



California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience Goals and Key Actions – December 12, 2022

GOAL 1: INTEGRATE FOREST HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Integrate the provision of high-quality, sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities with forest health and resilience and wildfire and climate mitigation efforts so that all people can connect to the benefits and wonders of the natural world.

Key Actions

- 1. Maintain Public Access as the Climate Changes:** Develop climate-smart best practices toolkits and resources to be used by land-management organizations for programs and projects associated with forest and wildland health, vegetation management, transportation, and visitor use that enhance public access to outdoor recreation on public lands and waters as the climate changes.
- 2. Develop Educational Materials Targeted at Reducing the Human Causes of Ignition:** Create and distribute educational materials in multiple languages targeting human causes of ignition of wildfires.
- 3. Develop Integrated Communications Systems:** Establish integrated and standardized communication systems to provide consistent information to the public about forest health projects, and wildfires and other natural disasters, across jurisdictional boundaries and among federal, state, regional, and local organizations. Partner with Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), chambers of commerce, fire safe councils, cultural groups, outdoor recreation and stewardship groups, and local media to communicate in multiple languages and with digital media about closures, restrictions, smoke, and alternative facilities.
- 4. Incorporate Sustainable Outdoor Recreation into the State Department of Conservation's Regional Forest Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program:** Incorporate the Key Actions from California's Joint Strategy for Sustainable Outdoor Recreation and Wildfire Resilience into the RFFC Program, Regional Forums, and Regional Priority Plans being developed by RFFC Program Regional Block Grantees.
- 5. Add Public Education to Forest Health Projects:** Forest health projects on public lands under state and federal funding programs will include a component to educate the public about the project's purpose, techniques, and impact on outdoor recreation opportunities. Education efforts will serve to promote public safety, minimize impacts to recreation user groups, and develop public support for the value of forest health projects, including prescribed fire.
- 6. Strengthen Partnerships Between Resource Conservation Districts or Other Appropriate Partners and Land Managers:** Where feasible, recreation land managers will enter into partnerships with Resource Conservation Districts and other appropriate land-management partner entities or authorities to support work including design, permitting, and construction

for outdoor recreation facilities and trails and fuel reduction around communities (including fencing, water sources, etc.).

7. Implement Multi-Benefit Projects in or Adjacent to the Wildland Urban Interface:

Implement projects in or adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas that have joint wildfire risk reduction and outdoor recreation benefits, such as trails and campgrounds that can be used during fires as personnel and equipment staging areas. Where appropriate, conduct thinning, prescribed burns, and vegetation clearing around outdoor recreation infrastructure to make it more resilient to wildfire and to create defensible space for fire suppression. Within these project areas, create demonstration and interpretive areas incorporating TEK practices where people can recreate and learn about the benefits of prescribed fire and vegetation management.

8. Design and Build Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure That Is Resilient to Climate Change and Wildfire:

Consider nature-based solutions to address climate change and wildfire risk considerations when designing, constructing, maintaining, and renovating outdoor recreation facilities. Where appropriate, relocate facilities away from floodplains, landslide areas, avalanche paths, or high-risk fire areas. Install multilingual signage identifying emergency egress and shelter-in-place protocols, and, where needed, develop additional access and evacuation points. Design and harden roads, trails, bridges, and outdoor recreation infrastructure to be fire resistant and resilient to natural disasters. When available, cross-train fire crews in sustainable trail construction to help in recovery of trails post-fire.

9. Establish Permanent Fuel Breaks Proximate to Recreation Trails: Where feasible and appropriate, develop permanent fuel breaks that cut across jurisdictional boundaries along or adjacent to recreation trails and infrastructure to achieve multiple wildfire risk reduction and response benefits. Locate fuel breaks near trails to provide access for prescribed fires and fire suppression. In wilderness areas, consider non-permanent fuel breaks to protect resources.

10. Use Data to Prioritize Wildfire Risk Reduction Treatments in Outdoor Recreation Areas:

Assess community and outdoor recreation asset vulnerability through the use of data developed by the Task Force, such as Planscape, and the Key Working Group (California Recreation Opportunities GIS Map) to develop priorities for treatment around outdoor recreation areas based on likelihood of ignition and vulnerability to the impact of wildfire. In particular, focus prioritization of treatments adjacent to campgrounds, trails, and trailheads.

