



December 17, 2025

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Task Force Unveils Slate of Announcements at Final Meeting of 2025: On December 12, Task Force and CAL FIRE leadership [unveiled a slate of announcements](#) that showcase how California's unprecedented investments have led to large sustainable increases in wildfire prevention work with a focus on treatments that matter most. Additionally, the Task Force highlighted key elements of the upcoming 2026 Wildfire and Landscape Action Plan, a new 10-year roadmap to resilience, and how we are moving beyond measuring progress simply by number of acres treated with new outcome-based measures. If you missed the meeting, view the [meeting recap](#).

2026 Task Force Meetings Announced: [Upcoming meetings](#) include:

- March 19-20: Sierra Regional – Chicken Ranch Casino, Jamestown, Tuolumne County
- June 5: Sacramento
- October 1-2: North Coast Regional – Fortuna River Lodge, Humboldt County
- December 11: Sacramento

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

CAL FIRE Awards Over \$62 Million in Wildfire Prevention Grants: On December 12, CAL FIRE announced it will award nearly \$62.6 million in funding for 84 local wildfire prevention projects across the state, including 41 projects in low-income and disadvantaged communities. [CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grants](#) enable local organizations like fire safe councils to implement activities that reduce wildfire risk to communities. Funded activities include hazardous fuel reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education. These projects all meet the goals and objectives of [California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan](#), as well as the [Strategic Fire Plan for California](#). Over the last six years, CAL FIRE has awarded more than \$566 million in its Wildfire Prevention Grants Program to over 575 projects across the state. A full list of the 2025/2026 Wildfire Prevention Grant recipients is available [here](#).

Conservancies Award Nearly \$14 Million of “Early Action” Funding from the Climate Bond for Wildfire Resilience Projects: In April of 2025, Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 100 which allocated over \$170 million in accelerated, or “early action” Climate Bond funding to conservancies for urgent forest and vegetation management across California. The California State Coastal Conservancy (Coastal Conservancy) and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) have moved quickly to ensure these funds are being distributed to enable progress on-the-ground.

- **Coastal Conservancy Awards Over \$11 Million for Wildfire Resilience:** On November 20, the Board of the State Coastal Conservancy [awarded over \\$11 million for ten projects](#) that aim to reduce the risk and impact of catastrophic wildfires along the coast. Five of these projects received \$9.4 million in accelerated funding from the Climate Bond (Prop 4). Additionally, [five projects were awarded](#) \$1,665,000 in accelerated Climate Bond



funding from the Department of Conservation's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program.

- **Sierra Nevada Conservancy Awards \$4.6 Million in Wildfire and Forest Resilience Grants to Help Protect Communities:** On December 12, SNC's Board [approved three separate grants](#) totaling nearly \$4.6 million to fund projects that will reduce fuels and create fuel breaks in efforts to restore forest health and protect nearby communities from wildfire. The three grants from SNC's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program will fund projects in Butte, Mono, and Madera counties.

FEDERAL UPDATES

Orange County Fire Chief Brian Fennessy to Lead New United States Wildland Fire Service: Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) Chief Brian Fennessy will retire on January 2, 2026 to become the [inaugural Director of the newly established United States Wildland Fire Service](#) (USWFS). The new federal agency, launching in January 2026, is designed to consolidate and modernize federal wildland firefighting efforts. Fennessy announced the move in a letter to OCFA personnel in which he emphasized that the creation of the USWFS offers a "historic opportunity" to elevate wildland firefighting, strengthen interagency coordination, and modernize capabilities across the country.

PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Task Force Releases 2024 Interagency Wildfire Treatment Data: On December 12, the Task Force released 2024 wildfire treatment data, showing an upward trend in acres treated over the past 4 years. Collectively, interagency partners completed over 1 million activity acres of treatments across 733,000 footprint acres in 2024. Activity acres track every treatment, including multiple treatments on the same acre. Footprint acres reflect the number of acres that were treated rather than the number of treatments. The 2024 totals largely kept pace with records set in 2023 and are much higher than in 2021 and 2022. Acres treated by state agencies remained stable with record numbers set in 2023, with a slight increase from federal partners. Timber industry acres decreased by more than 40,000 acres from 2023 which was largely due to reduced levels of reforestation activities, which were much higher following the large 2020 and 2021 fire seasons. While there is year-to-year variation, wildfire prevention treatments have been, and continue to be, on an upward trend over time. The data is available in the [Interagency Treatment Dashboard](#), California's first-of-its-kind tool that offers a one-stop-shop to access data, provide transparency, and align the efforts of more than a dozen agencies to build resilient landscapes and communities in California.

