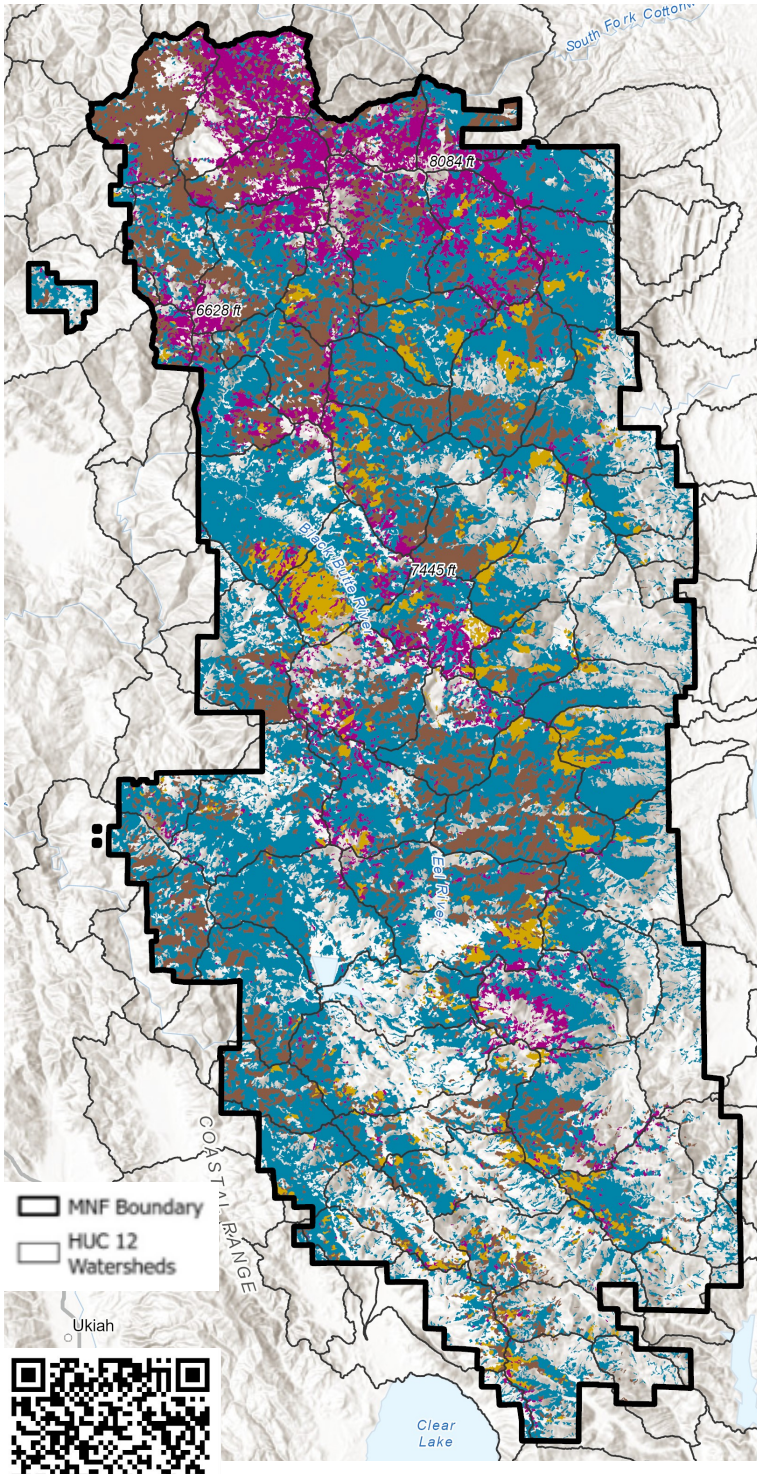
Final Mendocino Postfire Restoration Strategy

Developed collaboratively by the USFS R5 Ecology Program, USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, and the Mendocino National Forest

Managers are not only faced with the challenge of supporting ecosystem recovery, but they are also faced with ensuring that these ecosystems will be resilient to the next fire and other future stressors.

This restoration strategy pulls together information and datasets in an ecologically meaningful way, to help understand the status of ecosystem health and integrity across the Mendocino National Forest.

Restoration Opportunities were identified within areas of conifer forest, late seral habitat, and oak woodland depending on pre-fire conditions, burn severity, and expected climate impacts.



