



NORTHERN SIERRA SUMMER HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2016

Tree Mortality/Bark Beetle Infestation and Fuel reduction along the Highway 50 Corridor

In August, the Board met to discuss cabin owner issues, in particular the impact of the drought on tree mortality and bark beetle infestation. Steve Hahn, a cabin owner from Sayles Canyon Tract, attended a public workshop on tree mortality in early August and shared with the Board the information he learned. On July 27th, Steve and Forest Service Special Use Permit Administrator, Nancy Platt, walked through the Sayles Canyon Tract and identified over 100 dead trees. Similar tree mortality is occurring in other tracts along the Highway 50 corridor. While tree die-off is a naturally occurring ecological process within the forest, the lack of water has increased tree mortality beyond normal rates. Drought conditions have also given rise to our problem with bark beetle infestation. When trees are healthy and receiving enough moisture, they are able to produce a sticky resin which pushes the beetle out of the bark. Currently, the drop in the water table throughout the Sierra decreases a tree's defense and has created a perfect environment for the beetle to infect millions of trees, as we have all seen around our cabins. Although the Northern Sierra has been impacted less than the southern part of the state, it is still a massive problem affecting national forests in California, including the Eldorado.

I recently met with Ranger Duane Nelson, of the Placerville Ranger District along with Josh Sjostrom, Kate Eccles and Nancy Platt of his recreation staff. We discussed how the Eldorado National Forest is addressing the large numbers of drought and insect killed trees through a wildland fire prevention lens.

In 2014, the Eldorado National Forest began implementation of the South Fork American River (SOFAR) Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. One example of the many projects under the umbrella of the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy is the Highway 50 Fuels Reduction Project. This project teams the Eldorado National Forest with CAL FIRE to reduce approximately 1,100 acres of hazardous fuels within the wildland-urban interface around Silver Fork, Kyburz, and Strawberry and the reduction of roadside fuels 300 feet in on the north (uphill) side of Highway 50 from Pollock Pines to Strawberry. More detailed information about this and other SOFAR Cohesive Strategy projects for 2016 is on the Eldorado National Forest website at

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd516337.pdf

The Forest Service is also working with PG&E and Cal Trans to deal with the large number of hazard trees. Within the tracts, PG&E is clearing trees and limbs along their power lines as they have done in the past and this year the Forest Service has required them to remove tree trunks and to chip limbs and other woody debris. Cal Trans is clearing dead trees along both sides of the highway within 100 feet. They have also been instructed to chip debris and remove downed hazard trees.

The next stakeholder meeting for the SOFAR Cohesive Strategy will be held on Thursday, November 17, 2016 and will follow up on the public workshop held last June. The meeting time is 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the American Legion Hall, 4561 Greenstone Rd., Placerville.

More information is available at the sources below:

SOFAR Wildland Fire Management Cohesive Strategy

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/eldorado/home/?cid=FSEPRD495094&width=full>

http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd495091.pdf

Tree Mortality

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/catreemortality/home>

PG&E Helpline for Debris Management 1-800-743-5000.

Please share this information with your cabin neighbors and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Kathy Lewin, President