

Forest Service , Region 5

Vegetative Conditions & What to Do

California Forestry Association Perspective

Steve Brink – Vice President/Public Resources

California's National Forests



GROWTH ON PRODUCTIVE FOREST SERVICE LAND AND ANNUAL HARVEST LEVEL

- AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH – **4 billion board feet/year**
- AVERAGE ANNUAL SOLD TIMBER VOLUME – 1994-2018 (PAST 25 YEARS) – **349.2 million board feet/year (8.7% of annual growth)**
- 2018 Sold Timber Volume – 355 mmbf
- Average acres of fuels reduction accomplished 2011-2017 –
- 168,000 acres/year
- 2018 accomplished 221,000 acres

Vegetative Condition of Region 5's National Forests

- Forest Service Inventory & Analysis Permanent Plots (FIA) –info on Productive Forest Land Available for Active Management (8.7 million acres in Region 5)**
- 2005 – average number of conifer trees per acre --- 266**
- 2010 – average number of conifer trees per acre --- 294**
- 2015 – average number of conifer trees per acre --- 302**
- Arguably, there's only enough year-round water to support about 20-100 trees/acre depending on slope, slope position, and aspect**

Stand Structure & Species Composition Changes over the 20th Century



Impact of the 3 Natural Disturbance Agents (Insects, Disease and Wildfire)



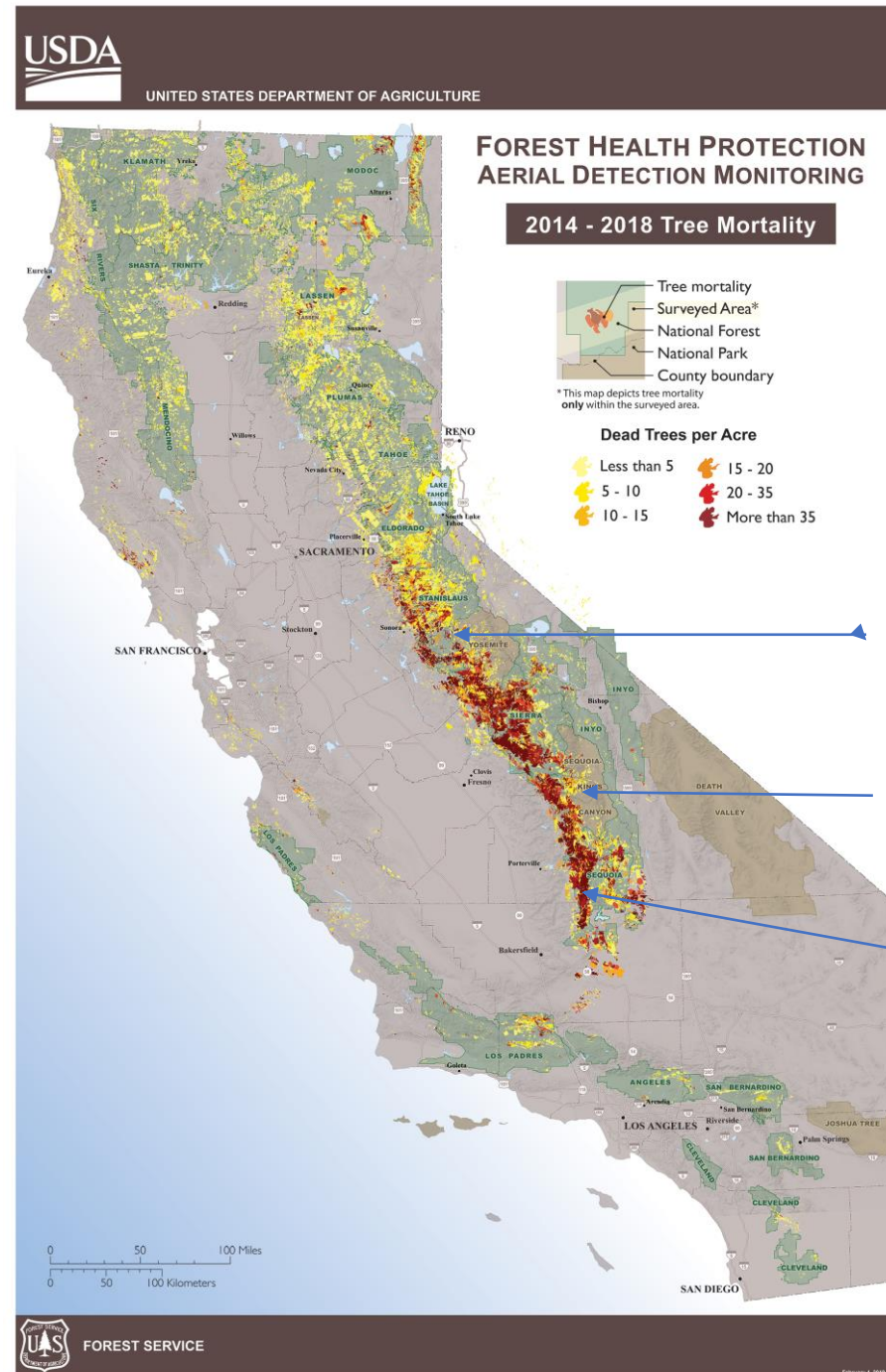
Wildfire – Contributes over
2/3 of the total annual
California Particulate Matter
Emissions (215 Tons/day)

