



# **THE BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

## **2015 ANNUAL REPORT**



**MEMBERS OF THE CALIFORNIA  
STATE BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

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**SUSAN HUSARI**

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**MARY RICKERT**

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**BRUCE SAITO**

**(Member Saito resigned on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015)**

**RICH WADE**

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**(Member Los Huertos was appointed November 2015)**

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**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) Mission**

*The mission of the Board is to lead California in developing policies and programs that serve the public interest in environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management of forest and rangelands and a fire protection system that protects and serves the people of the state.*

The California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) is a Governor-appointed body within the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Department). Members are appointed on the basis of their professional and educational qualification and their general knowledge or interest in problems that relate to watershed management, forest management, fish and wildlife, range improvement, forest economics, or land use policy. Of its nine members, five are chosen from the general public, three are chosen from the forest products industry, and one member is from the range-livestock industry.

The Board is responsible for developing the general forest policy of the State, determining the guidance policies of the Department and for representing the State's interest in Federal land located within California. Together, the Board and the Department work to carry out the California Legislature's mandate to protect and enhance the State's unique forest and wildland resources.

**Committees of the Board****COMMITTEES REQUIRED BY STATUTE**

1. Range Management Advisory Committee
2. Professional Foresters Examining Committee
3. Soquel Advisory Committee

**INTERNAL STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Forest Practice: The mission of the Forest Practice Committee is to evaluate and promote an effective regulatory system to assure the continuous growing and harvesting of commercial forests and to protect soil, air, fish, and wildland and water resources.
2. Resource Protection: The mission of the Resource Protection Committee is to evaluate and promote an effective fire protection system implemented by the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and improve forest and rangeland health in California.
3. Management: The mission of the Management Committee is to evaluate and promote long-term, landscape level planning approaches to support natural resource management on California's non-federal forest and rangelands, and to

evaluate State Forest management plans.

### **EXTERNAL STANDING COMMITTEES**

1. Effectiveness Monitoring Committee
2. Monitoring Study Group
3. Forest Pest Council and the California Oak Mortality Task Force
4. Forestry Climate Action Team
5. Jackson Advisory Group

### **Current Status and Trends**

#### **Forests and Woodlands**

Monitoring of Best Management Practices (Forest Practice Rules) on private and public forestlands shows generally high compliance with implementation and effectiveness when implemented properly.

Both private and public forestlands appear to continue to build inventory volume.

A recent [Forest Inventory Analysis](#) indicates that while its lands are sequestering carbon at a positive rate, long-term carbon storage will be a function of management inputs over the next 100 years.

A carbon sequestration and storage analysis of California's private timberlands suggests there may be opportunities to increase sequestration on non-corporate private timberlands in the long-run as compared to current trends, particularly when harvested wood products are also considered.

#### **Forest Products Sector**

The softwood sawmill capacity in California has continued to constrict in the last few years, which is indicative of the overall contraction of this sector in jobs, capacity, and overall economic activity. In 2015, California experienced a fluctuating export market, with logs being shipped via container to China. This is seemingly a very volatile market with demand ebbing and flowing dramatically from one year to another and even month to month.

Ownership patterns have changed for large industrial forest landowners within California. All industrial ownerships are now privately held firms. Individual Timber Harvesting Plans (THPs) have increased in acreage (before 2009 their size was fairly steady). Acres under Non-Industrial Timber Management Plans (NTMPs) continue to rise, although at a slower rate than years past. There are over 700 NTMPs covering over 300,000 acres. There is anticipation from ranchers and owners of mid-sized parcels for the possible implementation of the new Working Forest Management Plan regulations in 2017.

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**NTMP and THP Statistics for Fiscal Years 11/12 – 14/15**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Harvest Document Type</b>	<b>Number of Plans</b>	<b>Acres</b>
2011-12	THP	270	139,553
2012-13	THP	243	107,051
2013-14	THP	278	146,384
2014-15	THP	260	128,644
2011-12	NTMP	14	10,932
2012-13	NTMP	12	7,365
2013-14	NTMP	10	4,126
2014-15	NTMP	12	3,367

### ***Rangelands and Range Industry***

Like the timber industry, the ranching industry has been in steady long-term contraction. The maintenance of large ranches across California landscapes cannot rely on amenity values alone; these operations must be economically viable to avoid conversion, abandonment, or fragmentation.

Conversion of working rangelands is increasing due to pressure from high management costs, low returns, infrastructure loss and generational turnover. Permanent land cover change occurs most often in grassland/scrubland types, most dramatically in grazing lands along the edges of the Central Valley. The rate of conversion is occurring at approximately 47,000 acres annually<sup>1</sup>.

To address these issues, the Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) was reconstituted and outlined priority concerns for years 2014-2016.

