

Welcome to ATF with The Sierra Institute

Esther Duke | Chief Operations Officer
Coalitions & Collaboratives | co-co.org

Sierra Institute for Community and Environment

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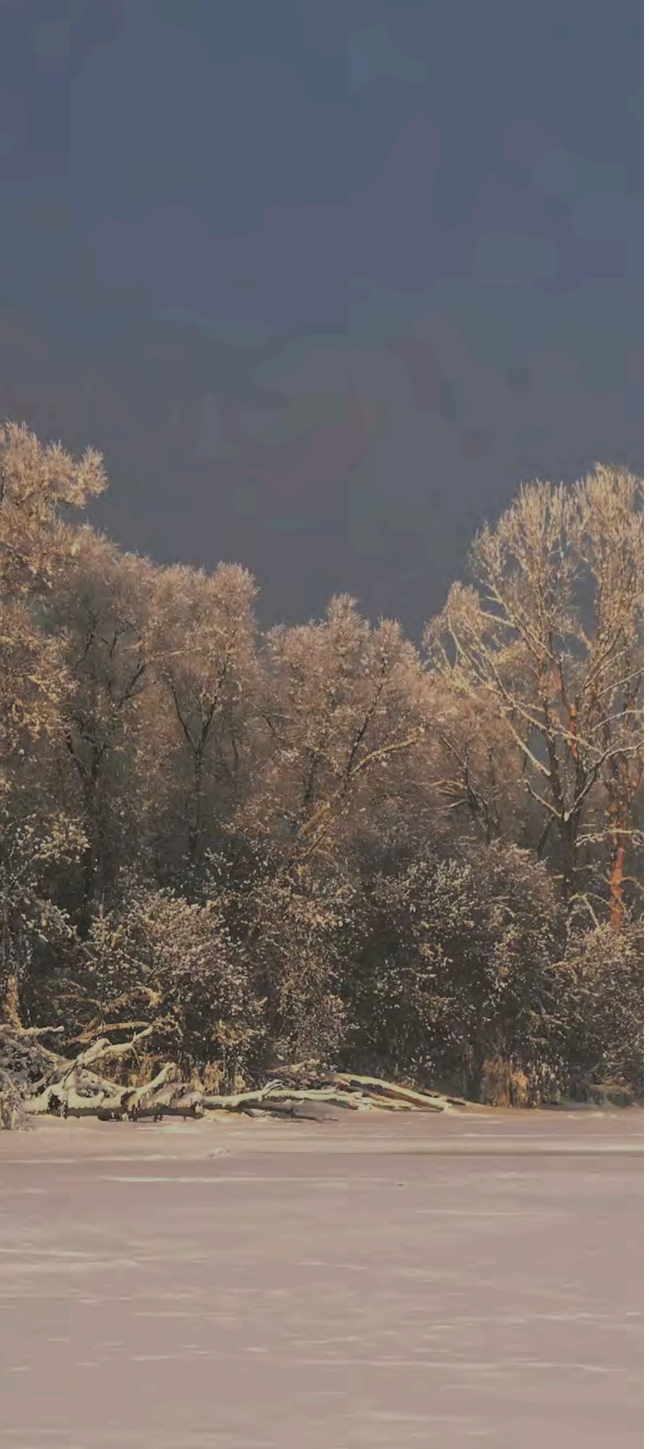

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Discussions, Polling, Q&A

- Polling is anonymous. Please be respectful & professional.
- Please note we will try to address all questions & comments in the webinar
- Monitoring Zoom Q&A, but please consider adding to Menti first
- Webinar is being recorded, so drop questions in Zoom that will be transerfed to Menti, if you have to leave early

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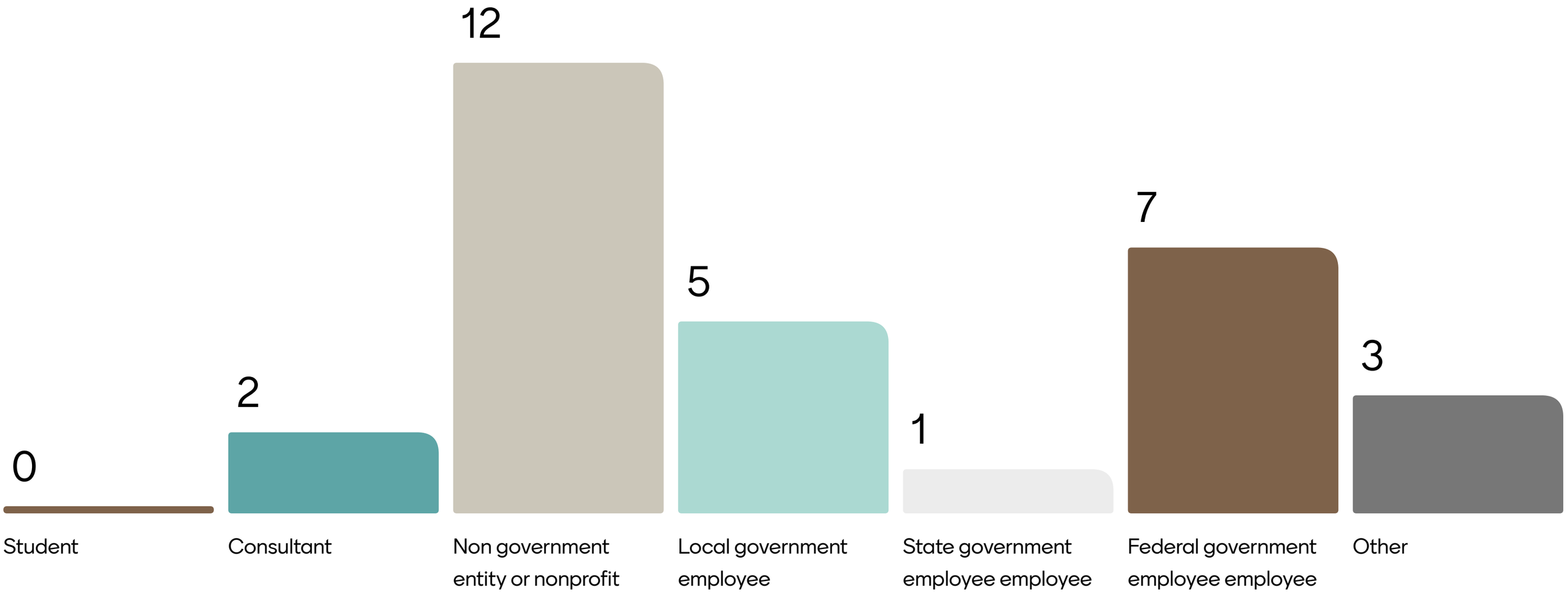
I'm a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2
12
5
1
7
3
Student
Consultant
Non government entity or nonprofit
Local government employee
State government employee employee
Federal government employee employee
Other

What geographic location are you joining us from?



