

Introduction

This section describes the California State Forest Program and how Jackson Demonstration State Forest is a part of that program, describing the purpose of the forest and the bodies that manage the forest. It describes a brief review of the history of the management of this forest. It includes the purpose of this management plan, its legislative basis, and relationship with other management plans. The management goals are outlined. And finally, it covers administration and collaborators, how the forest is funded, surrounding land use, and the legislative and policy context.

Demonstration State Forest Program and Jackson Demonstration State Forest

The concept of the Demonstration State Forest Program was created during the 1940s to demonstrate the restoration of cutover timberlands and showcase responsible and innovative forest management practices for California's private timberland owners, forest managers, policymakers, educators, researchers, and the general public. As of 2025, the Demonstration State Forest Program consists of 14 forests totaling 85,135 acres representing the most common forest types in California.

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) share responsibility for effective management of the state forests. The Board sets state forest policy and approves management plans that provide guidance for 10-year periods. CAL FIRE manages the state forests according to those policies and management plans approved by the Board. This process provides for ongoing interaction between CAL FIRE and the Board, along with public input which has allowed the Demonstration State Forest Program to evolve with ongoing needs of society over its nearly 80-year existence.

At 48,652 acres in size, Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF or Forest), located in the center of the coastal redwood region, is the largest forest in the Demonstration State Forest Program. JDSF is dedicated to increasing our understanding of forest management and providing recreational opportunities. JDSF has demonstrated sustainable management practices since 1947, balancing economical timber production with the protection of public trust resources. Due to the long-standing practice of harvesting less than growth, inventories of standing timber on the Forest continue to increase. Some of the densest and most ecologically complex, actively managed redwood forests can be observed on JDSF.

Coast redwood forests are among the most productive temperate forest ecosystems on Earth with a natural geographic range limited almost entirely within California. A unique feature of redwood forests is that over 80 percent of the land base is privately owned. Public demand for recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, climate mitigation, forest products, and forest related science from these redwood forest ecosystems is increasing. With that demand comes intense public scrutiny of forest management practices within redwood forests. As one of the only large, actively managed public redwood forests, JDSF offers a unique opportunity to demonstrate the compatibility and

conflicts involved in managing for multiple uses even as population and development pressures increase.

Today's concept of sustainable forest management includes maintaining forest ecosystems that provide social, ecological, environmental, and economic benefits. Emerging topics requested of forest management at JDSF include: the reintroduction of beneficial fire; management that contributes to the State's climate change mitigation goals; and fostering relationships with local Tribes for co-stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Research projects under development at JDSF are already beginning to increase our knowledge in each of these topics. This management plan provides guidance on how management activities can advance these topics of public interest even further.

The JDSF management approach is to provide for recreation, research, and sustainable forest management within a financially viable forest management program. The need to demonstrate this potential is compelling. Demonstration of diverse timber management practices within the context of a working forest helps guide private landowners on how best to allocate funds to those restoration efforts that will have the greatest likelihood of success. In addition, this plan is intended to guide timber management practices on JDSF that are compatible with local and state public interest values so that visitors and neighbors will continue to use and enjoy the State Forest.

History of JDSF

Pre-contact History

The following was provided to CAL FIRE by JDSF's Tribal Advisory Committee in 2025:

The area now known as Mendocino County was home to thousands of indigenous people. The people used hunting and gathering techniques to collect vital resources to sustain life on the land, its waterways, and the nearby ocean.

This region's health, abundance, and sacred management practices allowed the local Tribal people to live and flourish throughout the decades. Deer, rabbits, quails, and other small animals were taken for food. All parts of the animals were used for housing, clothing, and basketry. Berries, roots, and grasses were also used for food, household uses, basketry, and clothing. The Water was also a very important source for lifeways.

Sustenance harvesting, propagating, seeding, gathering of seeds, and burning on the land for forest health and for future generations to survive was a part of everyday life.

More Than a Land Acknowledgement

CAL FIRE respectfully acknowledges that Jackson State Demonstration Forest is located on the ancestral lands of the **local** Indigenous Peoples. Mendocino County was built upon the unceded territory of unique and distinct groups of indigenous people, including but not limited to the Northern Pomo, Central Pomo, Southern Pomo, Coastal Pomo, Noyo River, Coast Yuki, Yuki, Huchnom, Round Valley, Wailaki, and Cahto People.