### ***Notable Wildfires***

The 2015 California Wildfire season resulted in extensive fire activity throughout the state, causing environmental damage and continued infringement upon the wildland-urban interface. A total of 283,941 acres burned within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), which falls under CAL FIRE's jurisdiction. Two notable individual wildfires, the Valley and Butte Fires, are ranked as the #3 and #7 worst wildfires, respectively, in terms of structures destroyed in the state's recorded history. During the 2015 season, two firefighter fatalities were confirmed with several other firefighters being injured, along with numerous civilian injuries and deaths. The 2015 fire season also led to a state of emergency being declared for the State of California in general, and the counties of Amador, Calaveras, Lake and Napa. The following commentary provides brief descriptions of some of the most destructive 2015 wildfires in California.

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<sup>1</sup> California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, Forest and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP). (2010). *California's Forests and Rangelands: 2010 Assessment*. Retrieved from [http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/data/assessment2010/pdfs/california\\_forest\\_assessment\\_nov22.pdf](http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/data/assessment2010/pdfs/california_forest_assessment_nov22.pdf) .

## **ROUND FIRE**

The Round Fire began on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on the west side of Highway 395 at the Sherwin Grade. The fire's boundaries were within CAL FIRE'S San Bernardino Unit (BDU) and burned throughout Inyo and Mono Counties. Severe and variable winds during the entirety of the fire made it impossible for fire suppression agencies to utilize fixed or rotary aircraft resources. The fire was controlled on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, having burned over 7,000 acres. The Round Fire destroyed 40 residences and outbuildings and damaged 5 structures. Four firefighters were injured during the fire suppression activities. The cause of origin for the Round Fire is still currently under investigation.

## **VALLEY FIRE**

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015 the Valley Fire ignited within southern Lake County. The fire eventually encompassed the reaches of Lake, Napa, and Sonoma counties within Cal Fire's Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU). In one day the fire grew rapidly to over 50,000 acres with 0% containment. The blaze was officially deemed controlled on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 after burning 76,067 acres. Additionally, the Valley Fire scorched greater than 90% of Bogs Mountain Demonstration State Forest, a research forest administered by CAL FIRE, located outside of Middletown, CA. A total of 1,955 structures were destroyed that included 1,281 homes, 27 multi-family dwellings, 66 commercial properties and 581 minor structures. Due to the relatively high severity of the event combined with steep topography, the [California Office of Emergency Services \(Cal OES\) Post-Fire Watershed Emergency Response Team](#) identified a sizeable portion of the burn area to be capable of generating large amounts of surface erosion. The Valley Fire was also responsible for 4 significant firefighter burn injuries and 4 civilian fatalities. The Valley Fire is still currently under investigation, and caused over \$1.5 billion in damages.

## **BUTTE FIRE**

The Butte Fire began on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 just east of Jackson, California. The fire burned throughout Amador and Calaveras counties, and fell within CAL FIRE's Amador-El Dorado Unit (AEU). On Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the fire was deemed extinguished after burning 70,868 acres. 921 structures were destroyed including 549 homes, 368 outbuildings and 4 commercial buildings. The fire was also responsible for 2 civilian fatalities and 1 civilian injury, and triggered a State of Emergency to be declared for both Calaveras and Amador counties by the Administration. The relatively high severity of the Butte Fire led to the activation of the Post-Fire Emergency Watershed Response Team by the Cal OES. The team was led by CAL FIRE Resource Managers, and was directed to assess the post-fire hazards that may result post fire. The cause Butte Fire is still currently under investigation, and has been estimated to have cause over \$450 million dollars' worth of damage.

## **ROCKY FIRE**

From July 29<sup>th</sup> to August 14<sup>th</sup> the Rocky Fire burned throughout Lake, Yolo, and Colusa counties and was ignited just east of Clear Lake adjacent to Rocky Creek Road. The fire was within the boundaries of CAL FIRE'S LNU. The incident was officially suppressed on August 14<sup>th</sup> after burning 69,636 acres, with many resources staying on the scene to ensure a complete mop up of any hot ash pockets. A total of 96 structures were completely destroyed, including 43 dwellings and 53 outbuildings. The cause of the fire is

still currently under investigation.

### **ROUGH FIRE**

The Rough Fire, was ignited via lightning strikes on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 in Fresno County, 5 miles north of Hume Lake. The fire burned throughout Sierra National Forest, Sequoia National Forest, and Kings Canyon National Park.. Although the entire area burned by the incident was under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, CAL FIRE made its resources and command leadership available to the USFS, as it had an estimated 6 acres of land within the fire's boundary that fell under the State Responsibility Area (SRA). The incident lasted over 2 months, ending on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 after burning 151,623 acres. Furthermore, it was additionally reported that there was a known total of 12 firefighter injuries and 4 structures destroyed. Following the incident, the USFS established a BAER (Burned Area Emergency Response team) to evaluate the effects of the wildfire. The BAER team found over 34,000 acres susceptible to severe soil erosion, and 66,031 acres susceptible to moderate soil erosion. The Mill Flat Creek and Converse Creek watersheds located within the burned area experienced a 72% and 61% respective increase in post-fire soil sedimentation levels compared to pre-fire levels.

