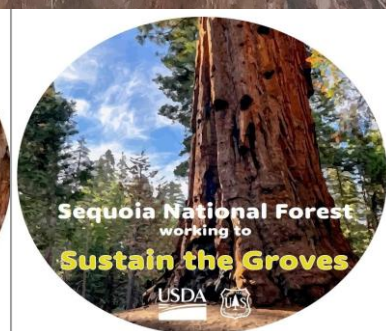
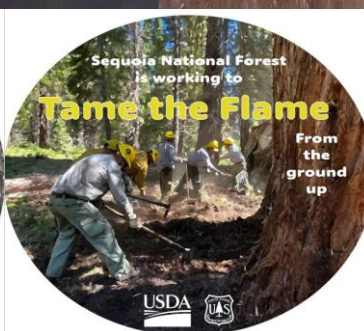




Final Report

Sequoia National Forest Fire Prevention and Education Team

Porterville, California
August 9-29, 2022



**Sequoia National Forest
Fire Prevention Education Team
Final Report
August 28, 2022**

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A National Fire Prevention Education Team (FPET) assisted the Sequoia National Forest (SNF) in providing information and education for the **Giant Sequoia Emergency Response (GSER)** actions August 9-29, 2022.

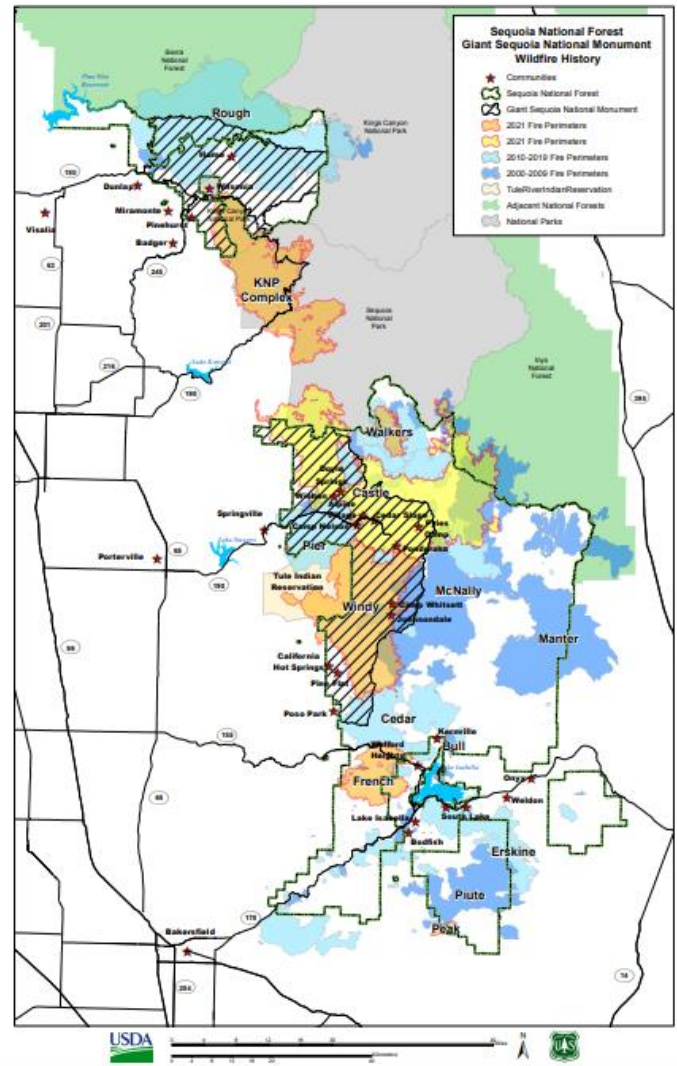
This National Fire Prevention Education Team was composed of five public information officers with various specialties including photography, videography, graphics, interpretive services, Forest Service Agency Administrator, writing, and marketing.

Objective:

The team was tasked with supporting the public information messaging of the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response. In that role they worked closely with the Forest Public Affairs Officer and GSER Incident Management Team.

