



# STOP CLEARCUTTING CALIFORNIA

*SAVE OUR FORESTS, WATER AND CLIMATE*

## PLANTATIONS INCREASE FIRE RISK

The growing trend of large and fast-moving wildfires has generated intense debate about how best to address this issue.

Eliminating the widespread practice of clearcutting and replanting of dense even-aged tree plantations would address one major risk factor for such fires.



Photo: Doug Heiken

### CLEARCUTTING DISRUPTS NATURAL FOREST RESILIENCE TO FIRE

- Young seedlings are planted close together after a clearcut. For the first couple of decades, their thin bark and stems and proximity to the ground make them highly vulnerable to fire.
- Crown fires spread quickly through tree plantations and can take down entire stands. Fires in unmanaged and selectively logged forests burn some trees and miss others.
- A burned plantation must be replanted. In an unmanaged or selectively logged forest, new trees are seeded by surviving older trees.

### SELECTIVE HARVESTING REDUCES FIRE IMPACTS

Unlike areas where trees have been clearcut and replaced by even-aged tree plantations, selectively harvested forests maintain the natural tree and plant diversity that helps to slow wildfires and ensure the regeneration of a diverse forest.



Photo: Doug Heiken

For more information, see [StopClearcuttingCA.org](http://StopClearcuttingCA.org), [Sierraclub.org/clearcutting](http://Sierraclub.org/clearcutting), [Facebook.com/StopClearcuttingCA](https://Facebook.com/StopClearcuttingCA) or contact [forests@lomapieta.sierraclub.org](mailto:forests@lomapieta.sierraclub.org).

FIRE

## HELPFUL VS. HARMFUL FIRES

Fire is nature's way of thinning and regenerating forests. For the last 100 years forest managers have suppressed most forest fires.

Forest management practices are changing, and controlled burns and allowing natural fires when safe are now more common practices.

Widespread clearcutting makes it harder to allow fires to burn because tree plantations encourage the rapid spread of fires.



## MYTH

Burned or dead insect-infested trees must be removed to prevent forest fires.

## TRUTH

Some studies show that burned or dead insect-infested trees are not especially vulnerable to fire and are essential to forest ecosystem health.



## DIVERSE FORESTS ARE MORE RESILIENT TO FIRE

To decrease the severity of forest fires in the state, California should ban clearcutting on private and state-owned lands.

- Diverse forests have vegetation of different sizes and ages, which makes it harder for fire to spread quickly.
- Older trees are more likely to survive fires and to spread seeds to regenerate vegetation after a fire.

## MYTH

Burned trees must be removed and seedlings planted for forests to recover from fire.

## TRUTH

Most forests have recovered from fires without human intervention for millennia.

To improve water security, reduce forest fire risk and fight climate change, California must ban clearcutting on state and private lands.