



## July 2024

### STATE HIGHLIGHTS

**New Map Shows Californians Where to Find Relief From Wildfire Smoke:** On June 24, the California Air Resources Board [announced](#) the launch of an interactive, statewide map that offers a one-stop-shop for information about the location and services available at Clean Air Centers. Clean Air Centers will offer Californians who don't have access to adequate air filtration a safe place to go during periods of heavy smoke. Built in collaboration with local air quality control districts, the online map makes it possible to see where Clean Air Centers are located and provides easy-to-access information, including operating hours, contact information and on-site resources like free Wi-Fi.

**CAL FIRE Updates Wildfire Preparedness Website:** In preparation for the fire year, CAL FIRE has updated the [ReadyForWildfire.org](https://ReadyForWildfire.org) site. This one-stop-shop provides advice and guidance on everything from home hardening and defensible space, to what to pack for evacuation, to what California is doing to enhance and protect forest health.

**California Aims to Expand Insurance Coverage in High Wildfire Risk Areas:** On June 12, the Department of Insurance [announced](#) a new draft regulation to get more insurance coverage options for Californians in areas particularly threatened by wildfires. This new regulation will require that insurers that use new catastrophe modeling must write more policies in distressed areas, with larger insurance companies required to insure properties in distressed areas at a rate equal to 85% of the insurer's statewide market share. [Governor Newsom provided his support](#) for the regulation, which is part of the [Sustainable Insurance Strategy](#), a package of reforms to strengthen California's marketplace and maintain strong consumer protections.

**CAL FIRE Announces Cutting-Edge Scientific Research Grant Awards:** CAL FIRE's [Forest Health Research Program](#) has [awarded](#) \$4.4 million to support [13 scientific research studies](#) that will improve our understanding of fire severity, post-fire restoration, and effectiveness of forest treatments. Research projects will produce scientific publications, outreach and education events, and decision support tools. Effective forest and fire management depends on a solid scientific foundation and is critical to informing California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force.

**SNC Adopts Five-Year Strategic Plan and Supports Four Forest Resilience Projects:** On June 6, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) approved a new [2024–2029 Strategic Plan](#) that will guide the development of programs, policies, and actions to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of California's Sierra-Cascade Region. Additionally, [SNC is awarding \\$6 million to four different projects](#) to help with the planning and implementation of forest-health efforts. All four projects will promote recovery and resilience to disturbances, such as wildfire, in the Sierra-Cascade.



**Energy Safety Releases Annual Reports on Compliance:** During the month of June, the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety released its [Annual Reports on Compliance](#) (ARC) for the approved 2021 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) Updates of Trans Bay Cable (TBC), PacifiCorp, Liberty Utilities, and Horizon West Transmission (HWT). Energy Safety's ARCs are an assessment of each electrical corporation's WMP implementation. Energy Safety found that most were moderately or largely successful executing actionable and adaptive plans for wildfire risk mitigation, except PacifiCorp, which was largely unsuccessful in executing an actionable and adaptive plan for wildfire risk mitigation.

**State Waterboard Ensures Wildfire Risk Reduction Projects Protect Water Quality:** Since July 2023, the State Water Board has issued more than 80 notices of applicability letters for vegetation treatment projects statewide. These projects, which are enrolled under the Board's [Vegetation Treatment General Order](#) and are within the scope of CAL FIRE's [Vegetation Treatment Program](#), are reducing wildfire fuel risk for nearly 1.4 million acres of non-federal, fire-prone land in California while also ensuring water quality is protected.

## FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

**California National Forests Complete Record Number of Prescribed Fire Acres:** As of June 24, the USFS has treated 63,878 acres with prescribed fire on national forests in California. The previous record was set in 2018 when 63,711 acres were treated. USFS fire managers are using prescribed fire to reduce hazardous fuels and reduce threats to communities from extreme fires. Reintroducing fire also minimizes the spread of pest insects and disease, recycles nutrients back to the soil, and improves natural conditions for native flora and fauna.

**Lassen National Park Case Study Shows Effectiveness of Forest Thinning to Restore Fire Resilience:** [A case study](#) conducted in Lassen Volcanic National Park examined a 2019 project aimed at reducing forest fuel load by thinning the density of trees using crosscut saws to create and reinforce fire boundaries with the intention to reintroduce fire to the landscape and direct fire regimes toward a more fire-resilient and climate-adapted landscape. The case study showed how forest thinning can prepare areas for prescribed fire, remove fuels to preserve historic structures, and that utilization of crosscut saws is more cost-effective and safer than traditional chainsaw sawyer crews.