What do you hope to get from this webinar?

Insights into working collaboratively

Lessons Learned

Continued learning

Ideas

Community recovery

Community responses to wildfire

successes of collaboratives

Learning how to better work with communities after wildfires.

What do you hope to get from this webinar?

Lessons learned post-fire recovery

Post-fire recovery concepts

Lessons learned and community resilience

Best Practices

Means of collaborative recovery

What can and should we do ahead of time.

How the Dixie fire impacted outreach and education to the general public about post-wildfire

Learn about what others are doing and ways to improve

What do you hope to get from this webinar?

Collaborative responses

Ideas for how to utilize collaboration in future and attached to wildfires

A Community-based Response to the Dixie Fire: Collaboration to Restore Landscapes and Rebuild Community in the Footprint of California's Largest Wildfire



Kyle Rodgers, Executive Director, Sierra Institute
Kyle is the Executive Director of the Sierra Institute for Community and Environment based in Taylorsville, CA. Over the past 15 years, Kyle has worked in various capacities with the Sierra Institute since moving to Taylorsville in 2011. He now leads the organization's work, which focuses on forest and watershed health, rural development, wood utilization, and youth stewardship.



Bella Bledsoe, Director of Collaborative Engagement, Sierra Institute
Bella Bledsoe joined Sierra Institute in May 2021 as the Watershed Coordinator and has since transitioned into the role of Director of Collaborative Engagement. Her work focuses on fostering community-led approaches to landscape restoration by bringing together agencies, industry, Tribal community members, and other partners to shape land management priorities and advance on-the-ground forest and watershed restoration.

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A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSE TO THE DIXIE FIRE

Collaboration to Restore Landscapes and Rebuild Community in the Footprint of California's Largest Wildfire

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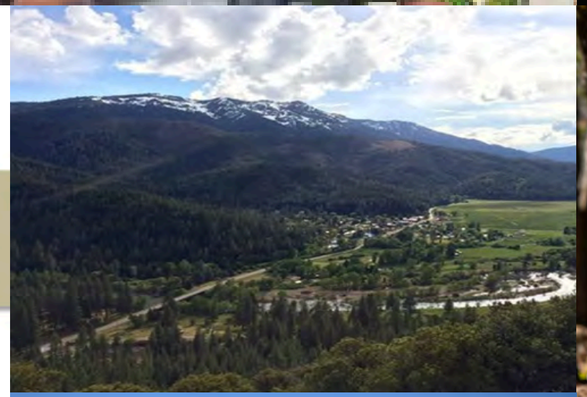
WHAT WE DO

- COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- WOOD UTILIZATION
- YOUTH STEWARDSHIP





