CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE & FOREST RESILIENCE TASK FORCE

# California Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan

2026 - 2031

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Photo: Irvine Ranch Conservancy/David Stoecklein

# CALIFORNIA'S WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

Public Draft June, 2026

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# INTRODUCTION

California stands at a pivotal juncture in our state's ongoing wildfire crisis. Under Governor Gavin Newsom's leadership, no state has organized and invested more to protect our communities and landscapes from catastrophic wildfire, with visible results. Yet as conditions worsen, no state has suffered more from the devastating impacts of catastrophic wildfires.

In the years since the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) released the state's first comprehensive *Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan* in 2021, state government and its tribal, public, and private partners have collectively invested billions of dollars in wildfire resilience projects, streamlined project approvals, and coordinated federal, state, local, private, and tribal programs. Since 2021, Task Force partners have surged proactive wildfire resilience investments to more than $6 billion, funding more than 2,000 wildfire resilience projects across the state that have made a measurable difference protecting communities and landscapes. A summary of these completed actions is available in California's Wildfire Resilience Accomplishments.

Amidst this progress, California's wildfires are continuing to burn hotter, larger, and more destructively. Fifteen of the most destructive wildfires in California history have occurred since 2015, with devastating consequences for lives, property, and public health. California has suffered most of the recent structure loss to wildfire in the United States, including the Los Angeles fires of January 2025 which killed 31 people and destroyed more than 16,000 structures.

**Building the Foundation for a Resilient Future**

The 2021 Action Plan aligned federal, state, local, tribal, and private efforts to confront the state's wildfire crisis. For the first time, all key state and federal wildfire resilience programs were identified in one place, together with nearly one hundred specific actions to collectively move them forward. These actions formed a roadmap that guided unprecedented levels of investments and actions by key agencies and their tribal, public, and private partners.

Now, our challenge is to build on this alignment and progress to provide a clear, sustainable path to ensure long-term wildfire resilience for California's communities and landscapes. This requires that we carefully focus our use of resources and employ new strategies to most effectively and efficiently achieve the scale of action that this crisis demands.

To meet this challenge, the 2026 Action Plan builds upon our collective progress since 2021, particularly in the following areas:

**Scientific Consensus on Priority Actions:** We have learned a great deal in the past few years about the wildfire risks facing our communities and landscapes and the most effective approaches to reduce these risks. These key findings are described in the 2026 report produced by the Science Advisory Panel to the Task Force, A Science-Based

Synthesis to Safeguard People, Communities, and Ecosystems from Wildfire in California (Science Synthesis).

We now know that across our landscapes, strategically planned and regularly maintained fuel breaks are effective to help contain wildfires, and that significantly increasing ecologically based thinning, beneficial fire, and active reforestation is essential to improve the health of our forested landscapes.


Within communities, we now know that home hardening and defensible space are vital to protect homes and businesses, and that wildfire preparation is far more effective when an entire neighborhood or community participates. Just as California's landscapes have evolved, adapted, and thrived with fire, we must design and retrofit our homes, neighborhoods, and communities to safely and sustainably coexist with periodic wildfire.

We have also learned through our Task Force regional meetings that each area of our state faces unique risks. In much of the Sierra Nevada and Northern California, our forests are too dense and lack regular intervals of low intensity fire that are vital to strengthen resilience and preserve biodiversity. In much of Southern California, by contrast, large and destructive fires have been driven by high winds and unwanted, human-caused ignitions. These differences require regionally tailored strategies aligned with local risks, conditions, landscape type, fire regimes, and organizational capacity.

**Building Capacity:** We've also invested heavily in supporting tribal, local, and regional groups to better organize themselves, set priorities, plan, and execute wildfire resilience projects. Through the Department of Conservation's (DOC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, the state has invested more than $150 million in 20 regional planning initiatives covering many fire-prone regions of the state, resulting in durable partnerships and expanded project pipelines. As a result, many of these groups can now accept larger grants to carry out multiple projects over many years, enabling expanded wildfire projects across the state. In addition, through funding from CAL FIRE 49 counties have received funding for a wildfire preparedness "County Coordinator" administered through the California Fire Safe Council.

Many tribal, state and local agencies are partnering with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through Good Neighbor Agreements and other mechanisms to expand and accelerate work on federal land.

**Streamlining Processes:** Governor Newsom has made streamlining wildfire regulations one of the hallmarks of his administration, while maintaining California's nation-leading environmental protections. Shortly after taking office in 2019, the Governor issued an Emergency Proclamation to suspend the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to complete 35 high priority fuel reduction projects to protect the state's most vulnerable communities. In the same year, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board of Forestry) streamlined environmental review and permitting for forest health and wildfire prevention projects within non-federal timberlands and in 2020, established the California Vegetation Treatment Program, providing CEQA coverage for non-commercial forest health and wildfire resilience projects. In 2022, the Governor signed AB 211 (Committee on Budget, Ch. 574, Stats. 2022) which extended to January 1, 2028 the sunset date of the CEQA exemption created by SB 901 (Dodd, Ch. 626, Stats. 2018), which allows State-funded fuel treatment projects on federal lands to bypass CEQA if a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review has already been conducted.

Immediately following the devastating 2025 Los Angeles firestorms, the Governor issued Executive Order N-4-25 to suspend CEQA, the California Coastal Act, and other permitting requirements to enable homeowners and businesses to rebuild without undue delay. He also issued an Emergency Proclamation directing the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) to expedite critical fuels reduction projects while protecting public health and the environment.

Through this streamlined process, wildfire safety projects were approved in as little as 30 days – reducing review timelines by a year or more while ensuring these projects take environmentally protective measures. Under the streamlined process, which expired May 1, 2026, California fast-tracked over 400 critical forest health and wildfire safety projects to better protect communities, infrastructure, and natural landscapes across the state. Building on these efforts, Governor Newsom signed an Executive Order in October 2025 to cut green tape and expand tools to safely deploy beneficial fire projects statewide.

**Investing in Cutting-Edge Science and Data Tools:** The Task Force and its partners have built cutting-edge science and data tools to guide our decision-making and to help local and regional groups better plan, prioritize, and evaluate the benefits of their projects. The Task Force launched an Interagency Treatment Dashboard to track wildfire resilience projects statewide, and CAL FIRE released its Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard to better measure the effectiveness of these efforts in reducing the impacts of uncontrolled fires. CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) assembled a wildfire risk modeling workgroup that published a 2023 report on modeling wildfire risk for communities and at the parcel level. The Task Force also

developed a series of landscape metrics to help local and regional entities better evaluate the health and resilience of their landscapes and prioritize projects.

Together, these collective efforts lay the foundation to not only sustain our progress, but to shift to a new set of focused and cost-effective strategies to improve the resilience of our communities and landscapes.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California's wildfire challenge continues to require strong collective action across federal, state, local, tribal, and private organizations throughout the state. California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force is the platform for this collective action. Since it was established by Governor Newsom in 2021, the Task Force has organized state, federal, tribal, and local governments to take coordinated action to confront wildfire challenges, using a detailed Action Plan to guide priority actions.

This updated Action Plan, covering 2026-2030, aligns activities and investments across these partners while equipping regional and local agencies with the tools to rapidly scale and sustain their efforts.

As described in Task Force Background and Structure, the Task Force's Executive Committee is co-chaired by the CNRA Secretary and the USFS Regional Forester. Senate Bill 456 (Laird, Chapter 387, Statutes of 2021) later codified the Action Plan and directed the Task Force to update it every five years.


Science, data, and shared technology sit at the center of this Action Plan, connecting three linked efforts: 1) landscape resilience, 2) community wildfire preparedness, and 3) a framework for mobilizing regional action. The Plan advances two integrated sets of actions: one focused on improving vegetation health and reducing wildfire hazards, and another focused on reducing wildfire impacts in and around communities.

Mobilizing regional action advances both sets of actions by enabling coordinated planning, permitting, funding, implementation and reporting of actions at the local level. Together, these elements reinforce one another: landscape treatments reduce fire severity and spread near communities; community preparedness protects people and reduces losses; and coordinated regional delivery enables effective actions that build wildfire resilience.

1) The **Landscape Resilience** section introduces a new 10-year strategy to prioritize treatments on the state's highest-risk landscapes. Prioritizing treatment of these high-risk or overly dense landscapes maximizes wildfire risk reduction and ecological benefits and sets the stage for rapidly scaling beneficial fire and ignition reduction programs to maintain the resilience of the state's fire-adapted landscapes.

To support this approach, the Landscape Resilience Strategy includes actions to:

- **Identify and increase pace of treatments in high-hazard landscapes**.
- **Expand beneficial fire** through streamlined permitting and the launch of a Beneficial Fire Training Network.
- **Reduce the state's reforestation backlog** and expand the work of Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs).
- **Accelerate workforce and wood utilization programs**.
- **Expand support for tribal stewardship** and cultural burning.
- **Align wildfire resilience programs** across agencies, including new interagency strategies for reforestation, grazing, private landowner assistance, and chaparral resilience to supplement existing beneficial fire and recreation strategies.

The Strategy also includes, through a collaborative effort with the USDA Forest Service (USFS), an initial set of shared outcome-based measures to move beyond "acres treated" as the primary metric for assessing progress toward improved landscape resilience.

2) The **Community Wildfire Preparedness** section applies a holistic, multi-domain approach to reducing wildfire impacts in and around communities, combining actions in the built environment with the community programs and systems that enable sustained planning, preparedness, and recovery. It focuses on scaling the mitigations that matter, strengthening tribal and local capacity and coordination, and improving the data and tools needed to target investments and track outcomes.

To achieve these goals, the Community Wildfire Preparedness section includes actions to:

- **Adopt regulations for a five-foot ember-resistant area around homes and businesses**, also known as Zone Zero.
- **Accelerate development of a statewide network of fuel breaks** across federal, state, and private lands.
- **Establish new data standards and wildfire metrics** to guide structure and community protection actions.
- **Launch a CAL FIRE-supported county wildfire preparedness program,** building off of the County Wildfire Coordinator Program to equip communities with the tools, data, and planning structures needed to prioritize community preparedness actions and coordinate local and regional efforts.
- **Expand partnerships with utilities and Caltrans to reduce unwanted ignitions.**
- **Expand smoke notification and preparedness programs.**

3) The **Mobilizing Regional Action** section provides a framework to guide and support local and regional collaboratives in addressing the unique risks and needs across California. This Plan supports a network of partnerships to develop Regional Priority Plans that cover all federal, state, tribal, and local wildfire community and landscape resilience projects within each region. The Action Plan Regional Overviews outline the current conditions, primary threats, and key resilience strategies for Northern California, the Sierra Nevada, the Central Coast, and Southern California.

The Regional Framework includes actions to facilitate:

- **Planning**: Launch an updated statewide network of Regional Priority Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and five-year interagency project pipelines of coordinated work.
- **Permitting**: Make permanent a streamlined permitting process to accelerate projects.
- **Partnerships**: Expand interagency and private partnerships, particularly with the USFS through Good Neighbor Authority.
- **Reporting**: Expand the Task Force interagency project tracking system and related dashboards through the California Wildfire Commons.
- **Funding**: Expand use of regional large-scale grants that provide multi-year funding for coordinated project portfolios, including rollout of Climate Bond (Proposition 4) grants.

**How Science Informs the Action Plan:** The Action Plan draws on a broad body of scientific research on the key risks facing California's landscapes and communities, as well as the effectiveness of resilience strategies and programs.

The Task Force commissioned its Science Advisory Panel to prepare a synthesis of recent wildfire resilience research and a comprehensive set of findings (Science Synthesis) to inform the Plan's priorities and strategies. CAL FIRE's forthcoming 2025 Forests and Rangelands Assessment and the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) 2025 Natural and Working Lands Carbon Inventory also provide essential information on the health of the state's forests, shrublands, and grasslands, and the diverse wildfire risks facing California.

