

Weekly ReCAP for March 22, 2019

**Next CPC meeting April 1, 2019, 1:30 pm, Chesebrough Room,
Main Library, San Andreas**

REPEAT OF IMPORTANT NOTICE:

...Tim Laddish told me D1 Planning Commissioner Joe Bechelli will be leaving soon, and he's looking for someone to replace him to recommend to Supervisor Tofanelli before General Plan hearings start. They are concerned about who Tofanelli might pick otherwise. A D1 PC replacement will affect upcoming General Plan Update hearings and more. CPC members: Please think hard about anyone you know that lives in District 1--San Andreas, Wallace, Valley Springs town center, Gold Creek subdivision, most of La Contenta. Do you know anyone that is at least competent, shares at least some of our outlook on the county, and is willing to serve on the planning commission? This is important! Any ideas, volunteers, people you know...maybe YOU??? Please think hard, try to come up with names and ideas!

Colleen

Another repeat of an important message:

Director Maurer announced the Draft Housing Element would be posted today (March 15) and then public comment period begins. Public comments on the Draft Housing Element are due by May 14. Peter will be sending the HE to HCD on April 1 for a 60 day review, then the HE will come back for adoption hearings, probably in July. The Public Review Draft Housing Element is now posted. The link is at the bottom of [Housing Element](#) page: <https://planning.calaverasgov.us/Gen-Plan-Zoning/Housing-Element>

Sierra Nevada Film Festival

Saturday, March 30, 2019, Black Bart Playhouse, 580 S. Algiers Rd., Murphys

www.sierrsfilmfest.org

info@sierrafilmfest.org

April 20, 2019--The Calaveras Holistic Health Fair 2019 will be held on Saturday, April 20th from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Mountain Ranch Community Park in Mountain Ranch.

Home in Ashes, They're Forced to Fight for Share of PG&E Money - The New York Times

Employees, suppliers and bondholders all have claims against the utility in bankruptcy court, along with those counting on payouts over blazes started by the company's equipment.

www.nytimes.com

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/14/business/energy-environment/pge-bankruptcy-claims.html>

Iconic Forests Reaching Climate Tipping Points in American West, Study Finds

Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir forests are struggling to regrow after wildfires in parts of the West as temperatures rise and the air and soil become drier.

See insideclimateneews.org for complete article.

Calaveras Supervisors To Discuss Disaster Preparedness, Butte Fire Settlement Spending

[03/14/2019 3:35 pm PST](#)

Tori James, MML News Reporter

San Andreas, CA — A long-anticipated study session on emergency management and talk about how to use over \$20.2 million in wildfire settlement monies from PG&E looms large on the next Calaveras supes agenda.

Plans are for the board and county staff to spend significant time exchanging information and education regarding the county's emergency management structure and activities; also related projects focused on multi-agency coordination and fire preparedness efforts. Among the areas the session will pore over in detail is the current structure and function of county emergency management; how agencies coordinate to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters; also the funding and responsibilities of the Calaveras County Office of Emergency Services (OES). Collaborating agencies will also present on countywide fire preparedness efforts.

Another somewhat related focus for next Tuesday's meeting is a Butte Fire settlement funds discussion, during which the board will provide staff direction regarding appropriations of those funds for specific purposes. The deadly wildfire disaster that ignited Sept. 9, 2015 and claimed two lives, destroyed 548 residential structures, 368 non-residential structures, four commercial structures, and damaged an

additional 22 structures in Calaveras County. A total of 70,868 acres were burned, much of it private property. The determined ignition point was a falling tree making contact with a PG&E power line.

On July 20, 2018, Calaveras County filed a complaint against PG&E in the Superior Court of the State of California, County of Sacramento and entered into a settlement agreement and general release on Nov. 18. In it, PG&E agreed it would make a one-time payment to the county of \$25.4 million. On Dec. 14, after the payment of certain fees and expenses it incurred in connection with the settlement, the county received \$20,252,034.98.

