



# Director's Report to the Board of Forestry



Resources Building, Auditorium  
1416 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

November 2014 Board of Forestry Report

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### NEW GRANT PROGRAMS

#### Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, and SRA Fire Prevention grants

- New CAL FIRE web site: <http://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/grants.php>

### FOREST PRACTICE PROGRAM

#### THP SUBMISSIONS

- **THP Submissions in 2014** are up significantly over last year. In Redding, submissions of THPs are up 10% over 2013 (from 83 to 91, YTD). In Fresno, THP submissions are steady from 2013 (from 22 to 21, YTD). In Santa Rosa, submissions of THPs are up 13% over 2013 (from 99 to 114 as of October 20, 2014) (see attachment).
- **NTMP:** Redding submissions of NTMPs remained steady at 2-YTD. Notices of Timber Operations in Redding are up 54% over 2013 (from 13 to 20). To date, no NTMPs have been submitted to Fresno in 2013 or 2014. Santa Rosa has received nine NTMPs YTD, compared to four last year. Notices of Timber Operations for Santa Rosa are up 20% compared to last year (85 to 105 as of October 20, 2013).
- **Exemption Notice Submissions:** Redding submissions of Exemption Notices remain steady (from 824 to 826, YTD). Santa Rosa submissions of Exemption Notices are up 15% (from 246 to 288, YTD). Fresno submissions of Exemption Notices are down 70% (from 862 to 254, YTD). The decline in Exemption Notice submissions in Fresno is primarily due to the conclusion of the *Forest Care Program* in San Bernardino County, where Exemption submissions went from 611 in 2013 to 0 in 2014.
- **Emergency Notice Submissions:** Emergency Notice (EM) submissions are down significantly in comparison to last year in Santa Rosa and Fresno. Fresno submissions of Emergency Notices are down significantly (70%) from 70 to 21, YTD. Santa Rosa submissions of Emergency Notices are down from seven to three this year. Redding submissions of Emergency Notices remain steady (from 99 to 98, YTD).

#### 2014 FIRE SALVAGE/EMERGENCY NOTICES

Fire activity has damaged several thousands of acres of timberland across the State. Over 157,000 acres of timberlands were burned during the recent fires. This includes both larger industrial and smaller nonindustrial timberland ownerships. Timberland owners have a variety of options under the Forest Practice Rules and Forest Practice Act to salvage damaged timber while preventing and reducing additional environmental impacts from substantially damaged timberlands. Forest Practice staff worked diligently assisting Landowners in developing plans to salvage timber values while preventing and avoiding additional watershed impacts. CAL FIRE has recently recirculated a 2012 memo providing guidance on timber operations in areas substantially damaged by fire.

### **THP NON-CONCURRENCE**

We received a non-concurrence from DFW September 16, 2014, on an SPI THP 1-14-068 HUM ("Burton"). The two primary issues raised by DFW relate to information in the THP needed to verify presence or absence of Late Successional Forest Stands and the marking of potential Pacific Fisher den trees. The non-concurrence was resolved with DFW, CAL FIRE and SPI following the submittal of additional information by SPI.

### **REVIEW TEAM PERSONNEL ISSUES**

**Fresno:** The Review Team Forester I is currently in the Pre-Academy in Whitmore until the end of the month. The Review Team Chair- Forester II will be in the Company Officer Academy in November and then the Firefighter Academy in January.

**Redding:** Review Team Chair-Forester II will be in the Company Officer Academy in November and then the Firefighter Academy in January. The Forester I will be in a Company Officer Academy in January.

**Santa Rosa:** Two Foresters will be attending the pre-academy until the end of October. Both will be attending FFA beginning November 10 - December 19. The Office has one Forester I opening.

We expect additional impacts to the Forest Practice Program staffing due to the anticipated retirement of Review Team Forester III, Mike Bacca in December 2014. We are preparing by providing additional training to review team personnel and are working to fill existing vacancies.

### **GENERAL PLAN REVIEW**

- **New Road Rules:** In anticipation that plans will be submitted late in the year and may not be approved until after the first of 2015, staff are suggesting that RPFs address the new "Road Rules" (which go into effect January 1, 2015), in their plans from this point forward. CAL FIRE has developed guidelines with suggestions for rule information placement in plans inside and, separately, outside ASP watersheds. These draft general guidelines have been distributed to review staff and consulting foresters.
- **Threatened Species:** On December 27, 2013, the CDFW Commission published its findings which formally noticed Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*; hereafter COTO) as being a Candidate species under review by CDFW for addition to either the list of threatened species or the list of endangered species (Cal. Reg. Notice Register 2013, No. 52-Z, p. 2092.). CAL FIRE Forest Practice Staff have completed a draft COTO review guidance document that will provide information on take avoidance and CEQA compliance for plan submitters within the range of COTO. The guidance document is intended to provide resource professionals preparing and reviewing plans an overview of species biology, habitat requirements, and suggested management practices based on the scientific literature. The information will be instrumental in developing plans and protection measures to avoid take (CESA) and significant impacts (CEQA) to COTO.

