



*Overstocked plantations in the Pilliken Forest Health project area. The Eldorado National Forest completed a Decision Memo in August 2016 using the 2014 Farm Bill authority to approve fuels reduction and forest health treatments on 1,886 acres. This is one of many treatments which will create a Cohesive Strategy for the South Fork American River Watershed.*

**Background**

The South Fork American River (SOFAR) Cohesive Strategy is an All-Lands Wildland Fire Management Strategy with three goals: *Resilient Landscapes*, *Fire Adapted Communities*, and *Safe and Effective Wildfire Response*. The SOFAR Watershed was proposed for implementing the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy because of the values at risk threatened by complex fire issues associated with drought, climate change, fuel loading, insects, and disease. Communities, water delivery systems, hydroelectric power generation facilities, Old Growth forest remnants, protected species, recreation, and Highway 50, an important transportation gateway to South Lake Tahoe are all values at risk in this watershed. The need for proactive fuels management and implementing a cohesive strategy in this watershed is underscored by the frequency and extent of wildfires in the project area. For example, the Hwy 50 corridor has had five large fires within the last 40 years which have spread throughout the watershed: the Pilliken Fire (1973), Wrights Fire (1981), the Cleveland Fire (1992), the Freds Fire (2004) and the King Fire (2014). The SOFAR Cohesive Strategy project area is approximately 410,000 acres, including approximately 250,000 acres of the Eldorado National Forest. The project area includes the upper 75% of the South Fork of the American River Watershed, and 49 miles of the Highway 50 corridor.

**Fiscal Year 2016 Funding and Accomplishments**

The SOFAR Cohesive Strategy Collaboration hosted a workshop in June 2016 to learn about perspectives and collaborative approaches to fulfill the goals of the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy. The resulting Stakeholder Issue Assessment Findings and Recommendations, prepared by Consensus Building Institute, provide a foundation to developing a Collaboration charter, which is an emphasis for the Collaboration in 2017.



*Approximately 60 people attended the South Fork American River Cohesive Strategy Collaboration meeting in June 2016.*

The Eldorado National Forest had a productive year implementing projects that would assist in achieving the Cohesive Strategy goals. The Forest received \$5,087,546 of supplemental 2015 Wildland Fire Hazardous Fuels Funding (WFHF), of which approximately \$1.6 million were allocated to Agreements and approximately \$3.2 were allocated to Stewardship/Service Contracts (*Table 1*). Most of the Agreements and Steward/Service contracts were awarded to companies, agencies, or organizations in El Dorado County or counties adjacent to El Dorado County. There were a few contracts awarded to companies in northern California and southern Oregon. In addition, the Forest received an additional \$1.0 million in previous year Forest Products (2014) and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (2009) dollars, which were awarded to fuels reduction projects. The Eldorado also contributed over \$1.7 million (*Table 1*) towards project implementation directed towards achieving the Cohesive Strategy goals.



*Fuels treatment conducted through an agreement between the Eldorado NF and the American Conservation Experience program.*

### ***Fire Adapted Communities***

The Forest Service and CAL FIRE worked closely to develop the Fire Adapted 50 plan which focuses on the Fire Adapted Communities component of the Cohesive Strategy. Fire Adapted 50 includes a series of projects which will strengthen and expand existing fuel breaks in the most heavily developed part of the watershed along the Highway 50 corridor. In July 2016, the Eldorado National Forest and CAL FIRE’s parent agency, California Natural Resources Agency signed the first Good Neighbor Agreement in the Region, designed to start implementation of the Fire Adapted 50 plan. This agreement will provide treatments across 500 acres; a tracked chipper; an equipment trailer; and the environmental analysis required for additional fuel break construction. In addition to protecting and restoring habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species, and enhancing water quality and watershed function, actions implemented under the agreement are expected to enhance resiliency to catastrophic wildfire or pest outbreaks. The Participating Agreement with the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians also contributes to the Fire Adaptive Communities goal by reducing hazardous fuels in 150 areas around the Wrights Lake and Dark Lake recreation residence tracts and the Wrights Lake campground and day use area. Likewise, the Forest entered into an agreement with the American Conservation Experience to implement 90 acres of fuels reduction in the Caples project area and around the community of Strawberry (*Table 2*).

### ***Safe and Effective Response***

Defensible space and fuels reduction activities around Wrights Lake, Dark Lake, and Strawberry residence tracts, campgrounds, day use areas, and roadsides promotes Safe and Effective Responses by improving emergency access and egress to these highly recreated and at-risk areas. In addition, the Forest funded 11 miles of road resurfacing on the Granite Springs and Webber Mill roads (funded with Freds Fire settlement funds), which are key routes needed for effective fire response.

