

2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT



FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
CAREER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program is to increase recruitment and retention of early-career forestry professionals by: pairing university and community college students with a professional mentor, providing networking and training opportunities, and offering insight into a forestry career.

The Program recognizes that a diverse and expanded workforce is essential to addressing current and future challenges facing the field. We encourage support for underrepresented groups in the profession, including women, Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and LGBTQIA+ by: providing training on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) for participants, pairing participants based on shared professional interests and identity (when requested), and highlighting the diversity of identities and specialties that exist within the field of forestry.

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Liana Vitousek at liana@placerrcd.org. The application period begins in late August.

Please visit placerrcd.org/mentorship for more information.



CALIFORNIA
LICENSED
FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION



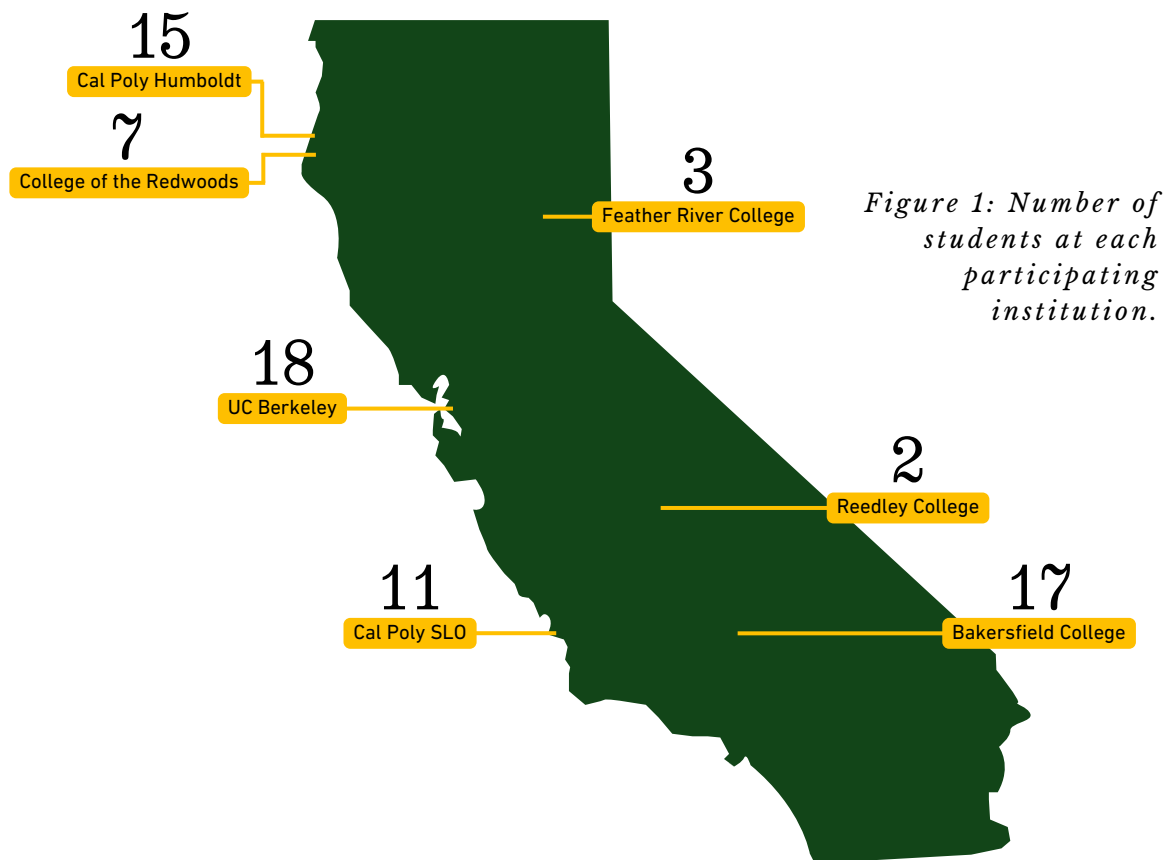
California Women
in Timber



Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants, with support from above organizations.

OVERVIEW

In the 25-26 academic year, the Program served 73 students from 7 community colleges and universities throughout California (Figure 1). These students were mentored by 56 mentors from various forestry and natural resource-related sectors (Figure 2).



