

CDA at the Table As a Positive Voice of Change

The California Deer Association's mission is to improve California deer herds and other wildlife through habitat restoration, range-land improvement, and research projects that support/improve deer herd health. CDA has been a partner with USFS, BLM, State, and private landowners for nearly 25 years and has worked on a variety of wildlife-related projects, wildlife studies, habitat restoration projects, and land conservation projects.

Since 1996, CDA has been a collaborative partner with USFS, CDFW and BLM, and others throughout California. CDA has performed on-site restoration for thousands of acres and, with the help and support of our members and other funders, financially supported many other projects that have enhanced forest resiliency, wildlife forage, habitat restoration, enhanced meadows, restored clean water for wildlife, reduced fuel loads, and reduced conifer encroachment of sensitive and protected areas, to name a few. CDA also designs and is currently managing large, landscape-scale restoration and fuels reduction projects throughout California with USFS, BLM, and other partners.

In 2017 CDA entered into a Master Stewardship Agreement with the USFS, Region 5 Pacific Southwest. Currently, CDA is managing 5 Supplemental Project Agreements (SPA) with the USFS totaling over 100,000 acres. CDA also is managing the restoration efforts on BLM and with private landowners for sage grouse and other restoration efforts on over 40,000 acres. In the past three years, CDA is managing over \$12 million in grants, agency, and private funding to implement these habitat restorations, rangeland improvement, and forest health projects.

In 2020, CDA was acknowledged for our commitment and work with the Klamath National Forest (KNF), Gooseneck Ranger District and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF), McCloud Ranger District with the Southwest Regional USFS Partner of the Year Award for 2020. This partnership encompasses nearly 40,000 acres of treatment focusing on improving forest resiliency, fuels reduction, prescribed fire, forest and watershed health, and wildlife habitat restoration. CDA played a significant role in the design and is overseeing the implementation of these projects with a collaboration of agencies and other partners. The following are some of the projects CDA is engaged in throughout California:

Mendocino Project

This Stewardship Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) was entered into by and between the California Deer Association, and the USDA, Forest Service, and Mendocino National Forest. This project is a post-fire treatment to assess and restore historic meadow boundaries, remove fuels, and restore habitat and forest resiliency within the burn scar of the Mendocino(August) Complex Fire.

Background

Work within this SPA will include restoration improvements, timber product removal, and non-timber service work across the Mendocino National Forest, Covelo Ranger District. Implementation of these activities is in response to the 2020 August Complex

wildfire and will improve habitat for a variety of wildlife and plant species, reduce fuel loadings in strategic locations, and promote desired conditions in project areas across the Covelo Ranger District.

Sequoia Project

The purpose of this Project Agreement is to document the cooperative effort between CDA and USFS to implement habitat restoration projects. This Stewardship Supplemental Project Agreement (SPA) is hereby entered into by and between the California Deer Association and the USDA, Forest Service - Sequoia National Forest.

Background

Work within this SPA will include restoration improvements, hazardous fuel reduction, and various service work across the Sequoia National Forest, Kern River Ranger District. Implementation of these activities will improve habitat for a variety of species, reduce fuel loadings in strategic locations, and promote desired conditions in project areas across the Kern River Ranger District.

Project Description

Hazard Tree mitigation along about 8 miles of Rancheria Road and within the Evans Flat Campground that have both been closed by the USFS due to the risk associated with dead tree/snag felling, both maintained by the US Forest Service, Sequoia National Forest. CDA crews will be removing these risks while restoring stream function and meadow resiliency. Removing downed woody fuels will aid in reconnecting the proper hydrological function of the meadows and stream courses, thus providing better water and increasing forage and bedding components for wildlife. The other inherent benefit of the project is reopening of the road systems and campgrounds to provide an opportunity to the public to enjoy this part of the Sequoia National Forest again. This project is the first of many in the Kern/Sequoia region for CDA. We have many other projects in the area we will be working on including meadow restorations, water projects, fuels and forest health projects, and others.

