



# Director's Report to the Board of Forestry



Resources Building, Auditorium  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

February/March 2014 Board of Forestry Report

---

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- **Resource Protection and Improvement**

### **State Forests:**

Caspar Rainfall records at Jackson State Forest are lining up to match or fall short of the record low flows of 1977. Seasonal rainfall-to-date (Hydrological year) is below HY77 and there has not been a 12-month period with this little rainfall since the Caspar record began in 1962.

THP preparation is ongoing in the Cave Rock area that will include the upper VTAC project (Section V Technical Advisory Committee) area along the upper reaches of South Cow Creek, at LaTour State Forest.

### **Forestry Assistance Programs:**

#### Forest Legacy Program:

The transfer of the conservation easement on the Usual Redwood Forest (49,576 acres) from The Conservation Fund to CAL FIRE has been reviewed by DGS. WCB has agreed to act as CAL FIRE's land agent in the no-cost acquisition. However, in order to comply with the law, the WCB must "approve" the transfer. The proposal was to be presented to their full board at the regularly scheduled meeting on February 20<sup>th</sup> but during the meeting, it was pulled from the agenda. The Department of Finance was not prepared to render a decision. CAL FIRE will pursue completion of this transaction.

#### Prop 40 Fuels Reduction Program:

The much-needed rain earlier in the month has allowed most landowners to burn their piles associated with their projects. All agreements expire on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. We expect all final invoices to be sent in and approved by the end of March. The Sierra Coordinated Resource Management Council must have final billing in to the Departments Financial unit by the end of April.

#### Forest Pests:

**Sudden Oak Death in Trinity County:** While State and Federal Quarantines will likely cover the entire county it may be possible to request a more limited area for the Zone of Infestation. CAL FIRE Pest Management staff are in the process of briefing and formulating recommendations for the Director.

### **Urban & Community Forestry:**

The Urban and Community Forestry program has continued to maintain program services while staff members have been out on leave or at Academy. Most of the staff has now completed these assignments. Assembly Bill 101 was signed which provides \$7 million to urban forestry (amongst other activities) through the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program. This money is going to the Resource Agency and is the only local assistance funding in the state budget specifically for urban forestry. Program staff will provide grant review and technical expertise for this program as time allows. Urban

Forestry Program's 5-Year Strategic Plan is now complete. It is posted to the CAL FIRE website and is available in print as well.

CAL FIRE and California ReLeaf are preparing for their joint Arbor Week celebration campaign (March 7-14). There will be a focused media campaign as well as many Arbor Day celebrations statewide. A press release and additional public information are being created in regards to urban trees and drought. They will be released very soon, likely during Arbor Week.

- **Forest Practice Program:**

Redding Pilot Program Update. The one-year timeframe for the Redding Pilot project ended on March 21, 2013, and the final draft report was forwarded to The Natural Resources Agency. The Natural Resource Agency has forwarded the report to the legislature for review. CAL FIRE Redding review team staff are in the process of comparing the review timelines for Redding Pilot Project plans with 2011-12 plans submitted one year earlier within the same geographic Pilot Project area. This comparison is aimed at identifying any process improvements associated with the Redding Pilot Project. The review process is completed (approved, accepted, or withdrawn) for all plan and substantial deviations in the study. The updated draft report should be submitted to the Department for review by March 31, 2014.

2012 Fire Salvage/Emergency Notices: Some salvage on non-industrial parcels affected by the Ponderosa Fire (Tehama & Shasta Counties) continues; SPI has completed their salvage operations for this fire. The salvage operation on the Bagley Fire (Shasta County) is about 90% completed. SPI has logged over 115 MM board feet of timber to date (SPI's estimate was that they lost about 125 MM board feet of timber in the Bagley Fire). SPI continues to submit Emergency Notices on their lands burned over in the Bagley Fire with two additional notices submitted in January for a total of 44 Notice submitted in 2012 through 2014 to date. Collins Timber Company continues to submit Emergency Notices on their property burned in the Barry Point Fire (Modoc County) with one additional Emergency Notice submitted in December for a total of 27 Notice submitted in 2012 through 2014 to date.

2013 Fire Salvage/Emergency Notices: For the 2013 fires, twenty Emergency Notices have been received at Redding Review Team to date. Thirteen Emergency Notices have been received for the American Fire (Placer County). The primary industrial timberland owners affected by the American Fire are Simorg West Forests, LLC (eight EMs for 1665 acres) and SPI (one EM for 460 acres.). Six Emergency Notices totaling 904 acres were submitted on small non-industrial landowners' property to date. Additionally, two EMs were submitted on the Hough Complex (both from Chy Co. in Plumas County ), one on the Windy Fire (Tehama Co.); one for the Cheney Fire (Lassen Co.), one on the Allegany Fire (Sierra Co.), two for the Panther Fire (Tehama Co.) and one on the Smith Fire (Shasta Co.).

