

Exhibit A – Executive Summary

State of California

ExhibitAExecutiveSummary.pdf

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

California's 30 million acres of public-, private- and tribal-managed forests provide clean water and air, carbon storage, employment, recreation and tourism opportunities, wildlife habitat, and educational outlets for residents and visitors alike. California's current drought and intensifying wildfire activity threaten the future of these ecosystem, health, and societal benefits. Almost 60 percent of the State's developed water supply originates in the Sierra Nevada region, falling first through the forest canopy and understory, residing temporarily as snow pack, filtering through soil, before flowing into networks of rivers, reservoirs, and aquifers, and finally, reaching taps on farms and in homes, schools, and businesses statewide. Climate models suggest a future with declining snowpack, rising temperatures, and an increase in the frequency and intensity of wildfires and other extreme events—all of which threaten the health of the State's watersheds. Preparing for these changes as the State's population grows to 50 million requires a cohesive, flexible approach to watershed management and resilience.

The 2013 Rim Fire (Fire), the State's third largest recorded wildfire, burned in Tuolumne County, which includes private, public, and tribal forested lands. Over two months, the Fire burned more than 250,000 acres within the watershed through which clean water flows to San Francisco and parts of the San Joaquin Valley, one of the fastest growing regions in the State. The Fire recovery effort provides an entry point to examine dimensions of resilience that are of concern statewide and to the western United States, and develop a model for resilient watershed management replicable in other communities, regions, and states. The National Disaster Resiliency Competition funding opportunity will provide the resources needed for the State of California to develop and implement the Community and Watershed Resilience Program (Program) in Tuolumne County.

California is partnering across organizations and practices to overcome the financial and institutional barriers to sustainable, healthy forests and watersheds and transition to a sustainable forest economy in our rural communities. The Program design integrates strategic planning for activities to support forest and watershed health with job-training opportunities in sustainable forest management, the growth of appropriately-scaled biomass and wood products markets, watershed restoration efforts, and education.

In partnership with federal and local government agencies, community organizations, and private business, California is working to develop a balanced, integrated, and sustainable approach to watershed restoration and forest management that supports the interdependent relationship of communities and forest ecosystems. The State has developed a strong partnership with Tuolumne County and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) to lead this effort. We have engaged with local businesses, community groups, and education leaders to identify unmet recovery needs and to develop a program for community and ecological resilience in the immediate and surrounding areas.

To magnify the benefits of the Program, California will leverage funds from the USFS's Rim Fire recovery funds, a portion of the State's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, State Water Bond Funds designated to protect upper watersheds, and the California Public Utility Commission's Senate Bill 1122 program, which is designed to make small-scale bioenergy facilities more competitive. Our stewardship and resilience Program will result in enduring ecological and community resilience that will be replicable throughout the forested Sierra Nevada region and other western states (Attachment E, page 98).