CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE & FOREST RESILIENCE TASK FORCE

California Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan

2026 - 2031

NOVEMBER, 2026

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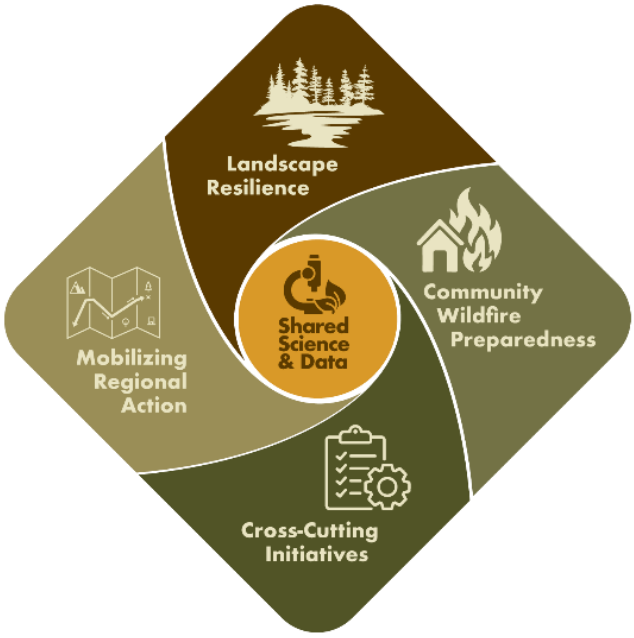
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

California's wildfire crisis demands unified collective action across federal, state, local, tribal, and private organizations. As the central coordinator for this effort, the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force), in 2021, issued the state's first comprehensive framework to improve the health of California's fire-adapted landscapes and the resilience of its communities.

This updated Action Plan, covering 2026 through 2031, provides a new framework that builds upon a strong scientific foundation, unprecedented state, federal, and local investments, and the tremendous growth and sophistication of local organizations and regional collaboratives across the state.

Developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and a diverse coalition of stakeholder agencies, this Action Plan also serves as the second five-year framework advancing the landmark 2020 Shared Stewardship Agreement. This agreement commits the State of California and the USDA Forest Service to implement a coordinated 20-year roadmap at five-year intervals that aligns their respective forest and vegetation management programs.

Science and collaborative action sit at the center of the Action Plan, connecting four linked efforts: 1) landscape resilience, 2) community wildfire preparedness, 3) mobilizing regional action, and 4) cross-cutting initiatives.



Together, these elements reinforce one another: landscape treatments reduce fire severity and spread near communities; community preparedness protects people, reduces losses, and enables the use of beneficial fire; regional delivery coordinates execution and improves effectiveness; and cross-cutting initiatives tackle implementation barriers across land ownerships.

1. Landscape Resilience Strategy

The Landscape Resilience Strategy establishes a new 10-year strategy that prioritizes treatments on the state's highest-hazard landscapes. Prioritizing appropriate treatment of high-hazard or overly dense vegetated areas maximizes wildfire risk reduction and ecological benefits. When paired with ignition reduction programs, it also sets the stage for rapidly scaling beneficial fire to maintain the resilience of the state's fire-adapted landscapes, including forests, woodlands, grasslands, and shrublands.

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

- **Scale up treatments** in high-hazard landscapes and landscapes with dense vegetation, particularly in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI);
- **Expand beneficial fire** through streamlined permitting, launching a Beneficial Fire Training Network, and restoring landscape conditions to significantly scale up beneficial fire, including the strategic use of natural ignitions under the right conditions;
- **Reduce the state's reforestation backlog** and expand the work of Emergency Forest Restoration Teams;
- **Conserve shrubland ecosystems** – including chaparral, coastal sage scrub and other shrubland types through collaborative, science-based initiatives that improve landscape health and reduce wildfire risks; and
- **Align wildfire and natural resource planning and policy** among state and federal partners.

The Strategy also calls for outcome-based measures to complement "acres treated" as the primary metrics for assessing progress to improve landscape resilience. Outcome-based measures will be developed through a collaborative effort with the USDA Forest Service, state agencies, California Native American tribes, regional collaboratives, partner organizations, and other western states to align objectives and reporting.

2. Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy

Building upon a historic legislative package passed this year (2026), the Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy applies a holistic approach to limit wildfire impacts. This strategy calls for actions within communities to enable long-term planning, preparedness, and recovery. It focuses on expanding actions that have the greatest impact strengthening 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 Strategy includes actions to:

- **Harden buildings and ensure defensible space** through Zone Zero ember-resistant regulations, building house-to-house risk models, and establishing low-interest financing for structural retrofitting under Assembly Bill (AB) 1934 (Bennett, 2026), AB 1964 (Bennett, 2026), and Senate Bill (SB) 894 (Allen, 2026);

- **Strengthen community-wide preparedness programs** by establishing a California Wildfire Preparedness Program, launching neighborhood wildfire mitigation certifications under AB 1960 (Bennett, 2026), and expanding multilingual evacuation alerts and smoke hazard programs;
- **Limit unwanted ignitions** through electric utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans and expanding roadside treatments and regional ignition reduction partnerships; and
- **Prioritize landscape treatments around communities and infrastructure** by building a comprehensive statewide network of strategic fuel breaks, embedding Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) into regional priority plans, and expanding utility wildfire mitigation partnerships.

3. Mobilizing Regional Action Strategy

The Mobilizing Regional Action Strategy focuses on building the capacity and coordination needed to align individual projects into integrated regional programs of work, with actions to:

- **Develop Regional Priority Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and five-year interagency plans of work** to align and advance regional priorities;
- **Expand access to data, tools, and modeling** to improve regional planning and project prioritization;
- **Align and sustain funding** to expand regional landscape grants and multi-year funding for coordinated, multi-benefit project portfolios;
- **Expedite state and federal reviews and permitting** while maintaining environmental safeguards and tribal consultation to deliver important projects;
- **Expand implementation partnerships and capacity** to strengthen shared stewardship, public-private partnerships, and regional workforce and organizational capacity; and
- **Align monitoring and reporting programs** to improve shared project tracking, dashboards, and outcome-based measures to assess the effectiveness and benefits of projects and regionally based plans.

4. Cross-Cutting Initiatives

The Cross-Cutting Initiatives section cultivates inclusive partnerships and leverages local capacity to:

- **Support tribal stewardship** to protect sovereignty, integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), and sustain tribal communities;
- **Sustain private landowner stewardship** to expand financial assistance pathways for non-industrial holdings;
- **Expand workforce and career development pathways** to secure job recruitment to be commensurate with the scale of work needed;
- **Expand wood utilization capacity** to grow regional markets for both conventional and innovative wood products;
- **Promote and expand sustainable recreation** to build multi-benefit trails and protect rural gateway economies; and
- **Expand prescribed grazing** to reduce flashy fine fuels using appropriately managed livestock systems.

Science Shapes this Action Plan: The Action Plan utilizes a broad body of scientific research on the key risks facing California's landscapes and communities and the effectiveness of resilience strategies and programs.

The Task Force commissioned its independent 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. The 2025 Forests and Rangelands Assessment from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and 2025 Natural and Working Lands Carbon Inventory from the California Air Resources Board (CARB) also provide essential information on the health of the state's forests, shrublands, and grasslands, and the diverse wildfire risks facing California.

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 that the plan is grounded in Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and tribal science. Additionally, the Action Plan pulls from California's Strategic Plan for Expanding Beneficial Fire, which benefited from significant tribal input and review and was developed in alignment with CNRA's Tribal Stewardship Policy. The Action Plan will continue to be guided by meaningful tribal engagement and collaboration, consistent with tribal sovereignty and self-determination.

CALIFORNIA'S WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

California stands at a pivotal juncture in addressing 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 and measurable results. Yet as climate conditions have worsened, no state has suffered more from the devastating impacts of catastrophic wildfires and mass tree mortality events.

In the years since the California 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, tribal programs. Since 2021, Task Force partners have surged proactive wildfire resilience investments to more than $6 billion, funding more than 2,200 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.

Despite this historic progress, California's wildfires are continuing to burn hotter, larger, and more destructively. Fifteen of the most destructive wildfires in California state 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 devastating January 2025 Los Angeles fires, which tragically claimed 31 lives and destroyed more than 16,000 structures.

Building the Foundation for a Resilient Future

The focus of the 2021 Action Plan was to align 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 resources and employ new science-based strategies to most effectively and efficiently achieve the pace and 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 as well as 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).

Across our diverse forests, it is clear that significantly increasing ecologically based thinning, beneficial fire, and active reforestation, together with strategically planned and regularly maintained fuel breaks, is the most effective approach to improve wildfire and forest resilience.

Within our communities, home hardening and defensible space are vital to protect homes and businesses, and wildfire preparation is far more effective when an entire neighborhood or community participates. And most importantly, 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 fire.

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 often too dense and lack the regular intervals of low-and-mixed severity fire that are vital to strengthen resilience and preserve biodiversity. In much of Southern California, by contrast, fire has been too frequent, sparked by unwanted, human-caused ignitions during high wind events that have resulted in large and destructive fires. 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 (RFFC) Program, the state has invested more than $150 million in 20 regional planning initiatives covering the most fire-prone regions of the state, resulting in durable partnerships and greater organizational capacity. As a result, many of these regional groups have grown in their capacities and can now accept larger grants to carry out multiple projects over many years, enabling expanded wildfire projects across the state. In addition, 51 of 58 counties have hired "County Coordinators" through the California Fire Safe Council to help increase local capacity.

On federal lands, Good Neighbor Agreements and related mechanisms with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have the potential to accelerate cross boundary work and projects on federal land.

Fast-Tracking Approvals: Governor Newsom has made streamlining 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 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 (CalVTP), providing CEQA coverage for non-

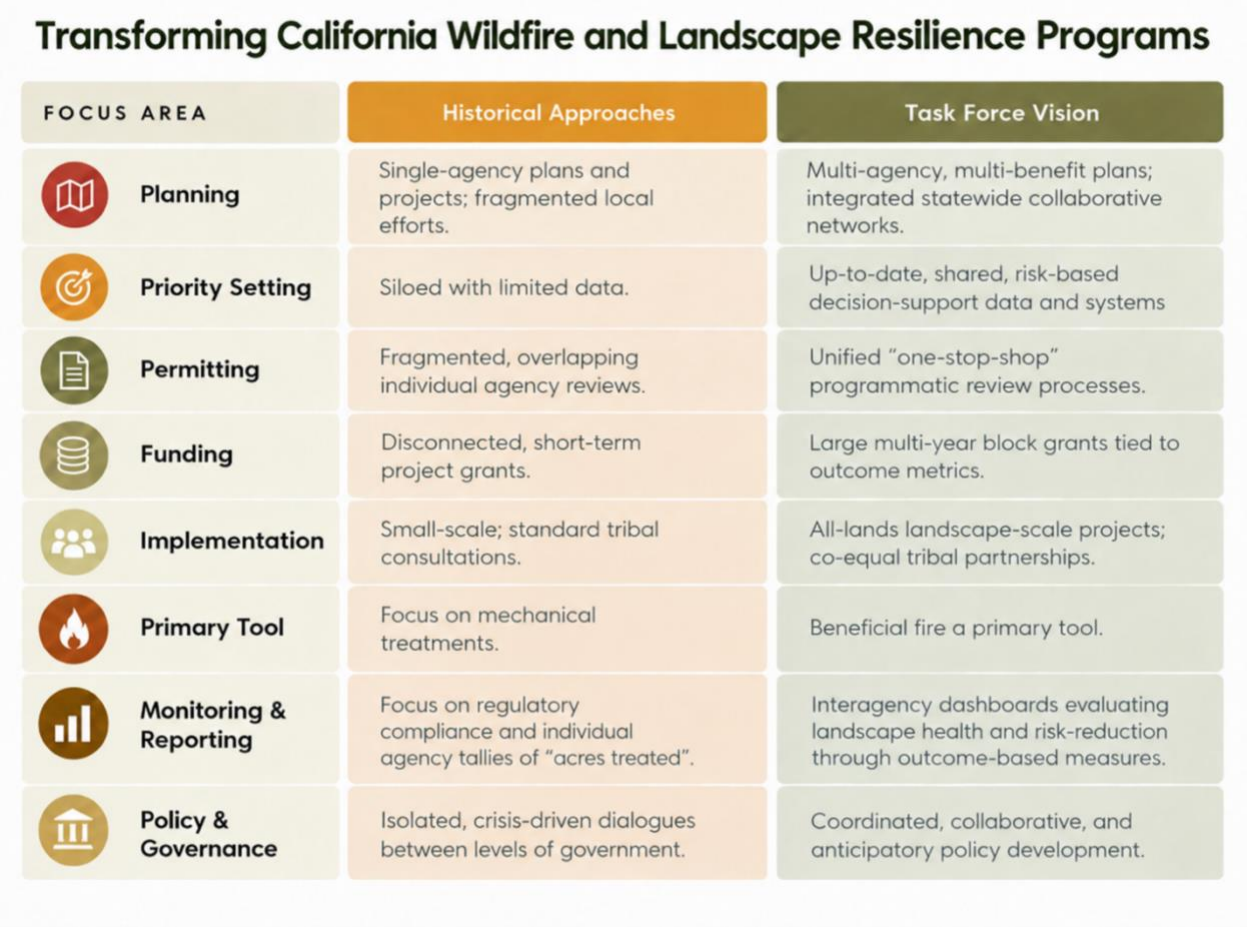
commercial forest health and wildfire resilience projects. In 2022, the Governor signed Assembly Bill (AB) 211 (Committee on Budget, 2022) which extended to January 1, 2028 the sunset date of the CEQA exemption created by Senate Bill (SB) SB 901 (Dodd, 2018), which allows State-funded fuel treatment projects on federal lands to bypass CEQA if a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review has already been conducted.

The Governor 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, California fast-tracked approval of over 540 critical landscape health and wildfire resilience projects, exceeding 140,000 footprint acres, to better protect communities, infrastructure, and natural landscapes across the state. SB 1370 (Stern, 2026) establishes a durable framework to extend this expedited review process.

Investing in Cutting-Edge Science and Data Tools: The Task Force and its partners have built cutting-edge science and data tools 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 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) released its Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard to better measure the effectiveness of these efforts in reducing the impacts of uncontrolled fires. The Task Force also developed the California Landscape Metrics, and CNRA launched Planscape, a decision support platform co-developed with the USDA Forest Service and Google.org, 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 that improve the resilience of our communities and landscapes. They are also part of a broader set of changes that are transforming how the state manages its wildfire resilience programs to match the scale of effort required to address this crisis.

As described below and in more detail in Section 3, the Task Force and its partner agencies are reevaluating and rethinking every aspect of their programs to help local and regional collaboratives more effectively address their key priorities. While federal, state, and local agencies have long recognized the importance of partnerships and scaling up their work, until recent years, they have often lacked the capacity and legal and policy framework to work across agency boundaries or jointly plan, prioritize, and fund projects. As a result, collaborative efforts have thrived in some regions and pilot areas but not others. To bridge these gaps, the Task Force's 2021 Action Plan accelerated a shift away from the historically more fragmented approaches depicted in the following table. In its place, the Action Plan established a new science-driven framework for collaborative plans and projects across the state. The right-hand column depicts our collective vision for this updated Action Plan and beyond.