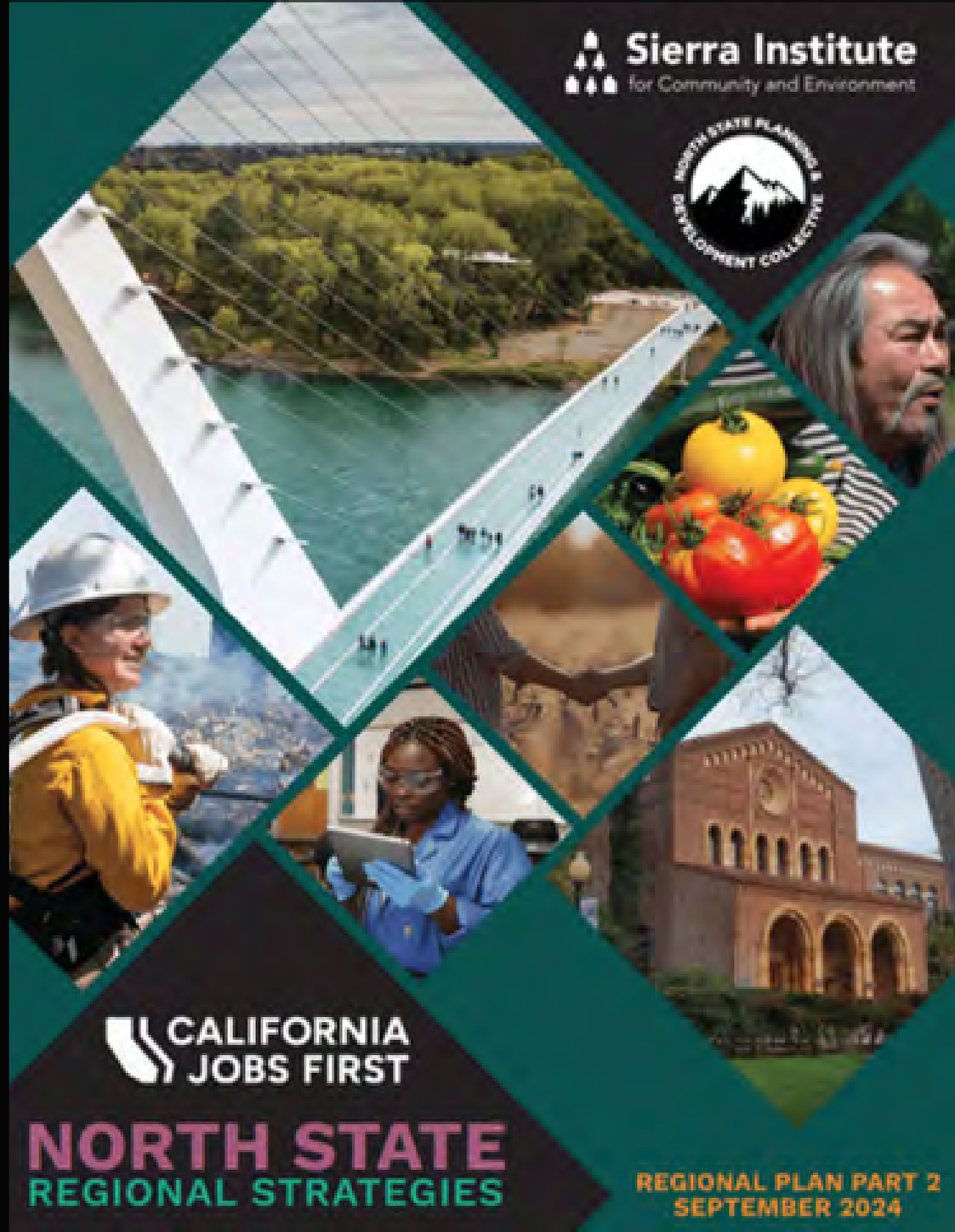




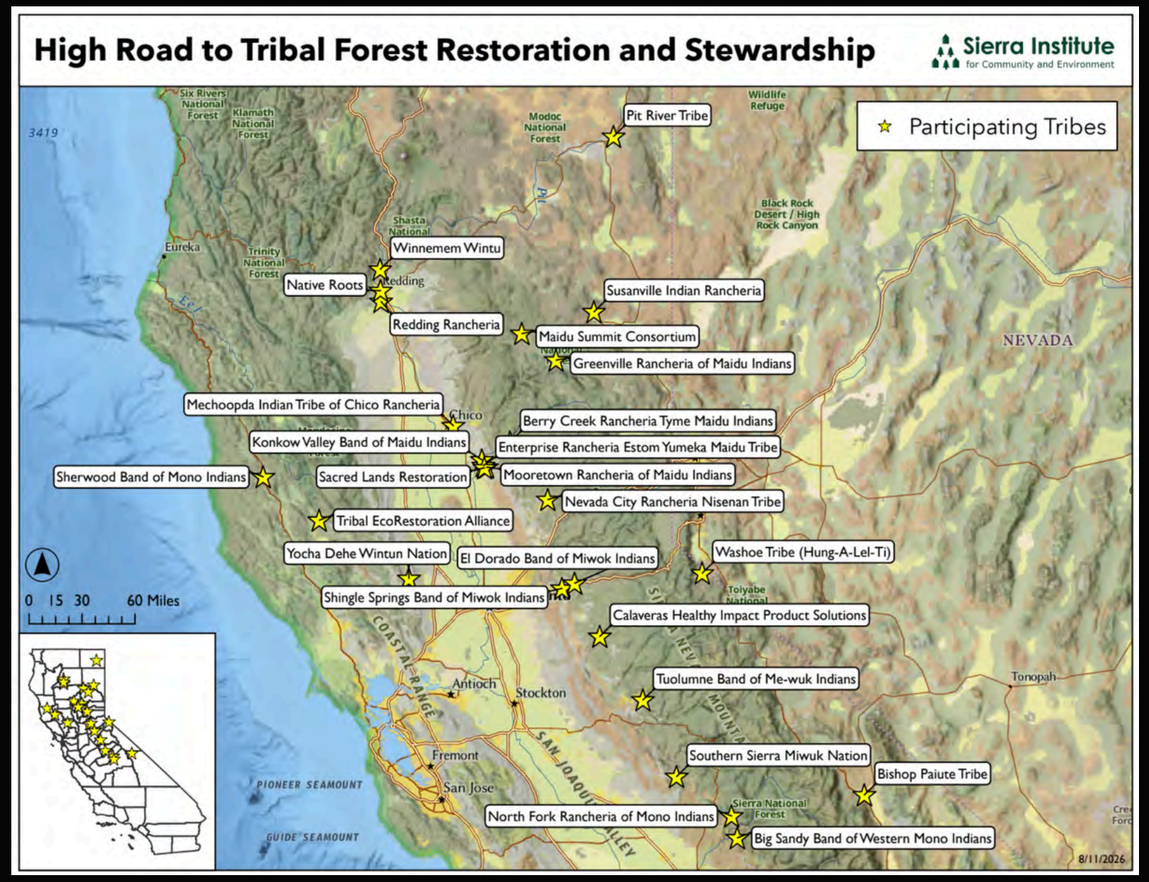
RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Community Capacity Research and Assessments
- Peer-Network: Community-Scale Wood Processing Infrastructure
- Jobs First: Rural Economic Development Planning for the North State





RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: WORKFORCE



Sierra Institute's High Road to Tribal Forest Restoration and Stewardship program partners with California Native American Tribes, Tribally led non-profits, and local organizations to offer workforce training in forest health, fire, and land stewardship, preparing participants for in-demand jobs.



