



Sierra Institute
for Community and Environment

Achieving Pace Through SCALE:

A Blueprint for Implementing Landscape Restoration and Community Resiliency

Acknowledgements

Thank you to our many SCALE contributors and partners for their valued feedback and participation in crafting this document.



Through the Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement (SCALE) project, the Sierra Institute facilitates a peer-learning network of forest collaboratives by convening meetings designed to share key lessons and barriers to landscape scale work, and promote awareness of key state and federal policies, funding, and authorities. The SCALE network offers an opportunity for collaboratives to collectively identify strategies to achieve landscape-scale, cross-boundary restoration of healthy, resilient forests and healthy communities. Thanks to the Resource Legacy Fund and the Satterberg Foundation for their support of this work.
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Seven Steps to Achieve Recovery and Resiliency

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Executive Summary

Preventing and recovering from catastrophic wildfires

requires a portfolio of highly coordinated projects that integrate the knowledge, resources, capacities and relationships among local and tribal governments, civic organizations, community members, and private businesses at an appropriate geographic scale – often watersheds.

While state and federal agencies possess many of the financial resources, legal authorities and technical abilities required, local partnerships have proven to be the most effective organizational structure for aligning actions with community characteristics and concerns. For state and federal agencies, tailoring support to these local partnerships is essential to effectively implement the plethora of programs that collectively seek to reduce catastrophic wildfires and restore ecological and economic resiliency throughout California.

The Sierra Institute's "Sierra to California All-Lands Enhancement" project, known as SCALE, has for more than 10 years provided a learning network for more than 15 collaboratives across the state. Based on this shared experience, SCALE recommends to state and federal leaders seven actions that would enable these collaboratives to further reduce damage to communities and ecosystems and advance economic, equity and environmental goals.

1. Fund Project Ready Collaboratives and other Partners to Increase Pace and Scale

Opportunity: A number of collaboratives and other groups (e.g., Resource Conservation Districts) are ready to increase the pace and scale of restoration and resiliency efforts, but are hobbled by fragmented, short-term and inadequate funding streams. These groups have developed agreement among community, environmental and wood utilization interests on feasible projects that will provide multiple benefits.

Solution: Consolidated, long-term and adequate funding is essential to implement comprehensive NEPA- and CEQA-compliant plans for reducing forest density and fire intensity.

2. Reduce Inequities by Supporting Core Capacity Opportunity:

Some regions and watersheds need time, resources and technical support to build the political consensus, social license and management capabilities to advance a comprehensive approach to forest health and community resiliency. For the most part, these communities have not had the wherewithal to develop these capacities. Continuing to allocate funds through competitive processes – especially those targeting shovel-ready projects – will further exacerbate inequalities.

Solution: With focused attention, these communities could develop the abilities to manage and coordinate activities that contribute to landscape-scale projects. The technical assistance can be provided by mature collaboratives, community-building organizations and entities, and the Tahoe and Sierra Nevada conservancies and others.



3. Invest in Utilization Infrastructure

Opportunity: Publicly funded projects narrowly focused on the removal of excessive woody biomass will by themselves be inadequate to reduce catastrophic wildfire, restore forest health and adequately reduce poverty and economic insecurity in rural forested communities.

Solution: Private enterprise need to be engaged through state and federal investments, incentives and other means to attract capital and develop new uses, value chains and markets for products that restore heritage landscapes, reduce carbon emissions and increase economic security in rural communities.

4. Accelerate Prescribed Burning

Opportunity: Over the last 10 years, a broad consensus has emerged regarding the negative consequences of past forest management practices, compounded by the exacerbating effects of climate change. That understanding includes the need to re-establish more frequent and lower intensity fires that are beneficial to forest health and reduce catastrophic wildfires.

Solution: Federal, state and local officials and forest stewards need to agree upon and implement strategies for aligning permits and providing financial and other resources to accelerate the reintroduction of beneficial fire, including tribally led cultural fire.

5. Integrate State Programs

Opportunity: State leaders have proactively worked to address community and watershed needs – often assigning new programs to individual departments based on their expertise. While this approach has benefited communities and regions urgently working to respond to or to prevent disasters, the fragmentation of programs and funding streams and the variations in application procedures and reporting requirements make it extremely difficult for communities to sustain comprehensive activities.

Solution: To produce the potential multiple benefits of forest and community restoration projects, the State needs to thoroughly integrate the disparate programs that are intended to –but seldom do – result in safe, prosperous, healthy and adaptive communities and watersheds.

