



# SOUTHERN CA ASSOC OF FORESTERS & FIRE WARDENS

**2022-2023**

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*Minutes of the Board of  
Directors meeting of the  
Southern California  
Association of Foresters  
and Fire Wardens*

*February 3, 2022  
Irvine, California*

***We, the members of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens, do band together for the purpose of strengthening interagency cooperation, fire safety coordination, and fellowship.***



## CONTACT US

**SCAFFW**

**c/o Tim Chavez**

**25268 Howard Dr.**

**Hemet, CA 92544**

**[scaffw@gmail.com](mailto:scaffw@gmail.com)**

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SOUTHERN CA ASSOCIATION OF FORESTERS & FIRE WARDENS  
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# President's 2024 Budget Advances Efforts to Address the Nation's Wildfire Crisis through Workforce Reform and Other Investments in Wildland Fire Management Programs

***More than \$4.2 billion for the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and the Interior wildland fire and hazardous fuels management; includes funds to implement comprehensive workforce reform, including increased firefighter pay, additional firefighting capacity, enhanced mental and physical health support, and improved housing options for firefighters***

**WASHINGTON, March 9, 2023** – The Biden-Harris Administration today submitted to Congress the President's budget for fiscal year 2024, which includes significant funding increases for wildland fire and hazardous fuels management. These investments will help address the nation's wildfire crisis and implement comprehensive reforms for the wildland fire management workforce that provide stronger financial and health support to wildland firefighters, who are the backbone of wildland fire management nationwide.

The workforce reforms proposed in the FY 2024 budget request will increase federal and tribal firefighters' pay, invest more in their mental and physical health and wellbeing, improve their housing options, and expand the number of permanent firefighters. These reforms build on the temporary pay increase provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The permanent pay reforms require authorizing legislation, and the Administration is committed to working with congressional leaders on developing a comprehensive legislative proposal.

"Wildland firefighters save lives, protect communities and serve on the frontlines to confront our nation's wildfire crisis," said **Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack**. "We must take better care of them in return by addressing challenges that have plagued them for decades. Better care means better pay and benefits, better housing, better mental and physical health resources, and better work-life balance for these people who have given so much."

"Wildfires fueled by climate change and ongoing drought continue to reinforce the need for a well-supported wildland fire management workforce that is available year-round to protect lives, communities, infrastructure and ecosystems throughout the country," said **Interior Secretary Deb Haaland**. "The President's 2024 budget proposal supports our ongoing effort to shift away from a temporary, seasonal workforce toward a more permanent team that can conduct wildland fire management year-round, including activities to reduce wildfire risk throughout the country."

Last year, nearly 69,000 wildfires burned more than 7.5 million acres across the country. On average, wildfire activity, severity, size, and cost are escalating. Wildfires that are larger, more intense, and harder to control threaten lives, communities, and valuable resources. In addition, wildland firefighters, who now face a fire year instead of a fire season, spend more time on the fireline and less time at home.

The 2024 budget request for the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service's wildland fire and hazardous fuels management totals \$2.97 billion, which is \$647 million, or 28% above the comparable 2023 enacted level. More information can be found on the Forest Service's website. The FY 2024 budget request for the Department of the Interior's (DOI) wildland fire and hazardous fuels management totals \$1.33 billion, which is \$233.1 million, or 21%, above the comparable 2023 level. More information can be found on the Department's website.

## **FY 2024 increases to implement workforce reform:**

**Increases firefighters' pay.** The cornerstone of the workforce reform proposal in President's FY 2024 budget request for wildland fire management is a permanent pay increase for wildland firefighters.

The budget includes increases of \$180 million for USDA and \$72 million for DOI to raise base pay for Federal and Tribal wildland firefighters, with additional premium pay costs covered out of funding requested for suppression operations. To implement this reform, the President's budget proposes legislation to: establish a special base rate salary table for all federal wildland firefighters that will permanently increase their pay; create a new premium pay category that provides all incident responders with additional compensation for all hours they are mobilized on an incident; and establish a pay cap with secretarial waiver authority using specific criteria.

**Expands firefighting capacity.** The increases in the budget over FY 2023 enacted include \$76 million for USDA and \$35 million for DOI above the FY 2023 levels for capacity, bringing total operational increases for USDA to \$259 million and for DOI \$45 million, with additional premium pay costs covered out of funding requested for suppression operations. This will ensure that the agencies can effectively meet the demands of wildland fire year-round while improving the work-life balance of firefighters. In total, the budget will support the equivalent of 970 (8.5%) additional federal firefighters and support personnel for USDA and 370 (8.8%) more federal personnel for DOI. The budget for DOI also will support the equivalent of 55 more Tribal wildland fire personnel than the FY 2023 enacted level.

