



CALIFORNIA  
WILDFIRE & FOREST RESILIENCE  
TASK FORCE

# KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON WILDFIRE & LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE

TACKLING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS WITH  
NATION-LEADING RESULTS



JUNE 2026



Governor Newsom took office shortly after several of the most destructive and deadly fires in California history, including the Camp and Woolsey Fires in Butte and Los Angeles counties. He immediately directed CAL FIRE to carry out 35 priority projects to protect the state's most vulnerable communities, suspended CEQA review to accelerate their completion, and declared wildfire resilience a top priority of his administration.

Soon after, Governor Newsom established the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force), a coalition of state, federal, local, tribal, and private organizations that have collectively made swift progress to protect communities from the unprecedented threats of catastrophic wildfire and climate change, while ensuring the long-term health of California's natural landscapes.

In January 2021, the Task Force released the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. This marked the nation's first interagency wildfire resilience plan and identified 99 key actions to protect the state's diverse and invaluable communities and landscapes. California has moved quickly to achieve these goals, with 100 percent of the 99 key actions outlined in the plan either underway or completed.

With the 2021 Action Plan serving as a roadmap, California has increased spending on wildfire resilience to make a real impact on-the-ground protecting communities and landscapes across the state. Since 2021, Task Force partners have:

- Surged wildfire resilience investments to more than \$6 billion;
- Doubled down on community protection, leading the nation with over 1,500 local Firewise USA® communities;
- Funded more than 2,000 wildfire resilience projects;
- Increased wildfire resilience treatments to over 700,000 acres annually;
- Nearly doubled prescribed fire statewide with roughly 200,000 acres treated annually;
- Improved data sharing and public transparency through a first-of-its-kind Interagency Treatment Dashboard, that displays completed vegetation management projects across the state; and
- Supported tribal stewardship and cultural fire through the Governor signed SB 310.

## 1. LANDSCAPE WILDFIRE RESILIENCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Catastrophic wildfires put California's rich and unique biodiversity in peril. In addition to reducing wildfire risk to communities, wildfire resilience projects are enhancing biodiversity, safeguarding water and air quality, protecting wildlife habitat, reforesting lands, and storing carbon. To most effectively leverage landscape resilience investments, California is prioritizing treating high-hazard landscapes, areas with frequent ignitions, and unhealthy forests vulnerable to mass mortality:

- Collectively, Task Force partners treated over 3.7 million activity acres with federal and local partners between 2021 and 2024, including over 1 million activity acres of treatments across 733,000 footprint acres in 2024.
- Since 2023, U.S. National Forests across California have reported accomplishing over 784,000 acres of hazardous fuels reduction work.



- CAL FIRE has awarded more than \$500 million for 150 restoration and reforestation projects since 2021 through its Forest Health Grant Program.
- Since 2018, CAL FIRE awarded more than \$48.6 million for 116 research projects covering a wide range of forest and wildfire management issues through its [Forest Health Research Program](#).
- Since 2021, the USDA Pacific Southwest Research Station provided \$10 million for more than 20 research projects in California on a wide range of forest and wildfire management issues.
- California has invested more than \$9.6 billion since 2020 to harness the power of nature to build resilience to climate impacts with nation-leading strategies that prioritize nature-based solutions (NBS), including:
  - [California's 2024 NBS Climate Targets](#)
  - [California's 2022 Scoping Plan to Achieve Carbon Neutrality by 2045](#).
  - [California's 2022 California's Natural and Working Lands \(NWL\) Climate Smart Strategy](#)
  - [California's 2024 Climate Adaptation Strategy](#)

## A. Prioritizing Treating High-Hazard Landscapes

**California is increasingly prioritizing treatments in the highest wildfire hazard landscapes—where ignitions, fuel loads, and ecological vulnerability are greatest—to maximize risk reduction and achieve more meaningful improvements in landscape resilience:**

- California is prioritizing treating areas with the high risk of human ignitions, including along roadways.
- The Task Force is partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, CNRA, University of California, and Google.org to develop and expand [Planscape](#), a free, open-source decision-support tool that helps land managers maximize identify areas for treatment to maximize wildfire resilience and ecological benefits.
- In December 2025, the California Natural Resources Agency in partnership with the California Air Resources Board, NASA Ames Research Center, and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force [released the state's first-ever statewide LiDAR maps](#), providing data on forest and vegetation conditions, enabling tribes, researchers, land managers, and community partners to incorporate the free data products into their own tools, models, and planning processes to improve our ability to target wildfire resilience projects with the greatest impact.

## B. Expanding Beneficial Fire

"California's landscapes are, and always have been, shaped by fire. It's not a question of whether these places will burn; it's a question of when and how. Now is the time to elevate the voices of California's Indigenous and local communities—the original stewards of fire—and to work together to bring beneficial fire back to California's landscapes and people."

**Lenya Quinn-Davidson, Director, UC ANR Fire Network**



## Expanding Pathways for More Good Fire

California continues to remove barriers and expand tools to dramatically increase the use of prescribed and cultural fire across the state:

- In early 2021, CAL FIRE established the [State-Certified Prescribed Fire Burn Boss](#) program. As of December 2025, there were a total of 55 active State-Certified Prescribed-Fire Burn Bosses.
- The Task Force issued [California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire](#) (2022), a comprehensive roadmap to coordinate the efforts of state, federal, and tribal partners to scale up prescribed fire, cultural fire, and managed fire to meet the state's ecological, climate, public safety, public health, and cultural needs.
- [California's Nature Based Solutions Climate Targets](#) set goals for the state to treat 800,000 activity acres annually by 2030, 1.2M activity acres annually by 2038, and 1.5M activity acres annually by 2045.
- CAL FIRE released the first version of a [manual outlining field monitoring protocols](#) through the California Prescribed Fire Monitoring Program to assist land managers with unit selection, data collection, tools and technologies, data storage, and analysis procedures.
- CAL FIRE established a first-in-the-nation [Prescribed Fire Liability Claims Fund](#), backed with \$20 million in state funding, to accelerate beneficial fire on private lands by covering losses in the rare instance that a prescribed or cultural burn escapes control. More recently, the fund expanded to allow enrollment by Resource Conservation Districts and Volunteer Fire Departments and Districts. As of December 2025, 261 projects covering over 38,000 acres have been enrolled in the claims fund, and at least two private insurers are offering supplemental insurance for private burners that are enrolled in the fund.
- In September 2024, Governor Newsom signed [SB 310](#), which respects tribal sovereignty and reduces barriers for California Native American tribes to conduct cultural burns in their ancestral territories. [The Karuk Tribe and CNRA entered into the landmark SB 310 Cultural Fire agreement](#) in February 2025. As part of this effort, the Tribe and CNRA developed a template agreement for other tribes to utilize and education materials to support government-to-government collaboration in advancing cultural fire.
- In September 2024, Governor Newsom signed [SB 1101](#), which streamlines CAL FIRE's contracting and procurement processes to support beneficial fire.
- In March 2025, Governor Newsom [proclaimed a state of emergency on wildfire](#) that directed CNRA and CalEPA to provide recommendations to increase the pace and scale of beneficial fire. In December 2025, the Governor [extended the proclamation](#) to continue the state's record pace to approve and implement wildfire projects.
- In October 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [issued policy guidance](#) directing regional offices to work with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to remove barriers in State Implementation Plans that discourage prescribed fires.
- In October 2025, [Governor Newsom signed an executive order](#) directing state agencies to reduce red tape and expand tools to safely deploy beneficial fire projects. The order supports collaborative efforts to update beneficial fire permitting, address air quality



concerns associated with smoke, and enable resource conservation districts and other entities to carry out beneficial fire projects. Just six months later, [State agencies have moved quickly to provide immediate on-the-ground support](#) to local governments and fire practitioners to maximize beneficial fire use.

### Ramping up Beneficial Fire Treatments

California is rapidly increasing the pace and scale of prescribed and cultural burning through coordinated federal, state, and local action to meet ambitious acreage goals:

- Prescribed fire treatments nearly doubled between 2021 and 2023 in California. Federal, state, and local agencies completed nearly 220,000 acres of prescribed fire treatments in 2023.
- During the 2024 fiscal year, the U.S. Forest Service completed [a record 72,000 acres of prescribed burning](#) across California national forests.
- In May 2025, CAL FIRE, for the first time ever, met and exceeded its 50,000-acre goal for beneficial fire as outlined in the [California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire](#).

### Making Beneficial Fire Information Easier to Access Than Ever Before

California is improving transparency and public access to real-time data, tools, and educational resources to support safe and informed use of beneficial fire:

- In August 2023, the Task Force launched an [Interagency Treatment Dashboard](#) that provides transparency on the location of completed beneficial fire projects.
- CAL FIRE's [Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard](#) spotlights and documents how recent wildfire resilience projects, including prescribed burns, are protecting communities and landscapes when wildfire strikes.
- The California Air Resources Board's [Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System](#) (PFIRS) shows current ignitions across California. [The California Smoke Spotter app](#) provides a comprehensive overview of the latest information on prescribed fires, projected smoke impacts, current air quality, and educational material.
- In July 2024, the Climate & Wildfire Institute released [Intentionalfire.org](#), which provides information on the use of intentional fire, including prescribed fire and cultural fire. The website provides concise and easy to understand information about the benefits and importance of intentional fire. It also features engaging audio and video clips, project case studies, and actionable steps for people to help advance intentional fire in their communities.
- In early 2025, the Forest Service Southern California Wildfire Risk Reduction team launched [a new webpage](#) to share ongoing efforts across Southern California. The page features stories and videos celebrating successful fuels reduction treatments during the 2024 wildfires: [Lake Fire on the Los Padres](#), [Airport Fire on the Cleveland](#), [Bridge Fire on the Angeles](#), and [Line Fire on the San Bernardino National Forest](#).
- The [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) launched a series of new [Prescribed Fire, Smoke and Health web pages](#) to support local health departments receive and share notifications about local planned prescribed burns to help communities protect



themselves from smoke. They explain why the use of prescribed fire is increasing, share tools for tracking fires and smoke, [provide information on getting smoke ready](#), and share the results of [CAL FIRE-funded research on prescribed fire](#).

## C. Restoring Post-fire Landscapes

“Catastrophic wildfires are an existential threat to California’s forests. To support recovery and secure future forests, Task Force partners are working to address the reforestation backlog by increasing seed collection, seedling production, and planting.”

**Shelley Villalobos, California Reforestation Pipeline Partnership Manager, American Forests**

### California is accelerating reforestation, seed collection, and recovery programs to restore forests impacted by wildfire, drought, and pests:

- The Task Force partnered with American Forests, CAL FIRE, and USFS to develop a [Reforestation Pipeline Partnership](#) to ensure California has the capacity to actively reforest lands impacted by wildfires, drought, and pests.
- Since 2020, investments by CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service, NGOs, and private sector partners have supported between 247,000 and 505,000 acres of tree planting as part of active reforestation projects across all land ownerships statewide in addition to more than 400,000 acres of other reforestation activities, such as site preparation, across all land ownerships statewide.
- Since 2021, CAL FIRE and its federal partners have established 15 [Emergency Forest Restoration Teams \(EFRTs\)](#) across the state to rapidly restore forestlands after fires. EFRTs are helping small private landowners who otherwise may lack the funding, expertise, or time to recover their lands. Three pilot EFRTs established in response to the Dixie, Tamarack, and Caldor fires have already proved successful with over 9,000 acres treated and over 2,300 landowners enrolled.
- Since 2021, investments by CAL FIRE, U.S. Forest Service, NGOs, and private sector partners have expanded capacity for cone and seed collection, resulting in a 275% increase in public seed bank deposits from 2023 to 2024.
- In 2023, the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Department of Interior published [Reforestation Goals and Assessments, and a Climate-Informed Plan to Increase Federal Seed and Nursery Capacity](#) which includes an agency-specific target to reforest over 2.3 million acres nationwide by 2030. The report also includes an opportunity assessment of voluntary reforestation through federal programs and partnerships. (April 2023)
- The USFS published [Growing and Nurturing Resilient Forests: A Reforestation Strategy for the National Forest System](#) – a focused effort to address current and future forest needs on the nation’s forests.
- California has ramped up efforts to collect cones to enable reforestation with [a record 11,330 bushels](#) of seed-bearing cones at the state’s two public seed banks in 2024.
- In 2025, the USDA California Climate Hub and partners launched the [California Reforestation Toolshed website](#) which consolidates reforestation resources into one



location. The Toolshed includes [12 new California Climate-Informed Reforestation Guidance booklets](#) that provide regionally specific recommendations for site preparation, planting, and post-planting management.