6. Resolve Regulatory Issues

Opportunity: The plethora of regulatory requirements – while well intended and well administered – often add so much time, cost, uncertainty and complexity that projects get stalled and the urgent benefits in terms of public health and safety, forest and watershed protection are delayed or lost entirely.

Solution: Assertively coordinating regulatory reviews for specific projects will help address and resolve ambiguities in regulations or differences in interpretations, reconcile conflicts among state goals and simply accelerate the often-sequential review process within or among multiple agencies.

7. Support Adaptive Management

Objective: In addition to the direct and intended benefits, each ground-based project contributes to growing knowledge regarding forest and community resiliency. If captured and shared, that new knowledge can be used to further capacity building in communities, incorporated into future projects, improve management, and inform state legislative, budget and regulatory deliberations and decisions.

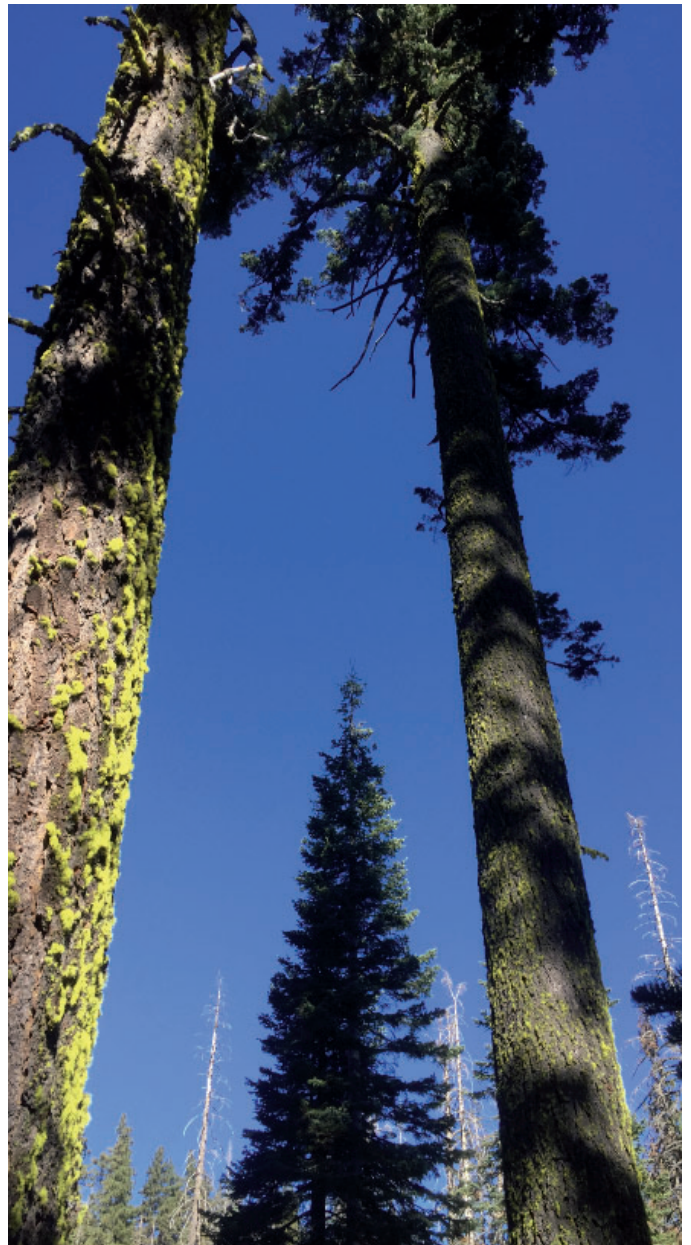
Solution: A vibrant learning network is essential to produce the knowledge, insights and agreements that will be required to effectively steward natural resources, improve the economic security and wellbeing of individuals and communities, and nurture cohesion among the diversity of interests and perspectives who must work together to overcome the existential challenges facing California.

A Blueprint for Landscape Restoration & Community Resiliency

The Implementation Imperative: Collaboratives as Essential Partners

The urgency of the wildlands crisis is reflected in the escalating investments of public funds and the proliferation of often fragmented programs. These actions accompany an emerging consensus that the size and devastation of wildfires is growing faster than the ability of state and federal agencies to implement prevention activities and reduce risks to wildlands and rural communities – a dangerous dynamic for communities and forests, one that is reflected in the still growing burden on state and federal response and recovery efforts.