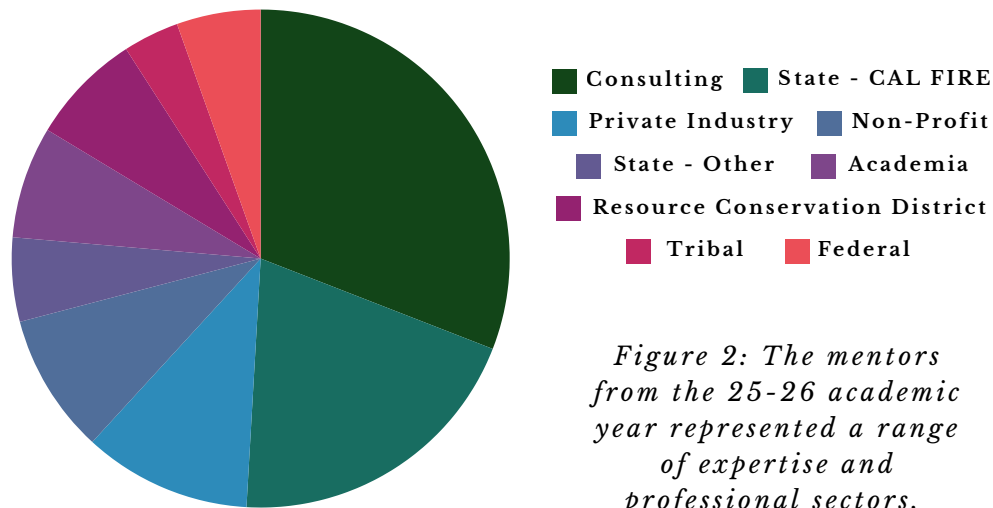


Figure 2: The mentors from the 25-26 academic year represented a range of expertise and professional sectors.

63% of pairs met once per month or more, and used their time to discuss job boards and employment opportunities, expectations of a forestry professional, resume and job searches, RPF licensing, and more (Figure 3).

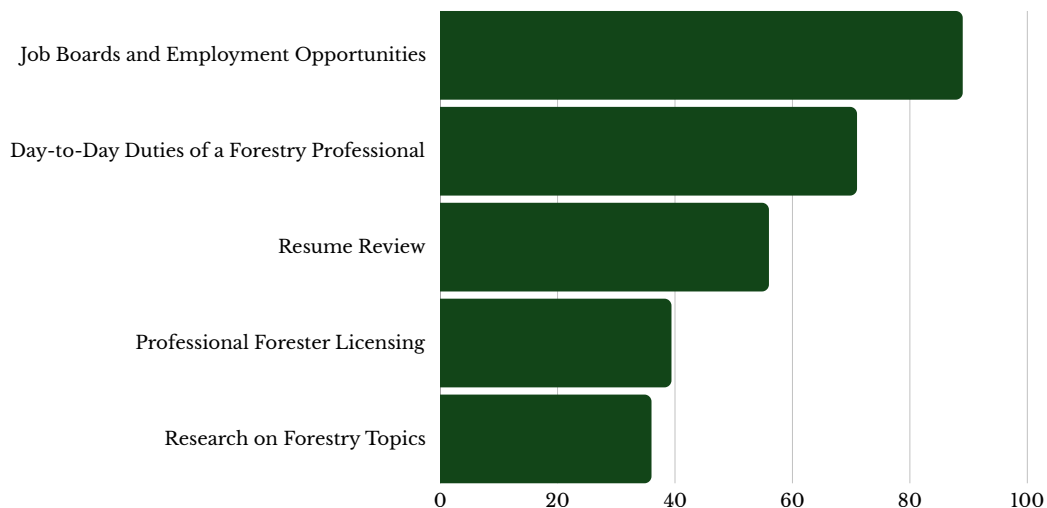
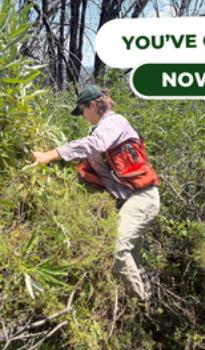


Figure 3: During the 25-26 end of year survey, mentors and mentees were asked what topics of discussion they engaged in, and were given a list of options, with the five most common topics shown here

PROGRAMMING

The Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program provided 12 unique opportunities for mentors and mentees to meet, expand their understanding of forestry and natural resources careers, and for students to enhance their professional development skills. This year, the Program offered three distinct trainings to amplify mentors' and mentees' understanding of the diversity and complexity of the forestry field.



**YOU'VE GOT THE JOB...
NOW WHAT?!**

Robert Aguero
RPF, Senior Environmental Specialist

Camila Quintana Del Caprio
RPF, Forestry & Natural Resources Advisor

John LeBlanc
Registered Professional Forester

JOIN US FOR A PANEL AND LEARN ALL ABOUT BENEFITS, POTENTIAL PERKS, AND WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE STARTING YOUR CAREER IN FORESTRY!