Background:

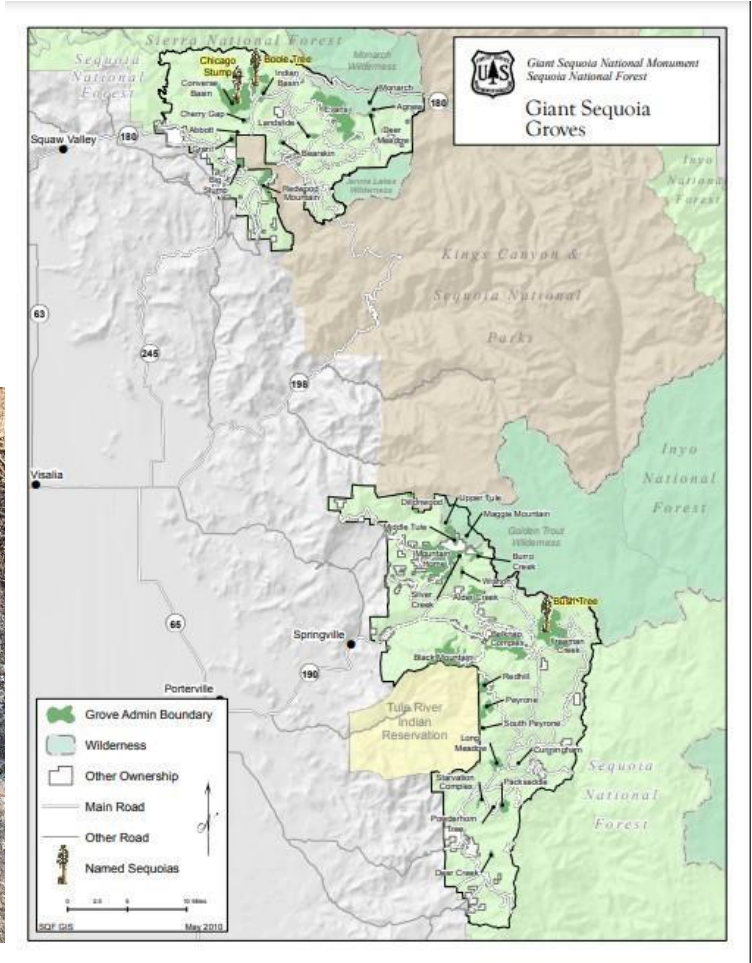
The Sequoia and Sierra National Forests received emergency approval from the U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore to initiate fuel reduction treatments to reduce the wildfire risk that currently threatens the remaining endangered giant sequoia groves.



Of the 37 giant sequoia groves on 37,000 acres within National Forest System lands in California, all but five have burned or partially burned in recent wildfires, and many giant monarchs were killed. Since 2015, wildfires have caused significant destruction of the giant sequoia groves and have destroyed nearly one-fifth of all giant sequoias in the last two years.

The **Giant Sequoia Emergency Response** allows for immediate implementation of specific fuel treatments within twelve Giant Sequoia groves, encompassing approximately 13,377 acres.

Emergency fuels treatments would remove surface and ladder fuels that present the greatest wildfire risk and include hand cutting of small trees, mechanical removal of trees, application of borate on green stumps, pulling duff away from the base of large giant sequoias and prescribed burning. The intent is to complete treatments by 2023 but may continue through the end of 2024.



Black Mountain Grove before and after treatment.

TEAM OBJECTIVES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

MEDIA - Reach out to the media to provide information about GSER.

- Assisted with **media roll-out** of the GSER project with one media tour and two public tours of emergency response work.
- Created several press releases and advisories for use by SQF.
- Team was available to handle any local **media requests**.
- Assisted **Getty Images** photographer in the field for three days.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH - Develop targeted messaging to tell the story of what we are doing.


