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SNC, USFS launch Watershed Improvement Program in response to ongoing risks

SACRAMENTO, CA, March 5, 2015 -- The [Sierra Nevada](#) Region is the source of more than 60 percent of California's water supply. It provides drinking water for 23 million people and irrigation water to the nation's most fertile agricultural land. Climate change, damaging forest fires and [ongoing drought](#) are placing this important region at risk, and the impacts to water, forests, agriculture, public health, energy, and safety are great.

In response to these challenges, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), in partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS), has officially announced the launch of the Sierra Nevada [Watershed Improvement Program](#) (WIP). The WIP is a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program to restore the health of California's primary watershed through increased investment and needed policy changes.

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"California's Sierra Nevada forests and watersheds are at a critical point. Failure to understand the urgency of the situation will have devastating impacts on California's economy, [water supply](#) and air quality," said Jim Branham, SNC executive officer. "Decades of fire suppression, a changing climate and a shortage of forest restoration efforts have led to unhealthy conditions in many Sierra forests -- the region where the majority of our state's [drinking water](#) originates."

The WIP is a large-scale watershed restoration program designed to address a variety of ecosystem health issues in the Sierra Nevada. Restoring streams and meadows, improving habitat conditions, preserving working landscapes, restoring forest health, and improving local socio-economic conditions will be key outcomes of the WIP. Because forests link all of these issues, they are the first area of focus for the program.

See also:

["First USDA forecast reveals normal water supply for much of West"](#)

["New California Water Action Plan outlines state's future water goals"](#)

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