We further acknowledge those who were forced here (Covelo) and are now part of the Round Valley Indian Tribes, including the Pit River, Nomlaki, and Concow People.

The Native Peoples of Mendocino County are past, present, and future stewards of this land. The broader history of colonization has had harmful impacts on Native Americans and their cultures.

It is important to acknowledge the history that has brought you to enjoy this forest and land.

We thank the Tribal Advisory Committee for reminding us that a Tribal ecological approach has kept the forest alive. We acknowledge this approach for today and towards the future. Post-Contact

The structure and composition of JDSF today reflect a complex history of Indigenous stewardship, the era of unregulated logging, natural regeneration, and state-led forest management. Recognizing this legacy and understanding the principles of management for a diverse set of objectives, including habitat and biodiversity, is critical to shaping future management strategies, restoration efforts, and inclusive governance.

Beginning in the 1860s, JDSF lands were extensively logged by the Caspar Lumber Company, which relied on railroads and steam donkeys to transport logs, personnel, and equipment.¹ The original old-growth forest was largely harvested between 1862 and 1945, with much of the activity centered along the Caspar, Hare, and South Fork Noyo, and Little North Fork of Big River Watersheds. The technique employed broadcast burning of brush and slash to clear the way for log removal. Tanoak bark was removed as well for tanning hides.

After World War II, logging became more selective and incremental. Larger trees were removed in early entries, followed by additional entries to harvest smaller trees. This resulted in uneven-aged stand structures on the east side of the forest including Chamberlain and James Creek watersheds.² Tractors and truck roads replaced the railroad and steam donkeys. The use of tanoak bark and broadcast fire were no longer included in the management practices.

The State of California purchased the forest in 1947 and established JDSF in 1949, naming it after Jacob Green Jackson, founder of the Caspar Lumber Company. The forest was established as a site for restoration, applied silvicultural research, and sustainable timber production.

From the 1960s through the early 1990s, management activities included both partial cutting and clearcutting. Clearcutting over these three decades totaled less than 4% of the forest, with the resulting even-aged stands having limited understory development. By contrast, stands managed through partial cutting retained greater structural complexity and supported more diverse vegetation. Selective harvesting techniques were developed and multiple studies examined variable density thinning, natural regeneration, and planting at JDSF during this period. These provide a baseline for the knowledge we have for today's multi-aged management that is common in redwood forestry.

Forest inventories show forest growth has consistently exceeded harvest within JDSF since the 1980's, demonstrating sustainable management and the ability to continually reevaluate

¹ Mendocino Redwood Company. (2009). *A Brief History of Logging in Mendocino County*

² California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). (2008). *Jackson Demonstration State Forest Management Plan*.

constraints on harvest levels and intensity based on ecological and social values. Long-term sustainable forestry models consider non-timber resource values, affecting the level of timber production at JDSF. Some of the major limiting factors are wildlife and watershed resources, recreation and aesthetic enjoyment by the public. These models are updated approximately every decade and look at the full suite of constraints and management goals in place at the time.

The forest continues to accumulate standing volume while increasing the complexity of structural conditions. The trend toward larger, older trees, higher species diversity, and greater spatial heterogeneity is expected to continue under this updated management plan, which has an increased emphasis on forest restoration while maintaining its mandate to investigate, demonstrate, and manage for sustainable timber production. The State's commitment to increase collaboration with local Tribes reflects a broader commitment to ecological integrity and social equity.

Purpose & Relationship to Other Plans

The Forest Management Plan (FMP or Plan) guides the management of Jackson Demonstration State Forest for the next 10 years, or until a subsequent plan or major revision is approved. This FMP replaces the 2016 updated JDSF Forest Management Plan. Per Board policy 0351.10 a thorough review of this Management Plan shall be presented, by the Department, to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection every ten years. The Plan's purposes are to guide the integrated use and protection of the Forest's resources, to meet the requirements of legislation and Board policy, and to address local, regional, and statewide issues. This Plan presents and synthesizes current resource conditions and management techniques on JDSF, articulates the desired future Forest stand conditions, and provides guidance on developing that future condition.

