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## Sierra Nevada Forests and Community Action Plan

This Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Action Plan is intended to address key issues and impediments affecting the successful achievement of increased forest resiliency through restoration in the Sierra Nevada Region.  The key objectives of the plan are:

- Increase state and federal investment in forest restoration activities;
- Address state and federal policy issues that affect increasing pace and scale of forest restoration;
- Develop new wood and biomass processing facilities in the Region, while supporting those currently in operation; and,
- Secure investment from downstream beneficiaries.

Because federally managed lands comprise more than half of the forested land in Sierra Nevada, increasing the pace and scale of forest restoration on these lands is the primary focus of this Plan.  Implementation of the Plan will improve forest resilience, thereby reducing the risk of large damaging fires.  This will result in a number of important outcomes:

- ✓ Protection of people, communities and property
- ✓ Improved water yield and reliability
- ✓ Improved water quality
- ✓ Protection of existing water storage capacity
- ✓ Enhanced storage of carbon
- ✓ Reduced GHG and particulate matter emissions
- ✓ Protection of important habitat
- ✓ Protection of recreational opportunities
- ✓ Increased economic and social well-being in Sierra communities

**Plan Development**
The Plan is being developed by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) in cooperation with the wide variety of partners that share the SNC vision on these issues.  This effort builds upon and integrates a number of existing efforts at the local, regional and State levels, including:

- The 2011 Sierra Nevada Forest and Community Initiative (SNFCI) Resolution.
- The vision articulated in the US Forest Service (USFS) Region 5 Leadership Intent for Ecological Restoration.
- Existing local collaborative efforts throughout the Sierra Nevada (including the CFLRA projects).

- Focus areas for increasing restoration pace and scale identified by the SNFCI Regional Coordinating Council.
- The California Bioenergy Action Plan.
- The California Water Action Plan.
- The State Water Plan and Integrated Regional Water Management Plans.
- The AB 32 Scoping Plan Update.

**Plan Implementation**

Upon approval of the Plan by the SNC Governing Board, the SNC will implement it the Sierra Nevada Region.  For purposes of the Regional efforts, the SNC will utilize the SNFCI Coordinating Council to help direct, monitor and act upon Regional priorities. Securing adequate federal, state and beneficiary investment to achieve forest restoration objectives is a key element of the plan.

Initial actions under the plan may include the following:

- **Identify existing projects that have completed environmental review (or in process) but lack funding to be implemented**
- **Work with the USFS and stakeholders to identify 10 year forest restoration goals by watershed/National Forest/county, as appropriate and necessary. This should include estimates of acres in need of treatment and costs associated with such treatment**
- **Continue efforts on five key policy areas identified by the SNFCI Coordinating Council and concurred upon by the USFS**
- **Work with local stakeholders to identify additional needs and create processes for prioritization of projects**

The SNC will work with partners to advocate for support of the action plan at the federal, state and local level.  This includes efforts to secure adequate funding and address key policy issues.

At the watershed, Forest or county level, the SNC may work with interested parties to create a  Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) committing parties to work together to achieve agreed upon objectives, consistent with the plan.  Any such MOA would only be pursued where there is consensus for the need for such an approach and would build upon, and be consistent with, existing efforts to achieve similar objectives.  The MOA may include the creation of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), where such an entity can assist in the achievement of Plan objectives and develop more locally focused actions. The MOA/JPA will be developed in close cooperation and coordination with existing efforts in the area, including collaboratives that have been created to address these issues.  The watershed-based efforts will include coordination with the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) organizations in the area.

Parties to be potentially included in the MOA are Counties, Resource Conservation Districts, water agencies, dam operators/power providers, environmental/conservation

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organizations, wood processing industry, IRWMs, local fire districts, State agencies, federal agencies, Fire Safe Councils, watershed organizations and other organizations who support the objectives identified in the plan. Potential parties to a JPA would include the various governmental entities identified in the previous sentence.

The SNC will strategically identify the use of its staff and financial resources to implement the Plan. This may include dedication of a portion of available bond funding to support needed activities to achieve the objectives of the Plan. Regular updates will be provided to the SNC Governing Board.

**Potential Performance Metrics**

- Increase in federal funding for restoration efforts
- Increase in state funding for restoration efforts
- Increase in beneficiary funding for restoration efforts
- Increase in number of acres restored (quantitative and qualitative)
- Maintaining existing, and developing new, wood and biomass processing facilities (including currently non-operational facilities)
- Increase in amount federal contracting dollars staying in local communities

| Timeline | |
|---|---|
| June 23 – August 1 | Discussion Draft Developed by SNC Staff |
| August 4 – 29 | Draft Circulated Among Partners/Stakeholders |
| September 4, 2014 | Draft Plan Approved by SNC Governing Board |
| September – November 2014 | SNC Staff solicits additional input and public comment, prepares final draft |
| December 4, 2014 | SNC Governing Board Approves Final Plan |

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