



September 2024

TASK FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

Task Force and CAL FIRE to Showcase Treatment Dashboards and New Resilience Metrics at Sierra Nevada Regional Meeting:

The Task Force and CAL FIRE will unveil several new tools that will revolutionize how California tracks and communicates progress toward improving wildfire and landscape resilience at its [Sierra Nevada Regional Meeting](#) on October 10 in South Lake Tahoe:

- **Interagency Treatment Dashboard:** One year after its [beta release](#) with 2022 data, CAL FIRE will present three years (2021-2023) of treatment data from a more complete range of federal, state, local, tribal, and private entities through its expanded and improved Interagency Treatment Dashboard.
- **Draft Metrics:** Task Force Science Advisory Panel staff will present a subset of initial proposed metrics to document the outcomes of recent projects on wildfire hazard, watershed health, and wildlife habitat.
- **Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard:** CAL FIRE will demonstrate its prototype dashboard to document the benefits of fuels treatments in reducing the impacts of recent fires, including the Park Fire in Butte and Tehama County.

CAL FIRE Director Joe Tyler will also provide a report on the current fire season, and three panels of federal, state, tribal, and regional leaders will discuss their efforts to create vibrant forest ecosystems and thriving communities through landscape-scale wildfire resilience projects. Tours will be offered on October 9 and 11. The draft [agenda](#) is posted now and will be updated on the Task Force website.

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

CAL FIRE Funds 94 Wildfire Projects to Build Climate and Community Resilience:

On August 20, CAL FIRE [announced](#) grants for 94 local wildfire prevention projects across California, supported by \$90.8 million in [Wildfire Prevention Grants](#). Projects include hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire prevention planning and education, with an emphasis on improving public health and safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Over two-thirds of the projects are in low-income and disadvantaged communities. These grants bring the total awarded by CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to \$450 million in 450 projects statewide which have, collectively, accelerated progress toward the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan.

California IBank Invests \$25M in Wildfire Innovation Fund: On September 3, California's Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) [announced](#) \$25 million from the [Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund](#) will be invested in the [California Wildfire Innovation Fund](#) to reduce wildfire risk through restoring California forests, improving forest health, and putting new biomass technologies to work. The California Wildfire Innovation Fund is managed by Blue Forest, a conservation finance non-profit and supports entrepreneurs and companies working toward forest restoration and economic revitalization. The fund offers flexible, low-cost credit and credit support for public and private



sector applicants for emerging opportunities across California's forest restoration and wood utilization sectors.

SNC Awards Cultural Burning Capacity Grant to Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Nonprofit: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) has [awarded \\$250,000 for the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe](#) to reduce hazardous fuels through cultural-burning practices and demonstration of traditional ecological knowledge forest management practices on highly visible lands in the wildland urban interface of Nevada City, CA. The funding will support partnership development, training, planning, permitting, and implementation of a cultural burn, along with replanting culturally and ecologically important plants in the restored landscape.

City of Dunsmuir Becomes California's 900th Firewise Community: In August, the City of Dunsmuir was recognized as Siskiyou County's first and California's 900th Firewise Community. Communities are recognized as a Firewise Community [upon the completion of certain tasks](#), include forming a committee of residents and other wildfire stakeholders, obtaining a written risk assessment form, and developing a three-year action plan for the community, including hosting an outreach event. Reaching the 900th community mark within a few months of the 800th community mark is a major accomplishment for California and shows the speed being taken across the state to organize and plan in advance of wildfire events.

FEDERAL HIGHLIGHTS

USFS Announces \$25M Funding Opportunity to Reduce Wildfire Risk: On August 6, the USFS [announced](#) a funding opportunity through the hazardous fuels transportation assistance program to reduce wildfire risk, expand and create market opportunities, and support local jobs. [This program](#) is available to local businesses and partners that remove hazardous fuels from national forests and transport the material to be processed for wood products or services. Without transportation assistance, these materials are often burned in place or not removed from the national forests, increasing the risk of insects, disease, and wildfires that threaten ecosystems, communities and critical infrastructure. This will accelerate removal of hazardous fuels with little commercial value which will reduce wildfire risk, protect watersheds, and improve forest health and resilience.

USFS Invests \$15M to Help Underserved and Small-Acreage Landowners Access Climate Markets: On August 28, the USFS [announced](#) it is investing \$15 million to connect underserved and small-acreage forest landowners with emerging climate markets. These investments will expand access to markets that were previously out-of-reach for underserved and small-acreage landowners to access new economic opportunities to maintain healthy working forests as pressures increase to convert forests to other uses. In California, nearly \$2 million will go to the [Shelterwood Collective](#), a 900-acre Indigenous, Black, Disabled, and Queer-led community forest and collective of land protectors and cultural changemakers.