The immediate purpose of this project, however, is to fell hazardous trees that have the potential to fail and cause injury to either people or property. The project may remove dead, dying, or live trees of any size which are immediate hazards to roads, campgrounds, power lines, or other infrastructure, as defined by the Hazard Tree Guidelines for Forest Service Facilities and Roads. When completed, the public can safely visit and enjoy this great part of the Sierras. Trees determined to pose either a high or moderate hazard risk may be cut on approximately 400 acres and may be sold as timber, fuelwood, or commercial biomass, chips, or other forest products. In areas of steep ground or sensitive resources, trees may be felled, bucked, or left in place to avoid resource damage. Removal of hazard trees also necessitates some fuels treatment to deal with slash and other material that is left behind. In conjunction with mitigating hazard trees, the project will treat fuels to reduce fire risk.

Klamath Project

The project is within the Goosenest Ranger District and is a priority for treatment due to the high risk of a catastrophic wildfire and the immediate threat it poses to the communities of Tennant and Bray (this has since come to light as the Tennant and Antelope fires both put forest and folks at risk this fire season). The proposed project activities are part of a larger landscape treatment of nearly 70,000 on the Klamath National Forest (KNF) and neighboring private lands planned for implementation through a partnership with the California Deer Association. This project improves forest and watershed health and resiliency on 7,300 acres within a 60,700-acre boundary and protects the forest infrastructure and promotes public safety to the communities in eastern Siskiyou County. Treatments include conifer thinning and mastication to create strategic fuel breaks, juniper removal to reduce encroachment on fire-tolerant species, fuels treatment and mastication of high-fuel load areas, and expanding the USFS capacity to implement prescribed fire activities.

The Need for Similar Projects

Over the past century, the Klamath National Forest and the Butte Valley area, like many around the state, have experienced a perfect storm of events that have caused a shift to non-fire adapted vegetation. Such compounding events include climate change resulting in drier and more drought-like conditions, irregular and unpredictable rainfall, fire suppression policies, insect infestations, increased visitors and visitor-created fires, and fewer fuels reduction. Forest Service records indicate that most of the project area has not had a landscape-level natural fire since the 1940s - until this year. The Antelope and Tennant Fire proved the need for this type of work is imminent.

Degraded forest conditions have led to heavy fuel loads, high stand densities, continuous fuel conditions, encroachment of fire intolerant species resulting in an increased likelihood of large, high-severity wildfire. This increase in decadent, non-fire adapted vegetation has encroached upon perennial native grasses and browse species critical to wildlife in the region. This includes adversely affecting wildlife browse, forage, roost, and nesting habitat for big game and migratory species. For much of the year, the Butte Valley is water-limited, including surface and groundwater sources used by the communities and for agriculture. An unnatural overabundance of vegetation due to long-standing fire suppression presents both a fire risk and consumes more water through transpiration that would otherwise flow to surface water and groundwater sources. These compounding factors have created a landscape that has an increasingly high risk for a high-severity, catastrophic wildfire. This landscape is highly susceptible to the effects of drought, insect attack, disease, and threatens human health and safety, water quality and quantity, critical infrastructure, and wildlife habitat. The effects of these compounding factors have already been seen in neighboring communities with the 2020 Slater Fire and the 2014 Little Deer Wildland Fire.

The project is needed to accelerate the pace and scale of the forest management practices needed to reduce the risk of larger, more catastrophic wildfires in the Butte Valley area. Current forest management policies have prioritized reducing wildfires by reducing high fuel loads and implementing a return to prescribed fire to improve the forests and watersheds to a healthier native vegetative landscape. There are five neighboring communities within

a thirty-mile range of the project area that would greatly benefit from the project: this includes Macdoel, Mount Hebron, Tennant, Dorris, and Bray. Project goals include improving forest health and resilience, reducing fuel loads, improving watershed health and water supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and increase public health and safety. Successful implementation of the project activities would allow forest managers to slow the spread of wildfire and potentially reduce the level of carbon emissions that are commonly emitted from a large, high-severity wildfire.

Enduring, Sustainable Benefits, and Management

This project will have sustainable restoration benefits beyond the period of this grant since the project restoration activities increase self-sustaining habitat resilience that can be more easily maintained by the Klamath National Forest and adjacent landowners. Additionally, these restoration actions will increase forest health and resilience to wildfire, water availability, decrease vegetative competition, and reintroduce prescribed fire to the landscape so these habitats and ecosystems can functionally rebound on their own once treated.

