

Community Based Approach to Wildfire Risk Mitigation

Submitted by Blue Forest on behalf of Pacific Gas & Electric

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Abstract:

This whitepaper introduces a partnership-based model for wildfire risk mitigation that positions utilities as catalysts in a public-private ecosystem of resilience. It explores how utilities can expand their role beyond the traditional right-of-way (ROW) wildfire mitigation efforts to engage in programs, and with partners, that are mutually beneficial to their infrastructure, their customers, and the communities and forests they operate within.

The first section outlines the evolving nature of wildfire risk and its implications. The second section discusses opportunities for utilities to help address this risk by accelerating implementation timelines, reducing costs through shared investment, acting as catalysts for meaningful change, enhancing public trust, and achieving meaningful risk reduction. Case studies illustrate how utilities have captured these benefits, and show how key non-profit organizations have played a pivotal role in resilience partnerships by serving as critical intermediaries linking public funding, private capital, utility contributions, and on the ground implementation to accelerate forest restoration and wildfire risk mitigation. The last section provides strategic insights to grow this approach. Wildfire resilience partnerships have proven to be an important tool to improve community safety, reduce utility risk, and restore healthy forests, and deserve expanded participation and support moving forward.