**How Tribal Input and Traditional Ecological Knowledge Inform the Action Plan:** The Action Plan was developed in collaboration with California Native American tribes and tribal organizations to ensure the plan is grounded in a foundation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and tribal science. The Action Plan was informed by input gathered during a 60-day tribal consultation period which included two tribal roundtable sessions. Additionally, the Action Plan pulls from California's Strategic Plan for Expanding Beneficial Fire, which underwent significant tribal input and review and has been developed in alignment with CNRA's Tribal Stewardship Policy.

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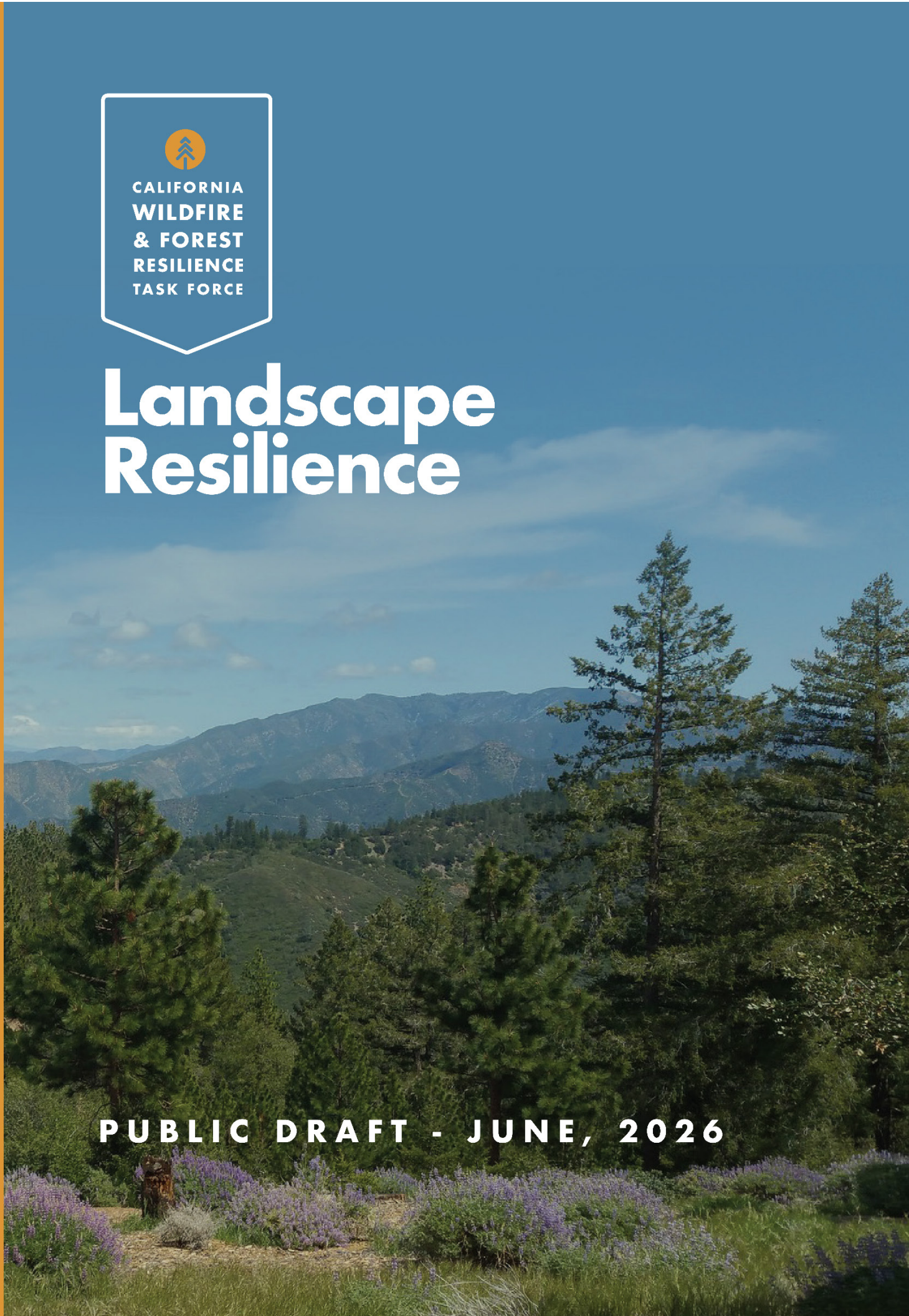
# Landscape Resilience



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# 1. Landscape Resilience

A top priority of the Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force has been to provide a statewide framework to address California's wildfire crisis and guide state and federal investments, as well as local and regional plans and projects. To that end, this 10-Year Landscape Resilience Strategy draws upon the latest scientific findings, data, and tools to provide a clear, sustainable path to achieve wildfire and landscape resilience across California's fire-adapted forests and shrublands.

This Landscape Resilience Strategy works in parallel with the two other pillars of this Action Plan – the Community Wildfire Preparedness actions and the Framework for Mobilizing Regional Action – to accelerate progress where it matters most. This landscape-focused strategy identifies priorities for where and how to treat California's fire-prone landscapes in coming years to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk and achieve other important benefits. Importantly, this strategy also advances the state's nature-based solutions targets, which call for a significant increase in landscape treatments between 2030 and 2045.

The Strategy has three primary purposes:

- **Reduce wildfire hazards** to communities and landscapes.
- **Restore health** to forests, shrublands, and grasslands.
- **Promote long-term beneficial fire** in forests and natural fire frequencies in shrublands.

### How Science Informs the Strategy

In addition to the Science Synthesis, the Landscape Resilience Strategy draws heavily from a 2025 modeling study from CAL FIRE, American Forests, and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) – hereafter the 2025 American Forests Report – which proposed a 10-year pulse of increased wildfire resilience treatments across the state's most vulnerable forests.[1] The Task Force interagency team, in coordination with its Science Advisory Panel, supplemented this work with modeling scenarios which analyzed treatments in grasslands and near shrublands to reduce ignitions, followed by additional analysis of the benefits and costs of the different scenarios.

The Strategy also closely aligns with newly designated USFS priority areas under the Forest Health and Fuels Emergency Situation Determination (FHFESD) order, and incorporates regional treatment plans being developed statewide, as detailed in *Section 3. Framework for Mobilizing Regional Action*.

### Core Concepts

The Strategy is organized around three core concepts:

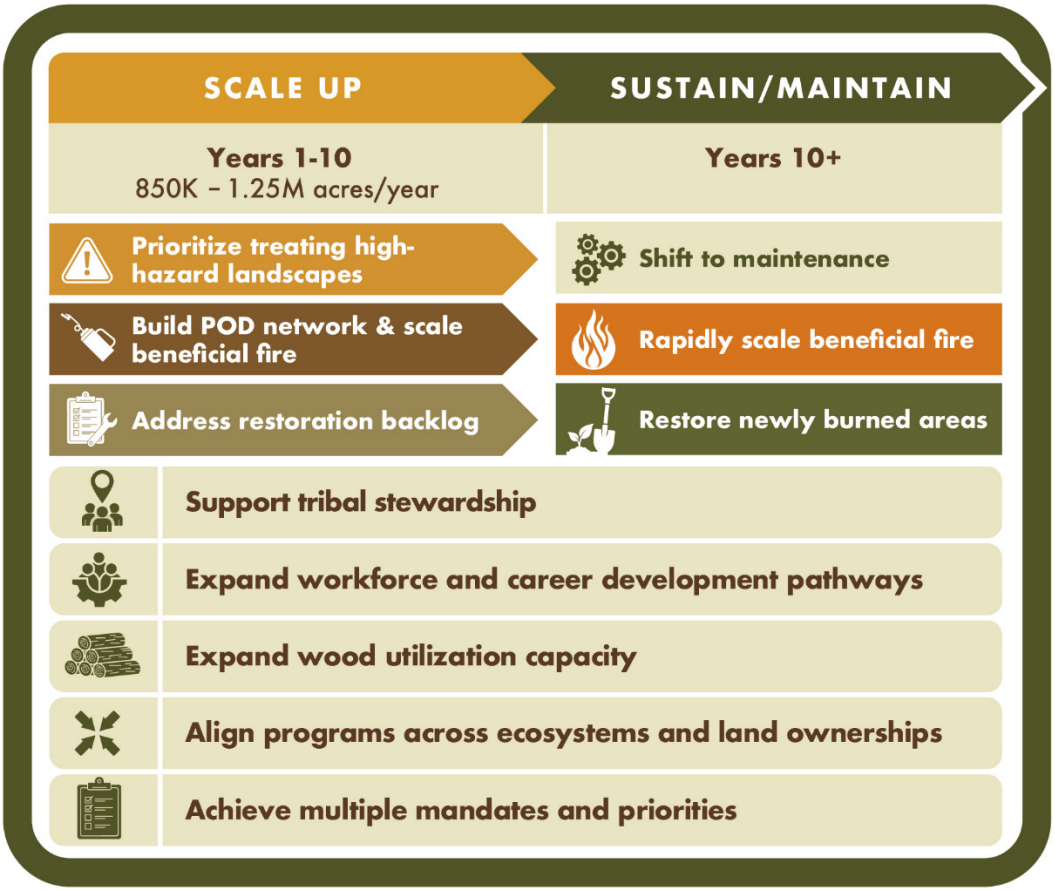
- **Treat the Worst First:** The Strategy prioritizes completing landscape treatments in high hazard areas located around what we value most, including vulnerable

communities, essential infrastructure, and ecologically important landscapes. Reducing wildfire risk in these locations has the greatest protective impact on these values. In much of Northern California, reducing tree density in overcrowded forests significantly reduces the potential for high-severity fire and improves forest health and drought resilience. In Southern California, aggressive ignition-reduction programs during high-wind events, coupled with strategically placed fuel breaks and treatments of dense montane forests, are the highest priorities for improving both community and landscape resilience.

- **Set the Stage for Beneficial Fire:** Restoring fire at appropriate intensities and intervals is essential to sustain California's fire-adapted landscapes. However, high fuel loads often require mechanical thinning and, near communities, fuel breaks before beneficial fire can be safely reintroduced in these high hazard areas. Combined with community-level resilience efforts, a 10-year pulse of these focused treatments to reduce risk and density will give land managers and communities the confidence they need to further expand use of beneficial fire where appropriate across the state.
- **Restore Post-fire Landscapes:** Across the state, millions of acres of forests are at risk of conversion to shrublands because high-intensity fires prevent natural regeneration. The 2025 American Forests Report warns that nearly half of California's forests could be lost by 2071 if forest health and reforestation efforts are not scaled up. Significant areas of native shrublands, particularly in Southern California, are also at risk of conversion to grasslands due to too-frequent fires and will require active restoration.

The figure below summarizes this 10-year Landscape Resilience Strategy and how its major elements fit together. In the first ten years, the Strategy's emphasis is to treat high-hazard landscapes, expand prescribed and cultural fire, and reduce the restoration backlog. By focusing first on treating the highest-risk areas, this approach sets the stage for a transition to maintenance thinning and beneficial fire to protect the state's most vulnerable areas over the long term. It will also provide more opportunities for the strategic use of natural ignitions, also known as managed fire, which has significant potential to become the most cost-effective method for improving landscape health and resilience across the state.

The Strategy also emphasizes the importance of tribal stewardship, workforce development, and wood utilization capacity, while delivering outcomes that meet multiple mandates and priorities.