## D. Supporting Tribal Stewardship

“This landscape evolved with fire. The structures that were here are just temporary...the only real guarantee we have is that fire is going to be here. So the real opportunity for us is to decide, what kind of fire do we want here?”

*Don Hankins, CSU Professor, Indigenous Stewardship Network*

**California is advancing tribal sovereignty and expanding cultural fire through landmark agreements, land return, dedicated funding, and sustained partnerships that strengthen ecosystem health and wildfire resilience:**

- Since 2023 CAL FIRE has awarded \$29 million of Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grants to 21 tribes and tribal organizations. These projects [support California Native American tribes with managing ancestral lands and promoting wildfire resilience](#).
- Since 2023, the U.S. Forest Service has awarded over \$9 million in [Community Wildfire Defense Grant](#) funding to tribes, to plan for and mitigate wildfire risk on tribal lands — including the [Chicken Ranch Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians](#), the [Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians](#), and the [Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation](#). Additionally, the Forest Service has continued to strengthen its relationship with tribal partners through cultural burns, including:
  - The Painted Cave Prescribed Fire, a collaboration between the Los Padres National Forest, Santa Barbara County, and the Santa Ynez band of Chumash Indians to accomplish 75 acres.
  - Sierra National Forest Cultural Burn, a collaboration with the North Fork Mono Tribe under the leadership of chairman Ron Goode, accomplished 10.5 acres focused on applying Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge to support cultural tradition and fire regimes.
- In September 2024, Governor Newsom signed [SB 310](#), which supports tribal sovereignty by enabling California Native American tribes to conduct cultural burns on ancestral territories. In March 2025, [the Karuk Tribe and CNRA entered into a landmark cultural burning agreement](#) as part of SB 310.
- In 2024 CNRA awarded \$107.7 million to fund 33 projects and support the return of approximately 38,950 acres of land to California Native American tribes through the [Tribal Nature-Based Solutions](#) grant program.
- CAL FIRE has supported 14 cultural burning workshops across the state to demonstrate tribal culture and the effectiveness of cultural burning.
- In March 2024, the Karuk Tribe released [Good Fire II](#), a report that identifies recommendations to expand cultural burning in California.



- In March 2024, the Yurok Tribe, Save the Redwoods League, the National Park Service and California State Parks [signed the first-ever cooperative arrangement for the National Park Service and California State Parks on Tribe-owned land](#).
- In June 2025, the Yurok Tribe regained over 47,000 acres of ancestral forestland along the Klamath River — the largest single land return in California history.
- In October 2025, the Tule River Indian Tribe of California [reclaimed over 17,000 acres](#) in the Sierra Nevada foothills, the largest ancestral land return in the history of the region.
- In March 2026, CNRA launched the state's first-ever [Tribal Stewardship Policy](#), establishing a statewide goal of expanding tribal stewardship over at least 7.5 million acres of lands and coastal waters in California. The Policy sets clear standards to institutionalize meaningful and durable tribal-state partnerships and advance tribal stewardship through tribal access, collaboration, and ancestral land return.

## E. Expanding Workforce and Career Development Pathways

"The ambitious suite of actions set forth by the Task Force require an empowered and trained workforce to back them. By providing training opportunities and supporting employee well-being, satisfaction, performance, and growth, we can build the workforce necessary to confront California's wildfire crisis."

*Allison Jolley, Watershed Research and Training Center*

### California is strengthening forest-sector workforce development and wood product markets to support restoration and rural economies:

- In 2022, the Task Force Workforce Development Work Group released an [assessment of current and future workforce needs of California's forest and wood products sectors](#), providing guidance for investments in training and vocational programs.
- Since 2022, CAL FIRE has awarded approximately \$55 million in [Workforce Development Grants](#) to educational institutions, tribes, and non-profits.
- Between 2022 and 2024, CAL FIRE awarded approximately \$130 million in [Business and Workforce Development Grants](#) to educational institutions, non-profits, new business startups, and existing forestry and forest products businesses.
- In 2024, California's Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank) invested \$25 million from the [Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund](#) in the [California Wildfire Innovation Fund](#) to accelerate projects in the state's forest restoration and wood utilization sectors.
- In 2025, the Sierra Business Council and The Watershed Center released [Advancing Wildfire Resilience Workforce and Career Development in California](#), which outlines recommendations to build and retain the human capacity necessary to scale up wildfire resilience efforts – while also creating good jobs, strengthening local economies, and promoting wildfire resilience across the state.



## F. Expanding Wood Utilization

"By mobilizing investments in forest health projects and tying funds to the movement of forest thinning material, downstream wood product markets can flourish."

