

# Western Klamath Restoration Partnership: Bringing Good Fire Back at the Landscape Scale



## Background

- This planning effort explores a path toward collaborative fire management in the Western Klamath landscape. It arose from a desire by the Karuk Tribe, the Mid Klamath Watershed Council, the US Forest Service, area Fire Safe Councils, environmental groups and other community-based stakeholders to explore what fire management could be like using a collaborative paradigm.
- We utilized a two-pronged approach to shape the planning effort: GIS-based fire modeling, and an open and interactive planning process. Each prong engaged multiple stakeholders and multiple ecological and social values. Cash and in-kind funding for the effort included multiple local, regional and national sources.



Figure 1: Western Klamath Restoration Partnership members discuss strategies to address threats to the group's shared values.

## Defining Zones of Agreement

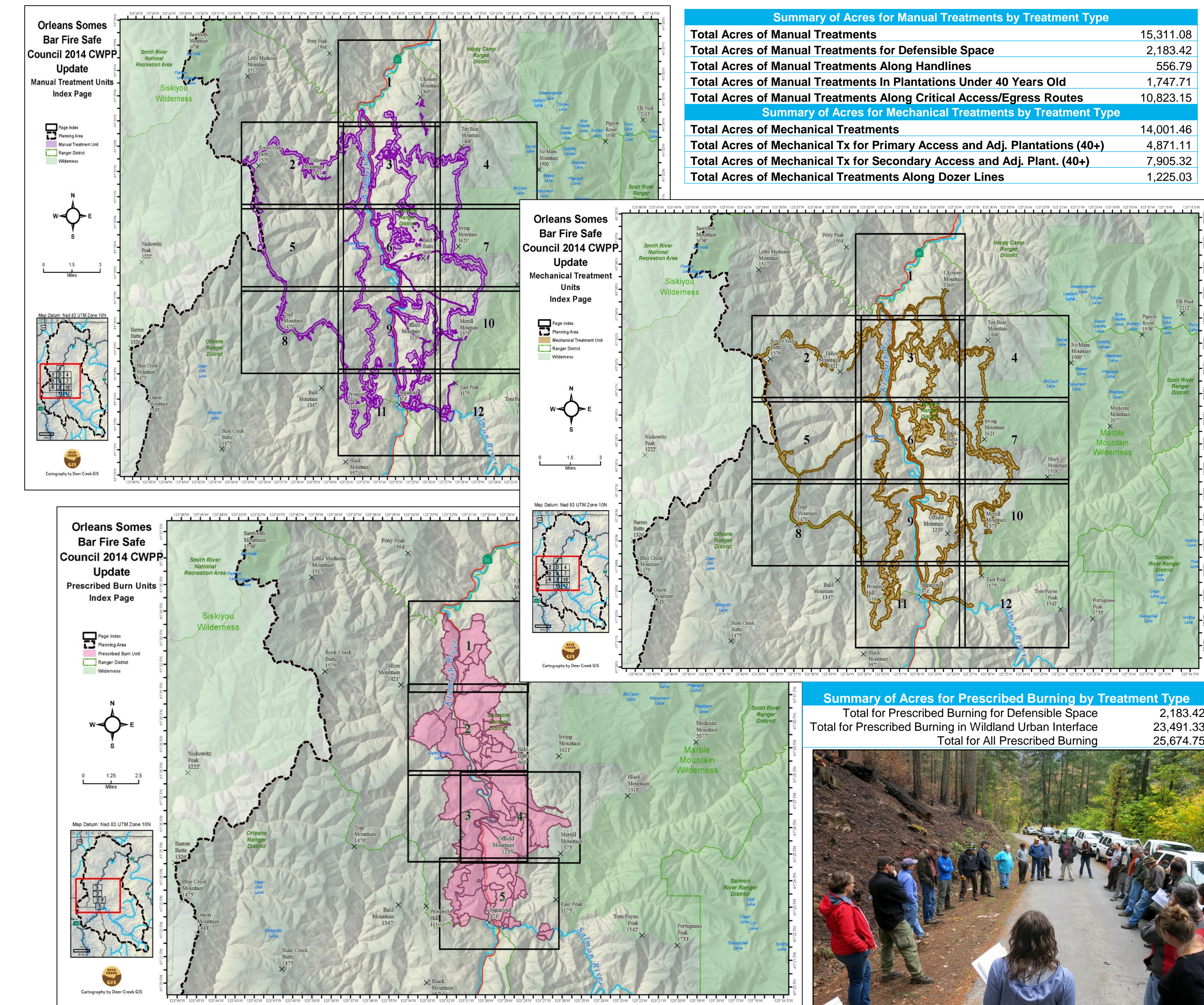


High level facilitation by Mary Huffman and Lynn Decker with the US Fire Learning Network allowed participants the structure to share their thoughts, ideas and concerns about what actions were needed to achieve our shared values. A Draft Situation Analysis showing the complex linkages between Strategies, Threats and Values guided discussions on how, when, where, why and what sort of treatments could help us reach our targets and values was created to track how strategic actions could be taken that would address identified threats and increase to potential for success. Mapping exercises, group reports, homework teams, and field trips were all incorporated to build a working relationship between participants that fostered a thorough analysis of the social, ecological, cultural and economic factors that will determine whether our identified actions, if implemented, will achieve their intended results.

## Developing Landscape Level Projects

### Somes Bar Integrated Fire Management and Capacity Development Project

This project combines planning accomplished for the Katimui Cultural Management Area MOU, Ti Bar Demonstration Project, Ukonom West Thinning Project, and Ukonom Transportation Access Planning Project. The Orleans/Somes Bar CWPP and the Karuk Tribe's Eco-Cultural Resource Management Plan also provided direction for project development. More than half of this project area will have LiDAR completed by December 2014, making quantification of the risk from existing fuels accumulations and the results of treatments very accurate. Manual, mechanical and prescribed burn treatment areas were identified based on the GIS overlay assessment in a 100,000 acre project area near Orleans and Somes Bar where fire has been effectively excluded from the WUI for over 100 years. Manual and mechanical treatments will be implemented first to allow for controlled burns to be safely implemented. The goal is to protect the community, restore cultural resources, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat by restoring fire processes in this landscape. Nearly \$2 million in funding has been secured from the USFS and other sources to begin left side planning for this project.