To implement the Landscape Strategy, California must continue to maintain its steady expansion of vegetation treatments achieved since the 2021 Action Plan while ensuring that these treatments are combined and aligned with local investments in community wildfire preparedness. To address the state's highest risk landscapes, federal, state, local, private, and tribal partners must treat from 850,000 to 1.25 million acres of the state's highest risk landscapes annually over the next ten years. In addition, the state must increase and align investments in other key areas of risk reduction, including ignition prevention during extreme wind events, utility corridor and roadway hardening, and the replacement of highly flammable "flashy" fuels with more fire-resistant native vegetation.

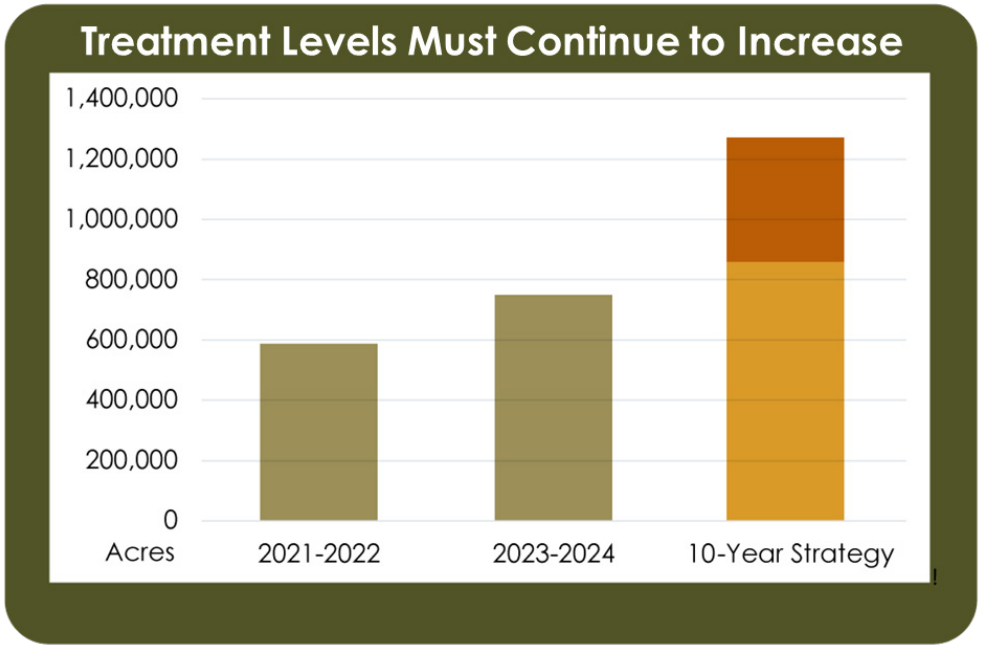



**Figure 1.** Displays average annual footprint acres treated 2021-2024. The shaded portion of the rightmost bar displays the 850,000 to 1.25 million acres annual treatment need of the 10-Year Strategy.

These treatment levels are consistent with the one-million acre target established in the 2021 Action Plan and the Shared Stewardship Agreement established in 2020 between the State of California and the USFS. They also advance our state's progress to achieve California's wildfire risk reduction and reforestation Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) Climate Targets.

The Task Force mandate, as described in PRC 4771, is to establish yearly treatment goals by determining priority areas for treatment. Accordingly, this Landscape Resilience Strategy prioritizes the state's highest risk landscapes, including high hazard areas, areas with elevated values-at-risk, areas with frequent ignitions, and dense unhealthy forests vulnerable to drought-induced mortality. CAL FIRE and Task Force modeling and a broad range of scientific studies show that strategically placed treatments in high-risk areas can most effectively reduce wildfire hazards and improve forest and landscape health.[2,3,4,5] These studies and models, along with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) analysis from the 2022 Scoping Plan update, also make clear that treating additional acres beyond these highest-hazard areas would deliver additional benefits.

These estimates will be further refined through the development of five-year interagency programs of work and Regional Priority Plans described in the Mobilizing Regional Action section. Regional Priority Plans, supported by increasingly sophisticated decision-support tools, will more accurately identify and effectively address landscape resilience risks and priorities, and may lead to refining or adjusting these estimates over time. This regionally based approach will accelerate progress toward landscape-scale strategies and enable the Task Force to report progress beyond acres treated through outcome-based measures.

## MEASURING OUTCOMES

Measuring the state's progress in improving wildfire and landscape resilience is vital to be accountable to Californians and to adapt strategies over time. Accordingly, the Task Force is advancing a framework for outcome-based measures to inform planning and to report progress beyond acres treated. Acres treated is a necessary measure of effort, but it does not answer the questions that matter most: How much has wildfire risk been reduced? Has the health of our forests and rangelands improved? What is the value of these investments to society? Outcome-based measures address these questions by tracking the measurable effects of treatments on wildfire risk and landscape condition. Because the same measures can be modeled before treatments to set priorities and measured afterwards to assess results, they provide a common framework for both planning and reporting, even in years or places that are not tested by wildfire.

This approach builds on the Core Reporting Metrics effort that the Task Force launched in 2024 through a public workshop and survey process, and it draws on parallel advances by the USFS. USFS Research and Development has led a multi-year, cross-agency collaboration to develop Outcome-Based Change Metrics (OBCM) that apply sophisticated fire, landscape, and economic modeling to generate quantitative and replicable metrics across its 21 highest-risk landscapes. Because the Task Force and the USFS share the same analytical infrastructure, every metric and model in the OBCM framework is available to California.

Table 1 presents the Task Force's initial set of measures drawn from both efforts that will form the basis for a shared planning and reporting framework for Regional Priority Plans and landscape-scale interagency projects. As described in Key Action 3.12, the Task Force and its Science Advisory Panel will continue to work with key state agencies and other partners to further refine these measures and to align and coordinate their development with the ongoing efforts by the USFS and the western states.

The Task Force will also continue to track statewide indicators of actual wildfire impacts, including acres burned, smoke emissions, observed fire severity, and number of ignitions. These indicators are essential, but they are not well suited for use as reporting measures because they are strongly influenced by weather, chance ignitions, and the availability of suppression resources. A wet year can make a poor strategy look successful; a year of extreme wind events can obscure real progress. The outcome-based measures below take a different approach, using models to estimate how treatments have changed the likelihood and consequences of future wildfire, independent of whether fire actually occurs. This approach allows progress to be tracked based on what management has changed rather than on what nature delivered.

The initial outcome-based measures encompass two categories that parallel the USFS framework (Table 1):

- **Wildfire risk measures**, which track changes in the probability and consequences of damaging wildfire to specific assets and resources; and
- **Landscape condition measures**, which track trends in forest and ecosystem resilience.

Several measures also support economic valuations of avoided losses, which will be developed in coordination with the USFS and reported separately. Most measures are aligned with or adapted from the USFS OBCM framework to support consistent planning and reporting across ownerships. California-specific measures for shrublands and post-fire debris flow, which are not covered by the USFS framework, are included to address ecosystems and hazards that are important in California but fall outside the scope of the national system.

These measures will improve as new data and science become available. Investments now underway will strengthen the analytical foundation. For example, NASA's Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience, and Risk Assessment Initiative (WERK), a partnership between NASA, CNRA and CARB, is developing high-resolution, statewide data products including LiDAR-derived vegetation structure maps and change detection layers. These products will directly sharpen key measures in Table 1. LiDAR-derived structure data will improve the precision of stand density and large-tree metrics, and change detection layers will enable more accurate remeasurement of landscape conditions after treatments. As these and other data products come online over the next several years, they will expand the scope of outcome-based measures across California's diverse landscapes.

**Table 1.** Initial outcome-based measures. The source of each metric is identified in parentheses below the description.

| Objective | Measure | Direction of Change |
|---|---|---|
| **Resilient Communities** | Change in wildfire risk to homes (Adapted from USFS) | **Reduce** the expected wildfire risk to homes in and near the WUI. |
| | Expected fire intensity in the WUI (Adapted from USFS) | **Reduce** the expected fire intensity in the WUI. |
| | Expected smoke emissions (PM2.5) (USFS specific) | **Reduce** potential smoke emissions from wildfire. |
| **Resilient Forests** | Relative stand density index (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the proportion of forests with unhealthy stand densities. |
| | Probability of high-severity wildfire (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the proportion of forest that burns at high severity. |
| | Proportion of late-seral forest exposed to high-severity wildfire (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the proportion of late-seral forest at high risk of loss from wildfire. |
| **Resilient Woodlands** | Probability of high-severity wildfire (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the proportion of woodlands that burn at high severity. |
| | Proportion of woodlands with large trees exposed to high-severity wildfire (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the proportion of woodlands with large trees at high risk of loss from wildfire. |
| **Resilient Shrublands** | Burn probability in and near shrublands (CA specific) | **Reduce** burn probability in and near shrublands. |
| | Grass cover in shrublands (CA specific) | **Reduce** the proportion of shrubland with excessive (>50%) invasive grass cover. |
| **Conserve Biodiversity** | Wildlife habitat security (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** wildfire risk to sensitive wildlife habitat. |

| Objective | Measure | Direction of Change |
|---|---|---|
| **Enhance Watershed Protection** | Change in wildfire risk to surface drinking water source watersheds (Adapted from USFS) | **Reduce** wildfire risk to watersheds that provide drinking water. |
| | Probability of post-fire debris flow (CA specific) | **Reduce** debris flow hazard following wildfire. |
| | Drought stress (water quantity) (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** forest drought vulnerability in priority watersheds. |
| **Enhance Recreational Opportunities** | Burn probability and predicted fire severity to recreational resources (Aligned with USFS) | **Reduce** the predicted risk of loss to recreational infrastructure. |

## BENEFITS OF THE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Scientific research shows that strategic investments in wildfire risk reduction can dramatically reduce some of the harmful consequences of extreme wildfires and deliver benefits that far exceed the required investments, especially when compared to the cost of suppressing large, intense fires and the damage they inflict.[6,7,8,9] Thinning overly dense forests, preventing ignitions, strategically managing fires, promoting beneficial fire, restoring severely burned areas, and supporting wood utilization, will lower wildfire severity, save lives and critical infrastructure, protect water supplies, conserve native ecosystems, support durable carbon stocks, protect and restore tribal practices and cultural resources, and strengthen rural economies.

The following summary of the benefits of the Landscape Strategy, compiled by CAL FIRE and an interdisciplinary research team, is based on recent modeling overseen by the Task Force as well as peer-reviewed studies.

**Improving Public Health Outcomes:** Wildfire smoke is one of the most serious public health threats associated with wildfire. Fine particulate pollution (PM2.5) from wildfire smoke penetrates deep into the lungs and bloodstream, increasing the risk of heart attacks, strokes, asthma attacks, and premature death.

Peer-reviewed research establishes that wildfire smoke is a primary driver of health-related losses, contributing to thousands of premature deaths annually in California while damaging economic productivity and educational outcomes (Science Synthesis). With climate change expected to exacerbate these risks across the U.S. and especially in California,[10] recent studies demonstrate that reducing high-severity wildfires through proactive treatments could prevent hundreds of premature deaths per year over the coming decades.[11,12] When carefully planned and executed, beneficial fire generates far less smoke[13] and fewer harmful emissions than uncontrolled high-severity wildfire.[14,15]

**Protecting Communities and Critical Infrastructure:** Homes and communities are increasingly exposed to wildfire. Recent research shows that structure loss from wildfire is rising across the western United States, and losses in California alone can be in the billions of dollars during high-loss years. Ignition reduction treatments that reduce ignitable grasses and materials from along roadsides and the strategic use of fuel breaks may significantly reduce burn probability around communities. Such treatments are particularly needed to reduce losses in Southern and Central California where unwanted human ignitions have led to highly damaging wind-driven wildfires such as the 2025 Los Angeles fires.