Transforming California Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Programs

FOCUS AREA	Historical Approaches	Task Force Vision
Planning	Single-agency plans and projects; fragmented local efforts.	Multi-agency, multi-benefit plans; integrated statewide collaborative networks.
Priority Setting	Siloed with limited data.	Up-to-date, shared, risk-based decision-support data and systems
Permitting	Fragmented, overlapping individual agency reviews.	Unified "one-stop-shop" programmatic review processes.
Funding	Disconnected, short-term project grants.	Large multi-year block grants tied to outcome metrics.
Implementation	Small-scale; standard tribal consultations.	All-lands landscape-scale projects; co-equal tribal partnerships.
Primary Tool	Focus on mechanical treatments.	Beneficial fire a primary tool.
Monitoring & Reporting	Focus on regulatory compliance and individual agency tallies of "acres treated".	Interagency dashboards evaluating landscape health and risk-reduction through outcome-based measures.
Policy & Governance	Isolated, crisis-driven dialogues between levels of government.	Coordinated, collaborative, and anticipatory policy development.

Task Force and Action Plan Background

The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force was originally established in 2018 through Executive Order B-52-18 to coordinate state, federal, tribal, local, and regional partners in addressing the state's escalating wildfire crisis. In January 2021, the Task Force released California's first Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan and launched an ongoing series of regional meetings to hear directly from local and regional leaders about their key issues and opportunities.

To oversee the Plan, Governor Newsom restructured the Task Force in April 2021. He established an Executive Committee co-chaired by CNRA and the USDA Forest Service, and expanded its membership to include federal, state, and county representatives, together with the Indigenous Stewardship Network. The Task Force is also supported by a Science Advisory Panel and about a dozen interagency and stakeholder-driven work groups and partners. These groups and partners help shape, inform, and align a broad range of interagency programs, including the many cross-cutting initiatives described in Section 4.

To highlight the value of this collective effort and their invaluable contributions, Task Force key agency and nongovernmental partners are both cited throughout the

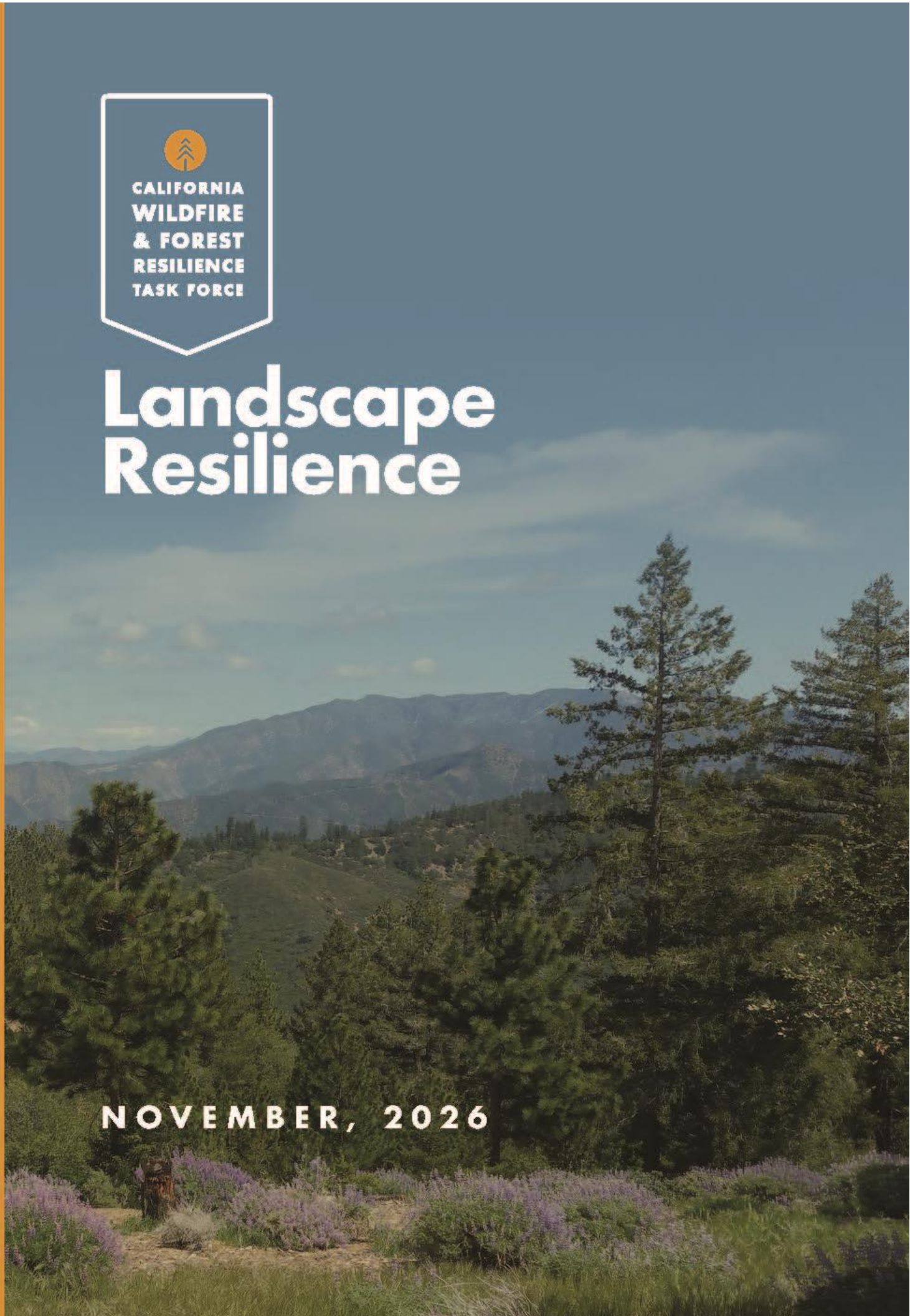
Action Plan. The Task Force is cited as a lead when its small interagency team is playing a convening role.

The responsibilities of the Task Force were formally codified under SB 456 (Laird, 2021), which directs the Task Force to develop a comprehensive implementation strategy for its Action Plan, update the plan every five years until 2048, and submit annual progress and expenditure reports to the Legislature. In summary, by seeking to align policies, funding, and regional efforts, the Task Force and its Action Plan serve as a statewide forum and framework dedicated to reducing wildfire risks, protecting communities, and restoring the long-term ecological health and resilience of California's forests and wildlands.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

Landscape Resilience



NOVEMBER, 2026

1. Landscape Resilience Strategy

The Landscape Resilience Strategy (Strategy) draws on the latest scientific findings, data, and tools to provide a clear, sustainable path toward wildfire and landscape resilience across California's fire-adapted landscapes, including forests, woodlands, grasslands, and shrublands. The Strategy also fulfills the Task Force mandate, as described in Senate Bill (SB) 456 (Laird, 2021) to identify treatment priorities and establish annual goals.

The Strategy works in tandem with the other three pillars of this Action Plan – the Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy, the Mobilizing Regional Action Strategy, and Cross-cutting Initiatives – to accelerate progress where it matters most. It establishes clear priorities for where and how to treat California's fire-prone landscapes, aiming to minimize catastrophic fire risk while securing broader environmental benefits.

As a high-level statewide framework, the Strategy is designed to be refined and adapted by regional collaboratives to address the unique localized conditions of California's diverse landscapes and communities.

The Strategy has three primary goals:

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

How Science Informs the Landscape Resilience Strategy

The Landscape Resilience Strategy is grounded in extensive scientific research, core ecological principles, and advanced spatial data. Specifically, it synthesizes key findings from three foundational sources:

- A synthesis of recent wildfire resilience research prepared by the Science Advisory Panel.
- A 2025 collaborative modeling study by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), American Forests, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service—hereafter referred to as the 2025 American Forests Report.
- A comprehensive statewide modeling effort directed by the Task Force and conducted by the Spatial Informatics Group – hereafter referred to as scenario modeling.

The 2025 American Forests Report provides a strong foundation for the Landscape Resilience Strategy. It identified nearly 11 million forested acres in California at high or very high risk for wildfires and proposed a 10-year surge in resilience treatments across these areas.[1] Promptly treating these lands restores forest health and helps ensure future wildfires burn at low and mixed severity. This approach also reduces long-term carbon losses and tree mortality while easing the demand for costly post-fire reforestation in

areas that cannot naturally regenerate. Additionally, these treatments make it safer to reintroduce beneficial fire to fire-adapted ecosystems.

In coordination with its Science Advisory Panel, the Task Force interagency team supplemented the American Forest Report by modeling various management scenarios in both forests and shrublands to assess the most effective approaches to improving landscape resilience (Appendix C).

Key findings from the scenario modeling include:

- **Target High-Hazard Forests**: Treating the highest hazard forests first yields nearly 4x greater reduction in high-severity fires than treating more acres with lower hazard.
- **Scale Up Forest Treatments**: Expanding forest treatments drives broader improvements in forest health and more effectively alters wildfire behavior.
- **Target the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**: Prioritizing the highest-hazard WUI areas delivers nearly 3x greater reduction in burn probability than treating more acres with lower hazard.
- **Focus on Forest Health**: Looking beyond fire hazard reduction to improving general forest health boosts long term forest resilience against drought, disease, and insects as the climate warms. Millions of acres of forests across California are at low risk of wildfire but at high risk for tree mortality from drought and rising temperatures.
- **Treat Additional Acres for Multi-Benefit Returns**: While the direct wildfire risk-reduction benefits taper off as treatments expand into lower-hazard areas, in many areas treating these acres improves the health and resilience of the ecosystems that our economic and social systems depend upon, and secures vital improvements in air quality, water security, recreation, and carbon storage.

These insights reinforce a long-standing body of science that reflects similar findings and directly shaped the core concepts and treatment levels called for in the Landscape Resilience Strategy. But because the Strategy does not dictate specific prescriptions for individual areas, tribal, local, and regional leaders must carefully analyze landscape conditions to translate these overarching principles into locally effective treatments.

Finally, both the Landscape Resilience Strategy and the Community Preparedness Strategy recognize that wildfire resilience requires ongoing stewardship. Ongoing maintenance treatments are essential to sustain the value of today's investments.

Core Concepts

The Strategy is organized around three core concepts:

- **Treat the Worst First:** The Strategy prioritizes landscape treatments in California's highest-wildfire hazard areas, including, frequent ignition areas, and dense, unhealthy forests vulnerable to drought-induced die-offs. It also prioritizes protecting vulnerable communities and critical assets like essential infrastructure

and ecologically significant landscapes. Specific treatments will vary by region and ecosystem type.

- **Set the Stage for Beneficial Fire:** Restoring fire at appropriate intensities and intervals is essential to sustaining California's fire-adapted landscapes. The Strategy encourages land managers to reduce fuel densities, establish strategic fuel breaks and Potential Operational Delineations (PODs), and expand capacity to safely scale up the use of beneficial fire. Together, these treatments can also create safer conditions for the use of managed wildfire, allowing unintentional ignitions to be used as a tool to reduce fuels and restore fire-adapted ecosystems when conditions are appropriate. Managed wildfire has potential to be a cost-effective and efficient tool for reintroducing fire and achieving broad-scale landscape management goals.

- **Restore Post-Fire Landscapes:** High-severity fires can inhibit natural regeneration, putting millions of forest acres at risk of permanently converting to shrublands or grasslands. The 2025 American Forests Report warns that California could lose nearly half of its forests by 2071 without scaled-up forest health and reforestation efforts. Additionally, too-frequent fires put vast areas of native shrublands—particularly in Southern California—at risk of converting to invasive grasslands, requiring active restoration.

Landscape Resilience Treatment Levels

The Landscape Resilience Strategy adopts a phased approach. Over the next ten years, wildfire and land management agencies should focus on treating high-hazard landscapes, expanding prescribed and cultural fire, and reducing the restoration backlog. By prioritizing these high-hazard areas first, the Strategy establishes the necessary groundwork for a long-term transition toward protecting and sustaining landscape health primarily through maintenance thinning and beneficial fire.

As overall landscape conditions improve and community fire preparedness increases, land managers will gain more opportunities to deploy beneficial fire, including by strategically utilizing natural ignitions to treat additional acres, the most cost-effective method for maintaining and enhancing long-term ecological health. The long-term goal of this approach is to ensure that a much greater portion of future wildfire acres are occurring at low and moderate severity.

The Strategy calls on federal, state, local, private, and tribal partners to prioritize treatment of 850,000 to 1.25 million acres of the state's highest risk landscapes annually over the next ten years. As shown below in Figure 1, meeting this goal requires California to maintain the steady expansion of vegetation treatments achieved since the 2021 Action Plan.

These priority treatment levels align directly with the one-million-acre target set by the 2021 Action Plan and the landmark 2020 Shared Stewardship Agreement between the State of California and the USDA Forest Service. They also contribute significantly to the state's Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets. As noted previously, expanding

treatments beyond the priority-based levels in the Strategy can provide multiple benefits, including enhanced water security, recreation, and carbon storage, along with reduced wildfire smoke exposure and related health impacts.

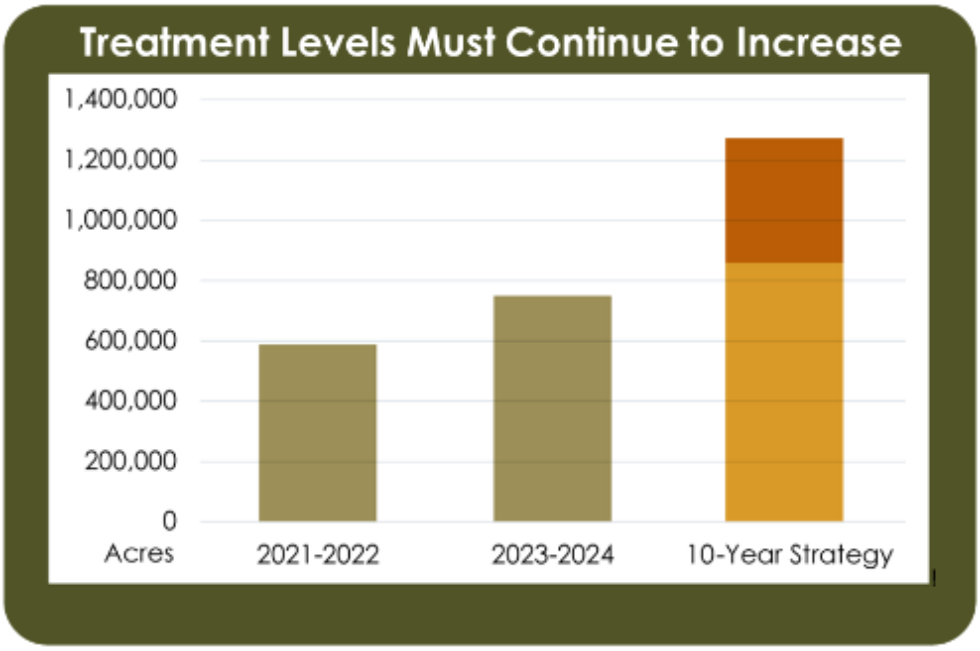


Figure 1. Average annual footprint acres treated from 2021-2024. The top portion of the rightmost bar displays the lower and upper range (850,000 to 1.25 million acres) of priority annual treatment identified as needed under the 10-Year Strategy.

