

FORESTS WITH A FUTURE



ECOSYSTEM. ECO-DISASTER.

Protect Wildlife in the Sierra Nevada.

Sierra Nevada wildlife in danger

Fire has always been a natural part of the forest ecosystem. In the past, the Sierra Nevada forests were far less packed with vegetation than they are today. Fires were frequent, low, and slow. Wildlife had a fighting chance. In fact, wildlife thrived.

But fire suppression practices over the last century have allowed a dangerous buildup of brush and densely-crowded small-to-medium trees. Overgrown forests allow disease and insects to attack, leaving trees dead, dry, and prone to ignite. This crowding of fuel allows flames to climb and spread from tree to tree in a catastrophic phenomenon known as a "crown fire." No living thing, animal or plant, can survive such fires.

Catastrophic fires have increased dramatically



Fuel Ladder Intact

Fuel Ladder Removed

Ladder-effect: Overgrown forest allows wildfire to climb up and destroy wildlife habitat.

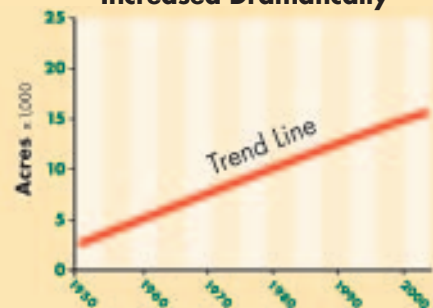
over the past three decades, destroying critical habitat for spotted owls, great gray owls, willow flycatchers, northern goshawk, plus many furbearers and other threatened or endangered animal species.



Spotted Owl

Our forests, and the wildlife they shelter, are in crisis.

Catastrophic Fires Have Increased Dramatically



Acres of forest destroyed in the Sierra Nevada.

Approximately 7.5 million acres in the eleven Sierra Nevada national forests are estimated to have dangerously high levels of fire hazard. This vast landscape encompasses some 550 vertebrate animal species alone, of which 32 are threatened or endangered. Wildfire loss of protected spotted owl areas now averages 4.5 sites per year.

We must better protect these wildlife habitats from catastrophic wildfires.

Catastrophic fires wipe out wildlife habitat.



Pine Marten



Willow Flycatcher



Northern Goshawk

What can be done?

The Forests With A Future Campaign will use the best scientific information available to adapt and apply methods to preserve wildlife, old growth trees, and local communities from catastrophic wildfires.

This Forest Service campaign initiates an intensified program of tree thinning and removal of underbrush at strategic sites. Though the campaign thins only a small percentage of the forest, these sites will benefit the entire forest's wildlife habitat, acting as "speed bumps" to slow the spread of catastrophic wildfires.

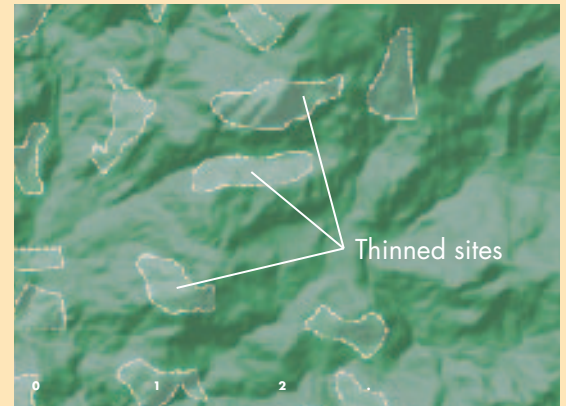
Methods of controlled and monitored burning, and mechanical removal, will be used to thin forests and preserve habitats.

The campaign maintains livestock grazing guidelines to protect wildlife habitat and allows site-specific grazing decisions in other areas, which will be closely monitored.

The campaign also includes accelerated restoration of ecosystems destroyed by wildfire.

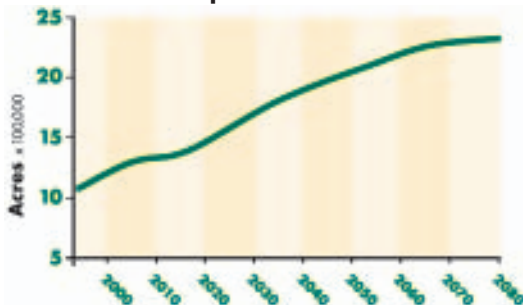
Restoring nature's balance

Reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfires to wildlife on a landscape-wide scale won't be quick or easy. Under Forests With A Future, the net growth of forests still will far out pace planned tree removal. But the accumulating threat of decades of uncontrolled growth can be reversed strategically, even while the number of old-growth trees doubles in fifty years. Wildlife habitat will dramatically increase.



Thinning in strategic sites acts as "speed bumps" for runaway wildfires.

Spotted Owl Nesting Habitat Projected to Double



Protecting wildlife

Forests With A Future reduces fire risk while retaining all of the current 1,321 protected spotted owl areas in the Sierra Nevada national forests. Such areas will not be subject to tree thinning, except small portions in strategic "speed bumps" to slow the spread of wildfires in this precious habitat.

Tree-thinning projects will be proposed by local District Rangers, and monitored by scientists and professionals to see how well results achieve scientific projections for wildlife.

Please help

Everyone has a vital role – individuals, local communities and organizations, civic leaders, government, timber companies, in addition to the dedicated scientists and experts of the Forest Service.

Support the Forests With A Future Campaign.

For further information:

www.forestsfuture.fs.fed.us or
www.fs.fed.us/r5/snfpa



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