Monday, Feb 9th
3:30pm - 5:00pm
Hosted by UCCE & FMP

REGISTER HERE



WORKING WITH WILDFIRE-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES

Zoom Training

Saturday,
April 18th
9:00 - 2:00

Join the Forestry and Natural Resources Career Mentorship Program and UCCE to learn how to better work with communities that have been impacted by wildfire. Whether your focus is initial response, recovery, or restoration, this training offers practical tools for approaching trauma and taking care of oneself and one's community.

REGISTER to ATTEND



BECOMING A REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL FORESTER
An Interactive Career Panel

Learn about the career journeys and experiences of three RPFs, and understand what it takes to become one yourself!

THURSDAY, December 4th
AT 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

REGISTER NOW

RPF PROCESS

DAN STAPLETON
Assistant Executive Officer,
Foresters Licensing

PANELISTS

STACY STANISH
State Forestry Research Coordinator

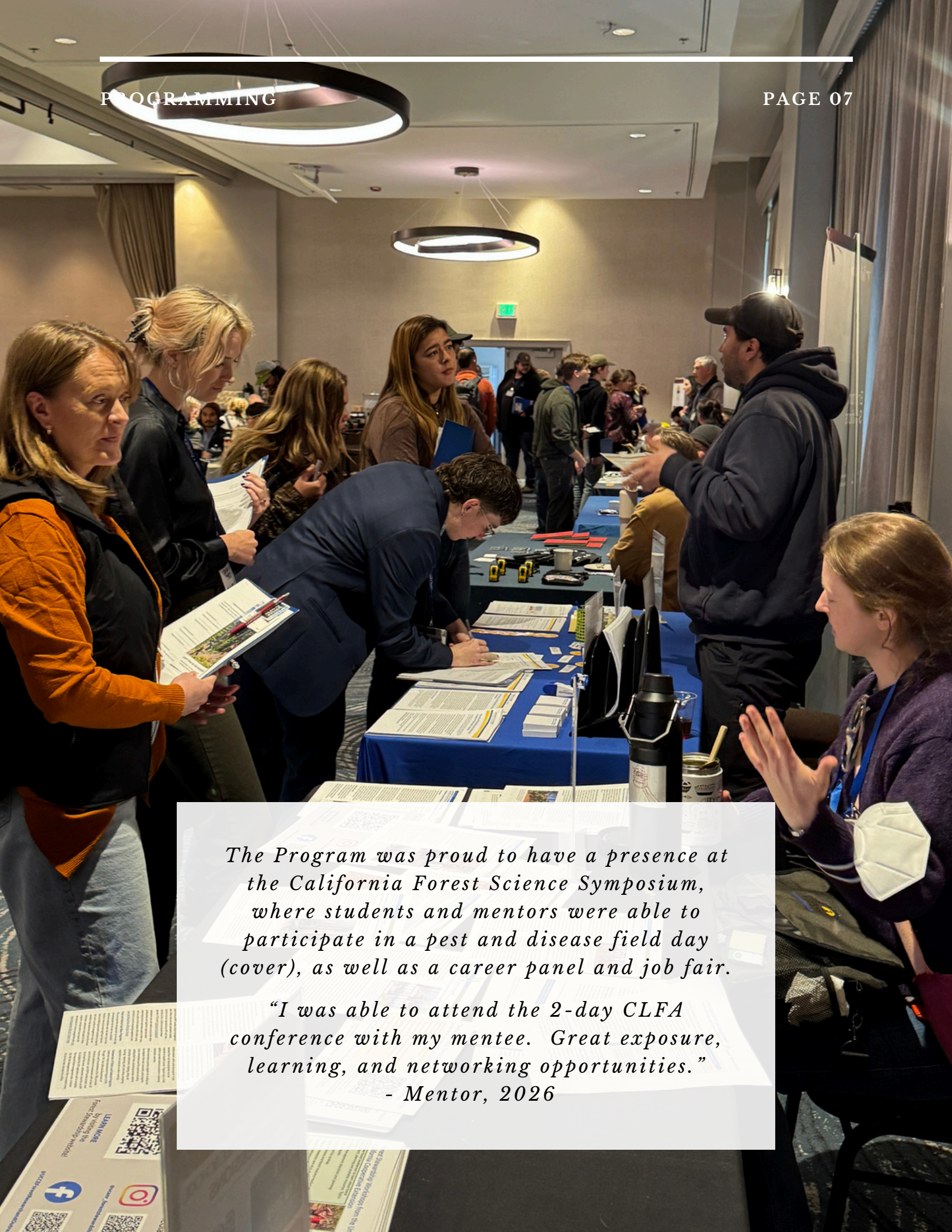
ANNE FEHSENBACH
Engineering Geologist

ELLIOTT VANDER KOLK
Wildfire and Forest
Resilience Program Manager

Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Forestry and Wildlife Development Grants. The program is subject to state and federal funding and availability in the program.