Achieving Landscape Resilience through Collective Action

In addition to scaling up treatments, the state must increase and align investments in other key areas of wildfire and landscape resilience, 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.

The Landscape Resilience Strategy also requires coordinated action at local, regional, and statewide scales. As described in the Mobilizing Regional Action section, Regional Priority Plans, supported by increasingly sophisticated decision-support tools, will identify regionally specific landscape resilience risks and priorities, facilitate local actions, and drive the progress of statewide policy goals.

Beyond regional coordination, successfully scaling landscape treatments depends upon a suite of statewide priorities, as described in the Cross-cutting Initiatives section. These include expanding tribal stewardship, developing a wildfire resilience workforce, streamlining environmental permitting, and growing wood utilization capacity. Together, these integrated efforts will help dismantle implementation barriers,

strengthen capacity, and accelerate coordinated action across ecosystems and land ownerships.

MEASURING OUTCOMES THAT MATTER

Measuring progress is vital for maintaining accountability to Californians and adapting strategies over time. To build upon and expand from reporting acres treated, the Task Force partners are committed to developing outcome-based measures of performance.

Measuring acres treated provides critical information about level of effort and contributes to our understanding of carbon dynamics, but it doesn't answer important questions, such as: How much has wildfire risk been reduced? Has the health of our forests and rangelands improved? Has the resilience of key ecosystem services increased? What is the true return on these public and private investments?

Outcome-based measures directly answer these questions by tracking the measurable effects of treatments on wildfire risk and landscape condition. Because the same measures can be calculated from projected conditions before treatments to set priorities and from measured conditions to assess results, they provide a unified framework for both planning and reporting, even in years or places that are not tested by wildfire. Accordingly, as described in the Mobilizing Regional Action section, the USDA Forest Service, the Department of Conservation (DOC), and other Task Force partners will work with regional collaboratives to use outcome-based measures to model both the results of past projects captured in the Interagency Treatment Dashboard and the potential benefits of planned projects developed through Regional Priority Plans and interagency 5-year plans of work.

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 USDA Forest Service. Forest Service Research and Development has led a multi-year, cross-agency collaboration to develop Outcome-Based Change Metrics that apply sophisticated fire, landscape, and economic modeling to generate quantitative and replicable metrics across its 21 highest-risk landscapes.

Both initiatives recognize three essential features of a robust reporting system:

- **Action Responsive**: Metrics must directly respond to management actions.
- **Measurable and Replicable:** Metrics must be practical to remeasure after treatment, ensuring that realized benefits are quantifiable.
- **Transparent Methodology**: Metrics must rely upon consistent, transparent methods.

Example: Using Flame Length as an Outcome Metric

Reducing wildfire intensity is a shared goal of state and federal land managers. One useful measure of progress is how treatments change expected flame lengths if a

wildfire burns through a treated area. Flame length is closely tied to fire intensity and has clear practical meaning. It affects how difficult a fire is to suppress and how much risk it poses to important resources. It also responds to changes in fuels, so it can show the effects of thinning, prescribed fire, and other treatments.

Because flame length can be estimated before and after treatment using the same assumptions, it provides a consistent way to measure treatment benefits. Furthermore, since the underlying USDA Forest Service methodologies are publicly available, the results can be independently verified, helping to build strong public confidence and scientific validity into the assessments.

Wildfire hazard reduction is just one of the priorities driving the Landscape Resilience Strategy. Other goals include improving forest and shrubland resilience, protecting critical ecosystems, conserving biodiversity, limiting smoke exposure, enhancing watershed integrity, and maintaining recreational opportunities. A range of metrics can track progress toward these diverse objectives.

At the same time, science is advancing rapidly, with new methods and metrics continuing to emerge. Thus, a robust process is needed to establish a common set of core metrics while allowing new measures to be incorporated as science advances.

A Collaborative and Adaptive Framework

To meet this need, the Task Force has launched an iterative process that brings together Task Force leadership, key stakeholders, scientists, and an interagency team. These groups will work together through a process grounded in four principles, ensuring that the resulting measures are credible and widely adopted:

- **Inclusive:** A Stakeholder Advisory Group, composed of the agencies, organizations, and communities that apply the metrics, will help Task Force partner agencies develop measures that are practical and relevant.
- **Science-based**: The Science Advisory Panel will provide rigorous technical reviews of candidate metrics and share their assessments.
- **Practical**: An interagency team will advise on the practicality and durability of ongoing measurement of the outcomes.
- **Adaptive**: Because the process repeats annually, core metrics can be continually refined, new measures added, and priorities updated over time.

BENEFITS OF THE LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE STRATEGY

The Task Force led a public-private team that used results from the scenario modeling and peer-reviewed literature to quantify the benefits of implementing the Landscape Resilience Strategy (Appendix C). As described in How Science Informs the Landscape Resilience Strategy, the modeling results demonstrated how implementing the first 10 years of prioritized treatments called for in the Strategy would affect burn probability, burn severity, and tree density. These changes, in turn, would have significant implications for a broad range of ecological and other benefits. Several of these benefits, established in the peer-reviewed literature, are described below:

Improving Air Quality and Public Health: Fine particulate pollution (PM2.5) from wildfire smoke poses an immediate public health crisis, causing thousands of annual premature deaths and severely harming economic productivity (Science Synthesis). Expanding prescribed burning serves as a core pillar of the Strategy to significantly reduce net toxic air pollutants and secure tens of billions of dollars in societal savings[2,3,4,5].

Protecting Communities and Critical Infrastructure: Severe wildfires have inflicted billions of dollars in structural damage across California and destabilized statewide insurance markets. Regional modeling demonstrates that executing forest thinning and beneficial fire treatments reduces structural loss risks by up to 76 percent for thousands of homes[6], but must be paired with home hardening, defensible space and other parcel and community-based practices to fully support community resilience.

Protecting Biodiversity: Catastrophic high-severity wildfires threaten California's unique biodiversity, damaging critical terrestrial habitats for vulnerable species like giant sequoias[7] and the California spotted owl[8] and the aquatic resources that salmonids and other aquatic species rely on. The Strategy promotes ecological thinning and beneficial fire to safeguard old-growth forests and ignition-reduction projects to allow degraded shrubland habitats time to recover.

Preserving Recreation Assets: Climate disturbances and intense wildfires inflict severe economic damage on California's outdoor recreation sector through impacts such as millions of dollars in lost winter recreation value and canceled camping reservations[9,10]. Prioritizing targeted thinning and beneficial fire minimizes these disruptive, large-scale public land closures while protecting critical infrastructure like roads, campgrounds, and ski areas.

Safeguarding Watersheds, Water Supplies, and Hydropower: High-severity wildfires trigger catastrophic post-fire soil erosion that impairs water quality, destroys fisheries, and clogs reservoirs with sediment. By mitigating destructive fire behavior, the Strategy preserves the snowpack-regulating forest canopy and can generate up to $2,000 per acre in avoided-erosion benefits in high wildfire hazard, highly erodible watersheds with downstream reservoirs (Appendix C).

Reducing Carbon Loss: Active landscape treatments significantly reduce carbon losses from extreme wildfires and protect the long-lived carbon stored within mature ecosystems[11,12,13]. The Task Force scenario modeling, other agency modeling efforts, and academic literature shows that proactive forest management can reduce carbon losses from severe wildfire, protect long-lived carbon stored in mature trees, and avoid millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions[14]. While climate change may make some forest carbon losses inevitable, active management can limit the extent of these losses relative to the state's current trajectory.

Strengthening the Rural Economy: Decades of decline in California's forest-based industries have severely strained rural economies, making it difficult to find viable

markets for restoration biomass. Scaling strategic forest health treatments will help revitalize these regions by creating skilled local jobs and transforming excess wood into valuable bioenergy and forest products.

Summary: Interconnected Benefits of Landscape Resilience: Strategic investments in landscape resilience provide multiple benefits and deliver billions of dollars in annual returns that significantly exceed initial treatment costs across California's landscapes and can ultimately reduce expenses on fire suppression and post-disaster recovery[14].

KEY ACTIONS TO BUILD RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

A. Prioritize High Value and High Hazard Landscapes

Because the need for wildfire risk reduction across California exceeds current treatment capacity, land managers must maximize the return on every investment. This begins by protecting vulnerable communities, essential infrastructure, and landscapes with high ecological and cultural value—such as old-growth shrublands or forest stands, biodiversity hotspots, critical wildlife habitats, and climate refugia. Maximizing impact also requires targeting high-hazard areas, particularly zones with frequent ignitions and unhealthy, overly dense forests vulnerable to mass mortality.

Key Actions

- **1.01 Increase Treatments in High-hazard Landscapes and Overly Dense Forests:** Land management agencies will expand coordinated forest thinning and prescribed burning while partnering with California Native American tribes (tribes) to support cultural burning across California's highest-hazard landscapes. This work will span areas both within and beyond the WUI, prioritizing locations where interventions most effectively reduce high-severity fire potential, mitigate widespread tree mortality, and improve fire suppression conditions.
- **1.02 Increase Treatments to Protect and Promote Biodiversity, Old-growth, and Climate Refugia**: Land management agencies will continue to prioritize strategic treatments to mitigate wildfire hazards and restore ecological processes in or adjacent to critical biological assets. This includes focused interventions near, and ecological restoration within, biodiversity hotspots, designated critical habitats, sensitive aquatic resources, climate refugia, and old-growth forests, woodlands, and shrublands. To support this approach, Task Force partners will collaborate with federal, tribal, and regional partners to build or support continued development of comprehensive, statewide datasets that explicitly map and identify the locations of these high-value ecological resources.
- **1.03 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 regularly update and publish hazard, risk, and condition datasets. This effort will include data layers derived from the Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience and Risk Assessment Initiative. By making data and associated decision-support workflows available in the California Wildfire Commons,

regional collaboratives will have a shared starting point to adapt these data to identify local priorities. This common baseline will improve transparency and compatibility across programs.

- **1.04 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, philanthropic organizations, and nonprofit partners to advance the development, testing, and deployment of innovative technology. This partnership aims to increase the pace and scale of treatments while lowering the cost of vegetation management operations that promote wildfire resilience. These technological advancements will be driven through various mechanisms that could include field testing via CAL FIRE operations, grants, or design competitions.
- **1.05 Promote the Conservation of Oak Woodlands:** USDA Forest Service and CAL FIRE will assess the risks, challenges, existing efforts, and opportunities for conserving and enhancing oak woodland health and reducing associated wildfire risk in consultation with California Native American tribes and land management and regulatory agencies.

B. Expand Beneficial Fire

Many of California's fire-adapted ecosystems now exist outside their historical fire regimes, creating conditions that fuel dangerous and destructive wildfires. "Beneficial fire," which encompasses prescribed fire, managed wildfire, and cultural burning, provides a critical pathway for restoring fire to these landscapes. Expanding its use reduces the threat of extreme wildfire events, improves ecosystem health, supports tribal cultural stewardship, and restores the natural ecological processes that sustain biodiversity, water quality, and long-term landscape resilience.

To scale these efforts, the Task Force and its partners published California's Strategic Plan for Expanding the Use of Beneficial Fire in 2022, establishing the nation's first comprehensive roadmap and acreage targets across state, federal, tribal, and private lands. Executive Order N-35-25 subsequently advanced these goals by streamlining permits, accelerating funding, and prioritizing cultural burning.

More recently, the 2026 Good Fire Act, Assembly Bill (AB) 1699 (Rogers), removed critical barriers to implementation by:

- Establishing permanent liability protections for prescribed and cultural fire practitioners;
- Reducing regulatory hurdles for CAL FIRE to assist with local burning projects; and
- Expanding the qualified burn-boss workforce through certification reciprocity pathways.

Building on this foundation, the Landscape Resilience Strategy aims to establish beneficial fire as California's primary tool for long-term landscape maintenance. However, decades of fire exclusion mean fire may be a challenge to safely return to all areas immediately. In some frequent-fire forests, mechanical thinning may first be needed to reduce heavy fuel loads and tree crowding.

To accelerate the widespread use of beneficial fire, the USDA Forest Service, CAL FIRE, and large private landowners are deploying Potential Operational Delineations (PODs). By dividing landscapes into distinct management units bounded by features like roads, ridgelines, and fuel breaks, PODs give communities a practical spatial framework to plan and execute beneficial fire at scale. By reducing fuel loads and pairing treatments with PODs and strategic fuel breaks, California can also create the conditions to increase managed fire as a cost-effective, efficient tool for reducing fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and advancing landscape-scale management goals.

Key Actions

- **1.06 Expand Beneficial Fire:** State, federal, local, tribal, and private land managers - alongside non-governmental organizations, Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), Fire Safe Councils, and Prescribed Burn Associations - 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.
- **1.07 Enhance Training and Workforce Capacity**: CAL FIRE and the California Air Resources Board (CARB) will collaborate with partners to accelerate the launch of the Beneficial Fire Training Network, expanding training opportunities for practitioners, air districts, local health jurisdictions, and regulators. Additionally, CAL FIRE, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), and CARB are partnering with the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) Fire Network to expand beneficial fire outreach, education, research, capacity building and training.
- **1.08 Expedite Implementation and Streamlined Permitting**: Pursuant to AB 1699 (Rogers, 2026), CAL FIRE will provide direct assistance to local agencies and beneficial fire practitioners. Additionally, CAL FIRE will continue to streamline the state burn permit process and utilize template agreements to support burns led by landowners and other partner organizations. Consistent with SB 310 (Dodd, 2024), 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 fast-track beneficial fire projects, pursuant to SB 1370. See Action 3.14 for more details on SB 1370 (Stern, 2026).
- **1.09 Expand Local Participation and Reduce Liability Barriers:** Pursuant to AB 1699 (Rogers, 2026), CAL FIRE will continue administering the Prescribed Fire Claims Fund and expand eligibility for coverage to include public entities outside of CAL FIRE and the federal government, including resource conservation districts, volunteer fire departments, colleges and universities, and others in addition to the existing non-public user base. Permanent and expanded coverage will reduce liability barriers and increase the pace and scale of prescribed fire and cultural burning across private and public lands.
- **1.10 Expand and Support Cultural Burning**: CNRA, CalEPA, and their affiliated agencies will develop collaborative partnerships with California Native American tribes and prioritize tribal consultation across the work of the agencies to ensure tribal leadership and tribal priorities are incorporated into beneficial burning

activities. Additionally, these agencies will strengthen partnerships with tribes through the creation of meaningful and durable land access and collaboration agreements to 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 (Dodd, 2024) air district agreements. Also see Key Actions 4.01 through 4.05 on supporting tribal stewardship.

