

Managing Vegetation is Key to Restoring Forest Health

Susie Kocher, Forestry Advisor, Registered Professional Forester #2874 University of California Cooperative Extension

Morgan Galliano, Coordinator, El Dorado Amador Prescribed Burn Association



California forests are fire adapted ecosystems

- Consequences of fire suppression
 - Displacement of understory plants due to shade
 - Conversion of shrub habitats to conifer thickets
 - Displacement of deciduous vegetation by conifers, especially in riparian areas
 - Reduction and loss of mountain meadows to conifer encroachment
 - Densification or encroachment of oak woodlands
 - Reduction and loss of open / non-forested habitat
- ***Huge build up in forest fuels***
- ***Increased stress due to water competition leaves trees***



Consequences of fire suppression



Spaulding Lake in Nevada County, 1919 and 1993. Source:
Gruel 2001

What can a forest landowner do?

Understand that vegetation management is key to reducing hazards

Reduce fuels, reduce density

Many methods can be used

All methods require knowledge, resources, follow through



Landowners face barriers to forest management

- **Cost:** Most treatments do not yield any income
- **Time:** Not having enough time to carry out actions, especially for remote owners
- **Lack of workforce:** It's hard to find qualified contractors.
- **Needing to get agreement from multiple owners:** Other owners may have different goals which need to be resolved before action can be taken.



How to get started on managing your forest

- Learn about your forest
- Develop a vision
 - Articulate your management goals
- Develop a forest management plan
- Reach out for help to implement your plan
 - Assistance organizations
 - Registered Professional Foresters
- Stick with it!



What is Prescribed Fire?

Prescribed fire is the intentional setting of a fire under determined conditions to achieve a set of objectives. It is often the reintroduction of a Fire Return Interval with low intensity in forested systems through broadcast burning or pile burning



Outcomes



wildfire



prescribed fire

Prescribed fire offers a method to reduce wildfire risk by burning under conditions that protect and improve forest health.

Example: Cool, CA

Date: November 27, 2023

Number of Participants: 9

Size: 3 Acres

Objectives: Reduce wildfire hazard and improve habitat and tree health



Prescribed Fire Example Volcano, CA

Date: October 18,
2025
Number of
Participants: 7
Size: 2 Acres
Objectives: Reduce
wildfire risk, build
skills



The Landowner Burn Process



- Deciding where to burn
- Preparing the area
- Making a burn plan
- Obtaining permits
- Coordinating with supporters and gathering equipment and supplies
- Implementing the burn when conditions are right
- Patrolling afterward until the fire is all the way out

How to Find a Local Prescribed Burn Association

- Prescribed burn associations (PBAs) can provide technical assistance for burn planning and implementation.
- Visit www.calpba.org and scroll down under the “Find a PBA” tab.
- In El Dorado and Amador Counties, email eldoradoamadorpba@gmail.com to request a site visit or other technical assistance.

