



*Calforests*  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

---

**2024**

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## **CHAIR'S MESSAGE: JEFF PUDLICKI, W.M. BEATY ASSOCIATES, INC.**

As 2025 marks the end of my two-year term as Board Chair, I reflect on our accomplishments as an association. It has been an honor to work with the professionals that constitute the Board of Directors, Calforests' staff, and the consultants we work with. The dedication of Board members and their active involvement has been instrumental in steering the California Forestry Association (Calforests) toward success. Everyone has played a crucial role in shaping our achievements.

In the past year, Calforests has reached new heights thanks to our collaborative efforts. Additionally, our strengthened relationship with The California Forest Foundation (TCFF) has created new opportunities for public education and advocacy, ensuring that sustainable forestry remains a priority in California. With the recent hiring of Christina Tsapoulkis, we are confident in our ability to strengthen our advocacy efforts through a partnership with TCFF and continue our benchmark pursuit of educating policy leaders across the state on the value of a healthy forest products sector while further elevating our strategic communications.

The past year was busy, as we worked on sponsoring legislation while also supporting or opposing other bills, helping to craft proposed regulations on our industry, and working with federal entities in the realm of timber supply and fire suppression. Notably, the hard work of our dedicated staff led to the successful passage of AB 2776, which provides a new Forest Resiliency Exemption under the Forest Practice Act and Rule, allowing for more efficient forest management to reduce wildfire hazards and promote forest health.

A major highlight of the year was the successful launch of the California Forestry Sector Jobs Initiative (CFSJI). This initiative is a groundbreaking effort to expand workforce opportunities, increase diversity in the forestry sector, and provide equitable access to stable, well-paying jobs. By investing in workforce development, we are not only strengthening the industry, but also ensuring that the next generation of forest industry professionals is prepared to meet the challenges of the future. CFSJI stands as a testament to our commitment to both economic growth and environmental stewardship.

While celebrating our successes, it is important to acknowledge the challenges that lie ahead. California continues to face significant impacts due to wildfires. The Park Fire, while occurring during an otherwise modest fire season, affected several of Calforests' members and is now the fourth-largest fire in California history. The impacts from this, as well as past fires, will continue to disrupt log markets and demand significant attention from forestry staff as they once again undertake post-fire recovery efforts.

As Chair, I am pleased to report that our association is in excellent financial health. Financial stability and caution remain top priorities for Calforests. We were able to maintain and slightly increase our reserve funds, all while avoiding an increase in members' dues.

I would like to thank each member, the dedicated staff, and our invaluable partners. Your support has been the driving force behind Calforests' success, and I look forward to continuing our work together to build a stronger, more resilient forestry sector in California.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: MATT DIAS, PRESIDENT AND CEO**

As I approach my fourth year with the California Forestry Association (Calforests), I'm reminded of a saying: "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now." In our case, the best time to plant a policy, a workforce initiative, or educate policymakers on what our industry stands for is now. But here we are—growing stronger, adapting faster, and standing taller than ever.

Calforests and its members have proven time and again that the forest products sector is nothing if not resilient. Through it all, our commitment to sustainable forestry practices, environmental stewardship, and supporting rural economies has remained steadfast.

The forestry industry, as you know, is central to the well-being of our communities and the health of our state, nation, and planet. Our members are stewards of the land, tackling challenges that range from climate change to economic uncertainty. And yet, these challenges reveal the true strength of our association. Together, we've embraced innovation, adopted cutting-edge technologies, and found creative ways to manage our forests sustainably while still meeting society's needs. Talk about multitasking.

This year, I am particularly proud to highlight two major milestones. First, the passage of AB 2776. This landmark legislation streamlines the notification process for sustainable forest management practices, proving that efficiency and environmental stewardship can go hand in hand—like forests with clean air and water. Its successful passage is a testament to the collective advocacy and determination of our association and its partners.

Second, the launch of the California Forestry Sector Jobs Initiative. This isn't just another program; it is a solution to assist in meeting workforce needs. Our initiative is committed to increasing workforce diversity while also addressing the urgent need for proactive forest management to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. And let's not forget the meaningful career opportunities it provides across Northern and Central California.

To each member of Calforests, I want to say: you're the roots that keep this association grounded and the branches that allow it to reach new heights. Your dedication to responsible forest and facility management ensures the vitality of our industry and the health of California's forests.