- **1.11 Improve Smoke Management Consistency and Coordination**: CARB, with CAL FIRE support, will standardize early and frequent collaboration practices between practitioners and air districts. Together, they will identify smoke management best practices that balance minimizing public smoke exposure with beneficial fire objectives. They will also develop guidance to support longer burn authorization windows where feasible while improving public communication regarding smoke impacts and mitigations.
- **1.12 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 (PFIRS), to support air districts and practitioners and promote faster, more efficient permitting.
- **1.13 Provide Grant Support to Increase Beneficial Fire Capacity:** Subject to the availability of funds, CAL FIRE will continue to support beneficial fire capacity-building initiatives through the Business & Workforce Development, Tribal Wildfire Resilience, and Forest Health Programs.
- **1.14 Use Recent Wildfires to Expand Beneficial Fire:** Public and private land managers will seek to incorporate recent wildfire burn areas into management plans, using wildfire edges as control lines to introduce beneficial fire to adjacent areas.

C. Restore Post-fire Landscapes

As wildfires have burned hotter in forests or occurred too frequently in shrublands, 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 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[15]. In the last 20 years, large areas of shrubland have experienced high-frequency fires and have type-converted to more ignition-prone non-native annual grasses, further increasing fire frequency and risk.

To address this crisis, California's 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. This Strategy builds on the successes of the Reforestation Pipeline Partnership and the work of Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs). Additionally, several Key Actions described in the "Conserve Chaparral and Other Shrublands" section address post-fire restoration needs in these ecosystem types.

Key Actions

- **1.15 Accelerate and Expand Reforestation:** State and federal land management agencies will seek to expand tribal, public, and private reforestation efforts in accordance with California's Reforestation Strategy and to support California's Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets, focusing on reforesting priority areas where severe wildfires have compromised natural forest regeneration. Additionally, land managers will include California Native American tribes in planning efforts to restore resilience in post-fire landscapes through practices such as reintroducing ecologically and culturally important species, including fire-resilient hardwoods.
- **1.16 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 and effective in restoring ecosystem services. Concurrently, agencies will uphold meaningful consultation with tribes and incorporate tribal priorities and knowledge into planning to protect cultural resources in post-fire landscapes.
- **1.17 Evaluate State Reforestation Standards:** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will consider regulatory updates and rulemaking to potentially modernize reforestation standards and post-disturbance reforestation rules under the California Forest Practice Rules.
- **1.18 Enhance Supplies of Reforestation Planting Materials:** Through the Reforestation Pipeline Partnership, CAL FIRE, USDA Forest Service, and American Forests, in coordination with tribal governments and nurseries, 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.
- **1.19 Develop Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs)**: Subject to the availability of funds, CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service will continue to support RCDs and counties in developing Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs) to rapidly provide restoration funding and technical assistance to private forest landowners impacted by wildfires. For example, CAL FIRE's Wildfire Resilience Block Grants are well suited to support EFRTs, as they provide grantees flexibility to identify landowners and parcels for treatments throughout a project's duration. Additional information about EFRTs can be found in California's Private Forest Landowner Assistance Implementation Strategy.
- **1.20 Promote Climate-informed Reforestation Practices:** Task Force partner agencies will develop trainings, outreach efforts, and grant programs to accelerate climate-informed reforestation practices, such as the use of climate-adapted planting stock, modified planting densities, and planting designs with variable spacing.

D. Conserve Chaparral and Other Shrublands

Increasingly frequent large wildfires are disrupting the natural fire regimes of many of California's shrubland ecosystems, degrading landscape health and increasing risks to nearby communities. These ecosystems—including chaparral, coastal sage scrub and other shrubland types—cover more than 30 million acres in California, supporting exceptional plant diversity, wildlife habitat, and important social and cultural resources.

Human development, habitat fragmentation, invasive plants and a rise in human-caused ignitions have all reduced the overall resilience of the state's shrublands.

Managing wildfire in shrublands requires an approach tailored to their distinct fire ecology, fire behavior and environmental conditions. Unlike many of California's forests, which have short historical fire return intervals, these ecosystems are adapted to infrequent, high-intensity wildfire, with natural fire return intervals generally exceeding 30 years. However, human population growth and the expanding WUI have increased the distribution and frequency of human-caused ignitions in shrublands. As a result, fire return intervals can be as short as five years in certain regions (Science Synthesis).

To summarize our current understanding of shrubland management tradeoffs, the Task Force Science Advisory Panel synthesized expert consultations on the effectiveness of treatments in shrublands and their potential ecological impacts. Building on this effort, the Climate and Wildfire Institute, together with Task Force partner agencies and stakeholders, is developing a comprehensive management framework to help guide wildfire resilience and restoration activities in the state's shrublands.

Key Actions

- **1.21 Advance and Refine a Statewide Shrubland Assessment and Management Framework:** The Task Force Shrublands Work Group will continue to refine and implement the Shrubland Assessment and Management Framework and advance key actions to address emerging challenges facing shrublands through science-based approaches.
- **1.22 Develop a Southern California Chaparral Conservation and Management Strategy:** University of California, Davis (UC Davis), San Diego State University, University of California, Santa Barbara, and the USDA Forest Service, in collaboration with regional partners, will develop a Southern California Chaparral Conservation and Management Strategy. This Strategy will provide a common foundation of information along with a blueprint for action to increase the resilience and persistence of Southern California's chaparral. It will identify climate-considered adaptation activities and restoration goals for chaparral at risk and identify current and future challenges to implementing chaparral management activities and solutions.
- **1.23 Develop a Strategic Fuel Break Network and Expanded Ignition Reduction Strategy:** The USDA Forest Service, CAL FIRE, and regional partners will continue to develop an ecologically appropriate all-lands strategic fuel break network and expand the Southern California Ignition Reduction Program to protect both neighboring ecosystems and communities. See Action 2.25 for details on strategic fuel breaks and Actions 2.18 through 2.24 for details on California's ignition reduction strategy.
- **1.24 Improve Planning and Maintenance of Vegetation Treatments**: In alignment with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's updated California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), state, local, and private partners will continue to plan, implement, and maintain vegetation management projects at scales commensurate with wildfire risk reduction needs

and the appropriate ecology of shrublands. See Action 3.15 for more details on updating the CalVTP PEIR.

- **1.25 Establish Restoration Priorities:** Task Force partners, UC Davis and the USDA Forest Service, and tribes whose ancestral lands span these ecosystems, will refine and develop tools to identify priority areas for post-fire restoration and to help achieve the state's shrublands restoration nature-based solutions targets. This includes expanding the current Post-fire Restoration Prioritization (PreP) tool with more extensive fire history data and an updated prioritization process.
- **1.26 Develop Shrubland Restoration Tools and Best Practices:** The Task Force Shrublands Work Group will coordinate with the Task Force Science Advisory Panel to develop tools and best practices for restoring ecologically appropriate shrubland mosaics in degraded and post-fire ecosystems, including reversing type conversion and managing invasive species.
- **1.27 Increase Public Awareness and Integrate Shrubland Protection Into Local Planning:** The Task Force Shrublands Work Group, in coordination with the Task Force Communications Work Group, DOC, the Watershed Research and Training Center and regional partners, will develop and disseminate educational materials and regionally relevant tools, including the SoCal Ecoservices Tool, to increase understanding of shrubland ecology and incorporate protection measures into local planning efforts.
- **1.28 Expand Existing Funding Sources to Address Shrubland Resilience:** Pursuant to AB 2513 (Petrie-Norris, 2026), DOC will continue to support Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program grantees to develop capacity for shrubland projects in Regional Priority Plans, and CAL FIRE will expand Forest Health Grants to include non-forested shrublands. See Action 3.08 for more details on AB 2513 (Petrie-Norris, 2026).

E. Promote Alignment of Wildfire and Natural Resource Planning and Policy

The scale of California's climate crisis demands an integrated approach to wildfire and landscape management. Wildfire resilience is fundamentally inseparable from broader state and federal environmental mandates, including biodiversity preservation, water security, and carbon sequestration. By linking this Strategy to other state and federal natural resource frameworks, Task Force partners can leverage funding and promote projects with multiple benefits.

Key Actions

- **1.29 Align Wildfire Resilience Efforts with Other Natural Resource Planning and Policy:** Task Force partners will seek to align this Action Plan with the following state and federal planning and policy frameworks:

    A. **Nature-based Solutions Climate Targets**: Pursuant to AB 1757 (Garcia, 2022), the state adopted nature-based solutions climate targets to improve the health and resilience of California's diverse landscapes. These include targets for ecological thinning and grazing, beneficial fire, post-fire restoration, roadside treatments,

defensible space, and conservation easements that maintain more carbon rich and climate resilient landscapes.

B. **30x30 Strategies:** AB 900 (Papan, 2025) calls for CNRA to increase support for the stewardship of the state's conserved lands. This mandate includes a review of stewardship best practices, and an evaluation of how active stewardship increases biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly through beneficial fire.
C. **California Climate Adaptation Strategy:** The California Climate Adaptation Strategy includes goals to speed implementation of nature-based climate solutions, strengthen the resilience of natural systems, and increase the pace and scale of wildfire resilience and forest health projects.
D. **California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment:** The Assessment includes relevant findings, climate projections, and decision-support tools to support implementation of the Action Plan, ensure wildfire resilience priorities reflect the best available science on changing climate conditions, and support coordinated investments in landscape resilience, natural resource management and climate adaptation.
E. **California Water Plan/Watershed Resilience Program:** The Department of Water Resources will support integration of wildfire resilience with the Department's California Water Plan and Watershed Resilience Program. This effort will include sharing datasets, elevating vegetation management and targeted watershed restoration opportunities as nature-based implementation actions to support watershed resilience, and supporting progress toward the interim water supply target under SB 72 (Caballero, 2025). The effort will also include working with water agencies, regional leaders, and key partners to develop an interagency strategy to better align and integrate wildfire resilience, watershed-based planning, and water supply reliability programs and priorities.
F. **Carbon Neutrality:** Pursuant to AB 1279 (Muratsuchi, 2022), CARB and other state agencies will continue to drive down greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate carbon dioxide removal toward economy-wide carbon neutrality by 2045. This will mitigate longer and more severe fire seasons, extreme heat, and drought events that put landscapes at higher risk of mortality and fire and impede natural recovery.
G. **CAL FIRE Forest and Rangeland Assessment:** CAL FIRE's Forest and Rangelands Assessment is a comprehensive assessment of the ecological health, timber resources, vegetation trends, and wildfire hazards across California's forests and rangelands. Assessment findings enable Task Force partners to track progress toward long-term resilience goals and adaptively refine management strategies as climate and forest conditions evolve.
H. **USDA Forest Service and State of California Shared Stewardship Agreement:** This Action Plan serves as the second 5-year strategy under the August 12, 2020, Agreement for Shared Stewardship between California and the USDA Forest Service. Through this framework, Task Force partners and the USDA Forest Service will continue to coordinate treatments across federal and non-federal lands to advance the shared objective of treating one million acres statewide and to maintain and restore healthy forests and wildlands. The National Forest

Foundation, the official, congressionally designated nonprofit partner of the USDA Forest Service, will serve as a primary partner for the Forest Service in aligning its work with Task Force partner agencies and organizations.

I. **USDA Forest Service Active Forest Management Strategy:** The USDA Forest Service's Active Forest Management Strategy calls for five-year plans of work for each of California's 18 national forests. As described in Section 3, Task Force partners will work with the USDA Forest Service to integrate these plans into DOC's regional priority plans across the state.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

Community Wildfire Preparedness



NOVEMBER, 2026

2. Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy

California communities face escalating wildfire risks driven by climate change, expanding development, and extreme fire behavior. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)'s Fire and Resource Assessment Program 2025 Assessment reports that wildfires destroyed nearly 90,000 structures from 1990 through 2025, about three-quarters of them after 2015. In 2020, nearly 2.8 million homes were in designated Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and one in five homes statewide was in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).

The California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force)'s Science Advisory Panel found in its Science Synthesis that direct wildfire exposure in California is growing faster than in any other continental state. WUI expansion continues to put more homes in danger, and the devastating 2025 Los Angeles fires proved that extreme wildfires also threaten dense urban areas—destroying over 16,000 structures, claiming 31 lives, and $10 billion in projected economic losses through 2029.

The impacts of these fires extend far beyond the burn zones. Wildfire smoke causes thousands of premature deaths annually, with 86% of hazardous smoke days since 2006 recorded after 2017. Indirect economic and social damages to healthcare, education, agriculture, and labor often exceed direct fire losses by tenfold. Between 2008 and 2018 alone, smoke exposure caused an estimated 52,500 to 55,700 premature deaths and $432–456 billion in economic impacts[16].

How Science Informs the Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy

A robust, growing body of evidence shows that home-, neighborhood-, and community-based actions are all vital to significantly increase wildfire resilience. Drawing on this data, the Task Force Science Advisory Panel's Science Synthesis highlights the most critical actions:

- **Plan and design for wildfire**: Home location and community arrangement are the strongest predictors of structure loss. Future exposure must be minimized through fire-resistant community design and compact land use planning, while existing communities require targeted investments to retrofit legacy infrastructure.
- **Build safer communities**: Resilient infrastructure—including interconnected roads, reliable water supplies, backup power, and early warning networks—is essential to support safe evacuations and maintain critical functions during a fire. Evacuation plans must explicitly account for vulnerable populations and should be reinforced by temporary refuge areas or strategic fuel breaks where necessary.
- **Harden homes and maintain defensible space**: Installing ember-resistant vents, closed eaves, and multi-pane windows is vital because wind-blown embers are a primary cause of structure ignition. Managing defensible space complements these structural retrofits by eliminating continuous fuels, with improvements in the area closest to the home providing the highest level of protection.
- **Prioritize community-wide action**: The Science Synthesis and other research emphasize that wildfire resilience is most effective at the community level. Partnerships between residents, tribes, utilities, local governments, and emergency

agencies are required to address systemic vulnerabilities that individual property owners cannot tackle alone.
- **Engage residents and address barriers**: Effective public engagement must build trust and provide targeted financial or technical resources to overcome socioeconomic and physical barriers to preparedness. Tailoring outreach to local values ensures sustained participation, with a necessary focus on communities facing the greatest hurdles to evacuation and recovery.

Finally, as with the Landscape Resilience Strategy, the Community Preparedness Strategy recognizes that wildfire resilience requires ongoing maintenance. Vegetation grows back, seasonal debris accumulates, and infrastructure fails. Maintenance activities are vital to ensure that the benefits of our investments today are sustained in the future.

A Transformational Legislative Package

Governor Newsom's signing of a landmark legislative package on September 29, 2026, will transform the state's efforts to improve community wildfire preparedness. The package includes pioneering new mandates for both structure and community home-hardening certification (Assembly Bill (AB)1934, Bennett, 2026 and AB 1964, Bennett, 2026), a standardized validation framework to recognize community-wide progress (AB 1960, Bennett, 2026), and the California Wildfire Resilience Loan Program (Senate Bill (SB) 894, Allen, 2026) to provide low-interest financing for structural improvements. SB 973 (Becker, 2026) codifies the Wildfire County Coordinator Program, a program first established in 2021 with the goal of increasing local capacity to implement wildfire resilience activities and recover from wildfire incidents. By pairing these powerful legislative mandates with targeted state funding, California will fundamentally improve and reshape its approach to protecting homes and communities.