Through the larger KNF Stewardship Agreement, CDA and KNF will be able to informally monitor the project sites since we will both be working either at those specific project sites and/or within the larger Goosenest Ranger District landscape for several years beyond this grant. Once the treatment of these sites is complete, KNF as the landowner will continue to oversee, monitor, and maintain the health and success of these areas. There are no restrictions or protections that will affect the project. Because KNF is the landowner, Goosenest District Ranger Drew Stroberg will be responsible for the long-term maintenance and management of this project. The Forest Service will use standard best management practices (BMP), in alignment with the Klamath National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, to monitor long-term benefits.

In Closing

We continue to see the need to not only emphasize our dedication to protect our green forests and their critical resources that wildlife are dependent on, but also to put ourselves within the post-fire restoration efforts. CDA is at the table - we have become a positive voice of change within these areas and a supporter of the great efforts by our USFS, BLM, State, and private partners who wish to expand this change. We look forward to these cooperative successes and look to you, our members & supporters, to have your voices heard as well. We will be reaching out to you for positive support for projects with partners that share the same vision that we do. Thanks for your continued support and we look forward to seeing you in the field or at the table working with us to help conserve wildlife for generations to come.



DALE MacDOUGALL
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The Drought Rescuers



Contributed by John Dawson

As we struggle through another drought, here in Siskiyou County, we need to think about our abundant wildlife neighbors and ask where do they get their water? As creeks dry up or never even flowed this year, as ponds and lakes disappear, where are the wildlife suppose to get water? They often die. Those people living rurally hopefully have placed water containers outside with water for our thirsty wildlife neighbors. In the wilds, there is no one to help stake the thirst of wild animals. However, here in Siskiyou County, we are blessed to have some special people who have volunteered to step forward and help the thirsty wildlife. This article is about two of those special volunteers helping wildlife in need.

The Siskiyou County Wildlife Commission recently voted to make the drought its number one priority. In their June 8th, 2021 meeting held in Tulelake, Commissioners voted to allocate the sum of \$5,000.00 for drought relief. The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors approved the expenditure and the gears were set in place.

The Fish and Game Commission is fortunate to have the knowledge and expertise of a long-time, now retired, Commissioner, Harold Duchi. Duchi has made it his mission to keep the 240 Wildlife Guzzlers scattered around the county functional. What is a Guzzler? It is a large plastic, sometimes aluminum, rainwater collection device. When it rains, the rainwater is collected in a large tank which is slightly below ground level. The guzzler tank has a step or stairs or a drinking platform allowing thirsty wildlife to step down and reach the water. The guzzler tanks range in size from 500 gallons to 1,800 gallons. Harold Duchi knows where the guzzlers are located all around the Klamath National Forest and the Shasta Trinity National Forest. Duchi has for years made the guzzlers his project, visiting them and inspecting their water

amounts, adding water, repairing them, and sometimes even fencing them to keep cattle out.

With the onset of the drought, it has been critical that water be added to the guzzlers, many of which have gone dry due to the lack of adequate rainfall. Duchi reached out to District Ranger Drew Stroberg at the Goosenest Ranger District on the Klamath National Forest(NF) and District Ranger Carolynn Napper out of McCloud on the Shasta Trinity NF. Both Rangers wholeheartedly agreed that putting water into the guzzlers was a critically important project. Steve Pigoni, an alternate Wildlife Commissioner, has been ramrodding through a guzzler project in the south county, in the McCloud Ranger District. Both District Rangers told their fire crews that when available, fill the wildlife guzzlers as directed by Duchi and Spigoni. Most of the guzzlers are located on National Forest lands and they were placed there 50 years ago or more.

Wildlife rainwater guzzlers help mitigate the effects of drought and water use policies.

Game, endangered & threatened species, all benefit thanks to our members' contributions towards their purchase and deployment.

