

Restoring Reds Meadow Valley's Vitality – *Pardon our Dust!*



What is happening this summer?

The Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP) is a collaborative, landscape-scale effort between the Whitebark Institute, Inyo National Forest, and other local partners. Together, we are restoring the landscape, mitigating the risk of severe wildfires, and revitalizing ecosystem health in the Eastern Sierra region.

Forest restoration treatments will occur in Reds Meadow Valley in the summers of 2024 and 2025. The Reds Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction project is a collaboration between the Inyo National Forest and Whitebark Institute to implement forest health, fuels reduction, and meadow restoration treatments across 961 acres.

Why is it needed?

Over the past century, the suppression of naturally ignited, low to moderate severity fires has led to an overgrowth of trees in Sierra Nevada forests. Now, when wildfires ignite, they burn hotter, faster and with more devastating consequences to both people and the ecological health of the area. Overcrowded trees also facilitate the spread of harmful diseases, including bark beetle infestations.

Once thriving meadows are now being overtaken by trees, disrupting these important ecosystems within forests. Regular fire cycles in the past would have restricted the growth of these trees, preserving habitat for the diverse plant and animal species. Comprising only 1% of the Sierra Nevada landscape, meadows have dwindled in size as trees encroach upon them.

What are we doing?

Restoring Forest Health: Thinning of both large and small understory and overstory trees, to reverse the adverse effects of tree crowding, while helping the ecosystem and bolster its defenses against the spread of pests and pathogens.



Returning Natural Composition: By helping the forest return to its normal mix of tree sizes and spacing, we're mimicking what existed before, improving biodiversity by opening up the forest canopy and allowing other species to thrive.

Reducing Fire Risks: Removal of trees is part of our effort to reduce hazardous fuel loading in the Reds Meadow area. This reduction in fuels will not only help protect recreational, cultural, and heritage resources in the area at risk from wildfire, but will reduce the likelihood of extreme wildfire behavior that cannot be stopped by firefighters.



Responsible Woody Material Management: Smaller woody material is strategically left on the landscape in organized piles, which undergo a two-year drying process. These piles are burned during the winter season by Inyo National Forest firefighters to reduce fuel loading and reintroduce fire back to the landscape to promote for forest health.

Restoring Meadows: By removing trees that have spread and encroached onto meadow ecosystems, we're helping meadows retain more water throughout the season, enhancing botanical diversity and restoring these important habitats.



Cultivating a Resilient Reds Meadow

Together, we're taking steps to cultivate Reds Meadow's resilience to future wildfires, disease and a changing climate. By implementing these measures, we're not only nurturing the health of this ecosystem, but restoring its natural wonder for future generations of flora, fauna and all people. Thank you for your understanding and support! For more info, visit www.whitebarkinstitute.org