Butte Fire Settlement Spending Possibilities

While the board has total discretion and can appropriate the funds as it chooses, staff recommendations specifically include not using them for activities that could incur ongoing costs for which funding sources are yet unidentified; new permanent staff positions; or programs that are primarily funded by state or federal sources.

Among a list of possible uses for the monies are to increase the General Fund Reserve; construction, renovation, and/or major improvements of county-owned facilities; acquire major capital assets to facilitate activities that are hampered because appropriate equipment is either unavailable or beyond its useful life.

The list also suggests emergency and fire preparedness related uses, such as: communications infrastructure that increases rapid response ability; training to improve future disaster response; improvements for temporary evacuation areas or facilities; improvements to roads damaged by the Butte Fire and/or potential primary evacuation routes; contributions to emergency partners that would improve their future emergency response.

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. in the supervisor's chambers at the county government center (891 Mountain Ranch Rd.).

Mother Lode tourism: Bass Pro-Am anglers spending hundreds of thousands of dollars

Guy McCarthy / Union Democrat / March 15, 2019

A bass-fishing tournament bringing well-heeled anglers from across the U.S. to New Melones later this month is already generating significant visitor spending in Angels Camp and Sonora, and some locals are calling it a boon to Mother Lode tourism.

It's called the Wild West Bass Trail Pro-Am at New Melones and tournament director Randy McBride says he expects 150 teams, with one professional and one amateur per boat, for the five-day event scheduled March 29-31.

Registration for the tournament is \$755 for pros and \$380 for amateur co-anglers, and Glory Hole Sports owner Gene Hildebrand estimates total entry fees for the event are already exceeding \$166,000.

A one-day Wild West Bass Trail California Team tournament in February at Don Pedro ended with winners Christian Ostrander and Kevin Nunes taking the top prize of \$8,670. Hildebrand estimates the winners' take at the New Melones Pro-Am will be up around \$20,000.

'All booked up'

McBride estimates each pair of anglers in the Wild West Bass Trail Pro-Am at New Melones will spend

up to \$300 a day on fuel, tackle, food and lodging, depending on where they stay.

“Some camp and sleep in their vehicles,” said McBride, who is based in Titusville, Florida, and spoke by phone Friday from Melbourne in the Sunshine State. “Some who like to fish more stay at campgrounds closer to the water. Others like to stay at the best hotels and enjoy themselves.”

Hildebrand said Friday some competitors for the Wild West Bass Trail Pro-Am at New Melones are already here in Calaveras and Tuolumne counties, fishing the reservoir to prepare for the competition.

“This event here is going to be huge for not only us,” Hildebrand said. “We’ll get great business from this, with 300 anglers plus their families. That equates to a lot of dollars spent in the community, at hotels, Save Mart, other businesses in town, restaurants, the RV park over on 49, Angels Camp RV park. They’re all booked up. These guys are going all the way into Sonora because there’s not enough lodging over in Angels Camp.”

Some guys bring their motorhomes to camp down at the reservoir and it’s going to generate cash flow down there, too, Hildebrand said. This is the largest event that’s come through town in the three years he’s been running Glory Hole Sports. A unique thing about it is that it will be a televised event, and the Wild West Bass Trail people have a big following, Hildebrand said.

McBride said previous Wild West Bass Trail events have been televised on the Pursuit Channel, which airs programming on cable carriers and focuses on hunting, fishing, shooting and outdoor recreation. Wild West Bass Trail promoters and competitors also have videos and channels on YouTube.

More can be done for visitors

A lot of bass-fishing competitors travel constantly on a professional circuit of tournaments, going state-to-state, reservoir-to-reservoir and lake-to-lake, Hildebrand said. They’re from all over the U.S.

“It’s one of the biggest things impacting this area in my mind,” Hildebrand said Friday. “But it seems like the community is not reaching out to these folks as much as they could, and I think we need to reach out and show support for all these visitors. Their entry fees alone are over \$166,000 just for them to fish the event.”