California can only achieve its goals for reducing carbon emissions, protecting public health and adapting landscapes to climate change by building the capacity of local collaboratives to steward their forests. Similarly, to achieve national resource management goals the federal government must work with and through partnerships grounded in California's diverse watersheds. In short, local collaboratives are essential to aligning interests, partners and projects to achieve landscape-scale improvements.



These local partnerships have five distinct attributes that are prerequisites to accelerated stewardship¹:

1. Community-based knowledge.

Local collaboratives possess a depth and breadth of knowledge about their communities and natural resources – over generations, hydrological cycles and management regimes. For example, and not an outlier, five members of the Yosemite-Stanislaus Leadership Team have more than 100 years of hands-on experience on the Stanislaus National Forest. Collaboratives collect and amplify the voices of multiple stakeholder groups who are often focused on specific resources, such as fish and wildlife, and advocate for diverse perspectives, such as those of Tribes, private enterprises, and environmental organizations. The sum of these voices provides an authentic place-based vision for a future landscape predicated on centuries of combined experience.

2. Science-based agreements.

Collaboratives have demonstrated the willingness and ability to forge science-based agreements on priority issues that result in specific treatments to restore forest health. State and federal agencies often express frustration that diverse interests cannot reach the agreement required to proceed. However, many collaborative groups have demonstrated this ability. Spatial modeling, for example, has been used to characterize landscape and community needs and identify shared priorities for forest health treatments. These powerful visual approaches help stakeholders reconcile the needs of ecosystems and rural forested communities and can enable consensus among practitioners and managers that provides a “social license” to act.

3. Ability to execute.

Collaboratives coupled with established NGOs and local governments – with adequate financial and technical support – possess the abilities to develop and implement a portfolio of projects that simultaneously advance environmental, economic and equity goals. Collaboratives, for example, are the most cost-effective mechanism for operationalizing Master Stewardship Agreements and Good Neighbor Authority. Local governments – and especially counties, K-12 schools and community colleges, workforce development boards, resource conservation and water districts – all hold key authorities and resources needed for comprehensive solutions. Collaboratives can authentically incorporate indigenous knowledge, leaders, and tribal governments and help reconcile management practices and relationships.

4. Experience-based feedback loops.

Planning, Governing and Funding for Restoration and Resilience Collaboratives – individually and collectively – have extensive experience with the dysfunction stemming from disjointed state and federal programs and processes involving natural resource management and community development. This experience informs more effective approaches to forest health work. Effective collaboratives can improve communications and coordinate project management, enabling them to efficiently accelerate restoration activities. When adequately supported, collaboratives serve as a source for data and qualitative feedback that enables state and federal agencies to refine policies, funding streams and regulations to meet desired results.

5. Laboratories for adaptive management.

Collaboratives also hold the potential to be valuable scientific partners to bolster the discovery and assessment that will be required to understand the impacts of climate change and refine the management practices required to reduce damage, support restoration, and enable resiliency.

¹Some of these collaboratives are based on watersheds while others are predicated more on community, and still others on political boundaries. Some are partnerships managed by local boards and governments, such as Resource Conservation Districts. Regardless of their geographic footprint, the common elements include cross-sector leaders seeking to move beyond adversarial gridlock to develop broadly supported management practices that advance economic and ecological goals to increase individual, community and forest resiliency and sustainability.

Planning, Governing and Funding for Restoration and Resilience

California has long encouraged – even requiring – collaborative community planning. The State requires regional coordination for transportation and housing. In some instances, such as community colleges and workforce boards, the state requires coordination with employers and civic organizations.

In the domain of natural resources, the Integrated Regional Water Management Program successfully elevated the comprehensive water needs of many regions, and could accomplish more if consistent implementation funding was available. To that end, the Regional Fire and Forest Capacity Program (RFFCP) provides block grants to align local knowledge with regional wildfire prevention and forest conservation needs, a promising approach to supporting core capacities within local partnerships.

In addition to planning, the State also has increasingly dealt with the complexity, diversity and size of California by establishing statewide goals and devolving authority and discretion to local governments, including K-12 schools, and county criminal justice and mental health systems. That governance strategy has been extended to forest management. To advance statewide goals for fire reduction and forest health, California has promulgated the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan with 99 action items, many requiring local initiatives. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Tahoe-Central Sierra Initiative established a Framework for Resilience that includes 10 “Pillars” to enable local leaders to determine their priorities and needs in the context of state goals and desired outcomes.