Maintain/Promote (87,840 acres)

Target Areas: Unburned areas with low structural departures or those where recent low severity fire likely benefited forest health and improved ecological functions and processes. These areas may not need immediate management interventions to remain resilient in the near-term.

Actions: Monitoring existing conditions or planning for future maintenance burning.

Take Management Action (433,703 acres)

Target Areas: Degraded areas due to either recent fire effects or the impacts of past fire exclusion. These areas are likely to need management interventions to restore desired conditions where management action is feasible.

Actions: Reforestation of trees, thinning and/or fuels reduction, or promotion of oak overstory.

Reevaluate Desired Conditions (44,371 acres)

Target Areas: Degraded areas where restoration of previously established desired conditions may not be ecologically feasible due to changed conditions.

Actions: Re-evaluating the species and density of trees in areas selected for reforestation or choosing to promote different plant communities that are better suited to current and future conditions.

Resource Conflict (149,760 acres)

Target Areas: Overlapping resources that have different desired conditions. For example, a conifer forest with high amounts of flammable fuels that is also protected late seral habitat.

Actions: Consider what management actions make sense on the ground at this specific location while keeping in mind the context of the larger landscape.

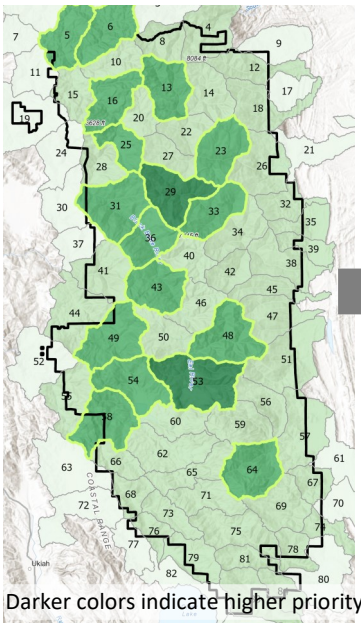
"Planning and Prioritization after Fire"
StoryMap Website: https://bit.ly/plan-after-fire

Full report available at:
https://bit.ly/postfire-restore-MNF
For more content: https://bit.ly/postfire-framework

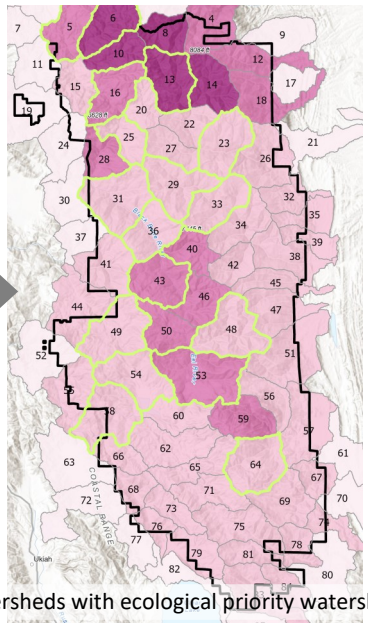
With over 700,000 acres of restoration opportunity, it is critical for managers to prioritize where and when they implement management actions.

Prioritization is an important step to effectively manage time, energy, and resources while building confidence in our management decisions along with accountability and trust between stakeholders. By using watersheds we focus restoration efforts at an ecologically relevant scale at which actions and needs can be prioritized and applied.