Modeling in areas such as the Lake Tahoe Basin and Southern California suggests that strategic fuel treatments can reduce structure loss risk by 45–76% in high-risk areas. Reducing wildfire risk also helps stabilize homeowners' insurance markets. As catastrophic losses mount, insurers have reduced coverage or withdrawn from high-risk

regions. Risk reduction investments are a key part of restoring insurability and financial stability for communities.

**Safeguarding Water Supplies and Hydropower:** California's mountain forests are the headwaters for most of the state's water supply. Large, high-severity wildfires can cause severe erosion, sedimentation of reservoirs, and long-term damage to watersheds.

The Task Force's modeling results show that fuel treatments may reduce post-fire erosion and lower sedimentation in reservoirs. In some Sierra Nevada watersheds, avoided erosion-related damages alone are valued at more than $1,000 per acre treated, with particularly large benefits where reservoirs serve urban water systems.

**Delivering Climate Benefits:** Task Force, CARB, and CAL FIRE modeling, along with academic literature, show that proactive management can reduce carbon losses from extreme wildfires,[16,17,18] protect long-lived carbon stored in mature ecosystems, and avoid millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions. While climate change may make some forest carbon losses inevitable, active management can mitigate these losses. Using removed wood in long-lived products can further reduce net emissions compared to leaving material to burn in piles or wildfires.[19,20,21]

To achieve our climate goals, California has set targets to manage the equivalent of over half the state's land for health and resilience by 2045. These nature-based solutions targets cover all of California's diverse landscapes and will be implemented by a diverse range of partners. Many of the actions outlined in the 2026 Task Force Action Plan will support achieving the targets to reduce wildfire risk:

- Scale fuel reduction treatments and beneficial fire
- Expand defensible space
- Reduce wildfire ignitions caused by vehicles
- Expand roadside vegetation treatments
- Restore degraded forests, shrublands, and grasslands

**Strengthening the Rural Economy:** Investments in wildfire risk reduction can also provide important economic benefits for rural communities, where much of the state's forest restoration work occurs.[22] Expanding forest thinning, beneficial fire, reforestation, and wood utilization requires a skilled workforce and supports jobs in forestry, contracting, transportation, wood processing, and restoration services. These activities generate local income and help sustain forest-based industries that have declined in many parts of rural California over recent decades.

Finding ways to support the increased use of small-diameter trees and forest residues for wood products, bioenergy, or other emerging markets present a challenge. However, utilization of these materials serves both an ecological function, by reducing landscape hazard and improving forest health, and an economic function, by building up a resilience economy that can be environmentally and economically sustainable.

**The Case for Investment:** Taken together, the benefits of large-scale wildfire and landscape resilience treatments can deliver benefits valued at many billions of dollars annually. This is broadly supported by both the peer-reviewed scientific literature and internal state modeling efforts.[23,24,25,26,27] These investments are likely to yield measurable benefits across many dimensions: fewer deaths and illnesses from wildfire smoke, avoided damage to homes and infrastructure, more reliable water supplies, durable forest carbon stocks, conservation of wildlife habitat, and support for rural jobs and forest industries. In sum, resilience investments deliver a triple win: protecting communities, restoring native ecosystems, and securing vital ecosystem services like clean air and water.

# KEY ACTIONS TO BUILD RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

## A. Prioritize Treating High-Hazard Landscapes

**Key Finding:** Recent Task Force modeling shows that prioritizing treatments in higher-hazard areas yields approximately twice the reduction in high-severity fire potential and up to four times greater reductions in overall burn probability compared to non-strategic placements. By prioritizing treating high-hazard landscapes, areas with frequent ignitions, and unhealthy forests vulnerable to mass mortality, land managers can move beyond simply counting "acres treated" and move toward achieving measurable outcomes that more effectively increase landscape resilience.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.1 Increase treatments in high-hazard landscapes and overly dense forests:** Land management agencies will expand coordinated thinning and prescribed burning, and partner with tribes' cultural burning, across the state's highest hazard landscapes, both within and beyond the wildland urban interface, prioritizing locations where treatments most reduce high severity fire potential, reduce tree mortality risks, and improve suppression effectiveness. Additional community-focused treatments including ignition reduction and strategic fuel breaks are described in Key Actions 2.10 to 2.17.
- **1.2 Advance data-driven prioritization through the California Wildfire Commons:** Building on the California Landscape Metrics and Interagency Treatment Dashboard, CAL FIRE and Task Force partners will curate and publish improved high-hazard datasets (including layers derived from the Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience and Risk Assessment Initiative), and associated decision-support workflows in the California Wildfire Commons to provide regions with a shared starting point they can adapt to local priorities while improving transparency and compatibility across programs.
- **1.3 Improve monitoring and quantification of treatment impacts and benefits:** CAL FIRE, in partnership with CNRA, the Department of Water Resources (DWR), CARB, and other state entities, will advance the science and develop practical methods to better monitor and quantify the impacts and benefits of on-the-

ground projects. Accurate measurement of these effects strengthens prioritization, builds stakeholder support, and attracts new investment in wildfire resilience. While some effects like carbon sequestration can be readily quantified, others including water quality, water yield, air quality, and wildlife habitat remain difficult to measure rigorously and will be a focus of this work.

- **1.4 Spur deployment of innovative natural resource management technology**: CAL FIRE's Fire Innovation Unit and Business and Workforce Development grant program will collaborate with other state entities and philanthropic and nonprofit partners to advance the development, testing, and deployment of innovative technology to increase the pace and scale and decrease the cost of vegetation management operations that promote wildfire resilience. This work will proceed through mechanisms that could include field testing via CAL FIRE operations, grants, or design competitions.

## B. Expand Beneficial Fire

**Key Finding:** Expanding beneficial fire, which includes prescribed fire, managed wildfire, and cultural burning, at appropriate intervals is key to improving the health and resilience of many of California's fire-adapted landscapes that have not experienced regular fire intervals. However, in much of California's forests tree densities and fuels loads are too high to safely introduce beneficial fire without accompanying mechanical treatments and extensive fuel break networks.

To help address this need and improve landscape resilience, the Action Plan prioritizes thinning followed by prescribed and cultural fire in the highest wildfire risk forests. At the same time, the USFS, CAL FIRE, and their private and community partners are establishing a comprehensive network of fire management units known as Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), which are reinforced by strategically placed fuel breaks, as described in Key Action 2.16. Coupling those actions with

home and community-based wildfire resilience programs will create conditions to further expand use of beneficial fire. California's nature-based solution targets call for significantly scaling beneficial fire across the state, and California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire (Beneficial Fire Strategic Plan) provides a vision and framework for rapidly expanding beneficial fire. Additionally, Executive Order N-35-25 directs a suite of actions to support tribes, local governments, and fire practitioners to maximize use of beneficial fire. The following actions execute, and build on, the Beneficial Fire Strategic Plan and Executive Order N-35-25.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.5 Expand beneficial fire:** State, federal, local, tribal, and private land managers will expand prescribed fire, managed wildfire, and cultural burning to support California's beneficial fire targets in alignment with the Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire.
- **1.6 Enhance training and workforce capacity**: CAL FIRE and CARB will work with partners to accelerate the launch of the Beneficial Fire Training Network to expand training opportunities for practitioners, air districts, local health jurisdictions, and regulators. Additionally, CAL FIRE, CNRA, and CARB will partner with the UC ANR Fire Network to expand beneficial fire outreach, education, research, capacity building and training.
- **1.7 Expedite implementation and streamlined permitting**: CAL FIRE will provide direct assistance to local agencies and beneficial fire practitioners, streamline elements of the state burn permit process for eligible projects, update its prescribed fire guidebook to better support burns led by non-CAL FIRE entities, and develop template agreements to enable beneficial fire on state owned lands. CNRA and local air districts will work collaboratively with federally recognized tribes to develop government-to-government agreements for cultural burning. CNRA and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) will establish a durable process to fast-track beneficial fire projects that extends beyond emergency authorities.
- **1.8 Expand local participation and reduce liability barriers**: CAL FIRE will continue operating the Prescribed Fire Liability Claims Fund Pilot Program, including enrollment and claims administration, through its current statutory sunset of January 1, 2028, and will work with partners to make durable the eligibility expansions implemented under Executive Order N-35-25, including participation by resource conservation districts and volunteer fire departments.
- **1.9 Expand and support cultural burning**: CNRA, CalEPA, and their constituent entities will prioritize tribal consultation across the work of the agencies to incorporate tribal priorities into beneficial burning activities. Additionally, CNRA, CalEPA, and their constituent entities will strengthen partnerships with tribes through the creation of meaningful and durable access and collaboration agreements to expand and support cultural burning pursuant to the CNRA Tribal Stewardship Policy. CARB in collaboration with air districts will continue to collaborate with tribes to honor SB 310 air district agreements pursuant to Public

Resources Code Section 4505. Also see Key Actions 1.20 through 1.23 on supporting tribal stewardship.

- **1.10 Improve smoke management consistency and coordination**: CARB, with CAL FIRE support, will standardize early and frequent collaboration practices between practitioners and air districts, identify best practices for smoke management plans, and develop guidance to support longer burn authorization windows where feasible while improving public communication about smoke impacts.
- **1.11 Strengthen modeling, technology, and reporting tools**: CARB will develop and make available new modeling and related technologies, including updating the Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System, to support air districts and practitioners and promote faster, more efficient permitting.
- **1.12 Establish the Beneficial Fire Capacity Program:** Subject to the availability of funds, CAL FIRE will establish a Beneficial Fire Capacity Program to expand training, organizational capacity, and support for community-led beneficial fire programs. CAL FIRE will also, subject to the availability of funds, continue to support the expansion of training, organizational capacity, and support for community-led beneficial fire programs through the Business & Workforce Development Program, Tribal Wildfire Resilience Program, and Forest Health Program.
- **1.13 Use recent wildfires to expand beneficial fire:** State, federal, local, tribal, and private land managers will evaluate how to incorporate recent wildfire burn areas into management plans, using wildfire edges as control lines to introduce beneficial fire to adjacent areas and reapplying fire to lightly or moderately burned areas to maintain and reinforce forest resilience.

## C. Restore Post-fire Landscapes


**Key Finding:** As wildfires have burned hotter and grown larger, vast areas of forests and shrublands are failing to regenerate naturally. Statewide, only about 14% of the forested acres that burned at high severity since 2020 and need treatment have been

reforested. This means that at least 1.3 million acres of severely burned forestland remain at risk of repeat high-severity wildfire and possible type conversion to shrublands or grasslands.[28] The 2025 American Forests Report warns that nearly half of California's forests could be lost by 2071 if fuels reduction and reforestation efforts are not scaled up. Additionally, in the last 20 years, large areas of shrubland have been type-converted to more ignition-prone non-native annual grasses, further increasing fire frequency and risk. The state's forthcoming comprehensive Reforestation Strategy, led by the USDA California Climate Hub, establishes a collaborative interagency framework to accelerate reforestation on public and private lands over the next decade. The Strategy also builds on the Reforestation Pipeline Partnership and the work of Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs) to support scaling post-high-severity-fire reforestation and restoration in line with California's nature-based solutions targets.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.14 Accelerate and expand reforestation:** State and federal land management agencies will seek to expand tribal, public and private reforestation efforts through interagency and public-private partnerships with a goal of reforesting priority areas where severe wildfires have compromised or are expected to compromise natural forest regeneration.
- **1.15 Increase the efficiency and pace of reforestation planning:** CNRA and CalEPA will consider how to provide regulatory relief to critical post-wildfire reforestation projects and prioritize efforts in areas most likely to be successful.
- **1.16 Enhance supplies of reforestation planting materials:** Through the Reforestation Pipeline Partnership, CAL FIRE, USFS, and American Forests, in coordination with tribes, will continue to invest in the plant materials infrastructure and workforce required to meet current and future reforestation needs, with a focus on improving seedling quality.
- **1.17 Develop Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs)**: Subject to the availability of funds, CAL FIRE, USFS, and local agencies, such as counties and RCDs, will develop EFRTs to rapidly assist private forest landowners impacted by wildfires with funding and technical assistance to accelerate restoration and reforestation projects. CAL FIRE's Wildfire Resilience Block Grants are the funding mechanism best suited to support EFRTs, as they provide grantees the flexibility to identify landowners and parcels for treatments throughout a project's duration.
- **1.18 Promote climate-informed reforestation practices:** CAL FIRE, CARB, CNRA, American Forests, and federal partners will develop trainings, outreach efforts, and grant programs, as needed, to drive the application of climate-informed reforestation practices, such as the use of climate-adapted planting stock, modified planting densities, and non-gridded planting designs. Subject to the availability of funds, CAL FIRE will continue to use existing programs to provide grants for reforestation that use climate-adapted practices.
- **1.19 Establish restoration priorities in shrublands:** The Task Force, in partnership with the Climate and Wildfire Institute, CNRA, and other key partners will assess the extent of shrubland conversion to inform prioritization of restoration actions.