**Enhances support for firefighter health and wellbeing.** The workforce reform proposal also includes increases of \$10 million for both USDA and DOI (\$20 million in total) to enhance support for firefighters' mental and physical health and wellbeing. The Joint Wildland Firefighter Behavioral Health Program will establish year-round prevention and mental health support training, provide post-traumatic stress care, enhance capacity for acute response, and create a system of trauma support services with an emphasis on early intervention. The departments will co-host a Firefighter Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit in April to further the program's development.

**Provides vital housing for wildland fire personnel.** In addition, the workforce reform proposal increases funding for both departments to house firefighters and support personnel. The budget increases USDA's and DOI's funding for facilities improvement and maintenance by \$50 million and \$22 million, respectively. These increases will go to repair, renovate, and construct housing for wildland fire personnel as they continue to encounter limited or unaffordable housing options in some locations.

#### **Other FY 2024 increases for Wildland Fire Management Programs:**

**USDA** - The President's budget for USDA also includes an increase of \$16 million for the **wildfire preparedness program** and \$183 million for hiring **additional personnel**. These funds, together with the capacity increases included in the workforce reform proposal, will support an additional 970 wildland firefighters and support personnel and ensure that fire management assets, such as large airtankers, helicopters, Hot Shot crews, and smokejumpers, can support timely and effective initial attack response operations. The budget also includes an increase of almost \$116 million to increase the acres of **hazardous fuels reduction treatments** on public lands to meet the goals of the agency's 10-year Wildfire Crisis Strategy. Of that increase, \$1.6 million will accelerate the procurement of **Zero Emission Vehicles** as practicable to replace fire fleet vehicles. A separate increase of \$6 million supports continued access to the FireGuard capability currently administered by the National Guard and would initiate a process to formally document the transition of **FireGuard** capability from the Department of Defense to USDA. Additionally, this funding will be used to identify key areas where artificial intelligence and automation can reduce staffing needs and risks to firefighters.

**DOI** - The President's budget request for DOI also provides increases totaling \$38 million for **wildfire preparedness**, including more funding for aviation contracts, uncrewed aerial systems, and incident support. These increases, together with the capacity increases included in the workforce reform proposal, will support the equivalent of 370 additional federal personnel for DOI, as well as the equivalent of 55 more Tribal personnel. In addition, the budget provides an increase of \$9 million for **fuels management** to go to tribal contract support and the Reserved Treaty Rights Lands program, which enhances the health and resiliency of tribal landscapes. The budget's funding for fuels management, in conjunction with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, will promote the treatment of over 2 million acres of hazardous fuels to reduce wildfire risk. This work will be done in collaboration with numerous stakeholders and partners.

For more information on the fiscal 2024 president's budget, visit [www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget](https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget).

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING of the SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOC of FORESTERS & FIRE WARDENS

Irvine, CA  
February 3, 2023

The meeting of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens was called to order by President Schwarm at 0900 hours at Irvine, California on February 3, 2023. A round of introductions were made. President Schwarm thanked Director Fetterman for making the arrangements for the meeting and dinner. Chief Dustin Gardner greeted the board and wished us well.

## **Officers and Directors Present:**

Curt Schwarm – President – Los Padres National Forest  
Dave Fowler – First Vice President – CAL FIRE – San Luis Obispo Co.  
Trevor Johnson – Second Vice President – Ventura County Fire Dept. (virtual)  
Phil Johnson – Treasurer – Orange County Fire Authority (ret)  
Tim Chavez – Secretary – CAL FIRE – Sacramento HQ  
Doug Lannon – CAL FIRE San Bernardino (ret) – Arrangements Chair  
Kevin Fetterman – Orange County Fire Department  
Chris Childers – Santa Barbara County Fire Dept.  
Troy Whitman – Southern California Edison  
Tim Dunfee – Angeles National Forest  
Brook Spelman – CAL FIRE – Southern Region  
Matt Ahearn – San Bernardino National Forest  
Don Forsyth – Orange County Fire Department (ret) – Safety Chair  
Andrew Kennison – Kern County Fire Dept.  
Jason McDermott – CAL FIRE Riverside County  
Nathan Judy – Cleveland National Forest

## **Officers and Directors Absent:**

Vacant – Los Angeles Fire Dept.  
Drew Smith – Los Angeles County Fire Dept.  
Josh Black – CAL FIRE – San Diego County  
Ed Shabro – Vendor Representative  
Dan Snow – San Bernardino National Forest (ret) – Liaison Chair  
Garrett Huff – Member – Santa Barbara County Fire Dept.  
Rusty McCulley – CAL FIRE – San Bernardino Co.  
Vacant – Sequoia National Forest

## **Guests:**

Mike Rhode – Orange County Fire (ret) – Life Member

## **Minutes:**

President Schwarm presented the minutes of the December meeting. Motion by Director Judy seconded by Chairman Forsyth, to approve the minutes. The motion was approved.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Treasurer Phil Johnson presented his report covering December 1, 2022 to February 3, 2023.

