



May 18, 2026

TASK FORCE UPDATES

Task Force to Share Updates on the 2026 Action Plan at June 5 Meeting: On June 5 at CNRA HQ in Sacramento, the Task Force will provide updates on key elements of the forthcoming 2026 Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan. [Learn more and register for virtual attendance.](#) No registration required for in-person attendance.

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

- June 5: Sacramento
- October 1-2: North Coast Regional – Fortuna River Lodge, Humboldt County
- December 11: Sacramento

STATE HIGHLIGHTS

CAL FIRE Announces \$100 Million in Funding to Increase Community and Landscape Wildfire Resilience:

- **\$70 Million to Help Communities Strengthen Wildfire Resilience:** On May 7, CAL FIRE [announced](#) the availability of up to \$70 million in funding for community-focused wildfire prevention and resilience projects. Funded projects will support locally led efforts that reduce wildfire risk, strengthen preparedness, and help protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure. Eligible activities include hazardous fuels reduction, wildfire prevention planning, and wildfire prevention education aimed at increasing readiness and reducing wildfire ignition potential. Projects that also deliver carbon-reduction benefits will receive additional consideration. Completed applications must be submitted by 3:00 p.m. on July 8, 2026.
- **\$30 Million for Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience:** On May 13, CAL FIRE [announced](#) the availability of up to \$30 million through a new [Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Grant Program](#) funded by the [2024 California Climate Bond](#) (Proposition 4). The program aims to accelerate landscape-scale, regionally appropriate activities that strengthen local capacity, improve landscape health and resilience, and reduce wildfire risk to communities. By anchoring funding in a local context, these grants encourage regions to move beyond one-size-fits-all solutions and instead tailor strategies to unique challenges and opportunities. Priority will be given to projects that leverage funding from multiple sources to maximize public benefits, build regional capacity to develop and deliver future resilience projects, and reflect broad stakeholder engagement, including meaningful tribal participation. The program will follow a two-phase application process, with concept proposals due by 3 p.m. on June 30, 2026.

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Releases Draft of Zone Zero Defensible Space Regulations: On April 17, a California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection subcommittee [released an updated draft](#) of proposed Zone Zero (first five feet around homes and structures) defensible space regulations, marking another step in the state's ongoing effort to better protect homes and



communities from wildfire. The draft regulations were informed by extensive public input and reflect a flexible approach that empowers homeowners and local governments to take action. The updated draft rule includes a phased-in implementation approach that prioritizes education and outreach over a 5-year period.

Governor Gavin Newsom Proclaims Wildfire Preparedness Week: Governor Newsom [proclaimed](#) May 3–9 as Wildfire Preparedness Week — calling on all Californians to stay vigilant and prepared year-round as the state continues to deploy the most prepared, best-equipped firefighting force in the world to meet that threat. As part of Wildfire Preparedness Week, state agencies doubled down on preparedness messaging, [providing resources](#) for communities to protect their property, home, and family from wildfire.

Governor Gavin Newsom Requests Extension of FEMA Disaster Funding to Help Survivors of LA Wildfires: On May 8, Governor Newsom [formally requested](#) that the federal government extend critical disaster assistance programs to ensure families can continue their recovery. The Governor requested a 12-month extension of the Individuals and Households Program (IHP) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which provides financial and housing assistance to disaster survivors. The extension would allow eligible survivors to continue receiving support through July 9, 2027.

FEDERAL UPDATES

USFS Pushes Forward on Landmark Disaster Recovery: On May 12, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) [announced](#) that the agency is using \$6.35 billion in disaster recovery supplemental funding allocated through the American Relief Act of 2025 to fund the restoration of infrastructure and natural resources across much of the National Forest System following natural disasters between 2022 and 2024. The agency's disaster recovery work is focused on restoring access, rebuilding recreation sites, reducing wildfire risk, restoring ecosystems, supporting communities, and preparing for future disasters. In California, road repair work continues across national forests affected by widespread damage from 2022-2023 atmospheric rivers. Recently, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest repaired and reopened 63.8 miles of roads, removed over 700 downed trees, and regraded 35 miles of roads, thereby restoring access to power infrastructure, private property, and firefighting routes. Nearby, in the Six Rivers National Forest, 25 miles of roads were repaired within the Smith River National Recreation Area, improving access to campgrounds, trailheads, and active management sites.

