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Conservation, Water, Forestry and Rural Communities Agree on Ecologically Sound Forest Management

Alliance Launches Website and Educational Video

SACRAMENTO, CA – January 26, 2017 – An unprecedented, urban-rural coalition representing water interests, local government, the conservation community, agriculture, and the forestry sector has formed to advance proactive, science-based, and ecologically sound forest management practices. The California Forest Watershed Alliance (CAFWA) supports policies and practices that promote healthy forests that are more resilient to drought, wildfire, and climate change.

Knowing that 60 percent of California's water supply originates in the Sierra Nevada, the alliance has coalesced around a set of proactive priorities to help protect California's forested watersheds, and outlined them in [this](#) educational video, accessed on the CAFWA [website](http://www.caforestsandwatersheds.org) at www.caforestsandwatersheds.org.

Five years of record drought have led to a year-round wildfire season in California, with wildfires increasing in both size and severity. Megafires, like the Rim Fire and King Fire, degrade wildlife habitat, release tons of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, threaten water supply, and put lives and communities at serious risk. Recent storms have compounded the impacts in fire-scarred watersheds by sending debris and sediment into streams and drinking water supplies.

The more than 100 million dead trees from insects and disease in the Sierra Nevada have further degraded forest health, wildlife habitat, and carbon storage – a function of the drought and unhealthy, overcrowded forest conditions.



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“California’s water supply depends upon healthy forests and healthy watersheds,” said Tim Quinn, Executive Director of the Association of California Water Agencies. “By proactively managing our forests, we can safeguard our water supply by reducing the risk of damaging megafires.”

“California’s wildfires are getting larger, hotter, and more destructive, posing a serious threat to wildlife habitat and natural values,” said David Edelson, Sierra Nevada Project Director for The Nature Conservancy. “That is why we are partnering with water utilities, rural counties, and the forestry sector to promote ecologically-based management of our forests and watersheds.”

“Our forests provide us with a multitude of benefits, including clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation and economic opportunities,” David Bischel, President of the California Forestry Association. “If we can proactively manage our forests, it will protect all of those environmental and economic values we rely on.”

“Without a major change in forest management, vast swaths of forests will continue to be lost, impacting the natural resources that residents throughout the state rely upon,” said Paul Wenger, President of the California Farm Bureau Federation. “It’s time that we come together to solve the crisis in our forests, and having a diverse group of interests working to restore our forests to healthier conditions for the long term is an idea everyone should support.”

“Static management practices, coupled with drier, hotter conditions, have created unhealthy, highly flammable forests, resulting in large, destructive, and difficult to control megafires,” said Justin Caporusso, Vice President of External Affairs for the Rural County Representatives of California. “Fortunately, there are better ways to manage our forests to reverse this trend and restore them to health. CAFWA’s collaborative effort seeks to bring attention to forest management practices that will protect our water, energy, environment, and economy. ”

CAFWA’s policy platform includes increasing the pace and scale of ecologically-based forest management, increasing the funding for forest thinning and wildfire prevention efforts, increasing the geographic scope of forest management to address problems at a landscape scale, and making economic use of the byproducts of ecologically-based forest thinning through the use of biomass.

CAFWA’s website can be accessed [here](#), or by visiting www.caforestsandwatersheds.org.

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ABOUT CALIFORNIA FOREST WATERSHED ALLIANCE (CAFWA)

The California Forest Watershed Alliance (CAFWA) is an urban-rural coalition representing water interests, local governments, the conservation community, agriculture, and the forestry sector, created to promote the restoration and improvement of California’s forested watersheds.