California Unveils First-ever Statewide LiDAR Maps: On December 12, The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), in partnership with the California Air Resources Board (CARB), NASA Ames Research Center, and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force announced the public release of new statewide datasets on forest and vegetation conditions built from LiDAR, the gold standard for forest and vegetation information. This release is powered by [the Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience, and Risk Assessment Initiative](#) (WERK) which has processed more than 100 million acres of LiDAR data across California. That total includes 40 million acres collected through CNRA's use of \$30 million dedicated by the State Legislature to wildland remote sensing. For the first time, California has a single wall-to-wall picture of forest and vegetation



conditions that is the highest resolution available and consistent across the entire state. Agencies, tribes, researchers, land managers, and community partners [can access the data](#) and begin incorporating the released products into their own tools, models, and planning processes immediately.

Watershed Center and Sierra Business Council Release Wildfire Resilience Workforce & Career Development Roadmap: On November 25, The Watershed Research and Training Center and Sierra Business Council released [Advancing Wildfire Resilience Workforce & Career Development](#), a nonprofit-led roadmap recommending how California can grow and sustain the skilled workforce needed to protect communities and restore healthy landscapes in the face of wildfire. Developed in coordination with the California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force, this roadmap outlines how the state can strengthen its wildfire resilience efforts by investing in the people and organizations driving this critical work. Key recommendations in the roadmap include:

- Building education, training, and professional development pipelines.
- Supporting high-quality, well-paying jobs with clear career pathways.
- Pairing wildfire resilience investments with workforce capacity investments statewide, including urban, rural, and Tribal communities.
- Removing barriers to recruit, train, and retain a robust wildfire resilience workforce.

LEGISLATION WATCH

The California Legislature will reconvene January 5, 2026.

PRESS BOX

Opinion: California must extend BioMAT to fight wildfires and protect jobs. [Sacramento Bee, December 16, 2025.](#) \$

Opinion: Biomass is a money pit that won't solve California's energy or wildfire problems, [CalMatters, December 16, 2025.](#)

The hydrants will run dry: Trump's LA fire claims missed the mark, study shows. [CalMatters, December 15, 2025.](#)

What's in an Acre: California is getting its forests raked, according to new data compiled by state, federal, tribal and industry officials. [Politico, December 12, 2025.](#)

IBHS findings on LA County's Palisades and Eaton Fires reinforce systems-based mitigation dramatically improves home outcomes during wildfires. [PR Newswire, December 10, 2025.](#)

California delays wildfire rules that would force homeowners to clear vegetation. [San Francisco Chronicle, December 9, 2025.](#) \$

Firefighting plan that tripped up spending package back on track. [Roll Call, December 4, 2025.](#)



How an Incline Village HOA received a 33% insurance reduction amid wildfire driven increases and non-renewals. [Tahoe Daily Tribune, December 4, 2025.](#)

Native American tribe reclaims 900 acres near Yosemite National Park in California. [The Modesto Bee, December 3, 2025.](#) \$

Can California learn to let Native American fire practitioners burn freely? [Los Angeles Times, November 27, 2025.](#) \$

California shatters training records with 650 new CAL FIRE officers in 2025. [Governor Gavin Newsom, November 21, 2025.](#)

Burn, learn, repeat: In California's Sierra Nevada, UC Berkeley researchers are turning decades of fire research into action. [Breakthroughs Magazine, November 18, 2025.](#)

Forest Service completed prescribed burns on 127,000 acres during shutdown, despite reduced workforce. [Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2025.](#) \$

'Good fire' cultural burns return in Yolo County to help California slow wildfires. [Abridged, November 12, 2025.](#)

An extreme tree hunt in the Sierra Nevada. [UC Davis, November 10, 2025.](#)

How rising wildfire risks are rewiring the future of power systems. [RTO Insider, November 9, 2025.](#)

California gears up for prescribed burns during rare wildfire relief. [SF Gate, November 3, 2025.](#)

LATEST IN SCIENCE **Indigenous stewardship rights and opportunities to recenter Indigenous fire.** [Hankins et al., Fire Ecology, 21, 74 \(2025\).](#)

Valuing co-benefits of forest fuels treatment for reducing wildfire risk in California's Sierra Nevada. [Guo, et al., Science of the Total Environment, Volume 1001, 25 October 2025, 180487.](#)