Looking ahead, let's continue to work together—with the same grit, determination, and occasional good humor that have gotten us this far. Calforests has always been a leading voice for the forest products sector in California, and I'm confident that together, we'll keep building a future where our forests flourish, our communities thrive, and our industry remains a model of excellence.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to each of you for your hard work, passion, and unwavering support. It's an honor to serve as your president. Together, let's ensure that the legacy of our forests endures for generations to come.

## **REGULATORY AFFAIRS REPORT: GEORGE GENTRY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**

### **Board of Forestry and Fire Protection**

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) passed three rule packages in 2024 of interest to the Association. “Less Than Three Acre Conversion Exemption Amendments” was the result of AB 1526, which amended PRC § 4584(g)(2)(A)(iv) to allow the Board to adopt a waiver of the one-time limitation on less than three-acre conversion if the one-time limitation would impose an undue hardship. Also adopted was “Drought Mortality and Forest Fire Prevention Exemption Amendments,” which primarily placed acreage limits on operations to remove trees killed by drought conditions and extended the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption. Finally, the Board passed regulations to add clarity to the definition of “Wet Areas.” Pending final approval is “Watercourse Crossing and Emergency Notice Watercourse Crossing Requirements,” which clarifies and further defines certain terms.

For 2025, the Board has several issues under immediate investigation. “Vegetation and Fuels in the WLPZ” is designed to allow the use of equipment to remove fuels near watercourses. “Exemption Use on Active Plans” clarifies that utilizing exemptions and overlapping them on active operations is prohibited, although it likely will allow limited use of 1038(b) (10% Dead, Diseased, and Dying) to triage emergent outbreaks of mortality. “Utility and Public Agency ROW Exemption Amendments” is a regulatory package that has proved difficult to finalize—currently, analysis of the economic impact is being conducted. “Defensible Space Zone 0” is another challenging regulatory package, as it pertains to defensible space requirements within five feet of structures.

The Association sponsored AB 2276, which created the Forest Resilience Exemption, replacing both the Small Landowner and the Forest Fire Prevention Exemptions. This new exemption builds upon and improves the other two. Emergency adoption provisions were placed in the enacting legislation. Thanks to the efforts of the Board staff, the Department, and stakeholders, this was accomplished, and the exemption became effective January 16.

### **Member Assistance**

Staff provided assistance on numerous requests from members regarding regulatory issues, providing background information, guidance, and working as a liaison with regulatory agencies. This process is very useful to the staff, as it keeps them informed of potential deviations from previous forest practice procedures.

### **California Forest Management Task Force**

Staff was engaged with the Task Force and played a major part in shaping the recommendations for the final work plan. Included objectives are the development of guidance for plan preparers and reviewers and “Permit Synchronization,” which will align permitting under the Forest Practice Act and Forest Practice Rules with the Water Board and CDFW permitting and regulatory requirements, including waste discharge requirements and lake and streambed alteration permit issuance timelines.

Recently, the NiVAK Group was retained by the State to conduct a “Lean Six Sigma” analysis of the THP process to identify areas of possible improvement.

## **FEDERAL AFFAIRS REPORT: STEVE BRINK, VICE PRESIDENT**

### **Forest Service, California Region (R5), Wood Supply**

Region 5's fiscal year (FY) 2024 timber target was 395 million board feet. Of the total volume sold (362.5 mmbf) in FY 2024, 240.3 mmbf was sawlog (66.3 percent), 36.2 mmbf was fuelwood (10 percent), and 86.0 mmbf was biomass (23.7 percent). The sawlog component of the total volume sold has been an industry talking point with R5 to ensure a sufficient supply for dependent mill infrastructure. Over the past 12 years, the average annual sawlog component of total volume sold has been 70-85 percent. There is general consensus among many stakeholders that 70-85 percent of the total volume sold should be sawlog to provide reasonable assurance of maintaining existing sawmill/veneer mill infrastructure in California.

Region 5 has increased the percentage of sawlog sold by 20 percent in FY 2024, which is a significant achievement. Calforests believes, based on conversations with Region 5, that the FY 2025 sawlog component of total volume sold will be 75 percent.

### **Forest Service Budget and Staffing**

The Forest Service is currently operating under a budgetary Continuing Resolution until March 14, 2025. This means the Forest Service budget remains at 2024 appropriations levels for at least half of Fiscal Year 2025. This situation is further complicated by indications that the Forest Service was near a \$1 billion deficit in Fiscal Year 2024.