*Andy Miller, Chief Executive Officer, Loamist*

**California is expanding wood utilization by investing in forest product businesses, biomass and biofuel innovation, and market development programs that create productive uses for forest residues and support the scale of forest restoration:**

- Since 2021, the U.S. Forest Service has awarded over \$43 million in [Wood Innovation Grants](#) in California to spur wood products manufacturing, expand active forest management, and accelerate energy innovation across America's timber-producing communities.
- Since 2022, CAL FIRE has awarded more than \$75 million [Business Development](#) Grants, to non-profits, new business startups, and existing forestry and forest product businesses.
- In September 2024, the IBank Climate Catalyst Revolving Loan Fund announced [approval of \\$25 million to support financing for projects in the biomass utilization sector](#).
- In 2023, DOC's [Forest Biomass to Carbon-Negative Biofuels Pilot Program](#) awarded \$4 million for projects that convert sustainably sourced forest waste to carbon-negative biofuels.
- The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI)'s Feedstock Aggregation Pilot Program launched [five pilot projects](#) to develop regional strategies to establish reliable access to sustainably sourced woody feedstock.
- LCI's [Forest Sector Market Development Program](#) diverts forest residues for productive use, which can help increase the pace and scale of forest restoration.
- The California Public Utilities Commission's [Bioenergy Renewable Auction Mechanism \(BioRAM\) program](#) requires California's investor-owned utilities to procure bioenergy from High Hazard Zone (HHZ) fuel to aid in mitigating the threat of wildfires.
- In March 2025, the President issued an [executive order](#) directing the U.S. Forest Service and BLM to accelerate ongoing federal programs to increase timber production in California by 25 percent over five years and streamline federal policies to enhance forest management, reduce wildfire risks, and decrease reliance on imported timber.
- In October 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [issued policy guidance](#) directing regional offices to work with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to remove barriers in State Implementation Plans that discourage prescribed fires.
- In 2026, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded a \$14.7 million grant to the Tule River Tribe to construct a [biochar production plant](#) in California's Central Valley that will also have the capacity to generate renewable electricity and process up to 31,500 tons of woody residue annually.



## G. Aligning Programs Across Ecosystems and Land Ownerships

California is coordinating strategies across sectors and land ownerships to ensure wildfire resilience efforts are integrated, science-based, and mutually reinforcing.

### Increasing the Use of Prescribed Grazing

"Prescribed livestock grazing is one of our most effective, large-scale vegetation management tools for protecting California's communities and ecosystems from wildfire. By tapping into local grazing knowledge and working across ownership boundaries, we can build healthier and more resilient landscapes."

*Leslie Roche, Professor of Cooperative Extension in Rangeland Management, UC Davis*

### California is expanding prescribed grazing as a cost-effective, landscape-scale vegetation management tool to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest and rangeland health:

- In September 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Senate Bill 675](#) into law, establishing a local assistance grant program to promote prescribed grazing as a tool for wildfire prevention and forest health.
- University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) is supporting prescribed grazing implementation through hands-on trainings, field days, and grazing demonstrations.
- In March 2025, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) published a [Guidebook and Management Action Plan Templates](#) to assist land managers in meeting vegetation management objectives while ensuring a sustainable grazing operation.
- In March 2025, members of the Task Force's Prescribed Grazing Work Group released [a report on expanding prescribed grazing for wildfire resilience in California](#).

### Improving the Resilience of State-Owned Lands

"California's state-owned lands protect a diversity of fire adapted ecosystems. The State-Owned Lands Strategy presents a roadmap that leverages the state's collective expertise to advance the restoration and stewardship of these critical lands while leading by example in California land management."

*Jay Chamberlin, Natural Resources Division Chief, California State Parks*

### State agencies are scaling up coordinated stewardship and restoration across public lands to reduce wildfire risk and strengthen ecosystem resilience:

- Collectively, State agencies are treating over 425,000 acres of state-owned lands annually.
- Since 2021, the Task Force's [State-Owned Lands Working Group](#) has established a partnership uniting 11 state entities in leveraging resources to achieve the shared goal



of scaling up stewardship and restoration of natural and working lands to increase wildfire resilience across the state.

## Providing Assistance to Small Private Landowners

“Private forest landowners are often the missing link in connecting wildfire treatments across fragmented landscapes. The Task Force and its partners have been critical in aligning landowner assistance programs to deliver real results, often in partnership with resource conservation districts (RCDs), which serve as the local boots on the ground.”

*Sophia Lemmo, Forestry and Fire Director, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts*

### California is delivering technical, financial, and educational support to empower small forest landowners to implement wildfire resilience and post-fire recovery projects:

- Since 2021, CAL FIRE has assisted 2,398 private forestland owners across 12,615 acres through Wildfire Resilience Block Grants and [California Forest Improvement Program \(CFIP\)](#).
- The University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) [offers educational resources](#) and established [Forest Stewardship Workshops](#) to assist residents and landowners manage forestlands for wildfire resilience.
- Since 2021, CAL FIRE and its federal partners have established 15 [Emergency Forest Restoration Teams \(EFRTs\)](#) across the state to rapidly restore private forestlands after fires. EFRTs are helping small private landowners who otherwise may lack the funding, expertise, or time to recover their lands. Three pilot EFRTs established in response to the Dixie, Tamarack, and Caldor fires have already proved successful with over 9,000 acres treated and over 2,300 landowners enrolled.
- In November 2025, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) launched an [interactive dashboard to help non-industrial private forest landowners](#) find educational, technical, and financial assistance programs available in their area.

## H. Achieving Multiple Priorities

California is advancing a comprehensive approach to landscape resilience, integrating wildfire risk reduction, climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, and sustainable recreation. By strengthening natural and working lands, and investing in forest-based economic opportunities, the state is building healthier, more resilient ecosystems and communities for the future.



## Expanding Recreational Opportunities

“Getting people out into nature is the most effective way to inspire public support for climate and wildfire resilience efforts. The Task Force has provided the Joint Strategy for Recreation and the key actions needed to safeguard California's world-class recreational opportunities from wildfires, and to empower communities to expand sustainable outdoor recreation for all.”

**John Wentworth, CEO, The Mammoth Lakes Trails & Public Access Foundation**

**California continues to be a national leader in prioritizing projects that not only promote landscape resilience but also ensure access to recreational opportunities:**

- [California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience](#) provides key actions to advance the integration of sustainable recreation into wildfire and landscape resilience planning.
- In November 2023, CNRA released the [Outdoors for All Strategy](#) to increase access to California's forests.
- The Task Force's [Sustainable and Outdoor Recreation/CALREC Vision Work Group](#) (Recreation Work Group) was awarded [Partnership of the Year](#) by the U.S. Forest Service in recognition of its efforts.

