

# SIERRA NEVADA WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (WIP)

The Sierra Nevada forests and watershed have been under increasing stress from continuous droughts, long-term fire suppression, insect attacks and disease, and climate change. All of these issues have led to massive increases in wildfires. In order to support restoration efforts, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) have partnered together to create the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program (WIP). The WIP is a coordinated, integrated, collaborative program that aims to restore the health of one of California's primary watersheds through the integration and coordination of governments, special districts, private and corporate interests, nonprofits, foundations, and other out-of-region beneficiaries. The program is implementing large-scale restoration through three focus areas - increased investment, needed policy changes, and increased infrastructure - with the eventual goal of increasing restoration annually from 200,000 to 500,000 acres. The initial funding for this project came from a \$7.5 billion water bond, of which \$25 million was directly allocated to SNC.

For more information visit: <http://restorethesierra.org/>

## HOW IT APPLIES TO STEWARDSHIP

The WIP is presently identifying key restoration work and creating the coordinated implementation plan necessary to address the needs. Assessments should be complete in late 2016 for the 17 watershed assessment areas, and pilot programs will begin shortly after. Meanwhile, the partners have also signed a prescribed fire memorandum of understanding, expanding this tool as a stewardship technique in the region. As the plan develops, further stewardship opportunities will be identified.

## STRENGTHS

- Collaboration among a variety of entities spreads burden of work among many stakeholders
- Engagement of local crews and restoration-focused collaboratives brings jobs into the communities in the Sierra Nevada Region

## CHALLENGES

- Poor wood- and biomass-processing infrastructure in the Sierra Nevada hinders forest restoration efforts
- Securing commitments from stakeholders for collaborative funding to maintain forest/watershed restoration efforts take time and energy
- Investments are made for specific projects and as such require more work



## Quick Facts

SNC and USFS led the formation of the WIP collaborative effort in 2015

Program focused on increasing investment, addressing policy, and increasing restoration infrastructure

Broad mandate to address a variety of restoration needs

Enhanced through \$25 million in funding from a \$7.5 billion water bond approved by California voters

Presently working on creating the WIP strategy before pilot implementation in 2017

## CASH FLOW DIAGRAM