YOUTH STEWARDSHIP

P-CREW








EXPERIENCING
FIRE
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THE DIXIE FIRE

BURNED NEARLY 1 MILLION ACRES

JULY TO OCTOBER, 2021

- 2024 Park
- **2021 Dixie**
- 2020 North Complex
- 2019 Walker
- 2018 Camp
- 2012 Chips
- 2007 Moonlight
- 2000 Storrie

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Community Impacts





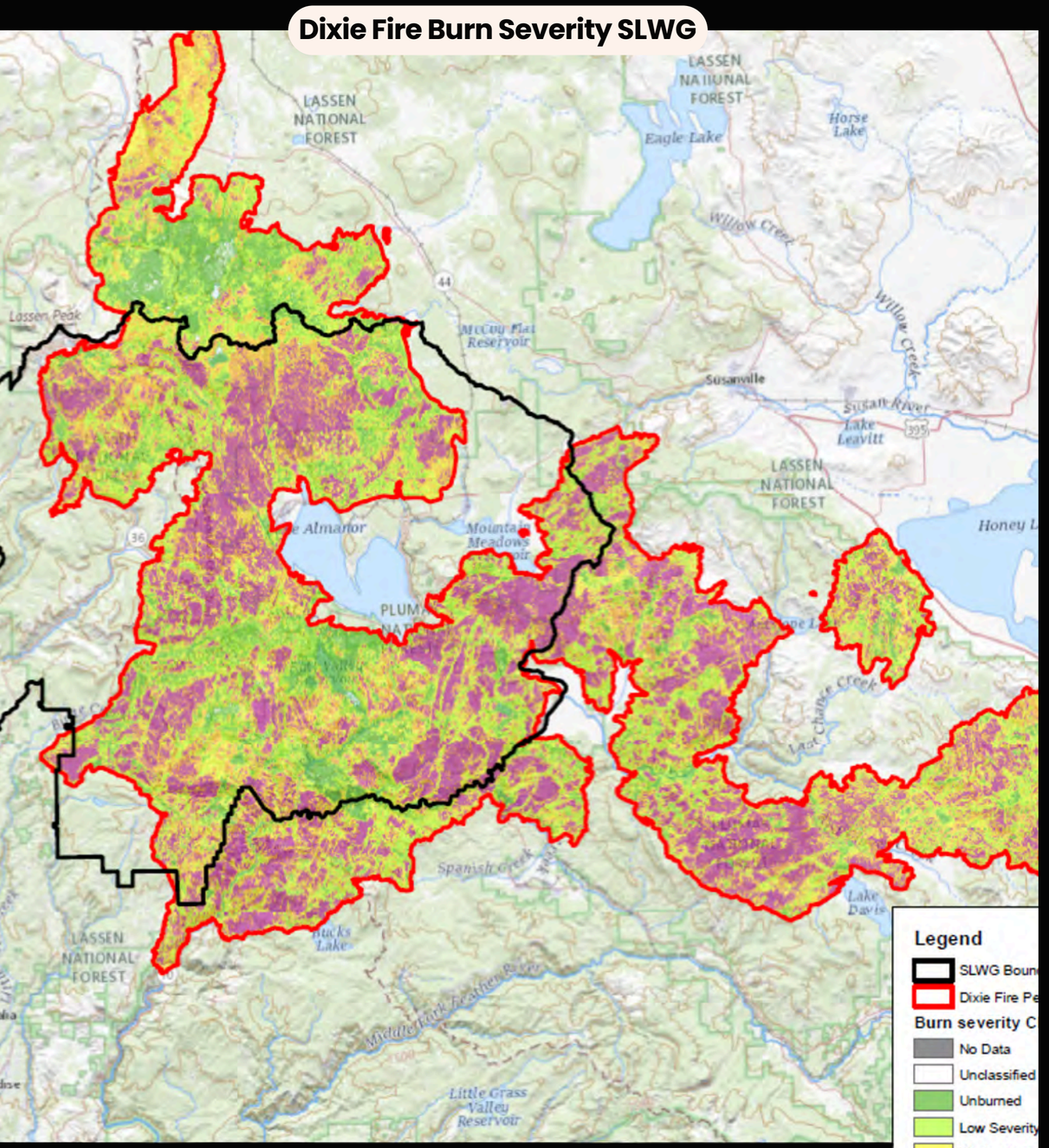
- More than 1,300 structures lost in Greenville
- Nearly 800 were homes
- Rebuild estimated at ~20% of homes as of 2025

FIRE AND FOREST **MANAGEMENT**

- Projects lost to fire
- Seasonal staff laid off
- Permanent staff turnover
- Impacts on workload and morale
- Partner impacts, transitions, and more