### **FROG FIRE**

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 conditions including storm cells, low fuel moistures and high temperatures led to a fire incident that became known as the Frog Fire. This was not a CAL FIRE managed incident. The fire initially started just southwest of the Lava Campground within the USFS's Modoc National Forest, approximately 25 miles northwest of Bieber, CA. The Frog Fire burned extremely fast taking advantage of the favorable conditions, eventually consuming over 4,863 acres of the national forest. The highly volatile vegetative fuel sources and warm conditions led to a very dangerous incident, which claimed the life of a USFS Fire Engine Captain. The Frog Fire was declared extinguished on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Lightning strikes from overhead storm cells have been declared the cause of origin.

### **WRAGG FIRE**

Within the afternoon of July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, a car accident was suspected to have ignited a brush fire that would become known as the Wragg Fire. The fire started off Highway 128 near Wragg Canyon Road within close distance of Lake Berryessa. The fire burned throughout both Napa and Solano Counties, within the administrative boundary of CAL FIRE'S Sonoma Lake Napa Unit. The incident was declared contained on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, burning a total of 8,051 acres. The origin of the fire is still currently under investigation, although it has been determined to be human caused and was initially believed to be sparked by a vehicular accident.

### **JERUSALEM FIRE**

In the early morning of August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a fire was ignited in the Jerusalem Valley area of Lake County, northeast of Middletown, CA. The Jerusalem Fire burned throughout Lake and Napa Counties within the administrative area of CAL FIRE's Sonoma Lake Napa Unit (LNU). The wildfire burned approximately 25,118 acres and destroyed 6 residences and 21 outbuildings, and was declared extinguished on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The cause of the

Jerusalem Fire is currently under investigation.

### **TASSAJARA FIRE**

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a wildfire which would become to be known as the Tassajara Fire began in Monterey County, at the intersection of Tassajara and Cachagua Roads near the community of Jamesburg. The fire's boundary was within Monterey County and was under the administrative area of CAL FIRE's San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU). The wildfire was declared controlled on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and burned a total of 1,100 acres. The incident resulted in 1 civilian fatality. CAL FIRE Investigators and Monterey County Sheriff's Office Investigators have determined that the fire was human caused but the circumstances in which it started in still undetermined.



## CAL FIRE DIRECT PROTECTION INCIDENTS

January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015

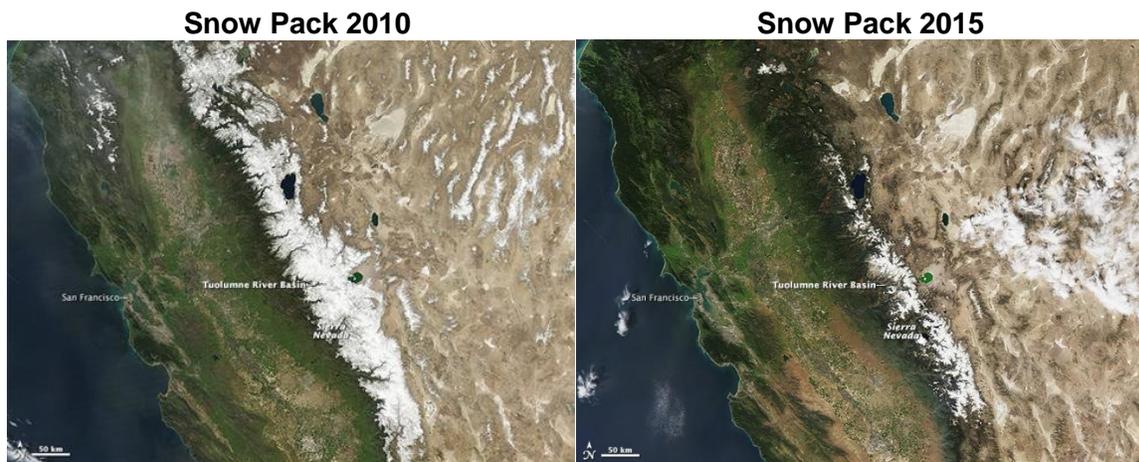
\*(ALL WILDLAND FIRE INCIDENTS OVER 300 ACRES)\*