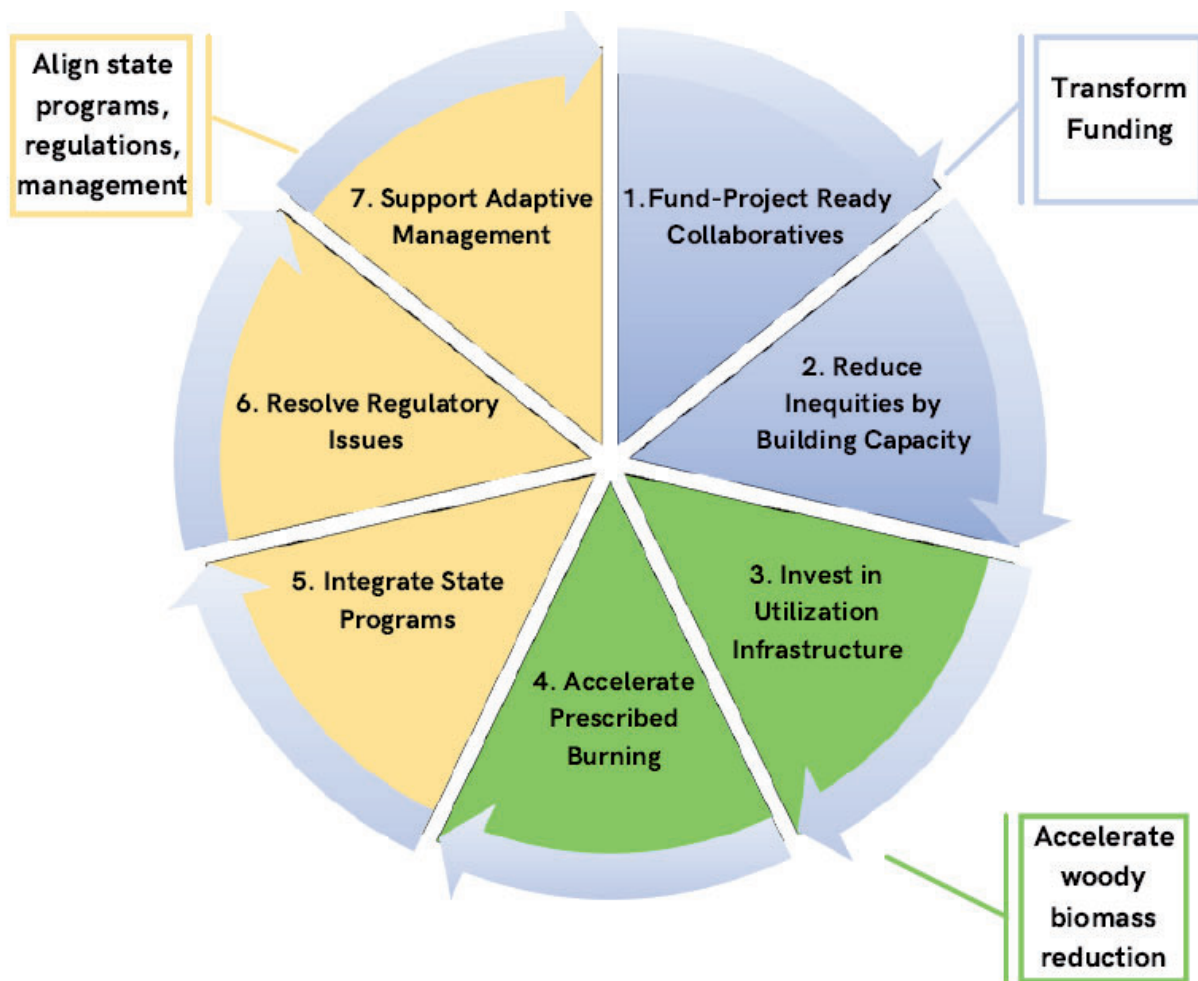
The framework is predicated on the understanding that the projects required to protect and restore rural communities and forest health transcend one level of government and require cross-sector partnerships among local governments, private businesses, civic organizations, and communities themselves.

The following recommendations assertively advance this evolution in planning, governance and funding to produce effective local partnerships that are essential to achieving state goals. The seven elements are intended to transform the way forest-related projects are funded; accelerate the reduction of excess woody biomass; reduce the risk of devastating catastrophic wildfire and dangerous smoke events; and, align state and local programs, regulatory requirements and management systems.