Due to this deficit, the Chief issued an emergency directive stating that there would be no temporary employee hiring for the entire FY 2025 (with the exception of fire suppression, which will be fully funded and has the authority to hire necessary firefighting personnel). Additionally, the filling of permanent vacancies within the organization has been largely curtailed. However, Region 5 has been granted approval to permanently fill the Modoc, Lassen, Tahoe, and Eldorado National Forest Supervisor positions. Any approved hiring to fill permanent positions will only be open to existing government employees.

### **Federal Forest Resource Coalition (FFRC)**

FY 2026 appropriations hearings will take place in spring 2025. FFRC will focus on increasing funding for the forest management and road budget line items. FFRC will continue advocating to appropriators that sawtimber produces net revenue, which can expand the number of restoration acres treated to address insects, disease, and wildfire-damaged landscapes.

The roads budget has remained dismal for 10 years, with the Forest Service road system continuing to deteriorate and its maintenance backlog increasing.

The Farm Bill remains a point of contention, with substantial differences between the Senate and House versions, making a compromise unlikely in the near future.

### **Forest Service National Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance Grants**

On November 13, 2024, the Forest Service awarded \$20 million in Hazardous Fuels Transportation Assistance (HFTA) Grants. This program, authorized and funded under the Inflation

Reduction Act, supports the hauling of sawlogs, cull logs, or biomass removed to reduce hazardous fuels to locations where that material can be utilized.

The \$20 million awarded will be distributed among 66 projects across 13 states, with Region 5 receiving 12 awards totaling \$7.2 million. Future funding opportunities will be available in 2025.

### **Recent Forest Service Region 5 Permanent Personnel Changes**

- Chris Christofferson – Appointed Klamath NF Forest Supervisor
- Dave Fournier – Appointed Eldorado NF Forest Supervisor
- Liz Berger – Moving to Calforests mid-February 2025
- Jessica McMullen – Appointed Plumas NF Deputy Forest Supervisor
- Rosalie Herrera – Appointed Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Deputy Forest Supervisor

### **Fire Suppression – Forest Service**

The Forest Service will be funded to maintain 3,500 firefighters at GS-9 grade and below; however, the goal is to reduce 49 overhead positions through attrition.

## **LEGISLATIVE REPORT: KRIS ROSA AND CRAIG SWAIM, ROSTRUM**

### **Legislative & Policy Overview – 2024**

In January 2024, the Legislature reconvened for the second year of the 2023-24 legislative session, with each house in different stages of a leadership transition. After taking the helm of the State Assembly in July 2023, Speaker Robert Rivas began his first full year as Assembly Speaker. On the Senate side, Pro Tem Toni Atkins was wrapping up her final month leading the Senate after Senate Democrats announced that Senator Mark McGuire would serve as the next Pro Tem starting in February 2024. While both houses adjusted to new leadership, the Legislature faced a host of issues, including a significant budget deficit, disagreement on the size of that deficit (Governor’s projection: \$38 billion / Legislature’s estimate: \$68 billion), growing concerns about the cost of living and housing affordability, voter frustration with homelessness, drug addiction, and crime, and a general sense that political leaders at all levels of government were not doing enough to address issues of immediate concern to their constituents.

Despite the Park Fire, which significantly impacted several Calforests members, 2024 was a relatively mild wildfire year. This, combined with fewer resources available for expanded fuel reduction efforts, resulted in fewer high-profile legislative efforts in the wildfire space. However, Calforests capitalized on continued legislative interest in forest health and wildfire prevention, as well as requests by legislators for common-sense, cost-effective solutions, by bringing together a broad coalition of stakeholders to reform, extend, and consolidate a handful of existing timber harvest permit exemptions into a new, more efficient Forest Resiliency Exemption.

Calforests also worked with broader industry coalitions to improve or defeat legislation that could have negatively impacted the forest sector and California businesses in general. These efforts included significant reforms to California’s Private Attorney General Act and defeating legislation that would have raised the cost of unemployment insurance by extending coverage to striking workers.

