



YSS

Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions



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PARTNER NEWS RELEASE

THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIP BRINGS DOLLARS TO FOREST HEALTH IN TUOLUMNE COUNTY

Sonora, Calif.— August 13, 2021. Tuolumne County and Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions received \$5 million for a CAL FIRE Healthy Forest grant to begin implementation of the Social and Ecological Resilience Across the Landscape (SERAL) project designed to make local communities and forests resilient to largescale fire, insect, and drought disturbances.

Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions Collaborative (YSS), in partnership with Tuolumne County and the U.S. Forest Service, has developed the SERAL project to increase the pace and scale of forest restoration activities on the Stanislaus National Forest and surrounding areas. SERAL offers a shared stewardship approach representing all hands and all lands in a 118,808-acre project area including 94,823 acres on the Stanislaus National Forest.

Patrick Koepele, Executive Director of Tuolumne River Trust and YSS leadership team member said, “SERAL is a big step forward in improving forest health in an unburned area that is of high risk to catastrophic fire. The project will meet many of YSS goals including reducing fire risk to our communities, improving wildlife habitat, and protecting our watersheds, and supporting local economies.”

Funding will be used to implement the first phase of SERAL, which is to construct 4,700 acres of fuel management features strategically placed in high priority locations on the Stanislaus National Forest to protect communities and infrastructure along the Highway 108 corridor. The larger SERAL project also includes forest thinning to increase forest resilience to largescale disturbance events such as fire or drought, and prescribed fire to improve forest health.

“This project will build the foundation for future phases of SERAL to improve forest health by modifying fuels so that we are able to reintroduce fire at a landscape level,” said Liz Peterson, Tuolumne County Senior Administrative Analyst.

“The Forest is excited to be part of an all hands, all lands approach working together across boundaries to accomplish the common goal of restoring and creating healthy fire resilient communities and landscapes,” said Jason Kuiken, Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor.

The grant also provides funding for fuels reduction and forest health treatments on 120 acres of Murphy Ranch owned by the Tuolumne Band of the Me-Wuk Indians, highlighting another example of collaborating across borders.

Jerry McGowan, Fire Chief of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians said, “We are very appreciative to have funding to help protect tribal lands and adjacent properties. The work will serve as an anchor point for fighting fire as well as for future projects.”

Tuolumne County, YSS, Stanislaus National Forest and other partners working together in shared stewardship of forested lands to protect, enhance, and restore forest and watershed health while bringing economic opportunities to the local area.

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