



## **News from the Emergency Management Committee Chair (3/19/21)**

### **Last Chance to Join Our Team!**

Today is the final day to submit applications for our open [Associate Consultant position](#). If you or anyone you know would make a good fit, please have them submit a resume and cover letter to [taylor.gonsalves@asm.ca.gov](mailto:taylor.gonsalves@asm.ca.gov) by the end of this business day.

The full job listing can be found [here](#).

### **California Counties Reject Blue Shield's COVID-19 Vaccine Contract**

[Becker's Hospital Review reports](#) several California counties haven't signed the contract to allow Blue Shield of California to manage distribution of the state's COVID-19 vaccines. This has resulted in many counties – including Los Angeles County – being unable to reach an agreement with California and Blue Shield of California on COVID-19 vaccine distribution for weeks, possibly slowing delivery.

Under a new memorandum of understanding, counties can sign an agreement with the state rather than Blue Shield of California to continue receiving their allotment COVID-19 vaccine doses.

Paul Markovich, president of Blue Shield of California, told the publication March 12 that many counties were concerned about signing a contract with a private company to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses. However, the counties are now expected to reach a separate agreement with California, which will still require counties to "reasonably cooperate" with Blue Shield, according to the memorandum obtained by the [Los Angeles Times](#).

As of March 12, 92 vaccine providers have signed Blue Shield of California's contract to operate 1,300+ vaccine sites.

### **Why Newly-Eligible Groups May Still Have to Wait for a Vaccine in the Sacramento Area**

[The Sacramento Bee reports](#) Californians ages 16 to 64 with severe obesity, who are pregnant, or who have a number of other medical conditions or disabilities are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. However, supply issues may hinder chances of getting a shot right away.

"The increase in people eligible does not mean we get an increase in shipments," Sacramento County health department spokeswoman Brenda Bongiorno said. "It just makes it more competitive to get an appointment."

Kaiser Permanente, the biggest health care provider in the state and in the Sacramento region, is moving forward with vaccination appointments for people in the high-risk 16-64 group but warned the going could be slow.

“We expect that in the weeks ahead demand will continue to be greater than supply.” Kaiser, which has been given a larger share of doses by the state, issued a reminder Monday that non-Kaiser members can apply for a vaccine appointment at Kaiser as well.

The state has now opened vaccinations to a wide range of people including teachers, farm workers, and other essential workers, as well as anyone over the age of 65. Furthermore, [state guidelines on vaccine eligibility](#) were recently updated to include public transit workers, janitors, homeless people and a few other classifications. The changes represent some of the broadest expansions yet of the state and local vaccination programs — and also present some of the biggest logistical problems.

Estimates shown on the state’s health department website say there are 15 million Californians across phases 1A and 1B of distribution, and about 4.4 million ages 16 through 64 with qualifying medical conditions.

The amount of overlap — essential workers ages 16 to 64 with medical conditions — is not clear, but even with substantial overlap, Monday’s expansion would push eligibility to more than above 40% of California’s total population and more than half of its roughly 31 million adults.

Sacramento-area health officials are suggesting that people with health insurance apply for vaccines given by their health provider, because those providers know whether or not the person has a qualifying condition.

[Sacramento County on Monday revamped its own vaccination appointment application website](#) to simplify it and to include the 16-64 age group.

For more information on the confidentially around disabilities and medical conditions, the anticipated supply increase in April, and the distribution progress by the numbers, [please see the Sacramento Bee’s full article](#).

## **Smoke from Wildfires Wiped Out the U.S. Pandemic-related Clean Air Gains in 2020**

[The Washington Post reports](#) wildfires that charred millions of acres in the West wiped out the country’s pandemic-related clean air gains in 2020. Due to the pandemic restrictions limiting travel and other activities, fine-particle pollution from the burning of fossil fuels dropped 13% between March and July compared to the previous year and dipped again in November and December, according to Lauri Myllyvirta, lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

Unfortunately, the 2020 historic wildfire season more than made up the difference. Overall, the U.S. average for the deadliest type of air pollution rose nearly 7% in 2019 because of smoke from the fires in California, Oregon, and Washington. Fine-particle pollution particles are tiny enough to penetrate deep into lungs and enter the bloodstream, where they can trigger asthma attacks and other lung and heart issues that could lead to cancer.