**BLM Support Reduces Wildfire Risk in El Dorado County:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has finalized [a new long-term agreement with El Dorado County](#) to reduce the impact of wildfire near communities adjacent to BLM-managed public lands. BLM will provide an initial investment of \$100,000 to the agreement starting this year, with funds provided by the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#). The agreement includes projects that create defensible space around homes or structures on private properties adjacent to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. Other projects include expanding strategic fuel breaks, performing wildland-urban interface fuels reduction treatments, and conducting community outreach and education.

## PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

**NFWF Announces 9 Large Watershed Planning Grants Totaling \$53 Million for California National Forests:** On June 24, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) [announced \\$53 million in grants](#) to protect and restore



forests and watersheds in California using voluntary, targeted headwater resilience planning and monitoring. The grants leverage \$31.4 million in matching contributions, for a total conservation impact of \$84.4 million. The awards were made possible by a first-of-its-kind agreement between the USDA Forest Service and NFWF. This effort pools multiple funding sources from public and private organizations to meet the level needed for effective landscape-scale projects to tackle California's wildfire crisis.

**New Report Shares 'Lessons Learned' on Emergency Forest Restoration Teams:**

Small private landowners often lack the funding, expertise, or time to undertake restoration work. To address these barriers, California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan called for the establishment of Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs). In June, 2024 [a report on lessons learned was released](#) from three pilot EFRTs that were developed in late 2021 in response to the Dixie, Tamarack and Caldor Fires. The report provides key recommendations for future EFRTs to be successful.

**New Report Provides Recommendations to Protect Public Health from Impacts of Wildfire:**

This [new scoping report](#) covers the intersections of wildland fire and public health. Developed by [UC Berkeley's Center for Law, Energy, & the Environment](#) in partnership with [the Climate and Wildfire Institute](#), the report investigates key issues in the physical and mental health impacts of wildfire, provides an overview of the current state and federal policy landscape, and presents key recommendations for future resilience.

**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 of receipt of the plan, and authorizes them to consult CAL FIRE for technical assistance if necessary.



**AB 2416 (Connolly) Residential property insurance: wildfire risk:** Would require the Department of Insurance, starting Jan. 1, 2030, to consider every three years whether to update the Safer from Wildfires regulations to include additional building hardening measures for property-level mitigation efforts, 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 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

**AB 3023 (Papan) Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force: watershed restoration plans: forest resilience actions:** Would require CAL FIRE to review and update grant guidelines for climate change, fire, and watershed restoration programs to encourage projects that advance plans and goals in an integrated fashion. The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) would also be required to develop an interagency funding strategy to coordinate and align watershed restoration plans and initiatives with forest resilience actions.

**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 expand the Wildfire Prevention Grants eligible activities list to include the installation of fencing and watering improvements for prescribed grazing projects, and would also require CAL FIRE to consider incorporating prescribed grazing guidance developed by the Range Management Advisory Committee.

**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 Water Infrastructure for Community Wildfire Protection 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

**Review of prescribed fires finds gaps in key areas as US Forest Service looks to improve safety.** [Associate Press, July 8, 2024.](#)

**Cal Fire's new website, approach to data sends crews out faster, shares critical info in real time.** [Sacramento Bee, July 2, 2024.](#) \$

**Wildfire smoke kills thousands of Californians a year. It doesn't have to be so deadly.** [Los Angeles Times, July 2, 2024.](#) \$

**Major insurance companies support California home insurance plan for high fire risk areas.** [Sacramento Bee, June 27, 2024.](#) \$



**Record amount of preventative fires set in California this year — but is it enough?** [San Francisco Chronicle, June 25, 2024.](#) \$

**The Deep Connection Between Life and Fire.** [The Atlantic, June 25, 2024.](#)

**Rebuilding Paradise: Nonprofit's \$500 'defensible space' grants help cut residents' insurance costs.** [Associated Press, June 24, 2024.](#)

**Biden administration old-growth forest proposal doesn't ban logging, but still angers industry.** [Associated Press, June 20, 2024.](#)