The legislation bolsters the state's integrated framework for Community Wildfire Preparedness 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 WUI.

- The community domain includes leaders and groups working together to plan, prioritize, coordinate, implement, and adaptively manage a comprehensive set of 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 recovery activities.



The Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy is also based 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, developing 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.
- **The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection** provides a governing role in community resilience, wildfire prevention, and protection by establishing and maintaining statewide policies, standards, and regulations that support wildfire preparedness and risk reduction.
- **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 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.

- **Private landowners** implement wildfire mitigation and preparedness measures on private lands, including vegetation management, defensible space, home hardening, and landscape-scale fuel reduction, contributing to broader community wildfire risk reduction.
- **California Native American tribes** lead, implement, and sustain community wildfire preparedness work on tribal lands. Tribal fire departments also provide critical mutual aid and emergency response services throughout California.

KEY ACTIONS TO PREPARE COMMUNITIES FOR WILDFIRE

A. Harden Buildings and Ensure Defensible Space

The Science Advisory Panel's Science Synthesis found that wind-blown embers are a leading cause of structure ignition, and that home hardening and defensible space are complementary strategies for reducing this risk. Ember-resistant features — including closed eaves and soffits, ember-resistant vents, sealed gaps, and multi-pane windows —are strongly associated with structure survival, while defensible space reduces combustible fuels and breaks up fuel continuity. Mitigation efforts closest to structures, including maintaining an ember-resistant area ("Zone 0"), provide the most critical line of defense.

Key Actions

- **2.01 Implement Regulations for "Zone 0":** CAL FIRE will implement and educate homeowners about the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's new ember-resistant zone standards, which apply within five feet of structures. CAL FIRE will also, in coordination with local fire departments, provide compliance assistance and resources to homeowners and other relevant stakeholders.
- **2.02 Establish Data Standards for Structural Vulnerability and Risk Modeling:** CAL FIRE, in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), will define standards for statewide data collection 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 risk-reduction programs within communities with insurance and broader wildfire resilience programs.
- **2.03 Establish Home Hardening Standards, Assessments, and Certification:** Pursuant to AB 1964 (Bennett, 2026), CAL FIRE's Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) will adopt comprehensive home hardening standards that address ember exposure, direct flames, and radiant heat by January 1, 2028, and will complete a statewide, county-by-county assessment of homes in Fire Hazard Severity Zones that meet or fail to meet those standards by 2030. Additionally, OSFM, in consultation with the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee, will develop an implementation plan by January 1, 2029, for a statewide, parcel-level home hardening certification program pursuant to AB 1934 (Bennett, 2026).

- **2.04 Establish Financing for Home Hardening and Defensible Space:** Pursuant to SB 894 (Allen, 2026), the State will establish the California Wildfire Resilience Loan Program to help residential property owners and local entities finance the upfront costs of home hardening and defensible space retrofits. The California Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing Authority will administer the program to provide financial assistance for projects and activities to reduce wildfire-related risks and losses.
- **2.05 Align Property-Level Wildfire Mitigation Actions with Other Property-Level Programs:** CAL FIRE will seek to integrate home hardening and other residential wildfire mitigation actions with complementary programs that advance energy efficiency, drought resilience, home rehabilitation, and climate adaptation to maximize multiple community benefits.

B. Strengthen Community-Wide Preparedness Programs

Wildfire can overwhelm communities when individual properties are prepared but surrounding buildings and parcels remain vulnerable to ignition. Embers can travel across neighborhoods, ignite structures and vegetation, and contribute to structure-to-structure fire spread, making community-wide preparedness essential to reducing structure loss and protecting lives.

The Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy addresses this risk by scaling home hardening, defensible space, and fuels reduction across neighborhoods and communities. It supports local and regional partners in identifying and prioritizing high-impact actions, coordinating implementation among local governments, agencies, California Native American tribes, and community organizations, and providing residents with sustained outreach and assistance. The Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy also strengthens community readiness for evacuation and smoke impacts, ensuring preparedness extends beyond individual properties to the systems and partnerships communities rely on during wildfire.

Key Actions

- **2.06 Build a California Wildfire Preparedness Program:** Building on the California Fire Safe Council's (CFSC) Wildfire County Coordinator Program, CAL FIRE will establish a California Wildfire Preparedness Program, as required by SB 973 (Becker, 2026). The Program will strengthen county capacity to assess wildfire risk, prioritize and implement mitigation and preparedness actions, and coordinate local efforts with state and regional wildfire resilience strategies. CAL FIRE will enter into an agreement with CFSC to support counties in planning, coordination, community outreach, and implementation of wildfire prevention, preparedness, mitigation, and recovery activities. Through this Program, CAL FIRE and the CFSC will promote county-based Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) as a key platform to coordinate community preparedness.
- **2.07 Establish Statewide Targets and Implementation Plans 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.

- **2.08 Develop a Community Wildfire Mitigation Validation Program:** CAL FIRE, in partnership with local governments, will establish a voluntary Wildfire Mitigation Validation program, as required by AB 1960 (Bennett, 2026). This program will provide voluntary official recognition to a community that achieves progress toward community-scale wildfire preparedness and mitigation.
- **2.09 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. To support this program, UC ANR, in partnership with CAL FIRE, will develop various science-based standards that support parcel and neighborhood-level strategies for wildfire mitigations.
- **2.10 Develop Community Wildfire Metrics:** CAL FIRE, CNRA, and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) will develop a standardized set of metrics to measure a community's wildfire exposure, vulnerability, and resilience outcomes. Data sources will include new statewide products from the Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience, and Risk Assessment Initiative (WERK), such as maps of building area, height, and volume to measure exposure and vegetation management mapping to track defensible space implementation. These community metrics will enable more targeted local actions, help assess improvements more accurately, and complement the Vulnerable Communities Platform and the California Landscape Metrics, which assess landscape conditions statewide.
- **2.11 Prepare for Smoke:** 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, with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), coordinate and expand the equitable distribution of information to prepare for and protect against smoke exposure.
- **2.12 Implement the Wildfire Smoke and Health Plan:** As required by AB 619 (Calderon, 2022) and expanded by AB 1003 (Calderon, 2025), CDPH will implement a statewide Wildfire Smoke and Health Plan by providing guidance to counties on communicating wildfire smoke risks and protective actions, including the stockpiling, distribution, and use of respiratory protection and other protective equipment. Counties will address the recommendations and guidance developed by CDPH in their next county emergency plan update and disseminate their county-specific plans through outreach and education to residents and key stakeholders.
- **2.13 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 and Cal OES will support integration of evacuation plans into CWPPs and the Safety Elements of local General Plans.

- **2.14 Integrate Wildfire Risk into Local Land Use Practices:** LCI, the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), and CAL FIRE, in coordination with the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee and the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), will strengthen guidance, technical assistance, data, and planning tools to integrate wildfire risk into local land use, housing, subdivision, infrastructure and development planning decisions.
- **2.15 Establish a Statewide Wildfire Mitigation Workforce Training Strategy:** CAL FIRE, in coordination with UC ANR and other Task Force partners, will develop a strategy to develop, expand and coordinate wildfire mitigation workforce training. Priority occupations include defensible-space crews, contractors, landscapers, builders, and other professions related to wildfire mitigation.
- **2.16 Establish a Post-Disaster Recovery and Safer Rebuilding Framework for Wildfire-Risk Communities:** Cal OES, in coordination with CAL FIRE, LCI, HCD, and SGC's Energy Investments team, will support communities at risk from wildfire to develop and maintain plans for post-fire recovery and safer-rebuilding. Plans will establish roles and procedures to address debris and hazardous-material removal, restore critical infrastructure, provide temporary and permanent housing, streamline permitting, expand rebuilding options, and speed community economic recovery.
- **2.17 Align Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Strategies with Strategies for Other Hazards:** CAL FIRE will seek to align community wildfire preparedness and mitigation planning, investments, and implementation with strategies for other hazards, including earthquakes, floods, extreme heat, drought, and severe wind events.

C. Limit Unwanted Ignitions

Reducing unwanted ignitions is critical to improving community wildfire resilience, particularly during extreme weather when fires can spread rapidly and suppression is most difficult. The Science Advisory Panel's Science Synthesis found that human-caused ignitions are responsible for most wildfires in California, and that the source, timing, and location of ignitions relative to assets at risk, wind, and fire weather strongly influence wildfire impacts.

California has established a range of programs, regulations, and technologies to reduce ignition risk and detect fires early. The Southern California Ignition Reduction Program (SCIRP) coordinates efforts to reduce human-caused ignitions, particularly along roadways. The Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety (Energy Safety) requires utilities to develop Wildfire Mitigation Plans to reduce the risk of utility infrastructure causing catastrophic wildfires. Recent legislation, including SB 742 (Pérez, 2026), which requires electrical corporations to account for transmission facilities and plan for the removal of permanently abandoned facilities, and AB 2075 (Bennett, 2026), which updates wildfire safety and requirements for vegetation management and related operations, further strengthens ignition prevention and fire safety requirements.

Key Actions

- **2.18 Implement Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans:** Public and investor-owned electrical utilities, overseen by Energy Safety, will continue to implement Wildfire Mitigation Plans and required updates to reduce wildfire risk.
- **2.19 Standardize Metrics for Utility Project Reporting:** Energy Safety, CNRA, CAL FIRE, and the Task Force 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.
- **2.20 Reduce Risks from Abandoned Transmission Facilities:** Energy Safety will incorporate SB 742 (Pérez, 2026) requirements into the Wildfire Mitigation Plan guidelines for electrical corporations to account for active, inactive, and permanently abandoned electric transmission facilities and submit plans for their removal.
- **2.21 Improve Local and Statewide Data on Ignition Risk:** Task Force partner agencies and organizations will improve the collection and application of ignition data to help prioritize investments related to reducing ignition risk from roadways and utility corridors.
- **2.22 Expand Roadside Treatments Along Highways and Local Roads:** The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will expand its Vegetation Management Program to develop program guidelines, highway-specific treatment objectives, and a science-based methodology to prioritize projects and maintenance activities in coordination with other roadside land managers.
- **2.23 Expand Regional Partnerships to Reduce Wildfire Ignitions:** Building on the Southern California Ignition Reduction Program (SCIRP), USDA Forest Service, CAL FIRE, and other partners will develop additional regional partnerships to reduce

human-caused wildfire ignitions along roadways and utility corridors. 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.

- **2.24 Strengthen Forestry Equipment Safety Requirements:** Pursuant to AB 2075 (Bennett, 2026), the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will adopt and update standards to modernize safety standards, spark arrester mandates, and fire suppression tool requirements for internal combustion engines and heavy equipment operated in wildlands during forest operations and brush clearing. CAL FIRE will support implementation and enforcement of these requirements.

D. Focus Landscape Treatments Around Communities and Infrastructure

Reducing wildfire risk to people, communities, and critical infrastructure requires strategically located and maintained landscape treatments that reflect local vegetation, topography, fire behavior, and suppression needs. Strategically placed and regularly maintained fuel treatments around high-hazard areas reduce ember exposure and fire intensity, improve firefighter access and operational options, and help maintain power, transportation, water, and communications during extreme events.

Key Actions

- **2.25 Expand Strategic Fuel Break Networks**: CAL FIRE, Caltrans, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the California Forestry Association (Calforests), and regional and local partners, including industrial private landowners, will accelerate efforts to develop and maintain a comprehensive statewide network of strategically placed fuel breaks to protect communities, infrastructure, and critical landscapes.
- **2.26 Establish Potential Operational Delineations (PODs):** CAL FIRE will collaborate with the USDA Forest Service, BLM, California Native American tribes, and other partners to develop a comprehensive and community-informed network of PODs. PODs are linear features that aid in fire containment and can form both a basis for responding to active wildfires, as well as form natural discrete areas where mitigation treatments can be planned and tested for landscape and fire-scale impacts and risk reduction. SB 1101 (Limón, 2024) directs CAL FIRE to implement PODs in service of increasing the number and size of larger, landscape-scale prescribed burns. The POD framework is ideal for testing these treatments, getting partner support, and designing long-term maintenance. Fire managers will work collaboratively on PODs for treatment planning and explore their use to minimize adverse impacts from wildfires. Tribal governments will be engaged early in the development and application of PODs where projects or wildfire response activities may affect tribal lands, ancestral homelands, or tribal cultural resources. These PODs will help to prioritize locations to place strategic fuel breaks, fuel reduction projects, ignition reduction priorities, and opportunities for beneficial fire. CAL FIRE will

integrate PODs into its Unit Plans and other regional planning efforts as appropriate. PODs, typically defined by containment potential, may be aggregated into larger Strategic Fire Zones based on shared management objectives[17].

- **2.27 Advance Utility Wildfire Resilience Partnerships**: Task Force partner agencies, including Energy Safety and CAL FIRE, will work with electrical utilities to coordinate vegetation management projects across the state. The partners will share relevant data and seek to integrate utility work into CWPPs, Regional Priority Plans, and other regional frameworks.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

Mobilizing Regional Action



NOVEMBER, 2026

3. Mobilizing Regional Action Strategy

California's 2021 Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan promoted regional strategies as the centerpiece of the state's approach to improve community and landscape resilience. This approach is essential to tailor resilience strategies to the unique risks, opportunities, values, and institutions across California's diverse regions. It also leverages the leadership and experience of local and regional leaders to strengthen the state's strategies.

Accordingly, the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force (Task Force) has hosted regional meetings, strengthened regional partnerships, provided regionally specific data sets, and coordinated agency work across ownerships and jurisdictions. This regional approach has begun to deliver transformative benefits, including:

- Sharply focused investments
- Sustained organizational capacity
- Large-scale, multi-benefit projects
- Pipelines of priority projects that accelerate mitigation and resilience-building
- Public support based on tangible results

This updated Action Plan shifts the state's focus from laying the foundation for regional action to strengthening the systems needed to implement large-scale programs of work across the state. As depicted in the diagram below, this requires aligning and accelerating every step of the process—from planning and priority setting to funding, permitting, and reporting.