- Developed **messaging** for media, local communities, and forest visitors about the fuel reduction treatments to reduce the wildfire risk that threatens 11 of the giant sequoia groves in SQF at highest risk from wildfire. Communicated the magnitude of recent losses in giant sequoia groves and the high risk that unburned groves are facing.
 - Developed **flyer** introducing the three phases of the GSER, *“Protecting and preserving eleven giant sequoia groves - from the ground up.”*
 - Developed **infographics** to briefly detail the three phases of GSER, *“Protecting and preserving eleven giant sequoia groves - from the ground up.”*
 - Developed **“postcards from the groves”** to highlight interpretive information on the Giant Sequoia Groves.
 - Laminated display materials for USFS bulletin boards.
 - Distributed material to USFS staff, including talking points and key messages.
- Provided content for use on SQF **Facebook** and **Flickr** accounts.
 - A completed schedule of **social media** posts in Trello.
 - Sixteen **Facebook posts** have been developed to date. Thirteen have been posted or scheduled on Facebook. These include:
 - 3 inspirational quotes - two by John Muir, one by Teddy Roosevelt

USDA Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument


Giant Sequoia Emergency Response

Protecting and preserving eleven giant sequoia groves - from the ground up.


The Sequoia National Forest is implementing the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response (GSER) in the Giant Sequoia National Monument within Fresno and Tulare counties. The objective of this emergency response is to reduce catastrophic wildfire risk that currently threatens our imperiled giant sequoia groves.



Phase 1: Make Safe Access
Goal - Provide safe access to the giant sequoia groves for future restoration and fuel reduction.
Drought and wildland fires weakened or killed trees throughout the national forest. Forest Service Organized Crews are being hundreds of dead standing trees, known as 'snags', that line the roads, and pose a hazard to people traveling them.



Phase 2: Tame the Flame
Goal - Protect giant sequoia from the imminent risk of severe fires.
Once access to the groves is safe, workers will clear fuel from around larger sequoias by hand-cutting small trees and pulling away downed logs, debris and duff from the base of large giant sequoia trees and stumps. Treatments will eventually include mechanically removing fuels, and prescribed burning.



Phase 3: Protect & Sustain
Goal - Implement landscape scale projects to protect giant sequoia groves.
Long-term plans for preserving these national treasures will continue as the Forest works to complete six projects designed to protect and sustain the giant sequoia groves and hillside around them.


“Fuel treatments from this emergency response will take some time for us to implement because safety of our crews and the public is of the utmost importance, along with protecting these giant, iconic trees. By reducing the potential for mortality of the monarch giant sequoias during high-severity fire, and taking the actions we are taking now, we will protect the people, our communities, and our land for generations to come.”
—Teresa Benson,
Forest Supervisor
Sequoia National Forest

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument

Giant Sequoia Emergency Response


Protecting and preserving eleven giant sequoia groves - from the ground up.



Phase 1 - Make Safe Access
Working to provide safe access to the giant sequoia groves for future restoration and fuel reduction.



Phase 2 - Tame the Flame
Working to protect giant sequoia groves from the imminent risk of severe fires.

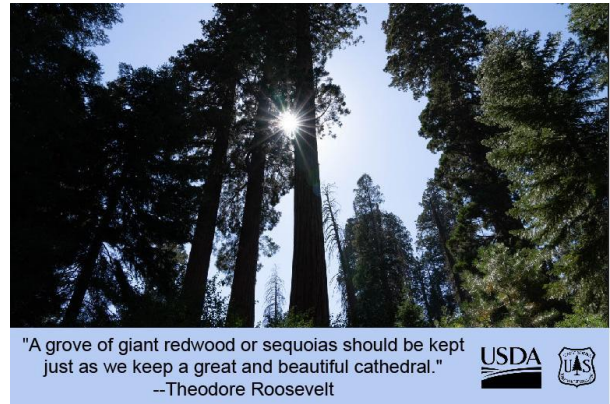


Phase 3 - Protect & Sustain
Working towards long-term protection of the giant sequoia groves.

For more information on this project visit:
www.fs.usda.gov/sequoia/

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- An introduction to the GSER using the project flyer
- 1 post with the infographic
- 2 posts that described the GSER project
- 1 post on the importance of fire to the sequoia groves
- 1 recreation post about the SQF
- 1 historic post on the introduction of black bear in the 1930s
- 1 post discussing protection of cultural/archeological resources on the SQF
- 1 post on the importance of studying sequoia stumps
- 1 post on the establishment of the Giant Sequoia NM
- There are three posts waiting to be reviewed. These include two hiking trail posts and one history post on the naming of the Giant Sequoia Tree in 1847.



- Posted about the team on the National FPET Facebook page.

