



## August 2024

### TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

**Task Force to Host Sierra Nevada CA Regional Meeting in South Lake Tahoe:** The Task Force will host its sixth regional meeting October 10 in South Lake Tahoe. [The meeting](#) will include a report on the current fire season, updates on the Task Force's Interagency Tracking System, and sessions focused on issues specific to the Sierra Nevada region. Tours will be offered on October 9 and 11.

### STATE HIGHLIGHTS

**CNRA to Host Webinar on the State of Wildfire in California:** On August 8 from 12-1pm, California Natural Resources (CNRA) Secretary Wade Crowfoot will be hosting a [webinar](#) on the state of wildfire in California as part of the [Secretary Speaker Series](#). Secretary Crowfoot will be joined by representatives from the Task Force, CAL FIRE, USFS, the Karuk Tribe, and others, for a conversation on current efforts to protect California from dangerous wildfires and restore the health of our landscapes.

**UC Berkeley Launches Tool to Select Plant Seeds in a Changing Climate:** On July 14, UC Berkeley [released](#) a new spatial tool, called [Seeds of Change](#), to help land managers in California select plant seeds for resilience to climate change. Users can search by plant species, specify species parameters and climate change scenarios, and click on the map to identify places to collect seeds to plant or places to plant with seeds from that site. Users can export a geographic information system (GIS) file of the results.

**Fuel Treatment Proves Effective in Alameda County:** If you didn't hear about the July 1st Peak Fire, that's because it was contained at just 0.21 acres. [Immediate suppression of the fire was possible](#) due to the CAL FIRE funded UC Berkeley Hill Campus Fire Hazard Reduction project that removed fuels across 140 acres in the area of the Peak Fire ignition. This project is an example of a fuel reduction project being put to the test and proving effective. It demonstrates the importance of fuels treatment within the wildland-urban interface.

### FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

**New Science-Based Model Helps Forest Managers Prioritize Fuels Treatments:** Stanislaus National Forest is isolated, vast and, like many of California's forests, is overly dense with vegetation which poses elevated wildfire risks. To prioritize treatments with the greatest benefit, land managers in Stanislaus NF are [using a pilot scientific model](#) to measure where forest density exceeds desired conditions, evaluate whether an overgrown site might threaten homes and campsites if it ignites, explore treatment types that best reduce fuels, map distance to the nearest processing plant, and calculate if hauling debris will net money under current and projected markets.

### PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

**New Conservation Strategy to Protect Montane Forests in Southern California:** On July 30, the [Southern Montane Forest Project released](#) its [Climate-Adapted Conservation Strategy for Southern California montane forests](#). The initiative will bolster the resilience of montane (i.e. higher-elevation forests) with climate-informed actions that confront threats from wildfires, droughts, pollution, and invasive species. The strategy takes an all-lands approach, calling for State,



federal, academic, and non-profit efforts to work in concert within the USFS's Southern California Wildfire Crisis Landscape. Southern California's montane forests protect the upper watersheds that supply about 40% of the water used downstream for drinking and agriculture, capture carbon, prevent soil erosion, and serve as critical habitats for threatened and endangered wildlife. They also support Indigenous communities with food, fiber, and medicine as well as provide recreational opportunities to over 24 million people.

**New Website Offers a Deep Dive into Intentional Fire:** [Intentionalfire.org](https://intentionalfire.org) is a new educational website from the [Climate & Wildfire Institute](https://climateandwildfireinstitute.org) which offers a deep dive into the topic of intentional fire, which includes prescribed fire and cultural fire. The website provides brief descriptions accessible to wide audiences and outlines the key benefits and importance of intentional fire. It also features a variety of informational audio and video clips, project case studies, and actionable steps for individuals to help advance intentional fire in their own communities. Increased utilization of intentional fire is a key component of [California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire](#).

**California's Reforestation Pipeline Partnership Trains Next Generation of Cone Collectors:** In collaboration with CAL FIRE, USFS, American Forests, and several other public, private, and academic partners, [California's Reforestation Pipeline Partnership](#) recently hosted 'Cone Camp' in Plumas National Forest to train cone surveyors and collectors in an effort to accelerate reforestation efforts in the State by providing seed banks and nurseries with greatly needed cones and seeds. This collaborative, forward-looking effort shows how California is responding and adapting to the impacts of increasing wildfire activity and climate change to ensure a forested future for the State. CAL FIRE highlighted the importance of this training in a recent [video](#).