### **FOREST PRACTICE CIVIL PROSECUTION UPDATE**

There are 45 active civil prosecution cases. There have been three new cases submitted in the month of October, bringing the total to eight cases submitted thus far in 2014, all of them currently under review by the Department. At a minimum, 'Complaint and Proposed Orders' have been served on all other cases. There are approximately 12 cases that are in need of judgment and five that are in default. CAL FIRE Legal Counsel is assisting in processing the judgments. Two cases are in need of hearing dates through OAH. Eight cases are waiting for payment. The remaining 15 cases are open cases in process; either pending settlement, in court, waiting for remediation to be completed, or on probation.

## **TIMBER OPERATORS LICENSING PROGRAM UPDATE**

Applications for renewal of timber operators' licenses must be received by the Department on or before December 1. The Timber Operators Licensing Program will be mailing out renewal 'reminders' before the end of October.

## **TIMBER REGULATION AND FOREST RESTORATION FUND (TRFRF)**

UPDATED FROM THE TRFRF DATABASE 1/1/2014 THROUGH 10/20/14

- **Specific TRFRF Forest Practice Effort** : The Forest Practice Program has utilized 90,533 hours in conducting forest practice activities in the following breakdown: review and processing of THPs (29.1%); conducting forest practice inspections (22.8%); participating in mandated training (15.1%); processing and managing the data related to THPs (11.9%); supervising and managing the forest practice program (11.5%); forest practice law enforcement (4.1%); responding to letters of concern (2.1%); and program/project monitoring (2.0%). Other activities comprising an insignificant portion of the time include Board of Forestry and Fire Protection related activities, ecological performance, and litigation. *(This represents TRFRF funded forest practice effort only.)*
- **Total Departmental Forest Practice Efforts**: The Forest Practice Program has utilized a total of 125,645 hours in conducting forest practice activities and non-forest practice activities in the following breakdown: review and processing of THPs (21.0%); conducting forest practice inspections (16.4%); emergency incident support (15.2%); participating in mandated training (10.9%); processing and managing the data related to THPs (8.6%); supervising and managing the forest practice program (8.3%); other duties in support of unit programs (6.8%); other forestry related activities (5.9%); forest practice law enforcement (3.0%); responding to letters of concern (1.5%); and project/program monitoring (1.5%). Other activities comprising an insignificant portion of time include Board of Forestry and Fire Protection related activities, ecological performance, and litigation. *(This represents all forest practice efforts both TRFRF and Non-TRFRF funded.)*

## **RESOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

### **STATE FORESTS**

- A new seasonal tree diameter growth study has started at Jackson Demonstration State Forest, using manual band dendrometers on redwoods in our ongoing seasonal growth study.
- On October 3, Jackson Demonstration State Forest hosted 12 international scientists on a pre-tour for the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations- Society of American Foresters Conference. The scientists were able to tour several sites on the Forest, including ongoing work with our USFS partners in the Caspar Watershed and active logging operations in the Caspar THP.
- A German film crew visited Mountain Home Demonstration State Forests to film a documentary on California's redwoods. The crew shot footage at CAL FIRE's Bear Creek Station, Mountain Home State Forest, and Visalia ECC.
- The Board of Forestry accepted the Initial Study and Negative Declaration for the Soquel State Forest General Forest Management Plan in late August and the 30-day public comment period has concluded. We hope that the Board will adopt the management plan and certify the Negative Declaration at this meeting.

## **FOREST LEGACY**

- The top three projects for federal consideration were Rainbow Ridge in Siskiyou County, Pacific Union College in Napa County, and Grizzly Creek Ranch in Humboldt County. All three are requests for federal funding to help purchase conservation easements and all are less than 1000 acres.
- **Usal Redwood Forest, 49,576 acres:** The transfer of this conservation easement to CAL FIRE is almost completed. The transfer documents (Assignment and Assumptions Agreement) have been signed and notarized. The item is on the November 14, 2014 Public Works Board agenda.
- **Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) Applications:** the application period closed October 24. We received eight applications. Evaluations and approval must be completed by November 26 if we wish to leverage with the federal program this year.

