

YOSEMITE STANISLAUS SOLUTIONS

In 2010, the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) collaborative was formed to restore and maintain healthy forests and watersheds, firesafe communities, and sustainable local economies using a science based approach. YSS is a highly diverse coalition of interests that includes approximately 30 stakeholders who represent the timber industry, grazing interests, local government, environmental organizations, business interests, recreation groups, and others. The group's original goal was to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration so as to prevent large-scale catastrophic wildfires on the Stanislaus National Forest. This focus changed however when, in 2013, the devastating Rim Fire severely damaged a vast portion of the landscape that is the focus of YSS.

Due to the massive amount of restoration planning and targeted reforestation, the value of collaborative support became even more evident. Although the group was not able to develop an action plan and bring resources to prevent the Rim Fire and tree mortality from damaging the watershed, we have been very successful in three key areas subsequent to the Rim Fire. First, the group was able to forge a common-ground solutions to salvage logging and the reforestation plan in the burned area that prevented lawsuits from stopping either of these activities from proceeding. Second, the group has successfully been awarded approximately \$4.5M in funding for fish and wildlife habitat (meadows, springs, owl, deer, etc.) restoration activities. Third, over the past three years YSS has attracted nearly 2,000 individuals who have volunteered approximately 30,000 hours towards planting 114,000 trees, restored meadows, removed noxious weeds, and improved trails in the burned area.



YSS has now turned its attention back to the “green” forest – areas that were not burned by the Rim Fire. Over the past year the group has built agreement around a plan to treat the green forest. Called the Forest Resiliency Pilot Project for the Stanislaus National Forest, the plan is intended to reduce forest fuels and restore resilient, self-sustaining forest conditions. The primary activities that we propose in the project are to complete the detailed project plans and designs, project layout, implement mechanical thinning and prescribed burning. The project will follow the principles and strategies outlined in General Technical Report (GTR)-220: An Ecosystem Management Strategy for Sierran Mixed-Conifer Forests and its companion GTR-237: Managing Sierra Nevada Forests. These principles have been successfully applied at the Tuolumne-Stanislaus Experimental Forest to produce an economically and ecologically successful thinning and prescribed burning project. Key amongst the principals outlined in these documents is the application of variable-density thinning to recreate forest heterogeneity with individual trees, clumps of trees, and openings in the forest structure.