USFS Releases Climate Action Tracker Fiscal Year 2023 Report: In July, the USFS released their [Climate Action Tracker Fiscal Year 2023 Report](#). The Climate



Action Tracker is the primary reporting and tracking tool for the Forest Service on climate change actions. Progress in the tracker is measured across four dimensions: Serving People, Organizational Capacity, Natural Resources Stewardship, and Operations and Infrastructure. The report describes how the Forest Service has explicitly considered climate change impacts and adaptation strategies in implementing the Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

Plumas National Forest's Fuel Treatments Help Protect Against Gold Complex Fires: It's not just how we respond to wildfires that determines their outcome—it's also how we plan for them. Existing fuel treatments near the Smith Fire, as well as the Mabie Project on the Plumas National Forest, the Stevens Project on Graeagle Land and Water property, and roadside fuel reduction treatments in the Tahoe National Forest [all proved instrumental](#) in containment of lightning-caused fires that burned in late July. Existing fuel treatments near ignition points were especially critical as they provided a strategic location for firefighters to safely start constructing fireline that allowed for quick response and prevented fire spread into the nearby communities.

PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

California Protects 11,000 Acres of the Upper Trinity River Watershed: On August 5, the Pacific Forest Trust [purchased and transferred 11,000 acres of the Upper Trinity River watershed](#) from a timber company to the Watershed Research and Training Center as a conservation easement. This marks a significant step in the state's efforts to safeguard its vital water resources, protect biodiversity and conserve ecologically important landscapes. This purchase was funded by state and federal agencies, including support from the Wildlife Conservation Board and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. This conservation easement assures the property will be managed to mitigate extreme wildfire risk and demonstrates the critical intersection between efforts to promote wildfire resilience with enhancements of watersheds, wildlife habitats, and recreation and economic opportunities.

LEGISLATION WATCH

The following bills were enacted by the legislature, and are awaiting a signature or veto by the Governor:

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 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 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.

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 multiple benefit projects. The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) would also be required to develop an interagency funding strategy to promote integrated, multiple benefit projects to achieve landscape resilience on fire-prone lands.

SB 310 (Dodd) Prescribed Fire: civil liability: cultural burns: Would create a process for federally recognized California Native American tribes and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) to enter into agreements to waive various State regulatory requirements to conduct prescribed fire or cultural burn projects within the tribe's ancestral territory.

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 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, among other things, repeal the Public Utility Commission's Wildfire Safety Division from statute, and would require the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety to assume those responsibilities and develop performance metrics in addition to creating an oversight program to evaluate and audit electric corporations' performance implementing maximum feasible risk reduction relative to their wildfire mitigation plans.

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.

PRESS BOX

New Stanford hydrogel to reduce damage of California wildfires. [Mercury News, September 3, 2024.](#)

In the Park Fire, an Indigenous cultural fire practitioner sees beyond destruction. [Inside Climate News, September 1, 2024.](#)

Hillside erosion worsening in California due to wildfires and intense rain. [Los Angeles Times, August 31, 2024.](#) \$

Robots are starting (good) fires in California. [Seattle Times, August 30, 2024.](#)

Silicon Valley wants to fight fires with fire. [New York Times, August 30, 2024.](#) \$

The wildfire risk in America's front yards. [The Atlantic, August 30, 2024.](#) \$

Post-wildfire erosion in California threatens water storage and increases flood risk. [San Francisco Chronicle, August 29, 2024.](#) \$

Gold Complex displays importance of fuels treatment projects. [USFS Feature Stories, August 29, 2024.](#)

California insurance crisis deepens as thousands to lose fire cover. [Newsweek, August 29, 2024.](#)

Prescribed burn slowed Park Fire. [Action News Now, August 29, 2024.](#)

As wildfire risks intensify, California insurance rates keep rising. [Washington Post, August 29, 2024.](#)

How wildfire smoke threatens health. [New York Times, August 28, 2024.](#) \$

'Dodged a bullet': Fuel break helped to stop the Canyon Fire from reaching homes. [The Union Democrat, August 28, 2024.](#)

Big Basin Redwoods State Park rebuilding plans unveiled four years after massive wildfire. [Mercury News, August 26, 2024.](#)

Wildfires and real estate values in California. [Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, August 26, 2024.](#)

California redwoods preserve turns fire-damaged wood into boon for farmers. [ABC 7, August 22, 2024.](#)

Low-severity wildfires help protect future forests. [Earth.com, August 20, 2024.](#)



Burned and uninsured: Wildfires are leaving California's housing market in trouble. [CNN, August 18, 2024.](#)

California insurance commissioner Lara invites public input on final phase of "fire of its kind" new wildfire modeling regulation. [Sierra Sun Times, August 17, 2024.](#)