11. Create Wildfire Evacuation Plans for At-Risk Outdoor Recreation Areas: In coordination with local government and using specific evacuation planning tools (e.g., Zonehaven and CAL FIRE's Evacuation Guide), outdoor recreation providers including park agencies, private resorts, and other entities will create, regularly update, and implement and maintain evacuation plans that identify assets and areas most at risk, and safe evacuation routes and staging areas for shelter-in-place.

12. Create California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Programmatic Exemptions/Exclusions for Recreation Trails Located Within Treatment Areas: Create Categorical Exclusion(s) under NEPA, and Categorical Exemption(s) under CEQA, for recreation trails located within treatment areas that have already undergone previous environmental review.

GOAL 2: ADVANCE INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR ALL THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA

Plan for and provide a diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities to foster inclusive and equitable access for all Californians.

Key Actions

1. Create Statewide School Programming: Federal, state, and local agencies will engage and collaborate with the California Department of Education to develop place-based virtual and in-person programming that educates students about the value of outdoor recreation and natural resources, including topics such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge, responsible recreation, fire-prone landscapes, safety, and how to participate in stewardship projects.

2. Create Interpretive, Historical, and Stewardship Educational Opportunities at Key Recreation Facilities: Where feasible, create interpretive, historical, and stewardship education to educate the public at key outdoor recreation facilities across the state.

3. Minimize Impact of Wildfire-Related Area and Facility Closures to Public Access and Recreational Use: Target outdoor recreation site and area closures to the minimum area and time periods deemed appropriate to mitigate threats and minimize impact to the recreating public and commercial providers. Land managers should engage with relevant public and commercial recreation interests and DMOs on reopening plans, with a particular focus on addressing access concerns of underserved and underrepresented communities.

4. Engage with Local Communities During Post-Fire Recovery Planning to Expedite the Resumption of Outdoor Recreation Access: After fires, coordinate and engage with local communities on post-fire recovery plans, including activities aimed at expediting the return of public access. Within burned areas, prioritize forest health, hazard tree and vegetation removal near trails, slope stabilization around trails, and restoration of park and outdoor recreation facilities lost in wildfires. Where appropriate, utilize local workers, volunteers, conservation corps, or tribal capacity such as the Tiüvac'a'ai Tribal Conservation Corps to assist in post-fire restoration of outdoor recreation infrastructure and trails.

5. Explore Creating an Online Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Resource: Explore creating a one-stop online outdoor recreation resource for visitors to research local, regional, and state recreation opportunities based on interest and location. The online resource may contain information on how to prepare for visits to outdoor recreation areas, including information on responsible recreation, how to obtain permits, and what recreational uses are allowed. The resource may also serve as a multilingual communication tool to identify outdoor recreation facilities that are closed due to natural disasters or emergencies. Where possible, coordinate

with existing information platforms that provide similar services. Alternatively, agencies may maintain a multi-jurisdictional, centralized map of outdoor recreation assets (campgrounds, trailheads, etc.) and link out to existing agency platforms for additional information from the land-management agency.

6. Conduct a Multi-Agency Social Science Survey to Gauge the Current Needs of Outdoor Recreation Users:

State and federal land-management agencies will develop a simple methodology and conduct a joint statewide survey to identify current and emerging use and demand, barriers to outdoor access, and the desired critical outdoor recreation needs and uses of our communities, with a particular emphasis on underserved and underrepresented communities. The survey will be shared broadly with California’s public-land managers and private outdoor recreation lands operators at all scales well in advance of survey implementation to encourage broad data collection across California’s lands and communities. The survey will be designed to be repeatable over time and at different geographic scales.

7. Develop Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Across the State That Provides for a Diversity of Recreation Experiences:

Where a local community has identified a need for more outdoor recreation opportunities and uses, land-management agencies will look to collaborate and partner with the local community (counties, cities, towns, special districts) to plan for, fund, build, and maintain climate- resilient outdoor recreation infrastructure, facilities, and trail systems that will increase the diversity of recreation opportunities in that local community.

GOAL: 3: PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL CALIFORNIANS THROUGH OUTDOOR RECREATION

Provide health information, training, and alternative recreation opportunities that promote the health and well-being of all peoples, with consideration of people’s needs before, during, and after wildfires and other natural disasters.