Hildebrand said he thinks there should be some incentives given to the guys running these events. Maybe some lodging or meals or something like that for the organizers because they bring so much business to the Mother Lode. Hildebrand also suggested visitors bureaus or chambers of commerce can build stronger relationships with local anglers clubs and with the organizers of these bigger tournaments.

Competitors who made video of their experiences at the Wild West Bass Trail Team Tournament at Don Pedro in February got up early and talked about how many fish and how big a bass they’d hope to catch to “get a check” at the end of the day. They spoke in hushed tones on their boat when they hooked lively fish, half-whispering, “Got one. Got one. It’s a good one, too. Depends how he’s hooked.”

At the end of the day the pair made video of their weigh-in with seven decent-size bass. They didn’t take home a winners’ check but they raved about the quality of the fishing at Don Pedro, and the opportunity to spend another day fishing, which they called “a blessing.”

Visitors bureaus

Lisa Boulton with the Calaveras County Visitors Bureau said Friday she wasn’t sure how often Wild West Bass Trail events have been staged at New Melones, but she is aware they do bass-fishing tournaments at other locations in the U.S.

Jennifer Lopez with the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau said the Tuolumne County Visitors Bureau sponsored a WWBT Pro-Am event at Don Pedro in March 2018.

Lopez said Wild West Bass Trail tournament officials did a basic economic impact report generated by surveying 210 participants during last year's event at Lake Don Pedro in 2018. She said the report indicated competitors stayed in Tuolumne and Stanislaus counties and they directly spent more than \$131,000 regionally on lodging and RV sites, meals, and miscellaneous expenses during the tournament, with a total of more than \$328,000 generated for the region.

Supervisors discuss Butte Fire Settlement spending priorities

- [By Davis Harper](#) / Calaveras Enterprise
- Mar 19, 2019

More than three years after the devastating Butte Fire ignited, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors are discussing allocations of settlement funds from Pacific Gas & Electric Co.

File photo

Near the conclusion of a nearly 11-hour meeting Tuesday, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously on a poll to bring back an action item on spending priorities for its \$25.4 million Butte Fire settlement from Pacific Gas & Electric Co. Tuesday.

PG&E was found to be responsible for starting the 2015 Butte Fire by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in April of 2016.

The 70,000-plus-acre wildland blaze ignited off of Butte Mountain Road in Amador County in early September of 2015, destroying 921 buildings and damaging several miles of road in District 2. In February of 2018, county supervisors voted unanimously to initiate litigation against PG&E to recover losses from the devastating 2015 Butte Fire, seeking more than \$167 million in damages. The claim included costs for “infrastructure damage, erosion control, and other costs related to the Butte fire,” according to PG&E’s SEC filing for the first quarter of 2018. Before the study session began, District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi handed out 50 copies of his proposal to the public and fellow board members detailing how he feels the settlement should be spent.

With more than \$20.2 million (after subtracting attorneys fees) at the board’s disposal, Garamendi proposed that nearly three-quarters of the settlement be allocated to Public Works for repairs on Butte Fire-damaged roads.

Public Works has been developing a three-year plan for spending \$14.6 million to “repave, improve and restore every road within the Butte Fire scarr to a condition at or better than it was prior to the fire,” Public Works Director Josh Pack told supervisors at the meeting.

In part, the work would be repairing ditches and culverts that became clogged with debris as a result of tree mortality and erosion from the Butte Fire, Pack said.

District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills expressed concern about the department’s capacity to fully utilize the \$14 million allocation.

Pack is slated to present next week on the roads in District 2 he is considering for repair with money

from the settlement.

As for the other designated funds under Garamendi's suggestions, \$2 million would be designated County Disaster Preparedness Funds to be used for equipment purchases by designated fire agencies, \$1 million would be allocated to the County Evacuation Center (Calaveras County Fairgrounds) to improve the septic system on the site and \$573,398 would be placed in the county General Fund to reimburse lost property taxes.