See Key Action 1.42 regarding the chaparral and coastal sage scrub conservation strategy.

## D. Support Tribal Stewardship

**Key Finding:** Tribal stewardship and cultural fire are foundational to California's ecosystem resilience and wildfire risk reduction, yet decades of development, fire suppression and exclusion of traditional ecological practices have constrained tribes' ability to burn at the timing and frequency needed to sustain ecological and cultural benefits. Expanding meaningful government-to-government consultation, supporting land return and stewardship agreements, and enabling tribally led planning and implementation can restore cultural traditions, accelerate fuels reduction, improve biodiversity and watershed health, and reduce wildfire size and severity.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.20 Respect tribal sovereignty:** State and federal agencies will ensure the exercise of reserved, retained, and other rights by tribes and their members to engage in cultural burning and other forms of tribal stewardship and will ensure that the exercising of these rights is welcomed and encouraged. The Indigenous Stewardship Network will work with tribes, state, and local agencies to provide training and resources on increasing frequent and meaningful consultation with tribes, and educate public, private, state and local partners on harmful policies affecting Indigenous stewardship, cultural fire, and data sovereignty.
- **1.21 Seek opportunities for tribal ancestral land return, collaboration, and access**: State and federal agencies will seek opportunities for ancestral land return either through the purchase of property or transfer of ownership to a tribe from a non-tribal entity, either in fee or trust. State and federal agencies will seek opportunities to enter into meaningful and durable tribal access and collaboration agreements to support tribal stewardship and restoration of landscape health and wildfire resilience.
- **1.22 Ensure tribal stewardship is included in wildfire and landscape resilience planning:** State and local agencies will include tribes in planning and implementation of wildfire resilience, fuels reduction, and wildfire recovery projects, including in potential operational delineations (PODs) and Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs) to ensure tribal inclusion prior to wildfire prevention and recovery work to protect tribal cultural resources. The Indigenous Stewardship Network will convene a Tribal Work Group to expand a network of cultural fire practitioners, regional and subject matter experts, and policy makers to increase engagement with tribal communities and tribal non-profits in statewide planning and policy discussions as well as develop recommendations for tribal stewardship inclusion in wildfire and landscape resilience planning.
- **1.23 Reduce funding barriers and streamline reporting for cultural fire practitioners**
  State and federal agencies will allocate beneficial fire funding specifically for tribes, tribal organizations, and cultural practitioners with tribal organizations

serving as the conduit for fund selection and distribution. State and federal agencies will continue to streamline reporting requirements.

## E. Expand Workforce and Career Development Pathways

**Key Finding:** Accomplishing the work described in this Action Plan depends on a diverse and skilled workforce operating in a variety of professional, community, and cultural roles across the wildfire resilience sector. However, workforce capacity remains a major constraint to increasing the pace and scale of work statewide. Demand for qualified personnel is growing faster than the available talent pool, leaving critical positions unfilled, while the existing workforce faces high rates of attrition. Workplace culture, limited career pathways, and compensation are frequently cited as drivers of turnover. Achieving the goals of this Action Plan will require stabilizing and expanding the workforce through sustained investment in recruitment, training, retention, and career development.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.24 Coordinate on expanding wildfire resilience career pathways:** Building on efforts by CAL FIRE, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and CNRA, state wildfire resilience agencies will collaborate to modernize and expand access to careers across the sector. This includes reducing barriers to job discovery and hiring processes; reviewing and updating classification requirements; expanding recruitment; supporting experiential training and tribal-led workforce development; and embedding career navigation support. In parallel, a work group of trainers, educators, certifying bodies, and funders will convene to align traditional and non-traditional education pathways, address sector-wide bottlenecks, and improve entry, credential transferability, and advancement opportunities.
- **1.25 Design a centralized, accessible HR Development Hub to strengthen organizational capacity and employee retention across the wildfire resilience sector:** The Watershed Research and Training Center, with support from the DOC and in partnership with potential end-users, will scope a service model for providing standardized Human Resources (HR) development resources for use by all wildfire resilience employers, including tribes and tribally led organizations, nonprofits, small businesses, government agencies, and special districts.
- **1.26 Leverage grant programs to stabilize and invest in workforce and career development:** When updating grant guidelines, CNRA and wildfire resilience funding entities will consider integrating eligible costs, evaluation criteria, and reporting requirements that incentivize applicants to include necessary workforce and career development expenses, track related outcomes, and advance workforce objectives, while incentivizing grantees to leverage external funding sources to cover these costs where appropriate.

## F. Expand Wood Utilization Capacity

**Key Finding**: As annual treatment acreage grows to achieve the goals of the Action Plan, California's capacity to process wood and woody biomass must expand accordingly. Without sufficient wood utilization and processing infrastructure, California risks falling short of its treatment targets. In addition, markets for wood and forest byproducts can significantly reduce treatment costs. CAL FIRE estimates that one-third to one-half of project costs could be recovered if markets were available for forest materials.

According to the 2025 American Forests Report,[29] California would need to add processing capacity equivalent to approximately 29 to 31 new average-sized mills statewide and roughly 8 to 9 large-scale bioenergy facilities to make productive use of the wood and biomass generated by treating one million acres annually. These findings underscore the importance of coordinated investments in sawmill, biomass, and innovative wood product facilities to achieve the state's forest health, wildfire resilience, and climate objectives.

The USFS National Active Management Strategy underscores this need by calling for expanded timber production to levels that align well with the state's need to significantly reduce the density of its forests, make productive use of wood and woody biomass, and support rural economic development. It should be noted, however, that timber harvest from federal lands makes up only about 16% of the state's total. As a result, CAL FIRE estimates that the extra volume associated with increasing federal timber sales by 25%, the goal of the Active Management Strategy, would increase timber harvest in California by only a small percentage, but would be consistent with

the goal of the landscape strategy to significantly increase thinning in high hazard landscapes.

Increasing the scale of treatments without a corresponding increase in wood utilization capacity will require significantly more piling and burning. These piles, which often remain in place for years following treatments,[30,31] compromise the effectiveness of treatments until they are burned, are expensive to burn, and generate significant particulate emissions.[32,33]

State agency efforts related to wood utilization are spread among more than half a dozen state agencies, including CAL FIRE, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board of Forestry) and its Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation (Joint Institute), the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), DOC, CARB, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), and others. Among these agencies, the Board of Forestry and its Joint Institute are best positioned to align and accelerate the state's wood utilization programs and policies.

### *Key Actions:*

- **1.27 Develop comprehensive wood utilization strategy:** The Board of Forestry, in coordination with key public and private partners, will lead the development of a comprehensive wood utilization strategy by the end of 2027.
- **1.28 Increase the reliability of wood and biomass supply:** USFS will continue to expand its use of 20-year contracting mechanisms, explore the potential for direct timber sales, and conduct a wood processing facility assessment to better understand challenges and opportunities to increase use of wood fiber from California's national forests.
- **1.29 Establish regional woody biomass partnerships**: Subject to the availability of funds, LCI will continue to support the development of regional woody biomass partnerships to centralize the collection and contracting of biomass feedstock, and to serve as a broker for long-term contracts.
- **1.30 Increase sustainable timber harvest:** In coordination with state partners and consistent with the President's March 1, 2025 Executive Order, the USFS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will accelerate ongoing federal programs to sustainably increase timber production in California to help achieve the goals of the Landscape Resilience Strategy.
- **1.31 Expand wood and biomass processing capacity:** Subject to available funds, CAL FIRE, DOC, and the USFS will continue to award grants to support facility development. As part of the 2027 CEQA Guidelines update, LCI will research and evaluate the feasibility of creating a categorical exemption for projects that utilize forest biomass on properties zoned as industrial and outside areas of extreme air quality nonattainment. GO-Biz will offer regular workshops and other forms of assistance to individual wood utilization businesses.
- **1.32 Establish a California mass timber strategy**: The Board of Forestry, in coordination with GO-Biz and the USFS, will coordinate with other state and federal agencies, local and regional governments, educational and research

institutions, and the private sector to develop a strategy to advance the use of mass timber and other innovative wood products.

- **1.33 Reduce Carbon Intensity of New Buildings:** Consistent with AB 2446 (Holden, 2022), CARB and HCD will develop a framework for measuring and reducing the carbon intensity of the building materials used in the construction of new buildings. Through this process, CARB and HCD will consider incorporating innovative wood products, such as mass timber, oriented strand board, and other products made from low- or no-value woody biomass, into the state's strategy. DOC, HCD, SGC, and other State agencies will also consider incorporating innovative wood products into their grant solicitation and review processes.
- **1.34 Increase Communication and Promotion of Wood Products in California.** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation will work to amplify messaging regarding wood products and related issues in California. Increasing awareness will help support the industry development necessary to advance state forest restoration and climate goals.
- **1.35 Support innovative research and development of pilot- and community-scale wood processing facilities**: The legislature may consider allocating funding to the California Energy Commission (CEC) and CARB for biomass energy and wood products/building decarbonization research and technology to establish the state as a hub for leadership and innovation in renewable energy and engineered, carbon-storing wood products.
- **1.36 Support emerging markets for biochar:** Subject to the availability of funds, CARB will assess the feasibility and science of biochar as a method of carbon sequestration, and the Joint Institute will develop a biochar market strategy, including a producer and consumer guidebook.
- **1.37 Develop bioelectricity transition strategy:** The Board of Forestry, in coordination with other state and federal agencies and key stakeholders, will explore the development of a transition strategy for the BioMAT and BioRAM programs that would retain the benefits of bioelectric facilities while reducing both their costs and emissions until advanced technologies – such as gasification, pyrolysis, and fermentation – can be widely commercialized.
- **1.38 Maintain state support for forest biomass to biofuels grant programs:** Through funds made available through Proposition 4, DOC will continue to support projects utilizing forest biomass to make less carbon-intensive energy and other products.

## G. Align Programs Across Ecosystems and Land Ownerships

**Key Finding:** Aligning programs across land ownerships and vegetation types is essential to achieving durable, landscape-scale wildfire resilience because wildfire risk, fire activity, and ecological processes span jurisdictional, property, and ecological boundaries. California's highest-priority treatment and restoration needs occur across a complex mosaic of state, federal, tribal, local, and private lands, yet implementation

capacity, incentives, and management approaches remain fragmented. In addition, the science and experience of fire ecology and risk in shrublands have rapidly emerged in the last two decades, and California's fire management and policy must reflect this knowledge.