2010-2018 Cumulative Mortality

Stanislaus National Forest
9.7 million dead trees on
447,000 acres

Sierra National Forest
35.5 million dead trees on
787,000 acres
(60% of the Forest is Dead)

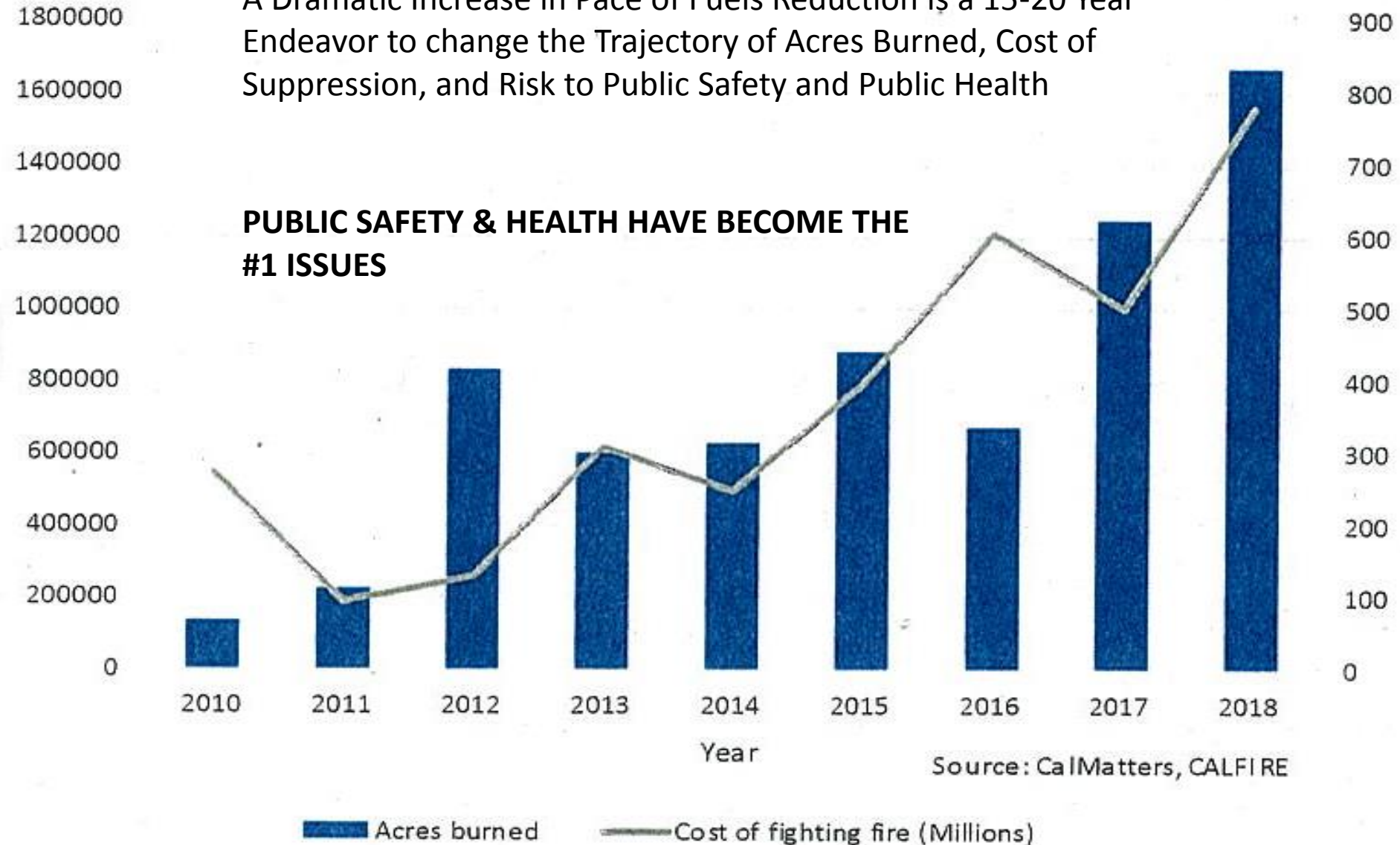
Sequoia National Forest
22.9 million dead trees on
654,000 acres