## Improving Climate Resilience

“Climate is a strong driver of wildfire in California, but its influence varies across regions and interacts with other risk factors. Resilience means recognizing those differences and tailoring solutions accordingly.”

**Alexandra Syphard, Senior Research Scientist, Conservation Biology Institute**

**California is advancing climate resilience by integrating wildfire risk reduction with climate adaptation strategies that restore forest and ecosystem health, reduce catastrophic fire impacts, and help landscapes better withstand a warming, more fire-prone future:**

- The Wildlife Conservation Board's [Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program](#) funds projects that provide climate adaptation and resilience on California's natural and working lands.
- [CAL FIRE's Climate and Energy Program](#) works at local, state and national levels to protect and manage California forests so they can return to carbon sinks and increase California's resilience to wildfires and future climate risks.
- In 2021, California released its [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#) which provides the state's overarching framework for building community, economic, and environmental resilience to climate impacts, such as fire, floods, heat, drought, and sea level rise. In 2024, California released an [updated Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).



- CARB's [2022 California Scoping Plan](#) provides a roadmap for the state achieve carbon neutrality by 2045, and links those goals to management for wildfire and landscape resilience.
- In April 2022, California released [California's Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy](#), which identifies priority nature-based solutions to deliver climate benefits across all of California's diverse landscapes.
- In September 2022, Governor Newsom signed [AB 1757](#), which calls for a suite of actions to urgently scale nature-based solutions to improve climate resilience.
- In April 2024, California released its [Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets](#) to increase resilience to climate impacts across the state.

### **Protecting and Improving Biodiversity**

“California is in one of 36 global biodiversity hotspots – regions where species diversity is exceptionally high, unique, and under threat. By enabling beneficial fire and working with nature to reduce the intensity and frequency of extreme wildfires, we protect the habitats and ecosystems that sustain our globally important biodiversity while also safeguarding human communities.”

*Jun Bando, Executive Director, California Native Plant Society*

### **California is enhancing biodiversity by restoring habitats, managing forests and grasslands to support native species, and implementing wildfire resilience strategies that bolster ecological health with fire risk reduction:**

- In October 2020, Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-82-20](#), which establishes a state goal of conserving 30% of California's lands and coastal waters by 2030 – known as 30x30 – to conserve and restore biodiversity, expand access to nature, and mitigate and build resilience to climate change.
  - In April 2022, California released its [Final Pathways to 30x30 Strategy](#).
  - In July 2025, California released its [Pathways to 30x30 Annual Progress Report](#) which showed that as of June 2025, 26.1% of California's lands are under long-term conservation.
- In 2022, CNRA, in coordination with the California Department of Food and Agriculture, CalEPA, and other state agencies, launched the [California Biodiversity Network](#), bringing together experts, leaders, and communities across California to advance a unified, comprehensive approach to protecting the state's biodiversity.
- The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) [Science Institute's Climate Change Program](#) evaluates climate risks to biodiversity and supports integration of climate science and adaptation into the Department's programs and activities.
- In July 2024, The Southern Montane Forest Project— a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Climate Science Alliance, San Diego State University, and Southwest Climate Adaptation Science Center — unveiled its [Climate-Adapted Conservation Strategy](#), offering land managers a comprehensive guide a roadmap for



increasing the resilience and persistence of Southern California's threatened montane forests.

## Enhancing Watershed Protection

“Restoring and conserving healthy watersheds safeguards the source of California's water supply. Repairing streams, roads and meadows, along with restoring more resilient forest structure, requires the same people and equipment working in the same places. To be efficient we must plan for, and implement, fire-resilient landscapes and healthy watersheds at the same time.”

**Paul Mason, Vice President for Policy & Incentives, Pacific Forest Trust**

### **California is strengthening watershed protection by restoring forests and riparian areas, reducing wildfire impacts on water sources, and promoting land management practices that safeguard water quality and ecosystem health:**

- The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation [announced \\$53 million in grants](#) to protect and restore forests and watersheds in California through a first-of-its-kind agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to support voluntary, targeted headwater resilience planning and monitoring.
- The California Department of Water Resources' (DWR) [Watershed Resilience Program](#) has funded five pilot projects to promote multi-sector, watershed-based planning.
- CDFW's [Wetland Restoration for Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program](#) directly addresses both climate change adaptation and mitigation by restoring or enhancing wetlands and watershed ecosystems.
- The [Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Watershed Improvement Program](#) is a large-scale restoration program that is restoring the health of California's primary watershed and creating resilient Sierra Nevada communities.
- The Department of Conservation created the [Watershed Coordinator Program](#), which enables local governments or non-profits to develop plans and projects to improve watershed health and achieve targeted state and local natural resources climate resiliency goals including forest health.

## 2. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS ACCOMPLISHMENTS

California continues to be a national leader in addressing wildfire risk to communities, setting the standard with bold policies, innovative partnerships, and science-driven strategies to protect the state's most vulnerable communities.

- CAL FIRE and Cal OES established the [California Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program](#) (CWMP) to coordinate regional and local efforts with state policies, strategies, and programs for community wildfire mitigation.
- CAL FIRE awarded over \$450 million to support more than 450 [wildfire prevention projects](#) across the state between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2024.



- Since 2023, the U.S. Forest Service has awarded over \$150 million across California to plan for and mitigate wildfire risk through Community Wildfire Defense Grants.
- California is leading the nation with more than 1,500 local Firewise USA communities.

## A. Hardening Structures and Creating Defensible Space

“After watching fire after fire impact communities across California, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, but there’s good news and solid evidence that fire mitigations at the home scale can be effective. Small actions to reduce the vent screen size and to reduce the fuels near to our homes can substantially improve the likelihood that a building will survive wildfire. Working from the home outward is the key to success.”

