

Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership

Trinity County Community Protection Project

2016–2018



Thinned forest in Trinity County (Credit: Dan Ostmann)

In the remote mountains of northwestern California, nestled between the central valley and coast, is a forest full of fish and wildlife. At-risk species such as Chinook salmon, Coho salmon, steelhead, northern spotted owls, and Pacific fishers can all be found here. This rugged landscape is marked by South Fork Mountain, which is North America's longest continuous mountain ridge. The South Fork of the Trinity River—California's longest running undammed anadromous fish river—also flows here, between the Six Rivers and Shasta-Trinity National Forests. The waters that flow off these forests support the municipal water supplies for downstream communities like Eureka and Arcata. While images of tall evergreen trees and rushing mountain streams are common, so are frequent devastating wildfires. This Joint Chiefs' project reduced the risk of catastrophic wildfire to rural communities by establishing fire breaks and reducing hazardous fuels. Many local skilled contractors were hired to carry out this important work. These contracts helped support local communities. Along with the wildfire risk reduction work, forest habitat improvements were accomplished. These restoration projects included tree planting, removing old roads and trails, and rehabilitating former tree plantations. Through this project, existing collaborations were strengthened and new partnerships were formed.

PROJECT IMPACT:

4,479 acres

Fuel reduction on 4,479 acres
of National Forest.

USFS & NRCS JCLRP funds awarded 2016–2018: \$3,319,753
Total USDA and partner project funds: \$3,726,272

PROJECT RESULTS



Restored firebreak (Credit: Dan Ostmann)



Strategic fuelbreaks: thinned small diameter trees and shared them with community at public fuelwood utilization site.



Safer evacuation routes: firebreaks provided alternate egress for public in the south Ruth Lake area.



Restoring forest habitats: planted 1,889 acres of conifers and oaks in areas impacted by high severity fires.

USDA's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service are working together to improve the health of forests where public forests and grasslands connect to privately owned lands. Through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, the two USDA agencies are restoring landscapes by reducing wildfire threats to communities and landowners, protecting water quality and enhancing wildlife habitat.

Photos in this document are public domain or stock imagery unless otherwise noted.

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TRINITY COUNTY COMMUNITY PROTECTION PROJECT



Thinned forest with piled vegetation (Credit: Dan Ostmann)

Partnerships to Protect

The Trinity County Community Protection Project is an important collaboration among Federal agencies and local partners that mobilized for long-term positive change in Trinity County. One of the key partners central to this Joint Chiefs' project was the Watershed Research and Training Center in Hayfork, CA.

The Watershed Research and Training Center conducts the full gamut of land and watershed management services, partnering with communities, organizations, and agencies, with the goal of creating jobs and connecting people to the land and to each other.

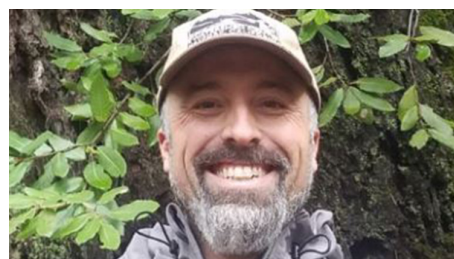
One of objectives of the overall project was hand thinning and mastication (or mulching) on 1,099 acres of young forests—commonly referred to as plantations—in the watersheds around Hayfork. Ultimately, the USDA Forest Service wanted to create conditions where prescribed fire can be used in these young forests.

"For much of the Trinity landscape, which is dominated by oak woodland savanna and mixed conifer forests, prescribed fire is the only cost-effective and ecologically appropriate tool for reducing surface fuels and maintaining those conditions over time," explained Nick Goulette, Executive Director of the Watershed Research and Training Center. "Joint Chiefs' helped us plan and implement projects spanning public and private lands, leading to cohesive treatments for safer and more effective fire management that benefits our forests and communities."

Working with diverse and knowledgeable partners through challenging circumstances has benefitted the landscape and has been fulfilling for partners like Nick.

"Deepening our partnerships across public and private lands allowed us to break down traditional planning and funding silos to look at the whole landscape," he said. "It also provided flexibility to adjust priorities over the multi-year project period, allowing us to adapt and respond to changing conditions and emerging needs."

For more information, please visit nrcs.usda.gov/JointChiefsReports



Hayfork's Watershed Research and Training Center Executive Director Nick Goulette (Credit: Josh Smith)

Key Partners

Trinity County Resource Conservation District
Trinity Fire Safe Council
Watershed Research and Training Center
Trinity County Collaborative Group
Watershed Research and Training Center

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