KEY ACTIONS FOR MOBILIZING REGIONAL ACTION

A. Develop Regional and Community Plans

Historically, land management agencies focused on their own planning processes and geographic scales tailored to their respective missions. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service national forests, California Department of Conservation (DOC) Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program grantees, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) units, and California

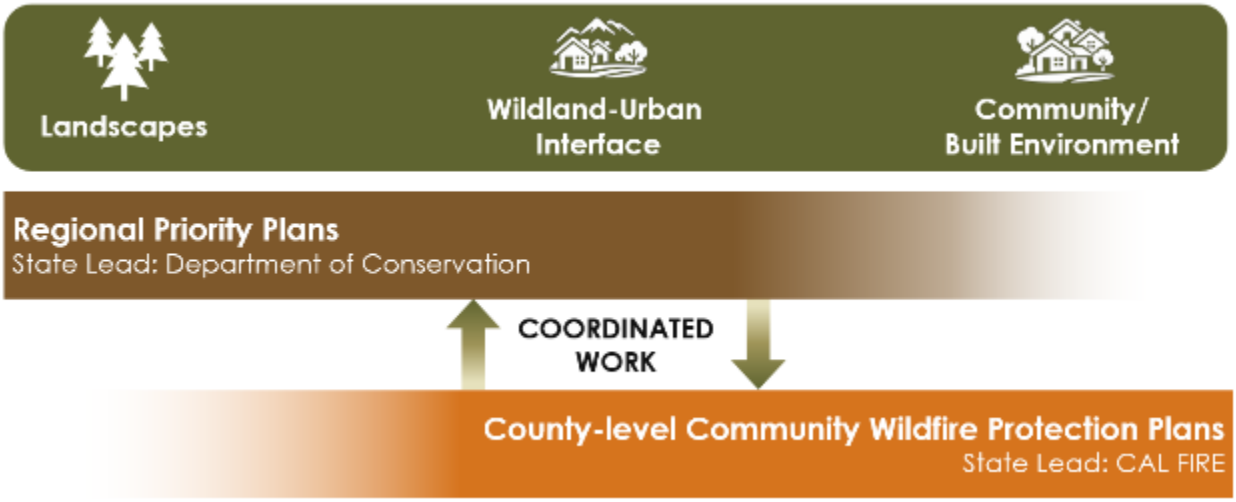
Department of Transportation (Caltrans) districts all operate within vastly different boundaries. They also plan and report progress at different scales.



To address this fragmentation, the Task Force and its partners are establishing a statewide network of regions and subregions. The subregions are largely drawn to align with existing RFFC partnerships and national forests. In the Sierra Nevada region, however, because local partnerships overlap and leave gaps in coverage, the Task Force is creating large subregions to develop integrated 5-year plans of work. This strategy mirrors the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative, which aligns the work of multiple local collaboratives at a broader scale to tackle climate change, wood utilization, and related challenges more effectively.

In tandem with these landscape-based efforts, CAL FIRE and the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) are partnering to boost county-level capacity under the Community Wildfire Preparedness Strategy. This partnership will help counties assess wildfire risks, prioritize mitigation actions, and align local efforts with broader state and regional resilience strategies. Consistent with Senate Bill (SB) 973 (Becker, 2026), both organizations will promote county-based Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) as the primary platform for coordinating local preparedness.

In the Central Coast, these landscape and community boundaries align. In other areas, regional and county-based plans will work in tandem to build resilience from wildlands to communities. Aligned regional designations and strong partnerships will connect these efforts across scales and jurisdictions.



Key Actions

- **3.01 Expand Regional Priority Plans & Partnerships:** DOC, in coordination with CAL FIRE, USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Native American tribes, regional and subregional partners, private landowners, and others, will continue to invest in the development, maintenance, and implementation of Regional Priority Plans. These Plans will:
    - Describe and assess the landscape conditions within their region;
    - Define the governing structures that steer decision-making and implement wildfire and fire-adapted landscape priorities within their jurisdictions;
    - Establish science-based processes for planning and setting priorities; and
    - Develop pipelines of public and private priority projects.

- **3.02 Develop County-Level Community Wildfire Protection Plans:** Building upon the CFSC Wildfire County Coordinator Program, CAL FIRE will establish the California Wildfire Preparedness Program to expand county capacity and support the development of county-level Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). Under this program, counties will create or update their CWPPs on a five-year cycle. See Actions 2.06 through 2.17 for related community-wide preparedness strategies.
- **3.03 Develop Interagency Five-year Plans of Work:** Task Force partners will work with DOC, the USDA Forest Service, the National Forest Foundation, and their partners to develop interagency five-year plans of work for each subregion. These five-year plans will include rolling project pipelines drawn from Regional Priority Plans, USDA Forest Service five-year work plans, utility plans, CWPPs, and other local projects, all dynamically tracked within the California Wildfire Commons. Each five-year plan of work will include:
  - Spatially explicit portfolios of projects, planned across agency boundaries, over five to ten years, backed by decision-support tools or other science-based methods for planning and priority-setting, such as those developed through the Regional Priority Plan process;
  - Projected costs for planned projects and related activities;
  - Project objectives and benefits;
  - Project timeline and status;
  - Project points of contact and partners; and
  - Expected/modeled outcomes that can inform adaptive management.

B. Expand Access to Data, Tools, and Modeling

Since 2021, Task Force partners have steadily improved the scientific datasets, tools, and models available to federal, state, and local agencies. For example, the California Landscape Metrics provide a curated set of nearly 200 high quality, high-resolution geospatial data layers to support land managers in assessing landscape conditions, and the Interagency Treatment Dashboard displays recently completed projects from more than a dozen state and federal agencies. Additionally, CAL FIRE's Fuels Treatment Effectiveness Dashboard shows how on-the-ground projects protect communities and landscapes when wildfire strikes, a key initiative of the Task Force.

State and federal agencies are also investing in increasingly sophisticated decision-support tools to help local and regional agencies and partnerships better plan, prioritize, and assess project effectiveness. These include commercial products such as the Vibrant Planet Platform and XyloPLan, as well as Planscape, a freely accessible, open-source tool launched by Google.org on behalf of the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and now managed by a public-private partnership that includes the USDA Forest Service, the Task Force, Google.org, American Forests, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, the Moore Foundation, and the University of California, Berkeley.

In 2024, the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) Supercomputer Center launched the Wildfire Science and Technology Commons (Wildfire Commons) to provide a central hub for wildfire data and modeling tools. The Wildfire Commons provides a federated, jointly governed, open-science platform that enables partners and stakeholders to discover, access, and use data related to community and landscape wildfire risk, treatments, fuels, weather, fire behavior, and outcomes. The Wildfire Commons emphasizes open data, artificial intelligence, and a community of practice to accelerate innovation.

The Task Force is partnering with UC San Diego to ensure that communities throughout the state benefit from the best available information in the California Wildfire Commons. It provides the foundation for an open wildfire data ecosystem in which public and private sector partners collaborate to develop complementary tools using common data and transparent, rigorous scientific standards.

Key Actions

- **3.04 Update California Landscape Metrics and Develop New California Community Metrics:** Task Force partner agencies, in coordination with the Task Force Science Advisory Panel, will update the California Landscape Metrics to incorporate new and improved datasets. In parallel, consistent with Action 2.10, CAL FIRE, CNRA, and the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) will develop complementary California Community Metrics to support regional priority-setting, while supporting broader regional assessment, planning, evaluation, and reporting.
- **3.05 Improve and Expand the Interagency Treatment Dashboard:** The Interagency Treatment Dashboard provides a user-friendly platform for viewing the full range of wildfire resilience and mitigation projects completed by over a dozen state and federal Task Force partners. The Task Force and its partner agencies will update and improve the Dashboard to include planned projects, and a platform to view the interagency five-year plans of work called for in Action 3.03.
- **3.06 Expand the California Wildfire Commons**: UC San Diego will collaborate with the Task Force and other partners to expand the California Wildfire Commons with a transparent governance structure. The near-term expansion priorities include: the updated California Landscape Metrics; an enhanced Interagency Treatment Dashboard; integration of outcome-based measures of performance (Action 3.23); standards and templates for data and project information; and modeling to support Regional Priority Plans and subregional five-year plans of work (Action 3.03).
- **3.07 Establish the Wildfire Data and Modeling Advisory Committee:** California continues to lead the nation in building data, decision-support, and modeling tools to plan, prioritize, and report on wildfire resilience programs and projects more effectively. However, as described in a 2025 needs assessment coordinated by the Climate and Wildfire Institute, there are gaps in critical data, and the available data and associated models are not integrated across the community, landscape, utility, climate change, and insurance sectors. To address these shortfalls, Task Force partners, through its Science Advisory Panel, will form a Wildfire Data and Modeling Advisory Committee to better align public and private tools, ensure transparent

governance, and identify priorities for the effective use of wildfire resilience data and technologies.

C. Align and Sustain Funding

Since 2021, state agencies have invested more than $4 billion in wildfire resilience projects and programs, primarily through competitive grants funded by the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, Proposition 4, and the General Fund. During this same period, the USDA Forest Service and other federal land management agencies have also invested billions on federal land in California. Sustaining and leveraging these investments with growing public-private funding is vital to achieve the goals of the Plan.

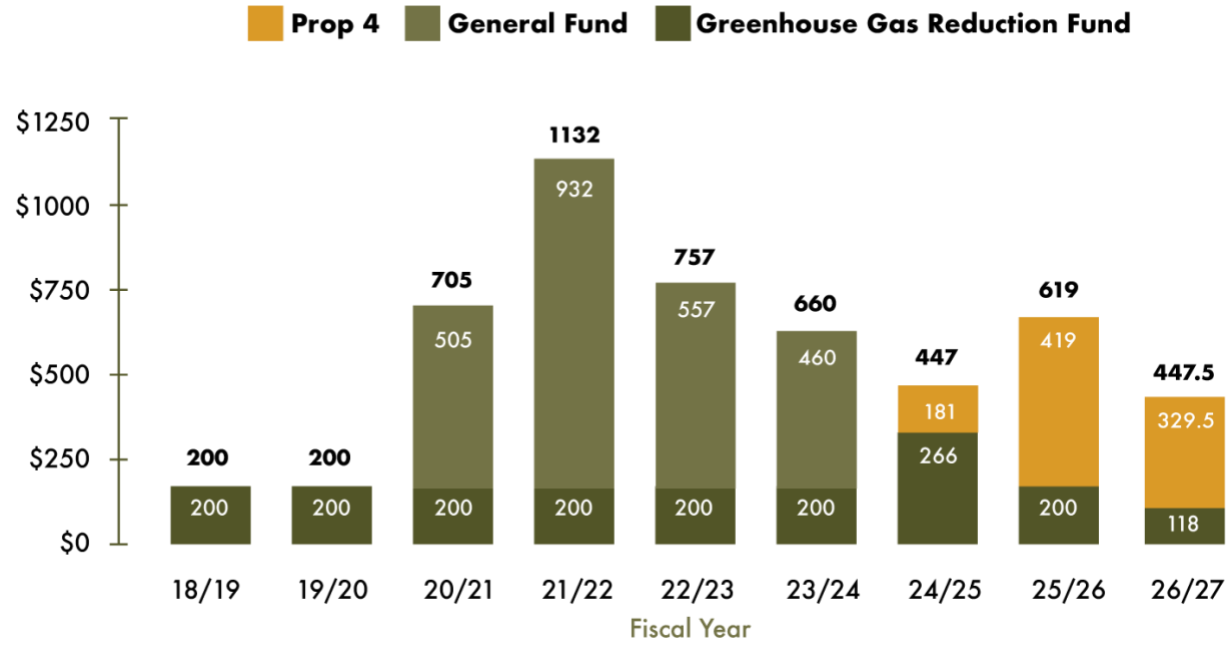


Figure 2. State of California Wildfire Resilience Investments: FY2018-2026 (in millions).

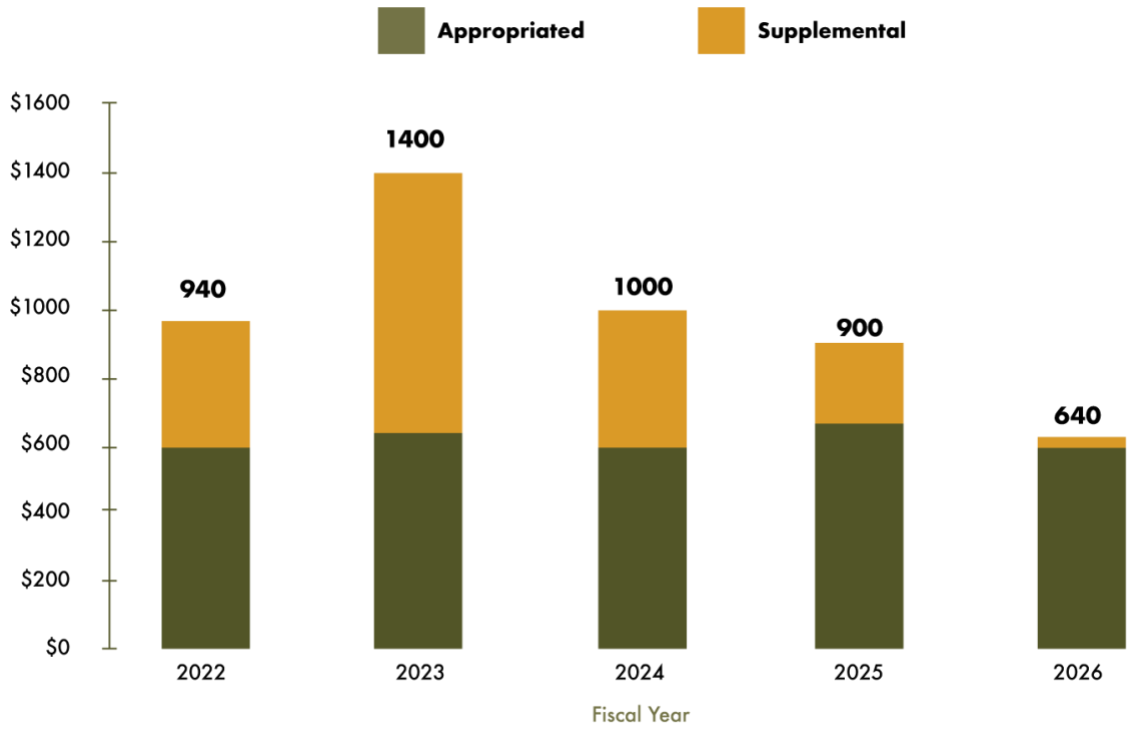


Figure 3. Federal Wildfire Resilience Investments in California FY2022-2026 (in thousands).

State investments have supported more than 2,200 wildfire resilience projects across the state. While recent studies show these funds are effectively targeting highest-hazard areas, grants for individual projects slow the pace of progress, hinder workforce development and wood utilization, and present a large administrative burden.

To increase the pace and scale of resilience strategies more efficiently, state and federal agencies are increasingly shifting to block grants. These include the RFFC block grants, CAL FIRE and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy's landscape grant pilots, and models such as the USDA Forest Service's Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and priority landscapes.

Beyond public grants, philanthropic funding and conservation finance can complement public investments in multi-benefit wildfire resilience projects. Using risk-based decision tools and outcome-based measures to quantify portfolio benefits can help regional collaboratives attract these complementary sources of funding and financing.

Key Actions

- **3.08 Invest in Regional and Landscape-Scale Programs of Work:** Pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 2513 (Petrie-Norris, 2026), DOC, CAL FIRE, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and other agency partners will continue awarding regional landscape grants

to eligible regional entities. These grants fund regional priority strategies developed through the RFFC Program. Agencies will collaborate to adopt shared funding criteria and guidance tied to regional plans. These criteria will prioritize multi-project, multi-year portfolios that deliver multi-benefit outcomes, increasing predictability while reducing administrative burdens.