DATE	UNIT	CAUSE	HUMAN CAUSED?	FIRE NAME	TOTAL ACRES BURNED	SRA ACRES BURNED
02/06/2015	BDU	Undet.	N/A	ROUND	7,000	3,425
04/18/2015	RRU	Equip.Use	Yes	HIGHWAY	1,049	1,049
05/11/2015	MMU	Vehicle	N/A	FOREBAY	692	692
06/18/2015	MMU	Electrical	No	CORRINE	920	376
06/20/2015	SLU	Vehicle	Yes	PARKHILL	1,791	1,791
07/02/2015	AEU	Arson	N/A	IONE	357	357
07/04/2015	SKU	Ltng.	No	YORK 2-3	395	395
07/18/2015	MMU	Ltng.	N/A	MCCABE	1,600	1,600
07/21/2015	TUU	Ltng.	No	TRIPLE 3	430	430
07/22/2015	LNU	Undet.	Yes	WRAGG	8,051	8,051
07/25/2015	NEU	Undet.	N/A	LOWELL	2,304	2,304
07/29/2015	LNU	Equip.Use	Yes	ROCKY	69,636	69,636
07/29/2015	BTU	Debris Burning	Yes	SWEDES	400	400
07/31/2015	SHU	Ltng.	N/A	BARKER	3,261	3,261
07/31/2015	MMU	Vehicle	Yes	CREEK	1,450	1,450
08/01/2015	HUU	Ltng.	N/A	1-44 PINE	1,774	1,774
08/01/2015	HUU	Ltng.	No	1-51	304	304
08/01/2015	HUU	Ltng.	No	1-57 DOBBYN	788	788
08/09/2015	LNU	Undet.	N/A	JERUSALEM	25,118	25,118
08/16/2015	SLU	Vehicle	N/A	CUESTA	2,446	2,400
08/19/2015	SCU	Undet.	N/A	TESLA	2,850	2,850
09/02/2015	LNU	Equip.Use	N/A	ELK	700	100
09/09/2015	AEU	Undet.	N/A	BUTTE	70,868	58,808
09/11/2015	BTU	Arson	Yes	LUMPKIN 2	1,040	0
09/12/2015	LNU	Undet.	N/A	VALLEY	76,067	76,067
09/19/2015	BEU	Undet.	Yes	TASSAJARA	1,100	1,100
10/03/2015	BTU	Equip.Use	N/A	MERIDIAN	860	860
10/12/2015	BEU	Electrical	No	CIENEGA	690	690
<b>TOTAL=</b>	-	-	-	-	<b>283,941</b>	<b>266,076</b>

## Drought

On January 17, 2015 California State Governor Jerry Brown declared a State of Emergency for the severe drought conditions. On April 1, 2015, the California Department of Water Resources measured the statewide water content of Sierra snowpack at five percent of average for April 1<sup>st</sup>. These levels are lower than any year in recorded history, going back to 1950. The April 1<sup>st</sup> snowpack measurement is crucial due to snowpacks normally being at their peak. This generally predicts how much water will eventually reach California's streams and reservoirs. Snowpack, through runoff, provides about one-third of the water used by California's cities and farms.

California's 2015 Water Year, which ended September 30, 2015, was the third driest in 119 years of records. It also was the warmest year on record. Dry, hot and windy weather, combined with dry vegetation and potential ignition sources— through either human intent, accident or lightning - can start a wildfire. Additionally, drier than normal conditions have the ability to increase the intensity and severity of wildfires. In the aftermath of wildfires such as the 2013 Rim Fire, or the 2015 Butte and Valley Fires, ash, woody debris and sediment can flow downstream from burn areas and contaminate water supplies. Flash flooding and mudslides in burn areas can also be damaging and deadly.



## Pest Conditions

The following is a 2015 summary from the California Forest Pest Council (CFPC) regarding invasive species that continue to threaten and alter impacted urban and wildland forests in California if left unchecked.

***Phytophthora ramorum*/Sudden Oak Death** (SOD; invasive plant pathogen) continued to be the primary cause of tree mortality in coastal California from Monterey to Humboldt Counties, with USDA Forest Service aerial surveys estimating over 125,630 dead trees across 28,834 impacted acres (down from 2013 levels due to the drought). In March 2015, the pathogen was found for the first time in Trinity County, bringing the number of infested California counties to 15. The disease continued to spread and intensify in Humboldt County, with several new infestations found in parts of the northern coastal region. In July and September, *P. ramorum* was confirmed at two sites along Redwood Creek in

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Redwood National Park. The pathogen continues to spread in Bay Area urban areas, with unexpectedly high levels of *P. ramorum* found in north Berkeley (Alameda County), and adjacent Tilden Regional Park (Contra Costa County). High levels of *P. ramorum* were also observed in the region between Novato (Marin County), Petaluma, and Sonoma (Sonoma County).

The **goldspotted oak borer (GSOB- *Agrilus auroguttatus*)** was found for the first time in Orange County in December 2015 at one isolated location in Weir Canyon infesting 62 coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) trees. This invasive beetle spread locally within areas already infested in San Diego and Riverside Counties, with approximately 3,700 dead oaks identified in eastern San Diego County alone during aerial surveys. The Board unanimously approved the expansion of the GSOB Zone of Infestation in December to include new areas in San Diego County (Palomar and Ranchita) and Riverside County (Pine Cove and Idyllwild).

