Forests of the Sierra Nevada are experiencing an unprecedented increase in the size and severity of wildfires. These dangerous fires put lives and communities at risk, and also threaten the benefits that healthy forests provide, such as clean water, clean air, carbon storage, recreation, and wildlife habitat. In response to this increasing threat, a diverse group of partners are working together to plan and implement a forest restoration and wildfire risk reduction plan for the North Yuba watershed, an area of outstanding beauty and natural diversity in the northern Sierra Nevada. The project area stretches from New Bullards Bar Reservoir at the bottom of the watershed up to the headwaters at Yuba Pass -- a total of 275,000 acres, of which approximately 210,000 acres is national forest land.

The North Yuba Forest Partnership is working on an unprecedented scale to collaboratively plan, analyze, finance, and implement forest restoration on national forest lands across the entire 275,000-acre watershed. Through ecologically-based thinning and controlled burning, the partnership seeks to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire to North Yuba communities and restore the watershed to a healthier and more resilient state. At the same time, the partnership seeks to create a model that can be used to increase the pace and scale of forest and watershed restoration throughout other regions in the Sierra Nevada.

**Why Here? Why Now?**

Across the Sierra Nevada, our forests are in dire need of restoration. For too long, naturally-occurring, low-intensity wildfire has been suppressed while historic logging practices removed the largest, most fire-resilient trees. Now our forests are overstocked with young trees, ladder fuels, and an unnatural mix of vegetation species so that when wildfires occur, they are burning uncharacteristically hotter, larger, and out of control.

Research has shown that forest restoration can protect and improve wildlife habitat by reducing the risk of high intensity, stand replacing fires. Meadows and aspen groves, which have been on the decline, will also benefit from the restoration. Forest restoration improves forest health, safeguards water supplies, mitigates climate change, protects air quality, supports a sustainable forest products industry, stimulates economic growth in disadvantaged rural communities, and most importantly, lessens the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire -- protecting the future of both people and nature.

**The Watershed**

The North Yuba watershed is a jewel within the Sierra Nevada. In addition to human communities, it is home to at risk populations of California spotted owls, northern goshawks, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frogs, and many other species of animals and plants. Known for its iconic river, historic gold mining towns, rugged terrain, world famous trails, excellent fly-fishing and remote forests, it is a special place worth saving and restoring.
**The Innovation**

We are taking a promising and innovative approach to project design, financing, and implementation. Our hope is that this effort can serve as a model for accelerating the pace and scale of forest restoration across the Sierra Nevada and beyond.

**Planning:** By utilizing satellite imagery and remote sensing data, as well as incorporating the latest science from the Historical Range of Variability Study and the Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative, this project will leverage the latest science and cutting edge technology to plan more effectively and efficiently.

**Finance:** We will utilize a public-private financing model to pay for both the planning and implementation. The local water agency is a committed partner and embraces the call to restore the North Yuba River headwaters. We will utilize the newly developed Forest Resilience Bond to help finance the implementation work, which will allow for efficiencies in contracting in addition to other advantages.

**Implementation:** We anticipate the Forest Service will enter into a stewardship agreement to allow for a state, local or NGO partner to lead and coordinate project implementation.

**Scale:** This effort stands on the shoulders of two other innovative projects — the French Meadows Project (~28,000 acres) in the headwaters of the American River, and the Yuba Project (~15,000 acres), located in the headwaters of the North Yuba River (and within the planning area of this larger effort). We are bringing the lessons from these two innovative projects together to scale up an order of magnitude to 275,000 acres.

We understand that succeeding in this effort will require innovation at every step in the process, and we embrace the work ahead as anything but “business as usual.”

**Join Us**

We are in a challenging and pivotal moment in ecological history. With each year breaking wildfire records of death and destruction, this is our chance to work together and restore our forests at the scale required. We have the right partners and the time to do this work is now. Together we can create wildfire-resilient forests, thriving ecosystems and the many benefits they provide, including restoration-based jobs, thereby promoting the collective well-being of both people and nature for decades to come. The partnership is actively seeking funding from a variety of federal, state and private sources to plan the project—and it will require all of us to work together for this effort to succeed. Please visit www.yubaforests.org to learn more.

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