**Yana Valachovic, Forest Advisor and County Director, UC ANR Fire Network**

### California continues to strengthen building standards, defensible space enforcement, and home hardening programs to better protect lives and property:

- CAL FIRE’s Office of State Fire Marshal established a [Defensible Space Assessment Training Program](#) to increase defensible space and home hardening assessments within the State Responsibility Area.
- CAL FIRE has conducted over one million defensible space inspections since 2021, providing education, compliance support, and enforcement in at-risk communities. In FY 2023/24 CAL FIRE inspected over 299,000 homes (up from 204,000 in 2018/19) for defensible space.
- The Office of the State Fire Marshal released updated [Fire Hazard Severity Zone](#) maps for areas under local government responsibility.
- CAL FIRE and Cal OES launched a [home hardening initiative](#) through the California Wildfire Mitigation Assistance Program (CWMP) that will provide funding for defensible space and ignition-resistant retrofits to approximately 2,000 homes.
- CWMP established [Minimum Quality Standards](#) to ensure CWMP projects meet applicable codes and enhanced resilience and a [home hardening assessment application](#) to evaluate the defensible space and home hardening retrofit recommendations.
- In 2024, Governor Newsom signed [SB 504](#) to strengthen defensible space standards.
- In February 2025, Governor Newsom [signed an executive order to further improve community hardening and wildfire mitigation](#), including the acceleration of Zone Zero regulations.

## B. Strengthening Community-Wide Resilience Programs

“Wildfire knows no boundaries. The Task Force’s cross-jurisdictional approach to advancing public health, safety, evacuation, and recovery is making communities safer, healthier, and more resilient before, during, and after wildfire.”

**Mark Brown, Executive Officer, Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority**



### State agencies are equipping communities with planning tools, public health resources, and coordination programs to build long-term wildfire resilience:

- In 2025, CAL FIRE released the [California Community Wildfire Protection Plan \(CWPP\) Toolkit](#) to support the development of modern, actionable CWPPs that align with structure hardening, land use planning, the State Fire Plan, and CAL FIRE Unit Plans.
- In 2022, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation [published new wildfire planning resources](#), including an updated Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory and a Wildland-Urban Interface Planning Guide.
- In 2021, the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) established the [Wildfire County Coordinator Program](#) to educate, encourage, and develop countywide collaboration and coordination among wildfire mitigation groups. With support from CAL FIRE, the program has expanded to 47 counties.
- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) launched a statewide [Clean Air Centers](#) map to display safe places to go during periods of intense wildfire smoke.
- The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) published a [California Wildfire Smoke and Air Pollution Health Burden Mapping Dashboard](#) that displays the health burden (excess emergency room visits) related to air pollution and wildfire smoke from 2008 to 2016. This work was supported in part by a grant from the CAL FIRE Forest Health Research Program.
- CARB's California [Smoke Spotter](#) mobile app and [Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System](#) provide real-time information on smoke impacts from wildfires and prescribed burns.

### C. Reducing Unwanted Ignitions

"Catastrophic wildfires driven by extreme winds are nearly impossible to suppress with conventional tactics. Our best approach is to prevent wildfire ignitions during high wind events - especially along roadways and powerlines - and to make structures resistant to wind-blown embers from the fires we can't prevent."

**Michael O'Connell, President & CEO, Irvine Ranch Conservancy**

### Task Force partners are targeting human-caused ignitions through technology, roadside vegetation management, and utility oversight:

- Federal, state, and nonprofit partners, including the U.S. Forest Service, CAL FIRE, the DOC, Caltrans, and the Task Force [signed the Southern California Ignition Reduction Program](#) (SCIRP) charter to reduce human-caused wildfire ignitions, particularly along roadways where nearly two-thirds of Southern California wildfires begin.
- Between 2021 and 2024, Caltrans treated over 500,000 acres of roadside vegetation treatment work statewide, including over 160,000 acres in Southern California. Additionally, Caltrans has invested \$123 million for private industry to address more



complex fuel reduction and post-fire restoration, treating over 11,000 acres in primary evacuation corridors.

- Between 2021 and 2024, Caltrans awarded \$123 million to qualified forestry and landscape contractors for 50 fuel reduction projects to address more complex fuel reduction, tree mortality due to invasive pests, and post-fire restoration work on primary evacuation corridors. Between 2021-2025, Caltrans VMP projects achieved an additional 11,300 acres treated, and 23,100 acres is currently planned for a total of 34,430 acres prioritized on 213 state highways across 3,070 centerline miles in 34 counties.
- CAL FIRE partnered with UC San Diego to support the development of [ALERTCalifornia](#), named one of [TIME's Best Inventions of 2023](#), which utilizes AI to identify and monitor wildfires.
- The California Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (OEIS), created in 2021, has implemented a performance-based regulatory framework for utility wildfire mitigation and adopted updated [Wildfire Mitigation Plan Guidelines](#) in 2025. OEIS and the California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) both closely scrutinize plans before OEIS approves the plan and CPUC approves collection from ratepayers.
- California's investor-owned utilities have made sizable investments to reduce the risk of utility-caused fires.
  - As of December 2025, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) [reported](#) it has underground 1,000 miles of distribution lines, completed system upgrades on an additional 1,557 miles of distribution lines, employed enhanced powerline safety settings on 47,000 line miles, employed high-definition cameras in most high risk areas, installed more than 1,000 weather stations and performed vegetation management for over 30,000 line miles.
  - As of August 2025, Southern California Edison [reported](#) it has installed covered conductors on more than 6,000 miles of lines, underground 48 miles of lines, installed nearly 2,000 weather stations, installed hundreds of cameras, and has engaged in millions of trims and tree removals from high fire threat areas.
  - As of August 2025, San Diego Gas and Electric (SDGE) [reported](#) it has underground 300 miles of lines, placed covered conductors on an additional 180 miles of lines, and conducted enhanced vegetation management on nearly 70,000 trees.

## D. Focusing Treatments Around Communities and Critical Infrastructure

"Wildfires should never take us by surprise in California's fire-prone landscapes. With Potential Operational Delineations we can plan and align resources before wildfire strikes to strategically manage beneficial fire on our landscapes and better protect communities from catastrophic wildfires."