- **3.09 Expand Investments in Planning and Technical Assistance**: DOC, CAL FIRE, and other state entities 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 CWPPs. This support will help partners build organizational infrastructure, enhance project planning and implementation skills, develop program expertise, and adopt novel technologies to accelerate wildfire resilience work.
- **3.10 Identify Equitable and Durable Community Wildfire Mitigation Financing Options:** CAL FIRE, in coordination with the Wildfire Mitigation Advisory Committee, will develop a coordinated approach to expand access to financial assistance, technical assistance, and implementation capacity for community wildfire mitigation. Grant opportunities, financing options, credits, incentives, and other long-term funding options will be considered.
- **3.11 Pool Landscape-Scale Funding Using Proposition 4**: Where appropriate, CNRA and participating departments will utilize Control Section 15.04 to combine and efficiently administer Proposition 4 Climate Bond funds for eligible projects, while developing streamlined process guidance and agreement templates.
- **3.12 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 resources. This coordination will feature guidance that simplifies funding pathways, ensures community input and transparency, standardizes reporting and administration, and increases flexibility to combine funding sources.
- **3.13 Broaden Funding Pathways**: Task Force partners will continue to pilot and promote innovative funding mechanisms to supplement traditional public grants and attract new capital for regional implementation. Potential approaches include expanding public-private partnerships to align federal and state investments with private capital; developing standardized methodologies for calculating benefits and avoided costs; and adopting conservation finance models such as forest resilience bonds. These mechanisms will be linked to outcome-based measures to evaluate investments based on measurable reductions in wildfire risk and improvements in landscape resilience.

D. Streamline Environmental Review and Permitting

California's strong environmental protections are essential to safeguarding communities, ecosystems, and natural resources. However, permitting requirements

can delay critical wildfire resilience projects that protect communities, improve landscape health, and reduce wildfire risk. State and federal agencies are working to streamline permitting while maintaining environmental safeguards and tribal consultation.

California took significant strides in permitting streamlining during the Newsom Administration through the Cutting Green Tape initiative, the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), and several emergency orders. For example, in March 2025, the Governor proclaimed a statewide emergency to temporarily suspend certain statutes and regulations and accelerate fuels reduction and related permits. CNRA and the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) established an online fast-tracking process that secured state approvals in as little as 30 days for more than 540 projects while maintaining environmental safeguards. To sustain this effort, SB 1370 (Stern, 2026) subsequently directed the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to establish a durable expedited state review process for specified wildfire mitigation projects.

Key Actions

- **3.14 Expedite State Permitting and Environmental Review:** Pursuant to SB 1370 (Stern, 2026), CNRA, CalEPA, and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will consolidate review for covered wildfire mitigation projects into a single coordinated review to accelerate critical wildfire prevention projects while also protecting public health and the environment. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will engage with departments, boards, commissions, stakeholders, and the public in developing the requirements of a permanent program for non-timber vegetation management and will establish a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) certified regulatory program by July 1, 2030.
- **3.15 Update and Expand CalVTP:** As described in the Governor's 2025 Wildfire Prevention Projects State of Emergency proclamation, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will update the CalVTP Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) 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, 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 ignitions and minimize type conversion in shrublands.
- **3.16 Streamline Timber Harvest Plan (THP) Review Process:** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, building upon the recent independent evaluation of the THP review process, will convene an interdisciplinary review team of key agencies and partners to identify and implement improvements to further streamline and synchronize permit timelines, including better aligning submission requirements and reducing redundancies in the review of timber harvest permits and related permits by the

state's Regional Water Quality Control Boards and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

- **3.17 Expedite Federal Permitting and Environmental Review:** The USDA Forest Service and BLM, in coordination with the Task Force and state partners, will implement complementary federal streamlining tools, including expanded use of categorical exclusions, programmatic National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and time-bounded reviews for projects that meet landscape resilience, fuels reduction, or community wildfire resilience objectives. This work will be coordinated with California Native American tribes, local governments, and other relevant partners to ensure transparency and environmental protection.

E. Expand Implementation Partnerships and Capacity

Strategic partnerships are essential to advance agency missions, improve productivity, and deliver large, multi-jurisdictional projects. Partnerships span nonprofit and for-profit entities, tribal communities, private landowners, academic institutions, and local governments. These partners provide local expertise, workforce capacity, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and project management experience.

Key Actions

- **3.18 Expand Shared Stewardship and Partnership Agreements**: CAL FIRE, CNRA, timber industry partners, the USDA Forest Service, BLM, and other state, federal, and tribal land managers will expand the use of long-term shared stewardship instruments, including Good Neighbor Authority agreements, to enable cross-boundary planning, contracting, and project implementation.
- **3.19 Scale Up Capacity of the California Conservation Corps and Local Corps**: CNRA will seek to scale up the capacity of the California Conservation Corps and state-certified community conservation corps (Local Corps) for wildfire resilience projects.
- **3.20 Conduct Statewide Capacity Assessment**: DOC, in partnership with the Watershed Research and Training Center, will complete a statewide capacity assessment to evaluate practitioners' ability to deliver wildfire and landscape resilience work. The assessment will identify regional resource gaps—such as staffing, expertise, and organizational constraints—and guide future investments to ensure local, regional, and tribal partners have the infrastructure required to sustain an accelerated pace of work.
- **3.21 Improve Resilience of State-Owned Lands**: State landowning agencies, including State Parks, CAL FIRE, and CDFW, will continue to coordinate their efforts in improving the resilience of state owned and managed lands across the state.

F. Align Monitoring and Reporting Programs

Historically, state and federal agencies have monitored and reported on activity-based metrics (e.g., acres treated, number of inspections), with individual organizations housing data in siloed systems. These activity-based metrics are useful for tracking effort,

but measuring the collective impact of the Action Plan requires agencies to assess whether projects actually reduce risk and improve ecological conditions. Because this work spans multiple jurisdictions and ownerships, agencies need to share data and use consistent reporting methods to assess progress and outcomes.

The 2021 Action Plan prompted the development of the Wildfire & Landscape Resilience Interagency Treatment Dashboard, which aggregated wildfire resilience treatment data from more than a dozen state and federal agencies and private timber companies into a centralized database with a common language and structure. For the first time, fire crews, land managers, forest collaboratives, scientists, and the public could access and use this resource.

State and federal agencies also conduct landscape-level monitoring and assessment through programs such as the USDA Forest Service's Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) Program, CAL FIRE's Forest and Rangeland Assessment, the NASA, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and CNRA collaborative Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience, and Risk Assessment Initiative (WERK) and the CARB 2025 Natural and Working Lands Carbon Inventory update. These assessments complement project-level monitoring of individual treatments, including CAL FIRE's Prescribed Fire Monitoring Program, CAL FIRE's Forest Health Monitoring Program, and CAL FIRE's Fuel Treatment Effectiveness Reports. The Task Force partner agencies are working to expand use of this data to connect landscape- and project-scale monitoring to evaluate treatment effects at statewide and regional scales.

Key Actions

- **3.22 Enhance Dashboards and Shared Reporting:** Building on the Interagency Treatment Dashboard, Task Force partners will expand public dashboards to report on community and landscape resilience targets, project implementation, and progress toward five-year plans of work.
- **3.23 Develop Outcome-Based Measures:** As described in the Landscape Resilience section, the USDA Forest Service, DOC, and the Task Force, in coordination with the Science Advisory Panel, the Monitoring, Reporting and Assessment Work Group, and other key state and regional partners, will continue to develop a comprehensive set of outcome-based measures of performance to improve planning, priority-setting, and reporting on the benefits of landscape-scale treatments, Regional Priority Plans, and interagency five-year plans of work.
- **3.24 Evaluate the Potential Benefits of Planned Projects**: DOC, CAL FIRE, and other Task Force partners will work with the USDA Forest Service to model the expected performance of planned projects identified in Regional Priority Plans and subregional five-year plans of work. The modeling will use outcome-based measures that capture multiple benefits (see Action 3.23).
- **3.25 Develop New Community Wildfire Resilience Certification and Validation Programs:** As described in Actions 2.03 and 2.08, CAL FIRE will establish a statewide, parcel-level home hardening certification program and a voluntary community Wildfire Mitigation Validation program.

- **3.26 Track Progress Toward Achieving California's Nature-Based Solutions Targets**: Task Force partner agencies will continue to contribute to the reporting requirements related to wildfire risk reduction and landscape resilience targets called for in AB 1757 (Garcia, 2022), which require CNRA to report every two years on statewide progress toward the state's nature-based solutions climate targets. WERK's updatable land cover maps will give the Task Force partner agencies a statewide basis for tracking progress toward these targets.
- **3.27 Develop Standard Methods to Consistently Track Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Reductions, Carbon Sequestration, and Additional Benefits:** Pursuant to AB 1757 (Garcia, 2022), AB 32 (Pavley, 2006), SB 32 (Pavley, 2016), AB 1279 (Muratsuchi, 2022), and SB 901 (Dodd, 2018) and building on existing methodologies for forest management practices, CARB and the California Public Utilities Commission will develop standard methods for state agencies to consistently track greenhouse gas emissions and reductions, carbon sequestration, and, where feasible and in consultation with CNRA and the California Department of Food and Agriculture, additional benefits from natural and working lands over time. WERK's statewide LiDAR biomass estimates will give these methods a consistent carbon baseline for reporting the climate change mitigation benefits of the Action Plan.
- **3.28 Improve Monitoring and Quantification of Treatment Impacts and Benefits:** CAL FIRE, in partnership with CNRA, CARB, CDFW, California Department of Water Resources, Water Boards, and other state agencies, 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 partner support, and attracts new investment in wildfire resilience.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE AND LANDSCAPE RESILIENCE ACTION PLAN

CALIFORNIA
WILDFIRE
& FOREST
RESILIENCE
TASK FORCE

Cross-Cutting Initiatives



NOVEMBER, 2026

4. CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES

Achieving California's ambitious landscape, community preparedness, and regional wildfire resilience goals require strategies that transcend traditional categories and break down silos between agency programs. To meet these requirements, the state is prioritizing cross-cutting initiatives that cultivate inclusive partnerships and leverage local capacity. This includes expanding wood utilization and regional processing infrastructure to support forest management while driving rural workforce development and economic growth. It also entails expanding prescribed livestock grazing as a scalable, cost-effective vegetation management tool to reduce fine fuels. Simultaneously, integrating wildfire resilience with sustainable recreation systems protects public access to natural lands while embedding critical fuel breaks and tactical staging infrastructure near vulnerable communities.

Ultimately, the success of the Action Plan also relies on all stewards of the land, not just state and federal land managers. By actively supporting California Native American tribes to steward their ancestral lands and including Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in wildfire resilience planning, the state can restore ecological integrity to degraded landscapes. Concurrently, the state can remove complex regulatory, technical, and financial barriers for small, non-industrial private landowners to mitigate wildfire risk across millions of acres. Together, these unified strategies establish the collaborative, all-lands framework necessary to accelerate landscape restoration and foster statewide wildfire resilience.

KEY ACTIONS FOR CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES

A. Support Tribal Stewardship

For generations, California Native American tribes (tribes) have used cultural fire and other stewardship practices to maintain healthy, fire-adapted landscapes. Decades of development, fire suppression, and the exclusion of traditional ecological practices have disrupted these traditions and constrained tribes' ability to steward ancestral lands and burn at the timing and frequency needed to sustain ecological and cultural benefits. Restoring tribal stewardship not only respects tribal sovereignty and upholds cultural traditions, but also reduces wildfire risk, improves landscape health, and restores fire-adapted conditions.

California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)'s Tribal Stewardship Policy provides a framework for tribal access, collaboration, and ancestral land return. It recognizes tribes as essential leaders and partners in natural and cultural resource management, ensuring meaningful opportunities for tribes to shape wildfire planning and implementation to expand cultural fire and other stewardship practices while protecting cultural resources.

Key Actions

- **4.01 Promote Tribal Sovereignty**: State and federal agencies will ensure and encourage the exercise of reserved, retained, and other tribal rights to engage in cultural burning and stewardship. The Indigenous Stewardship Network will work with tribes, state, and local agencies to provide training and resources to increase 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.
- **4.02 Seek Opportunities for Tribal Ancestral Land Return, Collaboration, and Access**: State and federal agencies will seek opportunities for ancestral land return through property purchase or ownership transfers in fee or trust. State and federal agencies will enter into durable tribal access and collaboration agreements to support tribal stewardship, landscape health, and wildfire resilience.
- **4.03 Ensure Tribal Stewardship in Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Planning**: State, federal, and local agencies will include tribes in planning and implementing wildfire resilience, fuels reduction, and wildfire recovery projects. This includes integrating tribes into Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) and Emergency Forest Restoration Teams (EFRTs) planning efforts in order to protect tribal cultural resources prior to wildfire prevention and recovery work. The Indigenous Stewardship Network will convene a Tribal Work Group of cultural fire practitioners, regional experts, and policymakers to increase tribal engagement in statewide planning and develop recommendations for tribal stewardship inclusion.
- **4.04 Sustain Funding for Cultural Fire Practitioners**: State and federal agencies, in coordination with tribes, will allocate beneficial fire funding specifically for tribes, tribal organizations, and cultural practitioners. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will continue to support tribally led planning and stewardship through the Tribal Wildfire Resilience Grant Program for tribal projects that advance wildfire safety, forest health, and the cultural use of fire.
- **4.05 Support Wildfire Resilience Planning and Community Safety on Public Domain Allotments**: State agencies and Task Force partners, in consultation with the California Public Domain Allottee Association, will explore opportunities to provide technical assistance and planning support on public domain allotments—parcels of land held in federal trust for individual tribal members—to develop and implement state-funded wildfire resilience projects. This includes assistance navigating project planning, funding, permitting, and contracting, alongside coordinating with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to address participation barriers. Additionally, partners will support allottees in ensuring safe ingress and egress to prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters.

B. Sustain Small Private Landowner Stewardship

Non-industrial private forestlands cover approximately 8 million of California's 32 million forested acres. Because these lands are often interspersed with public, tribal, and other private holdings, they are critical to an all-lands approach. California's privately owned

shrublands, oak woodlands, and rangelands are also essential to building resilient landscapes. However, small private landowners often face significant planning and implementation barriers, including limited technical knowledge, high treatment costs, complex regulations, and difficulty navigating assistance programs. Non-forest landowners also need guidance tailored to their unique landscape conditions and specific wildfire risks.

To deliver assistance more efficiently and at scale, state and federal agencies are increasingly shifting from individual landowner grants toward block grants for regional partners—such as Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), Fire Safe Councils, and Prescribed Burn Associations. These partners can also integrate landowner assistance into larger-scale projects on adjacent public lands. Connecting private landowners with support through regional delivery networks benefits both landscape resilience and community wildfire preparedness.

