

Prescribed Fire Updates from California

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Northern California Prescribed Fire Council
Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association



Northern California Prescribed Fire Council

- Formed in 2009
- Built community around Rx fire through annual meetings, etc.
- Elevated prescribed fire conversation in the West
 - Other PFCs followed
- Brought TREC to CA in 2013



Northern California
Prescribed Fire Council

Northern California Prescribed Fire Council

- Policy work—current movement:
 - State-Certified Burn Boss Program



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CA State-Certified Burn Boss (CARX)



- Legislation passed Sept. 2018 (Senate Bill 1260)
- Curriculum development—2019
- Curriculum approval finalized January 2021
- Program rollout spring 2021

CA State-Certified Burn Boss (CARX)



What's the benefit?

- Doesn't change CA negligence law
- Does offer opportunities for **liability sharing** with CAL FIRE through the permit process

CA State-Certified Burn Boss (CARX)

Potential benefits to landowners:

- More qualified contractors to plan and lead burns
- Reducing bottlenecks in cost-share and grant programs?
- Opportunity to become a CARX and have liability relief for their own projects, and/or for projects with their local Prescribed Burn Association



CA State-Certified Burn Boss (CARX)



Potential benefits for private/retired fire professionals:

- A realistic Rx fire certification route for non-fire professionals
- Potential access to Rx fire insurance and liability sharing with CAL FIRE
- Opportunity to expand professional portfolio to include burn planning and implementation

Northern California Prescribed Fire Council

- Policy work/2021 priorities
 - Current legislative session: liability standards and insurance
 - Cultural burning and tribal sovereignty
 - How to best enable prescribed burn associations and cultural burning?



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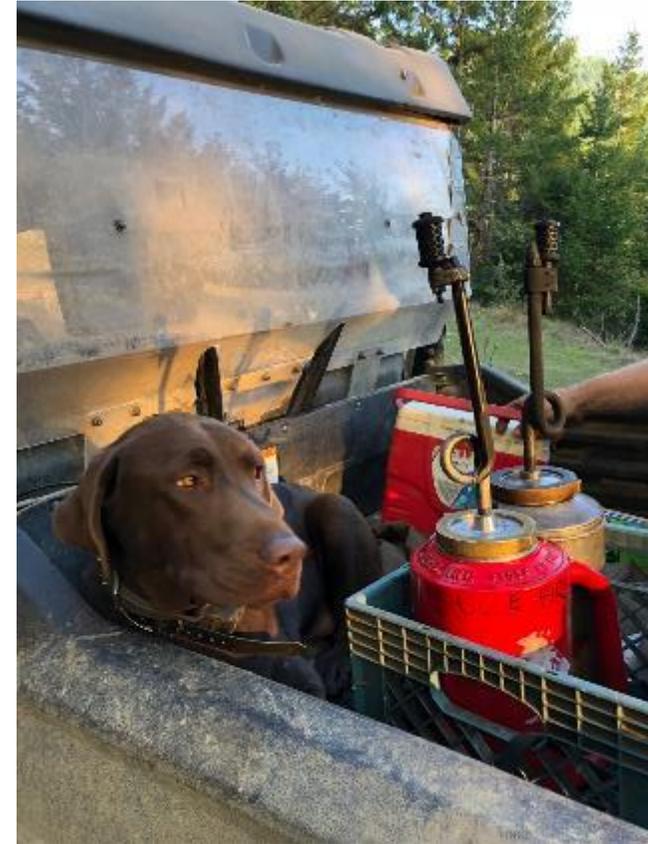
Prescribed Burn Associations in California



Great Plains PBAs – 2015 survey

- 27 PBAs conducted **1,094 burns covering 472,235 acres** in 8 years
- Only one official report of injury
- Escape rate of 1.5%, with no insurance claims or lawsuits

From Weir et al. 2015







Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association

- Started unofficially in 2017
- Officially formed March 9, 2018
- Board of Directors & by-laws established
- 80+ paying members (\$25/year);
300-person mailing list



Humboldt County Prescribed Burn Association



- Neighbors helping neighbors
- Diverse membership
- VFD involvement + training
- CAL FIRE support
- Private contractors as needed
- Cooperative Extension: research, education, and outreach on burning

Burn trailer!

- Tools, radios, slip-on units, pumps, drip torches, etc., etc.
- Free check-out for all PBA members



26 burns since June 2017!