In September 2020, 24 out of the world's top 25 most polluted cities were in California and Oregon. The top of the list was marked by Happy Camp, California, with a monthly average of 154.4 micrograms per cubic meter. The World Health Organization tries to target levels of 10 parts per cubic meter or less. The highest level ever read was 4,709.3 micrograms per cubic meter in Weed, California, on September 13.

Now that wildfires are becoming larger and more common while fossil-fuel emissions have trended downward in the U.S., a better question may be which type of pollution is more toxic. Unfortunately, [new research](#) from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography suggests that wildfire smoke may be significantly worse.

To review further details on the report conducted by Lauri Myllyvirta and her team, [please view the full article](#).

### **Tribes, Allies Press State of California for Wildfire Policy Changes**

[YubaNet reports](#) On Wednesday, the Karuk Tribe and a diverse coalition of allies released [\*Good Fire: Current Barriers to the Expansion of Cultural Burning in California and Recommended Solutions\*](#), a comprehensive report looking at the obstacles that Tribes, ranchers, community fire safe councils, and others face when trying to use cultural and prescribed burning to manage the unhealthy buildup of fuels in rural landscapes across California.

The document is a policy roadmap for lawmakers and communities committed to better managing wildfire in California and includes policy solutions to allow more prescribed fires to protect communities and resources.

Tribes like the Karuk are seeking a return to the historic landscape management practices of their ancestors, while farmers and ranchers are trying to manage noxious weeds and pests. In many cases, the legal and policy barriers are the same for both groups.

The Karuk Tribe is currently working with Gov. Gavin Newsom to provide funding for tribal cultural burn programs, and a number of lawmakers to reform problematic statutes.

Groups collaborating on the *Good Fire* project include: the Karuk Tribe; Mid-Klamath Watershed Council; Pacific Forest Trust; California Indian Environmental Alliance; The Watershed Center; Shute, Mihaly, and Weinberg, LLC.; Northern California Prescribed Fire Council; the Cultural Fire Management Council; and The Fire Restoration Group.

### **Ontario Authorities ID 2 Missing in Fatal Explosion as Crews Work to Clear 80 Properties of Debris**

[ABC 7 News reports](#) Ontario authorities on Wednesday identified two men who remained missing the day after a cache of fireworks caused a deadly explosion at a home in Ontario. Windows were shattered on nearby properties and multiple structure fires ignited.

The spokesman from Ontario Police Department emphasized that whether the two men were the two people who were killed in the incident had not been confirmed. Meanwhile, crews at the scene continued working to clear nearly 80 properties of debris from the explosion.

Authorities - including the FBI and ATF - are investigating Tuesday afternoon's explosion of what were believed to be a cache of commercial-grade fireworks.

The incident occurred shortly after 12:30 p.m. Tuesday in the 400 block of West Francis Street. About 50 firefighters still worked to douse the flames three hours after the initial blast. Fire crews remained at the scene Wednesday morning.

Videos posted to social media showed flames and a thick plume of smoke rising from the home, and then a long series of fireworks shooting up into the air, sending nearby pedestrians running for cover.

Cell phone video captured the terrifying moments immediately after the initial explosion, with a woman asking other people off camera if they were OK. Seconds later, another blast rocks the home. The woman recording can be heard screaming, appearing to be knocked to the ground as debris flies around the room.

Neighbors described hearing a series of explosions that felt like small earthquakes. Hours after the first explosion, several smaller blasts went off, apparently from remaining fireworks.

Fireworks are illegal in Ontario, as they are in many California cities. Police said they were investigating the incident as a possible felony.

For further details on the explosion and reactions from residents, [please view the full article](#).

**March 17, 2021 - The Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released an unclassified summary of the joint comprehensive threat assessment on domestic violent extremism.**

The ODNI assessment was drafted by the National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and DHS, and includes contributions from the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. All agencies involved are mindful of the duty to respect privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties and to act within the authorities granted to them as they seek to put together as complete an intelligence and analytic picture as is possible.