MAKING SENSE OF RAVG DATA

963,309 ACRES BURNED

50% High severity	14% Moderate severity
17% Low severity	18% Unburned

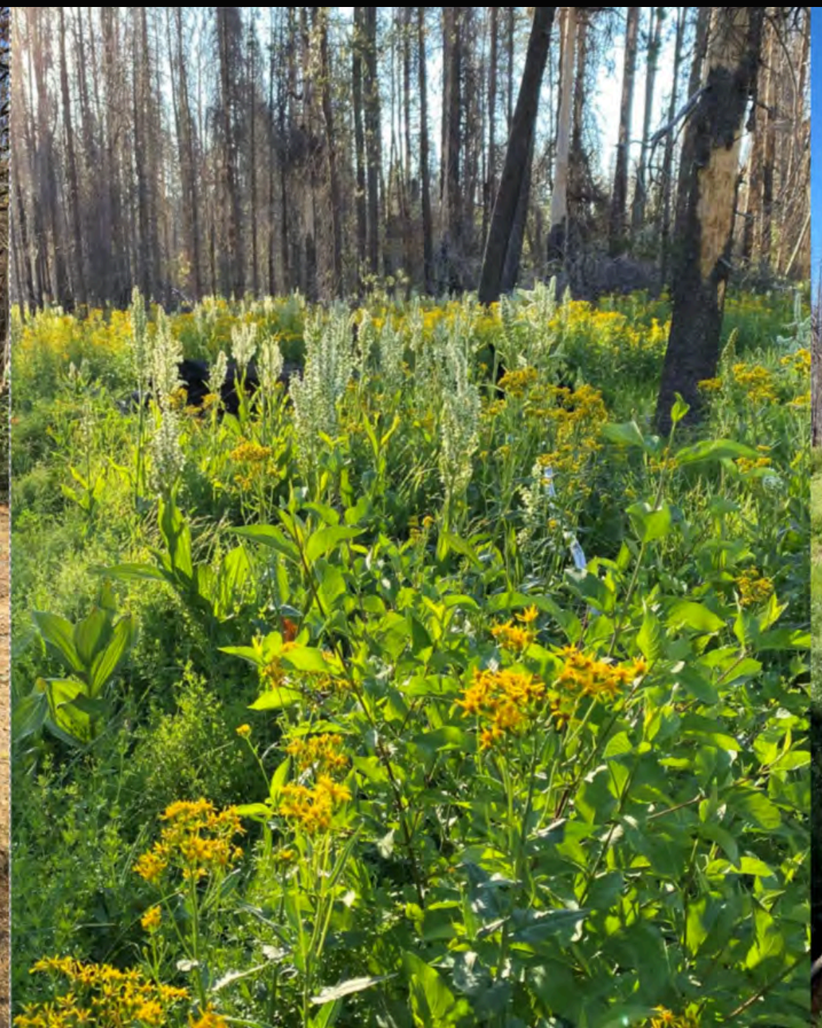






TREATMENT OPTIONS AND
SYSTEM RESETS

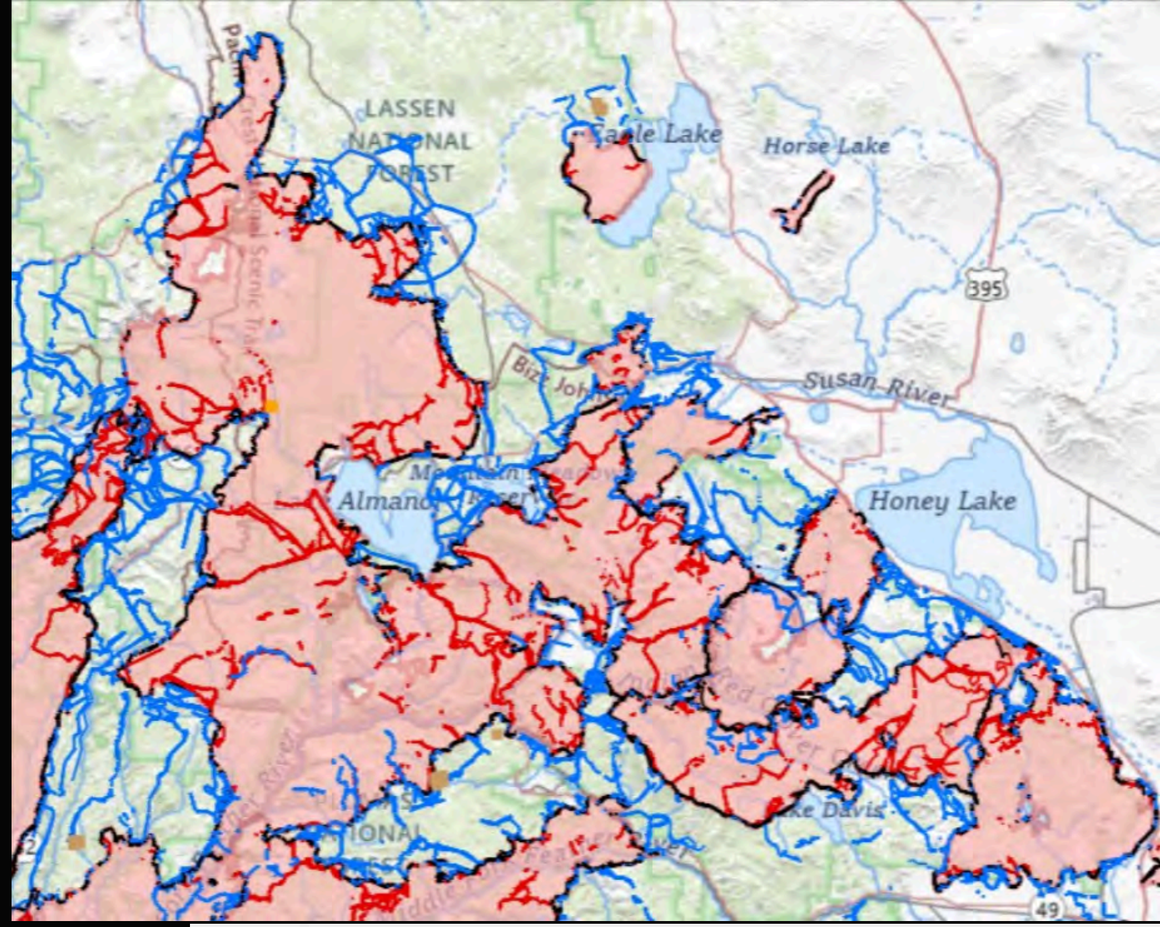






WHAT ABOUT **FIRE SUPPRESSION ACTIVITY?**

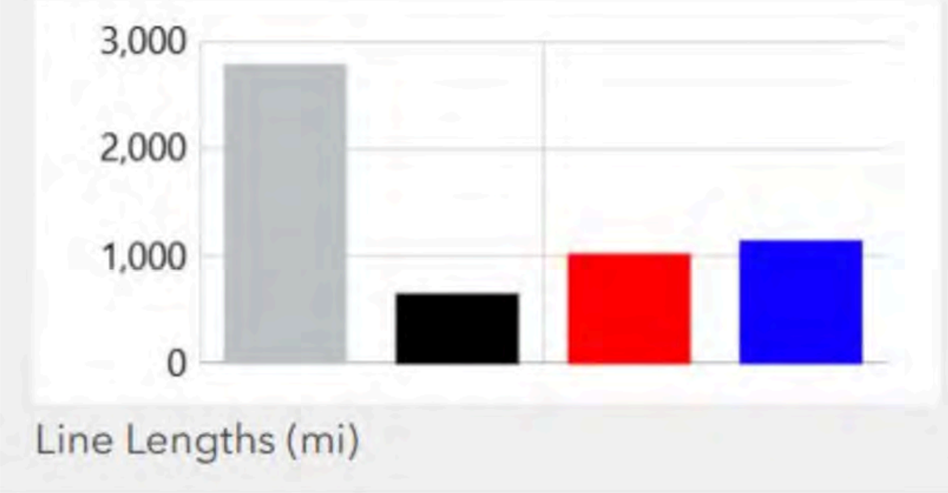




Black = successful

Red = burned over

Blue = not engaged




RESPONDING
POST-FIRE
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Addressing Near-Term Needs





Community-Scale Sawmill, Ribbon Cutting

What are the right roles for the organization?