Durable progress will require coordinated, cross-boundary action that strengthens stewardship on small private lands; accelerates treatment and long-term maintenance on state-managed lands; establishes a cohesive, ecosystem-specific strategy for chaparral; expands industrial and private-sector partnerships to support wood utilization and biomass processing; and scales tools such as prescribed grazing to manage vegetation across ownerships.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.39 Expand and institutionalize prescribed grazing as a regional fuel management strategy:** University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR), in coordination with BLM, Board of Forestry, and DOC, will scale prescribed grazing as a multi-benefit vegetation management tool by mapping priority areas where grazing can reduce fuels and protect communities, strengthening the technical assistance network, and expanding recruitment and support for Certified Rangeland Managers. Additional information is available in UC ANR's statewide brief, Expanding Prescribed Grazing for Wildfire Resilience in California.
- **1.40 Sustain and expand landowner assistance and incentive programs:** State and federal agencies and non-governmental partners will sustain and expand technical, financial, and market-based assistance programs to accelerate active landscape management on private lands. This includes expanding landowner education and technical assistance programs like UC ANR's Forest Stewardship Workshops; broadening participation in incentive and market-based programs including CAL FIRE's California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) and the National Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); exploring sustainability certification to promote California-gown wood products through the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Program and related partnerships; and developing tailored assistance pathways for shrublands, oak woodlands, and rangelands that are currently underserved.
- **1.41 Improve interagency coordination and strengthen collective action on state-managed lands:** The Task Force's State Lands Working Group will establish shared templates, agreements, processes, and practices to increase agency capacity and coordination between technical and funding staff. Members will identify and implement resource coordination strategies to increase the efficiency, quality, and scale of resilience projects implemented across multiple state lands to achieve synergistic impacts.
- **1.42 Develop a chaparral and coastal sage scrub conservation strategy**: The Task Force, in partnership with the Climate and Wildfire Institute, CNRA, tribes and

tribal organizations, along with other key partners, will develop a comprehensive chaparral conservation strategy. The strategy will inventory statewide chaparral science and available tools to inform policy and management, identify priority gaps in data and management guidance, and align objectives with near-term wildfire resilience actions.

## H. Achieve Multiple Mandates and Priorities

**Key Finding:** Restoration of healthy ecosystems provides multiple benefits that enable the state to meet its climate, water security, biodiversity, public health, tribal partnership, recreation, and rural economic development goals. It also protects the massive historic investments the state has made in conserving these areas.

The combined effects of climate-driven stressors, such as drought, disease, and wildfire threaten those investments and benefits on a large scale: half of California's forest cover could be lost by 2071;[34] all old-growth forests in the Southern Sierra Nevada could be lost due to wildfire by 2100;[35] and multiple interacting factors threaten continued conversion of shrublands to highly flammable non-native grasslands.[36] Such rapid and dramatic ecological changes have far-reaching effects on the landscape, including loss of wildlife habitat and carbon stores, and on communities, including damage to drinking water infrastructure and loss of rural livelihoods.

### *Key Actions*

- **1.43 Support achieving California's nature-based solutions targets**: pursuant to AB 1757 (Garcia, Chapter 341, Statutes of 2022), the State adopted nature-based solutions climate targets to improve the health and resilience of all of California's diverse landscapes, including wildfire risk reduction targets. These annual implementation targets call for accelerated annual implementation of numerous practices identified in this Action Plan, including beneficial fire, post-fire restoration, priority roadside treatment, establishing defensible space, and fuel reduction activities such as thinning, prescribed grazing, mechanical treatments, etc.
- **1.44 Align Action Plan and 30x30 Strategies:** AB 900 (Papan, Chapter 385, Statutes of 2025) calls for CNRA to increase support for stewardship of the state's conserved lands, including a review of stewardship best practices for conserved lands and a valuation of the benefits of stewardship on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Task Force will partner with CNRA and 30x30 stakeholders in addressing these mandates across the state's fire-adapted landscapes. This effort will focus on strategies to sustain and document the benefits of beneficial fire, appropriate fire return frequencies, and other vegetation management practices in achieving the state's 30x30 and biodiversity goals.
- **1.45 Align Action Plan and California Water Plan:** DWR will partner with the Task Force, CNRA, and CalEPA to integrate wildfire resilience and watershed restoration priorities into the 2028 Water Plan. This will include contributing shared

datasets, elevating vegetation management as nature-based implementation actions, and supporting progress to interim planning targets under SB 72 (Caballero, Chapter 210, Statutes of 2025).

- **1.46 Implement California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience:** The Task Force's Recreation Work Group will partner with CNRA, DOC, USFS, BLM, and state and local recreation managers, to deliver multi benefit recreation and wildfire resilience projects in and near the wildland urban interface, including fire hardened trails prescriptions and fuels reduction around recreation infrastructure, and will, where appropriate, embed these priorities in Regional Fire and Forest Capacity Regional Priority Plans.
- **1.47 Standardize methods for tracking progress towards achieving California's nature-based solutions targets**: The Task Force partner agencies will increase coordination across reporting mandates and reporting systems related to wildfire risk reduction efforts, including close coordination between the Task Force Interagency Treatment Dashboard and AB 1757 reporting mandates, which requires CNRA to report every two years on statewide progress towards the state's nature-based solutions climate targets.
- **1.48 Develop standard methods for quantifying greenhouse gas impacts of wildfire risk reduction treatments:** Pursuant to AB 1757, AB 32, SB 32 (Pavley, Chapter 249, Statutes of 2016), AB 1279 (Muratsuchi, Chapter 337, Statues of 2022), and SB 901 (Dodd, Chapter 626, Statutes of 2018), CARB will develop standard methods to consistently quantify carbon, greenhouse gas, and additional benefits from land management practices across the state, including wildfire risk reduction treatments and other nature-based climate solutions.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE & FOREST RESILIENCE TASK FORCE

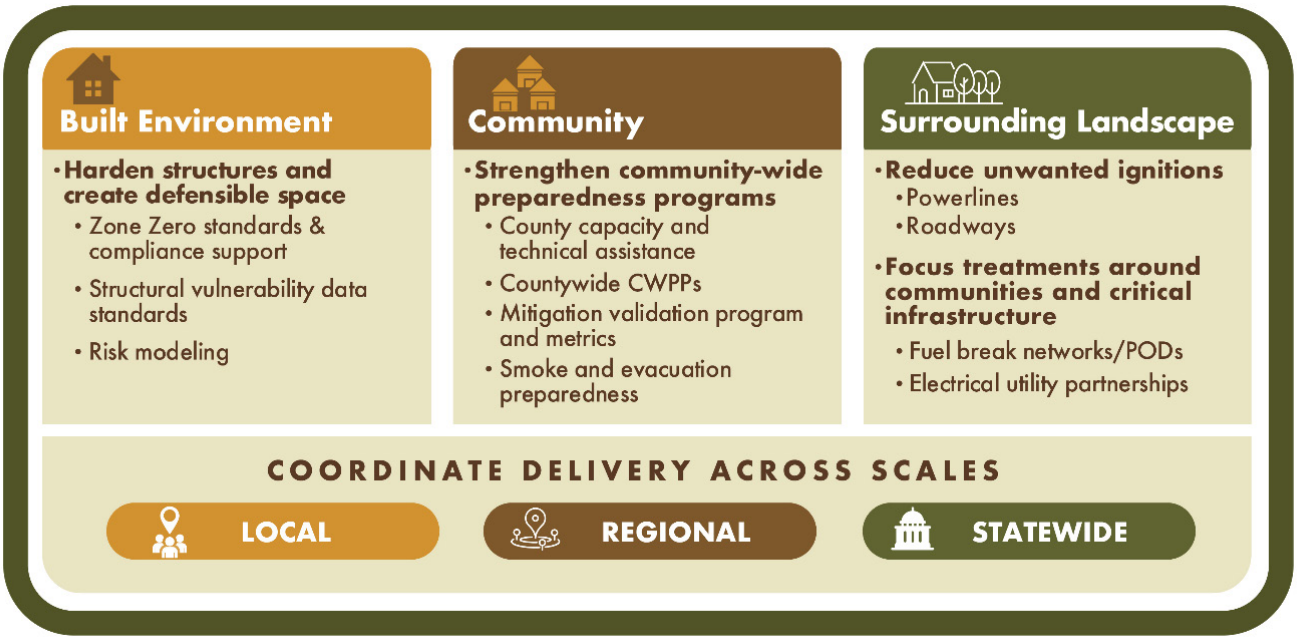
# Community Wildfire Preparedness

PUBLIC DRAFT - JUNE, 2026

# 2. Community Wildfire Preparedness

California's approach to community wildfire preparedness is grounded in an integrated framework that connects three domains of action – the built environment, the surrounding landscape, and the community systems that organize people, institutions, and programs:

- The built environment includes buildings, structures and critical infrastructure that can be designed, retrofitted, or maintained to reduce vulnerability.
- The surrounding landscape includes forests, shrublands, and grasslands where wildfire can ignite and spread, including areas within and near the wildland urban interface.
- The community domain includes leaders and groups working together to plan, prioritize, coordinate, implement, and adaptively manage actions to build wildfire resilience. These actions include strengthening preparedness through improvements to the built environment and surrounding landscapes, protecting public health and safety, planning for evacuations, and initiating recovery functions that determine whether communities can safely and sustainably coexist with fire.




Community wildfire preparedness also depends on coordinated delivery at statewide, regional, and local levels:

- **CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal** plays a central leadership role by establishing statewide standards and guidance for the built environment, building and maintaining shared data and reporting systems, aligning program

requirements, providing grants and technical assistance, and ensuring coordination across state, federal, tribal, and local partners.

- **Regional and local organizations** including counties, fire safe councils, and wildfire prevention authorities establish wildfire resilience programs in their areas, which often include wildfire mitigations, evacuation planning, smoke preparedness, and land use planning.
- **Local governments, tribes, and community-based organizations** implement and sustain work on the ground through neighborhood outreach and assistance, parcel- and community-scale risk reduction, and ongoing community readiness.

## KEY ACTIONS TO PREPARE COMMUNITIES FOR WILDFIRE

### A. Harden Buildings and Ensure Defensible Space

**Key Finding:** Wildfire risk reduction must be accelerated near homes, businesses, and infrastructure by expanding proven measures that reduce risks, prevent building and structure loss, and protect firefighter and public safety. These actions include creating and maintaining defensible space, expanding home hardening, and improving data and tools that are used to target and evaluate investments to reduce wildfire risks in the built environment. In particular, overwhelming evidence demonstrates that maintaining an ember-resistant area around buildings ("Zone Zero") is critical to improve the safety and resilience of homes and businesses.

California has strong data and analytics to understand how fire moves through vegetation, which provides a solid foundation to prioritize programs and projects across our landscapes. However, data and modeling to fully understand fire behavior in the

built environment are limited, which constrains the ability to target and prioritize programs and projects within our communities.

The Palisades and Eaton fires of 2025 demonstrated that a wildland fire can quickly transform into an urban fire depending on the level of community preparedness. A top priority for the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) and its partners is to develop data, analysis, and modeling to understand how to target and optimize strategies including home hardening, defensible space, and vegetation management within and around communities.

### *Key Actions*

- **2.1 Adopt regulations for "Zone Zero":** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board of Forestry) will complete public engagement and rulemaking for new ember-resistant zone standards that apply within five feet of structures. CAL FIRE will support education and outreach and provide compliance assistance for homeowners.
- **2.2 Establish data standards for structural vulnerability and risk modeling:** CAL FIRE will define statewide data collection standards to assess the vulnerability of structures to ignition. These data standards will enable counties and regional partners to model structure-to-structure fire spread, develop neighborhood-level risk assessments, prioritize investments to reduce risk within communities, and integrate programs to reduce fire risks within communities with insurance and broader wildfire resilience programs.