California has ambitious plans for how state lands can contribute to the state's climate mitigation strategies, biodiversity goals, provide equitable outdoor recreation, and improve relationships with local Tribes. The FMP compliments these state plans and incorporates those activities into the goals set for JDSF to accomplish over the next decade where opportunities exist. These plans include but are not limited to California's Natural and Working Lands Strategy, California Forest Carbon Plan, Pathways to 30x30, Outdoors for All Strategy, California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force Action Plan, Strategic Plan for Expanding Use of Beneficial Fire, and the California Natural Resource Agency's Tribal Stewardship Policy and Tool Kit. We anticipate the state will continue to refine these current plans and develop new ones over the life of the FMP. This FMP is a "living" document which includes the flexibility to adapt to future changes in policy, public needs, or changed conditions.

Other plans that shape the FMP and its updates are JDSF's Fire Plan, Road Management Plan, Recreation Plan, and Research Plan; all of which are included as Appendices of the FMP. These plans provide further detail on how JDSF will accomplish the goals set forth in the FMP. When these other plans are updated, they will reflect any new goals or guidance provided in this FMP.

As the only large public redwood forest ownership where manipulative research and demonstrations on all aspects of sustainable forest management may take place, it's critical that the forest represents landscapes and economies relevant to the redwood region. Within the current

range of redwood forests as of 2021, 16% is public ownership, 36% is owned by small landowners, and 48% by mid-size and large landowners. A growing number of these forests are shifting from private to community forests, Tribes, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with active management focused on accelerated restoration of older and more diverse forest structures.

This FMP builds upon prior Management Plans and retains the established land allocations, or long-term landscape planning objectives with the land allocations to old growth preservation, management for older forests, and common management (matrix) practices adopted by the Board and Jackson Advisory Group (JAG) in 2011. The Board and JAG approved landscape allocation maps that spatially identified overarching management objectives across the forest and committed to maintaining these for a 40-year period. This long-term commitment allows for two harvest entries spaced 15-25 years apart and time for the forest structure to differentiate based on these varied management treatments. The land allocations set the goals for long-term forest structure but do not dictate the silvicultural methods for achieving them. Progress can be assessed through monitoring and adaptive management at each entry and intervening growth period to ensure the desired forest stand conditions are achieved. Land allocations are discussed further in Section 2 of the FMP.

The landscape allocation types represent common goals that landowners hold for their forest stands. Preserving existing old-growth stands and accelerating the development of selected younger stands to obtain old-growth characteristics is relevant to other public lands, NGOs, and some private landowners. Older Forest Development Areas management balances restoration and ecologic objectives in economically viable management regimes common to land trusts, NGOs, and small to medium sized private landowners. Matrix lands allow for the demonstration of the wide diversity of forest management allowed under the State's Forest Practice Rules and test the effectiveness of those rules in protecting public trust resources.

The landscape allocations are distributed strategically across the forest to expand the limited old growth groves remaining at JDSF and connect this habitat with an Older Forest Structure Zone extending both north-south and east-west across the forest as well as through connected riparian corridors. The principal management zones are:

Old Growth Reserves - Continuous areas with substantial primary forest (i.e. Pre 1860 trees). Management is focused on protecting the ecological integrity of these forests and restoring natural processes such as beneficial fire. No commercial harvests are proposed.

Late Seral Development Areas - Goal is accelerated restoration of old growth like forest conditions and through limited harvests and other management activities. The stakeholders and interests are State Parks, non-profit conservation groups, and private forest landowners interested in restoring old forests as a primary goal.

Older Forest Development Areas - This management area will enhance the Older Forest Structure Zone because of its recruitment of wildlife structures that emerge with older forests and management for larger trees than those found in Matrix stands. This will enable management strategies that explore climate strategies, carbon storage, and visual quality. Periodic harvests will provide opportunities for restoration and enhancement of ecological functions and opportunities

for beneficial fire. Older Forest Development Area stakeholders and interest groups are small landowners, land trusts, community forests and other NGOs.

