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Our mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

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Role of Resource Conservation Districts in Promoting Cross-Boundary Restoration

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Sierra National Forest employees review map of Blue Canyon hazard reduction project with Dinkey Creek Collaborative participants, including Sierra Resource Conservation District members, July 2017. SRCD's boundary overlays within SNF's High Sierra District and covers private lands within and adjoining. SNF encompasses nearly 850 thousand acres or 50 percent of the SRCD's overall total of 1.9 million acres.

Resource Conservation Districts are leaders in on-the-ground conservation efforts. There are 97 districts throughout California that coordinate conservation work in their communities and accomplish thousands of practical, hands-on conservation projects annually. Typical work includes: water conservation, watershed protection, creek restoration, stream bank restoration, hedgerow and native plantings, fire protection projects, and watershed management. Numerous and varied Resource Conservation District partners include local, state, and federal government entities, tribes, universities, farm bureaus, and non-profit organizations.

The Resource Conservation Districts are responsive and accountable to their communities to promote local conservation goals. Conservation projects undertaken by Resource Conservation Districts are funded mainly through grants and private contributions. The U.S. Forest Service Forest Stewardship Program is one such source of grant funding.

Collaborative by nature, Resource Conservation Districts play a key role in cross-boundary collaboration, uniting parties under the shared mission of developing a land stewardship ethic that promotes long-term sustainability of California's rich and diverse natural resource heritage. Below are two examples of such integrative work.

Sierra Resource Conservation District – Forest Health Partnership with the Sierra National Forest

Via the Dinkey Creek Collaborative, established in 2010, the Sierra Resource Conservation District in partnership with the Sierra National Forest is working on the socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural challenges with the Highway 168 and Oak to Timberline Fire Safe Councils, tribal entities, local Conservation Corps and others on the development of an integrated and comprehensive forest management framework that will support a landscape approach on both public and private lands. The SRCD is focused on the private lands to assure that there are no "gaps" that could be inadvertently overlooked within such a broad and complex landscape. In partnership with the SNF and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the SRCD has been working on biomass conversion technologies that could be used for processing these excess materials for beneficial uses on an economical basis. These technologies complement the SNF's management efforts to move towards the recovery and restoration of these critically important forestlands and the resources within them.

Fall River Resource Conservation District – Burney-Hat Creek Collaborative with the Lassen National Forest

Fall River Resource Conservation Districts Burney-Hat Creek Bioenergy Plant was one of three California Energy Commission grant recipients in September 2017. The grant will help the plant convert forest material into electricity, heat and biochar via gasification. The forest-sourced feedstock for this plant will come from CAL FIRE-designated "high hazard" zones. This Collaborative Forest Restoration Project, conducted in partnership with the Hat Creek Ranger District of the Lassen National Forest, provides additional capacity plus a forum to discuss the interplay of wildlife and forest health management.

These landscape-level projects conducted in partnership with Resource Conservation Districts demonstrate the benefits (e.g., reduced catastrophic wildfire risk and improved socioeconomic conditions in local communities) of working across multiple jurisdictions.

“The Dinkey Creek Collaborative, after nearly eight years, has overcome almost insurmountable challenges – in particular facing head-on the tree mortality crisis of which many would say is of epic proportions,” said Steve Haze, the SRCD’s district manager. “Now more than ever, maintaining the strength and durability of the Collaborative is imperative if we are to achieve the ultimate goal of a healthy and resilient forest, in what scientists say will be a warmer and drier climate in the southern Sierra region.”

To learn more about the role Resource Conservation Districts play in addressing complex environmental challenges throughout the state, visit the [California Association of Resource Conservation Districts website](#).