The newer guzzlers were bought and paid for by the California Deer Association and they too have been leading the charge to put water in the guzzlers as well as place more guzzlers in the field for wildlife usage. In 2018 California Deer Association purchased 19 large guzzlers and placed them in the ground where

old, now damaged guzzlers had once been located. They have purchased 3 more which will hopefully be placed in the field this fall. These super guzzlers hold 1,800 gallons of water, enough to get through a dry summer.

In addition to the help of the US Forest Service, Duchi sought the help of Cal Fire. A small fire truck capable of holding water and able to negotiate some of the overgrown wilderness roads was needed. Duchi was pointed towards the various volunteer fire departments in hopes of finding a small fire truck. Luckily, and here again, another volunteer hero came thru. Bernie Paul of the South Yreka Fire Dept. stepped up and said he would like to help. Paul volunteered his time and knowledge of the fire trucks to deliver water where Duchi directed him. South Yreka Volunteers agreed to front the fuel costs with the assurances that the County Fish and Game Commission would pay them back as soon as possible. Now, all we had to do was figure out who pays for gas and the repair items for the guzzlers. That is where the Fish and Game Commission stepped forward with budgeting \$5,000.00.

Today, I had the pleasure of accompanying Harold Duchi and Bernie Paul as we once again set out, this time into areas near the Lava Fire, to fill guzzlers. The first guzzler we went to was about half full of its 500-gallon capacity. We filled it and marveled at all the animal tracks and trails leading to the guzzler, elk, deer, and bear. When we finished filling the guzzler numerous birds visited the water as we rolled up the hose used to fill the guzzler. The second guzzler was more of the same.

The third guzzler had been evidently run over by a bulldozer who was making a fuel break in front of the Lava Fire. The guzzler was destroyed. Harold Duchi was already in contact with the Forest Service seeking reimbursement for 19 guzzlers which were located inside the burn area and are suspected to be lost to the fire. The fourth guzzler was again surrounded by animal tracks, mostly elk. We filled it too and returned to the Grass Lake Cal-Trans yard for more water. The fifth guzzler was the large Boss Guzzler model bought and placed by the California Deer Association. It



was partially full. We put all of the trucks 500 gallons into it. The dirt around it was powder from the numerous animals using the water hole. Elk tracks were everywhere as well as some very big deer tracks. As we drove away, numerous birds descended on the guzzler to slake their thirst. It was a good day.

If anyone would like to help with this project, we need money to continue paying for fuel and guzzler repair parts. I encourage hunters who want to help to join California Deer Association. They put dues money to work locally.

Honoring the Crowns of Monarchs



Home to the land of the world's largest trees, Sequoia National Park is over 400,000 acres of what could easily be described as a mystical wonderland. Add that to the adjacent Kings Canyon Park and there are over 850,000 acres (about the area of Rhode Island) of a scenic amusement park. Wandering through this forest is a literal time capsule where one could imagine incomprehensibly large trees, thousands of years ago, just beginning to sprout from the ground, and by the miracle of resiliency, are still standing and growing today. One hopes that for the thousands of years to come, many generations beyond us will have the opportunity to experience what it is like to live among these ancient giants — but will they?

In the year of 2020, an estimated 10%-14% of the world's population of Monarch Sequoia trees, the *Sequoiadendron giganteum* that grow in Sequoia National Park, were lost due to California wildfire. The 2020 Castle Fire took an unprecedented amount of wildlife habitat, beneficial forage components, and regeneration while blazing through the fire-tolerant trees and leaving nothing but skeletons of the giants that once could not only withstand but benefit from any less aggressive blaze. One might wonder how this could happen, or maybe being conditioned to California wildfires keeps critical questions from arising because "this is just what happens," but it does not just happen. The conditions are created, and they arise from reasoning far beyond climate change. As the park stands today, the rolling hills of forest are infested with standing dead fuel, otherwise known as trees, snags, or standing

dead timber. This loss is brought upon by a multitude of reasons: stand densities that exceed carrying capacity that lead to a strain on the available shared water sources, a lack of supplemental nutrients to maintain healthy and resilient forests, and, in their weakened state, forests become more susceptible to beetle infestation and diseases. These trees die and when efforts succeed in stopping their salvage removal, they continue to stand, adding to the excessive fuel loads on our overstocked forests. Imagine miles beyond miles of barren branches and lifeless trunks left as they are — standing dead fuels increase the severe risk that adversely increases flame eruptions to surrounding areas. These extreme fire types are detrimental to the natural succession of our forested lands as well as all the wildlife that inhabit them.

