

Sierra meadow restoration: Where to start?

By Julie Fair, American Rivers

Over the last decade, momentum for restoring Sierra Nevada meadows has been building. The State of California and the U.S. Forest Service have both increasingly recognized the benefits of meadow restoration for California watersheds and are now committed to meadow restoration. Healthy meadows provide a suite of benefits including improved groundwater storage, enhanced water quality, reduced peak flood flows, and critical habitat.

However, with an estimated 50 percent of the 191,000 acres of meadow in the Sierra (Sierra Meadows Strategy, 2016) degraded by human impacts, it is difficult to know where to start. To address this, in 2010, American Rivers partnered with UC Davis and the U.S. Forest Service to develop the Meadow Condition Scorecard, a rapid assessment method to quickly assess overall meadow condition and help identify meadows in need of restoration.

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