- **Video/Photos:** The team member who is a professional photographer and videographer visited all four groves where work is currently being done.
 - Documented the GSER treatments with photos and videos of specific areas in the targeted groves.
 - Worked with Zach Coswell for two days to take drone footage of several work areas.
 - Developing public education **videos** to support the GSER and why this work is important.
 - How do you see a sequoia? From the ground up.
 - How does fire kill a sequoia? From the ground up.



- How do you save a sequoia? From the ground up.
 - Giant Sequoia Emergency Response (2 minutes)
 - Provided pool footage for the media.
 - Assisted Sierra National Forest staff for a day to document the work being done on the Nelder Grove with video and photos. Conducted multiple interviews.
 - Looked through hundreds of historical photos from the Western Divide Ranger District but was unable to find anything that would work for this project. We also had technical difficulties with the scanner.
 - Obtained 11 historic SQF photos from Forest History Society.
- Creating SQF **website** page dedicated to GSER.
 - Developed a plan to develop the website.
 - Developed plan for Storymap on the GSER.
- Creating **Postcards from the Crews Project**
 - Completed templates for “postcards from the crews” so they can be printed and distributed to crew members and staff.
 - Different group photographs can be used in the template for other crews helping on the GSER.
 - Postcards will also be used on social media.
- Creating GSER **PowerPoint** for use by local staff or PIOs at local meetings.



INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM - Giant Sequoia Emergency Response Incident Management Team.

- Team closely coordinated with SQF staff and the GSER Incident Management Team to discuss strategy and gain approval for products.
- Team was available to assist with community meetings and activities as needed.
- Showcased the local Organized Crews who are creating history to save giant sequoias by **“working from the ground up.”**



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES -

- Worked with Carol DeHart to sign off relevant fulfilled tasks in her PIOF Task Book.
- Worked with Ludie Bond to sign off relevant fulfilled tasks in her PETL Task Book.

SAFETY -

Adhered to agency specific safety policies.

- Completed a Team Safety Plan.
- Safety messages were delivered and practiced daily.

PROVIDE A CLOSEOUT REPORT -

- Information developed and distributed is attached as appendices.
- A budget was created and submitted.
- Transition planning and recommendations for further projects and actions were implemented.
- This written final report was developed and presented on Monday, August 29, 2022.

Recommendations and Follow-up:

Remote Work: Two team members will continue by working remotely to finish telling the story of the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response:

- Creating videos for use on social media, in visitor centers, by staff, etc;
- Organizing videos and photos taken in the field.
- Uploading photos to the regional Flickr site.
- SQF website page and story map.
- PowerPoint slide show.
- Design, printing, and distribution of the “Postcards from the Crews”.
- “Meter” to show work accomplished, such as monarchs protected.
- FAQ and links for the website.
- Other projects as needed.

On-Site PIO: One team member will stay an additional three weeks to continue working with the media and Getty Images, writing press releases, and distributing printed materials.

Bring PIOs back as needed:

- Use milestones for bringing additional PIO help back as the project progresses, such as when prescribed burning begins, or when work starts again next year.

Include Podcasts in your media lists.

Continue to focus on the local OC work crews who are doing the hard work “from the ground up” through media opportunities and additional postcards.

Design your budget to develop the following items:

Banner Display:

- Develop a banner display that features the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response project.

Printing:

- Use the Government Printing Office to print handout materials for the public and partners.

Stickers:

- Develop a project specific sticker to give away to the public, community members, partners, crews, staff and others

Office Space and Equipment:

Office space and adequate equipment can sometimes be a struggle with prevention teams. Having access to a high-quality color printer is always needed as well as reliable Wi-Fi.

Build Your Capacity:

- Increase the Forest’s capacity for trained Forest Service PIOs.
- Provide training for P-310 - Prevention Education Team Member (PETM).
- Build capacity by training prevention staff to become Prevention Education Team Leaders (PETL). (P-410)

Links to Articles:

['Tremendous' progress being made in Sequoias emergency response | News | recorderonline.com](https://www.recorderonline.com/news/2022/07/23/1113158387/us-forest-service-emergency-action-sequoias-wildfire)

<https://www.npr.org/2022/07/23/1113158387/us-forest-service-emergency-action-sequoias-wildfire>