## B. Strengthen Community-Wide Preparedness Programs

**Key Finding:** Home hardening, defensible space, and fuels reduction are most effective when applied across a large share of buildings and parcels in a neighborhood or community. Reducing fire risk of buildings and parcels across an entire neighborhood or portion of a community reduces ember exposure, limits structure ignitions, and reduces structure-to-structure fire spread. Achieving this scale of coverage requires ongoing community and county capacity to plan and prioritize high-impact actions; coordinate across local governments, agencies, tribes, and community groups; sustain outreach and assistance for residents; and maintain preparedness for evacuations and smoke.

### *Key Actions*

- **2.3 Build the County Wildfire Preparedness Program:** Building on the California Fire Safe Council's (CFSC) Wildfire County Coordinators Program, CAL FIRE will develop a County Wildfire Preparedness Program to further strengthen local capacity to plan, prioritize, and implement wildfire mitigation and preparedness actions.
- **2.4 Establish Community Wildfire Protection Plans as the key platform to coordinate community preparedness:** The County Wildfire Preparedness Program will support counties Community Wildfire Protection Plan The program will support

counties to develop updated Community Wildfire Protection Plans. These County-level plans will identify community-level mitigation priorities. Wildfire County Coordinators will continue to serve as key local leads and inform CAL FIRE and CFSC, which will develop additional tools and resources to support local, tribal, and cross-agency planning and program integration. Also see Key Action 3.2 on developing county-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

- **2.5 Establish statewide targets and implementation plan for community wildfire resilience:** CAL FIRE, in coordination with Task Force partners, will establish statewide targets for community wildfire preparedness and track progress to achieve these targets with shared data systems.
- **2.6 Develop a neighborhood wildfire mitigation validation program:** CAL FIRE, in partnership with local governments, will develop and pilot "Firewise Plus" – a new neighborhood-level wildfire mitigation validation program that builds on Firewise USA to validate the level and scape of protective actions taken for buildings and parcels across an entire neighborhood. This program will help to assess whether mitigation actions in the built environment have been achieved at a scale effective to limit neighborhood-wide ignition risks.
- **2.7 Support University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources' (UC ANR's) Fire Network Program:** CAL FIRE will continue to support, as funding allows, UC ANR's Fire Network Program, which delivers science-based expertise to communities about wildfire preparedness, post-fire recovery, workforce development, and land stewardship.
- **2.8 Develop community wildfire metrics:** CAL FIRE, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), in partnership with the California Wildfire Commons, will develop a standardized set of measurements that identify the exposure and vulnerability of a community to wildfire, and assess outcomes to build that community's resilience. These metrics will enable more targeted actions and help assess improvements more accurately, and complement the California Landscape Metrics which assess vulnerability and actions across the state's landscape to reduce risks.
- **2.9 Prepare for smoke:** The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the California Air Resources Board (CARB), in partnership with local air districts and the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, will improve notifications on smoke hazards and coordinate and expand the equitable distribution of information to prepare for and protect against smoke exposure.
- **2.10 Prepare for evacuations**: The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), in partnership with local jurisdictions, will continue to expand regional evacuation zones, improve multilingual alert systems, and provide resources to integrate evacuation planning into local hazard mitigation and emergency operations plans. CAL FIRE will support integration of evacuations plans into Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) and the Safety Elements of local General Plans.

## C. Limit Unwanted Ignitions


**Key Finding:** Reducing fire ignitions is critical to limit community threats from wildfires, particularly under dangerous weather conditions that pose the greatest risk to life and property when suppression is difficult. In the Southern California and Central Coast regions unwanted ignitions, especially along roadways and utility corridors, account for nearly all extreme wind-driven fires that have harmed life and property. Reducing unwanted ignitions includes managing vegetation around powerlines, hardening infrastructure to reduce the potential for sparks, reducing flammability of roadsides and utility corridors, and expanding early detection technologies to quickly catch fires that do start.

### *Key Actions*

- **2.11 Implement utility wildfire mitigation plans:** Public and investor-owned electrical utilities, overseen by the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety), will continue to implement their annually updated Wildfire Mitigation Plans on a rolling basis.
- **2.12 Standardize metrics for utility project reporting:** Energy Safety, CNRA, CAL FIRE, and the Task Force's Monitoring, Reporting, and Assessment Work Group, in coordination with electrical utilities, will align metrics that track and report utility vegetation management and other wildfire mitigation actions to ensure full and consistent reporting in the Interagency Treatment Dashboard.
- **2.13 Improve local and statewide data on ignition risk:** CAL FIRE, Caltrans, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and USFS, in coordination with regional partners, non-profit organizations, utilities, local fire departments, and research institutions, will improve the collection and application of ignition data to help prioritize investments to harden infrastructure, manage roadside vegetation that serves as wildfire fuel, and plan improvements that protect public safety.

- **2.14 Expand roadside treatments along highways and local roads:** Caltrans will expand its Vegetation Management Program (VMP) within the Division of Maintenance to reduce roadside ignition risk to protect public safety and ecological health; develop VMP guidelines, highway-specific treatment objectives, and a science-based methodology to inform projects and maintenance activities; and develop localized prescriptions for roadside treatments in coordination with other roadside land managers.
- **2.15 Expand regional partnerships to reduce wildfire ignitions:** Modeled after the Southern California Ignition Reduction Program (SCIRP), USFS, BLM, CAL FIRE, DOC, Caltrans, and local agencies will develop additional regional partnerships to reduce human-caused wildfire ignitions, particularly along roadways. SCIRP's vision – a future where Southern California fires are limited to natural or beneficial ignitions and roadways are lined with ignition-resistant materials and native plants – will serve as a model for expansion statewide.

## D. Focus Landscape Treatments Around Communities and Infrastructure

**Key Finding:** Reducing wildfire risks to people and property is most effective when landscape treatments are located where fires threaten communities and critical infrastructure. Prioritizing strategically placed and regularly maintained fuel treatments around high-hazard areas reduces ember exposure and fire intensity, improves firefighter access and operational options, and helps maintain power, transportation, water, and communications during extreme events. Strategic fuel treatments, including fuel breaks, also facilitate the expanded use of beneficial fire in areas where it is a priority. Fire management units known as PODs (Potential Operational Delineations) identify the most effective locations for landscape treatments and connect them to safe and effective fire response operations. These PODs provide the basis for shared operational planning across state, federal, tribal, and local fire managers.

### *Key Actions*

- **2.16 Expand strategic fuel break networks**: CAL FIRE, Caltrans, USFS, BLM, Calforests, and regional and local partners including industrial private landowners will accelerate efforts to develop a comprehensive statewide network of strategically placed fuel breaks to protect communities, infrastructure and critical landscapes.
- **2.17 Establish PODs:** CAL FIRE will collaborate with the USFS, BLM, tribes, and other partners to develop a comprehensive, community-informed network of PODs. These PODs will help to prioritize locations to place strategic fuel breaks, fuel reduction project, ignition reduction priorities, and opportunities for beneficial fire. CAL FIRE will integrate PODs into its Unit Plans and other regional planning efforts as appropriate.
- **2.18 Advance the Utility Wildfire Resilience Partnership:** Energy Safety and CAL FIRE will partner with electrical utilities to coordinate the timing and location of

vegetation management and fuel reduction projects to align efforts and strengthen the effectiveness of these projects. This partnership will also include land managers, tribes, Regional Partners, and local organizations to coordinate their respective investments and landscape treatments. This effort will share relevant data and regional wildfire resilience planning across CWPPs, Regional Priority Plans, federal plans, and other relevant frameworks. This effort will also identify funding opportunities to support collaboration among communities, tribes, and regional partners on utility wildfire mitigation efforts. Proposition 4 funds will support pilot project coordination, planning, and implementation.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

# Mobilizing Regional Action

PUBLIC DRAFT - JUNE, 2026

# 3. Mobilizing Regional Action

In the 2021 Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) initiated a regional approach to California's wildfire and landscape health crisis, tailored to the unique risks, challenges, and institutional structures across the state's diverse regions. A regional approach delivers:

- **Sharper investment focus:** State and federal funds are targeted to each region's specific risks and priorities.
- **Faster coordinated funding and implementation:** Coordinated regional pipelines of projects reduce duplication and align programs, and queue up shovel-ready projects.
- **Durable capacity:** Local and regional organizations are built and sustained so work continues year after year.
- **Cross-boundary results:** Multi-benefit and multi-jurisdictional projects are completed at a large landscape scale.
- **Public backing:** Local and regional support for resilience efforts grows through aligning shared priorities and making clear visible progress on the ground.

Building upon this progress and lessons learned over the past five years, the Task Force is updating the Regional Framework launched in 2021, to bring together actions that promote resilient landscapes, fire-adapted communities, and safe, effective, risk-based wildfire response.

The updated Regional Framework will accelerate and better align the efforts of federal, state, tribal, local, and private organizations at every stage of work to improve the resilience of California's landscapes and communities. As described below, this framework has five key components:


A. **Improve Planning:** Launch a statewide network of Regional Priority Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and five-year interagency project pipelines of coordinated work.
B. **Streamline Environmental Review and Permitting:** Establish a new streamlined regulatory framework to formalize the state's highly effective emergency suspension process and build on Cutting Green Tape, CalVTP, and proven emergency regulatory improvements.
C. **Expand Implementation Partnerships and Capacity:** Expand interagency and private partnerships, particularly with the USDA Forest Service (USFS) through Good Neighbor Authority and related agreements.
D. **Modernize Reporting:** Track outcomes with common metrics and public dashboards, enable plan evaluation, and apply lessons learned to improve performance.
E. **Align Funding:** Expand multi-year large-scale grants that fund regional programs of work, leverage state and federal resources, and enable innovative financing.

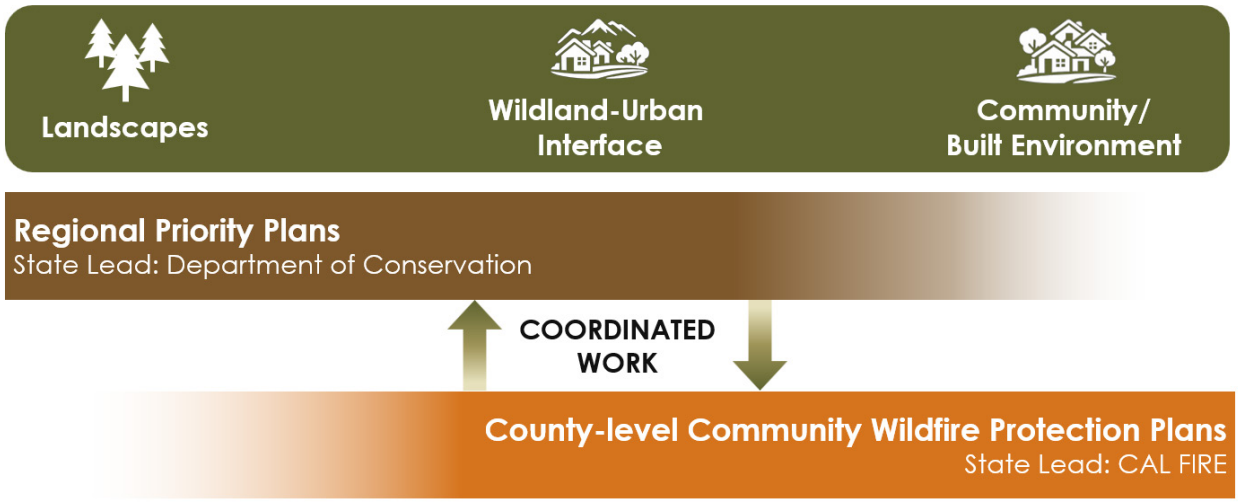
# KEY ACTIONS FOR ACCELERATING REGIONAL ACTION

## A. Improve Planning

Historically, each land management agency has developed its own process for planning and prioritizing projects based on unique missions and mandates, which has made it difficult to coordinate and integrate local and regional projects, and to build a comprehensive interagency pipeline of projects. For example, the USFS had maintained a regional system of four zones that did not align with Task Force regions, the Department of Conservation's (DOC) network of Regional Fire and Forest Capacity (RFFC) Partnerships, CAL FIRE's units, or Caltrans' districts. Even where planning efforts have been coordinated, reporting and information-sharing processes still vary across agencies and scales, contributing to coordination challenges.

