

AGENDA for Quarterly WMA Meeting
Thursday, February 15, 2018
10am - Noon



LA County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
12300 Lower Azusa Road
Arcadia, CA 91006

Click on map for location and directions:



1. WMA Member Introductions
2. Guest Speaker:
Chad Hanson, Research Ecologist, John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute (Big Bear City, California)

Topic:

Importance of high-intensity fire patches, and pulses of snag recruitment from drought and native bark beetles, in maintaining complex early seral forest habitat in ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests.

3. WMA Member Updates
4. Announcements
5. Next Meeting Date

GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Current forest management is often still dominated by the 20th century concept that forests are essentially defined by mature, live trees. However, the past two decades of research have challenged previous notions of fire history, natural succession, and habitat heterogeneity, particularly in western U.S. ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests. While some disagreements and gaps in knowledge remain, there is now broad agreement that high-intensity fire—both small and large patches—is a natural component of fire regimes in these forests, and that large pulses of snag recruitment from drought/native-beetles also occurred historically. These realizations have spurred a dialogue about the ecological role of “complex early seral forest” created by such fluctuations, and the threats to biodiversity posed by management that values only mature, live trees, to the relative exclusion of the other equally important structural components of dynamic forest ecosystems: snags; downed logs; native shrub patches; wildflowers and grasses; non-conifer early/mid-successional trees (oaks, aspen); and understory conifer regeneration of varying densities. Dr. Hanson will discuss the key role complex early seral forest plays in maintaining the full range of native biodiversity in ponderosa pine and mixed-conifer forests, and some of the numerous imperiled wildlife species dependent on this habitat. Dr. Hanson will also dispel some common misconceptions about historical forests with regard to density and composition.

Chad Hanson is a research ecologist with the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute, located in Big Bear City, California. He has a Ph.D. in ecology from the University of California at Davis, with a research focus on fire ecology in conifer forest ecosystems, and he is the co-editor and co-author of the 2015 book, “The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature’s Phoenix”. Studies published by Dr. Hanson cover topics such as: habitat selection of rare wildlife species associated with habitat created by high-severity fire; post-fire conifer responses and adaptations; fire history; and current fire patterns.