Read the assessment: [Domestic Violent Extremism Poses Heightened Threat in 2021](#)

**The UK's Integrated Review predicts at least one major successful terrorist attack by 2030**

The UK just released a roadmap, known as the Integrated Review, for its post-Brexit future. Entitled "Global Britain in a Competitive Age," and as far as policy papers go, this one is of the not-so-boring kind. The much-anticipated 100-page document outlines a vision for a leaner and meaner Britain by 2030—one that is more resilient to threats, more innovative, and more confident in defending its values at home and abroad.

It also warns Brits about the threats they will likely face in the next decade, from regular infectious disease outbreaks to more extreme weather events tied to climate change, and at least one successful terrorist attack. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>

## **Funding Opportunities**

### **Climate Smart Agriculture Technical Assistance Grants**

[The California Department of Food and Agriculture](#) is issuing this grant solicitation to ensure there are Technical Assistance Providers available to provide outreach to farmers and ranchers about Climate Smart Agriculture programs and assist them in accessing a diversity of funding sources.

Funds awarded through this competitive grant process will be distributed to several eligible entities and throughout the state to assist farmers and ranchers in applying to the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP) and provide continued assistance during project implementation.

Eligible grant entities include Resource Conservation Districts, University of California Cooperative Extension, and non-profit organizations with demonstrated technical expertise.

The total allocation for this Technical Assistance grant solicitation is not known at this time and is dependent on the funds allocated to the Healthy Soils Program (HSP) and State Water Efficiency Enhancement Program (SWEEP) in the State budget. A minimum of five percent of HSP and SWEEP funding will be made available for the Technical Assistance Program.

The application deadline is **Monday, March 22, 2021**, and the application with further guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **CAL FIRE Forest Health Grants**

[The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#) has created the Forest Health Program to award funding to landscape-scale land management projects that achieve the following objectives:

- Restore forest health and resilience to California's forests;
- Promote long-term storage of carbon in forest trees and soils;
- Minimize the loss of forest carbon from high severity wildfires;
- Further California's climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

Through grants to regionally-based partners and collaboratives, CAL FIRE seeks to significantly increase fuels management, fire reintroduction, reforestation, and conservation of forests degraded by overcrowding, drought, pest infestation, and catastrophic fire.

All Forest Health projects must have climate benefits that account for greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from:

1. Treatment activities,
2. Avoided future wildfire and fossil fuel use,
3. And reforestation and/or growth and yield of remaining vegetation.

All applicants must submit data to support CAL FIRE's calculations of such benefits.

The Forest Health Program is part of [California Climate Investments](#) (CCI), a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

Fostering healthy forests calls for a balanced approach using a variety of activities including:

- Forest fuels reduction

- Prescribed fire
- Pest management
- Reforestation
- Biomass utilization in wood products and energy
- Conservation – [Forest Legacy Program](#)
- Research – [Forest Health Research Program](#)

Activities must be applied across large landscapes to achieve regional resilience. Projects that implement a mix of activities with multiple, experienced partners will be given priority.

Projects may include planning, organizational and business capacity-building, and workforce and infrastructure development as components of proposed projects.

CAL FIRE will enter into grant agreements with local, state, and federal public agencies; Native American Tribes; Universities; special districts; industrial and nonindustrial private forest landowners; and non-profit organizations.

To be eligible for funding under CAL FIRE's Forest Health Grant Program, projects must: focus on large, landscape-scale forestlands composed of one or more landowners, which may cover multiple jurisdictions. Large landscapes usually mean sub-watersheds, firesheds, or larger logical management units.

Total estimated funding available is \$170 million. The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, May 19, 2021**, and the online application with further guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **California Forest Legacy Program**

[The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#) has created the Forest Legacy to protect environmentally important forest land threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Protection of California's forests through this program ensures they continue to provide such benefits as sustainable timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, watershed protection, and open space. Intact forests also contribute significantly to the storage and sequestration of carbon.

**Working Forest Conservation Easements:** Under this competitive grant program, CAL FIRE purchases or accepts donations of conservation easements or fee title of productive forest lands to encourage their long-term conservation. The primary tool CAL FIRE uses to conserve forest lands in perpetuity is permanent Working Forest Conservation Easements (WFCEs).

This program is entirely voluntary. Eligible properties include those with working forest and rangelands, where the property is managed for the production of forest products and traditional forest uses are maintained. Landowners who wish to participate may sell or transfer particular rights, such as the right to develop the property or to allow public access, while retaining ownership of the property and the right to use it in any way consistent with the terms of the easement and management plan.