<https://phys.org/news/2022-07-emergency-action-sequoias-wildfires.html>

<https://www.americanforests.org/article/statement-on-emergency-protections-for-giant-sequoia-groves/>

https://www.bakersfield.com/news/emergency-work-begins-in-giant-sequoia-groves/article_7b181214-20e1-11ed-85d7-8f8ebb346384.html

<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/press-releases/league-endorses-emergency-legislation-to-save-giant-sequoia/>

<https://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-bakersfield-californian/20220822/281509344983908>

<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/blog/an-emergency-in-the-giant-sequoia-forest/>

<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/press-releases/league-endorses-emergency-legislation-to-save-giant-sequoia/>

<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/redwoods/fire/wildfire-emergency-in-the-giant-sequoias/>

Appendix A: 2022 Sequoia National Forest FPET Communication Plan

Purpose:

The purpose of this communication plan is to guide the Sequoia National Fire Prevention Education Team's (FPET) efforts during their August 9 through August 22, 2022 assignment.

The FPET will assist the Sequoia National Forest SQF) in providing information and education for the **Giant Sequoia Emergency Response (GSER)** actions:

- Develop **messaging** for media, local communities, and forest visitors about the fuel reduction treatments to reduce the wildfire risk that threatens 11 of the giant sequoia groves in SQF at highest risk from wildfire. Communicate the magnitude of recent losses in giant sequoia groves and high-risk unburned groves are facing.
- Provide educational/interpretive **videos** and **social media** posts to support the GSER.
- Assist with the SQF's **media** roll-out of the GSER project.
- Showcase the field staff who are creating history to save giant sequoias by working **"from the ground up"**.
- Document the GSER treatments with **before and after photos** and videos of specific areas in the 11 targeted groves.

The team will coordinate with SQF staff and the GSER Incident Management Team.

Objectives:

The primary objective is to support the public information messaging of the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response. Almost 20% of the large naturally occurring giant sequoia trees in the world have been killed by unprecedented hot-burning wildfires in the last two years because of extremely high fuel loadings in groves due to past fire suppression and drought mortality along with a warming climate. The Forest Service must act now to reduce accumulated fuel build-up in the groves and protect old-growth giant sequoias.

Specific Objectives

Community Outreach - Develop targeted messaging to tell the story of what we are doing in the form of videos, social media posts, handouts, displays, fliers, and other products.

Strategies/Action:

- Review existing GSER **talking points, key messages, and historical photographs** to develop products and messaging.
- Develop and distribute materials for **displays** and bulletin boards as needed, targeting local communities, tribes, and forest visitors. Update any previously produced products as needed.
- Develop and distribute **“from the ground up”** themed printed, photo and video products showcasing the four local “fire crews” who are working to protect the giant sequoia groves.
 - Postcards from the groves.
- Organize and promote a **tour** to answer questions and inform the public about the GSER.
- Possibly develop a GSER **PowerPoint** for use by local staff or PIOs at local meetings.
- FPET will be sensitive to local political and social issues related to public land management and use.
- FPET will be sensitive to and respectful of any Tribal customs, issues, or concerns.

Media - Reach out to the media to provide information about GSER.

Strategies/Action:

- **Draft press releases** to share via the SQF public affairs officer.
- Organize and promote a **tour** to answer questions and inform the media about the GSER.
- Provide content for use on SQF **Facebook, Twitter** and **Flickr** accounts.
- Assist with creating a SQF **website** page dedicated to GSER.
- Use FPET members to develop additional **video** content for social media and websites.
 - Potential ideas include drone footage, crew interviews, still photography and an infographic of project phases.
- Explore the possibility of inviting **podcast** hosts to feature the GSER project on their shows.
- FPET will handle any local **media requests** and inform SQF PAO.
- Any national media requests will be forwarded to SQF PAO.

Incident Management Team - Giant Sequoia Emergency Response Incident Management Team

Strategies/Action:

- Reach out to GSER IMT to discuss FPET strategy and establish communication between the two teams.
- Assist with community meetings and other activities as needed.

FPET Operations

FPET Information Distribution

Strategies/Action:

- Reports from the FPET will be provided to the SQF and other key contacts every other day.
- Team Leader will reach out to SQF Public Affairs Officer for direction on local needs for information distribution.

