Lightning Complex Fire which burned 97% of Big Basin Redwoods State Park, California



State Parks and partners are working to reopen parts of the park, rebuild permanent facilities, and [increase access](#). Santa Cruz METRO is increasing bus service to the park, offering free access from Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley. Additionally, to protect the heart of the old-growth forest, a pilot shuttle program will run from a new parking area into the main day-use area. [Reimagining Big Basin](#) regularly reports on efforts to rebuild facilities, provide access to recreation, and promote forest health.

Energy Safety Updates on Wildfire Mitigation Plans: On May 10, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) released its final audit report of PacifiCorp's 2021 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) vegetation management work and found that PacifiCorp substantially complied with the audit. Of 18 initiatives in the initial audit, Energy Safety identified two deficiencies. On May 14, Energy Safety rejected and ordered resubmission of the Bear Valley Electric Service (BVES) 2025 WMP Update. BVES failed to follow WMP guideline requirements in submitting its plan. BVES was required to submit a revised plan by May 29.

FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

USFS Makes Major Investments into California:

- **Over \$40M to Reduce Wildfire Risk to Communities:** On May 14, USFS [announced](#) the funding of 15 projects across California, totaling over \$40 million from the [Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program](#). Grants are intended to assist at-risk communities and tribes in planning for and mitigating wildfire risks. USFS invested \$250 million in grants nationally with funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The funding supports developing or revising Community Wildfire Protection Plans as well as completing projects identified in these plans.
- **\$12.7M for Wood Innovations Projects:** On May 15, the [USFS announced](#) Wood Innovations, Community Wood, and Wood Product Infrastructure Assistance funding awards. In California, 26 projects totaling \$12.7 million were funded, including three tribal projects. These grants are meant to spark innovation, create new markets for wood products and renewable wood energy from sustainably sourced wood, and increase the capacity of wood processing facilities.
- **\$35M to Protect Public Lands, Support Conservation Efforts:** On June 4, USFS announced its investment of just over \$35.6 million in funding from the [Great American Outdoors Act](#) to improve infrastructure, recreation facilities, public lands access, and land and water conservation.

"Wildfire Risk to Communities" Website Updates Wildfire Risk Data: Created by the USFS, the free [website](#) is designed to help communities understand, explore, and reduce wildfire risk. It includes interactive maps with the latest data and innovations in vegetation, weather, and fire behavior models. Features include latest vegetation data, updated weather datasets, updated and improved building footprint datasets, a new funding section to help communities find grants and support for wildfire risk reduction, and a new feature called "Risk Reduction Zones" to help communities see the most effective mitigation activities in different locations.



Federal Climate Financial Report Demonstrates Need for Proactive Action on Wildfire Resilience: Over the last decade, suppression has cost the USFS and the Department of the Interior an average of [more than \\$3 billion per year](#). The [Climate Financial Risk report](#) provides estimates for 10 future climate scenarios and a wide range of projections for fire extent and fire suppression spending. A central estimate across the 10 future climate scenarios shows that lands in the National Forest System would experience a near doubling of the area burned by mid-century (2041-2059) and a 42% increase in costs by 2050, to \$3.9 billion. Anticipated increased costs of fire suppression due to climate change brings additional urgency to the need for proactive wildfire risk reduction treatments and efforts to protect and prepare communities ahead of wildfires.

**PROGRESS
THROUGH
COLLABORATION**

New “California Cone Hunter’s Pocket Guide” Empowers Seed Collectors to Support Post-fire Reforestation Efforts: On May 31, the [California Reforestation Pipeline Cooperative](#) released the [California Cone Hunter’s Pocket Guide](#) to serve as an in-the-field reference for those assisting with seed surveys and seed collection in support of post-fire reforestation efforts. Available in both electronic and printed formats, the pocket guide was created by seed bank managers, geneticists, seed collectors and Cone Corps members, led by USFS, CAL FIRE, and American Forests. The Pocket Guide is being distributed at [Cone Camp seed collection trainings](#) being offered this summer throughout California.

