



CALIFORNIA
LICENSED
FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION

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November 6, 2013

Mr. Stan Dixon, Chairman
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Board Priorities for 2013

Dear Chairman Dixon,

As the Board sets its priorities for 2013, CLFA would like to point out four important issues that are negatively impacting the state's forestlands, inhibiting RPFs ability to effectively practice forestry, and limiting landowners' ability to economically manage their lands. First, a 1-year protocol for surveying for northern spotted owls (NSO) needs to be established for, at the very least, small landowners and NTMP holders. Second, the timelines in the Forest Practice Rules regarding slash treatment should recognize that burning slash is the largest potential economic exposure facing landowners during timber operations and allow flexibility for slash to be treated during appropriate climatic windows, not arbitrary dates set by the Board. Third, the Board should evaluate the CFIP rates, especially in light of the potential new funding source created by passage of AB 1492. Lastly, the issue of criminal trespass needs to be aggressively addressed to make the woods a safer place in which to work and to reduce the associated negative environmental impacts affecting fish, wildlife and water quality.

The 2-year NSO survey protocol creates an economic burden on small landowners and NTMP holders. Land management activities are intermittent on these parcels and mostly opportunistic in response to favorable timber markets that may not last for a two year period. Since these landowners are non-industrial in nature, many lack the economic resources to begin surveying two years in advance of uncertain future revenues. These lands produce relatively low volumes of timber, are widely dispersed throughout the state, and their responsible management is unlikely to significantly damage wildlife habitat. One of the best ways for the state to encourage continued ownership of undeveloped or lightly developed timber parcels, and provide continued NSO habitat, is for it to remain economically attractive compared to other potential land uses. Cost effective and timely access to timber markets is currently one of the best economic opportunities to encourage the continued responsible management of small timberland parcels throughout the state.

Strict timelines are provided for slash disposal in the hazard reduction zones and within the 150' Fire Safe Exemption. When treating slash for hazard reduction, 14 CCR 917.2(a), 937.2(a), and 957.2(a) requires that "slash to be treated by piling and burning shall be treated not later than April 1 of the year following its creation, or within 30 days following climatic access, or as justified in the plan." The 150' Fire Safe Exemption, 14 CCR 1038(c)(3), states "All surface fuels created by timber operations under the exemption which could promote the spread of wildfire...shall be chipped, burned or removed within 15 days from the start of timber operations." Burning is often the only efficient way to deal with the large quantities of non-merchantable material created during timber operations when no feasible biomass market exists. To minimize the risks of escapes or of exceeding air quality regulations, burning must be conducted in appropriate climatic windows after the slash has had sufficient time to dry. The April 1st deadline does not allow for slash created late in the logging season to adequately dry before treatment. Forty-five (45) days as required by 14 CCR 1038(c)(3) does not give slash adequate time to dry, or allow for the landowner to wait for an appropriate burn window. In both cases, the landowner is pushed into undertaking more costly slash disposal techniques or facing a higher risk of fire escapes and of exceeding air quality regulations. In the interest of allowing

burning to remain a viable slash treatment option while ensuring maximum public safety, CLFA would like to see reasonable flexibility built into these rules to allow time for slash to dry and for appropriate climatic conditions to develop prior to treatment.

The CFIP rates have not been adjusted to keep up with inflation and no longer reflect the true cost of hiring an RPF to perform the needed work. This is creating a bigger financial burden on landowners wanting to take advantage of the CFIP program to improve their timberlands, and potentially preventing some landowners from participating at all. The low rates also put pressure on RPFs to accept discounted fees for their services, providing a disincentive for them to participate in CFIP projects. The passage of AB 1492 should provide an additional funding source for the CFIP program. CLFA encourages the Board to take this opportunity to revisit the CFIP rates and make sure they adequately reflect the true cost of these projects. CLFA believes that CFIP is a valuable program for encouraging small landowners to responsibly manage and improve their forestlands. Increasing the rates to reflect the current market value of these projects should serve to strengthen this program going into the future.

The recent tragedy in the woods near Fort Bragg brings to light that California's timberlands are becoming more dangerous for those who choose to work and recreate in them due to illicit drug growers. In addition to the safety issue, massive environmental damage can be caused by illegal water diversions, illegal herbicide and rodenticide use, unpermitted tree cutting, and the large amount of trash left in the wake of these activities. As professionals, Foresters take great pride in assisting landowners in providing clean air, clean water, and fish and wildlife habitat while assuring a sustainable supply of high quality timber products. It is disheartening that a small group of illicit drug growers can trespass on these timberlands we have so carefully tended and destroy years, or decades, of hard work in a single growing season. CLFA applauds the Board for creating the Advisory Committee on Criminal Trespass and encourages the Board to actively collaborate with relevant State agencies in combating this issue.

We realize that you have limited staff time and resources, and must therefore prioritize what issues you can realistically address in a meaningful manner in any given year. We have taken input from our members throughout the state, and narrowed down our recommendations to the four most pressing issues brought before us. We thank you in advance for considering adding these issues to your 2013 priority list.

Sincerely,



Matt Greene
RPF #2747
President
California Licensed Foresters Association



cc: Members, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.
Mr. Ken Pimlott, Director, CAL FIRE.
CLFA Board of Directors.

The California Licensed Foresters Association, with a membership responsible for the sustained management of millions of acres of California forestland, represents the common interests of California Registered Professional Foresters. The Association provides opportunities for continuing education and public outreach to its membership, which includes professionals affiliated with government agencies, private timber companies, consultants, the public, and the academic community. Governed by an elected Board of Directors, CLFA was established in 1980 after the passage of the landmark California Professional Foresters Law.