FPET Training Opportunities

Strategies/Action:

- Provide training opportunities to personnel on the FPET for any task book needs.

FPET Safety

Strategies/Action:

- Follow established and recognized SQF agency safety practices and policies.
- Provide a daily safety message to the team, with all team members having an opportunity to present a safety message.
- Complete a safety plan.

FPET Close Out Report

A close-out report will be presented at the end of assignment. The target date for this close-out meeting is the morning of Monday, August 22. SQF leaders will let the team know in advance if this needs to be changed to an electronic close-out or moved to another date. FPET members will need to drive to their various airport destinations the afternoon of August 22.

Final close-out report shall include:

- Contacts made
- Information developed and distributed
- Projects completed
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations for further projects and actions
- Cost tracking
- Transition plan for incoming prevention team, if needed

Target Audiences

- Media
- Local tribal members, community members, business owners and municipalities
- Any potential or current visitors to Sequoia National Forest
- Sequoia National Forest employees
- Special interest groups such as Save Our Sequoias, Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition

Key Messages

- Firefighters and giant sequoias are experiencing unprecedented wildfire conditions .

- Giant sequoias that have already survived centuries of wildfires are suddenly dying due to extreme wildfire behavior
- Drought leads to tree mortality and even higher fuel accumulation which leaves the sequoia groves extremely vulnerable to high severity fire.
- Extreme temperatures also increase the intensity and severity of wildfires.
- Fire exclusion (both from natural ignitions and those as a result of cultural burning practices) over the last 150 years has led to extreme fuel accumulation in sequoia groves that were accustomed to frequent low severity fires.
- The sequoia groves selected for immediate GSER treatment have not experienced the negative impacts of recent wildfires (which often can act as an initial fuel treatment). The groves in need of additional fuel removal treatments are both unburned groves and groves that burned at a lower severity.
- These GSER actions prepare the groves for re-entry of primarily lower severity fire.
- Giant sequoias have serotinous cones which means that cones only open after certain environmental conditions (in the case of sequoias it's heat) have triggered them to. Frequent fire in groves facilitates seed release from cones and promote favorable growing conditions for young sequoias to establish.
- Fire is very important to the maintenance of giant sequoia ecosystems.
- Fire creates natural canopy gaps, removes surface litter, and reduces tree density which increases understory light and soil moisture availability.
- Giant sequoias have evolved with a frequent primarily low-to-moderate severity fire regime where relatively small (generally less than 1 acre) fire-created canopy gaps facilitate natural sequoia regeneration.
- Giant sequoias provide habitat for many species of California wildlife including California spotted owl, Northern goshawk, and the endangered Pacific fisher.

Talking Points

Wildfire prevention in giant sequoia groves is important for firefighter and public safety, and cultural and natural resource protection.

- The objective of emergency response is to provide long-term survival of giant sequoias by reducing the effects of high-severity wildfire through fuels reduction activities before a wildfire threatens previously unburned or lightly burned groves.
- By reducing the effects of high-severity fire, we protect people, communities, and our lands.

The Sequoia National Forest is implementing Giant Sequoia Emergency Response actions to protect and preserve these national treasures in three phases.

- Phase 1 - Make Safe
- Phase 2 - Tame the Flame
- Phase 3 - Sustain

The USDA Forest Service protects and preserves giant sequoia on the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument. Eleven of these groves will be protected through the Giant Sequoia Emergency Response.

- The Sequoia National Forest was established in 1908 and is one of nineteen National Forests in California.
- The Sequoia National Forest takes its name from the giant sequoia, the world's largest trees, reaching ages of 3,200 years or more.
- The giant sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) is the world's largest tree and grows naturally only in a narrow 60-mile band of mixed conifer forest on the western slopes of California's Sierra Nevada mountain range.
- The Forest covers more than 1 million acres with 33 magnificent groves of towering giant sequoias, mountain meadows, limestone caverns, bold granitic domes and spires, plunging gorges, a diverse array of plants and animals, and archaeological sites.
- The giant sequoia's landscape of soaring granite monoliths, glacier-carved canyons and roaring whitewater is as spectacular as its trees.
- Elevations range from 1,000 feet in the foothill region to peaks over 12,000 feet in the rugged high country, providing visitors with some of the most spectacular views of mountainous landscape in the entire west.
- The Giant Sequoia National Monument within the boundary of the Sequoia National Forest was designated by President William Jefferson Clinton in April 2000.
- The outer boundaries of the area encompass approximately 327,769 acres of federal land managed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
- Establishment of the Giant Sequoia National Monument brings permanent protection and recognition to all the federally owned giant sequoia groves within the Sequoia National Forest.