**Malcolm North, Affiliate Professor, Department of Plant Sciences, UC Davis**



## Strategic fuel breaks and fire management zones are helping firefighters protect communities and essential infrastructure across the state:

- In September 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom signed [Senate Bill 1101](#) into law, which directs CAL FIRE to develop fire management zones, also known as [Potential Operational Delineations](#) (PODs), to inform strategic fuel reduction priorities and fire planning statewide.
- The Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety and CAL FIRE launched the Utility Wildfire Resilience Partnership to improve coordination among utilities, state and federal agencies, tribes, communities, and regional partners. Successful pilot projects and programs include [Liberty Utilities' Forest Resilience Corridors Project](#) and [PG&E's Wildfire Resilience Corridors Pilot Program](#).
- In 2024, the National Alliance of Forest Owners and the Forest Service [signed a Memorandum of Understanding to boost wildfire crisis response](#). This agreement helps coordinate fuel break construction on private lands, leverage private resources for federal mitigation, and improve cross-boundary fire suppression for healthier forests.
- In July 2024, a network of collaborative fuel breaks, funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, [helped prevent further damage to Butte County communities](#) in the wake of the Park Fire.
- CAL FIRE's [Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard](#) spotlights wildfire mitigation projects, including strategic fuel breaks that helped protect communities and landscapes from wildfire. Examples of effective resilience projects include the Loafer Creek LLC Vegetation Management Project, where prescribed fires and forest health [treatments slowed the 2024 Park Fire](#) and the Starchman Fuel Break Project that [reduced the rate of spread of the 2024 French Fire](#), enabling fire crews to extinguish it.
- In recent years, U.S. Forest Service has implemented strategic fuels breaks across California have mitigated wildfire intensity and helped protect communities.
  - In 2025, the Forest Service Tecuya Ridge Fuel Break allowed firefighters to safely engage the Frazier Fire along the ridgeline, protecting the community and critical utility infrastructure in Frazier Park.
  - In September 2024, Forest [Service strategic fuel breaks enabled firefighters to protect](#) the community of Angelus Oaks from the Line Fire and the community of Wrightwood from the Bridge Fire.
  - In 2023, the Forest Service Scott Bar Mountain Fuel Break helped protect the community of Beauty Bar and prevented the fire from moving into the more populated Scott Valley.
- In February 2025, the [USDA signed a Stewardship Agreement with Sierra Pacific Industries](#) to construct and maintain strategic fuel breaks on national forests in California and Oregon. The \$75 million investment of federal funding will mitigate at least 29,500 acres of hazardous fuels — to protect communities and resources while reducing wildfire risk.
- In August 2025, [a shaded fuel break on BLM land was instrumental in stopping the Tiger Fire](#), ensuring public safety and saving homes in Amador County, California. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy supported the development of the fuel break by funding the Amador Fire Safe council with [planning](#) and implementation grants.



### 3. ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON EMPOWERING REGIONAL ACTION

Through the Task Force's [Regional Meetings](#), the Department of Conservation (DOC)'s [Regional Forest and Fire Capacity \(RFFC\) Program](#), and large federal investments in the state's growing network of forest and landscape collaboratives, the Task Force and its partner agencies have focused their efforts towards helping local and regional organizations accelerate and improve wildfire and landscape resilience projects and programs. This regional framework has delivered results in three key areas:

- **Capacity:** DOC has invested in 20 regional planning efforts covering almost all fire-prone regions of the state, resulting in durable partnerships and expanded project pipelines.
- **Common tools:** The Task Force launched the [Interagency Treatment Dashboard](#) and [California Landscape Metrics](#) giving regional partners shared data to plan faster and report results consistently.
- **Financing:** CAL FIRE, DOC, and the State's conservancies piloted landscape-scale funding approaches based on proven models like Department of Water Resources' (DWR) [Integrated Regional Watershed Management](#), Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation's [Regional Climate Collaboratives](#), and the USDA Forest Service's (USFS) [Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program](#) (CFLRP).

#### A. Improving Local Wildfire Resilience Planning

**California is advancing local wildfire resilience planning by helping communities assess risks, coordinate mitigation strategies, and implement actions that enhance safety, preparedness, and long-term resilience:**

- In 2021 CAL FIRE established a new [Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division](#) to collaborate with federal, state, and local agencies; tribes; nonprofit entities; and other stakeholders to better prepare California communities for wildfire.
- The Department of Conservation's [Regional Forest and Fire Capacity \(RFFC\) Program](#) has awarded more than \$140 million to communities across the state to build local and regional capacity for creating fire-adapted communities and landscapes.
- The Task Force has published [Regional Profiles and Regional Resource Kits](#) for California's four regions. These resources bring together the scientific data needed to help regional entities more rapidly and effectively plan, prioritize, and monitor projects.
- In 2021, the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) established the [Wildfire County Coordinator Program](#) to educate, encourage, and develop countywide collaboration and coordination among wildfire mitigation groups. With support from CAL FIRE, the program has expanded to 47 counties.
- The Task Force is partnering with the U.S. Forest Service, CNRA, University of California, and Google.org to develop and expand [Planscape](#), a free, open-source decision-support tool that helps land managers maximize the wildfire resilience and ecological benefits across programs and projects.



- In 2025, the Task Force launched an [online resource](#) to serve as a one-stop shop for local project planners to identify and access technical assistance for wildfire projects in their counties.
- In December 2025, the California Natural Resources Agency in partnership with the California Air Resources Board, NASA Ames Research Center, and the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force [released the state's first-ever statewide LiDAR maps](#), providing data on forest and vegetation conditions, enabling tribes, researchers, land managers, and community partners to incorporate the free data products into their own tools, models, and planning processes to inform wildfire resilience projects.