The **polyphagus shot hole borer/*Fusarium dieback* (PSHB/FD) (*Fusarium euwallacea*)** complex was found in new areas of Southern California, including avocado production groves in San Diego County. The infestation is now found in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego Counties and includes one tribal reservation as well as a few canyons on the Angeles National Forest. Surveys to date suggest the PSHB/FD has killed box elder (27% mortality), castor bean (22%), red willow (16%), Fremont cottonwood (9%), Goodding's black willow (8%), California sycamore (5%), and white alder (2%) and has been found attacking many other hardwood species.

## **Accomplishments 2015- Regulatory**

### **SRA Fire Prevention Fee (Self Certification for Home Loss) (Regular Rulemaking)**

Since the SRA Fire Prevention Fee was enacted, owners of habitable structures that have been destroyed by natural disaster have had no way to request an exemption from the Fire Prevention Fee. In response to the public's concerns, the legislature passed AB 2048 which offered a remedy to this problem and which was the basis, initially, for emergency rulemaking, then, emergency re-adoption, and finally regular rulemaking.

This SRA Fire Prevention Fee Exemption is to provide owners of habitable structures the ability to request an exemption from the Fire Prevention Fee if their habitable structure was destroyed by natural disaster following July 1, 2015. To be eligible for the SRA Fire Prevention Fee Exemption, the owner of the habitable structure must certify that the structure is no longer habitable as a result of a natural disaster, and either documents that the habitable structure passed a defensible space inspection conducted by the Department or by one of its agents within one year prior to the date the structure was damaged or destroyed or certify that clearance, as required under PRC § 4291 and 14 CCR § 1299.03, were in place at the time that the structure was damaged as a result of a natural disaster.

***SRA Fire Safe Regulations  
(Regular Rulemaking)***

The Board revised 14 CCR §1270 et seq., known as the SRA Fire Safe Regulations. These regulations implement and make specific provisions of PRC § 4290, which requires the Board to promulgate regulations that create minimum wildfire protection standards for development in the SRA. These regulations were updated to accommodate modern fire engine dimensions, clarify existing language, and align with similar standards found in the California Fire Code, to reduce confusion by the regulated public. The new standards will become effective on January 1, 2016.

***Protection of Habitable Structures Exemption (AB 1867)  
(Emergency and Regular Rulemaking)***

Due to the increasing severity and frequency of catastrophic wildfires throughout California's landscapes, it was the intent of the legislature to authorize the Board to allow exemptions from the Forest Practice Rules and Regulations of the Z'Berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (FPA), for landowners that wished to reduce their risk from wildfire via the removal and/or cutting of trees of up to 300 feet from homes and/or property structures. By removing and/or cutting of trees of up to 300 feet from a home, the landowner reduces the vertical continuity of vegetative fuels and horizontal continuity of tree crowns that culminates in a marked reduction of fire threat, spread and severity. This exemption allows landowners to undertake the aforementioned steps without having to abide by all applicable Z'Berg-Nejedly FPA and Board of Forestry & Fire Protection rules and regulations. This assembly bill was introduced and approved by the legislature as an emergency (14 CCR § 1052.1) rulemaking document on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, and under rule alignment efforts of 2015 received a permanent certificate of compliance on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, taking effect as California law on January 1, 2016.

***2015 Water Drafting Amendments  
(Emergency Rulemaking)***

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection adopted emergency regulations known as the Water Drafting Amendments of 2015. Water drafting, as it is described in the emergency regulation, is the removal of water from a streambed or watercourse to be used on timber operations for dust abatement, controlling sediment from entering watercourses, and maintaining landing/road surface stability. Water drafting from natural occurring watercourses are commonly used in commercial timber harvest activities occurring in remote regions of the state, due to water storage tanks or man-made water reservoirs not being economically feasible or logistically possible. Previously, noticing of water drafting and discussion of its need and potential adverse effects were required in all commercial timber harvest activities located within Anadromous Species Protection (ASP) watersheds. Those occurring in non-ASP watersheds did not require parties involved with the timber harvest to specifically address water drafting, although Licensed Timber Operators (LTO's) were required to not remove water from watercourses in amounts deleterious to fish, wildlife, beneficial function of riparian zones, or the quality and beneficial uses of water. This emergency regulation will now make all commercial timber harvest activities adhere to these regulatory standards, regardless if anadromous species are present or not, will ensure compliance with Section 1600 of the Fish & Game Code, and also establish multiple benefits including: keeping water drafting from exacerbating drought condition,

increased conservation of water resources in California's timberlands, safeguarding adequate supplies of domestic water sources for rural communities, ensuring adequate reserve of water supply for wildfire incident suppression, and guaranteeing recreational water resources for California's citizens. This emergency regulation expired on March 3, 2016 and is no longer valid.