## **CALIFORNIA FOREST IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CFIP)**

- **Workshops:** Both CAL FIRE's GGRF workshops, and workshops organized by other entities focusing on reforestation, have been very well attended, especially when the venue was near a recently burned area. From the questions and comments received, we expect to have high numbers of Concept Proposals submitted for the GGRF Reforestation Services grant program submitted by the end of the calendar year.
- **Stewardship Forester:** Our new Stewardship Forester Steve Smith should be back from training in November 2014.

## **URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY**

In October, the program completed six scheduled public workshops and two webinars to inform interested applicants about the GGRF grants being offered. Attendance at the workshops was excellent, with 40-plus people at three of the meetings. The exceptions were the two San Joaquin Valley workshops where 20 people attended the Fresno and Stockton workshops. As a result, staff decided to have an additional workshop in Modesto. An additional 15 people were reached at the Modesto workshop. The first webinar had over 175 people registered. The second webinar had 106 registrants.

The program worked with our partners California Urban Forests Council and California ReLeaf to foster a webinar about tools available for Urban Forestry greenhouse gas estimation and tracking. The webinar was very successful and had over 100 registrants.

The California Urban Forestry Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday October 29. Prioritization of the strategic plan for the program is a primary agenda item.

Urban and Community Forestry GGRF concept proposals are due by November 13. The program is anticipating a very high level of interest.

## **LA MORAN REFORESTATION CENTER**

**2014 Cone Crop:** The overall cone crop is described as poor to non-existent across the state with a few exceptions. Moderate and better ponderosa pine production was reported in the Lassen-Modoc and Plumas areas but these cones were found to be non-viable; they were likely victims of a hard frost in May 2013. The notable exception was excellent sugar pine production at elevations above 4,500 feet throughout the northern and central Sierra. The Reforestation Center received over 1,525 bushels of sugar pine cone, nearly all blister rust resistant from industry cooperators. Arrangements have been made to procure a percentage of these collections for the State Seed Bank on behalf of small non-industrial landowners.

## **VEGETATION TREATMENT PROGRAM – VTP-EIR UPDATE**

CAL FIRE's Technical Team continues work on the Vegetation Treatment Program EIR, with guidance and support from the California Fire Science Consortium. Recent issues include fuel break modeling and wildland urban interface modeling. The effort is on schedule, with an expected draft to this Board in the spring.

## **FIRE PROTECTION**

### **FIRE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

#### **OPERATIONS**

Our CAL FIRE Telecomm Systems Manager organized and hosted a very successful meeting with nearly all other state agency Telecomm System Managers. This meeting was well received and identified a great deal of enthusiasm among the participants to stream line communications between agencies, identify common successes and challenges experienced in the Telecomm world, and explore options for more efficient and cost effective means of conducting Telecomm business.

#### **AVIATION MAINTENANCE**

CAL FIRE's entire Aviation Program continues to support one another and the family of S2T Tanker Pilot Craig Hunt. The NTSB is continuing with their investigation of this tragic accident and the department is fully cooperating and supporting the process. Program has also started the large task of identifying options for replacing the destroyed air tanker. There are no known S2T airframes available to build up a replacement.

#### **LE/CCR**

The new Civil Cost Recovery Case Tracking database went "live" to all CAL FIRE Region personnel on October 1, 2014. Once in-service training is completed for Region staff, all CCR case managers will have a deadline in which all open CCR cases will need to be entered and updated into the database.

- Statistics:
  - October 2014 arrests = 14
  - Fiscal Year-to-date arrests = 57
  - October 2014 citations = 43
  - Fiscal Year-to-date citations = 185
  - September 2014 CCR collections were \$39,353.71. October is not yet available.
  - FY 13/14 Final Civil Cost Recovery = \$14,993,757.25
  - FY 14/15 to date Civil Cost Recovery = \$525,829.67
  - Current statewide Open/Pending CCR cases = 363

### **Cooperative Fire, Safety and Training Program**

#### **CONSERVATION CAMP PROGRAM**

Funding to reactivate the Ventura Conservation Camp has been approved by the Department of Finance and the Legislature. CAL FIRE and Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation management staff has been put in-place at the Camp and full activation is anticipated in December 2014 – January 2015.

#### **STATE-FEDERAL PROGRAM**

Program is currently in the preliminary stages of renewing the Department's Memorandum of Understanding with the California Military Department (California National Guard). The current agreement expires on July 1, 2015. This renewal will facilitate the continued use of National Guard aircraft, fire crews, and equipment during periods of high drawdown on state responsibility area fires.