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## Restoring Land Health and Protecting C

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*We asked Harv Forsgren to write a guest editorial introducing the themes for a underway in the Southwest. The first is titled 'Bioenergy and Forest Restoration Sitgreaves National Forest, AZ.'*

For eons, fire was the dominant ecological driver across much of the southwestern contributed to the landscape's diversity and productivity. However, decades of succ drought have changed fire's role from restorer to destroyer. Ever larger, more inten

Over 80% of National Forest System lands in the Southwest are in poor ecological Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Jersey and Hawaii combined. Mo On the surface, the challenge seems overwhelming. In reality, it represents the mo Achievable, but not easy...

Success is dependent upon three things: 1) restoring fire as the dominant ecologic; to reduce the catastrophic risk of wildfire; and 3) partnering with the private sector t overly dense forests to reduce restoration costs. These three "lynchpins" are inter-r

Restoring Fire to the Landscape. Consistent with our desire to have fire play a moi "best buy." This planning enables us to take advantage of natural ignitions where w property at undue risk. With these plans in place, we avoid the double negative of objective. Currently, we have plans in place that allow for wildland fire use (WFU) c complete the planning necessary to make most of the rest of the acres available fo

Reducing Risks to Communities. Until risks are substantially mitigated for commun will continue. The ability to use lower cost management tools such as prescribed fir working with communities to complete wildfire protection plans (CWPPs), sharing i reducing hazardous fuels on National Forest System lands in the wildland/urban in community support and setting priorities for reducing the risks of wildfire. We have projects identified through the CWPP process. We are using a variety of funds to re 4-5 years of "shelf stock" through the environmental analysis process.

Engaging the Private Sector to Reduce Costs. Mechanical removal of excess biom fire can be used as a tool. Removal and disposal of this material is neither environr smoke, or tax the capacity of our landfills, and at \$1,200 an acre or more, we can't socially or ecologically relevant scale. By engaging the private sector in capturing v appropriated funds to get more done. We are working actively to improve the clima that encourage biomass utilization; providing technical and financial assistance; an environmental analyses to create "shelf stock" and expanding use of longer term st of existing businesses, establishment of new businesses, and reducing restoration

The challenge before us was many decades in the making. Its solution will require fire suppression costs with tragic social, economic, and ecological costs. However, associated with a healthy environment. The time for action is now.



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