## WKRP Planning Area

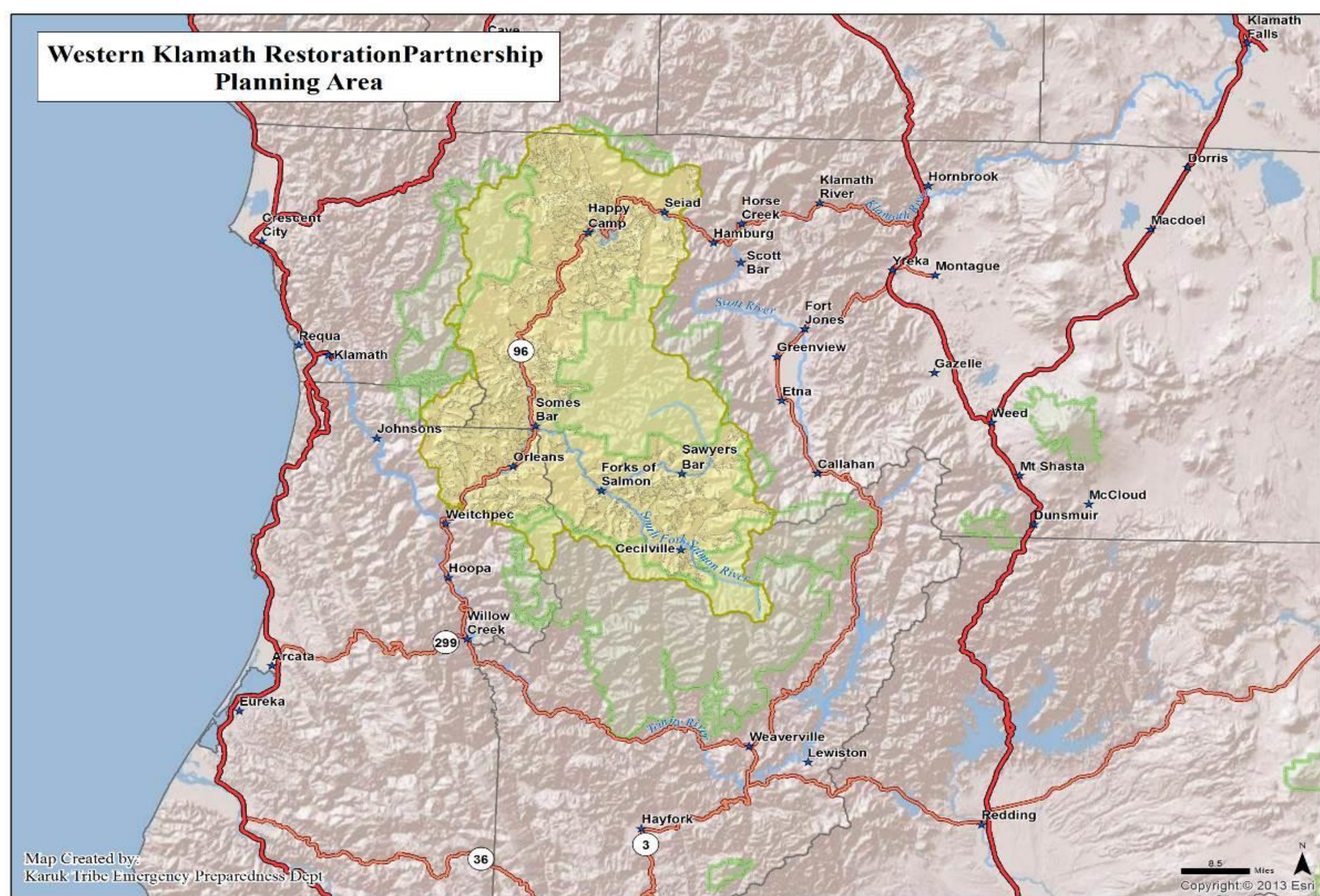
