
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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California Leads Western States in Forest Water Quality Protection

Sacramento – The Council of Western State Foresters is reporting that California is a leader in the use of best management practices for forest water quality protection.

“Well managed forests provide for the clean water necessary to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the watershed,” said Crawford Tuttle, Chief Deputy Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). “That is why CAL FIRE’s Forest Practice Program, which includes inspection, enforcement and monitoring, focuses on the ensuring the proper implementation of effective best management practices to protect water quality.”

The report, entitled “Forest Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Western States: A summary of approaches to water quality implementation and effectiveness monitoring,” is available on the Internet at www.wflccenter.org/news_pdf/240_pdf.pdf. The report summarizes what 17 western states are doing to protect water quality on private and state forest lands using best management practices and how each state is monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of those practices.

“In summary each of the states that have assessed implementation of BMPs (eight out of 17 states) indicated BMP compliance to be relatively high,” the report states. “The implementation rates ranged from 75% to 97%. Additionally, the states that conducted BMP effectiveness monitoring (nine out of 17) have shown that BMPs, when properly implemented, are effective in protecting water resources.”

California’s BMP implementation rate is among the highest of any of the western states, and its BMPs were found to be highly effective in protecting water quality based on two monitoring programs. Results of the Hillslope Monitoring Program and the Modified Completion Report Monitoring Program cited in the report are available on line at www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/ComboDocument_8_.pdf and www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/MCRFinal_Report_2006_07_7B.pdf.

California continues to innovate with the launch of a new pilot Interagency Mitigation Monitoring Program. The program specifically looks at watercourse crossings, a well-documented and potentially significant source of sediment pollution into streams.

Unlike many western states where BMPs are voluntary, California’s BMPs, which are part of the California Forest Practice Rules, are regulatory and can be enforced. CAL FIRE has approximately 70 Forest Practice Inspectors, who can apply enforcement where needed, including writing Notices of Violation and Citations (both criminal and civil).

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