HOUSING AND WOOD UTILIZATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- Mass Timber Homes
- Processing Infrastructure







LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT AFTER DIXIE

Needs, Opportunities, & Challenges

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DIXIE FIRE REVIEW

Two Objectives

- Learn about what worked and what didn't during Dixie Fire suppression, and
- Identify what the Dixie Fire meant for creating resilient forests

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Semi-structured interviews in 2022, averaging 60 minutes

- Interviewees included: researchers, ecologists, fire suppression personnel and fuels specialists, botanists, wildlife experts, geospatial analysts, meadow experts, and other natural resource specialists.

Interviewees Included:

- Universities
- National Park Service
- US Forest Service
- Timber Industry
- Non-governmental organizations
- State agencies
- Tribal organizations





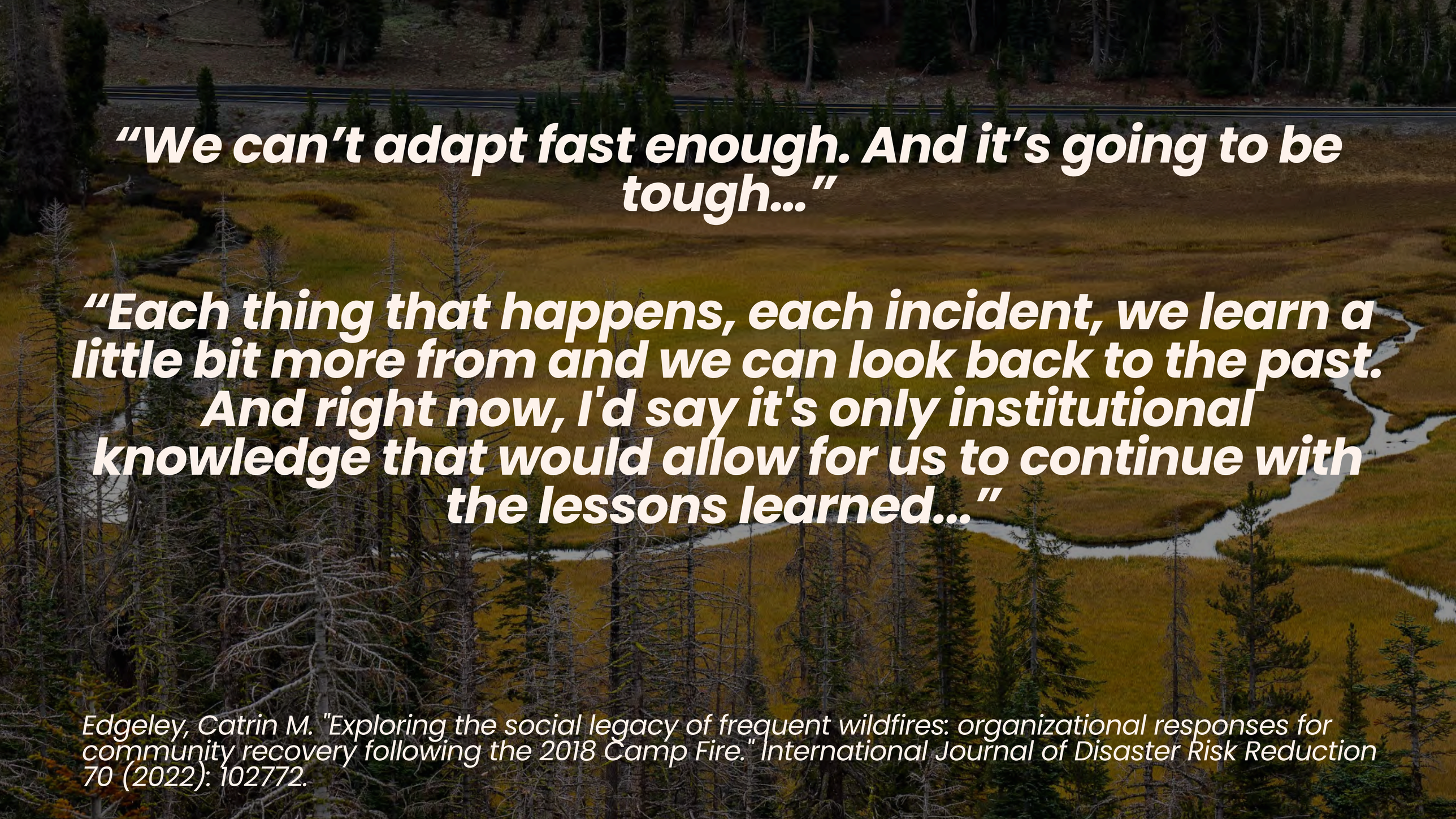






DIXIE FIRE REVIEW
LESSONS

Fire History	**Strategic Fire Management Features**
Restored Meadows	**Surface Fuel**



“We can’t adapt fast enough. And it’s going to be tough…”

“Each thing that happens, each incident, we learn a little bit more from and we can look back to the past. And right now, I'd say it's only institutional knowledge that would allow for us to continue with the lessons learned…”

Edgeley, Catrin M. "Exploring the social legacy of frequent wildfires: organizational responses for community recovery following the 2018 Camp Fire." International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction 70 (2022): 102772.

WHY COMMUNITY **VOICES MATTER** IN POST FIRE RECOVERY

Wildfire impacts more than the physical landscape. It affects homes, livelihoods, cultural resources, community identity, and people's relationships with the places they call home.

- In the aftermath of a disaster, people have different experiences, priorities, concerns, and visions for recovery.
- Communities and Tribes hold important local knowledge, histories, and relationships with the landscape.
- Including these perspectives leads to better-informed restoration decisions and helps identify potential challenges before they become barriers to implementation.