### **2015 Drought Mortality Amendments (Emergency and Regular Rulemaking)**

As the State of California continues to experience extreme drought conditions, timberlands across the state have appreciably deteriorated. The scarcity of rainfall has led to the mortality of numerous individual trees to either die from a basic lack of water essential to their complex physiological processes, or that the trees are so compromised in vegetative health that they are unable to employ their inherent defensive mechanisms to thwart attacks from insects (i.e. bark beetles), fungi and pathogens. The culmination of this ongoing water deficiency has resulted in large swaths of forestland to be riddled with dead and dying trees. To alleviate this issue, the 2015 Drought Mortality Amendments were submitted on July 01, 2015, and adopted on July 13, 2015 to streamline the process for removal of dead and dying trees, and in response to an Emergency Proclamation from the Administration. This emergency regulation serves to establish three main goals. The goal is to lessen the threat of falling trees causing damage to human life and property. Secondly, removal of dead and dying trees diminishes the threat of hazardous fuel conditions, and decreases the likelihood of threats of fire upon properties with habitable structures. Finally,

this exemption provides for a decrease in competition for limited water resources between individual trees, allowing post-harvest trees to grow more vigorously. This allows the tree to more efficiently deploy defensive mechanisms against insects (i.e. bark beetles), detrimental fungi and pathogens. Cumulatively, treatments under this exemption will produce healthier and appropriately stocked forests. Introduced as an emergency regulation in 2015, it will be made a permanent regulation upon permanent amendment of 14 CCR § 1052.1 which will add drought as a condition that constitutes an emergency, as well as regulations applicable to the harvesting of dead and dying trees in response to drought related stress. In 2015 there were 194 Drought Mortality Exemptions submitted in 2015. 147 of those were less than 20 acres in size, while 47 were 20 acres or greater in size. The median size of project is reported at 6 acres for 2015.

## **Accomplishments 2015- Policy**

### **Vegetation Treatment Program**

The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is completing a Statewide Programmatic Environmental Impact Report titled "California Statewide Vegetation Treatment Program," known as a VTP EIR. The document will provide California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance for CAL FIRE and other public agencies' vegetation management projects. This VTP EIR is intended for vegetation management projects that lower the risk of catastrophic wildfires on nonfederal lands by managing vegetation to modify/reduce hazardous fuels.

Numerous comments were received on the last draft of the VTP EIR that was authorized for public comment. The scale and complexity of the public response prompted the Board

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to commission an independent group of scientists to review the draft. Their report, received in 2014, was used by a new agency team to begin an update of the plan. The new draft was presented to the Board at their August 2015 meeting; and the Board hosted a series of workshops at their September, October, December 2015 and January 2016 meetings to receive public comment and discuss the preliminary draft document. A Revised Notice of Preparation was also distributed in 2015. A draft incorporating revisions from these workshops will be presented to the Board in March 2016 and it is expected to be released for public comment under CEQA shortly thereafter.

### **Local Government**

Board staff created a new webpage to provide guidance to local governments who are required to send their General Plan Safety Element to the Board for review and to provide information about the PRC §4290 certification process.

The Board reviewed the following General Plan Safety Elements for the following municipalities in 2015:

- Calaveras County
- Mono County
- Stanislaus County
- City of Orange
- City of Yucaipa

The following counties applied for 4290 Certification in 2015:

- Humboldt
  - Status: Certified
- Orange
  - Status: In staff review
- Santa Barbara
  - Status: In staff review
- San Bernardino
  - Status: Certification rejected, returned to county
- San Diego
  - Status: Certification rejected, returned to county

### **Range Management**

The Range Management Advisory Committee produced a white paper entitled “Prescribed Herbivory for Vegetation Treatment Projects,” approved by the Board at their May 2015 meeting. This paper was created to raise awareness of the use of prescribed herbivory as a vegetation management tool in the CAL FIRE Vegetation Management Program and amongst others contemplating fuel reduction projects in the SRA. RMAC stayed engaged with a variety of issues affecting the rangeland environment in California, including water quality, public lands grazing, rangeland health indicators, and drought impacts.

### **Climate**

The Board is part of the Forest Climate Action Team (FCAT). FCAT is currently drafting a multi-agency document known as the Forest Carbon Plan developed to set near-term and long-term planning targets to ensure increased net forest carbon storage. This team is an

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intergovernmental working group, that will focus on forest inventory (critical to tracking whether forests are a carbon sink or emission source at any point in time), co-benefits from forest management, and state state/federal public land issues and policy. The Forest Carbon Action Team formation was specifically directed by the recent California AB 32 Scoping Plan Update. The Forest Carbon Plan has completed target date of December 2016.

The Board has also initiated the development of an analysis work plan in response to AB 1504, the “Carbon Sink Act” (Skinner 2010). This act amended the California Forest Practice Act to take into account the capacity of forests to sequester carbon dioxide, and meet the forestry sector greenhouse gas emission reduction goals mandated by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32). Under this legislation, the Board is to assess the capacity of its regulations and forestry programs to meet or exceed the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals, specifically by determining:

- Whether regulations for timber harvesting are sufficient to ensure a net reduction or sequestration of carbon emissions from primary forest carbon sources, sinks, or reservoirs;
- Whether regulations governing conversion of timberland and forestland to non-timber and non-forest uses are sufficient to offset lost sequestration capacity and carbon emissions associated with the non-timber use; and
- Whether forest growth, harvest, and conversion information obtained is sufficient and reliable to track changes in carbon stocks, including net emissions and reductions, across the State's forested landscape.