Learning to live with wildfire rather than just fighting it. [Santa Barbara Independent, August 16, 2024.](#)

A Newsom-backed bill to change California's wildfire hazard rankings is taking heat. Here's why. [Sacramento Bee, August 14, 2024.](#) \$

How are the California wildfires affecting birds? [San Francisco Chronicle, August 6, 2024.](#) \$

LATEST IN SCIENCE

Accelerated forest restoration may benefit spotted owls through landscape complementation. [Jones, G. M., et al. *Animal Conservation* \(2024\).](#)

Characteristics of Pyrolysis Products of California Chaparral and Their Potential Effect on Wildland Fires. [Alizadeh, Mahsa, David R. Weise, and Thomas H. Fletcher. *Fire* \(2024\).](#)

Fire severity and prolonged drought do not interact to reduce plant regeneration capacity but alter community composition in a Mediterranean shrubland. [Salesa, David, M. Jaime Baeza, and Victor M. Santana. *Fire Ecology* 20.1 \(2024\): 61.](#)

Floral richness drives pollinator diversity after fire in upland forests and meadows of the Sierra Nevada, California. [Tarbill, Gina L., Angela M. White, and Rahel Sollmann. *Insect Conservation and Diversity* \(2024\).](#)

Moderating effects of past wildfire on reburn severity depend on climate and initial severity in Western US forests. [Tortorelli, Claire M., Andrew M. Latimer, and Derek JN Young. *Ecological Applications* \(2024\): e3023.](#)

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.](#)

Realignment of federal environmental policies to recognize fire's role. [Clark, Sara A., et al. *Fire Ecology* 20.1 \(2024\): 74.](#)

Repeat wildfire and smoke experiences shared by four communities in Southern California: local impacts and community needs. [Hopfer, Suellen, et al. *Environmental Research: Health* 2.3 \(2024\): 035013.](#)

Reconciling species conservation and ecosystem resilience: Northern spotted owl habitat sustainability in a fire-dependent forest landscape. [Halofsky, Joshua S., et al. *Forest Ecology and Management* 567 \(2024\): 122072.](#)



Sequoia sempervirens and Pseudotsuga menziesii tree growth and drought resistance following restoration thinning in secondary northern coast redwood forests of California. [Lalemand, Laura B., et al. *Forest Ecology and Management* 569 \(2024\): 122149.](#)

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.](#)

Untrammeling the wilderness: restoring natural conditions through the return of human-ignited fire. [Boerigter, Clare E., et al. *Fire Ecology* 20.1 \(2024\): 76.](#)

Using mixed-method analytical historical ecology to map land use and land cover change for ecocultural restoration in the Klamath River Basin (Northern California). [Eitzel, M. V., et al. *Ecological Informatics* 81 \(2024\): 102552.](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

USFS Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support Funding Opportunities: [Grants are available](#) through the funding opportunities outlined below. [Deadline is September 30, 2024.](#)

- Tribal Access to Emerging Private Markets for Climate Mitigation or Forest Resilience
- Landowner Cost Share Payment Programs for Climate Mitigation and/or Forest Resilience Practices
- Landowner Payment Programs for Carbon Stewardship Practices

Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant Program: [This grant program](#) is administered by the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition and supports high impact projects that promote collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes, leverage public and private resources, and advance priorities identified in a State Forest Action Plan or other restoration strategy. [Deadline is November 15, 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.

September 9: CNRA Secretary Speaker Series Progress on 30x30 Webinar: [This webinar](#) will feature a panel with PFT's Laurie Wayburn and other climate leaders will focus on California's strides toward conserving 30% of its lands and coastal waters by 2030 with milestones, recent updates, and the innovative strategies driving significant conservation efforts.

September 19 - October 17: UCANR's Post-Fire Resilience Workshops: [This workshop series](#) is intended to connect landowners affected by recent wildfires to post-fire management concepts, strategies, professionals, and programs. The format will be a hybrid of weekly zoom sessions and in-person field trip days. Zoom meetings will take place once a week on Thursdays from 6-7:30pm. The in-person field trips will visit burned landscapes in Lake County on October 19.

September 26 – November 2: UCANR Forest Stewardship Workshops: [This workshop series](#) will help landowners develop plans to improve and protect their forest lands in an ecologically and economically sustainable manner. The workshops will address management objectives and planning, forest restoration, fuels reduction, project development, permitting, and cost-share opportunities. Participants will connect with other landowners and learn how to collect information to develop their own management plans.

September 26: Power Dynamics and Fire Response Webinar: Presented by the California Fire Science Consortium, [this webinar](#) provides a geopolitical perspective on the CZU Lightning Complex Fires by exploring how power rivalries over forest management and firefighting agencies complicated the response to the CZU.

