

Transporting firewood could mean moving invasive species

As part of a nationwide effort to encourage the public to buy and burn firewood locally, CalFire and the California Firewood Task Force kicked off a public outreach campaign this fall to inform campers, wood cutters, arborists, and the general public about the risks of long-distance movement of firewood.



“Firewood can carry insects and pathogens that may or may not be visible, making it impossible to know if you are transporting an invasive pest from one location to another when moving it,” CalFire’s Don Owen, chair of the California Firewood Task Force, said in a statement. “Once an invasive species is established in a new area, it can do a lot of damage environmentally and economically as the trees in those areas have no natural defenses to fight off pest attack.”

The multi-pronged campaign includes surveying camper knowledge about invasive species and firewood in areas affected by the goldspotted oak borer (an invasive beetle in San Diego County likely brought into the state on firewood), providing firewood posters to campgrounds and parks for posting in public locations, mailing information to industry professionals, and offering educational Frisbees and playing cards to campers as a way to facilitate one on one interaction with campers while also providing them with useful information.

“As we increasingly become a global community, the movement of invasive pests and pathogens is becoming more frequent. Buying and burning wood locally is a simple way to help minimize the chances of spreading invasive species, and it is something everyone can do with little impact,” Owen said. “The feedback gathered through the surveys will be useful for developing our

long-term outreach campaign, helping us ensure that we reach out to our audience as effectively as possible.”