County Facilities, such as the West Point Community Hall and Sheep Ranch Fire Department would receive \$150,000, and non-county agencies would be able to apply for funds from a pool of \$950,000 for reimbursing expenses. Community organizations would be required to submit work proposals to the chief administrative officer.

Additionally, \$1 million would be held in reserve in anticipation of an audit on the county's spending of federal monies during the 2015 Butte Fire.

Auditor-Controller Rebecca Callen told the board in a meeting earlier this month that the county lacked proper documentation on how at least \$1 million in disaster recovery grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency was spent on tree and debris removals after the fire.

She anticipates the Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General to audit those expenditures within a year to five years after disaster recovery wraps up.

Supervisors agreed with the majority of Garamendi's recommendations "conceptually," but were apprehensive to break down numbers too specifically as part of the study session.

While largely in favor of the plan, District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper suggested that instead of allocating \$573,000 back to the General Fund that those monies instead be allocated to the seven fire districts outside the Butte Fire scar, which Garamendi was in agreement with.

"I do support everything here in one way or another," Stopper said. "They're all the right thing to do."

District 3 Supervisor Merita Callaway was in favor of the plan as well, with minor recommended changes, including reducing the limit for unused funds to return to the General Fund from five years to three. The board later voted 4 to 1 in a poll to make that change.

"In concept I really approve of this," Callaway said. "I've been evacuated twice. Mr. Garamendi, you did do a good job. (The Butte Fire) happened in District 2, and the settlement was for District 2, so I think that's where we should put the funds."

Mills said the only two suggestions on Garamendi's proposal he'd be "prepared to say yes or no to" during the study session were the allocations to Public Works and the Fairgrounds. The others, Mills said, should be brought up as separate agenda items at a later date.

"Those are two that I think would be fairly simple to move forward considering the amount of effort that's been put into them. This entire county was affected by the Butte Fire. To do it in this manner, I'm not happy with it at all," Mills said.

Multiple District 2 community members and Butte Fire victims expressed approval of Garamendi's proposal in public comment, especially with regard to the allocations to Public Works for road repairs.

District 2 resident Pat McGreevy suggested leaving a portion of the money in a rainy day fund for matching Federal Emergency Management Agency distributions for emergency preparedness work.

While in favor of the proposal, District 2 resident Marti Crane mentioned reforesting burnt areas with fire-resistant trees as another potential use of settlement funds.

Jodine Mills, a local real estate broker in District 2, said restoring the roads in the fire zone would help

encourage people back into the area to look at buying a home.

The board will vote on an action item in April to determine allocations based on Garamendi's proposal, Garamendi told the Enterprise in a phone interview after the meeting Tuesday.

"We will come back (in April) and we will negotiate," Garamendi said. "My suggestions were a starting point for a conversation to help guide us forward, and we will use that framework to cut a deal."

Butte Fire burn supervisor, survivors, residents say spend \$20M PG&E settlement in scar

Guy McCarthy / Union Democrat / March 19, 2019

People who survived the Butte Fire that burned 110 square miles of central Calaveras County in September 2015 lined up Tuesday afternoon to tell their elected Board of Supervisors what to do with the \$20 million settlement paid by Pacific Gas & Electric, the utility giant held accountable by Cal Fire for sparking the costliest disaster in the county's modern history.

"We lost everything, our home, our property, the forest," one woman told the board in San Andreas. "We've come back and rebuilt and moved back in November 2016."

"We need to rebuild roads in the area," a real estate agent said. "If we can get the roads fixed I can encourage people to move up there."

"Catastrophic firestorms, like the Butte Fire, we have to be proactive now in this age of firestorms," said Pat Guttman of Mokelumne Hill. "I recommend a large part of the Butte Fire settlement should be spent on equipment for our local fire departments. At least two new fire rigs to remain the county during mutual aid situations. Portable fire hydrants and hoses to extend our water supply into the wildland."

