

# Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force

Oct 5<sup>th</sup> – 1:00pm to 3:00pm

445 Jackson Street, Quincy CA 95971

## Introduction – Hannah Hepner, Plumas County Fire Safe Council

### Shane Vargas & Don Gordon, CAL FIRE:

- Intent of the meeting is to establish an Incident Action Plan (IAP), which is a tool used to manage large incidents. In our case, it is preparation in the event that we have a major tree mortality crisis.
- An IAP identifies players and special issues. Each page identifies a working group and group objectives.
- Other tree mortality task forces, including the state task force, have organized themselves in this manner. The IAP will act as an organizational tool for our Task Force to define efforts.
- A Board of Supervisor's Declaration of Emergency needs to be declared to access California Disaster Assistance Act funds, which reimburse 75% of monies spent for the purposes of public safety. These funds address the "brown tree" issue.
- Regionally based funding sources can address the "green tree" issue, which Fire Safe Councils in other areas have spearheaded as it is integrated with fire hazard. Prevention is the opportunity; Plumas County is not in crisis mode.

### Discussion:

*Are we making a joint effort with Sierra County? (Lynn Campbell, SNC)* Don Gordon – It is possible, but would complicate things as it would need to go through a different CAL FIRE unit.

*Can private landowners take down trees through normal venues? (Lee Anne Schramel, PNF)* Don Gordon – Yes, but they will not have access to funding.

*Is the infestation pine specific? (Leah Wills, Plumas County)* Al Klem – No; Mike De Lasaux – In the landscape he has observed it in Ponderosa Pine, Sugar Pine, White Fir, and Incense Cedar.

*Are "green tree" and "brown tree" funds both available in a specific locale? (John Sheehan, Plumas Corp)* Don Gordon – Yes.

*What is the county looking for to declare a state of emergency? (Leah W.)* Don Gordon – The magnitude of the event is so large that it overwhelms the budget capacity of the leading agency.

*What are people seeing on the ground locally? (Sue McCourt, Plumas OES)* Al K. – There are pockets throughout the county. Timber operators are not seeing mortality increase because they have been actively taking out dead trees. Andy Juska (Collins Pine Co.) – Historically an average annual salvage harvest is 2 million board feet; it has been 11 million in past years. Collins is now seeing a reduction in mortality, while they are trying to stay ahead of the problem. Steve DeBonis (SPI) - In Plumas County mortality has been individual trees and small pockets that SPI are aggressively removing. Ryan Tompkins (PNF) – There is preventative work being done around Frenchman Lake, with forest health funding, as well as timber sales on the Eastern side of the Forest. The FS has not yet seen their flight information for this year. The data from the flights include species and agent of mortality.

*During last big kill there were crews on the ground ready to do the work. Have they been coordinated yet? (John S.)* Don Gordon – Not as of yet, we are here to strategize.

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Don Gordon – Lassen County is working on the same thing. We can move forward with lessons learned from others. Lynn C. – Is present to bring in information from other areas.

**Issues to consider:**

- Disposal
  - Woodlots
  - Non-wood byproducts
- Transportation of affected material
- Utilization
  - Co-gen
- Outreach
  - Pre-mortality information for homeowners

**Break-out sessions resulted in Working Group objectives:**

Resource Allocation and Funding:

- Determine the existing sources of funding and resources to implement Plumas County TMTF efforts.
- Encourage funding and grant requests to support our efforts.
- Create a list of available labor equipment and contractors.
- Provide regular updates to Plumas County TMTF.
- Coordination with other groups:
  - Mapping – Get an inventory of existing conditions.
  - Outreach – Contracting opportunities.
  - Materials – Find funding resources to enhance disposal opportunities.
- Monitor and encourage biomass and electrical opportunities.
- Find a webpage.
- Watch 2480.

Public Outreach and Information:

- Provide information to the public and the press on activities of the Plumas County TMTF
- Acquire and distribute to the public educational materials on insect mortality.
- Develop an interactive mechanism with the public to give and receive tree mortality location information.
- Work cooperatively with landowners and agencies to share tree mortality information.
- Provide regular updates to Plumas County TMTF
- Communication Plan
- Website

Mapping and Data Collection:

- Field verify the accuracy of remote sensing data and statewide mapping efforts.
- Map tree mortality not accurately depicted.
- Work cooperatively with landowners and agencies to receive mortality information from outside sources.
- Provide regular updates to Plumas County TMTF.

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#### Materials Disposal, Storage and Utilization:

- Assist landowners in getting rid of dead trees and dead tree parts. Development of a county-wide subsidized chipping program which fosters local entrepreneurs in tree removal operations.
- Locate and detail collection sites, at least for residents near Portola, Quincy, Chester, and Indian Valley. These sites for collection and storage need to be large areas (acres) that are near public access routes and can be provided with limited security.
- Encourage utilization of wood fiber close to the origin of the fiber and from storage sites. Foster innovative wood uses.
- Promote community groups such as Fire Safe Councils, and Firewise organizations to develop aggregated cutting and contracts for same. Work toward streamlining process for utilizers.
- Distribute contractor needs and information widely. Work with public outreach group.
- Keep track of what committees with similar mandates are doing in counties that are already overwhelmed.
- Encourage public policy. Promoting wood fiber utilization and biomass power generation. Remove limits on generation sourcing.

#### Permits and Regulations:

- Provide tree removal information to the public and PC TMTF of when a harvesting permit is required, and what type of permits are available.
- Be available to advise forest landowners of regulatory requirements pertaining to tree removal.
- Work closely with the PC TMTF Public Outreach and Information Group to disseminate permit and regulation information.
- Provide regular permit and regulation updates to PC TMTF.
- Consult regularly with timber industry, forest landowners, professional foresters, and licensed timber operators to determine how existing permits and regulations are working to remove dead and dying trees, and report on regulatory challenges needing attention.

**Next meeting November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Meeting jointly sponsored by:**

**Plumas County Office of Emergency Services &**



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