Taken together, this blueprint defines a new structure that encourages and supports cross-sector partnerships – with public, private and civic organizations and leaders working together at the community and watershed scale. From the local perspective, this structure is necessary to build understanding of the issues and opportunities, agreement on needed projects, and the trust required to work together and respond to the inevitable emergencies.

From the state and federal perspectives this approach is the only way to significantly accelerate efforts to reduce catastrophic wildfire, adapt forests and watersheds to climate change, and improve the economic conditions in rural communities linked to California's emerald necklace.

Seven Steps to Achieve Recovery and Resiliency



1. Fund Project Ready Collaboratives and Partners to Increase Pace and Scale

- California must move from a funding model that is fragmented, limited term and competitive to one that is consolidated, adequate and sustained.

The ideal model from SCALE's perspective

is comprehensive multi-year block grants tailored to individual collaboratives or community partnerships that support core management infrastructure and leadership on specific projects of paramount regional importance. Collaboratives – or cornerstone organization for local partnerships, such as Resource Conservation Districts – would be accountable for documenting how the funds are spent to support local and state goals and objectives. Block grants would help reduce the time-intensive and unpredictable nature of competitive grants.

The RFFC Program is a promising effort to move in this direction. The Department of Conservation's efforts to work with "regional intermediaries" such as the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Coastal Commission also is potentially innovative solution.

To the extent that project needs cannot be funded through block grants, the state intermediaries could proactively bundle funding from other grant programs to reduce the administrative burden, time delays and the risk associated with securing only partial funding for critical projects.

This approach also would reduce burnout among staff at community-based organizations and provide data and insight to state agencies on which grant programs need additional or less funding.

With funding requirements already set by statutes and regulations, this process would identify for executive and legislative officials how those laws should be amended to increase progress toward statewide objectives to timely respond to climate change and catastrophic wildfire risk.



Desired Result: State and federal financial support will flow to local projects and organizations in ways that are integrated, adequate and stable over time to reduce the time and uncertainty associated with applying for grants and reduce the gaps in funding that prevent or slow down projects and limit the benefits to watersheds, rural communities and the state overall.

Objective: The State will establish multi-year block grants or funding compacts with local governments and their NGO and business partners to provide adequate financial support for a portfolio of projects with the potential to achieve shared goals for forest and community health and resiliency.



California must move from a funding model that is fragmented, limited term and competitive to one that is consolidated, adequate and sustained.

This bundling approach could be piloted in several collaboratives with an appropriate project portfolio to develop a shared understanding of organizational needs and iterate on a process that best serves the State and the collaboratives, while providing public accountability for progress. The State should select local partners committed to environmental and economic regional resiliency with leaders working together to meet dynamic local needs.

Providing core funding will cost the state and federal agencies substantially less than responding to a single catastrophic wildfire and will enable collaboratives to more effectively deploy state funds and leverage federal funding.

This approach also could catalyze deeper coordination with philanthropic funders, impact investors, and NGOs that seek to deploy technical expertise and funding in ways that leverage public investments.

Implementation

1. Building upon the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program, State conservancies, and Integrated Regional Water Management groups, the Governor and the Legislature, beginning with the 2022-23 Budget Act, should consolidate funding to the extent possible to support comprehensive and integrated projects at the watershed scale.

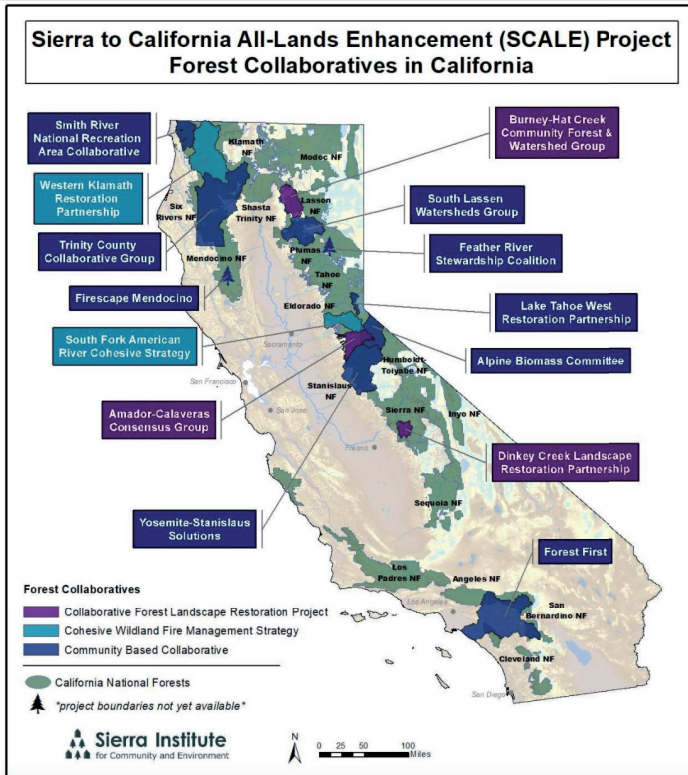
The Natural Resources Agency should be authorized to negotiate with local collaboratives and other local partnerships multi-year funding compacts for core operations and a portfolio of anticipated projects intended to achieve shared state and local goals.

