

# **Plumas County Tree Mortality Task Force**

**Nov 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1:00pm to 3:00pm**

**555 Main St., Quincy CA 95971**

## **Introduction – Mike Callaghan, Plumas County Fire Safe Council**

- Proposed moving monthly meetings to the second Thursday of the month following the Fire Safe Council meetings.

## **IAP Distribution – Shane Vargas**

- Check contacts and finalize objectives when in breakout groups

## **Breakout group session for 30 minutes**

**Presentation by Dr. Richard Harris, Northern California SAF** - Retired cooperative extension specialist based out of Berkeley and current contractor for the SAF forest stewardship helpline.

- The helpline (1-800-738-TREE) is being promoted more vigorously with tree mortality issue.
- The Emergency Declaration guiding actions of the California Tree Mortality Task Force prioritizes facilitating public agencies' ability to deliver services. The CA TMTF has only recently taken on private property with a new working group labeled Public Assistance.
- Affected counties have made applications to the State OES for California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA) funds which reimburse up to 75% of the cost of removing hazardous trees. However, the county has to be in declared emergency zone.
- Counties have taken different organizational approaches. Some have designated coordinators from public agencies, for example Placer County's Office of Emergency Services. Some have hired coordinators. Other counties have involved the RPF responsible for creating a tree mortality inventory with grant coordination.
- To apply for grants miles of county roads and/or infrastructure threatened need to be cataloged.
- Utility companies will remove debris associated with tree removal – if the trees threaten power lines. They are required by law to mitigate threats to power availability. Landowners can request assistance directly.
- A Tuolumne County Lions Club has created a senior assistance program to remove trees.
- SRA grants can be used to create programs for private landowners. The majority of the program applications submitted offer removal of 2-5 trees for senior and low income households. However, over four times the available \$11million in SRA funds were requested for tree mortality initiatives in the latest grant cycle.

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- With a lack of commercial market, limitations to technical advice available, and potential issues with homeowners insurances - private landowners are bearing the brunt of the burden.
- The issue is not just bark beetles. Species other than pine are being affected. Several background mortality agents have become more prevalent because of the drought stress.
- The question remains, when this wave of mortality subsides, what do we do with material and how do we re-forest?
- While it's not the first time or place that mortality has occurred, the unique factors in this situation are the elevated temperatures and extended drought. As a result, Sierra counties will be forever changed.

### Discussion

*Are there any other funding sources that have been tapped to clear dead trees such as NRCS, RAC, or Prop 1? (John Sheehan)* Richard – Certainly people are looking into different funding sources, hasn't heard of anyone securing these funds. It would be wonderful if the federal government weighed in and FEMA funds became available. *Have you heard of anyone using the new carbon funding? (John S.)* Richard – Carbon funds are generally used for reforestation and if these grant opportunities come through CAL FIRE again, they will be for reforestation.

*Are there multiple counties using the Lions Club model? (Sue McCourt)* Richard – Some counties' clubs may have applied for SRA funds – unsure.

**Presentation by John Heissenbuttel, Amador County Fire Safe Council** - Through Amador Calaveras Consensus group became involved in Tree Mortality issue.

- CDAA application basics:  
Form a planning team. Amador County followed Tuolumne's template and created a core group. Two Board of Supervisors members volunteered to head TMTF planning. The County BOS needs to make Declaration of Emergency that is renewed each month. There needs to an estimate of the number of hazard trees established. Survey methodology for Amador County provided in handout. Drive a certain percentage of county roads and catalog hazard trees. Submit report to BOS – also provided in a handout.  
Make a statement to Cal OES. Representative Peter Crase has been an excellent resource for Amador County.  
CDAA grant requires a 25% match which difficult for many foothill counties

### Discussion

*What is the difference between the 10 declared counties and those initiating efforts now? Will we be given any priority for assistance considering the crisis to the south? (John S.)* John H. – Cal OES encouraged Amador County to get involved early. Plumas County should to do the same in preparation.

*Do we have the most recent mortality information? (Sue)* Ryan Tompkins – The information currently available is from this spring. The most recent flight data is still being discussed at the Washington level. *Will the USFS continue their role in this regard? (John S.)* Ryan – Yes, it is part of the Forest Service’s annual program and has been done for a long time.

## **Working Group Reports**

### Resource Allocation and Funding:

- Objective 1: Determine the existing sources of funding and resources to implement Plumas County TMTF efforts - Asked Lynn Campbell to put together a broad list of grant sources, annotated with how they can be applied to tree mortality.
- Objective 3: Create a list of available labor equipment and contractors - Scott Rosikiewicz will look at Cal LTOs for the area. Group will then add arborists and RPFs.
- Objective 5A: Coordination with Mapping group to get an inventory of existing conditions – will rely on the annual mapping by the Forest Service. Lynn has map from Butte’s inventory, which was used to identify priority areas.
- Objective 3 & 5C: Coordination with Materials group to find funding resources to enhance disposal opportunities. Questions exist: What access do we have to a chipper, air curtain burner, etc, and what is needed for them to operate?
- Objective 7: Find a webpage – Website creation is part of Public Outreach objectives. Links to the TMTF should be available on various other sites.
- Objective 8: 2480 – Passed, considers forests as infrastructure, which could open up grant sources.

### Public Outreach and Information:

- Consolidated objectives to
- Outlining tasks in a Communication Plan
- Materials and links need to be evaluated in order to decide what to incorporate in our website, etc.
- Mike Yost to review existing Cal Fire Q&As for Plumas County
- Will need information from other groups
- May pursue additional meetings outside of formalized meetings
- Leah Wills recommended taking TMTF issues to Board of Supervisor’s public comment period

### Mapping and Data Collection:

- Will compile mapping efforts of mortality and risk – with a field verification component
- Question of what do we do with that data? Create progression maps and maps to inform TMTF decisions.

### Materials Storage, Disposal and Utilization:

- Primarily focused on collection site criteria.

Permits and Regulations:

- Confirmed existing objectives

**Next meeting December 8<sup>th</sup>, 11:30-1:00pm**

**Meeting jointly sponsored by:  
Plumas County Office of Emergency Services &**



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