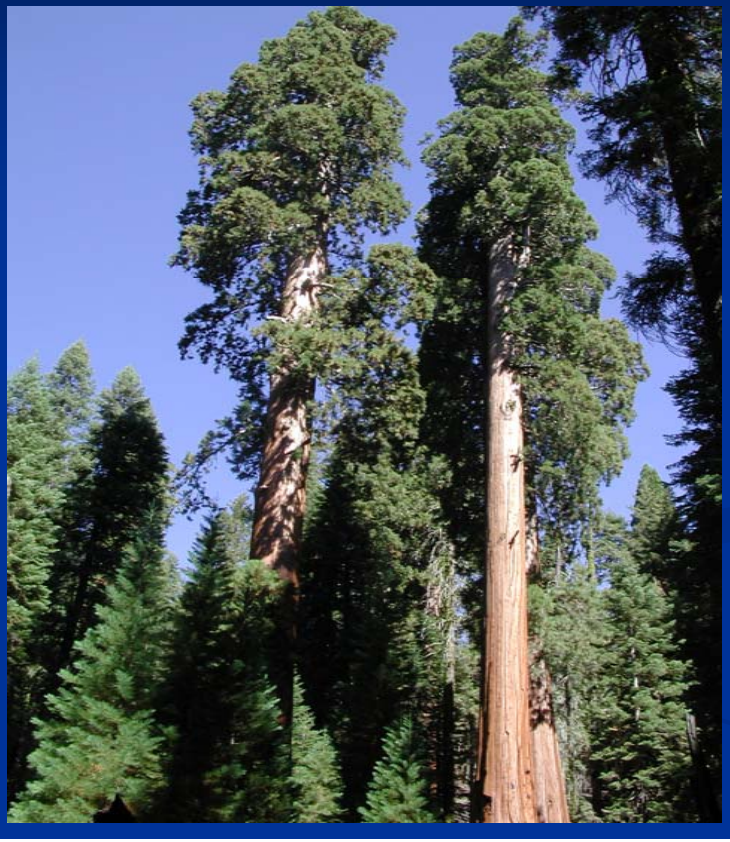
Restoring the Sierra Nevada



Sierra Forest Legacy

Protecting Sierra Nevada Forests and Communities

www.SierraForestLegacy.org

Sierra Forest Legacy

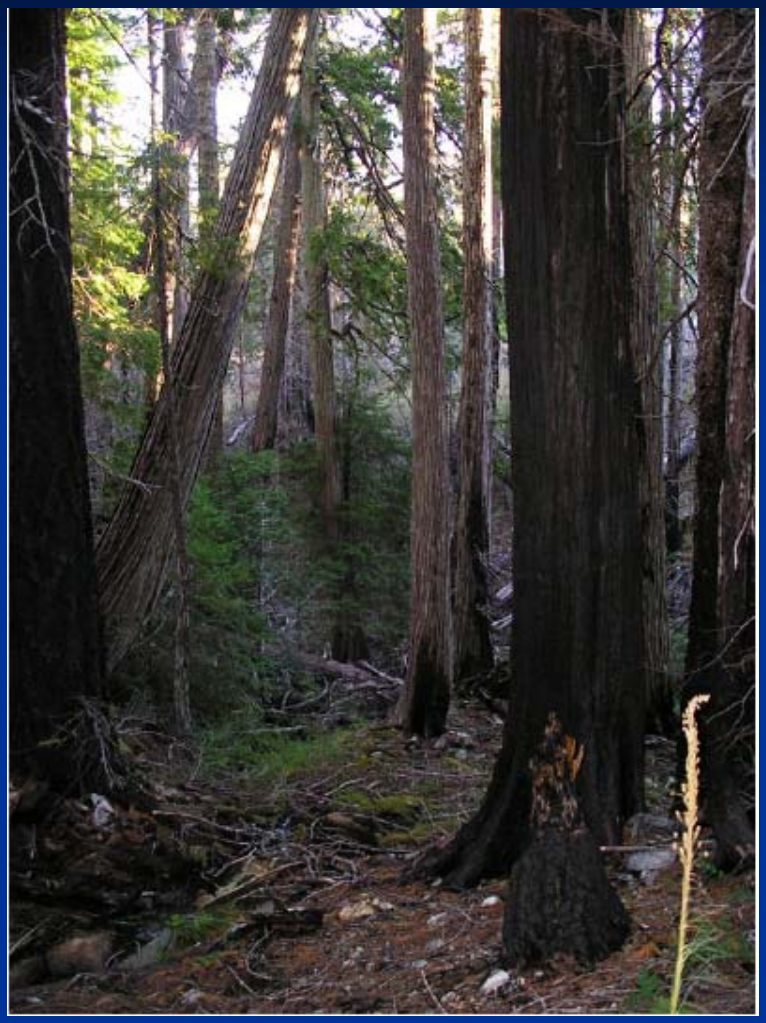
Protecting Sierra Nevada Forests and Communities

