



# Fact Sheet: Prioritizing Forest Management and Preventing Catastrophic Fires

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California's forests are reaching a breaking point. Poor management policies that interrupted the natural and historical cycle of fire, combined now with a changing climate, have left forests vulnerable to disease, insects, catastrophic fire and drought.

In its 2018 report, [Fire on the Mountain: Rethinking Forest Management in the Sierra Nevada](#), the Commission offers recommendations to bolster California's forest management efforts. These recommendations fall into five categories:

*Increase the pace and scale of forest restoration through collaboration:*

- Engage in greater collaboration with stakeholders at all levels of government, Native American tribes, scientists, and local residents in landscape-level forest management.
- Allow longer timelines on CAL FIRE funds that have time constraints for encumbrance and liquidation to facilitate collaborative large-scale forest management planning.

*Create a culture where fire is a tool, not a threat:*

- Lead a policy shift from suppression to using fire as a tool.
- Identify the resources needed to meet the draft Forest Carbon Plan goals regarding treating state and federal land.
- Actively work to find ways to increase prescribed burning through better use of technology.

*Develop a long-term plan for forest materials:*

- Encourage the creation of additional infrastructure to utilize material removed from forests.

*Educate Californians on forest resiliency:*

- Design mass public outreach campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of healthy forests and the necessity for prescribed burns.

*Plan for the long-term and ensure accountability:*

- Evolve the Tree Mortality Task Force into a forest management planning entity, with dedicated funding.
- Require regular reporting to the Legislature on progress made towards California's Forest Carbon Plan goals, and the steps being taken to being taken to implement the Plan.

These recommendations will help California prioritize forest management and stop catastrophic fires.

## SUPPORTED LEGISLATION

- [SB 1062 \(McGuire\), 2022](#): Among other things, would have required CalFIRE to maintain minimum staffing levels.
- [AB 1431 \(Frazier\), 2021](#): Would have established specified state goals for fuels treatment, vegetation management, and wildfire risk reduction.
- [AB 616 \(Patterson\), 2019](#): Would have required CalFIRE, the Natural Resources Agency, and CalEPA to annually report progress made implementing the Forest Carbon Plan to the Legislature.

## ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

- The August 2020 [Shared Stewardship Agreement](#) between the state and federal government implements key parts of the Forest Carbon Plan, such as treating one million acres of forest per year.
- In March 2019, Governor Newsom declared a [state of emergency](#) for California's forests and enabled the completion of 35 high-priority projects.
- In January 2019, the Governor Newsom issued [Executive Order N-05-19](#), which required CalFIRE to identify the highest priority areas for fuels treatment projects.
- In May 2018, Governor Brown issued [Executive Order B-52-18](#), creating the Forest Management Task Force and implementing the Forest Carbon Plan.

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