APPENDIX B: Budget (emailed to PAO)

Appendix C: Action Plan for Working with Fire Prevention Education Teams Pre-Plan in the Off Season

1. **Look into historical wildfire data** to ensure you know your fire causes and problem areas. Your pre-planning will save the prevention team time in researching historical fire occurrence, fire cause and values at risk information. Maps showing this kind of information are very helpful for prevention teams.
2. **Consider who you want to reach** with your messaging to reduce human-caused fires. What are the demographics? Who are your user groups? Have they changed? Did the Forest have an event that changed the message? What are the local concerns? Consider all of these aspects when pre-planning.
3. **Inventory fire prevention materials** you have on hand. Do the materials reflect your fire causes? Are they up to date? If not, there are some resources on-line in the Fire Prevention Education Team Digital Library www.nwccg.gov/fpetdl where you can build products. Your USFS Regional Prevention Coordinator should have access to previous team products and materials.
4. **Plan ahead** for large yearly events that occur during the traditional fire season.

- a. Order products that you know you will use during Stage 1, Stage 2, and Stage 3 Fire Restrictions. If you are using temporary signs, have a sufficient stock on hand.
5. **Provide fire prevention training** for appropriate Forest prevention staff. Make sure prevention staff is familiar with your National Forest Fire Prevention Plan and encourage them to participate in updates.
 - a. Send your current staff to P-310 - Prevention Education Team Member (PETM) training so they can serve as trainees as needed and if available for visiting teams: <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/p-310>
 - b. Encourage those who are interested to become Prevention Education Team Leaders (PETL) by taking P-410, so we can build capacity for your Forest and nationwide:
<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/training-courses/p-410>
6. Watch and share this National Prevention Education Team video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyiFlioWnp8&feature=youtu.be>

When to Call a Team:

Ideally, it works best to bring in a team at the onset of critical dryness before the typical wildfire season begins. If a team comes in early, it can help you prepare for the season. But bringing a team in later is also worth it because their efforts can greatly reduce the occurrence of ***unwanted human caused fires*** any time needed.

Follow the Host Unit Guide Summary: Fire Prevention Education Team (FPET) Interactions, to guide you on when to call.

<https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/committee/docs/fpetsc-host%20unit%20guide%20summary.pdf>

Before the FPET Arrives:

- Contact the FPET Leader to discuss your needs, the local situation, and your expectations. (The size and composition of the team can be flexible depending on your needs.) Give details of travel route and local lodging.
- Write the Delegation of Authority (DOA) with clarity, using concise and attainable expectations and goals. The team's communication plan is based on what is written in the DOA.
- Have a Local Liaison available to work with the team. This will ensure that any issues will be addressed in a timely manner. It is also very helpful to have at least one local person on the team. Local team members can supply valuable knowledge of the area.
- Provide an office with reliable internet and working printers. Ensure that there is adequate space for team members. Many teams have members who do not have government computers and need Wi-Fi.

- Know in advance who will approve graphics, news releases and purchases, if those items are needed. This is key to getting your messaging out fast.
- If posting to Facebook, Twitter or other social media and websites is an expectation, line-out the approval process and access to the social media when the team arrives.

When the Team arrives:

1. At the in-briefing:
 - a. Discuss leaders' intent, delegation of authority, political issues, community issues, along with safety issues and policies.
 - b. Discuss current fire and weather situations in detail. Provide contact information for any Incident Management Team Information Officers working on the Forest.
 - c. Provide contact lists for agency and local contacts including phone numbers and emails if possible. Provide Forest maps.
2. Follow up as needed to ensure that the team is meeting expectations, or to let the team know when expectations have changed.
3. If the team is following a previous FPET, ensure that they are given reports and products to avoid duplication of efforts and build upon previous work.