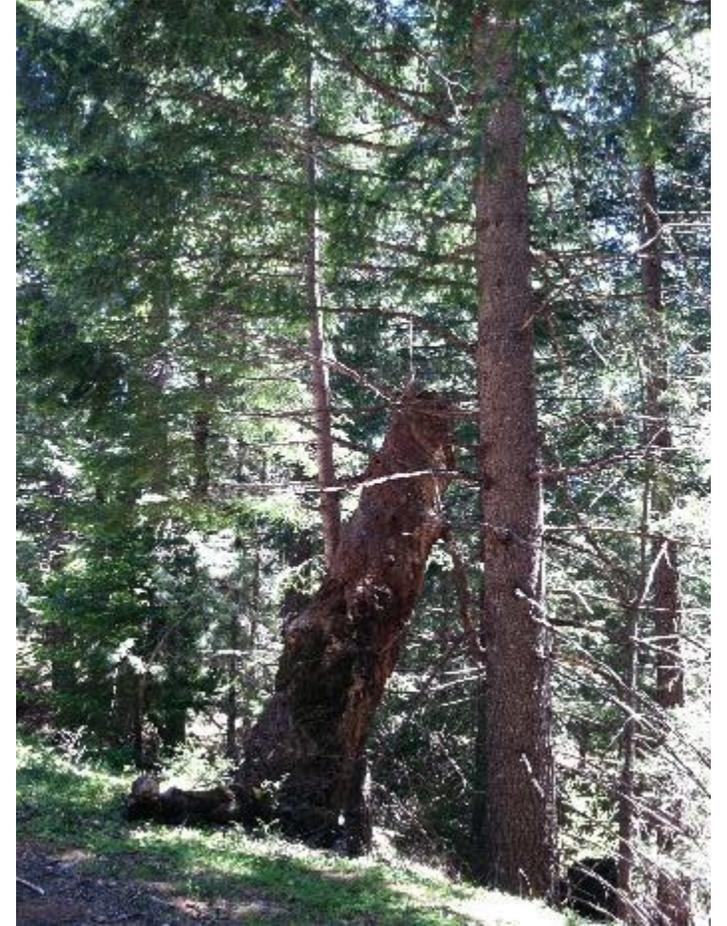


Year-round local capacity allows us to take advantage of different windows and meet a broad array of objectives

Medusahead (early summer)



Conifer encroachment in oak woodlands (fall/winter)





Coyote brush in coastal grasslands (early fall)



Understory fuels reduction (spring & fall)



Other: vineyard grasshoppers, blackberry, research plots, etc.



Day-of-burn costs are very low (sometimes \$0)

Primary costs are in unit prep, which can be offset by NRCS, USFWS, and other landowner cost-share programs

Core philosophies of our PBA model

- Everyone is welcome and has something to contribute
- Every burn is a training burn (TRES-inspired)
- Prescribed fire doesn't have to be expensive or overly bureaucratic
- We are bringing fire back as a *land* management tool, not just a *fire* management tool

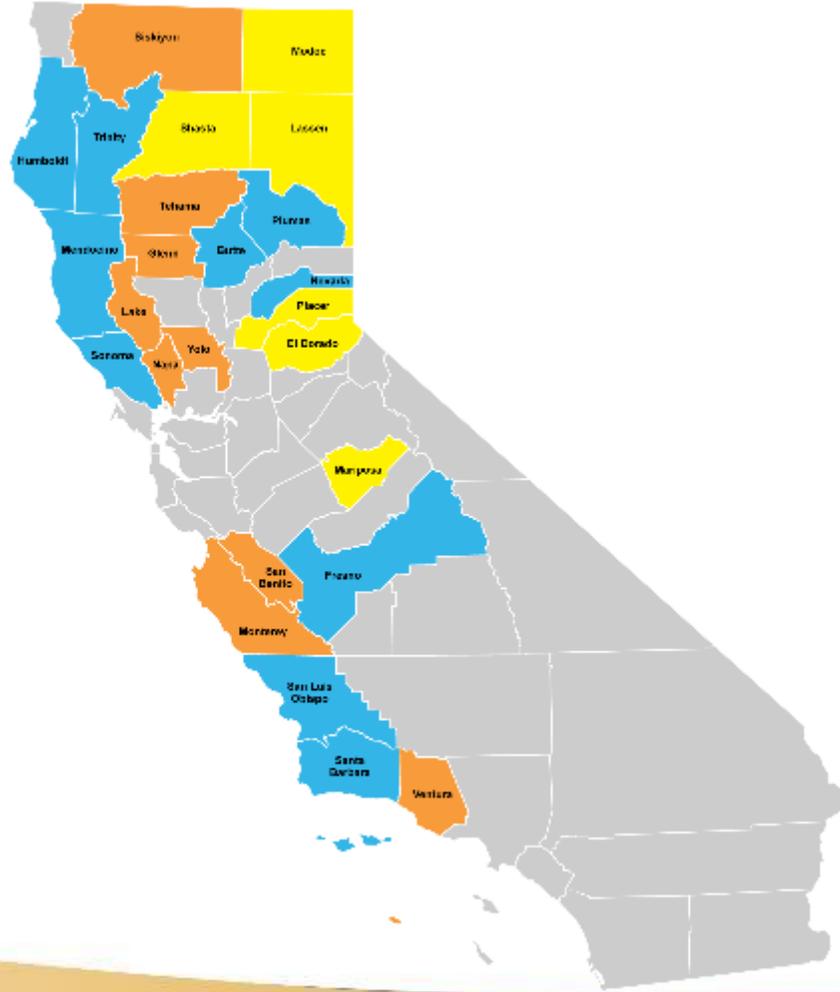


CA PBA/Community-Based Burning Efforts

Blue = group officially formed

Orange = group in formation

Yellow = having conversations about forming



Thank you!

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