Priority is given to lands that can be effectively protected and managed and that have important scenic, recreational, timber, riparian, fish, and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and other cultural and environmental values. CAL FIRE regularly partners with other funding agencies to select high value landscapes for conservation easement projects.

All projects will be evaluated on four main characteristics:

- Importance – Does the land provide important economic, habitat, watershed, water supply, recreational, scenic, historical/cultural benefits?
- Strategic Value – How does the property relate strategically to other properties adjacent or in close proximity to it?
- Threat – How is the property threatened by development or conversion to other uses?
- Readiness – To what degree has due diligence been completed?

Eligible applicants include individual, nonprofit, and tribal government entities. Matching funding is scored higher. Please see grant guidelines for details, [here](#).

Total estimated funding is \$14 million. The deadline to apply is **Friday, May 14, 2021**. To apply, please see the full grant guidelines first, [here](#).

### **FY2020/2021 & FY2021/2022 Forest Health Research Program – California Climate Investments**

[The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#) has created the Forest Health Research Program to fund scientific research that expands our knowledge in topics related to forest health and wildland fire. The outcomes of these projects will support agencies, organizations, landowners, and policy makers, while furthering the goals of the California Forest and Wildfire Resilience Action Plan and California Climate Investments.

The Forest Health Research Program was established as part of CAL FIRE’s plan for implementing the California Forest Carbon Plan. It is one of several CAL FIRE programs funded through the California Climate Investments Program (CCI), Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The mission of the Forest Health Research Program is:

1. To identify and prioritize research topics in forest health and fire science critical to the State of California.
2. To fund sound scientific studies that support forest landowners, resource agencies, and fire management organizations within the state.
3. To ensure scientific information generated from the program is made available to support decision making and policy.
4. To further the goals of the California Forest Carbon Plan, the California Natural and Working Lands Implementation Plan, CCI, and AB 32 Global Warming Solutions Act.

The Forest Health Research Program operates in conjunction with the Forest Health Program but draws from a separate source of funds. The program, procedures and requirements apply only to “stand-alone research” projects, where research-related activities are the only activities proposed. Research activities are no longer eligible as a component of larger Forest Health projects.

The following topics have been identified as priorities for study for the Research Program for FY 2020-21 and 2021-22. Proposed research must address one or more of these priority topics. Research projects should be focused on and relevant to California ecosystems and their management.

1. Disturbance, recovery, and strategies for forest resilience in an altered future climate.
2. Implementation, effectiveness, impacts, and tradeoffs of alternative management strategies to reduce wildfire risk, increase carbon storage, improve biodiversity, improve water and air quality, and provide regional economic benefits.
3. Natural, historical and contemporary range of variation in fire regimes (i.e., frequency, seasonality, size, spatial complexity, intensity, severity, and fire type), forest conditions and distributions, and wildfire-related greenhouse gas emissions in California ecosystems, particularly those less well studied.
4. Forest products and utilization of forest residues related to fuel reduction and forest health treatments.
5. Human dimensions and socio-economic considerations related to forest health and management.
6. Improved prediction of wildland fire spread, behavior, and potential impacts, particularly under extreme weather conditions and within the wildland-urban interface.

Please see Appendix B of the Forest Health Program Grant Guidelines for FY 2020-2021 & FY 2021-2022 for a more thorough description of this grant cycle's Research Priority Topics. The Grant Guidelines Document and other application resources can be found at [the Forest Health Grants Website here.](#)

CAL FIRE will grant funds from the Research Program to public and other nonprofit universities and affiliated academic institutions, local agencies (e.g., counties and special districts), state agencies, federal agencies, Native American tribes; private forest landowners; and non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations (e.g., fire safe councils, and land trusts).

Projects must be focused on and relevant to California forests and other ecosystems and their management. A significant portion of the geographic area proposed for study must be contained within California and may include adjacent lands contiguous and representative of California sites. Any sites external to California and discontinuous to study areas within the state require justification. Study areas may not be located outside the United States.

Total estimated funding available is \$3.8 million. The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, May 19, 2021** and the full guidelines with the application can be found [here.](#)