

Forest Restoration: OUR FUTURE

Centuries of resource extraction and development have fundamentally altered most of our region's forests, resulting in loss of habitat, water quality and Old Growth forests, as well as economic and social harm to communities and workers. While recent debates in Congress have focused on wildland fires and 'healthy forests,' true restoration is about more than reducing hazardous fuels. Sound forest restoration requires an integrated multi-disciplinary approach rooted in conservation biology and principles that include preserving and protecting intact landscapes, allowing the land to heal itself, and where necessary, helping it to do so through active restoration.



Ecological forest restoration can help reverse the loss of habitat, water quality and Old Growth forests, but only if it is based on science and recognizes that ecosystems are complex and our understanding is limited. Preserving wild forests and investing in degraded landscapes through thoughtful, science-based restoration will foster a just, conservation-based economy that can create and sustain jobs within the capacity of healthy forest ecosystems.

The “Citizen’s Call for Ecological Forest Restoration” (www.safc.org) is a national policy statement to guide sound ecological restoration. It clearly defines principles and criteria to serve as a yardstick for evaluating proposed forest restoration policies and projects. By including social and economic criteria, it also helps bridge the gap between what’s good for the land and what’s good for communities and workers. The Restoration Principles were developed by a diverse group of forest activists and ecologists, with input from forest practitioners and community forestry groups since 2001.

Talking Points for Restoration

- The Restoration Principles stands in stark contrast to the so-called "Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003" and the Bush administration's "Healthy Forest Initiative." During a period of significant change in forest policies at the federal, state, and local level, the Restoration Principles establish a vision for restoring natural ecosystems and a sustainable human relationship with the land.
- Ecological forest restoration can help reverse centuries of resource extraction and development that have fundamentally altered most of America's forests - resulting in loss of habitat, water quality and Old Growth forests, as well as economic and social harm to communities and workers - but only if it is based on science and recognizes that ecosystems are complex and our understanding is limited.
- The Restoration Principles provide an essential tool for stakeholders and decision-makers at all levels to evaluate, critique, improve, support or reject a proposed project or policy.

Summary of Restoration Principles

1. *Enhance ecological integrity by restoring natural processes and resiliency.*

- Reestablish fully functioning ecosystems.
- Outlines clear goals and benchmarks for monitoring and evaluation.
- Provide adequate funding for planning, monitoring, and adaptive management.
- Prioritize the least intrusive and intensive methods needed to enhance ecological integrity.
- Actively restore (e.g. remove roads and prescribe burns) where broad scientific and stakeholder support indicates.

2. *Intact forests are an investment in natural capital.*

- Establish an economic and institutional framework that accounts for non-market ecological services.
- Develop and employ the use of economic incentives that protect or restore ecological integrity.
- Recognize the value of intact ecological systems to guide restoration.
- Develop positive incentives to encourage ecological restoration.
- Eliminate commercial and other incentives that drive activities and harm ecosystems, communities, and workers.

3. *Effective restoration needs strong, healthy, and diverse communities and a skilled committed workforce.*

- Collaborate to build and create quality jobs that perform ecological restoration.
- Through thoughtful strategies employed over time, reestablish sustainable human connections to the land creating quality restoration jobs and encouraging conservation-based economies.
- Provide family wages and benefits, professional training and career development, equal access to work and training, and the right to organize and bargain collectively.
- Restoration and sustainable community development should involve an open, inclusive, and transparent democratic process.