

CAL FIRE Request for Early Review of the Jackson Demonstration State Forest Management Plan

The California Natural Resource Agency and CAL FIRE requests that the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) and the Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) immediately undertake a full review of the Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) Management Plan.

CAL FIRE has spent the last several months reaching out to the local community, local tribes, and other stakeholders about management of JDSF. State Demonstration Forests are designed to answer the most critical questions of the day and inform how millions of acres of forests across California are managed and sustained to meet the needs of current and future generations. We heard from the community that the pressures facing this forest have changed, and so must our approach to achieve more resilient forest stands in light of a changing climate and more severe wildfire.

CAL FIRE believes JDSF management needs to be modernized. Moving forward, JDSF needs to serve as a model of forest and tribal co-management that restores, enhances and protects this critical resource. This will only be accomplished by opening the forest management plan to review while allowing current scientific principles to guide decision making processes. We are requesting your help advancing review of the JDSF Management Plan now, rather than waiting until 2026, when this review was originally scheduled.

Specifically, CAL FIRE would like to ensure the management review includes the following:

1. **Restoration Economy:** Ecologically sensitive active forest management helps to recover the health of our forests. This includes well-planned, carefully monitored timber harvest, prescribed burning, forest thinning and fuels reduction projects that are designed to improve and maintain the health of landscapes and limit catastrophic wildfire risks.
2. **Tribal Co-Management:** California Native American tribes and communities have stewarded redwood forests since time immemorial but have been prohibited from traditional practices and stewardship over the last century. Co-Management agreements can serve as tools to increase tribal governments and communities access these lands and partner with state agencies to steward these lands.
3. **Cutting-Edge Science:** CAL FIRE's Demonstration Forests provide living laboratories for scientists to better understand how forests evolve and the impacts of various forms of timber harvest to help the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection update the state's Forest Practice Rules. Increased investments and updated focus must ensure that activities in JDSF are shaped by the scientific questions we must ask and answer to steward forests in the age of climate change.

4. **Community Forest:** The local community relies on JDSF for wildfire resilience, watershed protection, and recreation. In addition to enjoying the forest, we want the community to understand the science and demonstrations taking place and feel proud of the unique forest in their back yard.

CAL FIRE is already taking some concrete steps to modernize JDSF:

1. **Investing Resources:** Historically, the operations of the State Demonstration Forests were funded through timber sales from these forests. For the first time, we invested \$10 million in the Demonstration Forests this year, and have proposed an additional \$10 million next year. We wanted to ensure adequate funding to meet the community, tribal and the State's expectations. This funding will also help make needed improvements:
 - a. Remove slash piles and clean up old logging sites
 - b. Improve facilities and trails
 - c. Invest in fuel breaks
 - d. Fund prescribed burns
 - e. Expand research
 - f. Realize tribal co-management projects. For example, CAL FIRE is working to make a site of interest available to a local tribe for a cultural burning opportunity.
2. **A More Representative Jackson Advisory Group (JAG):** We are very excited to welcome the new members to the JAG, including:
 - a. Joanna Nelson, Science Director, Save the redwoods League
 - b. Reno Franklin, Former Chair, Kashia Band of the Pomo Indians
 - c. They will be working with one of our newest members of the Board of Forestry – Elizabeth Forsberg, who is a PhD forester from the Nature Conservancy.
3. **Reviewing the Science on the Jackson:** The Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Science Advisory Panel has been asked to review the science that has emerged from the Jackson. This third-party review will ground the scientific discussion around the current management and help guide future research and management for JDSF.
4. **Tribal Co-Management:** CAL FIRE and CNRA are reaching out to all local tribes individually and have started tribal consultations.

The Jackson Demonstration State Forest Management Plan is the document that guides all the management activities for the forest. By conducting a review of the Jackson Management Plan four years early, we hope this will guide future modernization goals and standards on JDSF. We look forward to the meaningful conversation and active engagement with the community as we seek to achieve a resilient forest together.