## B. Streamlining Environmental Review and Permitting

**California is streamlining environmental review and permitting to accelerate wildfire resilience projects while maintaining environmental protections, allowing the state to move faster than ever before:**

- Shortly after taking office, Governor Newsom directed CAL FIRE to carry out 35 priority projects to protect the state's most vulnerable communities, and suspended CEQA review to accelerate their completion.
- In response to 2019 legislative mandates, in coordination with partner agencies, the Board of Forestry commenced action to streamline environmental review and permitting for wildfire prevention projects within non-federal timberlands to address catastrophic wildfire risk.
- In 2020, in coordination with partner agencies, the Board of Forestry established the [California Vegetation Treatment Program](#) (CalVTP), leveraging existing regulatory clearance to provide California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) coverage for non-commercial forest health and wildfire resilience projects across more than 20 million acres statewide.
- In March 2022, the CNRA released a [Progress Report of its Cutting Green Tape initiative](#) which focuses on actions within CNRA and its boards, conservancies, commissions, councils, and departments to reduce bureaucratic barriers to climate solutions.
- In 2022, Governor Newsom sought and signed legislation to exempt from CEQA any projects receiving state funding for treatments on federally managed lands that have already undergone NEPA review.
- Through the 2023 [enacted Fuels Break Categorical Exclusion](#) (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in Sec 40806), the U.S. Forest Service is quickly implementing critical fuel break projects that help protect vulnerable communities.
- In January 2025, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order [N-4-25](#) to support families and emergency recovery efforts related to the Southern California wildfires. The order suspends CEQA and Coastal Act permitting requirements to enable homeowners and businesses to rebuild without undue delay.
- In March 2025, Governor Newsom [proclaimed a state of emergency on wildfire](#) to fast-track critical wildfire prevention projects. In December 2025, the Governor [extended the proclamation](#) to continue the state's record pace to approve and implement wildfire projects.



- CNRA, CalEPA and the Task Force quickly responded to the state of emergency and stood up a new [streamlined application process](#) to apply for suspension of certain State of California statutory and regulatory requirements to expedite critical fuels reduction projects, while at the same time protecting public health and the environment. California has [fast-tracked over 300 critical fuels reduction projects across the state in just over 300 days](#)— enabling a broad cross-section of communities, local fire safe councils, tribes, and organizations to move faster than ever before. As of June 2026, over 400 projects across nearly 100,000 acres have been fast-tracked.
- In June 2025, the [USDA revised National Environmental Policy Act regulations](#) to reduce red tape and streamline critical wildfire risk reduction work
- In October 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [issued policy guidance](#) directing regional offices to work with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to remove barriers in State Implementation Plans that discourage prescribed fires.
- In October 2025, [Governor Newsom signed an executive order](#) directing state agencies to reduce red tape and expand tools to safely deploy beneficial fire projects.

### C. Optimizing Implementation of Wildfire Resilience Efforts

**California is optimizing wildfire resilience efforts by coordinating across agencies and stakeholders, aligning funding and priorities, and using data-driven strategies to maximize the impact of treatments and projects on landscape and community safety:**

- In 2023, CAL FIRE and the Bureau of Land Management entered into a [statewide agreement](#) through the Good Neighbor Authority and a contract worth approximately \$4.5 million was made available to CAL FIRE as part of the agreement. The primary objective of this contract is to mitigate the potential devastation caused by wildfires on BLM lands.
- In 2023, the Bureau of Land Management launched a Statewide Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels Treatment Programmatic Environmental Assessment (EA) to streamline plans to protect communities, reduce wildfire risk, and improve forest health. Under the EA, fuels treatment projects will be coordinated across land ownerships to create a landscape-level network of strategic fuels treatments and breaks within the WUI.
- In December 2025, USFS-Pacific Southwest Region and CAL FIRE signed a [renewed California Fire Master Agreement](#) — extending a long-standing framework for mutual wildfire response and cooperative risk-reduction work across California for the next five years.
- In February 2025, the [USDA signed a Stewardship Agreement with Sierra Pacific Industries](#) to construct and maintain strategic fuel breaks on national forests in California and Oregon. The \$75 million investment of federal funding will mitigate at least 29,500 acres of hazardous fuels — to protect communities and resources while reducing wildfire risk.



## D. Modernizing Reporting

"The Task Force is bringing together comprehensive information from leading scientists to provide consistent and actionable data to inform science-based solutions to manage California's wildfire crisis."

**John Battles, Professor of Forest Ecology, UC Berkeley**

**California is modernizing reporting by improving data systems and tracking tools to provide timely, accurate, and actionable information that strengthens decision-making and measures progress on wildfire resilience efforts:**

- In August 2023, the Task Force launched an [Interagency Treatment Dashboard](#) to display completed federal, state, local, and private vegetation management projects across the state. The Dashboard, launched in 2023, provides transparency, tracks progress, facilitates planning, and informs firefighting efforts.
- The Task Force's [California Landscape Metrics](#) provide planners with access to consistent, statewide datasets that cover fuels, fire history, ecological condition, and other key landscape attributes.
- In October 2025, the California Natural Resources Agency, in partnership with UC Davis, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the California Air Resources Board, and CAL FIRE, [installed the first ever redwood forest observatory](#) consisting of two research towers that will provide critical forest health information on California's coast redwood forests.
- The Task Force is developing [Core Reporting Metrics](#) to document the multiple benefits of landscape treatments beyond acres treated, including improvements in fire behavior, water availability, and carbon storage.

## E. Aligning Funding

**California is aligning funding by coordinating state and federal resources to support multi-year, regionally focused wildfire resilience projects, reducing duplication, and maximizing the impact of investments on high-priority landscapes and communities:**

- In 2019, Cal OES established [the Community Resiliency and Listos California Grant Programs](#) to ensure resources are available to communities before, during, and after a disaster, including those who have historically been underserved or lacked resources. The Listos grant program supports community-based organizations to ensure every Californian, regardless of age, ability, income, or language, has access to information to prepare for wildfires and other hazards.
- The Department of Conservation's [Regional Forest and Fire Capacity \(RFFC\) Program](#) has awarded more than \$140 million to communities across the state to build local and regional capacity for creating fire-adapted communities and landscapes.