On October 24, 2013, the Rim Fire in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties was contained, but has burned over 257,000 acres. The Rim Fire has burned mostly on USFS and USPS managed lands although greater than 15,000 acres of SRA land has been burned over. The Fresno Review Team has accepted twenty-three Emergency Notices, in Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties to date. Of these twenty-three notices, SPI has nine totaling 16,320 acres (SPI is the largest private landowner affected by the Rim Fire with about 90 percent of the SRA land.). The other fourteen Emergency Notices are on non-industrial ownerships totaling 2,137 acres.

Additionally, on the Rim Fire affected private land, the Department has accepted twenty-three Utility Exemptions to removed burned / felled timber from power line rights-of-ways on industrial and non-industrial ownerships.

Redding/Fresno Personnel Changes: One of Two Review Team Chairs in Redding has transferred to a new position with the Department, and the only Review Team Chair in Fresno has promoted to a new position with CAL FIRE. Additionally, the Assistant Review Team Chair in Fresno has also promoted to Review Team Chair in Santa Rosa. All three of these positions have been advertised and candidates are being reviewed. The Review Team Chair Positions have been tentatively offered pending RPP physical results.

Forest Practice Civil Prosecutions Update: There have been two new civil prosecution cases submitted in the first month of 2014 both involving illegal conversion of timberland. No new cases submitted in February 2014. There were twenty-four civil prosecution cases for the year 2013, with thirteen of these cases related to illegal conversion of timberland for the purpose of marijuana cultivation. Of these twenty-four cases, nine have been closed, three have been settled, or the settlement agreements have been mailed for signature. Eight have had the Complaint and Proposed Order (CPO) signed and mailed. Three have been prepared and are either being reviewed or awaiting signature by the Director or his representative. One case is under review and has not been written. There were thirty-two civil prosecution cases for 2012, of which, twenty-three have been closed, three have default judgments, three have requested hearings, and two are discussing settlement. There is one case under review, it has been written, but not yet served. There are thirty civil prosecution cases prior to 2012 that are either still in the court system or are in default needing judgments, or penalties are outstanding and due.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

### **Fire Protection**

- We continue experiencing unprecedented fire activity and fire danger for this time of year.
- We continue to respond to the Governor's Executive Order to maintain necessary resources to address the increased fire risk resulting from historic drought conditions.
- Fire Protection has a new Assistant Deputy Director of Fire Protection (Chris Avina), hired behind Chief John Winder, who retired.
- Law Enforcement Officers affected fifteen arrests and issued 14 non-4291 citations.
- Civil Cost Recovery closed five cost recovery cases, with recoveries totaling \$540,375.60.
- Aviation began tanker pilot training at Chico, Hemet, and Ramona to meet the needs of Initial Attack statewide. The training is normally conducted at McClellan in Sacramento. This year due to the drought, we have pilots that are still on contract covering aircraft in the field.

## **COOPERATIVE FIRE TRAINING AND SAFETY PROGRAMS**

### **Training, Safety and EMS**

- The Training Academy is in start of new training cycle – it promises to be a busy training season. The Training Program is working on a 'Surge Capacity Plan' in anticipation of the need to hire and train additional engine operators for the upcoming fire season due to severe drought conditions and continued fire activity through the winter.
- The Safety Program Staff attended a multi-agency advisory committee meeting in Los Angeles addressing tactical EMS operations and active shooter procedures. There is a significant discussion between the fire and law enforcement agencies represented on how such incidents would be handled.

### **Cooperative Fire Program**

- Benefit Rates associated with Local Government Fire Protection Reimbursement Agreements are undergoing final review and we anticipate them to be released this month.
- The Conservation Camp Program held a multi-agency workshop at the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Academy in Galt on February 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>. Agencies in attendance included: CAL FIRE, CDCR, and the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

### **Office of the State Fire Marshal**

#### **SRA Fee**

- 2013-14 bills are starting to go out
- Website and other information has been updated

#### **Wildland Fire Prevention Engineering**

- LE-66 Training: Webinar training with the field personnel is ongoing, prevention staff has been completed.
- Fire Prevention Activities to date for FY 2013/2014 for CAL FIRE Units and Contract Counties (combined):

#### Northern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals:

Defensible Space Inspections - 6417  
Number of 4291 violations - 969  
Number of 4291 citations - 0  
Number of hours of fire prevention education – 8427

#### Southern Region - All Units and Contract Counties Totals

Defensible Space Inspections – 35,566  
Number of 4291 violations - 2653  
Number of 4291 citations - 101  
Number of hours of fire prevention education - 8960

#### **FRAP**

- Work with California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). FRAP staff are participating in the ongoing rulemaking process for fire safety regulations for overhead utilities at the CPUC. Specifically, Dave Sapsis, FRAP's senior fire scientist, has been selected to chair an independent panel of science experts to evaluate existing fire hazard models and develop a statewide map of key data elements that will ultimately result in implementation zones for new fire safety regulations designed to reduce the likelihood of utility-caused wildfires. The model development is being funded by the Independently Owned Utilities from a memorandum account created for fire prevention activities, and is expected to produce some new data and assessments on fire danger throughout California that will provide analytical benefits beyond the scope of this specific application. The project is scheduled to finish in July 2014, with a report and recommendation to the CPUC.