

Conference Committee Bullets
8/14/18

Overview

- Preventing wildfires in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) is a vital part of CAL FIRE's mission. While these efforts have occurred since the early days of the Department, CAL FIRE has succeeded in significantly increasing its efforts in fire prevention in recent years.
- The Department's resource management and fire prevention programs combine to provide a multi-pronged approach that includes forest and vegetation treatments, wildland pre-fire engineering, land use planning, education and law enforcement. All activities are aimed at reducing the number of fire starts, creating more fire resistant and defensible communities and reducing the overall intensity of wildfire.
- Typical projects include forest thinning, vegetation clearance, prescribed fire, defensible space inspections, emergency evacuation planning, fire prevention education, fire hazard severity mapping, and fire-related law enforcement including fire cause investigation and civil cost recovery for negligently started fires.
- CAL FIRE has conducted **over 1 million** defensible space inspections since 2011.
- In the last 5 years, CA has treated approximately **250,000 acres** annually of State and private wild lands through forest management activities such as: timber harvest thinning, prescribed fire, and other vegetation management activities.
 - **72,000 acres** mechanical fuel reduction
 - **39,000 acres** prescribed fire.
- Prescribed Fire MOU
- A Memorandum of Understanding between CPUC and CAL FIRE was signed in August of 2017 which supports providing the CPUC with technical assistance in the development of the Wildfire Mitigation Plans as part of SB1028. The two departments are meeting weekly in this effort.
- CAL FIRE continues to lead a multiagency update of the Power Line Fire Prevention Field Guide. The guide acts as a guidance document for statutes and regulations related to utility required vegetation management.

Fire Prevention/Forest Health Grant Awards

- Since 2015, CAL FIRE has **approved** 497 grants totaling nearly **\$242 million** in fire prevention, forest health, and tree mortality grants to stakeholders across CA aimed at restoring health and fire resilience across the State.

- Forest Health program grants emphasize projects that are:
 - Landscape scale
 - Multiple benefits (carbon, fire resilience, water, pest resistance, wildlife habitat)
 - Community benefits - low income and disadvantaged
 - Project readiness
 - Permanence

- Fire Prevention Program grants
 - Protection of habitable structures
 - Number of people benefited
 - Wildfire reduction benefits
 - Community Support

- Examples
 - Craggy Vegetation Project SKU – 11,000 acres fuel reduction and thinning through Good Neighbor Authority. State/Federal partnership.
 - MySierra Woods – American Forest Foundation – non industrial private landowner outreach in 9 NorCal counties – anticipate 720 projects across 42,000 acres. Using wood products markets to offset costs.

- As stated by Secretary Laird, CAL FIRE was allocated **\$165 million in the 2018/19 budget**, which included funding for fire prevention and healthy forests.

What's Next

- We need to do more:
 - Increase the pace and scale of fuels treatments, doubling acres treated
 - Increase the use of Good Neighbor Authority (5 currently)
 - Reduce barriers to entry for forest health and fuels reduction projects

- We are ramping up our own Vegetation Management Program, where CAL FIRE has lead responsibility for projects, to include six new prescribed fire/fuels treatment crews.

- We are also partnering with other entities on cooperative prescribed fire projects, in which CAL FIRE may not have lead responsibility, in order to leverage our ability to get more acres treated.

- Recently CAL FIRE also reassumed responsibility as the Statewide Coordinator for the national FireWise Communities Program. Since taking over the Program, CAL FIRE has increased the number of new FireWise Communities. In fact, California holds the record this year as the most new designated communities, adding 16 so far this year for a total of 154 in the State.

- The Governor’s Forest Management Task Force will ensure a durable commitment is maintained by State, Federal, and local agencies, commissions, and boards to resilient and healthy forests and wildlands.

Governor’s proposal

- Requires utilities to strengthen and enhance the construction, maintenance and operation of their electrical lines and equipment to further reduce the risk of wildfire;
- Mandates that utilities adopt more expansive wildfire prevention plans;
- Holds utilities accountable for implementing their safety plans by increasing state oversight of those plans and increasing penalties for safety violations;
- Continues to hold accountable those who are at fault for causing wildfires;
- Requires stronger wildfire prevention strategies, such as utility company inspections, infrastructure maintenance and temporary shut off of power during extreme weather

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