PROGRESS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Wildfire Resilience Index is Now Live— Providing a New Interactive Tool to Support Communities and Landscapes Living with Wildfire: On May 5, the [Wildfire Resilience Index](#) launched as an open source, free, interactive tool designed to support communities and landscapes living with wildfire in 12 Western US states, British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory. Users can look up any census tract, county or congressional district and get a resilience score — broken down by eight socio-ecological domains and split into resistance and recovery components to see not just how resilient a place is, but why, and what to do about it. The index is designed to inform land management, policy planning, and community preparedness by supporting evidence-based



decisions that enhance safety and ecosystem sustainability. The index offers flexible insights that communities can adapt to their unique needs. It highlights where resilience can be strengthened—whether through vegetation management, infrastructure planning, community preparedness, or other targeted actions.

California Landscape Stewardship Network Releases New Toolkit for Collaborative Stewardship: The [Collaborative Stewardship Toolkit](#) is a new open-source practitioners' guide, designed to support land and seascape collaboratives, with resources and guidance for every phase of a collaborative's life cycle—from inception to sunseting.

American Forests Releases New Resources to Protect and Restore Forests:

- **Interactive Webpage Showcasing Risks and Actionable Solutions to Protect California's Forests:** American Forests recently [released an interactive web story](#) that highlights the growing threats facing California's forests from climate change, drought, pests, and increasingly severe wildfires. The story also emphasizes the critical role forests play in protecting water supplies, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage.
- **Free Platform to Connect Forest Landowners with Reforestation Resources:** On April 6, American Forests launched [ForestSupport.org](#), a free, centralized platform designed to simplify the reforestation process. The site connects landowners, Tribal Nations, and forestry professionals with vetted reforestation funding opportunities, technical assistance, and expert support.

Fire Network Releases New Videos on Pathways to Wildfire Resilience in Northern California: As part of its Many Paths Project, the Fire Network released [two new videos](#) on the varied cultures, landscapes and fire challenges in Northern California and the dynamic Indigenous and community-based fire practices that honor local traditions and knowledge and center fire's role in restoring lands and connecting people.

**LEGISLATION
WATCH**

AB 35 (Alvarez) Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024: Administrative Procedure Act: exemption: program guidelines and selection criteria. Would exempt the adoption of regulations needed to effectuate or implement programs of the Clean Air Bond Act from the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act, as provided. Would require a state entity that receives funding to administer a competitive grant program established using the Administrative Procedure Act exemption to do certain things, including develop draft project solicitation and evaluation guidelines and to submit those guidelines to the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, except as provided. Would require the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency to post an electronic form of the guidelines submitted by a state entity and the subsequent verifications on the Natural Resources Agency's internet website.

AB 66 (Tangipa) California Environmental Quality Act: exemption: egress route projects: fire safety. Would, until January 1, 2032, exempt from CEQA egress



route projects undertaken by a public agency to improve emergency access to and evacuation from a subdivision without a secondary egress route if the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection has recommended the creation of a secondary access to the subdivision and certain conditions are met. The bill would require the lead agency to hold a noticed public meeting to hear and respond to public comments before determining that a project is exempt.

AB 261 (Quirk-Silva) Fire safety: fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal.

Would, as applied to both state responsibility areas and lands that are not state responsibility areas, authorize the State Fire Marshal, in periods between the State Fire Marshal's review of areas of the state for recommendations regarding an area's fire hazard severity zone, to confer with entities, including, but not limited to, public agencies, tribes, nonprofit organizations, project applicants, and members of the public, on actions that may impact the degree of fire hazard in an area or the area's recommended fire hazard severity zone designation. The bill would authorize the State Fire Marshal to provide a written response to an entity on actions that may impact the degree of fire hazard and would require this written response to be posted on the State Fire Marshal's internet website.

AB 300 (Lackey) Fire hazard severity zones: State Fire Marshal. Would require the State Fire Marshall to classify and review lands within state responsibility areas as fire hazard severity zones, and identification and review of areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones at least once every 8 years.

AB 442 (Hadwick) Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973: working forest management plans: harvest area.

Would delete the requirement under the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 that the harvest area of a working forest management plan be contained within a single hydrological area.

AB 687 (Patterson) Forestry: timber operations: maintenance of timberlands for fuels reduction. Would authorize up to 35 projects per year that are exclusively for noncommercial wildfire fuels reduction in timberland, less than 1,000 acres in size, and paid for in part or in whole with public funds, to prepare a timber harvesting plan to comply with CEQA.