NOV 2025	Program Kickoff Meeting Job Applications and Interviews Workshop
DEC 2025	Career Panel: Becoming a Registered Professional Forester
JAN 2026	Going Beyond Land Acknowledgements Mid-Year Mentor Check-In
FEB 2026	Open House So You've Got the Job... Now What?! LGBTQIA in the Forestry Field California Forest Science Symposium Career Panel & Job Fair
APR 2026	Working with Communities Impacted by Wildfire
MAY 2026	Preparing for Your First Field Job





The Program was proud to have a presence at the California Forest Science Symposium, where students and mentors were able to participate in a pest and disease field day (cover), as well as a career panel and job fair.

"I was able to attend the 2-day CLFA conference with my mentee. Great exposure, learning, and networking opportunities."

- Mentor, 2026

SUCCESES

Mentees surveyed at the end of the 25-26 academic year reported an enhanced sense of belonging in the forestry community, as well as increased confidence that forestry was the right career path for them.

Mentees also shared that their mentors supported them by being available, responsive, and willing to listen, as well as by providing in-depth career and job-search support.



“My perspective has changed a lot; I am considering going to Humboldt or SLO after getting my Associate's. I would also like to become an RPF in the future. At the beginning of the program, all I knew was, "I don't want to be a barista forever; I want to be in Forestry.”

- *Mentee, 2026*

“My mentor helped me with my application materials, and I got a job at NCRM. My previous mentor works there, and I think knowing her and having done a field day with her previously helped me get the job.”

- *Mentee, 2026*

“I feel like talking to my mentor brought me more clarity and reaffirmed my decision to get involved in forestry. Originally I was a bit worried that my degree might be a little too niche, but I learned that the field is very versatile and has a lot of opportunities.”

- *Mentee, 2026*

“Ultimately, my mentee received two job offers, which we discussed prior to them accepting one of the positions. I think this is a great outcome for a graduating student to know they have work ready for them out of school, which will immediately start providing real-world experience in a forested setting.”

- *Mentor, 2026*

BY THE NUMBERS

\$14,600

REIMBURSED
TO STUDENTS
AND MENTORS
FOR TRAVEL &
EVENTS

\$3,300

TO WORKSHOP
HOSTS AND
GUEST
SPEAKERS

\$7,080

SPENT ON
FORESTRY
SUPPLIES FOR
PARTICIPATING
SCHOOLS

In addition to supporting the Program Manager's salary and travel, as well as Placer RCD's Administrative costs, funding for the Program directly supports events and networking opportunities, student and mentor travel and training, and honoraria and payments for workshop hosts and guest speakers. In 2026, funds also went toward developing forestry gear closets for participating institutions.



The Program Manager, Chair, and Steering Committee are honored to leverage Program funding for the development of forestry professionals throughout California.

You can support us in our mission to develop forestry skills and professional literacy in early career professionals by donating to our Program or serving as a Mentor. We hope to offer this Program for many years to come.

Help us invest in our future foresters: donate today!

Donations via check may be written to the Placer Resource Conservation District with "Forestry Mentorship Program" in the memo line.

Attn: Liana Vitousek • Placer RCD • 11641 Blocker Drive
• Auburn, CA 95603

Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Business and Workforce Development Grants.

The organizations below contributed funding and fiscal sponsorship to the Program.



2025-2026 STEERING COMMITTEE

Allison Erny, Mason, Bruce & Girard
Ashton Ferry, Student Representative
Cameron Musser, Sierra Cascade Land Stewards
Christie Pollet-Young, SCS Global Services
Cole Humphrey, California Licensed Foresters Association
Corrie Munger, UC Berkeley
Henry Herrera, CAL FIRE
Joseph King, Sierra Pacific Industries
Renaldo Arroyo, Bakersfield College
Ricky Satomi, UC Cooperative Extension

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES

Cal Poly Humboldt
Faculty Representative: **Erin Kelly**
Cal Poly SLO
Faculty Representative: **Lilli Kaarakka**
Bakersfield College
Faculty Representative: **Renaldo Arroyo**
UC Berkeley
Faculty Representative: **Rachelle Hedges**
Reedley College
Faculty Representative: **Kayla Rodriguez**
College of the Redwoods
Faculty Representative: **Valerie Elder**
Shasta College
Faculty Representative: **Melissa Markee**



THANK YOU



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