The compacts can be structured in phases with thresholds and milestones for planning and project-related metrics.

The compacts should:

- I. Provide certainty for a 10-year horizon, which is necessary to justify investments in workforce, equipment, facilities and other infrastructure.
- II. Be developed over two years if necessary, provided that first year funding is allocated for additional planning activities and shovel ready projects.
- III. Anticipate that amendments will be made to adapt to conditions and events.

2. The Governor and Legislature should authorize the Natural Resources Agency to redirect program-specific funds into the block grants provided the agreement with local entities incorporate the objectives of the original program. For example, workforce funds administered by the Labor and Workforce Development Agency could be reallocated into the block grants for training activities to support project operations.



2. Reduce Inequities by Supporting Core Capacity

- Local collaboratives are at different stages of development, often as a result of their ability to secure state or federal funding.

The traditional practice of competitive

grants – administered by different agencies and focused on individual state-defined priorities, such as “shovel ready” projects – has continually rewarded the most sophisticated groups and perpetuated inequities among rural areas.

To achieve the goals of the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan, the State needs local partnerships that are high functioning. This will require individualized support for startups and an ongoing commitment to mature the capacities of all collaboratives and partnerships.

While volunteers and community leaders are invaluable assets, collaboratives require professional staff who can manage planning, projects and administration. Developing and maintaining these professional teams and coordinating bodies requires a commitment to stable and reliable multi-year funding. This stability – in terms of funding and staffing – enable the relationship building and continuity from planning to implementation that is essential to achieve a “million-acre strategy.”



Implementation

The Governor and the Legislature should direct the Natural Resources Agency to develop and execute a strategy to ensure all forested communities have functioning cross-sector collaborative organizations that can steward a comprehensive approach to forest health and community resiliency.

Desired Result: All forested rural communities have capable local collaboratives or similar organizations that engage diverse community interests, manage restoration and resiliency projects, and coordinate public and private activities to produce landscape-scale results.

Objective: The State will ensure that emerging local collaboratives receive the financial support and technical assistance to develop the capacity to plan and manage landscape-scale projects.



Local collaboratives are at different stages of development, often as a result of their ability to secure state or federal funding.

The Natural Resources Agency should build upon and incorporate existing efforts within the watersheds and state programs, such as the RFFCP and conservancies, as well as partner with experienced capacity building organizations.

The strategy should identify and develop common functions and capacities, while providing for tailored approaches based on local geography and existing governmental and social infrastructure.

The Natural Resources Agency should begin developing long-term compacts with emerging collaboratives so they can quickly scale up activities when they have achieved operational capacity.

Technical assistance should include expertise in collaborative processes to learn from successful and unsuccessful efforts, facilitators to support convenings and train local meeting managers, provide scientific expertise on risks and opportunities to develop science-based consensus, and incentive funding to implement initial projects.



The Governor and the Legislature should identify urgent needs within these watersheds, direct funds to meet those needs, and provide the technical support needed to effectively implement the projects while the local collaboratives are developing comprehensive plans and core capacities.



3. Invest in Utilization Infrastructure

- Recent investments in landscape treatment and restoration are both historic and insufficient.

For forest restoration to succeed, the State must invest in utilization infrastructure to increase the value of woody biomass in order to accelerate its removal, reduce emissions and sequester the carbon. Supporting economically valuable uses of woody biomass will attract the private capital that can greatly increase thinning operations and produce “high road” jobs in communities that lost quality jobs due to environmental regulations, automation and trade policies.

Many of the businesses involved in forest work and wood utilization require large startup costs, which are difficult to secure without long-term agreements and predictability of the workload over 10 to 20 years. Many factors erode this predictability, from the planning and permitting of projects, to litigation, to market uncertainty. Similarly, developing workforce development programs is only feasible – and fair to those being recruited into training programs – if those programs are aligned to actual needs of actual employers. The State should carefully evaluate the barriers and challenges that face wood utilization businesses and provide assistance to reduce these barriers.