She said it's vital to be proactive, to beef up at the front end so the county respond immediately to small fires and prevent the firestorms and fire-nadoes, put them out before they burn up the whole county.

Others spoke about needs for the Mountain Ranch Youth Alliance Resource Center, and the Mountain Ranch Food Pantry. District 2 took the brunt of the Butte Fire and one of the hardest hit communities was Mountain Ranch, a Youth Alliance and Food Pantry representative said. People there fought on their own to save the heart of Calaveras County and the community has a reputation for being self sufficient.

"We could use funds to make all our restrooms ADA compliant and for backup power facilities for future disasters," she said.

Lynn Darnsted, director of the Mountain Ranch Food Pantry, said the organization is self sufficient funded by donations.

Damaged roads

Earlier in the day, workers were burning more Butte Fire-killed trees on private property off Mountain Ranch Road near Rail Road Flat Road. A section of Rail Road Flat Road was coned along its edge with

a clutter of Butte Fire-killed trees debris that rolled down across the road in recent storms.

Further out in the Butte Fire burn scar, potholes pocked Whiskey Slide Road and West Murray Creek Road, which turned to single lane pavement in sections. Further out in the burn scar still, two Cal Fire workers used six tripods and surveying equipment next to Doster Road, another narrow, pot-holed, deteriorating road with blackened Butte Fire-killed trees on both sides. They declined to say what they were surveying.

County administrators said the Cal Fire workers were contracted with Cal OSHA to investigate the death of a county worker Monday at a tree removal work site there on Doster Road in the Butte Fire scar.

‘Call to action’

District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi appealed to his constituents in Butte Fire-impacted communities to come to Tuesday’ meeting to have their say on how the PG&E settlement funds should be used.

“It is critically important for members of our community to speak up during public comment to explain why the settlement funds should be used for finishing repairs on the roads and county infrastructure that were damaged by the Butte Fire as well as prevent future fires and promote community resiliency,” Garamendi said in a social media post earlier this week.

Garamendi also put together a five-page memo proposing how to best spend the \$20 million settlement. An itemized list set aside \$14.6 million for road repairs in the Butte Fire scar, and \$1 million to be held for final federal and state reviews and audits.

He said he created the document as a straw man, a conversation-starter, a first step. “you have my opinion, it’s in front of you,” Garamendi said.

District 5 Supervisor Ben Stopper asked about “possible funds we have to pay back to FEMA, I’d like to hear more about that before we move forward on this.”

Rebecca Callen, the county auditor-controller reiterated what she told the Board of Supervisors in late February, that Calaveras County owes the Federal Emergency Management Agency \$1 million or more in disaster recovery grant funding for the 2015 Butte Fire due to bad record-keeping.

The Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General will likely audit the county’s spending for tree and debris removal, Callen told the Board of Supervisors in February. On Tuesday she said the county should be prepared to pay FEMA a million dollars minimum. She said she doesn’t have a crystal ball and she couldn’t predict how much the maximum the county could have to return to FEMA might be.

Garamendi asked about unreimbursed county expenditures during the Butte Fire and Callen focused on estimated expenditures of \$400,000 to \$500,000 spent from the General Fund by the Sheriff’s Office, funds that were not tracked closely because there was no hope of reimbursement.

District 2 Supervisor Dennis Mills asked how much interest the county was making off the Butte Fire settlement, and Callen estimated probably about \$350,000 annually, maybe \$80,000 per quarter net.

Joshua Pack, the county director of public works and transportation, tried to explain to the board why it will take about \$14.6 million to improve and repair all roads damaged in the Butte Fire scar.

“We need that to pave, repave and improve every road to the same condition or better than it was before the fire,” Pack said. “Improving ditches, we need sizable investment in construction to help improve those roads, over a three-year period. The total includes equipment and seasonal employees.

