FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CBA

FSC REGION Pacific Coast

HCVS IN FSC A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.[1]

WHY IS CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CBA CONSIDERED AN HCV? This CBA is considered an HCV because it contains a high overall species richness, diversity, or uniqueness within a defined area compared to other sites within the same biogeographic area. The CBA was identified using a species richness index originally published by NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy that identifies areas with high concentrations of rare species. This index preferences species that have limited ranges by applying additional weighting. The results identify areas with concentrations of high biological diversity and spaces with an increased conservation significance.

SUMMARY OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CBA The California Floristic Province is recognized by many international conservation organizations as a globally significant center of biodiversity. This CBA includes two general ecological regions that both support high levels of biodiversity – the higher elevation Sierra Nevada mountains and the lower elevation California coastal region. For the purposes of this assessment, the focus is on the Sierra Nevada portion, because the concentrations of biodiversity in the coastal area are primarily associated with non-forested coastal prairies.

The Sierra Nevada hosts a wide variety of biodiversity including hundreds of vertebrates, rare species, and endemic plants. Approximately 400 terrestrial vertebrate species have been documented the Sierra

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1 Brown, E., N. Dudley, A. Lindhe, D.R. Muhtaman, C. Stewart, and T. Synnott (eds.). 2013 (October). Common guidance for the identification of High Conservation Values. HCV Resource Network.

Nevada – 13 are endemic to the mountain range and a number are rare. Biodiversity in the forested areas of this part of the California Floristic Province is dependent on a diversity of stand types and ages, including tree species diversity, forest openings, and standing and downed woody structure. Forest management has the potential to influence this within stand and between stand diversity. Mixed Conifer Stands and Montane Meadows drive the concentration of biodiversity in this area. The Sierran mixed conifer habitat is a vegetation band ranging 770 to 1230 m (2500 to 4000 ft) in the north to 1230 to 3076 m (4000 to 10,000 ft) in the southern Sierra Nevada and supports a number of rare species.

Montane meadows are grassland habitats, both wet and dry, that occur in the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada. They are the most botanically diverse ecosystems in the Sierra Nevada and are also important for wildlife species, especially birds.

IDENTIFIED THREATS TO CENTRAL CALIFORNIA CBA

Mixed Conifer Stands	Montane Meadows
Threats include **forest simplification due to forest management activities (affecting both within stand and between stand diversity), logging**, grazing, and fire suppression.	Threats include habitat loss to vineyards, orchards & development, fire suppression, invasive species, grazing, and **road construction** (resulting in channel incision) **for forest management** and other activities are all identified as threats.

While a portion of the Sierra Nevada is protected, the priority habitats also occur in portions of the CBA that are not protected. The portion of the CBA in the Rocky Mountain region is almost completely non-forested.

WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?

Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the Central California CBA is one of these places - specifically, the portions of the CBA that occur within World Wildlife Fund's Sierra Nevada ecoregion and are not effectively protected[2]. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places (like this CBA) are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this CBA, any mitigation actions will need to address the threats identified above in **bold**.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing

[2] Effective protection is demonstrated by GAP Status 1 & 2 areas in the PAD-US dataset (https://gapanalysis.usgs.gov/padus/data/download/) and USFS Inventoried Roadless Areas (https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/roadless/2001roadlessrule/maps/?cid=stelprdb5382437).

mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting engage.fsc.us.org and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.

INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- World Wildlife Fund
- California Department of Fish and Game
- USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station
- Sierra Forest Legacy – Montane Meadows