Key Actions

1. Improve Air Quality Advisory Communication: Refine existing air quality communication tools, such as the California Smoke Spotter Application (app) and EPA AirNow, so that more users are aware of the tools, information is available in multiple languages, and users are advised of preventative measures to reduce their exposure. Focus the awareness campaign and information on those who are more likely to be exposed to air quality impacts including smoke, such as outdoor recreation workers.

2. Train First Responders, Community Planners, and Outdoor Recreation Staff in Mental Health First Aid and Utilize Medical Reserve Corps and Similar Volunteer Groups to Provide Psychological Support During Disasters: Create a state program to train all first responders, community planners, and outdoor recreation field staff in mental health first aid to support communities during and after wildfires and other natural disasters. Share models and best practices for how to utilize medically trained volunteers to provide psychological support during and after disasters.

3. Build Partnerships Between the Health and Outdoor Recreation Sectors: Pursue the environmental elements of the Health in All Policies approaches of the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by creating and maintaining partnerships between public health entities and the outdoor recreation sector. Partnerships will identify and seek to implement projects with co-benefits for health and outdoor recreation, such as prescriptions to spend time outdoors, smoke safety and extreme heat guidance, community-based planning of desirable park features and programs, or research to document the beneficial health impacts of local outdoor recreation projects. Partnerships will share best practices and lessons learned with public health and outdoor recreation professional forums.

4. Increase Opportunities for Indoor Recreation: Develop public, multi-use indoor recreation spaces that can offer recreation when smoke and wildfire affect the safety of outdoor recreation. These spaces can also be used as information hubs, libraries, cooling centers, Local Assistance Centers, shelters, or staging areas during emergencies.

GOAL 4: SUPPORT ECONOMIES THAT ENHANCE SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION

Foster and support robust and diversified economies that enhance sustainable outdoor recreation while investing in the resilience necessary to withstand the impact of climate change, wildfires, and other disasters.

Key Actions

1. Build Sustainable Outdoor-Recreation-Based Economies: Engage the regions of the state’s Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF), the Department of Conservation’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity (RFFC) Program, and other relevant programs to help communities transition to or enhance sustainable outdoor-recreation-based economies. Develop programs, projects, and stewardship opportunities to connect communities through recreation infrastructure and trail systems. Support the establishment of workforces for resource management, conservation, and outdoor recreation that support the economies of local connected communities.

2. Support Fundamental Community Infrastructure: Support planning and implementation of the fundamental infrastructure and services needed for outdoor-recreation-based economies, such as resilient and affordable housing and multi-modal transportation systems. Planning efforts may include regional baseline economic assessments to describe the businesses, industries, and workforce involved in outdoor recreation activities, and identify the strengths and deficiencies of outdoor recreation economies for rural development.

3. Engage Communities Regarding Emergency Response and Land-Management Planning: Engage chambers of commerce, fire safe councils, DMOs, counties, special districts, and cities and towns with land managers in emergency response planning and the creation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Engage with outdoor recreation groups to identify outdoor recreation assets and integrate them into emergency plans to increase the likelihood that these facilities will be protected and/or restored during a wildfire event. When possible, pre-plan roles and partnerships for communication and essential services for emergency responders (staging



areas, food, lodging, etc.) that can be readily activated during disasters. Provide these plans to federal and state emergency responders during and post-fire.

4. Create Post-Fire Educational and Marketing Materials: Create and distribute multilingual educational materials and destination guides to encourage residents and visitors to return to outdoor recreation when it is safe. These materials will advise recreationists on allowable and responsible recreation activities and locations during active wildfire restoration and recovery. In addition, the materials will provide interpretive information on fire-adaptive ecosystems to educate the public on the impacts of fire.

5. Provide Technical Assistance to Local Businesses: To help navigate and access disaster assistance programs, provide technical assistance to local businesses following wildfire and other natural disasters in rural and low-income outdoor recreation economies.

6. Conduct Post-Fire Economic Studies: Conduct economic studies in communities that have experienced wildfire, including analyses of lost revenue and tourism-related income based on data gathered before, during, and after wildfire events.

7. Develop Post-Fire Insurance Program for the Outdoor Recreation Economy: Include outdoor- recreation-based businesses and events in the development and administration of post-wildfire insurance programs that are both attainable and affordable.

8. Evaluate Existing Telecommunications Infrastructure and Perform Upgrades: Conduct a review of existing telecommunications infrastructure on public lands and prioritize upgrades and/or replacements to ensure that communications in affected communities remain active and accessible during a wildfire.