HOW WE BRING **COMMNITY VOICES** INTO RESTORATION

Community and partner engagement is an ongoing part of restoration planning—not a one-time outreach effort. We work to include partners, Tribes, and rural communities through:

- Collaborative groups: Staying connected with Tribes, landowners, local organizations, and agency partners as projects evolve.
- Community meetings: Sharing information, answering questions, hearing priorities, and creating space for discussion.
- Field visits: Walking proposed treatment areas together, discussing restoration approaches, and learning from people who know the landscape.
- One-on-one conversations: Building relationships and making space for individual questions, experiences, and perspectives.





OPPORTUNITIES

- ALIGNMENT ON URGENCY
- WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE NEW POSSIBILITIES
- BROAD COMMUNITY INTEREST AND BUY-IN

CHALLENGES

- DIFFICULT TOPICS: HERBICIDE, REFORESTATION
- DISTRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS IN NEED OF REPAIR
- TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE











POST-FIRE

PROJECT PLANNING

Burned Stands	**Green Stands**
Fire Management	**Meadows & Watershed**

SCALING RESTORATION **TO MEET THE NEED**

Over the last 10 years
typical projects = *5,000 -7,000 acres*

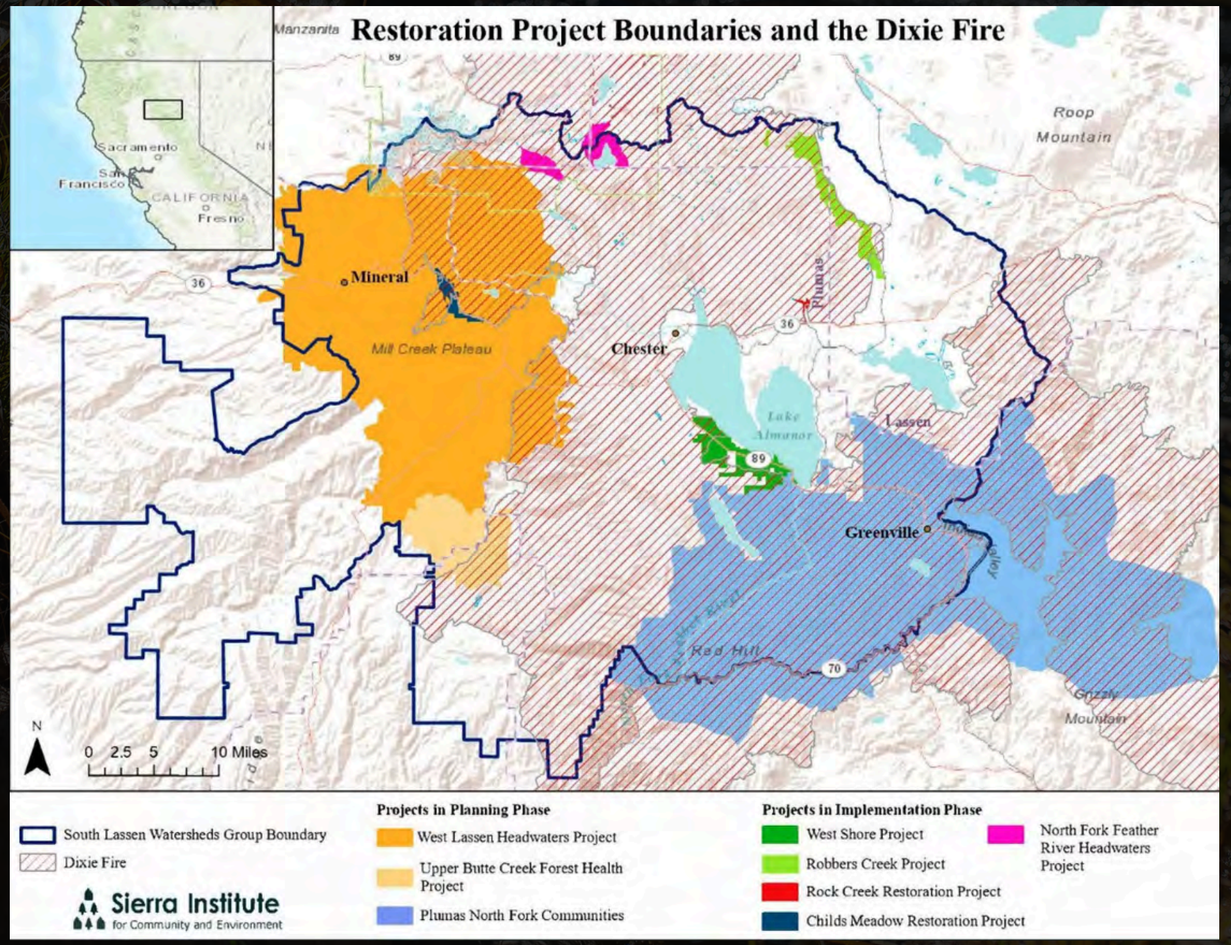
Dixie Fire: 1 million acres

North Fork Forest Recovery Project:

166,000 ac.

West Lassen Headwaters Project:

172,000 ac.



NORTH FORK FOREST RECOVERY PROJECT

Overview

- Covers over 166,000 acres of Plumas National Forest, entirely within the Dixie Fire footprint
- Surrounds heavily impacted communities (Greenville, Canyondam, Indian Falls, and others)
- Twin Aims:
  1. Community Protection + Fire Management
  2. Forest Resilience

Implementation



- Emergency Authority treatments adjacent to Communities
- Integration of treatments across boundaries:
  public lands → industrial timberlands → non-industrial landowners
- Prioritization of Future Implementation

WEST LASSEN
HEADWATERS PROJECT

Overview

- Spans Plumas, Shasta, and Tehama counties.
- Encompasses **101,422 acres** of National Forest System lands on the Almanor Ranger District, within a broader **172,000-acre cross-boundary** planning area.
- Includes the communities of Mineral, Mill Creek, and Childs Meadow.

Implementation

- Focuses on areas adjacent to and surrounding communities.
- Addresses urgent needs in both green forest stands and post-fire landscapes.
- Connects treatments across private and public lands to support a coordinated, landscape-scale approach.