**With fires burning again, is California becoming uninsurable?** [Los Angeles Times, June 20, 2024.](#) \$

**Nuns Fire inspires student's award-winning fire-safe landscape design.** [Press Democrat, June 20, 2024.](#)

**Should FEMA recognize extreme heat and wildfire smoke as 'major disasters'?** [Los Angeles Times, June 17, 2024.](#) \$

**California announces plan for insurance policies in high wildfire-risk areas.** [NBC San Diego, June 14, 2024.](#)

**Will this plan fix California's home insurance crisis?** [CalMatters, June 13, 2024.](#)

**California creates plan to tackle home insurance crisis.** [KCRA Sacramento, June 12, 2024.](#)

## LATEST IN SCIENCE

**Backfire: the settler-colonial logic and legacy of Smokey Bear.** [Vinyeta, Kirsten, and J. M. Bacon. Environmental Politics \(2024\): 1-26.](#)

**California wildfire smoke contributes to a positive atmospheric temperature anomaly over the western United States.** [Gomez, James L., Robert J. Allen, and King-Fai Li. Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics 24.11 \(2024\): 6937-6963.](#)

**California wildfire resilience core metrics rating process and results.** [Eitzel, M. V., et al. UC Berkeley: Berkeley Forests \(2024\).](#)

**Constraints on Mechanical Fuel Reduction Treatments in United States Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy Priority Landscapes.** [Woolsey, George A., et al. Journal of Forestry \(2024\): fvae012.](#)

**Cost-Effectiveness Of Large-Scale Fuel Reduction for Wildfire Mitigation in California [Report].** [Brown, Patrick. The Breakthrough Institute \(2024\).](#)

**Drought effects on tree mortality and regeneration in northern California.** [Lemmo, Sophia LB, et al. Forest Ecology and Management 563 \(2024\): 121969.](#)



**Matching the scales of planning and environmental risk: an evaluation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans in the western US.** [Hamilton, Matthew, et al. \*Regional Environmental Change\* 24.2 \(2024\): 93.](#)

**'Mind the Gap'—reforestation needs vs. reforestation capacity in the western United States.** [Dobrowski, Solomon Z., et al. \*Frontiers in Forests and Global Change\* 7 \(2024\): 1402124.](#)

**Post-fire resurveys reveal predictability of long-term conifer recruitment in severely burned California dry forests.** [Tortorelli, Claire M., et al. \*Forest Ecology and Management\* 566 \(2024\): 122100.](#)

**Impacts of mega drought in fire-prone montane forests and implications for forest management.** [Hankin, Lacey E., Sarah A. Crumrine, and Chad T. Anderson. \*Forest Ecology and Management\* 564 \(2024\): 122010.](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**The National Forest Foundation (NFF) Collaborative Capacity Program for Forests and Communities:** [This program](#) supports critical-capacity elements and activities that make collaboration for forest stewardship successful. [Deadline is July 12, 2024.](#)

**California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment Tribal Research Grant Program:** [This program](#) provides funding for tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal-serving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to conduct tribally led climate change research, assessments, and similar projects deemed a priority by the applying tribe. [Deadline is July 31, 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.](#)

**The NDN Collective Community Action Fund:** [This program](#) supports tribes, tribal nonprofit organizations, and other Indigenous communities and organizations most impacted by local challenges, ensuring that resources and decision-making ability lies with those who are best equipped to solve pressing issues and address imminent threats, including wildfire. [Deadline is October 31, 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.](#)

**Wetlands and Mountain Meadows Restoration:** [This program](#) provides funding for projects that restore or enhance wetlands and watershed ecosystems and provide co-benefits, consistent with the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy and Pathways to 30x30. [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.

**July 17: UC ANR Forestry & Fuel Profiles Webinar:** [This webinar](#) from 12-12:45 pm featuring Don Radcliffe from the University of Washington and Eric Knapp from the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, will cover hot topics in fire science and stewardship.

**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.

**July 19: Seminar on Health Benefits and Reduced Wildfire from Urban Green Space:** At [this webinar](#), UCLA researchers will provide results from a CARB funded study on natural and working lands benefits that investigated the health impacts of wildfire smoke and increased urban green space in California and developed tools to quantify health benefits of sustainable management actions.

**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.

