



The good news is we can repair our past mistakes.

Choosing sustainability, and safety. We have time-tested tools in mechanical thinning, prescribed fire and managed wildfire, and a 21st century understanding of how to strategically apply them to achieve broad landscape objectives. With collaboration and sound science, it is possible to move toward a “new natural” that is better for our forests, and our communities.

Driven by restoration, funded by timber. Mechanical thinning provides a variety of jobs, including skilled equipment operators and consulting foresters/silviculturists to develop harvest prescriptions. The value of timber being removed not only pays for thinning operations, but frequently also pays for additional land management and restoration activities.

Processing the possibilities. Mechanical thinning produces logs that can be processed into usable products. With a consistent supply of wood, new mills strategically located in North Central Washington could support large scale forest restoration, keep profits closer to home, and create jobs in our communities.

No action? Not an option.

Loss of large, fire-resistant trees and the exclusion of fire have contributed to diseased, distressed forests and increased the risk of uncharacteristically severe wildfire. Forest stakeholders have been concerned for years about the need to increase the pace and scale of restoration, and the wildfire seasons of 2014 and 2015 were an especially painful wakeup call to our state and our communities.

But we have tools to restore forests, and there is hope. Thinning and prescribed fire can make our forests healthier, and wildfire more manageable. When we thin and burn, restoration begins.

OUR FORESTS NEED US
Learn more at ncfhc.org

NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON
Forest Health Collaborative



THIN → BURN → RESTORE

And now it's time to return the favor.

Prior to fire suppression, dry, fire-dependent forests in North Central Washington were in a dynamic state of balance. Frequent, mostly low-intensity fire activity created a rotating, patchy mosaic of open areas, dense forest, and large, old trees throughout the landscape.

A century of fire suppression has dramatically altered this mosaic landscape. We now have large, continuous swathes of dry forest overstocked with small trees. This creates closed forest canopies and loads of ladder fuels – the perfect conditions for the rapid, uncontrollable spread of uncharacteristic wildfire.

Mechanical thinning, followed by controlled burning, is important to restoring the natural resiliency of Washington's dry forests.

— Ryan Haugo, Forest Ecologist, The Nature Conservancy



PINPOINT THE PROBLEM

Assessing old trees, stumps, historic data and scientific studies tells us a lot about the quantity, size and spacing of trees that were historically present. And we know the current density of North Central Washington's young trees is off the charts.

Overstocked conditions lead to the hotter, faster spread of wildfire. There are few natural breaks to alter fire behavior when it starts, and a shortage of safe locations to deploy firefighters.

Our forests and communities need a break. And thinning is where we start.



RESTORE LANDSCAPES

More people are talking about prescribed fire, and the way that intentional, low-intensity fire creates more resilient dry forests. But before prescribed fire can happen, it has to be safe to light.

Mechanical thinning changes the arrangement and profile of the forest. It creates canopy gaps, and reduces ladder fuels (small trees, shrubs and limbs 6-15 feet off the ground) which allows fire practitioners to safely ignite fire and achieve landscape objectives.

Just to be clear – thinning is logging. And forest health depends on it.



COLLABORATE & BUILD TRUST

Just like we've learned a lot about the unintended impacts of fire suppression, we've also learned how to log more sustainably – taking the long view, treading more lightly, and maximizing efficiency.

The NCW Forest Health Collaborative is a diverse group of respected leaders representing conservation organizations, government, tribes, and commercial timber. We are dedicated to forest restoration, reduced risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, and ecologically responsible thinning and burning. We are at the same table, and on the same page – it's time to thin.