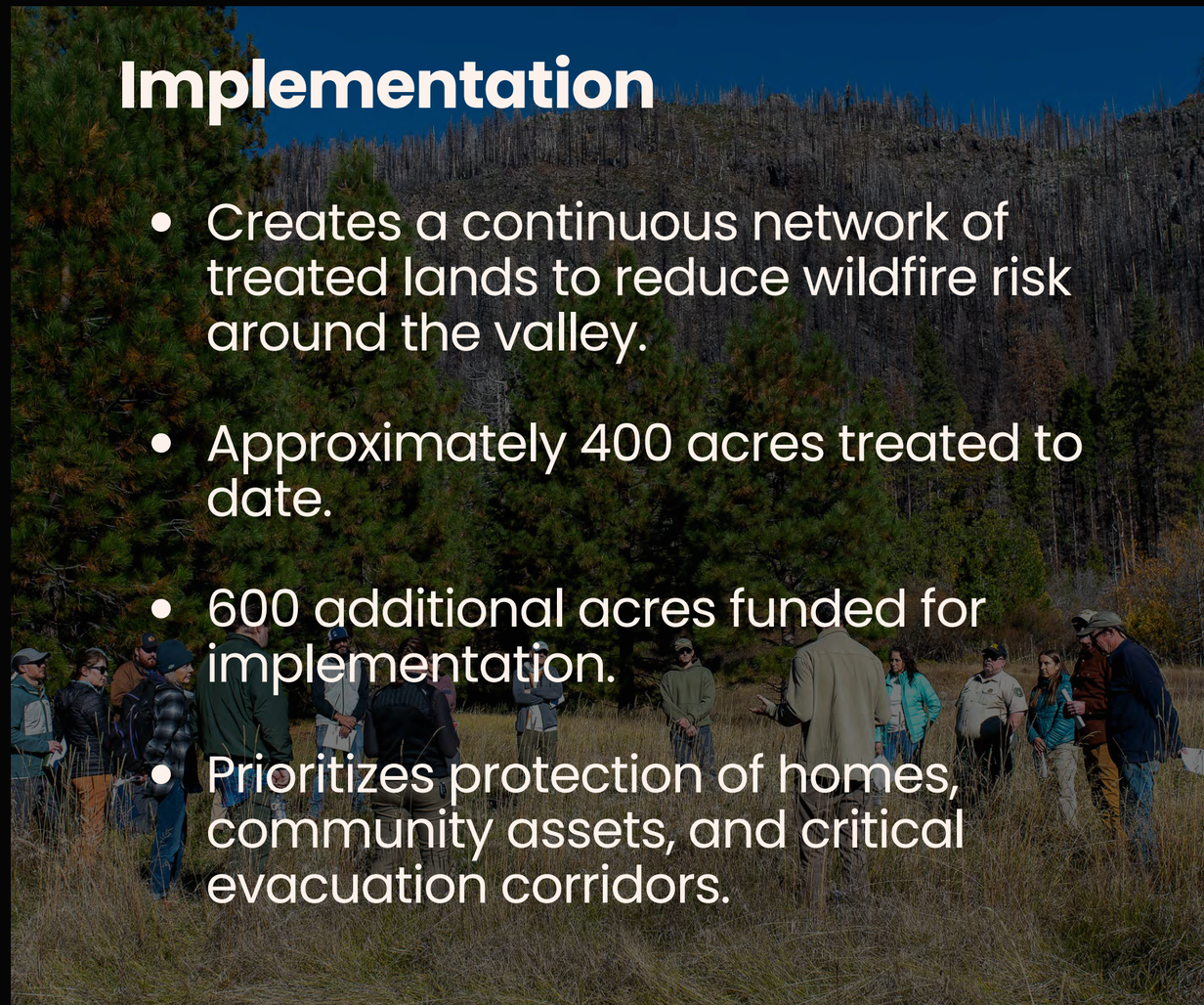


PRIVATE LANDS

Overview

- Focuses on wildfire resilience across Indian Valley, Plumas County.
- Plans a strategic greenbelt around the valley to protect communities and evacuation routes.
- Uses a novel Secretarial Suspension and Emergency Protection Plan (EPP) to streamline environmental compliance.

Implementation



- Creates a continuous network of treated lands to reduce wildfire risk around the valley.
- Approximately 400 acres treated to date.
- 600 additional acres funded for implementation.
- Prioritizes protection of homes, community assets, and critical evacuation corridors.

Integration of Community, Workforce Development, and Tribal Communities







CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Center communities in the work.** Community-driven processes are essential to determining what we protect and how we manage our landscapes.
- **Prioritize, don't just react.** We cannot protect every acre. We must strategically treat the places, communities, and resources we most want to protect.
- **Adapt to a new fire reality.** Megafires and climate change demand new approaches to firefighting, forest management, and landscape resilience.
- **Recognize the connection.** Rural community health and forest health are inseparable; the long-term resilience of each depends on the other.

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Questions & Comments

Can you provide more information about cross laminated timber and it's ignition resistant qualities?

Are we able to get a copy of questions used in the semi-structured interviews? I would love to be able to use some of these to better understand potentially shifting landscape restoration priorities.

How did the forest service respond to you and your collaborative organizations trying to open up discussions? How did you change their relationship with the community? We it state or federal FS?

Is low-tech process-based restoration an option for the geographic area?

How are you prioritizing treatments (location, type, who is engaged, etc) with so many competing values and/or acreage needs?

How do you balance the need to push for more action quickly while being patient with partners that might be more hesitant to implement projects or conversations?

I appreciate prioritizing the special places away from communities, in addition to the built infrastructure and communities themselves. Thank-you!

Were beavers involved in any restoration, either planned or opportunistic?

Questions & Comments

How much broadcast re-burning was used as opposed to logging, piling, &/or burning of burnt fuels?

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Thank You

A recording of this webinar will be available at AfterTheFlames.com. You will also receive a follow-up email of the recording with links to any resources shared.

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