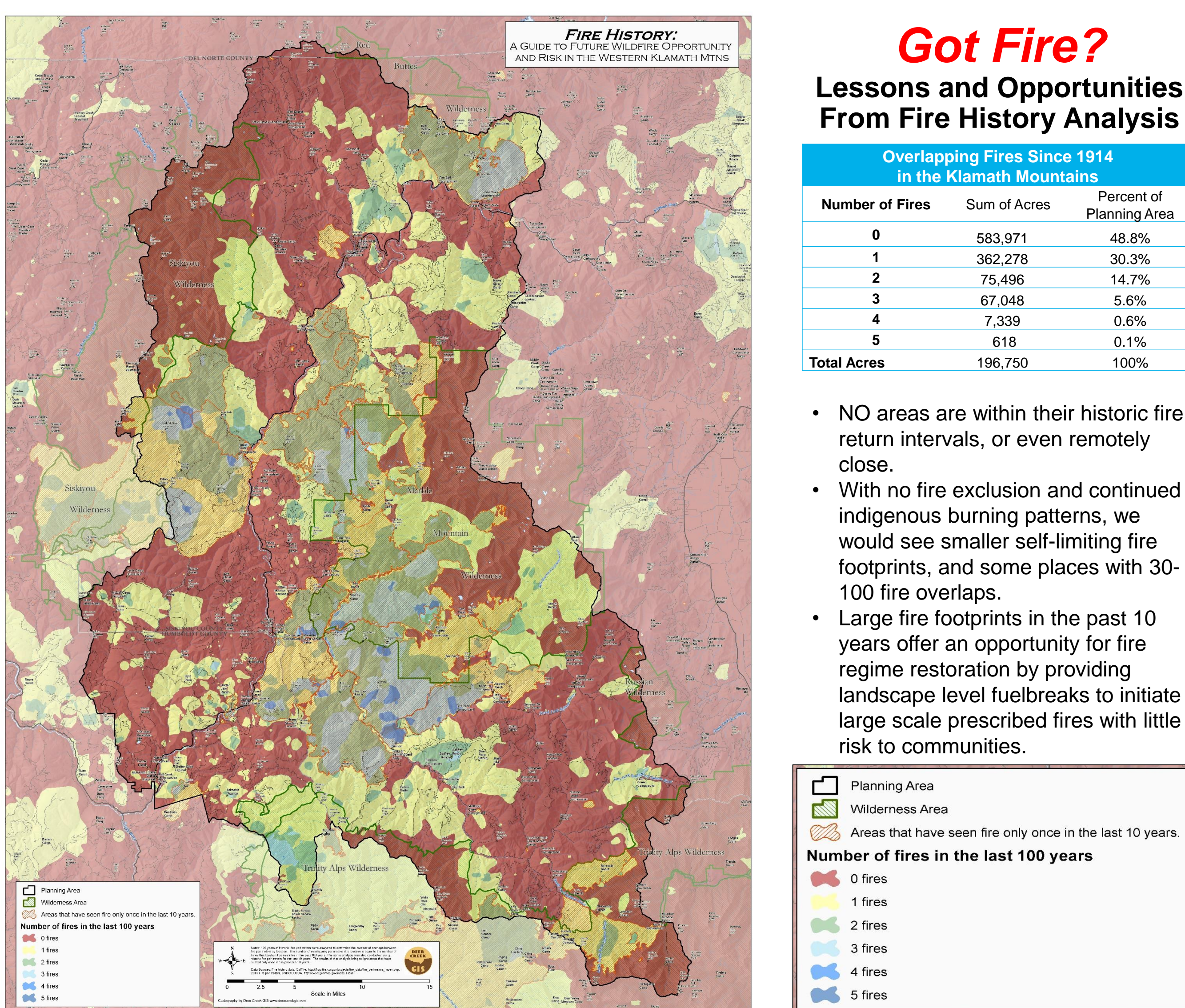