## ***State Forests***

### ***Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest (BMDSF)***

The Board was responsible for updating the Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest Management Plan in 2015. The 2015 fire season took its toll on BMDSF. The Valley Fire, noted as the state's third worst fire in recorded history, significantly impacted the state forest and surrounding communities. Over 90% of BMDSF was burned. As such, the Board and Department staff understands that the current Management Plan for BMDSF will require an entire re-drafting versus an update due to the changed conditions that resulted from that Valley Fire, harvesting of dead trees, implementation of various post fire trend monitoring projects, artificial regeneration of forested stands, road upgrading and redesigning and/or re-establishment of trail systems that support recreational activities. Thus, the Board has provided additional time for BMDSF staff to work on a full redrafting of the Initial Study and Management Plan, with a scheduled review during late summer to fall of 2016.

### ***Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF)***

The Board is responsible for the updating the JDSF Management Plan in 2016. Several new components of the Management Plan are currently being worked upon, or have been completed, by the Jackson Advisory Council and staff of JDSF. A newly updated “Option A” with projected the growth and yield estimates for JDSF was recently completed. Additionally, the Research Plan approved by the Board in 2013, will be added as a new appendix to the Management Plan. Currently, the Recreation Plan is in draft format and is

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proposed, upon completion, to also be appended to the Management Plan. The Board will work on a revision to the JDSF Management Plan in 2016, which will include a full review and incorporation of all supporting documents.

## **Stewardship Lands**

The Stewardship Council Board has recommended lands for CAL FIRE at the North Fork Mokelumne River, Pit River, Battle Creek, and Cow Creek planning units. The Stewardship Council Board is expected to make an additional recommendation for lands to CAL FIRE at Lake Spaulding in the second quarter of 2016, work on this transaction would begin in early 2017. This would complete the anticipated fee title recommendations for CAL FIRE.

The North Fork Mokelumne River final Land Conservation and Conveyance Plan (conservation easement and agreements known also as LCCP) was approved by the Stewardship Council Board in November 2014. The Department of General Services is currently LCCP and associated documents. It is anticipated that final documents will be brought back to the Management Committee for discussion in 2016. Work on the Efforts draft conservation easement and documents for the Cow Creek project resumed in January 2016. The Battle Creek and Pit River draft conservation easement and agreements will be developed starting in the second quarter of 2016 and may be available for review in late 2016 or early 2017. Conservation easement holders for each of the properties have been recommended by the Stewardship Council Board and include: Shasta Land Trust (Cow Creek, Pit River), Western Shasta RCD (Battle Creek), and Mother Lode Land Trust (North Fork Mokelumne River).

## **Effectiveness Monitoring**

The Effectiveness Monitoring Committee (EMC) acts as a technical advisory committee to the Board to develop and implement an effectiveness monitoring program that can provide an active feedback loop to policymakers, managers, agencies, and the public. The EMC will provide input to the Board to ensure a scientifically defensible monitoring effort is used to credibly evaluate the effectiveness of the California Forest Practice Rules and other forestry-associated laws and regulations related to water quality, aquatic habitat, and wildlife habitats. The EMC spent the greatest proportion of the first meetings of 2015 focusing on the development of a draft Strategic Plan for consideration by the Board. This plan, which will serve as a dynamic document over time, serves the roll as a guidance document for future EMC efforts. The initial draft of the EMC Strategic Plan was approved by the Board on October 1, 2015 as is currently available [online](#). The Strategic Plan will be brought before the Board annually for consideration and re-adoption. Amongst other topics, the EMC Strategic Plan in its current form contains:

- Discussion of history and trajectory of the EMC;
- Discussion of an Adaptive Management Framework;
- Appropriate scientific methods and reporting;
- An outline of committee and staff makeup;
- Discussion of organization framework of the AB 1492 process;
- Summary of proposed effectiveness monitoring projects.

To facilitate communication between EMC members, staff, and facilitate public participation, an [EMC web page](#) was created within the Board's web site. All EMC notices,

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agendas and documents are posted on this web page and it will serve as a point of contact for all committee information. The EMC spent significant time during 2015 in discussion about how to design the website to provide the most transparent process for public, committee and staff participation in this collaborative process.

In 2016 the EMC strives to rank and implement projects to work towards testing the effectiveness of the Forest Practice Rules and other regulations pertaining to forest management.