Lake County, California Leverages Federal Support for Local Action: [The Clear Lake Environmental Research Center \(CLERC\)](#) is utilizing a \$9.8 million Community Wildfire Defense Grant from the USFS to give Lake County a [much needed boost to reduce wildfire risk](#). With this grant, CLERC brought together multiple rural fire protection districts to clear overgrown brush from roadsides and support a brush chipping program that assists landowners with vegetation removal from their property. One of CLERC’s foundational principles is to hire local and ensure every dollar stays in the county. This project provides a blueprint on effectively leveraging federal funding to protect high fire risk areas in a way that incorporates place-based expertise and supports local economic growth.

Partnered Trainings Build Pathways to Wildfire Resilience Jobs: The Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), with funding and support from CAL FIRE and the Department of Conservation, led planning and coordination for [fire resilience training](#) to 22 trainees with Conservation Corps North Bay. This project supports WRTC’s Equitable Workforce Development Initiative which provides professional development services for under-served/under-represented communities in the field of fire resilience.

RCD of Santa Monica Mountains Releases Video Series on Guide for Wildfire Resilience at Your Home: The [Wildfire Defense Video Series](#) is an educational hub which provides guidance on home hardening, defensible space, fire ecology, and preparedness.



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 to approve or deny a local agency's plan for wildfire preparedness activities within 90 days.

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 2983 (Rodriguez) Office of Emergency Services: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: comprehensive wildfire mitigation program: impact on fire insurance: 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 (FSRs), defensible space regulations, and the Fire Risk Reduction Community List from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) to the Office of the State Fire Marshal (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 and the Task Force 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 (CWMP) 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 the Office of the State Fire Marshal to prepare a Wildfire Risk Mitigation Planning Framework, and to update it over regular intervals. The Deputy Director would then submit a copy of the Framework 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 Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) to distribute state matching funds to communities within the Wildland Urban Interface for the purpose of improving aging water delivery infrastructure. The bill requires CalOES to work with the Department of Water Resources, the State Water Resources Control Board, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, 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 Office of Planning and Research to, in consultation with CAL FIRE, Department of Fish and Wildlife, 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 the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Office of Emergency Services (CalOES), and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) 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. CAL FIRE would be required to submit a report to the Legislature on the workgroup's findings on or before January 1, 2026. The May 16th amendments specify the bill is enacted upon appropriation. It requires the workgroup to include mitigation through bioremediation of heavy metals through vegetation, fungal, or bacterial treatments in the study, and permits CAL FIRE to contract with public universities, research institutions, and technical experts.

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

Wildfires threaten California sequoias. Will a new farm bill measure actually help? [Sacramento Bee, May 3, 2024.](#) \$

Undoing important investments in wildfire prevention would place California in harm's way. [Sacramento Bee, May 8, 2024.](#) \$

Southern California Edison hardens power grid ahead of wildfire season. [ABC 7, May 9, 2024.](#)

New bots help improve the health of Tahoe forests, reducing spread of wildfires. [KCRA, May 10, May 10, 2024.](#)

Federal study shows vast amount of forest lost in California after wildfires, drought. [San Francisco Chronicle, May 11, 2024.](#) \$

Forest thinning to restore fire resilience at Lassen Volcanic National Park. [CART, May 22, 2024.](#)

Health of California's best-known lakes may have been hurt by back-to-back years of wildfire smoke. [Sacramento Bee, May 22, 2024.](#) \$

Wildfire smoke has covered up to 70 percent of California in recent years, affecting land and water. [The Hill, May 22, 2024.](#)

Thinning the blaze: enhancing forest resilience. [We the Forest, May 23, 2024.](#)

Can satellites combat wildfires? Inside the booming 'space race' to fight the flames. [Los Angeles Times, May 30, 2024.](#) \$



California wildfire smoke is changing the ecology of Lake Tahoe and other freshwater lakes. [SF Gate, May 31, 2024.](#)

