

# 2021-2022 CHAMPIONSHIP FORESTRY CHALLENGE

## FOCUS TOPIC QUESTION

### Introduction:

The focus topic for the 2021-2022 Championship event is ***California's Wildfire Crisis – A Call to Action***. Students will become familiar with the immense scope of the wildfire crisis, particularly over the last 2 years, identify stakeholders and their relationships, and recommend action items for one stakeholder.

### Focus Topic Fieldtrip Location:

Dependent on weather, we hope to travel to several sites that demonstrate various vegetative types in different phases of treatment, including:

- National forest pre-treatment
- Thinned forest on small privately owned or industrial forest or national forest
- Shaded fuel break on industrial land or at a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

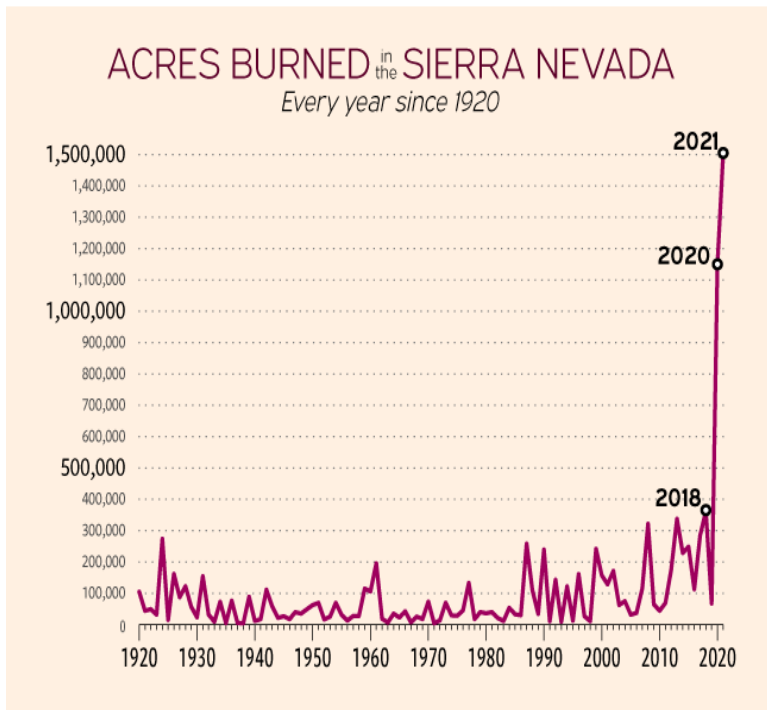
### Background Information:

#### Setting the Stage – the 2020 and 2021 Wildfire Seasons

The size and intensity of wildfires, particularly in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California have been increasing significantly. There are several reasons:

- Overly dense vegetation – six to sevenfold denser than 100 years ago (North, Collins, et al. Operational Resilience. Dec. 30, 2021)
- Seven of the past 10 years have been very dry.
- The dry years 2012-2017 caused a beetle epidemic that killed 147 million trees in California. The hardest hit was the southern Sierra Nevada (Source: California Forestry Notes, June 2019).
- The dry winters led to exceptionally low moisture content in the vegetation (3%). For comparison, kiln-dried lumber is about 12% moisture content.
- Hot, dry weather during the fire season coupled with lightning events. In 2021, lightning caused 582 fires in California (Source: Interagency Fire Center).
- Though the Forest Service stops fire starts at initial attack 98% of the time, they now say the other 1-2% are problematic (public statement by Deputy Regional Forester, Tony Scardina).

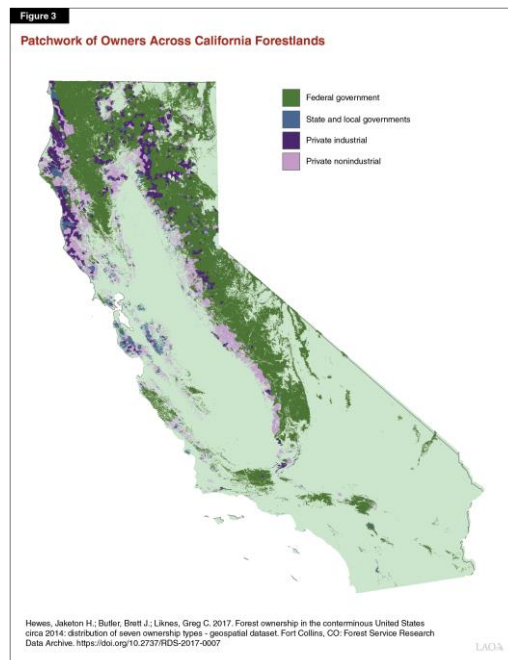
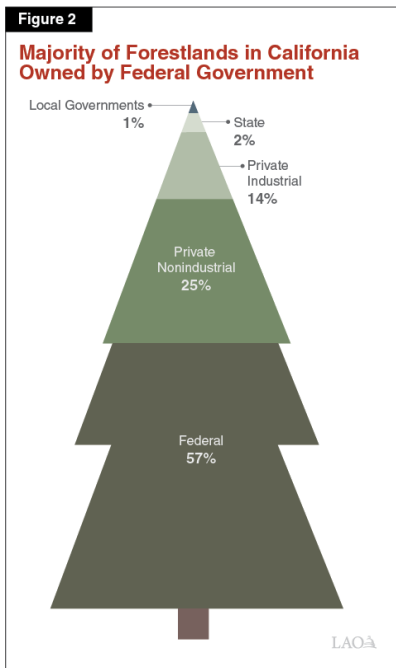
All of the above have led to the “1-2%” of fires that escape, becoming monster fires.