Desired Result: State and federal financial support will flow to local projects and organizations in ways that are integrated, adequate and stable over time to reduce the time and uncertainty associated with applying for grants and reduce the gaps in funding that prevent or slow down projects and limit the benefits to watersheds, rural communities and the state overall.

Objective: The State will ensure that emerging local collaboratives receive the financial support and technical assistance to develop the capacity to plan and manage landscape-scale projects.



Recent investments in landscape treatment and restoration are both historic and insufficient.

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Implementation

1. The Governor and the Legislature should direct the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for accelerating investment in industries, services and skilled labor.
2. The Natural Resource Agency should directly support wood utilization projects to absorb woody biomass generated from restoration projects and increase the value of the material.
3. GO-Biz should integrate its strategic planning with implementation to quickly seize existing opportunities to reallocate resources, attract private investment and businesses, or resolve regulatory ambiguity or conflicts.



Specifically, GO-Biz should:

Work closely with the local collaboratives to understand immediate needs and opportunities, and with county economic development agencies in particular.

Document and frequently report back to the Governor and the Legislature barriers for private investment and development.

Proactively work with individual businesses, associations and social impact investors that are working to make sure that private enterprise advances social equity and environmental goals in addition to profits.

Work with the Natural Resources Agency and other state and local partners to develop metrics to measure the environmental and socio-economic benefits of private enterprise.

4. Accelerate Prescribed Burning

- The State needs to accelerate approvals for prescribed and cultural burning throughout the forested landscape



These cross-sector activities represent a profound opportunity to simultaneously advance environmental and equity goals, restoring communities, forests and watersheds.

California's once fire-adapted landscapes have become heavily overgrown through decades of fire suppression. Landscape thinning through mechanical means is a needed first step and broad application of prescribed fire is needed to achieve objectives for treated acres. Many barriers block wide-scale implementation of a statewide prescribed fire program. In addition to increasing training and funding opportunities for prescribed fire, the State and collaborative partners should carefully assess the impediments to identify and make policy changes where necessary.

Implementation

The Governor and the Legislature should establish a "Beneficial Fire Unit" within the Natural Resources Agency with dedicated regional staff. California Tribes should be empowered to introduce cultural burns in ancestral homelands and adjacent areas. The unit should work with collaboratives on the following:

Develop and implement a coordinated and cooperative Beneficial Fire Plan of Action with appropriate entities including counties, air districts, fire-safe councils, and the U.S. Forest Service.

Identify priority areas for applying prescribed fires and managed wildland fires.

Develop a schedule for conducting prescribed fires and managing wildfires for ecological restoration purposes as feasible.

Conduct, as conditions allow, prescribed fires and manage wildfires for restoring forest health and increasing wildfire resiliency.

Desired Result: The pre-settlement regime of fire on the landscape will be restored to the benefit of forest resiliency, the safety of rural communities, and the public health of metropolitan areas.

Objective: As soon as safely possible, low-intensity beneficial fire will be reintroduced to sustain a forest structure that is more resilient to climate change.



The State needs to accelerate approvals for prescribed and cultural burning throughout the forested landscape.

5. Integrate State Programs

- The State needs to support cross-sector investments and activities.

Reducing mega-fires and accelerating fire prevention and forest resiliency projects, particularly at the landscape scale, require workforce and economic development, housing and in some cases transportation improvements.

California has extensive investments, agency structures and programs responsible for each of these domains that need to be strategically coordinated across forested California. State entities need to actively work across the state bureaucracy to align resources and programs to enable and encourage coordination and integration within communities and regions. Local and regional leaders also should be involved in these efforts.

For example, the California Community College Chancellor's Office and the state Workforce Development Board can more assertively support the development and replication of training programs that meet and support workers "where they are," including emerging on-the-job programs creating opportunities for tribal and other community members. The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development should assertively facilitate the state actions required to attract private capital investments into facilities and manufacturing.

These cross-sector activities represent a profound opportunity to simultaneously advance environmental and equity goals, restoring communities, forests and watersheds. California's investments in fire resilience are potentially transformative, but not unless the State pushes cross-sectoral integration especially in rural and isolated communities.

Implementation

1. The Governor and the Legislature should direct the Natural Resources Agency to develop a strategy for aligning, integrating and consolidating programs intended to support a comprehensive approach to forest health and community resiliency.