To facilitate more integrated planning, the Task Force established a statewide network of regions and subregions, largely based on the existing network of RFFC Partnerships, in collaboration with the USFS to improve alignment. This network forms the foundation for integrated regional planning and priority-setting for landscape resilience. For community wildfire preparation, counties will take on a growing role in aligning the work of local governments, nonprofit organizations, and fire safe councils.

Regional Priority Plans and County-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans work hand in hand. RPPs generally focus on landscape-scale resilience and follow boundaries shaped by landscape collaboratives and administrative units, while CWPPs primarily focus on community wildfire preparation and follow county lines. Their geographies will more frequently overlap rather than match, tightly coupled in some areas and coordinated in parallel in others, so that together they address resilience needs from the wildland to the community.




### *Key Actions*

- **3.1 Develop Regional Priority Plans:** DOC, in coordination with CAL FIRE, USFS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), tribes, regional and subregional Partnerships, and others, will invest in the development, maintenance, and evaluation of Regional Priority Plans, and support the development of interagency five-year programs of work and spatially explicit project pipelines in every Task Force subregion by 2027. These rolling five-year programs of work will be anchored in Regional Priority Plans and the ongoing work of forest and landscape collaboratives throughout the state. Each program of work will be refreshed annually and will include:
  - Spatially explicit interagency pipelines of projects planned over five to ten years, backed by decision-support tools or other science-based methods for planning and priority-setting.
  - Projected costs for planned projects and related activities.
- **3.2 Develop County-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans:** Building upon the California Fire Safe Council's (CFSC) Wildfire County Coordinators Program, CAL FIRE will develop a County Wildfire Preparedness Program to further expand the capacity of counties and support their development of County-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) Through this program, counties will prepare or update County-level CWPPs on a five-year cycle. Also see Key Actions 2.3 through 2.5 on strengthening community-wide preparedness programs.

- **3.3 Expand investments in planning and technical assistance:** DOC, CAL FIRE, and other state agencies will expand investments and targeted technical assistance to build the capacity of regional and tribal partners to develop and implement Regional Priority Plans and County-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans. This support will help regions develop organizational infrastructure, project planning and implementation skills, program development expertise, and adopt novel approaches and technologies needed to accelerate wildfire resilience work.
- **3.4 Update California Landscape Metrics and develop new California Community Metrics:** The Task Force, in collaboration with the Science Advisory Panel and state and federal partners, will continue to maintain and improve the core set of planning datasets for landscape health and wildfire resilience known as the California Landscape Metrics. Additionally, as described in Key Action 2.6 CAL FIRE, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), in partnership with the California Wildfire Commons, will develop and introduce a complementary suite of California Community Metrics to help target mitigations and measure community wildfire preparedness outcomes.
- **3.5 Expand tools and platforms to strengthen regional decision-making and shared planning:** The Task Force will work with the regional and subregional leads to make available decision-support tools, landscape and community metrics, shared outcome-based measures, and other science-based tools to prioritize and evaluate projects and expected outcomes.

## B. Streamline Environmental Review and Permitting

California has streamlined permitting and environmental reviews through Cutting Green Tape, the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), and emergency authorities. In March 2025, the Governor proclaimed a statewide emergency that temporarily suspended multiple statutes and regulations to fast-track fuels reduction and related permits. CNRA and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) then established an online fast-tracking process that delivered state approvals in as little as 30 days with clear environmental safeguards. This emergency process provided a framework for making permitting faster, more predictable, and better aligned across agencies. Federal land management agencies are aligning with this approach by expanding the use of streamlining tools that speed project approvals while maintaining environmental safeguards.

### *Key Actions:*

- **3.6 Update and expand CalVTP:** As described in the Governor's 2025 Wildfire Prevention Projects State of Emergency proclamation, the Board of Forestry will update the CalVTP Program EIR to increase CalVTP's efficiency in enabling rapid environmental review of large, complex vegetation management projects, and

to better address regional differences in risk reduction needs. The update may include extending CalVTP coverage to the Local Responsibility Area, expanding automatic permit enrollments, facilitating projects in the coastal zone, enabling projects to benefit from combined California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approvals, and adding coverage for projects with biomass cost-recovery components. It will also include provisions for managing vegetation-related wildfire risk in non-forested landscapes, such as treatments that reduce ignition and minimize type conversion in shrublands.

- **3.7 Expedite state permitting and environmental review:** The Task Force, in coordination with CNRA, CalEPA, and the Board of Forestry will explore options for establishing a durable framework for streamlining approval of fuel reduction, beneficial fire, and other wildfire resilience projects modeled after the process enabled by the Governor's March 1, 2025, State of Emergency proclamation which expired May 1, 2026. A durable framework for streamlined wildfire mitigation may require statutory changes for consideration by the Legislature.
- **3.8 Streamline Timber Harvest Plan (THP) Review Process:** The Board of Forestry, building upon the recent independent evaluation of the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) review process, will convene a workgroup of key agencies and stakeholders to identify and implement improvements to further streamline permit timelines, including better aligning submission requirements and reducing redundancies in the review of timber harvest permits and related permits by regional water quality control boards and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).
- **3.9 Expedite federal permitting and environmental review:** USFS and BLM, in coordination with the Task Force and state partners, will implement complementary federal streamlining tools, including expanded use of categorical exclusions, programmatic NEPA, and time-bounded reviews. This work will be coordinated with tribes, local governments, and stakeholders to ensure transparency and environmental protection.

## C. Expand Implementation Partnerships and Capacity

Public and private partnerships are vital for land managers to accomplish their missions, increase productivity, enhance collaboration, and deliver large, multi-jurisdictional landscape-scale projects. Partners of the USFS, for example, include nonprofit and for-profit entities; rural, urban, and tribal communities; universities; land management agencies; and many more. These partners provide localized expertise and workforce capacity, help engage underserved communities, provide historical and traditional ecological knowledge, facilitate public outreach and education, and bring experience in project management, among other skills and resources. With shrinking budgets at the state and federal levels, these partnerships are needed more than ever to sustain momentum in reaching the goals of the Action Plan.

### *Key Actions*

- **3.10 Expand shared stewardship and partnership agreements:** CAL FIRE, CNRA, Calforests, USFS, BLM, and other state, federal, and tribal land managers will expand the use of long-term stewardship authorities, including Good Neighbor Authority Agreements, to enable cross-boundary planning, contracting, and implementation.
- **3.11 Conduct statewide capacity assessment:** DOC, in coordination with regional partners, will conduct a statewide capacity assessment to evaluate existing capacity and identify gaps in delivering wildfire resilience projects, including needs for additional staffing, expertise, or organizational development. The assessment will identify where and how to expand tribal and local capacity to better meet the state's goals and will guide future investments to ensure each region has the necessary resources and infrastructure to sustain an accelerated pace of work.

## D. Modernize Reporting

Historically, state and federal agencies have focused on activity-based metrics (e.g., acres treated, number of inspections) rather than outcomes. Activity metrics are useful for tracking effort, but they do not show whether projects are reducing risk or improving ecological conditions. The Task Force is aligning outcome-focused reporting so agencies can consistently assess effectiveness and track progress toward shared goals and targets. As described in *1. Landscape Resilience Strategy*, initial shared outcome-based measures span forests, shrublands, communities, biodiversity, watersheds, carbon and recreation.

### *Key Actions:*

- **3.12 Shift to outcome-based measures:** The Task Force, in coordination with the USFS, state agencies, Science Advisory Panel, and the Monitoring, Reporting and Assessment (MRA) Work Group will continue to develop a comprehensive set of shared outcome-based measures to assess the benefits of public and private investments. The MRA Work Group will develop a comprehensive monitoring plan for the Action Plan, including recommended data sources, models, and methodologies for tracking changes in the measures. These measures will provide a continuous and standardized reporting framework on wildfire resilience accomplishments and outcomes tied to the Action Plan's goals and targets.
- **3.13 Enhance dashboards and shared reporting:** Building on the Interagency Treatment Dashboard, the Task Force will expand public dashboards to report on shared community and landscape resilience targets, project implementation, and progress against five-year programs of work.
- **3.14 Expand the California Wildfire Commons**: UC San Diego will partner with the Task Force and other public, nonprofit, and private partners to continue

expanding the California Wildfire Commons to provide a federated, jointly-governed open-science platform that enables stakeholders to discover, access, and use data related to community and landscape wildfire risk, treatments, fuels, weather, fire behavior, and outcomes.

## E. Align Funding

Since 2021, state agencies have funded more than 2,000 individual wildfire resilience projects, mostly through competitive grants. This approach has delivered priority work but makes it difficult for regional partnerships to maintain staffing, plan multi-year pipelines, and scale implementation. Multiple applications, mismatched timelines, and fragmented reporting requirements add further cost and delay. Building off RFFC block grants, CAL FIRE and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's (SNC) landscape grant pilots, and proven models like USFS' Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, wildfire resilience funders will create an interagency pool of multi-year, portfolio-based funding with simpler delivery and streamlined administrative requirements.

Proposition 4 allows state departments to collaboratively fund projects at a landscape or multi-jurisdictional scale to achieve multi-benefit outcomes. State agencies can collaborate more efficiently when they have the ability to easily transfer funds to other state agencies to jointly fund large-scale projects. The Governor's proposed 2026-27 Budget includes Control Section language (15.04) that would authorize state agencies to shift funds from one or more state agencies to a designated primary agency to serve as the administrator for the project, thereby reducing administrative and cash flow barriers.

### *Key Actions:*

- **3.15 Provide regional landscape-scale grants:** CAL FIRE, DOC, SNC, and other funding agencies will operate landscape-scale grants and block grant programs that provide multi-year funding for regional programs of work. Agencies will collaborate with regional partners to adopt shared funding criteria and guidance tied to regional strategies, identified in regional plans, favoring multi-project, multi-year portfolios of multi-benefit projects to increase predictability and reduce administrative burden.
- **3.16 Enable pooled, landscape-scale funding using Proposition 4:** CNRA and participating departments will utilize Control Section 15.04 by identifying projects where funds can be combined and efficiently administered, and by developing process guidance and agreement templates.
- **3.17 Streamline funding delivery:** CNRA and its departments (in partnership with other state and federal funding entities) will continue to coordinate the rollout of Proposition 4 Climate Bond funding and other sources with guidance that simplifies funding pathways, ensures community input and transparency, standardizes reporting and administration, and increases flexibility to combine funding sources.

- **3.18 Broaden funding pathways:** DOC, CAL FIRE, and other funding agencies, in coordination with regional partners, will pilot and promote innovative funding mechanisms to supplement traditional public grants and attract new sources of capital for regional implementation. Potential approaches include expanding public-private partnerships and conservation finance models such as forest resilience bonds.

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