

FEATHER RIVER AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM
December 7, 2020

TO: FRAQMD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: Christopher D. Brown, AICP, APCO

SUBJECT: Karla Sanders and Jason Branz ARB Presentation for Prescribed Fire Information Reporting System (PFIRS).

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an “Informational Only” Item

BACKGROUND:

This is specific information regarding the ARB project for the Prescribed Fire Information System or PFIRS. PFIRS is a joint project of the California Air Resources Board, federal land management agencies, local air districts, and various fire agencies including Cal Fire. The online database is meant for the sharing of information for our prescribed fire burners for forest management or wildland vegetation management.

The District manages and administers the open burning program for Yuba And Sutter counties. A portion of Yuba County has federal and state responsibility areas for open burning. We work closely with these agencies to provide the best possible care for our citizens.

Open burning consists of three major program areas; agricultural burning, non-agricultural burning, and residential burning. Since we are discussing PFIRS, this discussion is primarily focused on the agricultural burning as forest and wildland management are components of agricultural burning. Agricultural burning is defined as the use of open outdoor fires for the purpose of: Disposal of Agricultural Waste from agricultural operations; Forest Management Burning; Range Improvement Burning; Improvement of Land for Wildlife Habitat; Disease or Pest Prevention; Wildland Vegetative Management Burning and fires used for maintenance of a system for delivery of water for agricultural purposes.

The District issues about 1,000 burn permits annually with about 11 forest management and wildland vegetation management permits. Except for forest and wildland vegetation burning, most burns on the valley floor are covered by the Sacramento Valley Smoke Management Plan (SMP) depending on the elevation. This plan is issued for the Sacramento Valley by the Basin Control Council.

The Sacramento Valley Basinwide Air Pollution Control Council (BCC) consists of an elected official of, and designated by, the air pollution control district governing board of each district within the Sacramento Valley Air Basin.

Following these guidelines, the District rules specify that a smoke management plan is required for any forest or wildland management project located below 1000 feet elevation regardless of size. Above 1000 feet elevations a SMP is required for any project greater than 10 acres.

Most of our SMP's with the forest burners permits are entered into PFIRS but not all of them. We still allow manual and hard copy submittals from burners who either don't have internet access or can't afford computers.

Jason Branz of ARB will be showing the PFIRS system for the entering and approving process of the SMP's, a discussion on the effectiveness of the approval process and more specific information on the how the system works.