AB 706 (Aguiar-Curry) Forest Organic Residue, Energy, and Safety

Transformation and Wildfire Prevention Fund Act. Would establish the Forest and Wildfire Prevention Fund in the State Treasury, and would continuously appropriate the fund to the Natural Resources Agency to reduce organic fuel sources that increase fire risk by providing funding for the fire fuel reduction procurement program, which the bill would also establish, to support sufficient procurement, transport, and beneficial use of forest biomass waste that reduces fuel for wildfires, as specified.

AB 763 (Ward) Timber harvesting: streambed agreement: waste discharge requirements. Would require a regional water quality control board that has adopted general waste discharge requirements for timber harvesting, the



regional board to approve, deny, or otherwise act on a request for coverage for timber harvesting operations performed consistent with an approved timber harvesting plan subject to those general waste discharge requirements.

AB 846 (Connolly)/SB 375 (Grove) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities. Would authorize a local agency to submit to the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife a wildfire preparedness plan to conduct wildfire preparedness activities on land designated as a fire hazard severity zone, as defined, that minimizes impacts to wildlife and habitat for candidate, threatened, and endangered species and require DFW to notify the local agency within 90 days of receipt of the wildfire preparedness plan if an incidental take permit or other permit is needed, or if there are other considerations, exemptions, or streamlined pathways for which the wildfire preparedness activities qualify.

AB 1227 (Ellis) Wildfire safety: fuels reduction projects. Would, on or before January 31, 2026, require the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Natural Resources Agency to each report to the Legislature information on the implementation of the March 1, 2025, proclamation of a state of emergency that suspends applicable state statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements necessary for expediting critical fuels reduction project.

AB 1666 (Rogers) Forest management: biomass innovation parks. Would enact the Biomass Innovation Parks Act, which would establish the Biomass Innovation Park Grants and Financing Program, to be administered by the Natural Resources Agency. Would require the Agency, in coordination with the Department of Food and Agriculture and CAL FIRE, to identify one or more biomass innovation parks.

AB 1699 (Rogers) Good Fire Act: Prescribed Fire Liability Pilot Program: burn bosses: California Environmental Quality Act. Would establish the Good Fire Act, which would indefinitely extend the Prescribed Fire Liability Program, the pilot program for which is currently active only until January 1, 2028.

AB 1891 (Connolly) Forestry: Beneficial Fire Capacity Program. Would establish in CAL FIRE the Beneficial Fire Capacity Program to expand training, organizational capacity, and support for community-led beneficial fire programs, including those developed by California Native American tribes, nongovernmental organizations, universities and colleges, resource conservation districts, volunteer fire districts, and other local or special districts, and would require the program to provide competitive grants for beneficial fire implementation, capacity building, research, innovation, and training.

AB 2410 (Ellis) Wildfire safety: fuels reduction projects: California Environmental Quality Act: California Coastal Act. Would, until January 1, 2030, exempt from CEQA critical fuels reduction projects conducted in communities located in high fire threat districts or very high fire hazard severity zones, as provided. Because a lead agency would be required to determine whether a project qualifies for this exemption, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program.



AB 2494 (Rogers) State forests: forest management. Would redefine “management” for purposes of state forests as the handling of forest vegetation and soils within state forests for biodiversity conservation and wildfire resilience, while supporting durable onsite carbon storage and sequestration, climate mitigation and resiliency goals, equitable forest access, wildlife and fish habitat, recreation opportunities, and compatible research efforts. “Management” is currently defined for purposes of the state forests as a means of handling forest crop and forest soil to achieve maximum sustained production of high-quality forest products while giving consideration to values relating to, among other values, recreation, watershed, and wildlife.

AB 2513 (Petrie-Norris) Wildfire: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program: local assistance grant program: regional landscape grants. Would authorize the Director of the Department of Conservation to directly award regional landscape grants to regional entities to implement the regional priority strategies. Would require the director, in collaboration with the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, before the issuance of these grants, to establish guidelines for funding the grants to contribute to the achievement of the goals of California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, as specified. The bill would also extend the authorization for the department to award advance payments of grants awarded pursuant to the program indefinitely.

