



MARIPOSA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors • (209) 966-3222



RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2015-43

MEETING: January 27, 2015

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kevin Cann, District IV Supervisor

RE: Resolution Supporting Wild Fire Prevention on Federal Lands

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Adopt a Resolution Supporting Prevention and Maintenance Work on Federal Wild and Forest Lands to Mitigate the Threat of Catastrophic Wild Fires. A little over half of Mariposa County is composed of federally managed lands. Fire prevention efforts on the federal lands has been inadequate for a number of years and when combined with current drought conditions, has resulted in a serious increase in the likelihood of catastrophic wild land fires occurring. In recent years Mariposa County has all too often seen the disastrous affects these wild fires can have on the citizens and businesses in our community, not to mention the damage done to our precious natural resources.

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) are encouraging their member counties to adopt resolutions urging the Governor to work with our federal legislators in performing prevention and maintenance work on federal wild and forest lands.

Please see the attached Resolution for additional information.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

The Board has adopted Resolutions supporting actions that will ultimately benefit the citizens of Mariposa County.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Do not adopt the Resolution. RCRC will not receive a Resolution from Mariposa County supporting prevention and maintenance work on federal wild and forest lands, which may hinder their efforts on this issue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

Wildfire Strategy on Federal Lands (DOCX)

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Requested Action Recommended

Mary Hodson

Mary Hodson, Interim CAO 1/21/2015

RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

SECONDER: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

MARIPOSA COUNTY RESOLUTION 15-43

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PREVENTION AND MAINTENANCE WORK
ON FEDERAL WILD AND FOREST LANDS TO MITIGATE THE
THREAT OF CATASTROPHIC WILD FIRES**

WHEREAS catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten lives, property and the natural resources of the State of California; and

WHEREAS the Governor of California declared a drought emergency for the entire State based on the occurrence of the driest year on record in California; and

WHEREAS fire threat is no longer limited to a season, but ongoing throughout the year due to the multi-year drought, increasing suppression costs and the depletion of funds slated for fire prevention projects; and

WHEREAS the elected and appointed officials of both the State and the nation have an obligation to preserve public safety and protect the citizenry, their homes and businesses by ensuring that the landscape is as fire-resilient as possible and that firefighting efforts are as effective and as safe as possible for fire fighters; and

WHEREAS California is approximately 50% publicly owned land and many rural counties have substantially higher percentages of federally managed land; and

WHEREAS Mariposa County has more than 499,000 acres of federally managed land which is 53.5% of the total land in the County; and

WHEREAS the management of lands, particularly regarding fire protection and fuel reduction, on national forest system lands under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service is wholly inadequate, has long-been ignored, and is significantly underfunded, placing Mariposa County in significant peril and at great risk in the event that catastrophic wildfires occur, thereby threatening lives, and destroying public resources, private property, businesses, and the natural environment; and

WHEREAS significant acreage in Mariposa County has been destroyed by catastrophic wildfire over the last 10 years, destroying property, businesses, and the environment; and

WHEREAS California has more than 43 million acres of federal land, much of which has not been adequately managed to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire; and

WHEREAS 4 of the 5 largest wildfires in California in the past 100 years have been on federal land with the other having had a substantial federal component; and

WHEREAS the escalating costs of fighting fires on federal land over the last 10 years has significantly diminished the available resources for the critically needed prevention measures that can minimize these catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Interior have spent over \$1 billion on fire suppression every year since 2000 with suppression costs now consuming more than 50% of the total wild land fire budget, as compared to 13% of the total fire budget in 1991; and

WHEREAS the resources to manage the federal lands to reduce fire risk would be a small investment relative to the skyrocketing costs of fire suppression; and

WHEREAS the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires in Mariposa County will result in harmful secondary environmental effects, including diminished air and water quality, impacted watershed, increased air pollutant emissions, and threatened habitats of sensitive wildlife species; and

WHEREAS, approximately eighty percent of the State's developed surface water supply originates on watershed lands within our rural counties, of which California's residents use a portion of this water for domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial uses and these rivers, lakes, and watershed lands also serve as habitat for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the detrimental effects on these watersheds affect all of California, not just rural California; and

WHEREAS the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires significantly impacts the levels of greenhouse gases in Mariposa County and throughout the State; and

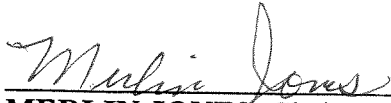
WHEREAS the mitigation of wildfire emissions is vital to reach the goals stated in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32); and

WHEREAS there continues to be a widely recognized extremely high risk of catastrophic wildfires in Mariposa County due to unnaturally heavy fuel loads and the early drying of wild land vegetation; and

WHEREAS the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors calls for immediate measures to be taken to prevent imminent catastrophic wildfires.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, declares that there is an ongoing emergency due to the actual and perceived threat of wildfire in California, that the State and local governments have taken many steps to resolve this issue, and now urges the Governor to take an active role at the federal level to demand that the United States Forest Service take action in California's federal wild and forest lands to do the prevention and maintenance work required to mitigate the ongoing and increasing risk of catastrophic wildfires.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of Mariposa County, a political subdivision of the State of California, this 27th day of January 2015, by unanimous vote.



MERLIN JONES, Chairman
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



RENÉ LaROCHE
Clerk of the Board



STEVEN W. DAHLEM
County Counsel