**CAL FIRE and USFS Partner on Research to Protect Communities and Watersheds in a Redwood Forest:** Researchers from [CAL FIRE and the USFS are conducting studies](#) in Jackson Demonstration State Forest to understand the impacts of different treatments within redwood forests on watershed and forest health. This research helps inform the regulation of the timber industry within State and private lands in California.

## LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Placer County Approves Framework for 10-Year Forest Health Action Plan:** On July 11, the Placer County Board of Supervisors [approved a framework for the Placer County Regional Forest Health 10-year Countywide Action Plan](#). The plan prioritizes forest health and wildfire resiliency, aiming to better protect communities in Placer County's forested and wildland-bordering areas. The action plan identifies the highest-priority and most beneficial projects to focus on first and includes 31 forest treatment projects between the Sierra Nevada foothills and North Lake Tahoe at a total estimated cost of \$49.5 million.

## 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 2029.

**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 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 610 (Wiener) Fire prevention: wildfire mitigation area: defensible space: State Fire Marshal:** Would realign various existing wildfire mitigations under the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) and require the OSFM to use a science-based, public process to map the area where these mitigations would be required.

**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**

**Mending disrepair in our forests - year 4.** [USFS Press Release, August 5, 2024.](#)

**Cal Fire chief discusses prescribed burns and why California's fire season is so active.** [CBS Sacramento, July 31, 2024.](#)

**California wildfires off to explosive start, burning 30 times as many acres as all of last year.** [Los Angeles Times, July 31, 2024.](#) \$

**California wildfires dim solar generation during power demand peak.** [Reuters, July 31, 2024.](#)

**New Conservation Strategy to Protect Montane Forests in Southern California.** [Edhat, July 31, 2024.](#)

**A surprising byproduct of wildfires: Contaminated drinking water.** [Washington Post, July 29, 2024.](#) \$

**Fire Safe Council awarded \$4.9 million for home hardening to the community.** [Sierra Sun, July 23, 2024.](#)

**Connecting communities to growing trees.** [EurekAlert, July 22, 2024.](#)

**Fighting wildfire with 'good fire': California must return to prescribed burns.** [CalMatters, July 22, 2024.](#)

**California faces a brutal wildfire season, with more land burned to date than in recent years.** [Smithsonian Magazine, July 18, 2024.](#)

**California plans to ban plants and bushes within 5 feet of homes at risk for wildfires.** [San Francisco Chronicle, July 16, 2024.](#) \$

**California's wildfires are burning far more land so far this year than in 2023.** [NPR, July 16, 2024.](#)

**Placer County Launches Ambitious \$2 Billion, 10-Year Plan to Bolster Wildfire Defense in Northern California.** [Hoodline, July 12, 2024.](#)



To Protect Giant Sequoias, They Lit a Fire. [New York Times, July 9, 2024.](#) \$

California's inmate firefighter crews are dwindling just as the state starts to burn. [Los Angeles Times, July 9, 2024.](#) \$

## LATEST IN SCIENCE

Assessing Wildfire Resilience Through Comprehensive County-Level Planning Effectiveness in California. [Zhang, Chendi, et al. Available at SSRN 4895022.](#)

Climate resilience through ecocultural stewardship. [Hankins, Don L. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 121.32 \(2024\): e2310072121.](#)

Coexisting with wildfire: strengthening collective capacity by changing the status quo. [Eriksen, Christine. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 59.](#)

Forest pollinator richness declines with distance into burned areas. [Ulyshen, Michael D., et al. Forest Ecology and Management 565 \(2024\): 122049.](#)

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.](#)

Taking the next step in wildfire education: integrating multiple knowledge forms into co-produced high school fire science curricula. [Restaino, Christina, et al. Fire Ecology 20.1 \(2024\): 62.](#)

The importance of geography in forecasting future fire patterns under climate change. [Syphard, Alexandra D., et al. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 121.32 \(2024\): e2310076121.](#)

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### 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](#):

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

**August 6 – August 30: 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.

**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 13: Wildfire Mitigation and Resiliency Symposium in Santa Barbara:** The goal of [this symposium](#) is to explore the current cycle of California wildfire mitigation, response, and relief efforts, with recommendations for the future.

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