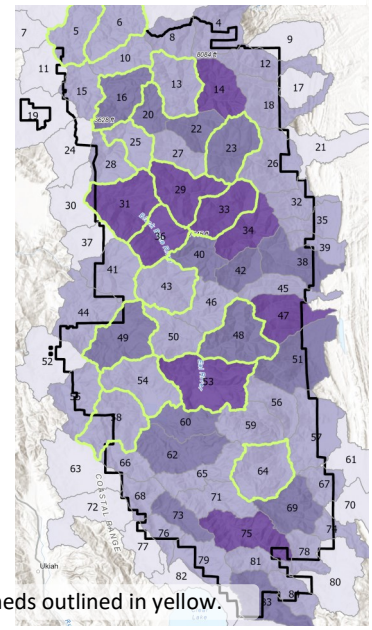
Ecological Rank



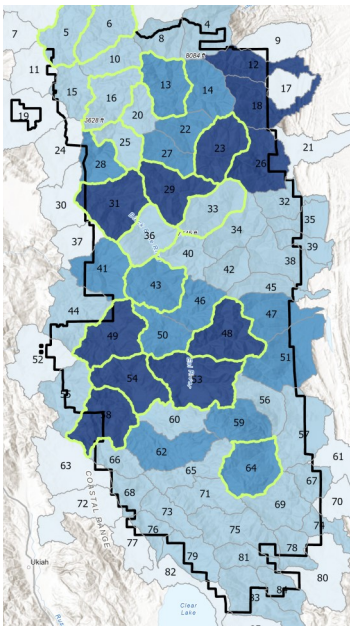
Maintenance Burning Rank



Reforestation/Reevaluate Rank



Thinning/Fuel Reduction Rank

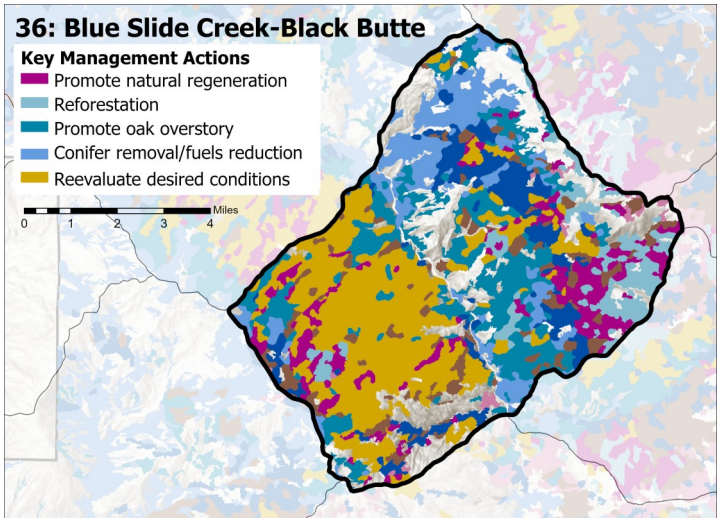


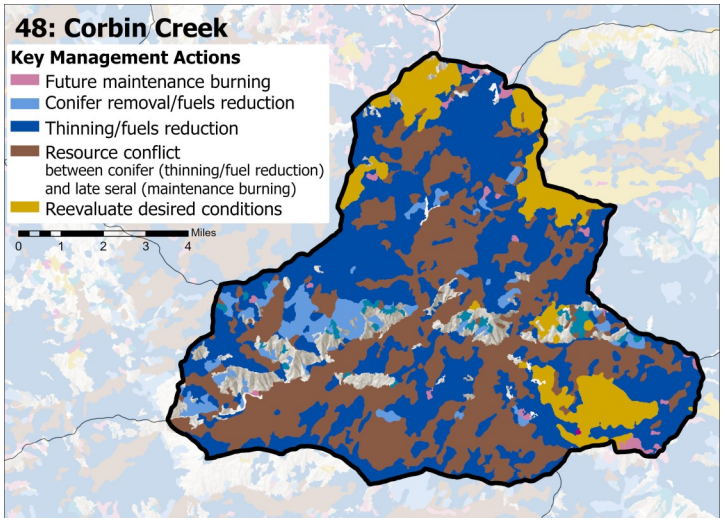
Darker colors indicate higher priority watersheds with ecological priority watersheds outlined in yellow.

Watershed-Level Application Within each watershed, the overall goal may be to restore degraded habitat, to ensure resiliency of remaining resources, or possibly both. This allows us to move from stand-level to watershed-level needs and has the potential to increase the pace and scale of restoration in larger meaningful ecological units.

Some watersheds were largely degraded by fire and require reforestation and/or a re-evaluation of desired conditions **to restore resources**. Restoration goals are focused on facilitating long-term conifer forest and oak woodland recovery through a reforestation strategy that considers both planting and natural regeneration and promoting the recovery and overall health of oak woodlands and their associated wildlife communities.

Watersheds where recent fires were neutral or beneficial to the resources present may have restoration goals that focus on **increasing the resilience** of surviving forest and reducing the risk of loss of late-seral habitat to future stressors by thinning and fuels reduction as well as maintenance burning. By being strategic with the placement and timing of restoration actions, managers can address both wildfire risk and wildlife needs across the watershed.





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