

Improving the Health of California's Headwater Forests

September 20, 2017

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Protection Agency

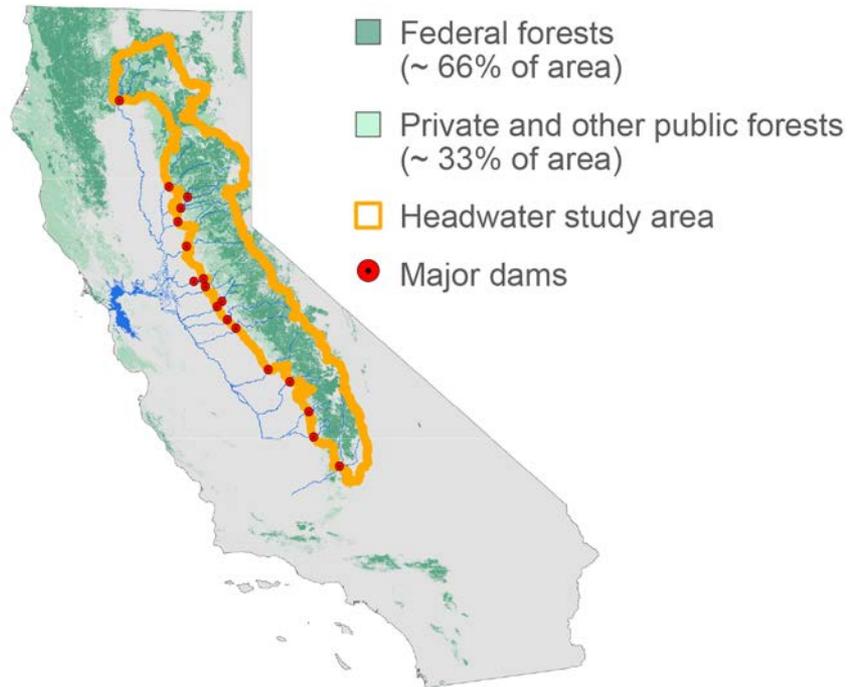


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Why focus on headwater forests?



Benefits of headwater forests:

- Source of 2/3 of state's surface water
- Habitat for endangered species
- Timber production for rural development and urban housing
- Recreation

Key takeaways for improving headwater forests

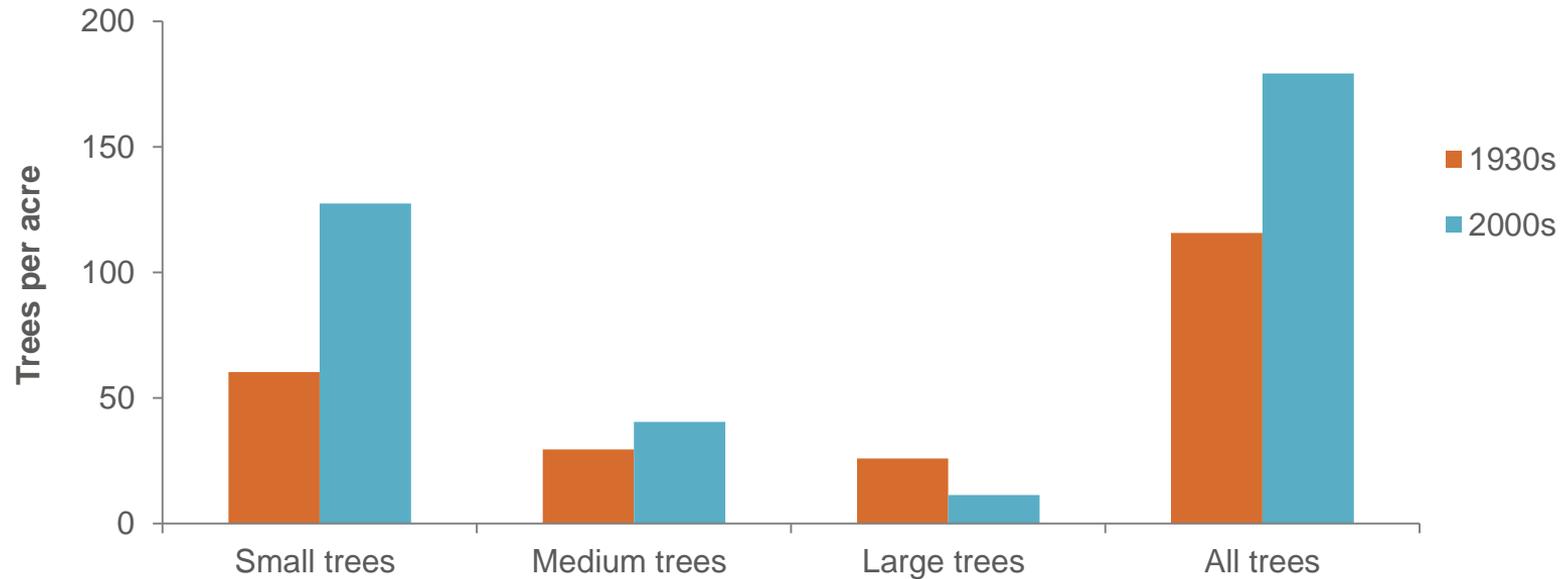
- Decades of fire suppression made forests too dense, vulnerable to die-offs and catastrophic wildfires
- Treatments to improve forest resilience are difficult to use in complex management environment
- Suggested reforms:
 - Manage for long term and over large scales
 - Bundle treatments with revenue generating projects
 - Enhance cooperation between various types of landowners and other stakeholders

Outline

- Forest health is in decline
- Treatments for improving forest health
- Reforms for increasing the pace and scale of action

Headwater forests too dense, with many small trees

Tree density in the headwater forests



The drought accelerated forest health decline



Recent tree die-off in the Sierra Nevada

Latest drought impacts:

- 15 million more dead trees per year, most from bark beetle outbreak
- Two of largest wildfires in state history

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Removing forest fuels will improve forest health



Prescribed and managed wildfire



Mechanical thinning

Barriers to increasing use of these treatments

- Focus on avoiding short-term impacts limits ability to manage for long-term health
- Treatment needs are poorly understood
- No single formula for funding expansion of treatments
- Many parties across a patchwork of landownership need to coordinate to be effective at large-enough scale

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Make forest health a top priority

Actions:

- Use broader permitting tools to support long-term forest health on federal lands
- Level playing field between fire suppression and other management actions
- Embed forest health objectives into state forest management practices



Smoke from a Sierra wildfire

Define needs and make the most of available funding

Actions:

- Improve and standardize forest treatment accounting practices
- Bundle harvesting with other treatments to help cover costs
- Collaborate for funding



Idaho sawmill

Utilize new and existing tools that facilitate collaboration

Actions:

- Long-term and financially viable stewardship contracts on national forests
- Federal and state collaboration through the Good Neighbor Authority
- Private forest owner collaboration through forest health districts



Malheur National Forest, Oregon

Solutions are not easy and not one-size-fits-all

- It took decades to create poor conditions in today's forests, and will take decades to improve their health
- Barriers to improving forest health are not technical—they are legal, social, and financial
- Reforms will require leadership and risk taking at local, state, federal levels
- Forest health should be a common goal for all Californians

Thank you!



About these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

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