



# The California Firewood Task Force: A collaborative outreach effort to protect California's trees

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To protect California's forest and urban trees from damaging pests that may be moved on firewood, UC ANR is part of the interagency California Firewood Task Force. Our main goal is to educate the public on the risks that firewood movement poses to trees through a variety of media, including a website, youth activities, posters, and other outreach materials. This work is directly related to the Endemic and Invasive Pests and Diseases (EIPD) Strategic Initiative in its use of science-based information to support exclusion strategies and policy, and efforts to increase the knowledge of invasion biology to better intervene in new pest introductions.

## About the Task Force

The California Firewood Task Force came about through a resolution passed by the California Forest Pest Council in November 2010. Pests such as the Asian longhorned beetle and emerald ash borer are established in other states and would cause great harm if they became established in California. The gold spotted oak borer, sudden oak death and pitch canker are invasive pests that are established in parts of California and would cause additional harm if they became established in other parts of the state. Resource management professionals and scientists recognize that transport of firewood is one of the principal means by which many invasive pests are spread from one area to another. The Pest Council resolution highlighted this threat and called for the formation of a California-wide task force to address the issue. Organization of the Task Force began in January 2011 and its first meeting was held a month later. The Task Force is an "outreach partnership" supported by numerous agencies and organizations that promotes its Mission.



The goldspotted oak borer

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## ANR's Role

UC ANR academics and staff have participated in the Task Force from its first meeting. Current representation is provided by the UC IPM (Mary Louise Flint) and Cooperative Extension (Janice Alexander) programs. With support from a federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant, Cooperative Extension was able to provide additional firewood outreach support from 2010-2012. With the ending of that grant, the Task Force opted to create its own contract with UCCE for consistent support of its outreach campaigns.

### Our Mission

The California Firewood Task Force initiates and facilitates efforts within the state to protect our native and urban forests from invasive pests that can be moved on firewood.

This is accomplished by:

- Engaging concerned stakeholders
- Synthesizing, evaluating and publicizing relevant information
- Developing and publicizing appropriate outreach materials and best management practices
- Identifying and supporting appropriate research, management, and educational programs
- Coordinating with similar efforts in other states and at the national level

## Outreach Activities and Materials

### How to Get Involved!

We need your help to reach the public and keep firewood from spreading pests. Join us by including firewood messaging in your public presentations, posting materials at your office and handing them out at events, and inviting colleagues and partners to join the effort. Free outreach materials are available by contacting Janice Alexander.



A California Agriculture article about firewood outreach



The website of the California Firewood Task Force, firewood.ca.gov

**General Outreach:** The primary focus of the statewide public outreach campaign has been campers and other outdoor recreationalists. In the summers of 2011 and 2012, Task Force members and partners distributed posters with the "Buy It Where You Burn It" message to campgrounds around California. In 2012, we increased our exposure with the purchase of 9 billboards on major travel routes. In addition, we have appeared at the California State Fair and other large outreach events.

**Multimedia:** The firewood.ca.gov website, hosted by CDFA and managed by UCCE, was created soon after the formation of the Task Force. It acts as a central point for the outreach campaign as well as providing other online-only resources. Multiple videos are linked to our website, including video Public Service Announcements produced by CDFA and Marin County.

**Youth Activities:** In 2011, we developed a youth activity - a Firewood Pest Passport - to present at events like the Marin County Farm Day and the San Diego Insect Fair. We also adapted the activity to an online game that is linked on our website.

**Giveaways:** When we are able to deliver our message in person, we often leave the audience with a small token branded with our message. These have ranged from decks of playing cards to temporary tattoos to lip balm. We also have a small, postcard-sized handout for the public to take away.



The standard campground poster from the 2012 outreach campaign



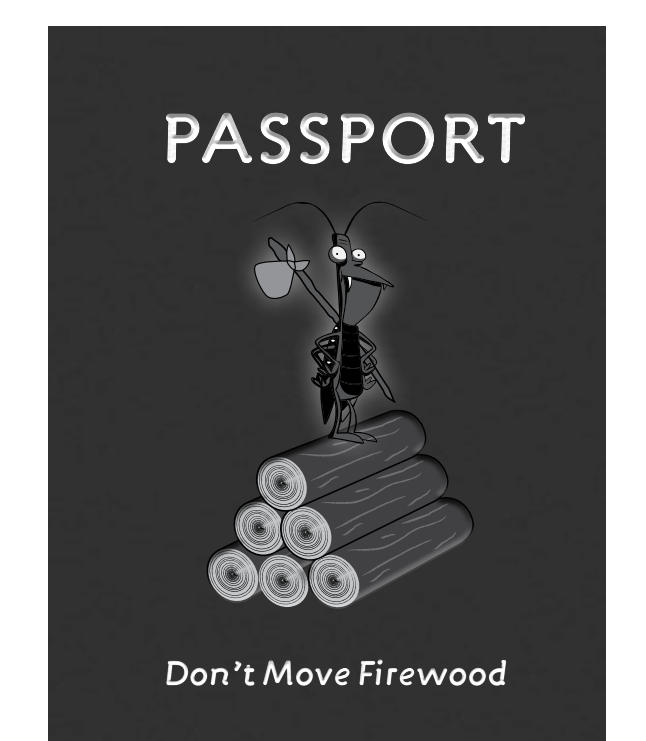
Playing cards



Temporary tattoos



Postcard-sized handout



Firewood Pest Passport