### **Key Legislation**

#### **AB 2276 (Wood) – Forestry: Timber Harvesting Plans: Exemptions**

Spearheaded by Calforests, AB 2276 made several important updates to existing THP exemptions, including:

- Extending and combining the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption and Small Landowner Exemption into the newly created Forest Resiliency Exemption.
- Increasing the size of harvestable trees.
- Expanding eligible projects to 500 acres.
- Extending the exemption for harvests within 150 feet of a habitable structure.
- Revising the Oak Woodland Exemption to allow for the removal of larger trees where necessary to improve conservation efforts.

#### **AB 99 (Connolly) – Department of Transportation Vegetation Management**

A carry-over from 2023, AB 99 would have required Caltrans to adopt an integrated pest management program prioritizing the use of non-pesticide alternatives for vegetation management



in local jurisdictions with no-spray policies. This would have increased costs for the department and jeopardized fuel reduction projects across the state. Although approved by the Legislature, the bill was vetoed by Governor Newsom.

#### **AB 2149 (Connolly) – Gates: Standards and Inspections**

Calforests worked closely with a large coalition of agricultural interests to defeat AB 2149—a well-intentioned but poorly drafted bill that would have required costly upgrades and regular inspections of hundreds of thousands of gates, including those on private property. The bill was held in the Assembly over concerns about compliance costs for state and local governments.

#### **AB 2538 (Grayson) – Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Seasonal Firefighters**

This bill would have authorized CAL FIRE to address personnel shortages by employing seasonal firefighters for longer than nine months in a consecutive 12-month period. Despite receiving unanimous support in the Legislature, Governor Newsom vetoed the bill, stating that it was unnecessary given his administration’s ongoing efforts to hire an additional 2,000 firefighters and implement the 66-hour workweek.

#### **SB 610 (Wiener) – Fire Prevention**

A late-session “gut and amend” bill, SB 610 proposed revising how the state designates fire severity zones, shifting from the existing three-tier system to a single “wildfire mitigation area.” Pushed by housing advocates and the Newsom Administration as a potential solution to the housing insurance crisis, the bill faced opposition from a large coalition of conservation groups, local governments, and agricultural interests—including Calforests. The bill was ultimately held in the Assembly.

#### **SB 1036 (Limon) – Voluntary Carbon Offsets**

A reintroduction of vetoed 2023 legislation, SB 1036 would have made claims related to voluntary carbon offsets (VCOs) subject to California’s False Advertising Law. If passed, the bill could have had a chilling effect on the VCO market, as both sellers and buyers feared liability for inadvertent errors or good-faith claims that are difficult to quantify. Faced with strong opposition, the author held the bill in the Assembly without a hearing.

### **Budget**

As previously noted, 2024 marked the second consecutive year of significant budget deficits in California. The budget deal reached between the Legislature and Governor Newsom addressed a \$55 billion deficit, accomplished through:

- \$14 billion in spending reductions.
- \$4 billion in fund shifts.
- \$6 billion in use of reserves.
- \$6 billion in business tax credit suspensions.
- \$13 billion in Proposition 98 school funding requirement suspensions.

The 2024-25 budget provides \$4.2 billion to support CAL FIRE, including:

- \$2.8 billion from the General Fund (a 2% decrease from 2023-24).
- \$199 million to implement the 66-hour workweek for firefighters and support the addition of five hand crews.

Despite the deficit, the approved budget maintained \$3.1 billion in statutorily required Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) spending, including \$200 million annually for forest health-related activities through 2028-29. However, for 2024-25, this was achieved via a one-time shift of \$120 million from the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund to offset GGRF costs.

### **Political Action Committee (PAC)**

The Calforests Political Action Committee (PAC) exists to support the campaigns of State Legislature candidates. In 2024, the PAC contributed nearly \$46,000 to 28 candidates. Our strategy centers on hosting small events with individual legislators to develop working relationships—an approach that has served Calforests well for many years and will continue into the future.

## **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT: YIANNI KAZANIS, MOZAIC MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS**

### **University Summits: Connecting Future Forestry Leaders**

In 2024, the California Forestry Association (Calforests), alongside leaders from the forestry sector, engaged with students and faculty at three of California's top forestry programs—UC Berkeley, Cal Poly Humboldt, and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. These university summits provided a platform for industry professionals to share insights on the evolving landscape of forestry, workforce opportunities, and the critical role of sustainable forest management in California's environmental and economic future.