SB 581 (McGuire) Department of Forestry and Fire Protection: employment: firefighters. Would require the Department of Human Resources, the State Personnel Board, and any other relevant state agency to transition the Firefighter I classification within CAL FIRE to a permanent firefighter employment classification.

SB 899 (Grove) Fire prevention: Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force: wildfire smoke. Would require the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, on or before July 1, 2028, and in cooperation with the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and the State Department of Public Health, to assess the health costs and impacts of wildfire smoke using existing wildfire smoke and health data. Would require the Task Force, in developing this assessment, to, among other things, develop a model to determine the approximate health benefits of achieving the goals identified in the action plan and make recommendations on how the action plan can increase its health benefits.

SB 973 (Becker) Wildfire County Coordinator Program. Would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to (1) establish recommended standards for wildfire risk modeling and analysis tools, (2) develop guidance and tools related to wildfire risk assessments, (3) support the development, updating, or procurement of county-level wildfire risk assessments, and (4) develop guidance and templates for the creation or revision of county-level wildfire resilience prioritization and implementation plans, and accompanying guidance for integrating these plans with related wildfire resilience programs.



SB 1079 (Stern) Department of Forestry and Fire Protection: Fire Innovation Unit. Would establish the Fire Innovation Unit within CAL FIRE, under the direction of a Deputy Director of Wildfire Innovation, to serve as the department's innovation arm and the state's principal hub for wildfire technology research, coordination, procurement, and deployment for technologies that, among other things, improve ecosystem and landscape scale resilience. The bill would require the unit to consist of the Office of Wildfire Technology Research and Development, the Innovation, Outreach and Coordination Program, and the Rapid Acquisition and Deployment Program, as provided. The bill would authorize the unit to establish and administer a grant program to fund early-stage, mature, or dual-use technology projects that enhance wildfire readiness, mitigation, or response.

SB 1297 (Allen) Regional Wildfire Partnerships. Would revise and recast the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program. The bill would, among other things, authorize regional entities to (1) implement collaborative planning efforts with insurance companies, private and public utilities, and other private and public entities, and (2) develop regional priority strategies that develop and support fire-resistant homes, businesses, and public buildings, as provided.

SB 1404 (Stern) Wildfire prevention: state responsibility areas: fire prevention fee. Would reinstate the fire prevention fee charged on each habitable structure within a state responsibility area, effective January 1, 2027, until its original repeal date of January 1, 2031.

PRESS BOX

Concerns about Trump cuts to US Forest Service abound as wildfire season comes. [The Hill, May 15, 2026.](#)

Newsom to propose fund to help California wildfire victims rebuild. [Los Angeles Times, May 13, 2026.](#) \$

'We're dry:' The new U.S. Wildland Fire Service prepares for extreme fire season. [NPR, All Things Considered, May 9, 2026.](#)

These blue states aren't getting fire prevention money from Trump. The [Washington Post, May 8, 2026.](#)

Forest fuel treatments reduce wildfire spread, prevent \$2.8 billion in damage. [UC Davis News, May 7, 2026.](#)

Smokey's Last Stand: What We Lose When President Trump Guts the Forest Service. [Union of Concerned Scientists, May 6, 2026.](#)

Trump administration falls behind on wildfire prevention with risky fire season ahead. [NPR, May 4, 2026.](#)

Bulldozers of fire: Heavy equipment fighting and mitigating fire. [USDA Forest Service Featured Stories. April 30, 2026.](#)



Ready for wildfire: Forest Service ramps up for expected busy wildfire season. [USDA Forest Service Featured Stories, April 30, 2026.](#)

As wildfire risks rise, Forest Service shuts labs that study them. [New York Times, April 30, 2026.](#) \$

We still aren't doing enough to prevent the next devastating wildfire. [The Hill, April 23, 2026.](#)

California could make homes in fire-risk areas pay controversial fee under bill advancing in Legislature. [San Francisco Chronicle, April 22, 2026.](#) \$

What to plant (and what to remove) in California's new 'Zone Zero' fire-safety proposal. [Los Angeles Times, April 18, 2026.](#) \$

California's building a federated wildfire data hub backed by UC San Diego supercomputers. [Statescoop, April 14, 2026.](#)

California leaders promised fire recovery in record time. Los Angeles isn't seeing it. [Politico, April 13, 2026.](#)