Causal analysis of fire regime drivers in California. [Keeley and Syphard, International Journal of Wildland Fire, \(2025\) 34\(12\): WF25166.](#)

Carbon costs of different pathways for reducing fire hazard in the Sierra Nevada. [Zhu et al., Ecological Applications, 2025; 35: e70111.](#)

Tree and stand characteristics moderate wildfire severity and promote resilience in secondary coast redwood forests. [Forest Ecology and Management, Volume 596, 14 November 2025, 123078.](#)

Containment lines, PODs and suppression success: a case study of the 2021 Schneider Springs Fire. [Young, et al., International Journal of Wildland Fire \(2025\) 34\(12\): WF25124.](#)



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Healthy American Forests Initiative: [This initiative](#) supports watershed restoration and vegetation-management projects on National Forest System lands to achieve healthy forest ecosystems. Applications are due January 13, 2026.

NFF's Connecting People to Forests: [National Forest Foundation's matching award program](#) projects that are focused on in-person community engagement and completion of appropriate stewardship activities to create lasting change on National Forest lands or adjacent public lands. Applications are due January 22, 2026.

ISN's Rekindling Fire and Culture Program: The [Indigenous Stewardship Network](#), with support from the DOC's Regional Forest and Fire Capacity program will support capacity-building for cultural fire or Indigenous-led fire in California. Applications are due February 2, 2026.

Climate Smart Communities Initiative: The [Climate Smart Communities Initiative Climate Resilience Project Grants](#) fund project teams consisting of a local or regional government entity and a community-based organization to advance community-based climate resilience in communities or regions that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Applications are due March 12, 2026.

NFWF's Healthy American Forests Initiative: [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#), through an agreement from the USFS, will support watershed restoration and vegetation management projects on National Forest System lands to achieve a healthy forest ecosystem. Full proposals are due March 17, 2026.

The USDA Timber Production Expansion Guaranteed Loan Program: [This program](#) provides loan guarantees to establish, reopen, expand, or improve sawmills and other wood-processing facilities. Rolling application until funds depleted.

SNC's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Directed Grant Program: This [program](#) is focused on protecting people and communities while achieving a combination of multiple watershed, ecosystem, and community benefits. Proposals accepted on continuous basis until January 31, 2026, or as long as funding is available.

SNC's Sustainable Recreation, Tourism, and Equitable Outdoor Access Grant Program: [This program](#) aims to support innovative efforts to enhance, promote, and develop sustainable recreation and tourism opportunities and increase access for all to public lands in the Sierra-Cascade region. Rolling application as long as funding is available.

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.](#)

Wood Energy Management Assistance Team: The U.S. Forest Service has partnered with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities to support direct, expert technical assistance to wood products manufacturers, provided by industry expert consults, through the [Wood Manufacturing Assistance Team \(WMAT\)](#). The WMAT can support a wide range of services, including operational efficiency audits, identification of equipment or process improvements, development of long-term strategic investment plans, maintenance and safety program reviews, capital investment feasibility studies, identification of new markets or expansion opportunities. [Rolling application.](#)

CA Wildlife Conservation Board Forest Conservation Program: [This program](#) advances the protection, restoration, and improvement of upper watershed lands in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountains, including forest lands, meadows, wetlands, chaparral, and riparian habitat, in order to protect and improve water supply and water quality, improve forest health, reduce wildfire danger, mitigate the effects of wildfires on water quality and supply, increase flood protection, or protect or restore riparian or aquatic resources. [Rolling application.](#)

CA Wildlife Conservation Board Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program: [This program](#) funds projects that provide climate adaptation and resilience on California's natural and working lands. [Rolling application.](#)

CA Wildlife Conservation Board Oak Woodlands Conservation Program: [This program](#) provides a mechanism to bring ranchers and conservationists together in a manner that allows both to achieve sustainable ranch and farming operations and healthy oak woodlands. [Rolling application.](#)

LOOKING AHEAD

January 27-March 4, 2026, UCANR Forest Stewardship San Diego Workshop Series: This [workshop series](#) will help landowners develop plans to improve and protect their forestlands 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.

March 4-6, 2026, Adapting Together – Shaping the Future of Fire in the Northwest: Oregon State University, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network and the Northwest Fire Science Consortium are hosting a [fire adaptation workshop](#) highlighting voices from Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana in Skamania Lodge, Washington.