As bleak as these words seem, this is not a story that ends with simply throwing up hands and succumbing to an inevitable, devastating loss. As an organization rooted in restoration and hope, CDA will not accept that outcome. This is a story that ends with activism rooted in solution-driven ideas. Let us take many logger's coined term into account, "log it, graze it, or let it burn" that is now used on bumper stickers, social media, and pro-logging associations to exemplify the necessity to aid the health of our forests by everyday management to prevent further loss due to wildfire. While we do not need to be recklessly chopping down our forests, it is more effective to take cautious action by falling timber rather than letting all timber remain standing. In August of 2021, California Deer Association put boots on the ground in Sequoia National





Park and was prepared to start fuel management projects along with U.S. Forest Service efforts to enhance California's beloved Sequoia National Forest. The purpose of the project was not only to assist the park in the return to its former glory but to protect what is left of the many significant resources it hosts from flames. The resources stated are meadows, stream courses, cultural sites, beautiful forests, and majestic ancient giants. Shortly after the official firing up of equipment and just a few days into the project, CDA received a notice of change in interpretation on the workflow due to a LOP or "Limited Operating Period" regarding a Goshawk in the operation zone. The project site, or part of it, was now on hold until September 15th. A week later, CDA received notice that a fire had ignited in the Kern County area which, coincidentally, is exactly where the project site was located. Imagine that.

So, it begs the question, what is more important? Effectively removing acres of fuels to prevent and halt fires, as this project was directly purposed, or letting the state burn year after year and indefinitely removing the habitat of the exact animals that are the reasoning behind LOPs and cause never-ending litigation? How many corners of the state of California need to go up in flames before it is too late to save protected animals? Where will the animals move to when all the land is overcome with charred trunks and an inhabitable forest floor? To date, the French fire is still blazing through the Sequoias and surrounding areas and has consumed nearly 30,000 acres as it marches on. The habitat for at-risk species was, at the snap of fingers, destroyed beyond immediate recovery.

There is no longer a short-term restoration period. But, as CDA does, we will continue to put boots on the ground and clean up the leftover mess caused by the "protection" of environmental wannabes. There is no more time to be wasted preaching to the choir. In our case, CDA is the choir. CDA's roots are and will remain conservation of wildlife and wildlife habitat. The diligent work CDA commits to restoring our land to a thriving state is our short-term, mid-term, and our long-term goal. This organization has created productive relationships that keep our boots on the ground with the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, state and private landowners, and a multitude of other partners who want to see the preservation of their land just as much as anyone else - they all have been an ally through all our efforts. Even still, though, we need more allies.

We ask for your support to prevent this litigation from continuing to hinder these worthwhile restoration efforts. When CDA has proactive protection projects, let us not allow misguided litigation get involved and win. In the near future, we will be reaching out to our partners and supporters, California Deer Association members, and all who share in a common vision to restore and maintain these great habitats, unique resources, culturally significant areas, and irreplaceable Monarchs of the Forest to show their support and voice their opinion for the positive support of these projects. This may be in the way of a call-out for support of project scoping letters, Voter Voice, and other avenues so our voices will be unified in this effort to keep California green.

Please be on the lookout for a call to action on our website www.caldeer.org, social media accounts, and emails being sent to our subscribers. Should you not follow us along, we invite you to do so. If we band together, we can continue working to lessen wild-fire impact as well as maintain and restore habitat.

CHERISE MacDOUGALL

Our new project reporter. Look for her posts on social media for real time progress we are making.



Even the Littlest Member Can Help Wildlife

Our eagle-eyed readers may have wondered where my articles have been in the past few magazines. Well, I am proud to announce that I was away raising our newest CDA team member!



Last year was quite a busy year for all of us with COVID-19 and California wildfires running rampant. However, all of those external difficulties did not slow down the CDA team. We were out in full force continuing to visit potential and active project sites with partners. Also, as some of our partners may have known, or as they quickly came to see in-person, I had a future conservationist stowaway.



