

Problem

Over 100 years of suppressing wildfires and changing climate have produced overgrown forests with increasing risk of catastrophic wildfire that threaten humans, Threatened and Endangered plants and animals, air quality, drinking water and other forest resources in the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group watersheds in Eldorado and Stanislaus National Forests.

Catastrophic wildfires release tons of greenhouse gases into the air while severely reducing the forest's ability to absorb and store atmospheric carbon. Forests evolved through the ages with low to moderate-intensity fires that cleared the underbrush, so fire is inevitable. Urgent action is needed to reduce the risk of devastating catastrophic wildfires.

Shared Vision

ACCG wants **a major shift to using fire in combination with mechanical thinning by USFS managers to prevent catastrophic wildfires in forests over large areas using a science-based concept called *Pyrosilviculture***. This is a method of forest restoration using fire that is described in a 2021 publication by twelve scientists led by Dr. Malcolm North. We want to apply the best available science to restore forests to a more resilient natural condition to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. Fire has been used for restoration in Yosemite and other National Parks and in forests in the southern US for many decades.

Pyrosilviculture includes 1) thinning treatments designed to expand prescribed and managed fire and connect dispersed treatments, 2) using low and moderate severity fire as treatments on a large landscape scale and reestablish frequent fires to control vegetation growth, and 3) identifying managed wildfire zones ranging from suppression to intentional burning. Broad landscape objectives are needed because fire is a blunter tool than silvicultural prescriptions to control tree size and density. So greater acceptance of tree mortality and canopy openings is needed. ***Pyrosilviculture*** thinning includes:

- 1) Anchor treatments** – treating fuels in strategic locations using thinning to control prescribed and managed wildfire and resist severe fire,
- 2) Ecosystem asset treatments** – pre-treating riparian corridors, spotted owl territories, or large-tree area assets prior to introducing fire, and
- 3) Revenue treatments** -- removing timber and biomass to provide a revenue stream to fund prescribed and managed fire.

Desired Actions

We want to collaborate with the US Forest Service on applying ***Pyrosilviculture*** in plans and projects over a large-scale in the ACCG area, including how fire will achieve resource objectives, methods, zones for managed wildfire, barriers to this method, and costs.

We want elected and USFS officials to provide additional funding for staff and equipment dedicated to planning and implementation of science-based ***Pyrosilviculture*** in the ACCG area.