Key Actions

- **4.06 Sustain and Expand Landowner Assistance and Incentive Programs:** State and federal agencies, along with RCDs and non-governmental partners will seek to sustain and expand technical, financial, and market-based assistance programs for private landowners. This includes expanding landowner education and technical assistance through RCDs and programs like University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR)'s Forest Stewardship Workshops. It also includes broadening participation in incentive and market-based programs including CAL FIRE's California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program; exploring sustainability certification to promote California-grown wood products through the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Program and related partnerships; and developing tailored assistance pathways for underserved shrublands, oak woodlands, and rangelands.
- **4.07 Align Funding and Strengthen Regional Delivery**: State and federal agencies will continue to coordinate their assistance programs—including CFIP, NRCS programs, USDA Forest Service assistance, Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program, and Wildfire Resilience Block Grants—to better leverage available funding, reduce cost-share burdens and support regional priorities. Additionally, CAL FIRE, NRCS-CA, USDA Forest Service, and other partners will assist the Department of Conservation (DOC) with supporting the long-term capacity of regional partners and private non-industrial forest landowners.
- **4.08 Increase Outreach and Education to Small Private Landowners**: CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service will continue to support, as funding allows, regular forest stewardship workshops for landowners through sustained funding to the UC ANR Forest Stewardship Education Initiative to continue offering forest stewardship and post-fire forest resilience workshops. Additionally, the California Association of RCD's Private Forestlands Committee, in coordination with the Task Force Communications Work Group, will seek to finalize an outreach plan focused on underserved landowners.

- **4.09 Provide Assistance for Rapid Post-Fire Restoration:** As described in Action 1.19, CAL FIRE, the USDA Forest Service, and local agencies such as RCDs, will seek to expand EFRTs to rapidly assist private forest landowners impacted by wildfires.

C. Expand Workforce and Career Development Pathways

Across California, federal, state, tribal, regional, and local partners are building career pathways through hands-on training, apprenticeships, workforce development grants, and community college and university programs. However, workforce capacity remains a major constraint to scaling up wildfire and landscape resilience projects throughout the state. Demand for qualified personnel is growing faster than the available talent pool, while attrition remains high. Workplace culture, limited career pathways, and compensation are frequently cited drivers of turnover.

Success also depends on supporting good jobs that are accessible, well-compensated, sustainable, and physically and psychologically safe. In 2025, the Sierra Business Council and the Watershed Research and Training Center, in coordination with the Task Force, published Advancing Wildfire Resilience Workforce & Career Development in California: Recommendations to Support and Invest in Workforce, Career Pathways, and Workplace Culture *(*Workforce and Career Development Recommendations). The report offers strategic recommendations to strengthen workforce development, career pathways, workplace culture, and collaboration with tribes and tribally led organizations. In addition to the Key Actions below, the Workforce and Career Development Recommendations will guide ongoing efforts to build and retain the workforce required to advance California's wildfire resilience goals.

Key Actions

- **4.10 Expand Wildfire Resilience Career Pathways:** Building on efforts by CAL FIRE, 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 tribally 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-level access, credential transferability, and advancement opportunities.
- **4.11 Design a Centralized, Accessible Human Resources Development Hub:** The Watershed Research and Training Center, with support from DOC and in partnership with potential end-users, will continue to scope a service model for providing standardized Human Resources development resources for wildfire resilience employers, including tribes and tribally led organizations, nonprofits, small businesses, government agencies, and special districts.
- **4.12 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 workforce related eligible costs and evaluation criteria that advance workforce objectives, while incentivizing grantees to leverage external funding sources to cover these costs where appropriate.

- **4.13 Expand State Hiring Pathways:** CAL FIRE and other departments will seek to expand hiring pathways for state-certified community conservation corps (Local Corps) graduates into CAL FIRE and state service, building on the existing streamlined hiring process for California Conservation Corps graduates.
- **4.14 Convene Key State Leaders and Partners:** Task Force partners, Sierra Business Council, and the Watershed Research and Training Center will convene leaders of state agencies and non-state partners to identify short and long-term opportunities to address the Workforce and Career Development Recommendations.

D. Expand Wood Utilization Capacity

To achieve the Action Plan's goals, California must expand its wood and woody biomass processing capacity alongside growing treatment acreages. Without sufficient infrastructure, the state risks falling short of its treatment targets. In addition, developing markets for wood and forest byproducts can significantly reduce treatment costs. The 2025 American Forests Report estimates that viable markets could recover 33% to 50% of these expenses. California's forest products sector can drive these efforts by providing the necessary workforce, equipment, and infrastructure to support rural jobs and the statewide manufacturing economy.

According to the 2025 American Forests Report, California must add processing capacity equivalent to 29 to 31 new average-sized mills statewide and 8 to 9 large-scale bioenergy facilities to process the material generated by treating one million acres annually. These findings underscore the importance of coordinated investments in wood product facilities to achieve the state's forest health, wildfire resilience, and climate objectives.

In addition, the USDA Forest Service National Active Management Strategy calls for expanded timber production to reduce overly dense forests, make productive use of biomass, and support rural economic development. However, since timber harvest from federal lands makes up only about 16% of the state's total, increasing federal timber sales by 25% (the goal of the Active Management Strategy) would be a modest step toward the ecological thinning goals of the Landscape Resilience Strategy.

While California has significantly increased investments in forest and wildfire resilience projects, wood utilization capacity has lagged. Absent viable outlets, the majority of biomass residues remain on the landscape with limited options other than pile burning or decaying in place. However, leaving fuels in place or piling residues without subsequent burning, as is the case with an estimated 250,000 piles across the Tahoe ` Basin alone, does not reduce near-term wildfire hazard [18,19]. Conversely, when burned, piles can increase methane and localized PM 2.5 emissions [20]. Both cases can potentially undermine the effectiveness of state investments.

California's wood products also provide significant economic benefits, particularly in rural areas[21,22]. The forest products industry, including timber harvesting and wood processing, supports approximately 5,200 jobs, generates $488 million in annual employee earnings, and produces $3.4 billion in annual sales.



Over half a dozen state agencies share responsibility for wood utilization, including CAL FIRE, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (and its Joint Institute for Wood Products Innovation), DOC, the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI), California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). Each entity brings unique expertise, policy focus, and implementation tools to the issue. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, for example, is well positioned as a public convener and forum for discussion of forest practices, wood products and markets. Recent efforts by CNRA have brought these entities together to better coordinate and align the state's wood utilization programs and policies.

Key Actions:

<u>Leadership/Governance</u>

- **4.15 Organize a Nimble State Governance Structure:** Building on recent efforts, CNRA will work with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, CAL FIRE, California Strategic Growth Council (SGC)'s Energy Investments team and others to identify options to coordinate, elevate and deliver state initiatives to advance wood utilization.
- **4.16 Develop a Comprehensive Wood Utilization Strategy:** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and CAL FIRE, in coordination with SGC's Factory Built Housing Program, will coordinate with key public and private partners to develop a comprehensive wood utilization strategy by the end of 2027.

<u>Facility Development</u>

- **4.17 Activate Climate Bond Funding to De-Risk Investment in Biomass Facilities:** DOC will establish a loan program to catalyze private sector investments in non-

combustion facilities and create a sustainable funding cycle supporting multiple rounds of economic development.

- **4.18 Implement the Forest Organic Residue Energy and Safety Transformation (FOREST) Program:** Consistent with Assembly Bill (AB) 706 (Aguiar-Curry, 2026), the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection will establish and implement the FOREST program to support biomass power generation in strategically located regions while long-term markets for low-value wood are developed.
- **4.19 Expand Wood and Biomass Processing Capacity:** Subject to available funds, CAL FIRE, DOC, and the USDA Forest Service will continue awarding grants to support facility development. LCI will evaluate the feasibility of creating a streamlined pathway for certain projects that utilize forest biomass on properties zoned as industrial and outside areas of extreme air quality nonattainment as part of the 2027 California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines update. GO-Biz will offer technical assistance to individual wood utilization businesses.
- **4.20 Support Small-Scale, Behind-The-Meter Facilities in Strategic Locations:** CNRA, in consultation with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) will explore options for supporting small-scale, behind-the-meter biomass facilities (up to 2 megawatts) that do not require ratepayers to fund above market costs, and are located in areas that advance wildfire safety and local jobs.
- **4.21 Explore Forest Biomass Gasification Pilots:** CPUC will continue exploring biomass gasification, in accordance with CPUC Decision 22-02-025, which established the Renewable Gas Standard and ordered Southern California Gas Company and Pacific Gas and Electric Company to develop biomass gasification pilots.

Supply

- **4.22 Increase the Reliability of Wood and Biomass Supply:** The USDA Forest Service and CNRA will partner to formalize commitments to expand their use of 20-year contracting mechanisms to increase supply certainty for projects seeking to utilize wood fiber from California's national forests.
- **4.23 Establish Regional Woody Biomass Partnerships**: Subject to the availability of funds, LCI will continue supporting 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.

Mass Timber and Wood Products

- **4.24 Establish a California Mass Timber Strategy**: With California's newly created Mass Timber Coalition, the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, will coordinate with GO-Biz, 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 engineered wood building products.
- **4.25 Support Wood Product Procurement for New State-Funded Buildings:** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, in coordination with the California Department of General Services, will explore strategies to support increased use of California wood products, including mass timber, for use in state-funded projects involving building

construction, with a priority on utilizing wood products that achieve goals for low-embodied carbon.

- **4.26 Incorporate California Wood Products in Housing Grant Programs:** The California Housing and Homelessness Agency and SGC will explore and report on the use of mass timber and California wood products in developments funded by state housing programs.
- **4.27 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 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.

Emerging Markets

- **4.28 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.
- **4.29 Maintain State Support for Forest Biomass to Bioenergy 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.

Transportation

- **4.30 Improve Forest Product Transportation Efficiency:** The California Department of Transportation, California Highway Patrol, and other appropriate state agencies will explore adjustments to truck weight requirements on non-federal transportation routes. Potential adjustments would increase biomass volume per trip, reduce fuel use and emissions per ton removed, and improve the economic feasibility of moving lower-value forest restoration byproducts to processing or bioenergy facilities.

E. Promote and Expand Sustainable Recreation

Wildfire and climate impacts are profoundly affecting California's outdoor recreation system, disrupting access to public lands and water, and threatening the communities and economies that depend on them. In many rural and gateway communities, outdoor recreation is a significant economic driver, supporting local businesses, tourism, and jobs. When wildfires and other climate-driven disasters limit access to recreation areas, the resulting impacts ripple through local economies and affect community vitality. These interconnected impacts underscore the need to manage landscape health, wildfire resilience, and outdoor recreation as mutually dependent priorities.

In December 2022, the Task Force Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group developed the Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience to provide a roadmap for advancing sustainable recreation access and strengthening the resilience of California's recreation system, communities, and economies in the face of increasing wildfire and climate impacts.

Key Actions:

- **4.31 Implement California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience:** The Sustainable Recreation/CALREC Vision Key Working Group will partner with CNRA, DOC, the USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and state and local recreation managers, to deliver multi-benefit recreation and wildfire resilience projects in and near the wildland urban interface. Where appropriate, they will embed these priorities in RFFC Regional Priority Plans.
- **4.32 Leverage California Jobs First to Implement Multi-benefit Programs and Projects:** Recreation and tourism industry sector coordinators from California Jobs First regions will develop best practices for job creation in the sector. This includes leveraging opportunities identified in the Joint Strategy and in both the Jobs First Sierra Recommendations for Implementation and Collaborative Action and the State Cohort Recommendations for Implementation and Collaborative Action.
- **4.33 Support Multi-Benefit Recreation Facilities Projects in and Near the WUI:** Federal, state, and local land managers will seek to build projects in or adjacent to WUI areas that provide both wildfire risk reduction and outdoor recreation benefits. Examples include trails and campgrounds that can be used during fires as staging areas for personnel and equipment. This includes approaches like the Fire-Hardened Trails Prescription, which removes fuels along trail corridors to protect trail system investments, mitigates wildfire risk from trail users, and provides strategically placed, tactically feasible trails for wildland fire operations.

F. Expand Prescribed Grazing

Prescribed livestock grazing can be a cost-effective, landscape-scale tool for fuels management and post-fire recovery that uses managed livestock to achieve specific resource goals. Grazing alters fire behavior by reducing flammable shrubs that ignite easily and contribute to ember cast, breaking up continuous fine fuels, and lowering fuel biomass. It is also an effective tool for maintaining and restoring post-fire landscapes.

Senate Bill (SB) 675 (Limón, 2024) directs state agencies and the Task Force to develop regional grazing guidance and incorporate it into wildfire prevention grant programs and landscape resilience planning. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Range Management Advisory Committee provides resources to help agencies and grazing operators enhance ecological values and sustainability. Additionally, the Task Force Prescribed Grazing Working Group's brief, Expanding Prescribed Grazing for Wildfire Resilience in California, recommends regionally tailored, outcome-based, context-specific, and collaborative strategies to scale up prescribed grazing statewide.

Key Actions

- **4.34 Identify Priority Areas and Expand Capacity for Prescribed Grazing:** UC ANR, in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, BLM, NRCS, DOC, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and partners will seek to scale up prescribed grazing where appropriate as a multi-benefit vegetation

management tool. This includes, as necessary, mapping priority areas where grazing can reduce fuels and protect communities, addressing permitting barriers, strengthening workforce development and the technical assistance network, and expanding recruitment and support for Certified Rangeland Managers. UC ANR will continue working with partners to expand prescribed grazing outreach and education, facilitate information exchange, and coordinate implementation across the state.

- **4.35 Strengthen Guidance and Coordination for Prescribed Grazing:** Pursuant to SB 675 (Limón, 2024), the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, through its Range Management Advisory Committee, will continue developing guidance, tools, and coordination to support communities and land managers in using prescribed grazing where appropriate to reduce fine fuels, manage invasive vegetation, and complement other vegetation treatments, while ensuring appropriate and beneficial practices and avoiding over-grazing. Building on the non-regulatory guidance approved in December 2025, the Board will refine guidance and practical tools, including grazing agreement and management-plan templates, to help land managers identify appropriate treatment locations, develop and monitor projects, protect ecological resources, including water quality, and build community and landowner support.

GLOSSARY

Acronym / Abbreviation	Full Term / Meaning
AB	Assembly Bill
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
Calforests	California Forestry Association
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CalVTP	California Vegetation Treatment Program
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CDPH	California Department of Public Health
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFIP	California Forest Improvement Program
CFSC	California Fire Safe Council
CNRA	California Natural Resources Agency
CWPP / CWPPs	Community Wildfire Protection Plan(s)
DOC	Department of Conservation
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EFRTs	Emergency Forest Restoration Teams
OEIS / Energy Safety	Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety
FIA	Forest Inventory and Analysis
FOREST	Forest Organic Residue Energy and Safety Transformation
GO-Biz	Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development
HCD	California Department of Housing and Community Development
LCI	Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
Local Corps	State-Certified Community Conservation Corps
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRCS / NRCS-CA	Natural Resources Conservation Service / California
PEIR	Program Environmental Impact Report
OES / Cal OES	Governor's Office of Emergency Services
OSFM	Office of the State Fire Marshal
PFIRS	Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System
PODs	Potential Operational Delineations
RCD / RCDs	Resource Conservation District(s)
RFFC	Regional Forest and Fire Capacity
SB	Senate Bill
SCIRP	Southern California Ignition Reduction Program
SGC	Strategic Growth Council
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge

THP	Timber Harvest Plan
UC ANR	University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
UC Davis	University of California, Davis
UC San Diego	University of California, San Diego
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WERK	Wildfire, Ecosystem Resilience, and Risk Assessment Initiative
WUI	Wildland-Urban Interface

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