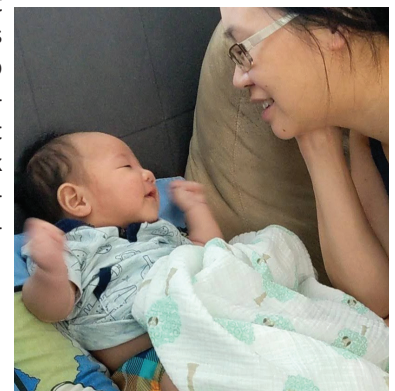
Project sites and partner discussions can already be fruitful in and of itself, but one in particular proved extremely productive. Mono County and Alpine County are a crucial area for migratory California-Nevada mule deer and wildlife. The area has a heavily used and critical migratory route that provides a much needed forage and rest area during spring and winter. In addition to traversing a highly used vehicle highway, deer and wildlife also had to contend with the 2020 Slink Fire which burned over 26,000 acres across private, state, and federal lands.

Alongside our state and federal partners, we were able to survey a section of the Slink Fire burned lands that ravaged over 3,700 acres of West Walker mule deer habitat and over 1,800 acres of sagebrush and bitterbrush forage in the winter and spring range, stopover area, and migratory corridor. The wildfire's destruction and alteration of crucial wildlife habitat was heartbreaking.

Together, CDA and partners wasted no time to put together a successfully awarded grant proposal. Building off of that success, CDA was also able to secure state funding. Combined, CDA and partners are now able to put over \$2.66 million into much needed post-Slink Fire habitat restoration that will provide wildlife forage, study wildlife's preference of seed vegetation used in restoration deter native habitat being overrun with invasive vegetation, and support a larger expansion of the migratory corridor.



My little future one had gotten to “see” some of our project sites and even helped with securing over \$2.66 million and he didn’t even know it! I will have to remind him in the future that he did play his part by not being too much of a distraction and allowing me to walk around with partners at project sites. Sharing the outdoors with a new little person has only reinforced my commitment to providing a healthier and more resilient habitat for all wildlife and ensuring that the public has that ability to safely visit and treasure the great outdoors. There has always been an underlying drive to leave the environment better than how we found it, but now I have a little face to look at while I make that commitment to CDA’s newest member.



CANDACE LEONG

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Passionate New Project Manager Joins The CDA Team

Hello! My name is Alexandra, and I am very excited to be a new staff member of the award-winning Projects Team of the California Deer Association! I will be working as a Project Manager and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist, helping to implement habitat restoration projects across the state.

I first moved to Northern California during the summer of 2016 for an internship, and I quickly fell in love with the mountains, meadows, rivers, and wildlife that inhabit them, so I decided to make the move permanent. Since then, I have worked in the fields of forestry, GIS, ecology, and botany for private companies and federal agencies all over California. I also hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in the summer of 2019, a 2,650-mile hike that starts at the Mexican border and travels north across California, Oregon, and Washington and ends at the Canadian border. These experiences allowed me to learn about the wildlife across many of California's diverse native habitats, including the Mojave Desert with its iconic Joshua Trees, the pristine alpine meadows and granite peaks of the Sierra Nevada, the giant redwood groves of the north coast, and the rugged volcanic landscapes of the southern Cascades.

My involvement with CDA began when I was working at an environmental and GIS consulting firm that was contracted to work on the implementation of the Eastside Restoration Project, a collaborative project between CDA and Shasta-Trinity National Forest McCloud Ranger District. I found the work that CDA is doing on this project very exciting—CDA even won the Partner of the Year Award from the U.S. Forest Service for it—and I was thrilled to be given the opportunity to join the team officially.

The Eastside Restoration Project involves performing habitat restoration treatments in the McCloud flats, a pine-dominated forested landscape in the shadow of Mount Shasta. The project area is incredibly beautiful; it is very flat with a relatively open understory, which makes it excellent ground for hunters, foresters, and wildlife. I've seen many blacktail deer, three black bears, two badgers, as well as elk scat throughout the project area. The soils here are famous for growing big trees so even though the forests are all second growth, the pines, cedars, and firs here are big and tall.