Balance as of December 1, 2022: \$50,306.03

### **RECEIPTS**

Dues and Conference Registration \$374.91

B of A Cash back \$642.72

**TOTAL: \$1,017.63**

### **DISBURSEMENTS**

Dan Snow \$28.25

Doug Lannon \$331.72

Pilgrim Pines Conference Deposit \$3,760.00

**TOTAL: \$4,119.97**

Balance on hand: \$46,828.78

Last year at this time: \$45,653.75

Notes: housekeeping/pending items SCE Grant applied for, Event Insurance, IRS Tax filing

Motion by Director Whitman, second by Chairman Forsyth to approve the Treasurer's report as presented.

The motion was approved.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Arrangements:**

Arrangements Chair Lannon reports: We have received new contracts for Pilgrim Pines/UCC. Days and schedule corrected. Phil and Doug have visited the new director and discussed the contract, meals, dates, parking, ABC Permit, etc. Gave a history of the Association and that we have been at Pilgrim Pines 42 years off and on. They are having some struggles with leaks in 17 cabins. No additional trees have fallen. The Oak Glen Steak House is back in business after the catastrophic debris flow that shut it down. The banquet room may be ready for the Directors Dinner. Luther Glen is again available for parking and lodging. Still need to arrange medic coverage from Yucaipa.

#### **Exhibits and Demonstrations:**

2nd VP Trevor Johnson reports: Progress moving along. If any members have apparatus or equipment to display let Trevor know as soon as possible. A letter will be sent to vendors soon, about 30. Discussed hats and stickers for giveaway. Need to set up Square for vendor registration.

#### **Registration and Membership:**

VP Fowler reports: Larry Kurtz will be available to help this year. Moving forward on a commercial off the shelf registration software program. A question about how to track meal numbers if we don't print the same sheet of cards. It is how we account and pay for meals. Suggested we just print a bunch of generic meal tickets, and everyone gets 4 when they register. Also discussed raffle tickets.

A motion was made to raise the registration fee \$5 to \$140. Motion was tabled until new business.

**Entertainment and Raffle:**

2nd VP Trevor Johnson dropped off, Director Spelman reported that he will be assisting with raffle. We will be sending out a business donation letter if anyone gets a donation. Suggestion to add a boot vendor to the vendors and advertise that custom boot fittings could be had at the conference. Entertainment is ready for Thursday night. Giveaways this year will be hat and sticker.

Motion by Chairman Forsyth to approve \$2750 for design and production. Second by VP Fowler. Motion passed. Also, must decide speaker gifts.

**Publicity:**

Price for conference is needed for advertisement. Megan Currier still has money left for social media ads.

**Historian:**

Director Whitman reported: Need to secure the Knot Head award. We know where it is we just need to get it from Director McCulley who has been on medical leave for a while. Troy reminded us that the award is presented by the President and should remain in possession of the VP after the scroll is signed at the conference.

**Safety:**

Safety Chair Forsyth reported that he will schedule the CHP/Sheriff officer to talk and reminded the Board that it is obligatory due to the insurance coverage. Talk will be scheduled for 1PM on Thursday, right after lunch.

**Golf:**

Director Spelman reported investigating several options and that the expense was too high for Top Golf. The Association may reinstitute the golf tournament in the future.

**Newsletter:**

Secretary Chavez asked if everyone liked the new newsletter format, thanked Megan Currier for the design and paste up work. Also, the new website should be ready soon.

**Program:**

See attached

**Old Business:**

Sec. Chavez reported that a bylaws call occurred and it was realized that the version of the Bylaws discussed was not the current version and the current version had most of the changes that were discussed already implemented. More to follow.

New nametags have been ordered.

If anyone needs the current Board member Polo shirt, contact Dan Snow as soon as possible.

The Gary Helming award will be discussed at the April meeting.

Board members were reminded that a sponsorship for each Board member to bring a new member to the conference remains in effect.



**Life Membership Recommendations:**

No life membership nominations. After the meeting it was discovered that Director Childers was retiring, and his name was nominated and approved by email vote.

**Gary Helming Award Nominations:**

**New Business:**

A motion is on the table for increasing conference fees. The motion was amended by Chairman Forsyth to increase conference fees \$5, making the total for conference and membership \$150. Vendors will be \$155 for first person and \$80 for second. Vote was 12 for and 4 against. Motion passed.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southern California Association of Foresters and Fire Wardens will be held in Pismo on April 7, 2023. Details to follow.

The meeting was adjourned at 1204.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Tim Chavez**  
Association Secretary