Source: Sierra Nevada Conservancy 1/24/2022

## Stakeholders – Who are they and how do they collaborate?

There are a myriad of agencies, organizations, and professional societies interested in and involved with management of forestlands in California. They can be loosely grouped together based on the ownership of the land they are focused on. In California, forestland is owned by the following groups in these proportions and distributed throughout the state as seen below:



Major stakeholders include:

1. Federal
  - a. Forest Service\* and their partners linked through Good Neighbor Authority and Master Stewardship Agreements
  - b. Congress
  - c. Tribes
  - d. Federal Forest Interest Groups such as the American Forest Resource Council\* (AFRC)
2. State
  - a. CalFire\*
  - b. California Legislature
  - c. California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection\*
  - d. Sierra Nevada Conservancy
  - e. Research groups such as University of California, who work in partnership with the US Forest Service
  - f. Prescribed fire groups such as the California Fire Science Consortium\*
3. Local
  - a. Small Private Forestland Owners and groups that assist them such as the American Forest Foundation\*
  - b. County Boards of Supervisors\*
  - c. Firesafe Councils\*
  - d. Collaborative Groups such as Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions\* (YSS)
  - e. Local Advocacy Groups such as TuCARE\*
4. Industry
  - a. Timber companies such as Sierra Pacific Industries\*
  - b. Byproducts such as biomass\*
  - c. Utilities, that manage forestland and have infrastructure in forests\*
5. Professional Organizations and Clubs
  - a. California Licensed Foresters Association\*
  - b. Associated California Loggers\*
  - c. Society of American Foresters\*
  - d. Environmental Community

Groups with stars (\*) behind them are represented at this event.

A legal-size piece of paper with 20 of these groups in a grid pattern will be provided. Use this gridded page to organize information about the relationships between each of these groups and within each group. Think about the nature of each of these 200+ relationships on the grid chart. Are they collaborative, confrontational, or something in between? How have they changed over time?

## Opportunities and Obstacles

Each stakeholder has a different skill set, authority, and interest. For example, an industrial timber company has different land management objectives than a small private family forest landowner, yet they often work together to accomplish their goals. Some groups, like loggers and environmentalists, traditionally disagree but in some cases have found common ground. Stakeholders may sometimes squander opportunities to advance their causes by not being internally organized or butting heads with other stakeholders.

## Solving the Crisis

By having several appointments with different stakeholders and using the resources on the flash drive provided, as well as gathering resources before you arrived and during the event, your team will start to come up with ideas on how stakeholders can take action to solve the crisis. At the end of the Thursday evening work time, you will be asked to select three stakeholders you would be most interested in gearing your presentation towards. By Friday evening you will know which stakeholder is yours to address. In the week or two following the event, we will attempt to set up a Zoom call or in-person meeting with members of your stakeholder group so you can share your ideas for their success.

## **Items to be Addressed in Your Presentation:**

Your presentation should address the following topics:

1. Overview of the wildfire crisis in California
2. Listing of the various stakeholder groups with an interest in the crisis
3. Relationships between two stakeholders, highlighting three, with examples of past interactions and advice for improving those relationships to advance their causes
4. Three recommended action items for one stakeholder group

## **Final Product:**

Your goal is to produce up to a 23-minute PowerPoint presentation that describes, in detail, the wildfire crisis in California and specific actions one group can take to help solve it. You are encouraged to use photos and information collected while at the event, interviews with various stakeholders, and the information on the flash drive provided. Additionally, use the judges' score sheet as a checklist, to make sure you cover the items on which you will be scored.