The first summit took place on October 2 at UC Berkeley, where students from the prestigious forestry program gained firsthand knowledge from industry leaders about career pathways and innovations shaping the sector. On October 7, Calforests and forestry professionals visited Cal Poly Humboldt, emphasizing the need for a skilled workforce and discussing how sustainable practices can mitigate wildfire risks and contribute to climate resilience. The final stop was Cal Poly San Luis Obispo on October 10, where students engaged in discussions about industry challenges, internship opportunities, and the importance of public-private collaboration in forestry.

These visits reinforced the strong partnership between the forestry industry and California's academic institutions, ensuring that the next generation of forestry professionals is well-equipped to meet the challenges of the field. By fostering these connections, Calforests continues to support education and workforce development in a sector critical to the state's environmental and economic well-being.

### **Members Only Photo Contest: Strengthening Engagement**

As part of a broader effort to enhance member engagement and expand Calforests' social media presence, the association continued the success of the Members Only Photo Contest, first launched in 2023. In collaboration with Mozaic Media & Communications, Calforests refined and expanded the contest, encouraging members to showcase the beauty of California's working forests through their own photography.

Mozaic played a key role in shaping the contest's outreach, developing content for the dedicated photo contest webpage and crafting a social media strategy to maximize participation. Through targeted promotions, engaging visual storytelling, and a streamlined submission process, the campaign not only strengthened Calforests' online presence but also fostered a deeper connection among members. The contest highlighted the talent within the forestry community while celebrating the landscapes and industry that sustain California's forests.

### **California Forestry Sector Jobs Initiative**

Mozaic Media & Communications, in partnership with Calforests and CAL FIRE, launched its work on the California Forestry Sector Jobs Initiative by laying the foundation for the initiative's branding and messaging. This effort included the creation of a distinct logo and the development of a key message document, which remains under review. As the initiative gains momentum in 2024, Mozaic will play a crucial role in shaping outreach strategies to expand awareness and

engagement.

A major focus of this initiative has been community outreach in both Northern and Southern California, ensuring forestry career opportunities reach a diverse and wide-ranging audience. As part of these efforts, Mozaic coordinated a highly successful ethnic media briefing, bringing attention to the initiative's goals and impact. Using the invitation designed for the event, Mozaic helped facilitate discussions among key forestry leaders, including Matt Dias, President and CEO of the California Forestry Association, and Chief Matthew Reischman of CAL FIRE, alongside representatives from industry and community organizations. The event emphasized the growing demand for a skilled forestry workforce and highlighted the initiative's commitment to diversity, equity, and environmental sustainability. The briefing generated media coverage, including a news story from Ethnic Media Services that underscored how climate change is driving the need for more forestry professionals and how the initiative is creating opportunities for traditionally underrepresented communities.

Looking ahead, Mozaic will continue to build on these efforts, expanding outreach, refining key messaging, and supporting community-driven events to bridge workforce gaps and strengthen California's forestry sector.

### **Social Media Impact in 2024**

In 2024, Calforests significantly expanded its digital footprint, establishing itself as a leading voice in forestry conversations across social media platforms. Through a strategic and sustained effort, the organization leveraged compelling content, data-driven campaigns, and audience engagement strategies to increase visibility, strengthen advocacy, and foster new partnerships. These efforts positioned Calforests as a go-to resource for forestry industry insights, policy updates, and workforce development opportunities.

One of the most notable achievements was the remarkable audience growth, with Calforests increasing its reach by 1,100% and boosting content interactions by 100%. These results were driven by the development of engaging multimedia content, including videos, infographics, and member spotlights, which resonated with followers and amplified the association's key messages. The increased engagement translated into a 505.4% surge in profile visits, underscoring a heightened interest in Calforests' initiatives and reinforcing brand awareness among both industry stakeholders and the general public.

The association also implemented targeted digital advertising efforts, deploying small but strategic campaigns that maximized visibility and impact. These initiatives helped Calforests grow its social media following by over 600 new followers, expanding its community of engaged supporters. By consistently delivering relevant and impactful content, Calforests strengthened its advocacy efforts, driving conversations around sustainable forest management, workforce development, and the industry's role in climate resilience.

Through these efforts, Calforests solidified its position as an influential voice in forestry, leveraging social media not just as a communication tool but as a catalyst for engagement, education, and

industry advocacy. Looking ahead, the organization remains committed to furthering its digital impact, continuing to refine its content strategy, and leveraging social media as a powerful platform to support California’s forestry sector.

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