Matrix - The remaining forest land available is managed primarily by periodic partial harvests using uneven-age silviculture results in a mix of tree age and sizes. A small portion of the Matrix forest area is managed with even age silviculture resulting in uniform age and size trees. Stakeholders and interest groups are a range of private landowners as well as regulators and others interested in commercial forest management.

Management Goals & Guidelines

The Goals and Objectives in the FMP are based upon legislative statutes, regulations, Board policies, and the direction provided by CAL FIRE and the Board. As discussed in the Administration section below, JDSF has several advisory groups and collaborators that help engage the public and design projects to achieve the Plan goals.

Goal #1 Sustainable Forest Management

- Maintain a diverse, dynamic matrix of forest habitats and seral stages that are suitable for a wide variety of native fish and wildlife populations and provide forest resilience to disturbances exacerbated by climate change.
- Maintain and protect old growth reserves and increase late seral forest and older forest structure and characteristics on the Forest.
- Preserve and promote local native plant species and limit the invasion and spread of exotic plants. Protect native plant communities from insects, disease, and plant pests using the concept of integrated pest management.
- Promote and maintain mature hardwoods as important habitat elements within the forest ecosystem. In areas with either an overabundance of, or a lack of hardwoods, restore stands to the historic ratio of conifers to hardwoods.
- Utilize beneficial fire as a regular part of silvicultural treatments at a frequency and intensity that are in alignment with forest management goals and environmental protections.
- Conduct regular harvests to achieve continuous sustained yields of high-quality timber products that contribute to local employment and tax revenue, while providing opportunities for forest restoration, carbon sequestration, watershed, wildlife, fisheries, research, aesthetic enjoyment, and recreational goals.
- Utilize forestry practices that protect and enhance watershed and ecological processes.
- Manage forest fuels to reduce the incidence and severity of wildfire.
- Generate sufficient revenues from forest management to achieve the Management Plan goals.

Goal #2 Research & Demonstration

- Implement the Research Plan, emphasizing climate change and the use of beneficial fire in forest management, and support investigations led by local Tribes when requested.

- Foster partnerships with universities, the U.S. Forest Service, public and private researchers, forest conservation organizations, and educators by hosting periodic collaborative discussions and pursuing joint research and demonstration projects.
- Conduct resource management demonstrations and investigations directed to the needs of the public, forest landowners, resource professionals, timber operators, and regulatory agencies.
- Develop demonstration areas showcasing a variety of forest management approaches, including multiple use compatibilities and conflicts, in compact, easily accessible locations.
- Collect, analyze, update, and organize information on the Forest and its resources, ensuring it is stored and indexed for use in planning, management, and as a baseline for research.
- Provide access to the Forest for educators and youth programs to support forestry and ecology curricula.
- Expand education and outreach on forest research and management findings through peer-reviewed publications, newsletters, message boards, interpretive signs, brochures, and online resources.

Goal #3 Recreation and Aesthetic Enjoyment

- Implement the Recreation Plan and periodically conduct recreation surveys to plan for future improvement.
- Demonstrate that recreation is compatible with forest management, restoration, and research activities. Include appropriate mitigations in harvest plans that may impact recreation and aesthetic values.
- Utilize recreational facilities to explain forest research and forest management to visitors and recreationists.
- Consider aesthetic enjoyment when implementing forest research and forest management activities in heavily trafficked areas.
- Maintain campgrounds, picnic areas, trails and other recreational facilities in rustic, safe, healthy, and attractive conditions.
- Engage recreation user groups interested in cooperating in the design, implementation, and stewardship of recreational facilities and volunteer efforts.

Goal #4 Tribal Co-management

- Collaborate, consult, and work with local Tribes on management projects and tribal uses.
- Provide early and meaningful opportunities for Tribal collaboration on management projects.
- Provide access for local Tribes to continue traditional lifeways, which may include cultural burning for forest health.

Goal # 5 Forest Protection

Wildfire Resiliency

- Implement the Fire Protection and Pre-attack Plan for the Forest.

Cultural Resource

- Inventory, survey, and protect historic and pre-contact archaeological resources.
- Develop avoidance or protection measures for archaeological resources during project development in consultation with local Tribes and CAL FIRE Archaeologists.

