



U.S. Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region  
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## Briefing Paper

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### Topic: Collaborative Forest Community Study

The Pacific Southwest Region has entered into a challenge cost-share agreement with the Center for Economic Development (CED) at Chico State University to work together to better understand socioeconomic conditions in local forest communities surrounding the Stanislaus, Eldorado, Tahoe and Plumas National Forests.

#### Purpose for Briefing:

To update the forests on project activities between October and December 2015. Note: The briefing paper dated September 8, 2015 provides background information on the initiation and the objectives of this project.

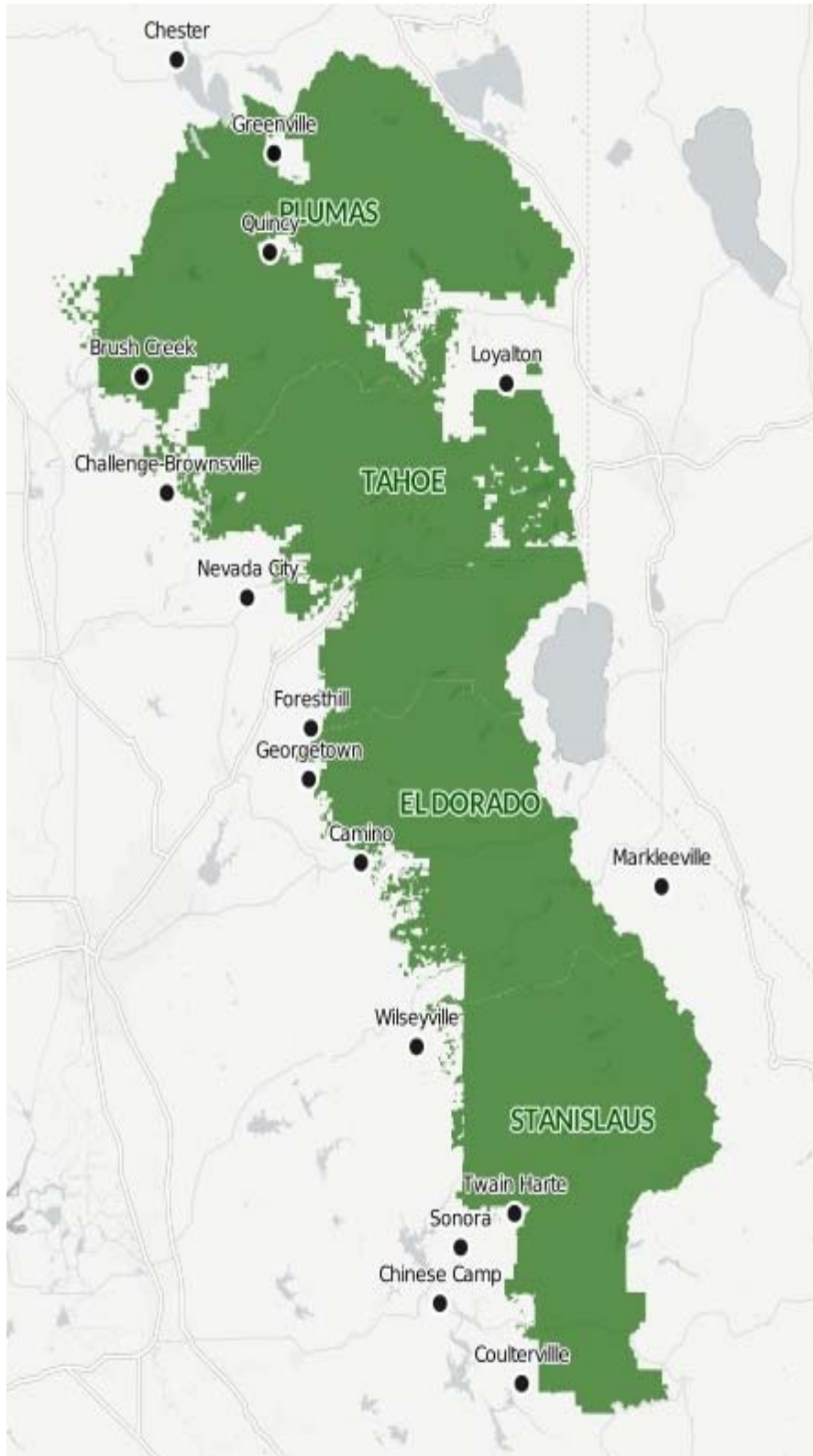
#### Background & Key Points:

The project team has identified the communities to be examined in the study. These communities were chosen based on the important contributions that the forests make to the forest products, recreation and grazing sectors of their local economies. These communities also reflect a geographical cross-section of the four forests with recognition of the important social and economic contributions that Forest Service employees bring to the communities that are home to a Supervisor's and/or District Office.

Communities were also chosen to be representative of smaller communities that are often less resilient and therefore more at risk from changes in forest management. For example, larger and more populated communities on the urban periphery, such as Oroville and the Auburn-Lincoln-Rocklin area, were not included in the study even though they support important forest products facilities. This is because these forest products businesses have a limited impact on the overall economy given the more diverse economic base that is present within these larger communities. This is in contrast to smaller communities such as Camino, Loyalton and Greenville where recent mill closings were felt strongly not only in the forest products sector but also by materials and service based businesses throughout the community. When forest products businesses close down or reduce their workforce in smaller communities, the ability of residents to find alternative employment within the same community is limited. Thus, people often need to move away in order to find new jobs and this migration results in less revenue available to support important public services, such as schools and health care, for the people who remain. The resulting decline in the quality of these services then results in even further migration of people out of the community. An objective of this project is to focus on the types of smaller

communities that are susceptible to this compounding effect. Currently, there is very limited information on these smaller communities and as a result, these effects can potentially be overlooked.

The communities chosen for inclusion in the study are:



Plumas National Forest

- Quincy
- Greenville
- Chester area
- Brush Creek

Tahoe National Forest

- Challenge-Brownsville
- Loyaltan area
- Foresthill
- Nevada City

Eldorado National Forest

- Camino
- Markleeville area
- Georgetown
- Wilseyville

Stanislaus National Forest

- Twain Harte area
- Sonora
- Chinese Camp
- Markleeville area
- Coulterville

CED has now begun the process of collecting socioeconomic data for these 16 small forest community areas. In addition, CED will also be creating some indices that characterize important conditions in these communities. The data being collected include:

#### Economic Conditions

- Cost of living
- Percent of employment in construction and construction related industries
- Percent of forest related occupations (timber, tourism, grazing, mining)
- Labor force breakdown and unemployment
- Median household income
- Business starts
- Retail sales index of important gateway communities
- Index of timber/forest dependence
- Employment diversity index for zip codes and counties

#### Social Conditions

- Educational attainment
- Crime statistics
- Single head of household
- Ratio of doctors to population
- Affordable housing
- Poverty rates
- Disability rates
- School enrollment
- Age demographics
- Migration by age
- Race and Ethnicity breakdowns
- Ratio of banking institutions to population
- Birth data
- Death data
- ESRI Tapestry data (measures of vulnerability e.g. community engagement, computer/internet access, ect.)
- School lunch program data by district/school
- Broadband adoption rates
- Hospital closures/existing
- School closures/existing

Initial results of this data collection were presented at a Sustainable Forest Action Coalition (SFAC) meeting in Medford, OR on December 16, 2015. This meeting was attended by SFAC members, CED staff, and Forest Service staff from R5 and R6 including both Regional Foresters. This data collection process will continue during the next quarter (January to March). In the Spring, CED staff will begin developing a web-based interactive mapping tool that will allow the forests to easily access this data so that it can be utilized in project and forest plan documents.

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