Scattered throughout the forested landscape are some incredible meadows that are important deer habitat. These meadows were created over thousands of years by snowmelt off Mount Shasta forming streams that meander across the flat landscape and pool in areas, encouraging the growth of wetland species like quaking aspen. Historically, low-intensity fires would kill young trees establishing within the meadows, keeping them open and wet.

This region was logged heavily in the 1950s and 60s and some areas were re-planted at very high densities with ponderosa pine monocultures. At that time, land managers thought the best way to protect the forests was to suppress wildfires as quickly as possible. This has resulted in trees encroaching into the meadow areas from the surrounding forests, and the forests growing more densely. The more trees on a landscape, the more water they will draw up from the ground to produce wood and grow. This leaves less surface water available for wildlife to consume in ponds, meadows, and streams. It has been so long since some of the streams within the project area have flowed





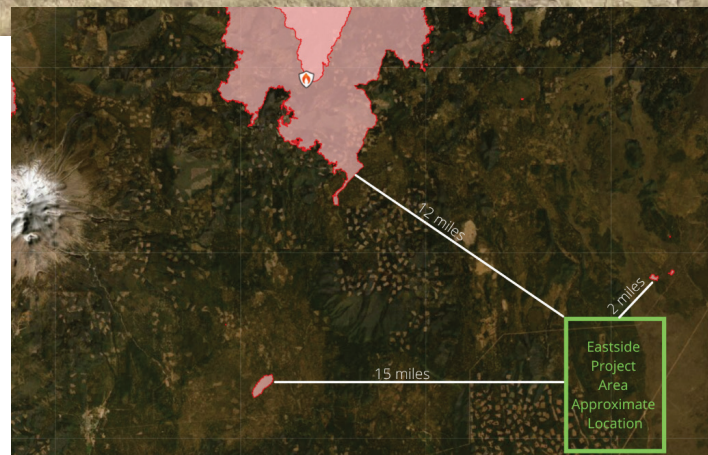
that the banks and channels are barely perceptible. It makes me wonder—how are all the animals I have seen in the Eastside Project getting enough water to survive? Could the limited water availability be impacting the wildlife populations?

To restore the meadow habitats at the Eastside Restoration Project to their historical and functioning condition, we will be performing a number of treatment activities including selective tree removal and prescribed burning. Many people are confused as to how removing trees from a landscape can be helpful for habitat restoration, but there are many ways it can be beneficial to the land and all the wildlife that depend on it. In the case of the Eastside Restoration Project, the meadows and forested landscapes surrounding them are currently too densely crowded with trees to perform a prescribed burn in a way that would be safe for the crews working, or that would produce the results to the habitat needed for the wildlife. Because of this, we will need to selectively remove some trees before we can perform prescribed burns.

Selective tree removal will reduce the number of trees per acre within the meadows and surrounding forests and prescribed burning will maintain that desired condition. One major benefit of these treatment activities will be the restoration of the

meadow habitats to their historical tree density, which will in turn increase the amount of surface water available for wildlife. Another benefit will be that more light will be able to penetrate the forest canopy to the ground, which will encourage floral biodiversity, including plant species that deer depend on for sustenance.

Furthermore, selective tree removal and prescribed burning will result in greater spacing



between trees and reduce the amount of fuel available in the understory to burn, which in turn will make the forest more resilient to the ever-growing threat of catastrophic wildfires. The Eastside Restoration Project has already been threatened by two wildfires this year, but luckily firefighters were able to contain the fire and protect this area. Living in California, it's inevitable that we have each been personally affected or know someone impacted by wildfires, and it's important to remember the same impact that it is having on our deer and other critical wildlife. Selective tree removal and prescribed burning in overcrowded forests can therefore benefit humans and wildlife alike.

The story of the Eastside Restoration Project area is similar to those of other forested landscapes across California, and many of the treatments CDA will implement on this project would be beneficial to other areas as well. With increasingly bad wildfires, habitat fragmentation, and drought, our critical wildlife resources are facing a long list of challenges. We at CDA and our members share a great passion for deer and other wildlife that inhabit California. I am very excited to work with the excellent team here at CDA to continue planning and implementing projects that will restore, enhance, and protect wildlife habitats across the state.

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