



NFWF

PRESS RELEASE

# NFWF Announces \$1.7 million in Grants for California Forest Health and Wildfire Risk Reduction

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 22, 2016) — [The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) (NFWF) today announced the first round of grants from its recently launched Pacific Southwest Fuels Management Partnership. The \$1.7 million in awards announced will fund four projects and will be matched by more than \$1.3 million in grantee contributions, for a total conservation impact of more than \$3 million. The partnership funds fuel management projects that reduce the risk of severe wildfire, protect critical natural resources and ecological values of U.S. Forest Service (USFS) restoration investments, and reduce the risk of damage to public and private improvements near USFS lands.

The successful first round of grants was made possible through funding from USFS.

“The grants we announce today will fund immediate activities to improve forest health and resilience to catastrophic wildfire,” said Jeff Trandahl, executive director and CEO of NFWF. “Working closely with our partners at the U.S. Forest Service, we were able to launch this new competitive grant program in less than a year to address the urgent conservation needs of California’s drought-stressed forests.”

The Fuels Partnership was launched in 2015 to fund projects that will decrease the intensity of future wildland fires and restore a healthier natural fire regime in order to support biodiverse forest ecosystems. A century of widespread fire exclusion, years of drought and insect- and disease-related tree mortality have resulted in a buildup of surface fuels and the overstocking of California forests with trees and ladder fuels. The buildup of flammable vegetation makes managing fire riskier, more complex, and more costly. Fuels management projects are designed to improve overall forest health, which in turn improves habitat for important species, including Clark’s nutcracker and northern goshawk.

“These landscapes are critical to our communities and preserving and protecting them is vital to ensuring their existence for future generations,” said Regional Forester Randy Moore. “The increased conservation work will benefit the environment and communities with more resilient ecosystems, improved watersheds and wildlife habitat, and hazardous fuel reduction.”

Grants awarded in this first slate of projects will make immediate improvements to forest health and wildlife habitat on four national forests. Projects will encourage maturation of old forest stands, which provide important habitat for Pacific fisher and California spotted owl, and will improve the condition of whitebark pine stands to support Clark’s nutcracker populations. Projects will also reintroduce natural fire into forest ecosystems, which has important benefits for fish and wildlife: the unique ecological process of wildfire recycles nutrients back into the soil, and post-fire regeneration creates new habitat types that are important for wildlife mating and nesting.

## 2015 Pacific Southwest Fuels Management Strategic Investments Partnership Grants

### Remove Dead and Diseased Trees:

- **June Mountain Ski Area Whitebark Pine Restoration (CA)**, *Inyo National Forest*, California Trout (\$490,144) Remove bark beetle-impacted trees to improve forest resilience and decrease the risk of a

large-scale, high-intensity wildland fire affecting 110 acres in the June Lake and downstream Grant Lake/Rush Creek watersheds. Project will remove dead and dying coniferous trees within the selected whitebark pine stands to promote seed cache behavior by Clark's nutcracker and improve stand conditions. Project will also confer fire protection benefits for the community of June Lake.

#### Improve Habitat Quality:

- **Frazier Mountain Vegetation Management (CA)**, *Los Padres National Forest*, Student Conservation Association (\$320,237) Complete fuels reduction treatments on 500 acres of the Frazier Mountain Project in the Mount Pinos Ranger District of the Los Padres National Forest. Project will restore forest structure, reduce the risk of bark beetle infestation, reduce moisture competition for residual trees, lower total fuel loading, reduce the potential for catastrophic, stand-replacing wildfire, and recruit and place a Fuels Management Team for six months, consisting of 10 team members and two project leaders.
- **Orleans Community Fuels Reduction and Forest Health (CA)**, *Six Rivers National Forest*, Karuk Tribe (\$500,000) Utilize existing fuels and fire crews and local contractors to treat fuels buildup that threatens forest, watershed and community health within the Orleans Community Fuel Reduction project and the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WGRP) Plan for Restoring Fire Adapted Landscapes. Project will reduce hazardous fuels accumulation, reduce the probability of crown fire in the project area, and support the reintroduction of natural, cultural and prescribed fire to improve ecosystem function.

#### Reintroduce Fire to Fire-Adapted Forests:

- **McKenzie Ridge Fuel Reduction and Prescribed Fire (CA)**, *Sequoia National Forest*, American Rivers (\$394,116) Complete permitting, environmental compliance and burn plan, reduce fuel loads and wildfire risks on 726 acres, improve forest health and associated habitat, reintroduce controlled fire as a method of restoring and preserving ecosystem diversity, and demonstrate monitoring benefits of controlled burning for fire safety and habitat. Project will improve denning and nesting habitat for Pacific fishers, northern goshawks and California spotted owls.

To learn more about the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's work on fire resilient western forests, visit [nfwf.org/pswfuels](http://nfwf.org/pswfuels).

#### **About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**

*The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's wildlife and habitats. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private contributions. NFWF works with government, nonprofit and corporate partners to find solutions for the most intractable conservation challenges. Over the last three decades, NFWF has funded more than 4,500 organizations and committed more than \$3.5 billion to conservation projects. Learn more at [nfwf.org](http://nfwf.org).*

#### **About The U.S. Forest Service**

*The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the Forest Service manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80 percent of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/r5/>*