*Table 1. Approximate funds expended in the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy project area in FY 2016 to meet the Cohesive Strategy goals.*

<b>Type of Funds</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Approximate Distribution of Funds</b>			<b>Fund Source</b>
		<b>Stewardship/ Service Contracts</b>	<b>Agreements</b>	<b>Eldorado NF</b>	
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (2015)	5,087,546	3,207,231	1,642,454	58,309	Region 5
Forest Products (2014)	750,000	750,000			Region 5
Hazardous Fuels Reduction (2009)	250,000	250,000			Region 5
Improvement or Maintenance of Roads (2016)	100,000	100,000			Eldorado NF
Freds Fire Settlement (2013)	1,715,502	1,186,464	128,538	400,500	Eldorado NF
<b>Approximate Totals</b>	<b>7,903,048</b>	<b>5,493,695</b>	<b>1,770,991</b>	<b>458,809</b>	

## Resilient Landscapes

Contract awards and implementation and Forest Service in house work on the Cleveland/Icehouse Plantations, En Garde, Quidazoic, Pilliken, and 2-Chaix project areas contributes important on-the-ground implementation towards the Resilient Landscape goal. For example, Quidazoic was a Stewardship Contract that consists of 584 acres of mastication and/or biomass cutting and piling, 920 acres of biomass cutting and decking, 45 miles of road maintenance, including the installation of 133 graded dips. The project should yield approximately 11 MBF of salvage. The Forest Service masticated 350 acres and pruned 30 acres of plantations in the Cleveland-Ice house project area, in addition to the approximately 129 acres of tractor piling or mastication, followed by pile burning in the 2-Chaix project area. In addition, noxious weeds were treated in both the Freds fire and King's fire perimeter. Additional stakeholder involvement in future projects design, and collaborative work to connect projects across jurisdictional boundaries contributes important accomplishments towards the Resilient Landscapes component of the Cohesive Strategy.

*Table 2. Key SOFAR Cohesive Strategy projects associated with the supplemental Funds (Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Forest Products) provided by Region 5 and Eldorado NF funding directed towards achieving the Cohesive Strategy goals.*

<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Contract/ Agreement/ Forest Personnel</b>	<b>Description</b>
Supplemental Funds	Wrights Lake Recreation Fuels Reduction	Participating Agreement with the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians	Approximately 150 acres of treatments to reduce hazardous fuels by removing blown down trees and small diameter trees and brush within the Wrights and Dark Lake Recreation Residences Tracts and the Wrights campground and day use area.
Supplemental Funds	Highway 50 Fuels Reduction Project	Good Neighbor Agreement with CAL FIRE	Approximately 500 acres of hand cutting/piling, and pile burning adjacent to Highway 50 in the WUI around Silver Fork/Kyburz, Strawberry and recreation residences.
Supplemental Funds	Caples Ecological Restoration Project	American Conservation Experience (ACE) Agreement	Complete 12.5 miles (76 acres) of hand line including cutting/piling within the 4,400 acres of proposed prescribed burning.
Supplemental Funds	Strawberry Fuels Reduction	ACE Agreement	Approximately 14 acres of hand cutting/piling of small diameter trees and brush, and limbing of trees greater than 9 inch dbh.
Supplemental Funds	En Garde	Service Contract	Approximately 2,199 acres of pre-commercial thinning consisting of biomass removal/ mastication. Project consisted of 1,054 acres in Cleveland-Ice House and 1,065 in King Fire footprint.
Supplemental Funds & Eldorado NF	Quidazoic	Stewardship Contract	Approximately 1,504 acres of treatments, consisting of 584 acres of mastication and/or biomass cutting and piling, 920 acres of biomass cutting and decking, 45 miles of road maintenance, installation of 133 graded dips, and 11 MMBF of salvage.
Supplemental Funds	King Fire Noxious Weed Treatments	Service Contract	Approximately 60 acres of noxious weed treatments.
Supplemental Funds	NEPA Planning	Agreement with TEAMS	Cleveland-Icehouse NEPA assistance.
Supplemental Funds & Eldorado NF	Cadastral Surveying	Agreement with BLM	Boundary marking around Kyburz in the Cohesive Strategy project area.
Supplemental Funds	California Conservation Corps	Agreement with State	Fuels reduction in the Cohesive Strategy project area.
Eldorado NF	Granite Springs and Webber Mill Road	Service Contract and Eldorado Personnel	11 miles of road resurfacing.
Eldorado NF	Freds Fire Noxious Weed Treatments	Service Contract and Eldorado Personnel	Approximately 500 acres of noxious weed treatments.
Eldorado NF	2-Chaix	Eldorado Personnel	Approximately 129 acres of tractor piling and/or mastication, followed by pile burning.
Eldorado NF	2-Chaix	Stewardship Contract, Eldorado Personnel	Salvage logged 750 acres, including grapple piling on 200 acres and biomass removal to landings on 550 acres, followed by pile burning. Contract was awarded in previous years.
Eldorado NF	Cleveland-Ice House Plantations	Eldorado Personnel	Mastication of 350 acres and 30 acres of pruning plantations.

**For more information contact:** Kendal Young, South Fork American River Cohesive Strategy; 530-621-5259; kendalyoung@fs.fed.us.