Law Enforcement

- Maintain a physical presence in the forest to enforce recreation, forest management and fire prevention regulations. Make regular contact with forest users to ensure understanding and compliance.

Administration

CAL FIRE

The Board provides policy for the Demonstration State Forests which are administered by the Director of CAL FIRE. The Forest Managers for each state forest manage their forest's operations and report to their Unit Chief, with budget and policy support from the Demonstration State Forest Program in Sacramento. JDSF is located within the Mendocino Unit, headquartered in Willits. The JDSF office is co-located with the CAL FIRE Fort Bragg Fire Station.

The management team for JDSF includes both staff and outside consultants comprised of natural resource professionals such as Registered Professional Foresters (RPF), wildlife and fisheries biologists, botanists, archeologists, and Professional Geologists.

Advisory Groups & Collaborations

JDSF has several advisory groups and collaborators that help implement the FMP. These advisory groups and collaborators assist in public engagement; developing, funding, and reviewing projects; advising on long-term research projects; and providing recommendations and support to improve proposed management activities, research focus, recreational facilities; and help guide current priorities for actions based on existing staff capacity and available funding during the life of the FMP.

Advisory groups include the Jackson Advisory Group (JAG), Mendocino Unit's Tribal Advisory Council (TAC), and Recreation Task Force (RTF).

Collaborators include the Board's Effectiveness Monitoring Committee, California Department of Fish and Wildlife Coastal Fisheries Program, California Geological Services, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), California Conservation Corps, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR), USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, the Mendocino Coast Cyclists, Redwood Practical Shooters, Trout Unlimited, Mendocino Land Trust, Redwood Tree Improvement Cooperative, and numerous University and research partners.

Funding

Management of the Demonstration State Forest Program is funded through revenue generated through sustainable forest management activities, with small contributions coming from recreation

and minor forest products such as mushroom and firewood permits. General funds are not regularly allocated for state forests in the state's annual budget.

All revenues are deposited in the Forest Resources Improvement Fund (FRIF), a special fund dedicated solely to management of the Demonstration State Forests. FRIF funds cannot by statute be used for other purposes. The FRIF supports all aspects of state forest management including personnel, facilities, restoration, research, and recreation. The state has set a goal of a 3-year prudent operating reserve which has not been met in the 21st century due to interruptions in forest management, cyclical market conditions for forest products, and impacts of large fires limiting sawmill capacity for planned forest management activities.

In 2024 the overall budget for the Demonstration State Forest Program was approximately \$9.8 million, which included about \$6.6 million for personnel costs and \$3.2 million for operating expenses. Of that, JDSF was budgeted for approximately \$5 million dollars, which included \$3.5 million in personnel costs and \$1.5 million in operating expenses. The operating expenses at JDSF are split amongst the core program budgets with 25% for administration and facilities; 25% to the roads program, 25% to the research program, 15% to sustainably forestry, and 10% to recreation. Additional investments in the forest are made through reduced revenues from timber sales by incorporating restoration, recreation, and research activities into timber sale contracts.

The Demonstration State Forest Program generated on average \$8.2 million annually between 2014 and 2022. JDSF contributed approximately \$6.3 million annually during this same period through the sale of approximately 13 million board feet of timber annually from sustainable forest management projects.

JDSF is located in a unique market relative to other state forests. Mendocino County has valuable tree species, a large and highly trained workforce, and robust forest product infrastructure that helps realize relatively high financial return for timber harvest. This allows a portion of revenues from JDSF to support activities on other Demonstration State Forests, such as conservation of giant sequoias at Mountain Home State Forest which has access to only one sawmill that serves all landowners south of Tuolumne County. Though Soquel also has redwood, there is a much smaller workforce and only a single local sawmill in Santa Cruz County and periodic interest from sawmills in Mendocino and Sonoma County to source forest products from there. This leads to approximately 66% of the financial value realized at Soquel relative to JDSF for the same quantity and quality of forest products. Shortfalls in annual revenue require deferment of some planned operating expenses to future fiscal years.