Pack said the \$14.6 million estimate does not include significant widening of the roads network or

work on private property. It does include vegetation and tree removal on public property. The priority will be on primary roads and heavy traffic roads, and transition to lower volume roads over the three-year period.

District 3 Supervisor Merita Callaway asked if the \$14.6 million would all be out-of-pocket from the county roads department, and Pack said yes, his plan assumes no reimbursement.

“A lot roads are destroyed and we’re talking about pulverizing the asphalt and putting in new road surfaces,” Pack said. “Impacts of the fire continue today, a lot of the flooding we’ve seen are the results of tree mortality and the Butte Fire. A road is three-dimensional, the road surface, culverts and ditches. We continue to have issues today with debris coming down off hills in these storms and blocking ditches and culverts. This will continue to happen for years.”

Manuel Lopez, the county’s interim administrative officer, told the board before their discussion he and other county staff need direction from the board on how to spend the Butte Fire settlement.

He summarized the background: On Sept. 9, 2015, the Butte Fire ignited and burned in Amador and Calaveras counties.

“The advent of the Butte Fire is without a doubt the most significant and catastrophic event in recent memory for the populace of Calaveras County,” Lopez said

The Butte Fire destroyed 548 residential structures, 368 non-residential structures, 4 commercial structures, and damaged an additional 22 structures, Lopez said, but he did not mention two civilians who died in the Butte Fire. A total of 70,868 acres burned with much of that land being private property.

In February 2018, Calaveras County filed a complaint against PG&E in Superior Court, Lopez said. In November 2018, Calaveras County and PG&E made a settlement agreement in which PG&E paid the county \$25.4 million in exchange for dismissal of the complaint. In addition, the county and PG&E released each other from any other claims or liability stemming from the Butte Fire.

In December 2018, after payment of attorneys’ fees and legal fees and expenses incurred in connection with the settlement, the county received \$20,252,034.98 from PG&E, Lopez said.

The settlement funds are non-recurring, one-time funds over which the Board of Supervisors has total discretion and can appropriate the funds as it chooses. In effect, the settlement funds can be considered General Purpose Revenue, Lopez said.

California National Guard Troops Reassigned To Fire Prevention

[03/20/2019 11:16 am PST](#)

BJ Hansen, MML News Director

Sacramento, CA — Next month 110 California National Guard troops will receive 11 days of training to help assist with fire prevention efforts, like thinning trees and brush.

The Associated Press reports that it will include work with shovels, rakes and chainsaws. At the direction of Governor Gavin Newsom, the 110 troops, who were previously assigned to President Donald Trump’s border protection efforts, are shifting over to fire protection. The troops will be

educated as to why the projects are being done, and how to do the work.

The troops will be divided into five teams that will go around the state to help with forest management efforts. [We reported last month](#) that CAL Fire released a list of 35 projects in the state that are ready to begin immediately.

Disaster preparedness topic of supervisors' meeting

- [By Davis Harper](#) / Calaveras Enterprise
- Mar 21, 2019

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors heard from county department heads and fire district chiefs, as well as officials with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and Sierra Pacific Industries during a study session on emergency preparedness Tuesday.

Michelle Patterson, the Office of Emergency Services director, discussed coordinating mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts during disasters, with an emphasis on staff training and partnerships with volunteer organizations.

We “utilize mutual aid resources to accomplish whatever the needs are,” Patterson told the board.

The National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), which just recently formed a chapter in the Central Sierra Region, assists the county in disaster response with supplemental coordinating services.

The consortium includes “faith-based, community-based and other nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and encompasses volunteers with unique skills and a resourceful spirit,” according to Jeane Kennedy, treasurer for Calaveras Animal Disaster Services, one of the group’s member organizations.

