



Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative open to new members

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A group comprised of a diverse range of stakeholders from throughout Madera, Mariposa, Fresno and Tulare counties with a common interest in the ecological, economic and cultural health of the Sierra Nevada is asking residents, agencies and organizations to join them.

Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative holds quarterly meetings, with the next planned for 9 a.m. to noon Aug. 29 at the Oakhurst Public Library, 49044 Civic Circle Drive in Oakhurst. Participation is free.

The mission of the collaborative is to initiate, encourage and support efforts that promote a healthy sociological system of forests, watersheds and economies in the communities of the south central Sierra through a transparent, collaborative and mutually- supportive process within a diverse and committed stakeholder group.

“We are facing so many environmental, economic and social challenges in the Sierra that it can be hard to know where to most effectively invest your time,” said Mandy Vance, a Sierra Nevada Conservancy representative in the collaborative. “The Sustainable Forests and Communities Collaborative’s balanced mission, diverse, passionate and knowledgeable members and commitment to action make this group the ideal place to develop innovative projects and leverage them into reality.”

The group’s vision is to take the region’s challenges presented by fire, forest and cultural resource stewardship and transform them into a healthy sociological system of forests, watersheds and economies in communities that are thriving in a long-term, sustainable way. This healthy system will transcend its present boundaries, providing a home for future generations to enjoy and multifaceted benefits to all Californians.

Group objectives include: fuel reduction and forest restoration; local economic and environmental sustainability; enhancements to the watershed to protect local users and benefit downstream users; protection of cultural, historical and archaeological resources; promoting environmental stewardship and awareness; renewable energy

production; ongoing environmental assessment, monitoring and outreach; promoting projects that support healthy community wildfire and urban interface; and building a capacity to plan, fund and implement projects.

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