The Demonstration State Forest Program is unique amongst state lands in that it pays both annual property taxes and yield taxes when sustainable forest management results in timber being harvested. Property taxes are paid annually based on the timberland values set by the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA). These taxes are approximately \$125,000 annually and are owed whether timber is harvested or not. The yield taxes are variable based on the amount of timber removed according to value schedules also set by CDTFA. These taxes have averaged approximately \$175,000 annually over the last decade and are paid by the timber purchaser as part of the timber sale agreement. Timber tax revenue collected by the CDTFA is allocated back to the county of harvest for the county auditor to distribute.

JDSF provides significant contributions to the local economy. Regular harvesting activities engage the local workforce for jobs in the woods and local manufacturing facilities. In addition, JDSF provides over 48 miles of multi-use trails connected by a well-maintained road system. JDSF has over 17 miles of State Highway 20 (SR 20) frontage, contributing to the redwood curtain experience for visitors entering the Fort Bragg coast from the east, and operates the only day use area welcoming visitors to stop and enjoy the river and redwoods along SR 20. JDSF offers unique opportunities compared to other public landowners such as single-track mountain biking, mushroom foraging, and firewood collecting. JDSF also supports numerous tours, special events, and research projects that bring visitors to the community. These opportunities are recognized and advertised by both the Fort Bragg and Mendocino County Tourism Bureaus in their public outreach to local and out-of-town visitors.

The uncertainties associated with harvest planning, lumber markets, and public acceptance of management activities impact the ability to achieve the goals set forth in the FMP. JDSF was unable to fill all the staff positions or have the resources to invest in achieving many of the goals envisioned in the 2008 and 2016 FMPs due to shortfalls in projected funding. This is partially due to the limited harvest volumes during this period, partially due to the 2008 recession causing low timber prices, and partially to the impacts of depleting FRIF financial reserves between 2002-2008.

Interruptions in management activities in 2022 have again weakened the financial position of the Demonstration State Forest Program, which now require the use of reserves and the deferment of expenses to cover annual personnel and operating costs. JDSF works closely with the public and Jackson Advisory Group to prioritize the use of scarce financial resources during these times. Achievement of the goals set forth in this FMP depends on the ability of the forest to generate consistent and adequate revenue and reserves to invest in the required personnel and resources to conduct the work.

Facilities & Improvements

Facilities on JDSF include:

- Buildings
- Roads
- Trails
- Campgrounds
- Day Use areas
- Domestic and municipal water supplies
- Research monitoring structures such as weirs and instruments

Facilities are managed according to their function. The Recreation Management Plan discusses campgrounds, trails, buildings, and other infrastructure associated with these facilities.

Safety, Security, & Access

The remote and rustic character of JDSF makes safety an important management consideration. Forest visitors need to be informed of safety issues and hazards inherent to the Forest. Roads, trails, campgrounds, emergency helicopter landings, and other facilities are annually evaluated and

maintained to ensure they are in a safe condition. The Mendocino Unit Chief is responsible for forest and fire protection in the Forest. To achieve this, the JDSF Forest Manager, Unit Operations Chief, Fire Prevention Battalion Chief, and the local CAL FIRE Battalion Chief all work together to ensure an adequate forest and fire protection program is in place for JDSF.

Hazards are communicated to the public through signs, brochures, maps, press releases, and social media. Seasonal closures of roads and campgrounds also provide for greater public safety during winter months in addition to natural resource protection. Temporary closure for specific activities or specific areas is also regularly issued by the Forest Manager to provide for public and contractor safety during road work, timber operations, or other potentially hazardous activities.

Access to JDSF is primarily provided through entrances from SR 20 and along the western boundaries with local use from the coastal communities of Mendocino, Caspar and Fort Bragg. Access points from the eastern boundaries to JDSF are limited and are equipped with gates restricting vehicle access to the primary access points along SR 20.

Surrounding Land Use

JDSF is in central Mendocino County. Land Use Classification (LUC) to the north and south of JDSF are Forest Lands (FL) in the Mendocino County General Plan (as is JDSF). Lands directly on the eastern boundary of JDSF are classified as FL and Range Land (RL). Further to the east are the large areas of Rural Residential (RR) as well as the thousands of smaller residential lots in the Brooktrails development. The LUCs for the west side of JDSF are Rural Residential (RR), Remote Residential (RMR), Public Service (PS) and Solid Waste Landfill (SW) (Mendocino County 2003). Special considerations are necessary where timber harvesting or other activities utilizing heavy equipment are conducted immediately adjacent to Rural Residential areas.