IMPACT OF WILDFIRE

Rising Cost and Acres Burned in California

A Dramatic Increase in Pace of Fuels Reduction is a 15-20 Year Endeavor to change the Trajectory of Acres Burned, Cost of Suppression, and Risk to Public Safety and Public Health



FUELS REDUCTION PACE IS DWARFED BY WILDFIRE BURNED ACRES

- **2001-2018 total wildfire acres burned on National Forests
= 6.5 million acres**
- **Since 2015, on average California wildfires have burned:**
 - **571,988 acres on National Forests**
 - **563,901 acres on State and Private Lands**
 - **Total of 1.1 million acres/year**
- **2018 Fuels Reduction Accomplishment (Acres)**
 - **CalFire – 45,000 acres Forest Service – 221,000 acres**

Human-Caused Fire Starts

A Shift in Emphasis is Called For

- In 2018, **96%** of all California fire starts were “HUMAN-CAUSED”
- A National Study (Morrison. Roads and Wildfires) show **95% of all Human-Caused fire starts are near a road**
- Even **a Substantial Increase in Pace** of Fuels Reduction Accomplishments **will NOT be sufficient** for the foreseeable future to meet the objectives of Public Safety and Public Health
- **Roadside Fuel Breaks** on State, County, and Forest Service Roads open to passenger cars & Strategic Landscape-Scale Fuel Breaks have to become integral to the overall strategy of fuels reduction for public safety and public health
- Led to a discussion in Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing (May 15) with Chief Christiansen where she agrees strategic fuel breaks in many cases next to roads would reduce risk

The Value of Roadside Shaded Fuel Breaks on Open Forest Service Roads in California

Pre-Treatment
Condition



Mechanically Thinned

Forest Service accomplishing 90,000
acres/year





**Winton
Road**

**Roadside
Shaded
Fuel
Break**

**Calaveras
County**

Along with a Need for Landscape-Scale Shaded Fuel Breaks



- **BENEFITS FROM ROADSIDE FUEL BREAKs On State, County, and Forest Service Roads**

- **Decrease in the number of fire starts that escape initial attack and become large wildfires**
- **Reduced Suppression Costs**
- **Improved Evacuation Routes**
- **Improved/Safe Ingress/Egress Routes for Suppression forces**
- **Decrease in the amount of smoke in the air**
- **Reduction in risk to communities**