

Concerned Citizens of Central California

Sierra National Forest Tri-County Proposal

Concerned Citizens of Central California (CCCC) are asking our Fresno, Madera, and Mariposa County officials to take an active part in developing an emergency plan, and working agreement. This emergency plan is an effective way to give our forest professionals the ability to properly manage the Sierra National Forest (SNF), which is mandated under the Federal Law H.R. 1904, and in accordance with their own study contained in the U.S. Forest Service document, "An Ecosystem Management Strategy for Sierran Mixed Conifer Forests - GTR 220".

Over the last hundred years, the relationship between the elected county governments and the SNF has been distorted. The National Forest is a property management organization under the Department of Agriculture with no Federal authority beyond what is delegated by each county government.

The desired goal of the CCCC is for each county to exercise their jurisdiction over the administration in each county's portions of the SNF. It is imperative that the counties are in agreement, while maintaining sovereignty.

This proposal is designed to enable the tri-counties of Fresno, Madera, and Mariposa to actively take part in the management, and law enforcement of their sections of the SNF. It is an effective way to communicate their communities' requirements and concerns regarding forest management, reducing catastrophic fires, and increasing the watershed to alleviate the drought.

To accomplish the desired goal of exercising jurisdictional control, a supervisory committee should be formed with a county supervisor, or their appointed representative from Fresno, Madera, and Mariposa counties, and an appointed representative from California Assembly Districts 23, Assemblyman Jim Patterson, and District 5, Assemblyman Frank Bigelow. They would have ongoing fluid communication with the SNF staff so they can compile a comprehensive annual plan for the proper management of the forest. The plan must be in compliance with H.R. 1904, which mandates proper management of the forests, and is broadly detailed in "An Ecosystem Management Strategy for Sierran Mixed Conifer Forests - GTR 220". Additionally, the elected county sheriff would ensure that the SNF law enforcement officers receive the same training and supervision as the members of their own departments, to consistently enforce laws.

These are the three areas of concentration:

1. Assure that each county maintains sovereignty over their own county's part of the SNF.
2. Develop a common plan of action between the three counties that make up the SNF.
3. To have a supervisory body creating a workable process to liaison with the SNF supervisor, and staff.

The duties and process of the committee will be that each member, using personal knowledge and knowledgeable experts, will submit areas of concern within their districts of the SNF. These five members' concerns will be individually stated, then compiled into an annual report to be submitted to the planning department of the SNF. They will incorporate this document into their annual plan, then return the annual plan to each board member to be reviewed and agreed upon by each counties' Board of Supervisors for implementation. After the plan is passed, then it will be returned as an instructional mandate to the SNF.

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Each county and California Assembly District member will have an ongoing and fluid relationship expressing ideas and concerns within the board, and with the supervisor and staff of the SNF.

This is the proposal put forth by the Concerned Citizens of Central California. Any additions, deletions, or changes are welcome before implementation.