Figure 2: The 1.2 million acre planning area was collaboratively developed and includes the Salmon River Watershed, the Middle Klamath River between Aikens Creek and Seiad Valley, and portions of the Siskiyou, Marble Mountain, and Trinity Alps Wilderness areas. It also includes the communities of Orleans, Somes Bar, Forks of Salmon, Cecilville, Sawyers Bar, Happy Camp and Seiad Valley.

## GIS Analysis & Treatment Prioritization



### Got Fire? Lessons and Opportunities From Fire History Analysis

Number of Fires	Sum of Acres	Percent of Planning Area
0	583,971	48.8%
1	362,278	30.3%
2	75,406	14.7%
3	67,048	5.6%
4	7,339	0.6%
5	618	0.1%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>196,750</b>	<b>100%</b>

- NO areas are within their historic fire return intervals, or even remotely close.
- With no fire exclusion and continued indigenous burning patterns, we would see smaller self-limiting fire footprints, and some places with 30-100 fire overlaps.
- Large fire footprints in the past 10 years offer an opportunity for fire regime restoration by providing landscape level fuelbreaks to initiate large scale prescribed fires with little risk to communities.

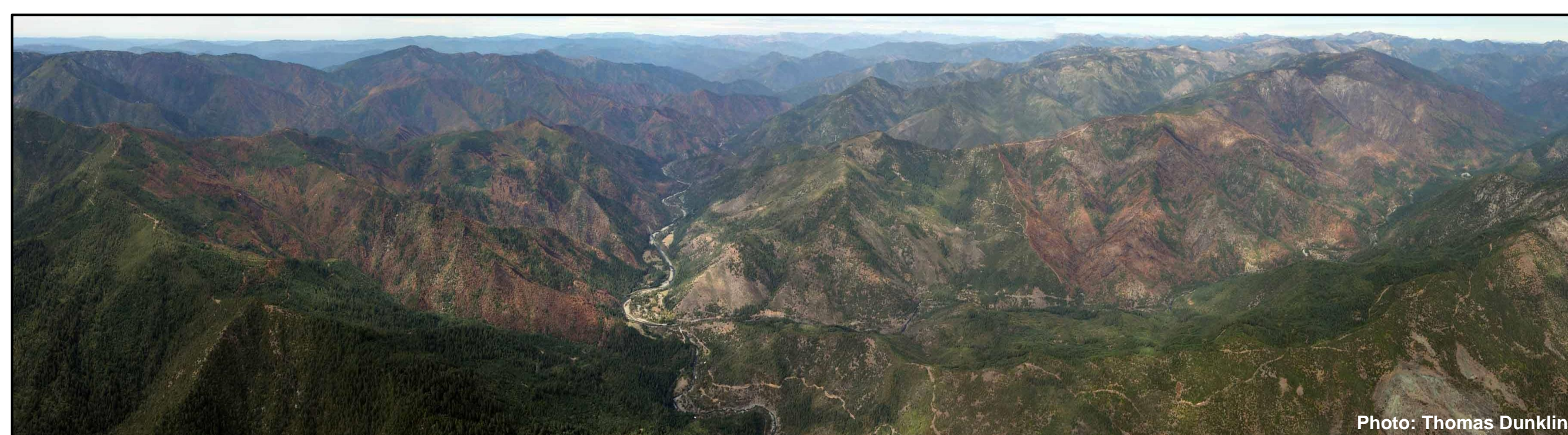
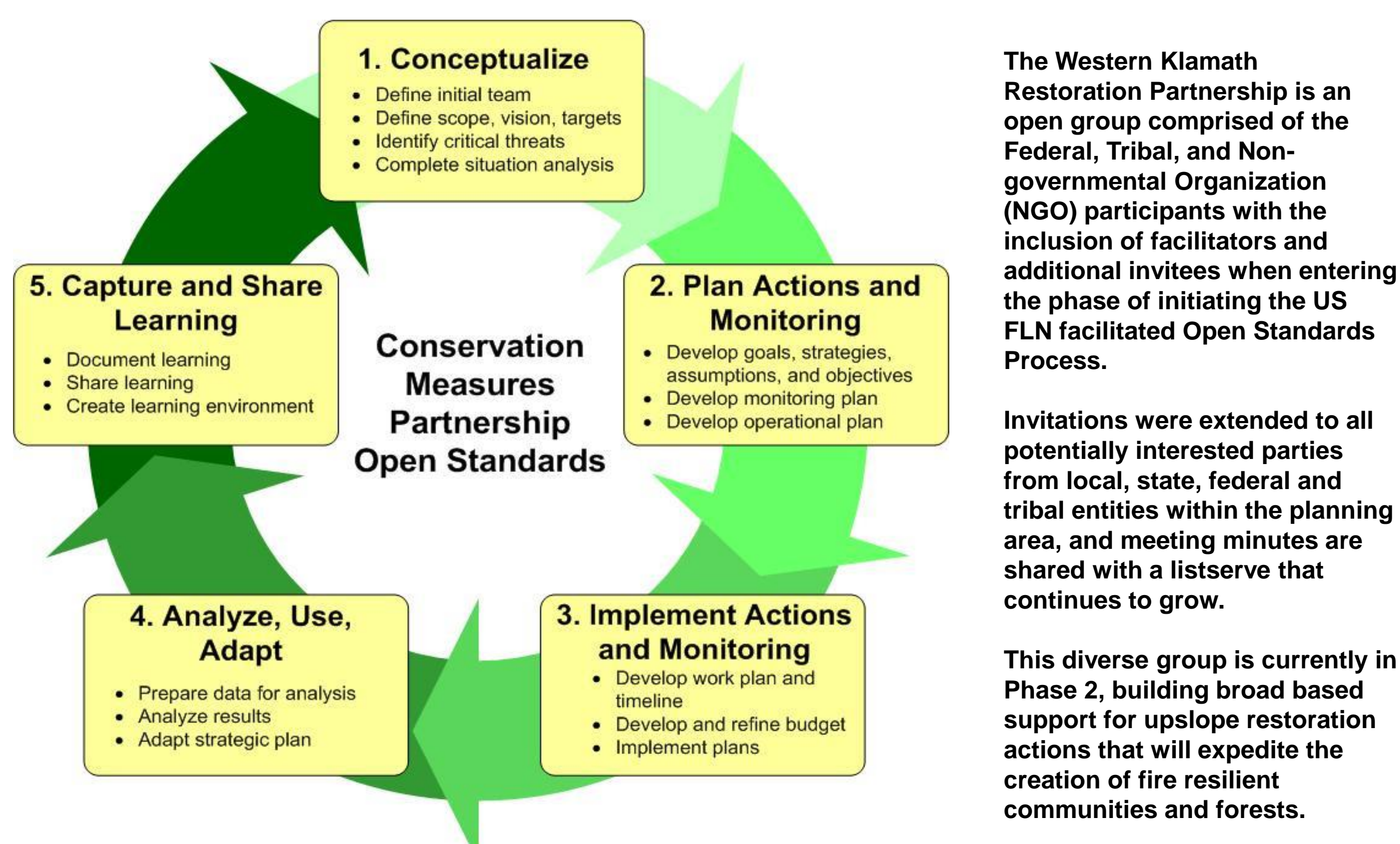
## Vision ~ Values ~ Threats