## **AB 1492**

The Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund (TRFRF) Program is a component of Assembly Bill 1492. The major elements of the TRFRF Program is to provide a funding stream via a one-percent assessment on lumber and engineered wood products sold at the retail level, seek transparency and efficiency improvements to the State's timber harvest regulation programs, provide for development of ecological performance measures, establish a forest restoration grant program, and require program reporting to the Legislature. The following are targets of the four AB 1492 Working Groups that the Forest Practice Committee will be tracking on behalf of the Board:

- Working Group Charters Completed (June 2015)
- Working Group Draft Work Plans Completed (September 2015)
- Background paper on approaches to ecological performance measures completed (Mid2016)
- Public Scoping Workshop on Ecological Performance Measures (Mid 2016)
- Public Workshop on First Draft of Ecological Performance Measures (Early 2017)
- Public Workshop on Second Draft of Ecological Performance Measures and Proposed Implementation Plan and Adaptive Management Approach (Fall 2017)
- Completed Ecological Performance Measures, Implementation Plan, and Adaptive Management Approach (Early 2018)
- Complete planning watershed pilot project (end of 2017 or (preferably) earlier)

## **Professional Licensing and Enforcement**

### **Licensing**

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code (PRC) §750 *et seq*, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection is authorized to grant licenses to Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) and specialty certificates (Certified Rangeland Managers (CRMs)). Earning either license is contingent upon meeting the educational, work experience and moral standards, and passing an examination specific to each respective field.

The term "Professional Forester" is defined in within PRC § 752, and refers to a person who, by reason of his or her knowledge of the natural sciences, mathematics, and the principles of forestry, acquired by forestry education and experience, performs services, including, but not limited to, consultation, investigation, evaluation, planning, or responsible

supervision of forestry activities when those professional services require the application of forestry principles and techniques. The CRM certification is the only “Certified Specialist” (pursuant to 14 CCR §1600) credential bestowed and recognized by the Board. A CRM is defined in 14 CCR §1651 as “... a person who provides services pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) 1602, at the request of the landowner or hiring agent, relating to the application of scientific principles to the art and science of managing rangelands and range.

<b>Valid Registered Professional Foresters (RPF) and Certified Rangeland Managers (CRM) as of 12/31/2015</b>	
RPFs	1200
CRMs	81

### ***Enforcement***

California Public Resources Code §4601 *et seq.* authorizes the Board to investigate and discipline, “Any person who willfully violates any provision of this chapter or rule or regulation of the Board...” These civil penalties are identified, investigated and pursued by CAL FIRE, with final adjudicative authority on these matters residing with the Board. During the 2015 calendar year, the Board deliberated and took action upon two civil penalties for non-compliance with the Forest Practice Act and/or the Forest Practice Rules.

### ***State Responsibility Area Fee***

#### ***State Responsibility Area Five Year Review***

Every 5 years the Board shall: “... Classify all lands within the state, without regard to any classification of lands made by or for any federal agency or purpose, for the purpose of determining areas in which the financial responsibility of preventing and suppressing fires is primarily the responsibility of the state. The prevention and suppression of fires in all areas that are not so classified is primarily the responsibility of local or federal agencies, as the case may be (PRC §4125).” The Board approved the recommended changes to the State Responsibility Area, effective July 1, 2015.

#### ***SRA Fire Prevention Fund Grant***

The Board approved a grant program to distribute SRA Fire Prevention Fund (SRAFPPF) grant monies, when such funds are appropriated by the Legislature, as required by PRC §4214. Rulemaking efforts will take place in 2016.

### ***Fee Adjustment***

The Board is required to consider adjusting the SRA Fire Prevention Fee each and every year by statute and regulation. Prior to 2015, the Board had no choice in the matter and the fee adjustment was automatic and implemented by Board staff via the Section 100 rule revision process. Recent revision to the PRC § 4212 through Assembly Bill 2048, signed into law on September 30, 2014, now provides the Board the authority to select if the fee is to be adjusted in a given year. The amount in which the fee is to be adjusted is pre-

determined and not subject to revision, but if the fee is to be adjusted by this pre-determined amount is subject to determination by the Board. Below is a description of the action and analysis.

The Board, with input from the Department, reviewed the necessity for an increase to the fee structure and it was determined that no increase to the fee would be necessary in 2015.

PRC § 4214(f) requires the Board to submit to the legislature a written report on the status and uses of the State Responsibility Area Fee Fund (SRA FPF) monies. This report is required by January 1, 2015, and annually thereafter. For the purposes of efficiency, the SRA expenditures report was contained in the 2014 version of this annual report.

SRA fees have been collected since the 2011/2012 fiscal year. While the Board is responsible for reporting expenditures to the Legislature, the SRA Fire Prevention Fee is collected and allocated by the Department. As such, the Board relies on the Department to gather and produce the data necessary for inclusion the fee report. The Department is currently working upon assembling and synthesizing data in regards to fee collection and expenditures. The Board will present these data in the form of either an appendix or amendment to this 2015 Annual Report once the Department provides the data to the Board for review.