

State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife

M e m o r a n d u m

Date: November 30, 2016

To: Mr. Matt Dias
Executive Officer
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

From: Richard Macedo 
Branch Chief
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch

Subject: **2017 Prioritization of Forest Practice Rules: California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Fish and Game Commission "Interim Joint Policy on Pre, During, and Post Fire Activities and Wildlife Habitat"**

Please see enclosed a summary of the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) and the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) "Interim Joint Policy on Pre, During, and Post Fire Activities and Wildlife Habitat" (Joint Policy). The Joint Policy was implemented on May 9, 1994.

In light of the on-going threats by major wildfires to communities and wildland resources that have been exacerbated by drought and fire suppression efforts, the impetus and stated precepts of the Joint Policy appear even more relevant today than they were some 22 years ago. That said, given the passage of time and changes in knowledge of fire science, ecology, threats, available resources, policies, legislation and even general awareness of the Joint Policy, a review of the Joint Policy appears warranted and overdue.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) asks the Board, with its lead role in protecting the forest resources of all wildland areas of California, to in 2017 initiate discussion with the Commission to review the Joint Policy and evaluate whether it should remain as is, be revised or be supplanted in its entirety. CDFW would have a particular interest in reviewing those aspects of the Joint Policy that would improve our ability to manage and conserve California's native plant, fish and/or wildlife resources and their habitats.

CDFW staff looks forward to working with the Board and the Commission to review and possibly revise the Joint Policy.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding this matter, please contact Mr. William Condon at (916) 651-3110, or by email at william.condon@wildlife.ca.gov.

Enclosure

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**California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection,
California Fish and Game Commission
“Interim Joint Policy on Pre, During, and
Post Fire Activities and Wildlife Habitat”**

(Adopted May 9, 1994)

SUMMARY

- The “Interim Joint Policy on Pre, During, and Post Fire Activities and Wildlife Habitat” (Joint Policy) was adopted by the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) on May 9, 1994
- The purpose of the Joint Policy was to promote the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the California Department and Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) coordination and communication so that natural resources were considered during:
 1. pre-fire vegetation management
 2. during-fire suppression
 3. post-fire rehabilitation
- The Joint Policy identified a number of time-sensitive as well as on-going tasks for CAL FIRE and CDFW to complete, including reports to the Board and Commission:
- CAL FIRE and CDFW were required to report to the Board and Commission on pre and during fire tasks in the May and January meetings following Joint Policy adoption
 - Both agencies were required to report annually thereafter

CDFW & CAL FIRE Joint Tasks

- Review the current vegetation management plan and submit a report to the Commission and Board
- 1994-1995: Complete as many vegetation management activities as possible on the urban interface
- 1996 and beyond: Develop or update a joint 5 year vegetation management program
- Incorporate fire protection requirements for both development and wildlife reserve planning
- Support enforcement of clearance laws
- Use the Incident Command System (ICS) to evaluate impacts on watersheds from fires in the State Responsibility Area
- Initiate emergency watershed work during the active suppression stage of the fire and complete before the first rainfall

- Define critical areas for emergency revegetation that consider long term ecosystem health and processes
- Consider mechanical methods of erosion control during the evaluation of emergency and watershed work; promote natural plant recovery and succession
- Carry out a study as part of the working group and policy task force reviewing the current watershed rehabilitation program ; specify appropriate limits to where reseeding can occur and how it should be carried out—until this study is complete, CAL FIRE 's current policy applies

CDFW Tasks

- Before fire season, CDFW shall meet with CAL FIRE at the regional level and provide information about the location of important plant and animal communities and their related ecosystems
- Train personnel on ICS
- As part of ICS, CDFW shall make technical specialists available during large fires to provide advice
- Work with CAL FIRE to identify fire suppression tactics on wildfires that could have long-term effects on ecosystems at the regional and local level
- Following a wildfire, CDFW is charged with the protection of fish and wildlife and related habitat, including viability of habitat
- Participate in the development of rehabilitation/watershed work response plans

CAL FIRE Tasks

- Before fire season, CAL FIRE shall meet with CDFW at the regional level and keep them informed of:
 - the status of the upcoming fire season
 - the location of areas where fire hazards are especially great
 - the availability of firefighting personnel
 - other relevant factors
- To the extent feasible, CAL FIRE shall incorporate CDFW information into the dispatch and ICS planning information bases and make certain that field personnel are familiar with this information and its application to suppression activities
- On potential major fires, CAL FIRE will include CDFW technical specialists in ICS to advise in the planning section regarding sensitive habitat; in the event that CDFW cannot provide appropriate specialists, CAL FIRE shall seek alternative specialists as necessary to deal with concerns related to plants, fish and wildlife

- ICS shall be aware of and consider the impacts of practices listed by CDFW as having potential long-term effects on ecosystems
- Advise CDFW of rehabilitation efforts and request appropriate staff to participate