VISION	TARGETS/VALUES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain resilient ecosystems, communities, and economies guided by cultural and contemporary knowledge through a truly collaborative process that effectuates the revitalization of continual human relationships with our dynamic landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fire Adapted Communities</li> <li>Restored Fire Regimes</li> <li>Healthy River Systems</li> <li>Resilient Bio-diverse Forests/Plants/and Animals</li> <li>Sustainable Local Economies</li> <li>Cultural and Community Vitality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of stable jobs</li> <li>Erosion of community and cultural values, including Karuk traditional practices</li> <li>Lack of beneficial fire</li> <li>Altered forest structure and composition (overly dense forests)</li> <li>High fuel loading</li> <li>Lack of defensible space</li> <li>Habitat degradation (terrestrial and aquatic)</li> <li>Impaired fishery</li> </ul>

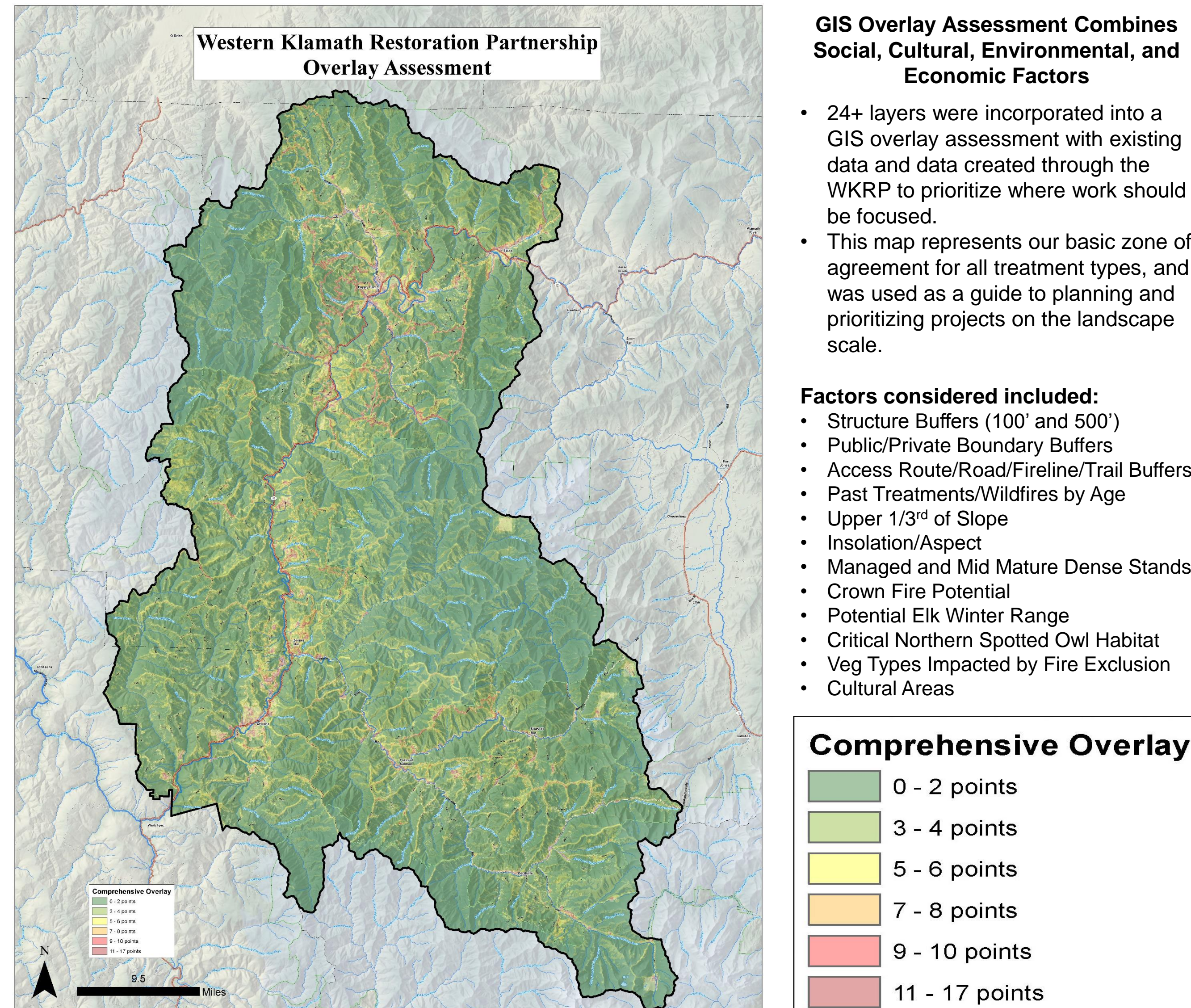
## WKRP Co-Lead, Core Team Structure

- As we began to move forward with developing specific projects, the need to formalize Co-Leads and the composition of the Core Team prompted the WKRP to get nominations for these positions during Workshop #7. In June 2014, these were tallied and the following individuals were nominated for each group:
- Co-Leads: Bill Tripp (Karuk Tribe), Will Harling (MKWC), Karuna Greenberg (SRRC), Clint Isbell (USFS KNF)
  - Core Team: Jill Beckmann (Karuk Tribe), Max Creasy (MKWC), Zack Taylor (USFS SRNF), Carol Sharp (HC FSC), Jon Grunbaum (HC FSC, USFS KNF), Cathy Meinen (HC FSC), Earl Crosby (Karuk Tribe), Tim Whitte (EPA), Kimberly Baker (KFA/EPIC), Bill Estes (HCCC), Kevin Osborne (USFS KNF), Josh Savon (Karuk Tribe/SRRC), and Frank Lake (USFS PSW).