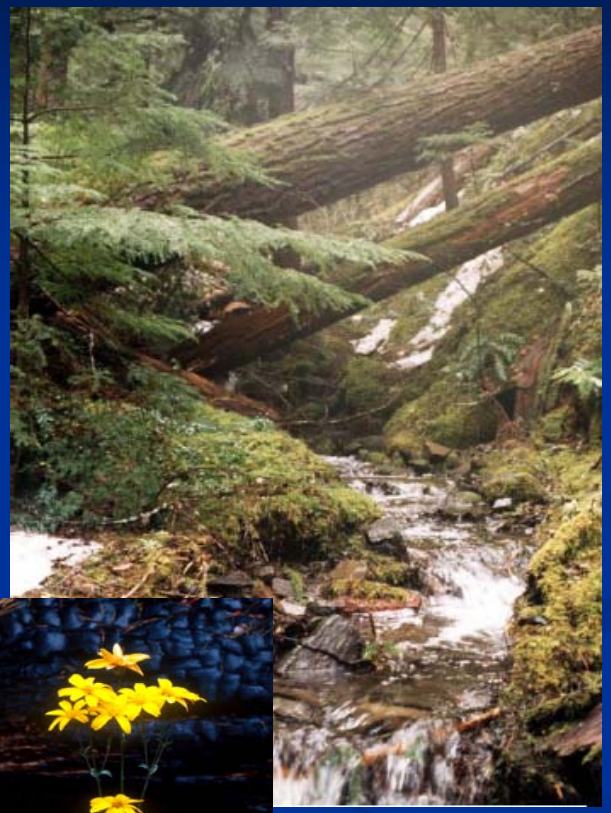
- We are an 98 member group coalition.
- We formed in 1996 to guide the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment process for the 11 National Forests in the Sierra Nevada.
- *The mission of Sierra Forest Legacy* — is to protect and restore the ancient forests, wildlands, wildlife, and watersheds of the Sierra Nevada through scientific and legal advocacy, public education and outreach, and grassroots forest protection efforts.
- We create and support ecologically sustainable solutions to restore forest resiliency and protect public safety in forest communities.

Sierra Forest Legacy Program Areas

- Advocacy
  Forest monitoring, advocating strong conservation alternatives
- Community Forestry
  Promoting forest thinnings: biomass, small-log utilization, community sustainability
- Community Protection
  Firewise Communities USA
  6 representatives on local Fire Safe Councils
- Smoke Management
  Work with Air Districts, agencies to mitigate smoke impacts, etc.

Fire has shaped our forests





Whitneya dealbata

Effects of Logging and Fire Suppression At Tahoe

- Greater than 50% departure from historic fire return interval.
- White fir and incense cedar have doubled in relative abundance, whereas Jeffrey pine has declined by half.
- Tree density is currently 184% of historic conditions, most of which is comprised of trees ***less than 16" in diameter***.
- "These two human activities—creating younger forests by harvesting older trees and suppressing fires that otherwise would have burned off accumulated fuel—have increased the likelihood of severe fire in the Basin."[1]

[1] State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

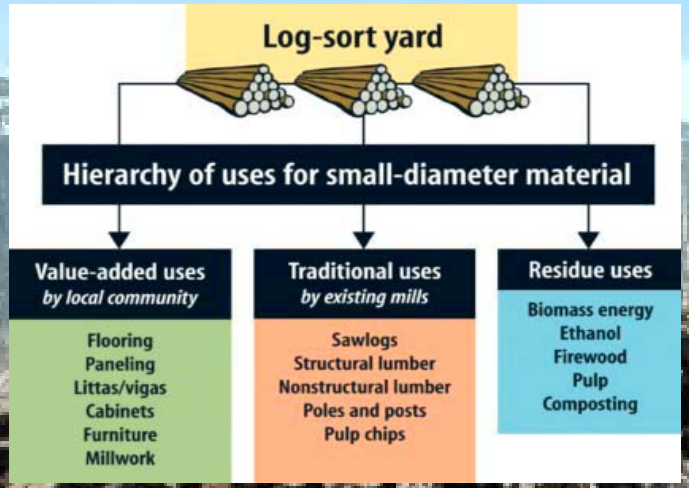
More of this:

Less of This:

We Need To Shift To Restoration

- "The majority of the traditional silvicultural systems … did not effectively reduce potential fire behavior" Silvicultural and reserve impacts on potential fire behavior and forest conservation; Scott L. Stephens *, Jason J. Moghaddas

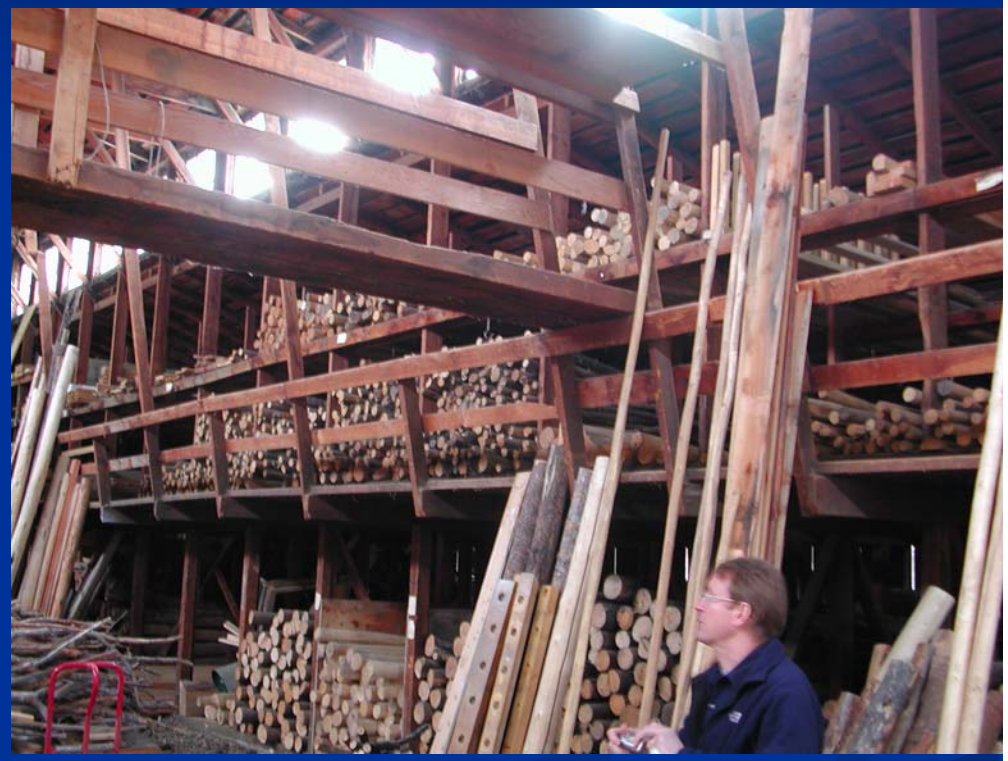
We Need To Re-build Community Infrastructure



*California is the largest consumer of pellets and wood poles yet has marginal manufacturing capacity.

Adding Value

This warehouse is full of sticks normally relegated to burn piles- sorting them has increased their value so that they are actually helping to pay for forest restoration projects.



Case Study: Forest Thinnings to Heat- Sierra Fresh Tomatoes

Case Study: White Mountain Stewardship

150,000 acres -- 10 Year, Best Value Contract – True Collaboration --

- Goals:
  - Reduce WUI Fire Threat
  - Restore Ecosystem at landscape scale
  - **Reduce treatment costs from $500-$700/ac to $200-$300/ac**
- Findings:
  - **Approx 90,000 acres NEPA-approved- no appeals have been filed to date.**
  - Effects are not always localized
  - Forestry "cluster" major:
  - 450 FTE employees
  - Indirect impact: 90 FTE employees
  - Local expenditures by firms ~$12 million/year

White Mountain Lessons Learned

- Strategic public investments catalyzed "cluster" of end-users.
- Flexibility by Forest Service in administering contract is key.
- Incentives for reducing treatment costs built-in.
- Expectation that it takes time and funding to facilitate success

Key Points

- Be cautious in sensitive areas
- Recognize that landscape effects must be viewed with wide lens
- Fire behavior modeling should drive treatments
- Focus intensity on Defense Zone (WUI)
- Feather treatments into general forest areas
- Utilize strategic treatments
- Build off of roads and ridge tops
- Focus on what is desired condition, not what is removed
- Return fire to the landscape
- Use an adaptive approach
- Don't put all eggs in 1 basket/don't have too many baskets
- Find good partners!