“It is an organization of organizations – an association that draws together all of the players to one table so they are ready to go to work as needed by our partners like OES, fire and police,” Rob Bline, a pastor in Burson and founder of the Central Sierra VOAD, told supervisors at the meeting. “We vet our partners, train and coordinate with OES to help provide services that are needed. With a VOAD in the area, you make one phone call and we tell you who’s ready to go.”

Pointing out that “We did not have an organized response” to the 2015 Butte Fire (in terms of volunteer organizations), Bline said VOAD can help filter volunteers into the right places during an emergency, and manage donations, among a number of other services.

Patterson stressed that individuals, households, families and neighborhoods “need to embrace what preparedness is for them,” and can’t rely solely on a government “top-down” emergency management approach. In some cases, that could mean proactively evacuating if a household appears in danger of a fire, even before county staff “knocks on the door” to issue an evacuation order, Patterson said.

Public Works Director Josh Pack presented to the board on the difficulties in establishing evacuation routes with over 1,800 miles of unregulated private roads throughout the county.

“The county does not have jurisdictional authority over private roads, and no way to ensure that these are adequately maintained,” Pack said.

A significant number of those roads don't meet fire safety standards (10-foot wide lanes with one-foot shoulders), according to Pack.

Pack said creating and maintaining new roads or acquiring access rights would be costly, time-consuming and overall difficult to achieve in a rural county where residents are particularly defensive of their property rights.

"A move to improve secondary access would be a profound shift in previous policy and have a significant impact on residential quality," Pack's Powerpoint presentation read.

Pack said he anticipated a road-widening project could cost about \$1 million per mile or more.

Representing the County Fire Chiefs' Association, Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District Chief Rich Dickinson stressed the importance of establishing fire ordinances to enforce and encourage residents to reduce fuel loads on their properties.

Ebbetts Pass Fire Protection District already has an ordinance, and the Murphys Fire Protection District just received approval for one, Dickinson said, adding that he's been working with County Counsel to draft an ordinance for the Calaveras Consolidated Fire District.

"Without this ordinance I don't have any teeth," Dickinson said, holding up a document. "Most people want to do the right thing. They just need a roadmap for how to do it."

Dickinson and supervisors discussed establishing a county fire marshal as well for enhanced enforcement of fire code.

Adam Frese, a unit forester with Cal Fire, discussed how a resident can prepare for a wildfire, with an emphasis on defensible space.

Frese emphasized the importance of fuel breaks in wildfire preparedness, highlighting the work of the Calaveras Foothills Fire Safe Council, a volunteer group that's "been tremendously active (and) aggressively going after grants for fuel reduction projects."

Pat McGreevy, a grant writer for the Calaveras-Amador Forestry Team, presented on the group's work securing grants for fuels reduction projects on Bureau of Land Management land in District 2.

McGreevy said there are currently about \$5 million in fuel reduction projects in the county.

After the presentation, District 3 Supervisor Merita Callaway asked McGreevy whether a county-hired grant writer could perform such a role and earn their salary entirely off of the grant.

If the county were to be the fiscal agent for grant applications, it would receive 10 percent of whatever the grant brings in, according to McGreevy.

"You could hire two grant writers out of that 10 percent," McGreevy said.

Tim Tate, area manager for SPI, told the board about the company's fuel reduction efforts, championing "industrial forest management to limit losses from large fires."

Tate expressed concerns with the California spotted owl potentially becoming listed as an endangered species, as it would present roadblocks on the company's operations.

Tate said the owl is up for a listing decision this fall.

"The greatest threat to this species is severe fires," Tate said, with reference to the 2014 King Fire in El Dorado County, which destroyed 27 of the birds' territories, according to Tate. "If you think we're constrained by what we do in the woods with a bird not yet listed, when they list this bird, fuels

treatments will basically grind to a halt out there.”

PG&E spokesman Dylan George presented on the utility’s enhanced wildfire protection plan, which seeks to expand vegetation management around power lines and shut off power to more customers during extreme weather events.