## The Open Standards Process: A Map to Effective Collaboration

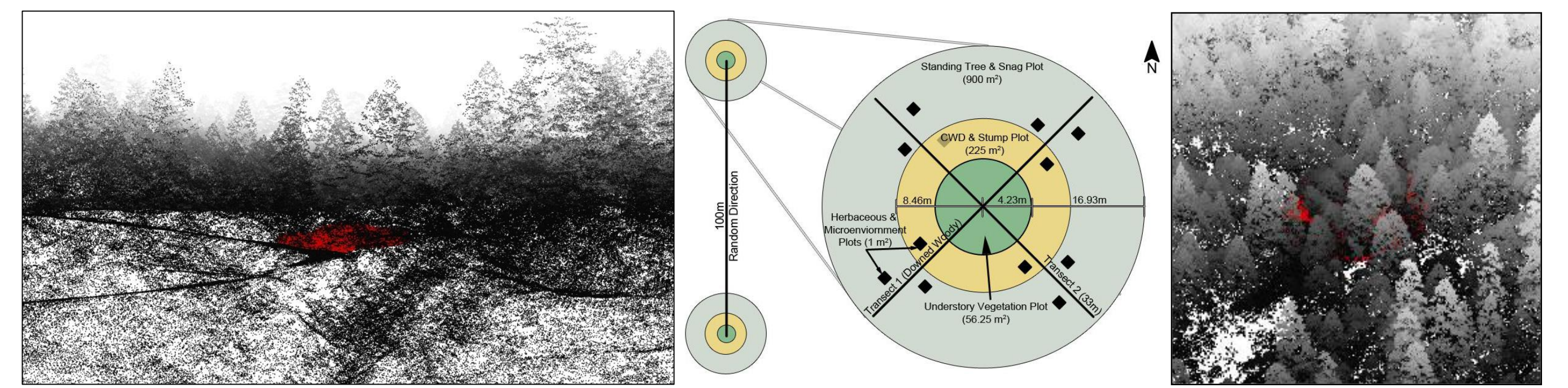


Recent large fire footprints in the WKRP planning area (last 10 years) provide an opportunity to reintroduce prescribed fires in these footprints to restore fire regimes before fuels build up again, and also allow for implementation of large controlled burns that bring fire from recent fire perimeters down to communities safely.



## Research and Monitoring

The USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station, Karuk Tribe, Mid Klamath Watershed Council, Universities (UC Berkeley, UC Davis, HSU, Stanford), the Klamath and Six Rivers National Forests, and others are working together to provide research and monitoring support for the WKRP. Collaboratively designed forestry and cultural resource plots will help guide stand level prescriptions and descriptions of practices for the larger WKRP group to synthesize into a series of treatments for specific vegetation types that collectively define our Agreement in Practice.



Ground-based plot surveys (center diagram) are being cross-walked with recent LiDAR data to correlate stand level data, and determine how LiDAR can be used to quantify fuel loading at the landscape scale. Data from this effort will feed into a multi-agency Interdisciplinary Team analyzing various treatment options across the 100,000 acre Area of Potential Effect, and an additional 5,000 acres being prepared for early treatment.

## Next Steps

NEPA will be completed on over 1,000 acres of private lands in the next year to expedite strategic manual, mechanical, and prescribed burning treatments where it matters most. Specialist data (wildlife, botany, soils, forestry, cultural/archeological, fisheries, etc) will be collected on 4,000 acres of adjacent public forest lands in preparation for implementation in the next three years. Programmatic NEPA on the larger 100,000 acre footprint will be initiated to expedite the scope and scale of landscape level treatments over the next decade and beyond. Material support for local brushing crews and the Klamath River Prescribed Fire Training Exchanges will simultaneously increase our ability to expand annual fuels treatment targets and safely implement controlled burns at larger and larger scales. Quarterly WKRP workshops, Core Team meetings, and working groups will provide opportunities for parties to collaboratively define treatment strategies and prescriptions as we prepare for the formal NEPA process.

