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Subject: SNFPA Implementation Clarification for Dead Tree Removal After Stand-Replacing Wildfire in Old Forest Emphasis Areas

To: Forest Supervisors: Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Tahoe, Eldorado, Stanislaus, Sierra, Sequoia, Inyo, Lake Tahoe Basin, And Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forests

To provide clarity and consistency, I am issuing these guidelines on how to plan and implement projects for the removal of standing dead trees after a stand-replacing event in Old Forest Emphasis Areas. These guidelines apply only to Old Forest Emphasis Areas on the Forests included in the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment. They do not apply to trees regarded as imminent hazards to human safety.

The implementation of projects for the removal of standing dead trees after a stand-replacing event in Old Forest Emphasis Areas occurs in two phases:

1. The first phase is the project-planning phase, which involves defining what a stand-replacing event is. As stated in my letter of February 12, 2002, "stand-replacing event occurs when 75 percent of a stand... within a fire is killed." As further clarification of this definition, a stand-replacing event has occurred when 75 percent or more of the basal area of a stand in stems larger than 6 inches dbh have been killed. Whether a particular tree has been "killed" within this definition will be based on the tree designation guidelines prepared by Sheri Smith and others dated March 8, 2002, or later. Many trees critically injured by a stand-replacing fire may not be dead at the time the stand analysis pursuant to the Smith guidelines is conducted; nonetheless, such trees will be considered "killed" if they meet the standards set forth in those guidelines. Because trees may take months, or even a couple of years, to die as a result of a fire, determining whether a stand-replacing fire has occurred by only considering the percentage of trees actually dead at the time of project planning would fail to recognize the true number of trees killed by fire.

2. The second phase is the project implementation phase where the intent is to remove the standing dead trees. Use the criterion of "No Visible Living Leaves" to designate trees for removal. An ocular estimate will be used to survey trees prior to cutting and determine if living/needles (green) are visible



**These guidelines are effective immediately for the purpose of project planning. Additional direction may be provided as the regional team completes its review of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment.**

**/s/ Jack A. Blackwell  
JACK A. BLACKWELL  
Regional Forester**