2. The Natural Resources Agency should be directed to:

Identify all programs that support the goals and meet the needs identified in the block grants / compact agreements with the local collaboratives and their agents.

Assess how well those programs – based on current design and funding – are aligned with the local needs and develop a strategy for evolving these programs to reflect the comprehensive approaches underway within watersheds.

Report back to the Governor and the Legislature on changes that should be made in statutes and budgets to align, integrate and consolidate programs as appropriate.

Desired Result: The State's portfolio of forest-related programs will be aligned and coordinated with comprehensive community and watershed plans and projects for forest health and community resiliency.

Objective: The State will evolve all forest-related programs into an integrated framework, with functional integration of program goals and activities that are aligned with the goals of community and watershed-based collaboratives and linked organizations.

6. Resolve Regulatory Issues

- The State needs to coordinate regulatory requirements and resolve ambiguities and conflicts.

The State and local collaboratives share a deep commitment to forest and community health and resiliency. SCALE's members have no interest in lowering standards that protect both. However, the time, expense and expertise required to navigate multiple regulatory processes required for individual projects increases costs at best and slows and even stops worthy projects at worst.



SCALE strongly urges the State to pilot and then iterate on a process for coordinating state review and approval of individual projects and actively help to resolve ambiguities in the application of regulations or resolve conflicts among the State's policy and regulatory goals.

Desired Result: Local collaboratives will be able to efficiently and confidently pursue projects designed to meet local and state economic, environmental and equity goals.

Objective: The time, cost and uncertainty associated with state permits required for local projects will be significantly reduced.

The State needs to assertively work to align regulatory objectives, processes and requirements with federal agencies to accelerate progress on federal lands. Some examples include streamlining CEQA and NEPA assessments, programmatic EIRs, CAL FIRE's VTP, and focusing the Natural Resource Agency's "cutting green tape" initiative to the fire resilience sector. SCALE leaders should be invited to share challenges as well as help identify pathways forward.

Implementation

1. The Governor and the Legislature should direct the Government Operations Agency to manage a project to curate the permitting process for a group of projects that are typical of those required for reducing excess forest biomass and improving public safety and forest health.

2. GovOps Project should:

Establish an advisory panel with experts in LEAN, process re-engineering and innovative environmental regulations.

Facilitate a task force of permitting agencies to develop a coordinated review process and identify and proactively resolve issues.

Frequently report the status of project reviews to department directors and agency secretaries.

Assess and identify opportunities for refining statutes and regulations to more efficiently meet public standards by reducing ambiguities, standardizing definitions and minimizing conflict among state goals and requirements.

Help participating state departments revise their review process to achieve efficiencies and improve public communication.

7. Support Adaptive Management

- The State needs to support learning and adaptive management across the collaboratives and engage the collaboratives to provide feedback for future policy, budget and regulatory decisions.

A learning network has been advanced through SCALE and has helped build capacity among collaboratives, state and federal agencies, as well as among local partners participating in collaboratives. While federal, state and local leaders have collectively developed a strong and clear vision for what needs to be accomplished, everyone has much to learn about how to achieve those goals. A learning network will help all partners learn to manage and manage to learn ² Metrics need to be developed to guide and assess efforts to build capacity for improvement, in addition to the improvements made.



Implementation

1. The Governor and the Legislature authorize and fund a learning network that helps all local collaboratives grow their capacity to plan, implement and problem solve.
2. The learning network should include a multi-interest body consisting of university and agency scientists, implementation leaders from agencies and collaboratives, and other collaborative implementation specialists and led by a pairing of a university scientist and collaborative specialists.
3. SCALE recommends that key representatives from the state support and participate in a learning network that helps all of the collaboratives grow their capacity to plan and implement, solve for shared problems, and articulate common needs to other local, state and federal partners. As participants, state and federal agencies will learn from – and contribute to – the learning among the collaboratives and gain insights for how to evolve their internal processes and approaches.

² Conversations are underway to link the California Landscape Stewardship Network and the Fire Adapted Communities Network to advance shared learning and policy work.

Desired Result: Projects over time will be predicated on the growing understanding of ecological and social systems and as a result, portfolios of projects achieve landscape scale impacts.

Objective: In addition to the intended benefits, each project will contribute to growing knowledge regarding forest and community resiliency and that new knowledge is used to guide capacity building activities; is incorporated into future projects; and, informs state legislative, budget and regulatory activities.



The State needs to support learning and adaptive management across the collaboratives and engage the collaboratives to provide feedback for future policy, budget and regulatory decisions.



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