Other important neighbors of JDSF on the west and southwest include several State Park units (Jug Handle State Natural Reserve, Russian Gulch State Park, Mendocino Woodlands State Park, and the Big River Unit of the Mendocino Headlands State Park). JDSF has numerous trail systems that connect these two public lands and collaborates with State Parks on management of the pygmy forest and the Mendocino Woodlands. The Conservation Fund holds lands in the Big River watershed, immediately to the south of the central part of JDSF. Mendocino Redwood Company is a major landowner to the north of JDSF. The Conservation Fund and Mendocino Redwood Company are industrial scale timberland owners that manage their lands for sustainable forest management.

Legislative and Policy Context

The State of California owns and stewards over 3.8 million acres. Land managing agencies include the Department of Fish and Wildlife, State Lands Commission, State Parks, CAL FIRE, Caltrans, various Conservancies, and the University of California Natural Reserve System. Each agency has a unique role and collectively represents the State's total interest in forests and natural lands. The Demonstration State Forest Program represents about 2% of total State ownership and fills the niche of demonstrating and advancing the understanding of sustainable forestry for social, ecological, and economic values.

The California Public Resources Code (PRC), created and maintained by the California Legislature, specifically addresses the management of state forests in Division 4, Part 2, Chapter 9 of the Public Resources Code (PRC). The California State legislature describes that the purpose of the Demonstration State Forests is to address the State's interest in restoring cutover timberlands within PRC Section 4631, which states in part "It is hereby declared to be in the interest of the welfare of the people of this state and their industries and other activities involving the use of wood, lumber, poles, piling, and other forest products, that desirable cutover forest lands, including those having young and old timber growth, be made fully productive and that the holding and reforestation of such lands is a necessary measure predicated on waning supplies of original old growth timber."

Responsibility for oversight and management of state forests is split between CAL FIRE and the Board. PRC Section 4645 states "The department, in accordance with plans approved by the board, may engage in the management, protection, and reforestation of state forests." PRC 4646 goes on to state "The director, acting in accordance with policies adopted by the board, shall administer this chapter. He may exercise all powers necessary to accomplish its purposes and intent." These statutes vest the Board with authority to approve management plans and set policy for state forests, and CAL FIRE to manage state forests according to those plans and policies.

Management of state forests is further defined by the legislature in PRC Section 4639 which states "Management" means the handling of forest crop and forest soil to achieve maximum sustained production of high-quality forest products while considering values relating to recreation, watershed, wildlife, range and forage, fisheries, and aesthetic enjoyment."

The Board's policies for forest management are defined in Chapter 0351 (0351-0351.10); these policies outline and guide management actions. Board Policy 0351.3 establishes "the primary purpose of the state forests is to conduct demonstrations, investigations, and education in forest management." Policy 0351.4 further defines timber management policies stating that state forest timberlands will be managed on the sustained yield principle, defined as management which will achieve and maintain continuous timber production consistent with environmental constraints;" and "Timber production and harvesting should provide for coordination with other state forest uses. Silvicultural practices should be compatible with recreation, soil, water, wildlife and fisheries values, carbon sequestration, and aesthetic enjoyment."

As California's values and interests in its forest resources have evolved since the original state forest statutes were set by the legislature to primarily protect the State's interest in timber resources, the management of JDSF has also evolved. These values are incorporated into each iteration of the management plan and provide guidance on how forest managers can best meet the needs of our current society. This plan similarly shows the evolution of the State's values in forestlands and highlights opportunities to address emerging issues such as climate change mitigation, beneficial fire, accelerated forest restoration, and incorporating local Tribes in management actions.

Board Policy 0351.1 sums this up well with the following statement: "The value of the Demonstration State Forest Program will continue to increase as the demand for forest products, recreational opportunities, valuable wildlife habitat, and forest related science increases and as

public interest in forest management practices intensifies. Demonstrations of the compatibility and conflicts involved in managing multiple use of forest land are essential as population and development pressures increase.”