A 2024 guide for how to prepare for wildfires in California. [KCRA, June 3, 2024.](#)

We all can help prevent wildfires. Commentary from Ken Calvert and Darrell Issa. [Redlands Daily Facts, June 4, 2024.](#)

LATEST IN SCIENCE

Beyond the Golden Shovel: Recommendations for a successful urban tree planting initiative. [Eisenman, Theodore S. et al. Journal of the American Planning Association \(2024\).](#)

Ecological forestry treatments affect fine-scale attributes within large experimental units to influence tree growth, vigor, and mortality in ponderosa pine/white fir forests in California, U.S. [Looney, Christopher E., et al. Forest Ecology and Management 561 \(2024\): 121814.](#)

Five social and ethical considerations for using wildfire visualizations as a communication tool. [Edgeley, Catrin M., et al. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 1-12](#)

Forest resilience and post-fire conifer regeneration in the southern Cascades, Lassen Volcanic National Park California, USA. [Niziolek, Dani, Lucas B. Harris, and Alan H. Taylor. Forest Ecology and Management 561 \(2024\): 121848.](#)

Lidar-derived estimates of forest structure in response to fire frequency. [Ross, C. Wade, et al. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 1-12.](#)

Net primary production of ecoregions across North America in response to drought and wildfires from 2015 to 2022. [Potter, C., Pass, S., & Ulrich, R. Journal of Geophysical Research: Biogeosciences, 129\(4\) \(2024\), e2023JG007750.](#)

Private landowner interest in prescribed fire in California: findings from workshops in the Sierra Nevada. [Wilkin, Kate M., Stasiewicz, Amanda M. and Kocher, Susan D. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 48.](#)

Smoke reduces lake ecosystem metabolic rates unequally across a trophic gradient. [Smits, Adrienne P., et al. Communications Earth & Environment 5.1 \(2024\): 265.](#)

Strategic fire zones are essential to wildfire risk reduction in the Western United States. [North, Malcolm P., et al. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 1-13.](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

PG&E Corporation Foundation: Better Together Nature Positive Innovation Grant Program: [Supports](#) environmental stewardship and projects that will help mitigate the risks to California's natural environment and unique biodiversity. [Deadline is June 7, 2024.](#)



The National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program: [Supports](#) projects that directly benefit U.S. National Forests and Grasslands through integration of community involvement and hands-on stewardship. Funding supports projects that inspire participants to get personally involved in caring for their public lands. Deadline is June 21, 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 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.

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.

The Headwaters Economics Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire: This [technical assistance program](#) provides support for communities to reduce wildfire risks through improved land-use planning, compelling communication, and applied research. 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.

June 8 – August 7: American Forests Cone Camps: [These trainings](#) are designed to equip attendees with the basic skills needed to effectively survey, monitor and facilitate conifer cone collections.

June 8 – June 14: Cal Poly Fuels Management Training Program Offerings:

- 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.

June 13 – 14: The Social-Ecological Consequences of Future Wildfire in the West: [This workshop](#), (to be held virtually and in-person in Irvine, CA) is hosted by National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, in collaboration with the Royal Society of Canada, on the future climate, social, and ecological



drivers of wildfire in the western region of the United States and Canada. The workshop will focus on understanding and responding to increasing fire size, severity, and frequency since the 1970s.

July 17: American Water Works Association Webinar: Water, Wildfires, & Wisdom: [This webinar](#) aims to bring together industry experts with diverse perspectives to explore the complex issues surrounding water security post-wildfire.

August 8: Forest Health Management in the WUI: Lessons Being Learned at Jackson Demonstration State Forest: This [field workshop](#) is an opportunity to learn about forest health management at CALFIRE's Jackson Demonstration State Forest.

August 20-21: CARCD Reforestation Camp: This two-day [reforestation workshop](#) and field tour in Quincy California that will cover site preparation, seedling selection, planting considerations, fire and plantations, and climate-informed reforestation.