LATEST IN SCIENCE **Short-term effects of single-entry prescribed fire in California's yellow-pine and mixed conifer forests.** [Gruppenhoff et al., Forest Ecology and Management, Volume 613, August 2026, 123771.](#)

Urban trees and structure loss in the 2025 Eaton and Palisades fires. [Kenny et al., Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 121, July 2026, 129470.](#)

Wildfire damages and the cost-effective role of forest fuel treatments. [Strabo et al., Science, Vol. 392 May 2026.](#)

Tracking headwaters management for wildfire resilience in California. [Franklin & Greenspan, Public Policy Institute of California, May 2026.](#)

Barriers to Indigenous fire stewardship on Karuk lands. [Cruz, Caitlyn, et al. Ecology and Evolution 16.4, April 2026, e73479.](#)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

CAL FIRE Business and Workforce Development Grants: \$10 million is available to strengthen California's forest-sector businesses and workforce while promoting healthy, resilient forests statewide. [These grants](#) support a variety of projects that enhance industry operations, develop workforce skills, and foster innovation in the forest sector. [Applications are due by May 20, 2026.](#)

Technology Solutions for Forest Health and Resilience Grants: [Grants](#) from the US Endowment for Forest and Communities support deployment and scaling of solutions that meaningfully improve forest-health outcomes or forest management decision-making including decision support tools, data integration platforms, remote sensing technologies, and technology demonstration projects. [Proposal deadline is June 4, 2026.](#)



CAL FIRE Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Grants: \$30 million available for [landscape-scale, regional priority projects](#) that strengthen local capacity, improve landscape health and resilience, and reduce wildfire risk to communities. Concept proposals are due June 30, 2026.

CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grants: \$70 million is available for community-focused [Wildfire Prevention and Resilience](#) projects. These grants support locally led efforts that reduce wildfire risk, strengthen preparedness, and help protect lives, property, and critical infrastructure. Applications are due on July 8, 2026.

WCB Forest Conservation Program: The California Wildlife Conservation Board issues [grants](#) to advance 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.

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.

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 communications, and applied research. Rolling application.

Wood Energy Management Assistance Team: USFS in partnership with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities will support direct, expert technical assistance to wood products manufacturers through the [Wood Manufacturing Assistance Team](#) (WMAT). The WMAT supports 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, and identification of new markets or expansion opportunities. Rolling application.

The Coalitions and Collaboratives (COCO): Community Mitigation Assistance Team Program: [This program](#) provides community coalitions at medium to high risk of wildfires access to Community Mitigation Assistance Teams (CMATs), which work closely with local partners to identify mitigation opportunities before a fire impacts the community. Rolling Application.

LOOKING AHEAD

May 19, CNRA Secretary Speaker Series: Wildfire Season Outlook: Join Secretary Wade Crowfoot and state leaders, including Task Force Director Patrick Wright, on May 19 from 12-1 PM for a [webinar](#) on the latest on conditions and hear what California has been doing to prepare for peak fire season, protect communities, and accelerate wildfire safety projects.



May 20, California Mass Timber Conference: The first [California Mass Timber Conference](#) will be held at the Richmond Field Station's UC Berkeley Wood Lab. The symposium will include updates, discussions, panels, project displays, and an opportunity to build the future of wood product innovation in California.

May 28, Data-Driven Planning for the Federal Wildfire Workforce: The Climate and Wildfire Institute and Grassroots Wildland Firefighters are hosting [a live webinar](#) to explore how data-driven planning can be used to build a modern, mission-based wildfire workforce.

June and July Dates, Cone Camp 2026: [Cone Camp](#) is a hybrid training course organized by American Forests in partnership with CAL FIRE, USFS, and the California Reforestation Pipeline Partnership. Attendees learn how to identify, survey, monitor, and collect from California's native conifers to support reforestation efforts.

August 17-19, 2026, Preparing Communities at the Wildland-Urban Interface: A [two-day national conference](#) on strengthening wildfire preparedness, mitigation, and recovery for communities in the WUI.

September 23-24, 2026, SCALE Annual Conference: The Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement Project [conference](#) brings together 15+ collaboratives and more than 80 natural resource professionals from across California, all working to advance landscape-scale restoration, community enhancement, and resilience.

November 17-19, CA Association of Resource Conservation District's 81st Annual Conference: CARCD's annual conference will celebrate collective impact, share innovative strategies, and strengthen the RCD network. [Call for proposals](#) will close on June 15, 2026.

